

TITOSTALGIA –

A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz



MITJA VELIKONJA

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A Study of Nostalgia for Josip Broz

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A CUP OF COFFEE

I'm having a cup of coffee in the café nearest to my place of work, aptly named *Amerika*. The coffee comes with a sugar pack featuring a well-known face. I glance through the other sugar packs crammed into the bowl on my table, and the same face stares out at me from every single pack. Now, if the name of the café was meant to have any significance, then the face should be that of, say, George W. Bush, or the likes of John Wayne, Michael Jordan, or at least Beyoncé. A face befitting an EU country would be a portrait of, say, one of the *fathers of European integration*¹, Robert Schuman or Jean Monnet. In the finally independent Slovenia, one would expect to see one of the widely (self-)acclaimed *fighters for independence*, for example, Lojze Peterle, Janez Janša or Jože Pučnik. As a member of a *nation of culture*, I should now be looking at the face of Primož Trubar, Jože Plečnik, France Prešeren or some other artist or writer. As a resident of Central Europe, I should see there the image of the honorable Franz Joseph I of Austria or his *Sissi*. If Slovenia were truly Catholic, the face staring at me should be that of the Counter-Reformation bishop Tomaž Hren or of the recently exonerated bishop Gregorij Rožman. If it is not Catholic, then it should at least be true to its Alpine character, but there is no trace of the intrepid folk band Avseniki, or the pioneer mountaineer Jakob Aljaž, or the Alpine skier Bojan Križaj, or any of the recently proliferating television stars in Alpine, folk-style outfits. Slovenia's independence was presumably *a thousand-year-old dream*, but sugar packs do not bear the image of any prominent Partisan fighter or of General Rudolf Maister. After many *dark decades of communism*, Slovenia is allegedly experiencing the post-socialist transition, but I'm denied the pleasure of looking at the image of some now highly praised *dissidents* from Socialist times. That is fine with me, but if preferences lay more on the side of the left political block, the face should be that of Boris Kidrič, Edvard Kardelj or Milan Kučan, or some other prominent figure in socialist times. No! Our new natural milieu should be the West, but there is no picture of some renowned public figure or contemporary pop icon from that part of the world. Why not Elvis, Marylin, Maradona, Kennedy, ABBA, Bruce Lee, Sid&Nancy, the Dalai

¹ In this book, ideological discourse is italicized. Quotations from professional literature or professional opinion are given in quotation marks.

Lama, Michael Jackson, Princess Diana, or David Beckham? Or some local pop star?

The image on the sugar pack was the 1943 portrait of Josip Broz Tito by Božidar Jakac.

 My reaction was probably the same as that of many other coffee drinkers who were stirred by old memories, or of anyone who nowadays comes across a similar picture in the abundant production of nostalgic content – *why Tito?* Every one among us has his/her own reason for asking this question: curiosity, wonder, shock, unease, elation, accusation, or joy. Some would say that the answer is self-evident: *Tito, of course, who else?* New moralists would ask what *went wrong so that things are as they are*. Some find this phenomenon entertaining, others worrying; some ignore it, others think that it is ephemeral, and still others that it is enduring. Some perhaps do not even recognize him. Some would like to erase him from their own and collective memory. For some he is a distant benefactor, for others a dangerous reappearance. Some see him as just another important historical figure who marked the previous century in one way or another. For foreigners, he is a superb tourist attraction. As a cultural studies scholar, a citizen of Yugoslavia for more than half of my life, a member of the generation which, as the cult band from Belgrade, Ekatarina Velika, once poignantly said, *did not know that fire was sin²*, and as someone who has had personal experience of the good and bad sides of both countries and political systems, their achievements and delusions, I'm interested in all the perceptions mentioned above and many more. Why, how, where and with what purpose? To whom or what should be attributed the unusual reappearance of his image, name, values, symbolic meaning and, last but not least, his vision, in our everyday culture, the media, public life, and even in advertising in various parts of former Yugoslavia? Where does this enigmatic neo-Titoism come from? From where do young Titoists spring, those that take it seriously and those for whom it is just an end-of-the-week pastime? The least one can say about this delicate topic is that it is intriguing. The scope and complexity of the phenomenon make it difficult to define, and even more difficult to explain. Therefore, I will contextualize and examine it as part of my wider study of post-socialist nostalgia, an unexpected phenomenon that has surprised practically everyone who has experienced the transition period in former socialist countries, and even

² Idemo (Let's Go), Dum Dum album, Belgrade, 1991.

more so foreign observers. I will call it “titostalgia,” meaning nostalgia for Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980).



I'd like to point out that this is not another book *about* Tito, but a book *after* Tito. I was not interested in his biography, in proven, attributed or imagined episodes of his life. I did not roam the archives of secret services, national institutions, or private collections, nor did I rely on *exclusive opinions* of his one-time aides and attendants who, all of a sudden, know the whole truth about him. I do not aspire to be a forensic expert historian uncovering unimportant details, such as the origins of his pseudonyms, or the actual date of his birth. Nor am I a “book-keeper,” recording obscure anecdotes from his life, or a “tabloid-style” researcher, feeding like a parasite on the thrilling details from his love life or culinary preferences. Myriads of such peculiarities are already documented in his many biographies, some more and others less favorable, and in a number of historical books, which altogether add up to the true “titology” that had begun to develop during his lifetime. Unfortunately, even more such trivia can be found in cheap print media, within denunciations that make part of daily politics, and sensationalist pseudo-studies. These come complete with meticulous descriptions by and wonder on the part of their authors, but lack practically any reflection on the subject, not to mention serious scientific evaluation.³

In brief, I am not asking who *Tito was in reality*, what *his role in history was* or how *he was praised/hated* in his time. All these answers can be found in the large-circulation eulogies and near *hagiographies* written and painted for decades

³ Yet there are exceptions. I'd like to draw your attention to two recent collections containing excellent analysis of the past and present perceptions of Broz using a fresh, inter-disciplinary and theoretically critical approach: one is edited by Kristi Mathiesen Hjemdahl and Nevena Škrbić Alempijević (2006), and the other by Radonja Leposavić (2004). Kuljić's socio-historical study (2005) is another valuable contribution. It describes Broz's manner of functioning and governing, meaning his political profile given in the context of the historical circumstances.

by Tyrtaean artists and political lackeys⁴, or by his staunch opponents. My subject of interest is diametrically opposite: What does he mean here and now to some? Why does his image live on in a quite positive sense despite everything? How come that he is held in high esteem by groups so diverse that a whole new phenomenon of mass-cultural production could have developed around his image? Why does his name can still “sell” a product even today? In other words, I do not write about Tito from the period before 1980, that is, about a boy from an out-of-the-way village by the Sotla River, or a man who frequented taverns and worked in mechanical workshops before the slaughter of the First World War, or about his service in the military, his dramatic Russian experience, his semi-legal activities during the inter-war period, his leadership of the Yugoslav communist party and Partisan resistance movement, deft steering between the extremes of the cold war blocks, his lifelong presidency of the second Yugoslavia or his lively foreign activities. Nor do I write about his death and funeral, which brought together the world leaders of the time. I do not burden myself with binarisms arising from gossip or newspaper columns, and I’m not interested in whether he was a *bad guy* or a *good guy*. The phenomenon of nostalgia is part of my field of research, so my question is why for some Tito is still or (even more intriguingly) once more a positive figure. Why does he continue to be an inspiration to people even today? In this study, I do not look back, but around me. I’m not interested in the old Titoism, but in the new one; not in Tito *before and after*, but only *after*. I’m interested in his “life after death” or “life after life.” My questions do not relate to the late Broz, but to the Tito that still “lives,” and not to an “unknown” Broz, but the well-known one – Tito whose signifiers can still be seen in the streets, on facades, in souvenirs shops, in newspapers, at events commemorating his birthday or death, and in the fond memories and beliefs held by people across Tito’s former Yugoslavia.

⁴ Rather than dwelling on them any further, I’d like to mention some of the artists who have described or portrayed him. These range from unknown folk artists to the great names within the world of art, for example, Vladimir Nazor, Miroslav Krleža, Božidar Jakac, Boris Kalin, France Bevk, Vojin Bakić, Safet Zec and, of course, Antun Augustinčić (his famous sculpture of war-time Broz, deeply in thoughts, striding pensively in a long army coat with his hands clasped behind his back, was reproduced countless times in various sizes and materials). For example, see Z. Mutavđić “Tito in umetnici” (Tito And Artists), dzs, Ljubljana, 1961.

I. INTRODUCTION – *Josip Broz dobar skroz⁵*

I really feel sad today when I see young people wearing T-shirts with Tito's or Che Guevara's image, that is to say, people who by many criteria do not belong among the giants of our or of global history. And we, Slovenes, have many people in whom our youths could take pride. General Maister, for example.

The Slovenian Minister of Education, Milan Zver,
Odmevi, tv Slovenija, July 2007

“The very curious period of post-socialism”, as former dissidents Adam Michnik and Vaclav Havel (1992) described it in an interview, has spawned a series of interesting social phenomena and cultural curiosities across former Yugoslavia. The professional public and ordinary people both refer to these as “yugonostalgia,” or nostalgia for the late country. Its manifestations are extremely diverse, varying with the region, time, group of people or intentions. It involves pleasant memories of various “things Yugoslav,” rather than things specific to individual nations of former Yugoslavia. These include Yugoslav pop-culture (ranging from *starogradiske* songs and Dalmatian *belcanto* to rock'n'roll, punk and new wave), Yugoslav film, television series, comedy programs, the entertainment scene, victories of national sport teams, informal (friendly, love) relationships and formal ones (forged while participating in work brigades, serving in the military, visiting twin towns or schools, taking part in country-wide contests), travel and vacationing from the Vardar River in Macedonia to Mount Triglav in Slovenia, employment opportunities across the former country, various phenomena of everyday life, cult industrial and food products etc.⁶ Titostalgia is part of yugonostalgia: a lament for *Yuga*, as it is affectionately called, is, as a rule, also a lament for *Drug Tito* (Comrade Tito). Moreover, titostalgia is an even more concrete, direct and essential part of the broad and loose notion of yugonostalgia; nevertheless, it

⁵ *Josip Broz dobar skroz* would roughly translate as, “Josip Broz good from top to bottom. The chapter subtitles in this book are taken from texts reproduced on T-shirts that are sold across former Yugoslavia. Those that involve word play and local concepts, and whose gist would be lost in translation, are left in the original and explained in parenthesis or a footnote. The short quotations introducing individual chapters are statements by Broz's critics and opponents of today.

⁶ This is excellently synthesized in Oleg Mandić's “Mitologije svakidašnjeg života” (Mythologies of Everyday Life) (1976) and the “posthumous” “Leksikon Yu mitologije” (A Lexicon of Yu-Mythology) edited by Iris Andrić, Vladimir Arsentijević and Đorđe Matić (2004). See also Jansen, 2005, 219-259.

requires examination in a broader context. Over the turbulent decades following his death on May 4, 1980, the attitude towards Tito on the part of Yugoslav citizens, later the citizens of newly formed countries, as well as of the wider international community, varied greatly.



the 1990s

Only one aspect of this attitude never changed: no matter whether times were good or bad, in the eyes of his opponents, supporters or neutral observers, Tito has invariably been an *important historical figure*, who marked the modern history of Yugoslav nations and the wider region in one way or another. In politics in particular, *a notable figure* is a synonym for controversy. Accordingly, over the past decades, *the great statesman, the victorious leader of the Partisan resistance movement, a citizen of the world, a rebel who dared say No! to Hitler and Stalin (and survived), the most welcome guest, the father of self-management socialism, a cosmopolitan, a peacemaker and a co-creator of the “third way” in the then divided world (the architect of the Non-Aligned Movement), a charming host and a bon vivant*, gradually became everything that is diametrically opposite: *a war criminal, a typical tyrant, an anti-democrat, a charlatan, a mass murderer, a staunch Bolshevik, a traitor of the Croatianhood, a Serb hater and the hater/murderer/butcher of every Yugoslav nation in turn, a smug totalitarian leader, a godless person, a cheap demagogue, a Comintern agent, the Balkan Pol-Pot, the Stalin’s best student etc.* A similar fate befell his Yugoslavia – since its break-up in late July of 1991, syntagms such as *the country of brotherly nations, free country, socialism with a human face*, were counterbalanced by new ones, for example, *the prison of nations, the Bolshevik rule of terror, the dictatorial regime, the conspiracy of the Communists/the Karadžorović family, and the Versailles/Yalta creature*. Foreign politicians and commentators used to describe him as *the only true Yugoslav*; historians called him *the last of the Habsburgs*, because he attempted to bring together under one roof nations so diverse. During WWII, he was the *heroic guerilla leader*; when he split with Stalin, western observers proclaimed him *the communist Luther*; he was likened to Henry VIII, called the *Balkan Caesar*, while the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin stated, at the time when the Informbiro crisis (the break with Stalin) came to a head, that Tito was *a scoundrel, but our scoundrel* (Pirjevec, 1995, 193). At the same time, Soviet propaganda called him the *American hireling and the servant of two masters*. The critical British historian S. Pavlowitch described his last years with the phrase “*helmsman and pharaoh*” (2006, 67). Yugoslavia

was ironically nicknamed *Titoland* and *Titoslavia*, while *Titoism* became a synonym for the type of socialist regime independent from the Soviet Union. There is practically no positive or negative quality that has not been (and will not be) attributed to him and his Yugoslavia.

Therefore, in this study I will be interested in titostalgia as part of a wider phenomenon that I've been studying for more than a decade, that is, yugonostalgia and nostalgia for socialism in general. The images of Broz, like the images of Yugoslavia, its political symbols, artifacts of mass culture, popular beliefs, fond memories of those times, the retro-style in design and advertising – all appear on various levels and in various locales of social life, including where no one expects them, on a daily basis, as part of everyday discourses and practices, and even more emphatically on the anniversaries of his death or birth. During *his times*, it was normal, and even required, that his portraits hung everywhere, that his image was reproduced on all kinds of objects ranging from stamps and badges to banknotes, that his historical statements were extensively quoted in the mass media, textbooks, historical and other studies, that his collected works in quality leather binding or books about him graced the bookshelves of those politically more conscious, that his name was painted on hills in huge letters seen from tens of miles away, that promises to him adorned many a classroom, office, waiting room, army barracks⁷ and other public place, that his name was proudly borne by one town in each republic and autonomous province, and that many streets, squares, public facilities and institutions were named after him. There existed numerous Tito scholarships, awards etc.; 88 trees were planted in memory of Tito, and many public events (including bizarre ones, for example, the contest for ploughmen called *Tito's Furrow*) were dedicated to him. Political rituals in his honor were plentiful, but the most illustrious were the annual *Youth Day*, celebrated on his birthday, May 25, with a huge sports event concluding the country-wide relay race and the ceremonial delivering of the baton symbolizing the best wishes from all Yugoslavs, and his magnificent funeral attended by a vast number of renowned political and public figures from around the world.⁸ Indeed, he was highly acclaimed by many of his notable contemporaries,

⁷ Touch our Tito, and you'll be blown up by a mine (Ko nam dirne Tita, razbiće ga mina), was an admonition I heard when I served in the military.

⁸ There were 206 foreign delegations from 123 countries. For a full list, see Dedijer (1981, 13). Practically all world statesmen were there, save for President Carter. Over the 64 hours while he lay in state, 465 000 people filed past to pay their last respect.

for example, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Martin Luther King and Jean-Paul Sartre, and even his enemies (e.g. H. Himmler⁹ and H. Hitler¹⁰). His photo appeared on the front pages of many magazines, such as Time, Life and Picture Post. Broz's biography by Vladimir Dedić was translated into practically all world languages, and even printed in braille (Kuljić, 2005, 405); more than one thousand books about him were published.¹¹



an antique shop,
Sarajevo, 2008

It is not difficult to explain this omnipresence and sweeping popularity of Broz: he was one of the main symbolic centers of the political mythology and narrative imaginary of socialist Yugoslavia, and a celebrated and protected one at that. A typical personality cult endorsed by repressive bodies and sustained by organized official propaganda was built around him, summarizing all Georges Dumézil's "cosmic and social functions" (rulers/priests, warriors and producers). The adulation of Tito began as early as during the liberation war¹² and only escalated after his break with Stalin (in 1948) in an attempt to diminish the personality cult surrounding the latter: on home ground, he is said to have been "more of a Stalinist than Stalin," (Barnett, 2006, 82) or, he put up "Stalinist resistance to Stalin" (Pavlowitch, 2006, 57-59).¹³ After 1948, socialism-building at

⁹ He stated: *I wish we had a dozen Titos in Germany, leaders with such determination and such good nerves, that even though they were forever encircled they would never give in.*

¹⁰ Kuljić, 2005, 398.

¹¹ For the list of more important ones, see Pavlowitch, 2006, 111-13.

¹² See also Milan Terzić's study "Titova vještina vladanja – Maršal i Maršalat 1943-1953" (Tito's Governing Skill – Marshal And The Marshalate) (Pobjeda, Podgorica, 2005). See also S. Eiletz: "Titova skrivnostna leta v Moskvi 1935-1940" (Tito's Secret Years in Moscow) (Mohorjeva, Celje, 2008).

¹³ Kuljić (2005, 366-420) also writes about the personality cult surrounding Broz and his charismatic leadership. Fister's empirical analysis (2002, 226-229) of Broz's image in songs dedicated to him from the time of his break with Stalin to his death showed that the dominant semantic units were *beloved (dear)*, *light (sun)* and *leader*.

home overshadowed communist internationalism, Yugoslav models prevailed over Soviet ones, and the October Revolution was less emphasized compared to the Yugoslav Partisan resistance movement or the national liberation war (mythologized as a *continual, unequal and bitter struggle against an enemy a hundred times stronger*, to quote Broz himself). He became the “trinity” ruler - head of state, of the military and of the party. Real “titocracy” indeed. However, it is much more difficult to understand why much of this cult has survived to this day, or returned, or perhaps emerged anew. Naturally, the methods, exponents, purposes and means are nowadays different, but nevertheless. He retreated from the leading pages of the newspapers dedicated to foreign and domestic affairs, but only to move a few pages toward the back, where he now appears in other sections, such as tourism reports, serialized stories and advertisements, or under arresting titles such as *Curiosities*, or conspicuously highlighted *This can't be true*. Broz, who with the debacle of Yugoslavia stepped down from the political stage with a roar, returned silently as Tito through the door opened by various cultural, media and consumer discourses. I may as well speculate further: are we witness to a plain “return to Tito,” involving more or less faithful reconstructions of the past, or is this something altogether new even if drawing on history? Is this a new construction of the past? Or of the present? Or even the future?

Let me clarify something early on to avoid misunderstanding: the Titoist discourse of today is a mere shadow of the discourse omnipresent during socialist times.¹⁴ We now have new protagonists, new political myths, symbols and rituals, and new “jargons of authenticity”, all infinitely reproduced much like those in the past. Within these, Tito and yugonostalgia generally figure as insults or convenient disparagements. The personality cult of the former Marshal all but disappeared from dominant discursive constructions. Or, more accurately, it moved elsewhere. When in Ljubljana or Sarajevo you come across a teenager in a T-shirt with Broz’s image; when in Mostar, next to the new Catholic church, a key tag with Broz’s image is sold alongside those with the Croatian national emblem, the images of the Medjugorje Virgin Mary, various saints or the rebuilt Mostar bridge; when in Serbia you see a street vendor selling a badge with his image alongside those with the images of

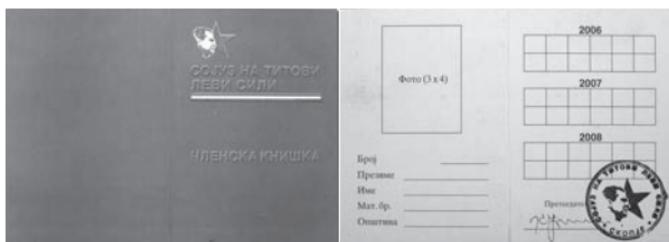
¹⁴ Equally interesting would be an analysis of the anti-Tito discourse that developed simultaneously inside and outside Yugoslavia.



left:
a street stall,
Ljubljana, 2004

right:
a showcase,
Beograd, 2007

Draža Mihajlović, Ratko Mladić, Radovan Karadžić, Zoran Đindjić, Che Guevara and ones with the text *God protects the Serbs*; *For King and Homeland*; *101% Serb*, and *Don't stare at my tits*; when in Skopje you see a beggar woman wearing a large Broz portrait on her chest; when in Istrian towns you walk along *Tito Streets*; when in Bosnia you are called *Tito* by someone who wants to say that you're special, that you are *The King*; when you realize that a notorious Slovenian nationalist has erected a monument to Broz in the garden of his villa; when in the center of Belgrade you see the shop window of an elite tourist store exclusively filled with Tito-souvenirs (lighters, magnets, badges etc) and books about him (ranging from two Broz cookbooks to a reprint of the book of anecdotes about him); when you learn that in Macedonia there exists a political party bearing his name;



right:
Makedonija, 2008

below:
a lawyer's office,
Tuzla, 2008

when his picture crops up in the most unexpected places, ranging from alternative youth clubs to old confectioner's shops, and from auto repair shops to private apartments; when you learn that in 2004 the President of Montenegro presented Libyan President Gadafi with one of Broz's Marshal uniforms (to the latter's *immense delight* according to media reports); when enthusiasts still maintain huge texts dedicated to him painted on hilltops; when on the





a workshop,
Skopje, 2008

anniversary of his birthday or death, as well as in between, both the wider public and the professional public still cross swords on the issue of Tito – one cannot but ask: Why he in particular? Why again? For what purpose? For whom is it all meant?

The new protagonists of this discourse doggedly insist on something that I have named the depoliticization symptom: they try hard to depoliticize Broz's reappearance. It allegedly has no connection with politics, and he is presumably not interesting as a political figure. They contend that the motives nowadays are quite different: commercial and sentimental, involving provocation, entertainment and the like. The organizer of the *Days of Tito's Cuisine*, for example, expressly stated that the event had no connection whatsoever with politics, but he only wanted to remind us of the times when we ate truly good food, and of November 29, when slaughtering of a pig was a must. Therefore, no politics, just good dishes and high spirits. The guests, too, swore that they were not there for politics but for delicious food, and the caption under the photo in a newspaper read “Politics? What politics?”¹⁵ The organizers of the 2007 *Tito party* in Doboј (Bosnia-Herzegovina) similarly asserted that their tourist event had no political undertones, adding that they hoped it would evolve into a tourist attraction that would pull tourists from the (former) homeland and wider.¹⁶ The manager of a company that bottles water called *Titov izvor* (*Tito Spring*) explained that his decision had nothing to do with politics, but was a pure marketing move expected to help the company gain a foothold in the market. The

¹⁵ M. Nedeljkov: Al je maršal dobro jeo... (What A Good Diet the Marshal had...) Press, Belgrade, December 3, 2007, p. 16, 17.

¹⁶ <http://www.livno-online.com/content/view/4708/261/>, accessed on August 12, 2008

self-proclaimed *Consul General of sFRY*,¹⁷ Marko Perković from Tivat (Montenegro), maintains that the aim of the relay races he organizes is *the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage and the promotion of former brotherhood and unity in Montenegro*. And all that *without idolization, ideology or politics*.¹⁸ Ivo Godnič, the impersonator of Broz, insists that *there are no ideological motives* behind the invitations he receives to appear at various events (ranging from the anniversary of a waterworks construction and the presentation of books on the local wine to birthday parties), but the reason is *a charismatic personality and a safety valve for nostalgia*.¹⁹ The same argument could be heard from Gordana Vnuk, the director of the Eurokaz theatre festival (renamed Titokaz for the occasion), who explained that the thematizing of Tito was *a poetic and anarchistic phantasmagoria without ideological answers*.²⁰



Slovenia, the 1990s

To proceed with the attempts at depoliticizing Broz's personality, the frontman of the Slovenian yugonostalgic band called Zaklonišče prepeva (Shelter Singing), Vanja Alič, says *If we are nostalgic, then we return to certain things that seemed beautiful or interesting at that time. In no way is this a recalling of the then regime*.²¹ Others even categorically reject the idea that memories of Broz and the events mentioned

¹⁷ sFRY was a widely used abbreviation for the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

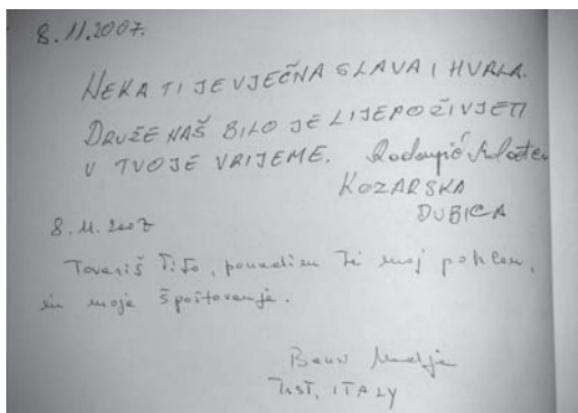
¹⁸ D. Novačić: Kako so nam Slovenci pokvarili veselje (How The Slovenes Spoiled Our Joy). Mladina, Ljubljana, May 19, 2007, p. 50.

¹⁹ R. Repnik: Jugo v naši glavi (Yugo In Our Heads). Nedeljski dnevnik, Ljubljana, December 19, 1999, p. 16.

²⁰ She also added that when theater is in question *the answers should not be ideological but poetical* (B. Munjin, Feral Tribune, Split, July 6, 2007, p. 38, 39; and I. Slunjski: Titokaz ili gledanje unatrag (Titokaz Or Looking Back). Zarez, Zagreb, July 12, 2007, p. 47).

²¹ He also adds, *It's simply about the socializing, journeys and moments we experienced then*. (Repnik, 1999, 17).

above involve (yugo)nostalgia: the leader of the youth section of the Slovenian Social Democrats says that we are not yugonostalgic, but we don't want to forget the values advocated by Tito, which are positive and important for today's world as well; the chairman of the Croatian Union of Josip Broz Tito Societies maintains that visitors to these events lament the times when they lived much better, and there were no employment problems; when health care and education were accessible to all (...) Nobody here speaks of the creation of a new Yugoslavia; it would be nonsense in an era of European and global integrations.²² A former high official within the Slovenian socialist youth organization light-heartedly dismissed the phenomenon, calling it a sort of entertainment and did not see in it any nostalgia for that system, perhaps just for youth.²³ And, last but not least, during the recent celebration of Youth Day in Broz's birthplace Kumrovec, a father in his early thirties, who dressed his two-year old son in a uniform worn by Tito's pioneers²⁴, thus explained the reverence for Broz: Some take it extremely seriously. But you know, I don't take it very seriously, we're here to have a little fun, and that's it. This is our day for fun, adding that Tito was a really cool guy. (Škrbić Alempijević, 2006, 192).



Dedinje, 2007

Ergo, fond memories of Broz and his presence in contemporary mass culture do not have a political prefix and are free from ideological burdens or "skeletons in the cupboards", or at least that is what everyone maintains. However, my

²² M. Podkrižnik: Dan, ko je oživelja nekdanja Jugoslavija (The Day Former Yugoslavia Came Back To Life). Delo, Ljubljana, May 24, 2005, p. 12.

²³ N. Gole: Kdo bo v prihodnje nosil štafeto? (Who Will Now Carry The Baton?) An interview with J. Školjč. Klin, Ljubljana, May 2008, p. 5.

²⁴ The Union of Pioneers of Yugoslavia, established in 1942, was an organization whose members were children from the age of 7. The pioneer uniform consisted of a red scarf and a blue cap called a Titovka. For more, see, e.g. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pioniri>

personal conviction is that the situation is just the opposite: if it is non-political and ideologically unburdened, why have they been choosing Broz in particular? There is a wide choice of other less controversial personalities who marked that time but remained outside the domain of politics: for example, those involved in mass culture or everyday life, sportsmen and entertainers. Yet people nevertheless make a “politically incorrect” choice and in pursuing their nostalgic discourse exploit precisely the political personality *par excellence* – the late head of state, the political party and the military. Negation – affirmation, taught Freud (1981, 123): “in our interpretation, we take the liberty of disregarding the negation and of picking out the subject-matter alone of the association”.²⁵ Barthes, too, says that a mythological discourse always pretends to be depoliticized, natural. In brief, it is clear that the exponents of nostalgic discourse – the organizers of and participants in nostalgia events, as well as the makers and consumers of nostalgia products – actually have neither a concrete “action plan,” nor the firm intention to restore the past with which they like to flirt in nostalgic constructions.²⁶ Yet this “*jouissance* of imaginary excess” (Jameson, 2005, 94), the evocation of something which clearly cannot come back, does not mean that their new narratives and practices are not ideologically or politically charged, but rather that the political is present on another level, as I will show later in the text.

Accordingly, the basic questions posed by this study are as follows. What is the fountainhead of the attention devoted to Broz, or even the affection for him? Why this new-old imagery and production, these narratives and practices? In brief, where does all this “tittooage” come from?²⁷ Has Broz been “reborn”, or has he actually never left for good but only temporarily withdrawn from mass culture, advertising, folk imagination and minds? Are we perhaps witness to something completely new that has simply taken on the well-known face? How should we explain the present proliferation of the signs of an obviously underground socio-cultural phenomenon?

Bosnia - Herzegovina,
2007



- ²⁵ And also: “Negation is a way of taking cognizance of what is repressed” (*Ibid.*, 124).
- ²⁶ I can agree with the Californian art historian Kunzle (1997, 21), who said that, “of course, wearing Che on your chest does not necessarily mean bearing him in your heart”, and would add that the same applies to Broz and many others.
- ²⁷ The term, combining the name Tito and the practice of tattooing is the sense of putting a firm image on someone’s body, was coined by Nena Močnik, and I use it with her permission.

Is it nostalgia, merely a retro-style, just another pastism, or a commercial niche? Is it a subversive response, even if fixed onto the past, to the unjust present and an uncertain future? How should we explain the fact that after a quarter century of passive and then active de-Titoization, meaning “silencing” processes affecting everything related to him, and countless negative and exclusionary myths, Broz’s long and recognizable shadow has not faded away but, on the contrary, has even acquired new nuances.²⁸ In other words, why has this iconic status been accorded to Broz rather than to someone else? What is the nature of the silent, overlooked and even loudly denied politicality of that specific discourse, of which even its protagonists may not be aware? The study of this phenomenon should be approached through the most basic questions, like those asked by Andersen’s child in “The Emperor’s New Clothes.” Why is it not someone else? If it is true that Slovenes have a *predilection for the ‘father of the nation’*,²⁹ how is it that stalls in Ljubljana do not sell T-shirts with the image of, say, Anton Korošec, the eminent Slovenian politician between the two world wars, or that of Boris Kidrič, while T-shirts with the image of Broz come in several designs?

Why in Croatia is it possible to buy *Brozovo vino* (Broz Wine) or *Titov borovničevac* (Tito Bilberry Brandy), but not a wine or brandy named after Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac, late President Franjo Tuđman or the inter-war politician Stjepan Radić? Why in Serbia can you find graffiti about Tito but not about, say, St. Sava or the prominent pre-war politician Nikola Pašić? Why do many street vendors in the towns of former Yugoslavia sell postcards showing Broz in various settings (with *pioneers*, aboard a ship, along with the sickle and the hammer, surrounded by hunting trophies, reading, patting a cheetah etc.)³⁰ and even in the company of his estranged wife Jovanka? How is it that many “Post-Yugoslavs,” if I may call them so, feel that *everything is the same, only He is not here*, as runs the title of the winning song from the 2005 song contest in Budva performed by



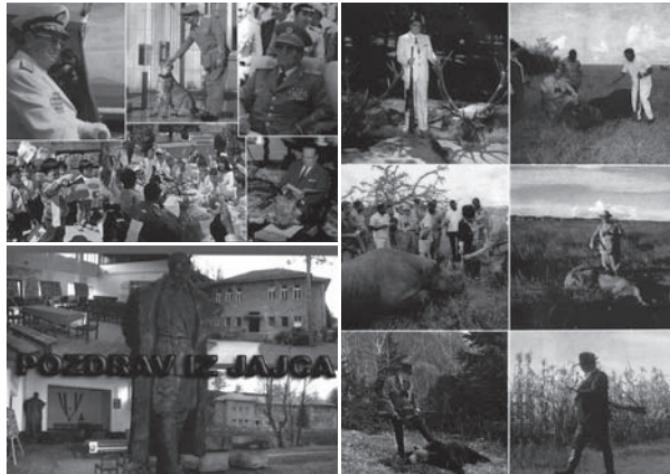
Serbia, 2008

²⁸ The Croatian historian Tvrko Jakovina, writing about the iconoclasm that followed Tito’s death, even mentions the term *brozomoran* (Brozobsessed in the sense ‘haunted by Broz’) (Nepoznati Tito iz američkih arhiva Unknown Tito From American Archives). Globus, Zagreb, May 2, 2008, p. 51). The post-socialist new speak also includes the terms *yugoskeptic* and *yugohater* (*jugomržnež*).

