

## ON PAHOR'S WORK

Biography is the key to Pahor's oeuvre, in which he chronicles the epic of the Slovene and, indirectly, the European individual in their struggle for survival. He narrates the story of a citizen of Trieste, a city only ostensibly limited by time and space, a city where the central subject is intertwined with historical events and personal experience. This modern-day, tragic Odysseus reveals his pilgrimage into the words of shadows, where he instils life and dignity into invisible friends with words and emotions and redeems himself (and all of us) through the only viable means: love. Pahor's oeuvre portrays the harrowing life experience of the author himself and all the victims of the fascist regime, survivors of death camps, post-war fighters for democracy, individuals who believed in the Human and the Truth. *Pilgrim Among the Shadows* (first published in 1967) is thus an exceptional and unique tale of a death camp experience and unveils the author's journey and the essence of all his works, which can be summed up in a single thought: The spirits of those who had not returned. He does away with dialogue completely, yet his writing exceeds and augments the memoir prose.

*Tatjana Rojc*

## NECROPOLIS/PILGRIM AMONG THE SHADOWS

"Forbidden languages are generous and sturdy, from the ashes they have risen and became a poem."

*Dominique Dissidour*

"The author attests to Slovenian thought and originality."

*Evgen Bavčar*

"A harrowing book, visiting a death camp and the re-emergence of unbearable images, portrayed in stunning detail and with an exceptional analytical force."

*Le Monde*

"The author's sensitivity, grace and the acuteness of his view of the world and people fuse with tragic memories in this wonderful and shocking book."

*La Croix*

"*Pilgrim Among the Shadows* is an exceptional work, belonging for decades among the best stories of destruction."

*Claudio Magris*

"A story whose beauty rightfully places it side by side with the works of Primo Levi and Imre Kertész."

*Paolo Rumiz (La Repubblica)*

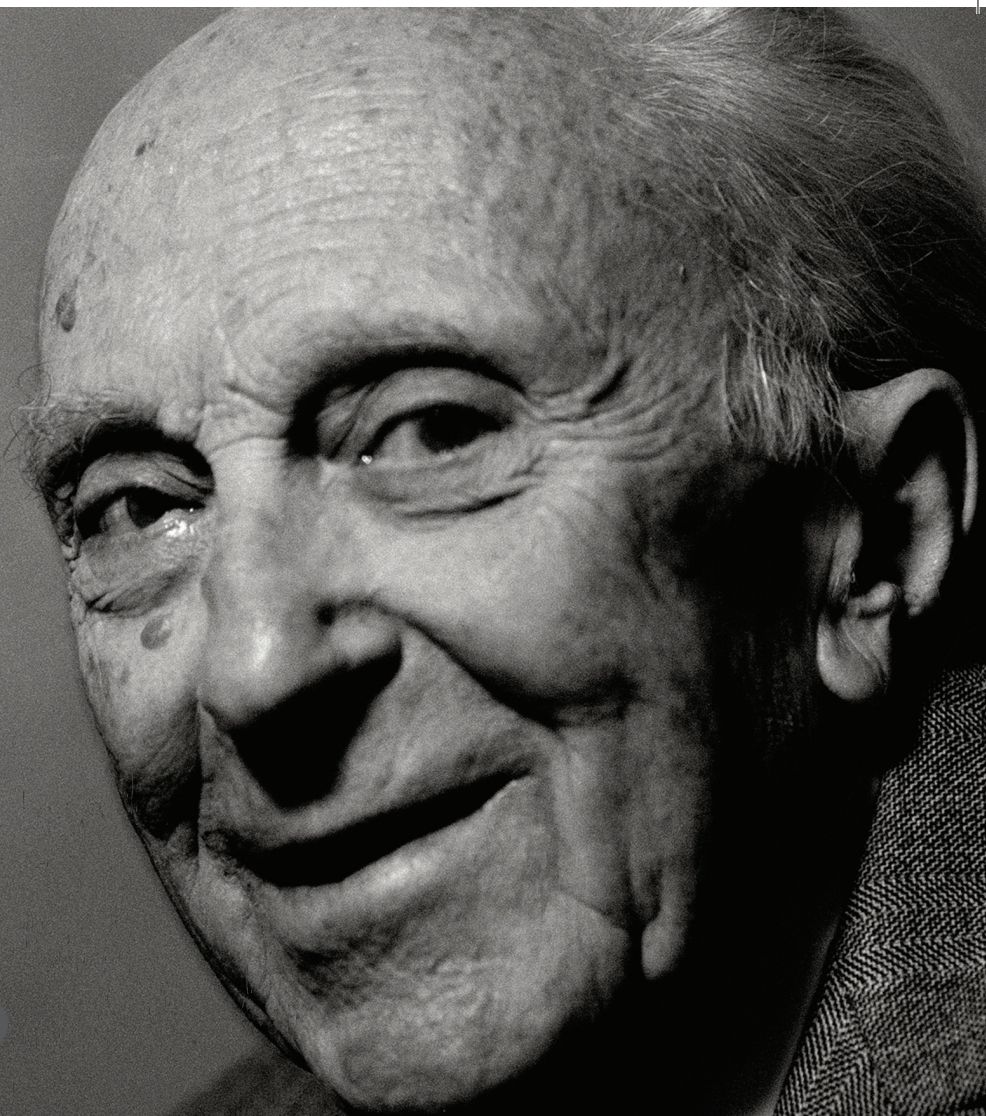
"A heart-rending and beautiful book."

