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**KOMUNISTIČNA PARTIJA SLOVENIJE IN  
REVOLUCIONARNO GIBANJE 1941–1943**

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## Povzetek

Komunistična partija Slovenije (KPS) je ob napadu sil osi na Jugoslavijo aprila 1941 stopila na politično prizorišče kot družbeno marginalna stranka, z manj kot 1.300 člani. Bila je integralni del centralistično urejene Komunistične partije Jugoslavije (KPJ), le-ta pa je bila sekcija Kominterne. Omenjeni okvir je pomembno določal njeno delovanje in usmeritve, ki jih je usklajevala z interesi revolucije in državnimi interesi Sovjetske zveze, ki je bila hkrati edina socialistična država boljševiškega tipa. Njena glavna idejna voditelja sta bila Edvard Kardelj in Boris Kidrič. Za sabo je imela dvajset let ilegalnega delovanja in temu ustrezno je bila ob nastopu vojne tudi usposobljena. Kar je bilo še posebej pomembno, vojno je dočakala notranje poenotena, saj je do takrat že zaključila s procesom boljševizacije, ki so ga spremljale notranje čistke.

Strateški cilj jugoslovanskih in s tem slovenskih komunistov je bila vseskozi revolucija in vzpostavitev družbe po sovjetskem zgledu. To je komunistična stranka na Slovenskem večkrat izkazovala že v dvajsetletnem predvojnem obdobju, ko je v pričakovanju revolucij v Evropi neposredno skušala uveljaviti svoje revolucionarne cilje; npr. z zaostrovanjem družbenih razmer prek organiziranja stavkovnega gibanja leta 1920, z organiziranjem nekakšne strankarske vojske v letih 1923–1924, ob uvedbi kraljeve diktature leta 1929, ko je zopet v pričakovanju revolucije v Evropi pozvala na upor in nato kar nekaj let živela v prepričanju, da je revolucionarna situacija v Evropi že nastopila. Obdobje ljudskofrontnih povezav je v skladu s taktiko Kominterne predstavljalo obdobje politične širine, ki je bilo prekinjeno ob sporazumu Hitler – Stalin avgusta 1939. Temu sledeča druga svetovna vojna je bila označena za imperialistično, glavni krivec zanjo pa zahodne demokracije – »zahodni imperialisti«. Malo pred napadom sil osi na Jugoslavijo so jugoslovanski komunisti opustili takšno oceno in sprejeli pogled o bolj izenačeni odgovornosti fašizma in zahodnih demokracij za vojno. Vendar misli na revolucijo niso opustili, saj je le-ta bila tako rekoč neizbežna skladno z njihovim pojmovanjem imperializma, ki da poraja do skrajnosti zaostrena razredna nasprotja, ki jih je mogoče razrešiti le po revolucionarni poti.

Ob napadu na Jugoslavijo komunisti takega stališča niso spremenili. Opustili so ga šele po nemškem napadu na Sovjetsko zvezo junija 1941 ob izrecnem naročilu Kominterne in sovjetskega državnega vodstva, da gre sedaj za domovinsko vojno, za boj proti fašizmu, in ne za revolucijo. S preusmeritvijo v protifašistični odpor so preusmerili svoje predhodne priprave za odpor, ki so bile dotlej v funkciji priprav na revolucijo. Le-te so se v konkretni obliki

najbolj jasno odražale v ustanavljanju vojno-revolucionarnih komitejev v obdobju med napadom na Jugoslavijo in napadom na Sovjetsko zvezo, s sprejetjem protifašističnega odpora pa so ti komiteji postali nekakšni štabi za organiziranje prvih partizanskih enot. Skladno s spremenjeno usmeritvijo se je tudi dotedanja Protiimperialistična fronta, ustanovljena aprila 1941, preimenovala v Osvobodilno fronto slovenskega naroda (OF). OF je bila ustanovljena na pobudo KPS, združevala je več predvsem levičarsko usmerjenih skupin, v njej je bila KPS edina stranka, v jugoslovanskem prostoru pa je predstavljala posebnost. S tem se komunisti niso odrekli revolucionarni usmeritvi, temveč so svoje delovanje prilagodili novim razmeram in spoznanju, da bo cilje mogoče doseči prek protifašističnega odpora in mobilizacije Slovencev na osnovi njihovega nezadovoljstva s predvojnimi družbenimi razmerami.

