

SLOVENES IN SWEDEN

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I. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF IMMIGRATION TO SWEDEN

Swedes consider the immigration of labour to Sweden after the Second World War as a turning point for Swedish society. Although the Swedish intelligentsia and media are still keen on presenting Sweden as an ethnically homogenous society, it would be more accurate to place Swedish social homogeneity in the 19th century, since the country was neither before nor after ethnically pure. In the 19th century, Sweden suffered a general recession caused by poor harvests, religious oppression, and the failed policy of the monarch. Large numbers of people left their homes and their country; in a few decades, some 1.5 million Swedes left to find a better future in America.

Swedish immigration figures only began to exceed those for emigration in the early 20th century, and this situation gradually augmented until its climax at the beginning of the Second World War. Officially, because of its neutral policy Sweden was not involved in the destructive processes of the Second World War. The country continued to develop economically, while the majority of other European countries suffered greatly as a result of the war. During that time, shelter was sought in Sweden particularly by individuals with a Jewish background. These were later followed by refugees from the Baltic and some other eastern European countries. In 1956, several thousand Hungarians sought exile in Sweden, followed by numerous Czechs and Slovaks in 1968.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s Swedish industry literally begged for labour. Swedes could not fill all the vacancies, and this made Swedish entrepreneurs decide to recruit labour from some of the southern European countries. Numerous agencies based in Italy, in the coun-

tries that comprised the former federation of southern Slavs (Yugoslavia), Austria, and some other countries acted as intermediaries. They mostly recruited young labour from these countries and filled the newly created gaps in the Swedish labour market. Foreigners accepted any job regardless of their qualifications, and some, particularly women, even took on two jobs. There were plenty of empty homes and work to choose from in Sweden, the only thing lacking was a supply of healthy young people. This gap was gradually filled by immigrants.

Most foreigners who arrived in Sweden as "labour" planned to improve their personal financial situation and return home after a few years. Time went by, children grew up along with the cost of living, and the initial plans of the majority of immigrants were never realised. Swedish policy made sure that the situation never changed: by introducing certain tax and immigration reforms, it aggravated conditions for saving money, thereby reducing the immigrants' chances of returning home. At first cheap homes were renovated, but this was soon followed by the demolition of old buildings and the construction of new expensive housing estates. Thus the living costs for the entire working class, which included Slovene immigrants, were increased. Those who did not save enough money to return home during the first few years still live in Sweden today.

REFORMS AND POLICY

Tax reforms here refer to the Swedish method of taxing personal income. Income-related taxes in Sweden are currently among the highest in the world.¹ This then determines the social conditions for the population of the country, where "Big Brother" keeps a close eye on every individual in the style of social-democratic ideology, which has been

¹ The only European country with a higher rate of income tax than Sweden is Denmark.

the leading power in Sweden for more than hundred years.² This means that every individual in Sweden has the right to at least a minimum standard of living and is entitled to assistance in creating basic living conditions for himself if necessary. The level of the standard of living is again determined by Swedish economic trends. This is particularly evident today, when the country is ridden with high unemployment, causing the general standard of living to drop.

Swedish immigration reforms have mostly been aimed at three particular political goals, which were defined and adopted in 1975: *equality, freedom to choose, and cooperation* (jaemlikhet – valfrihet – samverkan). These goals apply to the entire population of Sweden, regardless of ethnic origin and background. But goals are one thing and reality another. Swedish immigration policy has been based on the assumption that people who have settled there for any of a number of reasons and have received a residential permit will also stay there. Gunnar Alsmark, one of the leading ethnologists in Sweden comments: Swedish society does not wish to throw immigrants out of the country, on the contrary, it wishes to throw them into the country and make them Swedish by force. At the same time, the state preaches equality, freedom to choose, and cooperation to the entire population. The very attitude of the Swedish towards immigrants has been full of contradictions and conflicts from the very beginning. The way in which Swedish society takes care of its immigrants is oppressive rather than democratic, and, as Alsmark and many other experts maintain, the freedom to choose is therefore nearer to assimilation than integration.³

The expression "assimilation" here represents a way of making immigrants Swedish quickly and by force and, equally, of pulling down the bridges to their ethnic background. "Integration" in this case stands for the process of adjustment to Swedish society, culture, and lifestyle, a process which can take place over several generations. Only through the process of integration could the basic goals of the Swedish immi-

² In this century the bourgeois coalition has ruled Sweden for only three or four terms of office; the rest of the time the ruling party has been Social Democrat.

³ From an article in the Swedish daily *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, 6/1-96:4.

gration policy (equality, freedom to choose, and cooperation) be realised, otherwise they would remain a meaningless phrase.

