

SLOVENE PERIODICALS IN THE USA, 1891–1920

In this article the history of Slovene periodicals, i.e. newspapers and monthly and bimonthly reviews and annual almanacs in the United States of America from 1891 until early 1920s will be presented. Immigrant newspapers and other periodicals in general played an important role in keeping ethnic identities alive among American ethnic groups. They represented one of the most important expressions of the life of ethnic communities and at the same time also provided news of the cultural, economic, political, and other activities within them. History of ethnic periodicals in the U.S. mirrors the history of ethnic groups in the U.S. and this article will prove this assumption for the Slovenes in the U.S. There were ca. 100 titles printed. Some ceased publication after a few issues; some are still published today.

Keywords: Slovene Americans, ethnic press, immigration, ethnic groups in the U.S.

SLOVENSKI PERIODIČNI TISK V ZDA, 1891–1920

V pričujočem prispevku bo predstavljena zgodovina slovenskega periodičnega tiska v ZDA, to je časopisja, mesečnikov in štirinajstdnevnikov, revij in koledarjev, in sicer od leta 1891 do začetka dvajsetih let dvajsetega stoletja. Priseljensko časopisje in druga periodika sta na splošno igrala zelo pomembno vlogo pri ohranjanju zavesti o obstoju etničnih skupnosti v ZDA, še zlasti med njihovimi pripadniki. Priseljenska periodika je bila in je še danes eden najpomembnejših izrazov življenja omenjenih skupnosti; obenem pa je poročala o njihovih kulturnih, političnih in drugih aktivnostih. Zgodovina etnične periodike je odsev zgodovine etničnih skupnosti v ZDA, kar se bo v pričujočem članku potrdilo za slovenske Američane. Ti so objavili okoli 100 naslovov. Nekateri časopisi so prenehali izhajati že po nekaj številkah, nekateri izhajajo še danes.

Ključne besede: slovenski Američani, etnično časopisje, imigracija, etnične skupine v ZDA

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I am going to present the history of Slovene periodicals, i.e. newspapers and monthly and bimonthly reviews and annual almanacs in the United States of America from 1891 until early 1920s. Immigrant newspapers and other periodicals in general played an important role in keeping ethnic identities alive among American ethnic groups. They represented one of the most important expressions of the life of ethnic communities and at the same time also provided news of the cultural, economic, political, and other activities within them. History of ethnic periodicals in the U.S. mirrors the history of ethnic groups in the U.S. and this paper will prove this assumption for the Slovenes in the U.S.

Slovenes are one of the smallest European nations. Before World War I, ca. 1.3 million Slovenes lived in the Slovene ethnic territory. Most of them live today in the Republic of Slovenia, which was part of Yugoslavia during 1918–91 and since 1991 has been an independent nation. As members of indigenous minorities, Slovenes live also in border regions of neighboring Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Croatia. From the middle Ages until 1918, most of the Slovene ethnic territory was part of the Habsburg Monarchy (Gow and Carmichael 2000; Klemenčič and Žagar 2004).

Mass emigration of Slovenes started in the 1870s. According to the US Census of 1920, there were 208,552 inhabitants with Slovene as their mother tongue in the United States (14th U.S. Census ... 1923: 967–1007). Most of them found work in the mines and industries around the Great Lakes (Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin); in New York and Pennsylvania; in the West (California, Oregon, Washington); and in the mountain regions of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. Most of the Slovene immigrants to the United States settled in cities, where they typically founded Slovene ethnic neighborhoods, defined as the part of a city or town with a large enough Slovene community that at least one of the ethnic organization structures existed: a lodge of a Slovene fraternal benefit society, a Slovene national home, a Slovene or mixed Catholic or Evangelical ethnic parish, or the editorial offices or publisher of a Slovene ethnic newspaper.

Slovene fraternal benefit organizations are insurance companies that came into being during the period (beginning of the 1880s) when the United States did not have any kind of insurance. The fraternal organizations insured workers against accidents at work or illnesses. These organizations used their profits to support cultural and editorial activities of the Slovene immigrants. These are centralized organizations composed of individual lodges, which are still active today in Slovene communities. The most important were Slovenska narodna podporna jednota (SNPJ – Slovene National Benefit Society), headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, Kranjsko slovenska katoliška jednota (KSKJ – Grand Carniolian Slovenian Catholic Union), headquartered in Joliet, Illinois; Južnoslovenska katoliška

jednota (JSKJ – Yugoslav Catholic Union), headquartered in Ely, Minnesota; Slovenska dobrodelna zveza (SDZ – Slovene Mutual Association), headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio; and Slovenska svobodomiselna podporna zveza (SSPZ – Slovene Freethinking Benefit Society), headquartered in Chicago.