Glede na svojo izrazito revolucionarno usmeritev in vero v revolucionarno zmožnost evropskega proletariata so vse sile usmerili v organiziranje odpora na politični ravni in v takojšnji oborožen odpor ter se v tem oziru razločevali od evropskih komunističnih strank. Z organiziranjem zgodnjega odpora so prehiteli tradicionalne slovenske politične stranke, ki so sicer tudi začele s pripravami na odpor, a so njegovo izvedbo načrtovale v nedefinirani prihodnosti, ko bi v ugodnejši mednarodni konstelaciji ta odpor imel izgled na uspeh in bi terjal tudi manj žrtev. KPS si je s pobudniško in neposredno organizacijsko vlogo, pri čemer jo je vodil revolucionarni interes, zagotovila vodilno pozicijo v odporniškem gibanju že na samem začetku. Kljub določenemu upoštevanju tako imenovanih zaveznikov v OF je namreč takoj uveljavila popoln nadzor nad najpomembnejšimi področji, kot so bila partizanska vojska, propaganda in varnostno obveščevalna služba.

Odločenost slovenskih komunistov za zgodnji odpor in vztrajanje v njem sta izvirala iz njihovega pričakovanja revolucije v Evropi in prepričanja, ki je trajalo vse do sredine leta 1942, da zavezništvo protifašistične koalicije ni trdno. To je imelo ob še nekaterih drugih dejavnikih (npr. vera v moč Rdeče armade in prepričanje, da bo vojna kratka) za posledico prehod v tako imenovano drugo fazo revolucije zlasti na partizanskem ozemlju v Ljubljanski pokrajini spomladi in poleti 1942 z usodnimi posledicami za nadaljnja razmerja znotraj slovenskega naroda, katerih skrajna zaostritev je privedla do državljanske vojne. Na partizanskem ozemlju je namreč komunistična partija začela z najbolj odkritim vnašanjem revolucionarnih prvin v odporniško gibanje v celotnem vojnem obdobju in uveljavljati tako imenovano ljudsko oblast, kar je dejansko pomenilo uveljavljanje revolucionarne oblasti. Ta se je odražala v uvajanju sprememb na lastninsko-ekonomskem področju, v usmrтитvah razrednih nasprotnikov in nasploh v revolucionarnem terorju, v partijskem sektašenju napram nekomunističnim zavezniškim skupinam v OF, v odnosu do vere in Cerkve, v izrazitem

poudarjanju vodilne vloge KPS v odporu in s tem povezano partijsko ikonografijo (uvajanje komunističnih simbolov) ter ustanavljanju proletarskih vojaških enot.

V krizi odporništv, povzročeni predvsem s silovito italijansko ofenzivo poleti in jeseni 1942, je KPS krajši čas v politični usmeritvi uveljavljala večjo širino in je v tej situaciji zavezniškim skupinam dopuščala več možnosti v njihovem delovanju in s tem njihovemu skupinskemu uveljavljanju. Vendar je kmalu pod vplivom usmeritev osrednjega vodstva KPJ politiko širine opustila in s sprejetjem Dolomitske izjave marca 1943 začrtala strategijo utrjevanja svoje monopolne vloge v odporištvu. Z Dolomitsko izjavo je OF postala enotna organizacija, sokoli in krščanski socialisti kot temeljni skupini v OF so se morali odreči skupinski identiteti, KPS kot stranka boljševiskega tipa si je zagotovila izključno pravico, da stranko ohrani ter jo nadalje krepi, pa tudi formalno ji je bila priznana vodilna vloga, katero je sicer imela že ves čas.

