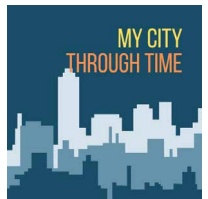


# MY CITY THROUGH TIME



# Mari bor



## THE PROJECT

# My City Through Time

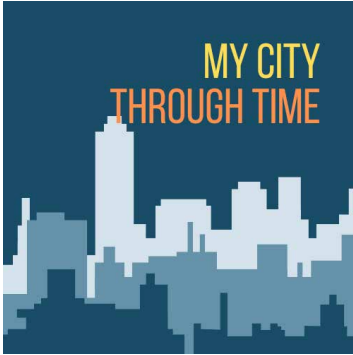
The project “My City Through Time. Exploring our cities through historic and civic education (MCT)” wants to contribute to the recognition and improvement of youth work and its practices and to strengthen the link between youth work and civic and historic education.

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The project aims to provide the partner and other organizations working with youth with new skills, competencies, working methods, and materials related to youth work and historic and civic education. At the same time, because of its thematic focus, the project aims to involve young people in a reflection on understanding diversities, the importance of intercultural dialogue, inclusion, and human rights.

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The project develops from the idea that the cities we live in are not neutral, but are carriers of values and narratives, and communicate them through elements of its public space, such as monuments, names of streets and squares, and architec-



ture. By critically exploring their cities through the methods of historic and civic education, the project partners will tackle different relevant topics for today's youth, such as the rise of radicalization, nationalism, and populism, issues of equal representation, and the spreading of stereotypes and prejudices among young people. Because of this reason, through the project's activities and results, young people will become more able to critically approach complex topics related to historical and social changes in the 20th century and better understand the origin and the causes of contemporary challenges, including issues such as memory, identity, representation, inclusion, and democracy.

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**PEKARNA MAGDALENSKE MREŽE** (PMM) is a non-governmental, non-profit institution, founded in 1997 in Maribor. The organization encourages cooperation programs and projects among young individuals and youth groups conducting artistic, cultural, educational, research, ecological, informative, and humanitarian activities. The organization's mission is to build an enabling environment for networking, co-management, engaged creativity, and civil society activism. It conceptually links three programme pillars (culture, youth, and civil initiative) and focuses on participatory approaches in programme design and implementation.

The organization is one of the leading cultural producers in the complex of Cultural center Pekarna, as well as in the city of Maribor, with a focus on youth programs and independent and under-represented forms of art and culture.

# THE HISTORY OF Maribor

**MARIBOR**, a second largest town in Slovenia with around 100.000 inhabitants, is situated in the northeastern part of the country. It is a university city with the second oldest university in the country, preserved medieval form in parts of the city center, beautiful city park and Drava river running through it. It is surrounded by hills and Pohorje, a pre-Alpine mountain range. Maribor is also known for its independent cultural production and alternative social practices.

Like most of Slovenia, Maribor was part of Habsburg monarchy until end of World War I (1918), when Slovenian fighters for the northern border led among others by general Rudolf Maister secured the city for the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, which then joined the Kingdom of Serbia to form Kingdom of Serb, Croats and Slovenes which was renamed to Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929.

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After the Axis invasion in April of 1941, Germany annexed Maribor and the surrounding Lower Styrian region into the Greater German Reich. Upon this annexation, immediate plans were made by Nazi Germany to re-Germanize the city, which included not only pushing out and marginalizing the Slovene population and culture, but also the mass arrests of local Slovenes and importation of ethnic Germans to the city.

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In spite of Nazi predictions, the first act of resistance in Yugoslavia during World War II took place in Maribor. The communist youth burned down two cars belonging to the Nazis on April 29th 1941. Nazis implemented repressive measures, suppressed dissent, and enforced strict control and harsh retribution over the population in an attempt to secure their grip on the city and its valuable assets. Regardless, resistance in Maribor was marked by a fierce determination to overthrow the German occupiers and dismantle the regime imposed on the city. The national liberation movement in Maribor also witnessed courageous acts of defiance by the city's communist youth. Students and intellectuals formed underground networks, disseminating information, and coordinating resistance activities. They risked their lives to challenge the oppressive regime and preserve the city's cultural heritage. On Pohorje, the famous Pohorje battalion, a resistance unit that between 1942 and 1943 mounted attacks on German-held areas, blew up railroads, destroyed mountain huts that could be used by the Germans and that also fought the German forces directly, was active.

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The national liberation movement dismantled the enemy's control over Yugoslavia, liberating it from the inside, and contributed greatly to the defeat of the Axis powers.

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The national liberation movement laid the foundation for the establishment of a new Yugoslavia after the war, embracing principles of socialism, self-management, and non-alignment in international affairs.

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After the liberation, Maribor experienced rapid industrialization and urban development under socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1991). In socialism, Maribor was one of the most powerful industrial centers with successful textile and car industries. The industrial giants like TAM (Maribor car factory), was the biggest car and truck producer in Yugoslavia employing over 8000 people and MTT (Maribor textile factory) was the biggest Yugoslav textile factory employing around 7000 workers and got Maribor dubbed “Yugoslav Manchester”. Having strong industry, also meant that Maribor had strong labor unions and syndicates, which actively participated in management of their factories, local environment and fought for their rights.

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In the 1960's and 1970's a lot of new apartment buildings were built offering comfortable housing to the city's many workers. Maribor also became one of the four sites of the famous Slovenian Forma viva. Namely, Maribor construction companies became patrons of the public art and between 1967 and 1986 when artists from seven countries designed large scale sculp-



tures, the companies created them from concrete from the artists' plans and designs. They were then placed by the city's urban planners at key points in Maribor's urban fabric.

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Maribor, a working-class city, was shaken during the transition from self-management to market economy, a period marked with mass workers' strikes. Workers gathered in front of the factories and made several strikes and protest marches. Strike from 1988 brought Maribor into the Yugoslav and world media space, as it was the biggest labor protest in the city after WWII.

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After the dismantling of Yugoslavia and the rise of capitalism and privatization in the early 1990s Maribor industry disintegrated and huge unemployment arose. This represented a huge blow to the city's identity and most of all to the people of Maribor who finally realized that voting for Slovenia's "independence" in the referendum of 1990 meant voting for capitalism.

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In 2012 Maribor was the starting point of protests wave in Slovenia between 2012 and 2013 which among others resulted in the establishment of a platform of self-organizing city quarter assemblies, moderated by Inicijativa mestni zbor (Initiative

City Assembly) whose main goal is the process of empowerment of citizens and initiative/campaign for participatory management of the municipal budget. In 2012 Maribor was the European capital of culture, however, planned sustainable development projects resulted primarily in the perpetuation of differences between public institutions and independent cultural producers.

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Maribor is still proud of its workers and communist movements' history and the industrial heritage, however the local bourgeoisie tries its best to revise the history and build monuments to imperialist dukes, generals and capitalists.

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***Bibliography:***

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***Authors:***

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# city RALLY



Autonomous zone: Cultural center Pekarna

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Resistance in Maribor

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National Liberation Movement  
Monuments



## AUTONOMOUS ZONE:

# Cultural center Pekarna

### KEY WORDS:

Autonomous zone, independent culture, alternative arts scene, historical outlook, social movements

