

Peace movement in Slovenia

1984-1993

*Rethinking demilitarisation and nonviolent strategies
40 years after the peak of Slovene Pacifist Movement*



Marko Hren

UPASANA, ACADEMY STAROSLAVOV HRAM

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Ljubljana Graffiti 1988
This graffiti was drawn by early members of Metelkova Network, to promote Demilitarisation campaign. The photo was published in year 2000 METAMORPHOSIS METELKOVA, reconversion from the fortress to agora, retrospective exhibition 1988-1999



Graffiti at Metelkova cultural center – 2025; symbolising the heritage of The Centers’ pacifist origin.



The Cover Photos, UPASANA archives.

- 1st: graffiti from Ljubljanica River Banks in Ljubljana, supporting the demilitarisation and Slovenia Without an Army Campaign, Ljubljana, 1990.
- 2nd graffiti at Metelkova today – a giant beast resembling a super bat, chasing for the military jets.

About the author

Marko Hren Conceptualised and served as a speaker for the campaigns of the Yugoslav and Slovene Peace movements in 1980ies and 90ties. He co-founded and directed The Center for the culture of Peace and Nonviolence in Ljubljana (1988), Slovenia and co-Founded Ljubljana Peace research institute (1991) where he served as founding director [.http://www.mirovni-institut.si/en/](http://www.mirovni-institut.si/en/). From 1985-1992 he served as editor of Slovene peace movement and Slovene democratic opposition newsletter in English and Slovene languages (Independent Voices from Slovenia, The Intruder etc). Samples are available at the archives of the Peace Institute of Ljubljana. He was repeatedly elected as international council member of the War Resisters International. He was a member of Slovene president's Council for Security and partnered with a range of international and domestic peace and human rights organisations. Hren published a number of articles on the history of nonviolence. Part of it is available free at www.dlib.si, In 1990 he Conceptualised, initiated and served in initial period (1988-2002) as an elected chair of Multicultural center established in former Yugoslav Army Headquarters at Metelkova street in Ljubljana, Slovenia. https://www.culture.si/en/Metelkova_mesto_Autonomous_Cultural_Zone.

In 2002, Hren initiated and cofounded the first FairTrade chain&store in SouthEastern Europe, 3MUHE in Ljubljana, <https://www.pravicna-trgovina.si/projekti/pravicna-trgovina-3muhe>

In 2012 he formally established a Cosmological Society UPASANA and its Academy STAROSLAVOV HRAM www.upasana.si of which the mission is to promote perennial wisdom of Humanity, perennial values and cross species solidarity based on ethics of nonviolence, restraint, modesty and sustainable living.

Hren serves as a senior expert advising Government of Slovenia and European Commission in various fields related to sustainable development and in particular the twin (Si: BISTRO) transition towards Society 5.0..

His research work is largely driven by method participant-observer. He can not and does not want to avoid adding a personal note to the interpretation of research findings.

Vsebina

Prologue (march 2025).....	7
Paper by Marko Hren for the book Mehr Sicherheit OHNE WAFFEN, edited by Werner Wintersteiner, Vienna, 2024.....	19
Cross-sections and interwovenness of national and international context.....	25
Peace option for Yugoslavia was designed to have realistic impact.....	25
Their Yugoslavia – Our Europe	26
Personal account.....	27
Campaign for Nonviolence and Demilitarisation – the summarised core action lines	28
Main achievements of the Peace movement – High Impact Actions.....	29
It was the Peace movement that triggered the Slovene spring.....	29
It was the PM that orchestrated some of the key strategic areas of Slovene spring.....	30
Concrete achievements, manifestations	31
The discourse on Civil Society.....	32
The Scope of Civil Society – pretenders for power only?	32
The terms defining context – civil society was not a core term.....	34
Civil society versus power or civil society resolving needs, objectives, ambitions - the case study of Metelkova	34
Civil society cross border solidarity – forgotten rules of the game?!	36
What did we have 40 years ago and we still have (or have again)	37
What did we have 40 years ago and we do not have now.....	38
What did we not have 40years ago but have now	38
What did we not have 40 years ago and we still miss having today	39
Can those lessons fit scenarios for Ukraine?.....	39
Existing multilateral organisations for early stage conflict resolution and peace building – Yes or NO.....	39
Religions and Peace – In or Out.....	40
Information technologies and AI - good or bad	41
Paper by Marko Hren for Resiting the Evil, edited by Bojan Bilič, Vesna Jankovič Geneva 2012.....	43
Early beginnings of the SPM	52
The history of the war-prevention activities.....	55
Conceptual pillars and action lines of the SPM	64
I. <i>Ahimsa paramo dharma</i> ,.....	64
II. <i>Human dignity, human freedoms, rights and ethics</i>	65
III. <i>The Rule of Law, Legal State, Constitutionality</i>	66
IV. <i>Civil disobedience and the power of the people</i>	67
V. <i>Cross border solidarity and international activities of SPM</i>	68

Key conceptual disputes between the SPM and the international movement.....	70
Conclusion – manipulated history	75
Bibliography	77
DELO –February 2021; On Demilitarisation; 30 years after the Independence of Slovenia	80
Post Scriptum : Putin – Trump, Le monde n'est pas à vous.....	81

Prologue (march 2025)

My generation is under constant challenge to maintain visions while being overwhelmed by memories.

While we are in a need of new realutopia, facing the rhetoric of colonial age, we are at the same time in a need to strive against amnesia as regards to past achievements of our realutopian visions. This volume addresses both, a realutopia of Slovene peace movement from half a century ago and a desperate need to develop a pro-active pan-European project, positive vision for Europe and its neighbourhood. At the moment, we do not see peaks or lighthouses of nonviolence, demilitarisation campaigns on the planet, to be comparable to Gandhian struggle, or to Intifada in Palestine in second half of previous century, or to Switzerland without an Army initiative, or Costa Rica without an Army, or the continuously evoking campaigns in Austria to strengthen and enrich its neutrality, as reflects in Werner Wintersteiner new edition that triggered my current meditation on the topic. The absence of pan-European movement makes the search for new realutopia harder. Might the Werner Wintersteiners' new edition titled "Mehr sicherheit ohne waffen" contribute to new awakening of perennial visions!

This is the crack through which **Werner Wintersteiners'** new edition seeks opportunity to shed light to nowadays potential of **Hans Thirrings** peace proposal based on disarmament. Thirrings' initiative was launched in Austrian parliament as a Memorandum in 1963 and had extensive consequences for the debates on neutrality, basic democracy and disarmament in Europe.

Wintersteiners' work is backed by essentiality for any RealUtopia, the basic democracy concept, as promoted by **Andreas Gross**, author of a contribution to "Mehr sicherheit ohne waffen" edition evoking Switzerland Without an Army initiative. The later was inspired by Thirrings thought and in the same way, it than inspired SOVA/OWL to fly in Slovenia. I often repeat: without Switzerland without an army, its headquarters in Rote Fabric in Zurich, the Slovene campaign would not emerge. It was fully inspired by European initiatives and movements.

I am writing this on spring equinox 2025, exactly 35 years after we formally launched the campaign **SOVA** – Slovenija Odpravi Vojaški Aparat / **Slovenia Abolishes the Military Apparatus**. The press conference was held on 28 of March 1990 and the leaflet was released to public on spring equinox 1990.

Ljubljana, 22. marca 1990.

Marko Hren, Vlasta Jalušič, Zoja Skušek (Neodvisna lista novih družbenih gibanj),
Janez Janša (Slovenska Demokratska Zveza),
Peter Jamnikar (Zeleni Slovenije)
Tomaž Mastnak (Svet Gibanja za kulturo miru in nenasilja),
Jožef Školč, Jaša Zlobec, Janez Sodrznik (ZSMS - liberalna stranka)

Javna predstavitev pobude bo v sredo, 28. marca 1990 v
Okrogli dvorani Cankarjevega doma v Ljubljani.



The emblem for the campaign Slovenia without an Army . OWL – SOVA, in Slovene an acronym for Slovenija Odpravi Vojaški Aparat). The Owl in traditional tails represents a Nature Wisdom, A Wise Animal of the Wild-hood. THE OWL is an emblem of THE WISDOM pertaining to the NATURE. The OWL stands for SMART.

Talking about smartness. Slovene language is perennial, still saturated with pagan cosmology in its origin! One of the most talkative example is a word *BISTRO*.

Bistro in Slovene language means *SMART* and *CLEAN*. In other words, Slovene language holds one word for contemporary trendy European Concept of *TWIN* (sometimes also referred to as *DUAL*) Transition, the transition to Green and SMART / Digital Future Society 5.0.¹ Well, for Slovenia, the transition is holistic, *BISTRO*. We naturally understand deeptech and twin transition as Smart, Nature Based Solutions supported by ethical use of diverse high- tech, this sums into so

¹ See also Hren, 2022, Ancient schools of wisdom, contemporary spirituality (4.0), sustainable development and industry 4.0. : an issues paper on evolution of the concepts of spirituality Including case study: Slovenia. This is where we explain Society 5.0. concept.

called deeptech. Not coincidentally, most of Slovene regions have either a river or a city embedding the word BISTRA, BISTRICA.

40 years are in between a great enthusiasm as regards to real utopia and great frustration while our cultures are saturated again by the rhetoric of war.

Our dream of nonviolent transition was realistic. While I try to prove this hypothesis in my books, my writings are systematically ignored, particularly by domestic historians and political scientists. Despite of the fact, that the hypothesis is published for more than a couple of decades, there was no single polemics or other form of argued criticism that would undermine my hypothesis. I ask the reader to correct me if I am wrong. Lets repeat the hypothesis. **The nonviolent dissolution of Yugoslavia and establishment of Independent Slovenia without an Army was realistically achievable objective and even in the tough time-frame feasible.** Full stop. Arguments are elaborated in the two recently published texts bellow.

It is therefore exactly due to the realm of current global and particularly European rhetoric of war that we need to recall our realutopia. **Not in our name** movement is a result of impulse generated by contemporary realm, where the rhetoric promoting the need to increase the arms race is comparable to the one in the cold war. In a sense, it goes even further in the wrong direction. If the cold war peak of war rhetoric was fuelled by ideological controversy – free economy versus socialism - the present rhetoric of war is **not about ideological controversy but about ideological consent** of key protagonists. That makes the problem much, much deeper and bigger. Namely, the US, Israeli and Russian rhetoric is all about reverting politics back 700 years into the dark colonial predatory era of European nations embarking vessels to conquer the world. The leaders of the cited states openly promote, and publicly discuss the new division of land and openly defend their interests when it comes to territories in independent sovereign states where we witness todays war zones such as Gaza, Ukraine, Syria, Sudan or in strategic territories of other sovereign states, Greenland, Panama, Mexico.

The United Nations Multilateralism has been buried in the ground. UN has been ignored since after first Russian intervention in Ukraine in 2014 in a most perverted way ever. The Russian annexations of Crimea and parts of Donetsk/Luhansk appeared to happen with a consent of world leaders. And this inspired Russia to continue illegal operations in 2022.

The evolution of UN fuelled our realutopia in 1980ies, it was absolutely the main reference supporting feasibility of our visions.

However, The real-politik is turning back to “real estate” business. The trumpism trumpets blunt unilateral colonial rhetoric without a single flavour of ethics, exante ignoring international law, while subverting the sovereignty of states and the UN in-principio.

We are dumped back into the colonial predators times.

This is an end- result of the past millennia of colonial thinking, of the culture, where post colonial reflexes are appearing automatically, perpetuating the predatory behaviour to an extent that finally brought the humanity to the edge of its existence.

And yet, the politicians in power, are voluntarily and massively resuming such rhetoric of predator-ship.

At the same time, the discourse on values, nonviolence and the respect of Life on Planet. is pushed into the silence of the void. While the biodiversity and ecosystems suffer thousands of tons of military debris, enormous quantity of waste and devastation, the elites in power continuously and increasingly exercise the demagoguery aiming at additionally propelling the arms industry.

The intellectual state of art of European and North - Western hemisphere political culture was never in our lives so down to hell as it is today.

In that decadent atmosphere, Werner Wintersteiner decided to recall the memory of real-utopia from previous century, publishing his book "More Security, No Arms".

The title itself is a wow of a RealUtopian.

Werner was a great friend of Slovene Peace Movement, notably active in Alpinian-Adriatic Peace Initiative, where Italian, Slovene and Austrian peace initiatives gathered and exchanged visions extensively from 1983 till 1994. The variety of topics that we covered in collaboration with Alpinian - Adriatic Peace initiatives, is illustrated in a copy of the Content Index of Slovene Peace Movements first book, the Cold Peace and other Hot Topics, republished in the appendix to this volume.

Not coincidentally, the National TV of Slovenia has pictured that period as a peak of Slovene and transnational Peace Movement in a documentary movie titled **Forbidden games** (Si: Prepovedane igre) by Helena Koder which was released in 1986. Werner was starring in documentary and here is a screenshot with Werner (third from left) during the meeting with Ljubljana Peace Circle. The meeting was held in the garden of our activist Ingrid Bakše on the brinks of Ljubljana. To the left, a cofounder of Not in my name movement Marjana Lavrič and the author of this volume in between of the two.



To underpin the down-to-Earth nature of the Slovene Peace Movement Realutopia of the time, We shall outline its materialised results:

1. Slovene Constitution, clearly prioritising Peace Politics and legalising the conscientious objection.
2. The functioning Metelkova Cultural Center in the area of former Yugoslav Army Headquarters in Ljubljana. More than 30 years after the squat and exactly 30 years after first investments into Metelkova cultural center, which is fully functioning, the largest cultural center in Slovenia, far the largest achievement for culture in Independent Slovenia.
3. The 34 years of Peace Institute, which is one of the largest independent NGOs in Slovenia, having headquarters intentionally at the very geometrical center of the Metelkova Cultural center.
4. CŠOD centers for youth – these are centers renovated in the premisses of former Yugoslav army, normally situated in nature, since they have been serving as borderline military watchtowers or small scale support military bases for border control. After the withdrawal of Yugoslav army, the buildings were gradually renovated by Slovene ministry of education and a public body CŠOD (center za šolske in obšolske dejavnosti) was establish to manage the

management and exploitation of the premises for educational and leisure uses of primary school pupils.

These are institutional outcomes of the Slovene Peace Movement and its Demilitarisation campaign from 1980ies.

Intangible, unmeasurable achievements are even more important for the state of the art of the cultural milieu but of course, we can not speculate as regards to the potential impact of such nexus.

And – since we recalled the summer equinox - there is another tinny little detail, the Symbolism of the number 6 that has a merit to be mentioned in the prologue.

Namely, the mysticism of number 6 was accompanying Metelkova project along the way. I wrote a little essay on this topic which is published in the book *Metamorfoze Agore Metelkove* (Hren, Marko, 1999) and is titled *Lux in tenebris lucet*.

Shall we say that the planets' center of evolutionary gravity oscillates under the symbolism of number 6? Where will we go from here - from the point where politics is yet again becoming a straight forward real estate business? *Post Colonial Reflex* in its most perverse form.

Lux in Tenebris Lucet and the svastika symbol, together with the spell of the number 6 might offer an answer.

The Democlays Sward will be hanging and threatening our cultures as long as Dionysian greed-full and predatory power elites will rein in our countries. As long as shamelessly debauched profligate powerholders and ignorant billionaires are allowed to make politics in highest positions.

Their show that we are forced to watch today shall be finally sobering enough for the population to massively wow: NOT IN MY NAME!

Lux in Tenebris Lucet; Veritas Versus Wine!. What I wrote in my letter to the director of Slovene Ethnographic museum, as an inaugural letter accompanying my gift to Museum before it moved to a first renovated building in Metelkova in 1997 is still relevant. The museum renovated its first building at the so called southern part of the liberated former central Yugoslav Army Barracks, the part belonging to the Government / Ministry of Culture, while independent artistic and social movements were occupying the so called northern part of the former military barracks under the leadership of Association for Metelkova where I served as an elected chair and later Society RETINA that was coestablished by Association for Metelkova and some other NGOs.

The gift was a tree, *taxus Bacata* and the essay was titled *Lux in tenebris lucet*.²

² published in a book *Metamorfoze Metelkove*. Hren 1999. The text is republished on the page 121 of the volume I of the *Antology of Metelkova – how we failed to stop the war*:

<https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-E665ZWP6> .

How does the symbolism of 666 published in 1999 reflect in 2025?

Here is what was coined down on paper in a cited essay:

“ the squatters of Metelkova were pushed in darkness, since the municipality switched off the electricity supply to the squatted area of former military barrack. We had to rely on the inner light of persistence. As the seed knows the direction to grow, being alone in universe, it grows towards the light. There was much darkness at Metelkova and the beasts found fertile soil there. These are the beasts from the Revelation (13:18). “Wisdom is needed here; one who understands can calculate the number of the beast, for it is a number that stands for a person. His number is six hundred and sixty-six, 666.«!

To the hell! The number 6 was determinative for us at Metelkova. First, the municipality assigned the number 24 (equals 6) to the first renovated building »Lovci«, (en. Hunters), and the rent calculated for users was 6,66 DEM (German currency of the time, dominating the understanding of the values in Yugoslavia of the time) per square meter. This immediately triggered artists in residence to draw a graffiti on the brand new wall of the building »HOUSE666«. This piece of art provoked upgrades and remaking constantly over years – the story of the beast in man triggered unlimited imagination in the epicenter of urban pathology and urban creativity in one pot of innovation – the Metelkova squat.

Soon-after, also the second building renovated by RETINA; got the street number 6: Metelkova 6. Yes, the beast did roar and those who did not comprehend, now knew: the 666 is not the number of a devil, but the number of a man.

666 - A number signifying a permanent struggle between divinity and bestiality of a human being.

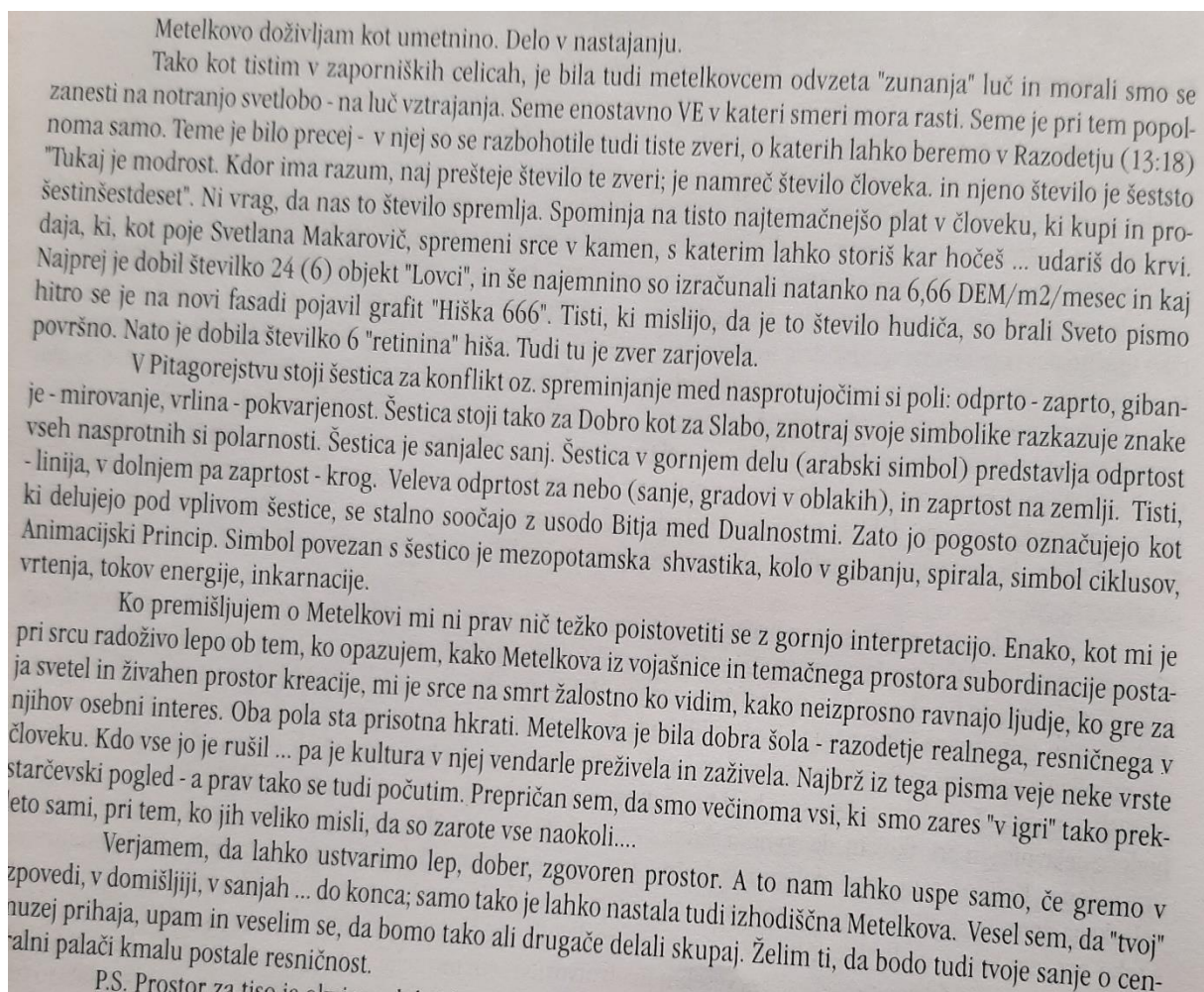
Pitagoras did teach that the number 6 would stand for conflict, the antagonism of the two opposing poles, two opposing virtues. The 6 would therefore stand for Good and Bad, it reflects all controversies. It is a dreamer in the upper part of Arabic symbol, where it is open stretching to the light, the subtle. In the lower part, it is circled, caught in spiral digestion of the vortexes of realm of dense matter. 6. In a font Dreaming Outloud. Real utopia is a manifestation of Dreaming Outloud. Of the animation principle, Of svastika as pictured in persian cosmology. The upper is open, the down is closed. Those acting under 6 are caught in duality all the time, but this causes change, motion, action. The 6 is often interpreted as an animation principle, also embedded in the symbol of svastika, the spiral, the evolution cycles, reincarnation..”

End of citation from Lux in Tenebris Lucet essay.

Svastika, being formed of four constalations of Great Bear rotating over four seasons of the year, forming a wheel of seasons, a wheel of life, a wheel of regenerations, made Persians name it The wheel of, **Mithra**, AKA the **Swastika**. **Not to mention the abundant use of the simbol on the diverse religious shrines in India.**

This is a symbol of Metamorphosis.

Now, 40 years later I reckon the planet is in a peak of the spell of 666 again, with the Trumpism, ruthless nationalism and right wing political prominence, with the predatory political rhetoric, the politics is being yet again reduced to real estate, predatory business. The political agenda being kidnapped by billionaires and oligarchs had contributed to a new spiral of Colonialism in its most perverse sense. The Politics, where Some are First, and all the rest are Marginal is made emblematic in the slogan *America first*; everything else is a subject of (Americas, i.a.) predatory interest.



Metelkovo doživljam kot umetnino. Delo v nastajanju.

Tako kot tistim v zaporniških celicah, je bila tudi metelkovcem odvzeta "zunanja" luč in morali smo se zanesti na notranjo svetlobo - na luč vztrajanja. Seme enostavno VE v kateri smeri mora rasti. Seme je pri tem popolnoma samo. Teme je bilo precej - v njej so se razbohotele tudi tiste zveri, o katerih lahko beremo v Razodetju (13:18) "Tukaj je modrost. Kdor ima razum, naj prešteje število te zveri; je namreč število človeka. in njeno število je šeststo šestinšestdeset". Ni vrag, da nas to število spremlja. Spominja na tisto najtemačnejšo plat v človeku, ki kupi in prodaja, ki, kot poje Svetlana Makarovič, spremeni srce v kamen, s katerim lahko storiš kar hočeš ... udariš do krvi. Najprej je dobil številko 24 (6) objekt "Lovci", in še najemnino so izračunali natanko na 6,66 DEM/m²/mesec in kaj hitro se je na novi fasadi pojavil grafit "Hiška 666". Tisti, ki mislijo, da je to število hudiča, so brali Sveto pismo površno. Nato je dobila številko 6 "retinina" hiša. Tudi tu je zver zarjovela.

V Pitagorejstvu stoji šestica za konflikt oz. spreminjanje med nasprotujočimi si poli: odprto - zaprto, gibanje - mirovanje, vrlina - pokvarjenost. Šestica stoji tako za Dobro kot za Slabo, znotraj svoje simbolike razkazuje znake vseh nasprotnih si polarnosti. Šestica je sanjalec sanj. Šestica v gornjem delu (arabski simbol) predstavlja odprtost - linija, v dolnjem pa zaprtost - krog. Veleva odprtost za nebo (sanje, gradovi v oblakih), in zaprtost na zemlji. Tisti, ki delujejo pod vplivom šestice, se stalno soočajo z usodo Bitja med Dualnostmi. Zato jo pogosto označujejo kot Animacijski Princip. Simbol povezan s šestico je mezopotamska shvastika, kolo v gibanju, spirala, simbol ciklusov, vrtenja, tokov energije, inkarnacije.

Ko premišlujem o Metelkovi mi ni prav nič težko poistovetiti se z gornjo interpretacijo. Enako, kot mi je pri srcu radoživo lepo ob tem, ko opazujem, kako Metelkova iz vojašnice in temačnega prostora subordinacije postaja svetel in živahen prostor kreacije, mi je srce na smrt žalostno ko vidim, kako neizprosno ravnaajo ljudje, ko gre za njihov osebni interes. Oba pola sta prisotna hkrati. Metelkova je bila dobra šola - razodetje realnega, resničnega v človeku. Kdo vse jo je rušil ... pa je kultura v njej vendarle preživela in zaživela. Najbrž iz tega pisma veje neke vrste starčevski pogled - a prav tako se tudi počutim. Prepričan sem, da smo večinoma vsi, ki smo zares "v igri" tako preke-to sami, pri tem, ko jih veliko misli, da so zarote vse naokoli...

