

## MASS EMIGRATION AND SLOVENES

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Since the great discoveries of the 15th century, European civilisation and Christianity have penetrated most parts of the world. From Columbus on, Europe discovered and conquered the world on a huge scale, but its populations practically flooded the American continent in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. Developing industry in Europe unleashed a constant flow of rural populations from the country to the towns and the emerging industrial centres. The Americas, in particular the United States, and its rapid economic development in the 19th century attracted a great wave of immigrants from the "old" world. The development of rail and sea transportation, brought about by the invention of steam power, was making the world much more accessible and attractive to all those who felt hemmed in in an increasingly more densely populated Europe. The period of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries is considered to be a period of mass emigration, started by the Anglo-Saxon population and completed by the wave of Slavonic, Jewish and Mediterranean emigration at the turn of the 20th century. After the First World War, the "golden door" to the United States was left only partly open, but immigration to the continent of North America never really ceased. It has been estimated that between 1790 and 1960 some 41 million people moved to the United States, of whom 90% moved from Europe and three-quarters moved before 1914. However, Europe was not deserted; despite the emigration, its population tripled from 140 million (in 1750) to 450 million (in 1914).<sup>1</sup>

During the period under examination, Slovenes lived in the south of the Austrian part of the Habsburg monarchy, squeezed between the Pannonian plain and the sea (Trieste) on the one side, and the Alps, the Kolpa and Sotla rivers, where they bordered with Croatia, on the other. In the 19th century, they were established as a proper nation with a language and developed culture, science and arts. They manifested their interests through a number of political societies – from the 19th century these were political parties – cultural and economic societies and their representatives in the provincial diets and in the central parliament in Vienna. They published numerous provincial and professional papers, weeklies, monthlies and daily newspapers. The introduction of the general eight-class compulsory school in

Austria (1869) resulted in an increased number of literate and broad-minded Slovene people: in 1900 only 15% of Slovenes were illiterate. The major part of the population were peasants while the bourgeoisie and industrial workers were only a thin strata of the Slovene population. The few industrial companies and mines were mainly in the hands of foreign capital – German for instance. Fear of German and Italian territorial aspirations was great: respectively, Carinthia and Styria in the north and Primorska and Gorizia in the west. Slovenes considered Austria to be a country in which they had been living for centuries but one which did not ensure them equality with the big nations within this multinational monarchy, for example with the Germans. Slovenes also lacked their university structure, their large number of grammar schools and, above all, their economic power. However, by the end of the 19th century or until the First World War, Slovenes had developed into a proper nation, in terms of culture and of a political will that was equal to the others'. But the population was only slightly on the rise. According to the 1910 census, 1,182,300 Slovenes lived in the Slovene national territory in the then Austro-Hungarian empire and some 40,000 in Italy (Venetian Slovenes and Resians). Demographers found that the whole of the natural population increase at home could be accounted for by a surplus population which had to find food and shelter outside the homeland, which means outside Slovene ethnic territory, and in great numbers outside Austria, in other countries of Europe, Africa (Egypt) and above all in the United States of America.<sup>2</sup>

The Slovene territory was particularly transitional and sensitive to a large variety of civilisational and cultural influences. It was squeezed between the Roman and German world on one side and the South-Slavonic world on the other. The population was emigrating in numbers even before the great "*American boom*" in the 19th century. To a lesser extent, people in turn moved into this territory, which became the destination of more substantial immigration only in the 1960s from other parts of Yugoslavia. If I limit myself to the migrations in the 19th and the 20th centuries, I can say that the wave of Slovene emigration to the USA was an integral part of the European wave, more precisely, the Slavonic and Jewish wave from eastern and central Europe during the period of mass emigration.<sup>3</sup> In the period under examination, seasonal emigration to nearby lands, in particular towards the east – to Croatia, Bosnia, Romania among others – was very strong among Slovenes. A special factor in determining the destinations of emigrating Slovenes is the fact that they lived in the multinational Habsburg monarchy and that the edge of the ethnic area was also the boundary between the "*homeland*" and "*foreign land*", although these were within the same

country.<sup>4</sup> To take into consideration the ethnic area seems to me the most acceptable with regard to Slovenes, since the life environment of a Slovene miner in Voitsberg in German Styria, for instance, was similar to one in Gladbeck in Germany, despite the fact that the Slovene miner in Slovene territory and the one in Voitsberg lived in the same country. In both cases, the Slovene immigrants lived in a different ethnic and social environment, which had the same impact on their assimilation, and which meant that they slowly merged into a different ethnic environment and thus lost their national identity. In the legal terms of the state, emigrants were considered to be those people who travelled across the sea in the between-decks of ships or in third class. Janez Evangelist Krek wrote in 1913 that emigrants were people going beyond the state border, normally travelling across the ocean, to earn and save money and then return home.<sup>5</sup> The question of the permanent or temporary nature of an individual's expatriation then arises. Seasonal emigration was either a longer or shorter temporary absence, and this was carried out in practice. With regard to the emigration to Germany or the USA, for instance, the most popular was temporary absence, an observation made by Krek in the statement above. In 1893, twenty years before Krek, *Landeshauptmann* of Kočevje wrote in a circular letter that emigrants were those: "... who leave their homeland to stay for a considerable period of time in America."<sup>6</sup> Both cases reflect the generally accepted idea of the time that emigrants would return home. Even in the preserved census forms in Carniola (e.g. 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910), the section relating to "absence" was mostly filled in with the word "temporary" for those noted as being in America. The hope that emigrants were leaving their homes only temporarily, cherished by the Church and the few intellectuals of the time who were studying the emigration of Slovenes, proved empty, despite the fact that some emigrants did return after all – most of them remained in America.