THE LANGUAGE

A few words must be said about immigrants' knowledge of the Swedish language. It has already been noted that until the mid-1970s, the Swedish immigration policy was officially that of assimilation. Foreigners must be made Swedish as soon as possible! But nobody stopped to think how this could best be done. During this period, immigration of labour to Sweden stopped entirely; borders remained open only for those with refugee status. The actual status and conditions of immigrants and refugees in Sweden was soon expressed through the Swedish media, which adjusted to the ups and downs of the economic situation and the unemployment rate in the country. Immigrants were occasionally bunched together into an undefined mass and made scapegoats for all Sweden's economic problems.

Swedish is a relatively "small" language, spoken by approximately 8.5 million people in Sweden and several thousand in the USA. It belongs to the Germanic group of languages and is most closely related to Danish and Norwegian. The majority of immigrants that arrived after the Second World War came from non-Scandinavian countries, which means that Swedish was completely alien to them. Swedish society did not pay any attention to teaching Swedish to foreign immigrants after the Second World War and foreign workers in the 1960s. There was plenty of work for everybody, even those who could communicate with their surroundings only with their hands or in Swedish that still today closely resembles a pidgin or creole.⁴

⁴ A *pidgin* is an artificial language of a minority which does not master the literary language of its environment in a country where this language is used. A pidgin can never be a first language. A *creole* is a higher-level artificial language which becomes a functional means of communication among people using this language. A creole can also be the first language of a speaker who is a member of a minority in a multi-lingual society.

It can be said that in Sweden in recent years knowledge of Swedish has become an indicator of social class, which in most cases is detrimental for immigrants. It is absurd that the majority of foreigners who have arrived in Sweden in the last decade and have enjoyed the advantage of formal (school-organized) Swedish language tuition have mastered the language better than those who have been living in Sweden for almost half a century but to whom Swedish society has not given the opportunity of learning the language in a formal environment. The latter are mostly refugees who arrived after the Second World War, and workers from the 1960-s and 1970s. They helped to build up the prosperity of Swedish society together with the rest of the Swedish population, but today their value is measured mostly according to their knowledge of Swedish.

As far as the knowledge and development of the Slovene language among Slovenes in Sweden is concerned, it can be established that contact with the original country was very limited due to the geographic distance and the relatively small number of Slovenes living in Sweden. Extra-curricular Slovene language classes were mostly given by teachers who were employed by the Swedish school authorities regardless of their actual qualifications and pedagogical abilities. The reason for this was of course the Swedish immigration policy, which tried to prevent Slovene immigrants and their children from returning home. In the majority of other Western European countries, Slovene teaching personnel were supplied by Slovenia itself, a fact which was also of great ideological significance.

Ideologically, culturally, and linguistically, Slovenes in Sweden were exposed to the strong influence of the Swedish assimilation apparatus. It is a well known fact that individuals who do not master their first, that is mother tongue, will have difficulties in learning a second and other languages. The same holds true for identity and personal cultural awareness: how can I value what is foreign if I do not know and value what is mine? Fortunately, the consequences of such neglect were not as serious as was expected. Much of the credit for this must go to Slovene societies and individuals who have continued to preserve Slovene cultural identity and to wholeheartedly defend the Slovene cause in Sweden, thus resisting the trend of assimilation.

POLITICAL INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS

In the introduction it was noted that some individuals had two jobs simultaneously and did not pay much attention to their spiritual development. Equally, Swedish society did not pay any special attention to them and did not demand them to learn Swedish, so their command of their native tongue weakened without the compensation of learning Swedish well. When an alternative opinion was needed in the public discussion on immigrants, only a few of them spoke Swedish sufficiently well to express their views. Furthermore, since the immigrants' command of their own language has weakened, conditions for literary creativity either in their language or in Swedish have been extremely poor. The consequence of this has been the extremely small number of (mostly rather insignificant) literary works (with the exception of contributions in magazines) among Slovene immigrants in Sweden.

Equally, the participation of immigrants in political activities has been far from adequate. Though it is true that the right to vote at municipal and regional elections is given to immigrants after only five years of permanent residence in Sweden, this right is only seldom exercised. This is probably caused by the lack of political candidates interested in changing the negative trends among immigrants or who themselves have an immigrant background. At the last elections, in 1994, the percentage of immigrants among politicians was 1.5%, which contrasts sharply with the overall proportion of immigrants in the Swedish population (approximately 25%).