²⁹ As claimed by the historian Božo Repe during his lecture in Nova Gorica in May 2008. MM: Naš Tito je naš (Our Tito Is Ours). Primorske novice, Koper, Nova Gorica, May 22, 2008, p. 7.

³⁰ He is also present on postcards without his photo, for example the one with the Yugoslav flag and the text *Tito Forever*.

the Macedonian singer Tijana Dapčević?³¹ Therefore, why exactly Josip Broz Superstar?



Serbia, 2007

³¹ The imagery and choreography of the performance, as well as a text combining all the languages of former Yugoslavia, clearly point to Tito's Yugoslavia. The video spot is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erh3hQ5sz8c>, accessed on February 25, 2008. The opening verses speak for themselves: *I remember when we all were Valter/ and mixed mortar for the Brčko-Banović railway/ and now, when even my pal can wear a bra,/ I see that we are not so good at democracy,/ what fools we've all made of ourselves... (E, sjećam se kad smo svi bili Valter/ i mješali malter za Brčko - Banović prugu,/ a, sad kad i jarav može nositi brusalter,/ vidim da nam ova demokratija baš i ne ide od ruku,/ a, jesmo ba ispalj papci svi od reda...)*

II. THE MAPPING OF NOSTALGIA AND THE RESEARCH APPROACH – *Following Tito's Path of Revolution*

Gorizia libera!

later added: Dai mone titini!³²

graffiti in Gorizia, 2008

To be able to research and analyze this vibrant and complex phenomenon, it is first necessary to define the basic notions and expressions, while acknowledging that no definition can exhaust all of its diverse forms. In providing definitions, my ultimate ambition is to establish their “family resemblances,” to use Wittgenstein’s words, meaning a minimal set of essential characteristics. I will now list and briefly compare several definitions of collective memory, nostalgia, neostalgia, retro, post-socialist nostalgia and, inevitably, titostalgia.

The author of a classical study on **COLLECTIVE MEMORY**, Maurice Halbwachs (2001, 75, 78), says that it is “in very large measure a reconstruction of the past achieved with data borrowed from the present, a reconstruction prepared, furthermore, by reconstructions of earlier periods wherein past images had already been altered”; for him, memory is “an image entangled among other images, a generic image taken back into the past”. For the cultural critic Svetlana Boym (2001, 53), collective memory is “common landmarks of everyday life” which “constitute shared social frameworks of individual recollections.” Memory, too, is ideologically connoted and, the same as any other mental form, subject to the mechanisms used by the centers of social power in their struggle for hegemony – selection, hierarchization, construction and amnesia. The “politics of memory” becomes materialized through the “industry of memory” (erection of monuments, a ceremony complex, annual holiday cycles, memorabilia production, “official” historiography production etc.), and as such it is an indispensable part of political, commercial, educational and concrete projects. Accordingly, it seems useful to draw attention to two peculiarities relating to memory, particularly in view of the conceptualization of nostalgia below. One is a distinction between testimony and remembering. Testimony rests on a “grain of truth” and as such is a more objective, factual and verifiable view of how it was, meaning a view based on the

³² Free Gorizia!, added, Stop it, Tito-idiots!

fragments of the past. Remembering, on the other hand, may tend to adjust these fragments, build further on them or add something, and is more susceptible to presentist imperatives. The other distinction is that between personal and collective memory. The latter is “in the possession” of a certain group through the operation of various media; it is subject to canonization and institutionalization, but still left to individual interpretations as well. Personal memory, on the other hand, while referring to collective memory, also jealously maintains individual exclusivity and eccentricity, cherishing its own, singular small stories from the past that are in the sole possession of an individual, although part of larger history.

Collective remembering in post-socialist societies is very specific, because of various disruptive transition processes: a change from the socialist political system to the parliamentary system, from the state-planned economy to the neo-liberal-turbo-capitalist one, from communist (inter)nationalism to, in most cases, new ethnocentrisms, Eurocentrisms and Occidentalisms, and, in the case of Yugoslavia (and also the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia), from a multi-national federation to small nation-states and various pseudo-state formations. Reckless revisions of modern history, new exclusivist ideologies, deliberate amnesia – all these precipitate not only an identity crisis but also serious ruptures in people’s memory narratives, both personal and collective.

NOSTALGIA is one of the most frequent discursive constructions in developed countries. It is a kind of inverse but indispensable companion of contemporary progressist ideologies, i.e. obsession with the future. The faster the development, the more change becomes the only constant trait; the more unpredictable and uncertain the future, the greater the number of digressions and escapades, and recourses to the past. No social process is ever linear; each and every one is contradictory in itself. Modernization invented the “correct”, self-legitimizing tradition; progressivism stimulated pastism; the proliferating presentist *ends of history*, realization of *thousand-year-old dreams* etc. create new utopias; amnesia and pogroms against the past bring about nostalgia, and it is practically all around us, pervading various segments of social life. While during the 1970s Toffler (1970) wrote about “future shock,” today we can confidently talk about “nostalgia shock.”

Nostalgia has become somewhat of a junkyard concept that is used utterly indiscriminately and superficially, so it deserves more accurate definition in this context. For Fred Davis, the author of the first sociological book on nostalgia, it is “a nice sort of sadness – bitter-sweet” (1979, 14) or “a joy clouded with sadness” (*Ibid.*, 29). For Roger Cardinal (1994, 93) it is “emblems of that bitter-sweet yearning directed across space and time”, while Christopher Lasch (1991, 83) says that “nostalgic representations of the past evoke a time irretrievably lost and for that reason timeless and unchanging”. In contrast to historical memory or heritage, which comprises both positive and negative episodes, nostalgia is purified from the latter: it is “memory with the pain removed.”³³ Boym says that “nostalgic longing was defined by loss of the original object of desire, and by its spatial and temporal displacement” (2001, 38); it is “an ache of temporal distance and displacement” (*Ibid.*, 44). For Malcolm Chase (1989, 133), its essential feature is “nostalgia for the past that had not itself been nostalgic: a past freed of exploitation, conflict, and instability”. Susan Stewart, the author of another brilliant study on these phenomena, is resolute in her assertion that “nostalgia, like any form of narrative, is always ideological: the past it seeks never existed except as narrative” (1993, 23). In my own definition, nostalgia is a complex, differentiated, changing, emotion-laden, personal or collective, (non)instrumentalized story which dichotomously laments and glorifies romanticized lost times, people, objects, feelings, scents, events, spaces, relationships, values, political and other systems, all of which stand in sharp contrast to the inferior present. It is a mourning for the irreversible loss of the past, a longing for it, and it frequently involves a utopian wish and even an effort to bring it back. Nostalgia, a “romance with an unhappy ending,” “a sad love,” “a bitter eulogy of the sweet past,” or put concisely, “a retrospective utopia,” is characterized by two antithetic elements: pleasant memories of an idealized yesterday that is compared with a downgraded today, and pain at the thought that these pastoral *tempi felici* are irrevocably gone.

The dystopian present is therefore put to the test by the utopian past. A nostalgic discourse is straightforward, not at all Aesopian, easily recognizable by its obsessive use of radical binaries such as, *it was better before, it's worse now*. The

³³ As wittily put by the columnist Herb Caen in *The Morning Line*. San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco, April 15, 1975, p. 17.

idealized *good old times* are characterized by stability, peace, purity,³⁴ security, tranquility, solidarity, naivety, love, and even exoticism, while the *bleak present* is afflicted by diametrically opposed qualities. Nostalgic discourses hover between melancholy and melodrama, and are signalized by unmistakable eros and pathos; they are moving, embellished, often kitschy, but above all crystal clear: the past is embellished at the expense of the abominably portrayed present.

Consequently, nostalgia is not (only) something intimate, a romantic memory, an innocent self-fulfilling fairy tale, but it can also be a strong social, cultural and political force, producing practical effects in its environment. It can become part of nationalist projects (the *imagined communities* in Benedict Anderson's sense, or the *invention of tradition* in Eric Hobsbawm's sense), neo-conservative revolutions (e.g. Reagan's during the early 1980s),³⁵ imperial appeals (occasional and improbable *black-red* alliances, e.g., between the present day Russian Fascists and certain communist groups), or religious fundamentalisms (a *return to the true faith*). Less fatefully, it can figure in advertising (e.g. *grandma's cakes, flour from the old mill* etc.) and popular culture (e.g. *good old rock*, various *old schools* etc.). By glorifying the past, it criticizes the present, telling us more about what is wrong now than what was better in the past. To understand it, we first need to understand the current situation, or to be more precise, people's dissatisfaction with the present situation. But make no mistake, nostalgic constructions are not about hard facts but about feelings and interpretations. In principle, the present is not all that bad, nor was the past all that good, as these nostalgic constructions suggest. It is important to be continually aware of the main traits of nostalgic narratives: their ahistoricity, ex-temporality, ex-territoriality, sensuality, complementarity, conflicted story lines, unpredictability, polysemism and episodic nature. Nostalgic, shall I say, litanies are often internally inconsistent, even contradictory in themselves, which indicates that what is involved is not a uniform, guided, centralized and systematic manner of presentation, but a set of generally unconnected semiological strategies, operations and exchanges in

³⁴ Let me corroborate this with an example of a titostalgic statement. One of his older admirers thus described her affection for Broz: *We were all equal. We were all together, all for one, you understand? I'm proud of it. And nothing can shake my faith. Nothing! We suffered a lot during the war, and what remained of us after that, that's what it is. It's a pure heart, pure soul and nobody can take it away from us....* (Belaj, 2006, 209).

³⁵ It called for a return to American roots, patriarchal values, the powerful state and the army, individual initiative, patriotic pride, religious tradition and a determined foreign policy. See, among others, Lasch, 1991, 99.

various environments and among different groups of people engaging in them with a special purpose, or even without any purpose. Nostalgia is an ephemeral and changeable kind of social notion; it varies over time and space, and across generations and social groups. It takes on various forms, is of varying intensities (ranging from simple entertainment to fanatical commitment) and may appear in practically every segment of social life (mass and consumer culture, art, advertising, popular imagination, media reports, party politics, religious rhetoric, various subcultures and sub-politics, and everyday life).

I will now briefly describe the four distinctions within nostalgia that I find essential. Naturally, the most basic is that between personal and collective nostalgia. Personal and collective nostalgias never fully overlap, and titostalgia is no different in this respect – every titostalgic person is nostalgic for someone or something in his/her own, subjective way, but this certainly should not prevent us from trying to establish common determinants underlying this affection or devotion in larger groups. The second distinction is that between “materialized” nostalgia (embodied in various old or new objects, products or souvenirs) and nostalgia as a feeling or an idea. Even more interesting is the distinction between instrumental and non-instrumental nostalgia, meaning nostalgia that serves certain purposes or is used to achieve certain goals (commercial, political, cultural), and one that is self-referential and free from such goals. Finally, taking the attitude towards the past as a starting point, I make a distinction between mimetic and satirical nostalgia. The former alludes to authenticity, is swathed in the aura of the “actually experienced,” obsessed with realistic representation (imitation, reconstruction), and it is dogmatic (non-analytical), meaning non-exceptionable. Satirical nostalgia is just the opposite: it is youthfully playful, ironic, deliberately eclectic or hybrid, boisterous, blasphemous, and indifferent to old canons; it swears by the borrowed and mediated past rather than being concerned with what *truly happened*.

The main epistemic shift that needs to be made in studying such notions is their de-essentialization and de-ontologization. To be more concrete, nostalgia is not necessarily linked to “actually experienced events,” or something that its protagonists “actually went through.” It may adopt or appropriate narratives originating in various contemporary discourses, or post-modernist discourses, if I may call them so

(discourses of the media, mass culture, daily politics, popular history etc.). Put differently, it is not necessary to insist that someone “actually had to live” through a certain period to be nostalgic for it or to perceive it as truly “his/her” memory. Illustrative of this are various (sub)cultural, (sub)political and other narratives, practices and groups which, within their safe nostalgic enclaves, create and cultivate the images, values and general culture of a time they never actually experienced;³⁶ or the rhetoric of present-day religious conservatives swearing by ethical models, cultural values, gender relations etc. dating from (at least) the 19th century. Accordingly, it would be preposterous to talk about the “abuse of memory,” “wrong uses of the past,” “distortion of history,” or “fake nostalgia,” since such a view would presuppose the existence of a positivist truth (although, of course, there is no such thing), meaning the *Truth* about the yesterday world which needs to be discovered in one way or another by probing beyond its erroneous interpretations.

For this reason, I believe that in studying nostalgia one has to move a step forward: nostalgia is not just a longing for something that no longer exists and an awareness that it cannot be regained. The past for which nostalgics long never existed as such – theirs is a yearning for something that never was, a sentimental return to the never-existing world, dreams about past dreams and not about past reality. Nostalgia is therefore not (only) a story about *how we were* in the past, but one about *how we never were*. Cherished memories or nostalgic vignettes are not credible pictures of *what actually happened*, to borrow from von Ranke, but retroactive constructs or simulations. Metaphorically speaking, they are not “documentaries” or “reality shows,” but “feature movies” about personal or collective pasts. They are not “histories” but “stories,” open texts and active fictions. And *homo nostalgitus* is neither a neutral chronicler nor a faithful recorder of the past, but its mannerist (post)creator. People, societies and periods never were as perfect as they appear in their nostalgic disguises.

To sum up, the classical notion of nostalgia in itself cannot exhaust all forms of its present manifestation, particularly not if it is defined in positivist terms as a pleasant memory of something that one actually experienced. Just

³⁶ Among the multitude of phenomena, let me mention various forms of neo-paganism, which, from the era of romanticism onwards, ranged from racial through socio-political to religious paganism. Baudrillard sums up this logic in the sentence, “There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity.” (1999, 15).

to remind you, the very term nostalgia is a neologism dating from the late 17th century, and combining two Greek words: *nostos*, returning home, and *algos*, pain. Since its first appearance, it has undergone considerable transformation: the initially medical usage (it described the homesickness of seamen, mercenaries and travelers) acquired psychological dimensions in the 19th century (in psychosomatic analysis of alienation, regression etc.), and only in the mid-20th century did it enter social studies and the humanities, i.e. the analysis of societies and cultures. That is to say that the term nostalgia has denoted various things within various areas over time.

The contemporary, post-modern situation, which is rich in cultural, historical and ideological narratives, with virtually everything being accessible and exchangeable, poses new challenges to this notion. The situationist Guy Debord (1999, 29, 31) established that in present-day culture, “all that once was directly lived has become mere representation”; “reality erupts within the spectacle, and the spectacle is real”. The American memory researcher George Lipsitz goes along, saying that today we face “transformation of real historical traditions and cultures into superficial icons and images” (1997, 134); the same can be said about politicized spaces, which are being transformed into political monuments and destinations of historical and political tourism. For Jean Baudrillard (1999, 57, 58), after the present-day “decline of strong referentials, these death pangs of the real and of the rational that open onto an age of simulation,” it seems that “history has retreated, leaving behind it an indifferent nebula, traversed by currents, but emptied of references.” And it is precisely “into this void that the phantasms of a past history recede, the panoply of events, ideologies, retro fashions”. In his view, “when the real is no longer what it was, nostalgia assumes its full meaning” (*Ibid.*, 15).³⁷ It is my opinion that in such circumstances, the redefining of practically all fundamental social categories should be reconsidered and nostalgia re-evaluated.

In the light of the arguments presented above, nostalgia should be liberated from the imperative of *actually experienced*: it can be “genuine,” “direct,” “first-hand experience,” but equally so “mediated” or “indirect experience” without losing any of its emotional surplus or the credibility of the “authentic” nostalgia narrative. Critics would describe the

³⁷ Put differently, “a controlling idea no longer selects, only nostalgia endlessly accumulates, only nostalgia endlessly accumulates” (*Ibid.*, 58).

latter as “false,” “pretended,” “stolen,” or “pseudo” nostalgia. My answer to them has been anticipated in the few passages above. In my opinion, nostalgia is not only a “destiny,” or a pleasant memory of good experience, but it is equally a “choice,” or “taking over” of someone else’s pleasant memories.³⁸ What is involved here is a new nostalgia, or “NEOSTALGIA,” which in my categorization belongs to the group of satirical nostalgias. In contrast to an “authentic” nostalgia, it enhances old foundations in a playful and unconventional manner, adding new content from the storehouse of contemporary mass culture, popular history, daily politics and the media. Such neostalgic hybrids – ideas and products – are elastic, ironic, often intentionally dissonant and boisterous. Their birth is auto-poetic and auto-referential, to borrow from Niklas Luhmann; they set themselves apart by appropriating and re-fashioning elements from their own and others’ environments. The difference between nostalgia and neostalgia is comparable to the difference that sets apart the collectors of original items from the past, antiquarians, from those who focus on new products with old content (e.g. badges, calendars or t-shirts with nostalgicized persons); or the difference between original folk music and its reinterpretation and hybridization, such as folk-pop and turbo-folk. It is precisely this neostalgic aspect that prevents us from conceptualizing the phenomenon of nostalgia as something fixed, unchangeable and dogmatic.

On with terminological clarification. Nostalgia is often mistaken for RETRO, although there is a marked difference between the two concepts, as was effectively shown by the American art critic Elizabeth Guffey. While the former is “always characterized by a certain seriousness”, “retro tempers these associations with heavy dose of cynicism or detachment” (2006, 20). Retro is invariably satirical, frivolous and replete with subversive impulse, continues Guffey; it reinterprets modern history, plays with recent progressivist goals (it is “the lure of yesterday’s tomorrows” in her inspired definition; *ibid.*, 133). Its main attributes, says Guffey, are self-reflexiveness, ironic reinterpretation of the past and disregard for the sort of traditional boundaries that separated ‘high’ and ‘low’ art (*Ibid.*, 21). In contrast to nostalgic continuities, retro “implicitly ruptures us from

³⁸ This is much like group affiliation in post-industrial societies, which is no longer determined by one’s origins and is not only inherent but also chosen. In the context of this study, a relevant example would be membership in veterans’ associations, whose members are not only former Partisan fighters, but also an increasing number of like-minded younger people born after WWII.

what came before" (*Ibid.*, 28, 160).³⁹ While retro "demythologizes the past" and "demythologizes its subject" (*Ibid.*, 27, 28), nostalgia intensely re-mythologizes it, "enchants" it anew.

The post-socialist period with its unprecedented dilemmas and solutions, fragilities and severities, is a seedbed for various nostalgias. These are more frequent in rapidly changing societies and during periods of dramatic transition. The bigger the promises and the more unrealistically stimulated the hopes, the greater and the more bitter the disappointment if these are not fulfilled. This often leads not only to political radicalism, on the one hand, and complete apathy and bitterness, on the other, but also to nostalgic dreams about a better past. **NOSTALGIA FOR SOCIALISM**, or *red nostalgia*, is present in various societies in transition from the Baltic Sea to the Balkans, and from Eastern Germany to Russia. It varies depending on the area, manner, group and intensity of expression. In former Yugoslavia it is called *yugonostalgia*; in east German territories it is called *Ostalgie*, in Russia, *Soviet nostalgia*. Sometimes it provides artistic inspiration; at other times it manifests itself as a longing for former military strength and international political reputation. In everyday life it is articulated as nostalgia for minute things and products from the socialist period; on the social level, it is nostalgia for former friendship and co-operation, for the welfare state and health protection, or even for, let's see, carnal things, for instance, the Soviet sausages that are missed in present-day Lithuania.⁴⁰ But underneath its amorphous, ameba-like appearance, it is possible to detect its basic structure and characteristics, which are summed up in everyday statements heard in practically all corners of post-socialist Europe: *after all, it was not so bad*, or, *we were poor but we didn't lack anything*, or, *we had nothing but we were happy*.

In my definition, **TITOSTALGIA** is a nostalgic discourse on the late Yugoslav president, as it has been pursued across once common Yugoslav space ever since the disintegration of the country. This surprising affection for Broz is completely different from the type that existed in the past: while the regime-imposed Titoism of the past was obligatory, directed and sponsored, the titostalgia of today

³⁹ Another kindred concept that should be mentioned in this connection is revivalism, which, in contrast to retro that reinterprets modern history, deals with older, pre-industrial periods and styles, for example the 19th century ones, or Gothic or Byzantine style. (Guffey, 2006, 13).

⁴⁰ Neringa Klumbyte in the article The Soviet Sausage Renaissance, not yet published.

is voluntary. The once-decreed collectivity has today become individual choice. A former mono-culture has been replaced by a modern hetero-culture, and ideological “orthodoxy” with a “heresy” where virtually everything is allowed, including the most daredevil combinations and synthesis. Furthermore, while in the past the system of representation was closed, standardized and canonized, the present one is wide open to anything, including piquant details about his life and completely new images; the former exclusivism has been replaced by eclecticism and dissonance. Finally, the discourse of titostalgia is not continuous, but consists of a series of disconnected discourses that add new elements to the already existing ones, including turnabouts, ironic decontextualizations, neostalgia, retro-creativity, and even (deliberate) historical ignorance. But the essential components that make this discourse nostalgic are constant: Broz is a brilliant historical figure, his government successful, his times good, his state just, and the attitude of titostalgics is invariably positive and emotional.

I set about studying titostalgic practices and narratives employing complementary methods and approaches. In studying texts, which ranged from mass media, web and advertising texts to memories and references to Tito in poems and films, I used the discourse analysis method. In analyzing visual culture, I used the method of observation and direct “live” experience. Items of visual culture included souvenirs, T-shirts, graffiti, photos, interior decoration in private apartments and public premises, as well as the scenography and iconography at rallies and in public places. I myself bought “commodified memories,” that is, souvenirs and various other titostalgic products, all of which represent “materialized” and “dramatized” nostalgia, its objectification or realization. I then set this gamut of documented, obtained, collected, photographed and recorded cases (only a small part of which are mentioned in this book, while many more are stored in my archive) against the results of public opinion surveys published in various studies and media and of a small-scale opinion survey I myself conducted (Velikonja, 2006). I compared nostalgia for Broz with the data and examples of nostalgia for other ex-socialist and no less charismatic leaders. I obtained certain pieces of information through planning, and came across others incidentally. I had countless conversations or contacts by phone or e-mail with people who participated in titostalgic practices; some were formal (interviews based on pre-formulated questions),

but most were informal; some respondents agreed to have their names published, while others wanted to remain anonymous. I established contacts with these people in various ways. I made inquiries, got in touch with them through personal acquaintances, came across them by chance, or, in many cases, I employed various social networks (so-called line-tracing). There were occasions when my curiosity was aroused by potent silence, that is, “the sound of silence” surrounding the issue of Broz; in such cases I had to make a special effort to combine several approaches in obtaining information. Finally, many people who learnt by chance that I was interested in the topic began to talk about Broz spontaneously, as in catharsis, describing their pleasant (and less often unpleasant) memories of him and his time, and comparing their past and present feelings. I must point out that the positive attitude was predominant, indicating that affection for him was much greater than could be discerned from public discourses.

What I find important in terms of methodology is that I tackled the two interconnected manifestations of the phenomenon: one is cultural production and practices, and the other people's beliefs. Put differently, titostalgia, much like any other nostalgia, comprises both the (materialized) discourses of certain groups, institutions and individuals, and a mentality pattern. In my nomenclature, the former is “THE CULTURE OF NOSTALGIA,” and the latter a “NOSTALGIC CULTURE.” This also indicates how I understand and research this phenomenon: not solely, to put it roughly and schematically, by applying the “top down” or “bottom-up” approach, but primarily by studying it in its dialectic relatedness, interaction, conditionality and interdependence. Such an approach enabled me to avoid frequent reductionist errors. The first is drawing one-sided conclusions about social phenomena by relying exclusively on discursive practices. For most researchers, the most fascinating aspects of nostalgia are “fabrication,” “dressing up,” “commercialization,” “instrumentalization” and “presentation,”⁴¹ with the question that usually follows being whether any of these can be called nostalgia at all. In so doing, they unfortunately ignore its other side, namely the nostalgic culture, or “bottom-up” nostalgia. Similarly, biased conclusions are sometimes drawn based solely on opinion surveys. My intention was to draw attention not only to the reciprocal conditioning of the two

⁴¹ This could be expressed with the dialectic equation: Broz (and Yugoslav socialism) as a thesis – consumer culture as an anti-thesis– and commercial titostalgia as a synthesis!



Macedonia, 2008



above:
a mousepad,
Slovenia, 2006

right:
Skopje, 2008



Its promoters are, for instance, inventive trendsetters in consumer culture, political parties, companies, advertisers, artists, spin doctors, subcultural groups, and last but not least, certain nostalgia enthusiasts.⁴² What is involved is a kind of nostalgia engineering, management or marketing – a ready-made nostalgia, *prêt-à-porter*, polished and designed for the “local market” and for “export”. On the other hand, nostalgia culture is a mental state, or a social and cultural notion, a popular conviction, a mental map and an attitude towards certain periods in the past that are the object of this nostalgia (that are nostalgicized). In simple words, it is a heartfelt nostalgia.

Nostalgia products in narratives, mass culture, advertising and politics can reflect, albeit not necessarily, “genuine” nostalgia for the past. And vice versa, people may be nostalgic, but that sentiment is not necessarily adequately reflected in dominant discourses. Titostalgia is a good example of this: although Broz is virtually excluded from dominant

⁴² See, for example, Boyer's provocative consideration (2006) of how *Ostalgie*, meaning nostalgia among the east Germans of today for the former East Germany, is more a projection (and production!) of the west Germans about what their east German compatriots miss today; accordingly, he replaces *Ostalgie* with *Westalgie*.



left:
Macedonia, 2008

right:
Slovenia, 2008

discourses, or even worse, is systematically defamed and denounced, people in post-Yugoslav countries have always held him in relatively high esteem. To sum up, my distinguishing between the culture of nostalgia and a nostalgic culture is an analytical tool. These are ideal types that facilitate an understanding of the phenomenon. The two act jointly, refer one to another, cannot live one without the other. Yet precisely because they are not always correlated, it is important to distinguish between them. I analyze the difference between the culture of titostalgia and titostalgic culture and their inherent connectedness in the two subsequent chapters.



a front yard,
eastern Bosnia, 2008

I collected examples of the culture of titostalgia and titostalgic culture across former Yugoslavia, in newly established countries, protectorates, entities, districts, federations, enclaves, and liberated and occupied territories, on this side and that side of the Schengen wall, that is to say (ironically), in all new *burek* republics, to use the analogy with *banana republics*,⁴³ in which I have recently resided

43 This label is more benign than the one used by an Italian analyst who uses the term *Mafia-states* (Perica, 2002, 186).

for longer or shorter periods of time, through which I have traveled or which I have visited on study trips. I obtained them from emigrants, pundits and informants living abroad or found them on the web. I was surprised at how much smaller than expected were the regional, cultural and generational differences; there were many more similarities, ranging from predominantly favorable opinions in opinion surveys to the persistence of streets bearing the name *Tito* or *Marshal Tito*. Organizations preserving his memory and fostering his legacy are present everywhere; items from his time occupy conspicuous places in antique shops, flea markets, public premises and private apartments.

Now, differences do exist. Instances of graffiti referring to Broz are numerous in the three western republics of former Yugoslavia (Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Slovenia), while elsewhere they are more rare. In Slovenia, the number of street stalls selling products with his image, various items of Tito-kitsch, is quite large (in Ljubljana one is located in the underground passage of the main railway station!), but they are not as widespread in other former republics.



Mostar, 2007

Titostalgia is amply displayed in public in the littoral region of Slovenia and Istria, where his credit for the *liberation of this region from the Fascist aggressor and its annexation to Yugoslavia* is emphasized.⁴⁴ The Serbian sociologist Todor Kuljić asserts that Broz is “still very popular in Macedonia, parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro, but not so much among nationally aware Serbs and Croats” (2005, 465). There are also differences in how nostalgia manifests

⁴⁴ Even now, one can find texts sixty or sixty-five years old, faded but not overpainted, reading *This is Yugoslavia, We are Tito's, Long live kraj.* (*kraj* is the abbreviation for the Communist Party of Yugoslavia). Their authors took them “bloody seriously,” and literally so, given that they were written using the very enduring medium of cow's blood.

itself. Tanja Perović, a researcher of post-socialist nostalgias, holds that “the Slovenes feel freer than others to display their nostalgia” (2008a, 6,7), thanks to Slovenia’s economic and political success. It is less conspicuous in the countries that have only recently gained independence or where political tensions are still running high (Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo), but this does not mean that nostalgia is not present there on the individual level, as I was able to establish through interviews and conversations. Given the unfolding of events elsewhere in former Yugoslavia, it is possible to expect that in these regions nostalgia for Broz and Yugoslavia in public discourse will appear somewhat later. Kosovo is an example of a place where the pantheon of heroes is quite different at the moment: there is practically no public display of titostalgia among the Albanians in Kosovo, but it can be found on the individual level, where it lives in the form of pleasant memories,⁴⁵ as argues the Albanologist Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers, based on her research findings. (2008)⁴⁶. The Kosovo sociologist Sezgin Boynik agrees with her on that point, affirming that, although it is not voiced (because of the risk of a “dangerous” constellation that may follow from it, i.e. *Broz-Yugoslavia-Serbia-Serbian hegemony*), Broz is perceived as a positive figure by the majority of middle-aged and senior citizens,⁴⁷ and particularly so by the minorities in Kosovo.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ The times of a 100% employment rate, social security, absence of crime, ethnic tolerance, high living standards, weakening of patriarchy etc. and, after all, the times when Broz enjoyed a reputation both at home and abroad.

⁴⁶ *Tito's death was the beginning of the end for us, Albanians*, was the concise answer of one respondent in her survey, summing up the opinion of many others.

⁴⁷ Interview held on August 2, 2008.

⁴⁸ He is even more highly estimated by Kosovo Turks, for whom he secured the right to self-declaration, education, their literature and culture, and protected them from the pressure of larger neighboring nations (Albanians and Serbs; an interview with S. Boynik, August 2, 2008). An unnamed member of the Gorani ethnic group (Slav Muslims in Kosovo), said something similar, sarcastically calling post-Yugoslavs ex-people, and saying that Yugoslavia was real Europe, *offering freedom, social security and jobs for all* (a conversation on August 2, 2008).

III. THE CULTURE OF TITOSTALGIA – *Tito – A Living Legend*

While others wept, we rejoiced...

A high representative of the Macedonian Eastern Orthodox Church, in a private conversation,
March 4, 2005

In this chapter I will be concerned with the culture of titostalgia, a deliberate (and materialized) discourse on Broz, and will then move on, in the next chapter, to titostalgic culture, i.e. mental representations of Broz. His images, statements, iconography, symbols and reinterpretations appear in various parts of the former common country and various social environments, and in an improbable variety of forms. This “nostalgia industry” comprises a wide spectrum of products featuring his image, signature, quotations, important places in his life and the like, a truly impressive array of memorabilia, resembling those from contemporary pop stars. These items are sold from street stalls, at memorial sites, in shops, as well as on-line. The most usual, and the most expected, are souvenirs and similar paraphernalia: key tags, badges, lighters, fridge magnet stickers, personal card boxes, pens and pen holders. Broz also inspires other types of “souvenir art” such as desktop statuettes, decorative plates and bottles, ashtrays, vases, wood reliefs and pictures. There are various cloth items and accessories with Tito’s image, such as printed t-shirts, caps, badges, dress stickers, socks, and needlepoint tapestry canvasses.



above:
Macedonia, 2008

right:
Slovenia, 2003



Statues sell particularly well. A metal casting workshop in Kumrovec, Broz's birthplace, holding a license for the production of replicas of Augustinčić's famous sculpture of Broz, is still in business; most of its output is exported to Germany, China, Russia, the Scandinavian countries and Slovenia (Rajković, 2006, 138, 139; Jurković, 2006, 292). In a mid-size Bosnian town with a history of metal processing, I spoke to a maker of small sculptures of Broz who wanted to remain anonymous and asked me not to mention the name of the place, either. He explained that he himself had cast and sold figures in bronze and plaster, until one of Broz's descendants learnt about it and requested that he cease production. However, a short time ago a work team from his factory used a mould surviving from *that time* to make (outside regular working time) two really large and heavy casts of Broz's bust (each weighing almost a ton!), which were given to the local *Josip Broz Tito* associations. The demand for such casts has allegedly increased since then. The man also told me that another sculpture maker had sold around 15,000 sculptures of Broz during the previous year, most of them at various events dedicated to Broz. In his words, there is a great demand for these products among Bosnian refugees on a visit to their homeland, who take sculptures to their new homes abroad.⁴⁹



a plaster sculpture,
eastern Bosnia, 2008

It is possible to drink a toast with a brandy called *Marshal* produced in Slovenia, with *Titovo vino* (Tito wine) made from grapes grown in Broz's personal vineyard, *Brozovo vino* (Broz wine) produced by the Broz family (both Croatian wines),⁵⁰ a mead called *Titova rakija medovača*, a bilberry brandy and an ordinary brandy also named after

⁴⁹ Interview held on September 11, 2008.

⁵⁰ The image of Broz is also featured on the wine bottle of an inventive Italian company. In this Historical Series, he appears in the company of other charismatic leaders such as Garibaldi, Che, Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler and others.