The KSKJ demanded that its members be active Catholics; while the SNPJ did not mix the religious beliefs of its members with the operation of the society, because it proclaimed that the religious beliefs of individual members were their private affair. The SNPJ ideologically consisted of two wings, liberal and socialist. Its leading members were active in the socialist workers movement in the United States. Most of these organizations had their own organ of communication. They either published their own newspaper or published their business news in existing Slovene ethnic newspapers (Klemenčič 1996: 21–31).

Ethnic parishes played an important role in the life of Slovenes in the United States. The first Slovene parish was founded in 1871 in St. Stephens (formerly Brockway), Minnesota. By 1920 there were 40 US Slovene Catholic parishes and one Protestant parish. These parishes were important also in the cultural and educational life of American Slovenes. They established their own parish schools where there were enough Slovene believers. Priests also published extended parish reports in either special publications or in ethnic newspapers (Friš 1995; Kolar 2001: 125–147).

Slovene immigrants in the United States also built Slovene national homes. In these buildings, meetings of the lodges and cultural events and parties took place. In larger communities, Slovene national homes consisted of two-story buildings with one smaller and one larger hall for cultural events, smaller rooms for meetings of lodge committees, and their own libraries. The first Slovene national homes were built by fraternal benefit societies. In 1905 only two homes of Slovene societies existed, in Chicago and Johnstown, Pennsylvania. During the next ten years more new Slovene national homes were built: in Rock Springs, Wyoming; Frontenac, Kansas; Herminie, Pennsylvania; and Ely, Minnesota. The building of Slovene national homes reached its peak in the 1920s (Valenčič 2001: 187–191; Klemenčič 1995: 219–224).

Various organizations of Slovene immigrants in their settlements also provided the basis for individual members of the Slovene American community to become involved in American politics at all levels (Klemenčič 2001: 185).

Slovene Americans also showed their interest in the events in the old homeland, especially during periods of political crisis such as World War I, or when an accident or a natural catastrophe happened in their ancestral villages.

In this paper the history of the Slovene ethnic periodicals will be presented as part of the Slovene American experience. It is obvious that I used methods that

are common among historians i.e. I gathered archival materials and literature and then wrote this article on the basis of the gathered materials and general knowledge on the history of Slovene Americans in the period from 1891 until 1920.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SLOVENE ETHNIC NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER PERIODICALS

Slovene ethnic newspapers and other periodicals played an important role in keeping Slovene ethnic identity alive among Slovene Americans. They represented one of the most important expressions of the life of ethnic communities and at the same time also provided news of the cultural, economic, political, and other activities within them. For the publication of a paper, three conditions had to be met: (1) an editor who hired journalists and reporters must have been named; (2) the editor had to arrange for the printing of the paper; (3) he had to ensure distribution of the paper. One additional very important condition was a lively Slovene community, in which activities worth writing about were many.

Newspapers and periodicals began to be published approximately ten years after a Slovene settlement began to be formed in a certain city. It was the time period necessary for the Slovene immigrants to establish conditions that would allow for publication of a newspaper (Velikonja 1981: 112–126). Of course it was not the process, which was similar everywhere. Quite often a newspaper was established soon after the Slovenes settled in a certain region, or, in some cases, much later (Klemenčič 1991: 300).

The idea to start publishing the first Slovene ethnic newspaper in the USA was born in 1889. At the beginning it did not receive much attention from the Slovene immigrants. Most of them at first did not intend to settle permanently in the United States. They settled as “birds of passage” and wanted to earn as much money as possible in the shortest time possible. Therefore, at least in the beginning, they were not interested in any additional activities, except work (Klemenčič 1991: 300).

From 1891 onward, Slovene ethnic newspapers were started in the main US settlements of Slovenes. Sometimes the hometown of the editor determined the place of publication. Newspapers and other periodicals differed in size, number of copies printed, and frequency of publication.

According to their contents, the periodicals of Slovene immigrant communities can be divided into (1) political and organizational press (i.e. *Proletarec*, the organ of the Slovene section of Yugoslav Socialist Federation; *Prosveta*/Enlightenment, the organ of SNPJ etc.); (2) religious publications (i.e. *Ave Maria*, a monthly review published by Franciscans, organs of different Slovene parishes) and (3)

other periodicals (i.e. *Enakopravnost* and *Nova domovina* and its successors-see below, *Glas naroda* etc.) Approximately 40% of Slovene American newspapers and other periodicals were conservative; others were more liberal, a few were even socialist. Some were issued only for a very short period; others were printed for decades – some of them are still published today. The newspapers were read not only by local readers where they were printed; quite often they had audiences across the country. This was true especially for organs of fraternal organizations.

Slovene ethnic newspapers in the United States played a leading and leadership role among Slovene immigrants. They not only followed events in Slovene communities but also influenced political and economic activities of the immigrants.

POLITICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRESS

Political and organizational publications, including those of ethnic fraternal benefit societies, were the most widely distributed and numerous. There were many reasons for this:

- 1) The first was the very colorful spectrum of political views among American Slovenes. They brought with them from their homeland a division into two political blocks, i.e. so-called “conservatives,” who were connected especially with the Catholic Church, and “progressives” (liberals), who did not care so much about religion and the Catholic Church hierarchy but were concerned about social issues. Both groups organized and sustained their fraternal, cultural, and other organizations and published their own newspapers and other publications. In the largest Slovene settlements, therefore, quite a few different politically oriented Slovene newspapers were published. It is interesting to note that some American Slovene organizations tended to be politically neutral, however.
- 2) Slovenes settled in numerous places in almost all the country except the South. The settlements were quite dispersed and the distances between them very great. Each of the settlements also had its own local characteristics.
- 3) At the turn of the 20th century quite a few Slovenes lived in the United States; their numbers had been growing following the mass immigration that lasted until the mid-1920s (Susel 1992: 239–240).

From the monetary support point of view there were two kinds of ethnic newspapers. The first were privately owned by one family, by groups of people

of the same political persuasion, or by merchants and investors. The publishers of these newspapers depended on, advertisements, private contributions, etc., and as such they were part of the market economy. If they got and sustained the support of the Slovene community (i.e., enough subscribers and advertisers) they succeeded; if not, they disappeared. Another reason for disappearance of ethnic newspapers was dying out of ethnic communities or migrations of subscribers.

The second kind of newspaper was supported by fraternal organizations as their official organs. The profits from the paper itself played a secondary role in these cases. Every member of these fraternal organizations had a paid subscription to the official issues of the paper. He had to cover part of the price for the other issues of the paper, which were also supported by the funds of the fraternal organization. Some of the papers published by fraternal organizations (like *Prosveta* for SNPJ) were dailies and were used for expression of views of the members on political issues (Susel 1992: 238–239).

Ethnic newspapers had to publish issues of interest to their readership. In addition to political news from Europe and the United States, they provided news about events in US Slovene settlements and also those in the old homeland. The latter were of interest primarily to the readers who were immigrants and who were emotionally still very connected with the old country.

Advertisements were also of interest to the readership, and they also constituted an important source of income for every newspaper. They contained invitations for various events in the Slovene ethnic communities, offers of services by Slovene organizations and products from Slovene producers or merchants, and advertisements for products of those non-Slovenes who sold to the Slovene community. The immigrants could also search for work or find relatives through these announcements (Sulič 1991: 336–337).

As already mentioned, the first Slovene immigrant newspaper began publication on September 3, 1891, in Chicago. The weekly *Amerikanski Slovenec* (American Slovene) was published by craftsmen from Bela krajina who had lived there for ten years or more. Anton Murnik, a former officer in the Austrian imperial army, became the newspaper's editor-in-chief as well as the board director, while Ivan Grilec became the associate editor and contributor of short stories and articles for the new publication (Jerič 1931: 8–15). The fear of "Americanization" of American Slovenes, i.e., disappearance of Catholic faith and Slovene language among Slovene immigrants (and especially their children), was mentioned as the main reason for publishing the paper (Spominska knjiga ... 1931: 46–47). The *Amerikanski Slovenec* published news from Europe and America and also from the life of the ethnic community.

One can not judge the outlook on the world of the first publishers of *Amerikanski Slovenec* because they issued only ten numbers. Ivan Molek, the American Slovene socialist and perhaps one of the most interesting figures among American Slovenes (Božič-Horvat 2007), noted in an article that *Amerikanski Slovenec*, while it was published in Chicago, was not a strictly Catholic-oriented newspaper. All of its founders (with the exception of Murnik, perhaps) were relatively liberal, while Grilec already showed fairly radical views (Molek 1941: 28–29).

Publishing of the *Amerikanski Slovenec*, though, proved to be too hard a task for Murnik and his collaborators. Owing to the problems, Murnik sold the paper for \$450 US to Msgr. Joseph F. Buh, the priest in Tower, Minnesota (Tower Dom je Amerikanskega Slovenca 1892: 1). The eleventh issue was published in Tower on March 4, 1892. The new publishers defined as the main mission of the paper sustaining of the Catholic faith and the Slovene language among Slovene immigrants in the United States (Spominska knjiga ... 1931: 49).

The circulation of the paper was ca. 550 at the beginning of its Tower period (Friš 1991: 405). Although the quality of the paper improved (Jerič 1931: 10), the publishers had to fight many problems. The main problem was, of course, financial support. According to the reports of Jurij Trunk, ca. 1000 Slovenes lived in Tower in 1903 (Trunk 1912: 501); in 1892 they were even fewer. The *Amerikanski Slovenec* continued to be published in Tower until 1899, when Buh sold it to the Slovene-American Press Association in Joliet, Illinois, for a few hundred US Dollars. The most prominent personality in that association was Rev. Frančišek S. Šušteršič (Nekaj črtic ... 1916: 1–2). Monsignor Buh had to sell the paper because of the problems caused by publishing announcements about the unsuccessful attempt to establish a Slovene settlement in Eden Valley near Ukiah in northern California.