According to statistical data, there are approximately 166 different nationalities and some further ethnic groups represented in Sweden.⁵ Some groups number hundreds of thousands (Finns), some tens of thousands (Bosnians, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, etc.), some thousands (Greeks, Italians and Danes), while some only hundreds or tens. The present total population of Sweden is approximately 8.7 million, with approximately 7 million having a Swedish background (those born in Sweden and with one or both parents Swedish).

⁵ Tommy Holm, *Det maongkulturella Sverige*, 1989:391-395.

Due to incomplete statistical data on many of the ethnic groups in Sweden, it is difficult to gather all the information on immigrants into a single volume of work which would cover all the important cultural and social issues. In addition, culture is not static – it is constantly changing and developing in one direction or other. This paper therefore cannot offer any final conclusions with regard to the history or the present situation of immigrants in Sweden, but simply presents data in its original form which might be interesting or useful for the reader. The reader is then free to study in greater detail parts of or entire areas covered herewith, but it should be noted that, unfortunately, Swedish research literature still fails to cover many aspects of life which could and would fill the gaps in the Swedish multicultural mosaic.

II. SLOVENES IN SWEDEN

Undoubtedly one of the Slovene forerunners in Sweden was the well known Swedish poet Carl Snoilsky (Karel Znojilšek), 1841–1903. The poet was convinced of his Slovene ancestry, although there was no solid proof of it. A survey revealed that there are at least five places called Znojile in Slovenia. For this reason researchers maintain that a Slovene with a family name of Znojilšek (probably the name of Carl's ancestors) must have come from Znojile. Snoilsky wrote about Slovenia and his ancestry in his poem *Laibach*, among other works; his family roots probably reach back to the Reformation Period of the 15th century.

It is often said that it is impossible to find a Slovene further north than Uppsala, and this is probably true. When Slovenes poured into Sweden as refugees in the 1950s and early 1960s, they mostly settled where the demand for labour was highest – in the regions of Skaone, Smaoland, Oestergoetland, and Vaestmanland. Slovenes who arrived in the 1960s and later were recruited directly to the areas around the major cities, such as Stockholm, Goeteborg and Malmoe. Many settled in Helsingborg, Landskrona, Halmstad, Olofstroem, Joenkopeing, Eskilstune, and Koeping, and founded Slovene societies. These are the present-day Slovene oases in Sweden.

Slovenes in Sweden do not live in close groups; many have bought or built houses where they live in a more or less traditional Slovene way – growing vegetables in gardens and making wine in cellars, either from bought grapes, apples, or concentrated fruit juice.

IMMIGRATION OF SLOVENES TO SWEDEN

In 1966 Sweden and the republics of Yugoslavia signed an agreement on movement of labour between the two countries. However, the arrival of Slovenes in Sweden was not organized in the terms of the inter-state agreement. Between 1966 and 1979 approximately 10,000 people left Slovenia for temporary work in Western Europe. In 1968, a total of 14,210 people arrived in Sweden, and many of these were Slovenes. After 1974 emigration from Slovenia was gradually overtaken by returns home, and for some time there were more people returning than leaving.⁶ In the 1980s the number of people returning to Slovenia also declined as a result of a general economic crisis in Yugoslavia following Tito's death.

The majority of Slovenes living in Sweden arrived there between 1965 and 1975. The total number of Slovenes in Western Europe, according to statistical data from 1982, is 72,000, which means that the Western European countries are home to approximately 4% of Slovenes. This data does not include ethnic Slovenes living in the border regions in countries neighbouring Slovenia. The number of first generation Slovenes in Sweden is between 6,000 and 7,000, including naturalised Slovenes holding only Swedish or double citizenship. The exact number is impossible to determine since Slovenes were treated, along with others from the former Yugoslavia, simply as "Yugoslavs". This mistaken definition was to a large extent a result of the activities of the influential "Yugoslav" group in Sweden, which greatly influenced the attitude of Swedes towards "Yugoslavs".

⁶ In 1973 all European countries – including Sweden – were shaken by a world crisis caused by a lack of crude oil, which was in effect reflected in the restructuring of the Swedish immigration and general policy.

According to approximate estimates, prior to the outbreak of the war in the Balkans, in 1991, Slovenes represented some 10% of all "Yugoslavs" living in Sweden. Including the second and third generations of the Slovene population in Sweden, there were probably 12,000 to 14,000 people of Slovene origin living there.