Tito. There are two brands of bottled water with Tito in their names: *Titov izvor* (Tito Spring) in Croatia, and *Broz Voda* (Broz Water) in Macedonia, and ground coffee sold by *Broz kafe* in Skopje. Needless to say, the labels feature the image of Broz, his birth house or some socialist symbol. To round off the pleasure, you can have a cigar *loved* by Broz, or roll a cigarette using *Tito* tobacco sold in a pack with his image from Partisan times (it is Belgian-made and sold in Croatia). The Ljubljana retro sandwich bar called *Snedvič Progres* (now closed) sold *Maršal* and *Jovanka* sandwiches. No one in former Yugoslavia is upset over these products, and they can be obtained practically everywhere, from street vendors or specialized souvenir shops.⁵¹

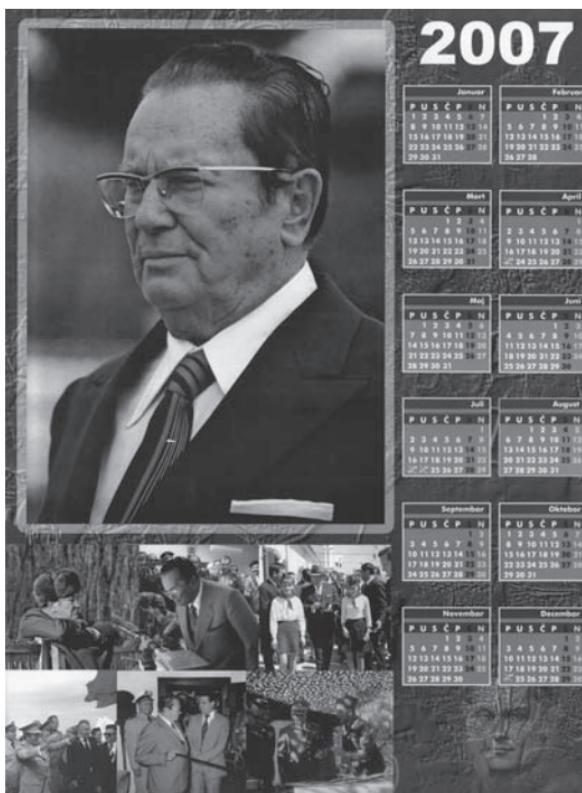


Kumrovec, 2008

Broz's image is found on calendars published by various associations bearing his name, WWII veterans associations, even anonymous people, and what is especially interesting, sometimes the publishing is sponsored by enterprising individuals who do not aim for direct benefits. A one-page 2008 calendar (published in Bosnia-Herzegovina and commissioned by an anonymous person) features his large portrait and a series of smaller pictures showing him in the company of other politicians, pioneers, soldiers and in a machine workshop. On the five-page 2008 calendar published by the *Sojuz na Titovi levi sili* (The Association of Tito's Left Forces) from Macedonia, Tito's picture appears on the second and last page (on the last page there is also the slogan *Comrade Tito we swear to you*), while on the two remaining

⁵¹ This is quite the opposite of what happened recently in the US, when the Target stores offered a CD carrying case featuring Che's image. The critics labelled him a murderer and a symbol of totalitarianism (asking what was next in line: Hitler backpacks? Pol Pot cookware? Pinochet pantyhose?). The scandal that broke out swept the product from retail stores. (M. Lacey: 40 years after Che's death, his image is a battleground. International Herald Tribune, October 9, 2007, p. 6).

pages he is shown with Presidents Carter and Brezhnev. The thirteen-page 2008 calendar commissioned by the Sarajevo based *Društvo Josip Broz Tito* (Josip Broz Tito Society), entitled *Tito and World Statesmen*, contains photos showing Tito with his important contemporaries – Tito and Kennedy, then Tito and Indira Gandhi, Tito and Nasser, and so on, with the last one depicting him with Che. On a Serbian calendar for 2008, there is an advertising slogan by the sponsor, obviously an entrepreneur: *Na miru, bez frke kupujte kod "Brke"* (Buy at ease and without upset at the Brka outlet). Almost all these calendars also feature other symbols of the former country, such as its flag and emblem.



Bosnia - Herzegovina,
2007

It is intriguing how his name has become a brand name, or a brand in its own right, for both prestigious and everyday products (which is in harmony with his dual image of a distinguished person and an ordinary man).

For example, in the mid-1990s, a small epidemic of his images hit Slovenian advertising. He appeared in advertisements for various kinds of products such as Jägermeister digestive liqueuer, Mercedes cars,⁵² the Dnevnik daily and

⁵² <http://arih.tv/>, enter Tito in the search field.



Slovenia, the 1990s

the Canon photocopying machine (see Jovanovska, 2002, 67–72). He was also featured in advertising spots for the *cult* ex-Yugoslav movies first available on DVD distributed by the Ljubljana-based Karantanija Cinemas. Broz was obviously “the fashion” in Serbia, too, at least judging by the advertisement in the summer of 2006 for the textile company Ateks, an importer of Italian clothes, which picked him as the example of an elegant man.



Serbia, 2006

Today, several renowned hotels in various parts of former Yugoslavia boast in their advertisements that Tito was their guest. For example, Šumarice Hotel in Kragujevac offers the *luxurious* Tito apartment built and especially decorated

for his visit in 1978. A Slovenian tourist agency invites the visitor to *a unique and unforgettable experience of pleasure, strength and perfection: to the world of prestige, power and pleasure of Marshal Josip Broz*. Under the slogan, *Experience the lures of the life of one of the greatest potentates!*, his refined sense of beauty, glamour and hedonism, they first take you to his hill residence, Vila Bled in Slovenia (golfing, a tour of Bled's renowned places, a visit to the casino) and then to Brijuni in Croatia, where Broz hosted world leaders and guests from the world of entertainment (included is a visit to the zoo, golf, and a ride in his Cadillac).⁵³ While various Tito-items sold on the street do not elicit much response, the appropriation of Tito's image for advertising provokes mixed reactions: some advertisements are received positively; others are rejected and problematized, while some go by unnoticed.

Apart from the products mentioned above, authentic souvenirs and antiques also sell well. Old objects with Tito's image, for example, books, badges, medals, souvenirs, pictures, reliefs, statuettes, replicas, picture postcards, banknotes, coins, stamps, parts of uniforms worn by Partisan fighters, the Yugoslav army or pioneers, flags and other rare objects, are displayed in conspicuous places at various flea markets and stalls, in antique shops and secondhand bookshops. Usually, they are mixed indiscriminately with religious antiques and symbols, items featuring controversial contemporary and historical political leaders, folklore memorabilia, national symbols, pop-icons, military insignia, even Fascist and Nazi signs. As a result, it is not unusual to find next to each other stamps with the images of Broz and Hitler, Partisan and Ustasha medals, uniforms worn by once clashing armies, a reprint of the solemn oath to Broz next to an advertisement for *Legendary Harley Davidson*, or sculptures of Lenin, Broz and Dante sticking together. "Historical junk" has become an appreciated commodity in high demand, sold at prices ranging from several coins to the several thousand euros being asked for more attractive and better preserved images and sculptures of Broz.⁵⁴

⁵³ http://www.createor.com/team_building/144/, accessed on August 12, 2008

⁵⁴ The case of two monuments to Broz that ended up in Užice, Serbia, is mentioned in the book *VlasTito iskustvo* (Own Experience) (2004, 173). Potential buyers from Montenegro, Austria and Germany are interested in the one stored in the museum, but that instance of Tito is *not on sale*. The price of the other one, which is owned by a man who runs a recycling business, is constantly increasing; the owner took an oath that runs: *Comrade Tito we swear to you that we won't cut you into pieces*.



above:
an antique shop,
Skopje, 2008

below:
an antique shop,
Sarajevo, 2008

Many popular books about him have been published over the last few years. The style of writing balances on the thin line between exclusivism and sensationalism, and the authors are people who were close to *Tito's court* or who presumably knew him well. His co-workers and aides, by now quite old, write about their *life and work with Tito*; journalists and essayists write about curiosities related to him. The titles of these books are telling in themselves: "*Titova sovladarica*" (Tito's Co-ruler, referring to Jovanka, the *empress of Dedinje*; the author, Aleksandar Matunović, was his personal doctor between 1975 and 1979);⁵⁵ *Titov prevajalec* (Tito's Translator, Ivan Ivanji)⁵⁶, *Titova poslednja ispovijest* (Tito's Last Confession, Vjenceslav Cenčić)⁵⁷, *Kako smo zabavljali Tita* (How We Entertained Tito, Minja Subota),⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana, 2008; the book had been previously published in Serbia. The book is a popular presentation of Jovanka in the first place, then of other women in Tito's life, and of the relationship between Tito and Jovanka.

⁵⁶ Karantanija, Ljubljana, 2007.

⁵⁷ Orfelin EWM, Belgrade, 2001.

⁵⁸ Čigoja štampa, Belgrade, 2006. The book is a collection of memories of entertainers and artists who performed for Tito from WWII onwards. It includes their memories, anecdotes and jokes, as well as accounts of other people that were present. Among

*Tito bez maske*⁵⁹ (Tito Without A Mask, Miro Simčić), and *Žene u Titovoj sjeni*⁶⁰ (The Women In Tito's Shadow, again Miro Simčić). There are many other books that sell well, for example, *Titova kuharica* (Tito's Cookbook), available in Croatian and English,⁶¹ and *Jelovnici poznatih ličnosti: Kako se hrano Josip Broz Tito* (The Menus of Famous Personalities: What Tito Ate).⁶² The advertising slogans for these books are of the *his secrets* type.

In the press, on the web and in electronic media, particularly on the anniversaries of his birth and death in May, or on the occasion of some other event related to him, one can find a myriad of reports on various events, sensationalist new contributions to his biography, photo reports,⁶³ articles or serialized stories packed with pictures from his life, describing, for example, his cuisine⁶⁴, his wife Jovanka's beautiful smile⁶⁵ or regular physical exercise. Various documentaries deal with similar topics, for example, the fate of his car collection (armored Mercedeses, Rolls-Royces etc.). The media articles have eye-catching titles, such as *Mit o Titu znova in silovito vzhaja* (The Myth About Tito Arising Anew and Strong)⁶⁶, *Alje maršal dobro jeo...*⁶⁷, (What A Good Diet the Marshal Had...), *Brozway u Zagrebu*⁶⁸ (Brozway in Zagreb),

the entertainers were the comic Čkalja, the singers Tereza Kesovija, Miki Jevremović, Zdravko Čolić, Kornelije Kovač, Gabi Novak, the film director Lordan Žafračanović, the actor Bata Živojinović and others.

⁵⁹ The book was also published by the Slovenian publisher Mladinska knjiga, which spotted a profitable market niche for books about Tito. It abounds in adventures from Broz's political and personal life, his relationships with women, descriptions of his trips, speculation about his origins, his attitude towards the Slovanes and the like. All is put into the wider context of historical events.

⁶⁰ The publisher is v/b/z, Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo, 2008; the book reveals a shocking truth that, despite his charm, Broz was mainly an unhappy and lonely man, either because of the sudden deaths of some of his partners, or because of his longest marriage, with Jovanka.

⁶¹ A. Drulović, Fraktura, Zaprešić, 2005.

⁶² B. Trbović, Prosveta, Belgrade, 1997.

⁶³ See, e.g. M. Povše, *Bilo je nekoč* (Once There Was). Dnevnik, Ljubljana, April 30, 2005, p. 39.

⁶⁴ For example, descriptions of the sumptuous feasts Broz held for his guests (politicians, actors, kings, dictators and so on), and dishes he was offered by his hosts, for example, "džuveč," offered by Saddam Hussein (a meat and vegetable dish), mushrooms stuffed with goose liver at Jackie Kennedy's etc. (S. Banjanac Lubej: Skrivnosti Titove kuhinje/ Secrets of Tito's Cuisine. Žurnal, Ljubljana, November 30, 2005, p. 43). J. Oseli, his personal attendant who worked for him in the 1970s and is today a renowned cook, recollects Broz's love for black pudding and buckwheat mush (a traditional Slovenian dish), explaining this by the fact that he was born and grew up close to the Slovenian border, so the food in his birthplace must have been similar (D. H.: Tito in ajdovi žganci/ Tito and Buckwheat Mash. Žurnal24, Ljubljana, March 8, 2008, p. 8). Broz supposedly liked dishes from all parts of SFRY – obviously, brotherhood and unity extended to his kitchen as well!

⁶⁵ Supposedly the most beautiful Yugoslav smile, or yugosmile for short.

⁶⁶ B. Jokić, Delo, Ljubljana, June 10, 2004, p. 12.

⁶⁷ Nedeljkov, ibid., p. 16, 17.

⁶⁸ Munjin, ibid., p. 38, 39.

V Srbiji za zapade spravili Titovega vnuka⁶⁹ (Tito's Grandson Jailed in Serbia), Neuobičajen grafit⁷⁰ (Unusual Graffiti), Tito jači od Tuđmana⁷¹ (Tito Stronger Than Tuđman) or Tito gre u Hollywood⁷² (Tito Goes to Hollywood).



Piquancies from his love life are especially highlighted, and it is to him, *the greatest Croatian lover of all times*, that the web page at <http://www.iznad18.com/najveci/> is dedicated.⁷³ His personality is still a source of inspiration for some journalists: the unsigned author of an editorial for Delo's weekly Več asserts that *Tito's spirit lives on, although primarily*

69 bl, Dnevnik, Ljubljana, January 25, 2008, p. 27.

70 This unusual graffiti reads *Long Live Tito*. S. Hu., Oslobođenje, Sarajevo, April 16, 2008, p. 26.

71 On the front page of Slobodna Dalmacija; Split, July 29, 2008.

72 B. Mehle, Dnevnik, Ljubljana, April 30, 2005, p. 38.

73 Similarly, in newspapers one comes across titles such as *Veza s Titom je bila površna* (Relationship With Tito Was Superficial), which is a statement by his last lover, who was not actually his lover at all. Dž. Husić, an interview with G. Munitić, Globus, Zagreb, February 7, 1992, p. 19.

deep in the hearts of all nations and nationalities,⁷⁴ while another says that indeed the state no longer exists, but what has survived is a touch of fractured vestiges of history, the spirit of ephemerality, a smell of timelessness... Ah, nostalgia.⁷⁵ Special attention is dedicated to his descendants, who are doggedly pursued by the media: his son Mišo, the Croatian ambassador to Indonesia, granddaughter Svetlana, a physician and a humanitarian worker, granddaughter Saša, a theatre director, grandson Edvard, who is sporadically mentioned in Serbian and Croatian media in relation to some car accident, and grandson Joško, who appears at various events organized by Broz's fans.

On the anniversaries of his birth and death, it is not only politicians and intellectuals who are asked to confide to the media *their opinion on Tito*, but also other public figures. Reporters are dispatched to Kumrovec (where one can find the cradle into which he was placed by his mother Marija Javeršek, a Slovene)⁷⁶ and to Dedinje. Bits of spectacle are inevitable, for example, a conversation with the buyer of one of Jovanka's limousines, then with Broz's economic adviser and the like. The journalists observe the political balance among their respondents, so the articles resemble pro and contra debates. In Slovenia, the opinion of the chairman of the Partisan veterans association is presented next to that of the chairman of the Anti-Partisan (neo-Home-guards) association *Nova slovenska zaveza*; favorable opinions of people from the world of entertainment, sportsmen and artists are counterbalanced by those unfavorable of conservatives circles; opinion is also sought from chance passers-by, or he is the subject of talk shows. Interestingly, in one such show broadcast by Radio Priština (Kosovo) on the 25th anniversary of his death in May 2005, older people in particular talked about his time with pleasure, saying that *life was good* then, and the program editor, Azem Zogaj, also went along with them, stating that Broz played a predominant and decisive role in the establishment and strengthening of Kosovo's autonomy.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Tito po Titu (Tito After Tito). Več, Ljubljana, April 29, 2005, p. 3.

⁷⁵ I. Gruden: Muzejska energija nostalgijske (The Museum Energy of Nostalgia). Nedelo, Ljubljana, January 6, 2008, p. 23.

⁷⁶ Tito po Titu (Tito After Tito). Več, Ljubljana, April 29, 2005, p. 3. In certain sources, his mother's surname is rendered as Javoršek.

⁷⁷ In his words: *This can be felt now as well, since Tito gave to Kosovo its name and borders, which are the main elements of every state* (STA/B.R.: Četrto stoljetje od Titove smrti/A Quarter Century Since Tito's Death. pop tv 24ur.com, May 4, 2005, accessed August 12, 2005).

“Broz sites” are another interesting aspect, each presenting a different image of him and a different story about him. In his birthplace, Kumrovec (Croatia), he is *a boy from the Sotla region*. In this *best known village in the world*, as it is frequently called, there is a memorial park designed as an open air museum, which in its appearance provides almost no clue about its most famous resident. The complex, comprising 40 buildings, is called *Staro selo* (Old Village). It is a tasteful reconstruction of an old Zagorje village with all the characteristic features of rural life and work as they were around a century ago: farming, trades, houses, workshops, architectural peculiarities (straw roofs, interiors etc.), important holidays, folk creativity and the like. The well-maintained memorial house, or museum, contains two comprehensive collections: one illustrating Broz’s life and the other that of his family. The sculpture of Broz, a work by Antun Augustinčić, dating from 1947, is in front. The monument was twice blown up by anonymous perpetrators: first unsuccessfully, in July 2001, and then again on December 27, 2004, when the explosion blew away his head, so the sculpture was under repair for four months.

There are no other traces in the area hinting at *Jože*, as he is affectionately called, save for the spacious parking lot in front of the memorial park, the decaying complex of the former Higher Political School and the equally derelict hotel built in 1974, 88 red maple trees planted in his memory, his abandoned Vila Kumrovec and a small but well-stocked souvenir shop.⁷⁸ The memory of him persists only in the name of a local disco club called *Marshal* and that of the bar called *Kod Starog* (*At the Old Man’s*; Stari is one of Broz’s nicknames).⁷⁹ The name of the street once called *Ulica Josipa Broza Tita* (*Josip Broz Tito Street*) has shrunk to *Ulica Josipa Broza* (*Josip Broz Street*), while the elementary school once called *Maršal Tito* has been renamed *Josipa Broza*. During the rule of the nationalist HDZ party in the 1990s, Kumrovec, much like the memory of Broz, was literally under threat of erasure: it disappeared from maps and textbooks; even the road signs around the village were re-

⁷⁸ More than 180 articles are said to be on sale, most of them with Broz’s image. (Jurković, 2006, 295).

⁷⁹ A general feeling is that people working in tourism in Kumrovec still attempt to de-Titoize the place while emphasizing the attractions of the ethno-village. Accordingly, there is no mention of Broz on the entrance ticket and the manager of the complex assured the Slovenian journalist that it was not only Broz’s house that was interesting but the entire village, including other events, e.g. *Zeleni Jurij* (Celec, 2005, p. 15). Another example of the relativization of his memory is the manifestation called *The Zagorje Giants Race*, which connects the birth houses of Josip Broz and Franjo Tuđman, both in the region of Zagorje. It is organized by the tourist boards of Kumrovec and Veliko Trgovišće (Tuđman’s birthplace).

moved. Visitors, nevertheless, kept coming, and they still do. During the 1970s, the visitor figures ranged from a quarter million to half a million a year; at the time of the break-up of Yugoslavia, they dwindled to only 125,000, and further down to 10,000 during the war in Croatia, but rose again to 35,000 over the past few years (according to official estimates, half of those visitors are Slovenes⁸⁰). Many hold that the turning point leading to the increase in visitors was the victory of the social-democratic opposition party in Croatia in 2000.



Kumrovec, 2008

By contrast, the Broz encountered at another such locality, his mausoleum in Belgrade, is *an old man who lived a full and successful life*. Yet the mausoleum called *Hiša cvetja* (*The House of Flowers*),⁸¹ located in the elite Belgrade quarter of Dedinje, appears forgotten: although it is decently maintained, there are almost no signs indicating the direction, no guard of honor since 1992, no former splendor, nor fresh flowers nor neat flower beds.⁸² A similar fate has befallen the nearby museum formerly called *Spominski muzej 25. maj* (May 25 Memorial Museum) but now renamed *Zgodovinski muzej Jugoslavije* (The Museum of Yugoslav History). It houses some of the presents he received from people around the world and a collection of more than twenty thousand relay batons given to him for his birthdays. However, many

⁸⁰ B. Celec: *Zvestoba od zibelke do groba* (Loyalty from Cradle To Grave). Več, Ljubljana, April 29. 2005, p. 15.

⁸¹ Note the mythological connotations of *flowers* in the local cultural environment – *flowers* are related to *youth*, and consequently, the *House of Flowers* to *Youth Day*. Their shared traits are the spirit of spring, freshness, novelty, the creative potential, meaning the essential elements of every political mythology of transition. And last but not least, according to some sources, the place itself, Dedinje, is located on the site of an Old Slavic, pre-Christian shrine.

⁸² In the early 1990s, the Radical party of Vojislav Šešelj launched an initiative to remove his remains from Serbia. They even threatened to destroy the House of Flowers and burn his remains. On the other hand, Ivica Račan, the late leader of the Croatian SDP party, which is a successor to the former League of Communists of Croatia, proposed that his remains should be moved to Kumrovec and a new memorial center built there.

objects previously stored there “got lost” at the time of the disintegration of SFRY. Most were allegedly appropriated by former party officials who found themselves without work or privileges. Today, many tour operators organizing trips to Belgrade somehow take it for granted that a visit to Belgrade should include a visit to the memorial complex. According to media reports, as well as official estimates, the greatest number of visitors, around 25,000 a year in recent years, come from Slovenia; for example, in 2005 more than two-fifths of visitors,⁸³ or according to another source, much more than one half,⁸⁴ were Slovenes.

The Brijuni archipelago off the northern Croatian coast is the third destination for “Tito-tourism.” There, Broz is *a bon vivant, the good host to world personalities and a simple man on vacation*. The permanent exhibition entitled *Josip Broz Tito in Brijuni* has been on display since 1984, with its original layout preserved to this day. The two hundred photos depict his life, work and leisure time activities on the islands where he spent half of his time as a president, performing his statesman’s duties and hosting guests, from politicians to people from the world of entertainment. Other exhibits there include his Cadillac, a still living cockatoo (a present to his granddaughter Saša), and taxidermic animals from his zoo. The souvenir shop offers the usual assortment: T-shirts with images of Broz in Brijuni, plates with his image, caps with his signature, badges and a multi-lingual brochure entitled *Tito in Brijuni*. The postcard features the slogan, *Feel the History of Brijuni*, and three pictures: of the archipelago, of a dinosaur footprint, and of Broz in the company of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton during their visit in 1971. A large billboard on the nearby Fažana coast draws attention to the attractions of Brijuni and especially to Broz’s life there. In May 2007, the management of the national park signed a contract with the Broz family obtaining the right to commercial use of Broz’s name, seal and image. They plan to sell various souvenirs, ranging from ceramic mandarin oranges with his signature and ceramic cups with his image to golden needles with his signature. The representative of the family, Saša Broz, announced that the money from sales

⁸³ J. Kontler – Salamon: Med obiskovalci Titovega groba največ Slovencev in najmanj Črnogorcev (Among The Visitors To Tito’s Grave, Slovenes The Most Numerous, Montenegrins The Least) Delo, Ljubljana, May 25, 2006, p. 17.

⁸⁴ This information was given by the mausoleum’s protocol manager. (Celec, 2005, p. 16). During the years immediately following his death in 1980, the crowds literally swamped the grave; 8.8 million people had visited it by 1986, plus 2 800 foreign delegations. (Jovanovska, 2002, 32).

would go to a special fund set up by the family for talented youths and to a Zagreb orphanage.

The island of Vis (Croatia) also offers Tito-related tourist attractions including *Tito cave*. In Drvar (Bosnia-Herzegovina), a renovated *Tito cave* was opened on May 25, 2006, and it is expected to attract both local and foreign visitors, as it did during the time of Yugoslavia. In conclusion to this overview of tourist destinations selling Broz's aura, let me mention Ivo Brešan's comedy *Maršal* (1999) which inevitably comes to mind. In it, a pragmatic local entrepreneur, an anti-Titoist, smells profit in the apparition of *Tito's ghost* (which is a clear allusion to apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Medjugorje) and organizes various events, entertainments, meetings with witnesses, visits, relay baton races, meaning all that befits *political tourism*.⁸⁵

Broz lent his name to many cafés and bars across the former country. In Sarajevo, *Caffe Tito* is a cult meeting point for young people, recently relocated nearer the city center.



Sarajevo, 2008

The facade and the interior of the new premises are painted red, and there is a WWII jeep at the front, in which visitors can take a seat. The café's logo is composed of Broz's

⁸⁵ The entrepreneur justifies his venture as follows: *Personally, I'd rather it were St. Ante, but it's Tito. It's not much of an apparition, but what can we do? You have to make the most of it.*

signature and a communist star, first spotted on the sign-board of the bar and reproduced on the T-shirts worn by the bar staff, as well as the glasses and cups. The interior is decorated with framed, enlarged photos depicting his life during and after the war; there is also a collection of books by or about him. The lamp shades are old helmets worn by the armies he defeated; the walls are decorated with arrest warrants and other historic documents, front pages of foreign newspapers with his image, and a number of engravings; next to these are guns and submachine guns from WWII, large and comprehensive maps of the troop positions and breakthroughs at the time of the famed battle on the Neretva River. The shelves are filled with sculptures of him, interspersed with bottles of wine and beer with labels bearing his name or image. There are also several ironical reinterpretations (for example, *Josip Broz* written in the Coca Cola style). Visitors can buy T-shirts with his image, and popular cocktails have been renamed to match the overall feeling (e.g. *Long Island Iced Tea* is *Maršal*, *Tequila Sunrise* is *Partisan Escadrille*, *Blue Lagoon* is *Valter*, *Pina colada* is *Igman March*, *Kamikaze* is *Drvar Landing*, *Black Russian* is *Stalin*, *Monkey Brain* is, of course, *Mussolini* etc.). On receiving the bill, you discover that your waiter was one of the *liberation war heroes* (e.g. *Ivo Lola Ribar*), and the last item on the bill is the inevitable *Death to Fascism!*⁸⁶

The motel *Restaurant Tito* is located by the highway near Paraćin in Serbia. It is similarly decorated with countless portraits of Broz, books, sculptures, plaques, needlepoint tapestries, woodcuts, flasks, ashtrays, school charts and Yugoslav symbols and maps.

Most date from those times, and only a smaller number are contemporary reinterpretations, either felicitous or quite comical. A decorative cushion occupying a conspicuous place on the shelf features, next to his portrait, an inscription reading: *Come back – everything is forgiven*. Items on sale include badges and caps with his image and signature. On May 25, Broz's birthday, the staff wear red pioneer scarfs, guests dance *kozaračko kolo* (a folk dance popularized by Partisan fighters during WWII), and there are other celebrations in his memory, including various activities, for example, the eating of *Partisan čevapi* (a meat ball made from minced meat, bacon and corn). The Skopje (Macedonia) restaurant *Kaj Maršalot* (At Marshal's) is similarly decked out with iconic

86 Not to mention other articles, such as plastic bags with his name, paper tissues, sugar packs, match boxes, advertising leaflets etc.



above:
southern Serbia, 2008

Podgorica, 2008

pictures of former Yugoslavia, pictures of Broz shown in all imaginable situations (e.g. at receptions or in informal environments drinking a toast), plus pictures of the flags of all the successor countries to former Yugoslavia. The decor of the luxurious restaurant called *Maršal* in Podgorica (Montenegro) is not typically nostalgic, but Broz still has his corner with portraits of him and books about him plus an elegant edition of his *Selected Works*, and the communist star in the promotional brochures. A bar in the center of Umag in Croatia, closed at the moment, also bears the name *Tito*, and is decorated with pictures, postcards, shawls etc. relating to Broz.



Skopje, 2008

In contrast to the bars and restaurants mentioned so far, which all adhere to the aesthetics of *those times* and are full of antiques, old depictions of Broz and various Yugoslav relics, *Broz kafe* in Skopje, opened in 2005, is decorated in a neonostalgic fashion – here, Broz's image and Yugoslav symbols have mainly served as the starting point for new creations. The elaborate logo contains both Latin and Cyrillic letters, while the walls are covered with prints showing the red star, the 100 dinar banknote, large retouched pictures

of Broz surrounded by pioneers, scenes from the life of work brigades, and everyday products typical of Yugoslavia. Old posters also embellish the walls, and cupboards contain old Yugoslav banknotes and books about Broz and Yugoslavia. Items on sale include cups, T-shirts, several brands of coffee, coffee pots and teapots, all equipped with the bar's logo which also adorns sugar packs, water bottles, place mats and carrying bags. Regular guests receive a *membership card* resembling the former pioneer and political party cards, in which the number of coffees bought is recorded – every tenth coffee is free.

A similar interior design could be found in the now closed *Tito cafeteria* and the *Nostalgija* bar in Ljubljana, where the only bar of this kind still surviving is the *Che bar*. Although its main icon is the Argentinean revolutionary, Broz, too, has his own corner (filled with books, pictures, photos and sculptures of him). Several images of him embellish the walls of another Ljubljana bar called *Druga pomoč* (Second Aid), frequented mainly by young people, and one in Velenje. In Maribor (Slovenia), *Tito* and Yugoslav symbols decorate the bars *29. november*, *KGB* and *Gala Girl* which includes *Tito room*; years ago there existed one such bar in Nova Gorica as well. Judging by media reports, similar nostalgic places are located in Užice, Kragujevac and Novi Sad (all in Serbia). *Tito kafić* (Tito café) in Belgrade is also brimming with objects and symbols of that time (Hjemandahl, Škrbić Alempijević, 2006, 259). The hairdressing salon in Belgrade called *SFRJ* offers the *Jovanka* hairstyle. In Ljubljana, the establishment of the museum of nostalgia is currently underway; the journalist reporting on it picked out *fičko* (a Yugoslav-made car manufactured under license from Fiat), *cockta* (a popular non-alcoholic drink) and *Tito* as the exhibits most typifying nostalgia.⁸⁷

The Serbian Railway offers tourist trips in Serbia and abroad in Broz's renovated *Blue Train*. This *hotel on wheels* enables *absolutely authentic* re-experiencing of socialist luxuries; organization of various events on board the train is also on offer. Price: *subject to train composition and destination*. The Greek owner of Broz's former ship, the *Galeb* (Seagull), considered turning it into a luxurious cruiser, expecting that its history would attract tourists (Radovani, 2006, 441, 442).⁸⁸ The town once called *Titovo Užice* (today Užice, in Serbia),

⁸⁷ Gruden, 2008, *ibid*.

⁸⁸ With this goal in mind, he took the ship for repair to the Rijeka shipyard, but eventually did not pay the bill. The town of Rijeka then appropriated the ship and proclaimed it an item of cultural heritage, planning to turn it into a museum. Unfortu-

is considering the establishment of a museum dedicated to that time, which would be modeled on similar museums of post-socialist nostalgia elsewhere in Europe. An entrepreneur from Novi Sad entertained a similar idea.⁸⁹ A restaurant in Zrenjanin (Serbia) organized the *Days of Tito's Cuisine* in the week of November 29, 2007, with several hundred gourmands from across Serbia attending. Guests could taste Broz's favorite dishes (for example, roasted pheasant à la Jackie Kennedy, fish à la Ernest Hemingway etc.), dance and sing songs from *Tito's times*. Encouraged by the turnout, the organizer plans a similar event on May 25.⁹⁰

Such use, or *abuse* as some argue, of Broz's name has provoked plenty of criticism. His grandson from Belgrade, Joško, strives to protect *Tito and his work against organizations and individuals who want to profit in one way or another from his name*.⁹¹ He also considered filing a suit against those who, in his opinion, *abuse* the memory of Tito. Referring to the law on author's rights, Mišo and Saša Broz from Croatia decided to protect the name and dignity of their grandfather, which is *unacceptably subject to massive prostitution*. The entrepreneurial users of his name never asked them for permission or notified them about their intentions, and the family decided to put an end to such practices. Their request was approved, and in 2006 they secured a ten-year exclusive right to that profitable name.⁹²

I will now switch to another area, but remain within the domain of the culture of titostalgia, meaning the discourse created and disseminated by various groups and individuals. In the next few passages, I will focus on mass culture and arts. Examples of such *ars nostalgorum* are abundant. In 2007, the Zagreb international festival of new theater called *Eurokaz* adopted the working title *Titokaz* and the slogan *Tito – the fourth time*, while the poster featured his image taken from one of the last Yugoslav banknotes. Needless to say, the concept of the program agitated many among the political and cultural right-wing, while critics assessed it as being *of low artistic value and doubtful production*. According

nately, money for the restoration could not be secured, so the ship has been decaying for some time now.

⁸⁹ G. Tarlać: "Vrni se, vse ti je odpuščeno!" - Lik Tita v Srbiji ("Come Back – Everything is forgiven" – Tito's Image in Serbia). Mladina, Ljubljana, No. 21, April 24, 2004, p. 26.

