

## CENSORSHIP MEASURES IN STYRIA IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF KOROŠEC’S SLOVENIAN DECLARATION\*

Andrej STUDEN\*\*

Immediately after the introduction of the King Aleksandar Karađorđević’s dictatorship the censorship became more severe. The press was supposed to subordinate its writing to the efforts of the government or at least avoid mentioning anything that was in contrast with these efforts. Through the press the state wanted to exert an all-encompassing control over the thinking, political viewpoints, as well as emotions of the people. The author argues on the censorship measures in Styria after the publication of Korošec’s Slovenian declaration in 1932.

**Key words:** Styria, censorship, Anton Korošec, Slovenian Declaration of 1932

With the introduction of King Alexander’s repressive dictatorship, censorship also became much more severe. Due to its strict and backward decrees, the reviewed and amended Press Act of 6 January 1929, which replaced the already relatively restrictive Press Act of April 1925, was criticised severely. The new Act did not only preserve the spirit of the old one, but also intensified many restrictive decrees to the extreme. In the opinion of Mihajlo Ilić of 1937, the new Press Act resembled a police regulation rather than a law. In

---

\* This article is an updated and revised version of the author's work published in Slovenian: “Ukrepi cenzure na Štajerskem neposredno po objavi Koroščevih punktacij”, in: Mateja Režek (ur.). *Cenzurirano: zgodovina cenzure na Slovenskem od 19. stoletja do danes*, (Zbirka Razprave, 2), (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 2010), pp. 99-112

\*\* Andrej Studen, Ph.D., Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana, Slovenia

fact, regarding its severity the Act of 6 January was beyond any semblance of good measure, since the freedom of press was not even mentioned. The decisions about the bans on the publication and distribution of press were left to the public prosecutors and police authorities, and it was impossible to lodge complaints against their decisions in court, which was, of course, completely incompatible with the concept of a state governed by the rule of law. The January 6<sup>th</sup> regime justified its unusually restrictive and harsh supervision of the press and journalists with the superior state interests. The press was supposed to subordinate its writing to the efforts of the government or at least avoid mentioning anything that was in contrast with these efforts. Through the press the state wanted to exert an all-encompassing control over the thinking, political viewpoints, as well as emotions of the people. The purpose of the press was supposedly to celebrate and praise the work undertaken by the government and ministers in all manners possible. It was forbidden to insult the King or members of the King's family, foreign rulers, the authorities, or call upon the citizens to amend the state legislation, encourage hatred towards the state as a whole, or incite religious and "tribal" discord. Printed articles were forbidden from committing any transgressions against the state which could be punished pursuant to the Criminal Code or State Protection Act. The strict censorship introduced with the January 6<sup>th</sup> regime and the supervision of the national and foreign press persisted until as late as December 1934, when the first articles demonstrating the spirit of at least partial liberalisation of the press appeared.<sup>1</sup>

In order to facilitate censorship, dissemination of propaganda, placement of information and control over the national and foreign press as well as the journalists' movement, in April 1929 the Central Press Bureau, which carried out the censorship very diligently, even fanatically, in collaboration with the local public prosecutors, was established with the Presidency of the Government in accordance with the German example. The list of forbidden events and topics that were not allowed to be written about kept expanding. More and more often even banal articles and news were ascribed with "hidden political and anti-regime contents and implications" and banned. On the other hand the newspapers had to publish, without any questions, all the news launched by the regime agency Avala or the Central Press Bureau.<sup>2</sup> This case study is based on the archival sources from Maribor, but the censorship apparatus and methods used were in the centralist Yugoslav state common to all environments, including Croatian. This study represents an insight to local censorship measures and forms a base for future research of the topic, hopefully also for the banates which later formed the Banate of Croatia. Slovenian and Croatian political history of the era share common problems, which could and should be dealt leaning on knowledge and methodology of such case studies. But we

<sup>1</sup> More about this: Ivana Dobrivojević, *Državna represija u doba diktature kralja Aleksandra 1929-1935* [State Repression During the King Alexander's Dictatorship 1929-1935], (Belgrade, 2006), pp. 301-322.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305 and p. 310.

should move to the centre of this study, Maribor.

The Belgrade Central Press Bureau kept flooding the State Prosecutor's Office in Maribor with censorship instructions in the form of telephone calls, memoranda or telegrams through an intermediary – the Office of the State Prosecutor General in Ljubljana.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the Maribor State Prosecutor was also warned about “dangerous articles” over the phone or in written form by the Head Office of the City Police, which supervised the press meticulously in the local coffee houses or elsewhere in public. The Central Press Bureau called upon both post offices in Maribor to carry out a strict control over the “arrival of forbidden papers”, while the border Police Commissioner's Office supervised the trains. Foreign press was also checked at the railway station in Maribor. First it was reviewed by the “Avala agency editor” and then also by the customs officials. “After the censorship procedure and payment of customs duties the press was distributed. The authorities opted for the concentration of importation and a regime of constant and immediate control over foreign press, as it became obvious that the implementation of censorship and police control at all of the post offices in the state was impossible.”<sup>4</sup>

Of course, stricter censorship was felt by the opposition newspapers in the Drava Banate (for example the Slovenec and Slovenski gospodar newspapers). On the other hand the liberal Jutro newspaper, which supported the regime, did not have too many problems with the publication of their articles. After the Slovenian People's Party (hereinafter SLS) joined the opposition and restored its autonomist programme, it was time to persecute the articles that hinted in any way at the demands for an autonomous Slovenia, since such articles constituted open attacks against the regime or policy of Yugoslav unitarianism. In 1932 the autonomist manifestations of the SLS were related to the birthday of Dr. Anton Korošec. The celebration did not only take place in Ljubljana, but in all of Slovenia, and green ties were worn as a sign of adherence to the SLS and its leader. The anti-regime protests culminated in the events in Šenčur on 22 May 1932.<sup>5</sup> We should not overlook that the Catholic Church represented an important support for the SLS during its time in the opposition, and that the SLS also relied on the Catholic Church during the anti-regime demonstrations. At the parish gatherings the adherents of SLS and Dr. Korošec could celebrate the political goals embodied by Dr. Korošec without interruption, as

<sup>3</sup> In 2002 the Regional Archive in Maribor prepared a special exhibition about this: *Državni tožilec v Mariboru, tisk in cenzura 1898-1941* [State Prosecutor in Maribor, Press and Censorship 1898-1941], (ed. Emica Ogrizek), Katalogi XII, (Maribor: Pokrajinski arhiv Maribor, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Dobrivojević, *Državna represija u doba diktature kralja Aleksandra 1929-1935* [State Repression During the King Alexander's Dictatorship 1929-1935], pp. 318-319.