According to data on the living conditions of Slovenes in Europe, almost half the Slovenes in Western Europe have lived outside their homeland for at least 16 years, more than 12% for more than 22 years. In Sweden the majority of Slovenes have lived there approximately 31 years (figure for 1996). It is of special interest that the majority of Slovene immigrants in Sweden came from relatively well-developed regions in Slovenia, such as the areas around Celje, Maribor, Ravne na Koroškem, and Ljubljana, and not only from Pomurje, which is the case among Slovenes in other Western European countries.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Slovenes living in Sweden are distributed among various social classes. We have already mentioned that many Slovenes worked in industrial production, but a great number of them found employment in sundry administrative positions. Many Slovenes have academic qualifications, which they acquired either in Slovenia or later in Sweden. These people are employed in various public institutions, in education, healthcare, catering, social institutions, the media, immigration bureaus, and so on. A relatively high number of them have founded their own companies or established themselves in Sweden in some other way. Their companies range from clothing, car repairs and services to light engineering.

Slovenes living in Sweden are still highly productive and active, although many are retired. In Sweden retirement begins at a certain age rather than after a certain number of working years. The retirement age both for women and men is 65 years. According to statistics on Slovenes in Europe, 20% are 20 and under, 40% are between 25 and 38,

and 35% are between 39 and 69. Only few are 70 or more, but this will start to change even within the next decade.

The unemployment rate among Slovenes in Sweden is relatively low both among men and women. The situation is also favourable in the second and third generations. Only few are unemployed, although the national unemployment rate is relatively high (approximately 9%). Some Slovene immigrants arrived in Sweden directly from rural areas, but the majority had already been employed in Slovene industry or elsewhere. The wages of Slovenes in Sweden can be compared with the average income of Swedes.

The level of education of Slovenes living in Sweden is to a certain extent higher than the average education level of Swedes. According to certain Swedish data, 17% of the first generation of Slovenes did not finish their primary education, while at least the same percentage of Slovenes have university degrees.

FAMILY AND RELATIONS

Slovenes may well be one of the ethnic groups which have had no special difficulty assimilating or adjusting to Swedish society. There are probably various reasons for this, one of them being that Slovenes are relatively well educated and have no particular problems speaking Swedish, which allows them to blend well with their working environment. The arrival of Slovenes in Sweden in the years when industry was in great need of labour contributed to the fact that most Slovenes established themselves in the new environment notwithstanding the prevalent unfavourable attitude towards immigrants. There are no significant cultural or religious differences between Slovenes and Swedes: both countries are Christian, although the prevalent church in Sweden is Protestant while in Slovenia it is Catholic. The long industrial tradition in Slovenia helped Slovene immigrants to adjust successfully to the Swedish lifestyle. The number of Slovenes in Sweden is relatively small – they are scattered in various regions of this large country and are mixed with the rest of the population. Mixed marriages with Swedes or

representatives of other nations and nationalities in Sweden are not uncommon among Slovenes.

The Slovene family does not differ greatly from the Swedish family. The average number of children is low, and the roles of the spouses are approximately the same, at least as far as Slovenes in Sweden are concerned. Children's upbringing may be stricter among Slovenes than among Swedes, but there are also exceptions. Visits to Slovenia and relatives living there are a part of everyday life for a Slovene in Sweden. If he does not visit Slovenia every year, he certainly does every other year. Almost every Slovene in Sweden still nurtures a latent wish to return. But Slovenia has not adopted any special programme to facilitate the return of Slovene immigrants. In Sweden the latter live under the impression that their position with regard to their motherland is best described by the proverb "*out of sight – out of mind*".

Young Slovenes are generally very successful in school, further education and work. In their studies they receive considerable support from their families: Slovene parents are of the opinion that the greatest gift and the best legacy for life that they can give their children is a good education whether at primary school, secondary school or university.

Heavy and highly strenuous work in a foreign country, in this case chiefly industrial work, and serious obstacles encountered by many regarding professional promotion, caused by general linguistic difficulties, have had lasting detrimental physical and mental effects on many Slovene workers in Sweden. An industrial day job lasts from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. with an one-hour unpaid break for coffee or lunch. Early retirement is increasingly common among Slovenes in Sweden. Many of them have died either young or in middle age. These deaths have been caused by cancer or other serious diseases resulting from stress, strain, and wrong diagnoses which prevented medical staff from treating patients on time.

The Protestant work ethic, promoted in Sweden by Max Weber among others, which states that man must work for the work itself and not because of income or pleasure has also made an impact on Slovene

workers in Sweden. Many Slovenes are still active and productive after living in Sweden for 30 years or more.

