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Reactions of Slovene Immigrant Communities in the US to 20th-Century Crises in the Homeland

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ABSTRACT

Interest in developments in the old homeland is one of the main characteristics of immigrant communities. It increases particularly during periods of political crises in the homelands. For Slovenes, three major 20th-century political crises resulted in border changes and changes in the political status of part of the Slovene ethnic territory. The first occurred during and after World War I, when the Habsburg Monarchy collapsed and most of the Slovene ethnic territory became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later known as Yugoslavia). The second occurred during World War II, when Slovenes were threatened by the Nazis and Fascists. The third occurred during the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, when an independent state of Slovenia was established. In response to these events, Slovenes in the US organized themselves politically and expressed support for the homeland. They sought to influence US policies by writing letters and sending various resolutions to their elected officials, with varying degrees of success. It is important, however, that their activities helped to maintain the cohesiveness of the Slovene community and slowed the process of their assimilation into the American mainstream.

Zanimanje za dogajanje v starih domovinah je ena bistvenih značilnosti izseljencev, ki se je zlasti potenciralo v obdobju političnih kriz v stari domovini. V primeru slovenskih izseljencev je šlo za tri politične krize v 20. stoletju, katerih rezultat so bile spremembe državnih meja in spremembe političnega položaja posameznih delov slovenskega etničnega ozemlja. Šlo je za krize v času prve svetovne vojne, ko je propadla habsburška monarhija in ko je večina slovenskega etničnega ozemlja bila vključena v Jugoslavijo. Drugo krizno obdobje predstavlja druga svetovna vojna, ko sta nacizem in fašizem grozila Slovencem s fizičnim uničenjem. Tretje krizno obdobje predstavlja križpotje 90. let 20. stoletja, v obdobju razpadanja Jugoslavije in osamosvajanja Slovenije.

Slovenski izseljenci vseh generacij, ki so živeli v ZDA, so se odzvali na omenjene dogodke. Organizirali so se v različne politične skupine in združenja ter izražali podporo stari domovini. Hkrati so z resolucijami in pismi svojim izvoljenim predstavnikom (kongresnikom, senatorjem, guvernerjem, predsedniku ZDA in državnemu sekretarju ZDA) skušali vplivati na politiko ZDA do njihove stare domovine. V teh svojih prizadevanjih so bili enkrat bolj drugič pa manj uspešni. S temi aktivnostmi so slovenski izseljenci v ZDA postajali bolj samozavedni. Tako so se, v primerjavi z nekaterimi drugimi izseljenskimi skupnostmi, uspeli tudi nekaj dlje izogniti asimilaciji v »ameriškem talilnem loncu«.

INTRODUCTION

Before World War I, most of the Slovenes outside Austria-Hungary lived in the United States¹. According to the US Census of 1920, there were 208,552 inhabitants with Slovene as their mother tongue in the US², while, at the same time, 1.31 million ethnic Slovenes lived in the Slovene ethnic territory in Europe, according to the official censuses of population. During the inter-war period, only a small number of Slovenes immigrated to the US. After World War II ca. 10,000 ethnic Slovenes immigrated.

Most Slovene immigrants found work in the mines and industries around the Great Lakes (Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin), in New York and Pennsylvania, and also in the West in California, Oregon, Washington, and in mountainous regions in Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. Most of them settled in cities, where they founded Slovene ethnic settlements. A Slovene ethnic settlement is defined as a part of a city or town with a large enough concentration or nucleus of a 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 editorial offices or publisher of a Slovene ethnic newspaper³. Slovenes still live today in some of the historic Slovene ethnic settlements. According to the 2000 US Census, there were 176,691 persons of Slovene ancestry⁴. Most of these are second, third, or fourth generation; therefore they are linguistically, socially, and politically part of the majority.