<sup>5</sup> This was a political incident in which members of the SLS prevented a march by the newly founded Yugoslav Radical Peasants' Democracy, calling out slogans against the 6 January Dictatorship and in support of the United Slovenia program. As a result, several Upper leaders of the SLS were arrested and imprisoned.

the gendarmerie was not allowed to enter the churches. Korošec's Slovenian Declaration, published on the New Year's Eve of 1932 and representing the "most resolute national-federalist demand" in the time of King Alexander's Dictatorship, was a reaction to the well-known Maček's memorandum. The federalist state-legal programme of the SLS demanded that "a Slovenian federal unit should be established in the Yugoslav state besides the Serbian and Croatian one, and the Slovenian national individuality, name, flag, ethnic integrity, financial independence as well as political and cultural freedom should be acknowledged."<sup>6</sup> Due to obvious reasons Korošec's Slovenian Declaration was not published in Slovenec, the political newspaper of the SLS. Instead it was printed on flyers.<sup>7</sup> Due to the restrictions imposed on the political freedom, which included severe censorship, this tactics were the only possible way of disseminating various appeals among the people.<sup>8</sup>

Korošec's Slovenian Declaration concerned the central Belgrade regime and its repressive ideological apparatus personified by the Central Press Bureau of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Already in the beginning of January 1933 the "instructions due to the publication of Dr. Korošec's Slovenian Declaration" were released.<sup>9</sup> From the memoranda of the State Prosecutor's Office in Maribor, whose activities we will analyse in our modest study of the case, we can infer that Dr. Dimić, clerk of the Central Press Bureau, "gave

<sup>6</sup> Jurij Perovšek, "Jugoslavija – pričakovanja in realnost" ["Yugoslavia – Expectations and Reality"], in: *Slovenija 1848-1998: iskanje lastne poti [Slovenia 1848-1998: Finding the Individual Path]*: international scientific symposium, (ed. Stane Granda / Barbara Šatej), (Maribor: Ljubljana, 1998), p. 253. For more details about the SLS during opposition and about the activities of Dr. Korošec see also: Jure Gašparič, *SLS pod kraljevo diktatur.: Diktatura kralja Aleksandra in politika Slovenske ljudske stranke v letih 1929-1935 [Slovenian People's Party under the King's Dictatorship: King Alexander's Dictatorship and the Policy of the Slovenian People's Party 1929-1935]*, (Ljubljana 2007), pp. 115-180; Jurij Perovšek, "Punktacije SLS" ["Slovenian Declaration"], in: *Slovenska novejša zgodovina: od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije 1848-1992, I. del [Slovenian Contemporary History: from the United Slovenia Programme to the International Recognition of Slovenia 1848-1992, Part I]*, (Ljubljana, 2005), pp. 339-342; Bojan Godeša / Ervin Dolenc, *Izgubljeni spomin na Antona Korošca. Iz zapuščine Ivana Ahčina [The Lost Memory of Anton Korošec. From Ivan Ahčin's Heritage]*, (Ljubljana, 1999), pp. 83-86; Janko Prunk, "Anton Korošec v opoziciji 1930-1934" ["Anton Korošec in Opposition 1930-1934"], *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje*, 77 (2006), No. 2-3: 83-91 and certain other discussions, listed in the aforementioned works.

<sup>7</sup> As the liberal (and pro-regime) *Jutro* reported, it was first published by the Il Piccolo newspaper from Trieste (on 3 January 1933), while the *Jutro* newspaper published it as corpus delicti on 11 January 1933. The preserved flyer Slovenian Declaration was published in Perovšek, "Jugoslavija – pričakovanja in realnost" ["Yugoslavia – Expectations and Reality"], p. 240.

<sup>8</sup> One such example was the SLS flyer before the Assembly Elections of 1931, persuading people not to vote. The flyer is published in: Gašparič, *SLS pod kraljevo diktaturo [Slovenian People's Party under the King's Dictatorship]*, p. 131.

<sup>9</sup> Regional Archive in Maribor (hereinafter PAM): Državno tožilstvo Maribor (hereinafter DTM), AŠ 19, Centralni presburo za leto 1933, Seznam k starešinskim spisom Centralnega presburoja za leto 1933, Ks 2/33/1.

instructions that Dr. Korošec's proclamation may not be published, but it is allowed to argue against it and condemn it."<sup>10</sup> Already a day earlier, on 7 January 1933, the Central Press Bureau employee Mr. Radosavljevič phoned the Office of the State Prosecutor General in Ljubljana, informing the state prosecutor "that the papers may publish Dr. Korošec's Declaration", but that "it should not be published in whole, but only summarised in general, as it was published by Piccolo on 3 January." Ljubljana informed the Maribor State Prosecutor of this "over the phone" as well.<sup>11</sup> Two days later, on 9 January 1933 at 12:40 p.m., the Press Bureau phoned the Ljubljana State Prosecutor General, informing him that the press may publish the latest statements made by Korošec "only if they are accompanied with a suitable commentary. In the comments the newspapers should underline that the people reject Dr. Korošec's statements with indignation and resolutely, as well as all of the consequences that these statements might have. These comments should not refer to His Majesty the King or any issues regarding the Monarchy, since these are not questions which can be asked at all." Naturally, Ljubljana forwarded this note to the State Prosecutor in Maribor as well.<sup>12</sup> The further developments are known. The liberal (and pro-regime) *Jutro* newspaper wrote an article *Nobody should Toy with Vital National Interests*, reporting that Dr. Korošec's Slovenian Statement was first (on 3 January 1933) published by *Il Piccolo* from Trieste, while *Jutro* published them as *corpus delicti* on 11 January 1933.<sup>13</sup>

