

Leon Stefanija

Elusive Contents: Two Notes on Socialist Realism and Slovenian Music

Summary

I would like to unfold two topics concerning the notion of socialist realism and music in Slovenia. Firstly, I would like to question the notion of socialist realism as regards Slovenian music. The comments on selected testimonies concerning music and the notion of socialist realism in Slovenia - from the archive of the Slovenian Composers Society, one programmatic essay of Dragotin Cvetko (published in 1945), two (of three) Slovenian post World War II musical periodicals (the first one published since 1946, the second since 1951), and a survey of the musical practice from the 1970s onwards - should offer an insight of its range.

Secondly, I would like to discuss the nexus of contents that constitutes the notion of socialist realism as regards Slovenian music. For the notion of socialist realism (probably not only) in Slovenian music after the second World War should be seen as a provisional historiographical category as well as a rather vague aesthetic concept. As a complex notion it involves the universalistic "quarrel" between the old and the new that flourished especially since the 1960s. But as for the Slovenian music it is necessary to acknowledge it as a term comprising ideological, psychological, and existential (generational and personal), but for music hardly wider political phenomena.

I would like to discuss some facts from the period between 1945, when Slovenia became a part of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the beginning of the 1960's. This paper focuses on the impact of socialism as a totalitarian, centralistic political regime on Slovenian musical life, as documented above all in the archive of the *Society of Slovenian Composers* (Društvo slovenskih skladateljev; further SSC).

The paper consists of three parts. The first part unfolds some features of the centralistic regime in Slovenia. The question of its effectiveness is then brought into focus - the question of the impact of politics, and its extent, on Slovenian music -, which leads in the closing section towards two notes on the socialist regime in post World War II Slovenia, namely, the simultaneous processes of the "integration of culture" and the "decentralisation of jurisdiction".

Some features of the socialist regime in Slovenia

The tendency toward centralist agitation and propaganda ("agitprop"), typical of socialist states, is for Slovenia abundantly attested. Communication between the capital of Yugoslavia (Belgrade) and Slovenia was very frequent. The administrations of the republican societies of composers in Yugoslavia met on the regular basis, discussing -

apart from bureaucratic questions concerning the operation of the societies - many current problems in musical life.

As an example of the mental climate within the SSC at the beginning of the 1950's, I quote the fifth decision of the plenary session held on 25th March, 1953:

"The Society [of Slovenian Composers] is deeply interested in the proper socialist education of composers. We will resist every attempt to allow foreign and the socialist community a harmful mentality among composers.

The Society of Slovenian Composers will especially resist charlatanism, concealment and egoism in the disputes between workers in the field of music. At the same time, the SSC acts according to the conviction that in this fight only frankness and truth are moral principles worthy of socialism, democracy and truly free people."¹

If such statements with similar well-known language were part of the vocabulary of many socialistic regimes, I should remark that Slovenian musicians did not experience the public ideological polemics found in some other socialist milieus.² A telling detail about the Slovenian musical culture of the fifties and the stance of the leadership of the SSC can be found in a press release comprising current problematics discussed in December 1950, during the annual meeting of Slovenian composers. The newly elected president of the SSC stated among other things:

"The point of view according to which art has nothing to do with the progress of society, is still present among our artists, particularly among composers. It seems that some of our creators are not familiar with the progress of our society nor with the progress the art has made. They think that art marches on its own and has its own laws."³

In similar reproaches to artistic autonomy in Slovenia during the early 1950's, the names of individual composers are not found. Instead, there is a comparatively small number of nameless variations on categorical reproaches, comparable to the quotation.

The reason for such categorical, anonymous critiques might be as follows. After World War II⁴ a thorough reorganisation of all sectors of public life took place. The leading principle of this reorganisation was to divide individuals as "politically ours", "politically undefined" and "politically hostile elements". A list of musicians, who had been collaborating with the occupiers, was supposedly drawn up in 1948. The question of this list of Slovenian collaborators was raised a few times in the SSC during 1954, in the context of insurance for pensions. But the president of the SSC at the time, Karol Pahor, was not acquainted with it, although he was the secretary of the association in 1948, nor did the ministry of education regard the "phantom" list as authoritative.⁵

¹ The typescript is to be found in the archive of SSC No. 47/1 and 47/2, 3.4.1954.

² Apart from the huge number of studies on cultural politics in the U.S.S.R., it is worth comparing this text with, for example, Lars Klingberg's 'Die Kampagne gegen Eberhard Klemm und das Institut für Musikwissenschaft der Universität Leipzig in den 60er Jahren', or some other papers in: Berliner Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft. Beihefte zur Neuen Berlinischen Musikzeitung, ed. Hartmut Grimm, Mathias Hansen, Klaus Mehner (Neue Berlinische Musikzeitung, 9. Jahrgang) Beiheft zu Heft 3/1994, 45-51.

³ The SSC sent a press release including the quotation above to the daily *Slovenski poročevalec* with letter No. 14-1/51, 25.1.1951.

⁴ The effect of World War II on the internal development of the state in the second half of the 20th century is discussed in: Božo Repe, 'Mesto druge svetovne vojne v notranjem razvoju Slovenije in Jugoslavije', in: Prispjevki za novejšo zgodovino XL-2/2000, 95-106.

