

COMMUNITY BUILDING THROUGH FESTIVITIES: A CASE OF DIRTY TOGETHERNESS?

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UDK 394.26(497.4Brežice)“194/196“
Original scientific paper
Izvorni znanstveni rad
Accepted / Prihvaćeno: 18. 10. 2010.

Using the example of the small Slovenian town of Brežice, this paper will demonstrate how various “we-groups” were established and imagined with respect to the calendrical holidays in use at that time. It attempts to analyze the role of various symbolic constructions, for example, of the town’s history of public festivities or the processes of differentiation within the local community. The author also focuses on the role of calendrical holidays in the integration of immigrants into local and specific communities. Since public festivities are presented primarily as resources that were competed for and used differently by different groups, the author also explores the possibility of the existence of a shared, and above all equal, sense of “dirty togetherness” in the first decades of socialism.

Keywords: *festivities, holidays, community studies, socialism, “dirty togetherness”, Slovenia*

The social sciences and humanities have long accepted that not just communities as groups of individuals with greater or lesser amounts of political power create and/or define festivities (cf. Muršič 2006:53). This has been shown, for example, by Peter Simonič who investigated the modern Slovenian celebration of Independence Day (2006). The opposite is also true: festivities contribute to the formation, definition and imagining of individuals within the community. But very little of this type of ethnological and anthropological research on the relations between festivities, power and communities has been conducted in the so-called post-socialist countries, at least not in Slovenia (cf. Habinc 2008a). In this paper¹ I look at the

¹ The paper is based on a doctoral dissertation on calendrical holidays in Brežice from 1933–1941 and 1945–1963. The dissertation was based on postgraduate studies at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana led by Prof. Janez Bogataj (see Habinc 2006).

example of the small Slovenian town of Brežice, which lies in the southeast of the country, a few kilometres from the Slovenian-Croatian border and just over thirty kilometres from the Croatian capital Zagreb, and attempt to depict various *we-groups* (Elwert 1996) formed in the first decades after the Second World War, partially on the basis of calendrical holidays.

I understand the concept of local community as people who live in the same place and are unified by a sense of self as a community, and who also express that sense. They are united primarily by discourse, which appears mainly when the members of the community encounter a dividing line with the outside or (and) among themselves, and this discourse is made possible by a shared vocabulary of values and symbolic capital. However, this vocabulary of values and symbolic capital is not defined once and for all, but appears on various occasions and with respect to various themes, e.g. in connection with festivities (Cohen 1985:98, cited in Kravanja 2007:45). In this paper, I therefore attempt to show how dividing lines were created among the members of the wider local community in the first decades after the Second World War in relation to various calendrical holidays, and which gave rise to smaller *we-groups*. I am interested in what the differences between the members of the local community were, and who and what the individual *we-groups* defined as the inner, cultural “Other” (Barth 1969). I attempt to establish what role was played by various symbolic constructions in these processes of differentiation and establishing of *we-groups*, e.g. language, territory and (traditional) culture (Gellner 1983, Hobsbawm and Ranger, ed. 1983). Here I am interested in particular in the role of public festivities in Brežice’s past, which my informants in the context of research most often characterized as being part of the “Brežice tradition”. In this paper, festivities and/or rituals are therefore not understood merely as symbolic actions that can unite individuals in a community and bear witness to its values: I am also interested in their role in the expression of social power. I attempt to look at them as resources that are competed for and used differently by different groups (for more on this see Habinc 2008), and so at the end of the paper I also explore the possibility of the existence of a shared and above all equal sense of *dirty togetherness*² in the first decades of socialism.

² For more on the concept of *dirty togetherness* see below.

FESTIVITIES AND SOCIAL POWER

If festivities are above all practices that create as well as invent and reveal culture (cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger, ed. 1983; Boissevain 1992), and according to Löfgren and Frykman are separate realities (1996:17) most often generated by only part of the community through their social power (Baumann 1993:98, 109), let's first of all look at who the key actors were in Brežice after 1945 in relation to individual festivities.