This settlement was developed on a 10,000-acre complex bought in 1896 by Fr. Peter J. Jeram, a Catholic priest. He thought it would be better for the spiritual and economic health of the Slovenes of San Francisco if they would move to this farm. Father Jeram wanted to organize the settlement on a co-operative basis; every member would work for the entire settlement for five years for everyone's benefit. The land would be divided later. All the inhabitants of the settlement would have the same duties and privileges. Many settlers did not like this way of life, which *Ave Maria Koledar* described as "communist." Disputes developed between Father Jeram, who decided everything by himself, and the rest of the settlers. Therefore the settlement failed to thrive and it finally collapsed after Father Jeram was drowned in the nearby river (Cesar-Nedzbala 1990: 87–102; Klemenčič 1999: 373–380).

The Slovene American community was unhappy because Msgr. Joseph Buh allowed Father Jeram to publish advertisements about the settlement and because Monsignor Buh did not fight decisively enough against what Jeram was doing in Eden Valley, even after he was made thoroughly acquainted with Jeram's activities, from which so called Eden Valley scandal developed (Molek 1931: 32-42).

Amerikanski Slovenec was published for the first time in Joliet on November 22, 1899 (Slovenci v Ameriki 1989: 1). At the beginning, it had 600 subscribers, which rose during the next few years to ca. 2000. The increase in the number of Slovene immigrants to the United States and the increased prosperity of those who had lived in the country for some years, as well as the fact that *Amerikanski Slovenec*, after it moved to Joliet, became an organ of the KSKJ, played a role (Friš 1991: 408-411). In 1914, due to a difference of interests between KSKJ and the publishers of *Amerikanski Slovenec*, the leadership of KSKJ decided to establish its own organ, *Glasilo KSKJ*, published beginning in 1915. *Amerikanski Slovenec* experienced some financial and technical difficulties and was sold to a German immigrant, Edward Winkler (Jerič 1931: 11). Later it changed owners, publisher, and name quite frequently but it is however still published.

As a result of the Eden Valley scandal and also because not all American Slovenes were happy with the strictly clericalist orientation of the *Amerikanski Slovenec* edited by Monsignor Buh, a new newspaper, the *Glas naroda* (Voice of the People) was founded in 1893 by Frank Sakser, entrepreneur, publisher, and owner of *Hrvatski Svjet* (an organ of Croatian immigrants to the United States) and also co-founder and leader of JSKJ (Klemenčič 1999: 40). *Glas naroda* was published in New York. The first issue was printed on September 27, 1893. From July 1898 the paper was issued twice a week; from December 1901 to September 1903, three times a week, after which it became a daily. The *Glas naroda*, with 14,000 copies being printed, was distributed beyond the local community. Among those who published in it were Murnik and Grilec, the former contributors to the *Amerikanski Slovenec* (Bajec 1966: 273-324; Bajec 1980: 14).

In 1899 a Slovene ethnic newspaper was begun in the largest Slovene ethnic US settlement, Cleveland, Ohio. Anton Klinc started to publish a monthly, *Narodna beseda* [People's Word], which ceased publication after six months. After that, a printing and publishing company was established, which printed a weekly, *Nova domovina* [New Homeland], from November 1899 until June 1908. First editors were Anton Klinc, Ivan Pucelj and Fr. Frančišek Kerže. On June 5, 1908, instead of *Nova domovina*, *Amerika* [America] began publication. Its first editor was John

Grdina. *America* was later renamed *Clevelandska Amerika* [Cleveland America] and soon became a daily (Bajec 1980: 17–18). In February 1919 it was renamed *Ameriška domovina* [American Home]. *Ameriška domovina* was owned by the family Debevec. It ceased publication in August 2008. Throughout its existence it has been a conservative Catholic newspaper and, as such, very critical towards the so-called progressive camp. It was the only Slovene ethnic newspaper which did not depend in its editorial policy on the policy of a fraternal or political organization. Its main source of income, in addition to subscriptions, has been advertisements by Slovene American merchants and other business people. More or less throughout the early period, *Ameriška domovina* also enjoyed the support of Cleveland Slovene ethnic parishes and organizations connected with them. Although *Ameriška domovina*'s subscribers were mainly from Cleveland and suburbs, many of them also lived in other US Slovene settlements. Therefore it published many contributions on the ethnic events in these other communities.