Na področju politične organiziranosti je s tem prišlo do pomembne strukturne spremembe, saj se je OF skupaj z množičnimi organizacijami poslej neposredno vezala na KPS, le-ta pa je v njih prek kadrovskih vzvodov uveljavljala politični vpliv, saj so odbori OF in odbori množičnih organizacij glede na kadrovsko sestavo postajali vse bolj partijski. Politični učinek, ki ga je partija dosegla z Dolomitsko izjavo, je bil torej zasnovan ravno na organizacijskem vprašanju v njegovem ožjem in širšem pomenu. S tem je KPS stopila na pot monopolnega političnega in organizacijskega jedra celotnega osvobodilnega gibanja. Vodilna partijska vloga, katero so ji ostale skupine v OF priznavale sicer od vsega začetka, vendar predvsem iz nekakšnih moralnih osnov, ker so cenile in ji priznavale njeno prvenstvo pri organiziranju protiokupatorskega odpora, se je v podolomitskem obdobju postopoma vse bolj materializirala, se pravi konkretno udejanjala, nekomuniste pa postopoma odrivala med manj pomembne sopotnike. V kolikor jim je KPS tudi poslej zaupala pomembnejše položaje, jim jih je zato, ker je z njimi na zunaj še vedno vzdrževala potrebno ji širino osvobodilnega gibanja.

Vzporedno z organiziranjem in vodenjem protifašističnega odpora je bila KPS ves čas izrazito usmerjena v reševanje notranjih partijskih vprašanj. Ohranjanje, obnavljanje in širjenje mreže partijskih organizacij so bile stalnice organizacijskega prizadevanja KPS, kar je bilo povezano z njenim spoznanjem, da ji protiokupatorski odpor odpira edinstveno priložnost za izvedbo revolucionarnih ciljev. Temu vprašanju je KPS namenjala polno energije, saj je le-to bilo najtesneje povezano sprva z vprašanjem uveljavljanja in zatem ohranjanja njene vodilne vloge v vodenju osvobodilnega boja. Samo takšna vloga ji je namreč odpirala pot k uresničenju revolucionarnega partijskega programa, kakršnega je Komunistična partija

Jugoslavije sprejela na vukovarskem kongresu leta 1920. Učinkovito reševanje organizacijskega vprašanja je bilo za partijo strateškega pomena, saj je za izvedbo revolucionarnih ciljev potrebovala usposobljene in zanesljive kadre.

V protiokupatorski odpor je KPS šla tako rekoč brez kakršnih koli zadržkov. Vanj je vključila vse svoje razpoložljive sile, ne oziraje se na lastne žrtve. Njena notranja disciplina in vera v revolucijo sta bili tisto vezivo, ki ji je omogočalo preživetje tudi najbolj kritičnih trenutkov. Zgodnja odločitev za oborožen odpor je že leta 1941 povzročila velike organizacijske spremembe z velikimi političnimi učinki. Cilj KPS je bil skladno s programom OF, s katerim je partija v javnosti nastopala, organizirati odpor v vseslovenskem obsegu, ne glede na okupacijske in državne meje, ki so delile slovensko nacionalno ozemlje, pri čemer je imelo italijansko okupacijsko območje (Ljubljanska pokrajina) ves čas središčno vlogo. Od tu je osrednje vodstvo pogosto neposredno posegalo s pošiljanjem partijskih aktivistov na območja, kjer organizacij KPS ob začetku vojne ni bilo (Primorska, Koroška) ali pa so te bile zaradi okupatorjevega pritiska močno prizadete (Štajerska, Gorenjska). Ob vzpodbujanju in neposrednem organiziranju odporniškega gibanja je obenem vzpostavljala in sčasoma vse bolj krepila tudi lastno organizacijo.