**DURATION:** approximately 30-40 min on foot or by bike



### STATION 1

**The Railway station and Austro-Hungarian Empire**



### STATION 5

**Coldroom, Garage, Little House, MC Pekarna**



### STATION 2

**Statue of comrade Tito and the period of Yugoslavia**



### STATION 6

**Bark Beetle**



### STATION 3

**Pekarna park**



### STATION 7

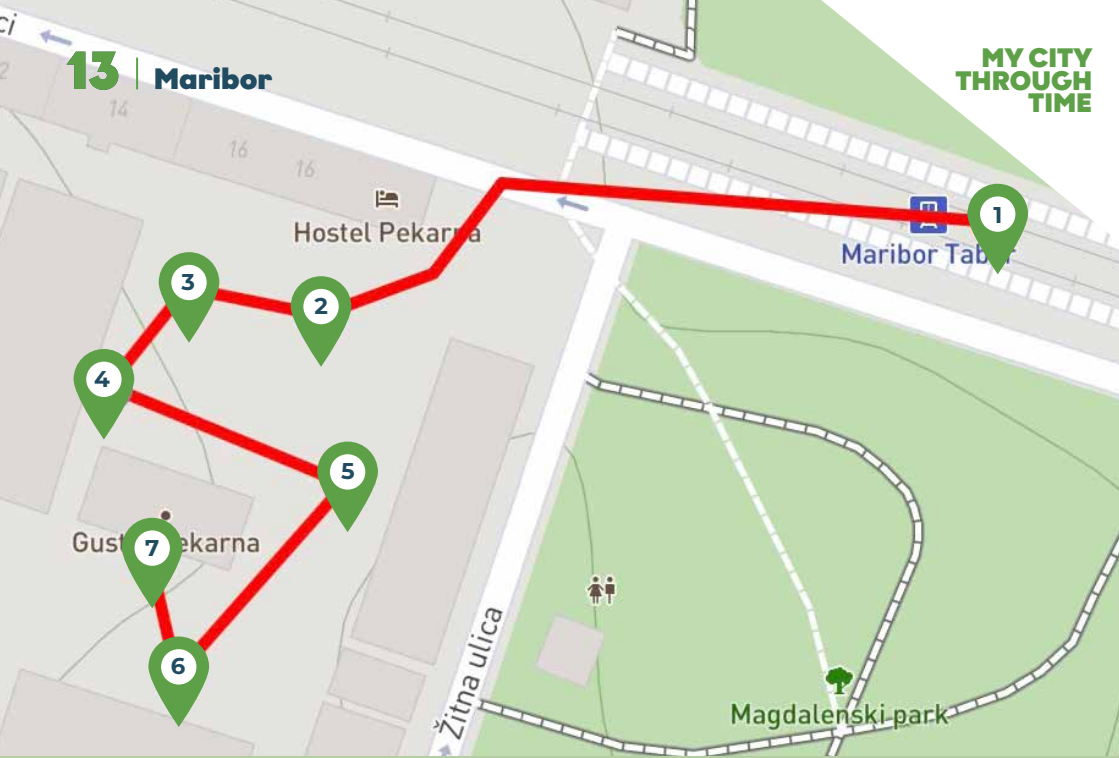
**Gustaf Hall**



### STATION 4

**Struggle continues - the story of censored graffiti and municipal administration**

13 | Maribor



**AUTONOMOUS ZONE:**  
**Cultural center  
Pekarna**



**STATION 1**  
The Railway  
station and  
Austro-Hungarian  
Empire



**STATION 5**  
Coldroom,  
Garage, Little  
House,  
MC Pekarna



**STATION 2**  
Statue of comrade  
Tito and the period  
of Yugoslavia



**STATION 6**  
Bark Beetle



**STATION 3**  
Pekarna park



**STATION 7**  
Gustaf Hall



**STATION 4**  
Struggle continues  
- the story of  
censored graffiti  
and municipal  
administration

## Description

Cultural center Pekarna is an autonomous social and cultural space with cultural, social, youth and sports non-profit activities.

The former military bakery from the beginning of the 20th century was occupied by artists and activists in 1994, who used the abandoned area for independent culture which has been developed by approximately 40 users of these premises (organized and informal groups, individuals). Today, Pekarna (which translates as bakery) is the largest independent cultural center in north-east Slovenia and one of the first forms of this kind of gathering and socializing in Slovenia. The Pekarna complex covers around 6 000 square meters of land and consists of a multi-purpose hall, gallery, park, open space, hostel, clubs, workshops, second-hand bookshop, ateliers for visual artists, rehearsal studios for bands, boulder walls for climbers, and other spaces.

Over the course of three decades of its existence, Cultural center Pekarna was a fertile ground for numerous new cultural, sport, and youth programmes and organizations, music and theater groups, artist collectives, film festivals and civil society initiatives. Pekarna has continuously supported and promoted the autonomy of local and foreign artists and producers.

As most autonomous zones, Cultural center Pekarna is in a permanent grip of the local political decision-makers, struggling against institutionalization and gentrification, constantly needing to reclaim its space and prove the importance of such venues for the local communities in Maribor, Slovenia, or globally.

**STATION 1****The Railway station and Austro-Hungarian Empire**

(Ob železnici 16, 2000 Maribor)



The buildings which comprise the Cultural center Pekarna originate from the times when Slovenia was part of the Franz Joseph's I Austro-Hungarian Empire. The first buildings, two bakeries and a closed complex of warehouses, named Imperial Royal Military Supply Depot, were built in 1897. They were located directly next to the railway which connected central and southern parts of the Empire (Vienna - Trieste) which was, at the time, the most important form of transportation. Another reason for building the complex on this location was its



proximity to the military barracks and the cadet school named “Emperor Franz Joseph Barracks” which was built in 1850’s. Concurrently with the Pekarna complex, a riding school (“Reitschule”) was established for the cadet school.

The appearance and scope of the whole complex which we have today was mostly completed up to 1903. The complex was used by the military as a bakery, warehouses and for administrative purposes.

The streets which border Pekarna complex were named after the activities around them and kept the versions of their names until today: on the north, the street bordering railway was originally named “Eisenstrasse”, now “Ob železnici”, both of them meaning “by the railway”; on the south, the street bordering riding school (“Reitschule”) was originally named “Reiterstrasse”, today “Jezdarska ulica” both translate to “riding street”; and to the east, street was named “Rie street”, today “Žitna ulica”.



## STATION 2

**Statue of comrade Tito  
and the period of Yugoslavia**

(Ob železnici 16, 2000 Maribor)



After the First World War, the military area was taken over by the military of the State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, known as Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1929, and then occupied by the German Reich. Following the liberation of Maribor by the Yugoslav People's Army during the Second World War, the Pekarna complex continued its function as a military bakery, warehouse and administration office, but it was renamed to Yugoslav People's Army barracks of Slava Klavora (local communist heroine from WWII).

The statue we stand next to depicts Josip Broz Tito (1892 - 1980). Tito was revolutionary leader of partizan national-liberation movement, leader of the communist party of Yugoslavia, president for life of Yugoslavia and one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement. Among many other accomplishments, Tito began a model of self-management or self-governing socialism in which firms were managed through workers' councils and all workers were entitled to an equal share of profits.

Tito's death represents a symbolic shift in social and political relations in Yugoslavia. Outside forces such as IMF, USA etc. which have from the middle of 1960's exerted pressure on the socialist state have now begun to openly help to destabilize the region. Soon after, self-managed socialism collapsed and neoliberal capitalism, together with nationalism, became guiding ideologies in Yugoslavia. Although Pekarna ceased to be a military bakery complex with the fall of Yugoslavia and the departure of the Yugoslav Army from Slovenia in 1991, it did not cease to attempt self-governing and fighting capitalist lifestyle to this very day.

Besides the one in Velenje (10 m high Tito statue at Tito Square), it can be said that the Tito statue in Cultural center Pekarna is the only in situ Tito statue in Slovenia. Additionally, in Maribor, one of the main bridges and streets were also named after Tito, and you can find Tito's portrait on the most prominent monument in the city center.



## STATION 3

**Pekarna park**

(Ob železnici 16, 2000 Maribor)



Behind Tito's back we have a park with autochthonous trees, compost, three small gardens, as well as custom benches, lights and totems, made by Pekarna artist. During the twentieth century there was also a concrete fountain meant as a resting place for bakery and storage workers and part of railways which would transport the goods to the wagon trains, both of which were removed when the last military administration left the complex in 1992.

After many initiatives and struggles from Maribor alternative youth, municipal administration finally designated a complex for use of youth culture. On 16th of June 1994 the complex, then owned by the Ministry of Defense, was squatted by various groups.

The very first squatted and renewed building was the former Administrative building (northern side of park) which served as reception office during the Austro-Hungarian period, and was changed into the wardrobe store for officers during the times of Yugoslavia. In the middle of the nineties Maribor Municipality became the owner of the whole complex and mayor Boris Sovič has officially designated that the complex should become a space for alternative culture. Cultural center Pekarna has been able to enjoy a few years of peace and prosperity that lasted until the next municipal election in 2005. Under the new right wing mayor, Franc Kangler, Pekarna was doomed to become a construction site for new apartment buildings and parking spaces. The community reacted vehemently and organized various events through which it advocated for the relevance of autonomous spaces in urban centers. Some of them were not without a certain degree of sarcasm focused on the mayor's inability to comprehend the sociological and cultural dimension of the city. The pressure put on the municipality proved to be successful and the plans were made to apply for EU funds for the renovation of the complex.

Prior to the planned renovation of the whole complex, together with Trans Europe Halles, Pekarna Magdalenske mreže organized a conference "New Times New Models" in 2010. A governance model for the Cultural center Pekarna was developed and became the first such document that defined the relationship between the municipality as the owner, public in-

stitution as a technical manager and collectives, organizations and individuals as autonomous program users in Slovenia. The model was passed in the City Council and became legally binding.

Scores of artists, cultural and sport organizations in a non-consensual way lost their spaces due to renovation of the building in 2010-2011 with the promise by the municipality that they will be able to return after the renovation in the buildings specifically renovated for their purposes. Some of the organizations were in the meantime offered provisional spaces. During the negotiations over the renovation, graffiti appeared on the entrance of the building: "This building is the cornerstone. Knock the building down and you will find Pekarna. Pekarna will always be here, or it never was. This building will (consequently) fall first."

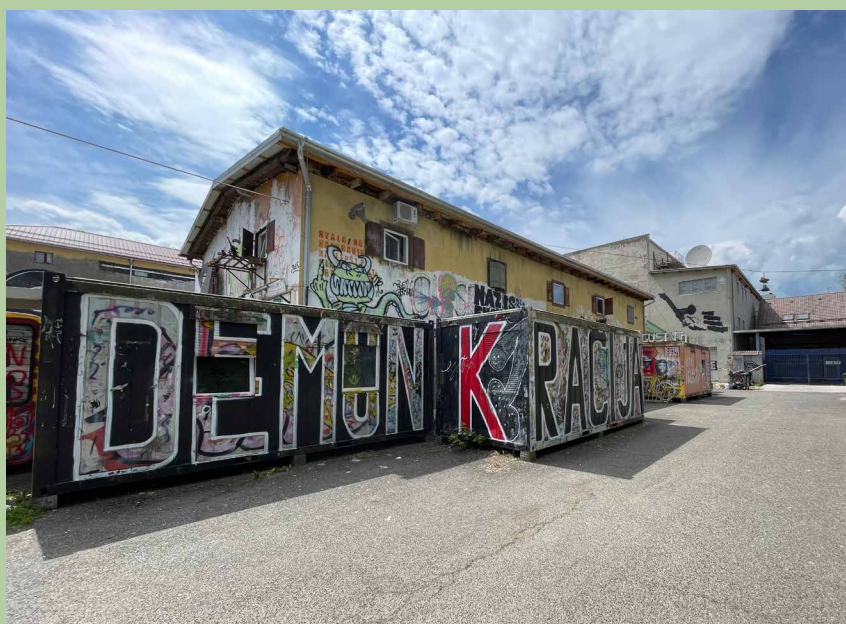
The second floor of the Administrative building got new occupants after the renovation: public organization Youth Culture Centre Maribor with the upper floors serving as their youth hostel. Administrative building is still the only renovated building in the center. On the ground floor it provides space for non-governmental youth centers and societies, which have been here from the 90's on organizing and developing programmes for the public good and which participate in numerous areas of cultural, youth and social fields. Such organizations are Pekarna Magdalenske mreže Maribor, Mladinski center IndiJanez, Društvo za razvoj humanistike - Zofijini ljubimci.