The number of Slovenes who left their homeland during the period of mass emigration has been researched by statisticians, geographers and historians, but the exact number of emigrants has not been determined as yet. All findings are more or less estimations, reached by researchers on the basis of analyses of incomplete statistical data or by the application of statistical methods. The Encyclopedia of Slovenia (*Enciklopedija Slovenije*) states that some 300,000 Slovenes or one-third of the then natural population increase left Slovene territory before the First World War.<sup>7</sup> According to data collected in American censuses, as many as 123,631 first generation and 59,800 second generation Slovenes in 1910 declared their mother tongue to be Slovene; ten years later these figures were 102,744 first and 105,808

second generation.<sup>8</sup> These are the most accurate figures relating to the existence of Slovenes in the United States, which was the destination of the largest number of emigrants from Slovene territory. Less than one half of Slovenes (in 1910, some 560,000) lived in Carniola, an administrative unit in the Austrian half of the country, for which data on emigration between 1892 and 1816 have been preserved. On the basis of the original archive material, later regretfully lost, these data were published in 1913 by Slovene commentator and translator Ivan Mulaček.<sup>9</sup> Some fragments of this material are kept by the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia in Ljubljana and the History Archives of Ljubljana. The picture is more complete for the period from 1892 to 1913, when 76,197 people left Carniola. Mulaček believes this figure should be increased by 25% (95,048) or 35% (102,864), since, in the period being considered, there were many who left Austria illegally, evading military service and punishment for criminal offences, or "*disappearing into the night*" to avoid obligations towards pregnant girlfriends; in addition, many girls and women travelled without passports. The most substantial outflow of people from the Austrian half of the monarchy was from Galicia and Bucovina and, in the south, from Dalmatia and Carniola.<sup>10</sup> Estimations of the approximate number of Slovene emigrants in the mass wave is also complicated due to the fact that many non-statistical sources (emigrants' letters, political commentary and newspaper articles, memoirs, etc.) show us emigrants returning home during the time of the American and other political crises (for weddings, to settle property matters at home, disappointment with the homeland, etc) and afterwards returning to America. Nevertheless, we find that the emigration of Slovenes before 1914 took place on a massive scale. The impression is that the "*blood toll*", a term very often used at that time, was among the highest in Europe in relation to the size of the population in Slovene territory. Mass emigration undoubtedly reduced the population of the nation living in Slovene ethnic territory; for instance, in the Kočevje district in Carniola, where the largest German ethnic group, the Kočevjarji, lived in the middle of solid Slovene territory, emigration fever gripped Kočevjarji to the same extent as Slovenes, since men and women in their prime and at their most reproductive age were leaving. However, the reasons for a slow demographic development can also be sought elsewhere – in the low birth rate, for example, since comparisons with some other small European nations affected by mass emigration such as Denmark, Norway and Finland indicate that emigration from these countries did not have consequences as fatal for population growth as it had with Slovenes.

Demographic, economic and social bases for emigration have been

accorded a lot of attention by Slovene history as well as by other sciences, such as geography, ethnology, economics (demography) and others. Summarising the findings to date about the emigration of Slovenes up to the First World War, I have found that most authors see the economic situation and the social position of the Slovene man which stems from it as one of the main causes for the search for something better and for a larger slice of daily bread outside the domestic environment. At the turn of the 20th century, the imbalance between increasing population and the incapability of the economy to employ and maintain it unleashed mass emigration to the United States, a country in need of labour, particularly in heavy industry and mining. This is a classic example of favourable causal bases in the home country ("push") and attractiveness or openness ("pull") of the new destination. Among the reasons for the emigration of Slovenes during this period, the most frequently cited are: fragmentation and small scale of agricultural holdings, increase of the agrarian population, decline of old trades unable to compete with cheaper and better industrial products (mainly arriving in the Slovene market from centres outside Slovene territory), decline of the old means of transport (haulers) due to the construction of railway links (e.g. Vienna-Trieste in the middle of the 19th century). However, attention should be paid when generalising the reasons for the agrarian population departing "across the pond", those reasons often cited in the newspapers of that time as being the two extremes of "poverty" and "hunger" forcing many Slovenes to leave their homes. There were cases of hunger among Slovenes, but this did not result in emigration, in contrast to the cases of the Irish and the Germans. This was definitely not the case during the time of mass emigration. Thoughts expressed by theologian Anton Korošec<sup>11</sup> at the 3rd Catholic meeting in Ljubljana (1906) may be shared: "...in the heart of every man there is an instinct for prosperity and greater happiness. Our Slovene emigrants, who are leaving for larger cities, either in Germany or in America, are not pale, drained, hungry and desperate but are strong, blooming, young men who are full of life and strength, and the most vigorous women. On the sad road taking them out of their homeland they are not accompanied so much by despair but rather by happy expectations and the awareness of their own forces and strength. Our people are particularly alert. They are aware of their spiritual and physical strength and that they could prosper with it. At home they see with sadness that all their intelligence and diligence are in vain, that it is impossible to develop one's powers as they should be developed and therefore they hurry abroad, where they intend to attain happiness and wealth more easily."<sup>12</sup> In addition to the causes of emigration already presented (e.g. fear of military service, etc.),

