

ETHNIC RADIO IN AUSTRALIA AND SLOVENE LANGUAGE BROADCASTING: DEVELOPMENT AND DIRECTION

I r e n a B i r s a

INTRODUCTION

Multilingual radio is no longer an innovative service in Australia. Its inception in 1974 occurred during a period when the »nation of Multiculturalism«, that is, Australia as a culturally pluralistic society was only just being recognized and promoted by the Federal Government. It was also during a time when the number of post-war immigrants entering the country was consistently increasing and changing the face of Australian society. The advent of ethnic radio was an idea initially advocated by Al Grassby, the Minister for Immigration under the Whitlam Labor Government. After it was implemented in 1975 by the Liberal National Coalition Government led by Malcolm Fraser, the service began focusing upon fulfilling the communicative needs of the ethnic population in the two main commercial and industrial cities of Melbourne and Sydney.

In both places, ethnic radio is primarily the domain of the Federal Government. This refers to the service offered (whereby about forty-nine languages are broadcast), funding and control. Semi-private or community-owned radio stations with community language programs do exist,¹ but their range is small and broadcasts are usually restricted to the languages of the more populous ethnic groups.

Despite the comparatively small number of Slovenes inhabiting these two coastal cities of eastern Australia,² they have been actively involved with ethnic radio since its beginnings, fostering a willingness to produce programs aimed at serving the interests of their audience. This paper will first deal with the historical development of Slovene language

programs within the wider context of the evolution of multi-lingual broadcasting in Australia, especially in Melbourne. My reasons for focusing on Melbourne are threefold. (i) Australia is divided into a federation of states whereby each state has its own local identity. Like the press, broadcasting that includes ethnic radio is strongly regional in its identity. (ii) The Australian broadcasting system is organized on the assumption that local interests predominate over regional interests.³ (iii) There is a significant concentration of Slovenes of all age groups living in Melbourne. In the second part of my paper I will analyze the content and examine some of the issues and problems which have arisen within the Slovene language programs on Radio 3EA - problems based upon what I conclusively argue to be pacifying characteristics of public sector broadcasting for ethnic communities in this country. This work is partially based on interviews with broadcasters and listeners and partly based on my own experience of working on ethnic radio.

THE BEGINNINGS

Slovene language radio broadcasts in Victoria have become an established service ministering to the Slovene communities of Melbourne and Geelong since the mid 1970's. Beginning with very basic productions aired for approximately one hour each week, the present programs on Radio 3EA have been increased to two weekly transmissions: one on Monday mornings (7.00-8.00 am) and the other on Thursday evenings (6.45-7.30 pm). Additionally, a Sunday evening program devoted to listener requests has been introduced, aired once every four weeks. Unlike the early presentations, today's Slovene language broadcasts on ethnic radio have progressed sufficiently to become professionally produced productions taking full advantage of all available media technologies and resources. This has allowed for a continued maintenance of the general aim of ethnic radio which is *»to assist ethnic groups to become more readily integrated into the Australian society, thereby adding to the cultural spectrum of all individuals and groups including the English-speaking majority«*.⁴

Even during the 1950's and 1960's, before experiments with

an exclusive ethnic radio service took place, foreign language programs on publicly-funded radio stations were broadcast. However, the time allotted for this purpose was severely limited to only 2.5% of a station's overall air time.⁵ Whenever the limit was exceeded, English translations had to be added.⁶ The main reason for the restrictive nature of this service was that during these first two decades of the post-war immigrant settlement, migrants were being encouraged to learn English rather than to preserve and maintain their own languages. Programs such as the daily »Learning English« and the weekly bilingual »Contact« - both on the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission) - were primarily directed toward educating the new settler in English.

Commercial radio stations were more inclined to incorporate programs aimed at the non-English speaking sector of the community. Programs in foreign languages all had to have an English translation and on the whole were nothing more than commercials, music, and a few community announcements.⁷ By the end of 1973, the air time was noticeably reduced to about 36 hours per week and the number of commercial stations offering this service on a national level totalled only 19 out of 118. It is worth noting that Slovene was among the languages transmitted on the Sydney radio station 2CH during the late 1960's and early 1970's. Although Slovene folk music was being played on some Melbourne and Geelong commercial radio stations, especially the tunes of Frankie Jankovič, there is no evidence that there were any specific Slovene language programs transmitted in Victoria.