Verjamem, da lahko ustvarimo lep, dober, zgovoren prostor. A to nam lahko uspe samo, če gremo v zpovedi, v domišljiji, v sanjah ... do konca; samo tako je lahko nastala tudi izhodiščna Metelkova. Vesel sem, da "tvoj" nuzej prihaja, upam in veselim se, da bomo tako ali drugače delali skupaj. Želim ti, da bodo tudi tvoje sanje o cen-alni palači kmalu postale resničnost.

P.S. Prostor za tiso je obri...

The above snapshot of Lux in Tenebris Lucet text (in Slovene) accompanying the Metamorphosis of the central military headquarters in Ljubljana, encoded in the letter to directress of Slovene ethnographic Museum, mme Inja Smerdel, substantiating the gift to the museum, a tree planted at

the yard that I offered to the Slovene ethnographic museum, the eternal Taxus Bacata, ritual Slavic Tree that symbolises longevity, eternity, persistence and strength of Life. Taxus bacata is the second most frequently planted tree of special meaning to Slovenians according to official data...

The only way to deal with the spell of 666 is to contemplate the Values, the concepts of Ethics. The transition to Societies 5.0. is all about introducing ethics into socio-economic discourse.

To rethink the concepts of ethics, Europe shall rethink its religious grounds and fundamentals.

Colonial era must cease to exist, the predatory culture must be annihilated.

New ethics involving cross species solidarity has realistic grounds to grow, since European as well as all global nations have it rooted in their nature centered beliefs and ancient wisdoms. The true religious grounds of all planetary cultures are pagan, nature centered.

Might the spiritual liberation become a joint pan European and global project?!

For more information on the promotion of ethics based on ancient wisdom, the perennial values, please see some examples of the published texts representing a Slovene contribution to such project:

Cosmological Society UPASANA; Free Dreamy Spirit, www.upasana.si

Several titles are published at <https://independent.academia.edu/markohren>

On the first lie versus the first miracle

https://www.academia.edu/7667572/Vino_versus_veritas

On the perennial architecture, the imperative for architect Jože Plečnik's design of mystical, pagan Ljubljana, a capital of a pagan state of Slovenia.

https://www.academia.edu/91824705/Guide_to_Heathen_Ljubljana_Capital_of_a_Pagan_State_of_Slovenia_Pre-Christian_hierophany_pagan_places_of_worship_and_perennial_architecture

On perennial spiritual deity – spiritual food, the MANA and the Slavic Deity NikaraMana.

https://www.academia.edu/125689987/A_discourse_on_the_revival_of_Manatism

On the role of Contemporary Spirituality transiting to Society 5.0.

https://www.academia.edu/43498293/Ancient_Schools_of_Wisdom_contemporary_Spirituality_4_0_Sustainable_development_And_the_Industry_4_0

On the example of the power of colonial religion in contemporary Slovenia, and on the need to foster Spiritual Liberation

[https://www.academia.edu/82762211/The Image of a Paradise or an Image of a Colony The tailoring of Bled Island as an ideogram of Slovenias spiritual liberation](https://www.academia.edu/82762211/The_Image_of_a_Paradise_or_an_Image_of_a_Colony_The_tailoring_of_Bled_Island_as_an_ideogram_of_Slovenias_spiritual_liberation)

I publish this present volume in a context and in a support to emerging Peace Initiatives ... notably, in a support of NOT IN MY NAME initiative that organised a first demo in Ljubljana in december 2024 – a summary of speeches is published here:

<https://kreativnirazred.blogspot.com/2024/11/ne-v-mojem-imenu.html>

The NOT IN MY NAME circle is launching a series of events under the title “TALKING PEACE”.

The first event is organized as an open forum and presentation of the book

Mehr Sicherheit, Ohne Wafen Zur Aktualitat von Hans Thirrings Friedens Plan

by Werner Wintersteiner at the Faculty of Philosophy, room 2, Aškerčeva ulica 2. Ljubljana, Slovenia on Saturday, April 26. starting at 11.00.

The event is organized at Faculty of Philosophy. At the same place The Network for Metelkova military barracks was launched on 22. December of 1990; on the last official Yugoslav Day of Yugoslav Army – the assembly of the community gathering, elected its reps. I was 31 at that time, when I was elected Chairman of the Association campaigning for the conversion of Military Barrack for culture and creativity – a core of our demilitarization campaign. Now I am 66. In the core of the mystery of number 6, and of the contra verse of Visions, Realutopia, Dreams and Realm of the rhetoric of armaments and predatory colonial thinking.

Not in my name!

I have a feel, that we will need to come to our squares and agoras in even larger numbers that we did when melting the cold war. We will need to shout louder.

“Putin, Trump, Von Der Leyen, the World is Not Yours, Le monde n’est pas à vous«!

And we will need to further develop our good old slogan that tied the pan-european solidarity to finally melt the iron curtain: “Peace and Human Rights are Indivisible”, since we need to revolutionise the ethical concepts and the spirituality of the civilisation.

Peace and cross-species solidarity are indivisible!

This might be a response to Today's war rhetoric, which is not about people, but about natural resources.

Written during Spring Equinox,

22. March 2025

Paper by Marko Hren for the book Mehr Sicherheit
OHNE WAFFEN, edited by Werner Wintersteiner,
Vienna, 2024

To present the context in which the initiative for Slovenia without the Army emerged, evolved and later eventually got capitalised in 1980ies and 1990ies, this paper will intentionally refer primarily to three recently published volumes written by insiders and co-creators of European Peace Movement (PM hereafter) cross-regional collaboration in 1980ies.

1. Hren, Marko (in Bilič, Bojan and Jankovič, Vesna), 2012. Slovenian peace movement in the context of Yugoslav anti-war contention³. This paper displays an overview of the activities of Slovene PM in 1980ies and 1990ies,
2. Wintersteiner, Werner (2023), *Aus der Kriegslogik ausbrechen*,⁴ since it actualises the 20th century PM activities putting them in the context of aggression against Ukraine,
3. Mastnak, Tomaž (2023) on Civil Society, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana 2023.⁵ Since this is a most recent volume discussing the discourse on civil society from the 1980ies by an insider, a member of former Slovene PM.

I was rejoiced when I had received the invitation from Werner. It evoked memories on dozens of meetings, mainly organised by Alpinian-Adriatic Peace Committee of three neighbouring countries, Austria, Italy and Slovenia in 1980ies, where we were discussing a variety of issues, ranging from peace education, global solidarity, human rights, environmental issues and of course, alternative security concepts.

Lets recall the year 1986. This was a year of Černobil nuclear disaster and a peak of European antinuclear missiles movement. Slovene PM was active, we were even co-organising the largest demo in Geneva in 1985 titled Regan - Gorbačev, the World is Not Yours, Le monde n'est pas à vous; we will always remember charismatic Petra Kelly from German Greens speaking in Geneva, empowering us to join pan-European green and peace movement. Her great vision of strong pan-european multi-issues movement, was mesmerising. We are missing Petra today. The European Nuclear Disarmament Movement was gaining momentum and widened the scope under slogan Peace and Human Rights are indivisible with which the END incubated dynamics of East- West Dialogue. This process is excellently summarised in Mastnak, 2023.

Yugoslav authorities were of militaristic nature and its systemic overarching powers illustrated by a joke, that the Yugoslav Army was the 7th Republic of the federation. While Socialist Federative Yugoslavia as a concept was evidently failing and phasing

³ In *Resisting the Evil, Post-Yugoslav anti-War Contention* edited by : Bojan Bilič and Vesna Jankovič , Nomos: Baden-Baden, Center for European Integration Strategies, Geneva, 2012. Available at <https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-ZPBPSA2D/?euapi=1&query=%27keywords%3dpeace+movement%27&sortDir=ASC&sort=date&pageSize=2>

⁵ The paper is based on exhaustive documentation *Si vis Pacem para Pacem* accessible also at <https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-UQVDMAQX>. Both volumes were prepared to serve as primary documentation for future research.

⁴ Werner Wintersteiner *Zwei-Jahre-Krieg-in-der-Ukraine_Wintersteiner.pdf* (wernerwintersteiner.at), Also published in Slovene language under title *Izstop iz logike vojne: Ali obstaja mirovna perspektiva za rusko-ukrajinsko vojno?* <https://www.mirovni-institut.si/izstop-iz-logike-vojne-ali-obstaja-mirovna-perspektiva-za-rusko-ukrajinsko-vojno/>

⁵ Mastnak, Tomaž, *Civilna družba. Osemdeseta: Pojmovnik novega kulturnega polja*, , edited by Oto Luthar and Martin Pogačar, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana 2023. Available at <https://omp.zrc-sazu.si/zalozba/catalog/book/2086>

out, both in economic and in social-political senses, the regime (with but few exemption, as described later on the case of Slovene Socialist Youth Organisation) did not follow with democratic reforms and pan-European trends. Since there was no absorption of contemporary democratic standards, the revolt in all republics was pending. Simultaneously the regime responded with more violence and more violations of human rights following. This cycle was visibly gaining momentum and resulted in a range of initiatives and organisations supporting change of which the center of gravity nested in Civil Society, a concept, that - in a nut shell - addressed a civil sphere of independent (autonomous) thought and action.

Alpinian Adriatic Peace collaboration was essential for Slovene PM. We referred to regional experiences with peace education and green initiatives, cases like the Groupe Switzerland Without an Army (GSOA) campaign, The Costa Rica case of unarmed security, the fascinating Palestinian first Intifada, as well as the more remote-in-time experimentations like the one presented in this book, the Thirring proposal (1963) for unilateral disarmament of Austria. The international exchange and particularly the show cases of nonarmed security concepts were inspirational and central for us when elaborating the ambition to propose **Slovenia Without an Army** as a key content of a new Security Concept of emerging Independent Slovenia.

The Swiss campaign for Switzerland without an army in late 80ies gave wings to our movement and we launched the campaign for referendum for Slovenia without an Army as a "sister" project to GSOA. Sufficient to add at this point, that Rotte Fabrigue, a multicultural center in Zurich, that served as engaging headquarters for GSOA referendum campaign, inspired me to launch the Conversion of Metelkova military barracks into creative cluster. Without GSOA, there would be no demilitarisation campaign and no Metelkova cultural center.

The proposals were elaborated by the PM in 1988 and first submitted to its umbrella organisation, the official Association of Slovene Socialist Youth (hereafter the ZSMS)⁶ for approval at its congress held in Portorož in November 1989, as initiative **SOVA** (meaning the OWL), acronym standing for Slovenia Abolishes the Military Structures (Si: **S**lovenija **O**dpravi **V**ojaški **A**parat). Traditionally, the owl figures as an animal, representing the Nature Wisdom.

At the same congress, the former socialist youth organisation announced its transformation to political fraction that would run for elections announced for spring 1990. Upon approval of the SOVA document by ZSMS, it was formally sent for approval to all emerging political parties of the time. On March 1990, a couple of weeks prior to first democratic elections held in Slovenia on April 8th 1990, the political organisations that joint the SOVA initiative held the press conference: aside from ZSMS – at that time already transformed into liberal party (signed by Jožef Školč, Janez Sodržnik and Jaša Zlobec) and the PM (signed by Tomaž Mastnak), the initiative was signed by the Independent List of New Social Movements

⁶ The official youth platform organisation ZSMS was gradually transforming over the 1980ies, beginning with its historic 12th congress held in 1986 where our movements have excelled and inspired the future firm support of ZSMS to social movements. Ignac Krivec, served as a coordinator for social movements within the ZSMS leadership and he was key advocate of the support for the complete autonomy of the movements under the umbrella of ZSMS.

(signed by Zoja SKušek Močnik, Marko Hren and Vlasta Jalušič) , the Slovene Democratic Party (signed by Janez Janša) and The Slovene Greens (signed by Peter Jamnikar).

In a very short period of time that followed, the initiative gained support by emerging political elites. The SOVA initiative quickly evolved into new Declaration for Peace, which was instantly signed by large number of politicians and hundreds of opinion makers, also 4 members of presidency of Slovenia (Milan Kučan, Dušan Plut, Ciril Zlobec and Matjaž Kmeclj, while the fifth member of five-headed presidency, Ivan Oman abstained from signing). The Declaration was therefore supported by majority of pending political parties, young Christian democrats, the Greens, the Party of democratic renewal, Liberal democrats, Social democratic union of Slovenia and by new social movements representatives. The main objective of declaration was to attain large political and public support for the articles in new Slovene Constitution which would frame the Peaceful nature of the newborn Republic and would read as follows **“Republic of Slovenia is a demilitarised state. The transition period needed for full demilitarisation will be elaborated by constitutional law.”** A freeze of conscription to Yugoslav Army was envisaged, while the protection of borders would be in domain of existing police and territorial defence troops which were always under the sovereign control of Slovene government, president and parliament. The Declaration clearly stated, that the processes of Independence, Demilitarisation and Peace politics should have been complementary to each other. In other words, the demilitarisation process was understood as a complex strategy supporting independence process with Active Peace Politics.

Simultaneously, the Slovene PM prepared and lobbied for the organisation of Peace Conference for former Yugoslav Republics – the idea was, to organise a peace conference immediately after the democratic election would have been completed in all former Yu republics. Little is known that the independent new born government of Slovenia supported⁷ the idea of founding Peace institute for the purpose of organisation of Peace Conferences under auspice of UN and/or OSCE.

The context of SOVA is therefore centered in constitutional debate during the process of independence of Slovenia - as a difference to Austrian Thirring proposal which was launched in a context of the pending cold war and fuelled by Einsteins pacifism, the discussions of neutrality of Austria, Switzerland and some other countries in Europe.

The Declaration for Peace was soon labelled as “capitulation act of the political left ” by the right wing politicians (i.e. Jože Pučnik...). Janez Janša, an initial signatory of declaration, in his new function of defence minister focused on preparations for military defence. The facts, that the leaders of the government assumed, that the violence of Yugoslav army was inevitable and prepared for military confrontation, consequently establishing the Slovene army, are well documented by other authors⁸ and there is no need to address those here.

⁷ The Prime Minister Lojze Peterle promised the budget which is all neatly documented in Si vis Pacem Para Pacem volume si vis pacem para pacem.pdf.

⁸ For example, published by the Association for the Values of Slovene Independence <https://vso.si/>. At VSO I initially served as a member of presidency, but I withdrew when it was clear, that other

In critical time, in the beginning of 1991, the emblematic gesture was the one of former Iustitia et Pax chair and former arch bishop Msg, Tone Stres, who withdrew his signature under the Declaration for Peace late February 1991 and at the same time he withdrew his membership in the Center for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence where he was invited to join as a board member, as a representative of Catholic Iustitia et Pax.

It is indicative, that Stres, a key Rome Catholic religious leader of the epoch, withdrew from Peace initiative not because of its content, but because of pure politization– he wrote to me in his personal letter, that I still treasure in my archives, that the Declaration of Peace was kidnapped by oppositional left parties. This was a strange cognition – since later on, until today, in fact the Declaration for Peace continuously reappears and figures as an item of political discreditations, despite of the fact, that it was initiated and designed as cross-parties “natural wisdom” option but the right wing representatives, initially supporting the initiative, gradually withdrew. It might be, that Niko Grafenauer, former editor of Nova revija, was pinning the right point, when he said to me one night when we were walking out of the PEN Club in early 1991: “Marko, the demilitarisation campaign is great tactical move – we will mislead Yugoslav authorities and they will really think that we will disarm while we will be made ready to protect ourselves!” Maybe this was not only a cognition of an honest poet, Niko.

Main objective of the Slovene PM was therefore to convene a peace building International Conference with newly elected political leaderships of all former Yugoslavia republic (planned June 1991), to initiate a process of peaceful dissolution of Yugoslavia, identify core diverging issues for negotiations and agree on procedures to follow. Peace Institute of Ljubljana has been deployed for this purpose, its international board⁹ is indicative and tailored to the core mission. It consisted of lead global experts for early stage conflict resolution. The SOVA vision was meant to be promoted at Peace Conference for the region as an unilateral gesture of good will paving the ground for inspiring adequate atmosphere for attaining peaceful solutions.

In a nut-shell. We had a relatively high support of Slovene political players, we had outstanding support of general public, We had elaborated, specific and timely goals, time-

members, key personalities of Slovene independency, have had no sincere intention to compile the White Book of Slovene independency truthfully and in an unbiased way.

⁹ The members of initial International Experts Board of the Ljubljana Peace Institute were : Brian Martin, University of Wollongong, Avstralija, Arno Truger, Institut für Friedensforschung, Austrija, Peter Bruck, University of Salzburg, Austrija, Jean-Marie Muller, Institut de recherche sur resolution nonviolents des conflits, France, Michael Randle, Dpt. of Peace Studies, University Bradford, Great Britain, Ferenc Miszlivetz, researcher, Hungary, Antonio Papisca, University Padua, Italy, Johan Galtung, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway, Juan Gutierrez, Inštitute Gernika, Baskija, Spain, Lyne Jones, Myfanwy, researcher, Great Britain, Andreas Gross, Institut für direkte Demokratie and GSOA, Switzerland, Gene Sharp, Albert Einstein Institute, Boston, US, Dietrich Fischer, Exploratory project on the conditions of peace, US, Danilo Türk, Faculty of Law, Ljubljana, Anton Grizold, FSPN Ljubljana, Radmila Nakarada and Sonja Licht, Inštitut za evropske študije, Belgrade, Serbij, Zdravko Grebo, Faculty of Law, Sarajevo, BIH, Silva Mežnarič, University of Zagreb, Croatia. We had a support granted by Julio Quan, UN Peace University, Costa Rica, and active roles at the conference were granted by Alberto L'Abate, University of Florence and, Piotr Ogrodzinski, East European Research Group, Poland, and Peter Wallensteen, Peace and conflict research, Uppsala University, Sweden

bound strategy and tactics. The question arises, weather or not SOVA and Peace Conferences envisaged had had REAL chance of success, taking diverging positions of Serbian and Yugoslav Military leadership into account. – did we have a chance to realistically prevent the warfare, providing that all envisaged steps have had been fulfilled in planned timing?

My answer, presented bellow, takes the key of international diplomacy¹⁰ to unlock the puzzle.

We failed since the key stakeholder, the government of Slovenia, at certain point reasoned, that there is no time left for peace building effort and that Slovenia had had to prepare for military defence. Time was running and we lost momentum to organise the Peace conference in time – the Peace Institute of Ljubljana was inaugurated a couple of weeks before military aggression of Yugoslav Army against Slovenia. At that moment, our visions were buried in military iron and sulphur.

It is to note, that domestic official (belonging to the public research organisations) researchers are not interested in research of social phenomenon related to peace and contemporary history. The question regarding the feasibility of SOVA was never thoroughly evaluated, assessed by non-partial, nonbiased researchers. Almost exclusively, these are foreign, meaning, non-Slovenian researchers that approach me with requests for particular information, assessment and contribution to validation of activities from 1980ies, pre-war and Slovene Independence process. This is why the recent volume by domestic researcher, dr. Tomaž Mastnak an Academic and important member of PM arrived just in time to inform my paper.

¹⁰ Elaborated in details in Hren, 2012.

Cross-sections and interwovenness of national and international context

I want to make a clear point right in the start that in my understanding, international and national contexts hold a large area of cross-sections which can be embodied in the acclamation of the notion of power of direct democracy and civil resistance, where the first is proactive, therefore political and the second is pro-defensive, therefore, political as well.

The first major edition of the Slovene PM went public in 1986 under the title *Cold Peace and other Hot topic*, hereafter *Cold Peace*, in Slovene *Hladni mir in druge vroče teme*. Indeed it covered a large variety of topics, demonstrating the envisaged portfolio of activities of the movement – in a range almost perfectly matching the issues discussed in above mentioned Alpinian Adriatic Peace Committee:

1. Human Rights and indivisibility of HR and peace, with strong accent on Conscientious Objection to Military service;
2. In this respect, peace education as a necessary item for school curricula reforms;
3. Peace and security (defence) concepts, prevention of conflicts, peace building;
4. Environmental issues, starting, but not at all remaining at the pressing issue of nuclear threat
5. Democracy, Rule of Law, political and cultural pluralism and ;
6. Exhaustive set of documents on East-west and global solidarity, but also discussing the Lybian crisis and launching a protest against Soviet Union after information blockade during the first week of Chernobyl disaster.;
7. Networking and partnering in Yugoslavia with peace initiatives in all republics.

The *Cold Peace* book therefore covered the holistic approach to Peace in terms of practical action lines, but also addressed theoretical inside into New Social Movements as triggers of social change and political dynamic, also in a view of political implications of pluralization and democracy.

But some key messages of the volume are hidden in what was not written and not made public. Let me therefore reveal two unpublished secrets of the historic *Cold Peace* Volume.

Peace option for Yugoslavia was designed to have realistic impact

On the first, nearly vacant page of the volume *Cold Peace*... a reader comes across a tinny little note: *the introduction will be drafted by historians*. Unfortunately, historians pretty much ignore the experiment of Slovenia to prevent the war in Yugoslavia. The *Cold peace* vacant page is still calling researchers to do the job. What I perceive in this vacant page today, is my desperate regret, that we failed and my sorrow, that we did not push even harder to catch momentum in early 1991.

Even though I published a thorough radical and clear hypothesis, contradicting¹¹ main stream interpretations as regards to events shaping Slovene Independence Process (in Hren, 2012) where I - amongst other - analysed the responses of CSCE, UN , US and European Council and concluded that the European Union (the Troika of that time presided by Holland) and US Congress defacto supported the independence and smooth transition of Yugoslav republics towards democratic regime(s), I presented evidence for such claims, quotations of historic documents that historians normally do not quote and concluded, that the strategy of Slovene PM; to prepare preventive Peace conference with newly elected leaderships in all republics of former Yugoslavia, was realistic, timely, phased in time adequately, achievable and could be eventually leading to success, meaning peaceful dissolution of Yugoslavia.

There was no response, neither opposition nor the take-up to this published hypothesis by Slovene research sphere. 12 years later, I repeat the call for thorough analysis.

[Their Yugoslavia – Our Europe](#)

Historians keep repeating that the idea of Independent Slovenia was first coined and published by editors of Nova revija no 57 in 1987.

But the fact is that the idea and Vision of independent Slovenia to join European Union was already coined by Slovene PM in the volume Cold Peace (1986) in a very direct way. The vision of PM is evident in copies that we keep in archives, Namely, the book was published by The Peace Movement Working Group and issued by the already mentioned ZSMS¹². When the volume was already printed in 1000 copies, the headquarters of ZSMS requested us to erase both titles of two conclusive chapters of the book: the first originally read as follows "OUR EUROPE" and the second "THEIR YUGOSLAVIA". All copies were censored by hand by ourselves. The black ink covering the titles could not totally cover the original subtitles – these are even more clearly visible today when the censors-ink is fading away with time while the printed letters remain solid-black. Is this just a funny spicy story or an important detail, proving, that the PM of Slovenia clearly and at the very start aimed at joining the democratic, European culture and was determined to exercise the disobedience-to and rejection-of the militaristic, centralised Yugoslavia?

The activities of PM of the time were promptly documented by Slovene Television in a documentary film edited by Helena Koder, titled Forbidden Games (Si Prepovedane igre), recorded over 1985 and promoted in 1986. The 43 minutes long film begins with scenes showing the selling of Cold Peace book on the streets

¹¹ Majority of protagonists of Slovene Independence, who wrote their own chronicles, including former prime minister Lojze Peterle, former defence minister Janez Janša, former president Milan Kučan, who (to sum it up) claim, that »the whole world was opposing Slovene independence, and despite of the opposition of the international politics, Slovene leadership bravely and stubbornly victoriously led Slovenia towards independence ...«

¹² The historical importance of ZSMS is exhibited in the fact, that from 80ies since, major politicians were incubated in this organization, LDS evolved directly from ZSMS and still historically the most outstanding political leader, visionary dr. Janez Drnovšek, was a head of LDSs, a member of Yugoslav Presidency in the critical period of dissolution of Yugoslavia, a honorary sponsor of Ljubljana Peace Institute, later Prime minister and elected President of Slovenia.

of Ljubljana, continues with our international activities, participation in Geneva anti nuclear weapons demos and many other actions. Werner Wintersteiner and I are documented in a film embraced in a warm friendly hug when he visited Ljubljana and participated at our meetings.

Personal account

My personal story as a pacifist reflects the importance of international movement and is emblematic for the interwovenness of national and international contexts. Sensibility to international issues began in my primary school where I joined UN club and soon became in charge of Wall News on international affairs – these were news about many wars of the time including the beginnings of Israeli violence in Palestine. The only library to use in Ljubljana was the one of UN. It is to say that UN was a respected infrastructure in Slovenia and for me served as a central reference. I was also a member of a local folk music group. I was not aware, that - over the years - a link between folklore, tradition, spirituality and peace would reveal to me as an essential connection to understand human evolution. The three threads, pacifist philosophy, spirituality and traditional knowledge ... only connected decades later.¹³

The short story goes as follows. We were touring Switzerland with my folk group in one of those street folk festivals so popular in central Europe at the time – during mid 1970ies. I was handed a leaflet in the crowd, »War is a crime against humanity« And this established a long lasting connection to War Resisters International (WRI).