Unlike the article in *Jutro*, the State Prosecutor's Office in Maribor banned, for example, the introductory article in the *Slovenski gospodar* newspaper, entitled *Let's Read Cankar and Pitamic*. The State Prosecutor Dr. Ivan Jančič wrote that "the Prosecutor's Office did not allow this article to be published, because it refers to the known declaration written by Dr. Korošec and defends it indirectly". The editorship of the *Slovenski gospodar* argued that "the editorial under consideration does not have such tendencies", therefore the State Prosecutor asked the Central Press Bureau for its opinion.<sup>14</sup>

Soon after Korošec's Slovenian Declaration was published, the January 6<sup>th</sup> Dictatorship regime suffered another "offensive" from the opposition SLS in the Drava Banate. On Sunday, 8 January 1933, a pastoral letter of the Catholic episcopate, written on 17 November 1932 at the bishops' conference in Zagreb, was read in all Slovenian churches. In this letter the bishops attacked the anti-religious and anti-Catholic tendencies of the Sokol society of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, emphasising that these tendencies originated from the very ide-

<sup>10</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Communication of 8 January 1933, Ks 2/33/5.

<sup>11</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Note of 7 January 1933, Ks 2/33/7.

<sup>12</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Note of 9 January 1933, Ks 2/33/7.

<sup>13</sup> "Nihče se ne sme igrati z življenjskimi narodnimi interesi" ["Nobody should Toy with Vital National Interests"], *Jutro*, 11 January 1933.

<sup>14</sup> The article was supposed to be published in the *Slovenski gospodar* newspaper, (1933), no. 3, PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Communication of 18 January 1933, Ks 2/33/1.

ological bases of the Sokol society founder Dr. Miroslav Tyrš, and reproached this organisation with having devastating influence on the moral education of the nation.<sup>15</sup> The pastoral letter, read by the priests in churches, caused indignation in the circles of the regime and members of the Sokol organisation. The attack against Sokol as a state and legitimate educational institution was a severe blow against this organisation. Therefore it condemned the reproaches expressed by the pastoral letter as “unjustified and false”. Such statements supposedly only “confused the members of the Sokol, especially the school youth with various impairments”.<sup>16</sup>

On 12 January 1933 the Minister of Internal Affairs informed the Ban of the Drava Banate Dr. Marušič that at the last episcopal conference in Zagreb certain bishops “complained due to the unfriendly behaviour of the individual administrative authorities and their bodies towards the Catholic priests and even persecution of the clergy.” In accordance with the decree of the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Ban “instructed all of the subordinate authorities and bodies to treat the representatives of acknowledged creeds with the necessary discretion and respect. The clergy represents the national intelligence, which is in constant contact with the people, and therefore they can contribute significantly to the maintenance of love and order among the people, civic education, national unity and the state as a whole. Should certain individual priests forget their place and carry out acts punishable in accordance with the state legislation – which has, unfortunately, happened several times before – the appropriate legal penal sanctions shall be used against them. In such cases the offences

<sup>15</sup> Gašparič, *SLS pod kraljevo diktaturo* [Slovenian People's Party under the King's Dictatorship], p. 175.

<sup>16</sup> Archdiocese Archives in Ljubljana (hereinafter NŠAL): Spisi V. Državne zadeve (Sokol) 1930-1940, file 49, Circular of the King's Ban's Administration of the Drava Banate for the schools on the Sokol organisation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia of 4 February 1933, signed by Ban Dr. Marušič. In regard to the so-called “impairments” the communication, sent by the priest of the parish office Mr. Zabret in Št. Vid nad Ljubljano to the Bishop's Ordinary's Office in Ljubljana on 20 January 1933, is very interesting. In it he reported that the catechist at the national school in Št. Vid, Mr. Kogej, informed him about the pressures that the school administrator Mr. I. Šmajdek exerted on the subordinate teachers. Šmajdek supposedly attacked the Yugoslav episcopate, claiming that its circular about the Sokol organisation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was full of lies. Therefore the teacher of religion Kogej asked the Bishop's Ordinary's Office for instructions about what to do should the school administrator keep exerting these pressures. The school administrator Šmajdek also started investigating a 6<sup>th</sup> year student Sonc, who supposedly “said, on his way from school, that ‘Sokol girls are bitches.’” Allegedly Šmajdek asked Sonc, who received aid in school due to his family's poverty, in front of the whole class: “Have you heard that in church?” The pupil supposedly answered: “I haven't heard that, in church they only said that the Sokol organisation was godless and anti-religious.” At that point Šmajdek supposedly said, in front of all the pupils and the class teacher: “And you believed them, didn't you? Do you think everything they keep yelling about from the pulpits is true? Not even the Pope is infallible, even though they say so. The Pope is just a man, same as you. From now on the school won't give you any aid anymore.” – NŠAL, Spisi V. Državne zadeve (Sokol) 1930-1940, file 49, communications of 17 and 20 January 1933.

shall be proved beyond doubt, after which the appropriate law shall be applied, but in such a way as to preserve the position and reputation of priesthood, if possible.”<sup>17</sup>

On Sunday, 8 January, the pastoral letter was read by the priests in the Styrian churches as well, so the pressure that the regime exerted against them intensified. In accordance with the instructions of the State Prosecutor General in Ljubljana Dr. Mirko Grasselli of 20 January 1933, the Maribor State Prosecutor Dr. Jančič had to withhold, until further notice, “all of the accusations regarding the last bishops' letter”, as they referred to the pastoral letter of the Catholic episcopate in their files, “without submitting any proposals to the courts. In connection with this issue please approach the investigating judges or the Local Courts, which should forward the eventual accusations to you without first carrying out any investigations.”<sup>18</sup>