⁹⁰ Nedeljkov, 2007, p. 16.

⁹¹ Jokić, 2007, *ibid.*

⁹² N. Sever Šeni: Obitelj Broz zakonom će zaštiti Titovo ime (The Broz Family To Seek Legal Protection For Tito's Name). Večernji list, Zg., June 22., 2005, on-line edition; http://www.finance.si/168163/Titovega_imena_ne_bodo_smeli_ve%E8_zlorabljeti; <http://www.nacional.hr/articles/view/29235/>; accessed on August 12, 2005.

to the media, the performances *thematized the environments whose lives the Marshal made either bitter or better, as well as those for which Tito was an entirely abstract notion* (the former group comprised, for example, performances from Macedonia, and the latter those from Germany and Russia).⁹³ Put differently, *while some just played with history, others took it seriously*,⁹⁴ and this was the first festival to *put to the test the meaning and significance of the icon that had painted the picture of Yugoslavia for 35 years*.⁹⁵ His image was part of dance and theater performances by the German choreographer, Felix Ruckert, Branko Brezovec,⁹⁶ Ahmed Al Attara and the Russian group, Akhe. Furthermore, his picture was also on the poster of the 12th International Theater Festival in Pula, in 2006, and in advertisements for the award winning *one-woman show* entitled *I Miss Communism* of the American-Croat artist, Ines Wurth.



Croatia, 2006

The sketch, or, as its subtitle explains, *our bitter, nostalgic comedy*, entitled *Kako smo voleli druga Tita* (How We Loved Comrade Tito), by the director and playwright Radoslav Zlatan Dorić from Vojvodina (Serbia) deals with contemporary perceptions of Broz.⁹⁷ This “nostalgically grotesque

⁹³ J. Boko: J. B. Tito plesač i heroj (J.B. Tito, Dancer and Hero). Slobodna Dalmacija, Split, July 4, 2007, p. 30.

⁹⁴ Munjin, 2007, p. 38.

⁹⁵ Slunjski, *ibid.*, p. 47.

⁹⁶ His staging of the play entitled *Tito – izabrani dijagrami hrepeneњa* (Tito – Selected Diagrams of Yearning), written by the Croatian playwright Slobodan Šnajder, provoked a true scandal in Macedonia in 2007. Just before the premiere night, the Macedonian Ministry of Culture threatened sanctions against performers, who then decided to spend the night in the theater and thus “defend” the show. Under pressure from the domestic and foreign public, the Ministry recalled the decision, and the show became a hit, including in foreign countries.

⁹⁷ To return to the context of a few passages above: One character in the comedy is an enterprising owner of a bar who, faced with bitter competition, renamed his bar *At Comrade Tito's*, just for fun, and the business began to flourish (scenario by Dorić, 2005, p. 8).

farce," as it was described by the Slovenian producers of the play, was first staged in Slovenia at the Sežana Theater in November 2005, and then in the Nova Gorica Theater in February 2006.⁹⁸ The stage setting included the usual signifiers of the previous regime and its leader; practically every one of its performances was sold out.



Slovenia, 2005

Tito was also the subject of several documentaries and feature films.⁹⁹ There were media reports that Sylvester Stallone was planning a film with *documentary value* about Broz. Broz also had a cameo appearance in De Niro's spy drama set in the cold war era.¹⁰⁰ The shooting of two documentary series about Broz has been announced.¹⁰¹ However, not everything runs smoothly all the time for film directors. In Croatia, Saša Broz and the Association of Anti-Fascist Fighters and Anti-Fascists (formerly the Veterans Association) have recently publicly expressed doubts that Antun Vrdoljak, the notorious film director and the director of Croatian national television at the time when the HDZ party was in power, could make an *objective* documentary about Broz (he allegedly stated that he *poured himself a champagne* when he heard the news that Tito was dead).¹⁰²

Various actors impersonate him in sketches and at public events. His double in Croatia, Željko Vukmirica, dressed in a white Marshal uniform, appeared in the news program on Croatian national television channel on *Republic Day* in 2007, that is to say, the *Republic Day* celebrated in former Yugoslavia, and congratulated all *nations and nationalities*.

⁹⁸ See <http://www.kosovelovdom.si/subsite/index.htm>.

⁹⁹ See the list at the end of the book.

¹⁰⁰ B. Mehle, *Tito gre v Hollywood* (Tito Goes To Hollywood). Dnevnik, Ljubljana, April 30, 2005, p. 38.

¹⁰¹ Jakovina, 2008, p. 56.

¹⁰² M. Jajčinović: *Kalendarski u 21. st., a u svijesti su u Jugoslaviji* (Citizens of the 21st Century, but Mentally Still in Yugoslavia). Večernji list, Obzor supplement, Zagreb, May 26, 2007, p. 14, 15.

He also regularly takes part in *Bolska karnevalada* (a carnival in Bol, Croatia), and Tito is a familiar carnival mask at other similar events, frequently accompanied by Jovanka and pioneers.

The Slovenian impersonator of Broz, Ivo Godnič, has been taking part in events across former Yugoslavia ever since 1990/1991, when he first set about studying articles and documents about Broz (he is said to be the most popular in Bosnia, and he has also appeared in Kumrovec). He explains that he chose to impersonate Broz because of *his charisma*, but adds that there were other events, too, leading to this decision.¹⁰³ In an interview he said that, *even now I speak and think as if I were Tito, not as an actor impersonating Tito*.¹⁰⁴ Godnič's goal is to bring Tito to younger generations through humour (...) to bring him in through another door, using political satire, humor, my talents, his charisma (N. Močnik, 2008, 16).¹⁰⁵ Interestingly, he relegates nostalgia to the background, asserting that *what is in the foreground is political satire and the raising of awareness among people* (*Ibid.*, 18). His performance consists of the act of solemn arrival in a cabriolet or in an authentic jeep, complete with a retinue, which sometimes includes Jovanka and pioneers, followed by the playing of the Yugoslav anthem, a speech, a press conference, mingling and shaking hands with people



Slovenia, the 1990s

- ¹⁰³ Among other things, he said that Broz died on his birthday, that he had predicted this including the hour of his death, and that as a child he had seen Broz at least 30 times on his way to his residence at Brdo pri Kranju.
- ¹⁰⁴ An interview by V. Milek: Govorim kot Tito, mislim kot Tito (I Speak Like Tito, I Think Like Tito). Delo, sp, Ljubljana, August 2, 2003, p. 20. Broz's voice on Godnič's answering machine says, *You have reached the House of Flowers in Dedinje, Užička 15. Please leave a message.*
- ¹⁰⁵ He also adds that the situation changed after the victory of the right-wing parties in Slovenia in 2004: since belouške (a derogative term for so called White Guards, Anti-Partisan Slovenian quislings) took over the government, companies do not dare invite me. But young people are now inviting me more. (*Ibid.*, 19).

etc.¹⁰⁶ He faithfully reproduces Broz's posture, outfit (a white or blue Marshal's uniform, occasionally an admiral's uniform decorated with several square inches of various medals and white gloves), gestures and expressions, while smoking the unavoidable cigar.¹⁰⁷

During the 1990s, there was a punk band in Slovenia called *Tito in ekšn* (i.e. "Tito in Action" written as pronounced). *Tito's Bojs* (*Tito's Boys*) from Istria present themselves in a song that runs *tito's bojs, tito's bojs!!!! / Tito is dead but they are alive / fight, fight don't let communism die / some politicians gonna die tonight /tito's bojs gonna join the fight!*. Broz figures in the songs of the Slovenian Yugo-rock band called *Zaklonišče prepreva* (*Shelter Singing*), whose members are nowadays in their early thirties, in the *Ausländer* video spot of the pop-eclectic Magnifico, the video spot *A Nice Day To Die* by the Slovenian pop-rock band *Dan D* (*Day D*), which includes documentary material shot at Broz's funeral (2008),¹⁰⁸ in the song and video spot entitled *Dragi Tito* (*Dear Tito*) by the Croatian rappers HZA,¹⁰⁹ in the songs of the Di-fense rappers from Niš (Serbia), and on the cover page and in the song of Korado and Brendi entitled *Pa je šel tovariš Tito* (*And So Comrade Tito Went Away*, 2000). He is an inspiration for many young visual artists, for example, Barbara Jakše Jeršič (photo *Titov trg/Tito's Square*, 2004),¹¹⁰ Mirjam Marussig (*Which colour do you prefer?*, 2002)¹¹¹, Jovan Balov (*Portret Tita/A Portrait of Tito*, *Transkript Tito*, 2007),¹¹² Arjan Pregl (the cycle *Olje na Biblijo in Našega Tita/Oil on Bible and Our Tito*, 2005–2006),¹¹³ Tanja Radež (a specimen t-shirt with Broz's image, 2008),¹¹⁴ Pino Ivančić

¹⁰⁶ See, e.g., <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUi2Ew99VJE>. For his crammed schedule on *Youth Day* in 2002, when he appeared seven times across Slovenia, see Jovanovska, 2002, 44.

¹⁰⁷ In the interview mentioned above (2003), Godnič also spoke about several unpleasant experiences, threats and prohibitions.

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-g9H4ZEFkM&feature=related>

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1ke-LdGFI>

¹¹⁰ Group exhibition "Likovno delo kot koncept" (*The Work of Art As Concept*), Galerija Kresija, Ljubljana, September 2006.

¹¹¹ An exhibition in the Metropol club, Ljubljana, May-June 2002.

¹¹² Group exhibition "Papir – Paperwork", Galerija Mestnega muzeja Vžigalica, Ljubljana, December 2007. The artist "changes" his artistic work into "a critique of political injustice, nationalism and racism" (from the catalogue text).

¹¹³ The exhibition entitled "Abstrakcije" (*Abstractions*), Eurna, Ljubljana, July 2006. In this cycle, the artist placed oil paint on the cover pages of the Bible and books dedicated to Broz, explaining this as a symbolic "adding of fuel to the flames" of old divisions between the communists and clericals.

¹¹⁴ The *Mladi levi* festival, August 2008.

(2004),¹¹⁵ Tanja Lazetić (*Hotel Kumrovec*, 2007),¹¹⁶ G. R. A. M. (*Wenn der Tito stirbt*, 2006),¹¹⁷ Natan (*zorB pisoJ*, to be read from right to left, 2007),¹¹⁸ Aleksandar Garbin (*J. B. Tito*, 2004),¹¹⁹ Stane Špegel (*Spomen/j/iki*, 2007),¹²⁰ the Austrian artist Walter Steinacher (*Souvenirs*, 2008),¹²¹ the Kosovo artist Alketa Xhafa (*Challenging Tito*, a performance, 2008), and the Slovenian performance artist Eclipse (*Performans presenečenja/Surprise Performance*, 1999).¹²² Pop-art reinterpretations of Tito can be found on postcards and so on and so on.¹²³



a postcard,
Serbia, 2007

The veneration of *our Tito* also extends to the virtual world – there are many web pages dedicated to him (and Yugoslavia). The most interesting is the new virtual state of Titoslavia at www.titoslavija.com, proclaimed on May 25, 2005 by the Sarajevo association *Mirovna akcija humanistov*.

- ¹¹⁵ His scheduled performance during *Tito Days* in Fažana, which should have included the original toilet seat from Broz's residence in Brijuni, was not enthusiastically received by representatives of the tourist organization and veterans association. The item in question disappeared, and the performance was cancelled (Radovani, 2006, 441, 442).
- ¹¹⁶ Video Work, Galerija P74, Ljubljana, May 2007.
- ¹¹⁷ The exhibition and the catalogue. Pavlova hiša/Pavel's House, Portna, Austria, autumn 2006.
- ¹¹⁸ An exhibit at the Independent Illustrators of Slovenia 1st Biennial, Ljubljana, 2007.
- ¹¹⁹ Bronze sculpture of Broz coated in colored Plasticine; exhibition at the Multimediali center in Rovinj, autumn 2008.
- ¹²⁰ Multi-media installation, in which the Rio de Janeiro Christ embraces the New York Statue of Liberty and Augustinić's sculpture of Broz; *Podoba prostora* (The Image of a Space), an exhibition held in Celje, summer 2008.
- ¹²¹ His exhibition in the Ljubljana gallery Alkatraz was accompanied by a text explaining that the artist was not a citizen of Yugoslavia during Broz's times, so he was not "personally or emotionally determined" by his personality and could therefore offer a "view from a distance." In so doing, he was not so much guided by Broz's role and work; instead, his exhibition offers a "deliberation about the methods of capitalist society, which transforms even its opponents into consumer articles." See <http://www.metelkova.org/210208.htm>. In a short Q&A section, he states that "today socialist iconography is a marketing tool of cunning advertising strategies."
- ¹²² Kunigunda festival, Velenje, August-September 1999.
- ¹²³ For example, Nevelina cards designed by D. Tanasković and sold in Belgrade.

(Peace Action of Humanists), which describes itself as a non-governmental, non-political and non-profit peace organization. In their words, *with the proclamation of the republic of Titoslavija and its constitution, a new and completely different state enters the global stage of politics determined to re-establish Tito's lifelong ideas and visions*. The state has no borders, parliament, laws or president, but it has a flag (red with a yellow circle and Broz's portrait from his Partisan days), an anthem (needless to say, it is *Comrade Tito, We Pledge To You*), a 10-article constitution, and it issues passports (the price is 20 convertible marks for Bosnia-Herzegovina citizens, 10 euros for citizens of former Yugoslav republics, and 15 euros for foreigners). In the words of Jezdimir Milošević, the *guardian of the seal of Titoslavia*, its capital lies in the heart of each of its citizens. The founders claim that they are not interested in mystifying Broz's personality but in re-establishing his ideas and visions.¹²⁴



world wide web, 2005

The oldest such page was created in 1994 by the young Slovenian film director Martin Srebotnjak and Matija Marolt (www.titoville.com). The options on the menu bar are *Speeches, Songs and Movies; Photo Album; The Facts; Books, Women and Jokes*, and *Feedback* (all in English). Since November 29, 2004 (the former *Republic Day*), another similar page has been dedicated to Broz: *Bratstvo* (Brotherhood), available at <http://de.geocities.com/opiumzanarod/>. The best page in terms of its systematic approach and range of information is certainly <http://www.leksikon-yumitologije.net/>; a similar page (currently inaccessible) was available at <http://www.otpisani.com/>. Another interesting

¹²⁴ GLM: Jugoslavija je mrtva, živila Titoslavija! (Yugoslavia Is Dead, Long Live Tito-slavia). Večer, Maribor, May 14, 2005, p. 14; B.R.: Milošević ustanavlja Titoslaviju (Milošević Establishing Titoslvia). POP TV 24.ur.com, May 19, 2005, accessed August 12, 2005.

page is that of the Belgrade *Yu Centar Tito* at <http://yu-centar-tito.50webs.com/>, where one can find an accurate list of activities, published books, cooperation, various links and texts about Broz. The head of the center is the former JNA General Stevan Mirković, the author of a book about Broz, who frequently speaks publicly at events related to Broz. A blog about Tito at marsal.blog.hr contains, apart from information and links to other pages, many fierce arguments between his supporters and opponents. The blog at titoyugoslavia.wordpress.com is more dedicated to the *memory of Tito's Yugoslavia*. Titoists from Nova Gorica maintained for some time a web page at www.nastito.org; the page maintained by Titoists from Velenje, at www.titovo.velenje.org, also lists important events in this mining town since its foundation in 1953 to the present. On September 1999, still another virtual Yugoslavia was established: *Cyber Yugoslavia* at www.juga.com, with nearly 17 000 "citizens."¹²⁵ An anonymous *Druže Tito* on Facebook has a large number of virtual friends. In short, Broz does live on, including as a virtual category.

¹²⁵ See also Perica, 2002, op. 96 on p. 303.

IV. TITOSTALGIC CULTURE – *Once there was a country!!*

Recently, some of Tito's countless bastards began to argue publicly through castrated media that Tito was the one who left behind for us the best precepts.

Mirko Vidović, a Croatian academician, 2007¹²⁶

Now let's reverse the perspective: the catalogue of the culture of titostalgia listed above should be compared with, read and interpreted alongside titostalgic culture, meaning images, opinions and assessments expressed by people from former Yugoslavia in opinion polls and surveys, through everyday activities and perception, street culture and creativity at home. Only then does it become clear that "revaluated" Broz is not solely a commercial trademark, a market niche, a pop star, a fad or a media trick, but a point on the mental map of post-Yugoslav societies.



left:
a barber shop,
Mostar, 2007

right:
a workshop,
eastern Bosnia, 2008

Let us first look at how the *Old Man* is still part of everyday culture and communication. In the spirit of the post-modernist maxim *anything goes* and consumer-driven all-inclusive practices, his image in various forms is found in many private apartments,¹²⁷ public premises and offices. Petrović describes how Broz's portraits were left behind in a decaying cable factory in Jagodina, Serbia, although not out of apathy but signaling a conscious and active political stance calling to mind the years when the company, its employees and the entire region were in better shape (2008a). In a

¹²⁶ Laskavci su gori od lažova (Flatterers Worse Than Liars). Fokus, Zagreb, July 6, 2007, p. 12–13.

¹²⁷ Including those of left-wingers and Broz sympathizers living abroad.

barber shop in Mostar, there is a large calendar with Broz's image and, tucked behind the mirror, postcards depicting Broz in his Partisan days issued by veterans associations on important anniversaries.

His images frequently stand next to artifacts belonging to entirely different cultures (e.g. contemporary consumer culture, religious culture, pop culture, national culture, or everyday culture of the past). One such unlikely melange in the reception room of a Ljubljana based company includes a picture of Broz, a school map of SFRY, a Crucifixion, an old icon showing Jesus holding his heart in his open hand and a calendar beauty. In a workshop in Bosnia, Broz and a bare-breasted young woman exist side-by-side.



an office,
Ljubljana, 2008

A Slovenian craftsman decorated his office with Broz's images and plaques, and old Yugoslav and Slovenian flags, which stretch across the skylights like curtains.



Jajce, 2008

The most bizarre locations for his image that I came across was the inner side of a satellite dish, with the text *All in all, you're the best – All honor to you!* and a kitchen cutting board

Contemporary society endeavors to separate the political from the intimate, so it is not by chance that a privileged place reserved for personal nostalgia is home, one's own "personal paradise," a refuge to which nostalgics retreat, fleeing the harsh world of today. The private apartments and their interiors (plus, of course, various other material stimulants) evoke memories of the past in a very simple and effective way, while providing "a comforting image of its own continuity" (Halbwachs, 2001, 145). The English scholars Malcolm Chase and Christopher Shaw (1989, 3) explain how contemporary generations "have lost faith in the possibility of changing our public life and have retreated into the private enclaves of family, and the consumption of certain 'retro' styles". A home functions as an ahistorical "enclosed garden", a *hortus conclusus* – and "the major function of the enclosed space is always to create a tension or dialectic between inside and outside, between private and public property, between the space of the subject and the space of the social" (Stewart, 1993, 68). I myself saw an interesting composition in the home of a refugee family of mixed ethnicity that fled to Philadelphia during the last war in the Balkans: a framed picture of Broz in his best times hung in the basement above the work bench; it was one of the rare things they had managed to rescue and bring along with them.¹²⁸ In their new home, they recreated a fraction of the life that they had lost overseas.



left:
a workshop,
Philadelphia, 2008

right:
a workshop,
Skopje, 2008

Another similar anecdotal event took place in Ljubljana: while removing junk before refurbishing an old attic, workers came across Broz's portrait and hung it on the wall of the empty room. I remember one scene in particular that

¹²⁸ I was invited to see it as their special guest.

kept recurring when I was taking shots of the pictures, calendars and similar objects in workshops, bars, or antique shops: the owners hurried to fetch from their offices or store rooms the images of Broz that they cherished most and kept separately, handing them to me with trembling hands and with much pride (after they had carefully removed the accumulated dust).

Many things related to Broz became important landmarks or “zero points” in relation to which are judged *before and after, better and worse, correct and wrong*. A former senior policeman in Slovenia assessed the security measures during the second visit of President Bush in Slovenia as *tougher than in Broz's time*.¹²⁹ Approximately one-fifth of a media article dealing with Queen Elizabeth's visit to Slovenia in October 2008 was dedicated to her meetings with Broz, who could be seen in one of the three photos accompanying the article.¹³⁰ At the end of the construction of the Zagreb-Rijeka highway, the mayor of Rijeka recollects the opening of its first section in 1970, when she drove along it with the honorable guest Broz.¹³¹ Ratko Mladić, wanted by the Tribunal in the Hague, is said to be hiding in *Tito's bunkers* on the Serbia-Macedonia border.¹³² Finally, here is another anecdote. A friend of mine explained how to politely discover someone's age, without asking directly about the year of birth: ask him/her something relating to the year of Broz's death (obviously an important point in time, as is the year of Kennedy's assassination for Americans or the date of the terrorist attack on the twin towers).¹³³

Broz also appears as a protagonist in new sarcastic jokes about the current state of affairs. One among the earliest was the slogan, *Dok je bilo Tita bilo je i šita*.¹³⁴ In Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, a slogan printed on pocket calendars with his image reads: *Happy is Bosnia if I'm its only problem/ Happy is the Macedonian nation if I'm their only problem.*

¹²⁹ I. Potokar: Na cesti huje kot pri Titu (Road Control Stricter Than For Tito's Visit) – an interview with P. Čelik, a former police commander . Žurnal24, Ljubljana, June 7, 2008, p. 6.

¹³⁰ B. Šalamon: Kako zanimivo, Njeno Veličanstvo prihaja (How Interesting, Her Royal Highness Is Coming). Nedeljski dnevnik, Ljubljana, October 19, 2008, p. 2, 3.

¹³¹ His words then were, *Just keep on like that; let others quarrel, you keep constructing*. J. Dečević, L. Benčić/EPEHA: Nedostaje još samo 14 kilometara ceste (Only Another 14km To Be Constructed) . Jutarnji list, Zagreb, June 28, 2008, p. 8.

¹³² <http://24ur.com/novice/svet/na-smrt-bolan-tici-v-bunkerju.html> , dostop 20. 8. 2008

¹³³ For more on the date as a framework of memory, see Halbwachs, 2001, 108-110.

¹³⁴ This slogan is one of those that loses its appeal when translated, if only because the effect of the rhyme is lost. “Šit” is the local word for hashish, and the text basically says *While there was Tito, there was hash*.



Macedonia, 2008

In September 2008, at the outbreak of the scandal in Slovenia suggesting that PM Janez Janša received a bribe from the producer of the Patria armoured vehicles to facilitate a deal, there began to circulate a joke that ran: *Tito, Partija, JJ, Patria!*¹³⁵ In various parts of former Yugoslavia, ironic arrest warrants in the form of simple posters or leaflets accuse Broz of serious crimes, by listing his good deeds and successes. In such an unsigned poster printed in Ljubljana in 2005, on A4-size paper, Josip Broz – Tito is *wanted on suspicion of a number of serious offenses.*¹³⁶ A similar leaflet appeared in May 2005 in Subotica, where the Subotica branch of the Yugoslav Communist Party wanted Broz *on suspicion that he did not approve the sale of our factories and lands, and our workers serving foreign masters.*¹³⁷ Macedonian neo-Titoists disseminated a similar arrest warrant, where his crimes were summed up under seven points, and the offered reward was one million (no currency was stated).

Broz is a motif found in new street culture, graffiti and street art. Graffiti and stencils relating to him are painted all across former Yugoslavia. It is interesting that their number increases as one moves towards the west of the former country. The following are some examples: *Tito, I love you!; Tito BiH;*¹³⁸ *We are all Tito; The locksmith was*

¹³⁵ *Tito, Party* is a part of the once well-known mantra, *Tito, Party, Youth, Action!*

¹³⁶ These serious crimes are as follows: *he prohibited war, famine, poverty and chauvinism for 50 years; he ordered the construction of factories and apartments for workers, and provision of regular wages and sound pensions; he provided the right to free education, health care and pensions for all!*

¹³⁷ STA/B.R., 2005, *ibid.*

¹³⁸ The graffiti is located in the Bosniak part of Mostar, and Tito is written in the Latin alphabet, while *BiH* (abbreviation for Bosnia-Herzegovina) is in the Cyrillic alphabet (used by Serbs). This lends it a special significance, given the fact that the town

better;¹³⁹ *Tito – Death to Fascism* (in the center of Zagreb, written in Cyrillic and accompanied with a stylized image of a man throwing a swastika into a dustbin); *Return Tito's picture to schools; TITO PARTIJA SFRJ KPJ OF* (plus the communist star); *Long Live Comrade Tito!* (plus the black, anarchist star); *Bring Tito back!* (plus the red star and the red heart); *Tito, come back, everything is forgiven*; a stencil graffiti with Augustinčić's image of Broz against the red star etc. In much the same vein, Tito features in new folk art, for example, in needlepoint tapestries, wood reliefs, embroideries, and on the web in works by unknown authors.¹⁴⁰ The people with whom I spoke showed me meticulously executed needlepoint tapestries, woodcuts, embroideries, pictures and the like made by themselves or their relatives, always pointing out that it was their handiwork.



left:
Prizren, 2008

above right:
Ljubljana, the 1990s

below right:
Brčko, 2008

Texts referring to Tito or Tito's name written in large letters on hilltops in the littoral region of Slovenia, visible from quite a distance (some even from Italy), still survive,

is divided along ethnic lines between the Bosniaks and Croats, while the Serbs, who before the war in Bosnia accounted for 19% of the town's population, are now practically all gone.

¹³⁹ Tito was a locksmith by trade; hence this frequent reference in popular slogans.

¹⁴⁰ A multitude of home-made videos are available on the web. These combine scenes dating from the Partisan fighters' times and socialist Yugoslavia, documentaries, and clips from feature films; in all of them the image of Broz is in the foreground. The accompanying music is either some Partisan or proletarian song or some popular pop song about Yugoslavia and Tito (by Đorđe Balalović, Zdravko Čolić or the like). See, for example, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWeVB7eBj4>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgjSNUG492M&feature=related>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HseznUKNvsA>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sy4bEvKqjgI&feature=related>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1H2Non8j4CQ&feature=related>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrNwXioWXUc&feature=related>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCAL7z1vrz8&feature=related>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LuRz3ongI8> (the children of North Korea singing to Tito), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8ps5BjQjjI&feature=related> (funeral).

thanks to Broz's fans. They are found above the village of Renče on the Italy-Slovenia border, above Branik, above Nova Gorica, on the Kokoška hill between Bazovica and Lokev in Kras, and above Dekani (near the port of Koper). Although the first three listed above are within just 15 km of each other, their fates differ considerably. The text made of stones above Branik on the Golovec hill, reads *Tito*. It was made in 1953, when Broz attended the rally at nearby Okroglica at the time of disputes surrounding the issue of the Yugoslavia-Italy border. Over the following decades, it was refreshed regularly and was first damaged by unknown persons in 2000, but the local residents promptly restored it. Then, in October 2004, it was completely destroyed on the day the right-wing coalition won the parliamentary elections in Slovenia. Allegedly, the perpetrators were an organized group of right-wing supporters from Nova Gorica and the local region who came by night in a bus; the group included Italian neo-Fascists and a local priest.¹⁴¹ According to the man who was the local community leader at the time, the locals quickly responded by collecting money and the necessary materials, so a few days later the volunteers recovered the lettering, fastened it down with mortar and put up a night watch.¹⁴² A heated debate followed between the local supporters and opponents of the lettering. The latter claimed that the restoration was unlawful because it had been done without the required permissions and paperwork, and the former responded by pointing out that no paperwork was ever required to build numerous small chapels in the Branik region. The lettering has since remained undisturbed. Every year on May 25, a torchlight procession is organized, and Tito's name is spelled out in torch lights. Those in favor of the lettering (including local residents, among them young people, members of the hunters' association, members of the Slovenian minority in Italy, and Broz's fans from other parts of Slovenia) have recently launched an initiative to protect it and include in the country's cultural heritage.¹⁴³

The *Naš Tito* (Our Tito) text on the Sabotin hill above Nova Gorica, dating from 1978, measuring 25 by 100 meters and facing the neighboring Italy, provoked an especially bitter controversy. Since the day Slovenia joined the EU in

¹⁴¹ When on one occasion this local priest was caught by surprise while scattering the stones, he defended himself by saying that he was taking physical exercise on the hill.

¹⁴² An interview with Edvard Bizjak, August 13, 2008. See also S. Gačić: Kamniti grafiti (Stone Graffiti). Mladina, Ljubljana, July 5, 2004, p. 32, 33.

¹⁴³ An interview with E. Bizjak, August 13, 2008.



Slovenia, 2008

2004 – *nota bene*, not since it became independent in 1991 – the lettering has been the target of opponents several times. For decades before that it had been regularly maintained and cleaned, but in June 2004, on the thirteenth birthday of independent Slovenia and one month after it entered the EU, an unknown group (allegedly the notorious right-wing supporters from Nova Gorica) erased the writing *Our Tito* and wrote *SLO* (for Slovenia) in its place, using stones to shape the letters. The act provoked a sharp response from the locals and the Association of Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle, with the head of its Nova Gorica branch stating that, *the residents of the Littoral region took pride in Tito, since it was thanks to him that they first felt like citizens of their own country.*¹⁴⁴ In March 2005, the youth section of the Social Democrats, with the assistance of their older party colleagues, set things right, and *Our Tito* was in its place again, but not for long. A few days later it was replaced by the enigmatic *Our Fido*, perhaps a dog's name, or a name derived from Fidel (Castro), but only to be promptly rearranged back into *Our Tito*. The Italian right-wing parties and their junior sections from Gorizia (Lega Nazionale¹⁴⁵, Forza Italia, the right-wing youth organization Azione Giovani¹⁴⁶) rushed to give public statements. However, the story does not end there. In 2006, *Our Tito* was transformed into *Our TIGR*, which was an abbreviation for the inter-war organization of Slovenian and Croatian anti-Fascists, living in the territories annexed by Italy. The original *Our Tito* was once again restored, but soon after it was destroyed by a local right-wing supporter who bought the plot of land on which it was located, mortgaging his property to obtain the site. Today it is practically indiscernible (Komel, 2008a). Nevertheless, every year since 2005, on the eve of *Labour*

¹⁴⁴ Gačić, 2004, p. 32.

¹⁴⁵ According to this organization, *the name Tito stands for terror only*; see <http://www.leganazionale.it/gorizia/comunica/035-090305.htm>.

¹⁴⁶ Its representative argues that the lettering was *a symbol of hatred*; see <http://www.azionegiovanile.org/scompare-la-scritta-nas-tito-dal-monte-sabotino>.

Day, Tito fans from both sides of the border have made expeditions to the site, spelling out *Tito* with lighted torches. Some carry recognizable socialist emblems (flags, caps). In 2007, a plane trailing an *Our Tito* banner flew over Nova Gorica, inviting its citizens to join the torchlight procession. The initiative was put forward by the May 45 section of the Nova Gorica Veterans Association. However, on the way up, participants in the procession were surprised by their opponents, who fenced off the plot in an attempt to prevent the event. A harsh exchange of words followed, and the police had to intervene.

The story about the writing on Fajt Hill (Fajtov hrib) above the traditionally anti-Fascist village of Renče is quite different. There, the name *Tito* was written immediately after the end of WWII, later to be joined by the inscriptions *Kardelj* and *FLRJ* on nearby hills. While *Kardelj* and *FLRJ* soon faded away because no one took care of them, *Tito* survived and is still regularly restored: it underwent a complete overhaul in 2006, when it was re-painted using an especially durable lime and salt solution. It was the (clandestine) work of his local fans, again including many young people. In contrast to the lettering mentioned above, this one has never been vandalized, nor there have been any initiatives or pressures to remove it.¹⁴⁷ To sum up: these texts have two things in common. One is a kind of conspiratorial atmosphere surrounding their restoration/vandalization. It is perpetuated by both sides, either because of a lack of understanding on the part of certain locals, or because of the opposition of the ruling party or various inspectors. There are many rumors in circulation, many objections and ambiguities of which I learnt while collecting data, but they were always communicated in confidence. The other thread that connects all three stories is an expedition organized for the past four or five years on May 25. It starts by *Tito* above Branik, proceeds past certain other symbols of the Liberation War to the next stop above Renče, and ends at the destroyed *Our Tito* on Sabotin. There is a short commemorative ceremony staged at each stop; in 2006, Tito's impersonator Godnič also delivered a speech on Sabotin.¹⁴⁸

There are similar examples in other parts of the former federation. The former stone text, *Tito volimo te* (*We love you, Tito,*) above Mostar, was changed to *We love you, BIH*

¹⁴⁷ An interview with the representative of the locals who maintain the lettering; the interviewer requested anonymity; August 13, 2008.

¹⁴⁸ See the photo report at <http://www.kulturnidom.it/dom/gallery-thumbnails.php?album=6&page=1&sort=nd>, accessed on June 6, 2008.