## STATION 4

**Struggle continues - the story of censored graffiti and municipal administration**

(Ob železnici 16, 2000 Maribor)



In the Cultural center Pekarna one won't find a lack of graffiti, tags and murals, but the one on the westernmost wall is the most telling about the relationship between Cultural center Pekarna and municipal administration or between autonomy and authorities. In the year 2020, Slovenia was struck with two things: Covid 19 pandemics and the comeback of far-right

prime minister Janez Janša to power. After the series of poor and harmful moves of Janša's government, massive demonstrations and protests started all over Slovenia. One of such comments against the government at the time was also the graffiti of a man with raised hand with the accompanying text "Smrt narodu - svoboda fašizmu" (Death to people, freedom to fascism). Soon after the graffiti was made, three cars of policemen came to the site with another van full of special forces in bulletproof vests who were accompanied by a group of firefighters in a fully equipped fire engine and another all-terrain vehicle. The group stayed there until the mayor of Maribor bought a few cans of black spray to cover what seemed to be a saluting hand of Janša and the accompanying text. It seems incomprehensible that one graffiti which represented satire of the political situation was being dealt with all day long by half of city services, while more and more signs glorifying Nazism are appearing on the streets of Maribor which are not being removed despite constant warnings. It is obvious that the government at the time was using all possible forms of control and censorship over its people deliberately creating a false state of emergency in the country in order to silence those who dare to criticize them.

Cultural center Pekarna was always one among the first to criticize those in power, fight for social justice and stand on the side of the underdog.

After many attacks by municipal administration on autonomy of Pekarna, the one Pekarna is facing in the last two years is the



most threatening: the current mayor Saša Arsenovič and his administration signed a letter of intent to sell the land and Pekarna will be no more. The same mayor in 2018 stopped the small construction works on the buildings that have not been renovated in 2011 and that previous mayor Andrej Fištravec initiated in 2013. With that he gave a clear signal that his intentions with Pekarna are anything but good. The whole city policy has been in the past few years considerably creating a hostile environment for non-commercial and non-for-profit endeavors. Pekarna is therefore a thorn in the side of municipal leaders who are gentrifying the city with every new project they finance. At a time when the Pekarna community should present a united front, many are unfortunately despondent or apathetic.

**STATION 5****Coldroom, Garage, Little house  
and MC Pekarna**

(Ob železnici 16, 2000 Maribor)



Opposite of the censored graffiti is Hladilnica (Coldroom). The Coldroom was built in 1897 as a warehouse for oats and preserves. Today its spaces on the ground floor are used for band rehearsals, ping-pong and skating, preparing and fixing unused computers and giving them to the ones in need, a community room, workshop for making instruments, event space and club room. Atic is used as an exhibition hall which hosted in the past many national and international exhibitions, installations and performances.

Next to Coldroom is Garage - an atelier-to-be of Pekarna nomad and artist responsible for most of the iron installations which adorn the exterior of the cultural center.

Adjacent to Garage is Hiška (Little House), formerly known as House Gallery, and later Supernova. Purpose of this small space has changed over the years, currently it is used for private counseling and competitions in meditation.

The last in the row is MC Pekarna (youth club). Originally built as a toast bakery in 1897, but inside, you can still find the remnants of a chimney which was demolished in 2007, and two massive ovens. MC is a club for predominantly metal music. Additionally, it serves as a library, exhibition place and soon, it will have a theater on the second floor.



## STATION 6

**The Bark Beetle**

(Ob železnici 16, 2000 Maribor)



Opposite to MC, is Lubadar (The Bark Beetle), built from wood in 1902, and served as a storage for flour. It got its name from the bark beetles which inhabit such wooden constructions. Originally, the building was connected with the toast bakery and bread bakery.

Today, the Bukvarna Ciproš (secondhand bookstore) operates on the ground floor. They save books from destruction and restore their dignity by returning them back to the shelves. Bukvarna Ciproš is the largest secondhand bookstore in this part of Europe where they managed to save over 3 million books since the mid 1996. Bukvarna is open every working day between 17.00 and 19.00, on Wednesdays and Saturdays also between 11.00 and 13.00.

On other floors of the building, you can find various art studios, rehearsal rooms for bands and other organizations. In the attic is a vast climbing area with a boulder wall and organized climbing school for children and youth.



## STATION 7

**The Gustaf Hall**

(Ob železnici 16, 2000 Maribor)



The hall in the middle of the cultural center is one of the best and biggest concert halls in Maribor. Various conferences, round tables, public forums, educational and musical events, concert series and parties as well as audiovisual and intermedia activities take place there that are organized by different NGO's and collectives from Pekarna. Backstage is used as a band rehearsal room, since 2020 on the top floor there is a re-

ilding studio. Originally, the building served as a warehouse. Surrounding Gustaf Hall there are two containers which serve as sleeping quarters for visiting bands and artists, and K67 Kiosk - modular kiosk concept designed in 1966 by Yugoslav architect and industrial designer Saša Janez Mächtig. The K67 Kiosk, owned by Pekarna Magalenske mreže, is also included in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York.

As this is a last stop, we kindly invite you to sit in a park, or have a drink in MC or Gustaf and think about questions from below. Feel free to ask the Pekarna people for more information and tips!

## Questions:

\_\_\_\_\_ If Pekarna wasn't squatted after the demilitarization in 1992, what do you think would be in the area instead?

\_\_\_\_\_ How do you think autonomous zones such as the Cultural center Pekarna contribute to the local community?

\_\_\_\_\_ In what way do you think we should fight gentrification?



## Glossary:

— **SELF-MANAGED SOCIAL CENTERS**, also known as **AUTONOMOUS SOCIAL CENTERS**, are self-organized community centers in which anti-authoritarians put on voluntary activities. These autonomous spaces, often in multi-purpose venues affiliated with anarchism, can include bicycle workshops, infoshops, libraries, free schools, meeting spaces, free stores and concert venues. They often become political actors in their own right.

The centers are found worldwide, and are inspired by various left-wing movements including anarchism and intentional communities. They are squatted, rented, or owned cooperatively.

— **GENTRIFICATION** is a process in which an economically underdeveloped or poor area (as of a city) experiences an influx of middle-class or wealthy privateers who renovate and rebuild homes and businesses and which often results in an increase in property values and the displacement of earlier, usually poorer residents.

— **SELF-MANAGEMENT OR SELF-GOVERNING SOCIALISM** was a form of workers' self-management used as a social and economic model formulated by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. It was instituted by law in 1950 and lasted in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until

1990, just prior to its breakup in 1992. The main goal was to move the managing of companies into the hands of workers and to separate the management from the state. It was also meant to demonstrate the viability of a “third way” between the capitalist United States and the socialist Soviet Union.

- **NEO-LIBERAL CAPITALISM** is the term used to describe the phase of capitalism where restrictions on the global flows of commodities and capital, including capital in the form of finance, have been substantially removed. Since such removal happens under pressure from globally-mobile (or international) finance capital, neo-liberal capitalism is characterized by the hegemony of international finance capital, with which the big capitals in particular countries get integrated, and which ensures that a common set of “neo-liberal” policies are pursued by all countries across the globe.
- **NATIONALISM** is a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups. In many cases, nationalist ideas lead to conflicts, wars, genocides, imperialism, etc.
- **FAR-RIGHT POLITICS**, or right-wing politics, refer to a spectrum of political thought that tends to be radically conservative, ultra-nationalist, and authoritarian. In most

cases, right-wing ideas lead to conflicts, wars, genocides, imperialism, etc.

— **A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION**, also known as a non-business entity, or nonprofit institution, is a legal entity organized and operated for a collective, public or social benefit, in contrast with an entity that operates as a business aiming to generate a profit for its owners.

*Authors:*

Filip Bojanić and Kaja Fiedler

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*Photos:*

Kaja Fiedler

## Resistance in Maribor

**KEY WORDS:**

protests, Germans in Maribor, Nazi occupation, workers strikes, uprisings 2012, Fridays for Future, protests against the far-right government