there is also the "migration idea", a kind of "fever", which spread among people by word of mouth (in rural environments, a lot was said about those leaving, and later on returnees spoke about America) and in writing (through emigrants' letters, advertisements by emigration agents, etc.). There was no shortage of people to remark reproachfully that Slovenes were driven to America out of their greed for wealth, real illness and a kind of fever that was sweeping the countryside. However, the myth of America as the promised land was already outmoded during the time of mass emigration, and I agree with many contemporaries, including Janez Evangelist Krek,<sup>13</sup> who claimed that those leaving were familiar with the wages in mines and factories in the United States, compared them to their income at home and were calculating the money they could save up after two, three or more years. I think that the statement by Jurij Trunk (1912),<sup>14</sup> that the main reason for the emigration of Slovenes to America was the difference in the wages between the two, was also true for the period of mass emigration, since the major part of the wave of emigration was composed of agricultural workers and people without property who depended on manual work.

The United States of America was the main destination for Slovene emigrants until the First World War. Peddlers from White Carniola were leaving for the United States in great numbers in the 1840s and 50s. Among the first to leave was Matija Premuta, who jointly with his friend Janez Gorše walked across Croatia, Styria, Carinthia, Sweden, Norway, Lapland, Denmark, Iceland, England, Ireland, Scotland, France and a number of German principalities before embarking on the boat for America in Bremen (1839). He succeeded in America and in a letter to his father, published in the Novice newspaper (1845),<sup>15</sup> expressed his surprise that more of his compatriots had not decided to leave for this "wealthy India". During this period, an increasing number of priests and theologians from Slovene territory were following Slovene missionary Friderik Baraga among the "wild Indians" (he had arrived in America in 1830). Invited by missionary Franc Pirc in the mid 1860s, many farmers with families left their homes in Mojstrana, Dovje and the area around Bled to settle on the fertile lands of Minnesota. This was a case of emigration from the native land to the lands that, at the time, still made up "remote" America (agrarian emigration). This agrarian wave was followed by many individuals and groups, but one can speak about mass emigration only from the 1880s on. These people were employed as workers in agriculture and forestry and the majority were employed in mining, transport (railways), heavy industry and trades.<sup>16</sup> After 1880, Slovenes were emigrating to Germany, particularly to the mining and

industrial centres in the Ruhr and Westphalia. In contrast to the emigration to America which engulfed the whole of Slovene territory, and was of a different intensity altogether, emigration to Germany primarily involved Lower Styria and the northern fringes of Carniola. Most of the population arriving from these areas found work in the mining and industrial centres of the German part of Styria and large towns such as Vienna. The third wave, especially interesting because of its make up, included girls and women from the western fringes of Slovene territory, that is, from Gorizia and Primorska. Their destination was Egypt, where they were employed as servants, wet-nurses and governesses mainly in Alexandria and Cairo. They originated from poor areas and were departing with a desire to save for their dowry, if they were girls, or for the survival of their families, if they were women. Many young mothers left their babies and children to be looked after by their husbands and became wet-nurses in the lands across the Mediterranean Sea. In 1875, more than 2,000 Slovene women were in Egypt; seven years later there were 3,200, and at the end of the century, there were 7,700 Slovenes there, of whom only some 300 were men. In the second half of the eighties and the first half of the nineties, the "Brazilian rush" broke out, which inspired among the poor hope for a better life and, at the same time, caused great disappointment because of the gap between promise and reality in Brazil. Seasonal emigration to various parts of Europe was a much older development and was very intensive during the period we are considering if we take into account the phenomenon of "peddling" – seasonal selling door-to-door and in markets. The real seasonal wave was directed to the near and more remote neighbouring regions (work on fields and in forests, etc.), namely to Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia, Serbia and Romania. Since this seasonal wave was initially directed to the Croatian forests nearby, those who were leaving were called "Hrvatari". Most of them were inhabitants of Inner Carniola and the eastern edge of Lower Carniola, White Carniola and the eastern part of Styria.