A drive towards pacifism and spirituality was not rational, was not grounded in educationit was an imperative beyond cognition, received from subtle spheres of celestial mind. The unknown WRI activist in Switzerland who handed me the leaflet made me aware that I was not a lonesome dreamer, but a part of a movement, a part of a global peace, nonviolence, conscientious objectors movement. My career as an activist was instantly deployed. Later on, these were WRI friends that made me aware of the Kemal Mubanga Chipoa Esbor Eide UN report on Conscientious Objection.¹⁴ This volume became my core tool for Conscientious Objection recognition campaign. I established my first action group in my secondary school, a troika of dreamers, sharing poetry, dreams and visions. We translated a War is a crime against humanity WRI leaflet and Broken Rifle News, regularly and distributed it in a small number of copies.... And soon we were interrogated by regime, being also threatened with dismissal from the school.

Larger edition of a leaflet War is a crime against Humanity was published in fall 1978 by a small group of students who later joint the Peace movement working group under ZSMS in 1983.

It is - again - thanks to the War Resisters International and its staff in London, 55, Dawes street, notably Myrtil Solomon and Howard Clark, that I came into possession of De Ligts' historic volumes Paix Creatrice. Reading through De Ligt I became aware of the relation between spirituality and peace and above all, it was evident, that there is a secret thread

¹³ See for example my recent volume Ancient schools of Wisdom, Contemporary Spirituality, ... published at <https://independent.academia.edu/markohren>

¹⁴ Conscientious objection to military service : report / prepared in pursuance of resolution 14(XXXIV) and 1982/30 of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities by Asbjorn Eide and Chama Mubanga-Chipoya, members of the Sub-Commission, 1985.

between historic schools of wisdom, even over the middle ages through so called “heretical” groups. De Ligt works firmly grounded my three fold comparative research interest: Jain/LaoTzu, Zoroaster, Manichean, Essenian/Bogomil/Cathar, European Heresis and ancient schools of Mediterranean, in particular Pitagorean towards the Anarchist movement (including Kropotkin, Bakunin, etc) promoting spiritual liberation. I focused on the notion of nonviolence in observed ethical systems and cosmologies and framed my phd thesis on pacifist leadership and nonviolent heresies within spiritual schools, mysteries and religions in European history, ranging in time to contemporary Quakers and Jehovah witnesses. Since I lead the campaign for conscientious objection to military service in Yugoslavia, I paid special attention to religious motivations for nonviolence and for pacifist stands, leading individuals to take high risks, confront military courts despite being scarified with up to ten years of their life in military prisons for the loyalty to their deep spiritual convictions and ethical norms.

This research interest became one of the core projects of initial Peace Research Institute since I was granted Research Phd Grant By the Government of Slovenia in 1991 as part of the support to the establishment of the Peace Institute for the thesis on Nonviolence in European Heresis from the Early middle ages to the Enlightenment and Anarchism. The grant allowed me to direct the initial phase of the foundation of the institute and to focus on peace and nonviolence campaigns in the region.

I felt that in the heart of the alternative to violence dwells spiritual seed, spiritual potential of man that shall be revealed to foster peace on Earth. My erroneous assumption was, that most of this knowledge was lost and it took me decades to discover, that the genuine mystery schools survived. Nonviolence as a holistic concept, is a supreme law of spiritual conduct and Mahatma Gandhi brought it glamorously to the victorious political strategy with satya graha the power of truth being based on nonviolence as a core. As simple as that: nonviolence is based on truthfulness. The major influence on my approach and major motivation was the Mahatma Gandhis’ cause of Satya Graha, and the pure and crystal clear though of Jain philosophers. Dr. S.L. Gandhi n India was operational to make me contribute to first ICPNA (international conference on peace and nonviolent action) conference in Landun, Rajahstan just before the wars broke out in Yugoslavia in 1991. Jain monks and ICPNA leaders were offering substantial moral support until today.

Campaign for Nonviolence and Demilitarisation – the summarised core action lines

Three major mutually complementary action lines of the Slovene PM were: SOVA (presented above), establishment of the Ljubljana Peace Institute, and the formation of a network of artists and social movements aiming at conversion of Central Military Barracks, headquarters of Northern Yugoslav Army district, along Metelkova street in Ljubljana (discussed bellow). Acknowledging, that I chaired/directed initial phases of all mentioned

processes, I also published a good number of publications documenting¹⁵ those, showing, that the Slovene PM strategy was wide-scope, inclusive, engaging all sectors of society.

The Peace institute of Ljubljana was founded a couple of weeks before the war sprang out in Slovenia in June 1991. The aggression of Yugoslav Army against Slovenia represented the end of our efforts to assure peaceful and nonviolent transformation of political landscape in the region. This was the beginning of yet another period of absurd warfare amongst Slavs in Balkans. The third slaughter in the same century.

Main achievements of the Peace movement – High Impact Actions

It was the Peace movement that triggered the Slovene spring

Was it not the PM that triggered the major episode of the Slovenian spring - the arrestment's of 4 intellectuals in Mikroada? Janša and Hren were members of the PM, and were both managers in Mikroada. Two corpus delicti documents were confiscated during the secret police investigations in our offices in spring 1988. Official historians only speak about one document – the so called secret military document that speaks about potential graduation of violence of Yugoslav authorities against the actors of Slovenian spring (so called democratic opposition).

But the second document speaks about preparations for civilian resistance and it found itself on **the top of the list of confiscated material** during the secret investigations. But it is not only the fact that the call for civil disobedience is the first item on the list of documents that triggered the peak of Slovene spring, years later. Igor Bavčar reported to parliamentary commission¹⁶ that was established to prepare a report on arrestment's of four intellectuals, that the intelligence services reported to Slovene political leaders about secret investigations in Mikroada but only mentioned the paper of Marko Hren calling for disobedience and nonviolent resistance, not about any other material.

During the years 1987- 1988 Slovenia has faced a number of threats by Yugoslav regime and particularly by the Yugoslav Army. The resistance movements were getting ready for escalation of violence and gross violations of human rights. Janez Janša (future defence minister and prime minister), Igor Bavčar (future minister of Interior), Igor Omerza and myself, were employed at SME Mikroada, that served – aside of its core business in ICT - as operational center of Slovene democratic movement. We were in possession of a number of documents revealing the threatenig plans of the regime, and at the same time, of a number

¹⁵ most of them can be accessed openly at <https://independent.academia.edu/markohren> and www.dlib.si (search by author, Marko Hren).

¹⁶ Igor Bavčar 1992, Bavčar claims that the chronology of secret police activity witness that on 26. April 1988 political leader Stane Dolanc and Andrej Maric were informed about a pacifist paper calling for nonviolent resistance and not other confiscated material was discussed. Bavčar, Igor. 1995. Recalls the Minutes (. dated. november1995.) of the 13th session of parliamentary Commission established in view of political responsibilities for arrestment's in 1988

of documents backing the preparation of resistance. The office of Mikroada was filled with sensible information. It is not by chance, that intelligence services were monitoring the activities of the personnel of Mikroada closely. The archives of intelligence service prove, that the intelligence services have broken into our offices secretly repeatedly in April 1988 and inspected documents and finally interrogated our offices officially on May 31 1988, confiscated a number of papers and arrested Janez Janša, while I was campaigning in US at that time. This triggered a massive resistance campaign of Slovenian people, often referred to as Slovenian Spring which finally ended in referendum for Independence in 1990 and to first democratic elections.

It is not by chance, that the first document on the list¹⁷ of confiscated material was my appeal to general strike and nonviolent resistance that I undersigned as a speaker of the peace movement. The paper was meant to be published upon my return from US and was treasured in Mikroada office in the drawers of Janez Janša. The paper was intending to mobilise massive resistance against violations of human rights in Slovenia. The paper in its introduction refers to Gandhian struggle in India and in its conclusion offers diverse means of cooperation of general public in the envisaged massive nonviolent resistance. Gandhian campaigns in South Africa and India as well as the Jain philosophy putting AHIMSA in the center of human ethics were therefore an inspiration for Slovene campaigns. It might be, that an attempt to apply Gandhian strategy in Yugoslavia was crucial for the enrolment of events in former Yugoslavia since 1988. Such conclusions hint to importance that the Yugoslav intelligence services paid to the potential of Gandhian nonviolent strategies¹⁸.

Unfortunately, the official chronologists of Slovene independence did not pay any attention to this aspect of the story and missed the opportunity to promote nonviolence as political strategy.

It was the PM that orchestrated some of the key strategic areas of Slovene spring

Was it not the PM that , conceptualized and coordinated the international aspects of the Human Rights campaign for liberation of arrested Janša, Brštner, Tasič and Zavrl, enhanced the establishment of HR for Slovenia Support office in Paris, organised and managed a tour of Slovene opposition to European Parliaments and political parties, issued systematic newsletter in English language from 1984 onwards, with different titles,. Starting with Ljubljana Peace movement Bulletin, The Independent Voices from Slovenia and after 1991 The Intruder!!!! In October 1988. Soon after the imprisonment of the four Intellectuals who were put in Military prison at the barracks of Metelkova street in Ljubljana, a special edition of Independent Voices from Slovenia was issued by the PM, titled »Slovenian Spring, Centralism or Democracy«, after the introductory texts of two editors, Braco Rotar and Marka Hrena, the

¹⁷ The confiscation documentation was reproduced in its integrity in Janez Janša, Ivan Borštner and David Tasič book titled 7 let pozneje (7 years after) in Chapter IV - document no.3 found in the drawers of Janez Janša's desk..

¹⁸ Kranjec, Marjan. 1998. The role of military counter intelligence services (Vloga in pomen vojaško obveščevalne službe, protiobveščevalne službe JLA in varnostne službe JLA. Borec, št. 567–569/1998). Marjan Kranjec served in headquarters of Slovenian part of intelligence service (SDV). Kranjec underlines that intelligence services states, that counter intelligence services were directly receiving reports only about the activities of “the object of operational monitoring classified under no. HSM 098600470, HSM standing for Hren Stanislav Marko). Our personal dossiers were destroyed after the cease of Yugoslavia.

contributions followed by renowned authors Mojca Drčar Murko, Janez Janša, France Bučar, Tomaž Mastnak, Miha Kovač, Anton Stres and Tonči Kuzmanić. This was a key volume to promote Slovene political opposition against Yugoslav regime. International aspects of the struggle to release the four intellectuals from military prison were coordinated by the PM, the political positions of emerging political fractions as well.

Concrete achievements, manifestations

Major research and campaign oriented infrastructures incubated within the PM; The Ljubljana Peace Research Institute and the Metelkova Cultural Center were both campaigns that originated at PM, and were part of PM strategy. There is abundant number of evidences to claim, that the Peace movement initiated major structures for Civil Society. For decades and also today, Ljubljana Peace institute was a major Non Governmental Research organization, it is based at Metelkova cultural center, intentionally and not coincidentally at geometrical center of the Cultural center. The Metelkova cultural center is an incarnated memory of Slovenian Spring, the largest tangible achievement of civil society and a proof of its power in 80ies

Mastnak, 2023, fails to notify the above three high impact actions and this is the reason why we need to dedicate next chapter to analyse his recent volume.

The Slovene PM did converge its visions into organizing Peace Conference for Balkans in 1991 – Peace institute was formally constituted to serve as an umbrella organisation for international conference under auspices of CSCEE and UN. Where did we fail: the timing?! We had very short window of time to act, and we were too slow while on the other hand Serbian/ Yugoslav Army forces moved faster, provoked armed clashes, incidents, and finally performed military interventions both in Croatia and Slovenia in 1990 /1991. The initiative for Slovenia without an army consequently and instantly became a matter of political confrontation between so called left and so called right. This affected the PM members. The movement adopted a declaration of self-dissolution in 1992. We did close down the Center for the Culture of peace and Nonviolence, while at the same time formally provided heritage in offices and equipment and library to the two institutional babies of the PM: The Ljubljana Peace Institute and the Metelkova Network. The PM vanished organically and following democratic procedures.

European as well as global peace, human rights and environmental activists of the time remember well that Ljubljana PM office and the Slovene PM represented “a must” first stop for most of global actions on the territory of former Yugoslavia. We published news about emerging peace and HR groups in the wider area regularly. In this sense, achievements are intangible, impossible to measure but our friends and colleagues from Croatian, Bosnian, Kosova, Serbian, Macedonian and Montenegro movements treasure the real truth.

The tangible achievement of the PM is encoded in Slovene Constitution, where the right for Conscientious objection is granted and Peace Policy is a mandatory primary pillar of the security constitutional values

The discourse on Civil Society

The Scope of Civil Society – pretenders for power only?

Dr. Tomaž Mastnak, was amongst key theoreticians contemplating and promoting the concept of Civil Society, as a researcher at the Scientific and Research Center of Slovene Academy of Science where he was employed until his recent retirement. In 2023 he published an interesting volume outlining his views on civil society development while contributing an encyclopaedic overview on the discourse about civil society in Europe (east and west) prior to dissolution of Yugoslavia.

Mastnak's work brings a valuable insight into positions of leading intellectuals that were influential in shaping European Nuclear Disarmament movement (END) where a pan-European Network for East-West dialog was incubated in mid 80ies. Mastnak underlines, that it was Slovene Peace Movement that – within East-West Dialogue Group - initiated a Network for *East-East Dialogue*. This indicates how strong and embedded the inter-regional dimension stood in the approach of PM.

Mastnak presents in his conclusive chapter subtitled CIVIL SOCIETY IN POWER a surprisingly limited understanding of civil society while he focuses on those, who attempted to profit from transition in a sense of grabbing for the political power and he even extrapolates the support of population to civil society to the results of first elections in 1990. Civil society actors are far wider scope than those who were grabbing for power. And Mastnak fails to analyse the spectrum. He further allows himself to analyse the Catholic Church and Civil Society under the same subtitle while -in terms of consistency of possibly related ontologies he gives no clue on potential comparability of those. In our view, Neither as a social category, nor in terms of relations to constituencies, the Hierarchically organised Rome Catholic Church and the vaguely defined and intangibly structured “civil society” allows for no solid and adequate comparison. But Mastnak claims (page 193) in one and the same argument, that “after the first democratic elections in Slovenia in 1990,... while the civil society staged a swan song, the Catholic Church gained influence”.

Mastnak is missing the point twice in his argument. First, while he reduces the civil society to those competing for power, and second, while he is reducing civil society again once more to The List of New Social Movements. The former was a coalition of a small number of civil society organisations, ranging from artistic, green, peace and human rights formed to participate during first elections with primary goal to contribute issues, objectives and visions into the pot of pre-elections discourse and not to gain power. Since I served as a head of the list I can firmly claim that The List

can in no methodological approach be identified with “civil society”. Finally, Mastnak is contradicting himself saying first that civil society has moved into power, and next, that civil society only gained 0,5% of votes (belonging to the List of New Social Movements). According to Mastnaks claim, that civil society moved into politics, the civil society gained 100% of votes. Mastnak further reasons that first elections showed that the support to civil society has fallen from majority support in 80ies to close to zero in 90ies, which is of course nonsense and without any theoretical or empirical ground. There is no empirical prove that the support to civil society in 80ies was majoritarian and we explained above that the score of 0.5 % of votes for The List of New Social Movements can not be extrapolated to the score for CS since the List could (also according to arguments of Mastnak) not be identified with civil society as such and let alone as a whole (?!?!?).

We would of course kindly pardon Mastnaks’ erroneous cognition if he would only be a member of Slovene Academy of Science. But Mastnak was a core member of the PM and one of the key promoters of international dimension of the movement. What a hell happened to a theoretician, who seemed to be an influential PM practitioner in 80ies?!?!? Mastnak and I have travelled thousands of miles around East and Western Europe in 80ies, for me, not being a social scientist, unlimited time for debate with him during our travels was of price-less value. I will always bow to Mastnak for his enlightening contribution during the 80ies. But reading his recent book, I can hardly subscribe to very limited set of his conclusions.

Namely, from my eyes, as practitioner, the major manifestation of “civil society” only began after the first elections held in 1990. “Swans song”, that Matnak attributes to the List of Independent Social Movements that I presided, was only composed much later in my view.

In my understanding, the center of gravity of democratic civil society activity did not move in the sphere of politics, but remained with us, who remained in the very same positions as prior to first elections, campaigning for values, for needs and objectives of identified groups of citizens, be it artist, green movement, peace activists, human rights activism including refugees, LGBT etc. These centers of independent autonomous THINKING and CAMPAIGNING have not only established the Independent List Of Social Movement that eventually failed to enter the Parliament, but primarily established the Ljubljana Peace Institute and the Network for Metelkova. In such a way we have grounded the Research/Academic, the Political/Public and the Campaigning pillars for our cross-associations collaboration. In their origin, I served simultaneously as a formal and operational leader of all three, as founding director of Ljubljana Peace Institute, as nominated Head of the List of New Social Movements and as elected Chair of the Network for Metelkova. I am therefore of course biased assessing the impact of those High Impact Actions.

For us, campaigners, not much has changed over the elections in terms of thematic focus – we were only confronted with dynamic political context that requested the adaption of tactics and strategies.

The terms defining context – civil society was not a core term

Dr. Mastnak and the editor of publication dr. Oto Luthar, leave impression on their biased view concerning the importance of the notion of civil society for social movements. For me, several other notions, ontologies and concepts were far more or equally important. Let me mention but few: Human Rights with Conscientious Objection, Nonviolence as Strategy and Civil Disobedience / Civil Resistance as tactics, Basic Democracy, all this under slogan: Peace and human rights are indivisible. It is evident that these concepts call for other ontologies that would request a separate effort to provide for any reasonable coherence with civil society.

For this paper, particularly the notion of Direct Democracy, de. Direkte Demokratie, fr. démocratie de la base, at that time outstandingly promoted by Andreas Gross and the movement for Basic Democracy in Switzerland, stand as most important notion. As I will elaborate, the Swiss campaign for referendum on Abolition of the Army was instrumental for the incubation of “twin” initiative in Slovenia the referendum campaign for Abolition of the Army and establishment of Demilitarised Zone in Slovenia.

This discourse is not even mentioned in Mastnaks lexicon. What I want to say is, that activists - like myself – did incorporate notions and conceptualisations of Civil Society in the same way as we did with other notions. Those were concepts, useful for structuring the strategies, the campaigning and for developing arguments supporting clearly identified needs, objectives and visions of campaigners.

Civil society versus power or civil society resolving needs, objectives, ambitions - the case study of Metelkova

What worries me most in the discourse of Mastnak is his perpetuation of the discourse of antagonism- I did not primarily understand the notion of civil society as antagonistic, let alone being in opposition to the Power. I primarily understood the notion of civil society to support the shaping of constituency of those who share the comparable needs, solutions for those, define common visions, objectives, strategies and relevant campaigns. For me, civil society represented autonomous initiatives aimed at fulfilling needs, ambitions and objectives of defined civil society players. The essence of civil society is in articulating needs and ambitions, opposition is only a (normally temporary adjustment of tactics).

Let me only elaborate but one example, the Network for Metelkova Military barracks, since it provides a show case for all arguments elaborated above.

The initiative was a constitutive part of the campaign for demilitarisation of Slovenia. Its aim was to engage larger constituencies for the demilitarisation campaign, the target groups consisted of artists, social movements, associations, editorials, cultural production etc. while the unique selling proposition of the PM was simple: diverse associations were motivated to gain urban spaces for their activities. The Network was founded in 1990, and it was membership based in terms of funding. The main clients were municipal and national authorities. Our interlocutors were changing over the elections on local and national level, and as the positions of certain political actors changed, also their attitude to Metelkova

project and protagonists, have had changed – and changed dramatically. The case of Metelkova shows that it is not possible to apply antagonistic attribute to civil society.

The Metelkova site, a city within a city, was a concrete, brilliant “creative living lab” to experiment with social innovation, democratic structures, applied values. It might be that the Failure of Metelkova to innovate autonomous transparent and efficient self governance as well as to provide long term sustainability for its operations, could be treated as Swans Song of civil society as Mastnak would want to hear. But such Swans Song was autonomously composed¹⁹ by limited number of civil society actors themselves – no antagonism is responsible for authorship, let alone the “elites in power”.

The right wing, while in Power in Ljubljana Municipality, holding position of the Mayor, started the demolition of Metelkova military barracks in September 1993. This triggered a squat and the squat triggered massive support of left wing parties to the campaigners at Metelkova. I know about no comparable support to squats in Europe or on the planet as whole as compared to the support that Metelkova Squat received from left wing political parties and their associated organisation in the period from (1993-1996) when left wing was holding power on National Level.

When positions changed, and Left parties gained position of Mayor of Ljubljana while losing National Government it was the Left (Liberal democrats) that attempted to orchestrate the demolition of Metelkova Squat, while the right (SDS) staged a victorious protection of cultural heritage of Metelkova, while holding majority in Ljubljana Municipality Council, and this prevented the attempted demolition by Left Wing. In other words, both, left and right have completely reverted their position in only a couple of years and we, campaigners for Metelkova, had to read through this hypocrisy and opportunism. And we had to create **pragmatic alliances to reach our objectives**. It was not the attribute of “opposition” but the attribute of the “**ability to dynamically form pragmatic coalitions**” that made us win battle after battle with schizophrenic political parties that possessed contradicting agendas in their portfolio. We were not confronting power, we had to pragmatically tune and adjust our strategies to the changing realm of the interests of political parties. It is only symptomatic for Slovene research and public sphere, that the fact, that right wing leader Janez Janša, after I presented my proposals to him, personally staged the protection of Metelkova against demolition planned by left wing. This way the actors of first demolition of the barracks (1991) transformed into protagonists of protection and finally to rescuing angels (1996/7). Years later, when Janšas’ party (2020ies) gained power again and held position of minister responsible for culture, their positions changed again and they launched a new threat to demolish Metelkova.

Over decades, the interests of “civil society” at Metelkova remained the same, while the relations with or against “civil society in power” oscillated and varied dramatically.

What I want to show here is that Mastnak is wrong assuming civil society can be defined as opposition to power.

Without the collaboration and support of “power”, or better say, the left wing in the government of Slovenia (1993 - 1995) there would be no Metelkova and also no Peace

¹⁹ See for example my own analysis of the failure of Metelkova to provide for Best Practice example of progressive space in Accelerating Progressivity (SI Pospešek Progresivnosti), <https://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:DOC-UGZTCQ01>

Institute and certainly no Peace Institute at the central building of Metelkova, which is dedicated to main institutions of civil society (arts, green, human rights, social rights...).

Shall Mastnaks' failure be attributed to "academic fatigue" or just to "personal preferences"?

Civil society cross border solidarity – forgotten rules of the game?!

It appears that theoreticians understood and contemplated civil society entirely in a different context than practitioners. This controversy sadly echoed during the aggression of Russia in Ukraine. Some key protagonists of civil society discourse, including Mastnak, have authored and released on 14. February 2023 for signatories an Appeal to Slovene statesman to take a lead towards peaceful resolution of military confrontation between "the West and Russia".

I did not sign the appeal, beginning with the argument, that the title was in my perception counter biasing and thus productive - we are confronted with outrageous violations of international law from 2014 onwards by Russia staging annexations and brutal aggression in Sovereign state of Ukraine. I object labelling this aggression as "a military confrontation between West and Russia". At least Mastnak should have remembered thousands of hours of mine and his debates abroad Slovenia between 1991 and 1995 when we kept explaining the words that shall fit the purpose of understanding the violence in former Yugoslavia. Mastnak should have remembered that undoubted and unprovoked military intervention of Yugoslav army in Slovenia in June 1991 (and sooner and later in Croatia and Bosnia) could not have been labelled as "civil war" between "rebellion nation of Slovenians in the north of Yugoslavia and federal authorities" as was the case in media coverage of the Balkans barrel of powder. He should have remembered hundreds of nights that we have spent arguing with international activists the proper language to be used.

Authors of the mentioned appeal used as key arguments and without any benefit of doubt, the US journalist Seymour Hersh and his apparent "analysis" of the US staging the Northern stream Gas incident that figures as eventual proof of NATO involvement at the early stage of Russian second (2022) aggression against Ukraine. I read Hersh paper and my first impression was that it is a plot of intelligence services – no facts, only self produced assumptions of a really low, unconvincing quality. The language of the appeal was clearly biased, contained no reference to positions of Ukrainian peace circles, intellectuals or opinion makers and failed to build on evidences. I was surprised to see some collaborators of former Slovene PM signing this, and - probably without reflection – subverting core principles of civil society action that we advocated in 1980ies – for example, the principle, that no international declaration let alone intervention would be promoted without being discussed and agreed with the actors from the region concerned (in this case Ukraine). The second principle that we were fighting for in 8'0ies was , that international community SHALL take clear stand when it comes to subversion of international laws, evident violence of subject A against subject B... and that we shall avoid applying »*impartiality for any price*« even if it is thought to be with good purpose. Taking no stand (remaining neutral) as a strategy when trying to bring parties to the negotiation table, is counterproductive, when we have to deal with totalitarian militaristic madness as was the case with Serbian Leaders (i.e. Milosevic, Mladić) in late 1980ies and early 1990ies. People, that were declared war criminals, responsible for genocide, by international court of justice, were approached in

90ies by masses of international activists equipped by such sophisticated, counterproductive “neutral”, “taking no stand” attitude that we disgraced so much.

It happened to be that I have a range of friends and collaborators in Ukraine – without any doubt or hesitation, all of them take clear stand against Russian aggression, they perceive the warfare as illegitimate, totalitarian, illegal act of Russian president and all of them unanimously support the defence and ask for military support. When I asked a friend from Kyev during first days of attacks on Ukrainian capital if she needs shelter in Slovenia , she answered with outrage: “ we need no booking arrangements, send us hamlets and weapons for self- defence”.

For us in 80is it was unperceivable that a declaration would be passed about Yugoslavia without being debated with us, campaigners from Yugoslav republics.

40 years later, Mastnak forgot the genuine principles of civil society solidarity campaigning.

In conclusive chapter, I will try to complement Werner Wintersteiners’ reflection titled From War to War. It might help if we honestly look into categories that substantially changed in 40 years and equally into those that did not and still remain.

