

ANNALES

Anali za istrske in mediteranske študije
Annali di Studi istriani e mediterranee
Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies
Series Historia et Sociologia, 33, 2023, 3





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Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies

Series Historia et Sociologia, 33, 2023, 3

ISSN 1408-5348
e-ISSN 2591-1775

UDK 009

Letnik 33, leto 2023, številka 3

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Založništvo PADRE d.o.o.

Založnika/Editori/Published by:

Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko - Koper / *Società storica del Litorale - Capodistria*® / Inštitut IRRIS za raziskave, razvoj in strategije družbe, kulture in okolja / *Institute IRRIS for Research, Development and Strategies of Society, Culture and Environment* / *Istituto IRRIS di ricerca, sviluppo e strategie della società, cultura e ambiente*®

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Address of Editorial Board:**

SI-6000 Koper/Capodistria, Garibaldijeva/Via Garibaldi 18
e-mail: annaleszdjp@gmail.com, **internet:** https://zdjp.si

Redakcija te številke je bila zaključena 29. 09. 2023.

**Sofinancirajo/Supporto finanziario/
Financially supported by:**

Javna agencija za znanstvenoraziskovalno in inovacijsko dejavnost Republike Slovenije (ARIS)

Annales - Series Historia et Sociologia izhaja štirikrat letno.

Maloprodajna cena tega zvezka je 11 EUR.

Naklada/Tiratura/Circulation: 300 izvodov/copie/copies

Revija *Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia* je vključena v naslednje podatkovne baze / *La rivista Annales, Series Historia et Sociologia* è inserita nei seguenti data base / *Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in:* Clarivate Analytics (USA): Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) in/and Current Contents / Arts & Humanities; IBZ, Internationale Bibliographie der Zeitschriftenliteratur (GER); Sociological Abstracts (USA); Referativnyi Zhurnal Viniti (RUS); European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS); Elsevier B. V.: SCOPUS (NL); Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ).

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received: 2023-08-26

DOI 10.19233/ASHS.2023.24

SAFEGUARDING LIBERTY? REPRESSIVE MEASURES AGAINST ENEMY ALIENS AND ETHNIC COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN WWI UNITED STATES: THE SLOVENIAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the complexities of the U.S.'s treatment of enemy aliens during World War I, particularly illuminating the experiences of the Slovenian-American immigrant ethnic community, following the declaration of war on Austro-Hungary. It presents instances of repression, violence and internment suffered by members of the Slovenian-American community and other immigrant ethnic communities originating from Austria-Hungary, while also highlighting examples of their resilience and defiance. The study is firmly grounded in the archives of the Slovenian-American fraternal benefit society the Slovene National Benefit Society (SNPJ), and the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance (JSZ), housed at the Immigration History Research Center Archives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Keywords: Slovenian Americans/American Slovenians, Slovenian-American community, fraternal benefit societies, World War I, USA, enemy aliens

PROTEGGERE LA LIBERTÀ? MISURE RESTRITTIVE CONTRO GLI STRANIERI NEMICI E RESILIENZA DELLA COMUNITÀ ETNICA DURANTE LA PRIMA GUERRA MONDIALE NEGLI STATI UNITI: L'ESPERIENZA SLOVENO-AMERICANA

SINTESI

L'articolo esamina in profondità le complessità del trattamento riservato dagli Stati Uniti agli alieni nemici durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale, mettendo in particolare luce sulle esperienze della comunità etnica di immigrati sloveno-americani, in seguito alla dichiarazione di guerra all'Austria-Ungheria. Esso presenta episodi di repressione, violenza e internamento subiti dai membri della comunità sloveno-americana e da altre comunità etniche di immigrati provenienti dall'Austria-Ungheria, mettendo in risalto anche esempi della loro resilienza e resistenza. La ricerca si basa sugli archivi della Società di beneficenza sloveno-americana, la Slovene National Benefit Society (SNPJ), e della Yugoslav Socialist Alliance (JSZ), che si trovano presso gli Archivi del Centro di Ricerca sulla Storia dell'Immigrazione a Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Parole chiave: sloveno-americani / americani sloveni, comunità sloveno-americana, società di beneficenza confraternale, Prima guerra mondiale, Stati Uniti, stranieri nemici

INTRODUCTION¹

On 12 October 1937, naturalized Slovenian American Louis (Alojz) John Pirc (1888–1939), who is primarily remembered in historiography for his editorial, translation, and teaching work within the Cleveland Slovenian-American immigrant ethnic community, concluded his radio speech with the following words²: “I am proud to be of Slovenian descent. I am immensely proud to be an American citizen; to serve a country that permits you to be a person and not simply a cog in a great wheel.”³

His words, emphasizing the freedom to be an individual in the United States (U.S.), resonate ironically in light of the subsequent treatment of non-naturalized members of the Slovenian-American and other immigrant ethnic communities from Austria-Hungary, pacifists, and those who supported Austria-Hungary after the U.S.’s entry into World War I.