By 30 July 1942, in the middle of the Second World War, the Germans had expelled approximately 37,000 people from two regions in Slovenia – Obsotelje and Posavje – the administrative region in which Brežice still lies today. Six thousand people escaped and so avoided exile, and around three thousand people were permitted to remain in their homes. The Germans moved the German-speaking community of Kočevars from the Kočevje region, which was under Italian occupation, into the homes of the exiles and refugees. But after the end of the war the Kočevars were not allowed to return home to Kočevje, and they were also driven out of the Obsotelje and Posavje regions (Ferenc 1993:68). The exiles who returned to Brežice after the war had allegedly been “fairly politically apathetic”. A Brežice resident who was allowed to stay during the war described in his memoirs the atmosphere of the town in 1945:

“The majority of the population was apathetic. This is a condition of mental indifference, people didn't care, were unfeeling and that's all. They weren't interested in a thing. First they had been deported to Germany or Croatia, Serbia or somewhere else. When they returned home after four years, it wasn't like it had been before. The people from Kočevje who moved into the exiles' homes had managed to destroy their property. Nationalization or to put it simply the seizure of private property of course did not help attract people to the new social system. They became increasingly mistrustful” (Graul 1998:11).

During the Second World War, Brežice was the centre of local Nazi organizations for the Obsavje and Obsotelje regions (Ferenc 1993a:31), and some of the Germans living in the town at that time are said to have openly supported Nazism (Graul 1998:16). Mistrust and fear increased in 1945 by the post-war partisan killings and persecutions, and the Germans

who had lived in the town before the war were driven out or left: “Brežice was cleansed. The guilty and the innocent” (T 2003/04:41).³ The population structure changed dramatically: “There were no more old-timers from Brežice. I don’t know if there were even ten of us. The rest were all people who had come from somewhere else” (T 2003/04:304). With the large number of newcomers, it didn’t matter to the “Brežice old-timers” whether they had been permitted to stay during the war or not, but in their relations with the newcomers they felt the difference of their urban pedigree. The first years after the war were therefore often described by my informants as the time of the “revenge of the villages against the town”, as was also reflected during public festivities:

“And then there was that first party at the National Hall. There were so many people that you could barely walk. The dance – that wasn’t a dance at all! That was just fidgeting on the spot. And then there was a dance at the Knight’s Hall at Brežice Castle. But there wasn’t even a hint of etiquette! I remember we were here at the castle once, and if somebody wanted to [ask you to dance], then they called you like this (points with her finger). Then you looked to your left, right, and you didn’t know who they meant. I mean, please, it was unheard of what happened to us at that time! Before, they had taught us for years and years how to behave!” (T 2003/04:87–88)

Alongside the many changes and uncertainties, some of the festivities of the time were held solely on the initiative of the “old-timers”. The similarities between the holiday scenarios from the pre-war period and the calendrical proximity of the “old” and the new public holidays served as rare reference points of the familiar, and provided at least a partial continuity with the past. Before the Second World War, the majority of holidays and other festivities in the town had been organized by members of the local “Sokol” gymnastics society (a socio-political organization)⁴, the Franciscan

³ The original translations and transcriptions of the conversations attempted to at least partially preserve the characteristics of the local ((Serbo-)Croatian tinged) vernacular (cf. Smole 1994:152–153). The transcriptions were made by the author of the article.