Ameriška domovina also published paid announcements of some of the organizations that did not have their own papers. Especially SDZ, a Cleveland-based fraternal organization, from its establishment in 1910 until 1939 published its official announcements and news from its lodges in *Ameriška domovina*. Of course this represented an important source of income for its publishers (Susel 1992: 237–251).

In April 1918 a group of “progressives” (liberals) started *Enakopravnost* [Equality] in Cleveland, which developed into a daily later. Its first editor was Janko Rogel, an important leader of Slovene fraternal organizations; he was later also president of JSKJ and ABZ. As a progressive newspaper, *Enakopravnost* fought ideological battles with its conservative counterpart, *Clevelandska Amerika* (after 1919 *Ameriška domovina*) (Grill 1973: 288–293).

Both papers were published in the heart of the Slovene settlement in Cleveland, on St. Clair Avenue. It is interesting to note that the printing offices of both newspapers were only a few hundred yards apart, while they were ideologically, in the words of historian and former editor of *Ameriška domovina* Rudolph M. Susel, “as far apart as Moon and Earth.” The issuance of both newspapers was also affected by the fact that they both existed, because otherwise neither would have been as stimulated as it was by the nearby ideological and business competition (Susel 1992: 242–243).

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Slovene newspapers were started up in Colorado also, most in the largest Colorado Slovene settlement, Pueblo. The first paper was *Mir* [Peace], which began in 1901 and in which were published articles in the Slovene, Croatian, and Serbian languages. The owner of the paper was a Croatian immigrant, Demetar Cognevich. In its first year the paper was bought by Slovene Martin Konda. After some disputes, the paper was bought by

Fr. Ciril Zupan, O. S. B. – parish priest of the local St. Mary's Slovene ethnic parish, who made it a Catholic paper. It was published until 1904 (Bajec 1980: 20–21).

In October 1902, Konda and Frank Medica started to publish in Pueblo a liberal-oriented paper, *Glas svobode* [Voice of Freedom], which they moved to Chicago by the end of May 1903. Medica left the post of editor-in-chief; after that quite a few editors succeeded him. Among the most well known were leading Slovene American socialists Ivan Molek and Jože Zavertnik. From 1904 to 1908 *Glas svobode* was an organ of SNPJ. In 1907 Ivan Molek and Ivan Kaker bought the paper; in autumn of that year Konda bought the paper again. SNPJ then later established its own paper, *Glasiilo SNPJ*. *Glas svobode* was published until December 28, 1928 (Molek 1941: 34; Bajec 1980: 14–16; Klemenčič 1991: 304).

In addition to the above mentioned, in 1905 *Coloradske novice* (Colorado News) also began publication. Its editor was Max Buh, nephew of Msgr. Joseph F. Buh. According to Frank Zaitz, *Coloradsko solnce* [Colorado Sun] was a supplement to *Coloradske novice* for the Slovene settlement in Denver, first published in 1908 (Zaitz 1934: 140). After Max Buh died in 1907, *Coloradske novice* was edited by Rudolf Gregorič and then Edvard Mensinger. Mensinger renamed it into *Slovenski narod v Ameriki* [Slovene Nation in America]. It was also an organ of Zapadnoslovanska zveza [Western Slavonic Association] and as such it was quite widely distributed in the western states. In 1908 its name was changed to *Ameriški slovenski narod* [American Slovene Nation] and later to *Slovenski narod* [Slovene Nation], and under this name continued to be published in Pueblo until 1915. In 1915 pro-Austrian businessman Frank Zotti bought it and continued publication in New York City. It was edited by Zvonko Novak and Anton Šabec. In 1917, after American entry into World War I, American authorities prohibited its publication due to its pro-Austrian point of view (Zaitz 1934: 140–141).

In 1915 the newspaper *Slovan* [Slav] was published in Pueblo, and in 1916 *Pueblske novice* [Pueblo News] was added. The unique publication in the area was the weekly *Camp & Plant* (1901–04), issued by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company and printed in English, Spanish, German, Italian, and also Slovene (Velikonja 1991: 445–452).

Slovene American socialists published *Proletarec* [The Proletarian], which was the organ of the Slovene section of the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance. It began circulation in January 1906. At first it was a monthly, and as such in its first years had only some 100 subscribers. In the first issue the publisher stated that the main purpose of the paper was to teach its readers “that capitalism is the only fatal enemy of the working classes ...” In fall 1907, *Proletarec* also published about two pages in the Croatian language, and thus it was partly responsible for the establishment of both the Croatian section of the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance and the newspaper

of the Croatian American socialists. In November 1907 it changed to a weekly, with Ivan Molek as its editor.

In the years 1912–13, *Proletarec* was edited by Leo Zakrajšek, who left his position due to a disagreement with Jože Zavertnik. In 1915–16, it was proposed that *Proletarec* should become a daily; however, this did not happen and Zavertnik became the editor of the *Glasiló SNPJ*. After Zavertnik's departure, *Proletarec* was edited by one of the leading Slovene socialists of the Habsburg Monarchy era, Etbin Kristan (Klemenčič 1987: 182).