Zgodnji odpor in brezkompromisno vztrajanje v tem odporu sta povzročala velike izgube v vrstah komunistov, še zlasti na nemškem okupacijskem območju. Krvni davek in izpadanje komunistov iz različnih vzrokov (aretacije, pošiljanje v koncentracijska taborišča, interniranje, tudi pojavi pasivizacije itd.) so privedli partijsko organizacijo na posameznih območjih občasno v kritičen položaj. Sodimo, da so bili zanjo najbolj kritični jesenski meseci v letu 1942. To je bil čas, ko je na Gorenjskem po razbitju organizacije v začetku leta 1942 ostalo le nekaj partijskih aktivistov na terenu in v vojski, ko je partija na Štajerskem, potem ko je pomladi in poleti 1942 sicer delno premagala posledice prejšnjih policijskih vdorov v organizacijo, bila ponovno povsem razbita, ko je italijanska ofenziva v Ljubljanski pokrajini zadala težke udarce odporniškemu gibanju pa tudi partiji, začel pa se je še odkrit državljanski spopad, in ko je partija na Primorskem bila še vedno omejena le na nekaj žarišč, na Koroško pa sploh še ni prodrla. Zatem je šla v načrtno ofenzivo s tem, da je za krajši ali daljši čas razposlala vidne partijske aktiviste v posamezne pokrajine, s kadrovske prerazporeditvami in neposrednim usmerjanjem političnega dela premagala kritično razdobje, kar je sovpadalo tudi z vojaško-političnim preobratom na mednarodnem prizorišču. Tako je do konca leta 1943 na večini etničnega ozemlja vzpostavila več ali manj trdno odporniško gibanje, partijske vrste pa do jeseni 1943 kljub velikim izgubam pomnožila na 2.900 članov in 1100 kandidatov za člane KPS.



Pri oblikovanju meril, na osnovi katerih je pritegovala nove člane, se je partija v času okupacije precej prilagodila spremenjenim razmeram. Prejšnjim, na razrednosti utemeljenim merilom, je dodala nova, ki so izhajala iz dejstva okupacije, vodenja odpora proti okupatorjem in posameznikove udeležbe v tem upor. Merila oziroma t. i. kriteriji, ki jih je posameznik moral izpolnjevati pri sprejemu v partijo, niso bila povsem enotna; opazne so bile razlike tako med posameznimi obdobji kot med posameznimi pokrajinami, opazne pa so bile tudi razlike v osebnih pristopih tistih, ki so o sprejemih odločali.

O vključevanju novih članov, to pa je bila v glavnem mladina, je mogoče na splošno zatrditi, da jih je partija izbirala med tistimi, ki so se zavzeto vključili v odporniško gibanje in disciplinirano opravljali naloge. Upoštevanje drugih meril, kot sta svetovnonazorska pripadnost in poznavanje partijskega programa, je težje določiti. Predpostavljamo pa lahko, da je bila KPS pri izbiri novih članov predvsem v Ljubljanski pokrajini najbližje predvojni usmeritvi. Prožnejša merila pri sprejemanju novih članov so se npr. odražala v navedbah, da se novi člani ali kandidati za člane KPS seznanjajo z "osnovnimi obrisi programa Partije", kar kaže, da vsaj nekateri člani ob sprejemu niso bili seznanjeni z njegovo vsebino. Glede socialne pripadnosti se je poudarjala delavsko-kmečka osnova, v primerjavi s predvojnimi obdobjem pa je bil opazen porast članov iz vrst kmečkega sloja. Posledica sprejemanja na širših osnovah so bili pojavi, ki so kazali na določeno zmedenost, ko ni bilo več prave ločnice med organizacijami KPS in OF ali požrtvovalnimi borci v partizanskih enotah. V obravnavanem obdobju se je to pojavljalo predvsem na Gorenjskem, kjer so neugodne razmere zaradi razbitja partijske organizacije želeli na hitro izboljšati z množičnim in kampanjskim sprejemanjem brez upoštevanja kakšnih posebnih meril. Čeprav so bili takšni pristopi s strani partijskega vodstva zatem večkrat kritizirani, pa sami po sebi vendar potrjujejo pomembnost ali celo izključni delež narodnoosvobodilne komponente, ki so jo posamezniki v partiji prepoznavali, jo zato tudi sprejemali in nato postali njen član. Šele takrat se je pogosto začela ideološka prevzgoja, od leta 1943 dalje tudi v okviru organiziranih partijskih tečajev in šol.