The American wartime government undertook the mobilization of their citizens in favour of the American war effort through federal agencies, established defence councils at various administrative levels, law enforcement bodies, and suppressive wartime legislation. For many, several of the established societal and social norms of the pre-war period became a thing of the past (Šorn, 2020, 728). The once free expression of opinions of individuals, local associations, larger movements, organizations, unions, and political parties, regardless of ethnic affiliation, ideological-political orientation, or religion, was reduced to merely one premise: either you were/became a supporter of the American war effort, or you remained/became an undesirable ‘foreigner’, even an internal enemy.

This article delves into the complexities of the U.S.’s treatment of enemy aliens, particularly illuminating the experiences of the Slovenian-American immigrant ethnic community, following the declaration of war on Austro-Hungary. It reveals a stark contrast to Pirc’s optimistic sentiments and explores how the community navigated these turbulent times. The first part of the article provides a

comprehensive examination of U.S.’s suppressive wartime legislation, with a particular focus on the repressive measures imposed on enemy aliens. In the second part, the article presents instances of repression, violence and internment suffered by members of the Slovenian-American community and other immigrant ethnic communities originating from Austria-Hungary. This challenges the assessment of Croatian historian and migration researcher Ivan Čizmić, who suggested that “the position of Slovenians, Croats, and Serbs in the US between April 1917 and November 1918 was favorable compared to that of the German-American community” (Čizmić, 1982, 273).⁴ Finally, in the third part, the article documents examples of diverse resilience strategies and defiance.

It builds on insights from scholars Jörg Nagler (2000) and Nicole Phelps (2010), who have provided valuable perspectives on the status of Austro-Hungarian enemy aliens in the U.S. during World War I. It also expands on the introductory study from Hazemali & Matjašič Friš (2018), which first addressed the status of the Slovenian-American community during this historical period, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the nuances within this context. The study is firmly grounded in the archives of the Slovenian-American fraternal benefit society the Slovene National Benefit Society (Slovenian: *Slovenska narodna podporna jednota*, SNPJ), and the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance (Slovenian: *Jugoslovanska socialistična zveza*, JSZ), housed at the Immigration History Research Center Archives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.⁵ Additionally, it draws from official records of the U.S. Congress, federal laws, presidential decrees, select Slovenian-American newspapers, and a wide selection of standard and contemporary scholarly works on the topic.

TARGETING ENEMY ALIENS:
SUPPRESSIVE WARTIME LEGISLATION

On 7 December 1917, the U.S. declared war on Austria-Hungary, thus the Slovenian-American

1 The article originated within the research programme *Slovenska identiteta in kulturna zavest v jezikovno in etnično stičnih prostorih v preteklosti in sedanjosti* (P6-0372 (B)), funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS).

2 Literal quotations are presented in their original form, including (but not limited to) any grammatical or other errors that may be present. Originals in Slovenian are added in footnotes.

3 Original: “Ponosen sem, da sem slovenskega rodu. Neizmerno sem ponosen, da sem ameriški državljan; da smem služiti državi, ki ti dovoljuje, da si oseba in ne le zobnik v velikem kolesu” (Work projects Administration in Ohio, 1940, 433).

4 Because the U.S. federal government did not formally recognise the Slovenian-American immigrant ethnic community in the U.S. as a sovereign legal entity during that period, as best illustrated by measures directed against non-naturalized immigrants from countries at war with the U.S., the Slovenian-American community is considered in this article in the context of a broader, either (South) Slavic or Austro-Hungarian immigrant community, in many matters.

5 The abbreviations for the Slovenian-American fraternal benefit societies the Slovene National Benefit Society (SNPJ) and the Grand Carniolan Slovenian Catholic Union (KSKJ), and the Slovenian-dominated Yugoslav Socialist Alliance (JSZ), correspond to the original Slovenian names of the organizations, not their English translations.

community found itself at war with its 'old homeland' (Scott, 1918, 165–172).⁶ Consequently, as discussed by Hazemali & Matjašič Friš (2018), Slovenians and individuals from other immigrant ethnic communities from the Danubian monarchy who had not yet acquired American citizenship were designated as enemy aliens (Slovenian: *sovražni tujci*), similar to citizens of the German Empire in the U.S. in April of that year (cf. the following standard works on the well-documented status of the German-American community in the U.S. during WWI: Capozzola, 2008; Nagler, 2000; Manning, 2014, 14–22; Richardson, 1995, 79–89; Leola, 1974, 418–429; Trommler, 2009, 241–266; Wüstenbecker, 2007).