THE 1970'S - EMPHASIZING THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANTS

Prior to the formation of Radio station 3EA in Melbourne and its Sydney equivalent 2EA, the ABC in Melbourne had set up in 1974, the Public Access Station 3ZZ which also functioned as a multi language station. Joan Dugdale⁸ states that the establishment of such a station was much influenced by the rapid rate of social and technological changes in the 1960's, changes which resulted in urban alienation and anonymity. By the early 1970's the general public was no longer satisfied that important decisions affecting them should

be made entirely by governments, bureaucrats and specialists. The newly elected Labor Government »set about trying to renew our social institutions, making them more accessible and responsive to the people.«⁹

Incorporated into the Labor Government's schedule was the eventual broadcasting of programs in about 28 different languages including Slovene. Despite the somewhat »ethnic« character that 3ZZ adopted, it was not an ethnic radio station. The contents were directly influenced by one of the policies of Access Radio:

»The prime purpose of Access Radio is to meet the communicative needs of the minority groups in the community who are denied adequate access to the media.«¹⁰

Another factor influencing the contents of the broadcasts was the eventual heavy demand from the various ethnic groups in Melbourne requesting air time to present programs in their respective languages. Melbourne immigrant groups were quick to seize the opportunity which was thus offered for participatory broadcasting.¹¹

An hour-long program was initially accorded on Tuesday nights to the Serbo-Croatian Language. At the time, the station's organizers had thought this to be the only Yugoslav language. Also, the ethnic community programs were divided by languages rather than national groups. In response to this, representative groups of Slovenes, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Serbians and Croats approached the station management, elucidating that each of them spoke quite a distinct language and requested that fifteen minutes of program time be allocated to each specific group. This action inevitably implied that an extension of fifteen minutes to the original hour-long time slot was needed. The proposal was consequently granted, based on the legitimacy of the claims. A noteworthy observation by Dugdale in relation to these ethnic groups from Yugoslavia was that »while the various groups had ... shared the same airtime, they would not take responsibility with one another for the whole program and preferred to see each fifteen minutes ... as a separate program.«¹² This tendency to work independently from one another is an important characteristic in the behaviour of the different Yugoslav groups. The same pattern of behaviour emerged once Radio 3EA began functioning.

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The founding of the multilingual radio stations 3EA and 2EA took place in June 1975, following the results of a 1974 sub-committee of the Migrant Task Force set up by Al Grasby which reported on the desirability of introducing community language broadcasting.¹³ The action was seen as a culmination of the Federal Government's recognition that there was a serious need to meet the linguistic and communicative requirements of the non-English speaking sector of the community.

In January 1978 the government established the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) which functioned as »an independent statutory authority to administer ethnic broadcasting ...«¹⁴ It was a professional organization that aimed to ensure that the government's code of principles in relation to ethnic broadcasting was being followed and which assisted with the production, financing and provision of transmission facilities.¹⁵ The commission was created as a result of the failure by the ABC to accept an offer by the government to take over ethnic broadcasting. On the ABC side, it appeared that the government offered too little money for the service to be thoroughly professional and attached too many strings for it to be adequately independent. On the government side, there were doubts about whether the ABC really wanted to take on ethnic radio.¹⁶

Two years after ethnic radio began, the conservative government of Malcolm Fraser forced the ABC to close Radio 3ZZ. Andrew Bear comments that decisions such as this one were illustrative of the Liberal Government's failure to have a coherent broadcasting policy. »What it did... (was) make ad hoc decisions when something in the mess reach(ed) a point where it had to be cleaned up.«¹⁷ It has been argued¹⁸ that the reasons for the closure were politically motivated. 3ZZ posed a particular problem for the Fraser Government since, as an experimental access station, it was open to less direct editorial control than 2EA and 3EA.¹⁹ The station had allowed individuals of all backgrounds the freedom to express their own viewpoints on a variety of topics which could at times be

sensitive and provocative:

»3ZZ gave people the opportunity to speak across social and ethnic barriers and to share with politicians and experts the right to broadcasting an opinion. It allowed an injustice done in one area to be communicated rapidly in many languages to other possible victims;«²⁰