⁵ According to his deposition, SSC No. 355 from 27.9.1954, signatory Karol Pahor wrote, "As far as the list of collaborators of with the occupiers is concerned, which was sent by the SSC to the Board of Education in March 1948, I declare that as a member of the administrative body of the SSC at that time, I do not know anything about that list and nobody has asked me for my concurrence, or vice versa. Furthermore, I declare that even if I were

This, of course, certainly does not mean that some Slovenian composers did not suffer coercive measures by the Communist Party because of their supposed suspiciousness. But research into individual cases is yet to begin.⁶ And conflicts concerning political "suspiciousness", if I may use the political jargon of that time, were frequent in the 'fifties. The danger of deviating from the "politically correct line", which was sought for by the authorities within works of art and individuals' activities, was seen by the "greatest orthodox [politician in Slovenian culture] Boris Zihelr [...] at every step"⁷.

Considering these facts, it is not difficult, I hope, to see that the socialist regime had at its disposal several levers for ousting from public life those whose artistic efforts were not oriented towards "our people", let alone those whose work would dared to question official policies. Although it is necessary to add that political totalitarianism began to decline at the end of the 1950's. Four years after the political break between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in 1948, the state apparatus for agitation and propaganda was dissolved at the sixth congress of the communist party (1952).⁸ And before Boris Zihelr's withdrawal from the leading position in Slovenian cultural life in 1961, "low-value" music (jazz or foreign popular music) had imbued everyday culture, which was not in accordance with the officially postulated aesthetics of the "unsentimental and objective" representation of "our life" in art-works.⁹

familiar with this list, I could not agree upon it, because (as I was informed by some members that have seen the list) it comprises the names of a members of our society who were connected with us [ie. the partisans] during the occupation and the liberation movement, be it as sympathisers or as members of the Liberation Front resistance, as was the case of Prof. Stanko Premrl, who is supposedly listed among others on the list." Dragotin Cvetko, the secretary of the SSC in 1948, also wrote a deposition. He called attention to the fact that he was not acquainted with the list, but he added that he could not have been acquainted with the list, because in February and March 1948 he was in Prague undertaking research (SSC No. 346, 13.9.1954).

As to the validity of the list of Slovenian collaborators, one may infer from the letter from the *Council of Education and Culture* (6.10.1954, II. No. 60/32; in the archive of SSC No. 392, 9.10.1954). Both signatories, the president of the *Commission for the Recognition of the Cultural and Scientific Work of Pensioners* and the head of the *Sector for Science and High Schools* Stane Melihar and the secretary of the *Council for Education and Culture* Vlado Vodopivec, warned that, "At the same time, we would like to clear up this misunderstanding which arose up along with a remark about a list comprising your members - supposed collaborators with the occupier. The list is not signed and because of this, the Commission will never consider it as an official document."

Unfortunately, I was unable to find this list, which obviously exists. Nonetheless, it is not to be found in the archive of the SSC because they have been maintaining their archive from 26th April, 1949 (extant files date back to 1951), as is evident from the *Record about Taking Possession over Documents*, with added inventory, SSC No. 33, 23.4.1954.

⁶ Cf. the testimony of the composer Zvonimir Ciglič *Between God and Satan. The thorny path of the composer, conductor and Teacher, Zvonimir Ciglič (Med Bogom in Satanom. Trnjeva pot skladatelja, dirigenta in glasbenega pedagoga Zvonimirja Cigliča)* in: *Slovenec*, 7.-14.11.1994, 18. On similar experiences of individuals – as, for example, the "interrogation" of the late composer Primož Ramovš, or the "detention" of Marijan Lipovšek and many other steps of the authorities - scholars will probably discover much telling information by studying the works and lives of individual composers.

⁷ Aleš Gabrič, 'Zajčeva Požgana trava v očeh partijskih ideologov', v: *Nova revija* XIII, julij-avgust 1994, 168.

⁸ *The Communist Party of Yugoslavia* changed its name at this congress (Zagreb, 2.-7.11.1952) to *The Association of Yugoslavian Communists*. One of the main criticisms of the political regime came from Milovan Djilas, later on deposed as a minister from the Yugoslavian government, who accused the political system of being "excessively bureaucratic". His view might be understood as an indicator, why should be considered among the most important principles adopted during that time the principle of the "worker's self-management" and principles of "more democratic forms of authorities", giving more freedom to the "local institutions" of the social life. (*Zgodovina Slovencev*, Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 1979, 900 in dalje.)

⁹ The following testimonies from the end of the 1950's and the beginning of the 1960's are shedding some light on the pervasiveness of "cheap Western music" in everyday life. In his letter itemizing the choirs prepared for the song-book designed for the Slovenian emigrants, A. Groebming, among others, writes, "We should bear in mind that the choirs of our emigrants still live in the period of reading-societies [the second half of the 19. century], whence we

Thus it seems that the following principle, which I would like to discuss further, suitably illuminates the main problematics of musical life and the Slovenian socialist regime in the 'fifties: they would prohibit nothing, if it did not jeopardize their party. On the one hand, this principle illuminates why it is difficult to discuss the musical aesthetics of socialist realism; on the other hand, it indicates an important question that I would like to discuss – the question of the extent of the impact that socialist politics had on Slovenian music.