[What did we have 40 years ago and we still have \(or have again\)](#)

In Slovenia, we are still overwhelmed by the heritage of the IInd world war – the old wounds echoes during all election campaigns, dividing the population during each crisis....recently, we have heard the rhetoric of old visions during mass oppositional rally held on 22. March this year to call for fall of the present government and immediate elections.

In other words, we still live in post IInd World War trap, we live the block division, the cold war internally.

What we repeatedly are confronted with is the rhetoric’s of eschatology. Be it COVID, Financial crisis, Nuclear Threatall converges in eschatology which in psychological terms result as COLLECTIVE FEAR and feal of insecurity which causes unconscious support to power holders.

Thirdly , we continue to observe dysfunctional multilateral framework, crippled institutions that were formed in 20 century to resolve major regional and global problems,

What we have again is the nuclear threat in proximity of Ukraine It is different than the **Chernobyl disaster** that began on 26 April 1986 with the explosion of the 4th [reactor](#) of the [Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant](#), in the north of the Ukraine, close to the border with the Belorusia. But the common denominator is eschatological fear that is being reproduced.

And forth: the Value system in hands of religious leaders prove to be useless and even passive. Religious leaders either clearly support totalitarian leaders or sell

useless demagogies. There was no single serious attempt of religious leaders to approach the problem solving for the situation in Ukraine. World Abrahamic Religions do not excel to become a part of solutions, in reality they insist being a part of the problem. In other words, we can forget about counting on religions as providing for ethics, values as key ingredients for problem solving.

What did we have 40 years ago and we do not have now

We had International movement with clear agenda and strong structures.

We possessed Conviction, that we can change things, realutopian thinking was legitimate-. “stop the war” and “abolish military” were promoted as realistic targes.

Now we see, that wars are agreed upon by major players, interests and civil society feels hopeless and powerless.

Wars are not only due to accumulated weapons, militaristic cultures, but primarily due to strategic interests, evidently agreed amongst key superpowers.

What did we not have 40years ago but have now

We obtained enough proofs to conclude, that big issues are agreed afront by global players and their intelligence services. This was manifested clearly over the recent crisis:

- Ukraine and <Syria violence during 2014/2015
- Greek monetary ciris
- Extreme media coverage of refugee crisis prior to COVID pandemic
- Refugees crisis reporting immediately ended when Covid crisis appeared
- Orchestrated Global Management of COVID Pandemic offers a case by itself.

All big affairs of past decade were excellently orchestrated on global level, evidently manageable. and concluded being pushed in oblivion immediately after the strategic targets of key political players were met.

Climate change issue that might soon cause the Gulf Stream and Arctic Stream to slow down or stop, which would result in chaotic situation in northern hemisphere with unpredictable results is an emblematic case for Wintersteiners scenario of “an Elephant in the room”.

Internet – abundance of information – caused completely another way of satisfying the need to acquire and select information. 40 years ago, right in the period 1985 - 1991 we were in pre-internet time, gradually having dial-up access to international bulletin-board systems, this was an era of GreenNet, Association of Progressive Communications (APC), Institute of Global Communications (IGC) etc. The Slovene PM served as Balkan node for APC, during the Serbian aggression in Bosnia, we organised European support for BBS Zerberus installations to social movements in Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosova

We can now acquire credible information from the first-hand actors ubiquitously. Let's recall that the Soviet Union banned information about the Chernobyl disaster in 1986 for days until European institutes identified radiation and alerted the population. However, the accuracy of information today, despite the abundance of information channels, is far from being satisfactory due to diverse frauds and the overwhelming activities of diverse intelligent services. The abundance of information is as confusing as the shortage of information.

What did we not have 40 years ago and we still miss having today

We lack the UN systems prompt and functioning we are still at zero level of Early Warning System functioning.

There is no transparent routine of Peace Conferences being called in terms of prevention of conflicts, prior to escalations.

We miss coherent value systems embedded in our educational systems to promote integrated values of peace & human rights and rights of all species in a sense of holistic environmental rights, ecosystem rights – 5th generation of ethics.

We long for transparent consensus algorithms based verification mechanism to distinguish truth from fraud.

Can those lessons fit scenarios for Ukraine?

I will only hint to three dimensions that I am preoccupied with in my daily reflection. Scenarios for Ukraine can only be influenced on midterm and long term. It does not seem realistic that any of Wintersteiners scenarios is realistic in short term.

Existing multilateral organisations for early stage conflict resolution and peace building – Yes or NO

We would need a most serious, well structured global PM debate on the role of UN. Continuously we rediscover the wheel - our intellectual ancestors have put major effort to develop structures to "talk peace" - amongst them the one that holds primate, my beloved author, Victor Hugo, who - on 14 June 1870 performed historic gesture coining his natural faith, pagan inspiration to design a magic ritual initiating European Union: planting the first being, the first »thing« that he called »*United nations of Europe*« - oak tree - *Chêne des Etats-Unis d'Europe* in his garden in Hauteville. Hugo planted the oak, United Nations of Europe, commemorating the fall of Bastille, and just a few days before the new war with Prussia was declared. He declared at this point, that the new war can only lead to united Europe. And he also declared, that he himself, as a visionary of the future, would not await the day of unification. He was right in both points he made.

My stand is, that – respectful to all our predecessors, who engineered multilateral structures – we insist making them better, more functional, efficient and values based. I am not in favour of experimentation with new bottom – up initiatives +for world governance, world parliament, or similar. Most of them have short breath and weak outreach – during major crisis, they are all completely irrelevant having no impact.

We shall decide, and provide full support to UN while pressing our governments to promote necessary reforms of UN multilateral procedures.

Coming back to beginning of my paper – I started as pacifist in the nest of UN clubs, I believed from the very beginning, that UN shall gain power and increase efficiency.

Religions and Peace – In or Out

Particular attention of the peace movement shall be paid to the role of religions. And religious organisations.

I refer here to the emblematic case reported above of Slovene Arch Bishop Stres withdrawal of signature to the Declaration of peace not for ethical but for political reasons.

Better saying - particular contemplation shall be made on fact of the absence of clear stands for peace from the side of religions. I am not speaking of cosmetic “lipstick on the pig” kind of occasional PR statements by religious leaders. I speak of systematic activity of religions for peace prevention and peace building.

While in the case of Slovenian participation in democratic /independence movement we shall assess the role of RKC as proactive and positive , as I displayed in my Book Duhovno vodstvo v Sloveniji nekoč in danes, Beletgrina 2018 in the essay Esoteric support to Independence Struggle in Slovenia in 80ies. Amongst other spiritual movements also ROMAN Catholic Church played a role ... As one of many spiritual organisations in the country - respectful to religious and spiritual pluralism in the country.

But in cases such as Israeli aggression in Palestine and Russian occupation of Ukraine, religious role is either nonexistant or is even evidently, actively fuelling the conflict .

What does the absence of true peace action of Abrahamic religion really tell us about religious landscape in Europe and the middle east????

Are major religions (still) a crucial part of the problem, as they were over the past two millennia????

Or, can we think of trusting, that religious organisations can play a role in preventing future conflicts?

In my view, peace minded people shall reconcile with the fact, that religions are phasing out in a very same way as Yugoslavia was clearly phasing out in 80ies. Any romantic sympathies for “socialist Yugoslavia” concept, was contra productive in 80ies In the same way, any romantic sympathies to Abrahamic religions, is counter productive in approaching solutions to contemporary wars and conflicts.

As Yugoslavia and its institutions (communist party, military) was a Major Part of the problem, the religious institutions today remain a major part of the problem and they remain far from a potential solutions.

And what is a potential answer to this spiritual crisis: it is all written neatly by the works of good old Anarcho Pacifist Bart De-Light and in the novel Besi by

Dostoyevsky - the answer is for European nations to go back to their genuine, authentic spiritual roots – nature faith values²⁰.

Information technologies and AI - good or bad

The challenge is how to verify information due to abundant sources, how to deploy consensus algorithms for peace, to separate biasing intelligence services fraud from truthful information about facts on the ground.

Technologies are values-neutral, it is on us to deploy them in the function of Satya Graha. All technologies, including AI can be turned but positive²¹.

It is on us – we can use all available technologies to identify the truth to empower our SatyaGraha engagement.

Marko Hren, April 2024

²⁰ For more details, see the recent volumes by the author – open access at <https://independent.academia.edu/markohren>

²¹ Further Elaborated in [cademia.edu/43498293/Ancient_Schools_of_Wisdom_contemporary_Spirituality_4_0_Sustainable_development_And_the_Industry_4_0](https://independent.academia.edu/43498293/Ancient_Schools_of_Wisdom_contemporary_Spirituality_4_0_Sustainable_development_And_the_Industry_4_0)

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Sober analysis versus contention
Re-discovered History of War-Prevention

Slovenian peace movement in the context of
Yugoslav
anti-war contention

Re-discovered history of war-prevention
(1984-1992)

Marko Hren

Ljubljana, 2012

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Introduction

Slovenian Peace Movement (SPM) published its first book titled »Cold Peace and other Hot Topics« in 1985²². Instead of introduction we left a blank page with a short memo noting our pretentious dilemma of the time: “The introduction will be written by The History”. Well, that “History” referred-to by the SPM nearly three decades ago, was never laid down by the social sciences. The Peace Institute in Ljubljana partially filled-in the gap with its recent volume “War and Peace”²³. As I compiled an introductory text for it, I felt an urge to simultaneously prepare a compilation of primary sources²⁴ to provide a reader with an archive illustrating the role of the resistance movement in Slovenia during the process of the independence struggle in Slovenia and the disintegration of former Yugoslavia. This web-archive documents the role of the Slovenian grass-roots, pro-democracy, human rights and pacifist movement in the process of the nonviolent resistance to Yugoslav regime, its contribution to the independence struggle and its position²⁵ within the pan-European process known as the Fall of the Iron Curtain. The period of time concerned in the paper extends from 1985 till 1991 and is later referred to as the “Slovenian spring”.²⁶

This paper shed some light onto the early beginnings of the SPM, its pre-war activities, then it frames the key disputes of the SPM within the international peace and democracy movement and reveals a “missed opportunity” embedded in a potential convergence of the processes approaching the pre-war crisis in Yugoslavia from below (Helsinki Citizens assembly on the Pan- European level and the Peace institute initiatives in

²² Hladni Mir in druge vroče teme/ Cold Peace and Other Hot Topics. Ljubljana: RK ZSMS, ABC Mirovni zvezki, Ljubljana, 1985 .

²³ Vlasta Jalušič and Lev Kreft, *Vojna in mir, refleksije dvajsetih letih / War and Peace, reflections after 20 years* (Ljubljana: Peace institute Ljubljana, 2011). Published during the occasion of the 20th year anniversary of the Peace institute

²⁴ Marko Hren, *Če hočeš mir pripravljaj mir / If you want peace, prepare for peace* (Hren, 2011) ; the compilation is published in electronic format for free download at Slovene national digital library www.dlib.si under the title in Slovene language. Larger part of the book includes articles and documents in Slovene language, however a selection of documents in English is also included to give scholars who may not be familiar with Slovene language an opportunity to get a grasp of primary sources. Since the majority of primary sources referred-to in this paper are reproduced in the above cited electronic compilation, we will be using an abbreviated reference: Hren, 2011, throughout this paper . The compilation lays down details about the Slovenian peace movement from the 1980-ies and particularly its efforts to prevent the war – amongst other it gives evidences of the consistent essays to call International Peace Conference before elections in all the republics of former Yugoslavia were held in 1990/1991 and outlines details concerning our (SPM) disputes and differences in opinion in a dialogue with international movements (particularly the Helsinki Citizens Assembly) in a pre-war and earl-conflict stage period (1988-1991).

²⁵ It shall be emphasised, that all my contributions in this contexts are intentionally subjective; they provide a view of active participant in the process and therefore do not pretend to represent an objective academic study.

²⁶ The term was adopted by the Slovenian opposition in the spirit of the political warming-up (spring) in other socialist countries after the Cold War. For the first time, the term was used by the special edition of the Independent Voices, entitled *Slovenian Spring, Centralism or Democracy?*, co-edited by Braco Rotar and Marko Hren and published by SPM in 1989. The events prior the independence were interpreted and compiled under the title *Slovenian Spring [Slovenska Pomlad]* also in a documentary web portal <www.slovenska.pomlad.si> (Accessed 9 July 2012).

Ljubljana) and from above (the activities of the CSCE, UN and European Community). In addition, this paper intends to stimulate further research in this domain and it finishes with some concrete proposals in this direction. Most of the available material documenting the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, focus on anti-war activities during the wars, while this paper focuses entirely on the pre-war and early-conflict-stage period.

In Slovenia, we had to wait till 2011 to open a contradictory debate on the archives of intelligence services from the “Slovenian spring” period; Slovenia was faced with a relatively large political scandal when an independent researcher and publicist Igor Omerza was prevented access to data from the official archives. This event has caused a public debate which oscillated around the legal issues and concerned the conduct of the archive management, while I believe that a true scandal was represented by a mere fact, that Omerza was apparently the first researcher requesting access to secret archives; it seems that none of the scholars, mentors or professors at public higher education or research institutions in Slovenia ever in 20 years proved interest for the archives concerned. The same is true for private archives of protagonists – including my own personal archive; none of the public institutions had shown an interest for the extensive volume of primary sources concerning the nonviolent resistance movement in Slovenia. Why such an illogical - even absurd to the first glance - abstinence of domestic social sciences? The answer might be simple; the public institutions in social sciences and humanities are still dominated or impregnated by (post)communist nomenclature. Is it in their interest to reveal the role and the facts related to the former communist party hierarchies and their extensive networks of influence? It is of no surprise that 20 years after the independence of Slovenia - a range of Slovenian intellectuals had to form a new independent association, the Association for values of Slovenian independence, with the first and immediate objective to publish a compendium of sources on Slovenian independence process²⁷. Not only the nonviolent resistance movement, the whole movement for independency of Slovenia, found itself in a “knowledge lacuna”.

Concerning the history of the SPM, there were only two outstanding exemptions of researchers showing great deal of interest – and both are not Slovenian citizens: Padraic Kenny and Andrea Licata²⁸. Omerza, who remains the only domestic writer in Slovenia, who contemplated into secret and private archives until now, discovered - amongst other facts - that the intelligence services in 80ies had exercised intense surveillance and the highest degree of interest for the activities of the activists of the SPM. This indicates, that the role of

²⁷ The Association for values of Slovenian independence was established in December 2010. One of its core aims is to document the facts prior to and during the process of the fall of iron curtain in Slovenia. The author of this paper has contributed an introductory essay to the opening congress of this association – the essay is published in its entirety at the internet address of the association and is also reproduced in Hren, 2011. Hren was elected as a member of presidency at the opening congress in December 2010 and remains a member of this board. The White Book on Slovenian independence struggle is a mid-term project of the association and shall be compiled by 2014. www.vso.si

²⁸ Padraic Kenney, the author of *A Carnival of Revolution, Central Europe 1989* (Princeton University Press, 2005) and Andrea Licata is the author a thesis *Resa del pacifismo e nuova resistenza, I movimenti per la pace dalla smilitarizzazione alla contestazione della NATO in Slovenia 1989–2005* (University of Trieste, 2005). Kenney and Licata are the only authors apart from already mentioned Igor Omerza and apart from the Slovenian journalist Ali Žerdin, autor of the web-portal-based archive on Slovenian spring (www.slovenskapomlad.si) who were interested in private archives of the actors concerned!

the SPM in the times of decomposition of militaristic Yugoslavia was perceived by the elites in power as substantial. It is therefore important to note, that a number of radical pacifists from Slovenia were on the list of most observed individuals by the counter intelligence and intelligence services in Yugoslavia in the 80ies. In other words, the intelligence personnel/ researchers was much more aware of the importance of the work of the SPM than the Slovenian historians and social sciences are today, after the transition was accomplished. Documents were revealed proving that key pacifists were amongst the most exposed “objects of direct surveillance” of the intelligent services.²⁹ This was true even for a bohemian poet, Jure Detela, an outstanding figure of Slovenian pacifism, an early prophet of deep-ecology, amongst other, a key-note speaker at the historic rally against Krsko Nuclear power Plant during the Chernobyl disaster on April 1986.³⁰ The counter intelligence was aware of the dangerous paradigm shifter –visionary bohemian Detela - while Slovenian historians, and sociologists remained ignorant for decades.

Missed opportunity

This article contributes a particular angle of views concerning the failure of the global peace movement in the case of the wars in former Yugoslavia. Most of the other authors focus on anti-war activities during the wars, therefore, after summer 1991, while this contribution focuses to the pre-war period. A sober analysis of the situation in Yugoslavia was available to international peace movements at least by the SPM, but it cannot be disputed that not sufficient effort was made to scrupulously discuss it, without ideological biases of “un-violability of borders”, ideological views on nationalisms, and other points of disputes of the SPM discussed later in this paper. The misunderstandings and differences in opinion, led to confused and even manipulated³¹ policy making and to the fiasco of European and global peace movement approach to the “Yugoslav crisis”.

²⁹ Marjan Kranjec in *The role and the impact of counter-intelligent services of the YA Borec*, št. 567–569/1998 (Ljubljana: Borec, 1998, reproduced in 2008 on <http://sl.scribd.com/doc/86522563/Balkanski-Poligon-Marijan-F-Kranjc>). Marjan Kranjec served in headquarters of Slovenian part of intelligence service (SDV) during the period concerned. He reveals that I was assigned a coded label, a personal dossier of the intelligence services as early as in 1984. Agents regularly reported about my activities to political as well as military, republic (Slovenian) as well as federal (Yugoslav), authorities. Kranjec claims, that I was “the only person in Slovenia, about whom the agents of Slovenian part of intelligence service directly reported to the Yugoslav Army authorities”. See also footnote 93.

³⁰ Detela wrote a book, an encyclopaedic guideline for identification of spies and agents, *Jure Detela, Pod strašnimi očmi pontonskih mostov / Under the Scary Eyes of Pontoon Bridges*, (Ljubljana, novel, National Library, the department of manuscripts, 1988). The compilation that I published to commemorate the 20years anniversary of the inauguration of the Peace Institute in Ljubljana in 2011 (Hren, 2011) was dedicated as a tribute to Jure Detela. See also footnotes 78 to 82.

³¹ See extensive correspondence between the SPM and the Helsinki Citizens Assembly (HCA), for example, where the SPM complains loudly against the manipulative practice of the HCA headquarters! Some documents in English language are reproduced in Hren, 2011. A thorough study concerning the positions of global peace movements and related spokes persons would contribute essentially to the understanding of the failure of the peace and democracy movement in Europe concerning the conflicts in former Yugoslavia.

European Peace movement activists, scholars and experts, the key interlocutors of the SPM in 1980ies, did not make an emphasis on a joint understanding of the rules of European Policy-making³²! As a result I was – to take one example of numerable instances of a lack of joint understanding.- not made sufficiently aware of the importance of the meeting of US Secretary of State James Baker with European troika of foreign ministers under the presidency of Netherland in the first half of 1991. The meeting was held in Berlin immediately prior to the well-known visit of Mr. Baker in Belgrade in June 21st 1991. Today, I believe that that meeting was crucial and decisive, a missed opportunity for the European social movement. Baker met the European “presidency troika” during the CSCE meeting on June 20th 1991 in Berlin, which was a first meeting of ministers within the framework of the CSCE Council of Ministers³³. The ministers held consultations on the European architecture and the strengthening of security in Europe. The meeting resulted³⁴ in the adoption of a mechanism for consultation and co-operation with regard to emergency situations³⁵, and made some operational decisions for the functionality of the CSCE Conflict Prevention centre in Vienna³⁶.

Last but not least, the meeting resulted in an adoption of the Statement on the situation in Yugoslavia. This Statement included a strong message concerning the support for democratic, human rights and economic as well as constitutional reforms in Yugoslavia, sovereignty of Yugoslav peoples to make decisions and clearly vowed a message that “international community would stand ready to assist Yugoslavias’ efforts to transform itself economically and politically”. These messages were presented to the leaders of the Yugoslav republics through the positions displayed by Baker in Belgrade, on June 21st 1991 when Baker apparently claimed³⁷ that US will not recognise neither Slovenia nor Croatia while suggesting that Yugoslavia shall be transformed in its integrity into a democratic state. Baker apparently claimed that independence shall not be achieved through unilateral decisions but through negotiations and peaceful means.³⁸ Bakers’ performance in Belgrade was understood by YA analytics as a hint, that military intervention in Slovenia would be

³² Sufficient to hint that I see the story of the policy making of that epoch, today with the eyes of an experienced European Policy maker; during the last decade, I am employed at the government of Slovenia in the department for development and European Affairs, I was involved as a dossier leader during the Presidency of Slovenia of the European Council in 2008 and I learned to become an insider concerning the rules of the game of European policy-making. I claim, that a well-coordinated action of European movements could bring efficient results providing that at least relative consensus would have been reached at least on the level of the HCA.

³³ The council was originally established in November 1990 by the Charter of Paris.

³⁴ CSCE, First Meeting of the Council, Summary Conclusions and the Statement on the Situation in Yugoslavia, Berlin, June 19-20th.

³⁵ Later referred- to as the “Berlin mechanisms” which were drafted as emergency mechanisms providing procedures which may be used by CSCE states in crisis situations.

³⁶ At that time, German foreign minister, Dietrich Genscher served as a chair of the CSCE Conflict prevention center which is an important fact to understand the “German shift” that followed soon-after.

³⁷ The main source of information concerning the meeting with James Baker is a document titled »The minutes of the meeting of president Milan Kučan with the US secretary of state James Baker in Belgrade on 21st of June 1991”. The author also made ad-hoc interviews with dr. Dimitrij Rupel, Slovenian minister of foreign affairs as well as with Lojze Peterle, Slovenian Prime Minister at-that-time. It would be interesting to compare minutes made by other delegations of the republics of former Yugoslavia present at the meeting.

³⁸ Baker, James A. (1995) *The politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace 1989-1992*. New York: G. Putnam's Sons.

tolerated by US. Did Baker bring a politically correct message to the leaders of Yugoslav Republics? Or did he act on his own, shadowing the message according to his or someone else's agenda? Or, did Slovenian leaders misunderstand or even misinterpret him? Comparing the minutes, the memories and the statements, the stories just do not match. The Berlin statement could and should be understood as a neutral statement, but certainly the diplomats that drafted the text did not exclude an option of independence of republics. The fact, that as early as in November 1990³⁹ the US State department proposed and the Congress voted for strict embargo on funds disbursements for Yugoslavia and conditioned any aid with free elections held in all republics, is controversial to the messages seemingly communicated by Baker on June 21st 1991 in Belgrade. Some sources from within the State department⁴⁰ claimed that the US administration was well aware of the situation in Balkans (also aware of the fact, that there was no doubt, that the whole crisis was due to the aggression of Serbs backed by Yugoslav army (YA) and that the conflict could not have been interpreted as civil war) as early as in 1990. These experts acted promptly – the cited Bill Text is a proof, that the US administration was fully aware of the dynamics of the elections held in particular republics in 1990 and the intervention of US via the cited Bill was timely and pro-republics; I claim that this was in fact a political gesture that should have been understood as pro-independence.

The fact is, that Bakers messages did not tranquilise the process on the ground, on contrary, they gave wing to Milošević, Serbia, YA and the Federal Yugoslav authorities, to escalate military interventions in Slovenia and Croatia. Open military conflict in former Yugoslavia started by the aggression of YA in Slovenia on June 26th 1991, only few days after the Bakers departure from Belgrade. This caused an armed resistance offered by formal Slovenian troops – known as the “10 days defence war for Slovenian independence”. Immediately-after, the German diplomatic mission recognized the mistake and Germany revised their diplomatic positions, thus becoming a leading country propelling the diplomatic process for recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. German and European diplomats quickly adjusted their views after June 26th. Did the European Peace Movement ever do the same?

³⁹ Bill Text 101st Congress (1989-1990) Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act , SEC. 599A. The Bill makes it clear that “none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available pursuant to this Act shall be obligated or expended to provide any direct assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and (2) the Secretary of the Treasury shall instruct the United States Executive Director of each international financial institution to use the voice and vote of the United States to oppose any assistance of the respective institutions to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Provided, That this section shall not apply to assistance intended to support democratic parties or movements, emergency or humanitarian assistance, or the furtherance of human rights: Provided further, That this section shall not apply if all six of the individual Republics of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have held free and fair multiparty elections and are not engaged in a pattern of systematic gross violations of human rights: Provided further, That notwithstanding the failure of the individual Republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to have held free and fair multiparty elections within six months of the enactment of this Act, this section shall not apply if the Secretary of State certifies that the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is making significant strides toward complying with the obligations of the Helsinki Accords and is encouraging any Republic which has not held free and fair multiparty elections to do so”.

⁴⁰ George Kenney, desk officer for Yugoslavia at the US State Department during 1990-1993. He spoke publicly of wrongs of US policy and repeatedly noted that American policy was – after the adoption of the above cited Bill Text - wrong, counterproductive and that the voice of independence shall be heard at early stage. He resigned in 1993 to strengthen his point.

Were pacifists able to adjust the pacifist positions? The positions and proposals of Slovenian Peace movement were made public promptly, continuously and repeatedly; a pile of documents serve as reference! But they were neither discussed properly nor taken seriously by the networks that we used to identify-with (END, HCA, East-West Dialogue group...).⁴¹ Key arguments and disputes follow later on in this paper.