By 1977 3ZZ had terminated transmission and 3EA became the sole publically funded multilingual station modelled on »professional« broadcasting, whereby its programming practice subscribed to a monolithic view of ethnic communities ... and a holistic concept of multiculturalism.²¹

In July 1976 another non-commercial station began broadcasting ethnic programs. Unlike 3ZZ, 3CR holds a restricted commercial licence even though it functions as a community station. It is not an open access station and broadcasters are expected to comply with the basic station philosophy.²² Rando defines 3CR's prime objective as being to »serve the interests and needs of those who have been deprived of effective use of the radio media either because they haven't money to buy time or are considered too insignificant or controversial to be given time by existing media...«²³ In contrast to 3ZZ, Slovenes have been involved with presenting programs in their language on 3XR.

The conclusion drawn from a 1975 survey by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, together with the Bureau of Statistics, revealed that »the use migrants made of community resources was directly related to their fluency in English (and that) large sections of the community were ill informed about community housing services, education, taxation and the law, and particularly about the use of the Commonwealth Employment Service to find work.²⁴ The migrants were inhibited from successful social integration into the mainstream society, and there was an obvious need to find a solution whereby information of a public nature could be dispersed to the various communities. In establishing an ethnic radio service the government demonstrated that it was abiding by the basic principle of multiculturalism, which was that each individual, regardless of his ethnic origin, had the right to maintain his ethnic identity, cultural heritage and language.

Left wing critics²⁵ have emphasized the conservatively oppressive character of multiculturalism. It is a means of sustaining a social and political control among ethnic communities. *»The philosophy [of Multiculturalism] is aimed ... at the Anglo-Australian ruling class, reassuring that cultural minorities will not be allowed to threaten their material superordination. It is also aimed at the minorities themselves, making it very clear that no such challenge would be allowed.«*²⁶ Jakubowicz also notes²⁷ that both the ethnic radio and television 0/28 are important propagandistic mediums for imposing political censorship and stressing a strongly conservative bias. The success of this is based upon the powerfully influential role both forms of media have upon the different language groups who make use of the services.

This argument is further substantiated by events in 1985 relating to the defeat of the proposal from Labor Minister for Communications Michael Duffy for the amalgamation of the ABC with SBS and the creation of a new broadcasting authority. The proposal was defeated in Cabinet because of pressure by the ethnic communities who were strongly opposed to the planned merger. The extent of this opposition was not anticipated by Duffy, nor was the value placed on the »ethnic vote« by other politicians such as the Premiers of Victoria and New South Wales. The end result was that Duffy was compelled to make a compromise on the issue, concluding that the two broadcasting services would thenceforth work closely together and that an amalgamation would not be anticipated in the foreseeable future. The course of these developments demonstrates that political expediency is not compatible with rational long term planning in decision making on ethnic/multicultural broadcasting - which in turn makes it virtually impossible to develop an overall policy in this area of broadcasting.²⁸ As Patterson points out, it became recognized by the government that amalgamating the two broadcasting services was not going to win party support from the voters. The most significant aspect of the decision showed that it did not affirm the government's multicultural policy which emphasizes that multicultural services should be part of mainstream services.²⁹

SLOVENES ON ETHNIC RADIO

Slovene was among the languages put on air during the first three month experimental period of 3EA, which began in June 1975. One of the main difficulties facing the majority of the participating community groups was the absence of experienced or professionally trained broadcasters. The two individuals responsible for the first Slovene programs on 3ZZ, and later on 3EA, were Helena Van der Laak and Ivo Leber. Neither had ever been trained as a radio announcer. Thus, they commenced their radio announcing careers as amateurs, gaining experience only after years of work on the radio.

Between September 1975 and April 1976, there was a six month extension of the initial three month experimental period. The additional time was intended to provide opportunities for a number of changes which would eliminate the problems of inadequate planning and confusion that had characterized the first three months. The government's overall objective was to establish ethnic broadcasting permanently.

It was during the first experimental period that program co-ordinators were selected. Helena Van der Laak became co-ordinator for the Slovene language program. She has continued to hold this position to the present day, even though there were two occasions when her co-ordinatorship was unsuccessfully contested. »[The] broadcasters [who worked with the co-ordinators] were responsible to their specific language co-ordinators for the editorial content of their programs.«³⁰ At first the broadcasters worked on an entirely voluntary basis. However, during the second experimental period some allowance was provided by the government to assist with payments relating to the acquisition of records, tapes and telephone calls.