The extent of political impact on Slovenian music

Until the 1960's, the incessant emphases of the political regime - of its symbols – remained, at least officially, alive in Slovenia, as in the other republics of Yugoslavia, well into the 1980's. Moreover, the features of the centralist policies of the 1950's, as they can be evinced from the well-preserved archives of SSC, could be understood as evidence of the idea of a "*Gesamtkunstwerk* culture" which is hardly possible to equate with that which Boris Groys discusses in his book *Gesamtkunstwerk Stalin*. The Slovenian composer was not only "more or less dependent on the orders of the new rulers"¹⁰, but was in first place dependent on those agents in the institutional hierarchy through which finances found their way to recipients.

Therefore, I will elaborate on those features of Slovenian musical culture which could be reckoned as forming part of one of the critiques of Marxism, that is the contradiction between ideology and practice. It was precisely this problem that emerged as the main institutional obstacle in the 1950's, and which, from the 1960's, remained a permanent stumbling block for the authorities. And it could be indicated as a specific feature of the Slovenian cultural milieu, as the following discussion of some details about the SSC and the head office of the Yugoslavian societies of composers SAKOJ attempts to show.¹¹

In his report on the work of SAKOJ between its second and third congress - between 1953 and 1957 - Matija Bravničar¹² spoke about the ideology of this institution. The question of ideology, he said, had been touched upon for the first time after World War II at the plenary session in Sarajevo in 1951 (17.-18. may).¹³ The resolution of this session was the following request: to "intensify the cultivation of cooperation with nations of good will". The formulation was probably adjusted to the festival publication, in which Bravničar's report was published. The fact is that SAKOJ was functioning

are returning, thanks to jazz." (SSC No. 202, 8.4.1959.) Similarly, the managing committee of the SSC remarked in a letter to the manager's office of the Broadcasting Station of Ljubljana: "We have ascertained that from 1959 the number of the mentioned broadcasts [of Slovenian symphonic works] has been rapidly falling in favour of popular music - domestic and especially foreign." (SSC No. 275, 18.5.1959.) And with comparable anguish the composer Pavel Šivic wrote to the SSC about the officially published invitation by Yugoslav Radio and Television for "a song about the rebellion", because no one had won the prize: "But worst of all is that all Yugoslavian composers put together are incapable of composing a song for at least third prize! Meanwhile, musically illiterate songwriters earn 130,000 dinars in Opatija [a music festival] for popular melodies, and we, composers of concert music, are discredited in the eyes of the public." (SSC No. 1187, 23.10.1961.)

¹⁰ Aleš Gabrič, 'Odmevi teorije socialističnega realizma v Sloveniji', v: Nova revija 147/148, 1994, 102.

¹¹ SAKOJ was officially acknowledged by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia in Decision VI. No. 26078, 8.9.1951, although the first meeting was held between 12th and 13th February, 1950, in Belgrade. The SSC was founded in 1946, although documentation for the first five years seems to have been lost.

¹² The president of SAKOJ 1953-1957.

¹³ Matija Bravničar, 'Savez kompozitora između II i III kongresa', v: SAKOJ 1950-1970, ed. Predrag Milošević, Beograd ??, 67.

according to the principle of "democratic centralism" and was cultivating social relations with socialist countries in the first place. The representative delegates of SAKOJ, authorised to *represent* their institution at various festivals of contemporary music, were cautiously selected. It was practically very difficult for individuals to foster systematically any personal contacts with Western musical cultures (although the authorities did not control communication between Slovenian composers and musicians abroad)¹⁴, because, despite there being no official prohibitions, the finances for visiting foreign countries were strictly apportioned¹⁵, and obtaining the necessary travel documentation was left to the ambition and skill of the individual composer.¹⁶

The discrepancy between ideological postulates and everyday practice and the influence of the politics on the pillars of Yugoslavian and Slovenian musical life could be illustrated with the statute of SAKOJ. In the first statute of SAKOJ in 1951¹⁷ it is stressed at the beginning that, among other things, the association "strives toward the acceptance and further development of the best traditions of domestic as well as world [=concert] music, [...] towards the development of and aid in the battle against the influence of idealistic comprehension, decadent phenomena and vulgarisation in music" and "to spread the work of the members of the association throughout the native country as well as abroad". But the first chapter of the old statute, in which the ideological stance of the association revealed itself clearly, had already been abolished in the draft of the second statute, confirmed two years after the first, and also valid for the SSC.¹⁸ The draft was sent from Belgrade to Ljubljana with a request for confirmation. It was returned with a telling correction. From the formulation in the third

¹⁴ In SSC letter No. 429, 25.10.1954, to the Slovenian Board of Education

we find the following: the SSC "has never kept records of our members' contacts with foreign countries, nor has it received any questions in this respect from the authorities. For the competent authorities, however, all societies have provided written reports on every visit by a foreign visitor. Our society has never delegated any member abroad, nor provided any money for such travel."

¹⁵ The Slovenian Board of Education sent letter (No. 4527/1, 18.11.1953) to the DSS, initiating a provisional commission for constituting a book of rules for scholarships which would help individuals to live abroad. (SSC No. 345, 19.11.1953) Cf. *A Draft of the Regulations for Awarding Scholarships for Overseas Study* (SSC No. 190/1, 3.3.1954).