From today's perspective, it seems that the meeting in Berlin on June 1991 was decisive. A proposal was agreed for all Yugoslav republics, to accept a technical office⁴² of the joint EC and US diplomacy. Slovenian president Kučan clearly presented the views of Slovenia at the meeting in Belgrade, insisting, that Slovenia intends to fulfil the decision made at plebiscite (December 1990) and declare independency on June 26th 1991, and in such a way become a fully sovereign state, and only under such conditions, namely, as fully sovereign player, enter negotiations and talks concerning the future forms of cooperation's with other equal partners.⁴³ The point of agreement of Slovenian and International policy makers of that epoch was, that all processes shall be backed by legal, constitutional arrangements. Slovenia did fully respect this line of acting and has backed all its actions with constitutional arrangements. Such attitude was crowned by prompt and extensive recognition of independent Slovenia later in 1991 and early in 1992 when Slovenia was recognised also by the European Community and in May 1992 became a member of the UN.

The diplomatic efforts of the EC and US were appropriate but arrived "just too late".⁴⁴ However, it is to note, that the official offer of EU and US diplomacy did perfectly match to the proposal of the SPM and the Peace Institute in Ljubljana, in the framework of the preparations of the Peace conference (preparations were held from June 1990 till June 1991). From the today's perspective, the potential fusion of both processes (from below and from above) seemed possible and realistic. We had all instruments on our disposal and we

⁴¹ I would love to see a truthful and thorough study, bringing to surface all lobbyist documents drafted by influential conflict resolution and peace policy experts of that time, particularly those, whose responsibilities involved direct membership in multilateral or national advisory bodies. The correspondence between the SPM and the Helsinki Citizens Assembly (HCA) key personalities is partially documented also in English language in Hren, 2011 and available at www.dlib.si. From today's perspective I assume, that at least some leading members of HCA were close to decisive European and US policy makers (i.e. both HCA co-chairs, Mary Caldor and Mient Jan Faber). HCA had strong political relations and positions in their own countries; particularly Faber did hold a prominent post in Netherlands, since he served as secretary-general of the Interchurch Peace Council (IKV) thus having large manoeuvre space to influence the minister of foreign affairs of the Netherlands, mr. Hans van den Broek, who was - at that time - holding the post of presidency of European presiding Troika) and could have played a role shaping more effective policies during the Yugoslav transition.

⁴² Not much details are known to us, we understand that a sort of vaguely defined technical office was offered, as referred to in the minutes found in Slovenian official archives; this was not only meant as an assistance for negotiations between federal authorities and individual republics, but also as an experts help for the "drafting of new constitution".

⁴³ President Kučan displayed a variety of options for future integrations (including confederation) while insisting on the respect of Helsinki Accords and European values. Kučan also highlighted, that the violence in Yugoslavia already was in effect and that we can therefore not speak of "a possibility of out-brake".

⁴⁴ Dimitirj Rupel, in the ad-hoc interview with the author, February 2012.

failed because we were not able to find consensus amongst opinion makers. The numerous letters of the SPM⁴⁵ to the international community witness the failure of our efforts to present the situation in Yugoslavia as truthfully as possible, and, consequently “the lack of understanding of the situation in Yugoslavia which prevented the peace movement from trying to avert the war has become an obstacle to its effective contribution to stopping the violence”.⁴⁶

I therefore disagree with those authors who advance conspiracy theories and blame big-powers for the collapse and for the violence in Yugoslavia; the international community cannot be blamed for the roots of wars in Yugoslavia, in fact, it can be blamed for not preventing the wars. However, I agree with the parts of such interpretations⁴⁷, clearly outlining the colonising role of some fractions of US international policy that were in charge of preparing grounds for wild privatisation of publicly own enterprises in Eastern Europe and for grabbing of the available resources in future “open markets”.

This paper shall contribute to the reduction of the manipulations of the events in history, to the revealing of the global blackmailing and to the vitalisation of the pacifist tradition on the planet..

Long Live Satya graha.

Long Live Satya graha.

⁴⁵ Key documents are reproduced in Hren, 2011 at www.dlib.si.

⁴⁶ SPM Open Letter to European Nuclear Disarmament conference Held in Moscow, August 1991; printed in a form of a leaflet and widely distributed under the title Understanding the “War” in Yugoslavia. Reproduced in Hren, 2011.

⁴⁷ See for example the interpretations concerning the roots of wars in Boris Malagurski “documentary” film under the title “The Weight of Chains”, last accessed at <http://www.weightofchains.com/buy> or search youtube for updated link. I agree with those parts of such interpretations which point to the colonising elements of the role of some fractions of US actors that were in charge of preparing grounds for wild privatisation of publicly own enterprises in East Europe and for grabbing of the available resources. For example, the Georg Soros’s “open society” operations in Eastern Europe (shall be better called “open markets operations”) are under-evaluated in this respect for obvious reasons; large part of so-called “progressive” authors in ECE cooperated closely with mr. Soros and his economic interests. The “open market” was the main agenda of this operation while the open society was a marketing tool. Some of us – actors on the ground in civil society- perceived Soros and his empire as well as his strategy including his local agencies, as a clear and ruthless dumping on the scene. It is now clear to me and to many progressive thinkers, that “operation Soros” was but a blackmail, a sort of “New Age Jesuit grabbing frontline strategy” to bring US economic interests acceptable by target civil societies. This topic goes beyond the purpose of this paper, but I would love to contribute to a study on this topic. I use this opportunity to call for a regional research effort in this domain. Not funded by Soros himself hopefully.

Early beginnings of the SPM

I owe a great deal of tributes to War Resisters International, Swiss basic democracy movements, French cultural and political left, as well as to Bask & Spanish & Italian Anarchists, German Greens, Eastern European colleagues-dissidents, then to Italian & Austrian friends in Alpe Adria Peace network, to my Croatian friends and to many individuals from all over the globe who have offered us inspirations, strength, shelters, love and friendship.

The thoughts in the mind of a teenager were revolt and heretic. The dreams were puzzling; I was repeatedly dreaming wars and conflicts, but seldom arms worked; in a critical situation of battles appearing in my dreams, all weapons were demobilised, as if some invisible guides would have been teaching me a good old eternal transcendental lesson: Ahimsa Paramo Dharma. Dreams played an important role in a formation of a pacifist writing this paper. Another crucial cultural factor shaping my thought was a clear observation of hypocrisy in a so-called Christian society; since Slavic nations were deprived their cosmologies due to centuries of violent Christianisation and inquisitions, the roots of violence seemed clearly related to false religion, historical manipulations of power elites and to the merge of ideologies and state-powers; Communist Militarism was found easily comparable with Inquisitors Catholicism. Of course I thought I was alone on a planet with my thoughts - until my ethno group (dedicated to the cultivation of traditional songs and instruments) went touring to Switzerland in 1975. This is where I met WRI activists mingling in a crowd at the international festival, handing over leaflets and selling badges on street-stalls. That's where I got my first broken rifle badge and my first "War is a crime against humanity" leaflet. I will never know who the person handing the leaflet and offering a deep light in her eyes was?!? Thanks to all who hang on street stalls! It is worth inspiring randomly! The encounter in Switzerland has turned me into an activist instantly and forever. An entirely new horizon has opened for a young rebel, a horizon of action rather than a horizon of dreams and bohemian poetry. Instantly I found another two bohemians at my secondary school in Ljubljana, and a first pacifist troika was formed in 1976.⁴⁸ For long years before this event, I have been involved in an UN promotion club in primary school and my first step after the tour in Switzerland was to re-establish contacts with local Ljubljana UN information center – a UN club as it was called⁴⁹. I grew into a convinced pacifist before reaching the age of conscription, - well aware of the consequences of my eventual objection. It was not easy to make a choice⁵⁰. But finally I subordinated to supreme law – the law of Omnipresent Love; I was in love and this made me decide to enter the military service and not to choose a career of a prisoner. But to compromise my consciousness I also made a decision that I will not use

⁴⁸ We translated first leaflets "war is a crime against humanity" into Slovenian language and called for disobedience. Conscientious objection nested as a high value and supreme term of ethical reflection. Soon we were taken to "consultation" to socialist authorities in Ljubljana. I remember well that we were kindly dis-recommended to continue our "counter-constitutional activity" and were sweetly threatened to be expelled from the school.

⁴⁹ These were in fact the only public, relatively open infrastructures to browse trends in human rights, international agreements and legal practices worldwide. The UN library was our Google of that time.

⁵⁰ Conscientious objectors in Yugoslavia were repeatedly sentenced and imprisoned for the same act of disobedience – some of them served more than 8 years sentence.

arms while in military. I told military personnel at the very beginning of my military service, that they have got my body, but haven't caught my personality and that I cannot use weapons. What I did in the army was – that I played guitar in a band, organised cultural events, and last, but not least, discussed CO issues in detail with some dedicated military personnel.⁵¹ I learned in the Army that this institution was a Ship of Fools; upon my return from the army, I knew “the enemy” and I was even more convinced pacifist than ever. Arriving back home, I decided to dedicate myself to action⁵². I made links with emerging progressive circles in Ljubljana and established working relations with WRI office in London, started to travel frequently and made friendship with WRI staff, particularly with Howard Clark, legendary desk-officer and today's chair.

For me, there was never a single trace of doubt: the Yugoslav army (YA) was a key structural and the key psychological problem in Yugoslavia. When it became the only federal infrastructure remaining in 1991 after national elections in all republics and after the Central committee of communist party disintegrated, YA clearly became a main threat. I learned during my service, that YA officers were in largest parts recruited from the poorest southern Serbia regions. Most of them grew in-depth anti-albanian traditional hatred, but in public, they would be loudest protagonist of Yugoslav ideologies. YA was a so called seventh republic – it was represented in all structures of the decision making, including the parliament. A Good Old joke about Yugoslavia goes as follows: Yugoslavia has 7 bordering states, 6 republics, 5 nations, 4 languages, 3 religions, 2 scriptures and 1 political party. That One Political party was the point of the explosive fusion of interests with the interests of YA: they both needed the status-quo, they both needed the integral territory, they both needed each other – they were one. These interests met the interests with the protagonists of the idea of great-Serbia. A lack of a sober, scrupulous, truthful analysis of the role of YA, within the progressive circles in Europe in the 80ies⁵³, was, in my view, a key obstacle that prevented the international civil movement to respond to the crisis in former Yugoslavia in a constructive manner. The responsibility is – overall - on us, intellectuals from former Yugoslavia. There was no trace of a real peace movement in Yugoslavia until the appearance of SPM in Slovenia in early-80ies. All initiatives were absorbed by existing institutions; i.e. The Official League for Peace was a completely useless interlocutor and severely criticised during the mature stage of the SPM. Viewed from today's perspective, the efficiency of the peace movement depended on its maturity at the time prior to the crisis – we were simply too late!

The early 1980ies have brought new opening for initiatives from below in Slovenia; the Socialist Youth Organisation (RKZSMS) became a nest of some outstandingly brave and open-minded individuals⁵⁴ who conceptualised an open, pluralistic public arena within the framework of the formal institutional fabric, and complemented a set of independent editorials

⁵¹ It became clear, that the military had already been well aware and well informed about my previous life prior to my service– they knew about most of my sins concerning the secondary school pacifist circle, as well as about the fact, that I sang in a church choir. In any case, the military hierarchy in Belgrade, where I served my term, were promptly briefed about my convictions – I discussed my views openly, even translated Broken rifle and other papers that I was receiving to my home address in Ljubljana; a couple of extra holidays were granted to me to bring the incoming issues to Belgrade which I appreciated of course. I used time in military to contemplate, dream and I wrote my personal book on yoga, practiced music and had time for reflection.

⁵² At that time, in early 80ies, UN mandated Asbjorn Eide and Chama Mubanga-Chipoya to write a report on Conscientious Objections. This process became my key political reference.

⁵³ Throughout years, the SPM speakers tried to present our analysis of the Yugoslav reality to international interlocutors, in too many cases without a major success; Yugoslavia figured (particularly within the left political intellectual circles) as an outstandingly positive experiment, and everyone wanted to maintain this dream/illusion.

⁵⁴ Amongst them, the outstanding role was played by Ignac Krivec and Ingrid Bakše. They facilitated the establishment of so called “working groups” for particular trend themes, i.e. new age spirituality & theosophy, ecology, peace, feminism, they opened room for gay&lesbian, youth subculture activities and systematically challenged the regime.

(i.e. Mladina, Nova revija, Students radio etc.). In 1983 the working group for Peace Movement began its outreach activities, started publishing its own bulletin in Slovenian and in English⁵⁵ language and endorsed radical issues as for example the right to conscientious objection. While the new-age and subculture movement inspired citizens, the RKZSMS leadership facilitated the activities of diverse individuals who would – by the end of 80ies- become the protagonists of the Slovenian social movements. These activists were recruited from a variety of settings: they were academics, experts working in different professions, war veterans, representatives of youth subcultures as well as employees in the Youth Organisation administration. A core group amounted to around 15 individuals, both men and women of different ages.

It is not the purpose of this paper to trace the roots of Slovenian Peace Movement. Numerous authors repeat, that social movements in Slovenia were incubated by youth subcultural movements, or even by punk subculture of the early 80is. In my personal view, such hypothesis has as much ground as an alternative hypothesis, claiming, that social movements in Slovenia were incubated by the new age spiritual movement. Early 80'ies in Slovenia offered fertile ground for plural, diverse, decentralised initiatives. Most of them found transitional home, an incubator-kind-of environment under the official Youth Organisational umbrella. I would claim that the Youth organisation leadership of that time had a role of facilitator as much as new-age and sub-culture movement had a role of inspiration for diverse individuals, who - later on - figured as lead protagonists of the social movements.

⁵⁵ The Slovenian peace movement continuously and without interruption published independent information in English (sometimes also in French and German or Italian languages) from 1984 (known as Information Bulletin of the Peace Movement, later transformed to the widely distributed Independent Voices from Slovenia) till 1994 when the volumes were known under the brand name The Intruder. At its best, the SPM bulletin was issued 4-5 times per year and was distributed to more than 500 addresses worldwide, including research institutions, media, NGOs, political parties etc. See also footnote 58.

The history of the war-prevention activities

A large part of the SPM archives was lost over time, however, a couple of individuals⁵⁶ have kept archives until the time has come in 2011 to re-establish the archive while the Peace institute decided to commemorate the 20 years anniversary. 80ies and early 90ies were pre-internet times; the main technology used was fax and faxmodems. Most of the material sent and received on this media, and not copied, vanished with time. In early 90ies, the Green Net and the APC, the Association for Progressive Communications played an important role for the region enabling the birth of legendary ZaMir network⁵⁷.

By 1988, democratic developments and particularly the activities of the peace movement in Slovenia were labelled 'counter-revolutionary'. The army, backed by the Federal Presidency, elaborated a plan for an armed intervention aimed at cracking down on the democratic counter-revolution. The worst was averted, however the YA staged a show trial in Ljubljana, in the summer of 1988.⁵⁸ The charge involved the betrayal of military secrets by an officer in the YA to Slovenian journalists. It was later revealed that these secrets involved details of unconstitutional actions that the army planned to take regarding Slovenia. The case abounded in illegal and anti-constitutional practices, and was clearly intended to provoke the local Slovenian population and resulted in a nationwide mobilization in 1988; the peace movement engaged fully within the early stage local Slovene democratic and human rights movement and shaped its identity with a flavour of the values of nonviolent struggle.

"If you want peace, prepare for peace"; such was a title of a conceptual paper of the Movement for the culture of peace and Nonviolence⁵⁹ at the peak of its pre-war endeavour, published shortly before the inauguration of the Peace institute of Ljubljana⁶⁰. The document

⁵⁶ Special thanks to Nace Kalin, who kept dozens of archive boxes patiently in his house for 20 years, some documents of great value were revealed thanks to this discovery.

⁵⁷ We have created a first Zamir node in Ljubljana and with an enormous effort of Eric Bachman and with a grand support of international movement, the Zamir grew all-over the region. I served as a node - in its early beginning - for the APC where we gained enormous moral and operational support, amongst other by Amalia Souza and the IGC (the Institute of global communications).

⁵⁸ The Committee for the Protection of Human Rights [Odbor za varstvo človekovih pravic] of four defendants was established immediately after three civilians, Janez Janša, David Tasič and Franci Zavrl and one military officer, Ivan Borštner, were arrested in Ljubljana on 31 May 1988; the Committee is referred to as the OVČP JBTZ. The trial against the defendants was held in a military court in Ljubljana in Serbian; both facts – civilians tried at a military court and the lack of respect for the Slovenian language as the official language in Slovenia, represented a violation of the Slovenian and federal constitutions. These events have been central to the Slovenian Spring process. See: <<http://www.slovenskapomlad.si/>>. See also: Janez Janša, *Sedem let pozneje*, (Ljubljana: Karantanja, 1995). See also footnotes 8, 92 and 94.

⁵⁹ SPM was registered as a legal entity named Movement for the culture of peace and Nonviolence (Gibanje za kulturo miru in nenasilja) in June 1990 under the law prepared for political organisations prior to the first democratic elections. This was immediately after a part of SPM joined a political list of Independent Social Movements which actually did propose candidates during the first democratic elections in 1990, but failed to enter the parliament. Marko Hren was a head candidate of this independent list. Being registered as a legal political organisation, the SPM ceased acting under the umbrella of Youth organisation.

⁶⁰ Hren and Kalin 1991. Document *Si vis pacem para pacem* is dated on May 6 1991 and was undersigned by Ignac Kalin and Marko Hren who proposed it as a draft to be discussed within the Presidency of Slovenia. The role of the SPM within the approach of the Presidency of Slovenia was

shapes the comprehensive alternative security concept for Slovenia⁶¹ bringing social cohesion and nonviolent conflict resolution to the centre of gravity of proposed concept. The Slovenian peace movement thus contributed to the creation of a sovereign, autonomous reflection of Slovenian Security concept.⁶² In fact, as seen from today's perspective, the race with time corresponded to the escalation of conflict in the region. The SPM proposed a well-defined process of research and moderated dialogue between all relevant actors in all republics of former Yugoslavia. We shall recall, that all republics did undergo first democratic elections in the period from April 1990 (Slovenia) till December same year. This was a key time to propose and govern a Peace Dialogue under the auspice of international multilateral institutions such as CSCE or UN. Let us underline, that democratic election in particular republics was a constitutional right and duty of all republics.⁶³ We have envisaged an in-depth analysis of the state-of-the-art of social, economic and political realities in all individual republics. It is important to remember at this point, that the federal institutions were collapsing rapidly at the same time when the elections and new governments on the level of separate republics were implemented. The Peace institute in Ljubljana would, with a help of renowned international conflict resolution experts⁶⁴, identify potential conflict areas, and then facilitate the process of negotiations and dialogue. From 1987 onwards, the SPM consistently proposed the internationalization of the Yugoslav conflict and we have intensified the proposals for international intervention into the conflict in 1990. The movement itself had, with its activities, performed the internationalisation of the conflict in Yugoslavia. The SPM cultivated high and realistic expectations concerning the support of-that-time Slovenian

later evaluated by the former Presidency member Dušan Plut; *Dvajset let pozneje- med vojno in mirom/ Twenty years after – between war and peace*, Dušen Plut, Ljubljana, Delo 2011.

⁶¹ The Concept was titled: *An Active Global Peace & Security Concept*.

⁶² This represented a structural follow-up to a long lasting campaign of the promotion of the culture of nonviolence in all domains of public life – from the kinder garden to diplomacy. The idea to constitute a Peace research institute found itself in a core of the plans to implement the proposed concept. The proposed role of the institute was central for the process of the demilitarization of Yugoslav society and in first place, the Institute was proposed to be instrumental for the process of the peaceful disintegration of the federal Yugoslavia. In such a way, enormous expectations were projected into the creation of Peace Institute; large quantities of primary documents held in private archives witness the potency, the intensity and the extensive ambition of the pacifist movement in the period from the first proposal for the constitution of the institute in June 1990 till its inauguration a year later in June 1991.

⁶³ Major part of international public opinion makers and politicians were not aware of the level of autonomy of republics in former Yugoslavia – this was relatively high, involving a complete sovereignty over some parts (education, culture, police, etc) and limited under the other (customs, fiscal, parts of a three-fold military system were under the authority of the republics and only the federal army formed of conscripts and professionals, was subordinated to the federal authorities).

⁶⁴ This was reflected in the International Scientific Board as nominated at the inauguration of the Peace Institute; its members were Brian Martin, University of Wollongong, Australia, Arno Truger, Institut für Friedensforschung, Austria, Peter Bruck, University of Salzburg, Austria, Jean-Marie Muller, Institut de recherche sur resolution nonviolents des conflits, France, Michael Randle, Dpt. of Peace Studies, University Bradford, Great Britain, Ferenc Miszlivetz, researcher, Hungary, Antonio Papisca, University of Padua, Italy, Johan Galtung, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway, Juan Gutierrez, Institutet Gernika, Euskadi, Spain, Lyne Jones, Myfanwy, researcher, Great Britain, Andreas Gross, Institut für direkte Demokratie, Switzerland, Gene Sharp, Albert Einstein Institute, Boston, ZDA, Dietrich Fischer, Exploratory project on the conditions of peace, US, Danilo Türk, Faculty of Law, Anton Grizold, Faculty for social sciences, University of Ljubljana, Radmila Nakarada and Sonja Licht, Institut for European Studies, Belgrade, Serbija, Zdravko Grebo, Faculty of Law, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia, Silva Mežnarič, University of Zagreb, Croatia. In addition, a partnership was agreed with Julio Quan, UN Peace University in Costa Rica, Alberto L'Abate, University of Florence, Piotr Ogrodzinski, East European Research Group, Poland, and Peter Wallensteen, Peace and conflict research, Uppsala University, Sweden.

Authorities, the Executive Council of the Slovenian Assembly (ECSA), latter referred as Slovenian Government⁶⁵. There were relatively well established communication channels⁶⁶ between the SPM activists and the ECSA as well as with the Slovenian Presidency. Also, the public opinion in Slovenia was - in the period of independence struggle - strongly in favour of the alternatives to a militarised society of that time.⁶⁷ The support for the SPM project for demilitarised Slovenia (Slovenia as a zone without an army) was outstanding and reached its peak in 1990 when we proposed a referendum on Demilitarisation of Slovenia⁶⁸. The public opinion pools⁶⁹ as well as the number of declarations signed under the title "The Peace Declaration" have manifested the results of a long-lasting activities to create peace culture. By June 1990, the Slovenian Government was presented a first outline for the creation of Peace Institute and for the launch of the Peace Conferences for Balkans⁷⁰. The correspondence witnesses a strong line of arguments of the SPM concerning the need of international multilateral framework to conflict resolution. SPM argued, that Slovenia has a moral duty to lead this process, since Slovenia was known for years as an entity striving for human rights and basic democratic values, respect for the rule of law and of legal procedures, as well as for nonviolent resistance.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Even the program of the newly established Slovenian government dated June 27 1990 included utopian items like »... the government will support studies and other peace activities which will contribute to the establishment of a security concept that will not be based on military« (Hren, 1991).

⁶⁶ An important share of the cabinet members including the Prime Minister Lojze Peterle, were – together with the SPM representatives, former colleagues and members of the boards or co-signatories of pre-elections independent oppositional formations; such as collegium of the CPHR JBTZ etc. Therefore, the communication channels were in principle, at least at the beginning, open. See also footnotes 8,37 and 93.

⁶⁷ This was reflected in public opinion pools and materialised in a creation of innovative political structures, i.e. The Parliamentarian Commission for Peace Politics under the Slovenian Parliament, presided by MP member Viktorija Potočnik. The Presidency of Slovenia was also very active, particularly its member dr. Dušan Plut one of leading representatives of Slovenian Greens.

⁶⁸ The Slovenia without an army initiative was for the first time promoted by the SPM at the Youth Organisation congress in Portoroz, held on November 3rd 1989. The goal was clear: to create a Peace, fully demilitarised zone on the territory of Slovenia. On November 15 the initiative was formally delivered to all political parties of that time and to the international community. On March 28th 1990 all political organisation that joined the campaign performed a first joint press conference under the title »Slovenia Abolishes the Military«; this was promoted as a non-party initiative and was undersigned by: Tomaž Mastnak on behalf of The Movement for the culture of peace and nonviolence, Marko Hren, Vlasta Jalušič, Zoja Skušek on behalf of the Independent list of Social Movements, Janez Janša on behalf of the Slovene Democratic Party, Peter Jamnikar on behalf of the Slovenian Greens and Jožef Školč, Jaša Zlobec and Janez Sodržnik on behalf of the Liberal Democratic Party.

⁶⁹ The public opinion pools in 1990 leave no doubt: for example, the research executed by the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana in early 1991 indicates that 53% of the population of Slovenia would abolish Yugoslav Army, concerning the question on demilitarisation concept for Slovenia, 38.3% expressed themselves clearly in favour of the demilitarisation concept for Slovenia, 29.8% would support the establishment of Slovenian Army and others remained undeclared.

⁷⁰ The Slovenian Parliament and the first democratic government were inaugurated in second part of May 1990, immediately following first democratic elections held in April 1990.

⁷¹ Marko Hren's letter to Lojze Peterle (Hren, 2011) dated June 12th 1990 witness that there was a number of meetings and exchanges made between the SPM and the government of Slovenia to establish the Peace Institute as a national institution.