Additional languages, belonging to smaller ethnic groups, went on air during the third experimental period, which lasted another six months. This action constituted part of the reorganization program which also involved the proposal to increase program time to certain »Yugoslav« language groups so that, overall, seven hours of air time was allocated to five different language groups from Yugoslavia. Serbo-Croatian received five hours of air time, while both Macedonian and Slovene obtained one hour per week each.

These planned amendments evidently led to a vocal response by prominent members of the Slovene community and the appearance of strongly patriotic articles in the Slovene language press. The latter specifically dealt with the station's intention to combine all the languages belonging to Yugoslavia under the centralized grouping of »Yugoslav«. The fear was that the broadcaster who would present the Slovene program might be someone who would not be sympathetic towards the Slovene language or would not »feel« like a Slovene. This type of antagonism was not an uncommon feature among the different Southern Slav groups. The desire to work independently was as strong as the desire to socialize separately. This way of thinking was prominent in two lengthy articles in both **Misli** and **Vestnik** in 1976. Both intended to instill in their readers a feeling of Slovene national consciousness and an acute awareness that they needed to assert themselves in order to obtain an independent Slovene radio hour, free of influence from other »Yugoslav« groups:

»Hočemo oddajo, ki bo strmela za tem, da nas Slovence druži in ne razdvaja s tem, da nam bo nudila razvedrilo, nas spominjala kulturnih vrednot našega naroda ter nam služila za obveščanje o delovanju naše etnične skupine« (Vestnik, May/June 1976, p.2) Translation: »We want a broadcast which will strive for this: that it will unite us Slovenes and not disunite us, that it will offer us a diversion, remind us of the cultural values of our people and serve us by informing us of the activities of our ethnic group.«

The result of pressure applied by the Slovenes led to the introduction of a separate Slovene radio hour which was later increased to two weekly hour long programs.³¹

Through the history of Slovene language radio in Melbourne, there have been many individuals who have been involved in the preparation and/or presentation of programs. During the second half of the 1970's there were an estimated seven additional contributors to the Slovene broadcasts, excluding Van der Laak and Leber. The underlying reason for this substantial number of participants was that during this

period conclusions had been reached by leaders of the Slovene community in Melbourne that each Slovene social club in this city should be granted a quarter of an hour of program time for its own communicative needs. However, this idea of club participation, devised by the Slovenes alone, did not last for long. SBS management felt the arrangement was unacceptable since it contravened the policies of ethnic language broadcasting. The Slovene programs were interpreted as no longer broadcasting for a general community. Instead, it seemed they were directed at only select audiences - those who were club members. The arrangement was subsequently reverted back to its original format.

One of the unique elements incorporated into the Slovene language broadcasts was the introduction of short three to five minute long religious epilogues which were aired on the Thursday evening programs. Their success is exemplified by the fact that they have continued to the present day. The concept was introduced by Van der Laak and Fr. Stanko Zemljak - a Slovene Franciscan friar working as an assistant chaplain for the Victorian Slovenes from the late 1960's until the early 1980's. The idea evolved as an extension of the special Easter and Christmas programs which were put on the air biannually.

During the late 1970's and early 1980's younger members of the Slovene community became more involved with Slovene radio in Melbourne. This occurred when an additional forty-five minutes of air time was given to the Slovene language program every fourth Sunday evening (6.50-7.25 pm). This time was dedicated to a Slovene youth program and was entitled *Voice of Slovenian Youth*. It was a completely new idea for ethnic radio. Devised by Van der Laak, the program was geared towards attracting younger people of Slovene background, especially the second generation, to be actively involved with ethnic radio. It was hoped that through this service cultural continuity could be maintained among the Australian born Slovenes.

Included in the program's content was an emphasis on contemporary music from Slovenia. During the early 1980's, priority was given to styles of music which were in extreme contrast to the traditional folk tunes played on the weekly

programs. This included new releases from Slovene punk and heavy metal bands. General local and overseas news was more limited, while information from Slovenia was inclined to be orientated towards cultural or current affairs issues. Principle sources used were publications like **Mladina**, **Teleks**, **Delo** and **Nedeljski Dnevnik**. Local youth events associated with the Slovene clubs were frequently reported, as were feature interviews with prominent young Australian-Slovenes. Unlike the weekly broadcasts, these programs contained a higher percentage of English language content. This was partly attributed to the large number of young, second generation Slovenes who were not proficient in the language of their parents.