**DURATION:** approximately 40-50 min

**ACCESSIBILITY:** by foot or by bike



**STATION 1**

**General Maister square - Maribor  
Bloody Sunday (1919)**



**STATION 4**

**Liberty Square -  
Maribor Uprisings  
(2012)**



**STATION 2**

**Volkmer's passage -  
First Sabotage Action  
(1941)**



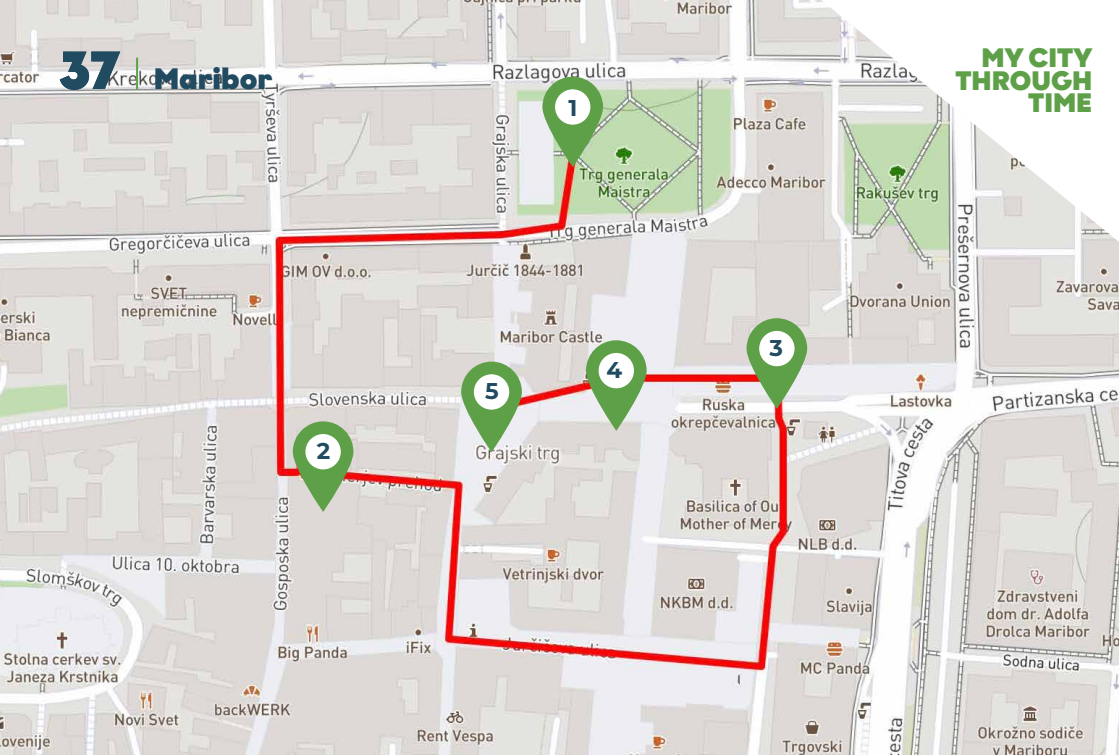
**STATION 5**

**Castle square -  
Climate Strike  
and Friday  
Cycling (2019,  
2020)**



**STATION 3**

**Partisan street -  
Workers' protests (1988)**



## Resistance in Maribor



**STATION 1**  
General Maister square - Maribor  
Bloody Sunday (1919)



**STATION 2**  
Volkmer's passage - First Sabotage  
Action (1941)



**STATION 3**  
Partisan street - Workers' protests  
(1988)



**STATION 4**  
Liberty Square - Maribor Uprisings (2012)



**STATION 5**  
Castle square - Climate Strike and  
Friday Cycling (2019, 2020)

## Description

Streets and squares have always been spaces for people to challenge hegemony in various ways. Change is possible if people are organised and united, if they collectively and clearly demand a different world with equal treatment and equal rights for everyone. However, it is a long way from protests to social change. The abolition of slavery and racial segregation, labour and social rights, and women's suffrage are just some of the most obvious rights for which the fight has been successful, but which are once again being eroded in the current political and economic system. That is why one needs to remain vigilant, organise and unite, and work for a better, more equal and inclusive society.

Practices of resistance are present in every historical period of Maribor. Some of those moments from past 100 years are covered here, from the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes; Nazi Germany; Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Republic of Slovenia:

1. In the aftermath of World War I, revolt of a German population led to a massacre which is known today as "Maribor Bloody Sunday".
2. The early days of the Nazi occupation in Maribor are marked with one of the first resistance moments in the national liberation struggle of World War II with sabotage in Volkmer passage.

3. Maribor, as the most industrious city in Yugoslavia, a working-class city, was shaken during the transition from self-management to market economy, a period marked with mass workers' strikes.

4. Beginning of the new millenia is marked with the mass protests in Maribor which triggered a wave of uprisings across Slovenia.

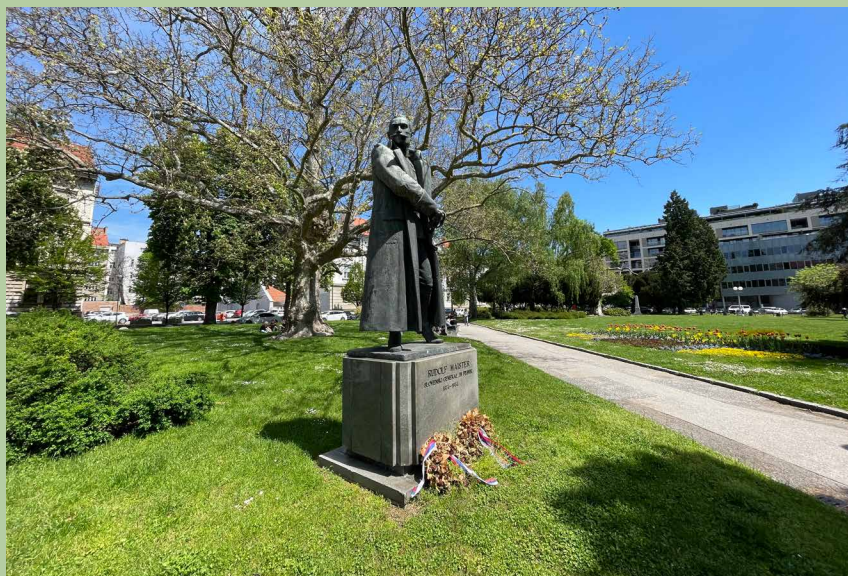
5. And last, but not the least, are the most recent struggles for environmental change and protests against the far-right government of Janez Janša.



## STATION 1

**General Maister square -  
Maribor Bloody Sunday (1919)**

(Trg generala Maistra 1, 2000 Maribor)



Rudolf Maister is seen as a general, fighter for Slovenia's northern border and poet, but the Maribor Bloody Sunday, which he staged with his soldiers, and which by today's standards would make him a war criminal, is mostly overlooked.

After the Slovenian takeover of Maribor in November 1918, members of the Woodrow Wilson's Commission announced a tour of the South Styrian capital at the end of January 1919 to



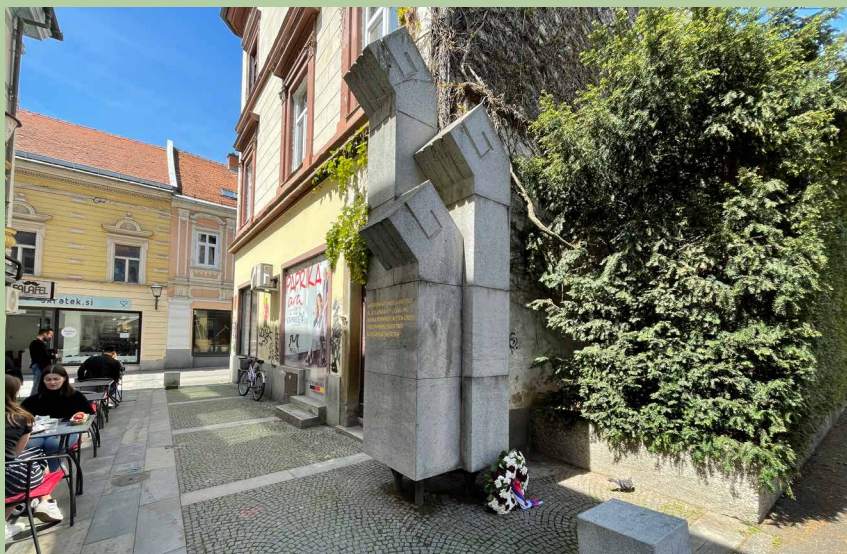
check the ethnic composition of the population and to settle territorial disputes. At that time, the Maribor was predominantly German, while the surrounding area was Slovenian. On Sunday, 27 January 1919, at noon, Germans gathered in protest on Maribor's Main Square, waving flags to express their will to keep the city German and under Austrian rule. German sources claim that there were more than ten thousand people, while a Slovenian observer says that the streets were packed. Then a patrol of Maister's soldiers appeared with weapons. The Slovenian source says that a German in the crowd shot at the Maister fighters. The soldiers allegedly shot first into the air and then into the crowd, eventually resulting in 13 Germans dead and dozens injured. The crowd dispersed from the Main Square within minutes. The Viennese newspapers described the event under headlines such as "The Bloodbath in Maribor", while the Germans and Austrians remember the event today as "Marburger Blutsonntag" - translated as "Maribor Bloody Sunday".



## STATION 2

**Volkmer's passage -  
First Sabotage Action (1941)**

(Volkmerjev prehod 1, 2000 Maribor)



During the Nazi occupation of Maribor, preparations for an armed uprising, resistance, intensive political and propaganda activities were of major importance. In April 1941, the city was occupied within a few days. The Nazis came well prepared, with elaborate plans for the imposition of an occupation civil administration and for the Germanisation of the city. Maribor was considered the centre of the occupier's apparatus for Lower Styria. It was a time of great triumph in the city for the

Nazi occupiers, the Maribor Kulturbund and the Germans, and of great pressure on the Slovenes.

A group of young Maribor communists and SKOJ members (Young Communist League of Yugoslavia) were preparing the first action in the whole Yugoslavia. They carried it out on 29 April 1941, only three days after Hitler visited Maribor (also, his only trip to the Yugoslav region). The action has never been completely reconstructed, as it was carried out according to the rules of strict confidentiality, and there are certain differences between the testimonies. The most important role in the action was played by the communists and SKOJ functionaries August Greif, Ljubo Tarkuš and Bojan Ilich, while the SKOJ members Albin Vernik and Franjo Zorko warned them of the potential dangers. Albin Vernik's testimony from 1958 is the most important to illustrate the action. He said that he was engaged by August Greif, that he did not give him any details of the planned action and that he had to keep silent about everything. From the right bank of the Drava river they started early in the morning in working clothes and with tools to cross a guarded wooden bridge, saying that they were going to work. On the main square they met Trakuš and others whose names he did not know. Greif went with someone to the Volkmer's Passage at about 5 am, while Vernik stood guard at the corner of Gosposka Street and 10 October Street. Only later did he find out what had happened at the Volkmer's Passage. Guards were placed on all the surrounding corners, nobody on guard knew anything about the action, and the whistling of the melody of the song "Sharpening Scythe" (Slovenian: "Nabrusimo kose") was

considered a sign of danger and retreat. The evening before, at around eight o'clock, engineer Sepp Treiber had parked his private car in the Volkmer's passage near the Hotel Zamorc. An hour later the driver of the regional peasant leader Sepp Heinzel had parked his car as well. Both cars were checked around midnight, everything was fine, but in the morning they were completely destroyed by fire.