The State Prosecutor Dr. Jančič then turned to the Maribor Investigating Judge and the Local Courts of Maribor, Slovenska Bistrica, Ljutomer, Marenberg, Sv. Lenart v Slovenskih goricah, Gornja Radgona, Dolnja Lendava, Murska Sobota, Ormož, Ptuj and Prevalje, requesting that “all of the potential reports with regard to the last bishops' letter, read from the pulpits on 8 January of this year” should be forwarded to him “prior to carrying out any investigations”.<sup>19</sup> The Maribor Investigating Judge as well as the aforementioned Local Courts informed him that they had not received “any complaints with regard to the latest bishops' letter”. Thus on 18 February 1933 State Prosecutor Dr. Jančič had nothing much to report to the State Prosecutor General Dr. Grasselli about the criminal offenders suspected of “reading a pastoral letter in church”. After Dr. Grasselli demanded, on 15 February 1933, that all of the files or reports about this incident should be sent to him, Dr. Jančič could only write that in the area of the Maribor State Prosecutor's Office “a single report was submitted with regard to the reading of the communication from the Yugoslav bishops against Jernej Frangež, a priest in Sv. Marjeta ob Pesnici”. Due to the suspicion of a breach of Article 4 of the Protection of Public Security and Order Act, Janko Rakuša and Jožef Knedl were investigated as well.<sup>20</sup>

A few days earlier Dr. Grasselli had asked Dr. Jančič to inform him of all the potentially reported “criminal offences with regard to the so-called Korošec's Declaration”, as he had to urgently report on that matter to the Ministry of Justice. On 5 February 1933 the Maribor State Prosecutor responded that his

<sup>17</sup> NŠAL, Spisi V. Državne zadeve (Sokol) 1930-1940, file 49, Communication to the Bishop's Ordinary's Office about the “reservation of the administration towards the clergy” of 26 January 1933.

<sup>18</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 2, Communication of 20 January 1933, Ks 22/33/1.

<sup>19</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 2, Several communications of 21 January 1933, Ks 22/33/2.

<sup>20</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 2, Ks 22/33/3

office “has not received any reports with regard to the so-called Korošec's Declaration. Furthermore, the reports from the Local Courts do not indicate that the Local Courts have received any such reports.”<sup>21</sup>

“On the basis of the decrees of the Ban's administration on 26 January 1933 the agents of the police arrested Korošec's close associates Marko Natlačen, Anton Ogrizek and Fran Kulovec and confined them. Two days later Dr. Anton Korošec was arrested as well.”<sup>22</sup> The Central Press Bureau telephoned the Office of the State Prosecutor General in Ljubljana and informed him that the report on the confinement of certain Slovenian personalities would be published by the Jutro newspaper, and that the State Prosecutor should let it do so. “Other newspapers are not allowed to publish reports about this, only Jutro.”<sup>23</sup> The telephone communication of the Central Press Bureau's instructions of 30 January 1933 at 18:45 was immediately forwarded to the State Prosecutor General Dr. Grasselli. However, obviously the news reached the Maribor State Prosecutor too late. As it happened, the Maribor State Prosecutor Dr. Jančič received these instructions as late as on 1 February at 8:30. His communication of 1 February 1933 indicates that he thus immediately “telephoned the C. P., informing it that the yesterday's (31 January 1933) Maribor newspapers – the Maribor evening edition of Jutro, Mariborer Zeitung, Delavska politika and Slovenski gospodar – published a report about this, as it was signed 'M' in the Jutro daily newspaper, and the State Prosecutor's Office was instructed to allow the publication of articles, marked with 'M'. I have already informed the C. P. that ten days earlier I telephoned them, requesting that the C. P. communicates all of the important instructions to me by telephone, because the instructions from Ljubljana only arrive in writing two to three days after the C. P. gives its instructions. Therefore it can happen that such instructions via Ljubljana arrive too late.”<sup>24</sup> In a special explanation sent to the Central Press Bureau Dr. Jančič emphasised once again that “with regard to the C. P. instructions of 23 January 1933 at 20:30 and of 24 January 1933 the yesterday's news about the confinement of the aforementioned people could not be prevented, as the news report was marked with 'M'. The Maribor State Prosecutor's Office can therefore not be held accountable for the publication of this news.” He also emphasised that the aforementioned Maribor newspapers “reported on the confinement /.../ literally in the way reported by Jutro on 31 January 1933 on the front page in the fifth column”. Dr. Jančič once again urged the Central Press Bureau to directly inform the Maribor Prosecutor's Office “over the phone”, so that any “developments such as when the news about the confinement of certain individuals was published can be avoided in the future.”<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 2, Ks 34/33/3.

<sup>22</sup> Gašparič, *SLS pod kraljevo diktaturo* [Slovenian People's Party under the King's Dictatorship], p. 178.

<sup>23</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Note of 30 January 1933, Ks 2/33/26.

<sup>24</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Communication of 1 February 1933, Ks 2/33/26.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



In the time of censorship pressures due to Korošec's Slovenian Statement, the book *King Alexander's Dictatorship* by Svetozar Pribičević was also "disseminated illegally as well as read". In his review of the translation of this book Metod Mikuž wrote that also the opposition SLS "enjoyed reading the book written by one of its greatest political opponents, because Pribičević's deliberations assisted it in its 'principled' struggle against the JNS, the regime party," as it "shed light on all of the perniciousness and immorality of the dictatorship".<sup>26</sup>

On 28 December 1932 at 19:30 the Central Press Bureau telephoned the Maribor State Prosecutor and instructed him "to ban the book published in Paris by Svetozar Pribičević, entitled *La dictature du roi Alexandre*".<sup>27</sup> Dr. Jančič immediately informed both of the post offices, Head Office of the Border Police, and Border Police Commissioner's Office.<sup>28</sup>

Of course, the Central Press Bureau followed carefully what the foreign newspapers wrote about Pribičević. For example, on 17 January 1933 in the forenoon the Central Press Bureau telephoned the Maribor State Prosecutor and instructed him to "withhold the Frankfurter Zeitung newspaper of 15 January 1933, because it contained an article about Svetozar Pribičević's activities in Paris, discussed the reasons why our country could not get foreign loans, as well as speculated on the future form of our country. The article is very unfavourable for our country."<sup>29</sup> The State Prosecutor contacted the Head of the City Police Dr. Lovro Hacin immediately and "requested that any potential copies of the aforementioned paper should be confiscated from the post office, newsagents and coffee houses and delivered to the State Prosecutor's Office".<sup>30</sup>

Later the Maribor State Prosecutor also reported to the Central Press Bureau about the foreign newspapers which published articles about Pribičević and his statements. On 15 February 1933 he wrote that Lidovy Listy, which had supposedly been intercepted, had not arrived into the country through Maribor, while after checking the Lidove Noviny newspaper of 14 February 1933 it was supposedly established that it did not contain any articles about Pribičević.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Review by Metod Mikuž: "Svetozar Pribičević, Diktatura kralja Aleksandra" ["King Alexander's Dictatorship"] (translation, Belgrade 1952), in: *Zgodovinski časopis* 8 (1954), no. 1-4: 300-306.