From which part of the Slovene territory was emigration most substantial and which direction did it take? Scientific literature and publications offer many clichéd answers to this question. Observing the Slovene ethnic area, one has the impression that the seasonal emigration from the eastern fringes of Styria, Lower and Inner Carniola was eastbound (to forests in Croatia, Slavonia and Romania), that more people from Styria and the northern fringes of Carniola, from both sides of the Sava river, were leaving for German Styria and Germany, that many people from Upper Carniola were looking for jobs in the German part of Carinthia, that Venetian Slovenes

went west and were part of the Friulian emigration wave, and that the population in the hinterlands of Trieste, Gorizia and Primorska was westbound and partly southbound (to Egypt, for instance). As far as overseas emigration, primarily to America, is concerned, it engulfed the whole of Slovene territory, although with a range of different intensities. In addition, emigration to Brazil was more popular in Primorska and Inner Carniola, reflecting the fact that they were close to Udine, which acted as a powerful propaganda centre for this destination. However, many emigrants to Brazil also came from Styria. Extant reports on emigration in Carniola for 1892 and 1893, when data were collected in individual municipalities, reveal great differences between the individual districts and even between the neighbouring municipalities.<sup>17</sup> This is confirmed by the questionnaire on emigration, filled in by parish priests for the areas covered by their parishes (1913).<sup>18</sup> There were cases where a large number of people left one village "to look for their daily bread" while there none left from the neighbouring one. All this indicates how difficult the answer to the question at the beginning of this paragraph is, since a great variety of causes and stimuli influenced emigration at a local level. Not many similar micro-studies exist and there are but a few archive references with which to examine the issue.

What were the responses to mass emigration amongst the general public? They can be seen in newspapers of that time and partly in the literature. As far as newspapers go, we have the impression – firmer conclusions could be drawn after the examination of all the leading newspapers associated with the various political orientations in the Slovene territory – that the emigration problem was addressed the most by the Catholic press, less by the liberal, and the least of all by the socialist press. Most of the articles condemned the emigration from the aspect of the weakening of the Slovene nation and the breaking-up of families, and, at the same time, painted foreign countries in grim colours, believing them to threaten the emigrant's material and spiritual existence and, in particular, his faith. This emotional treatment of Slovene emigration prevailed and has, to a certain extent, continued until today. People were reading the warnings, but increasing emigration in the last decade before the outbreak of the First World War showed that they were not successful. There were a considerable number of reports about America in which negative news describing accidents, sensational phenomena and events which "could only happen in America", etc. was made to prevail. Emigration was often dealt with by Slovene authors, such as Ivan Cankar, Oton Župančič and others.<sup>19</sup> I mention only two works. In the hope of discouraging people from emigrating by showing the dark side of the way of life in the new world,

Jakob Alešovec published a book in 1883 (revised edition 1912) bearing a title, typical of opponents of emigration: "*Ne v Ameriko!*" (Not to America!).<sup>20</sup> Its black-and-white and in parts naive story might not appeal to us today, but we have to keep in mind what its intention was: to stop people from departing for foreign countries. In 1908, a "*drama in four acts*" by Zofka Kveder was published in Ljubljana. It was entitled: "*Amerikanci*" (Americans).<sup>21</sup> The author did not side with anyone or condemn emigrants, although she concluded the play with a scene involving a mad girl whose boyfriend has left for America. On the whole, I think that Slovene writers, painters and musicians, were not attracted by this subject. Preparing a conceptually and artistically rich work with a title: "*Amerika in Amerikanci*" (America and Americans – 1912), Jurij Trunk was disappointed to realise, when collecting the subscription for the book, that there was little interest in it at home and among American Slovenes. Today, Trunk's book is an important reference for examining the period of mass Slovene emigration to the United States.

The interest of the state and Church, and of those members of the public who were aware of emigration, increased in the last decade before the First World War, although many people believed it was still too little. Ivan Mulaček was one of these and he wrote in 1913: "*Of all the social and national issues our emigration is one of the most important. In spite of this, our political public shows little or no interest in the fact that thousands of compatriots are day by day leaving their native soil, for good reason or bad, and are thus considerably and dangerously weakening the nation's power... Naturally, the emigration question is one of those issues which demand profound knowledge, and long-standing and wide-ranging experience, so the usual recklessness would lead us nowhere. Perhaps the reason for the incomprehensible and downright fatalist indifference of our political public to this cancerous wound on the body of our nation should be sought in these facts...*"<sup>22</sup> According to the Austrian constitutional law (1867), the freedom to emigrate abroad was only restricted – as far as the state was concerned – by compulsory military service for the male population. Prior to that, the emigration patent of 24 March 1832 was in force. It stipulated that a permit for legal emigration should be obtained from the provincial authorities. The constitutional law no longer required that a special emigration permit be obtained, but rather that those applying for a passport be listed. Despite the attempts by the state to adopt an emigration law regulating this sensitive issue, as in 1905 and 1913, no such law was introduced. There were many debates among the public, ranging from supporters of a liberal stance towards