The occupier's investigation of the first rebel action was not successful. Their documents show that, despite interrogating, arresting and torturing around 80 people in the basement of the Melje barracks, they were unable to find out who had taken part in the action. Already in their first report after the arson they blamed the youth, writing "The Slovenian youth between the age of 16 and 22 is raising its head again. Only the intensive police action we are preparing will help us." Following the sabotage action, a curfew was imposed, no civilians were allowed to be outside between 1 and 5 am, and pubs had to close at midnight.

The burning of two Nazi cars is considered the first act of liberation resistance in Yugoslavia during World War II. The initiative for the action stemmed from the anti-fascist and liberationist orientation and the fighting spirit of the SKOJ members and the communists, or from the general orientation of the Communist Party, which was already preparing the struggle against the occupier. The spark ignited by the youth in Maribor spread rapidly throughout the country, and by July 1941 the national liberation movement was well underway and strong until the final capitulation of the occupier and the collaborating groups.



## STATION 3

**Partisan street -  
Workers' protests (1988)**

(Trg svobode 1, 2000 Maribor)



Maribor was considered to be the industrial pride of Slovenia and Yugoslavia, but wages could not keep up with inflation, so workers gathered in front of the factories and made several marches to the city centre. The strike was launched by the workers of TAM on 21 June 1988 because the expected wage increase had not been realised. They walked from Tezno to the Maribor Municipal Assembly building and to Liberty Square.

On the square 3500 workers were joined by additional 400 workers from Primat, to chant and demand a wage increase. At 1 pm they returned to the factories to finish the strike in the morning shift.

The next day, their demands were not met and they continued their strike. Some believed it should take place in the factories, others in the city centre, and that's where they went. They demanded to be addressed by representatives of the republican leadership and the trade union from Ljubljana. After an hour's wait, they wanted to take a special train to Ljubljana. This was not possible, but they heard that there were at least 1 000 women textile workers in Freedom Square, so they returned back there. On the same day, Janez Bohorič, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic, and Miha Ravnik, President of the Republican Trade Unions, stood in front of the dissatisfied workers. The former increased their anger and discontent by saying that there were too many workers in Slovenia and that they could not raise their wages. Workers from Metalna and Elektrovina also came to support the protest. Around 6000 people were on the square shouting "Wages up, prices down". The next day, they started to gather in Liberty Square a little after six o'clock in the morning. The workers from Merinka came via Revolution Square, those from Tezno factories came via Tito's Road, and those from Melje came via Melje and Partisan Street. On the third day of the strike, the workers were already a bit indifferent, spurred on by their younger colleagues with chants, pictures of Tito and flags. Groups of engaged work-

ers went to the factories in Melje to pick up the workers, now about 7000 of them gathered in the centre. At two o'clock the youth persuaded the others to close the junctions and the railway station in the busy rush hour. For almost two hours all traffic was stopped, and again the police did not intervene, but watched from afar. The next day, only 300 TAM and MTT workers were still present in Liberty Square. They went to MTT, where they found that a special police unit from Ljubljana had arrived. They returned to Liberty Square and stayed there until noon. On Friday, 24 June, the workers' strike ended.

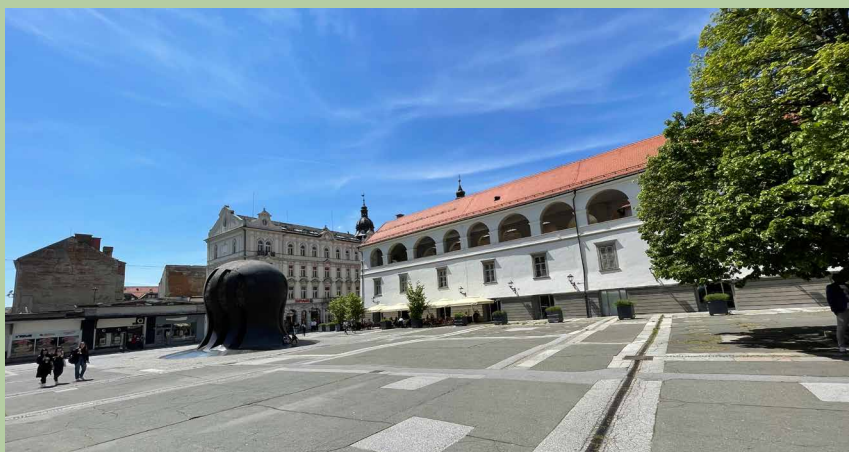
This strike brought Maribor into the Yugoslav and world media space, as it was the biggest labour protest in the city after the war. They got the highest representatives of the republic to come, while at the same time Maribor's economy was criticised for its underdevelopment and failure to adapt to market conditions. The Yugoslav working class at that time, however, was united in its demand for a fair wage for work, sufficient for a life worth living. The strike, however, was quickly doomed to failure. They had no real leader with the determination and negotiating power to make demands, and at the same time they were demanding the impossible. No one could promise them a 50% pay rise, let alone realise it.



## STATION 4

**Liberty Square -  
Maribor Uprisings (2012)**

(Trg svobode 1, 2000 Maribor)



In 2012, a series of protests against local administrations and national policies were sparked in Maribor, which later spread to other cities in Slovenia. At the time, Maribor was led by the right-wing mayor Franc Kangler and the Slovenian government by the far-right prime minister Janez Janša. Protests in Maribor against the mayor and his delegation had a modest start on 2 November 2012 with only 50 people in front of the municipal building, but the number of protesters grew exponentially from week to week. People took to the streets to demand the resignation of the mayor, who was accused of



several corrupt acts, the crucial one being the public-private partnership that installed radar cameras all over the city. The second time around 500 people gathered and the now legendary slogan “Gotof je!” (He is finished) was launched.

It should be clarified that the uprisings did not start to count with the first protest and that not every protest was an uprising. The third protest was called the First Maribor Uprising, which was attended by 1000 people and took place in the Main Square and the Rotovž on the day Kangler was elected to the Council of State. The Second and Third Maribor Uprisings took place between Trg Svobode and the Maribor Municipality building. Both demonstrations were attended by a large number of police officers and involved unjustified violent confrontations and police violence. The second uprising, where 10 000 people had gathered, was called off by the police, who used coercive means - physical force, baton, gas and cavalry. Even before the protest, a large number of so-called ‘law and order’ fences had been installed and road traffic rerouted. Individual protesters were throwing torches, granite cubes and other objects over those fences. This was allegedly the trigger for the repression by the police. Up to 20 000 people gathered at the Third Maribor Uprising to demand that mayor Kangler resign. The protesters carried the bale of hay to the front of the municipality, where it was set on fire. The new slogan of the protesters was “Let’s carry him out!” Once again, the arrests and violence were present. The hay bale was a symbol of the uprising, because the mayor justified his fortune by saying

that he profited from selling hay, among other things, to avoid accusations of corruption. The Fourth Maribor Uprising was held under the slogan “Let’s roast an octopus” where around 10 000 people marched through the city and roasted an octopus on the main square. Kangler was symbolised by the head of the octopus, while everyone connected to him in shady dealings were its tentacles.

The mass uprisings in Maribor, which took place week after week, encouraged other cities in Slovenia to protest. In early December protests were also held in Celje, Ljubljana, Ptuj, Ravne na Koroškem, Trbovlje, Jesenice, Koper, Kranj, Ajdovščina, Bohinjska Bistrica, Murska Sobota, Nova Gorica and Brežice. Although in most cities they were not as persistent as in Maribor, the uprisings spread into the All-Slovenian General Uprisings (Slovenian: “Vseslovenske splošne vstaje”), which took place in Ljubljana. People deeply dissatisfied with both local and national leadership took to the streets. The civil disorder that started in Maribor and spread across Slovenia resulted in two resignations. The first to resign was the mayor of Maribor, Franc Kangler, followed by the prime minister, Janez Janša.



## STATION 5

**Castle square - Climate Strike and  
Friday Cycling (2019, 2020)**

(Grajski trg, 2000 Maribor)



In August 2018, Greta Thunberg started a school strike in Sweden, sitting in front of parliament every day instead of being at school. She warned of the inevitable consequences of climate change and the climate crisis, and demanded that politicians start taking them seriously and, above all, take action. Other young people joined her in the protest, and on September 8th they started using #fridaysforfuture, and that was the start of

a movement that has spread around the world, demanding climate justice. On March 15th 2019, 5 minutes before 12, the first Climate Strike in Maribor took place on the Castle square, with the second strike following in the September of the same year. Young people left their school benches knowing that the fight for the environment is a fight for our future. Youth joined together in the informal group Youth for Climate Justice and drafted several documents, demands and actions to advocate for a dignified life for all on a preserved planet, to fight for concrete, people-and environment-friendly actions, and to build an alternative to the system of exploitation of man and nature in the long term. The climate strike in 2021 was held under the slogan “We need climate change”, 2022 “Planet before profit”, and 2023 “Various promises, still empty”.