Partijsko organizacijo so obeleževala prav zanjo izrazito značilna pravila vzdrževanja posebnih notranjih odnosov. Temeljila so na discipliniranem sprejemanju partijskih pravil ter usmeritev in iz tega izhajajočega discipliniranega opravljanja naloženih nalog, kar se je vse skupaj povezovalo s pojmom "boljševizacija" partije. Najpomembnejše vodilo v delu KPS je bilo zagotoviti si navzočnost v vseh organizacijah osvobodilnega gibanja, svoj vpliv pa uveljavljati predvsem z vsakodnevnim konkretnim delom in metodo prepričevanja. Med notranje partijske značilnosti je spadalo tudi ustvarjanje precejšnjega pritiska na članstvo, ki je

bil v začetku predvsem instrument zagotavljanja kontinuiranega vodenja odpora proti okupatorju pod vodstvom partije, kasneje pa vse bolj tudi usmerjanja mnogokrat politično nezadostno usposobljenega kadra.

Ključna dejstva, ki so KPS omogočila uveljavitev v vojnih razmerah v obravnavanem obdobju, so bila: dejaven protiokupatorski odpor, s čimer je prehitela druge politične subjekte; javno nastopanje s programom, kodificiranim v temeljnih točkah OF, s čimer je uspela pridobiti precejšen del Slovencev, kar je bilo celo bolj odločilno kot sama odločitev za odpor; okupatorjevi ukrepi, neposredno usmerjeni na uničenje slovenskega naroda kot etnične kategorije, ki so morali vsaj delno pritrjevati upravičenosti zahteve oboroženega nastopa; povezovanje narodnoosvobodilne vsebine s socialno, le-ta pa ni bila v programu le komunistov, temveč je bila širše prisotna, čeprav so bile konkretne predstave o njej različne. Ne moremo trditi, da komunistom v vojni ni šlo za nacionalno osvoboditev, vendar so ob tem prvenstveno zasledovali lastne cilje in jih na koncu tudi uveljavili. Brez slednjega, tj. brez jasnega cilja revolucionarne preobrazbe družbe, bi bila njihov delež in vloga v protiokupatorskem boju gotovo manjša, gotovo pa bi se tudi protiokupatorski boj drugače razvijal – predvsem počasneje in z možnostmi drugačnega političnega izida iz vojnega meteža.

## **Abstract**

### **The Communist Party of Slovenia and the revolutionary movement of 1941–1943**

The Communist Party of Slovenia (CPS), with the attack of the Axis powers upon Yugoslavia in April 1941, entered the political scene as a socially marginal party with less than 1300 members. It was integral to the centrally organized Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), which was a section of the Comintern. This framework significantly determined the operations and orientations of the CPS, which were coordinated according to the interests of the revolution as well as in accordance with the state interests of the Soviet Union, the only socialist state of the Bolshevik type at the time. Edvard Kardelj and Boris Kidrič were its leading visionaries. Following two decades of operating in the illegal, it was qualified for precisely more of the same with the onset of WWII. This proved particularly significant in that it awaited the war internally already uniform; that is, by then they had already concluded with the process of bolshevization and internal cleansing.

The strategic goal of the Yugoslav and hence also Slovene communists was that the revolution and reestablishment of society were to be carried out fully in accord with the example set by the Soviet Union. This was also repeatedly demonstrated by the CPS already in the two decades prior to WWII. In eager anticipation of revolution throughout Europe, it directly attempted to implement its revolutionary aims, such as by: aggravating societal conditions through organizing the strike movement in 1920, organizing a form of a factious army during the years 1923-1924, with the introduction of the King's dictatorship in 1929 it once again anxiously awaited the revolution in Europe as it called for a rebellion and then sustained the firm belief that the revolutionary situation in Europe had already begun. The period of popular Front connections, in accordance with the tactics of the Comintern, represented a time of political breadth; this discontinued with the Hitler – Stalin pact in August 1939. The World War that followed was labeled imperialistic; and the main culprit was western democracy, or rather »western imperialists«. Just prior to the attack of the Axis powers on Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav communists forsook this evaluation and rather adopted the opinion of the responsibility for the war falling more balanced upon fascism and western democracy. Nevertheless, the impulse for revolution was far from disimpassioned; after all, revolution represented what was once inescapably congruent with the comprehension of imperialism, which allowed the class struggle to escalate to the extremes, and which could be resolved only by way of revolution.