the complete freedom of emigration to those who demanded its abolition. Deputy of the Slovene provincial diet, Fran Šuklje delivered a speech in the parliament in Vienna on 5 October 1905 concerning the emigration problem. He opposed the desire to abolish emigration with the argument that there were too few freedoms for individuals and citizens in Austria as it was. An individual with an empty stomach could not be prevented from taking his walking stick and looking for work and food abroad, Šuklje argued. Also against abolition was Janez Evangelist Krek (1907). He drew attention to the state's incapacity to retain people at home.<sup>23</sup> He took an example from Italian emigration legislation, according to which special local committees were organised at the lowest level and involved the local parish priests. The following point was highlighted by Krek: that this was a country in which the Church was separated from the state, while in Austria there were only a few guild and police regulations about the functioning of the emigration agencies, and those emigrating were left in the hands of the local parish priests. In 1913, the Carniola provincial diet adopted a resolution demanding the legal regulation of the emigration problem. During a debate, the catastrophic consequences of the emigration process were put forward, one of which was the effect on the military power of the country.<sup>24</sup> Vienna started to become aware of mass emigration owing to the weakening of the military power of the country, but did not succeed in introducing protection measures because of the sudden outbreak of war in 1914. The Slovene church was the only one to show concern for the emigrant, albeit with little success in stopping people from leaving their homes. The emigration problem was discussed at Slovene Catholic meetings in 1892, 1900 and 1906 and at a Slovene-Croatian meeting in 1913. Practical decisions adopted only included advice to clergymen and the Catholic population, but failed to have greater power.<sup>25</sup> The Society of St. Raphael assisted emigrants when leaving the country. After 1907, it had its headquarters in Ljubljana.<sup>26</sup> With its warnings against emigration and the guidelines about behaviour during the journey, the society was firmly present in newspapers at that time but less successful in stopping the mass of America-bound emigrants crossing the Atlantic. The fact is that the Church was very active in stressing the negative effects of emigration on the religious, moral, family and national fate of emigrants. The most important were the activities of local parish priests who were most familiar with the emigration process and its consequences for the domestic environment. More important than the decisions and guidelines adopted by the Church authorities were the words of affection and advice given to those

leaving by the local parish priest, concerning their behaviour during the journey and in the new country.

The journey made by Slovene emigrants through Europe and further across the Atlantic to Ellis Island in New York was similar to those made by other European emigrants, with whom they came in contact for the first time on trains, on boats and in the ports of departure. The functions of emigration agents in Slovene territory was comparable to their activities elsewhere in Europe. An important railway crossing-point on the way to western European ports was Ljubljana, the capital of Carniola lying alongside the Vienna-Trieste railway. In 1914, there were agents for the following ship companies: Norddeutscher Lloyd (Bremen), Hamburg Amerika Linie (Hamburg), Compagnie Générale Transatlantique (Paris), Cunard Line (Liverpool), Red Star Line (Antwerp), Austro Americana (Trieste), Holland America Line and White Star Line.<sup>27</sup> Slovenes mostly travelled through the German ports of Hamburg and Bremerhaven and the French port of Le Havre, and less often through other ports such as Antwerp, Rotterdam, Liverpool and Southampton. The nearby city of Trieste was not much used as a port of departure. The reasons were various: it only became an important port for mass crossing in the first decade of the 20th century; the journey was longer and, at one time, more expensive too; ports in Germany and France were better known and had been used for years. During this part of the journey, and until their arrival in America, they shared the same fate as other emigrants: mostly travelling en masse, having to endure sanitary and health control at the borders and ports of departure and the like, although the sources also speak of the individuals who allegedly stopped in bigger towns and places, visited the local sites and avoided staying in the common emigration houses in the ports of departure. The journey was only a brief experience which did not, however, fade away, according to letters and a few extant memoirs penned by Slovene emigrants. In particular, the contact with the sea, which for most Slovenes of that time was their first, left unpleasant rather than pleasant memories for many. Storms, strange food, crowded between-decks or 3rd class sections, lack of knowledge of the English language further increased the feeling of insecurity, the fear of the new and the distress caused by the departure from home. Many were relieved when they caught sight of the American mainland, went through the formalities on Ellis Island and set their feet on dry land in the port of New York. But this was only the beginning and the initial feeling of relief was followed by fresh troubles – their journey to the final destination and the settling down into the new environment to name just two.