(BIH is the abbreviation for Bosnia-Herzegovina). There used to be a large *Tito* on the old fortress above Prizren (in Kosovo), made of bulbs mounted on a special frame, so it could be seen from all over the city of Prizren. It deteriorated over time, so today only the framework for the letter O still survives. The *Tito* lettering on a hill between Raša and Barban in Istria (Croatia) was destroyed, and even mined, several times during the 1990s, but each time it was restored and eventually fastened down with mortar, so it has remained untouched for several years now. Yet the most compelling story is the one I heard from a young woman from Zagreb, who asked me not to reveal the exact location of this inscription. There is a small park between two rather high residential blocks in the center of Zagreb inhabited mainly by retired people. The roses in the park are planted in the shape of the word *Tito*, but this can only be noticed from the higher floors. Throughout the tempestuous post-socialist period, the residents have jealously guarded this secret, so the name is still there.¹⁴⁹

Streets and squares named after Broz can still be found in many Slovenian towns: e.g. Velenje, Koper, Postojna, Jesenice, Senovo, Rateče, Radenci, Logatec and Maribor. The main square in Ajdovščina has been renamed *Lavrič Square*, but the plate with the old name, *Tito Square*, has not been removed. *Maršal Tito* or *Josip Broz Tito* streets, squares, parks or promenades can be found in Montenegro (in Podgorica, Rožaje, Bar and Ulcinj), in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Tuzla, Sarajevo¹⁵⁰ and Mostar), in Serbia, indeed only in the northern province of Vojvodina (Bečej, Kanjiža, Subotica, Bačka topola and Vrbas), in Macedonia (Skopje, Gevgelija, Tetovo, Veles and Strumica), and in Croatia (Varaždinske Toplice, Zaprešić and Zagreb),¹⁵¹ where they are most numerous in Istrian towns (Raša, Rabac, Labin, Opatija, Pula, Umag and Fažana, where in 2007 the original name *Titova riva/Riva Tito* was restored after eleven years).

The secondary grammar schools in Skopje and Bitola (Macedonia) are named after him. The metallurgical factory

¹⁴⁹ Interview held on Sept 9, 2008.

¹⁵⁰ There were proposals that *Maršal Tito Street*, one of the main streets in Sarajevo, should be renamed *Alija Izetbegović Street*. However, the residents of Sarajevo were determined to resist the proposal, so they placed on the street a billboard with a photo of Broz accompanied by the text: *This is Maršal Tito Street*. The name has not been changed.

¹⁵¹ On February 9, 2008, right-wingers organized a protest in Zagreb demanding that *Maršal Tito Square* should be renamed *Kazališni trg* (Theater Square). The counter-protest was organized by young anti-Fascists, who simply shouted *Tito, Tito* (<http://www.24sata.info/10045> accessed on May 12, 2008). Before that, there were attempts to rename it *Tuđmanov trg* (Tuđman Square).

in Skopje has been called *Metalski zavod Tito* since 1945, and the new foreign owners have kept the name.



left:
Fažana, 2008

right:
Podgorica, 2008

In Rabac (Istria) there is a plantation of 88 olive trees dedicated to him. There are also 88 trees planted in his memory along Ljubljana's walking trail, called *The Path of Memories and Comradeship*.

In Labin (Istria) there still stands a large *Tito* mounted on a high metal framework above the entrance to the now closed mine.¹⁵² The still surviving monuments to *Tito*¹⁵³ – for example, in Velenje, Sarajevo, Skopje (in two locations, in front of a grammar school and within the above-mentioned factory), in Kumrovec and Dedinje, are decorated with flowers, mainly red, around the dates of various anniversaries.



Skopje, 2008

In Labin, a new monument to Broz, a work by the local sculptor, Mate Čvrljak, was unveiled in April 2005 on the 60th anniversary of the town's liberation. On behalf of the local veterans association and the *Josip Broz Tito Association*, the initiative was given in 1997 by the Istrian coordinator of these organizations, Rudjero Faraguna. He gradually garnered support from the town authorities, so in 2003

¹⁵² This little town is full of symbols referring to Broz. For example, graffiti reading *Tito, thank you*, signed by Petar, aged 8, *We've had enough of EU shit, we want Tito*, and *It would be an honor to live with Tito again*.

¹⁵³ After the change of regime and the break-up of Yugoslavia, several thousand monuments and symbols of the national liberation struggle, socialism, Yugoslavia, its leaders, heroes and Broz were removed, destroyed, desecrated, stolen or damaged.

the monument was placed first in a local museum and two years later moved to its present location.¹⁵⁴



Ljubljana, 2008

Skopje has recently seen animated developments relating to the memory of Broz. *Maršal Tito Street* in downtown Skopje was unofficially renamed *Makedonija Street* by the town authorities, so plaques with both names are in place. In 2007, the admirers of Broz erected a monument to him nearby, but they had to dismantle it three days later while passers-by loudly protested against the removal. They also endeavored to obtain the two removed monuments, of which one had stood in *Sobranje* (the Macedonian Parliament) and the other in the *Maršal Tito barracks*, but their request was rejected at both places. Nevertheless, in 2000 they placed a triangular stone with a relief of Broz and his name in front of the *Josip Broz Tito Grammar School*, and on May 25, 2003, they unveiled still another memorial plaque



left:
Sarajevo, 2007



right:
Velenje, 2008

¹⁵⁴ The author of the initiative delivered a speech during the unveiling ceremony. The guests were the local mayor, the president of the Istrian district, and Broz's granddaughter, Saša. There was also a standard cultural program. A personal interview with R. Faraguna, July 3, 2008

with his name, date of birth and death, and the message,
From Citizens who respect his personality and work.

“Pilgrimages” to his birth place and grave, and various celebrations dedicated to him deserve special attention. There are reports of new *Youth Relay Races* in various parts of the former country. One such relay race has been organized for several years now in Montenegro. The runners start from several places (Lazine, Virpazar and Nikšić), with their one-hundred kilometer route passing through several towns (Podgorica, Cetinje) and ending in the coastal town of Tivat. According to the media, the arrival of the baton in Tivat was greeted by a crowd of several tens of thousands. The scenario was the same as in the past: people lined the street greeting the runners, and the concluding ceremony at *Obala maršala Tita* (Marshal Tito Promenade) included speeches and songs in honor of Broz, plus folk dances. Ships sounded horns, school airplanes flew above the participants’ heads, and the baton was handed to Mirko Perković, the founder of the NGO *Consulate General of SFRY* in Tivat¹⁵⁵ (or to the impersonator of Broz). The same institution published a newspaper obituary with Broz’s picture in his Marshal uniform on the 25th anniversary of his death. They also announced at the time a football match re-enacting the one that was played on the day when Tito died and was interrupted at the news of his death.¹⁵⁶ Perković endeavors to promote Tivat as the capital of Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁷



unveiling the monument, Labin, 2005

¹⁵⁵ The keynote speaker referred to Broz as our beloved comrade *Tito*, and thanked him for a carefree childhood, a happy and joyful youth and a life worthy of man’s dignity in the most beautiful country in the world. (B. Jokić: *Mit o Titu znova in silovito vzhaja/The Myth About Tito Rises Anew And Strong*). *Delo*, Ljubljana, June 10, 2004, p. 12). For more on the consulate, see <http://www.konzulatsfrj.com/>.

¹⁵⁶ STA/B.R., 2005, *ibid*.

¹⁵⁷ Novačić, *ibid*.

In 2003 and 2004 in Dol pri Ljubljani, several local associations and the junior sections of leftwing parties organized a municipal *Youth Relay Race* with the participation of pioneers and the *Marshal* band. Young people and students from Planina pri Sevnici and Šentjur in Slovenia similarly organized themselves, bringing the baton from Kumrovec to Velenje (followed by an exhibition, a solemn reception for the baton, inevitable pioneer uniforms etc.). A *Youth Race* (*Tek Mladosti*) also took place in Litija (Slovenia). In 2008, a similar event took place in the village of Lokavec: the guests of honor were Tito's and Jovanka's impersonators; the organizers and some participants were dressed in pioneer uniforms, the items on the menu were Balkan dishes (from traditional *čevapčići* to the bread and salt offered as a welcome gesture); trumpet bands entertained the guests, and the baton was delivered.¹⁵⁸ *Youth Day* and *Republic Day* are regularly celebrated in Ljubljana's alternative culture center, Metelkova, where the distinctive mise-en-scéne is adjusted only enough to match the subcultural and subpolitical atmosphere prevailing there: punk music, do-it-yourself aesthetics noticeable on posters and invitations, and so on.



posters, Alternativni center Metelkova, Ljubljana, the 1990s

There, the celebration of *Youth Day* includes *Tito fest* (concerts), with its manifesto being Tito's statement: *We spilt a sea of blood for brotherhood and unity. So, we will not allow anyone to touch it or undermine it from inside, to destroy that brotherhood and unity.* The events are described as *a nostalgic evocation of memories of comradeship and youth* (although none of the bands plays yugonostalgic music). Another such concert was organized by the youth of Kumrovec

¹⁵⁸ AT: Obudili praznovanje ob dnevu mladosti (Youth Day Celebration Revived). Prim. novice, Koper, Nova Gorica, May 27, 2008, p. 5.

some years ago. The holidays commemorating Broz and Yugoslavia are also marked in many bars and cafes (e.g. Trubar in Ljubljana).

The local tourist organization in Fažana (Croatia), traditionally organizes *Tito Days* in the week around May 25. There are a number of cultural, sport and folklore events, as well as parties called *Titova fešta*, with the inevitable baton and its solemn reception. There are also many other profit-oriented “memorial parties.” In 2007, a *Tito party* was organized in Doboj (Bosnia-Herzegovina) on his birthday; the participants danced, sang popular Partisan songs¹⁵⁹ and sipped Cockta, the *drink of our and your youth* (so this popular soft drink was advertised in Yugoslavia). The Belgrade based Association *For the Preservation of the Tradition of Youth Work Brigades* commemorates Broz’s birthday in a club dubbed *liberated territory*, followed by a visit to Broz’s mausoleum. A “mini” *Youth Relay Race* is organized in Skopje, with the main celebration being held next to the monument to Broz in front of the *Josip Broz Tito Grammar School* in the city center. According to organizers, one to two thousand people attend the celebration. Similar events take place in Zrenjanin, Subotica and Novi Sad (Vojvodina). His death is also commemorated at his monument in Sarajevo.

The atmosphere is particularly solemn in Kumrovec, where the commemorations are organized by various Tito associations and veterans associations. The jubilee celebrations attract the largest crowds: in 2004, on the 112th anniversary of his birth, around 5000 people attended; the next year, on the 25th anniversary of his death, there were 8000 to 10,000 people (most coming from Slovenia). For several years, the title of the event was *The Day of Youth and Joy, and Joy in Youth, Youth in Joy*. An especially solemn commemoration was that of the 115th anniversary of his birthday in 2007. It was attended by representatives from all former republics (his *older comrades* of both genders as well as *young pioneers*), who brought to Kumrovec six batons, several thousand members of various veterans associations and many other admirers.¹⁶⁰ In 2008, there were around 10,000 participants, although it was just an “ordinary,” not a jubilee year. The number of young people attending has been increasing steadily, and they actively participate in the program – for example, in 2004, media wrote about a “real delirium” among the crowd caused by a moving speech

¹⁵⁹ A. Kupanovac: 6 štafeta za pokojnog maršala J. Broza! (Six Batons For Late Marshal J. Broz!). Večernji list, Zagreb, May 26, 2007, p. 56.

¹⁶⁰ Kupanovac, 2007, *ibid*.

delivered by a 25-year old woman, speaking on behalf of the union of Broz Associations (Radovani, 2006, 437, 438).¹⁶¹ A similar setting can be seen at regular annual commemorations in Dedinje: the last one, in 2008, drew several thousand people, and six batons arrived from each of the former Yugoslav republics, with every baton carrier giving a short elated speech. The batons were handed to Broz's grandson Joško, who in his speech ironically listed Tito's "sins:" *for some, Tito is responsible for all that was wrong: for the bridges that were constructed during his time, while today we are not capable of constructing even a single new one; for health care that used to be free and cannot be afforded today; for factories that were built ... He is responsible for everything that they can no longer offer to the people.*¹⁶²

In conclusion let me say that the scenarios at these mass events are standardized:¹⁶³ the participants connote Tito's times, including through their appearance, gestures and salutations (e.g. a "Partisan fighter's" clenched fist, or the "military" salute accompanied with the cry *Death to Fascism, Freedom to the People!*). Some participants (including children) wear uniforms or partial uniforms once worn by Partisan fighters, the armed forces or Tito's pioneers,¹⁶⁴ then medals, red stars, red scarfs or badges with Broz's image; others come in civilian but solemn clothes. They fly Yugoslav and Party flags and banners, while the panegyrics by domestic and foreign speakers receive loud applause and cheers such as *True!* or *Long live Comrade Tito*. Participants address each other as *comrade*, the applause is accompanied by the chanting of Tito's name, people take photographs by Broz's sculptures and in front of memorial spaces, and loudspeakers broadcast his speeches (particularly those in which he warned against intra-country antagonism!) and Partisan/Yugoslav songs.¹⁶⁵ Sometimes his impersonators

¹⁶¹ The following parts of her speech speak for themselves: *You were not merely an army leader, but our father as well, who nourished us with his love. And: We must keep alive the memory and significance of our comrade Tito and not be afraid of the hatred of our opponents. Their hatred only reinforces our love for truth.* (<http://www.danas.co.yu/20040525/dijalog1.html>, dostop 12. 8. 2008).

¹⁶² A. Delić: *Živel Dan Mladosti!* (Long Live Youth Day!). Mag, Ljubljana, May 28, 2008, p. 58.

¹⁶³ And no less standardized are the attacks on such events. In 2008, the president of the Croatian association of the Diseased Veterans of Homeland War filed a suit against the participants at the Youth Day in Kumrovec for their violation of the Constitution, laws, resolutions and other positive regulations of the Croatian state (S. Galjot: *Uvredljiva simbolika i retorika/Offensive Symbols and Rhetoric*. Fokus, Zagreb, July 11, 2008, p. 36, 37).

¹⁶⁴ Some among them are women in their seventies, who could not possibly have worn the pioneer uniform in their childhood.

¹⁶⁵ Among these, the most usual are classic hits such as *Računajte na nas* (Count On Us), *Druže Tito ljubičice bjela* (Comrade Tito, the White Violet), *Ide Tito preko*

(for example Ivo Godnič) or folklore groups take part in the program. Wreaths and flowers are laid, candles are lit, the traditional *kolo* is danced etc. New eulogies are added to old ones. Most people actively take part in the event, meaning that they not only “listen, watch and applaud” but dance, sing, chant, deliver speeches and so on. In addition to the insignia of Titoism, Yugoslavia and socialism, insignia of other kindred ideologies are also present: for example, images of Che, rainbow flags (symbolizing pacifism, tolerance, acceptance of the different), alter-globalist symbols and displays. Interestingly, the boisterous behavior in the open stops at the entrance to his house in Kumrovec or his mausoleum in Dedinje; inside, only whispers can be heard. Most of the speakers stick to the same pattern: while Broz’s personality, socialism and Yugoslavia are glorified, the current governments are accused of nationalism, incitement of hatred, exploitation of people, wild privatization, corruption, apathy among people etc. Needless to say, these events are never missed by the hordes of salesmen offering souvenirs, antiques and tourist items at stalls or by the road. In Kumrovec, the sellers of badges, labels and ribbons in the colors of the Yugoslav flag besiege visitors as soon as they park their cars.

Organizations bearing his name and dedicated to the *preservation of his name and work* flourish in various parts of the former federal state. They are most numerous and best organized in Croatia, where they are joined into an association chaired by Tomislav Badovinac. They began to appear in the mid-1990s, with their number reaching 12 in 2005, according to Badovinac.¹⁶⁶ Three years later this figure rose to around 20; of these, 10 are based in traditionally anti-Fascist Istria.¹⁶⁷ Ivo Godnič, Tito’s impersonator from Slovenia, has recently established *Domoljubno društvo maršal miru Tito* (*Patriotic Society Marshal Of Peace Tito*), in Postojna, committed to the *cultivation of all the positive things Tito taught us*.¹⁶⁸ The establishment of similar societies is believed to be underway in Kranj and Velenje.¹⁶⁹ In Bosnia-Herzegovina, a

Romanije (Tito Crosses Romania), and *Padaj silo i nepravdo* (Down With Brutal Force and Injustice).

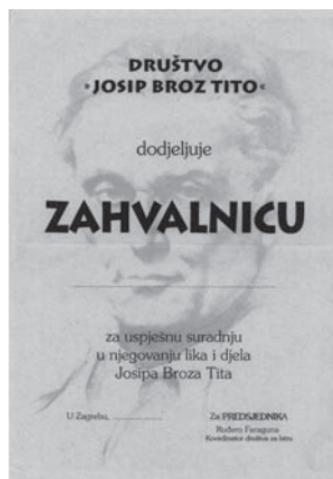
¹⁶⁶ With a membership of 4200 (*Podkrižnik*, 2005, *ibid.*).

¹⁶⁷ Information provided by R. Faraguna, their coordinator in Istria (in a personal interview July 3, 2008); each has a membership between 250 and 300.

¹⁶⁸ M. Hrastar, V. Pirc: *Ljubi diktator – Ljubiti, prezirati, častiti ali sovražiti lik in delo J. B. Tita* (Beloved Dictator – To Love, Despise, Honor Or Hate The Personality And Work of J.B. Tito). *Mladina*, Lj., Np. 21, May 24, 2004, p. 23. In Godnič’s words: *And he did a lot of good for everybody, and also those churchgoers, and Muslims, and we, who were none* (N. Močnik, 2008, 18).

¹⁶⁹ Celec, 2005, p. 14.

similar association is chaired by the former president of the SFRY Presidency, Raif Dizdarević, and member organizations can be found in all larger towns in Bosnia-Herzegovina (in Sarajevo, Zenica, Velika Kladuša, Bugojno, Travnik, Banja Luka, Doboj, Orašje, Jajce etc.; there are around 30 of them altogether, with a membership of 7000 and a home page at <http://www.tito.ba/start.htm>). All these organizations across former Yugoslavia are now linked through the *Zveza društava Josipa Broza Tita* (Union of Josip Broz Tito Associations), which organizes annual events in Kumrovec. Their activities include commemoration of important anniversaries, maintenance of monuments, organization of lectures, exhibitions, visits to Kumrovec and Dedinje, publication of books and other texts, contact with such societies in other parts etc. Young people within these organizations receive particular attention. Praiseworthy individuals are awarded *Zahvala* (Acknowledgment), a kind of official recognition for their contribution to the cultivation of the memory and legacy of Josip Broz Tito.



Croatia, 2008

Macedonia is especially interesting in this respect. Much like elsewhere, there are several *Citizens associations for the preservation of the memory and work of Josip Broz Tito*, with 11,000 members. The symbols of the Union of these associations are the image of Broz and the Macedonian flag. In addition, there is a political party called *Sojuz na Titovi levi sili* (The Alliance of Tito's Left Forces) which has regularly run in parliamentary and local elections since 2006. It has 3500 registered members and 23 municipal organizations. The leader of both is Slobodan Ugrinovski. The party's election result has been improving: from the 3000 votes it took

at the first elections in 2006, the number rose to 6500 two years later, and they are currently amidst intense preparations for the next election.¹⁷⁰ Its membership structure is diverse both in terms of ethnicity (Macedonians, Albanians and Serbs) and age (slightly more than half the members are middle-aged, one fifth are younger than 30-35, and one fifth older than 60, meaning that this is by no means a party of "retired people").¹⁷¹



Macedonia, 2008

A brief description of its political program would be as follows: working towards the re-establishment and development of all the positive things that existed in socialist Yugoslavia before it disintegrated in 1991.¹⁷² The symbol of the party is Broz's profile set against the red star. Its head office in the center of Skopje is decorated with the current and former Macedonian flags, the Party and Yugoslav flags, and a large photo and sculpture of Broz. The stall in front sells books about him, caps, badges, calendars, party brochures etc. An amusing detail is a light sign reading *Cabare* (*Cabaret*) placed above the entrance to the building housing the Party's head office. The office itself is crammed with pictures of Broz, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Goce Delčev (an early 20th century Macedonian revolutionary), various Tito souvenirs, posters, flags, books and the like. Applicants for member-

¹⁷⁰ Information provided by S. Ugrinovski (in a personal interview August 5, 2008).

¹⁷¹ Information provided by Trajan Nakovski, an official of both organizations (in a personal interview August 5, 2008).

¹⁷² Their view is that the government should be in the hands of the *people, the working class, farmers, young people, students and progressive intellectuals*. They acknowledge the division of Yugoslavia along the republics' borders, but propose a loose federation (with a common currency and army, and free movement of people and goods). The internal affairs platform includes re-introduction of free health care, education, active social policy, worker self-management (whereby the workers and retired people would again become the owners of companies), punishment for tycoons, corrupt individuals, criminals, the introduction of a non-party police force and a small, modern army. Their program highlights the rejection of membership in NATO, which is branded *an aggressor and the global policeman*; they demand the return of Macedonian soldiers from Afghanistan and Iraq. They require a referendum on any scheduled political integration; religion should be confined to religious institutions. (The program of the party, Skopje, December 2005, and an interview with the party officials.)

ship are appraised by a special board. The leading people within the party told me that the current blue membership cards would soon be replaced with new ones rendered in a more suitable color: red. They address each other as *comrade*, which was a rule that I myself had to observe. The party and various societies cultivate the memory of Broz, undertake initiatives for the erection of monuments, organize, in co-operation with the Union of Broz's Associations, ceremonies in Macedonia and excursions to Kumrovec, Dedinje and other places.¹⁷³

Notes in the visitor's books in Kumrovec, Dedinje and at the head office of the neo-Titoist party in Skopje are equally indicative. Some are one-liners, in the style of cheers, others are narrative in character, with some being as long as ten lines. Some visitors give their full names and place of residence, some add a note about the group with which they are visiting (e.g. a school, a veterans organization, a tourist group, a family), while some put down just their signature; the most direct messages are frequently anonymous. Some extol him, others develop a kind of friendly relation and "talk" to him through their messages as if with an old friend. Certain messages are elaborate and precise; others are improvisations, some with spelling errors. Among the favorable messages (not all are such; there are also critical, anti-messages, and even offensive ones, dating particularly from the period of war in Croatia, but their number is not large),¹⁷⁴ one can find both "virtual monologues" and live "virtual dialogues". The former group comprises messages describing or praising Broz in the third person singular, and listing pleasant memories of his times. The latter comprises messages in which writers address him directly in a kindly tone, express "personal" thanks, pledge to him, invite him to come back as if he were alive and so on. For some, Tito is obviously still *alive*, as he apparently was for the Slovenian media in 1980 at the time of his death.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ The Union of Broz's Associations also issues leaflets with the ASNOM (Macedonian Anti-fascist council) resolutions dating from the WWII, which represent the foundations of Macedonia's contemporary sovereignty. The leaflets feature Broz's signature and his photo.

¹⁷⁴ "Clashes" between his fans and opponents on some pages resemble street "graffiti wars."

¹⁷⁵ Delo, Lj. – *Tito je bil, Tito je, Tito bo* (Tito Was, Tito Is, Tito Will Be) (May 5, 1980, p. 3), *Titož žarek bo vsem še dolgo razsvetljeval pot* (Tito's Beam Will Light Our Way For Many Years To Come) (May 9, 1980, p. 9), *Živimo s Titom* (We Live With Tito) (May 10, 1980, front page); Komunist, Ljubljana-Belgrade – *Titovo delo je večno* (Tito's Oeuvre Is Eternal) (May 5, 1980, p. 5), *Tito živi v nas* (Tito Lives In Us) (May 6, 1980, front page), *Tito živi in bo večno živel z nami* (Tito Lives And Will Live With Us For Ever) (May 7, 1980, p. 9), *Vedno bomo Titovi dolžniki* (We Are Indebted To Tito For Ever) (May 8, 1980, p. 12), *Človek, ki ga je imelo rado toliko ljudi, ne bo nikoli umrl* (The Man Loved By So Many People Can Never Die) (May 9, 1980, p. 11); 7D, Maribor – *Vsa ta sila ostaja z njim, Titov duh bo živel naprej* (All That Energy Left

In addition to a signature and a place of residence, people often add a note referring to the image to which they are nostalgically attached: your *pioneer, fighter, worker, brigade-worker* and the like.

Below are several examples of the first, “indirect” type of note. The following are taken from the visitor’s book at his birth house in Kumrovec. *If only we had Tito now* (signature); *Tito was the best man in the world; Comrade Tito still lives in our hearts* (signature); *Help!* (signature). Notes in his mausoleum in Belgrade: *For a giant, in eternity for Tito* (signature); *Thanks to comrade Tito for all he did for an ordinary man* (signature); *I still have great respect for President Tito* (signature); *I’m here for the first time – to say that times with Tito were good times! Despite all that some do today to disclose his bad sides, it is a fact that he was one of the greatest statesmen in history. We should be proud of that!* (signature). Comments in Skopje: *Long live Tito!* (signature); *Nothing but good words for Tito* (signature) *He lives and will live in the hearts of those without rights, those who have been humiliated, and those who are most hard-working* (signature); *Everyone looks for Tito, but he is all around the world* (signature). There are also more “immediate” messages that address him directly: *Long live our Joža* (signature); *Comrade Tito, you’re a legend – thanks for all* (signature); *Tito, you were excellent, and stay like that* (signature) *Comrade Tito, thank you for my happy childhood* (signature); *Dear Tito! We had a good time, an excellent time, in shared Yugoslavia!* (from the visitor’s book in Kumrovec); *All these years on and I still imagine and dream that you’re alive. Respectfully* (signature); *Comrade Tito, thank you for all you gave us* (signature); *I wish your times could come back* (signature); *Old Man, we’d still need you* (signatures); (in Belgrade); *We will for ever carry you in our hearts. I love you.* (signature) (in Skopje).

I would like to draw attention to the literally religious or mystic dimensions of pilgrimage to his “shrines” and events at the ceremonies dedicated to him. It is as if some kind of new folk piety were at work. The divinization of Broz is most obvious at commemorations, where some participants touch his statue in the same way believers would touch a statue of a saint, reliquaries or an icon. This has to do with the law

Behind, The Spirit of Tito Will Live On) (May 8, 1980, p. 7); and Tribuna, Ljubljana – *Taki smo bili s Titom, taki bomo tudi poslej* (We Were Like That With Tito, And We Will Stay Like That After Him) (May 8, 1980, p. 2). The newspaper front pages relating to Broz between 1981 and the end of the 1990s were collected by Jovanovska, 2002, 31-34. For comparison, on May 5, 1980, the New York Post (New York, p. 18) informed its readers about the death of Tito, *last of the great warriors*.

of contact or touch,¹⁷⁶ in the sense of effect on and transmission among things even when direct contact no longer exists (sociologists of religion call this “contagious magic,” which is particularly characteristic of so-called magio-religion). The touch of the sacred transcends distance in time and space, since a believer is at that moment in touch with *those times and peoples*. While studying the celebration of Youth Day in Kumrovec, the ethnologist Marijana Belaj (2006, 207–214) noted that people addressed, greeted, stroked and even kissed the statue of Tito (his coat, legs, pedestal etc.).¹⁷⁷ Some bow and cross themselves, others confide in him saying things like *Hey, Old Man, if only you could know what happened to us*; still others take photos with him; some even begin to cry, while one “faithful” woman muttered the names of her friends while caressing the statue: *This is for Radenović, this for Majda etc.*¹⁷⁸ The visitors also touch his life-size photo standing at the entrance to the exhibition room in Brijuni, or, to be more precise, they place their hand against his right hand raised in the gesture of greeting and have themselves photographed in that pose. As a result, this portion of the photo has thinned, and the color has come off, leaving behind the shape of visitors’ palms and fingers.



Brijuni, 2008

In a small town in Bosnia with a predominantly Croatian population, one Broz fan (who wanted to remain anonymous), made a real shrine to Broz in his garden facing a local street. Ten years ago he placed there a large discarded bust of Broz, which he carefully restored and repainted (in

¹⁷⁶ See, e.g., Komel, 2008b.

¹⁷⁷ Kunzle (1997, 78–87) writes about similar eclecticism and religious connotations in the representations of Che, who has been turned into *Chesucristo*.

¹⁷⁸ The explanation given by one of the participants to the author of the text was as follows: *Listen, this is a deity. He is a deity. And we will touch him.* (Belaj, 2006, 213).

the early 1990s the bust was thrown out by the municipal gallery in a nearby town). Next to it stands another, smaller statue of a Partisan fighter, and the two are perched on a metal base surrounded by pots of fresh and plastic flowers. The owner especially decorates the shrine on the day of Broz's birth and death. Many passers-by heading towards the village graveyard past his garden stop by the monument and ask for permission to place some flowers or say a prayer, crossing themselves before they go on.¹⁷⁹

I have identified in these scenes two of the three main forms of ritualistic relationship with the sacred (see Caze-neuve, 1986, 227–245): prayer (swearing that *we will not divert from his path, that even after Tito there will be Tito, that he still lives in our hearts etc.*) and offerings (candles, wreaths, flowers).¹⁸⁰ The relationship between the sacred and the profane can also be recognized in the practice of *Youth Relay Races*, past and present. The relay race, too, is a form of offering, a Maussean reciprocal exchange of goods and civilities (a give-take relationship, “we to you, you to all of us”) which connects vertically and horizontally (relay racers among themselves as well as themselves with the receiver of the baton). At these rallies, speeches, songs, recitations etc. are frequently accompanied with cheers such as, *He is alive*. Many notes in visitor’s books include syntagms such as *eternal glory, for ever, in eternity, for ever great, Tito is alive, for ever yours etc.* Billboards at events dedicated to him and visitor’s books frequently contain calls for his reincarnation, or these are even voiced publicly: *Tito – Be born again and bring back Yugoslavia! He was, is and will be with us for ever; Yesterday, today, tomorrow – Tito; If there is eternity and if it has a name, the name of eternity is Tito; Tito lived, Tito lives, and Tito will live;* or, simply *Come back, you the legend!* The last words one sees when leaving the exhibition space in Brijuni are Miroslav Krleža’s words, *Tito is passing into legend from where he seemingly arrived.* Schwandner-Sievers (2008) documented the following response in her study of titostalgia among Kosovo Albanians: *My granddad had a watch that*

¹⁷⁹ My informant asked me not to reveal the name of the place, because the sculpture is easily accessible, so he feared that vandals could steal it and sell it as scrap iron. Although the majority of villagers and passers-by are supportive of this small shrine, he was the target of sharp criticism on several occasions, along the lines of, *Why do you celebrate that criminal?* Every room in his house contains at least one image of Broz: pictures, calendar, a tapestry made by his wife, clippings etc. The interview was held on September 12, 2008.

¹⁸⁰ But not the third element, i.e. sacrifice. However, many sacrifices were made during his times, ranging from sacrifices during the national liberation struggle, to those by volunteer workers rebuilding the country after the war and *building socialism.*

was given to him by Tito, because he was a high communist officer. When Tito died his watch stopped.

A similarly intimate attitude towards late Broz, actually towards his impersonator, was expressed by the people of Belgrade in Želimir Žilnik's film *Tito po drugi put medju Srbinima* (Tito Among The Serbs For The Second Time). The director sent his impersonator, the Serbian actor Mićko Ljubičić, into the streets of Belgrade where people addressed him as if they were speaking to Tito himself, praised him, criticized him, and shook hands with him; he gave autographs and received flowers, etc.¹⁸¹ The Slovenian impersonator Godnič, relates similar episodes. In his words, in theaters he never experienced them identifying with the role more than I (...) *I have it at my fingertips, but when you see that they behave as if I were the real one (...) for example, when a woman comes to you, shaking, when she speaks to you as if you were him, that happened countless times!* (N. Močnik, 2008, 4).



Slovenia, 2002

The ironic rocker, Rambo Amadeus, also talks with Broz in his song *Balkan Boy* (of course, in his version it is Broz who approaches him with, *Hi, Rambo, respect to you, how are you?*).¹⁸² For years now, a man from Montenegro has placed an obituary for comrade Tito in the Montenegrin newspapers on May 4, the day of his death.¹⁸³ Some people

¹⁸¹ He talked to them about the things that most worried them at the time: the war, the economic crisis, international sanctions, the responsibility for all these evils, ways to solve the problems, and they also compared life *then and now*. A curious incident occurred during the shooting: the director and the film crew were detained at the police station. "Tito" then came in, demanding, in his authoritarian voice, that they be let go, and the police indeed let them go. (Biro, 2006, 105, 106). Godnič also regularly stages a similar provocation, a less serious one but still provocation. Each of his arrivals on scene in the role of Tito is accompanied by the playing of the former Yugoslav anthem, and the viewers invariably stand up (N. Močnik, 2008, 5).

¹⁸² Rambo answers: *Fuck, Tito, why didn't you live for two hundred years. Or at least two hundred and fifty...* Live album "Koncert v KUD France Prešeren," VinilManija Records, Ljubljana, 1997.