<sup>27</sup> The information that the book was already banned in the end of 1932 is interesting, because the year of publication, as stated in Pribičević's book published by the Paris publishing house Bossuet, was 1933. This indicates that the intelligence service followed Pribičević's actions abroad constantly, already at the time of imprimatur.

<sup>28</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 12, Ks 1/32/441.

<sup>29</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Ks 2/33/18.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Ks 2/33/37 PAM: DTM, AŠ 2, Ks 34/33/3.

The politically-motivated process in Šenčur was also subject to censorship in February 1933. After an open conflict with the formally inexistent opposition in May 1932 in Šenčur, the authorities of the unitarian-centralist regime revealed its repressive nature. After the investigation lasting for as long as seven months and the beginning of the Šenčur process taking place in February 1933 against the “Catholic priests” from Slovenia, the regime of January 6<sup>th</sup> Dictatorship saw danger everywhere, so it followed all anti-state propaganda carefully and tried to nip it in the bud. Penal institutions were monitored as well. This is also shown by the report on the anti-state propaganda in the court prison in Kranj. The Commander of the Drava gendarme regiment sent the report of the gendarme station in Šenčur to Ban Dr. Marušič, asking for instructions with regard to the steps to be taken in order to prevent the anti-state propaganda in the court prisons:

*“On 20 February 1933, after his return from the remand in custody, mayor's son Šter Alojzij from Visoko k. No. 14 reported to the undersigned that a young man, supposedly from the surroundings of Škofja Loka, was with them in the prison of the Kranj Local Court for the duration of a certain police sentence.*

*During a general conversation this young man from Škofja Loka started telling the prisoners that he knew very well that within a month Yugoslavia would be ruined. It would go to hell and afterwards everything would be different.*

*Šter Alojzij made a statement to the undersigned that on that very same day, after hearing these anti-state statements made by this young man from Škofja Loka, he told this to the guard Simončič, who did nothing about it nor informed the judge.*

*At the same time Brodar Janez's servant – Žumer Josip from Hrastje near Kranj, who had been imprisoned due to the May events in Šenčur because he had criticised the current situation in the state – said the same thing. 'You see, if our party was in power, you would have other people visiting you in prison; but now these people are in power, so nobody comes and you're a fool for supporting them.'*

*Among others a peasant Novak Janez from Šenčur No. 132 was also in prison with Šter. The undersigned interrogated him on 21 February 1933, and Novak stated that he remembers a young man telling everyone that Yugoslavia would be ruined and that it would go to hell. However, he did not remember who said this, as there were many people in the prison. /.../ From the above it is obvious that the separatists, supporters of the former SLS, take every opportunity to spread their separatist ideas, even in prisons among the prisoners.”<sup>32</sup>*

The Ban, Dr. Drago Marušič, informed the Presidency of the Higher Provincial Court in Ljubljana about this on 6 March 1933 and asked it to “potentially implement suitable measures in the penal institutions”. All of the State

<sup>32</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 2, Ks 53/33/1.

Prosecutors Offices and penitentiaries were informed about the matter as well.<sup>33</sup>

However, let us go back to the censorship measures. With regard to the Šenčur process the Maribor State Prosecutor received “telephone” instructions from the Central Press Bureau on 21 February that the newspapers “should not publish anything about the King or the anti-dynastic tendencies in their reports about the indictment and the course of the process against Brodar and his colleagues because of the events in Šenčur. In so far as ideas about republicanism are mentioned in the indictment and the process, they can only be referred to 'in a very mild form'. It is preferable, however, if the newspapers refrain from writing about this at all. Generally, in their reports the newspapers should refer to the reports published in *Jutro*”. Dr. Jančič phoned the editorships and informed them about this immediately.<sup>34</sup>

The Central Press Bureau also decreed “that the newspapers, in their reports about the process against Brodar and his comrades at the State Court for the Protection of State in Belgrade, can only publish the legal parts of the defenders' speeches, not also the political parts. On this occasion the C. P., after my report, decreed that the *Morgen Ausgabe Berliner Tageblatt* newspaper of 1 March 1933 should be intercepted due to the introductory article entitled *Südslawen ohne Südslawen?*” Dr. Jančič informed the editorships about the first decree over the phone, while in case of the second decree he asked the City Police and both post offices to “confiscate any copies” of the aforementioned newspaper.<sup>35</sup> On 2 March 1933 the clerk of the Central Press Bureau Dr. Dimić emphasised yet again that, with regard to the Šenčur process, “the newspapers are also allowed to refer to the legal parts, not the political parts of the defenders' speeches”.<sup>36</sup>

On 23 February 1933 the Central Press Bureau dictated the instructions over the phone to the State Prosecutor General in Ljubljana, that “*Slovenec* should not publish any photographs of the accused and their defenders from the process against Brodar and his associates at the State Court for the Protection of State. As far as *Jutro* is concerned in this regard, the previous instructions, that is, that Dr. Kramar shall make decisions about this, remain in force.” Naturally, Ljubljana informed Maribor about this. Furthermore, the esteemed censors were especially reminded that “in the Brodar process any tendencies of the newspapers unfriendly towards the regime should be excluded which may aim to gain sympathy for the accused, their defenders of other political personalities among the population. Furthermore, I emphasise that in the *Slovenec* newspaper the proposals or questions of the defend-

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Ks 2/33/45.