Another round of protests began in early April 2020, during the coronavirus pandemics, when Slovenia was subject to harsh and contradictory sanctions dictated by the far-right government of Janez Janša. At first, people were expressing their dissatisfaction from windows and balconies that, under the guise of fighting the virus, extreme conditions were being imposed and freedoms were being curtailed. They said no to autocratic rule, to the militarisation of society and to the consolidation of the privileges of the few. At the end of April, they took to their bicycles and on Fridays they expressed their discontent, anger and indignation at the opportunist behaviour of the political and economic elites. Initially, it was about

self-organisation, radical social change, rejection of nationalism, the struggle for nature, social security for all, and against militarisation. They warned against the abuse of power and the creation of fear, hatred and the dissemination of disinformation. Resistance to the authoritarian state and to impoverishment was understandable and justified, and taking responsibility for oneself and others was understood not only as wearing masks and disinfecting one's hands, but as a rejection of the regime of terror. Friday's protests in Maribor, starting in Freedom Square, had been going on for several months. In Ljubljana, they cycled right up to the elections, however, the movement was somewhat diluted, it lost its radical potential and it was fully liberalised.

## Questions:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Which of the events described do you consider to be the most important for Maribor and why?
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you remember any other act of self-organising that took place on the streets of Maribor? What were they fighting for?
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you think protests are an effective way to participate in political and social life? If so, why?

## Glossary:

- **HEGEMONY**, the dominance of one group over another, often supported by legitimating norms and ideas. The term hegemony is today often used as shorthand to describe the relatively dominant position of a particular set of ideas and their associated tendency to become commonsensical and intuitive, thereby inhibiting the dissemination or even the articulation of alternative ideas. The associated term hegemon is used to identify the actor, group, class, or state that exercises hegemonic power or that is responsible for the dissemination of hegemonic ideas.
- **FAR-RIGHT POLITICS**, or **RIGHT-WING POLITICS**, refer to a spectrum of political thought that tends to be radically conservative, ultra-nationalist, and authoritarian. In most cases, right-wing ideas lead to conflicts, wars, genocides, imperialism, etc.
- **GUERRILLA WARFARE** can be defined as irregular military actions (such as harassment and sabotage) carried out by small and usually independent forces.
- **SOCIALIST SELF-MANAGEMENT OR SELF-GOVERNING SOCIALISM** was a form of workers' self-management used as a social and economic model formulated by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. It was instituted by law in 1950

and lasted in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until 1990, just prior to its breakup in 1992. The main goal was to move the managing of companies into the hands of workers and to separate the management from the state. It was also meant to demonstrate the viability of a “third way” between the capitalist United States and the socialist Soviet Union.

— **WORKERS STRIKE**, mass leisure coexisted interestingly with the final major social development of the later 19th century, the escalating forms of class conflict. Pressed by the rapid pace and often dulling routine of work, antagonized by a faceless corporate management structure seemingly bent on efficiency at all costs, workers in various categories developed more active protest modes in the later 19th century. They were aided by their growing familiarity with basic industrial conditions, which facilitated the formation of relevant demands and made organization more feasible. Legal changes, spreading widely in western Europe after 1870, reduced political barriers to unionization and strikes, though clashes with government forces remained a common part of labour unrest. The rise of organized labour signaled an unprecedented development in the history of European popular protest. Never before had so many people been formally organized; never before had withdrawal of labour served as the chief protest weapon. Many workers joined a sweeping



ideological fervor to their protest. Many were socialists, and a number of trade union movements were tightly linked to the rising socialist parties.

— **NEO-LIBERAL CAPITALISM** is the term used to describe the phase of capitalism where restrictions on the global flows of commodities and capital, including capital in the form of finance, have been substantially removed. Since such removal happens under pressure from globally-mobile (or international) finance capital, neo-liberal capitalism is characterized by the hegemony of international finance capital, with which the big capitals in particular countries get integrated, and which ensures that a common set of “neo-liberal” policies are pursued by all countries across the globe.

— **CLIMATE CRISIS**, climate change is the defining crisis of our time and it is happening even more quickly than we feared. No corner of the globe is immune from the devastating consequences of climate change. Rising temperatures are fueling environmental degradation, natural disasters, weather extremes, food and water insecurity, economic disruption, conflict, and terrorism. Sea levels are rising, the Arctic is melting, coral reefs are dying, oceans are acidifying, and forests are burning. It is clear that business as usual is not good enough. As the infinite cost of climate change reaches irreversible highs, now is the time for bold collective action.

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### Photos:

Kaja Fiedler

# National Liberation Movement Monuments

**KEY WORDS:** National liberation movement, monuments, commemoration, freedom fighters, partisans, Yugoslavia, Nazi occupation

**DURATION:** approximately 60 min

**ACCESSIBILITY:** accessible by foot or by bike



STATION 1

**Monument to Fallen Railwaymen - Fighters of The National Liberation Struggle**



STATION 5

**Museum of National Liberation and Pohorje Battalion**



STATION 2

**Boris Kidrič Monument**



STATION 6

**Volkmer's Passage Monument**



STATION 3

**Maribor Hostages Memorial and Slava Klavora**



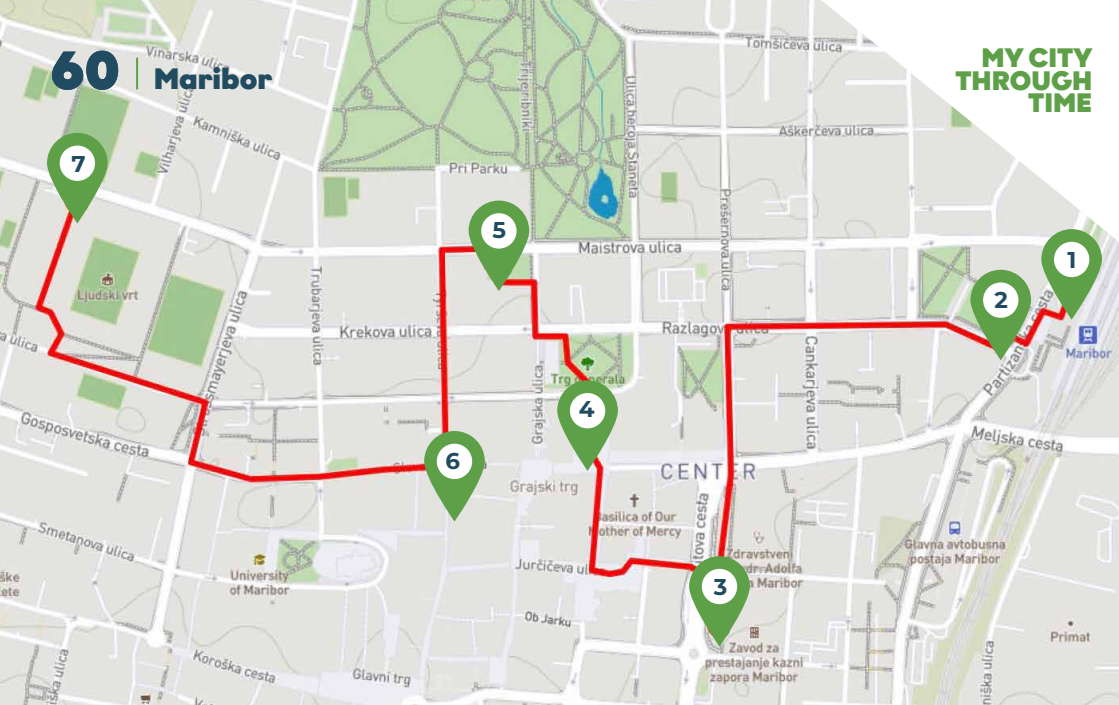
STATION 7

**Monument to Fallen Athletes**



STATION 4

**National Liberation Movement Monument**



## National Liberation Movement Monuments



### STATION 1

Monument to  
Fallen Railwaymen  
- Fighters of The  
National Liberation  
Struggle



### STATION 5

Museum of  
National Liberation  
and Pohorje  
Battalion



### STATION 2

Boris Kidrič  
Monument



### STATION 6

Volkmer's Passage  
Monument



### STATION 3

Maribor Hostages  
Memorial and  
Slava Klavora



### STATION 7

Monument to  
Fallen  
Athletes



### STATION 4

National Liberation  
Movement  
Monument

## Description

The national liberation movement in Yugoslavia was characterized by its unwavering commitment to anti-fascism and a united front against Nazi occupation.

Using guerrilla warfare tactics, the Partisans conducted sabotage operations, ambushes, intelligence gathering, and hit-and-run attacks, inflicting significant damage on the occupying forces. The national liberation movement dismantled the enemy's control over Yugoslavia, liberating the country from the inside, and contributed greatly to the defeat of the Axis powers.

The national liberation movement laid the foundation for the establishment of a new Yugoslavia after the war, embracing principles of socialism, self-management, and non-alignment in international affairs.

After the Axis invasion in April of 1941, Germany annexed Maribor and the surrounding Lower Styrian region into the Greater German Reich. Upon this annexation, immediate plans were made by Nazi Germany to re-Germanize the city, which included not only pushing out and marginalizing the Slovene population and culture, but also the mass arrests of local Slovenes and importation of ethnic Germans to the city.

In spite of Nazi predictions, the first act of resistance in Yugoslavia during World War II took place in Maribor. Nazis implemented repressive measures, suppressed dissent, and enforced strict control and harsh retribution over the population

in an attempt to secure their grip on the city and its valuable assets. Regardless, resistance in Maribor was marked by a fierce determination to overthrow the German occupiers and dismantle the regime imposed on the city. The national liberation movement in Maribor also witnessed courageous acts of defiance by the city's youth. Students and intellectuals formed underground networks, disseminating information, and coordinating resistance activities. They risked their lives to challenge the oppressive regime and preserve the city's cultural heritage.