⁴ The Sokol Gymnastics Society of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was founded in 1929 as a state institution and all other gymnastics societies were dissolved at that point. The organization was designed to promote Yugoslav nationalism as widely as possible among

church, and partly by members of the local Catholic society.⁵ In the first few years after the war, the participation of the Catholic church in organising the celebration of religious holidays was still relatively strong. Thus Victory Day (9 May) in Brežice in 1946 was celebrated with a holiday mass, New Year 1946 with a midnight mass, processions were held on the town streets for the feast of Corpus Christi for several years after the Second World War, and in 1949 the faithful also tried to organize a Palm Sunday procession, which sources before 1945 do not mention. Similarly, many people today see the “Razlag” gymnastics society, later renamed “Partizan”, as the successor to the pre-war local branch of Sokol. In the first years after the Second World War, the most active members of the Razlag or Partizan sports club were former members of the the pre-war Sokol organization or at least their descendants. They were also said to have played the most important roles in various holiday scenarios, for example by carrying the baton in a relay organized as a part of Tito’s birthday celebration, as well as in other annual mass events. Thus the former president of the Brežice Sokol society participated in the first relays at the end of the 1940s: “The national relay went through town. And always, always Holy was the last one to carry the baton to the Croats⁶. This is a known fact; he handed it over” (T 2003/04:38). Some also pointed out that many events were organized in the same kind of collaboration among the sports clubs, the elementary schools and the gymnasium as in pre-war times. As in those days, the Brežice Sokol Society cooperated mainly with teachers from the Brežice town schools in planning celebrations:

“In those days there weren’t even any problems with staffing, since the former leaders of the Brežice Sokol were still active in the

Yugoslav youth (Dolenc, Pahor and Majaron 1998:146). Despite this, my informants most often associated it with liberalism and only rarely mentioned that membership in Sokol was compulsory for officials and people employed in the state administration.

⁵ My informants most often mentioned the group *Slovenski fantje* (Slovenian Boys), which after 1929 was a member of the Catholic union of societies, the so-called “Educational Union” (Vidovič-Miklavčič 1989:86). The “Slovenian Boys” were also involved in sports, and some former Sokol members pejoratively labelled them “clerics” and “right-wingers”.

⁶ This refers to the handing over of the baton at the border of the Slovenian and Croatian republics.

society, and also the teachers and physical education teachers from the gymnasium joined in the (gymnastics) society's work" (Avsec 1994:[12]).

The "driving force of post-war cultural life", which also included holiday-related events, was the Brežice Gymnasium (cf. for example *Zapisnik otvoritvene... 1948:4, 5*), which through its cultural involvement differed significantly from the other school in town, the so-called vocational, and later trade or training school. This school was attended by students from the surrounding areas and other parts of Slovenia rather than by children from the town itself, and they would not have been very closely connected with their peers and the events in town. Unlike the gymnasium, this school was not yet one of the anchor points of local identity in the first few decades after the Second World War.

The impression of the continuity of festivities was not created solely by the apparently same organisers, but was also reinforced by the similar way in which the festivities were held. The informants particularly compared the cultural elements of the individual festivities or celebrations with speeches, recitations, singing, theatrical and other performances, and also saw parallels in the post-war processions and the pre-war torchlight parades: "The torchlight parades had a tradition in Brežice from before, from the Sokols" (T 2003/04:143). And although different public holidays were celebrated after 1945, some people also pointed out the calendrical proximity of certain days with those holidays celebrated before the war: "Before it was on the eve of the first of December, but now it's on the eve of the twenty-ninth of November.⁷ So that's three or four days difference" (T 2003/04:26; for a discussion of the systemically planned metamorphosis of religious and traditional symbolism cf. e.g. Makarovič 1995:320 and Rihtman Auguštin 2000).

At least at first glance and sifted through the screen of memory, it seems that for the "old-timers" the festivities in the first decade after the Second World War to a certain extent represented a continuity with the past.

⁷ From 1929 on, 1 December or Unification Day was legally defined as one of the most important public holidays, and 29 November was similarly proclaimed a Yugoslav or federal public holiday as early as in 1944.

But even at that time, as a few rare sources indicate, this continuity was of a short-lived or superficial nature, since for example certain individuals opposed renaming the “Radoslav Razlag Sports Society” the “Partizan Gymnastics Society”: “And they even threatened them with prison if they didn’t do it” (T 2003/04:173).⁸ On the other hand, even at the gymnasium, the “driving force of the town’s cultural life”, the “Church’s influence on ideas” increased significantly at the beginning of the 1950s (*Poročilo o delu mladinske... :2*; cf. *Letno poročilo... 1952*) and “politically incorrect incidents” are said to have occurred:

“There was some writing inside (the gymnasium, author’s comment). ... Some people from Brežice were interrogated at the police station at that time. They got it out of us who did it, how it happened and so on. A couple of people were even kicked out of school for it” (T 2003/04: 149).