The SPM campaign for Demilitarisation of Slovenia gained an extensive support of both, political actors as well as civil society and the SPM was provided optimistic grounds for ambitious action despite of the fact, that the remainders of federal authorities (including the YA) showed no positive response to the emerging reality. The SPM managed to build a solid institutional environment for its proposals; the newly elected parliament has accepted the proposal of SPM and nominated a special Commission for Peace Politics, presided by the liberal member of the parliament Viktorija Potočnik. A speaker of SPM was a member of consultancy body of the President of the Republic of Slovenia for the defence. As early as in July 1990, the SPM formally proposed to nominate an experts body to prepare the consultation process for conflict resolution and demilitarisation to the Presidency of Slovenia. This proposal involved the creation of the framework for dialogue with the existing and newly elected representatives in all republics of former Yugoslavia as well as the options for the umbrella multilateral environment for such process and for the final Peace Conference for the dissolution of former Yugoslavia. The SPM envisaged that the CSCE would be the most convenient umbrella (a CSCE conference in Paris, planned for October 1990 deemed to be the right timing to raise the issue). SPM also suggested that UN and European Community institutional capacities shall be engaged synchronously. The proposals of the SPM, both, for the demilitarisation of Slovenia and for the nonviolent conflict resolution in Yugoslavia, together with the proposal to establish the Peace Institute, were formally discussed and formally supported for the first time at the Council for the social defence at the Presidency of Slovenia.⁷² During the summer of 1990, the SPM has compiled and promoted the cluster of its proposals in a conceptual paper titled Slovenian Peace Option.⁷³ This document was proposed to become adopted as a Slovenian official diplomatic proposal. But in the fall of 1990 it became gradually evident, that the Slovene Government got preoccupied with other scenarios, based on information proving conspiracy preparations of YA to disarm troops in Slovenia that were legally and constitutionally under the sovereign authority of Slovenian headquarters.⁷⁴ Viewing events from today's perspective it is evident, that the Slovenian government assumed that the probability of military intervention of Yugoslav authorities instrumented by YA was too high and that it had to prepare for an armed confrontation; thus a legal, constitutional and formal, however managed in clandestine, manoeuvre structure of territorial defence was getting formed.

The formal negotiators of Slovenian government seemingly understood, that there was too little room for dialogue with Yugoslav authorities and little support of international,

⁷² The Council for Defence of the Slovenian Presidency discussed the proposal prepared by its member, Marko Hren on its session held on July 13th 1990. The proposal was promoted as a preparatory phase for the negotiations with the federation (Hren, 2011). The formal minutes of the session of this body clearly indicate, that the Slovenian executive authorities shall »provide sufficient funding for the establishment and the program of the Peace institute«.

⁷³ Document entitled »Slovene Peace Option« appears in minutes of the coordination of ministers of the Slovene Government as early as on September 24th 1990, while on October 1st 1990, it was formally delivered to the Government and to the Presidency of Slovenia as well as to the Slovenian parliament. As a first step, we proposed a study on the analysis of the state of the art (economic, political, demographic) in former Yugoslav Republics, identification of conflicts and early stage conflict management.

⁷⁴ The armed defence strategy, elaborated by Slovene general Tone Krkovič in 1990, is under-researched, however, well documented. See for example a recent volume by Tone Krkovič, Veleizdaja Slovenija – Razorožitev teritorialne obrambe RS, May 1990 / Grand Betrayal of Slovenia – the disarmament of the Slovenian territorial defence troops in May 1990, Založba Nova obzorja, Ljubljana, 2011.

multilateral institutions, to put a firm bet on negotiation process. The government accordingly only supported financially some of the proposed research of the Peace Institute, while the Slovenian Peace Option project remained without funding – PI suggested 70.000 USD initial funding to bring newly elected leaderships of separate republics into a negotiable process and at the next stage implement the process under multilateral umbrella. The support for the Slovenian Peace option was expressed also by the Commission for peace politics at the Assembly, particularly in view of the proposed internationalisation of the conflict. We found ourselves in situation, when the Presidency and the Assembly in Slovenia agreed with proposed scenario of the peace process, and suggested government to fund it.⁷⁵ In October 1990 the Presidency of Slovenia followed the proposal of the SPM and hosted a meeting with our key proposed expert, dr. Julio Quan, director of the program on Conflict resolution at the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica.⁷⁶ It is evident from the correspondence of SPM of that epoch that an enormous effort was invested into a realisation of Peace Conferences for Former Yugoslav territory in the second part of 1990,⁷⁷ and the SPM was realistically counting on a considerable amount of support from Slovenian diplomats for the Slovenian Peace Option as proposed by SPM. The Presidency of Slovenia summarised the proposal underlining that “nonviolent conflict resolution was the only rational path leading away from the crisis”.⁷⁸

SPM kept publishing its information bulletin in English regularly. In 1990 it was known as an *Independent Voices from Slovenia* and the SPM invited all political parties and organisations in Slovenia, to contribute to the paper and for some years, this was informally, but de-facto, the only representative information of the Slovenian spring, regularly published. The proposed Slovenian Peace Option has inspired SPM to strengthen the efforts for internationalisation of the evolving conflicts on one side and on the other side, to expand the constituency of the Independent Voices in order to arrive to a coherent and consensual international performance by domestic oppositional political actors.⁷⁹ At that time the SPM served as a focal point for the coordination of external policy divisions of emergent political groups in Slovenia, simultaneously promoting Slovenian Sovereign rights for self-determination, Human Rights agenda Yugoslav-wide, an Antimilitarist Analysis of pending crisis, pacifist responses to the crisis including demilitarisation and diplomatic proposals embedded in the document the “Slovenian Peace option”. Despite of the relatively strong and widespread support to SPM proposals in Slovenia, the SPM had to establish the Peace Institute entirely on its own – early in 1991 the decision was made by SPM board, to establish the Peace Institute as an NGO and not as a public research institute as was originally planned. At the same time the SPM prepared and promoted a revised version of the Civilian Based Security concept titled »Si vis pacem para pacem«. The late 1990 and early 1991 represent a culmination of the activities of the SPM; in collaboration with majority of political parties of that-

⁷⁵ Minutes of the 2nd session of the Commission for Peace Politics of the Slovenian Parliament dated October 24th 1990 (Hren, 2011).

⁷⁶ The visit of Dr. Julio Quan was prepared by the SPM, a formal invitation was granted by president Milan Kučan and dr. Quan arrived to Slovenia on November 11th 1990.

⁷⁷ Presidency of Slovenia discussed the proposals on November 6th 1990 discussed the questions of internationalisation of the conflicts and in this respect the proposal of the SPM to initiate a round table on Yugoslav crisis at the pending CSCE meeting in Paris (November 1990).

⁷⁸ A letter of president Kučan to the president of the Slovenian Government Lojze Peterle dated November 7 1990 (Hren 2011).

⁷⁹ Only small number of correspondences survived to prove this effort: amongst other, Peter Jambrek, an outspoken Slovenian intellectual, member of Social democratic party, answered the SPM initiative with his letter from November 1990 (reproduced in Hren, 2011) and declared that he would recommend his party (SDS) to fully support the Slovenia without an army initiative as a non-party initiative of all political actors in Slovenia.

time Slovenia, and in collaboration with other NGOs as well as with a number of media outlets,⁸⁰ the SPM collected signatures nationwide in support of Declaration for Peace⁸¹, a short but comprehensive policy paper including all major priorities for Slovenia of the time: the right for self-determination, the support for independence struggle, the need to resist the federal authorities and particularly the federal army, the determination towards the demilitarisation of Slovenia and the dedication to the peace and nonviolent conflict resolution processes for the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

At its origin, the Declaration for Peace was promoted and co-signed as a non-party, consensual policy paper, but gradually, the representatives of left wing parties have contributed larger share of public promotion which escalated after the Slovenian President Milan Kučan joint his signature. The SPM was not sufficiently aware of the depth of political divisions in Slovenia and failed to understand, that the amount of publicly known figures signing the declaration from the “left” political block would lead to a destruction of the original SPM strategy to form a consensus on the peace proposals. At the same time the government, formed from predominantly right-wing political parties was preoccupied by the scenarios based on threats from JLA and subsequently realistic assumptions that Slovenia will need to defend itself militarily to preserve its democratic achievements. The proposals for disarmament were in this context labelled as an act of capitulation, an obstacle towards the independency of Slovenia rather than as an alternative path⁸². This is how the campaign for demilitarisation in-a-way imploded. The Declaration for Peace— due to political polarisation in the country - remained a subject of long-lasting dispute between different political factions in Slovenia.

The SPM was well experienced with the techniques of building social and political consensus and fully aware of the potential of social networks for such campaigns. It will be reported later on in this paper, that it was the SPM together with other independent social movements, that was both initiator and instrumental for the first large “Slovenian Spring” political consensus-making, the widespread signing of the Declaration for the changes of Slovenian constitution in spring 1988, so called Declaration for Democracy⁸³. The network, created around this process later smoothly evolved into the Committee for the protection of human rights (referred to as CPHR JBTZ)⁸⁴, when four independent individuals were arrested in May 1988. This process was known as a Trial against four defendants in Ljubljana. The broad scope of the SPM had given us wings, to evolve ambitious plans later known as “Slovenia without an Army Initiative” and also enabled the successful gathering of signatures under the Declaration for Peace in 1991.

⁸⁰ The collection of signatures on the ground was co-organised and managed by representatives of diverse political parties, a large volume of archive documentation is available on this activity.

⁸¹ A Declaration for Peace was made public on February 7th 1991. The Signatories to the Declaration for Peace expressed their dedication to “Slovenia as sovereign, peaceful country that actively contributes to world peace”, they propose a project of demilitarisation of Slovenian industry and the abolition of the military. The Declaration clearly states that “struggle for independence, demilitarisation and building up of peace politics” shall be understood as indivisible, parallel, complementary processes. The declaration even specifies, that for the transition time, the Slovenian territorial Defence (armed Slovenian troops) structures shall provide for armed defence

⁸² See for example <http://www.tu-je.si/index.php?id=111> and the footnote 53.

⁸³ See Igor Omerza, The referendum stampede of the New Social Movements in the Constitutional Arena in Hren, 2011, pg 346..353. Omerza analyses the various drafts of this important document, treasured in private archives of Marko Hren. This declaration shaped the consensus of a pluralistic Slovenian civil society and channelled it into a decisive political resistance campaign.

⁸⁴ These events have been central to the “Slovenian Spring” process as displayed at <http://www.slovenskapomlad.si/>. The trial is documented extensively at the referred portal, additional information was released during the parliamentary investigation. See also Janša, Janez, Seven Years later /Sedem let pozneje, Karantanja, Ljubljana, 1995. “. See also footnote 95.

The Declaration for peace was discredited after the independence was declared, and remained a subject of long-lasting dispute between different political options in Slovenia; some treated it as treason, while the main political supporters of the Declaration for peace remained silent for nearly 20 years. However, before the 20th anniversary of Slovenian independence, during 2010, the Declaration for Peace witnessed political rehabilitation. During the constitutive debate accompanying the foundation of The Association for values of Slovenian independence (VSO) in the second half of 2010, an exchange of arguments was convened in a spirit of tolerance and mutual recognition of the values of all efforts leading to independence. The Association VSO endorsed peace initiatives as constitutive part of Slovenian Independence struggle.⁸⁵ This was followed by a clear declaration of two of former Presidency members, Dušan Plut and Milan Kučan, former Slovenian president, rehabilitating the Declaration for Peace⁸⁶ in mass media leaving no doubt, that the Declaration has vowed the right messages to Slovenian, Yugoslav and international public, expressing the will of Slovenian people, to transform Yugoslavia in a peaceful, negotiable manner without arms, and respecting the sovereign will and the constitutional rights of nations for independence. Namely four members (out of five) of Slovenian Presidency supported and signed the Declaration for peace in 1990-1991. Since the government of Slovenia of the same period understood this gesture of the presidency as counterproductive and even as a treason, this became a spot for long-term dispute about the role of particular political players during the independence struggle. As a leader of the campaign, I was not sufficiently aware of the political polarisation at the epoch; the fact, that the transitional “left” political wings (Social democrats, Liberal democrats) have - in certain moment – promoted the Declaration for Peace with an outstanding enthusiasm, has produced suspicious reaction of the right coalition in power; this resulted in somehow spontaneous withdrawal of former allies from the campaign⁸⁷. Some members of at-that-time right wing coalition claim today, that former president Milan Kučan and his political allies consciously aspired to manipulate the Declaration for Peace and to convert it into a strategic tool to surrender Slovenian population to Yugoslav Army and Yugoslav regime. However, no proof has been presented so far and this dispute remains a matter for further research. It shall be made clear at this point, that the initiators and the leaders of the campaign for the demilitarisation of Slovenia had had acted on our own initiative and autonomously; however, if indices or proofs were presented, that particular politicians (i.e. Milan Kučan) tended to subvert the campaign and turn it against the sovereignty of Slovenia, I, as an originator and leader of the campaign call for scrupulous investigation and public confrontation of arguments.

After 20 years, we are at the point where we might be able to value all the processes from 1990-1991 with a positive connotation. A closer view to the text of the Declaration for

⁸⁵ The Association for values of Slovenian independence (Združenje za vrednote slovenskega osamosvajanja). The initiative for the foundation of ZVSO was promoted by the first prime minister of independent Slovenia, Lojze Peterle, two of his ministers, Janez Janša and Igor Bavčar (former spokesman of the OVČP JBTZ) and the head organiser of the Slovenian armed defence prior to independence, general Tone Krkovič. This group issued an open call to all of those who were active during the period of Slovenian spring. Parts of debates before constitution are published at www.vso.si and in Hren, 2011. The positions of SPM regarding the Slovene independence was made absolutely clear and, is displayed in details in the section on key disputes of SPM with international movement. ”.

⁸⁶ Kučan, Milan. 2010. The Independence Was not framed in a proper Content, interview published in. Delo, 24. 12. 2010. <http://www.delo.si/clanek/133937>.

⁸⁷ The author preserves but one written evidence proving such – entirely ideological argumentation: a letter of one of the leading Rome-Catholic church representatives of the epoch, at that time a president of the Justitia et Pax Commission Anton Stres to Marko Hren, dated February 16th 1991, explaining the reasons for his withdrawal of a signature to the Declaration for Peace; these reasons were not content-wise, but solely political clearly indicating, that the withdrawal of the signature was due to the fact, that the campaign became a tool of left political wing.

peace leaves no room for speculation - the declaration endorses all political priorities of that time in Slovenia that harvested a large level of consensus. The symbolic rehabilitation of the Declaration for Peace in 2010 has finally opened space to analyse and discuss the Gandhian (nonviolent) and the David's (Slovenian military troops in relation to Yugoslav army as Goliath) components of Slovenian resistance against the Yugoslav militarised regime.

The inauguration of the Peace institute was scheduled for June 20th 1991 at the Old square in the very centre of Ljubljana. I still recall the joyful, serene, however, sober and troublesome atmosphere at that event. Some days later, the hopes and aspirations of SPM were buried by the military intervention of YA in Slovenia, The ten-days war for independence has started, as a beginning of the militaristic tornado that ferociously devastated Balkans for the next 10 years. Let the reader ponder on the fact, that the participants celebrating the inauguration ritual of the Peace institute at that historic eve, were NOT AWARE of the meetings of diplomats held at the same time in Berlin and in Belgrade.⁸⁸

Let me conclude the chronology of the activity of the SPM with a reference to consistent set of positions published and promoted by SPM during the military intervention in June 1991, and during the negotiations project known as The Brioni Peace Agreement⁸⁹, as well as and particularly shortly after, the Slovenian Parliament had to ratify the Peace Agreement which requested a moratorium on activities laid down in a plan for resuming full sovereignty of Slovenian authorities on the territory of the Republic of Slovenia.⁹⁰ The SPM consistently promoted proposals to internationalise the conflict, to manage the conflict with nonviolent conflict resolution institutional processes under multilateral auspice, to respect the legal procedures and constitutional frameworks. SPM advised that parallel political structures in some republics have to be formally consulted and brought into dialogue, in especially in those cases, in which elected authorities had shown no response,⁹¹ The SPM consistently claimed, that not all options for peaceful resolution were exercised and that there was an unused room for internationalisation (this generic term was used repeatedly in SPM position papers to promote proposals for the involvement of multilateral institutions for conflict resolution),⁹² The SPM called for immediate peace talks under an international umbrella,⁹³ and insisted, that all diverse, different conflicts in the former Yugoslav regions have to be brought to negotiating table simultaneously.⁹⁴ The SPM appealed Slovenian parliamentarians to consistently vote for gestures leading to peace and not to confrontation⁹⁵. Particularly the former was not self –

⁸⁸ See footnotes 12 till 19 on the diplomatic missions of James Baker at that epoch.

⁸⁹ The Peace Agreement known as Brioni Agreement is a document agreed on the Brioni islands in Croatia on July 7th 1991 by representatives of the Republic of Slovenia, Republic of Croatia and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia under the political sponsorship of the European Community. With this document, the SFRY stopped all hostilities on Slovenian territory, thus ending the Slovenian War, whereas Slovenia and Croatia froze independence activities for a period of three months which was latter disputed as a “step-back of Slovenian diplomacy”.

⁹⁰ See Hren, 2011.

⁹¹ i.e., a Statement of the SPM following the violence in Plitvice, Croatia, on March 31th 1991 (Hren 2011).

⁹² SPM Statement during the events in Pekre, May 26th 1991, during the conflict between the YA and the conscript center of Slovenian troops occurred; SPM appealed for internationalisation and the call of a Peace Conference as well as to enhance peace-treaties between neighbouring republics. At the same time the SPM called for large scale civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance (Hren 2011).

⁹³ SPM statement on June 23 and on June 27 during the first military confrontations with the Yugoslav Army in Slovenia (Hren, 2011).

⁹⁴ SPM statement accompanying the Brioni Declaration, early July 1991 (Hren, 2011).

⁹⁵ SPM statements during the ratification of so called Brioni Agreement prior to July 7th 1991. After I have spent days and nights lobbying parliamentarians to vote for the ratification of The Brioni Peace

evident at all; many parliamentarians opposed Brioni agreement and disagreed with what they perceived as a step-backwards. This part of the story was not researched; in my personal view, the symbolic victory gained with the final ratification of Brioni Peace Agreement in Slovenian parliament presented a symbolic victory for the culture of peace in Slovenia over the culture of militarism. Sufficient to note at this point, that extensive activities were performed in public during the debate on ratification in the parliament, hundreds of citizens got engaged in a decentralised manner, without umbrella organisation, to lobby parliamentarians and to rise voice of civil society and of the independent public opinion against the war, in a support of peace agreement as agreed by president Kučan on Brioni island.⁹⁶ The ratification of the Brioni Agreements by the Slovenian parliament can be understood as an impact of the decade long activity of SPM and other social movements, of the Slovenian spring period in 80ies. Viewed from the perspective of comparative studies of nonviolent resistance movements, this events can be taken as an emblematic case of spontaneous massive civil resistance – all this taken in pre-internet, pre-electronic social networking context. The long term results of the SPM activities are manifested in the living structures; The Peace Institute and the Metelkova Cultural Center⁹⁷ in Ljubljana, together with a dozen of military structures around Slovenia converted for educational and youth tourism activity, recall the heritage of the movement from the 80ies of the previous century and its insistence on conversion of military structures for civilian purposes.

agreement.... I concluded that there is a high risk that the Slovenian parliament would not ratify it and I made a radical step. I publicly announced that I am emigrating “from the country that is eventually taking a conscious step towards the continuation of war” and left for Austria, where I was kindly hosted by the friend of SPM Werner Wintersteiner. The Slovenian parliament voted to confirm the Agreement from Brioni on July 7th 1991. Fortunately they voted for peace with large majority (189 for, 11 against). I returned to Slovenia immediately.!

⁹⁶ Kenney (2002, 229) emphasised that Slovenia was in the respect of democratic engagement of pluralistic civil society substantially different that other republics. Kenney, Padraic. 2002. *A Carnival of Revolution, Central Europe 1989*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁹⁷ This project has been documented well, amongst other in two digital volumes (Hren 2008a in 2008b) available at Slovene digital library www.dlib.si. The compilation of the Anthology of Metelkova cultural center, subtitled »how we failed to stop the war«, was catharsis; the general failure preventing the war was compensated by a struggle to succeed to convert the former military headquarters for civilian, cultural, creative purposes (creative cluster).

Conceptual pillars and action lines of the SPM

We can simplify the program of the SPM by clustering the activities under five pillars with one overall common denominator: the transversal networking domestically and across borders. The five pillars enabled great ambitions in 1990 and provided enough strength to manifest the Metelkova and the Peace Institute plans; the pillars nest in a cluster of values that shall be nourished in collective memory on long term.

I. Ahimsa paramo dharma, the culture of peace and nonviolence

»Slovenia builds its security on foundations of peace politics and the culture of peace and nonviolence.«⁹⁸

The most refined author of pacifist thought in Slovenia was a poet Jure Detela. He interwove radical nonviolence, ecology and contemporary spirituality not only as his personal stand but also as a political philosophy and social action. He himself exercised the philosophy of radical minority, of which the mission is to refine and consciously defend ethical standards and values of the society. He was in favour of democratic dialogue of such radical minorities with the majority to achieve political relevancy and general acceptance of radical ethical standards.⁹⁹ His writings witness a great focus also on animal rights. In 1989 Detela contributed essential parts to the conceptual paper for the emergence of a radical pacifist political party; the paper was known as "The Pacifist alliance Manifesto"¹⁰⁰, launched to engage pacifist in dialogue and to prepare grounds for the performance of such political group during the first democratic elections. In this document Pacifists envisaged also their participation of such political wing in the government coalition where »the party would enhance and create processes, that contribute to the reduction and annihilation of violence between people and all sensual beings". The members of Pacifist Alliance shall unconditionally abstain from any form of violence, would be vegetarian, would commit themselves to ethical / fair trade and to nonviolent resistance in case of conflict situations. Detela, being ethical purist and refined eloquent speaker, "that uses all his powers to bring values clearly into the consciousness of people"¹⁰¹ represent a pillar of Slovenian pacifist thought, both with his extensive writings involving deep radical values of nonviolence, and with his rational, realistic political analysis and action. The historical role of Detela was never researched. But without his inspiration, we could hardly imagine the courage with which Slovenian pacifists promoted for example the peace treaties signed amongst the citizens of Yugoslavia.¹⁰²

Detela claimed, that ethical values (also concerning animal rights) shall be raised to the level of general political acceptance¹⁰³. The spirit of Detelas' deep and radical pacifist convictions was later on embodied in the text of Peace Treaties that was proposed and signed by thousands of citizens of all republics of former Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Article 124. Of the Slovenian Constitution was elaborated and proposed by the Parliamentary Commission for Peace politics in summer 1990.

⁹⁹ Jure Detela in his letter to Marko Hren, Ljubljana, October 30th 1989 (Hren, 2011).

¹⁰⁰ Detela, Jure in Hren, Marko. 1989. Program of the Pacifist Alliance, manuscript. Reproduced in Hren, 2011.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Peace treaties were translated to all languages used in former Yugoslavia.

¹⁰³ Jure Detela in his private letter to Marko Hren, Ljubljana, 30. October 1989 , reproduced in Hren, 2011.

¹⁰⁴ The proposal for text of Peace treaties was translated by Slovenian peace movement to all languages used on the territory of former Yugoslavia. The peace treaty text request from all signatories to abstain from any form and any act of violence or intolerance, including the verbal forms (i.e. jokes). The text of the treaty is reproduced in Hren, 2011.

A part of the SPM was also close to various new age movements of the epoch. The close link that SPM drew between the concept of nonviolence and the spirituality, is not only evident from the activities in the field of conscientious objection and peace education but also in a later fact, that the representatives of SPM also provided a bridge between the main church in Slovenia and the democratic movement manifested via the Committee for protection of human rights in the case of the trial against four defendants in Ljubljana in 1988. Interreligious dialogue was embedded into the activities of the SPM and it was self-evident for us, that religious, spiritual leaders and followers bear a great responsibility and shall become substantially more active in a pre-conflict times. The concept of nonviolence provided grounds for common language with emerging green groups. It is not at all by chance, that one of the presidents of Slovenia to follow during the mature phase of independency of Slovenia, Janez Drnovšek, incarnated the values of compassion, spirituality and environmental responsibility. Janez Drnovšek was a honourable sponsor of the inauguration of the Peace institute' being a member of the presidency of Federal Yugoslavia at the epoch.

One important project line of SPM within this category was so called "peace education from the Kindergarten until the University". We envisaged the establishment of a Peace University but failed to fulfil this ambition. However, the actions of the movement under the slogan "lets give children a chance" and the promotion of conversion of war toys harvested unprecedented and definitely not expected success in Slovenian society¹⁰⁵ - war toys largely disappeared from the shelves of Slovenian supermarkets for a while. SPM even managed to enter school curricula with an optional subject "culture of peace and nonviolence", that children could choose as an extra-curricular theme. Some of the SPM members were entitled to lecture in schools occasionally. The Ghandian doctrine of the Power of the Truth (*Satya Graha*) and the Jain doctrine of radical nonviolence (*Ahimsa paramo dharma*) and its social wing ANUVIBHA, provided a deep motivation.¹⁰⁶

II. Human dignity, human freedoms, rights and ethics

The above mentioned program of the pacifist alliance expressed the highest dreams about standards and ethics in human fabric and it articulated a platform for coherent set of ethical values. The conflict with existing legal norms was evident. Human rights and freedoms were both, motivation for action as well as the field for reflection on values. It is none of the coincidence, that the earliest issues of internal samizdats of SPM in Slovene language published interviews with pacifists and dissidents from Eastern Europe. The historic slogan "Peace and human rights are indivisible" was completely accommodated within the reflection of SPM. It was therefore obvious that the frontline project of the SPM in the 1980ies arose around the issue of the conscientious objection to military service in Yugoslavia. The members of the religious group of Jehovas witnesses provided an obvious case for SPM »It is simply a matter of preserving the peaceful consciousness.«¹⁰⁷. Slobodan Perović, who entertained as a first Yugoslav attorney acting in a defence of Jehovas witnesses, expressed a high appreciation for the SPM activity, noting that "a couple of contributions published in mainstream media, had gained a larger effect on these legal cases than 40 years of court procedures practices; the theory of law kept a blind eye to this problem until the media had brought it to

¹⁰⁵ Actions are documented in Peace Movement bulletins issued from 1984 to 1987 as well as in countless articles published in Slovene newspapers. The SMG activists organised street stalls and public workshops for war-toys reconversion into creative toys, a "black-list" of shops promoting military education was created and promoted.