Slovene Americans have reacted boldly and quickly to the crises in the old homeland whenever they occurred, whether they were political crises or natural disasters such as earthquakes or floods. They also reacted boldly and quickly to natural disasters or fires in their native villages, helping the inhabitants of those villages, especially their own relatives, by sending financial assistance and also by giving advice on how to improve their houses to prevent recurrences of such disasters.

There were three major 20th-century crises in the field of politics that resulted in border changes and changes in political status of part of the Slovene ethnic territory: 1) during and after World War I, after the Habsburg Monarchy collapsed and the major part of the Slovene ethnic territory became part of Yugoslavia; 2) during World War

II, when Slovenes' lives were threatened by the Nazis and Fascists, and they also fought each other, as the Communists not only resisted the Nazis and Fascists but also started a Communist revolution and, on the other side, collaborated with the occupiers and 3) in the early 1990s, during the process of dissolution of Yugoslavia, when an independent country of Slovenia was established.

Slovenes of all generations in the US reacted to those events. They organized themselves in different political groups and expressed their views in support of the old homeland. They also tried to influence the policies of the US by writing letters and sending resolutions to their elected officials (Members of Congress, Senators, Governors, President, and Secretary of State). Some of these efforts were more successful than others. It is important, however, that their activities helped to maintain the cohesiveness of their ethnic group and slowed down the process of assimilation of Slovenes into the American mainstream.

REACTIONS OF SLOVENE IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A YUGOSLAV STATE DURING AND AFTER WORLD WAR I

As already mentioned, most Slovene emigrants prior to World War I lived in the US. During this period, the US was the only nation in the world where immigrants could organize freely to express their support for different options for their homeland in Europe; and, consequently, this was the only country where ethnic Slovenes could, without any pressures, express their views for or against Austria-Hungary as their "homeland".

Prior to the entry of the US into the war in April 1917, many American Slovenes retained their allegiance to the Habsburg Monarchy. Some continued to support it secretly even later. At the outbreak of World War I, pro-Austrian feeling was relatively widespread among American Slovenes and was promulgated primarily by diplomatic representatives and some Catholic clergy. These Slovenes did not establish an organization, but were active in some of the Slovene ethnic press.

The second group of activists was originally based in the *Slovenska liga* [Slovenian League], which was founded in 1915, and later in the *Slovenska narodna zveza* [Slovenian National Union], founded in 1917. Both of these organizations worked in cooperation with and on the initiative of the Yugoslav Committee in London⁵. They acted very carefully on the question of how to formulate the future Yugoslav state. These activities can nevertheless be characterized as not favoring the establishment of Yugoslavia as kingdom.

The third group worked through the Slovenian Republican Alliance (founded in 1917), which, after its association with like-minded Croatians, was renamed the Yugoslav Republican Alliance in 1917. This organization's aim was to establish a Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in which Slovenia would be an autonomous republic.

During the First World War the Serbian government and the Yugoslav Committee in London recruited Croatian, Serbian, and Slovene volunteers from all over the United States to fight the Central Powers at the front in Thessaloniki. Around 5,000 Slovenes also enlisted in the US Army⁶.

Slovenes in the US were active in different committees that supported the policy of the American government. They also expressed the wish that President Wilson would ensure the further existence of small European peoples, including Slovenes⁷, and they claimed correctly that the new map of Europe would not be made by the peoples but by politicians⁸. In 1916, some American Slovenes were already beginning to talk about the so-called question of the Coastland, i.e., the political fate of the western part of the Slovene ethnic territory. Later, in August of the same year, they started to gather signatures for a petition against Italian territorial claims⁹. They also tried to reduce the importance of the question of whether the future Yugoslav state was to be a kingdom or republic, or whether it would be a federation or a centralized state. Already then they started to think about the urgency of helping the old homeland, which was devastated by World War I¹⁰.