America was a new world which brought happiness to many Slovenes and despair to others. Diligence, assiduity, modesty, thriftiness and persistence were the qualities most often ascribed to the Slovenes in America and elsewhere. And because of these qualities, Slovenes are said to have been generally successful in fashioning satisfactory living conditions in the harsh and ruthless American environment. It is hard to tell how much reality or exaggeration lies in all this. But such clichés are continuously repeated in memoirs and letters, and not only during the period of mass emigration to the USA but later on as well. In addition to the virtues there were also mentions of the vices. Alcoholism figured prominently among them, both at home and in America. Anti-alcohol activists of the time considered it one of the most important causes of emigration, according to the equation: alcoholic master = ruined estate = broken family. Way out? Leave for America. It also worked the other way round: spending hard-earned wages in "saloons" = alcoholism = lack of money for the return. Juro Adlešič,<sup>28</sup> wrote extensively about this, emphasising the fact that most of the returnees talked about American beer and liquor stores and this normally took place at a pub table. Emigrants' letters, which were published in newspapers of that time and which describe the situation in America, all touched on the price of alcohol and compared it with that at home. America was not only a country with better material living conditions but also a land of freedom. In spite of the harsh life, it offered greater personal freedom to the individual than he enjoyed at home. How many emigrants wanted to live in a less traditional environment, confined as they had been by the well-established and determined rules of life? One of them was surely Alojz Kastigar, who left for America as a young priest in 1891. In letters to his friend, teacher Matija Hiti, he wrote after a year of living in the United States: *"During this time I've walked around various places in the new land... Everything is working out well for me in America all the time and I am satisfied with everything. However, the situation here is not the same as in Carniola. Here we all have the same idea and a single heart – clothes do not make any difference in the country of golden freedom. Classes do not quarrel between themselves and people of various religions live together here and are well represented... If God preserves my health, which I sincerely hope, at least I shall feel stronger and more vigorous than I ever did at home... Here in the new world I have found satisfaction and I shall be able to forget all the bad things that were done to me by the righteous gentlemen of Ljubljana as well as by other people during the last period of my life in the homeland. Here a man can breathe, this is a country of the world, liberty and golden freedom – by these words an American tells you everything... From all these you can see that I do not need to mourn*

after Europe. I can forget the flowers that have been blooming there for me over the last year."<sup>29</sup> Matija Šavs,<sup>30</sup> on his arrival at the port of New York at the end of the last century, shouted: "A giant statue and lighthouse at the same time, Liberty, is inviting us – we are in America! Greetings, country of Liberty! You'll be my second home. I hope to God I'll love you as much as I love my native soil."<sup>31</sup> Many people became aware of the vastness of America and its individual freedom, which meant little if it was not reinforced by settled way of life. Its spirit was brought back with the returnees. A considerable number of newspaper reports and archive sources draw attention to the excessive liberty granted to Americans, their disrespect for traditional village customs, and, a great shock to the Slovene religious rural environment, neglect of church service attendance. But we should not generalise. In polls taken in parishes in 1913, which have already been mentioned (considering the results in the Slovene part of Styria), observations by parish priests varied a lot. Some priests had no problems with respondents and even praised them, saying that whereas before they spent their money lavishly, they returned from the New World industrious and diligent; other priests found the respondents' American spirit manifested in their way of reasoning, behaving, dressing and even eating. The myth of America as a country of liberty continued to live on and has not fully disappeared now. A lot was written about the myth of America on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the "discovery" of this continent by Columbus.<sup>32</sup> I must stress that with regard to the period of mass emigration, lasting from the 1880s onward, one cannot speak about the myth but rather the image of America among Slovenes, which they were getting from newspapers, stories told by returnees, emigrants' letters and the like. Opponents of emigration did their best to highlight the grim side of the land across the Atlantic, while its supporters – in particular, returnees – all too easily forgot about the negative sides and spoke of America as the country of great opportunities and a better life. Every emigrant carried within himself his "image", which was either confirmed or destroyed after his arrival in the USA. If, in the middle of the 19th century, Slovenes were still under the impact of stories that pictured America as a country where roast chicken flew into one's mouth just like that and dollars were lying around on the streets, fifty years later they knew this country better. Even children knew a lot about it. Viljem Rohrman, head of the Agriculture School of Grm near Novo Mesto, even blamed school for making America so popular. In the Dolenjske Novice newspaper, he wrote in 1913 that children were warned against the dangers of America, but that, on the other hand, they familiarised themselves with it during classes: "Instead of hanging pictures of the natural and rural

life of the homeland on the classroom walls, there are seascapes, steamers displayed in every detail, etc., which all inspires a kind of aspiration or yearning in young hearts for unknown places, particularly America, about which old people and youngsters have so much to say."<sup>33</sup> In 1905, Fran Šuklje described a similar situation among children of White Carniola, who were much more familiar with the American rivers of Mississippi and Ohio than with the domestic rivers of Sava and Drau, knew more about the states of Minnesota and Nevada than Bucovina and the Vorarlberg area in Austria, and of the larger Austrian cities were more familiar with Vienna only, while all shouted, "*New York and Chicago*" at once, when asked about famous American cities.