ORGANIZATIONS

Although Slovenes are fairly scattered throughout Sweden, concentrations of the Slovene population are mostly found around ten centres. This has facilitated the organization or founding of Slovene societies which still act as centres for Slovene culture and lifestyle among our countrymen in Sweden. Today, the following Slovene societies are active in Sweden:

- LIPA, Landskrona
- PLANIKA, Malmoe
- IVAN CANKAR, Halmstad
- FRANCE PREŠEREN, Goeteborg
- SLOVENIJA, Olofstroem
- SIMON GREGORČIČ, Koeping
- SLOVENIJA, Eskilstuna
- SLOVENSKO DRUŠTVO, Stockholm
- SLOVENSKO/ ŠVEDSKO DRUŠTVO, Helsingborg

In Landskrona and Joenkoeping further Slovene societies used to be active, SLOVENIJA (1973–77) and SAVINJA (mid 1980s) respectively. Both ceased to exist because of the very low number of active members and the assimilative pressure from the Swedish environment. The existence of a number of other Slovene societies in Sweden is also possible. For almost fifteen years a Slovene society of teachers was active in

Sweden, but this closed its doors even before the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

The Slovene Catholic mission in Sweden, the seat of which is now in Goeteborg, has been active for more than thirty years. Immigrant Slovene priests, Jože Flis, Ignacij Kunstelj, Janez Sodija, Jože Drolc, Stane Cikanek, Ludvik Rot, Jože Bratkovič, and the present priest Zvone Podvinski, have played a uniting role among Slovenes in Sweden. Janez Sodija was the first to organize the annual "Slovene Meeting in Vadstena", which takes place every Whit Sunday.⁷ These meetings have now been taking place for 23 years and are of great importance for establishing ties among Slovenes in Sweden, who are scattered throughout this large country. The most distant Slovene settlement from Vadstena is in Malmoe (450 km or 6 hours by car).

At dances at these and many other meetings of Slovene societies in Sweden, music is provided by the Lastovke orchestra, an active part of the LIPA society of Landskrona, which is the oldest society of its type in Western Europe.⁸ The TRIGLAV society was founded in 1968 at the instigation of Avgust and Janez Budja (father and son), and this was followed by the opening of other societies in Sweden and other Western European countries where Slovenes lived. In the last thirty years several Slovene choirs have got together in Sweden, including the Triglav and Lipa choirs, the Valovi children's choir of Landskrona, the Planika octet (from the PLANIKA society in Malmoe), the France Prešeren choir (from the FRANCE PREŠEREN society in Goeteborg), the mixed voice choir of the SLOVENSKO DRUŠTVO society of Stockholm, and the men's octet of Koeping.

⁷ The church of St. Bridget of Vadstena houses a tomb of the only Swedish saint, St. Bridget (14th century) who lived when Swedes were still Catholics. There is also a convent of the Order of St. Bridget and a Catholic church where Slovenes from all over Sweden gather for the Holy Mass, followed by a cultural programme in one of the halls nearby.

⁸ The original name of the society was TRIGLAV; on merging with the SLOVENIJA society in 1977 it was renamed LIPA.

Particularly in southern Sweden, several smaller vocal groups have got together: Vokalni Tercet Sester Budja, Sestre Perko, the Druga Generacija band, the Spise vocal quartet, the Lastovke, Vikis, and Planika folk bands, the Martin Pečovnik orchestra, Tomo Vitanc, Zdomci, Alleybirds (Goeteborg), Dambos, and others. And there are undoubtedly other similar bands in Sweden.

Slovene societies are associated under an umbrella organization called the Slovene Association of Sweden (SZ).⁹ According to the latest information from 1995, the membership of Slovene societies in Sweden comes to approximately 1,250 Slovenes, and all are automatically members of SZ. This means that some 10% of Slovenes living in Sweden are members of local Slovene societies. Before the founding of SZ in Sweden, links between Slovenes were maintained by the Coordinating Committee of Slovene Societies of Sweden and the Interest Group of Slovene Societies, which was a part of the Yugoslav Association of Sweden (1975–91).

SZ and its predecessors have also organized another type of Slovene gathering in Sweden, initially called "Slovene cultural festivals" and later renamed "Slovene Meetings". These were originally a political and ideological reply to the "Meetings of Catholic Slovenes" in Vadstena. But after Slovenia's declaration of independence in 1991, these meetings gradually came to represent the common interests of all Slovenes living in Sweden. Slovenes of all "colours", ideas and opinions are now happy to have a single place to meet. Of course there are still complaints from one side or the other – people do not change their convictions over night.