The attack on Yugoslavia certainly did not encourage the Communists towards altering their views. These views were ultimately abandoned with the German attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, with the explicit order of the Comintern and the Soviet state leadership that the war was now a patriotic one, against fascism and not for the revolution. Now redirected into an anti-fascist resistance, the preliminary preparations initially directed towards preparing for the revolution were now concentrated towards supporting the resistance. These preparations reflected most explicitly in the establishment of war-revolutionary committees during the period between the attack upon Yugoslavia and the attack upon the Soviet Union. Having accepted the anti-fascist resistance, these committees also became a sort of headquarters for the organization of the first partisan units. Quite in accord with these above-stated alterations, the until then Anti-Imperialist Front, established in April 1941, changed its name to the Liberation Front of the Slovenian People. The Liberation Front of the Slovenian People was founded on the initiative of the CPS, the only member being a party, and it linked several other liberally oriented organizations. It certainly represented a particularity in the region of Yugoslavia. With this the communists did not necessarily forsake their revolutionary orientation; rather, they adapted their operations to the current circumstances and the recognition that their goals may indeed be achieved by way of the anti-fascist resistance and the mobilization of Slovenes on the basis of their dissatisfaction with the pre-war social circumstances.

Congruent with their explicit revolutionary orientation and their faith in the revolutionary capacity of the European proletariat, they directed all their force towards the organization of the resistance on the political level as well as towards an immediate and armed resistance; this certainly distinguished them from other European communist parties. By organizing an early resistance, they overtook the traditional Slovenian political parties, which were also now in the mode of preparing for resistance; however, its execution was planned in the indefinite future. In a more conducive international constellation, such a resistance would have had the prospects of success and claimed far fewer victims. The CPS, with its direct role as initiator and organizer, and guided by the general interests of the revolution, assumed the leading position in the resistance movement right from the start. Despite the attention of so-called allies of the Liberation Front of the Slovenian People, it immediately enforced complete supervision over the most important areas, such as the partisan army, propaganda and the security intelligence service.

The determination of Slovene communists to incite an early resistance, and their perseverance, take rise from their expectation of a revolution in Europe as well as their

conviction, which endured through to the middle of 1942, that the anti-fascist alliance is not stable. Alongside other factors, such as faith in the Red Army and the belief that the war would be short-lived, the consequence was a transition into a so-called second phase of the revolution; in particular, this took place upon Partisan territory in the Ljubljana region in the spring and summer of 1942, and with fatal repercussions regarding circumstances within the Slovene nation. The extreme tensions that seethed ultimately led to civil war. Throughout the Partisan territory, the Communist Party began with direct interpolation of revolutionary elements into the resistance movement. This carried on through the entire span of the war and the so-called people's power continued to gain authority. Eventually it indeed led to the enforcement of the revolutionary powers. This was reflected in: the introduction of changes in the proprietorial and economic fields, the execution of class adversaries and revolutionary terror in general, party sectarianism in contrast to non-communist allied groups in the Liberation Front, the relationship to religion and the Catholic Church, the expressed emphasis of the leading role played by the CPS in the resistance and consequently also the party iconography (the introduction of communist symbols), the establishment of the proletarian army units.