SLOVENE RADIO - SERVING WHOSE NEEDS?

The Slovene language program is currently presented by four broadcasters: Helena Van der Laak, Ivo Leber, Elica Rizmal and Derry Maddison. All four are employed on a permanent part-time basis by SBS. When analyzing the content of these programs, there are some features which remain consistent with the other community language broadcasts on this station. These include community announcements, information on government services, especially in the areas of social security and immigrant welfare, sports reports and the compulsory minimum of eight minutes of local and overseas news readings. The latter is obtained from the English news service supplied by SBS and by telex subscriptions sent directly from Yugoslavia. Compared with homeland news, Australian news is kept to a minimum. This is most likely so because it is assumed that the Slovene people are sufficiently competent in understanding the English language media. Other groups who have also been settled in Australia for many years, such as the Dutch, Finns, Czechs and Germans, have followed this pattern for the same reason.

Broadcasters are given the freedom to determine the content for the remainder of their programs, as long as the material selected is non-provocative and avoids political partisanship. G.A. Sklovsky defines the latter term as meaning that the »EA stations must not become a political football for

Australian parties or for foreign diplomats«. ³² It is in this part of a language program that the role of ethnic radio as a medium for maintaining linguistic and cultural continuity among its particular community is most evident. With reference to the Slovenes, this section of their radio broadcasts is specifically aimed at the ethnic reaffirmation of the first generation.

In accordance with one aspect of the philosophy of ethnic broadcasting, as published in **Ethnic Broadcasting in Australia 1979**³³, it is intended that ethnic radio should assist the second generation children maintain their homeland language and traditions, keeping alive in the new country, cultures rich in history, emotion and heritage. Also, it is intended that it should help bridge the culture gap between parents and their Australian born children - allowing the latter to gain familiarity with the language, background and attitudes of the parent generation. From the perspective of language, it is expected that ethnic broadcasting should allow the children of immigrants to be more exposed to the language of their parents, facilitating their learning of the language.³⁴

It does not appear that these ideological viewpoints can be applied to the Slovene language programs in Melbourne, since there already exists a strong lack of interest among the second generation toward listening to the Slovene broadcasts. This situation is not restricted only to the the Slovenes in Victoria. J. Čuješ has observed the same attitude among the second generation Slovenes living in Sydney. »*Mladi [Avstralski Slovenci] poslušajo največ oddaje rednih avstralskih radijskih postaj: njihove oddaje so veliko bliže njihovem vsakdanjemu okolju*«. (Translation: »*The young [Australian Slovenes] mainly listen to the regular Australian radio stations; their programs are a lot closer to their everyday environment*«).³⁵ It is for this reason that the contents of the programs focuses primarily on the interests of the first generation. Because of the widespread nature of this situation, a widening gap evolves between the two generations, which in turn contradicts the philosophy of ethnic radio as bridging the cultural gap between immigrants and their children.

In order to discover the program needs of their listeners and to obtain a survey of audience composition, Van der Laak and

Leber conducted two informal surveys during the 1970's and early 1980's in which they prepared questionnaires essentially asking respondents what they wanted to hear on Slovene radio. These lists were left at places where Slovenes of both generations congregated. This included the Slovene Religious and Cultural Centre and the social clubs, particularly on nights when dances were being held.

Conclusively, the majority of respondents requested traditional items to be put to air. These included traditional Slovene folk music, choral singing, stories and folklore. The most common reasons given for these preferences were that these items reminded the people of the lives they left behind in Slovenia. Since these interests have a limited attraction and relevance to the second generation Slovenes, it was deduced that the majority of listeners were of the first generation and were predominantly made up of older immigrants who had migrated during the 1950's.