THE ROLE OF SLOVENE SOCIETIES

It is difficult for an individual to achieve anything on his own in Sweden. Those wishing to influence the dynamics of Swedish society

⁹ SZ was founded on 24th March 1991 when the Slovene Interest Group of the Yugoslav Association ceased to exist.

would find it easier to do so by joining a society or a larger organization that represents the interests of individuals or groups. This holds true both for Swedes and for all members of national minorities living in Sweden. Swedish society even gives moral and, in part, economic support to practically all forms of organized activity under the condition, of course, that it has control over the core of the organization's structure. The economic assistance to societies means that some of the money contributed by taxpayers (in this case also Slovenes) circulates and returns to taxpayers in the form of subsidies to societies. Slovene national societies aside, Slovenes are members of various Swedish societies, such as choirs, sports clubs, and so on.

Slovene societies in Sweden are mostly intended for the preservation of Slovene culture and tradition. The activities involved include singing, linguistic and literary meetings, different hobbies such as cooking, sewing, sports, dancing, and music, and other general social activities. It is becoming increasingly evident that Slovene traditions are merging with those of Sweden, illustrations of this phenomenon being the celebration of Christmas, St. Lucy's day, Easter, St. George's day, pagan rites accompanying Midsommer (the celebration of the longest day in the year), and St. Martin's day. Some societies offer assistance to unemployed Slovenes asserting their right to unemployment benefit, take care of the old, the infirm and other disadvantaged individuals, and are active in social, information, education and cultural spheres. It should be noted that Slovene societies employ only a few full-time managers or similar personnel, and that individuals in these positions are mostly driven by sense of duty, enthusiasm, and Slovene national awareness.

Society offices are places for various local Slovene gatherings – in Sweden there are no cafes or inns equivalent to those in Slovenia. They usually offer a variety of Slovene newspapers, Slovene books, tapes, records and films, there is always a copy of *Naš Glas* magazine, and Slovene is spoken, which is useful for everyone. Young people rarely participate in the activities of Slovene societies, but young Slovenes are very active in Swedish societies, where they can mix with people of their own age. This may be detrimental for the national awareness of young Slovenes living in Sweden, but it is also a sign that they are accepted by Swedish society.

Slovene societies in Sweden receive a great deal of information from Slovenia through a show on Swedish Radio which has for the last 16 years been produced by a Slovene, Jasna Carlen, in collaboration with a number of other individuals (Jakše, Veberič, Golčman, and others). Occasional information on events in Slovenia and elsewhere in the world are supplied to Slovenes in Sweden by the Slovene magazines *Naš Glas*, published in Stockholm six times a year, *Rodna Gruda* (and the Slovene Emigrant Organization based in Ljubljana), *Naša Slovenija* (edited by Luka Škoberne), and *Naša Luč*.

Slovene immigrant priests in Sweden (the present incumbent – since 1993 – is Zvone Podvinski) play an extremely important role in establishing and strengthening ties between the old and new countries. Individual families follow Slovene and Swedish media of either a religious, a generally informative, or a political nature. The task of connecting Slovene societies and Slovene and Swedish institutions is mostly performed by the Slovene Association of Sweden, which also deals with issues relating to the integration of immigrants in Sweden and receives financial support from the Swedish government. A further great source of moral support for Slovenes in Sweden is the Slovene embassy in Stockholm.

CULTURE

Over the years, Slovene culture in Sweden has assumed many characteristics of Swedish culture. This is particularly true for the second generation of Slovenes, who do not usually have a good command of the Slovene language. Many parents try to preserve the Slovene identity of their offspring, and to this end a large number of Slovene children visit Slovenia during their holidays – some of them join organized holiday camps, while others stay with their grandparents or other relatives. This has given a strong boost to the preservation of national identity among young Slovenes, but it has not always been effective in all areas.

Slovene cooking is still mostly left to women, although many men have lately started taking an interest. Traditional Slovene cooking has

adopted characteristics of Swedish and international cuisine, but for religious and family celebrations tables are still usually adorned with traditional Slovene dishes, although a number of Swedish delicacies can also be found. Usually the company gathered at the table is also of a mixed background, since young Slovenes have friends among other immigrant groups and the Swedes. In this way, Slovenes enrich their environment with special culinary features, culture and traditions which they brought with them to Sweden.

Characteristic of all events organized by Slovene societies is traditional food, a special place being reserved for the Carniolan sausage produced in Sweden. Since Sweden does not produce its own wines, wine is imported from different parts of the world. For a long time Sylvaner was the only Slovene brand in Sweden.

As is the Slovene habit, Slovenes living in houses and villas grow vegetables for the needs of their kitchens, producing potatoes, lettuce, parsley, tomatoes, onions, carrots and so on. Slovene gardens are of course adorned with beds of carnations and other flowers.

