

Referencia Recurso Didáctico

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Nada Pitz, daughter of the disappeared Janez Titan, has been researching her father's life and death since 1977. Titan has been a member of Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) before the Second World War, a factionalist of the Party and has been missing since April 17th 1945. Nada was only two months old. His destiny was very much like Mr. [Herbert Fornezzi](#)'s: another member of CPY and International *Brigadista* in Spanish republican army, whose combatant history has been published in this website.



Janez Titan

Very soon after Nada father's disappearance, the actual state authority "comforted" her mother saying that he probably became a member of a secret mission and that he would return in no time, in a few days, or in two years at most. But there were various rumors going around

in public: that he was shot; he was arrested by Russian Secret Political Police (NKVD) and he was writing communist's party history in Siberia; that he emigrated to Argentina and so on. The Nada's mother even searched for him through Red Cross International without results.

A very important milestone of Nada investigation was presented in 1991. Slovenia became a self governing internationally acknowledged state. Democratic changes in their society uncovered "the dark side of the moon" and unfolded shocking and suppressed un-judicial postwar manslaughters of many opposite thinkers and collaborators.

In the year 2004 the Nada's research got its epilog. Chairman of ZZB NOB (Union of Associations for the Values of the National Movement of Slovenia - war veterans' organization), Mr. Dr. Janez Stanovnik, gave a public statement: a confession that Janez Titan was murdered by OZNA (secret political police of Yugoslavia). Because of some clearings in the party "Titan became a victim of arbitrary judicially not verified murder". The truth came out precisely on the 59th anniversary of his death (newspaper *DELO*, April 17th 2004). But Nada Pitz is still trying hard to find his grave.

It is evident from the enclosed biography of Janez Titan, that he took political participation in the International Brigades in Spain. Nada would like to find out as much as possible about his mission or his role in the Spanish Civil War. Therefore, the publication the brief Janes Titan's biography in this website has by objective to obtain all information that historians or everybody can have about this disappeared person. This information can be send to Nada Pitz by e-mail: nada.pitz@gmail.com

Thank you for your collaboration.

Janez Titan biography

Janez Titan was born on October 2nd 1911 at *Krog*, near *Murska Sobota* in Slovenia. He was a peasant's son and he graduated from Grammar School, in *Murska Sobota*, in the year 1930. Thereafter, he studied medicine in Vienna (1930 - 1934).



Janez Titan (first on the left), medical students 1930-1934

There, he was accepted to the Yugoslavian Communist Party (CPY). He took an active role in the Foreign Country Bureau of CPY and he was in charge of communist propaganda on Slovenia Region, where was in touch with different agents (Martelanc, Marschalls, Sodar, Oskar and others). Janez had a very responsible position in Slovene national revolutionary movement for a while. He was the leading organizer of *NOVI ČAS* (NEW TIME), a fortnight paper in *MurskaSobota* (1932 /33). This newspaper was suppressed, the editorship fell to pieces, and Janez Titan was proclaimed an exiled political (1932-1939).

Despite he was absent, he was found guilty in his own land as a founder of Communist Party in *Drava* Province (Ban's Domain). In Vienna, Janez edited an illegal paper: *UPOR* (Rebellion). Mr. Rimski and Janez Titan were arrested and imprisoned together in Vienna in 1934. Titan was deported from Austria to Bohemia and in November 1934 he went to Paris. His medical tests were not validated; therefore he started to study law (1934-1939).



Janez Titan is standing second on the left, the photo shows graduation in 1930

Janez Titan was politically active in the Communist Party Bureau Abroad, headquarters in Paris, among seasonal workers in Germany and France. He had used the following pseudonyms: Titan, Krištof, Jože, Gaston and Anton. In February 1935 he traveled from Vienna to Bohemia to study there. The same year, Titan and Lovro Kuhar- Prežihov Voranc, CPY delegates, took part in Komintern Congress in Moscow.

He had trouble with the police in Paris and had to escape to Spain. On August 30th 1936 he was chairman of a meeting of 150 Yugoslav worker's delegates. He explained Bolshevik secret strategy main directives, regarding the beginning of the World Revolution in 1940: "when Russia would be completely ready". After this meeting he flew, together with Russian pilots and engineers, from the airport Bourget to Barcelona and Madrid to raise a rebellion in Franco's Army. His activities were connected with leading communists: Lovro Kuhar, Boris Kidrič and Josip Broz (known as *Tito*).

In the late thirties there were some factional fights in the Party. In *Oddelek za Zascito Naroda* (OZNA) [Department of National Protection: was a secret political police in Yugoslavia] documents, Titan was characterized as a Spanish Combatant in the Republican army. In letter from Central Committee of CPY to Emigration Committee in Paris, from 11/August/1936, was written: "Titan wish to assist and help the Spanish democracy" [Archive of Republic Slovenia (ARS), KI 1936/283 -Information gained on July 2008].



Janez Titan with fiancée Zinka Skrbič

In 1938 he came together with his schoolfellows: Ivan Camplin, a catholic priest for emigrants in France, and Casar Ferk, a lawyer student of diplomacy in Paris. On October 20th 1938, Ferk wrote in his diary that Janez paid him a visit and asked him if he could mediate in order to enable it to return to his homeland. Titan told him in a conversation “that he was walking up and down and that he was disappointed of everything, so he wanted to go home. He had got himself a big trouble inside. Ferk thought that Titan had clashed with himself (had some mental struggle).” Casar’s intervention, at Yugoslav Foreign Office, was granted and Titan returned to Yugoslavia in 1939.

He continued his law studies in *Ljubljana* and managed the Farming Co-operative (for buying off cereals) in *Murska Sobota* at the same time. In January 1940 he published his Statement to the Christian World in two newspapers: *Slovenec* and *Novine* and he introduced his deviation from the Revolutionary Communism. He took sides with Christian Socialism: “The statement highly echoed in public and affected all those who worked for communism. Titan was stigmatized, so we should not be surprised that after the liberation of the Country, when everything was boiling up, his opponents returned tit for tat” [conversations with the prof. M. Kokolj, 1982].

In May 1941 he married Zinka Skrbič. Their son Stanko was born in 1943 and in January 1945 their daughter Nada was born. In 1943 he set up their Brickworks in *Spodnji Moravci*. His wife

got all the engines needed as a dowry. He was interned in *Vöröszberenyi* in Hungary, from October 1943 to March 1944, and confined there later on. From October 17th 1944, before he was taken into custody again and until the arrival of Russians in April 3rd 1945, he was a member of underground movement. His pregnant wife had to undergo twenty-two police investigations. On April 14th 1945 he was nominated as a partisan political commissar for the town *Murska Sobota*.

The dramatic end of Janez Titan was on April 17th 1945. He was invited to a discussion to OZNA before noon and after that he disappeared without leaving any trace.

All statements which are offer in this brief Janez Titan biography are supported with documentary material collected in years between 1977 and 2007 by Nada Pitz.

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Janez Titan photos



Janez Titan, student of Medical school in Vienna, 1932



Janez Titan first on the right, with his compatriot-emigrants in Paris, 1935-39



Janez Titan with his friend Franc Novak (Architecture student, Vienna) 1932



Janez Titan with his wife Zinka Skrbič, 06/May/1941



Janez Titan with his wife Zinka and son Stanko, 1943



Janez Titan, niece Marija, sister Tereza, nephew Janez, mother Marija, wife Zinka with son Stanko, father Janez