Despite the results of this tentative survey, modern Slovene tunes are still played occasionally on current programs. This is to provide a balance in the overall contents of the programs and to expose the listeners to a wider cultural perspective of their homeland. However, it is not uncommon for the broadcasters to receive critical comments from their listeners, complaining that they don't want to hear modern music from Slovenia because it resembles contemporary English music. They comment that this style of music can be heard every day on the mainstream commercial stations. My own interviews with older Slovene immigrants have predictably indicated a marked bias towards music appealing to their generation. Since they appear to form the majority of listeners, they have great strength in influencing the overall format of the Slovene programs. This has already occurred in the Slovene programs in Sydney; »*največji krog poslušalcev imamo med starejšimi rojaki, zato je tudi večina naše glasbe 'starejše' po izvoru.*« (Translation: »*the majority of our listeners are among the older countrymen. That is why most of our music is of 'older' origin.*«) The subsequent creation of a distorted and outdated view of Slovene society and culture presented through the radio becomes increasingly manifest as listeners and community leaders attempt to influence their program's contents.

The failure of the Slovene youth program to attract and maintain a sufficient number of young listeners was an additional factor denoting that the children of Slovene immigrants were not interested in the Slovene language broadcasts on ethnic radio. Even though the program lasted until 1981, its audience composition remained that of the first generation - the precise audience it was making no effort to attract.³⁶ In general, the number of listeners was notably less than for the two weekly programs. The fact that the program went to air only once a month, at a time when most people would not habitually be listening to radio, and the lack of support from the various Slovene organizations are both contributing factors to the very minimal audience support for the youth broadcast. Nonetheless, there remained consistent advertising on the weekly programs so that the regular listeners were made aware of the existence of the *Voice of Slovenian Youth* program.

TIES WITH THE HOMELAND

The Slovene language program's emphasis on fulfilling the informative and cultural needs of the first generation has been enhanced in recent years, moving beyond the presentation of community news items, reports of local social, cultural and sporting events and the playing of traditional Slovene folk music. The availability of a more sophisticated studio technology combined with an increasingly closer relationship shared between the Slovene broadcasters of 3EA and 2EA with RTV Ljubljana, has resulted in regular short news reports and culturally oriented radio productions sent from Slovenia.

Since 1982, both Slovene programs in Melbourne and Sydney have regularly received from Ljubljana taped programs of approximately 15-30 minutes duration entitled *Zvočno pismo*. They deal with a variety of topics such as literature, music, social and current issues - topics which are deemed to be of interest to the Slovene emigrant community in Australia. In January 1989 telephone taped news summaries have been introduced, lasting about ten minutes and put to air during the Monday morning programs in Melbourne. This has now also been followed by a once weekly sports report from Ljubljana.

The inclusion of these segments is indirectly the result of a keen interest by the listeners for increased news from the homeland. The long distance of Australia from Yugoslavia, combined with frequent visits to the homeland by many Slovene immigrants whose families were left behind, has resulted in a strong listener support for these overseas radio presentations. The latter function as a means of consolidating both Slovene ethnic identity among the immigrants living in Australia and of increasing the ties with the homeland.

CONCLUSION

Slovene radio in Melbourne has come a long way since its meagre beginnings. The first ever broadcast in 1975 led to numerous positive responses, many of which were quite emotional. These listeners never imagined they would ever hear their own language and folk music on an Australian radio station. The response is best expressed in an article which appeared in **Misli** in 1976:

»Lepo je pri srcu, ko začuješ iz radia domačo govorico in domačo melodijo - nehote pozabiš, da si daleč od rodne grude, včasih že malo zrahljane vezi se obnove. Obenem pa se ti tudi nova domovina zazdi v trenutku prijaznejša in bližja, sam pa v njej še bolj doma.« (Misli, July 1976, p. 197)

Translation: *»It is lovely to hear on the radio your native language and music. You automatically forget that you are far from your native land; the ties which are already a little shattered are then renewed. Simultaneously it also appears to you that your new country is at that moment more pleasant and closer, making you feel more at home.«*

Slovene radio is today exemplified by a consistent degree of professionalism derived from the broadcasters' years of radio announcing experience and from working closely together with the different Slovene communities existing in the state of Victoria. In summary, we have seen how the contents of the Slovene radio programs have become a reflection of the informative needs demanded by an audience primarily made up of first generation immigrants. Over the years the listeners

have shown interest in news and issues relating to their homeland. The radio has become a means through which their knowledge of what is happening in Slovenia is constantly being replenished.