Immediately after World War I, they continued to campaign against Italian claims. The *aide-memoire* of the Yugoslav immigrant organizations in the US to President Woodrow Wilson merits particular mention; in this they emphasized that it would be detrimental to peaceful relations among peoples if the Yugoslav "land" were to remain under Italy after the peace conference. In this document they highlighted the consequences of the annexation of the Slovene Coastland [*Primorska*] to Italy: for the Slovenes, the secession of about 400,000 "Yugoslav souls" from their entire population of 1.5 million inhabitants would deal a fatal blow¹¹.

Of course, interest in the events in their old homeland continued among Slovene immigrants during the period of the first Yugoslavia (1918-1941). It reached its peak during the discussions prompted in the US by Louis Adamic's book *The Native's Return*¹², which condemned the regime of King Alexander from an American republican standpoint. The book provoked different reactions among Slovenes in the US: some, particularly on the American Slovene left, were positive; others, particularly among Catholic clergy, were negative¹³.

AID FROM SLOVENE IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS IN THE US FOR THEIR HOMELAND DURING WORLD WAR II

The activities of Slovenes in the US during World War II may be divided into two periods. During the first period, from the outbreak of war to the end of 1942, Slovene Americans and their leaders supported the Yugoslav peoples against the Axis through correspondence with important world leaders, members of the Royal Yugoslav government, and later its representatives in exile. During that period they organized the Yu-

goslav Relief Committee (Slovene Section) to gather material aid and elected Vincent Cainkar, president of the Slovene National Benefit Society, as their president. In early 1942, Slovene Americans organized another relief committee, which operated under the auspices of the Union of Slovene (Catholic) Parishes.

The second period of Slovene activities in the US began in December 1942, at the Slovene American Congress in Cleveland, Ohio, which elected the Slovene American National Council under the leadership of socialist Etbin Kristan, Catholic priest Kazimir Zakrajšek, and Slovene-American writer Louis Adamic. The Committee of this organization included leaders of all Slovene fraternal and other organizations, among them representatives of socialist, liberal, and Catholic organizations as well as priests. Congress accepted resolutions on the war and the Slovene Americans, on the situation of Slovenes in Yugoslavia and its neighbors, on the future of Yugoslavia, and on political action of Slovene Americans. The resolution on Slovenes in Yugoslavia and its neighbors emphasized the demand for a united Slovenia incorporating all Slovenes on their ethnic territory¹⁴.

On 15 January 1943, the Director of the Foreign Nationalities Branch of the Office of Strategic Services DeWitt C. Poole and Undersecretary of State Sumner Wells received a delegation from the Slovene American National Council led by Louis Adamic. The delegation delivered a memorandum explaining the situation in Slovenia during World War II and the Slovenes' wish that a united and autonomous Slovenia be established in a united, federated, and democratic Yugoslavia¹⁵.

Adamic, Kristan, famous Croatian American violinist Zlatko Balokovic, and Serbian American leader Žarko Buncick soon organized a movement to coordinate the activities of Yugoslav immigrants. The result of these endeavors was the establishment of the United Committee of South Slavic Americans, at first under the leadership of Adamic and later, Balokovic. In this committee, representatives of Slovene, Croatian, and Serbian Americans served. Later, Macedonian and even Bulgarian Americans also joined.

At the end of 1944 and during the first half of 1945, American Slovene leaders directed their activities primarily towards attempts at finding solutions to the questions of Trieste, the Coastland, and Carinthia in favor of the Slovenes¹⁶. These efforts continued after World War II. They succeeded, with the help of members of the US Congress whom Adamic and Balokovic knew personally, in drawing attention to the solution of the Trieste question in favor of the Slovenes among some state legislatures and members of the US Congress¹⁷.

After World War II, the United Committee of South Slavic Americans sent out many copies of the 30-page brochure entitled *Trieste or Trst*¹⁸, written by well-known British historian A.J.P. Taylor. This sought to convince important Americans of the Slovene right to Trieste. During the years 1945-1954, Slovene Americans sent many letters to US government officials on the Trieste question. The activities of leftist Slovene

Americans and other Americans from regions of Yugoslavia were coordinated with the Yugoslav authorities. Demonstrations had to be planned very carefully because of the substantial Italian-American population, some of whom could prepare mass counter-demonstrations at any time. The votes of those Americans played an important role in determining the official policy of the American Government towards the question of Trieste¹⁹.