SLOVENES AND THE CHURCH

Many Slovenes brought with them the religious traditions of their parents to Sweden and are still active members of the Roman Catholic Church. But many, particularly young families of Slovene origin, conveniently adopted Swedish customs, including those of the church. Their children are therefore christened in Protestant churches, and some even receive confirmation according to Protestant custom.¹⁰ Only a few Slovenes are practising Protestants, however. Those who are mostly come from the area around Murska Sobota, where there are several Protestant villages. There is at least one Catholic priest in office in Sweden, employed by the Catholic Church of Sweden and Germany. Each Whit Sunday several hundred Slovenes gather at the "Meeting of

¹⁰ Unlike in the Catholic Church, confirmation among Protestants is not one of the Sacraments of the Holy Church.

Catholic Slovenes" in Vadstena. There they attend a joint religious service and participate in a programme of culture and entertainment.

Additionally, a Holy Mass is read in Slovene at least once a month in all major towns throughout Sweden. One of the church's activities is the organization of a childcare service, and this is particularly active in the parish of Goeteborg. The Slovene immigrant priest also assists in the distribution of Slovene periodicals. The Slovene Catholic Church plays a particularly important role in strengthening and developing Slovene national awareness, integrity, and identity among Slovene immigrants in Sweden. These people are highly exposed to the pressures of assimilation and secularisation, caused in part by the former regime in Slovenia and in part by the Swedish environment.

SLOVENE NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER MEDIA IN SWEDEN

A Slovene language magazine, *Naš Glas* (Our Voice), has been published in Sweden regularly since 1973. The magazine is published six times a year (approximately 800 issues to date) and has a permanent board of editors. It includes articles and reports by occasional and regular correspondents on the activities of societies and other Swedish social news. *Naš Glas* publishes reports on Slovenes in Sweden and on celebrities in Slovenia, articles on Slovene and Swedish artists, poems, and passages from literary works. Some articles are also published in Swedish. The magazine tries to reflect the life of Slovenes in Sweden and to contribute to the preservation of the Slovene language in this country. Until 1995 it was financed by the National Institute for Culture, and since 1996 it has received funds from the Slovene Association of Sweden. *Naš Glas* is published in Stockholm.

The former *Jugoslovanski List* (Yugoslav Journal) and *Jedinstvo* (Unity) magazine included Slovene pages until 1991. Between 1984 and 1986 the magazine *Svobodna Misel* (Free Thought) was published, giving critical opinions on cultural issues in Sweden. Many Slovene families and individuals subscribe to *Rodna Gruda* (Homeland), *Naša Slovenija* (Our Slovenia), *Naša Luč* (Our Light), *Ognjišče* (Hearth), and

the weekly *Družina* (Family). These are published in Slovenia. In addition to this, Slovenes in Sweden contribute to *Slovenski Izseljenski Koledar* (Slovene Immigrants Almanac) and other daily, weekly and monthly magazines and newspapers published in Slovenia.

In the 1970s several shows on Swedish television were produced for the Slovene speaking population. In the first of these shows, in 1978, the Slovene folk band Lastovke, from Landskrona, performed some of their compositions. Since 1980 Slovenes have been able to tune into the weekly 10-minute broadcast in Slovene produced by Jasna Carlen for the 2nd channel of Swedish Radio. And it should be added that many Slovenes tune into morning and evening broadcasts from Ljubljana.

THE FUTURE FOR SLOVENE IMMIGRANTS

The issue of whether Slovenes in Sweden should be considered permanent immigrants or temporary workers abroad was first discussed in Slovenia in the 1980s. Many Slovenes have adopted Swedish citizenship; today some of them have dual (Slovene and Swedish) or only Swedish citizenship. The convention on social services between Sweden and Slovenia is not favourable for Slovenes living in Sweden, since they are not entitled to medical care if they are injured or fall ill during a stay in Slovenia. Regarding this, the living conditions of the Slovene population in Sweden are not expected to change in the near future.

The issue is in part political, and no radical changes can be expected in the migration policies of Slovenia and Sweden in the next few years. Slovenes in Sweden are caught between a rock and a hard place. They will have to be satisfied with occasional visits to Slovenia – assuming they are able to travel – or with occasional contacts with their old home through guest appearances by groups and individuals in Sweden. Swedish social policy does not give Slovenes any freedom to choose: when they reach retirement they must decide whether to stay in Sweden or spend the remaining years of their lives in Slovenia. Financially they will choose Sweden, but socially they would prefer to live in Slovenia.