¹⁶ For example, the composer Jakob Jež visited Donaueschingen Festival (11.12.53) at his own expense. He stayed in West Germany for a month and a half. (Jež's letter in SSC No. 381, 11.12.1953.) In a letter dated 22.9.1953, he requested financial help from the SSC (DSS No. 258, 16.10.1953), but information on political support was found. He received from the SSC a kind of recommendation, in which it was pointed out that Jež "is going to perfect his profession" (SSC No. 208/1-2). From this letter it is obvious that the personal contacts of Jež were of no interest to anyone in the SSC, perhaps because in both the previous years he had been reporting musical events in the west (München 1951, Wien 1952) for the local newspaper.

The lack of interest in Jež's personal contacts in the west is interesting not only because he is one of the most interesting Slovenian avant-garde composers, but especially because, in his letter of November, he has mentioned that he *might* (!) return the hospitality of his friends abroad *if* they decided (!) to visit him in Slovenia. And he submitted a request for the expected costs of his unnamed German hosts to the SSC with a letter dated 15.12.1953 (SSC No. 422, 8.1.1954). The president of the SSC, M. Bravničar, wrote back (SSC No. 426/1, 9.1.1954) saying that the SSC would cover his expenses, if he could give a lecture on the contemporary German music he had heard on his trip. Is Jež's example an exception? Considering the fact that his request is the only one of its kind in the archive of the SSC, one could assume so. But this detail from the archive of the SSC is, I think, obvious enough that the SSC acted according to the frequently mentioned principle at sessions of the "politburo" of the Central Committee of the Slovenian Communist party, namely: it is important to hold to the main line, digression into details is pernicious.

¹⁷ Verified by the Yugoslavian Home Office 3.10.1951. The draft of the Statute, also preserved in the archive of the SSC, had been attested by the latter already on 15.11.1950.

¹⁸ The draft of the statute of the association of Yugoslavian composers was verified by the SSC with a stamp, No. 387/1, 4.3.1953.

paragraph, which would allow political interference (not only of the central association in Belgrade), two words were crossed out:

The original written formulation:	The corrected formulation:
The task of the association is: to bring together the republic societies and harmonize their work on the development of musical life and unitarian solutions to the problematics concerning our guild and financial issues affecting composers and musicologists."	"The task of the association is: tobring together the republic societies and harmonize their work on the development of musical creativity and [///] to solve the problematics concerning our guild and the financial issues affecting composers and musicologists."

From the new emphasis added in the SSC it is obvious that the correction transferred the jurisdictional levers from the political domain to the professional. Although it is worth mentioning that despite this change, the SSC adopted in regulations from 7.11.1951 that among the tasks of their court of honour was "to examine closely the political, personal and social *irreproachability* ["purity"] of the members." (My italics)

This "close examination" of the *irreproachability* of composers must have been practically the more difficult for government clerks the more distant grew the post-war years (see below official letter SSC no. 280, 21.11.1958, about Alojzij Mav). This surmise seems reasonable due to the fact that the *Bureau for Propaganda* within SAKOJ, founded in 1957 for the popularisation of the existing musical works and not for the explicit ideological levelling of musical creativity, was dissolved nine years later, when a decision on the "decentralisation of activities" was adopted at the fifth SAKOJ congress in Sarajevo (14.-16.11.1966).¹⁹ The political situation in general brought back tensions in the 'seventies. Nonetheless, from the bulletin of the SSC (1966→)²⁰ it is obvious that the political and ideological questions played practically a negligible role, if any, in the musical life of Slovenia.

Though differently proportioned, the problematics resembling the discrepancy between the compulsory ideology of the time and practice had emerged also before 1952. From the register of performances between 1946-1951 prepared by the *Concert Agency for Slovenia in Ljubljana* (some time from 1947/1948 on, the *Agency for Folk Culture and Art in the Republic of Slovenia*),²¹ one cannot speak of manifest public concert politics. It is obvious that interpreters did rarely appear on the stage with church music²² and, after 1948, with formerly frequently played works of minor Russian composers,²³ or with works by contemporary composers which might step out of the repertoire, revealing a preference for the middle-class aesthetics from the 19th century.

The question concerning centralism and unified art policies in Slovenia thus reveals itself as a rather complex one. Some features of the perplexed circumstances in

¹⁹ SAKOJ 1950-1970, ed. Predrag Milošević, Beograd ??, 50.

²⁰ The first number of the *Bulletin (Bilten)* of the SSC was issued in april 1966. The bulletin was issued under this name until 1971, then its role until 1980 was taken over by the bulletin of SAKOJ. In the spring (May-June) the bulletin of the SSC was issued again, at first under the name *Composer (Skladatelj)*, from 1983 for a short period again as *Bulletin* and afterwards as *Messages of the SSC (Sporočila Dss)*.

²¹ The list is in the National library, Department of Music, in a folder with the concert programmes for Ljubljana 1946-1950.