¹⁸³ The one that appeared in the Podgorica newspaper *Vijesti* in 2004 contained the text: *Comrade Tito, as long as we were comrades, we were also gentlemen.* (Tarlač,

carry his photo in their wallets or keep it in a family album as a special treasure.

Titostalgia is obviously individualized and privatized. For 15 years now, one fan of Broz from a place near the town of Gornji Milanovac in Serbia, has been celebrating *slava* (the honoring of family's patron saint among Serbian Orthodox Christians) on November 29, *Republic Day*, calling it *Titovdan* (originally *Nikoljan*, in honor of St. Nikola, celebrated on December 19). His goal is to *preserve the memory of Josip Broz Tito and Yugoslavia, when all enjoyed freedom and economic development*.¹⁸⁴ His compatriot from Vojvodina established the *fourth Yugoslavia*, a *mini-Yugoslavia*, on his estate. He also organizes a relay race to the *House of Flowers*.¹⁸⁵ As mentioned earlier, many Bosnians say *he is Tito* when they want to denote an important, successful man. The phrase *Tita mi* (I swear by Tito) is meant to have the same effect as, *on my word of honor*. In an article about the most favorite months, a Slovenian journalist found it important to mention that the most favorite month among Slovenes, May, was the *month of love (and of labor and Tito)*.¹⁸⁶

It is interesting to compare (in)direct addresses found in visitor's guest books and elsewhere with the slogans on T-shirts featuring his image, meaning the situations in which "he" addresses the readers. Just in passing, according to some estimates 70,000 of these t-shirts are sold a year, and they are also available abroad.¹⁸⁷ There is one interesting detail: the analysis of 45 t-shirts featuring Broz's image or name (in various colors and font sizes) coming from various parts of former Yugoslavia showed that in these situations Broz is

2004, *ibid.*).

¹⁸⁴ Beta: Krsna slava – Titovdan (Slava Called Titovdan). Danas, Belgrade, November 30, 2007, p. 36.

¹⁸⁵ STA: "Mini Titove štafete" (Mini Relay Races For Tito). 24ur.com, Ljubljana, May 25, 2005. A *mini Yugoslavia*, or *Yugoland* was established by Blaško Gabrić in 2003, on his estate near Subotica in the northern Serbian province of Vojvodina. This entrepreneur in his late sixties stated that *he had already lost his homeland once, and he did not want to lose it again*. He plans to shape it into a relief and make a profit from it, and he also plans to build a sports and entertainment complex. Guests are welcomed by a Broz double and an orchestra playing the Yugoslav anthem; they can visit a museum, listen to Yugoslav music or watch Yugoslav films. The items on sale are products from those times, and it is also possible to buy Yugoslav citizenship (see e.g.. Volčič, 2007, 29, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/bringing-backtito790002.html>, accessed on September 1, 2008). The program also includes a *Youth Day celebration* complete with the the arrival of the relay baton.

¹⁸⁶ N. Pal: Le čakaj na maj (Just Wait For May). Več, Ljubljana, April 29, 2005, p. 13.

¹⁸⁷ So asserts Josko Broz, who thought that they were *vulgar* (Br. Jokić, Kdo lahko varuje Titovo podobo in delo/Who Can Protect Tito's Memory And Work). Delo, Ljubljana, May 29, 2007, p. 16). A manufacturer of T-shirts and badges with images of Broz, Che and the sickle and hammer assesses that their buyers come from *all generations, the older ones that lived under the socialist regime, and the younger ones, who do it out of spite, you know, punks and so on.* (Jurković, 2006, 291, 292).

less frequently depicted as a protagonist who speaks or communicates something – here he is more impersonal and serious, and speaks like a sovereign. For example, he says *I'm watching you!* or *I'm watching you, majku vam božiju!*¹⁸⁸; or, obviously addressing the new ruling elite, *Your time is running out!* More frequently, the slogan is just descriptive, and the majority of T-shirts bear only his image and/or signature. T-shirts therefore tend much more to express the owner's (and manufacturer's) opinion on Broz (and Yugoslavia), than to allow Broz to "address" readers "himself."

BROZ'S "ACTIVE" OR "PASSIVE" ROLE ON T-SHIRTS

Broz addresses ("active role")	4	9 %
Broz (or Yugoslavia) are described ("passive role")	17	38 %
No text (only Broz's image, signature or other related text)	24	53 %
TOTAL	45	100 %

All that has been said so far should be supplemented with what are probably the most accurate indicators of a nostalgic culture: the results of various opinion surveys. I will start with the survey conducted in the summer of 1998 in the Yugoslavia of the second Tito, i.e. Milošević's Yugoslavia. Broz was selected as the greatest Yugoslav politician of the 20th century by the greatest number of respondents (32.4%), most of whom were from the northern Serbian province of Vojvodina and from Montenegro. He was followed by the politician Nikola Pašić (21.1%), and the then president Slobodan Milošević (9.2%).¹⁸⁹ In another survey in 2004, conducted in the same country by then already renamed Serbia and Montenegro, the question was, *Who most contributed to the reputation of Serbia in the past two hundred years?* Broz was cited by 18% of respondents, the scientist Nikola Tesla by 14.2%, and the assassinated PM Zoran Đindjić by 8.4%.¹⁹⁰ In a Croatian poll conducted by the daily newspaper Jutarnji list in 1998, Broz was selected as the "most important Croat of the millennium," followed by the then President Franjo Tuđman and Nikola

¹⁸⁸ *Majku vam božiju* is a mild curse expressing irritation.

¹⁸⁹ Ri: Tito – "najveći državnik 20. stoljeća" (Tito – The Greatest Statesman of the 20th Century). Vjesnik, Zagreb, July 15, 1998, p. 29.

¹⁹⁰ DPA agency news: Tito oblikoval podobo Srbije (Tito Shaped The Image Of Serbia). Delo, Ljubljana, March 11, 2004, p. 12. Interestingly, when asked who most harmed the global reputation of Serbia, 53.6% answered that it was Slobodan Milošević.

Tesla.¹⁹¹ One year earlier, in 1997, in a poll conducted by the Croatian national television station, 70% of respondents agreed that Broz was a “great statesman” (Perica, 2002, 208). In 2000, Broz and the charismatic Stjepan Radić were chosen by almost one-third of respondents, while President Tuđman received 16% of the votes.¹⁹² In the poll conducted in 2003, Broz again topped the list with 26.4% of votes, followed by Nikola Tesla (20.7%), the astronomer and physicist Rudjer Bošković (8%), the writer Miroslav Krleža (6.6%) and President Tuđman (4.4%).¹⁹³ A poll conducted by one veterans association in Croatia showed that 85% of respondents knew the year of Broz’s death, while only 11% knew President Tuđman’s year of birth.¹⁹⁴ In Bosnia-Herzegovina, he was assessed as a “positive historical personality” by 59% of respondents.¹⁹⁵ As to Macedonia, I am not aware of such polls so far.¹⁹⁶



an apartment,
Ljubljana, 2006

However, there were many such polls held in Slovenia. In the Slovenian Public Opinion survey, Broz ranked 6th in 1995 and 4th in 1998 and 2003 on the list of the most im-

¹⁹¹ Najznačajniji Hrvat tisućljeća je Josip Broz Tito (The Most Important Croat of The Millennium Is Josip Broz Tito). Jutarnji list, Zagreb, July 18, 1998, p. 28–35.

¹⁹² B. Požun: Tito is Dead...Long Live Tito!. Central European Review, year. 2, No. 19, 15. 5. 2000.

¹⁹³ Tito je najveći Hrvat u povijesti (Tito The Greatest Croat In History). Nacional, Zagreb, January 6, 2004, p. 46-49.

¹⁹⁴ The commissioner of the survey was horrified to learn that the Croats knew more about the WWII hero Boško Buha than about the first Croatian victim in the war with Serbia, or about the beginning of operation Oluja (Storm) during the same war. One among them drew attention to the *shamefully poor knowledge of Croatian history*, and the alleged marginalization of recent history. D. Krnić: Hrvati više znaju o Bošku Buhi nego o Josipu Joviću (Croats Better Informed About Boško Buha Than About Josip Jović). Slobodna Dalmacija, Split, July 29, 2008, p. 6.

¹⁹⁵ Požun, 2000, ibid.

¹⁹⁶ T. Nakovski also confirmed that such surveys did not exist. In his estimate, Broz is a positive historical person for around 70% of Macedonians (a personal interview, August 5, 2008).

portant personalities in Slovenian history (Toš et al., 1999, 554, 866; Toš et al., 2004, 468). In 1995, 83.6% of respondents assessed his historical role as “very positive” or “positive.” In 1998, this figure was 84.3%, and in 2003 it rose to an awesome 90% (Toš et al., 1999, 563, 870; Toš idr., 2004, 473). Similar results emerged from surveys commissioned by various Slovenian media. In polls for the *Mladina* weekly, Broz was considered a “positive personality” by 67.2% of respondents in 1995, 63.9% in 1998, 79.3% in 2001, 79.5% in 2004, and 81.4% in 2007 (he was a “negative” personality for only 10%, 10.2%, 7.2%, 12.1% and 10.6% in respective years).¹⁹⁷ In a poll conducted by the *Delo* daily in September 1999, he ranked 3rd on the list of the most important personalities who marked the last hundred years of Slovenian history (the first was Leon Štukelj, the Olympic medal winner, and the second Milan Kučan, Slovenia’s former President), and 4th on the list of people who marked the last one thousand years (after the poet France Prešeren, the Protestant priest and writer Primož Trubar and the priest and writer Anton Martin Slomšek).¹⁹⁸ In 2000, his government was described as “excellent” or “good” by 45.1% of respondents (and as “bad” by only 10%).¹⁹⁹ On the 25th anniversary of his death, the Ljubljana daily *Delo* presented survey results showing that he was considered a “positive personality” by 69% of respondents (and a “negative” one by 24%), while in a poll conducted by POP TV, 75% of respondents thought that he was a “positive” personality and 25% that he was a negative personality.²⁰⁰ In the tele-voting during the panel discussion program *Vroči stol* (Hot Chair) on Channel One of the Slovenian national broadcaster, in response to the question, “Was Josip Broz Tito a criminal or a hero?” the “hero” defeated the “criminal” by 65% to 35%.

In 1995, he was a positive personality for 86.6% of respondents in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 42.7% of respondents in Croatia, and 39% of the citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.²⁰¹ In my survey among the Yugoslav diaspora in New York and Philadelphia in 2005, where the question was “Who were the three most positive figures from public life and popular culture in former Yugoslavia?” Broz was

¹⁹⁷ Hrastar, Pirc, 2004, *ibid.*, and B. Repe: Lik in delo tovariša Tita (The Personality And Work Of Comrade Tito). *Mladina*, Ljubljana, May 19, 2007, p. 46.

¹⁹⁸ D. Košir: Prešeren za tisočletje, Štukelj za zadnjih sto let (Prešeren For The Millennium, Štukelj For The Last Hundred Years). *Delo*, Ljubljana, September 22, 1999, p. 11.

¹⁹⁹ Požun, 2000, *ibid.*

²⁰⁰ POP TV 24ur.com Polls, March 2005, accessed August 12, 2005.

²⁰¹ Hrastar, Pirc, 2004, *ibid.*

selected by 45% of respondents, the actor Rade Šerbedžija by 15% of respondents, the last Yugoslav PM Ante Marković by 12.5%, and the Nobel prize winner for literature, Ivo Andrić, by 10% (Velikonja, 2006, 106). The surveys therefore show that generally Broz ranks among the more positive historical persons, and the same holds true – to the surprise and even horror of many – for some other former socialist leaders as well. As if they, too, promised in the “Terminator” style, *I’ll be back*, so they victoriously return to mass culture and high positions on the various top-lists.²⁰²

²⁰² Those who had been *written off* seem to be returning. I start with Stalin. Fifty years after his death, in 2003, 36% of Russians still thought of him in positive terms, compared to 29% for whom he was a negative figure (T. Kuzio: Attitudes to Soviet Past Reflect Nostalgia, Pragmatism. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newsline, Praga, Vol. 7, No. 153, 13. 8. 2003). Today, the Russians feel nostalgia for the “great power” and “welfare” of the Brezhnev era, and for the literary and political heroes (ranging from Peter the Great, Generals Suvorov and Kutuzov, Marshal Zhukov to Pushkin, Mendelejev, Gagarin and Korolev) (B. Dubin, The West, the Border, and the Unique Path – Symbolism of the “Other” in the Political Mythology of Contemporary Russia. Russian Politics and Law, Armonk, NY, year 40, No. 2, 2002, p. 20, 21). Therefore, it is not surprising that a 2004 poll showed that for the Russians, Peter the Great, Lenin and Stalin were among the greatest men in their history (R. Pipes: Flight from Freedom. The Moscow Times, August 9, 2004). In the 2006 Yearbook of Russian Public Opinion, 42% of respondents assessed Stalin’s role in the history of their country as “fully positive,” or “partly positive.” On the other hand, 37% of respondents assessed his role as “partly negative” or “very negative” (Russian Public Opinion. Levada, Moskva, 2006, p. 188). In the latest poll, Stalin is ranked second on the list of the most important figures in Russian history, closely following the most popular saint Sergej Radonezki, who leads by only a slight margin. Lenin is ranked 3rd, and Zukov 4th (<http://www.nameofrussia.ru/doc.html?id=2582>, accessed on Aug. 20, 2008). The Hungarian socialist leader, János Kádár, was ranked 1st among the most important Hungarians of the last century, and 3rd among the most important figures of the millennium (B. Nóvé: Memoria dei tempi dell’autocrazia o autocrazia della memoria. In: F. Modzejevski, M. Szajderman /ed./: Nostalgia ff Sagi sul rimpianto del comunismo. Mondadori Editore, 2003, p. 223; L. Andor: Hungary on the Road to EU. Praeger Publishers, Westport, London, 2000, p. 7). A surprising 46% of Poles thought that their socialist leader during the 1970s, Edward Girek, was the man who had done most for their country, ahead of Lech Wałęsa, who was chosen by only 39% of respondents (V. Gomez: Nostalgia for the Communist past. The Agonist, www.scoop.agonist.org/story/2004/11/17/7179/1885, 17. 11. 2004, accessed on November 29, 2004). The Romanians are more ambivalent when it comes to Ceaușescu, given that roughly the same proportion of respondents regarded him as the best and the worst leader in their history (L. Boia: Romania, Borderland of Europe. Reaktion Books, London, 2001, p. 234; see also <http://www.ceausescu.org/>). Much like, let’s see, zombies in Hollywood movies, the socialist leaders cannot be dismissed just like that; they appear to be very much *live corpses*.

V. (COUNTER)EXPLANATIONS –

While the “locksmith” was president, all doors were open to us!

And smart he was, one-legged cool mate.

Lied much, mother fucker, but we all loved him...

A quote from Srđan Dragojević's film *Lepa sela lepo gore* (Pretty Villages, Pretty Flames)²⁰³

How should we interpret the facts presented above? As has been established in the introductory chapter, nostalgia is not only a complex phenomenon, but also a contradictory one, which combines various narratives and practices. The only thing clear is that this strong, enduring affection for *Comrade Tito* cannot be explained in simple terms, as a consequence of one or a few factors. Below I present and reject several such generalized explanations of both materialized and non-materialized titostalgia. In each case, I first present an argument and then my counter-argument, because each argument is true to a certain extent, but none provides a comprehensive explanation.

ARGUMENT ONE. The “return of Tito” is a consequence of the catastrophic events over the past two decades or so: war, slaughter, destruction, destitution, economic and social underdevelopment, political crises etc. *Everything has collapsed*, was a resigned comment by a Kosovo man who actually summed up the opinion of many others. Since Broz is idealized as a symbol of friendship, solidarity, prosperity and security, it is seemingly self-evident why people long for that era. Consequently, one would expect to find the strongest expressions of titostalgia and yugonostalgia in those parts of former Yugoslavia (ironically named *Titonic* by the former member of the Praxis group of Yugoslav marxists, the Serbian scholar, Svetozar Stojanović)²⁰⁴ where people suffered most and which today radically lag behind their neighbors. In principle, the worse the present seems compared to the past, the stronger nostalgia is. Dissatisfaction and despair inspire and provoke nostalgia, and the past appears a safe haven when confronted with present-day problems.

²⁰³ A man who “talked” to Broz in Žilnik's documentary said something similar: *He was good, that one. Small thief, but good. Now, there are many of them.* The motif is obviously popular, given that it also appears in Đorđić's comedy: *Comrade Tito, you stole/ but also gave a bit. / Those now steal, /but give nothing!* (2005, 43) and in Dapčević's song: *All lied to us as much as they could, but he was the best liar of all...*

²⁰⁴ See the book entitled *Na srpskom delu Titonika* (The Serbian Part of Titonic) (Filip Višnjić – Centar za socialna istraživanja, Belgrade, 2000).

While this is true, it does not explain the strong presence of titostalgic elements, narratives and practices in Slovenia, which to a large extent escaped the tragic fate of most other former Yugoslav republics and has achieved significant economic and political progress during the past two decades, despite many serious problems. Obviously, there are other factors influencing nostalgia, as well. In addition to diachronic causality, it is necessary to also take into account synchronic interrelationship, suggests Jameson (2005, 88).

ARGUMENT TWO. The enigmatic veneration of the late leader is actually the nostalgia of older generations for *past times*, their youth, enthusiasm and ideals, meaning the nostalgia of former *Tito youth* who lived the best years of their life when Yugoslavia was at its peak and Titoism was a mature phenomenon. *It will never be better than it was then* is a statement I frequently heard in various parts of former Yugoslavia. It is believed that his fans mainly come from the ranks of “ordinary people,” who either met him at one of the many events or receptions organized for children and young people, or were award winners, relay runners, his co-fighters, co-workers and so on. Broz was undoubtedly a populist. He had a feeling for people, loved to mix with them, and in contrast to some of his contemporaries, was not a cabinet-leader. An illustrative piece of information is the average age of the membership of various Tito associations in Croatia: sixty-four.²⁰⁵ Judging from the interviews and conversations, but also various other sources, I can establish four “common denominators” underlying Broz’s present popularity with these people: anti-Fascism and the liberation struggle; industrial and social modernization; peace; and global reputation and recognition.

Yet, age is not the exclusive factor in nostalgia. Naturally, in one of its forms nostalgia is a “positive memory” of the past, but titostalgia can also be found among the younger generation that was born when Tito was already (long) dead, or the generation that only vaguely remembers him. They, too “find in the past what they miss in the present” (Pečjak, 2006, 47). How, then, can the traditional definition of nostalgia as something *personally experienced* explain teenagers’ wearing of T-shirts with Tito’s image, or self-organized

²⁰⁵ Their chairman Badovinac would like to see the average age reduced to 54 soon (Podkrižnik, 2005, *ibid.*). Faraguna explains (in a personal interview held on July 3, 2008) that older people, former Partisan fighters and supporters of Yugoslavia, were indeed the founders of these organizations, but proudly adds that many younger people have joined them recently.

student excursions to Kumrovec or Belgrade, where all the participants were born after 1980?²⁰⁶

DAN MLADOSTI

Izlet v Kumrovec

V soboto, 20. Maja.2006 ob 8.00

Odhod izpred parkirišča FDV! *Cena: 1500 SIT*

Kontakt in informacije: Marko (041 520325) in Boris (040472452)

Prijavite se lahko tudi preko spleta: soufdv@gmail.com



- IGRE BREZ MEJA

- KONCERT

- PO POTEH TITA

Vabljeni!

Ljubljana, 2006

How should we understand the statement by the founder of the *Zavod nostalgia* (Nostalgia Institute), a passionate collector of yugonostalgic objects and author of the initiative to establish the museum of nostalgia in Ljubljana, who says, *Tito is an icon with which I grew up, and I cannot simply dismiss him. Some like him, others don't, but for me he is simply part of me,*)²⁰⁷ knowing that he is today in his early thirties? Or a T-shirt made for the youth festival Kunigunda in Velenje in 2008, featuring the communist star and the name *Titovo Velenje*, which is the former name of the town, which was renounced by these young people's parents in the 1980s?

Nostalgia in young people should be understood differently than that in older people, that is, as neostalgia. While some young people are obviously aware that they do not know him at all and that they could not possibly know him,²⁰⁸ others perceive him as if they really remembered him and preserved him in their memory. A survey on yugonostalgia among Slovenian youth showed that they imagined "a secure, stable, just and united Yugoslavia, simple, satisfied and non-ambitious people who cultivate the values of collectivism, solidarity and equality" (Pečjak, 2006, 46). Similar viewpoints could be gleaned from the conversations

²⁰⁶ The invitations begin with *Do you still remember, comrades, the infinite derby between Zvezda and Partizan, the annual laying of wreaths in the House of Flowers on May 4, the day of Tito's death, Slobodan's "I can't hear you well," the fascinating smell of pleskavica and other delicacies of Balkan cuisine?* The excursions also include a visit to the grave of the best known Yugoslav of all times, Josip Broz Tito. Another excursion is entitled *Youth Day*, including *Games Without Limits, a concert and Along Tito's Paths*.

²⁰⁷ Gruden, 2008, *ibid.*

²⁰⁸ In the film *Rane* (Wounds) by the Serbian director Srdan Dragojević, dedicated to the generation born after Tito's death, a teenager from Belgrade describes the "change of idols" in his father: *Dad was first crazy about some Croat called Tito. Later on he got hooked on Sloba, like everybody else around here.*

with young Croatians who attended the *Youth Day* celebration in Kumrovec. One among them gave a typical answer stating that it was *undoubtedly better in the past, life was more relaxed, more human and less stressful. Men were co-workers, not competitors* (Kovačić, 2006, 328). The author of a Slovenian web page dedicated to Broz, who was three years old when Broz died, says that for him yugonostalgia is *a memory of the time before Slovenia became a sovereign country, the time when Tito was still alive, the world was different and different values were in place.*²⁰⁹ Some preserve at home the memories of the ceremonial admittance to the pioneer organization.²¹⁰ Still others are fully aware of “firsthand” nostalgia as compared to “mediated” neostalgia: *I can hardly imagine anyone seeing himself as yugonostalgic unless he has experienced it it is one thing to say something, and quite another to stand behind what you say* (Pečjak, 2006, 47).

It is from here that ARGUMENT THREE arises, namely that titostalgia (and conversly yugonostalgia) among young people is the consequence of a mechanical passing down of positive memories through generations. Titostalgic parents presumably educate their children in this spirit, and their children presumably simply accept it.²¹¹

Once again, I find this explanation too simplified, because it ignores the gap between the values and production of parents' culture and those of the younger generation's culture, a situation which lacks virtually any linearity in modern, fast-changing societies. Unlike their parents, many young people of today think of Tito outside any context, seeing him as a completely new figure. Some of them are critical and skeptical of any form of yugonostalgia or titostalgia. (In line with this, one editorial in a youth journal rejects the revival of *Youth Day* because, *given that the president is dead, there is no point in such an event, and the real meaning of such celebrations died with Josip Broz*).²¹²

ARGUMENT FOUR. In patricentric (hmm, titocentric?) Yugoslav ideology, Broz embodied practically every character: an unlearned peasant boy, a precarious proletarian, an ordinary soldier, a captive, a political prisoner, a victorious

²⁰⁹ Repnik, *ibid.*

²¹⁰ One respondent says, *I have the Yugoslav flag on the wall, and a relief with Tito ... I keep this for myself, in a way; that's one part of me* (Pečjak, 2006, 47).

²¹¹ ‘Cos you had a good time, I hear about it at home, was how a young man in his twenties explained his nostalgia for socialism to Broz's impersonator Godnič. (N. Močnik, 2008, 11). Another young titoist from Croatia said, *If I were born in 1965, I'd be the happiest man in the world.* (Kovačić, 2006, 331).

²¹² N. Došenović, V. Brkić: *Mladost iz naftalina* (Youth Out Of Mothballs). Klin, Ljubljana, May 2008, p. 3.

commander-in-chief, a globally renowned statesman and, inevitably, a bon vivant, a hedonist, a womanizer, and a *real macho*.²¹³ He was simultaneously a *typical Balkan man*, a *typical Central European* and a *typical cosmopolitan*. He started out as a member of the lower class, then rose to the petty middle class, and eventually to the upper class, actually the highest. Within the post-war political imaginary he was identified with his state, *Tito's Yugoslavia*, and all its citizens (at least according to one popular slogan of the past – *We are all Tito!*). His notorious political contemporaries – Hitler, Ante Pavelić, Draža Mihajlović, young King Petar II Karađorđević, later Stalin as well, and even some among his co-fighters-turned-opponents, for example Milovan Đilas, were presented as his antagonistic counterparts, and Broz emerged a winner from every conflict with them.²¹⁴ His political acumen, tactical wisdom, military ingenuity, but also affability, charm, and even physical endurance and vitality were highlighted.²¹⁵ It is possible to synthesize all these vignettes into two main ones: in the first, he appears as a *great leader*, a successful, unwavering and just politician, photographed in the company of top world leaders, crowned heads and Hollywood stars, living in immense luxury, hunting, playing with tamed leopards, navigating his yacht, etc. In the second, he is “one of us,” a *man of the people*, shown in informal situations, for example, picking fruit, taking photos, swimming, playing chess, playing a piano, shaping metal, dancing the *kolo*, and chatting to ordinary people, workers, children and soldiers.²¹⁶ This inflation of a leader’s images and his “phony closeness” supposedly facilitate people’s identification with him; that is how one could summarize the simplified rationalization of affection for a living or late politician. The more, the better, it seems.

Yet even this explanation is not sufficiently convincing, knowing that the simultaneous humanization and

²¹³ In America, this would be called *The American Dream*. Actually, it is one of the fundamental liberal myths about the infinite possibilities of vertical mobility – for an individual, not for a class or a group of people – according to which anyone can achieve anything, provided that *he/she has talent and puts in enough effort*.

²¹⁴ For his admirers, he is, naturally, better than any of his successors, i.e. post-socialist politicians. One among them says, *My dear Tito, many imitate you but none can hold a candle to you* (in the visitors book in Dedinju).

²¹⁵ Let me mention just one among the seemingly less important elements of this image, that is, depictions of Broz with animals: playing as a child with pets (a poodle, leopards in Brijuni), making use of them in his work (riding a white horse, his loyal dog Lux allegedly saved his life in WWII, protecting him with its body from a grenade), and conquering wild animals as a hunter (proudly posing with bears, wild boars etc.).

²¹⁶ A young Croatian Titoist says, *Don't know, I think he is original because he was everything, there is not anything that he was not. He tasted everything, prison, he also was some kind of leader...* (Kovačić, 2006, 335).

exclusivization of contemporary politicians is not a new propaganda trick. Virtually all of them are “painted” in this way; all are simultaneously *great leaders* and *suburban barbers*, to use Charlie Chaplin’s brilliantly stylized figures from “The Great Dictator” (1940). Remember the images of the charismatic Franz Joseph, as a glorious and sumptuous Habsburg, on the one hand, and an ordinary man with whom one could chat about the most trivial everyday subjects, on the other;²¹⁷ or the “secular magic of monarchy” surrounding the English royal family, which is presented as coldly supercilious, aristocratically luxurious and at the same time simply human, middle-class (Cannadine, 1995); or the self-legitimization of the Karadžorđević family as *crowned plebeians*, who never concealed their simple origin but, on the contrary, exploited this for their own advantage (presumably that was why they could be more sensitive to the needs of ordinary people!). The same holds true of certain “uncrowned heads,” contemporary politicians, such as Jörg Haider (Ottomeyer, 2000), Silvio Berlusconi and Umberto Bossi (Velikonja, 2003b, 53, 54). These examples speak for themselves ; these people are untouchable, but at any one time near-at-hand; somewhere far away, but among us. They are something special, but also the same as we are (see Barthes, 1993, 91–93).

Moreover, any emphasis on the celebrity chic surrounding Broz and his life in the lap of luxury at a time when he was the leader of a developing country that was more poor than not, is of dubious explanatory value. One would imagine that, in a society where egalitarianism and communitarism were both a pre-modern tradition and a socialist propaganda maxim, his blatant monarchic extravagancy would be seen as a drawback rather than a positive trait. It is interesting that today’s nostalgics do not hold it against him, although they, much like the wider society in post-socialist countries, evaluate negatively contemporary upstarts, taycoons, profiteers and people who have become rich and famous overnight. This double criterion is usually justified humorously, along the lines of, *Tito stole but he also gave; those today steal but give nothing.*

ARGUMENT FIVE. He was, and still is, esteemed for his political originality.²¹⁸ However, Broz’s Yugoslavism was just one form of the wider and older South Slavic supra-na-

²¹⁷ See J.-P. Bled, Franc Jožef. Mlad. knjiga, Ljubljana, 1990.

²¹⁸ A respondent from Bosnia told me that *for ordinary people the then political system was the best in global terms*, and that *there will never be any better system anywhere.*

tional ideology, i.e. Balkan pan-Slavism, originating with Ivan Franjo Jukić and Ljudevit Gaj in the first half of the 19th century (Illyrism, various other Yugoslavisms). In much the same way, socialism as a political system existed before Broz's time and evolved, after WWII, elsewhere in Eastern Europe as well and beyond it. Mass rallies and various cultural-sport-political events resembling *Youth Day* are a regular part of the ritual repertoire of every authoritarian group: the Church, the state, political parties etc. Just think of the opening of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. And last but not least, many important elements of the Broz propaganda engineering were not without precedent. In 1940, the relay race in honor of the then underage King Petar II of Yugoslavia was held, starting in Kragujevac and crossing all former *banovine* (a *banovina* was an administrative district in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). Towards the end of WWII it was again in Kragujevac that the idea about a relay race in honor of the new leader, Broz, originated. Furthermore, he took over from the Karađorđević family the custom of being the godfather to the ninth or tenth child in a family (see, among others, West, 1996, 197). *We are Tito's, Tito is ours* is a slogan much reminiscent of the one used by the Serbian radicals towards the end of the 19th century (*We belong to Pašić, Pašić belongs to us*) (Čolović, 2004, 140). Finally, Broz's succinct "last will," *Watch over brotherhood and unity, we paid for it in blood!*, is reminiscent of the alleged last words of the Yugoslav King Aleksandar assassinated in 1934 in Marseille: *Watch over Yugoslavia!*²¹⁹ The obsessive brotherhood rhetoric is at any rate part of every corporatism – we can even hear it as part of the ideology of the new eurocentrism.²²⁰

Furthermore, new mass-culture production, souvenir production and use of his image in advertising can be explained by purely commercial motives – Tito simply sells well. This was the guiding principle of the Mirna voda company based in Zagreb, which named its new bottled water *Titov izvor* (Tito Spring). *We named it Tito spring because Joža*

²¹⁹ It was the historian Dejan Djokić who alerted me to this and to other meaningful parallels between Aleksandar's ideological image of *chivalrous king, integrator* and *martyr* and the ideological image of Broz (his Yugoslavism, triumphant commanding of the army during the world wars, authoritarianism, arbitrage among various factions inside the country, "non-aligned" foreign policy, and of course, his closeness to the people and charisma). Personal correspondence, August 28, 2008. See also Kuljić, 2005, 226-228.

²²⁰ See examples in Velikonja, 2005b.

can bring profit, was their explanation.²²¹ The name was proposed to them by an advertising company aiming to bring a breath of fresh air to the market. The commercialization of Tito is by no means an exception. Other charismatic leaders or personalities can be found in similar roles, for example, Che (on cigarette packets, vodka bottles, ice cream and bikinis), Stalin (on glasses and in the shape of a candle), Mao (on watches and tags), Gorbachev (a vodka label), and Atatürk (found practically everywhere across the symbolic landscape of the Turkish state).²²² All this adds up to a genuine nostalgia industry. Volčič (2007, 21) argues that the use of Broz's image in advertising is "perhaps the final sign that Slovenia had become a full-fledged consumer society freed from anxiety of sliding back toward its socialist past."

Tito sells well, no doubt, and even earns capital gains, but many of the objects and arrangements mentioned earlier are home-made and intended, as their creators claim, *for use in the privacy of one's home*. By the same token, many similar activities and events ("pilgrimages" to Kumrovec or to the *House of Flowers*, his mausoleum in Belgrade) have no commercial value whatsoever and are not profit-oriented. A large part of this production follows the *DIY* principle. In support of this thesis, just think of the messages in visitor's books, most of which are very intimate, introverted and self-purposed, or the earlier mentioned satirical arrest warrants listing his "crimes." Titostalgia is not only an effective marketing trick, but also a typical phenomenon of "reflective nostalgia" as defined by Boym (2001, 41–55).²²³

ARGUMENT SEVEN. The posthumous informal "rehabilitation" of Broz is just one among the presently popular obsessions and fascinations with the past, or pastism, to put it concisely. The spontaneous toying with and replaying of history is a strategy frequently used by post-modern narratives ranging from media culture to arts, all adding to the



an apartment,
eastern Bosnia, 2008

²²¹ See R. Kajzer: Blagovna znamka Tito (Tito Trademark). Delo, Ljubljana, May 21, 2005, p. 32, and J.Z./STA: Tito se še vedno dobro prodaja (Tito Still Sells Well). Delo on-line, Lj., May 16, 2005, accessed on August 12, 2005. They plan to export bottled water primarily to non-aligned countries, where Tito's name still rules. The Bosnian town of Jajce, the birthplace of the second Yugoslavia in November 1943, entertains a similar idea. They see a window of opportunity in nostalgic events held in late November on the anniversary of the foundation of Yugoslavia, which have recently attracted a large number of participants including delegations from all post-Yugoslav republics, cultural groups and veterans' associations.