SLOVENE IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS' AID FOR THEIR HOMETLAND IN THE EARLY 1990s

In 1989 Slovenes in the US formed the Union of Slovenian Americans to inform their fellow Slovene Americans on how they could influence US policy on Yugoslavia to bring it into line with the interests of the Slovene people. At the end of March 1990, the Union established its headquarters in Euclid, Ohio, and supported the democratization of Slovenia, irrespective of political parties that appeared at the time. At the same time, some conservative Slovene Americans organized the American-Slovenian Council, which was led by Dr. Mate Roessman. Its aim was to support (especially financially) two out of five political parties involved in DEMOS (Democratic Opposition of Slovenia), namely the Slovenian Peasants' Party and the Slovenian Christian Democratic Party²⁰.

When Slovene politicians in the homeland were seeking support for independence by plebiscite in 1990 and 1991, leading members of the Slovene government visited major centers of the Slovene immigrant community. Their aim was to obtain immigrant support for political actions that would follow the Slovene Declaration of Independence. Soon after the Slovene plebiscite, on 23 December 1990, the then member of the Slovene government and minister responsible for Slovene emigrants and national minorities in the neighbouring countries, Dr Janez Dular, asked Slovene immigrant communities throughout the world and the members of Slovene minorities in Austria, Italy, and Hungary to support the movement for Slovene independence²¹. As early as January 1991, Slovenes from Cleveland responded to this request, expressing their support for Slovene independence in a letter to the then president of the Slovene government, Lojze Peterle. The movement for independence was also supported by Slovene Americans' statements concerning the civil war in Yugoslavia before the European Subcommittee of the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the US Senate. The activities of the two US Congressmen of Slovene descent (Dennis Eckart from Cleveland and James Oberstar from Minnesota), aiming to resolve the Slovene and the entire Yugoslav question were also significant²².

Following the declaration of Slovene independence on 25 June 1991 and the Yugoslav People's Army's attack on Slovenia, several Slovene politicians sought assistance from Slovenes living abroad. Slovenes throughout the world reacted to the aggression of the Yugoslav army by addressing protests to the governments of their states. The manifes-

tation of solidarity and unity among American Slovenes during the aggression of the Yugoslav army against Slovenia was more evident than ever before. The dismay and personal concern regarding the events in Slovenia on the part of the American Slovenes was also shown in their numerous phone calls to their friends in Slovenia. The then representative of the Republic of Slovenia in the US, Peter Millonig, sent numerous petitions and protests to different US government officials²³.

Some American cities with sizeable Slovene communities recognized the independence of Slovenia as early as June 1991. Cleveland's mayor, Michael E. White, issued a proclamation on 26 June 1991, designating Slovenian Independence Day²⁴.

As early as 27 June 1991, Congressman Eckart drew the attention of the US Congress to the problem of the attack of the Yugoslav army on Slovenia. He demanded the support of the State Department and the US president for democracy and economic reforms in Slovenia. He also called for action to prevent violence in this republic, which he noted was "the homeland of my parents and grandfathers"²⁵.

American Slovenes reacted as they did during the First and Second World Wars and undertook to raise funds. Their activities were carried out through Slovene fraternal benefit organizations, such as the Slovene National Benefit Society and the Grand American Slovenian Catholic Union. Money raised by selling Slovene flags was intended to help cover the costs of political activities and to partially repair the damage caused by the actions of the Yugoslav army in Slovenia. The Slovene American newspapers paid a great deal of attention to events in Slovenia in the period between 25 June 1991 (the beginning of the ten-day war for Slovenia), and the so-called "Brioni Agreement", which was signed on 8 July 1991²⁶.