During the crisis of the resistance, caused mainly by the forceful Italian offensive in the summer and autumn of 1942, the CPS shortly enforced more breadth in their political orientation and thus allowed allied groups more leverage in their efforts and consequently their joint purport. Nonetheless, under the influence of the central leadership of the CPY, they soon abandoned the policy of breadth; with the recognition of the Dolomite statement in March 1943, it planned a strategy for fortifying its monopolistic role in the resistance. The Dolomite statement brought unity to the Liberation Front of the Slovenian People; the Sokoli and the Christian Socialists, founding groups of the Liberation Front, were made to renounce their joint identity. Thus the CPS, as a party of the Bolshevik type, secured exclusive rights to preservation and expansion of the party as well as to formally recognized leadership, something it already had all along.

Significant structural changes were thus brought about in the field of political organization, after all, the Liberation Front together with mass organizations henceforth operated directly with the CPS. And the CPS, with the leverage of inside officials, enforced its policies through these organizations; that is, increasing numbers of officials on the committees of the Liberation Front and the mass organizations were from the Party. The political effect achieved by the Party with the Dolomite statement was thus focused precisely on the organizational issue, in its narrower and wider sense. This was the CPS' first step towards a monopolistic

political and organizational core for the entire resistance movement. The leading Party role, which other organizations of the Liberation Front all acknowledged right from the onset – albeit primarily on some moral basis because they valued its prerogative in the organization of a resistance against the occupier – gradually gained momentum during the post-Dolomite period and increasingly materialized. In the meantime, the non-Communists were gradually pushed aside and among the less significant fellows. Inasmuch as the CPS did confide in them more significant roles, it was in the aim of maintaining the necessary external front of breadth in the resistance movement.

Parallel with the organization and leadership of the anti-fascist resistance, the CPS was constantly and expressly oriented towards resolving internal Party issues. Preservation, restoration and expansion of the Party organization network were constant aspirations for the CPS. This also ties in to their recognition that the resistance against the occupier opened a unique opportunity for the manifestation of revolutionary goals. The CPS granted its fullest energies to this issue; after all, this was most tightly linked to the establishment and maintenance of the leading role in directing the struggle for liberation. This was the only way to the realization of the revolutionary Party program such as that accepted by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia at the Vukovar Congress in 1920. The efficacy of resolving the organizational issue was of strategic significance for the Party; it needed qualified and reliable officials for the execution of its revolutionary goals.

The CPS joined up in the anti-occupier resistance without any obstructions so to speak. It invested all its available resources, regardless of its own losses. The Party's internal discipline and faith in the revolution are the bonding matter that made ongoing perseverance at the most critical moments possible. The early decision to arm the resistance, in 1941 already, triggered extensive organizational changes, with massive political consequences. The goal of the CPS was in accordance with the program of the Liberation Front - with which the Party also made public appearances - to organize the resistance throughout all of Slovenia regardless of the borders delimited by the occupiers and the state; these are who shared the Slovenian national territory, whereby the Italian occupied region (the Ljubljana area) played a central role throughout. It was from here that the central leadership would often send Party activists to those regions where CPS organizations were still lacking at the onset of the war (Styria and Primorje, the coastal region) or rather where they were hard-hit by the occupier's powers (Styria, Upper Carniola). Through encouraging and organizing the resistance movement, its own organization was established and gradually also fortified.

The early resistance and the uncompromising endurance in the resistance caused significant losses in the Communist lines, especially in the German occupied territory. For a variety of reasons (arrests, being sent to concentration camps, intern camps, even the emergence of passivity, etc.) the blood tax and deficit of Communists, on occasion and in certain areas, brought decisive moments upon the Party's organization. Presumably, the pivotal months were in the autumn of 1942. This was a time when, after the dissolution of the organization in the Upper Carniola (Gorenjsko) region in the beginning of 1942, only a few Party activists remained in the field and in the army. It was in the spring and summer of 1942 when the Party in Styria, partly recovered already from the consequences of previous police incursions into the organization, was again entirely disintegrated when the resistance movement, and thus also the Party, was hard hit by the Italian offensive in the Ljubljana region. It did however begin to reveal a civil struggle. And when the Party in the Primorje region was still limited to only a few focal points, it had not yet even broken through to the region of Carinthia. It then chose to embark upon a planned offensive by way of dispatching visible Party activists to individual regions for shorter or even longer terms, as well as by allocating personnel and directly orienting political efforts towards surviving the critical period; this also coincided with the military-political turn-about on the international scene. As such, by the end of 1943 a strong resistance movement had been instigated throughout the majority of the ethnic territory; the Party lines, despite great losses, grew to a total of 2,900 members and 1,100 CPS member candidates by autumn in 1943.