The Slovene language as spoken by Slovene immigrants in Sweden is highly threatened, particularly among the second and third generations. The language of the first generation deteriorated due to infrequent contact with Slovenia, but young Slovenes were not usually given even a proper opportunity to learn the language of their ancestors well. Furthermore, the assimilation force of the Swedish environment has had its effect among Slovenes. The number of Slovene immigrants is too small for communication in Slovene to be conducted in normal circumstances, which would strengthen ties among Slovenes. Equally, Swedish mass media are not welcoming to the Slovene or other minorities in this respect. And in addition to all this mixed marriages abound.

Extracurricular Slovene classes were relatively well organized between 1977 and 1991, but today they have practically gone from Swedish schools. Classes are mostly conducted only in various Slovene societies. With the reforms of 1991/92 Sweden has almost destroyed the chances of young Slovenes to grow up with the language of their ancestors with the help of an organized Slovene system. This is of particular consequence for Slovenes because the number of Slovene children is relatively small. Somewhat better are conditions among young Slovenes who were born in Slovenia, where they learnt Slovene as their first language in a home environment. But there are not many of them. Young Slovenes living in families where both parents are Slovene and where all the family members used to or still actively participate in the Slovene societies have a greater opportunity to master Slovene than those from mixed families.

The number of Slovenes in Sweden is similar to that in the 1970s. Some have returned or died, while others have arrived or have been born. Slovene community in this country sustains and in certain respects even continues to develop successfully.

POVZETEK

SLOVENCİ NA ŠVEDSKEM

Avguščina Budja

Prispevek je razdeljen na dva dela. V prvem avtorica obravnava splošno problematiko priseljenstva na Švedskem, v drugem pa priseljevanje in vsakdanje probleme slovenske skupnosti v tej deželi.

Avtorica uvodoma podaja okvirni pregled priseljevanja različnih narodov na Švedsko, ki je bilo še najmanj množično v 19. stoletju, ko je bila na Švedskem splošna kriza zaradi slabih letin, zatiranja verske svobode, zgrešene politike tedanjega monarha ipd. V nadaljevanju spregovori o švedski priseljenski politiki in reformah, katerih prikriti cilj je bil, da bi švedska država svoje številne nove priseljence čim hitreje pošvedila. Sledi poglavje o stopnji obvladovanja švedskega jezika med tamkajšnjimi priseljenci, še posebej slovenskimi, ter o njenih vzrokih in posledicah. Zadnja tema uvodnega dela študije je vključevanje priseljencev v politično življenje nove domovine.

Drugi del prispevka uvodoma obravnava razpršenost Slovencev na Švedskem, sledi kratek zgodovinski oris procesov izseljevanja Slovencev na Švedsko. V nadaljevanju se bralec seznanja s stopnjo izobrazbe in ekonomskimi razmerami slovenske skupnosti na Švedskem, vlogo družine v tej skupnosti, oblikami organiziranosti in vlogo slovenskih izseljenskih društev na Švedskem. V naslednjih treh poglavjih spregovori avtorica o kulturnem gibanju, vlogi cerkve in etničnega časopisja švedskih Slovencev, prispevek pa se zaključuje z razmišljanjem o izgledih za prihodnost slovenske skupnosti v tej deželi.

Avtorica ugotavlja, da se je v Sloveniji v 80-tih letih odprlo vprašanje o tem, ali naj bi šteli Slovence na Švedskem za stalne izseljence ali za delavce na začasnem delu v tujini. Mnogi Slovenci so dobili švedsko državljanstvo. Socialna konvencija med Slovenijo in Švedsko tamkajšnjim Slovincem ni naklonjena, saj v času dopustovanja v

rojstni deželi nimajo niti pravice do zdravljenja v primeru bolezni ali poškodbe. Na tem področju ne kaže, da bi se njihov položaj v doglednem času občutno spremenil.

Slovenci na Švedskem so v nekem smislu v mačehovskem precepu, ugotavlja avtorica. Ko se slovenski priseljensec znajde pred upokojitvijo in vprašanjem, ali naj ostane na Švedskem ali naj se vrne v Slovenijo, mu švedska socialna politika ne dopušča svobodne izbire. Glede na ekonomske pogoje se bo vsekakor odločil za nadaljnje bivanje na Švedskem, čeprav bi se – glede na čustva – nemara raje vrnil v rojstno deželo.

Število Slovencev na Švedskem je dokaj konstantno, če ga primerjamo s stanjem v 70-tih letih. Nekateri se kljub slabo urejenim ekonomskim pogojem vračajo v rojstno deželo ali so že umrli, prav toliko pa se jih je v tem času rodilo ali na novo priselilo. Tako se slovenska skupnost v tej deželi kljub vsem političnim, ekonomskim in socialnim oviram obnavlja in v določenih pogledih celo uspešno razvija.