

'Thirty Years of Independent Slovenia: Challenges and Prospects'

University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies

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Abstracts and bios

Petra Svoljšak

Slovenes on the Move: Slovenian Refugeedom During the First World War

The paper presents the refugee experience of the Slovenian population during the First World War. The opening of hostilities between Austria-Hungary and Italy on 24 May 1915 had violent and unexpected effects on the lives of the local civilian population. Part of the Austrian Littoral inhabited by the Slovenian and Friulian populations was occupied by the Italian army, which introduced an occupation regime that would have prepared the territory for post-war annexation to the Kingdom of Italy. One security measure was the evacuation of the civilian population from the front to the interior of Italy (12,000 civilians). The Austrians also instituted security measures by evacuating the civilian population to the hinterland, to refugee colonies, and to refugee camps. Where refugees ended up depended on their social status and wealth. The latter became synonymous with the refugees' experience, which was marked by a sense of loss, alienation and constant fear.

Petra Svoljšak is head of the Milko Kos Historical Institute, a Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. She conducts research on the World War I period with a particular focus on occupation and violence against civilians, memory, victims of the war, gender and urban history. Among her most recent publications is "The Sacrificed Slovenian Memory of the Great War," in *Sacrifice and Rebirth: The Legacy of the Last Habsburg War* edited by Mark Cornwall and John Paul Newman (Oxford: Berghahn, 2016) and the monograph *Leta strahote: Slovenci in prva svetovna vojna* [Years of Horror: Slovenes and the First World War], co-authored with Gregor Antoličič (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba 2018).

Katarina Keber

Healthcare and epidemics among Slovenes: 19th century to the present

This paper charts healthcare development milestones in the Slovenian lands during the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, which contributed significantly to the establishment and understanding of public healthcare as we know it in contemporary Slovenia. While epidemics played a vital role in the development of public healthcare in the 19th century, other key public healthcare issues (decreasing birth rates, infant mortality, alcoholism) accompanied contagious diseases after the First World War to influence the improvement of its organisation. One of the significant milestones for Slovenian medicine and healthcare, both in the sense of humanity and expertise, was reached with the resistance movement during Second World War.

Katarina Keber is Senior Research Fellow at the Milko Kos Historical Institute, a Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. A specialist in the social history of medicine, her research focuses on cholera epidemics, the development of public health-care systems and social politics in nineteenth-century society. The title of her doctoral thesis was *Cholera Epidemics and Their Influence on the Development of Public Health-Care System in the 19th Century Carniola*.

Peter J. Verovšek

The Lessons of Slovenia's Memory for the Present: Between the Visegrád and the EU

Throughout its history, Slovenia has been divided about whether its future lies with the West or with the other Slavic peoples of the east and south. In its first thirty years of independence, Slovenia has gone from being the poster child of postcommunist democratic success to an example of the rise of illiberalism. In this talk, I interpret the internal debate within Slovenia as to whether it should tie its fortunes to the EU or the Visegrád states of Central Europe as a debate about the meaning and lessons of the country's totalitarian past.

Peter J. Verovšek is lecturer in Politics/International Relations at the University of Sheffield and author of *Memory and the Future of Europe: Rupture and Integration in the Wake of Total War* (Manchester University Press, 2020). He has degrees from Dartmouth College and Yale University. Before arriving in England, he taught at Harvard University for three years as a Lecturer in Social Studies. His work has been published in a broad array of leading international journals, including *Perspectives on Politics*, the *Journal of European Public Policy*, *The Review of Politics*, the *Review of International Political Economy*, *Political Studies*, and *Memory Studies*. He has also engaged in broader discussions in the public sphere, writing for *Social Europe*, the LSE Brexit Blog, *Eurozine*, and the Duck of Minerva, among others.

Barbara Korun

Sixty years of Slovene women's poetry: public reception and poetic response

In my debut collection of poetry, *The Edge of Grace* (1999), I wrote: "I still think that / the place of poetry / is forbidden for many women." Based on my own experience in the time when I was forming my poetic expression and looking for female poets to be my role models, and based on the experience of my colleagues—four women poets of four generations (Saša Vegri, Svetlana Makarovič, Taja Kramberger and Nina Dragičević), I will show how the reception of women's poetry has changed between the 1960s, when poetry written by women was socially invisible or ignored (with rare exceptions), and today, when the social imbalance between genders is becoming less visible. The paper also addresses the roles poets assume through their poetry and their social attitudes.

Barbara Korun is a poet, critic, and essayist. After completing her degree in Slovene language and literature, she taught Slovene literature in various Ljubljana grammar schools, worked as a language advisor in various theatres, and currently works as a freelance writer. She has published seven books of poetry along with fifteen in translation and is the recipient of several Slovenian

and international awards. For the ninth year now, she has led an annual event for contemporary Slovenian poets called “Poetesses on Poetesses”.