The term enemy alien originated in 1798 during the threat of war with France, leading to the *Alien and Sedition Acts* (Phelps, 2010, 93). Driven by concerns about foreign residents potentially supporting French revolutionaries, these laws had (at least) two far-reaching consequences that manifested during the period under consideration, coinciding with active American military participation in World War I. The first consequence was the establishment of the definition of an enemy alien. This classification refers to non-U.S. citizens residing in the U.S. who are typically citizens of a country at war with the U.S. These individuals, from the declaration to the end of the war, may support their home country, as specified by legislation or presidential decrees. Individuals falling under this classification may be subject to specific legal restrictions and scrutiny, impacting their rights and privileges within the United States (Brandon, 1950, 382). The second consequence was a transformation in American legislation concerning naturalization between 1798 and 1917, marked by key *Naturalization Acts* in 1802, 1906, and 1917. The 1906 *Act* replaced the 1802 version, reducing the residency requirement from fourteen to five years and introducing a three-year advance intention to become a citizen. The *Fourteenth Amendment* in 1868 granted citizenship by birth. The 1906 *Act* established the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, streamlining the process and confining it to competent courts (Schneider, 2011; Aptekar, 2015, 9). The 1917 *Act*, enacted despite President Woodrow Wilson's veto, introduced a literacy requirement in the native language for foreign applicants (Powell, 2009).

The implications of the *Naturalization Acts* and the *Fourteenth Amendment* on the Slovenian-American community were manifold. Thanks to the reduced residency requirement and birthright citizenship, tens of thousands within the community, born as American citizens, were *de jure* spared from the stringent measures imposed on enemy aliens between 1917 and 1918. While the precise breakdown between Slovenian Americans and naturalized Slovenian immigrants during this period remains unknown at the federal level, the 1910 census sheds light. Out of 183,431 individuals declaring Slovenian as their mother tongue, 59,800 were Slovenian Americans, descendants of immigrants who gained citizenship by birth. The status of the remaining 123,631, not born in the U.S., and their citizenship or enemy alien designation by 1917 remains unclear.⁷

Even before the U.S. armed forces strategically, tactically, and operationally intervened in World War I, employees at the U.S. Department of Justice, hidden from the public eye and certain other branches of government, began compiling lists of potentially dangerous immigrants from the ranks of Germans, Hungarians, and 'Austrians'. The latter almost certainly included Slovenians, along with other immigrant ethnic communities from the Cisleithanian part of the Danubian monarchy. At the same time, the U.S. Department of War began implementing plans for internment camps for the enemies of the U.S. When the American Congress declared war on the German Empire on 6 April⁸, Wilson issued a presidential decree on the same day with measures related to the powers and, above all, the duties of enemy aliens – at that time only Germans without American citizenship (children under the age of fourteen did not receive this designation) (Phelps, 2010, 93).

Non-naturalized Germans residing on American soil were prohibited from serving in the U.S. armed forces – naturalized individuals were allowed to do so. Several debates ensued in both houses of the American Congress regarding whether enemy aliens should be permitted to serve in the U.S. armed forces.⁹ Furthermore, non-naturalized Germans were not allowed to linger near weapon factories, barracks, etc. (Phelps, 2010, 93). Authorities could also register, interrogate, and intern them.¹⁰

6 When discussing the legal status of the Slovenian-American community in the U.S. during WWI, we must distinguish between the period before the declaration of war between the U.S. and the Danubian monarchy and the period after the declaration. Although Slovenians and other Slavs who migrated to the U.S. were problematic in many respects in the eyes of the American authorities and 'full-fledged' Americans, as pointed out by American Historian Karel Dennis Bicha (1982, 16–38), they were able to express their views relatively freely until the U.S. entered World War I.

7 DCL, BC (1913): 13th U.S. Census of Population 1910, 965.

8 Until the American declaration of war on Austro-Hungary, measures against enemy aliens did not apply to non-naturalized Slovenian immigrants, i.e., all those who had not yet completed the naturalization process and acquired citizenship. However, the line between law and practice was blurred during this time of war.

9 CR 55, 65th US Congress, 1st Session, page 693 and onwards, and page 800 and onwards.

10 *Clevelandska Amerika*, 9. 4. 1917: (Uredništvo), Proglas predsednika Wilsona glede zadržanja Nemcev, 1.