Proletarec reached most of approximately 800 Slovene American settlements. Of course, the paper had subscribers outside the country also, especially in Mexico, where the Slovene Socialist Club was active in Mexico City, and in Yugoslavia, where subscribers were primarily immigrant returnees. It is interesting that *Proletarec* was prohibited by the censors of pre- and post- World War II Yugoslavia (Klemenčič 1985: 475–486).

As a socialist organ, *Proletarec* always had to face the dilemmas of class structure and consciousness-raising of the Slovene ethnic groups. On the pages of *Proletarec* explanations could be found on the activities of socialists to strengthen the feeling of love for the land and people from which the immigrants had descended. The publishers claimed that the Slovene socialists had done more than any other group to unite the American Slovenes, and that no other group had contributed so much to Slovene cultural activities in the United States. Of course, as socialists, in their own words they also had to do everything possible for the Slovene American workers to be made class-conscious before it would be possible to extricate them from their "Austrianism" (Kje smo? ... 1929: 1).

With the exception of the periods during World War I and World War II, when it devoted much space to political issues in the homeland, *Proletarec* treated mostly American domestic and foreign politics. It reported on cultural events among the American Slovenes as well as on general events among Slovenes in Chicago (Klemenčič 1985: 482–483).

Slovenes on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan also published their own newspaper. At the end of September 1901, the Slovene Publishing Co. in Calumet started to publish *Glasnik od Gorenjega jezera* [Lake Superior Herald]. Its name was later shortened to *Glasnik* [Herald]. From its establishment until 1903 it was an organ of the independent benefit lodge of St. Joseph and later also of the Slovene-Croatian Union. Its editors were Frank Schweiger, John J. Plautz, Ivan Molek, Frank Javh, and Joseph Chesarek (Bajec 1980: 19–20). During its publication span it consisted of eight pages, half of them filled with advertisements (Chesarek 1944: 101–103). Because many subscribers were from Minnesota, *Glasnik* devoted a special page to the news from this state. Each issue contained a story reprinted from one of the

other newspapers, news from the homeland based on the Ljubljana liberal newspaper *Slovenski narod*, and letters to the editor. *Glasnik* was published until 1916, when *Slovenske novice* [Slovene News] replaced it (Božič-Horvat 2005: 231–238; Bajec 1980: 53–54).

In the years following World War I, Slovene emigrants from Prekmurje, the most eastern part of Slovene ethnic territory, in the Hungarian part of the Habsburg Monarchy until 1918, developed an active publishing enterprise in the United States. Most of them settled in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a steel mill town. Having a rich literary tradition, they hoped to continue it in America. However, very few of Bethlehem's immigrants were educated in the English language. Because they needed a newspaper with which they would remain informed and be able to publish their literary efforts, the Slovenes of Prekmurje decided to publish a paper in their mother tongue. There were a number of newspapers, all published in the Prekmurje dialect: *Zvezda Vogrskih Szlovincov* [Star of Slovenes from Hungary], Chicago, 1916–22; and in Bethlehem, *Szlobodna reics* [Free Word], 1916–25; *Vogrszki Szlovenecz: Glasilo kat. Vogrskih Szlovincov* [The Voice of Cath. Slovenians from Hungary], 1916–17; *Szv. Jozsefa Glasznik* [The Herald of St. Joseph], 1917; etc. ...

The large number of papers issued by the small Prekmurje Slovene community of ca. 3500 can be explained by the numerous divisions in their politics and religions. Especially the division into Catholics and Evangelicals was very sharp, therefore engendering many polemics and even “fights.” After Bethlehem Prekmurje Slovenes built a Slovene national home in 1916, the two factions started to unite their cultural and societal activities. By 1920 a special publishing house of Slovenes from Prekmurje was established; in May 1921 it started publishing *Amerikánszki Szlovenov glász* [The American Windisch Voice], which became an organ of all Prekmurje Slovenes in Bethlehem (Kuzmič 2001: 150–159).

In addition to those mentioned above, other Slovene ethnic newspapers were also published. Especially organs of fraternal benefit societies deserve mentioning; among them *Glasilo SNPJ* [Organ of SNPJ], which began publication in January 1908. At first it published only articles explaining the business of the fraternal organization and articles on general economic-political topics; later it became a very passionate defender of workers' rights (Zavertnik 1925). The fifth regular convention of SNPJ in 1912 supported this orientation of the paper, as SNPJ clearly defined itself as an organization that directly cooperated in industrial battles (i.e., with striking workers) and with the Socialist Party in political battles.