Alojzija Zupan Sosič

The contemporary Slovene novel: tendencies and characteristics (1990-2020)

This paper argues that the contemporary Slovene novel (1990–2020) is a “modified traditional novel”, enriched with post/modernist techniques. If traditional aspects are apparent in the clarity of the story, the distinctness of relations between literary characters, and the clearly determined place and time, the most important transformed tendencies include genre hybridism, the non-typical position of the narrator, and an increased number of spoken passages. Authors’ emphasis on intimacy is closely connected with the search for a (gender) identity, imbuing these texts with a “new emotionality”. New emotionality conveys a special kind of sincerity that controls the declaration of un/successful gender communication and stereotypes of the modern human being with ironical-parodical distance.

Alojzija Zupan Sosič is Professor of Slovene literature at the Department of Slovenian Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Her research interests include contemporary Slovene narrative, Slovene love poetry, women's literature, gender identity, narrative theory and literary interpretation. She has published monographs and articles in Slovene and other languages and edited several anthologies and proceedings of symposia or seminars. Among her most recent publications is *Teorija pripovedi* [Theory of the Narrative] (Ljubljana: Litera, 2017). She has chaired juries of various literary awards and is currently the vice-president of the board for Cankarjeva nagrada [Cankar Award]. She has also been involved in a number of international projects and led the project *Drugi v slovenski in bosanski književnosti* [Others in Slovene and Bosnian Literature].

Marko Stabej

Slovenian: what's the point?

Nobody really knows whether plurilingual Europe is a Sisyphean condition or a Babylonian effort. The once seemingly certain path of English prevailing not only as lingua franca, but also as a common language in many domains throughout the majority of European and world language communities is becoming a bit less certain. Recent developments in language technologies are also changing the global outlook: a new era of strengthening national (or even regional) monolingualism seems quite possible. So, what to do with a language of 2.5 million native speakers in the future? And why?

Marko Stabej is Professor of Slovene Language at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. His research is in the fields of Slovene linguistics, contemporary and historical sociolinguistics, textual linguistics, stylistics, and corpus linguistics. He has participated in a number of Slovene and European research projects in corpus linguistics and has served as editor-in-chief of the journal *Jezik in slovstvo*. He is a former member of the Slovene parliamentary working group for language policy and language planning (1994-2005), the Slovene council for foreign languages (1999-2006), and other bodies in the field of language policy and language

planning. He is currently Head of the Centre for Slovene as a Second and Foreign language of the University of Ljubljana.

Slavo Radošević

Slovenia - the success of the Yugoslav Breakup and the EU Accession?

The presentation will reflect on the economic development trajectory of Slovenia over the last 30 years. How Slovenia managed the transition from socialist to a market economy, from regional to the national economy, and became a member of the EU. We point to the gradualist approach to transition and corporatist political economy as significant factors shaping these transitions. We discuss how Slovenia coped with the downturn of the post-2008 crisis and with the COVID recession. Finally, we discuss the main challenges for further development, which arise primarily from the ageing population and low rate of productivity growth.

Slavo Radošević is Professor of Industry and Innovation Studies at the University College London where he has also been acting director of School of Slavonic and East European Studies. His main research interests are in science, technology, industrial change, foreign direct investments and innovation policy in Europe, with particular reference to central and eastern Europe (CEE). He favours empirically oriented and policy relevant research projects, based on neo-Schumpeterian economics. He acts as an expert for the EC, OECD, UNESCO, UNIDO, World Bank, UNECE and Asian Development Bank and several governments in CEE. He also had significant policy-making experience in Croatia and ex-Yugoslavia at the highest policy level. He has been a special advisor to the EC DG Commissioner for Regional and Urban Policy (2015-2019).

Cathie Carmichael

History and Heritage in Slovenia since 1991

In this paper, I examine the move towards independence in 1991 and how this enormous political change altered the ways which Slovenes view themselves, their country and their collective achievements. I argue that independent statehood changed the production of knowledge at a very fundamental level. In particular, I look at the writing of history and the growth of the heritage industry.

Cathie Carmichael is Professor of History at the University of East Anglia. She is the author of several books and edited books, including the co-edited *Language and Nationalism in Europe* (2000) as well as the forthcoming two-volume *Cambridge History of Nationhood and Nationalism*.

Tim Haughton

Novel Appeal: Old and New Parties and the Dynamics of Party Politics in Slovenia

Reflecting on three decades of party competition this presentation will examine both the annuals and perennials of party politics in Slovenia. Placing the Slovene case in comparative perspective, particular focus will be placed on the rise and fall of several new parties and the emergence of a new party subsystem. The presentation concludes by reflecting on what these dynamics mean for the health and well-being of democracy in Slovenia.

Tim Haughton is Reader (Associate Professor) of European Politics at the University of Birmingham. His research focuses on the domestic politics of Central and Eastern Europe, particularly party politics and campaigning in the region. He has published widely on the politics of the region including a number of articles on Czech, Slovak and Slovene politics. His most recent book is *The New Party Challenge: Changing Cycles of Party Birth and Death in Central Europe and Beyond* (co-authored with Kevin Deegan-Krause) which was published by Oxford University Press in December 2020.