Yet, this pervasive preoccupation with the political, social and economic developments happening in Slovenia shows how the Slovene community in Melbourne is inclined toward strengthening its contacts with the homeland, as opposed to a reversal of this procedure leading to an increased social integration with the Anglo-Australian society. Thus ethnic radio, for all its policies and goals of helping the immigrants adjust to their adopted homeland through the provision of a radio service presented in their native languages, does not seem to be completely successful with the Slovene sample group. For the Slovenes, ethnic radio is a means of forgetting that one lives and works in Australia. It is a way of returning to one's country of birth, albeit through the airwaves and only for about two hours per week.

The introduction and implementation of rigid guidelines by the SBS aimed at preventing any provocative or politically sensitive topics which might cause disruption, demonstrates how ethnic radio is intrinsically a pacifying agent. It does not invoke the listener to respond or reciprocate on a given subject. Instead, all it does is demand attention. An example cited by G. Rando illustrates how there are some immigrant groups who are completely complaisant towards information presented to them on their language programs:

»The station (3EA) ... seems to provide substantial potential for an institutionalized system of ethno-cultural control as listeners seem to readily accept or believe information relayed by the station ... one Melbourne university wishing to conduct a survey on pensions met with very little success among its ethnic respondents until the matter was broadcast on 3EA.«³⁷

With regard to the Slovenes, this element of docile trust is made manifest in a different way. Through my interviews with first generation Slovenes, I found that among those who listen to the Slovene language program, the majority have

expressed an unquestioning satisfaction with the content of their radio programs. Reluctant to display criticism, even if constructive, they revert to pointing out their utmost appreciation that such a service exists for them, since they are an ethnic minority group.³⁸

Slovenes have stopped immigrating to Australia in continually large numbers since the beginnings of the 1970's. They have, therefore, evolved into a predominantly aging population, with most individuals aged between 40 and 60 years. As already noted, this group forms the main age bracket which listens regularly to the Slovene language broadcasts. This characteristic is shared by many other groups who tune to ethnic radio. A general characteristic of SBS programming appears to be that of catering to an audience in the older age groups.³⁹

In an attempt to deduce the future direction of Slovene radio programs in Australia, using the Melbourne case study as an example, I would conclude that they will continue in their present day format by becoming more notably specialized in the dissemination of homeland news and culturally oriented productions relating to Slovenia. The continued presentation of a nostalgic and traditional society may unfortunately contribute to a greater feeling of alienation among the listeners, especially those who will have been in Australia for a long period of time.

NOTES

1. In 1979, a survey carried out by the Postal and Telecommunications Department revealed that there were eight public broadcasting stations which carried ethnic programming in New South Wales and Victoria. Only two of this total number were in Victoria. Neither station broadcast programs in Slovene.
2. No accurate statistical data is presently available on the number of Slovenes living in Australia. Estimates are between 20,000 and 30,000.
3. Andrew Bear, *The Development of Ethnic Broadcasting in Relation to Public Broadcasting, Media Information*

- Australia, Number 15, February 1980, p. 25
4. G.A. Sklovsky, Special Broadcasting Service and Ethnic Radio Broadcasting in Australia, Media Information Australia, Number 15, February 1980, p. 16
5. Ethnic Broadcasting in Australia 1979, Special Broadcasting Service, Sydney, p. 10
6. G.A. Sklovsky, op. cit., p. 15
7. Franca Arena, The Ethnic Media, Issues and Problems, A Consumer's Point of View; Australian Studies, Immigration and Ethnicity in the 1980's, I. Burnley, S. Encel, & G. Mc Call (eds), Melbourne, 1985, p. 97
8. J. Dugdale, Radio Power, A History of Access Radio 3ZZ, Hyland Press, Melbourne, 1979, p. 1
9. Loc. cit.
10. Ibid., p. 55
11. Richard Harding, Outside Interference, The Politics of Australian Broadcasting, Melbourne, 1979, p. 108
12. J. Dugdale, op. cit., p. 53
13. Jock Collins, Migrant Hands in a Distant Land, Sydney, 1988, p. 240
14. Ethnic Broadcasting in Australia 1979, op. cit., p. 6
15. Ibid., p. 7
16. K.S. Inglis, This is the ABC, The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983, Melbourne University Press, 1983, p. 408
17. Andrew Bear, op. cit., p. 26
18. J. Dugdale, G. Rando and J. Collins
19. J. Collins, op. cit., p. 240
20. J. Dugdale, op. cit., p. XI
21. Gaetano Rando, Multilingual Programs on Victorian Radio, Media Information Australia, Number 30, November 1983, p. 43
22. Loc. cit.
23. Loc. cit.
24. Ethnic Broadcasting in Australia 1979, op. cit., p. 11
25. Andrew Jakubowicz and Marie de Lepervanche
26. Andrew Jakubowicz, Ethnicity, Multiculturalism and Neo-Conservatism, Ethnicity, Class and Gender in Australia, G. Bottomley & M. de Lepervanche (eds), Sydney, 1984, reprint 1986, p. 43