In any case, the more or less apparent continuity with the public festivities from the past in the first few years after the war was also supported by the social system of that time (cf. Rozman, Melik and Repe 1999:146). Since they had been at least local functionaries of individual organisations, some of the “old-timers” had become an important part of that system by the mid-1950s. In general, anyone who had achieved merit during the war by his or her participation in the partisan movement was able to access the levers of (local) power quickly, and owing to their local origin they were better equipped to make competent decisions about the cultural events and/or festivities in the town – including what to publicly preserve as “tradition” and what not to. For example, a comparison of the post-war celebration of Carnival and the feast day of St. Roch in Brežice (cf. Habinc 2009) shows that the presentation and preservation of something as “traditional” required not just an association with the past, but also that this socio-historical association had to at least be allowed and ensured in the present. Thus various sources defined the feast day of St. Roch in Brežice

⁸ The “Radoslav Razlag Gymnastics Society” was founded on 14 May 1946, was renamed the “Physical Culture Society” in May of 1948, and in 1950, or according to Kerin and Gregorič 1952 (1994:[22]), it was renamed the “Brežice Partizan Society” (Avsec 1994:[12]).

as “traditional”: before the Second World War it had been an opportunity for the town to spread its reputation. The annual mass pilgrimage to the church of St. Roch was known at least as far back as the middle of the 18th century, and in the first half of the 20th century St. Roch’s Fair, the week around August 16, had been economically and socially important for both townsfolk and pilgrims. But after the Second World War, due to the constitutional separation of church and state, the feast day of St. Roch as a religious holiday no longer ranked among the “traditional” public holidays. The situation regarding Carnival events was totally different. During the mid-1950s one of the “old-timers”, then already a local and later a republican and federal political heavyweight, published his argument for preserving the Carnival celebrations in the local newspaper:

“The opinion of certain individuals that Carnival with the masquerades is a remnant of mystical customs and that therefore it is not modern will not hold water. The tradition of Kurentovanje⁹ is an ancient custom in Slovenia. It is significant that the religious circles were never wild about the Carnival masqueraders. Everyone who knows their history knows that the Carnival practices in Slovenia are a component part of folklore, and the right thing to do is to support these practices and to preserve them for posterity as national commodities” ([s. a.] 1955).

In Brežice, as in other places, “folklore”, i.e. elements of the pre-Christian, pagan, spiritual folk culture, such as Carnival practices, also became a state-approved version of tradition under the new atheist system (Kaneff 2004:10), and at the same time a safety valve (Main 2003, Roth 2008). Although mostly only to a socially acceptable limit, people could let themselves go during Carnival and at least once a year could express social criticism in public.¹⁰ But when analyzing the individual *we-groups*

⁹ From 1960 on, the Carnival celebrations in Ptuj, a town in north-eastern Slovenia, were called “kurentovanje”. In the cited passage, the author uses this term as a synonym for Carnival and Carnival customs in general, which according to short preliminary research seems not to have been exceptional for other regions of Slovenia all the way up to the year 1960 (cf. Habinc 2010).

¹⁰ In the period concerned, the informants recalled making fun of the intimate relations between a local vicar and a nurse, making fun of a doctor who was known for not concealing his religious beliefs, as well as of masks associated with the non-socialist social

that formed around festivities, it is interesting to note that while in Brežice the Carnival events were justified as “tradition” that should be preserved primarily by the “old-timers”, the newcomers were those who mainly engaged in organizing the Carnival festivities. However, not all newcomers joined in but only the “civilians” as they were called by my informants in the context of research or as they called themselves. The Carnival celebrations were held in proclaimed opposition to the other group of newcomers, “the military”. These were the employees of the nearby military airbase in Cerklje ob Krki, who at that time personified not only the local authorities but authority in general, and who began moving into town en masse just at the time that struggles over the organisation of Carnival were in full swing.