The mass emigration of Slovenes to the United States of America at the turn of the 20th century permanently marked the development of the Slovene nation, in particular from the demographic aspect. They were dispersed among large immigration populations around the world, and thus there is less known about them than about Germans, Poles, Jews, Italians, Scandinavians and others. As a small ethnic group, they are worthy of research because of their specific features, incomparable to those of large nations and other South Slav nations. After 1918 the idea of "*the Yugoslavs*" was a more familiar one than that of "*Slovenes*" and many official statistical and scholar debates have only dealt with them, if at all. I have to emphasise the great differences between the original environments of immigrants, e.g. of Slovenes on one side and Croats, Montenegrins, Serbs and others on the other. The same applies to their life and work in the new countries, although similarities could be found. These can also be seen when compared with other European immigrants. Differences and similarities are subject to research of both emigration and immigration and thus contribute to a more detailed awareness of the past of both: the respective environments of emigration and immigration.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Pierre Léon: *Histoire économique et sociale du Monde*. Tome 4: La domination du capitalisme 1840-1914. Paris 1978.
- <sup>2</sup> Janko Pleterski: *Probleme der Existenz - Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*. Band III: Die Völker des Reiches. 2. Teilband. Vienna 1980, 811-817.

- <sup>3</sup> Marjan Drnovšek: Pot slovenskih izseljencev na tuje. Od Ljubljane do Ellis Islanda - Otoka solza v New Yorku 1880-1924. Založba Mladika, Ljubljana 1991.
- <sup>4</sup> See the papers by Vlado Valenčič: Izseljevanje Slovencev v tujino do druge svetovne vojne. - Dve domovini - Two Homelands, 1, Institute of Slovene Emigration ZRC SAZU. Ljubljana 1990, 43-82. Ibid: Izseljevanje Slovencev v druge dežele Habsburške monarhije. Zgodovinski časopis, 44, No. 1. Ljubljana 1990, 49-71.
- <sup>5</sup> Janez Evangelist Krek: Izseljevanje in zadružništvo. - Narodni gospodar. Glasilo Zadružne zveze v Ljubljani, No. 22, 1913, 351-353.
- <sup>6</sup> Okrožnica vsem županstvom, 19.3.1893 (History Archives of Ljubljana, the Ribnica municipality, archive unit 3194).
- <sup>7</sup> Enciklopedija Slovenije. 4. Mladinska knjiga. Ljubljana 1990, 233.
- <sup>8</sup> Matjaž Klemenčič: Slovenci v ameriški statistiki v 19. in 20. stoletju. - Celovski zvon, September 1984, II/4, 23-31.
- <sup>9</sup> Ivan Mulaček, born 1874, In 1903 left for the USA. Edited Slovene immigration newspapers (Nova domovina, Nada, i.e. the first American-Slovene monthly for literature, education and entertainment), worked for the railways, the Metropolitan insurance company and others. After his return home began to study the English language in 1908 at the universities in Vienna, Prague, Graz and London. From London he sent his article (Naše izseljevanje v številkah) to the Slovene Catholic scientific journal Čas (Volume 4, 1913, 256-266). While in the USA he wrote Angleški tolmač (the English Dictionary) and Slovensko-angleška slovnica (the Slovene-English Grammar), first issued in Ljubljana in 1912.
- <sup>10</sup> Hans Chmelar: Höhenpunkte der österreichischen Auswanderung. Die Auswanderung aus den im Reichsrat vertretenen Königreichen und Ländern in den Jahren 1905-1914. Studien zur Geschichte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie. Band XIV. Vienna 1974, 95.
- <sup>11</sup> Anton Korošec (1872-1940), theologian and politician. In 1905 he took his doctorate in theology at University of Graz. At the 3rd Catholic Meeting in Ljubljana (1906) he joined those expressing concern at the bad situation of the farming population, who were, according to him, the

- foundations for the preservation of the state and the Habsburg throne, and religion among people. The same year he was elected a deputy of the parliament in Vienna.
- <sup>12</sup> III. slovenski katoliški shod v Ljubljani dne 26., 27. in 28. avgusta 1906. Edited by Evgen Lampe. Ljubljana 1907, 20.
- <sup>13</sup> Janez Evangelist Krek (1865-1917), a politician, sociologist, writer and journalist. He had a very sharp sense of the social troubles of the Slovene man, in particular of the farmers. In the spirit of the social encyclical issued by Pope Leon XIII, entitled *Rerum Novarum* (1891), he demanded the Church be active in the solving of the social problem. In his work he also dealt with the emigration problem.
- <sup>14</sup> Jurij M. Trunk (1870-1973), priest, writer, historian of emigration and journalist. In 1909-11 he went to America four times. Among other things he travelled to America to collect material for the book entitled *Amerika in Amerikanci* (America and Americans), which he independently published in Klagenfurt in 1912. In 1921 he left for the United States for good.
- <sup>15</sup> Slovensko pismo iz Amerike. - Novice, III/34, 20.8. 1845, 136.
- <sup>16</sup> Branko Mita Colakovic: *Yugoslav Migrations to America*. Editor: Adam. S. Eterovich. San Francisco 1973.
- <sup>17</sup> Marjan Drnovšek: *Izseljevanje iz širše ljubljanske okolice 1890-1914*. Doctoral thesis, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, History Department, 1993 (manuscript).
- <sup>18</sup> Bogdan Kolar: *Cerkev in izseljenstvo v letih pred prvo svetovno vojno*. - Viri 3. Archive Association of Slovenia. Ljubljana 1990, 92-98.
- <sup>19</sup> Miran Hladnik: *Slovene Popular Novels about Emigration in the Nineteenth Century*. *Slovene Studies: Journal of the Society for Slovene Studies*, 7/1-2, 1985, 58-59.
- <sup>20</sup> Jakob Alešovec (1842-1901), a Slovene prose writer, dramatist and satirist.
- <sup>21</sup> Zofka Kveder (1878-1926), a writer and commentator. When she wrote this drama she was living in Zagreb. She dealt above all with women's and social issues.