In June 1916 *Glasilo SNPJ* became a daily and was renamed *Prosveta* [Enlightenment]. Jože Zavertnik, who was editor of *Glasilo SNPJ*, became editor-in-chief of *Prosveta*; Ivan Molek and Anton Terbovec were hired as assistant editors. In addition to reports on conditions in Europe (especially the war) and the

United States, it published news from the settlements, especially SNPJ lodges, and news from the old country. Of the latter, news on everyday life prevailed; more rarely it published news on political life in the old country (Sulič 1991: 335).

Only during a period of crisis did the editors devote some space also to old country politics. During World War I they of course reported on the activities of American Slovenes with which they tried to influence the politics in the old homeland. *Prosveta* and other Slovene American newspapers also asked Slovene immigrants to gather funds, which they would send to the old homeland after the end of the war (Klemenčič 1987: 85–128). Of interest to the immigrants who sent money to their relatives at home were also data on the value of the Austrian crown, authored by Frank Sakser, the owner of an exchange business in New York.

Prosveta also published information on farming and some serialized stories and novels. There were quite a few reports on the situation of the working class in the United States and in other parts of the world (Sulič 1991: 335).

In 1915 newspaper *Sloga* [Harmony] started to be published. It was edited by Jaka Debevec and Anton Berk (Naš domači jubilej, 1937: 1). Slovene Franciscan fathers took it over in 1916. New editor was Fr. Kazimir Zakrajšek who moved the paper first in New York and later to Des Plaines, IL. From October 1919 onwards it was published in Chicago under new name *Edinost* [Unity] (Bajec 1980: 50, 56).

Also *Glasiło KSKJ* [Organ of KSKJ] deserves mentioning. It was first published in 1915 in Chicago, after a quarrel occurred between the leadership of KSKJ and the editorial offices of *Amerikanski Slovenec* (Slovenski časopisi in listi 1942: 31). *Glasiło KSKJ* played a similar role for Catholic Slovenes as *Prosveta* did for the “progressive” wing of Slovene immigrants (Bajec 1980: 48–49).

THE PERIODICAL PRESS OF SLOVENE CATHOLIC CHURCH COMMUNITIES

The Catholic Church’s aims in sponsoring publications were twofold, i.e., retaining Catholic faith and maintaining Slovene national consciousness among Slovenes in America. In accordance with their ideology, nationality was a treasure valued by Christians and, thus, worth retaining.

Important also are the organs of individual parishes. On the one hand they helped propagate the aims of the Catholic hierarchy; on the other hand they functioned also as local papers. They were an important source of information since they were in direct contact with the everyday life of the common people. They tried to help communities solve their problems in addition to promoting the views of the Catholic hierarchy (Rokicki 1991: 443). Their success depended on the size and level of national consciousness of the community and also on the vigor of the local priest, who also was coordinator of the community. Typically,

acculturation and assimilation of community members led to a decrease in the number of copies printed and, eventually, to the transformation into a normal parish newspaper published in the language of the majority. Many of the parish newspapers were published only for a very short time (Kolar 1991: 395–396).

The organs of individual ethnic parishes published the timetables of Catholic services, information on the priest's availability, and news about the business matters of the parish. They published also on religious education matters. Among Slovene American organs of the parishes, the first was *Oglasnik* [Herald], the newspaper of the parish of St. Joseph in Leadville, Colorado, begun in 1906. In the same year, *Zvonček* [Little Bell], the church paper of St. Lawrence parish in Cleveland, Ohio, began publication. In opposition to the establishment of the parish of Lady of Sorrows, accomplished through secession of part of the largest US Slovene parish of St. Vitus in Cleveland, the supporters of Fr. Vitus Hribar published *Danica* [Morning Star] beginning in 1907. Fr. Anton Sojar who was priest at St. Stephen's Parish in Chicago, IL, started to publish in the same time *Farna Poročila* [Parish Reports], which were later renamed in *Glasiilo župnije sv. Štefana* [Herald of the Parish of St. Stephen]. In 1919, after he became parish priest at St. Stephen's, Fr. Zakrajšek renewed its publication. It was published until he left for Slovenia in 1927 (Bajec 1980: 26–30, 63–64). Fr. Michael Golob published *Sv. Jožefa Glasnik* [St. Joseph's Herald] in Bridgeport, CT, from June till October 1917 (Arnez 1971: 64). Also *Letno poročilo/Annual Report* of St. Mary's parish in Pueblo, which was published annually from 1900s till late 1970s deserve mentioning.

The second type of periodical was aimed at the wider reading audience, published on the national level. The readers lived quite apart from one another. Once groups were organized, the publications fostered strong bonds among them and also became leading sponsors of activities aimed at retaining community consciousness, religious and/or national. These religious periodicals were of high quality and were of interest to the majority of the community members. In this they differed from the local newspapers. Their subscribers came from all over the United States and also from Canada and other continents. Therefore they were published in larger quantities.