²² Although it would be questionable to state that church music was banished, as it were, because of, for example, the concert for the Red Cross on 4.11.1946, when violinist Zlatko Balakovič played Schubert's Ave Maria; a concert with *Ode to Saint Cecilia* by H. Purcell, played by the Orchestra of Ljubljana Radio on 11.2.1947 with conductor Alen Busch; a celebration of J.S.Bach on 30.3.1950, when the conductor D. Švara and the orchestra of the Academy of Music in Ljubljana performed two airs by Bach (from the St. Mathew passion); celebration concerts of Jacobus Gallus between 7th and 12th November 1950, when motets were performed etc.

²³ Although some works of Tchaikovski and Musorgsky were often played as well as Schostakovich even after 1948, when Soviet Union was practically proclaimed as the main enemy of Yugoslavia.

the 1950's have been felicitously pointed out by Boris Kidrič, one of the most influential politicians at the time. In January 1951, two years before his death, Kidrič emphasized "middle-class, blind [elemental] forces" from the report of the spokesman of the "team of the *Central Committee of the Slovenian Communist Party*" Moma Markovič, as the main problem of the Communist party in Slovenia.²⁴ From the protocol records of the sessions of the CK KPS, where Kidrič's evaluation of the political situation in Slovenia is documented, as well as from other protocol records of that very influential political agency, it is possible to infer that the "middle-class blind [elemental] forces" referred to 1) clericalism, supposedly one of the the strongest opponent of socialism in Slovenia as well as in Bosnia and Hercegovina, and 2) the Soviet inform burea.²⁵

On the shoving aside of church music and, partly linked with it, "middle-class" music to the fringes of Slovenian musical life it is necessary to mention the dissolution of the Slovenian music society *Glasbena matica*, the main middle-class musical institution since the second half of the 19th century, the abolition of the organists' school (established in 1877) and of the periodical *Church Musician* (published since 1878 and again from the 'seventies onward). More concretely, in a series begun in 1954, the SSC published five compositions by Stanko Premrl (1880-1965) during the lifetime of this priest and composer, one of the greatest Slovenian church musicians. None of them is church music. The position of church composers and their musical works could be exemplified by a letter by Stanko Premrl, dated 23.8.1958, in which he offered to Slovenian philharmonics his most extensive work, a "cantata-oratorio" entitled *Saint Joseph*, composed in 1948.²⁶ Relations between the authorities and supposedly

²⁴ Boris Kidrič in a record of a meeting of politbiro of Central committee of the Slovenian Communist party in January, 1951. In: Darinka Drnovšek, *Zapisniki politbiroja CK KPS/ZKS 1945-1954*, Ljubljana (Arhivsko društvo Slovenije) 2000, 257.

²⁵ I quote three typical ascertainments about "middle-class, blind [elemental] forces" from the records of the meetings of politbiro of the Central Committee of the Slovenian Communist Party. Janez Hočevar (5.3.1949): "In the cells of the [Communist] party, represented by LMS [Slovenian National Youth], tolerance has nestled as regards hostile parols and assaults of various kinds, of clerical as well as an informbiro nature.

[...]

In schools, the clerical influence is linked with that of the informbiro." (Drnovšek 2000: 142)

Boris Kreigher (20.11.1950): "As far as our youth is concerned, the question concerning IB [informbiro] is as important as questions concerning religion." (Drnovšek 1000: 234)

Milovan Djilas (january 1951): "Sympathies for informbiro are more perilous than the blind [elemental] forces of middle-class people." (Drnovšek 2000: 260)

²⁶ Like some other clergyman and many believers, Stanko Premrl supported the Liberation Front. A letter to the *Slovenian Council for Education and Culture* dated 19.10.1954 (SSC No. 406, 18.10.1954) describes him as a "sympathizer of the Liberation Front", who has "actively joined the Liberational Front at the Academy of Music" and whose "name was highly esteemed in the cultural institutions of the partisans, because he is the author of Prešern's 'Zdravica' [the current national anthem], a song which was always sung at partisan meetings."

Justifying his offer, Premrl mentioned the positive response of listeners to the first two performances at Ljubljana Cathedral in 1951 and resumed: "Unfortunately, spiritual music is not so popular today; it is a fact, though, that it is performed and the Slov.[enian] Philharmonic Orchestra has been performing such works (Requiems, Stabat Mater and others) not only within Slovenia, but also abroad." His letter (SSC No. 897, 27.10.1958) was addressed to the SSC with a request for support that could help with the public performance of his oratorio-cantata. The secretary of the SSC, Pavle Kalan, mediated the score to the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra (SSC No. 896, 23.10.1958), but their artistic director, Marijan Lipovšek, promptly replied in the negative and returned the scores. His letter was sent on 25.10.1958 (archive of the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra 2601/1, 25.10.1958; SSC No. 912, 20.10.1958).