- <sup>22</sup> Ivan Mulaček: Naše izseljevanje v številkah. - Čas. Volume 4. 1913, 256-257.
- <sup>23</sup> Varstvo izseljencev, Ljubljana, 11 November 1907. -Slovenec, No. 265, Ljubljana, 16.11.1907.
- <sup>24</sup> Obravnave deželnega zbora kranjskega v Ljubljani, Volume 48, part II, 1913, p 673 (the 17th session, 3./4.10.1913). The adopted decision was sent to the provincial diet for Carniola, 11.11.1913. Cf. Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, DPK, 4617/1913).
- <sup>25</sup> Marjan Drnovšek: The Attitudes of the Slovene Catholic Church to Emigration to the United States of America before 1914. Slovene Studies: Journal of the Society for Slovene Studies, 14/2, 1992 (published in 1994), 169-184.
- <sup>26</sup> Andrej Vovko: The Myth of America and the Society of St. Raphael. - Slovene Studies. Volume 13, No. 1. 1991 (published in December 1992). 107-110.
- <sup>27</sup> Marjan Drnovšek: Slowenische Auswanderung vor 1914 über Hamburg, Bremen/Bremerhaven und Le Havre nach Ellis Island. Hoffnung Amerika. Europäische Auswanderung in die Neue Welt. NWD - Verlag Bremerhaven. 1994, 103-118.
- <sup>28</sup> Juro Adlešič (1884-1968), lawyer. See: Juro Adlešič: Organizacija slovenskega izseljenstva. Čas, Volumes 4 and 5. 1909. 184-185.
- <sup>29</sup> History Archives of Ljubljana, DOM 31, Matija Hiti, Box 2, Archive Unit 7 (Letters by Alojz Kastigar to Matija Hiti, 4 March and 30 May 1892 from New Ulm in Minnesota).
- <sup>30</sup> Matija Šavs (1870-1944), commentator, organiser and public figure. Having finished the seventh class of grammar school in Ljubljana he arrived in the USA in September 1891. He finished grammar school there and in 1895 completed his theology studies in St. Paul in Minnesota.
- <sup>31</sup> Matija Šavs: Življenje na ladji. Dom in svet, X/15, 1897, 467.
- <sup>32</sup> I would like to list some Slovene articles written in English; Jernej Petrič: The myth of America in Slovene literature up to the Second World War. Slovene Studies: Journal of the Society for Slovene Studies. Volume 13, No. 1, 1991 (published December 1992), 101-106; Matjaž Klemenčič:

Images of America among Slovene and other Yugoslav Migrants. - Distant Magnets. Expectations and realities in the Immigrants' Experience, 1840-1930. Edited by Dirk Hoerder and Horst Rössler. Ellis Island Series. Holmes & Meier. New York / London 1993, 199-221.

- <sup>33</sup> Gospodarstvo. Kaj bo s kmetijskimi posli in delavci? (r.). Dolenjske novice, XXIX/16, Novo mesto 25. 8. 1913.

## POVZETEK

### MNOŽIČNO IZSELJEVANJE IN SLOVENCİ

Marjan Drnovšek

Avtor sintetično povzema rezultate lastnih raziskav o množičnem izseljevanju Slovencev v zadnjih desetletjih 19. stoletja in do izbruha prve svetovne vojne. Na kratko obdela naslednja vprašanja: opredelitev izseljenca, demografski aspekt izseljevanja, trajnost odsotnosti, smer (predvsem v Združene države), vzroke izseljevanja (poleg ekonomskega navaja tudi ostale, na primer beg pred služenjem vojaškega roka in tako dalje), odmevnost množičnega odhajanja v javnosti, pot izseljencev od doma do Ellis Islanda. Krajša verzija razprave je objavljena v zborniku 27. zborovanja slovenskih zgodovinarjev, Ljubljana 1994.