By the end of Yugoslavia, about 200 monuments and memorials to the national liberation struggle had been erected in Maribor. With Slovenia's independence in 1991, Maribor experienced the last change of power at national level in the 20th century. The city authorities erected a few memorials and renamed only a few streets to represent Slovenia's independence. Most of the names and memorials remained unchanged, just as they had been in socialist Yugoslavia which is atypical for post-socialist countries.

Slovenia, in general, is one of the few countries that has not seen monuments destroyed on a large scale. One of the reasons for this is that most of the monuments were erected to specific people and specific acts of resistance against the occupier. There were fewer impositions of external commanders or symbolic figures such as Lenin or Stalin, or of Soviet Union fighters, who were perceived by the Eastern Bloc countries in the period following the collapse of the bloc as occupiers, and no longer as liberators.



## STATION 1

**Monument to Fallen Railwaymen -  
Fighters of the National Liberation  
Struggle**

(Partizanska cesta 50, 2000 Maribor)



In front of the Maribor railway station is situated an often overlooked monument dedicated to the fallen railwayman who perished during World War II. During the Nazi occupation, railwaymen were one of the many groups who volunteered in great numbers for the national liberation struggle. All over Yugoslavia railwaymen were invaluable cooperation to the partisans, carrying messages, weapons and sanitary material, and on several occasions secretly facilitating the transport of

fighters and activists. From the Maribor railway station alone, 39 railway workers gave their lives during the struggle against the Nazi occupier.

Unveiled on April 14th, 1962 to a crowd of over 2,000 people, the monument was made by famous local sculptor Slavko Tihec, who himself came from a family of railway workers. The monument consists of three thin metal fins roughly 6 meters tall that all connect at the mid-section. These fins represent train lines and the connection is meant to illustrate their crossing-point, all combining into an arrangement symbolizing the ultimate struggle and sacrifice of railway workers united against the oppressor.





## STATION 2

**Monument to Boris Kidrič**

(Trg Borisa Kidriča, 2000 Maribor)



Boris Kidrič was one of the most important figures of Slovenian and Yugoslav society in the crucial period during and after World War II. A revolutionary, Marxist, political leader and national hero, he was one of the most prominent Slovenian

communists alongside Edvard Kardelj. In the upper grades of grammar school, he was introduced to Marxism, became a member of the SKOJ and soon of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. He grew up in a family of intellectuals, but quickly developed a sense for workers and socialist society. Kidrič took part in several actions and communist activities, and as a student of the 8th grade of the gymnasium was arrested and imprisoned for a year in the Maribor prison. There he met other communists, learned about conspiracy and organization, and further strengthened his communist beliefs. After his imprisonment, he finished high school and continued his studies, during which he was actively involved in the reconstruction of the broken Communist Party. He edited illegal communist party bulletins, organized meetings, encouraged workers' unions, and the activities of the communists and youth workers. He combined and applied revolutionary theory and his organizational skills. Kidrič was one of the founders of the Liberation Front of the Slovene Nation, the first Commissar of the General Command of the Slovene Partisan Army, the first President of the Slovene National Government (1945), Minister of Industry in the Government of the SFRY (1946), and President of the Economic Council of the SFRY and economic strategist of the socialist self-management, responsible for the implementation of the "First Five-Year Plan".

The monument, work of Jaroslav Černigo and Stojan Batič, was placed in Boris Kidrič Square in 1963. The square was created in two periods and changed several names, from German

to Croatian, and in 1953 it became Boris Kidrič Square. The sculptor Batič and his assistant Ivan Štrekelj carved a portrait of Boris Kidrič into the 54-tonne granite rock on the spot. The monument is made of granite, marble, steel and bronze and measures 8m x 6.3m x 7m. The bronze relief represents the masses of people, while the steel bars and granite rock show Kidrič as a guardian watching over the crowds. Due to the weight of the granite part the monument started to sink, so the upper part was slightly truncated, which also changed the symbolism slightly. As people often confused the face with Tito, a name plaque was later added to emphasize that this is Boris Kidrič.



## STATION 3

**Maribor Hostages Memorial and Slava Klavora**

(Ulica talcev 14, 2000 Maribor )



The monument is dedicated to all members of the national liberation movement, who were imprisoned in the Court Street (Slovenian: Sodna ulica) prisons during the Nazi occupation 1941-1945. They were tortured there and then sent to concentration camps. Among these, 661 hostages were executed in mass shootings. The first six hostages were shot in the prison yard on August 10th 1941. This was to show the Slovenes that they should not resist the Nazi imposed authorities, as they would end up the same way. The Nazis carried out their worst massacre on October 2nd 1942, when 143 hostages were shot dead in the prison yard. The names of all 661 shot are inscribed on a granite plaque, and urns with the hostages' ashes are placed in niches in the wall. A verse is also inscribed in their

memory: “You fell with terror in your eyes, killed behind these walls, you fell with faith in our nation, may your memory not be forgotten.”

The memorial to the hostages, designed by local Maribor architect Jaroslav Černigoj, is in good condition and is regularly commemorated. The architect wanted to add a fountain to the monument, which would have brought a symbolism of hope to a subject full of death, but this was never realized. It was made in 1959 of marble, 175 cm x 520 cm.

Among the tortured and killed was also Slava Klavora. Her strong fighting spirit brought her into the inner circle of the resistance organizers at a very young age. She became secretary of the Union of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia (SKOJ) for the Maribor district. Together with Bojan Ilich, she set about consolidating the SKOJ groups and mobilizing them to fight against the German occupier. Slava maintained links between the leading organizers of the resistance, expanded the network of Liberation Front supporters and, together with other SKOJ members, carried out numerous sabotage actions. On the morning of 7 August, the Gestapo broke into Mara Čepič's home where the main outpost of the resistance movement was located. Slava Klavora was among the many activists who were trapped. Because she refused to divulge secret information, she was brutally beaten. On the same day, she was taken to the judicial prisons, where for 18 days she defied the inhuman violence of the German secret police with an indomitable

will. Despite her exhaustion, she exercised regularly to build up enough strength for the grueling interrogations. On the night of 8 August, she was taken from Maribor to Graz prisons, where she was subjected to a new avalanche of interrogations and torture. She returned to the Maribor Court prisons on 15 August. On the evening of 24 August, Slava was taken to the prison yard, where the names of all those sentenced to death by firing squad for sedition were read out. After the verdict was read out, she was the first to cry out, "Long live the Communist Party!" In response, the other convicts sang, "Rise up, slaves, from the curse..." When the German soldiers placed her in front of the wood pile, she refused to be blindfolded. Her young life ended under the shots of the occupier's guns. In 1953, the People's Power of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia declared her a national heroine. Today, a Maribor primary school, a men's choir and theater play are named after her. Also, there are two monuments dedicated to her.



## STATION 4

**The National Liberation Monument**

(Trg svobode 1, 2000 Maribor)



The National Liberation Monument, situated on the Freedom Square in Maribor, stands as a powerful symbol of valor, resilience, and the enduring spirit of freedom. Conceived and constructed by the renowned local sculptor Slavko Tihec, this monument encapsulates the collective memory and historical significance of the city. The National Liberation Monument is a commemoration of the heroism and sacrifice of the freedom fighters during World War II.

The idea behind the monument was a droplet that, when it falls to the ground and makes contact with the ground, is made thinner by the earth's gravity and flattens at the bottom, representing a nation that "has risen from the ground" after defeating an oppressive and brutal occupier. Tihec used this physical form primarily in the context of the struggle against the alienating and invader tendencies of the occupier. The monument is enriched by documentary material about the shooting of 661 hostages who were sentenced to death or killed during World War II. It contains a farewell letter from Jože Fluks, who was sentenced to death, and raster images of local hostages and combatants on its upper segments. There are roughly 200 faces within the monument, with the photos themselves sourced from the archives of the Museum of the National Liberation in Maribor. Among them, the author added an image of Tito (leader of partizan national-liberation movement) and image of himself.

Locals often call the monument "Kodžak" because its shape is reminiscent of Kojak, a famous bald detective from a TV show in the 1980's.

The memorial was erected in 1975. It is made of bronze, measuring 6m x 4m x 4m. It was restored in 2011.

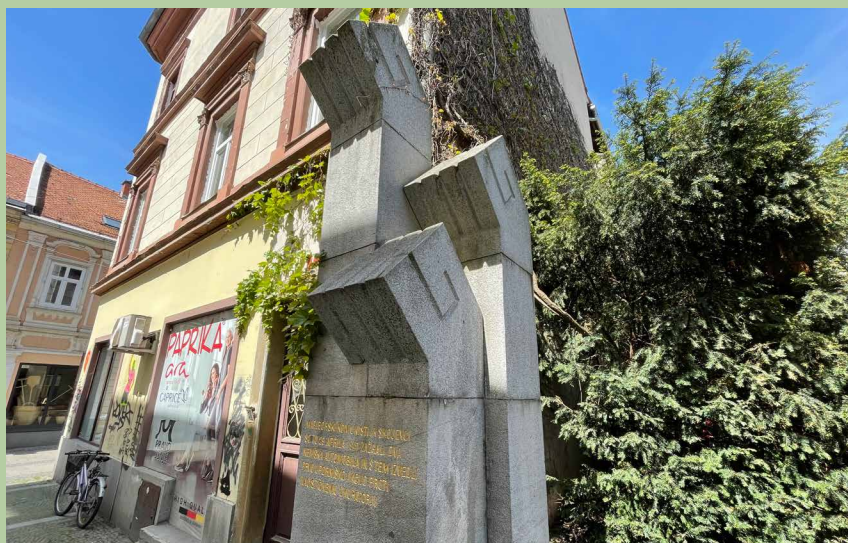




## STATION 5

**Volkmer's Passage Monument**

(Volkmerjev prehod 1, 2000 Maribor)



The first action of the Maribor Communists against the occupier which is also the first act of liberation resistance in Yugoslavia during World War II took place on 29th of April 1941 in Volkmer' Passage. Two Nazi cars were set on fire by the group of young Maribor communists and SKOJ members (Young Communist League of Yugoslavia), August Greif, Ljubo Tarkuš and Bojan Ilich. The occupier's investigation of the first rebel action was not successful. Their documents show that, despite

interrogating, arresting and torturing around 80 people in the basement of the Melje barracks, they were unable to find out who had taken part in the action.