It is particularly important that this time no split took place in the Slovene community in the US, or anywhere else in the world. This time they acted uniformly until recognition of Slovene independence was achieved. In this case American Slovenes reacted very quickly and demanded from the US government recognition of Slovenia as a sovereign and democratic state²⁷.

Matjaž Jančar, who was the Yugoslav consul general in Cleveland until the beginning of the ten-day war for Slovenia, and who resigned his post and became a representative of the Republic of Slovenia in Cleveland a few days later, issued an appeal to all organizations of American Slovenes to support Slovenia in its fight for independence and international recognition, and to create a special organization for this purpose²⁸.

On Monday, 1 July 1991, when the aggression of the Yugoslav army against the Slovenes reached its peak, representatives of the leaders of the Slovene fraternal organizations, Slovene parishes, and Slovenian cultural organizations in the US met at the Slovene National Home in Cleveland, on the initiative of Matjaž Jančar and Charles Ipavec, and established the United Americans for Slovenia (hereafter UAS). The activities of this organization were intensive for nine months and its governing committee held a

meeting almost every week. Its only aim was to exert pressure on the US government so that it would recognize Slovene independence.

Edmund J. Turk, the former president of the Cleveland City Council and a former city judge, was elected president of the UAS. As many as 659 different societies and organizations of American Slovenes had joined this body by the end of the year. An important achievement of the representatives of the American Slovenes was that non-Slovene organizations, i.e. the media and the American Red Cross, began to take an interest in Slovenia. Organizations such as the Slovene National Benefit Society, the American-Slovenian Catholic Union, the American Mutual Life Association, the Progressive Slovene Women of America, and the Slovene Women's Union supported the activities of the UAS by publishing numerous articles about their activities in their newspapers. Here special tribute should be paid to "Ameriška domovina" [American Home], an independent Slovene ethnic newspaper from Cleveland that provided comprehensive coverage of developments regarding Slovene recognition at the time²⁹.

Americans of Slovene descent and their numerous non-Slovene friends, some in Slovene settlements and others scattered across the US, sent thousands of petitions and demands for recognition of Slovene independence. They also used a special telephone line and on 8 October 1991, they made thousands of phone calls to the White House³⁰.

On 4 July 1991, numerous volunteers gathered in the rooms of the American Mutual Life Association to plan sending hundreds of letters to senators, members of the US House of Representatives, and to the president of the US. All these letters included demands for the recognition of the Republic of Slovenia. This was followed by attempts to persuade members of the US Congress and US Administration officials. Slovene Americans also used the connections of Congressmen Eckart and Oberstar. Senator John Glenn from Ohio and Congressman Eckart sent a joint resolution to President George Bush calling for the recognition of Slovenia. On that occasion Glenn said to Jim Debevec, editor and publisher of "Ameriška domovina", that he was deeply disappointed by the fact that the US carried on its misleading policy of non-recognition of Slovenia as an independent state.

During the June 1991 war for Slovenia and subsequently during the war in Croatia, American Slovenes and Croatians and their organizations organized numerous demonstrations supporting Slovene and Croatian independence. Demonstrations took place in many cities from the Atlantic to the Pacific, as well as in front of the US Congress and the United Nations. Demonstrations by Slovenes and Croatians were also organized in Cleveland. The UAS continued to pressure the American government for recognition of Slovenia until the US finally recognized Slovenia in April 1992.

Once Slovenia had been recognized by the European Union on 15 January 1992, "Ameriška domovina" published favorable comments by Ohio politicians from Senator John Glenn to Governor George Voinovich, with a demand for recognition of Slovenia by the US.

Slovene Americans organized a phone-in to the White House for the recognition of Slovenia on 10 and 12 February 1992. When the recognition finally came in April 1992, Slovene politicians from Slovenia thanked American Slovenes for the support they gave for US recognition³¹. The celebration by the Slovenes in the Slovenian National Home in Cleveland that followed the recognition represented the crowning point of Slovene-American activity between 1989 and 1992.