Even though the accompanying letter, mentioned in Lipovšek's letter, is not preserved in the archive of the SSC, one could assume that the officially repudiated church music was rarely performed only due to the bureaucratic mechanisms of some cultural, not political institutions. They seem to have been the main arbiters in the performing of church music on the fringes of public concert life. In other words, the oratorio-cantata by Premrl was favourably mentioned by Venčeslav Snoj, who wrote a celebratory article on Premrl's 70th birthday for the *Slovenian Musical Journal (Slovenska glasbena revija)*, edited by (above all) Marijan Lipovšek and Matija

"suspect" musicians are indicated in the example of Alojzij Mav,²⁷ a composer of smaller pieces of church music and some popular secular choirs, in the event of his requesting a higher pension. Both mentioned examples suggest that there was no "open" or "hard" settling of accounts with "politically hostile elements". Instead, one should speak of complex social circumstances, which institutional politics could not hold control and act upon adequately, thus leaving the measures to individual professional musicians - to their artistic convictions and their narrow or open-minded decisions. As far as the relation of the Slovenian authorities to the Soviet informbiro problems is concerned, a note from the plenary session of the council of the administration of SAKOJ is suggestive. In Sarajevo, in 1951, they "condemned the slandering and war-instigating campaign of the informbiro countries against our country" and declared that they "support our civil authorities in their efforts to defend peace, independence and the raising of socialism".²⁸

It seems that similar appeals to the "independence of socialism" in Yugoslavia became rather vague in the 1960's, through politically handy phrases²⁹ which evade concrete meaning. From the 1960's onwards, the number of visits of Slovenian composers abroad swiftly increased. They attended various festivals of contemporary music. Visits to *Warsaw Autumn* became rampant, and Slovenian musical life opened itself up through the foundation of the *Musical Biennale* in Zagreb (1961→), whilst in Ljubljana a group of composers called *Pro Musica Viva* was founded, cultivating (1962→) the ideals of new music in Slovenia following the examples of other west European musical centers. And it is hardly a coincidence that along with the political warming of the 1960's, institutional contacts with the Soviet Association of Composers were re-established (1961).³⁰

Bravničar. Because of this, one could rightly assume that the reason for Lipovšek's refusal to perform Premrl's work was an everyday decision of the artistic manager of the Philharmonic, being at the same time a prominent composer, whose views were far from being politically motivated.

²⁷ As an example of the practical difficulties of the authorities there is the treatment of Alojzij Mav, the organist and composer. A copy of the letter to the *Commission for Recognizing Artistic Merit* at the *Slovenian Council for Culture and Education* by Pavle Kalan, the secretary at the SSC, is preserved in the archive of the SSC No. 280, 21.11.1958. From this letter, the range of the practical problems of the authorities is clearly recognizable. For this reason, I would like to quote a larger section of it:

"As far as Mav's life during the World War II is concerned, we could not give more accurate information, and we think that it would be better to address this question to the competent authorities. All we know is that Mav has never been actively involved with collaborators with the occupier.

The song 'My Country' ['Moja domovina'] was composed few years before the Great War in Belgrade from a Serbian text and is supposedly still performed in this form. During the war, Mav only substituted a Serbian text with a Slovenian, which has - as we see it - no politically propagandistic points. As far as we know, collaborators have sung this song during their marches, along with other, above all, Slovenian folk songs. [...]

As regards the five songs from the song-book *To the Fatherland* [*Domovini*] we could say the same as for the example mentioned. Except for one of them, they have no specific politically propagandistic meaning [...]

[...] Of course, we cannot overlook the fact that this song-book was issued during the occupation, when all positive elements of our cultural circles remained silent. Because of this we cannot meet with approval similar collections."

The administration of the SSC concluded the letter with a suggestion to examine the case more closely. But probably they did not have to carry on further investigations, since there is nothing more about this case in the archive of the SSC.

²⁸ SAKOJ 1950-1970, ed. Predrag Milošević, Beograd ??, 14.

²⁹ There is an telling detail in *Recollections of the Slavko Osterc Ensemble* (*Spomini na delovanje ansambla Slavko Osterc*) by Ivo Petrić. In his unpublished typescript, the conductor of this group, important for the development of Slovenian new music, writes that the name of the ensemble was "criticized at the beginning by the [Croatian composer] Milko Kelemen, who said that it smacked of cultural-artistic, socialistic societies" (p. 3).

³⁰ Before 1960 SAKOJ had an opportunity to take part in an exhibition of Yugoslavian books in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. In a circular letter in 1958 to the republic societies, a special emphasis was laid upon the

Consequently it would be difficult to deny that the "anti-decadent" musical policies of the Soviet Union and similarly administered countries were in Slovenia practically unfeasible even in the 1950's. This was probably due not only to the fact that music as an artistic medium was far from having such a socially penetrative force as the written word or film, but also because of the autocracy and national consciousness of the leadership of the SSC, and also because of the legal regulation of the executive republic agencies. It seems that they did not manage to (and partly they even did not bother to) constitute an effective inspectorate over Slovenian musical life.

Totalitarian centralism?

Therefore, after the political influence on Slovenian musical life between 1945 and 1991, when Slovenia attained independence, one should look 1) at the *non.existent* - in the then *non grata* domains of musical practice ⁻³¹ and 2) in the *appropriation* of

importance of that occasion, at which also scores for the exhibition would be displayed and concerts of Yugoslavian music would be given (see also the letter SSC No. 450, 10.3.1958). The arrangements between the SSC and some representatives of the Soviet Union concerning the exchange of printed publications in both countries were launched when the composer Nikolaj Ivanovič Pejka visited Ljubljana, 20.-22.12.1961 (see the report of the secretary of the SSC Primož Ramovš, SSC No. 1317, 27.12.1961).