*Elena Loewenthal (La Stampa)*

"It is impossible to overlook the brave and direct perspective of Boris Pahor. He is one of the major chroniclers of concentration camp horrors, along with Primo Levi, Imre Kertész and Robert Antelme."

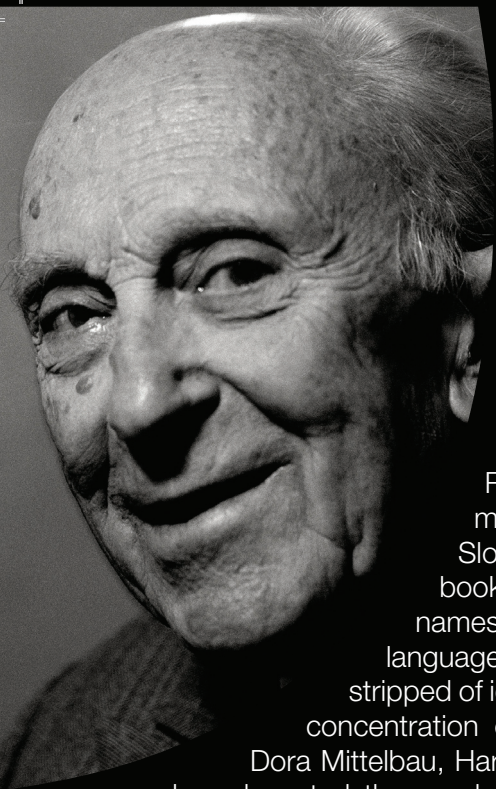
*Süddeutsche Zeitung*

photo by Jozse Suhadolnik



BORIS PAHOR

design Studio Ušnek d.o.o.



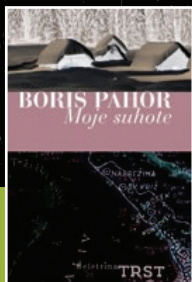
## BORIS PAHOR

is the chronicler of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Born in Trieste on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1913, he witnessed first-hand the fascist persecution of the Slovene community which became part of Italy after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Treaty of Rapallo in 1920. Still a child, he witnessed mass persecution and the torching of the Slovene Culture Center, burning of Slovene books, Italianization of first, family and place names, the prohibition of the use of the Slovene language in public and schools. After having been stripped of identity, he was sent to a number of German concentration camps (Dachau, Struthof, Dachau again, Dora Mittelbau, Harzungen and Bergen Belsen). After the war he advocated the need for a Slovene democratic system. His life experience has had a profound impact on his literary work as well as his historical and socio-political writings and essays. Pahor's literary oeuvre is renowned in Europe and the United States and he is considered one of the classic writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Boris Pahor: b.pahor@yahoo.it*

## SOME BOOKS BY BORIS PAHOR

*Moje suhote*



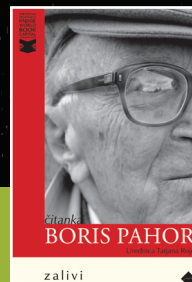
*Trg Oberdan*



*Zgodba o reki, kriпти in dvorljivem golobu*

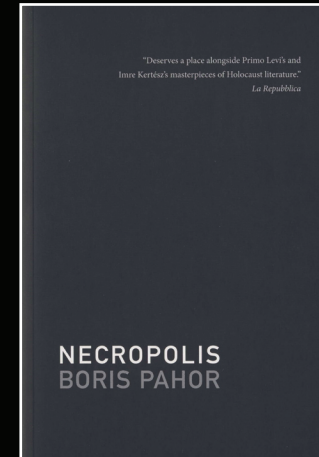


*Zalivi*



## NECROPOLIS/PILGRIM AMONG THE SHADOWS

*The book was translated by Michael Biggins / Excerpt*



It's a Sunday afternoon, and the smooth and sinuous asphalt strip that leads ever higher into the mountains is not as desolate as I would have wished it to be. Cars pass me or return down into the valley, toward Schirmeck, and the volume of tourist traffic disrupts, defiles, even, the calm I had anticipated. Admittedly, my car and I are now a part of the motorized procession. I had hoped that if there was no other traffic but me, my former intimacy with this place would keep my intrusion from distorting the dreamlike images that have lived untouched in the shadows of my mind ever since the war. I realize that some vague resistance is forming in me—resistance to the fact that this mountainous region, such an integral part of our inner world, should be laid bare, made

accessible. My resistance is tinged with jealousy, because these outsiders are coming to sightsee in the place that witnessed our anonymous captivity. But—and I sense this unmistakably—their eyes will never see the abyss of desolation that was our punishment for believing in man's dignity and freedom. At the same time I feel an unbidden and gently persistent satisfaction that this mountain in the Vosges is no longer the site of a distant, self-consuming fury of destruction; that it has become, instead, the destination of endless crowds which, naïve and guileless though they may be, are sincere in their wish to experience just a hint of the inconceivable fate of their lost brothers. Maybe in the ascent here there is something of the fervor of religious pilgrimages to the remote peaks of holy mountains. But nothing in this pilgrimage is even remotely connected to the blind idolatry that Primus Truber so fervently opposed when he exhorted the Slovenes to discover their own inner enlightenment and not spend themselves in superficial, pompous ritual. People all over Europe are coming together on high mountain terraces where human evil wrung victory after victory out of human pain and nearly set the seal of permanence on destruction. It isn't the search for miracle that brings these modern pilgrims. They come here to tread on truly holy ground, to pay homage to the ashes of fellow creatures who by their mute presence have raised in our hearts, an immovable landmark of human history.