“CIVILIANS” AND “THE MILITARY”

The post-war immigrants came to a “cleansed” Brežice on “official duty” or on their own initiative, from both nearby rural areas and other Slovenian towns. In the framework of their employment or in their free time they could participate in the organisation and hosting of holiday festivities and other events, e.g. as trade union members, school employees, members of sports societies (clubs) or of local branches of the “Women’s Antifascist Front”, the “Friends of Youth Association” or the “Slovenian People’s Youth”. However, in the first few years after the war, through organising the Carnival – an event that was not the purview of either the aforementioned (state) social organisations or the Church – it was above all the town tradespeople who in their own eyes as well as those of their neighbours became not just a part of the local community, but part of a separate *we-group*: “There was one group of these tradespeople, assistants and managers, who organised something every year. And they published a newsletter, and organised this procession and those masquerades” (T 2003/04:33). They were usually the same people, who as residents of a new urban environment began to take charge the organisation of Carnival:

systems. Numerous people were said to have donned “city clothing” e.g. frocks and top hats, and there are numerous photographs of children or adults dressed as the last Egyptian king, Farouk.

they made costumes together and drew up the Carnival programme, and the same people held the same positions in the “Carnival parliament” (a group of disguised actors that gives a parodic account of the most significant events in the last year) for several years in succession.

The other group of immigrants, “the military”, was intentionally and systemically separated from the other townspeople at least for the first decade after the war. Informants defined as “civilians” spoke of “castes” or “two kinds” of townspeople: “They were special. The pilots and the other personnel. All that mattered was: ‘us, just us’” (T 2003/04:139). Until the end of the 1950s, when new residential blocks of flats for military personnel were built in the town, very few members of the Yugoslav People’s Army (YPA) lived in Brežice. For many, being posted to the Cerklje airfield was a form of punishment: “We called it a penal airbase. And to tell the truth, this was the first time I had ever lived in a village. And it was tough to deal with” (T 2003/04:277). The division into first and second-class townspeople, according to the “civilians”, put the latter purposefully into an economically and socially marginalised position, which they “felt every day”. The “military” wore uniforms even during their free time, and better-stocked shops were opened in town solely for their use. But even more than the ceaseless systemic privileging of “the military” at the level of everyday life, the “civilians” were especially bothered by the fact that the airfield personnel were apparently happy to take advantage of those privileges. They apparently only looked after their own interests:

“Once in that part of Marof (a part of Brežice), where the soldiers had their blocks of flats, there was a problem. It was either the sewage system or the water or the roads had to be fixed – in short, there was a problem. The military never came to the meetings of the local community. They weren’t there. Or maybe there were two or three. That time there were more soldiers in the hall than... and they vehemently defended their demands. And I stand up and say: ‘Well, comrades, this is just a regular military invasion’” (T 2003/04:27–28).

The “military” allegedly also “took over” the town’s main cultural venue, the pre-war Sokol National Hall, and turned it into a YPA Hall. The army held festivities there particularly on public holidays, but also on military holidays, for example on YPA Day (22 December) and Yugoslavian

Air Force Day (21 May), which also served to make youths interested in various careers in the military. Until the beginning of the 1950s, YPA Day was mainly a school holiday on which students were also invited to tour the airbase. "Pilots' Day", as recalled by informants, was similarly intended primarily to promote technical knowledge and various technical careers from as early as 1949. In all of these cases, at least in the first decade after the war, the celebrations in the YPA Hall were divided into those for military personnel and those for the civilian population. The highest-ranking officers at first rejected "folklore", so that, for example, "the military" did not participate in Carnival celebrations in Brežice. But as a safety valve the Carnival parties often became a reflection of the town's disharmonious social relations. The disunity between the "civilians" and "the military" did not remain merely a concealed "open secret", the subject of various jokes mainly at the military's expense, but to cite one informant: "... we had problems at the start. There were fights in the pubs. There were plenty of those crowds there up to 'fifty, 'fifty-five'" (T 2003/04:316). And boosted by alcohol, the Carnival parties at the pubs often became an opportunity to test each other's strength, as the following account shows:

"For Carnival I was at the Lukež (inn) dressed as a gypsy woman. But I was dressed, you know, sexy. I made a flirty little move and said I was going to sit down. This officer was sitting there, and he pulled the chair away from me like this. When I went to sit down there was a litre of wine on the table. When I tried to catch myself, I spilled the litre of wine. And of course it spilled all over the table and on that 'sir' there. But when I fell, I hit that 'sir' in the face. And when I came out, someone took my hands and said 'Do you know who you just hit?' I said, 'Even if it were Tito, I would have hit him!' 'Do you know that I am a captain, a "military man", and you hit me!' But then he started yelling 'Damn Slovene whore, I'm going to throw you into the Sava (river)! ...and that he was going to sue me. So then I went to court. ... The president of the court said: 'Wait until he sues you. When you get the lawsuit, you are going to sue him for insulting your honour. Slovene whore! And a soldier said that to you'" (T 2003/04: 272–275).

At the end of the 1950s, when the town's population grew once again as new blocks of flats were constructed to house military personnel, the

intentional systemically supported separation of the population into the “military” and “civilians” was replaced by planned rapprochement. The military introduced a new “concept”, it became: “...a national and people’s army. Then we became involved in the life of the town” (T 2003/04:312). As a result of “cooperation in the field”, from then on, the base commander was always a Slovene and newcomers were included in “all aspects of social life”. It was hoped that as many as possible would become members of political, social, sports and other organisations, but like the planned division, this planned rapprochement was unpopular with a lot of “civilians”:

“And then they started just pushing officers into the football club. They could have played in Cerklje, but they didn’t train with us. And it seemed pointless to us. I dressed up, and now he’s going to play instead of me! We were opposed to this. But the officers didn’t succeed in replacing us guys from Brežice. We didn’t allow that!” (T 2003/04:50–51)

Despite this, public festivities contributed to a significant extent to bring the population closer together. From the end of the 1950s on, “the military” was involved in organising and hosting several holiday events. In addition to celebrations on public holidays it became an important co-organiser of the Youth Day celebrations¹¹ and one of the first significant joint appearances of “civilian” and “military” athletes occurred on 25 May 1958:

“The military arranged for a helicopter or plane to come and drop a flag on the middle of the pitch. And the military’s performance! They had their own exercises, and this was their first performance. It was really something special!” (T 2003/04:127, cf. Avsec 1994:[15])

From the 1960s on, “the military” was also included in celebrating the municipal holiday: “They participated in the group mountain hike. And they worked on organising it too” (T 2003/04:263). Even celebrations of

¹¹ 25 May or Youth Day was never pronounced a national holiday (cf. Brkljačić 2006:182). In 1945, the Central Committee of the Young Communist League of Yugoslavia (CK SKOJ) pronounced it the holiday of Tito’s birth, and from 1956 on it was renamed Youth Day (Stefanović et al., eds. 1989:1).

various, also public, holidays were no longer celebrated in parallel at the YPA Hall: the hall's facilities were opened to the public. So, from the early 1960s on, the festivities at the hall included social evenings with dances open to anyone, which significantly enriched the town's social life and are still cherished today by at least some "civilians": "Everyone came to those [dances]" (T 2003/04:285). The dances were also cheaper than other events: "You know why it wasn't so expensive? Because we paid only for the food. The facilities were military. The orchestra and singers who came, the army hall paid for that" (T 2003/04:321). But as in earlier times, both "the military" and "civilians" remember interpersonal contacts and rapprochement primarily in terms of personal advantage or harm. For example, the "civilians" received economic benefits from their neighbours employed in the military when they would help them to obtain rare goods (e.g. cigarettes, nylons, leather coats) in the military shops, even though officially they were not allowed to, and used their technical skills to fix their radios and televisions. On the other hand, a lot of male "civilians" felt threatened by the socialising and dances:

"Women who wanted to get married tried to get a 'military man'. That way you got a flat quickly, you got this quickly and that quickly... The men could be a little bit jealous of us. But these were just individual cases. They argued with us. They even fought with us! Some of them would say, 'You took all the prettiest girls because you had a lot of money'" (T 2003/04:285).

The fact that they "had a lot of money" still holds true for many sons and daughters of former YPA personnel: "loaded", "they never had to work", etc. are modern labels and explanations for various "losers" who never "made anything of themselves". Some of the newcomers who were formerly employed at the nearby airbase or their descendants are among the so-called "erased people", i.e. people who were deleted from the register of permanent residents of the Republic of Slovenia in 1992. At that time, they lost their rights to residence, employment, social security and health insurance, and only twelve years later, in 2004, did their status and possible compensation become political issues (see e.g. Dedić, Jalušič and Zorn 2003). For this reason as well, after more than four decades of living in town, many people still emphasise the difference between "us" and "them",

between “the military” and “civilians”. Sometimes this has been expressed in the form of a joke, as one of the informants asked his fellow townsfolk when they were hoping that after independence Slovenia would become a second Switzerland: “What’s it like living in Switzerland?” And they would answer: “Sweaty.” (T 2003/04:289).¹² However, this differentiation is also often emphasised in everyday conversation, in general practices and perceptions of modern life in the town. In the opinion of many, both former military personnel and “civilians”, Brežice would not have grown beyond “two streets” (Počkar 2005) and developed into what it is today without the nearby airfield. The military airbase in Cerklje ob Krki continues to provide employment to many locals, and there is frequently speculation and/or fear that in the future it may become a NATO airbase.¹³ In this case, Brežice would become the home of newcomers from all over Europe. The town’s “military” past therefore continues to define its present and potential future.

EPILOGUE: FESTIVE “DIRTY TOGETHERNESS”?

In the first two decades after the Second World War, various non-homogenous and not strictly defined *we-groups* were formed in Brežice with respect to festivities: the “old-timers”, the “civilian” newcomers and the “military” newcomers. Various other *we-groups* formed alongside these, for instance those who had been exiled during the war or those residents who had been allowed to remain in their homes despite the Nazi occupation. But these groups reinforced their identities mainly through other, less festivity-related occasions and issues. It was a different story for religious people who, regardless of whether they were “old-timers” or newcomers, had to move their festivities into private spaces or Church facilities from the beginning of the 1950s on. The more liberal “practical Christians”, as people called themselves who had attended church before the Second World War, either because school at that time had required

¹² The pun relies on the similarity between the Slovene word for “Switzerland” (*Švica*) and the verb “to sweat” (*švicati*) (t. n.).

¹³ This is denied by official sources, since NATO would only use the modernised military part of the airfield “in case of a very serious crisis in the vicinity of that region” ([s. a.] 2007, cf. STA 2010).