27. Loc. cit.
28. Rosalind Patterson, EA Ethnic Radio, Dilemmas of Direction, Media Information Australia, Number 41, August 1986, p. 54
29. Ibid., p. 55
30. Ethnic Broadcasting in Australia 1979, op. cit., p. 19
31. The Macedonian language also received an independent radio hour. These additional program times were not given on the basis of community pressure. They were a result of the station's reorganization plans.
32. G.A. Sklovsky, op. cit., p. 18
33. Special Broadcasting Service, Sydney, 1979
34. Ibid., p. 8
35. Jože Čuješ, Deset let etničnih radijskih oddaj, Zbornik Avstralskih Slovencev 1985, Slovensko-Avstralski Literarno-Umetniški Krožek (SALUK), Ljubljana, p. 86
36. This was deduced from listener feedback, particularly from complaints about the music being played, received by the broadcasters.
37. Gaetano Rando, op. cit., p. 48
38. Meaning that they are numerically small when compared with other larger ethnic groups living in Australia.
39. Gaetano Rando, op. cit., p. 52

POVZETEK

ETNIČNI RADIO V AVSTRALIJI IN ODDAJE V SLOVENSKEM JEZIKU: RAZVOJ IN USMERITEV

I r e n a B i r s a

Etnični radio so v Avstraliji uvedli leta 1975. Ustanovila ga je zvezna vlada, ki ga tudi nadzira. Prispevek obravnava predvsem razvoj etničnega radia in oddaj v slovenskem jeziku v Melbournu. Podaja tudi kratko vsebinsko analizo in obravnavo problemov, ki izhajajo iz ciljev etničnega radia. V petdesetih in šestdesetih letih so programe v tujih jezikih oddajale komercialne in državne radijske postaje, vendar s strogo omejenim

časom oddajanja in s poudarkom na učenju angleščine. V tem času oddaj v slovenskem jeziku ni bilo. Leta 1974 je bila ustanovljena radijska postaja 3ZZ, ki je delovala tudi kot večjezična postaja; oddajala je programe v 28 jezikih, vključno s slovenskim. Etnični radio je bil ustanovljen naslednje leto, ker je avstralska vlada ugotovila, da je treba neangleško govorečim članom skupnosti omogočiti zadovoljevanje njihovih jezikovnih potreb, kar je bilo v skladu z multikulturnimi principi. Leta 1978 je bila ustanovljena Posebna oddajna služba (Special Broadcasting Service), ki je upravljala sistem etničnih oddaj. Leta 1977 je vlada ukinila postajo 3ZZ, ker ni mogla izvajati vsebinskega nadzora nad oddajami. Drugi vzrok za ukinitve naj bi bila izraba etničnega radia v propagandne namene, zlasti za vsiljevanje politične orientiranosti in konservativnih idej poslušalcem. Oddajanje v slovenskem jeziku se je na etničnem radiu začelo leta 1975. Osnovni problem je bil v tem, da napovedovalci niso bili strokovno usposobljeni. Sprva je bila Slovincem za njihov program namenjena ena ura tedensko. Pozneje so čas podaljšali na dve oddaji tedensko in dodatnih 40 minut programa vsako četrto nedeljo. V času organizacijskih sprememb leta 1976 so Slovenci zahtevali od radijskega vodstva neodvisno radijsko uro. Njihova zahteva je bila kmalu uresničena.

Raziskave so pokazale, da so poslušalci slovenskih radijskih oddaj predvsem starejši priseljenci. V sedanjih programih je poudarek na novicah iz stare domovine. Na ta način se predvsem krepijo vezi med priseljenci in Slovenijo, ta usmeritev pa je v nasprotju s procesom naraščajoče socialne integracije, v katerem naj bi etnični radio igral pomembno vlogo.