The initiative for the action stemmed from the anti-fascist and liberationist orientation and the fighting spirit of the SKOJ members and the communists, or from the general orientation of the Communist Party, which was already preparing the struggle against the occupier. The spark ignited by the youth in Maribor spread rapidly throughout the country, and by July 1941 the national liberation movement was well underway and strong until the final capitulation of the occupier and the collaborators.

Bojan Ilich was ambushed in the home of Mara Čepič on August 7th 1941, together with other national heroes Slava Klavora, Slavko Šlander and Bogdan Špindler. After being tortured, he was executed on 27 September 1941. One of the oldest elementary schools in Maribor was renamed after Bojan Ilich.

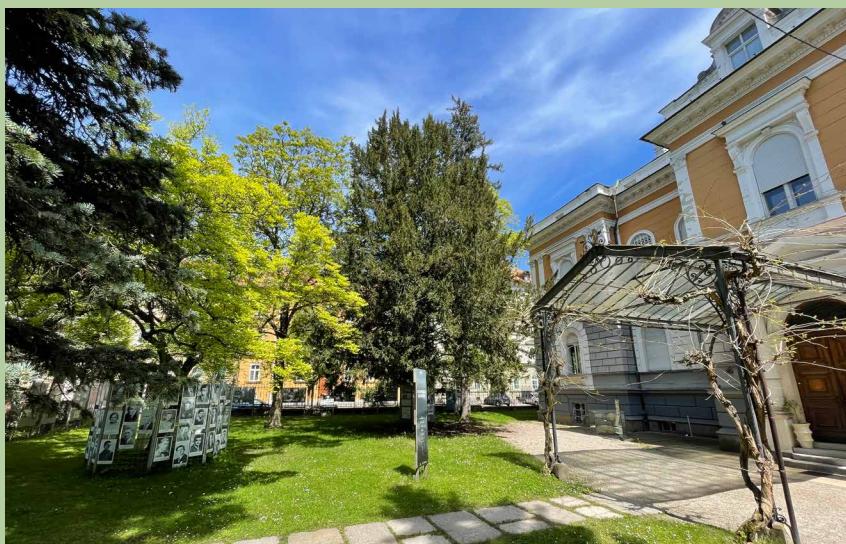
On May 21st 1961, a commemorative plaque was unveiled in the Volkmer's Passage, and in 1975 a granite memorial was erected, the work of Maribor architect Branko Kocmut. The dimensions of the memorial are 435cm x 88cm x 130cm. The abstract form of the memorial represents three fists raised towards the sky.



## STATION 6

**Museum of National Liberation  
Maribor**

(Ulica heroja Tomšiča 5, 2000 Maribor)



Museum of National Liberation Maribor started to operate as an independent museum institution on May 1st 1958. It was founded by then's District People's Committee of Maribor, although the idea of the museum dates back to 1947, when a collection on the national liberation struggle was opened in the Regional Museum in Maribor. This was the first collection of its kind in Slovenian museums. It is a history museum, which deals with the museological and historical treatment

of the recent history of north-eastern Slovenia. The museum is special for its archives with more than 120 meters of material of occupier and partisan origin. The permanent exhibition shows happenings in the region of Maribor during World War II. In all six exhibition rooms visitors learn about the Nazi occupation, the occupier's Germanizational measures of the Slovenian population and the organization of the resistance and the operations of the resistance groups and partisan units in this part of Slovenia from 1941 up to the end of the war.

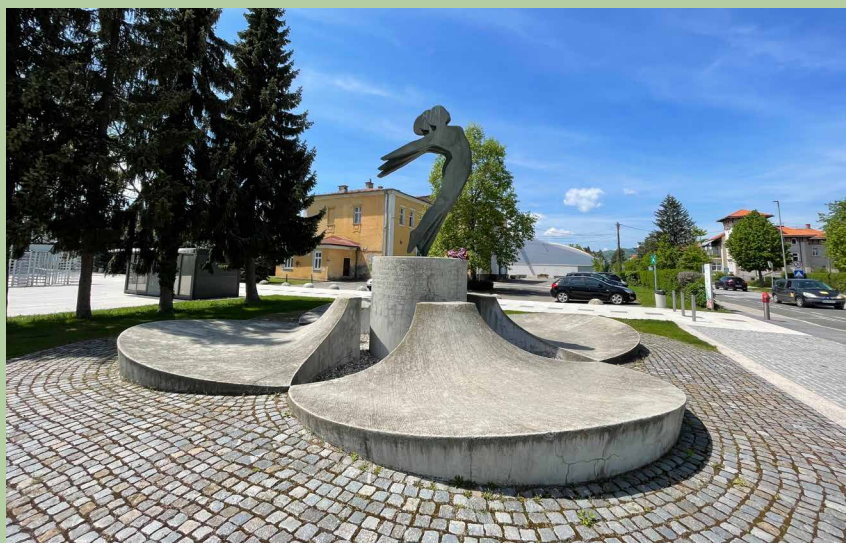
In the courtyard of the museum stands a permanent outdoor exhibition The Pohorje Legend, which was opened in 2018 on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the tragic fall of the Pohorje Battalion (January 8th 1943). The Pohorje Battalion (officially the 1st Battalion of the Pohorje Detachment) was a partisan unit formed on 11 September 1942 in the foothills of Pohorje. Battalion had three companies and a women's platoon, with a total of around 100 combatants. The battalion carried out 120 actions and sabotages, which seriously undermined the Nazi occupier. In mid-December 1942, at the location called "By the Three Nails", The Germans managed, through the secret channels of the Gestapo, to obtain information about the Pohorski Battalion and on January 8th 1943 they sent police and army squads from Maribor (around 2,000 combatants) to overcome them. In a fierce fight, in the muddy snow, the entire Pohorje Battalion was slain.



## STATION 7

**Monument to Fallen Athletes**

(Mladinska ulica 29, 2000 Maribor)



Placed in front of the Ljudski Vrt football stadium and surrounded by sport centers is the monument dedicated to the memory of fallen athletes who sacrificed their lives in the Second World War for freedom. This work was unveiled in 1983 and was created by Slovene sculptor Viktor Gojkovič, along with local architect Bogdan Reichenberg. The plinth of the monument contains the inscription names of 49 athletes who were members of the Slovenian Sports Association of Maribor.

Among them are national heroes Rado Iršič, Evgen Matejka and Franjo Vrunč. The memorial sculpture itself consists of a flat bronze female figure who appears to be diving into the air. Stacked versions of the form impart the impression of movement through space. The monument is in good condition, and is regularly commemorated.

Here is suggested list of 10 more notable monuments dedicated to National Liberation Movement in Maribor: Radvanje Hostages memorial (1955), Memorial to the fallen fighters - workers of the TOZD Boris Kidrič factory (1959), Monument to Slava Klavora (1974), Monument to Slava Klavora (1983), Monument to Angel Besednjak (1975), Bust of Tone Čufar (1977), Bust of Slavko Šlander (1980), Bust of Janez Hribar (1980), Monument to Janez Hribar (1981), and Monument to Ljubo Šercer (1986).

## Questions:

- \_\_\_\_\_ If these monuments were removed in the transitional period between socialism and neoliberalism, what do you imagine in their place?
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ How do these monuments fit in the surrounding environment?
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Why is it so important to commemorate and have monuments of the National liberation movement?

## Glossary:

- **SOCIALIST SELF-MANAGEMENT OR SELF-GOVERNING SOCIALISM** was a form of workers' self-management used as a social and economic model formulated by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. It was instituted by law in 1950 and lasted in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until 1990, just prior to its breakup in 1992. The main goal was to move the managing of companies into the hands of workers and to separate the management from the state. It was also meant to demonstrate the viability of a "third way" between the capitalist United States and the socialist Soviet Union.
- **NEO-LIBERAL CAPITALISM** is the term used to describe the phase of capitalism where restrictions on the global flows of commodities and capital, including capital in the form of finance, have been substantially removed. Since such removal happens under pressure from globally-mobile (or international) finance capital, neo-liberal capitalism is characterized by the hegemony of international finance capital, with which the big capitals in particular countries get integrated, and which ensures that a common set of "neo-liberal" policies are pursued by all countries across the globe.
- **NATIONALISM** is a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as op-



posed to those of other nations or supranational groups. In many cases, nationalist ideas lead to conflicts, wars, genocides, imperialism, etc.

— **FAR-RIGHT POLITICS**, or **RIGHT-WING POLITICS**, refer to a spectrum of political thought that tends to be radically conservative, ultra-nationalist, and authoritarian. In most cases, right-wing ideas lead to conflicts, wars, genocides, imperialism, etc.

— **GUERRILLA WARFARE** can be defined as irregular military actions (such as harassment and sabotage) carried out by small and usually independent forces.

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# MY CITY THROUGH TIME

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