CONCLUSION

Slovenes, like any other immigrant group in the US, tried to influence US government policies towards their homeland. Those groups are always only partially successful in their endeavors. These activities are always important, however, because they have helped community self-preservation.

NOTES

- ¹ M. Klemenčič, *Slovenes of Cleveland: The Creation of a New Nation and a New World Community: Slovenia and the Slovenes of Cleveland, Ohio*, Novo mesto 1995, pp. 48-75.
- ² *14th US Census of Population 1920*, vol. 2, chapter 10, *Mother Tongue of the Foreign White Stock*. Washington DC 1923, pp. 967-1007.
- ³ Klemenčič, *Slovenes of Cleveland* cit., pp. 71-81.
- ⁴ *Census 2000: Ancestry – Summary File 3, Sample Data*, Washington DC 2000, at http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/QTTable?_ts=69596705830
- ⁵ The Yugoslav Committee in London was established by Slovene, Croatian, and Serbian politicians who managed to escape from Austria-Hungary before World War I began. The main aim of the Committee was the unification of Yugoslav lands, which were then part of Austria-Hungary, with the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro in a Yugoslav state. In this endeavor the Committee expected support and cooperation especially from Slovene, Croatian, and Serbian immigrants in the US. See M. Paulova, *Jugoslavenski odbor (povijest jugoslavenske emigracije za svjetskog rata od 1914.-1918)*, Zagreb 1925.
- ⁶ M. Klemenčič, *Izseljenke skupnosti in ustanavljanje novih držav v vzhodni Srednji Evropi: primer Slovencev – 1. del* [Immigrant Communities and Establishment of New States in East Central Europe: the Case of Slovenians, part 1], in "Zgodovinski časopis", 1996, 50, 3, pp. 394-395.
- ⁷ Id., *Ameriški Slovenci in NOB v Jugoslaviji: naseljevanje, zemljepisna razprostranjenost in odnos ameriških Slovencev do stare domovine od sredine 19. stoletja do konca druge svetovne vojne* [American Slovenes and the National Liberation Movement in Yugoslavia: Settlement, Geographical Dispersion, and the Attitude of American Slovenes toward the Old Country from Mid-19th Century until the End of World War II], Maribor 1987, pp. 86-87.
- ⁸ M. Drnovšek, *O stališčih slovenskih socialistov v ZDA do vojne in jugoslovanskega vprašanja med prvo svetovno vojno* [On the Standpoints of Slovene Socialists in the US towards the War and Yugoslav Question during the World War I], in "Prispevki za zgodovino delavskega gibanja", 1975/76, 15-16, 1-2, p. 78.
- ⁹ *Poziv Slovincem v domovino!* [An Appeal to the Slovenes in the Homeland], in "Clevelandska Amerika", 16 August 1916, 9, 97, p. 1.
- ¹⁰ Klemenčič, *Ameriški Slovenci in NOB v Jugoslaviji* cit., p. 99.