¹⁰⁶ It is not by coincidence, that one of the first activities of the Peace institute (in May 1991) was a planned study visit to Rajahstan that was meant for a large group of domestic scholars and activists. The emerging war and the collapse of the SPM prevented those plans.

¹⁰⁷ Jehovas witness in a documentary film »Clandestine games«, directed by Helena Koder, TV Slovenia 1986.

public”.¹⁰⁸ And the SPM made it sure that media did exploit the case of conscientious objection; supported by the War resisters international (WRI) knowledge base. WRI provided both, somewhat security in terms of international support as well as a framework of international solidarity in terms of campaigning.

Over time, the SPM has extended its HR activities within the East-West Dialogue Network and linked-up closely with pan-European pro-democracy movements; those became a domicile, a sanctuary for the SPM activists who were free to travel extensively east and west and profited largely to this fact. We have embarked monthly to travel either to east European dissident groups (Bulany circle and the Dialogue group in Hungary, Charta 77 in CzechoSlovakia, Wolnosc I pokoy and Solidarity in Poland, East German solidarity groups, etc.) and to western enclaves of solidarity in Paris, London, Bruxelles, Amsterdam and elsewhere. The international activities of the SPM in 1980ies were intense and movement got ready to offer a platform for international solidarity activities during the campaign for protection of human rights of four defendants during the military trial in 1988. The SPM coordinated international activities of the Committee for the protection of human rights CPHR JBTZ.¹⁰⁹ The culture of expressing solidarity with movements abroad was an important characteristic of Slovenian movement, we were campaigning and petitioning regularly, which is an indicator of strong dedication to Human rights and to dialogue as such – this differentiated Slovenia from other republics in Yugoslavia!

III. The Rule of Law, Legal State, Constitutionality

The fact, that Slovenia has fought its sovereignty and independence through a completely and consistently legal, constitutional process, is far from being a coincidence. Great majority of international consultants and experts were not at all aware of constitutional outline of Yugoslav federation, let alone of the level of sovereignty of separate republics. The formation of Slovenian state followed strictly the constitutional steps. Even the military confrontation in June 1990 had no characteristic of a civil war – the armed confrontations were exercised by members of legal troops under Slovenian authorities (police and military) and legal (however far from legitimate) troops of Yugoslav army. In the case of Slovenia, the 10 days defence war was a confrontation between absolutely legal forces, between two states, thus. The president of Slovenian parliament, France Bučar, consistently monitored the constitutionality of the process. This was a decisive set of procedures for the moment when the international community had to judge whether or not to recognize Slovenia as a new state.

The “Rule of Law” and the “Legal State” concepts had roots in the movement of the 1980ies. The human rights campaigns and the projects for demilitarization were referred strictly to constitutional and legal instruments, conventions and standards, such as to UN and Council of Europe acquis of international law. The SPM addressed its proposals and demands to all relevant institutions, both, federal and republic; in this terms, the SPM was strictly legalistic. The format of documents was normally an “open letter” or a public declaration published in a media, since - when addressed only to the address of the recipient, the letters would normally remain unanswered.

The SPM itself constantly developed institutionally (its institutional fabric and its legal shell) according to the situation in the environment.¹¹⁰ In 1990 the SPM had established its

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ See the Slovenian spring portal www.slovenskapomlad.si. See also footnotes 58 and 95.

¹¹⁰ Until 1990 the SPM took form under the umbrella of the Socialist youth organisation and also as a so called People for Peace Culture within the Students cultural center. During the elections campaign in 1990 a part of the SPM had established an independent list of Social Movements. Also

own infrastructure, known as a Center for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence (CCPN) in Ljubljana. This center became a domicile of many emerging social movements, and provided offices for the Peace institute and for the Network for the conversion of Metelkova Military Barracks for civilian purposes at its early incubating stage. The management of the Center for the culture of Peace and Nonviolence inspired the SPM to attain an independent legal form and we selected a legal framework established for political associations emerging during elections campaign in 1990; the SPM took form of a political association in June 1990; a Movement for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence was established as an independent political association. This legal entity served as a constitutive legal subject for both, the Peace institute and the Network for Metelkova which have to be understood as direct institutional successors of the SPM. SPM was therefore flexible and dynamic concerning its legal appearance, but, consistently insisted on acting legally, using institutional channels, however, always radical in its proposals and demands. The SPM consistently performed dialogue with all parties involved within our diverse campaigns. Even the cessation of activities of the SPM and the closure of institutions, was performed with legal acts and involving legitimate procedures within existing institutions.¹¹¹

The activists of SPM were in the center of gravity of the historic Slovenian Declaration with an appeal for the referendum for constitutional changes in March 1989; this action, incubated and instrumentally coordinated by SPM, was a decisive act leading to internal Slovenian oppositional groups coherency, and to the creation of operative political informal network, which, shortly after, spontaneously and smoothly evolved into the national-wide, cross-ideological campaign referred to as CPHR JBTZ. The draft of declaration for constitutional changes was prepared by the protagonists of the peace movement and was entitled "For Democracy"; social movements wanted to leave no doubt – our focus was pluralism of interests, basic democracy and human rights.¹¹²

IV. Civil disobedience and the power of the people

In the period from 1988 till 1991 the SPM called on the public to exercise civil disobedience and to use the tactics of nonviolent resistance, including strikes and boycotts. SPM was inspired by Gandhian and other more contemporary nonviolent resistance doctrines. The SPM has regularly published appeals concerning the rights and duties of public servants and uniformed troops members (police, army ...) while on duty.¹¹³ The paradigm of nonviolent civil resistance was a novelty for the intelligence services of the communist regime and they have closely followed all of our actions. SPM published a series of articles on this topic in newspapers and by April 1989 I have compiled a conceptual paper titled "Civilian disobedience and nonviolent resistance". This paper was ready for publication and distribution at the offices of MikroAda when some indications appeared that the authorities were preparing the arrestment of protagonists of the Slovenian democratic movement. Janez Janša and Marko Hren treasured large number of copies in their drawers

the positions of radical pacifist wing, represented in co-writings of Jure Detela, are emblematic for the point raised here; see also footnotes 78 and 82.

¹¹¹ In September 1992 the SPM acknowledged the facts, that many of its activities were accomplished successfully, some got institutional umbrella under newly established institutions and some activities caused conflicts within the constitutive members of the SPM. The epilogue of the SPM itself witnesses the dedication of the movement to the Rule of Law.

¹¹² See also footnote 62.

¹¹³ In April 1989 a leaflet recalling the Nuremberg principles of international law was printed in large numbers, to remind repressive institutions and their personnel, to act according to their conscience and not according to the orders of hierarchies of the regime. Some of us would always keep some copies of the leaflet with us and handed it out at all occasions of confrontation with the agents of the regime – and such opportunities were many.

of Mikroada Office.¹¹⁴ »When it is evident that the YA is preparing for a warfare against civil population in clandestine, and secretly, even in a secrecy concerning the Communist Party, then it is obvious, that the civil society has to perform its preparatory activities publicly and openly”. This was a core of our call to civil disobedience, and at the same time we insisted at internationalisation of the pending conflict. These activities of the SPM represented a direct threat to CP and YA. Analysis of the so called “attacks against YA”¹¹⁵ as well as the analysis of the activities of the intelligent services prove, that the activities of the SPM were on the top of the list of surveillance¹¹⁶ and attention of YA and the political elites in power, therefore, of the headquarters of the Yugoslav regime.

Kranjec, an agent of the intelligence agency, claimed “I admit that the YA understood the peace movement as its main threat In Slovenia in the whole period between 1983 and 1989. It is not clear to me why the leader of the peace movement escaped to US during the arrests in Mikroada in May 1988” . Kranjec continues: “The strategic influence of the SPM was displayed during the events that followed arrest of the four and the trial at military court itself. They have manipulated almost the whole republic leadership with their idea of demilitarisation. I will put it this way: if they (SPM) acted on their own, then, they were geni. However, the historians shall find out who was behind the SPM, who their true mentors were!” I can also claim - as a “subject of direct surveillance” - that there was absolutely no outside nor inside pressure or influence on the activities of SPM. Our action was autonomous; our political identity was matured within the movement. The fact, that our movement was autonomous, had puzzled both, local Slovenian politicians, as well as the variety of intelligent services on the ground; “as objects of direct surveillance”, we were perceived by ALL as agents of “the opposite party”. Only years later, I discover the truth behind the gradual failure of Slovenian Peace Movement; we were gradually losing the support of political parties simply because ALL politicians thought, that our activities are influenced by “the other part of political spectrum”. This is actually a proof, that we belonged to none of political wings – they all gradually flew away, being convinced that - by not-belonging to them, we belong to someone-else. At the end, I remained alone, as Havel declared during one meetings in Prague in Prague “it is inherited to a dissident – to primarily feel alone and isolated”.

V. Cross border solidarity and international activities of SPM

¹¹⁴ Early 1988, the Intelligent services have repeatedly and invisibly entered and researched the offices of the SME Mikroada, where Janša and Hren were employed. During the investigation on May 31st when Janša was arrested, they confiscated a number of documents; the cited document was first on the list of confiscated material. It is also evident from the chronology of operations of the intelligent services (made public during the parliamentary investigation) that the communist party headquarters were primarily informed about the discovery of the document, calling population to civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance. This proves, that the concept of nonviolent resistance represented a major threat to the regime. ”. See also footnote 8.

¹¹⁵ Igor Žagar and Peter Tancig, 1989. »Računalniška analiza napadov na JLA/ Computer Analysis of the articles criticising the YA«. Ljubljana, Časopis za kritiko znanosti, no. 119–120/1989

¹¹⁶ Kranjec, 1998. Kranjec reveals that the intelligent services in Slovenia directly reported the counter intelligence only about the activities of the “object of direct surveillance” named Hren Stanislav Marko under the classified number HSM 098600470. According to the information available, they never discovered the true reasons why I left for US immediately prior to the historic events when the intelligence services researched my enterprise Mikro Ada and arrested 4 future defendants, thus leading to the campaign known as CPHR JBTZ. ”. See also footnote 63. Marjan Kranjec in The role and the impact of counter-intelligent services of the JLA Borec, št. 567–569/1998 (Ljubljana: Borec, 1998).

The widespread activity of social movements within the processes of transnational solidarity, this great enabler of the fall of iron curtain, remain under researched. This is particularly true when we assess the proportion of activity targeting the transnational focus in relation to any other activity; it is clear that the SPM invested significantly in international solidarity networking. This was done somehow spontaneously, as we felt, that we belong to a global movement and we found our domicile, our intellectual and spiritual base within the trans-border movement. At the same level of belonging, we functioned at the regional level with our Alpe-Adria cross-border cooperation with Italian and Austrian friends, in solidarity campaigns in Bask regions, on anti-nuclear rallies in Belgium, Germany, France or in Great Britain and around the globe. The added value of this investment showed its effects at the peak of the dissolution of Yugoslavia when the SPM played a pioneering role for internationalisation of the conflict.¹¹⁷ The fact, that it was SPM that initiated the systematic coordination of Slovenian oppositional political organisations in 1989 also speaks by itself. The aim of SMG was to provide the Slovenian Spring protagonists with an independent media outlet that would target international recipients. The SPM somewhat assisted the growth of the foundations of the Slovenian external relations even before the independent political landscape came into place.¹¹⁸ The November 1989 issue of *Independent Voices* (year V, no. 3,) was dedicated to the first democratic elections and even included a translation of a joint declaration of a majority of new political parties agreeing on common principles for the pending elections.¹¹⁹ The cooperation with the Croatian movement seemed self-evident and was carried out spontaneously and smoothly, beginning with cooperation with SVARUN movement and the Green action [Zelena akcija] in mid 80ies.¹²⁰

Since the social science and even the Peace institute itself, did not provide for an in depth research of the activities of the SPM, we can hardly assess the real impact of the SPM.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ The chronological facts speak for themselves: a number of events organised by the SPM from 1984 onwards, a number of issues of independent information bulletins in English published from 1985 till 1993 consistently and without interruption. It is a fact that SPM participated actively and regularly in the most potent European civic networks of the epoch; the European Nuclear Disarmament, East-West Network and the Helsinki Citizens Assembly and it maintained extensive links with engaged environments in Europe and globally.

¹¹⁸ The SPM initiated and called first coordination meetings of all oppositional parties on the topic of coordinated foreign policy of Slovenia; the meetings were held already in November 1989. Participants discussed also the Slovenia without an army initiative (Hren, 2011). See also footnotes 34 and 58.

¹¹⁹ The editors of the *Independent Voices* clearly offered to the use the SPM communication platform oppositional political parties as a vehicle for internationalisation of Slovenian oppositional thought (Hren 1989b).

¹²⁰ The smooth cooperation manifested during the constitutive moment of the peace movement in Croatia, at the meeting in Kumrovec, Croatia, on August 22.-24 when the Committee for Antiwar Campaign was formed and the strategy for action elaborated. The minutes of this meeting are reproduced in Hren, 2011.

¹²¹ The initiative of the Croatian peace research with the present book could provide for a good reason to re-start the evaluation of the domestic and international movement, In my view, the international movement would gain new motivation and new reassurance concerning the strength of civil resistance.

Key conceptual disputes between the SPM and the international movement

I. *Ethnic strife thesis versus sober analysis / Civil War versus Military Aggression*

“There is a little civil war in Balkans; the rebellion nation of Slovenians is fighting federal authorities for its independence!” This breaking news from one of the global channels from June 1991 still echoes in my memory. It is emblematic, reflecting the miss-understanding of the state of the situation in Yugoslavia in 1991. The “ethnic/nationalists strife thesis” was ideological, tailor made to European left, simplistic, biased and biasing. It contributed decisively to a biased hypothesis, that what was happening in Yugoslavia was civil wars enhanced by groups that were non-constitutional, armed and ethnically demarcated.

The thesis that the Yugoslav conflicts were ethnic in nature, (referred as “ethnic/nationalists strife thesis¹²²”) was fabricated by official regime and supported by intellectuals in Belgrade and thereafter promoted widely. It involved at the same level of discourse the so called “Albanian irredentists, Bosnian fundamentalism, Croatian fascism and Slovenian separatism.”¹²³

The analysis of Slovenian peace movement was consistently deriving from constitutional set-up of Yugoslavia, the constitutional rights for self-determination and from human rights agenda. We directed our criticism to Yugoslav institutions, primarily to YA¹²⁴, we analysed the role of Yugoslav army- Our analysis of conflict was antimilitaristic: the YA and Great Serbia scenario, the two militaristic interests have merged into an explosive mixture. We therefore

¹²² This thesis was promoted mostly by the Belgrade regime and its intellectuals as well as by many independent intellectuals. It involved at the same level of discourse the phenomena popularised as “Albanian irredentists”, “Bosnian fundamentalism”, “Croatian fascism”, “Slovenian separatism” and similar. See for example Jelena Vasiljević, *Citizenship and belonging in Serbia: in the crossfire of changing*, page 11 (last accessed at www.law.ed.ac.uk/.../327_)... where the author summarises “...that in the rhetoric of Serbian leadership and state-controlled media nationalism became a feature of others/enemies (»separatist« Slovenians, »irredentist« Albanians, »fascist« Croats or »fundamentalist« Muslims)«. Such thesis was widely reproduced; prof. James Patras claims that “ Most European and US progressives supported the following: US-backed Bosnian fundamentalists, Croatian neo-fascists and Kosova-Albanian terrorists, leading to ethnic cleansing and the conversion of their once sovereign states into US military bases, client regimes and economic basket cases – totally destroying the multinational Yugoslavian welfare state.«; James Patras in *Separatism and Empire Building in the 21st Century*, Global Research, June 8, 2008, accessed at <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=9246>. This quote illustrates the “success” of the artificially fabricated and extensively promoted thesis. Later the same “lobby” got involved in one-sided conflict interpretations when sanctions against Serbia were declared. Even the international peace researchers community, gathering in Kyoto, Japan, in summer 1993 almost adopted a clearly one-sided declaration “Against Sanctions Against Serbia” as proposed by the Serbian participant Radmila Nakarada; vigil presence of Theodor Herman and myself prevented such a misfortunate action which — during the siege of Sarajevo, would have completely ignored the warfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

¹²³ A referential Slovenian author on this subject was a peace activist Tomaž Mastnak. He was one of the key authors of the SPM position papers. Recently, he wrote extensively on relations of Europe to the Balkans, see for example his article *Barbarians to the Balkans* available at <http://www.mirovni-institut.si/data/tinymce/Projekti/EE-vklju%C4%8Devanje/tomazmastnak.pdf>.

¹²⁴ “The federal army is one of the parties in conflict and is not impartial. It has substantially contributed to the building up of the conflict and to aggravating it, and it can neither solve it nor stop the bloodshed. It has always been a political and ideological army”; The SPM letter to END conference held in Moscow, August 1991

presented an entirely different view to the conflict in comparison to the predominant “leftist discourse” which was biased by ideologies of “dangerous ethnic identities”.

In fact, ethnic strife was only one element of the crisis and arised from more complex structural differences, in particular conflicts between incompatible political systems. With respect to Slovenia, the underlying problem was clearly a conflict between totalitarianism and democracy. Slovenia's process of democratization, for a long time received little or no support from other parts of Yugoslavia. “The slowly decaying federal structures of the communist dictatorship, militant Serbian communist authorities, and the Yugoslav army, were powerful and uncompromising defenders of the old regime”.¹²⁵

SPM proclaimed that “Neither a Yugoslav state nor an army of the Yugoslav state currently exist , the federal army is not under civilian control. The war against Slovenia was made possible by a covert military coup in Belgrade.”¹²⁶

II. Sacred Frontiers

The only truth about Life is – that there is a Change!¹²⁷

The ideology of inviolability of borders prevailed in Europe. The SPM has faced obstacles while arguing the right to self-determination We repeatedly asked our interlocutors in European social movements the same questions: do we need a third world war to design new borders, or will the change happen as a result of a peaceful process? Is it possible to redefine or/and correct miss-conceptualisation of borders from the end of 2nd world war without major shocks? European diplomacy answered that the change of border is only possible through war when they declared, that Slovenia would be recognized if Yugoslav army continues the aggression. Under what condition was the peace movement willing to recognize new state? So we concluded our questions with the following: »Avoiding to discuss the question of borders would mean to keep a blind eye to social dynamics. ... Borders are changing all the time. Not only in geographic terms, but mainly in qualities. Social and political dynamics are too strong to be suppressed with mere declaration of the STATUS QUO on the borders.«¹²⁸

We claimed that there are simultaneous processes of integration and of disintegration. “Disintegration is a necessary process to abolish the old monolithic structures, for the parts included into them to be able to reintegrate with the international community on new basis, freely determinating their interests and relations. “There is no integration of Europe without the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The Dissolution of East Block was just a first and major, but least painful step. The political transformations in some East European countries were only as an introduction to much more profound disintegration processes”.¹²⁹

III. Right to self-determination Slovenian people legitimately decided for independence.

¹²⁵ The SPM letter to END conference held in Moscow, August 1991

¹²⁶ Ibid. The other important thing to understand is that the Federal Army has actually ceased to be a Yugoslav army. At that time Slovenia and Croatia have stopped sending recruits to serve in it YA and the fundamentalist YA headquarters have started a purge among the officer corps to exclude all who were politically unreliable, and begun a new mobilization to fill the ranks with exclusively Serbian recruits. It was no secret that the army has sided with Milošević. YA was generally perceived as the Serbian army. Moreover, since the federal army has not only tolerated but also supported the Serbian paramilitary groups in Croatia (to say the least), it has lost the monopoly of force and violence and become a paramilitary force itself.

¹²⁷ Paraphrased spiritual truth embedded in numerous religious scriptures.

¹²⁸ Amongst other in Marko Hren, An essay on Borders Presented at WRI Trienal July 1991, Belgium, reproduced in Hren, 2011.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

The SPM called on the international community to rethink its positions on the struggles for independency. It was clear, that without the right to self-determination it was impossible to approach the problems since partners needed for dialogue were not performing on an equal level of sovereignty. SPM argued, that real danger lay in the non-recognition and that those opposed to the recognition of Slovenia were *via-facti*, tearing up the foundations of the rule of law in Europe. The SPM letter to END conference held in Moscow, August 1991, clearly called for the responsibility of European policy makers. SPM claimed that without recognizing fully all parties in conflict it was impossible to seek solutions and alerted the international community that the armed conflict started because neither the Yugoslav state nor the international community recognized Slovenia as a partner in dialogue. Having failed in its attempts to reform the federal structure, Slovenia was forced towards unilateral measures to achieve independence.¹³⁰

Since the military intervention in Kosovo in 1989, the SPM has warned that the country was heading towards a permanent violent crisis and, possibly, civil war. Little notice was taken of such analyses and appeals.¹³¹ The SPM displayed the substantial differences in separate republics in detail! Western diplomacy was either unable or unwilling to distinguish between the preservation of a unitary state, and the Serbian drive to dominate the federation. They failed to challenge the latter through supporting the former. They failed to recognize that the conflict in Yugoslavia was not one between "federalists" and "secessionists" but between those who strived to democratize and modernize the country and others who were willing to use any means, including the fomenting of ethnic hatred, to preserve the political and economic structures of the communist dictatorship. Western diplomacy has not understood that Yugoslavia has ceased to exist as a state.

IV. Discuss process, not solutions

Conflict resolution is about sober analysis and not about ideologies, certainly not about the promotion of dogmas. At my very last WRI triennial meeting in NY just before sanctions against Serbia were declared, the participants have spent days and nights arguing – without an agreement being reached. International attitudes changed dramatically only after Slovenia "had paid a high enough price". SPM claimed that the task of the international community¹³² is not to come up with new political maps but to define principles and values and request their implementation. The international community was appealed to leave all options for future political arrangements open (all positions to remain negotiable) and insist upon a fair and peaceful process.

¹³⁰ SPM Open Letter to The European Nuclear Disarmament conference Held in Moscow, august 1991; printed in the form of a leaflet and widely distributed under the title Understanding the "War" in Yugoslavia; the leaflet is reproduced in Hren, 2011. The SPM argued, that the guarantee of self determination to all individuals, peoples, ethnicities, nations or minorities that require it, in the first place provides recognition of the entity which struggles for its rights and it further includes the legitimacy of its interests. »The recognition of the right to self determination provides entities with a sense of autonomous identity out of which they can negotiate.»

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid. The SPM called on the international community to learn from both the good and bad aspects of the Slovenian experience and proposed the following principal. Recognition of all parties in conflicts as legitimate partners for negotiations before they enter armed confrontation. Request particular state authorities to assure and exercise democratic and nonviolent procedures in the process of negotiations. The international community should apply nonviolent sanctions to make parties sit down and talk before they engage in armed conflicts. Insist that the federal army is brought under civil control since it represented a power by itself and on its own. Continuity of the sending of observers, offering good offices and mediation. The same principles were also agreed at the first Meeting of the Committee for anti-war campaign in Kumrovec, August 22-24th 1991. See the minutes from the meeting, reproduced in Hren, 2011.

The SPM argued that the question of change of borders should be transferred to a question of change of relations and qualities of the process of the change. There was no doubt whether we want status quo or free change of borders, what was important was to agree on “standards including the right to self determination, democratic tools and nonviolence.” We wanted to discuss activities during the process and not political solutions, to declare on principles not on forms, to define qualities and not the borders.¹³³

“All we ask for is realism!» These were concluding words of the SPM letter to the Helsinki Citizens Assembly (HCA) and international community, dated August 29th 1991¹³⁴. Slovenian activists were involved in the HCA process from the very beginning, starting with collaboration in the East-West dialogue Network. As “creators of HCA identity and structures”, we did put much hope into HCA: “we understood the HCA to become an institution of great importance as perhaps the soled unspecialized international nongovernmental network of concerned citizens presently existing!” Our main hope was, that HCA would be democratically organized and governed. However, Slovenian movement was “deeply disappointed”. The Slovenian movement has launched a wider debate on the criticism of HCA also outside HCA since “our attempts to address the problems within the HCA framework have not been particularly satisfactory”. Our public letter to international community was meant to “reflect the HCA process and to contribute to the Assembly work in the future. We thought that the understanding of the nature of the Yugoslav crisis of the persons leading the HCA was not likely to effectively contribute to its resolution”. The starting point for any successful peace effort in Yugoslavia is the understanding that conflicts in its constitutive republics and autonomous regions are of different nature, that there is, consequently, not a single truth about the situation and no single solution to the crisis. Instead of taking the existing differences into account, and recognizing the legitimacy of different and also conflicting views, HCA has, unfortunately, promoted only one of them and presented it as a the view of the Yugoslav National Committee (if not HCA as a whole); the problem is, however, that a Yugoslav national committee does not exist. What functions under its name is the Belgrade group.”

I claim (j'accuse!) that one-sided position of HCA and many independent experts in conflict resolution (i.e. Johan Galtung, etc.) has contributed to the warfare in the territory of Yugoslavia, since they have contributed to the biased positions taken by EU and US.

HCA has been more anxious than the EC diplomats to point at Serbian imperialism as the main destructive force in Yugoslavia. HCA talked about “possibility of war” in Yugoslavia, when there already was a war; about “civil war” when the war was all but civil; about an ethnic strife where there was a military aggression; about ethnic minorities as most threatened groups where the most threatened groups were not ethnic minorities; etc. HCA did talk about the necessity of keeping Yugoslavia together and refused to recognize, that the Yugoslav state ceased to exist some time ago; and failed to acknowledge that the insistence on keeping a non-state together has only bred hatred, violence and destruction.