²²² In the words of M. Lacey (2007, *ibid.*), "In fact, 40 years after his death Che is as much a marketing tool as an international revolutionary icon".

²²³ In contrast to restorative nostalgia, which strives for the active reconstruction of the past, reflective nostalgia rests more on feelings of yearning and loss: it "lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time" (*Ibid.*, 41).

past a measure of spectacle and pop-art and changing it into a thrilling, titillating and trivialized story. This gives rise to the present feverish search for freak details in Broz's life: his love adventures, his most loved dishes, friendships with domestic and foreign film stars, marital scandals, ambiguous origins etc. (speculations about his origins truly run wild, so he is said to have been *a Russian, a Hungarian, a Ukrainian, a Jew, a Pole, an illegitimate descendant of a member of the Habsburg dynasty, a count, a British/Stalinist agent, a Free Mason /presumably buried in the Vatican and not in Belgrade/*, an abbreviation for a secret organization, *Churchill's son /!/, a woman /!!/*; it is also said that he died young and was replaced by his educated half-brother, Franc, and even that *he never existed at all*).²²⁴ As with any other kind of nostalgia, titostalgia, too, can be a kind of hobby, as it is in the case of the Nostalgia Institute mentioned earlier.²²⁵ Yet, although this is true in principle, one may ask why other nostalgic trends in these societies are not equally strong, and why there is no equally obvious nostalgia for other important personalities? Naturally, other such personalities are the subject of various nostalgias; the “old demons return,” as Adam Michnik put it, in Slovenia and elsewhere in post-socialist Europe. Certain controversial personalities from modern history are being venerated again, for example, the Chetnik leader Draža Mihajlović, and Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović in Serbia, the Ustasha leader, Ante Pavelić, and Archbishop Alojzij Stepinac in Croatia, Bishop Gregorij Rožman in Slovenia and so on. However, these trends are incomparably less strong than in the case of Broz.²²⁶ Accordingly, Broz has firmly settled into first place on the Croatian top one-hundred list of historical figures, Alojzij Stepinac has taken 21st place (interestingly, he shares this position with the legendary rock singer Johnny Štulić), while Ante Pavelić cannot be found among the top 100 personalities.²²⁷ On the Slovenian list dating from 2003, Broz occupies 4th place, while the renowned Slovenian politicians Pučnik, Korošec and Krek lag well behind.

Broz is said to be respected by his *old comrades, Titoists, diehard Yugoslavs, rigid yugonostalgics, yugophiles, yugo-Bol-*

²²⁴ See, e.g., West, 1996, 183.

²²⁵ See, for example, an interview by M. Kastelic with the Institute's founder, entitled *Nostalgik s kakovostjo* (Quality Nostalgia).

²²⁶ A good example is the former dissident and later Polish President Wałęsa, who started as a charismatic opposition leader in the 1980s, became one of the leading politicians in the 1990s, but since then has been reduced to a political outsider.

²²⁷ *Tito je najveći Hrvat u povijesti* (Tito Is The Greatest Croatian In Our History), 2004, *ibid.*



an antique shop,
Sarajevo, 2008

sheviks, cryptocommunists, HeySlavs, the stinking guts of Yugoslavia, Udbamen (Udba was a Yugoslav version of the KGB), spies of international bolshevism, false prophets, army officers' children, the red bourgeoisie, children from ethnically mixed marriages, we-swear-to-yous, yugocomrades, yugozombies, Partisan fossils or komunjajzari/komunjare (the last one is a juicy insult roughly equivalent to commie, denoting supporters of the former regime).²²⁸ Generally, he is believed to be more popular among anti-Fascists and left-wingers, according to the logic, “Suffice it that it is on the left!” There are at least four objections to this argument. First, among the most ardent anti-Titoists of today, I myself often met – *ah, cuore ingrato* – the one-time most eager Titoists. The “advocates” of the Tito lettering on the hilltop above Branik have established that among the desecrators and opponents of this sign are certain people who decades ago actually painted it and then maintained it for a long time.²²⁹ Even the responsibility for the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the late 1980s can be partly attributed to certain groups within the ruling elites, meaning the political party elites in individual republics which swore to follow Tito's path but actually diverted from it. Furthermore, various antagonistic groups from this period referred to him and even staged demonstrations in which they carried his portrait, but their real goals were different (for example, Kosovo Albanians and Serbs). To borrow from Slavoj Žižek (1989, 115): “Tito has not died for the second time through the agency of an Enemy: his legitimate successors took care of that pretty well.”²³⁰

²²⁸ For more on these “flowers of evil,” see I. Antić: Playback – Poletni zapiski iz dežele vitezov (Playback – Summer Notes From The Land Of Knights). Delo, sr, Ljubljana, September 21, 1996, p. 36, and Jansen, 2005, footnote 1 on p. 221, 222.

²²⁹ An interview with E. Bizjak, 13. 8. 2008.

²³⁰ See also Pavlowitch, 2006, 89, 90.

The second objection: why is it he (and, e.g., Che) and not some other left-wing politician, either global (Stalin, Mao, Castro, Trotsky, *subcomandante Marcos*) or local (Moša Pijade, Edvard Kardelj, one of the legendary Partisan commanders and national heroes such as Sava Kovačević, Peko Dapčević, Franc Rozman Stane, Koča Popović, Ivo Lola Ribar, or Boško Buha)?²³¹ And the third objection – the examples from real life testify to the opposite of what is claimed, given that even some nationalists and right-wing politicians also refer to him. For example, the notorious leader of the Slovenian Nationalist Party, Zmago Jelinčič, placed a monument to Broz in the garden of his villa (it is open to visitors twice a year, on December 23, the day of the plebiscite on independence in Slovenia, and on May 25, Tito's birthday). The inscription on the plinth reads, *Son of the Slovenian mother – Winner of WWII – Marshal of Yugoslavia*. It is one of just two new monuments to Tito (the other one is in Labin, Istria) erected over the last twenty years. For Jelinčič, Broz is (generally) one of the coolest guys in our history and a fantastic politician.²³² In 2005, his party proposed that the main street in Ljubljana, once called *Tito Street* but renamed when Slovenia became independent and divided into *Slovenska Street* and *Dunajska Street*, should have its former name restored. A candidate for the right-wing Slovenian People's Party at the local election in 2006 included in his election pamphlet a long quotation from Broz's famed speech in Okroglica dating from 1953, and a well-known portrait of Broz.²³³ After all, the Croatian historian Jakovina also writes about the “first Croatian President F. Tuđman’s never fully voiced but nevertheless obvious sympathies for Broz.”²³⁴

And last but not least, the explicitly positive image of Broz emerging from opinion surveys –corroborated by the data presented in the previous chapter – should not be attributed solely to secularist left-wingers, as the following two messages choosen from many similar ones found in visitor's books illustrate. The first comes from the book in his mausoleum in Dedine: *Honorable Josip Broz Tito, may the almighty God bestow on you eternal peace and rest!* (signature). The

²³¹ Not to mention the more controversial figures such as Aleksandar Ranković, Andrija Hebrang or Đilas.

²³² *Dnevnik 24 ur, pop tv*, Ljubljana, August 9, 2008. The Slovenian humorist Tof also asserted that Tito was a genius (in the broadcast *Pri Činču* on Čarli tv, May 3, 2008).

²³³ *Join forces! Your mayor R. Harej*, an SLS candidate in elections for the municipal council in Nova Gorica, 2006.

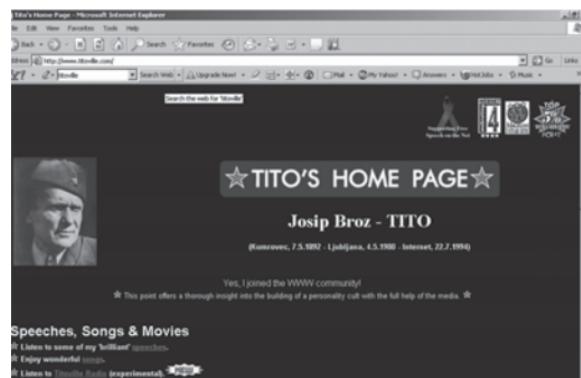
²³⁴ Jakovina, 2008, p. 53.

second one is from his birth house in Kumrovec: *I'm happy that I lived while you were President; may you rest in God's peace* (signature). In a Bosnia-Herzegovina broadcast on Broz of a few years ago, an older woman who was asked what she thought about him and his time, replied, *May God give him a sacred paradise.*²³⁵ A recent survey among Slovenian voters asked about their opinions of Broz's personality. The results were quite interesting: naturally, he was described in more positive terms by the supporters of "left-liberal" parties (100% of voters for the Retired People's Party, 92.9% of voters for the Social Democrats and 92.3% of voters for the Liberal Democrats) and secular nationalists (88.9%), but the proportion of right-wing voters who saw him in positive terms was also high (80% of voters for the People's Party, 59.8% of voters for the Democratic Party, and 52.2% of voters for the pro-Catholic nsi Party).²³⁶

ARGUMENT NINE. Some interpret the "second coming" of Broz through mass culture as being backward, static, old-fashioned (even technologically backward), as inertia or as a reproduction of the past that will soon die together with his aging subjects, meaning that it will disappear through entropy. A certain continuity with the past undoubtedly exists. At events paying tribute to him, people fly old flags, wear old medals and fragments of uniforms, and the rhetoric is reminiscent of that used during the heroic times of the Partisan resistance and the era of enthusiastic post-war building of socialism. On the other hand, titostalgic discourse has also moved to new media. As already mentioned, there are several web pages dedicated to him; debates between his supporters and opponents in various chatrooms and on blogs are also interesting. On his birthday or on the (former) *Republic Day*, humorous greeting cards are distributed by e-mail (e.g., the one showing a pretty young woman congratulating him), often including a well-known statement in all the Yugoslav languages (*Dear Young Comrades, Happy Youth Day, May 25, 2007!*), or humorous descriptions of those times (e.g. *Seven wonders of socialism*, briefly ironizing all that was dysfunctional but despite which the system nevertheless worked). T-shirts and other objects with Broz's image can be bought on-line from *Josip Broz Tito Shop* at <http://www.josipbroz.com/>.

²³⁵ A. Telibečirović: "Bog mu daj sveti raj!" - Lik Tita v BIH ("May God Give Him a Sacred Paradise" - The Image Of Tito In Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mladina, Ljubljana, No. 21, 24. 4. 2004, p. 25.

²³⁶ Repe, 2007, *ibid.*



world wide web, 1994

The Slovenian blogger magazine *Drugi svet* (Other World), available at <http://www.drugisvet.com/> and the Mladinska knjiga publisher launched an invitation to bloggers to write about their views of Tito or an interesting experience, or send a message dealing with this topic; the first fifty among them were awarded a voucher worth 10 euros that could be used for on-line shopping at <http://www.emka.si/>. The invitation was advertised through an icon with Tito's image and the message *Tito is watching you! Click!* (<http://www.dru-gisvet.com/news/tito.html>). The Slovenian company Pimp offers caricatures and funny voices of famous personalities and other unusual sound effects for your mobile phone; among others are a *prayer on the phone* with an angel, *screw you* with a full-breasted woman, *fuck*, *it's the phone ringing* with an angry baby, stereotyped images of different "typical Balkanians" with quasi-comical comments, the tune of the Yugoslav anthem *Hey Slavs* with the SFRY emblem, and *Comrade Tito*, with a caricature of Broz and Jovanka reminiscent of Homer and Marge Simpson.²³⁷



an advertisement,
Slovenia 2008

²³⁷ It was on offer in the autumn of 2007. Interestingly, the majority of titles were in Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian.

His image is also reproduced on mouse pads. Those sold in Ljubljana are in the shape of formerly used signs with street names (e.g. *Titova 244*); in Belgrade, he is depicted on a white horse and playing a piano; in Croatia, mouse pads bear his image from Partisan times and an inscription alluding to punk: *Tito is not Dead*, with an encircled A (for Anarchy).



a mousepad,
Croatia, 2008

ARGUMENT TEN. What is involved is the continuation of his personality cult, his charismatic image and narcissistic self-image, cultivated by him and for him ever since WWII. In this argument, the emphasis is on his hedonism, luxury, glamour, nonchalance, and his association with important, contemporary politicians and the jet-set from the world of entertainment (his guests included Sophia Loren, Gina Lollobrigida, Richard Burton, Kirk Douglas, Josephine Baker, Yul Brynner, Mario del Monaco and Orson Welles, as well as Jean-Paul Sartre and Che and the first woman astronaut, Valentina Tereshkova). After WWII he made 142 trips, visited 62 countries, and met practically all the world statesmen as either their guest or their host. This is also the image usually presented by contemporary newspaper articles, with one of the characteristic sentences being: *Tito was a typical bon vivant, actually the epitome of hedonism.*²³⁸ True, but the mythologies surrounding great leaders, the “heroarchy” or “government of heroes,” to use Thomas Carlyle’s term, come and go, while the one that developed around Broz not only survived, but also acquired new dimensions in a politically and culturally changed world. It seems as if Broz has been regenerated for new generations that have only second-hand, indirect knowledge about him. Even among the left-wing parties, it is their youth sections rather than the bulk of members that preserve his memory, although many such parties arose from the former League of Communists

²³⁸ Banjanac Lubej, ibid.

or one of the political organizations that existed under the former regime. A typical example is the Slovenian Youth Forum of Social Democrats, whose representatives regularly attend the ceremonies in Kumrovec and lay wreaths at the monument to Broz, as do their Croatian counterparts from the Youth Forum of the Croatian Social Democratic Party (SDP). As already mentioned, his image is also frequently found on the alternative and subcultural stage.

ARGUMENT ELEVEN. In certain circumstances, Broz is still a delicate political topic, particularly in everyday wrangles among political parties; he seems to be a kind of political divide separating the left wing from the right wing.²³⁹ The right-wing Slovenian columnist Bernard Nežmah, writing at a time when the ruling parties were the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) and the United List of Social Democrats (ZLSD), accused *the political and management elite of celebrating the accession to the EU, while perpetuating their contradictory silent admiration of Tito and de facto replication of his attitude towards the opposition.*²⁴⁰ A similarly tense atmosphere is frequently felt in Croatia, particularly between the two biggest parties, the leading right-wing Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and the leading left-wing Social Democratic Party (SDP). There, the recurring themes during the election campaigns are the evaluation of Broz's (evil) deeds, and declarations *in support of Tito* as opposed to those *in support of Croatia's late President Tuđman*. When Zoran Milanović, the SDP leader, said in the summer of 2007 that *Tito was greater than Tuđman*, he provoked an avalanche of accusations from the opposing camp. There were allegations that someone wished to restore Yugoslavia, re-establish links among these countries, that Milanović was actually a *fervent Titoist* who was in favor of *Yugoslavia and communism*, that he was a friend of the Serbian president Boris Tadić and a supporter of Željko Komšić, a *Titoist* from Bosnia-Herzegovina, that he *idealized Titoism*, that instead of attending the celebration of *Statehood Day* he chose to attend the commemoration for the *Day of Anti-Fascist Struggle* etc.²⁴¹ Nevertheless, this is not a rule, as is obvious from the several examples given

²³⁹ This also extends to everyday life and coffee table discussions. One older Titoist from Slovenia told me that he embarrassed his acquaintance, who had changed loyalties, by asking him, *And who gave to you all that, education, job, pension, who? Tito!* (obviously, his question also provided the answer).

²⁴⁰ B. Nežmah: *Tito v Brižinskih spomenikih* (Tito in Freising Manuscripts). Mladina, Ljubljana, May 24, 2004, p. 20.

²⁴¹ His "sins" were later on listed by Zdravko Tomac, a former high SDP official turned orthodox right-winger, in the article entitled "Milanović provodi radikalnu deračanizaciju" (Milanović Set On The Radical De-Račanization Course) (Fokus, Zagreb, July 6, 2007, p. 14, 15).

above, revealing that Broz's supporters also come from the right end of the political spectrum.

However, the situation on the "left" end of the political spectrum is not uncomplicated, either. The Croatian SDP experienced a split between "Titoists" and "revisionists." The conflict broke out in the summer of 2003 after public debate in the wake of the publication of a photo on which the then party leader and the Croatian pm Ivica Račan posed next to Tito's picture at the celebration of the 60th anniversary of a Partisan uprising in Istria. The SDP vice-leader's personal opinion, and also the SDP's official standpoint, was that Broz had been, despite mistakes, *an extremely competent leader who deserved credit for what he did for Croatia and the global anti-Fascist movement*; for his party colleague, he was also undoubtedly *a positive historical figure*. On the other hand, Zdravko Tomac, another leading figure in the SDP, was much more critical of him, claiming that the SDP should not draw on Tito's heritage because of his responsibility for political imprisonment and mass murder, nor should it uncritically perpetuate a kind of continuity with Tito's principles.²⁴² Generally speaking, it is symptomatic that many post-Yugoslav politicians, who were embarking on their political careers, or had already held high political office when he was still alive, and later either remained part of the transition "left-wing" or switched to the right-wing, are conspicuously silent on the issue of Tito. Through this "policy of silence," they have simply renounced him, avoiding him as if avoiding their own bad conscience dating from some other time.²⁴³ An exception in this respect is the current Croatian President, Stipe Mesić, for whom Broz is the most important person in local history²⁴⁴ and who promptly and emphatically condemned the blowing up of the monument to Broz in 2004. In Slovenia, the only prominent politician who publicly expresses his favoring of Broz is the above-mentioned Jelinčič, who

²⁴² N. Božić: Tomac: Da, Tito je odgovoran za ratne zločine (Tomac: Yes, Tito Is Responsible For War Crimes). Nedeljni Jutarnji, Zagreb, August 3, 2003, p. 4.

²⁴³ This is understandable, given Tuđman's description of him in the book entitled *Stvaranje socialističke Jugoslavije* (The Formation of Socialist Yugoslavia) dating from 1960 (Naprijed, Zg., p. 33): *His personality combines the characteristics of a revolutionary, politician, statesman and army leader. In short, during that fateful period of their history, the nations of Yugoslavia had a popular leader and a great man, such as appear only during the milestone periods in national and general history.* Dilas, too, described him in his early writings as unwavering, prudent and visionary, the embodiment of the inconquerable power of our nations and our Party, a great son of our Party and our nations etc. (Članki 1941–1946, Articles 1941–1946. Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana, p. 59, 77). Dobrica Čosić had praised him until the mid-1960s, but in the early 1990s he described him as a swindler on a global scale, a Stalinist, a tyrant, power-hungry, hedonistic, a cruel and corrupt demagogue, an ignoramus and career man (in Kuljić, 2005, 432–437).

²⁴⁴ Tito je najveći Hrvat u povijesti (Tito Is The Greatest Croat In History). Nacional, Zagreb, January 6, 2004, p. 46.

probably aims at winning over several voters, given the predominantly positive evaluation of Broz in Slovenia.

ARGUMENT TWELVE. Titostalgia (and yugonostalgia) cannot be fully explained by the fact that Yugoslav socialism, i.e. Broz's government, was more humane compared to other socialist regimes, that his authoritarianism was milder and softer than that of his eastern counterparts, that the living standard was higher, that the state took care of employment, accommodation and social security, and that he succeeded in conciliating the differences for so long, contributing in this way to peace in the region. To sum up, the nostalgic pastorals claim that *life under Tito was quite good*. While it is easy to go along with the above arguments, it should be noted that the majority of Yugoslavs had never had close experience of life under the real-socialist regimes outside Yugoslavia. The negative images of these regimes were formed on the basis of anti-propaganda (claiming that *our self-management socialism was better than their etatistic, bureaucratic socialism*) and sustained through the silent fear that the *Russians might eventually decide to march into Yugoslavia*.²⁴⁵ The Yugoslavs had more experience of and more contacts with life in the West, so it would not be surprising if they evaluated life in socialist Yugoslavia in worse terms and were critical of it.



Slovenia, after 2000

ARGUMENT THIRTEEN. There are many attempts to explain the massive presence of Broz's many images as pure parody, or a playful subversion of dominant political, cultural and media discourses. Examples of humorous rendering of Broz are numerous. Such is a photo-montage on the cover of a CD compilation of great Ex-Yugoslavia pop-stars, Vol.

²⁴⁵ I remember a joke circulating at the time of the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo, saying that the Yugoslav organizers got shivers when they heard that the Soviet team included twenty thousand biathlon skiers.

2, where Broz looks like Marlon Brando in the movie *The Wild One* (1953); he is depicted as a biker with bared, muscular arms, in a sleeveless jeans jacket studded with patches, and riding an impressive motorbike.

Another one is his image on a T-shirt showing him at an advanced age; in the original photo, he is smoking a cigar, but here it has been changed into a really big joint; next to it is the well-known socialist slogan *Tujega nočemo, svojega ne damo* (We want nothing that belongs to others, and won't give anything that belongs to us). A book by Dejan Novacić, a fake tourist guide entitled *SFRJ: Moja dežela* (SFRY: My Country), which humorously reinterprets the Yugoslav past, mass culture, politics, achievements and delusions, and inevitably Broz, opens with a Biblical scene of creation: 1. *In the beginning there was the earth, formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep. Then Tito said, "Let there be light," and there was light.* 2. *And Tito separated the light from the darkness, and called the light "Us," and the darkness he called "Them."*²⁴⁶ Years ago, a commercial radio station in Slovenia broadcast a humorous program with "Tito" calling in from heaven. ŠKUC, the cult exhibition space in Ljubljana, uses Broz's image for the sign on the men's toilet, and the image of his wife Jovanka for the ladies'.



a gallery,
Ljubljana, 2005

Various youth clubs organize parties, concerts and other events on Tito's birthday, while yugo-nostalgic *fešta* parties and retro-parties have become a constant item on the entertainment menu across former Yugoslavia. The music played at these parties and in certain cases the entire imagery is reminiscent of those times. This is interpreted as an entirely apolitical type of entertainment, a stunt or mild provocation, a pretext to throw a good party in memory of someone, although the majority of young people attending

²⁴⁶ Orbis, Ljubljana, 2003, p. 7.

presumably do not know exactly who he actually was. The cultural scientist Gregor Tomc explains that young people attending these parties *do not have any attitude towards Yugoslavia and that they accept things without prejudice* – they simply come for the music and to enjoy themselves.²⁴⁷

an office,
Ljubljana, 2003



The relaxing, comical re-playing of the past and playing with it are both undoubtedly part of neostalgia. Yet I believe that these also constitute a kind of political gesture of which its protagonists are not necessarily fully aware. Naturally, I do not argue that all those who wear T-shirts with his image, participate in commemorative events or parties, or think of him as a *good leader* also adhere consciously to his political legacy or support his political platform. This kind of loyalty cannot be purchased along with a T-shirt or a ticket. And yet, it is legitimate to ask why the holiday of the defunct state and the birthday of the late leader are so widely celebrated in Slovenia, and not, say, *Statehood Day* (June 25), or *Europe Day* (May 9)? The answer can be found in the latent and unconscious, and frequently even obvious and well-reflected, subversion inherent to this type of nostalgic discourse. The two holidays mentioned above are official national holidays and part of dominant discursive constructions, so inevitably it follows that it is necessary to appropriate other holidays, if only from the simple need to challenge the official ones. Therefore, apart from mimetic nostalgia, which is serious, dogmatic, unchangeable, expressly political and continuous, in which Broz's image is the same as it was in the past, there also exists counter-nostalgia, satirical nostalgia or neostalgia. Its defining features are mischievous teasing and a deliberate subversion of the current system by exploiting the problematic past. Such

²⁴⁷ Repnik, *ibid.*, p. 17.

behavior is not without political connotations, although these are indirect and shifted to another level (more on this in the last chapter).



a stall with antiques,
Labin, 2008

Finally, we have good reason to assert that titostalgia is more a rejection of the current political situation and leaders than an uncritical glorification of the politics of several decades ago and of Broz himself. It can therefore be understood as a protest, or an effective provocation, or even a defense, particularly for young people against aggressive imposition of new ideological trends (e.g. nationalism, the decree of humble *accession to Europe*, neoliberalism, conservatism, traditionalism, clericalism, restitution of the old political situation).²⁴⁸ This helps us to understand the graffiti *TITO KPJ* at the entrance to a building of the Split-Makarska archdiocese, an inscription which appeared a few years ago,²⁴⁹ or the *Tito* sprayed over *Welcome to the Republic of Srpska* written only in Serbian (in Cyrillic) and in English on a large billboard greeting you on entering the Serbian part of Bosnia-Herzegovina, or the writing in Labin (Croatia) reading, *We want Tito, not the EU*.



left:
Croatia, 2008

right:
Bosnia - Herzegovina,
2008

²⁴⁸ In Michnik's lucid view, the main dangers that threaten post-socialist societies include aggressive religious integrism, post-communist populism and Neanderthal anti-communism (1997, 235, 237).

²⁴⁹ Feral Tribune, Split, April 1, 2005, p. 8.

The following anecdote from Ljubljana is another good illustration of the underlying motive. During the punk craze in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, there appeared a graffiti based on the official pioneer slogan *Forward we go with Tito, for our homeland!* (*Za domovino s Titom naprej!*), except that *Tito* was crossed out and replaced by the provocative *punk* (so the slogan read *Forward we go with punk, for our homeland!*). Towards the end of the 1990s, when punk had already gained its “citizenship rights”, there appeared a new version of this graffiti, with *punk* now crossed out and *Tito*, by this time already a provocation, written instead. Obviously, what is important is to always maintain a contrary position!²⁵⁰

The author of the Slovenian web page about Tito says that young people resisting the impersonality of capitalist society seek escape in obsolete ideals (*Tito, Yugoslavia*) because it is a way to kill two birds with one stone. They are interested in something which is not part of today's capitalist world (a revolt against trends, commercialization, and everything that is popular) and which also illustrates times when people were committed to a shared idea and believed in shared goals.²⁵¹ Yet, Broz's image and Partisan slogans (*Death to Fascism – Freedom to the People!* is a must) are frequently part of new political activism, as well; for example, they can be seen in the 2008 posters of Bosnian anti-Fascist organizations petitioning for a law prohibiting the organization and activity of neo-Fascist organizations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and posters advertising Partisan fighters' anniversaries and events organized by veterans associations. The flags of socialist Yugoslavia and its individual republics (featuring the red communist star), the red banners of the former League of Communists and photos of Broz are also seen at various worker and student demonstrations.²⁵² After all, my conversations and interviews on the subject of titostalgia and yugonostalgia as a rule ended with serious accusations on the part of my respondents about the current state of affairs, the system and its politicians, or idiots, every one among them worse in all respects than Broz was, as many put it (in various languages of former Yugoslavia).

²⁵⁰ Such a turnabout is all the more irritating when one remembers the moral panic and accusations of punk and punk fans at the time of its appearance in Slovenia (Nazi-punk scandal, accusations of their *indecent behavior*, prohibitions of concerts etc.), coming precisely from the supporters and institutions of Tito's Yugoslavia.

²⁵¹ Repnik, 1999, 16. For similar statements, see also Pečjak, 2006.

²⁵² They fill the current government with horror, since their shrewd eye quickly detects the conspiracy of old communist forces.

The exaltation of Broz therefore involves criticism of the present ruling structure, but also offers a different perspective, which in many ways comes close to contemporary left-wing trends (rejection of unjust globalization, capitalism, militarization and supra-national corporations, as well as aversion to American unilateralism, NATO and the EU). Consequently, it is not by chance that the criticism of the current state of affairs (plus matching slogans) and appeals for a just society coming from the young fighters for a more just world (alter-globalists) are almost identical to the criticism and appeals voiced by aging Titoists, pop-leftists and neo-Titoists.²⁵³ Some venture far beyond simple negationism. Neo-Titoists from former Yugoslav republics do not restrict their activity to commemorations in Kumrovec or Dedinje. For example, in 2007 they met in Bihać on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the 1st AVNOJ congress and announced better organization and higher participation in 2008, at the commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the even more important 2nd AVNOJ congress in Jajce (the two congresses were crucial to the establishment of socialist Yugoslavia). They strive for the reconstruction of Yugoslavia within its former borders, organized into a loose federation, with Bihać as its capital.²⁵⁴

Finally, Broz figures as one of the icons of leftist resistance, along with Che, and that is how he is presented: not only as the founder of a stable state, a peacemaker and a legislator, that is as a “Solon-like” figure,²⁵⁵ but also as a warrior, a victor wearing the uniform, symbolizing a continual struggle and an “Alexander the Great” figure²⁵⁶ (a kind of “Yugoslav Che” from WWII, “Che preceding Che,” or “Che for domestic use”).²⁵⁷ On t-shirts he is most frequently de-

²⁵³ For example, the name of the organization and the slogan of the Slovenian and Italian alter-globalists *Dost je!/Ya basta* (Enough is enough!) is the same as that found on the election pamphlet of the Macedonian party *The Alliance of Tito's Left Forces (Dosta beše!)*. The earlier mentioned coordinator, R. Faraguna, thinks that Yugoslav self-management is still the best alternative to present-day capitalism, just as it once was a better option than Soviet-type real socialism; relations among the Yugoslav former republics should be friendly and cooperative, resembling those among the Scandinavian countries (in a personal interview held on July 3, 2008).

²⁵⁴ Information provided by T. Nakovski (in a personal interview August 5, 2008).

²⁵⁵ See Girardet, 1986, p. 77, 78.

²⁵⁶ See Girardet, 1986, p. 75–77. It is not unsignificant that after the war there were attempts to link Broz's origins to the insurgency tradition of the region of Zagorje (the great peasant rebellion in 1573, see Brkljajčić, 2006, 187–190, Dedijer, 1980, 13–15); there were also speculations about distant family relations between the 16th century insurgency leader Matija Ambroz Gubec and the Broz family (Ambroz - Broz). Dedijer wrote that the region of Zagorje in Croatia bears the same significance as Piedmont in Italy and Šumadija in Serbia. (*Ibid.*, 12).

²⁵⁷ To invert the logic, in contemporary mass culture Che figures as a kind of “Tito on a global scale.” Titostalgia phenomena can be partly compared, while acknowledging the great differences, with the presence of Che's image in contemporary mass cul-

picted as a Partisan commander and less frequently as the President of Yugoslavia in his later years (and even when depicted as President he sometimes wears the Marshal uniform). Similar holds true of other products on sale and souvenirs of the culture of titostalgia: there, too, a younger, “Partisan” Broz prevails.²⁵⁸

THE IMAGE OF BROZ ON T-SHIRTS

As a Partisan commander ("Alexander" image)	25	55.5 %
As head of state in his advanced age ("Solon" image)	13	29 %
Without Broz's image (only a text referring to Broz, his signature or a slogan).	7	15.5 %
TOTAL	45	100 %

True, the motive here is eternal opposition to the current state of affairs, but there is more to it than meets the eye. In my opinion, it is not just saying *No!* to the present, but also, or even above all, reaffirming the previous, now neglected values such as social justice, common property, health and social security, solidarity within society, linking of nations etc. In brief, what is involved is the promotion of what was positive in “the lost world of Tito.” For example, his impersonator Godnić says that *as a Tito youth – and I'm still thankful to him for this*

turture and politics. After all, the sellers of t-shirts, badges and patches with the image of Che or Tito in former Yugoslav republics target the same segment of consumers. Time magazine included Che in a list of the *one hundred most influential people of the 20th century, but in the group Heroes and Icons, not Leaders and Revolutionaries*. (www.time.com/time/time100/heroes). According to one survey in Austria, as many as 98% of 17-year old Austrians have heard of Che (A. Salihbegović: *Che fotografije kojima je revolucija bila sjena (Revolution In The Shadow Of Che Photos)*). An interview with Peter Coeln. *Jutarnji list*, Zagreb, July 5, 2008, p. 76). He, too, is perceived as a romantic, universal and inevitably photogenic icon of youth rebellion. The curator of the exhibition of Che photographs in Vienna in 2008 inspiringly says that in each one of them *Che looks like a natural film star, like a superstar and a fascinating PR genius* (Salihbegović, ibid., p. 75–77). Rastko Močnik (2004, 195) named Tito a “Romantic pop” in the sense that he realized the romantic ideal that life is only a work of art; “it was a mass use of formulas – often truly popular and anonymous, sometimes in the way pursued by the cultural industry, which belongs to the history of artistic practices that already experienced the paradigmatic formulation, and which precisely because of that can be reproduced.” In a way, the infinite reproduction of Broz's (or Che's) image blunts his political charge, so he becomes chic and acceptable to supporters of various political options. Let me relate here an interesting anecdote told by Che's daughter Aledia. After signing T-shirts with his image at one of the numerous conferences on her father held in Italy, she learnt that some of those youths were Fascists who knew nothing about him (Lacey, 2007, ibid.).