- ¹¹ I. Čizmić, *Jugoslovenski iseljenički pokret u SAD i stvaranje jugoslavenske države 1918* [The Establishment of Yugoslav State in 1918 and Yugoslav Immigrant Movement], Zagreb 1974, p. 293.
- ¹² L. Adamic, *The Native's Return: An American Immigrant Visits Yugoslavia and Discovers His Old Country*, New York - London 1934.
- ¹³ I. Čizmić, *The Native's Return: Its Impact*, in J. Stanonik (ed.), *Louis Adamić – simpozij – symposium*, Ljubljana 1981, pp. 313-321.
- ¹⁴ Klemenčič, *Ameriški Slovenci in NOB v Jugoslaviji* cit., pp. 165-213.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 216-218.
- ¹⁶ See M. Klemenčič, *Slovenes beyond Slovenia, in Europe and Overseas*, in M. Klemenčič, M. N. Harris (eds.), *European Migrants, Diasporas and Indigenous Ethnic Minorities*, Pisa 2009, p. 58.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 214-273.
- ¹⁸ A.J.P. Taylor, *Trieste or Trst*, mimeographed manuscript, [s.l.]: [s.n.], 1945.
- ¹⁹ Klemenčič, *Ameriški Slovenci in NOB v Jugoslaviji* cit., pp. 279-280.
- ²⁰ Id., *Izseljenske skupnosti in ustanavljanje novih držav* cit., p. 401.
- ²¹ Id., *Pozivi in zahvale funkcionarjev iz Slovenije slovenskim izseljencem* [Appeals and Thank you Notes from the High Officials of Slovenia to the Slovene Emigrants], in M. Klemenčič, J. Stergar, S. Kristen, K. Munda Hirnök, M. Trebše Štolfa, *Viri o demokratizaciji in osamosvojitvi Slovenije. IV. del: Slovenci v zamejstvu in po svetu ter mednarodno priznanje Slovenije* [Sources on Democratization and Independence of Slovenia, part IV, Slovenes in Neighboring Countries and the World and the International Recognition of Slovenia] (=Viri, no. 20), Ljubljana 2005, pp. 23-36.
- ²² M. Klemenčič, S. Kristen, *Delovanje slovenskih izseljencev v ZDA za neodvisno Slovenijo* [The Activity of Slovene Immigrants to the USA for Independent Slovenia], in "Razprave in gradivo", 1999, 34, pp. 10-11.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- ²⁴ *Proclamation: Slovenian Independence Day*, in "Ameriška domovina", 27 June 1991, 93, 26, p. 6.
- ²⁵ D. Eckart, *Support Democracy and Market Reform for All Peoples*, in "Congressional Record", 137, 101, Washington DC 1991, p 16757.
- ²⁶ Klemenčič, *Izseljenske skupnosti in ustanavljanje novih držav* cit., p. 404.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*
- ²⁸ M. Jančar, *Message to all Slovenian American Organizations and to Americans of Slovenian Descent*, in Klemenčič et al., *Viri o demokratizaciji in osamosvojitvi Slovenije* cit., p. 26.
- ²⁹ Klemenčič, Kristen, *Delovanje slovenskih izseljencev v ZDA* cit., p. 16.
- ³⁰ *Call President' Is Big Success*, in "Ameriška domovina", 31 October 1991, 93, 44, p. 1.
- ³¹ Klemenčič, Kristen, *Delovanje slovenskih izseljencev v ZDA* cit., p. 16.

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Of all the family that stayed in Europe, a very large extended family, only one woman survived WWII. She emigrated to a kibbutz in the north of Israel after the war. So: people who uproot their lives and families and leave their ancestral homes generally don't do so because they are prosperous, safe, and happy. They do it because their very existence is threatened, or because their or their children's educational /economic future is bleak and they want to improve their chance for a better life. Why was the Midwestern US such a hot spot for Eastern European immigrants in the early 20th century? Related Questions. Has immigration stopped, or is it still ongoing in America/USA? The reasons these new immigrants made the journey to America vary depending on the immigrants conditions. Some left their homeland in order to escape religious, racial, and political persecution, or looking for a better economical opportunity. Many were brought to the United States by contract labor agreements offered by recruiting agents, known as padrones to Italian and Greek laborers. Hungarians, Poles, Slovaks, Bohemians, and Italians flocked to the coal mines or steel mills. Greeks preferred the textile mills. Russian and Polish Jews worked the needle trades or pushcart markets of New York. 2015 was the 50th anniversary of the passage in 1965 of the Hart Cellar Act, which amended the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (INA) and began the most recent period of mass immigration to the United States. These amendments abolished the restrictive quota system of the 1920s and opened up legal immigration to all countries in the world, setting the stage for a dramatic increase in immigration from Asia and Africa. At the same time, they limited the numbers of legal immigrants permitted from countries in the Western Hemisphere, establishing restrictions on immigrants across the U.S. so