A coincidence - or an irony of history - enabled Pavel Šivic and the ensemble *Collegium Musicum* (a kind of forerunner to the Slavko Osterc Ensemble) to give a concert of contemporary American music on the first day of Pejka's visit to Ljubljana, at which he could have heard works by Diamond, Ives, Piston, Porter and Helm. The Russian visitor could have listened to the concert also on the radio, since on 13.11.1961 a request for broadcasting the concert was sent by Pavel Šivic to the Radio Broadcasting Station of Ljubljana.

Interest in contemporary American music at the beginning of the 1960's in Yugoslavia was rather lively. For example, an opera company from Santa Fe performed in 1961 in Belgrade two works by Igor Stravinski (*Oedipus rex* and *Persephone*; the invitation is in the archive SSC No. 1147, 21.9.1961), while the *Slovenian Musical Journal* was sent to some distinguished American universities (presumably in exchange for their journals). As one can see in letter SSC No. 1199, 26.10.1961, the Slovenian journal was sent to Yale, Berkley, Columbia, the University of Boston, Harvard, Stanford, and to the Library of Congress.

³¹ But an assessment of the repressive measures of the former authorities and their impact on Slovenian musical life - as some scholars have rightly indicated, it could be found in the *removal* from the public life or the deliberate *ignoring* of some aesthetic, philosophical and compositional layers of music - demands some caution. In other words, it would hardly be an exaggeration to claim that the epistemological categories introduced by Ivan Klemenčič in his article on music and totalitarianism in Slovenija are not comparable to those used by Nikolaj Čužak in his article entitled *In the Sign of Life-Building* [*Pod oznakom žiznestroenija*, LEF, 1, Moskva-Petrograd, 1923, str. 36].

<p>Čužak writes: "Art as a method of cognition - that is the highest content of the old bourgeois aesthetics. Art as a method of life-building - this is the catchword of the proletarian view on the science of the arts."</p>	<p>Klemenčič, after describing the "compositional retrogression" (331) in the music of some composers who were supposedly (mis)led by the "totalitarian regime" versus art that would be free of ideology and would take European civilisation as an example worth following, concludes his paper somewhat awry. He writes that it is precisely the mentality of the obstinate "renewed communism" which is the main reason, "we [!] still [1998] stick [...] to politics and the [question of the regime in Slovenian] state when we [!] would like to discuss music."</p>
---	---

(Translated by L.S. from: Boris Groys, *Celostna umetnina Stalin* [*Gesamtkunstwerk Stalin. Die gespaltene Kultur in der Sowjetunion*, 1988], Ljubljana 1999, 35.)

(Ivan Klemenčič, *Glasba in totalitarna država na Slovenskem* [Music and the totalitarian state in Slovenia] in: *Temna stran meseca* [The Dark Side of the Moon], ed. Drago Jančar, Ljubljana 1998, 333.)

The authors are writing from diametrically opposed political, historical and epistemological positions. Čužak's speaks from the theoretical and "pro-communist", Klemenčič from the daily-political and anti-communist point of view. Furthermore, both claims (obviously enough, I hope) share rather similar vocabulary. But Slovenia is hardly, if at all, comparable to the Soviet Union, and Klemenčič's findings are exaggerated distortions in at least two respects. First, it would be difficult to argue that the aesthetic category of *expression* - the central synonym for freedom in Klemenčič's paper - has an opposition in politically engaged, non-expressive "socialist aesthetics", as far

some segments of musical culture that were by no means a result of the activities of socialist policies, but were the consequence of the productive and reproductive capacities of Slovenian musical culture.³²

I hope it is obvious now that the impact of socialism on Slovenian music could hardly be deduced from the relatively small number of politically engaged cantatas, choirs, mass songs, chamber vocal-instrumental and programatically conceived symphonic pieces. Nor could the impact of the otherwise centralistic politics on music even for the 1950's be labelled as totalitarian. Moreover, the role politics was playing in Slovenian musical life was constantly fading, although at the same time one may not conceal the individual examples of vileness and, especially in the 1950's, the sense of rigidity brought about by the new political regime.

For the 1950's, and especially from the 1960's onwards, it seems that except for this question of the centralisation of musical culture, in which many individual experiences with the socialist authorities should be differentiated, another problem reveals itself: the question of the relation between concert music and other kinds of musical performance. It could be addressed to the obscurity concerning the practical execution of socialistic principles in the domain of music, and could be indicated with the following two questions:

1) what criteria could help discern between "socialist" music and "music without adjectives" (H.H. Eggebrecht) - from the music of the Western concert canon, among which some Slovenian symphonic works (allegedly socialist because of their added patriotic titles or programmes) could be included, which formed the mainstay of Slovenian concerts from the 1950's onward; and

2) at which point does the question of political impact on concert music - the impact of stimulating propagandistic, engaged music, which turned into a kind of "octettomania" (M. Stibilj), representative reviews of music for brass bands, occasional competitions for vocal-instrumental compositions, (mass) songs and choirs on the subject of heroic deeds during (or concerning life after) World War II - cease to be a question about concert music and becomes part of a much broader problem that was actualized in the discussion on post-modernity from the 1960's onward, namely the problem of the relation between artificial and popular music?