²⁵⁸ The epithet ‘younger’ should be relativized, since during the war Broz was in his mature years, 49 to 53.



a newsstand,
Tuzla, 2008

– I did not know the racial or religious intolerance that came with new times.²⁵⁹ The famous Roma singer Esma Redžepova from Macedonia remembers him as *the best statesmen in these parts, because he linked us.*²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ Hrastar, Pirc, 2004, *ibid.*

²⁶⁰ In an interview for *Nacional*, Zagreb, January 6, 2004, p. 45.

VI. CONCLUSION –

We are Tito's, Tito is Ours (*Mi smo Titovi, Tito je naš*)

He was dead even before he was born.

Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral
Amphilochios²⁶¹

Each of these (counter)arguments is true in a certain respect and can partly explain the endurance of Broz's popularity, but altogether they still do not provide sufficient answers to the questions asked in the introductory chapter, nor do they explain the complexity of this phenomenon. Yugonostalgia is similar in this respect, having many instant explanations which, however, cannot quite encompass its diversity. But the reader should not be misled by the extent of the phenomenon and the myriad of examples. I emphasized in unambiguous terms very early in the book that titostalgia is not a ubiquitous or mass phenomenon and that other cultural, media and political content is predominant. Nevertheless, the instances of it are so numerous, present in so many localities and among such diverse groups that they cannot possibly escape the notice of even a disinterested traveler wandering through the geographical and mental landscapes of post-Yugoslav transition. Furthermore, I should emphasize that the examples presented in this book frequently reveal the internal inconsistency, the absence of logic and the contradictoriness of nostalgic discourse, making room for criticism and even repudiation by way of their consistent interpretation. In my opinion, which is substantiated in this concluding chapter, a prerequisite for the emergence and development of any type of nostalgia is something larger than all that has been presented so far.



southern Serbia, 2008

²⁶¹ V. J. Ćulibrk: Ne-zaobilazne strategije (Non-Circumventable Strategies). Projekat Rastko, Biblioteka srpske kulture na internetu, Filosofija, http://www.rastko.org.yu/filosofija/jagnje/otac_jovan.html.

I will now first explain why I “dare” call these phenomena nostalgia rather than simply retro. Undoubtedly, the presented products of the culture of nostalgia, as well as many others that did not find their way into this book, are also retro products, and yet not solely retro. The reason is their essentially positive disposition, their affirmative emotional added value and utopian perspective. Moreover, I identified the same qualities in the mental dimensions of nostalgic culture. Nostalgia ventures “deeper” than retro, which is satisfied with the more superficial replays and ironization, and is primarily sarcastic and sacrilegious. In Guffey’s words, retro “considers the recent past with an unsentimental nostalgia”. The cardinal features of nostalgia are – apart from the sugary, idealized image of someone or something departed – a positive emotional involvement and a look beyond the present. The popular opinion and mental images of Broz are much more affirmative than negative, so bowing down before the late president can justifiably be called nostalgia. It is present among his *old comrades* but also among new entrepreneurs, collectors as well as eclectic artists, but primarily among a multitude of people who hold firm, or loose, or superficial but ultimately positive opinion about him. In this connection I should draw attention to the conspicuous absence of anti-Tito discourses from everyday culture: there are practically no instances of anti-Tito graffiti or images discrediting him; his image on T-shirts is not crossed-out or ridiculed, and bad opinion about him, as opinion surveys clearly show, is in the minority.²⁶² In political jokes – at least in those of which I am aware and which date from both Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav times – Broz is always a positive figure. Interestingly, there was no negative reaction among the public in Istria and wider Croatia when the monument to Broz was unveiled in Labin in 2005.

It is equally clear that people today are not simply uncritical of his historical role; they are not, as is often claimed, still *deluded* or *misled*, so it is not possible to label this phenomenon *post-communist neo-communism*, as one Croatian Catholic conservative called it (in Perica, 2002, 193). People are familiar with other faces of Broz, as they are with

²⁶² An explicit anti-Tito discourse is only practiced by his most fervent opponents (I gave some examples of these in short citations at the beginning of individual chapters). A good example is a book by Miroslav Todorović about Broz’s crimes against the Serbs, with the telling title *Hohštapler* (*Impostor*) (Narodna knjiga, Bg., 2003). A rare example of contemporary caustic caricature of Broz, actually a cartoon showing Broz in the toilet preparing a *historical speech for Republic Day* is available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbXVE8hOujk&feature=related>.



Skopje, 2008

the suppressed, dark sides of former Yugoslavia. Titostalgia is often described in terms that in my opinion point to an insufficient interpretation, in which Broz is said to have been simply cleansed of the dirty part of his biography and controversial historical periods and mistakes avoided, with titostalgia keeping aloof from them. It is naive to think that past eulogies to the *brightness of Tito's star, path* and what-not could have left anyone oblivious to the injustices, crimes and deficiencies for which he and his state were responsible. These include brutal inter-war and post-war showdowns with actual and potential political opponents, unscrupulous imposition of *revolutionary justice*, imprisonment and repression during the clash with Stalin, confrontation with the protagonists of liberalism in Serbia and Slovenia and the advocates for greater autonomy for Croatia belonging to the *Maspok* movement, curtailing of human rights, censorship and political monism. There have been many attempts to produce an objective, comprehensive balance sheet by *adding pluses and minuses*, and Broz seems to have always scored more pluses than minuses, a situation which presumably suffices for nostalgia to develop. Yet, I do not believe that this is sufficient to sustain nostalgic feelings. I tend to see it as a kind of fetishized denial to the effect that *we know that Tito was not solely a positive personality and that Yugoslavia also had its dark sides, but still...* However, the affection or nostalgia for someone cannot be explained by saying that he/she had more positive than negative qualities, that he/she was *objectively a positive historical figure*; something else must be at work as well. Similarly, it is not proportionate only to one's media appearances or omnipresence.

Taking into account all facts presented in this text and explanations of *who Broz actually was*, as well as the

controversies, changes, turnabouts, mocking remarks and eulogies, I can conclude that, despite all, he has preserved a kind of “indefinable positivity.” If, when speaking to someone, you insist on an answer to the question *why is it precisely Tito?*, or why it is precisely he who is considered good, or try to establish this from the discourse itself, you usually do not obtain a definitive answer, or the answer is shallow along the lines of, *after all he was OK*, or, *generally speaking, he was a good and honest leader*, or *he was a cool guy*, or something similar half thought-out. *He is who he is*, to paraphrase the Bible,²⁶³ without much additional or redundant explanation. The texts from two T-shirts with his image illustrate this well: *Tito is Tito – We all know that*, meaning that we do not have any precise answer as to what kind of man he was, or what we actually “know” about him, since nostalgia can function only as the unquestionable, indisputable, unchanging truth. The other writing is *Tito is Ours, We are Tito’s*; it is not important so much who he actually was, what is important is that we see him as “ours.”



Alternative center
Metelkova,
Ljubljana, 2006

For the purpose of evaluating a historical personage, forgetting is equally important as remembering, to paraphrase Ernest Renan. However, to provide the final interpretation, we have to move one step forward: the positive image of Broz has, in my opinion, less to do with who or what kind of man he actually was than with what his present sympathizers wanted him to be in the past. Nostalgia tells us what we would like to have had back then, or in the case of Broz, what a good leader should look like. At the same time, nostalgia also tells us a lot about dissatisfaction with the present – in this case, what we miss in present political leaders. One of the most important functions of both personal and collective nostalgias is the creation, not mere restoration or embellishment, of the past that in reality never existed, that

²⁶³ I am who I am (Ex 3, 14).

never was, save in the present notions and wishes. Nostalgia is based on the utopias of the past: it is not (only) lethargic remembering of past realities, but primarily remembering of past should-bes, ambitions, illusions and hopes that no longer exist.²⁶⁴ It is the story of a *lost paradise* that never existed in reality.²⁶⁵ People do not mourn for the real past, but for their past wishes, perspectives, and old glory. They miss past dreams, not real life in the past. The same can be said about nostalgicized leaders, which in these *a posteriori* projections more resemble *good rulers* or *fatherly protectors* than actual historical personalities with all their good and bad sides and achievements.

At this point it is necessary to clearly emphasize the utopian dimension of nostalgia that has been barely mentioned so far. In so doing, I start from Stewart's thesis (1993, 23) that nostalgia "wears a distinctly utopian face, a face that turns toward a future-past, a past which has only ideological reality". The same as in nostalgia, in utopia, too, one seeks happiness, freedom, non-alienation, a Golden Age, and a land of milk and honey (Bloch, 1981, 1636). Nostalgia cannot be explained in the positivist manner exclusively in terms of something that we presumably lost over time and now grieve for. Underlying the nostalgic longing is a desire for a *better world*, as demonstrated by the examples in this book and many others. Progressists and various futurists sought it in the future; esoterics have found it in parallel worlds; nostalgics have found it in the past; and yugo- and tito-nostalgics in *Tito's times*.

Utopian scenarios varied over time. If from the times of the French poet and politician Lamartin, the predominant view was that utopias were nothing more than "truths whose time has not yet come", we could say that within nostalgia, utopia is the "truth whose time has run out". Nostalgics' "millenarianism" is fixed onto the past – their *golden age* is already passé. Furthermore, the notion of utopia comprised only non-realizable dreams about an ideal society, but the examples in this study clearly show that nostalgics surpass the present existence through their narratives and practices

- ²⁶⁴ This is clearly articulated by Jelinčič who, speaking about his memories of *Youth Day* and the *Relay Races*, says, *It was nice, we had a good time and we always reckoned on a better tomorrow. That is no longer so today, there is no more hope that it will change for the better.* N. Gole: Ni upanja, da bomo mlajši (*No Hope That We Will Be Getting Younger*) - a survey. Klin, Ljubljana, May 2008, p. 5.
- ²⁶⁵ In Stewart's words, it is "sadness without an object, a sadness which creates a longing that of necessity is inauthentic because it does not take part in lived experience. Rather, it remains behind and before that experience". In other words, "nostalgia is the desire for desire" (1993, 23).

– they defend their own views, criticize presentist dictates, reject the amnesia of dominant discursive constructions and construct what I call their ivory towers (in this case it is, for instance, a virtual Yugoslavia, the commemorations of Broz's anniversaries, the materialization of memories in the form of various titostalgic keepsakes, the creation of Broz "corners" at home or in public places etc.).

Karl Mannheim (1968, 157) argues that utopian consciousness is not in harmony with the existence around it. In his opinion, utopia transcends the existent social circumstances, the same as ideology, which also transcends the here-and-now but drawing on the past, meaning that it actually supports the present by crippling the reformative potential. Utopia, on the other hand, looks forward and has a vision about a better and realizable future; it criticizes and subverts whatever exists now, strives actively to transform it and also makes it come true through historical practices. It is a perspective and a will to act. It is the criterion of practical realization that divides ideology from utopia; the former does not become realized; the latter does; the former actually conserves; the latter introduces changes for the better; the former conceals reality, the latter destroys it (Ibid., 158–170). Therefore, following Mannheim's suggestion, nostalgia could be proclaimed an ideology that appraises the present using a retrograde principle, meaning that its transcending of the present world is phony, because it actually supports it. This is partly true, given that nostalgia also has conservative potential. However, in claiming so, we would ignore one of its essential elements: its active engagement. As a matter of fact, it does not restrict itself to criticism of the present world but also constructs an alternative world and aspires for the realization of a different reality of existence. That is where I find the utopian moment of nostalgia, because the images of our wishes become utopian only when they acquire a revolutionary role (Ibid., 158), when they transform existent historical reality through counter-action that moves in the direction of their own idea (Ibid., 159). In nostalgia it is visible whenever narratives about *how it was* are coupled with criticism of the present in the sense, *It's no longer like that*. For example, in titostalgic discourse, one can find the listing of Broz's merits as well as a critique of present governments and their leaders (who are said to be *selfish, hypocritical, duplicitous, subservient to foreigners* and so on), all of which creates new forms of affiliation and socializing.

According to Frank E. Manuel (1971), the utopias of modern time can be divided into three periods. From Thomas More to the French Revolution, utopian scenarios had been dominated by “quiet bliss.” In the 19th century, these were pushed out by progressist historical-deterministic utopias, while in the 20th century, psychological-philosophical utopias predominated. He finds it important to point out that even if we use the abstract criterion of truthfulness, we can still doubt that utopias distorted the future more than historians distorted the past (1971, 95). The narrative constructions about Broz and Yugoslavia, both the past and the present ones, those favorable and those unfavorable, are a good example of this.

Fredric Jameson has established that utopia’s “very existence and emergence certainly registers the agitation of the various ‘transitional periods’” (2005, 15). A “utopian program” or “project” differs from a “utopian impulse”. The former is “systemic” and includes “revolutionary political practice, when it aims at founding a whole new society,” meaning that it is clearly articulated and goal-oriented. The latter, which is more relevant for this study given the plethora of its examples in nostalgic constructs, is “obscure yet omnipresent,” and its milieu is “a variety of covert expressions and practices” (*Ibid.*, 3-8). Utopian longings are therefore far from practical politics, but they are nevertheless political in nature, although on another level. According to Jameson (*Ibid.*, 84), the desire called Utopia “must be concrete and ongoing, without being defeatist of incapacitating”. In practice it is realized within utopian, closed spaces which are – as is obvious from certain examples – “an imaginary enclave within real social space” (*Ibid.*, 15).

Ernst Bloch has found utopian motives in our immediate environment, here and now, in a multitude of everyday activities, practices and discourses, and in most unexpected places where they apparently do not exist. Bloch argues that the utopian search for the better is inherent to the human mind, characterized by processuality and a forward gaze; in his words, everything, but primarily human life, is certainly and by all means a kind of transcendence, a kind of stepping beyond the given (1981, 1633, 1634). A concrete fantasy and the sculpture of its mediated anticipation boil within the very process of reality and are mirrored in concrete dreams about the future; anticipatory elements are constituent parts of reality; dreams about a better life reach far beyond their social-utopian dwelling into every kind of

cultural anticipation. (*Ibid.*, 227, 180).²⁶⁶ Wherever there is a wish for the better and a gaze into the future, there is also utopia, although not necessarily articulated in clear terms. Undoubtedly, abstract utopian dreams contain an immature utopian function, one that does not yet rely on a solid subject and does not refer to the real-possible (*Ibid.*, 165). He introduced the notion of the “utopian present,” since utopia is nothing unless it points to the present day and demands da se mu njegova sedanjost izroči” (*Ibid.*, 366-368).²⁶⁷

Roland Barthes (1979, 23) similarly theorizes that utopia is not reflected as much in theoretical constructs as in the organization of everyday life, since everyday is a feature of utopia. Such notions of “subliminal”, non-programmed, everyday utopia seem essential for this study. The forms of the utopian longing for a better world change over time, acquire new faces and political denotations, but the wish as such remains, never coming to an end, and never coming true. The utopian longing is always around, always present; as Bloch says, concrete utopia stands on the horizon of every reality (Bloch, 1981, 259). The search for a better world, the dreams, cravings and hopes for change do not necessarily involve a clear and articulated goal, purpose, action plan or the means for its realization. A utopian wish is characterized by “vulnerability and fragility” (Jameson, 2005, 71), as well as elusiveness, vagueness, and capillarity. In fact, “utopia as a form is not the representation of radical alternatives; it is rather simply the imperative to imagine them” (*Ibid.*, 416). Revolutionaries and other operative anticipators of the future necessarily criticize such a stance, seeing it as immature, naked escapism, as a kind of ideological somnambulism: they advocate concrete, realizable utopias.

Back to nostalgia. Since it is a notion hovering between *no longer* and *not yet*, between a past that is not yet over and a future that is not yet here, I interpret it in three complementary ways. First, as resignation and escapist conservatism. Metaphorically speaking, nostalgic *dreams* about the past are substitutes for active and engaged *awakening* oriented towards the future. Instead of confronting present issues and injustices, it laments a fictive old order, lost stability, past comforts and outdated values. What I find problematic

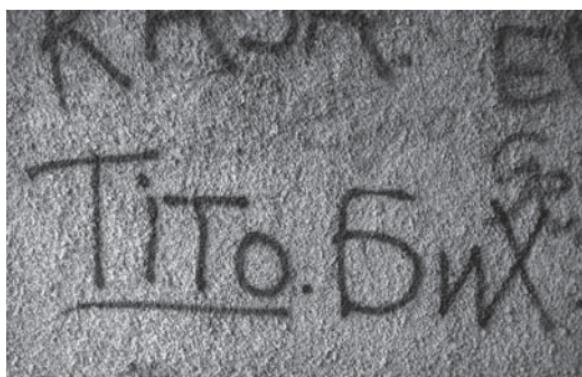
²⁶⁶ In his capital study of utopia, he finds such practices and discourses “anticipating the future” in daydreams as well as in scientific systems, in philosophy as well as medicine, in various forms of art and architecture, mythologies and religions, and feminism and geographical discoveries of the world.

²⁶⁷ Also, utopia functions only for the sake of the present, which must be achieved, so this present is instilled in all utopian deviations.

in nostalgia is not its retroactiveness and defensiveness, but primarily the fact that it is an *a priori* strategy: it is not a retreat *in the wake* of defeat, but a retreat *in the face* of defeat. Its discourse offers conservative explanations and solutions to modern dilemmas: it bedazzles, obstructs and paralyzes the new and the fresh, using the usual traditionalist repertoire and can therefore have serious political implications. For this reason, because it offers a false haven, nostalgia can be an unproductive, even a dangerous choice. It is possible to criticize it as a fatalistic manoeuvre, infantile regression, or an ostrich mentality. It “resolves” problems by fleeing from them into the embellished past. The more it seems that nostalgia “helps” or “consoles” nostalgics, the worse service it does to them. They remain alienated from current problems, apathetic, fixated on expired and fossilized things, entrenched in the “continuous past” (Petrović, 2008b, 21), and deprived of hope for a better future.

In my second interpretation, nostalgia is one of the competing hegemonic discourses that fill the void created by the lack of sense in late capitalist societies. Jürgen Habermas (1975) says that we are in the position of “legitimization deficit.” Contemporary societies have serious problems with self-legitimization, with finding the point of their own existence. Consumerism does not know utopia, only the naked here and now, while societies in transition do not know the present, because they live in a limbo between the lost past and the uncertain future. Therefore, nostalgia may be created and sustained as a deliberate answer, as a smart trick, or a smokescreen invented by the dominant social forces faced with legitimization problems. It can be “an additional resource in the warehouse of late capitalism’s ruses and lures” (Jameson, 2005, 168). The ruling elites are much more comfortable when people complacently look into the past, cultivating a homeostatic feeling as if *tomorrow will never come*, than when they look for ways to transform the present and design potentially dangerous scenarios for the future. The nostalgics cannot accept the existing world, so they seek refuge in the idealized past. This is precisely what the hegemonic forces want, since for them the *retrospective* is certainly better than the *prospective*. Accordingly, nostalgia is a “safe discourse,” since its inherent assumption is that the *belle époque, just masters, and lost youth* can never return. It is a wish for the better that can never be fulfilled, a wish broken in itself. Viewed from the perspective of the ruling elite, nostalgia is necessary for the

normal functioning of contemporary societies: it socializes its addressees around harmless, innocent, not to say childish, images of the past.



above:
Zagreb, 2006

below:
Mostar, 2007

While the two readings above criticize nostalgia for supporting dominant ideologies despite apparently opposing them (first by escaping into the imaginary past, and second by legitimizing the emptiness of contemporary societies), the third espouses it as an explicit opposition to the present. In my understanding nostalgia is also a dissident discourse, a kind of resistance to the blanket accusations of the past, and a survival strategy in a fast-changing world. I fully agree with Boym (2001, 354) that “nostalgia can be both a social disease and a creative emotion, a poison and a cure”. Nostalgia also has its third face: it is an emotional protection against the narrative breaks in people’s life stories; it has a cathartic, therapeutic and healing effect. It resists the criminalization of the past and “strikes back,” preserving in this way the continuity of identity threatened by historical discontinuities. It protects the past that would otherwise be stolen, in the sense of Milan Kundera’s famous maxim that “the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against for-

getting." As such, nostalgia is utopian and alternative, and transcends the existing order. Some may find this aspect of it contradictory, since it actually yearns for *old times* and the *things already experienced*. At any rate, the simple fact that it searches for and anticipates a world that would be *more just than the present one*, makes nostalgia a potential engine and means of emancipation. For this reason, I do not see it only as re-action, but also as action; not only as healing wounds, but also as creating cracks within whatever is currently dominant; not only as a denial of reality, but also as a construction of a new reality; not only as a *pious wish*, but also as an initiative for its realization.



Tuzla, 2008

It is this third interpretation of nostalgia that clearly exposes its utopian aspect, of which we can become aware only if we liberate utopia from its commitment to the future, and insist on its search for *the better*. It is precisely utopia, Bloch's "landscapes of wish," that represents that vital, active, creative, imaginative and hence political capacity in nostalgia. It is by no means innocent or without a silent revolutionary potential; it is not only a conservative, pessimist, fatalistic and paralyzing discourse of *poor creatures* who *cannot make their way through the present, are the prisoners of the past, losers in new times*, to use the harsh language of the transition era, or a discourse of those who have no future so they cling to the lost past existentially and transcendently. Above all, nostalgia is a prerequisite for survival, a sharp and

subversive critique of presentism, current dominant ideological matrices of the never concluded transition, according to which the current world is the best of all; nostalgia provides perspectives on *how the world should be*.²⁶⁸ At the same time, it does not venture beyond the contemplative level. In most cases, nostalgia is not directly or consciously oriented towards a concrete political goal, but it remains a fantasy, fragmented, meditative, elegiac and unconscious. In short, it is an inversion of the present and simultaneously a foretaste of the different, but not also a program-based action. Its utopia is abstract, not concrete or real. But it may become such.²⁶⁹

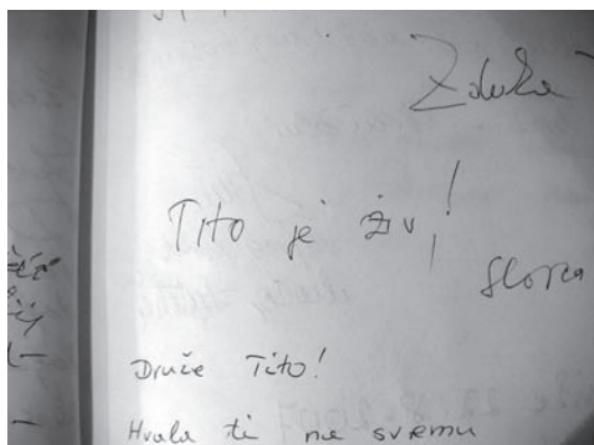
Therefore, my ultimate conclusion in this study is little unexpected and seemingly contradictory. The Tito from ti-tostalgia has not much to do with the “real Broz.” In fact, as a historical personality, he is not even very important in that context. It is precisely this retrospective utopia within nostalgic narratives that can explain why today we encounter not only the surviving examples, or residues, of former veneration of Broz, but primarily his new image, created in new ways. It tells us that for utopia the *actual experience of his times* is not important, so young people who share with the older generation the vision of a better world can appropriate him, too; that various antiques and souvenirs are not only materialized memories whose task is to evoke in our minds a pleasant image of him, but that they also tell us what kind of image it should be; that they are on offer not only because the “market asks for them,” but because supply itself creates the market, or put differently, that memory is not only evoked but also created; that what is involved is not simply a “return of the suppressed,” but a kind of new coming into being; not only a reinterpretation, reinvention, redefinition, re-appropriation, reconstruction, and adaptation, but also the invention and construction of the past as it never existed. It is not solely a shift of meaning, but the creation of meaning; not only decontextualization, but completely new contextualization. Nostalgia has less to do with the embellishment of the past than with its invention or construction and with new conceptions. All this does not necessarily have much to do with how the past actually looked and what kind of character one actually was. It is primarily a new composition and not only a positive

²⁶⁸ The findings of her study led Petrović to conclude that “nostalgia is about gaining the right to have a future” (2008a, 24).

²⁶⁹ Much like other forward-looking dreams, it is capable of a revolutionary consciousness, and can become part of history without departing from what is good in these dreams (Bloch, 1981, 1624).

historical heritage, or the *legacy of our beautiful shared past*. It is not *welcome back*, but *Hello to the new*.

To be more concrete, the diction of titostalgics – *Tito is alive!* – should be understood literally: their Broz is a figure of the present, not of the past. Broz in titostalgia is not the fervently sought *second Tito*.²⁷⁰ He has not come back, but was born in nostalgia – distant from his historical image – born anew to a large degree. What is involved is not his *redesign*, an ideological *lifting* or *makeover*, to use the lingo of modern popular culture, or a *pump-my-leader* project. His replica born out of nostalgic yearnings is in all respects more perfect, better, and more just than the historical prototype. Utopia therefore makes nostalgia a critical, active social notion, not just a passive, defensive and reactionary one, as it is usually blamed for being.



Kumrovec, 2007

In brief, Broz in titostalgia is a symptom of post-socialist transition, meaning the painful combination of neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism and post-colonialism, and not a reappearance of socialism.²⁷¹ Of course, the question that arises is why it is Tito and titostalgia that are present in modern culture, if historical Broz is not of crucial importance and if this has more to do with the search for a utopian society and its just leader? In my opinion, the answer lies in the fact that, for people in this part of the world, Broz and Yugoslavia, as a social experiment that worked for some time, provide the closest frame of reference for the realized utopian ideals of *a just society*, meaning *just* for the most of its

²⁷⁰ That is how Milošević was described in the songs of his supporters during the time of the “happening of people”: *The people ask who will replace Tito, now we know who the second Tito is, Slobodan is a noble name!*

²⁷¹ Boyer (2006, 363) argues similarly in connection with Ostalgie: “it is a symptom less of East German nostalgia than of West German utopia”.

members, and of a *fair* leader.²⁷² At the same time, it is also a sharp critique, particularly from young people, of present social injustice, economic injustice, political arrogance, and of course, a critique of nationalism, nation-states and their *national-cultures* as well as other exclusivisms, because examples from the past prove that it was possible to live together.²⁷³ Here the historical lesson appears as an alternative to the present. The social anthropologist Stef Jansen argues that *yugonostalgia* in anti-nationalist individuals is a “continuity” with the former normality, “prosaic memories of everyday life which provided the basis for the development of their resistance strategy”, and “resistance to nationalistic amnesia and selective memory,” which, as such, is “capable of influencing everyday practices and can lead to a concrete engagement,” while at the same time it “frequently also includes a powerful ‘yearning’ for a better life in general” and for “a kind of anti-nationalist ‘home’ that never existed as such and that does not exist anywhere, meaning a ‘home’ within some better, utopian future” (2005, 254-258).

The examples provided by former Yugoslavia and its spirit of *positive cynicism*²⁷⁴ are therefore conveniently close and can be used in new narrative constellations. The most effective way to express abstract notions in everyday culture and beliefs is by using the existent, convenient, well-known, tested things or concrete persons. The creation process and content of the nostalgic notions can be explained with the help of Lévi-Strauss’s concept of *bricolage* (1978, 57-63), which produces brilliant and unexpected results. Using this “science of the concrete,” a new practical product, in this case a social notion, is created retrospectively by relying on available sources, examples, elements and references. In this way one “withstands the absence of meaning” and overcomes contradictoriness. Accordingly, the birth and the structure of utopian notions are also, in a way, culturally and historically determined, defined and limited by

²⁷² Jameson (*Ibid.*, 12) holds that utopian programs can always be explained with one and the same slogan. In the concrete example, instead of saying *a better world*, you say *Yugoslavia*, instead of *utopia* it is *Yutopia*, and instead of a *good master*, *the king*, *the cool guy* – *Tito*.

²⁷³ Some recent surveys conducted after the last wars point to this as well. The residents of Vojvodina, of both Hungarian and Serbian origin, thought that the golden era was *Tito’s era*; Broz was also voted the most preferred figure in Serbian history (ahead of Tesla, Mihajlo Pupin, Vuk Karadžić and Karadorde). There, Broz is still “popular as the symbol of supra-national integrations” (Kuljić, 2005, 466; see also Perica, 2002, 106).

²⁷⁴ The term used by one of my respondents in research on *yugonostalgia* among the diaspora in the US (2005).

already existing notions which are refashioned, upgraded and combined with others.²⁷⁵

Back to Broz. Practically all Post-Yugoslavs know him. He is the most accessible and “borrowed” image of indeterminable utopian search, or the historical figure that “goes beyond human boundaries.”²⁷⁶ As the examples of titostalgic culture clearly show, practically every titostalgic person can create his/her “own Tito” while pursuing his/her nostalgia hobby. Much like other nostalgicized personalities, things and eras, the notion of him is polysemic, polyphonic and unstable; it has neither the same meaning nor the same ring to it for all of its creators and recipients. It is understood, to use Hall’s classical division (2004, 306–308), in the dominant-hegemonic, professional (relatively independent), negotiated or oppositional terms. Despite a few shared characteristics, a common framework and momentary ideological preferences, everyone imagines, organizes, and (if he/she wishes) disseminates it in his/her own way. Jameson arrived at a similar conclusion (*Ibid.*, 25), when he described the “excitement that identifies a forgotten or repressed moment of the past as the new and subversive”. What is important is that Broz can be attributed the utopian wish mentioned earlier, that is to say, that the ideology of that utopia is materialized in the titostalgic cultural production, to use Althusser’s words. Yugonostalgia, as the wider phenomenon, and titostalgia as the narrower one, express precisely that: the nostalgics’ wish for better times, a better political system and a better leader, although, unfortunately for them, these belong to the past. To rephrase the cliché: utopia dies last.



southern Serbia, 2008

²⁷⁵ Referring to the subversion of bourgeois ideology Barthes (1979, 16) says that the only possible answer to it is not resistance or destruction, but theft: to crush the old texts of culture, science, literature and rearrange them according to previously unknown rules.

²⁷⁶ See Bloch, 1981, 1180–1219.

In our case, nostalgia “speaks” the Yugoslav, Titoist language, not only because the reality of that time collapsed before the very eyes of the majority of its citizens, or because of enduring collective and personal memories of those times and testimonies about them, or because *certain things survived* the chaotic transition. There is also the utopian, transcending, emancipatory element: a vaguely profiled wish for the better. For this reason, the introductory questions *Why is it Tito?* and *Why is it Yugoslavia?* need to be reversed. These are not questions but answers. The real questions are *Where do we go now? How? Who, in fact, are today's leaders?* In this sense, titostalgia is a political discourse, but on another level, not the apparent one. This discourse is not directly and conventionally political in the sense that it *resuscitates Yugoslavia, takes us back to Tito etc.*, which is the interpretation favored by its constantly alert opponents and one avoided by many of its proponents.²⁷⁷ It is not such not only because these implications are impossible, but primarily because Yugoslavia and Tito never existed in the way they are constructed within titostalgia and yugonostalgia. It is not a revisionist or “restorative nostalgia,” as defined by Boym (2001, 41–48), not a return of the past, the regime, the leader or past times, but a return of the utopias of those times. Re-politicization therefore occurs on a much more abstract or meta level, within utopia. It transcends the concrete, left-right political divides, daily politics, actual historical personalities, circumstances and regimes. It is rather an indefinable wish for better times, a more just world and incorruptible people which only later made use of something definable as its reference. It is a clear message to the present, exposing its deficiencies and telling it how a better world should look.

The Yugoslavia from the nostalgic discourse never existed. It is its utopian simulation, Yugoslavia as it should have been, a *dreamland* purified from all weaknesses and mistakes, a kind of socialist Cockaigne. The same holds true of Tito. It is ironic that Broz's brave promises, optimism and endeavors to create a better life for the Yugoslav nations have survived only in the imagined world of nostalgia. All that remains of the anticipated *kingdom of freedom* is an inspiring recent past; a Bloch-like “anticipatory consciousness” has been rendered into a retrospective utopia and a wish for

²⁷⁷ Although Titostalgia and yugonostalgia are also directly instrumentalized politically; they are often present in pre-election activities and the propaganda of the Bosnian Social Democrats.

the better that looks back into the past. The real historical personality has become a typical myth. The late politician has reappeared as a pop idol; the communist has become a profitable brand name; the *beautiful future* is behind us, not in front of us, and the signifiers of the former *proletarian state* have become modern consumer commodities. Judging by these nostalgic narratives, Yugoslavia was a perfect state and its leader, Tito, a perfect ruler. But as we know, such perfection can live only in nostalgia and exist only as utopia, which, remember, is a place that does not exist.



Slovenia,
autumn 2008

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY – *I'm watching you, majku vam božiju*

Or, to be more concrete: it is not possible to idolize certain icons and monuments to certain heroes who are directly responsible for drastic violations of human rights and at the same time expect the younger generation to respect human rights and accept them as part of their attitude and general outlook.

Slovenian PM Janez Janša in his speech on the Human Rights Day, December 10, 2007



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