<sup>35</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Ks 2/33/45.

<sup>36</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Ks 2/33/45.

ers should be printed under a heading printed in bold, while the questions of the President and the Prosecutor shall be printed in ordinary script. I also have to underline the following heading: *And you stand with Barle*<sup>37</sup> – *And one of the greatest Yugoslavs and Slovenians /sc. (sciliet = that is; i.e.; – author’s comment) Dr. Korošec/*. All such deliberate messages should be eliminated without exception.”<sup>38</sup> On 24 February the Central Press Bureau telephoned the Maribor State Prosecutor’s Office yet again, warning it “that the ban on the publication of the photographs of the accused also applies to the newspapers from Maribor”.<sup>39</sup>

In Styria a whole collection of illegal flyers appeared in a fervent response to the confinement of Dr. Korošec and his close associates, as it was forbidden to discuss these issues in the permitted Catholic press. The secret circular mail, spreading among the population, was pronounced as nothing short of a “new kind of literature” by the pro-regime newspaper *Jutro*. The constant campaign of secret circular mail proved that the organisational structure of the former SLS “kept functioning very efficiently. Ban Marušič was powerless. With his policing he encouraged quite the opposite – the hostile sentiment towards the regime.”<sup>40</sup>

As a model example of the dissemination of the forbidden anti-regime flyers we can look at their spreading in Slovenske Konjice and its surroundings. The incident occurred in the night from 18 to 19 February 1933, when the unknown perpetrators scattered a large number of flyers with anti-regime contents in the main square in Konjice and its immediate surroundings. The flyers entitled *Slovenian Declaration* and *To Each His Own* (on the back) as well as *To the Slovenian Nation* were partly scattered over the floor, partly affixed to fences and trees, while in the Tolsti vrh municipality, more precisely in Špitalič, “many flyers were displayed in various spots in front of the church, where the church-goers could read them”. The local commissioner of Konjice immediately informed the State Prosecutor at the State Court for the Protection of State in Belgrade about the criminal incident in order to initiate criminal proceedings.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Member of Parliament and priest Janko Barle. For more information about him see for example: Gašparič, *SLS pod kraljevo diktaturo* [Slovenian People’s Party under the King’s Dictatorship], pp. 154-155.

<sup>38</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Ks 2/33/49 in relation to 45.

<sup>39</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Ks 2/33/50.

<sup>40</sup> Gašparič, *SLS pod kraljevo diktaturo* [Slovenian People’s Party under the King’s Dictatorship], pp. 179-180.

<sup>41</sup> Zgodovinski arhiv Celje (hereinafter ZAC): collection Okrajno sodišče v Slovenskih Konjicah 1898-1941 (OS SK), AŠ 23, K 10/33. Report of the local commissioner of Konjice of 20 February 1933 and 21 February 1933.

The printed contents of *Korošec's Slovenian Declaration* are known. The back of the flyers contained an appeal to all Slovenians, entitled *To Each His Own*, signed by the *Slovenska pest (Slovenian Fist)*. The flyer emphasised that Dr. Anton Korošec, Dr. Marko Natlačen, Dr. Franc Kulovec, Dr. Anton Ogrizek, Dr. Vladko Maček and Dr. Mehmed Spaho had been interned “because they wanted to ensure the rights of the Slovenian people, and because they wanted to save the Slovenian people from total destitution. Now these lackeys threaten to imprison our bishops as well, /.../ because they publicly stated, in accordance with their duties, that the regime-supporting Sokol organisation, financed by the regime with the millions taken from the pockets of taxpayers, that this Sokol society is godless and anti-religious.” The flyer called upon Slovenians to stand up to the repression and exploitation of the Slovenian nation and subdue the traitors among Slovenians who want to “crush our Slovenian awareness and Catholic conviction while stripping us naked, ensuring that we soon become a nation of paupers. – The centralist and dictatorial regime from Belgrade commits heinous crimes against Slovenians. However, from afar the pressure would not have been so terrible if this regime did not have its loyal servants, minions, lackeys, traitors of their own nation among us. Under the threat of bayonets and police truncheons these cowards among Slovenians dare to carry out their reign of terror against the Slovenian people.”<sup>42</sup>

The undersigned *Slovenska pest (Slovenian Fist)*, which supported a free Slovenia in a free Yugoslavia, used its motto *To Each His Own* to call for a “unanimous boycott” of all traitors, regime merchants and craftsmen, who carry out the tasks of regime lackeys and who keep “reporting and denouncing”. The people who wish for “freedom and bright future” were called upon not to drink another drop “in the taverns supporting the JRKD, as this organisation of regime servants and minions is called. No Slovenian soul should take part in another event or gathering organised by the regime or the Sokol society. Avoid and beware the regime rats!”<sup>43</sup>

The third, cyclostyle-printed flyer entitled *To the Slovenian Nation*, is a good example of the fieldwork carried out by the SLS. It opposes the liberal press, which supposedly tried to “hide the truth with a thousand lies” and confuse the people. The flyer printed by the opposition SLS would allegedly “reveal the truth” to the people, who were asked to read the flyer and hand it on, because “it should go from hand to hand”. The cyclostyle-printed flyer mentions the book by Svetozar Pribičević, which “describes all of the past and current circumstances and accuses the today's regime, especially Slovenian democrats, that they have sold the freedom of our nation for a handful of lentils. The book is forbidden in Slovenia, just like all other texts fighting for justice and honesty are banned and confiscated, and just like all honest men are imprisoned. Furthermore, the book also states that we are broke, and proves it with numbers.