The most important among them was *Ave Maria*. Its beginnings were connected with the activities of Father Zakrajšek and the establishment of the St. Raphael Society in New York. After a short sojourn in New York, to which he came in 1906, Zakrajšek got to know the difficult circumstances in which immigrants lived after they arrived in America. He decided to use the press to help immigrants socially and also to present religious values to Slovene American communities. The first issue of *Ave Maria* was published on March 4, 1909. It was an organ of the Society of St. Raphael, but only some of its pages were devoted to its own needs. It sys-

tematically followed the development of religious life in Slovene parishes and settlements and asked priests to serve as its reporters (Friš 1995: 354–356).

As written in *Ave Maria*, it served as a substitute for Slovene Catholic priests where they were not available in Slovene settlements and also served individuals who settled away from Slovene communities. The paper printed articles in which it fought against all opponents of religion and nationalist ideas and also against those who defended ideas of socialism. In this context it especially attacked the articles in *Glasiló SNPJ*, *Prosveta*, and *Proletarec*. It published on religion, with special emphasis on the role played by religious values in Slovene history, and also on Slovene church and national history in general, and especially on work for propagating the deeds of Bishop Friderik Baraga, an early Slovene Catholic missionary.

Ave Maria played an important role in organizing Catholic Slovenes into Slovene Catholic organizations in the United States. It welcomed the establishment of Catholic fraternal and other organizations and, especially, ethnic parishes. It helped organize actions to help newly arrived Slovene immigrants and to collect funds for education of priests and nuns. Reports on life within Slovene settlements were written by Catholic laymen (Kolar 1991: 400–401).

It is interesting to note that the first issue of *Ave Maria* was printed in 3,000 copies and that there were only 100 subscribers. In the second year of its publication, the review had 200 subscribers; in the third, 500. By the beginning of World War I, the number of subscribers had risen to 3,000, and by the end of the war, to 5,000 (Arnez 1996: 31).

Of special importance for raising Slovene American youth was *Mali Ave Maria* [Little Ave Maria], which developed from a section of *Ave Maria*. It was published in 1917 and 1918 (Bajec 1980: 56).

In addition to the monthly *Ave Maria*, which was the main product of the Ave Maria Printing Co. established by Franciscan fathers, some other products came into being. Already in December 1912 they started to publish a yearly almanac, *Koledar Ave Maria* [Ave Maria Almanac]. It devoted much space to Slovene history, history of American-Slovene relations, and also to descriptions of Slovene settlements in America and in other countries outside the Slovene ethnic territory (Bren 1938: 19–27).

It also published biographies of Slovene missionaries and priests in America, other books with religious content, and a series of scripts for people's plays. In 1917 it published *Abecednik* [ABC] and *Katekizem* [Catechism] for Slovene schools in the United States. Thus it responded to the needs of Slovene American communities (Kolar 1991: 400–401).

OTHER PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS

Among other periodicals were various advertising papers, humor papers, literary reviews, family almanacs, youth almanacs, etc. In 1898 Amerikanski Slovenec Publishing Co. in Tower, MN, started to publish *Koledar Amerikanskega Slovenca* [Amerikanski Slovenec Almanac]. It was published also in 1899 and 1900 (Mulaček).

Especially worth mentioning is *Ameriški družinski koledar* [American Family Almanac], which began publication in Chicago in 1915. It was published by the Cultural Society of the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance or its Jugoslovanska delavska tiskovna družba [Yugoslav Workers Printing Co.], which also published *Proletarec*. It was the most widely distributed periodical publication among the American Slovenes, providing articles on general political themes in the USA and abroad, popular scientific articles, poetry and prose by both Slovene American authors and Slovene writers and poets from the homeland, and also translated literature. The first year's volume was edited by Ivan Molek; in 1917–19 it was edited by Ethin Kristan; and from 1920 on, by Frank Zaitz (Klemenčič 1985: 482). Another almanac, *Slovensko-ameriški koledar* [Slovene-American Almanac], published by Glas Naroda Co. from 1894 until 1948, is also worth mentioning (Klemenčič 1999: 40).

Also of interest is the Chicago monthly *Čas* [Time], which was published in the period 1915–28. It was very well based and edited informative reviews of literature and science. It was edited by Frank Kerže, who gained experience by editing the humor paper *Komar* [Gnat] and, in the period 1912–13, the monthly *Naš gospodar* [Our Householder].

CONCLUSION

In this article we surveyed the Slovene ethnic press in the United States from its beginnings in 1891 to 1920. There were ca. 100 titles printed. Some ceased publication after a few issues; some are still published today. In the introduction I wrote that history of ethnic periodicals in the U.S. mirrors the history of ethnic groups in the U.S. which I proved for the Slovenes in the U.S., especially for the period covered by this paper.

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