With this question I would like to sum up with a concluding elucidation of the aforementioned and probably the central principle of the socialist regime concerning

as Slovenian musical heritage is concerned. And second, the principle of "social self-government" led towards the problem of the "centralisation of culture along with the decentralisation of competence" as early as in the 'fifties, not to mention that the executive powers in communist Slovenia, hardly comparable to that in the Soviet Union, had practically no interest in music.

³² Besides the poverty of the first decade or so after World War II, when musicians could not have been paid for concerts properly and concert programmes seemed to be put together rather ad hoc, without any long-term concert policies outlined, one could say that even during the 1950's in Slovenia works were performed by composers who were undesirable or even prohibited in some other communist countries. As regards Slovenian concert politics, it seems that for performing works by foreign composers musicians had had to bear in mind the following principle: "SAKOJ protects all our members, but not every work they compose." (The record of the fifth plenary session head committee of SAKOJ, Belgrade, 3.-5.4.1959. SSC No. 367, 15.4.1959, p. 2.)

Thus, for example, one can find in the list of performances in the period between 1946 and 1951 - for the time of the worst political "measuring out" - more than twenty performances of J.S. Bach (apart from the mentioned solemn concert in J.S. Bach's honour, three Brandenburg concertos, twice performed Italian concerto, two of his pieces for cello etc.), more than forty performances of Beethoven (among them Eroica, "the overture" to the broadcastings of the fanatic speeches of Göbbels, was performed in 1946 as well as in 1949, and except his Ninth symphony all others were performed without ideological reservations), few symphonic poems by R. Strauss and overtures from Wagner's operas were performed during that time.

Slovenian music: we do not prohibit, as far as it does not jeopardize our party. The posed question of the relation between artistic and popular music could be addressed to the fusion of SAKOJ and the Association of Composers of Popular Music. The associations began to merge in July 1962 and remained legally united from 1963. At first, the reason for their merging was understood as a contribution to the general "integration of culture in the ideological battle, which would guide the processes and development of that culture according to development in our socialist society,"³³ as reads the formulation written in the early seventies by Aleksandar Obradović, who was the secretary-general of SAKOJ between 1962 and 1966. As the then main problem of this fusion he considered: "the integration of culture and decentralisation of jurisdiction etc. etc."³⁴ It seems to me that that this process had begun in the 1950's, with the mentioned "middle-class, blind [elemental] forces" - with various personal experiences of the past, individual beliefs and expectations, and with in many respects, prim politics, frequently without much interest in music. That is to say, it seems that precisely the simultaneous processes of integration of culture and decentralisation of jurisdiction enabled the young generation of composers already in the second half of the 'fifties to commence the realisation of their ideas for a new and avant-garde music.³⁵ At the same time, the fundamental, eternal processes of the "integration" in music and "jurisdiction" seem to be a kind of epistemological "handle", that might help to reveal some differences and similarities in Slovenian musical life during the periods marked off by historical turning points.

³³ Aleksandar Obradović, 'Četiri najteže godine u radu Saveza kompozitora', v: SAKOJ 1950-1970, ur. Predrag Milošević, Beograd ??, 95.

³⁴ Aleksandar Obradović, 'Četiri najteže godine u radu Saveza kompozitora', ib., 93. In the circular letter of the *Council of culture and education*, there is - among other decisions of their session in 1958 (21.-22.1.), when the question of the cooperation between individual "pillar-institution in culture" was discussed - a telling emphasize about the "unbelievable swing of national cultures in all republics of Yugoslavia". As the main reason for its existence, this political institution stated the *necessity* for "unifying, coordinating and directing mass culture, education and artistic activity". From the contents of this circular (SSC No. 549, 21.4.1958) as well as from the range of actions and some other precautionary measures in the 1950's (such as not tolerating absence from important, but obviously badly attended meetings at individual societies as well as at SAKOJ) one can assume that not only was the decentralisation of jurisdiction an urgent problem, but also premonition of the unfeasibility of the unified policy making for the "masses" emerged. For this reason, too, *The Bureau for Propaganda and Information* as well as the *Central Musical Archive* (in Belgrade) were founded at the same time.

The report on the international cooperation of composers and musicologists by Dragotin Cvetko, published in the same collection as the above quoted Obradović's note, could be understood as a gradual development of the latter's apparently unimportant remark on the integration of culture and decentralisation of jurisdiction. (Dragotin Cvetko, 'Međunarodni susreti', v: SAKOJ 1950-1970, ur. Predrag Milošević, Beograd ??, 113-117.) In it, Cvetko wrote at some length about the response to his advocacy of artistic subjectivity and free musical creativity, delivered as the prefatory speech at the opening of the international meeting of composers and musicologists in 1960 (18.-24.8., Dubrovnik). About the reserved response to his speech among some participants, ten years later he wrote as if he were referring to the past. The entire report, written by a man who had founded the Slovenian musicological chair in Ljubljana at the beginning of the 1960's, seems to be a plea for creative freedom and free thinking.

³⁵ About Slovenian avant-garde music cf.: Matjaž Barbo, *Pro musica viva, prispevek k slovenski moderni po II. svetovni vojni*, doctoral dissertation, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Musicology, Ljubljana 1997.