In the development of the criteria as the basis for attracting new members, the Party during the period of occupation greatly adapted to the altered circumstances. To the earlier class-bound criteria it added also new ideas; the roots for these novel ideas developed from the basic actualities of occupation, the leadership of the resistance against the occupiers and individual participation in the resistance. The criteria that each individual was required to fulfill for admission into the Party were not entirely unified; differences were quite obvious during certain periods, just as in certain areas. Differences in the personal approaches of those who were making the decisions about admissions and memberships were also evident.

Regarding the admission of new members, for the most part youths, it is generally confirmable that the Party chose from among those who strove to join in the resistance movement and who demonstrated much discipline in the performance of their tasks. How much other criteria were acknowledged, such as ideological adherence to and knowledge of the Party program is difficult to establish. Presumably, the CPS was closest to the pre-war orientations in the selection of its new members, especially in the Ljubljana region. More

flexibility in the criteria for the admission of new members is reflected by the statement that new members or candidates of the CPS are acquainted with the “basic framework of the Party program”; this indicates that certain members were not acquainted with these contents upon their admission. Regarding social affiliation, the working-class and peasant bases were emphasized; as compared to the pre-war period, the number of members belonging to the peasant class had evidently grown. The result of making admissions on a wider basis was a certain degree of confusion, inasmuch as the dividing line between the CPS organizations and the Liberation Front or the self-sacrificing fighters in the Partisan units was no longer distinct. During the discussed time span, these things occurred primarily in the Upper Carniola region, which is where the aim was to quickly improve the uncomfortable circumstances caused by the Party’s organization by way of mass and campaign admission, without any regard to any earlier and/or specific criteria. Despite that such approaches, on the part of the Party leadership, were then frequently criticized, they nonetheless confirm the significance or even the exclusive share of the national liberation component, which individuals in the Party recognized and which they also accepted and were then admitted to membership for. Often it was at this point that the ideological reeducation began; from 1943 onwards, it was also within the framework of courses and schools organized by the Party.

Highly representative rules for maintaining especial internal affiliations earmarked the Party organization. They were based on the strict adherence to Party rules and orientations, as well as a disciplined approach to executing the imposed tasks. All of this together corresponded with the concept of the “bolshevization” of the Party. The most important principle in working for the CPS was to ensure the presence of all the organizations in the resistance movement, and to exercise its influence primarily on everyday and actual efforts and methods of persuasion. Also incorporated into these internal Party affiliations was the exertion of heavy pressure upon the membership; at the beginning, this was mainly applied as an instrument for establishing that the continued leadership of the resistance against the occupiers remained in the hands of the Party; later this was increasingly oriented towards the politically, insufficiently qualified personnel.

The key facts bidding the CPS with authority under circumstances of war in the discussed period were: an active anti-occupier resistance that helped overtake other political subjects; public appearances with a program, codified according to the basic issues of the Liberation Front, which helped to entice a large portion of Slovenes and proved to be even more decisive than the decision to fight for the resistance; the occupiers measures, which were directly oriented towards destroying the Slovene nation as an ethnic category, had to at least partially



agree with the justifications for the demands of an armed resistance; linking the national liberation content with the social content, which was not only integrated into the program of the Communists but also in the broader context, despite that actual comprehensions varied. It cannot be established that the Communists were not maneuvering for national liberation in the war; however their primary goal was to follow and enforce their own objectives. In absence of the latter, that is without a clear ambition of a revolutionary transformation of society, their contribution towards the struggle against the occupiers would certainly have been less significant. Hence, the struggle against the occupiers would most likely have evolved quite differently: more gradually and with the possibility of an alternate political outcome from the turmoil of WWII.