it or “out of habit”, increased in number after the Second World War. The new system was in fact a good excuse for people to restrict their religious observances to “the most important obligations”, e.g. receiving the sacrament or to holiday mass. After 1945, alongside these people, or often in the same person, the phenomenon of the “practical communist” appeared, as such people referred to themselves: “At our house we were loyal to everyone” (T 2003/04:151). These people limited their Party activities to the “most important obligations” if not for the advantages then at least because “it can’t hurt”, for instance to membership in the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and to participation at meetings and in holiday festivities. But all of this together with festivity-related “practicality”, avoidance of the “non-essential” or, to cite polish sociologist Adam Podgorecki, the survival strategy of *dirty togetherness* (Podgorecki 1987) in the first decades after the Second World War cannot in my opinion be considered of the same character as in later periods. Why not? According to Podgorecki, Polish late-socialist society was based among other things on the operation of informal groups, cliques and networks which used tactics to outsmart and adapt apparently recognised and accepted formal and prescribed circumstances to their own needs and wishes (cf. Fikfak 2008:206). Owing to such informal interpersonal relationships, in which a high premium was placed on who knew how to cheat the formal system best (cf. Luthar and Zei 2003:[15]), people in socialism learned how to live in a lie. They became suspicious of everything and everybody, but the fact that they were “dirty together” supposedly also connected them, since they were all part of a culture of lying and suspicion, and were therefore all equal. But, was this in fact the case for the people of Brežice celebrating various calendrical holidays during the first decades after the Second World War? As always, also in this period, the norms of this local community relating to public festivities differed from practice: new public holidays had just been established, the religious holidays had been moved out of public view, and in certain cases tradition had already been folklorized (Kaneff 2004:10). However, certain people discussed and perhaps even made joint decisions about on which days the local community could engage in public festivities and on which days they could not, and it was not a necessary condition that they then participate in the organisation and hosting of these festivities. Years ago, Gerd Baumann defined festivities primarily as the

strategic practices of various groups and individuals actively involved in different ways of imagining, practising and interpreting their associated meanings and values (Baumann 1992:99). This also occurred in the case in question. Festivities during this time and in this environment were primarily a resource that different groups competed for and in connection with which they formed or at least expressed different *we-groups*. For example, the “civilians”, due to their new identity but also in order to establish their own interests and goals, to some extent wanted the “old-timers” to accept them. However, it would have seemed difficult during the first few post-war years for “the military” to have been able to want this as well. Above all, the newcomers who worked at the military airbase were the collective “Other” to both the “old-timers” and the “civilians”. The “others”, were apparently not concerned with anything else but advancing their own interests, and therefore at the same time represented the group from which the “civilians”, or at least the tradespeople, differentiated themselves by “contributing something” to the events in town. This also gave them “more of a right to make decisions” on general local issues, e.g. the role of the commerce in the town. If “the military” in the first years after the war represented a systemically established, superior new socialist authority remote from the population, i.e. the state, the civilian population on the other hand tried to access the levers of power and at least local authority through its activities in the framework of orienting and limiting the new social order including its festivities. The co-existence of several *we-groups*, who through their decisions and actions guided the town’s social life, is one of the factors that in my opinion makes it difficult to speak of *dirty togetherness* in the period concerned. It would have been difficult for a tradesperson who helped organise a Carnival procession to feel the same as an “old-timer” who deserved at least part of the credit for the event even happening, or to feel like a YPA soldier who as part of his official duty merely observed from a distance what people around him were doing. It seems that by privileging military personnel the formal political system, which nominally advocated equality, did not realise its objectives but merely created a need among citizens to outsmart it.

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STVARANJE ZAJEDNICA TIJEKOM PRAZNIKA: PRIMJER PRLJAVOG ZAJEDNIŠTVA

Članak polazi od pretpostavke da su suvremena istraživanja praznika, obreda i običaja usmjerena na procese njihova stvaranja, postajanja i postojanja, t.j. na odnosne kategorije. Koristeći studiju slučaja, autorica naglašava važnost praznika u odnosu na formiranje, stvaranje i izdvajanje različitih skupina koje se uspostavljaju kao ‘mi’ i identifikacije pojedinaca s takvim ‘mi’ skupinama. Na temelju prikupljenoga gradiva koje se odnosi na prva dva desetljeća nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata i na mali slovenski grad Brežice, autorica analizira ulogu godišnjih događanja u gore spomenutim procesima (u okviru opisanog slučaja) i u zaključku dovodi u sumnju moguće postojanje zajedničke, jedinstvene socijalističke solidarnosti ili vrijednosnog sustava *prljavog zajedništva*.

Ključne riječi: godišnji običaji, praznici, studije zajednica, socijalizam, “prljavo zajedništvo”, Slovenija