<sup>42</sup> ZAC, OS SK, AŠ 23, K 10/33, flyer entitled *To Each His Own*.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

It also describes the private lives of higher-ranking people, making the readers ask themselves: why do we have to feed them? This book has been spread all over the world now, and it is a historical proof that sooner or later everyone who oppresses our people, firing our family fathers from their jobs and transferring our cultural workers to Macedonia, should be wiped away.”<sup>44</sup>

The flyer calls upon the people to beware of “democratic minions, who will see you imprisoned or will report you to the tax administration for a small reward. It has recently happened that the democrats forged a map and wrote 'long live Mussolini' over the Slovenian territory. Then they photographed it and sent the photo to Belgrade, claiming that this was done by the Slovenian students raised by the clericalists. And this is only one small example. Not long ago they sent denunciations to Belgrade, that our vicars taught the children that the members of the Orthodox Church were bandits – claiming that 'schismatic' meant 'bandit' in Slovenian.”<sup>45</sup>

In order to open the eyes of the Slovenian men and women, poisoned by the liberal press, some interesting details were included on the cyclostyle-printed flyer. With regard to the question of the French ambassador about the confinement of Dr. Korošec and others the authors revealed an alleged explanation of the Belgrade regime that “all Slovenians were against him and that he was at a risk of being killed, thus they decided to make it possible for him to live in peace.” Because Yugoslavism means that all South Slavs should speak a single language, they emphasised “that we do not want any other language but the one we have been taught by our Slovenian mothers. However, we acknowledge that we are Yugoslavs, that is, citizens of a single state. That's why we're being imprisoned.”<sup>46</sup>

In the end they wanted to remind people “that many professors who have families have been fired from the secondary schools, and in their place their own people, who are single and have other jobs, have been instated. Do you know that us Slovenians pay three times as many taxes as the whole of Serbia? Do you remember how in Grosuplje Pucelj said that he would remain in power, even if he had to kill every last one of our people, so that the whole Slovenia would be drenched in blood? The Minister incites murder!”<sup>47</sup>

Naturally, the gendarmerie in Konjice started looking for the unknown perpetrators immediately. However, the dissemination of the forbidden flyers continued. On 27 February 1933 Anton Čampa, Commander of the gendarmerie station in Oplotnica, informed the Local Court of Konjice that in the night from 25 to 26 February 1933 “several flyers with anti-state and anti-regime contents were nailed to the houses. /.../ As the perpetrators are unknown,

<sup>44</sup> ZAC, OS SK, AŠ 23, K 10/33, flyer entitled *To the Slovenian Nation*.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

house searches were carried out at the residences of the most fervent and active adherents of the former SLS, who had also expressed their support of the SLS by wearing green ties immediately after the events in Šenčur, Mengeš and Domžale. At that time they were also reported to the Local Court because of it. These people include Dr. Sevšek Maks, Petelinšek Matija and Celcer Franc from Oplotnica. Sevšek was awarded the degree of a doctor at the University of Graz. As soon as he returned, he became active in politics and started gathering supporters. Petelinšek Matija runs an assorted goods store, while Celcer is a wood merchant. These two are zealous adherents and loyal comrades of Sevšek, especially Petelinšek, because he is Sevšek's brother-in-law. The investigation has not revealed anything aggravating about Sevšek or Celcer, while a single copy of the '*Slovenian Declaration, New Year 1933*' was found in Petelinšek's house. Its contents are identical to the fliers nailed to the houses, but it is different in terms of writing and paper. Petelinšek stated that he had found this Declaration on the morning of 21 or 22 February in front of his house. Let me also mention that on Sunday, 19 February, Dr. Sevšek arrived from Ljubljana, where he had just concluded his internship, so it is not impossible that he brought these flyers with him at the time and then distributed them among his loyal friends, who proceeded to nail them to the houses.<sup>48</sup>

On 1 March 1933 the local commissioner proposed that criminal proceedings should be instigated against the suspected perpetrators, who had used tacks to affix fliers to the houses in Oplotnica.<sup>49</sup> Towards the end of March Matija Petelinšek was interrogated at the Local Court of Konjice, but he denied any guilt. He stated: "By no means do I have anything to do with the dissemination of any flyers, and I have no idea where they could have come from."<sup>50</sup> On the same day Franc Celcer was interrogated as well, and he also denied everything.<sup>51</sup> Dr. Maks Sevšek did not appear at the interrogation. The witnesses interrogated on the same day confirmed the innocence of all three suspects.<sup>52</sup>

Gendarmerie started inquiring about Dr. Maks Sevšek's address in order to interrogate him as well. As it happened, on 15 March 1933 he had gone to practice "to some (probably women's) hospital in Ljubljana". The doctor was finally tracked down in April 1933. On 4 May 1933 he was interrogated at the Local Court of Ljubljana. Dr. Sevšek stated that he was not guilty. With regard to the report of the gendarmerie he stated that he knew that flyers had been spread all over Oplotnica in the night between 25 and 26 February, "but I haven't even seen them. On that night I was visiting the merchant Ivan Pavlič

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., communication of the Gendarmerie Station Commander in Oplotnica of 27 February 1933 and the attached cyclostyle-printed flyer entitled *Slovenian Declaration, New Year 1933*.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., Communication of 1 March 1933.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Minutes from the interrogation of the suspect Matija Petelinšek of 27 March 1933.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Minutes from the interrogation of the suspect Franc Celcer of 27 March 1933.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Minutes from the interrogation of witnesses of 27 March 1933.

in Prihova, as his son has just been baptised. I stayed there until about half past four in the morning, when I headed home in the company of Marta Bekar, teacher in Mežica near Prevalje, Marija Lešnik, living in Oplotnica, and Jožef Vahtar, also living there. On the way I stopped at the local parish church for the morning mass, and then I went home together with a large number of other people leaving mass as well. Two members of the gendarmerie from Oplotnica, whom I met as I was leaving the mass, can confirm that. I should add that on 25 and 26 February in the evening Pavlič Ivan, the merchant in Prihova, and his wife Sabina also celebrated their wedding anniversary.” The merchant's wife Sabina Pavlič confirmed Sevšek's statement as a witness, but after this hearing the young doctor definitely remained on the list of suspects who endangered the regime of King Alexander.