In the opinion of Slovenian Peace movement HCA was “not likely to define a sound policy regarding Yugoslavia until it prefers desires and illusions to factual analysis. A sound policy cannot be founded on the intellectual insincerity and confusion, and double standards, neither on religion of civil society.”¹³⁵ We concluded that the HCAs discussion on Yugoslavia has not

¹³³ SPM letter To the participants of the Belgrade HCA meeting, July 7th 1991,

¹³⁴ A letter to European democratic movements titled »HCA and the Yugoslav Crisis«, signed by People for PEace Culture in Ljubljana, Marko Hren and Tomaž Mastnak. Published in The Intruder, October 1991.

¹³⁵ Ibid; for all quotations in this section.

been conducted openly and honestly, without all forms of authoritarianism and exclusiveness; the values that HCA proclaimed as leading principles for its actions.

Conclusion – manipulated history

The Slovenian public discourse repeatedly operates with the term of reconciliation. The in-depth and effective reconciliation must be based on truthful display and analysis of facts. Unfortunately, the history remains manipulated with one-sided, too often fault interpretations. Our region still (and again and again) suffers gross misinterpretation of history, starting with under-researched question of violent Christianisation of Slavs in the period from 10 – 17 century which left the spiritual base and cosmology of Slavs almost completely vanishing under long periods of inquisitions, continuing with the manipulations of the true events during the second world war (the hypothesis concerning the cooperation between Hitler and Stalin despite of recent evidences lacks to find space in school curricula) are still largely misinterpreted. The history books - used even today in schools - are, in this respect, irrelevant. Columbus is still interpreted as a great adventurer and discoverer, while it is clear, that he was guided by supreme and well informed elites in power, while it is also clear that he was far from being the first wanderers landing to American continents. It is somehow easy to accept, that the interpretation of events during the middle ages and even during the second world war is hard to reach the criteria of objectivity, however we shall not allow miss-interpretations concerning the events we contributed-to 20 years ago. There are diverse hypotheses concerning the roots of war; my assumption is that violent catholicisation of cultures remain root cause of conflicts in Balkans. Why? Because it camouflaged the true identities and in-depth cosmologies of the ethnic groups (today's nations) on the ground. The centuries of violence almost annihilated the true cosmological, spiritual roots and imprints in the habitats. True reconciliation can only be built on true recognition of deep cosmologies of individuals and groups. The Slavic cosmologies were castrated and almost annihilated during the long lasting inquisitions. Consequently, the primary values systems - coded in non-revealed etymological codes - were flooded by the experiences of direct brutal long-lasting violence; centuries of inquisitions were followed by a century of world wars; our parents and ancestors were either afraid to speak the truth or preoccupied with stress of contemporary violence. Is it time for true reconciliation arriving now, in 21st century?

Wars in Balkans at the end of 20th century could have been prevented! The Peace options elaborated from grass roots could easily find a point of convergence with the official CSCE process of the époque, providing, that civil society initiatives had found agreement on the state-of-the-art analysis and had articulated consensual proposals for action; civil society created the proper instrument and did put it in place for such task in a right time: the Helsinki Citizens Assembly. This tool was miss-used and the convergence of the processes from above and from below made impossible. The HCA did not play its historical role due to manipulative individuals¹³⁶ in its headquarters. Consequently we did not build a bridge between the EU and US diplomacy and the civil society. HCA did not contribute to the un-blocking of the situation; rather, it strengthened the position of its Belgrade representatives who manipulated its standpoints while supposedly acting on behalf of a virtual “Yugoslav HCA community”.

This paper has described in detail a possible point of convergence between the CSCE efforts in Berlin, in June 1990, with the grassroots proposal known as Slovene Peace Option whose institutional memory remains in the form of the Ljubljana Peace Institute. These processes were in culmination just before the outbreak of wars.

¹³⁶ Serbian intellectuals succeeded to completely overshadow and manipulate the stand-points later promoted by HCA. Also the END conference in Moscow in July 1991 was subordinated to the lobby of Serbian intellectuals, who were the only speakers from former Yugoslavia, given the floor at the HCA round table on Yugoslavia, and they apparently acted on behalf of virtual “Yugoslav HCA committee”.

Finally, this paper shall serve as a call¹³⁷, as an index to topics deserving additional research to fill the knowledge lacunas of the epoch concerned! A provisional list of topics for further research is suggested here:

- The emergence of radical pacifist thought in Slovenia (SPM) and in Croatia (Svarun) in 80ies, including the outstanding and completely overlooked role of Jure Detela¹³⁸, in my view one of the most outstanding pillars of the East-central European Pacifism of the epoch.
- The systematic and systemic efforts of SPM to call an international conference for nonviolent conflict resolution in Balkans (1990-1991)¹³⁹.
- Comparative study of positions and proposals of the conflict resolution experts and peace-movement-lobbyists as well as of the independent social science experts in Europe, during the most important period (1988-1991) for eventual war prevention. The role of the peace movement and other civil initiatives in the framework of international cooperation (in all aspects of formal and informal diplomacy) with particular emphasis on the operation and effects of the HCA.
- In-depth Analysis of the policy making of the CSCE, UN; EU and USA of the same period.¹⁴⁰
- The methods and means used by the civilian resistance movement in Slovenia from 1985-1991, including the strategies of civil disobedience. The comparative study of Slovenian civil resistance with other cases in Balkans and later contemporary cases.¹⁴¹
- The role of social movements shaping political changes in pre-transition period, including the outstanding role of the peace movement initiating the need for constitutional changes of Slovene Constitution.¹⁴²

I am aware of the obstacles preventing the suggested research, However, I use this opportunity to call on independent researchers and independent research institutions, to form

¹³⁷ The author is using this opportunity to call for an establishment of a regional consortium of independent research institutions to facilitate the process of opening of all archives, former federal as well as all republics, and in a long run prepare a project to exchange archive documentation.

¹³⁸ Jure Detela was an early prophet of deep ecology, radical pacifism and sustainable consumption, and early critic of totalitarian institutions. He was an invisible, modest pillar of Slovene pacifism. He is known to public mainly or solely as a poet. But he was an exposed activist for human rights, animal rights and for the protection of the environment. He was— amongst other — a keynote speaker at the historical rally against Krsko nuclear power plant during the Chernobil disaster on April 1986.

¹³⁹ It shall be reminded that the Peace research institute in Ljubljana was founded in 1990 primarily for this very purpose. See Hren, 2011 for details.

¹⁴⁰ See also footnote 26.

¹⁴¹ Gene Sharp, for example, was closely involved and cooperated with the SPM in the pre-war period. His role in civil-resistance movement is under-researched.

¹⁴² See footnotes 62 and 91 explaining the context of the historic Declaration for Democracy signed in Slovenia widely in spring 1988.

an international consortia for cooperation amongst official, public, secret and private archives dealing with the period and region concerned in this paper.

I feel to conclude this paper with a warm echo dwelling in my memories; hundreds of powerful moments reflecting numerous deep, generous, serene and engaged interactions with countless people, friends and collaborators worldwide. I wish to express a sincere thanks to all and I hope that the reader can grasp a feeling of deep solidarity, determination to human rights, ethical values and to nonviolent action, the qualities that we have shared and radiated over decades, the qualities that impregnate the tradition of pacifism on Earth.

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Rožljanje z orožjem in demilitarizacija

Deklaracija za mir – Poskusom, da bi demilitarizirali Slovenijo, časi pred tridesetimi leti niso bili naklonjeni



SLOVENIJA 30 LET
Samostojen časnik
za samostojno Slovenijo

Rožljanje z orožjem in grožnje vojaškega posredovanja jugoslovanske vojske v razmerah na Hrvaškem so pospešili začetek pogovorov predsednikov republik o iskanju tihoda iz nastale krize. Nacionalistično naravnani srbski uporniki na Hrvaškem in nič manj nacionalno zagretri Hrvati so se že takrat zdelo, da bo soprodaj izbruhnil vsak trenutek. Razlike med zahodnimi in vzhodnim delom naklanje Jugoslavije so postajale iz dneva v dan večje, tudi pogledi, kako naj bi rešili Jugoslavijo pred propadom, so bili vse bolj vsaksebi.

VEŠO STOJANOV

Februarja je politika sicer še zmogla toliko moči, da je ustavila bojevitvo razpoložene jugoslovanske generalne, ki so hoteli na vsak način preprečiti napad zvezne države in s tem povezano obratitev socialistične politične ureditve, ki je bila tudi glavni vzrok za obstoj zvezne armade. V Sloveniji so v zaključnostjo gledali na vojaško rožljanje z orožjem. A takrat sta pomekala dva procesa. Prvi je bila krepitev teritorialne obrambe v klasično slovensko vojsko, tajno kupovanje orožja in oboroževanje drugih pa se je razvijal v posevem nasprotju smer.

Mirovno gibanje je bilo v Sloveniji vse od srede osemdesetih let v vzponu, tako po ugledu med ljudmi kot po številu aktivistov, ki so ga zavzeto propagirali. Kot večina, zdaj bi jim rekli alternativenih gibanj, se je razvijalo pod okriljem Zveze socialistične mladine Slovenije. Eden najvišjih mirovnikov je bil Marko Hren, ki je bil tudi zelo aktiven pri spreminjanju miselnega vzorca Slovencev glede dojemanja vojske in oboroževanja.

Sova

Mirovno gibanje je pobudo za demilitarizacijo Slovenije predstavilo javnosti že novembra 1989 na kongresu ZSMS v Portorožu. To je tisti kongres, na katerem je takratni predsednik mladinske organizacije Jožef Školč optimistično napovedoval zmago na prvih večstrankarskih volitvah (zmagali sicer niso, šlo pa med strankami postali druga največja stranka). No, in med vrsto dokumentov, ki so jih takrat sprejeli na kongresu ZSMS, je bila tudi pobuda Slovenija demilitarizirana dežela. Pobudo so nato kmalu po kongresu posredovali vsem takratnim strankam in političnim združenjem.

Konec marca leta 1990, torej le nekaj dni pred prvimi večstran-

karskimi volitvami v Sloveniji 8. aprila 1990, je bila skupna predstavitelj takrat že nadstrankarske pobude, ki so jo poimenovali kar SOVA – Slovenija odpravi vojaški aparat. To pobudo so podpisali Tomaž Mastnak za Gibanje za kulturo miru in nenasilja, Marko Hren, Vlasta Juhalec in Žiga Skušček, ki so takrat zastopali Neodvisno listovno društveno gibanje, Janez Janša za Slovensko demokratsko zvezo, Peter Jamnikar iz vseh tednih in Jožef Školč, Jasja L. Zlobec in Janez Sotrižnik za takrat že v liberalnodemokratsko stranko preimenovali ZSMS.

Potem je bolj ali manj ostalo pri tej pobudi. Po volitvah je Janez Janša postal republiški sekretar za ljudsko obrambo oziroma po današnji terminologiji minister za obrambo in je kot tak tudi po službeni dolžnosti pozabil na mirovništvo. ZSMS oziroma liberalnodemokratska stranka je pristala v opoziciji in zaradi političnega dogajanja v Sloveniji (aktivnosti za čim hitreje sprejetje nove ustave, poznejše plebisciti) je mirovno pobudo postavila za nekaj časa na stranski tir. V tem času so se začeli z mirovno pobudo spogledovati še Zelenci, ki so bili del Demosove vladajoče koalicije.

Deklaracija za mir

A ta zaustavi mirovne ideje je bil zgolj začasn. Sedmega februarja so član predsedstva Slovenije in predsednik Zelenci Dušan Plut, Marko Hren, predsednik LDS Jožef Školč, Vika Potončnik in poslanec Stranke demokratične prenovice (sedajni Socialdemokrat) Murico Olenik sklicali tiskovno konferenco, na kateri so predstavili deklaracijo za mir. Sestavili so jo Mladi krščanski demokrati Stranka demokratične prenovice.

Demilitarizacija je proces, zato predlagamo ustavni zakon, s katerim bi določili prehodno obdobje, ko bi za varnost Slovenije skrbeli policija in teritorialna obramba v sedanjem obsegu, saj se nam zdi, da v času, ko se povečujeta brezposelnost in socialna stiska državljanov Slovenije, ni upravičeno ustanovljati lastne vojske, za katero bi namenjali najmanj pet odstotkov bruto družbenega proizvoda.

DUŠAN PLUT

neodvisna družbena gibanja. Socialdemokratska unija Slovenije, Zelenci Slovenije in liberalnodemokratska stranka. Namen deklaracije naj bi bil aktivneje vključevanje političnih člena v javnosti pri oblikovanju člena v novi slovenski ustavi, ki naj bi se po predlogu pobudnikov venja je demilitarizirana država. Prehodno obdobje, ki je potrebno za demilitarizacijo, se uredi z ustavnim zakonom. V tem prehodnem obdobju do popolne demili-



Štirje člani predsedstva Slovenije so podpisali deklaracijo za mir. FOTODOKUMENTACIJA DELA

tarizacije, so saptali v deklaraciji za mir, naj bi za varnost meja Slovenije skrbeli policisti in teritorialni obrambniki naj bi napotitev vseh vojaških obveznikov iz Slovenije

Podpisniki

Član republiškega predsedstva dr. Dušan Plut je na predstavitvi deklaracije dejal, da so za velike besede in dejanja potrebni majhni koraki. Slovenije lahko majhen korak hi bi za varnost Slovenije skrbeli policija in teritorialna obramba v sedanjem obsegu, saj se nam zdi, da

najbolj potrebuje gospodarsko, ekološko, socialno ali vojaško? Po njegovem mnenju so prve tri precej pomembnejše za Slovenijo. «Demilitarizacija je proces, zato predlagamo ustavni zakon, s katerim bi določili prehodno obdobje, ko bi za varnost Slovenije skrbeli policija in teritorialna obramba v sedanjem obsegu, saj se nam zdi, da



Marko Hren je bil v času demokratizacije in osamosvajanja Slovenije vodilni mirovnik in zagovornik demilitarizirane Slovenije.

Slovenska vojska leta 1918 in leta 1945 ni izginila zaradi vojaškega poraza, ampak je bila ukinjena po volji takratnih slovenskih politikov. Leta 1991 kaže, da bo vrhovni poveljnik ravnal podobno, saj so že štirje člani predsedstva podpisali deklaracijo za mir.

JANEZ JANŠA

v času, ko se povečujeta brezposelnost in socialna stiska državljanov Slovenije, ni upravičeno ustanovljati lastne vojske, za katero bi namenjali najmanj pet odstotkov bruto družbenega proizvoda. «Je se deljal Plut. Marko Hren pa je opozoril, da se mu zdi pomembno, da je projekt Slovenija brez vojske nastal «spodaj», v civilni družbi, ki pa seveda za svojo uresničitev potrebuje močno podporo države.

Deklaracijo je še isti dan podpisalo več kot 140 javnih osebnosti,

med njimi štirje člani predsedstva – Milan Kučan, Dušan Plut, Ciril Zlobec in Marija Kmeč, med prvimi podpisniki je bil tudi član predsedstva SFRJ iz Slovenije Janez Drnovšek ter nekateri člani Demosove vlade: Jože Mencinger, Peter Vencelj, Matija Malešič, Igor Umek, Miha Tomšič in Peter Tančig. Poleg njih še cel kup takratnih poslancev in drugih vidnih osebnosti takratnega javnega življenja.

Nasprotniki

Čeprav ni minilo niti leto dni, ko je Janez Janša prispeval svojo podpisno pobudo SOVA, je februarja 1991 deklaracijo za mir nalogodajne kritiziral. «Slovenska vojska leta 1918 in leta 1945 ni izginila zaradi vojaškega poraza, ampak je bila ukinjena po volji takratnih slovenskih politikov. Leta 1991 kaže, da bo vrhovni poveljnik ravnal podobno, saj so že štirje člani predsedstva podpisali deklaracijo za mir,» je takrat dejal Janša. Predsednik Demosa Jože Pafnigler je celo rekel, da je to, kar so naredili štirje člani predsedstva – deklaracije ni podpisal le Ivan Oman –, velezdaja.

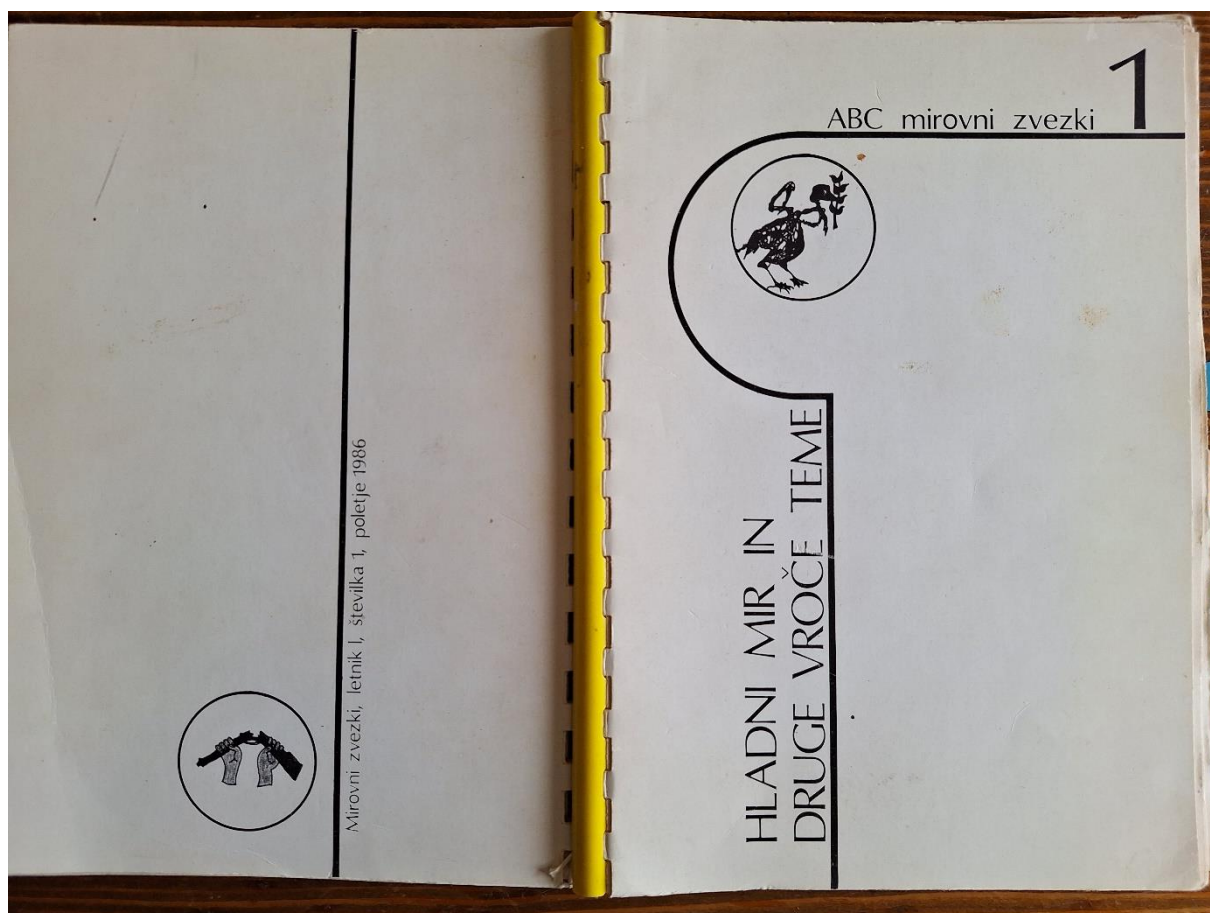
Največja Demosova stranka kršanski demokrat so bili v prvih dneh bolj ali manj tiho, zato pa so v SDZ takoj izjavili, da ne bodo privolili v takšno opredelitev vprašanja nacionalne varnosti, ki bi v negotovost lahko postavila dokončanje projekta slovenskega osamosvajanja ali ga ogrozila takoj za njega uresničitev. Zato se SDZ zavzema za ustanovitev lastnih oboroženih sil, ki bodo podrejene samo legitimnim organom Republike Slovenije.

Orožje za očitke

Tudi izvršilni odbor Slovenske kmečke zveze – ljudske stranke, kot se je takrat imenovala poznejša Slovenska ljudska stranka, je zavrnil deklaracijo za mir. Opredeleli so se, da nasprotujejo zamisli o takšni demilitarizaciji Slovenije. Po njihovem mnenju naj bi bila takšna poteza pobudnikov, s katero se boče zavlačevati proces osamosvajanja Slovenije. Proces demilitarizacije naj bi začel, ko bo Slovenija resnično samostojna in mednarodno priznana država z mednarodnimi zagotovili o spoštovanju njenih meja. V razpravi so se čudili, da je celo vrhovni komandant oboroženih sil v Sloveniji Milan Kučan podpisal to deklaracijo. «To je posebna kapitulacija, je še podkreplil besede svojega brata Dušana stranke.

Deklaracija za mir je bila sčasoma pozabljena, poznejši razvoj dogodkov, vključno z desetredno vojno je pobudo odnesel na ostaja zgodovine, a še vedno ostaja projekt Slovenija brez vojske nastal «spodaj», v civilni družbi, ki pa seveda za svojo uresničitev potrebuje močno podporo države. Deklaracijo je še isti dan podpisalo več kot 140 javnih osebnosti,

Post Scriptum : Putin – Trump, Le monde n'est pas à vous.



The front and the back cover of the book Cold Peace and other Hot Topics, published by Ljubljana Peace Movement in 1986.

The cover pages of the Peace movement publication Hladni Mir in Druge Vroče Teme- Cold Peace and other Hot Topics, Ljubljana, 1985/1986.

What we see on the backcover is a Broken Rifle Badge, a symbol of War Resisters International, which was an instrumental global NGO, offering full support and umbrella platform for the Ljubljana Peace Group. The author was repeatedly elected to serve as a member of the board of War Resisters International. On the cover, we see an emblem of the Peace Movement, the Skeleton of an Ancient Peace Dove with a green olive branch. The skeleton for what has passed and the green branch for

what is yet to be. As Leonard Cohen would command in his Anthem »Ring the Bells that Still Can Ring, Forget the Perfect Offering, There is a Crack, a Crack in Everything, That's Where the Light Comes in...:«. This badge was designed by the Member of Metelkova Network, a painter Jože Bunič BUNA. BUNA served as a designer for Independent Voices from Slovenia and later for The Intruder. I remember him having repeatedly nightmares and apocalyptical visions concerning “what is yet to come”. For Jože Bunič - Buna, the Sward of Damocles had fallen long before it actually did. He coined that in a phenomenal badge of a Peace Dove holding a Green Branch – Animation Principle in its most subtle illustration.

Looking at the titles of contributions of this historic volume from 40 years ago, we can easily imagine the actualisation of most of those.

In particular this applies to a contribution referring to the Summit of Regan and Gorbachew that was accompanied by massive peace rallies under the slogan *Regan, Gorbachev, the World is Not Yours, Le monde n'est pas à vous*. I can still sense the spirits and the feel of being surrounded by tens of thousands people crying loud the same slogan in Geneva, Bruxelles, Paris, Ljubljana.... *Le monde n'est pas à vous*

Slovene Peace movements delegation was always there, amongst the organisers and in the crowd protesting. The title of that essay from *Cold Peace and Other Hot Topics* could be easily rephrased and put in a context of today.

Putin, Trump, the World is Not Yours, Le monde n'est pas à vous

Putin, Trump, The World is not Your Private Property.

Putin, Trump, Von Der Leyen, The politics is not a real estate business, nor a playground for bourgeois, oligarchs and billionaires.

A part of the content index of the volume Cold Peace and other Hot Topics was subject to censorship of umbrella Youth Organisation – we had to systematically erase adjective “our” when referring to “Our Europe” and also erase the adjective “their” when referring to “their Yugoslavia”. All copies had to be corrected by ourselves manually. The original that I treasure in my archives, clearly show, that the ink of a censors hand is vanishing while the printed letters remain. Our Europe and Their Yugoslavia is made transparent.

-Mirovna vzgoja	96
Koncept delovanja za mirovno vzgojo in akcija "Dajmo otroku možnost"	96
Marko Hren : Mirovno gibanje in primerna igrača.	96
Tomaž Mastnak & Marko Hren : Politično neprimerno	96
Nasa Evropa	102
Ingrid Bakše : Sodelovanje mirovnih gibanj treh dežel	102
Manifest mirovnih gibanj treh dežel	103
Memorandum mreže za dialog med Vzhodom in Zahodom	105
Pismo LISTINI 77	107
Mir je nedeljiv. Evropa je razdeljena. Kaj lahko stori mirovno gibanje?	111
Gregor Tomc : Hladen mir	115
: Militarizacija družbe	118
Marko Hren : Konvencije END European Nuclear Disarmement.	124
Janez Juvan & Marko Hren : Reagan - Gorbačov, svet ni vajina privatna lastnina	127
Poziv k stikom med Vzhodom in Zahodom	131
Pismo poljskemu neodvisnemu mirovnemu gibanju.	132
Njihov Jugoslavija	133
Ingrid Bakše : Odnos liga za mir / mirovna skupina	133
Delovna skupina za mirovna gibanja: Proslave in prireditve	134
Studentje FSPN: prispevek k javni razpravi o paradi	137
Poziv pristojnim vojaškim in civilnim organom / Ivan Čečko /	138
Peticija za priznavanje ugovora vesti	139
Odrpito pismo udeležencev javne razprave o obveznem vojaškem usposabljanju za ženske	140
Izjava ob agresiji ZDA na Libijo	142
Izjava ob katastrofi v Černobilu	143
No comment	146



The Demilitary graffiti painted by Metelkova network activists on the banks of Ljubljanica river, later published in a book Metamorphosis Metelkova – From the Fortress to Agora. Ljubljana and other cities in Slovenia were saturated by demilitarisation messages in late 1980ies which underpinned the Real Utopia of the epoch.