If we return to the Office of the State Prosecutor Dr. Jančič in Maribor, we can establish that after March 1933 he only received a few more instructions from the Press Bureau with regard to how to handle the publication or dissemination of forbidden anti-state and anti-regime articles and news. On 24 March 1933 the last communication was sent by the State Prosecutor in Maribor with regard to the Slovenian Statement. The State Prosecutor Dr. Jančič reported to the Central Press Bureau that a single copy of the *Amerikanski Slovenec* newspaper, published in Chicago, was confiscated and that he was forwarding it. The prosecution “withheld the newspaper because of the article *Dr. Korošec's Slovenian Statement* on page 2, column 1 and 2. The copy I am sending to you is the only one which has arrived to Maribor.”<sup>53</sup>

From the preserved archive materials we can discern that in the period when the SLS was in opposition the censorship intensified considerably. The regime of the King's Dictatorship became mindful of all that was forbidden and anti-state, especially after the publication of Korošec's Slovenian Statement, which represented the culmination of the turbulent events taking place in 1932. After the aforementioned censorship interventions, in the middle of 1933 the Central Press Bureau wanted to intensify the control over the forbidden press even further. On 6 June 1933 it sent a strictly confidential message to the State Prosecutor's Offices that “the existing procedures for the supervision of printed materials should be supplemented with new measures in such a way as to facilitate a closer cooperation with the military authorities in this regard.”<sup>54</sup> This cooperation would supposedly take place on two levels. The State Prosecution should also review the printed materials, published abroad, from the military point of view, “since we have noticed that especially recently literature is being disseminated in the army and navy which could be very detrimental for the spirit and morale in the army. Such literature includes various texts and other printed or copied materials regarding the spreading of communism, anti-militarism and similar defeatist ideas, as well as those texts

<sup>53</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 19, Ks 2/33/66.

<sup>54</sup> PAM: DTM, AŠ 2, Ks 109/33/2.



and subjects that argue against the trust in our state regime and encourage its illegal change."According to the Central Press Bureau this goal could be achieved if the State Prosecutor's Offices carried out the inspections in agreement with the military authorities, which was envisioned at the second level of cooperation, where the State Prosecutor's Offices should, after reviewing the Slovenian printed materials, inform the military headquarters about all the banned publications. The Division (or Army) Headquarters – the General Staff – in the territory of the Prosecutor's Office would have to be informed. Furthermore, during every inspection the State Prosecutor's Office should also consider the influence of these publications on the army and navy. In case it should be unclear whether a certain matter could be harmful for the spirit of the army or not, the preliminary opinion of the military authorities would have to be acquired.<sup>55</sup>

## **Die Zensur in Steiermark unmittelbar nach der Verlautbarung der Korošec-Punktation**

### **Zusammenfassung**

Nach der Einführung der repressiven Diktatur des Königs Aleksandar wurde auch die Zensur noch strenger ausgeübt. Den Staatsanwälten und der Polizei wurde überlassen, Entscheidungen über das Verbot der Veröffentlichung und der Distribution von Druckerzeugnissen zu treffen. Gegen ihre Entscheidung konnte man keinen Einspruch bei Gericht einlegen, was nicht im Einklang mit dem Konzept des Staates und der Rechtsstaatlichkeit stand. Das am 6. Januar 1929 eingeführte Regime rechtfertigte die ungewöhnlich restriktive und strenge Aufsicht über die Presse und Journalisten mit höheren Staatsinteressen. Die sehr strenge Zensur, die vom genannten Regime eingeführt worden war, und Aufsicht über die in- und ausländische Presse dauerten bis zum Dezember 1934, als erste Artikel, wenigstens teilweise im Geiste der freien Presse, veröffentlicht wurden. Die von Korošec verfasste slowenische Deklaration (Punktation) machte das zentrale Belgrader Regime und seinen ideologischen im Zentralen Pressbüro des Präsidiums des Ministerialrates verkörperten Apparat besorgt. Aus den erhaltenen archivalischen Quellen konnte man schließen, dass zur gleichen Zeit, wenn die Slowenische Volkspartei (Slovenska ljudska stranka) in Opposition war, auch die Zensur bedeutend strenger ausgeübt wurde.

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

## Bibliography:

Dobrivojević, Ivana, *Državna represija u doba diktature kralja Aleksandra 1929-1935* [*State Repression During the King Alexander's Dictatorship 1929-1935*], (Belgrade, 2006)

*Državni tožilec v Mariboru, tisk in cenzura 1898-1941* [*State Prosecutor in Maribor, Press and Censorship 1898-1941*], (ed. Emica Ogrizek), Katalogi XII, (Maribor: Pokrajinski arhiv Maribor, 2002)

Gašparič, Jure, *SLS pod kraljevo diktaturo: Diktatura kralja Aleksandra in politika Slovenske ljudske stranke v letih 1929-1935* [*Slovenian People's Party under the King's Dictatorship: King Alexander's Dictatorship and the Policy of the Slovenian People's Party 1929-1935*], (Ljubljana 2007)

Godeša, Bojan / Dolenc, Ervin, *Izpuščeni spomin na Antona Korošca: Iz zapuščine Ivana Ahčina* [*The Lost Memory of Anton Korošec: From Ivan Ahčin's Heritage*], (Ljubljana, 1999)

Mikuž, Metod, "Svetozar Pribičević, Diktatura kralja Aleksandra" ["King Alexander's Dictatorship"] (translation, Belgrade 1952), in: *Zgodovinski časopis* 8 (1954), no. 1-4: 300-306.

"Nihče se ne sme igrati z življenjskimi narodnimi interesi" ["Nobody should Toy with Vital National Interests"], *Jutro*, 11 January 1933.

Perovšek, Jurij, "Jugoslavija – pričakovanja in realnost" ["Yugoslavia – Expectations and Reality"] in: *Slovenija 1848-1998: iskanje lastne poti* [*Slovenia 1848-1998: Finding the Individual Path*]: international scientific symposium, (ed. Stane Granda / Barbara Šatej), (Maribor: Ljubljana, 1998)

Perovšek, Jurij, "Punktacije SLS" ["Slovenian Declaration"] in: *Slovenska novejša zgodovina: od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije 1848-1992, I. del* [*Slovenian Contemporary History: from the United Slovenia Programme to the International Recognition of Slovenia 1848-1992, Part I*], (Ljubljana, 2005)

Prunk, Janko, "Anton Korošec v opoziciji 1930-1934" ["Anton Korošec in Opposition 1930-1934"], *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje*, 77 (2006), no. 2-3: 83-91