In June 1917, Wilson signed into law the *Espionage Act*, which prohibited interference with military operations or the recruitment of armed forces, prevented disobedience in the armed forces, and prevented giving or showing support to the enemies of the United States during the war. The law also granted the U.S. Postmaster General the authority to seize or refuse the shipment of publications of all forms that were found to violate legal prohibitions. With this clause, the Wilson administration abolished the issuance of all pro-Austrian publications as well as those advocating isolationism. Labour organizations were also affected (Zavertnik, 1925, 228). The editor of the left-leaning Slovenian-American newspaper *Prosveta*, Jože (Josip) Zavertnik (1869–1929), commented on the new law in a letter addressed to the Supreme Committee of SNPJ, stating that the government wanted “to prevent any writing against the war”¹¹ in this way. Editors of foreign-language newspapers in the U.S. had to translate every news item related to the war into English. Newspapers that received special permission¹² from the U.S. Postmaster General were exempted, but by the end of 1917, there were hundreds of such requests in Washington, so editors had no choice but to start publishing bilingual news.¹³ This did not stop Zavertnik and others at the top of SNPJ: “The main administrative board then decided to send the chief secretary and the society’s lawyer to Washington on this matter. This was carried out, and the society’s publication received permission to be issued without having to translate articles and news related to the war into English.”¹⁴ In Washington, D.C., editors of foreign-language publications were thoroughly interrogated. The interrogators were particularly interested in their attitudes towards the war. According to the preserved minutes of the main board meeting, the *Prosveta* editorial staff made a good impression on the competent representatives of the federal authorities. They humorously added that the: “Croats have a very bad influence on the government.”¹⁵

To intensify the campaign against enemy aliens, the Wilson administration instituted the Committee on Public Information (CPI), also known as the Creel Committee, an autonomous government

entity primarily tasked with fostering enthusiasm and backing for the war effort among the diverse American population on the home front (Hazemali & Matjašič Friš, 2018, 914). Its crucial role extended to supplying provisions for the military and boosting the willingness of young men to enlist. Simultaneously, the Committee aimed to counteract individuals and organizations accused of attempting to undermine the U.S. war effort (Creel, 1920, 1–10). These included enemy aliens, radicals, anarchists, and even pacifists.¹⁶ The scope of the engagement was comprehensive, touching every facet of the war machinery and utilizing various mediums of communication, including the printed word, spoken discourse, motion pictures, posters, and signboards. Creel himself later remembered that these mediums were used “to make our own people and all other peoples understand the causes that compelled America to take arms in defense of its liberties and free institutions” (Creel, 1920, 2). Throughout its existence from April 14, 1917, to June 30, 1919, the Committee, either independently or through collaborating institutions exerted every conceivable effort to promote its objectives through diverse media channels. Even today, the CPI’s endeavors are widely acknowledged as one of the most noteworthy propaganda campaigns in the history of the United States (Vaughn, 1980).

The American Protective League (APL) assisted U.S. law enforcement in dealing with enemy aliens. Its members were individuals with anti-immigrant sentiments. The APL helped identify sympathizers of Germany or Austria-Hungary, as well as radicals, anarchists, Bolsheviks, and even pacifists (Luebke, 1974).

In October 1917, the *Trading with the Enemy Act*¹⁷ was adopted, which, among other things, gave the U.S. government the authority to confiscate the property of enemy aliens on American soil. In practice, it often happened that the property of full-fledged American citizens was confiscated, either intentionally or due to a simple mistake (Garner, 1918, 744–779; 1919, 22–59; Potterf, 1927, 453–472).

The mentioned laws also affected inheritance law. At the meeting of the main board of SNPJ on 1 August 1917, they discussed the case of Fr. Vehovec

11 IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1917–1918, Glavni Odbor, Minutes 1917–1918: Joseph Kuhelj in Ivan Molek, Seja gl. upravnega odbora 27. septembra 1917.

12 IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1917–1918, Joseph Kuhelj in Ivan Molek, Seja gl. upravnega odbora 25. oktober 1917.

13 IHRCA-2241: SNBS, 2, 1917–1918, Joseph Kuhelj in Ivan Molek, Izredna seja gl. upravnega odbora 29. oktobra 1917.

14 Original: “Glavni upravni odbor je nato sklenil, da pošlje glavnega tajnika in jednotinega odvetnika v Washington v tej zadevi. To se je izvršilo in jednotino glasilo je prejelo dovoljenje, da je smelo izhajati, ne da bi bilo treba prevajati člankov in vesti, tikajočih se vojne, v angleščino” (IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1917–1918, John Vogrich in Ivan Molek, Letna seja glavnega odbora SNPJ. Prva seja 17. januarja 1918).

15 IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1917–1918, John Vogrich in Ivan Molek, Letna seja glavnega odbora SNPJ. Prva seja 17. januarja 1918.

16 Following the U.S. decision to intervene with other Entente members in the Russian Civil War in January 1918, Bolsheviks and communists were added to the existing threats (Nežmah, 2020, 130).

17 CR 55, 65th US Congress, 1st Session, 411–426.

from Cleveland, who could not obtain a birth certificate from the 'old homeland' because of the "war situation," and therefore could not inherit from his father, a member of SNPJ Lodge No. 5 Lovrenc Vehovec.¹⁸

On 16 November, a new presidential decree followed, along with a new wave of measures aimed at enemy aliens. From then on, all non-naturalized Germans in the U.S. had to register and always carry registration information with them. In the summer of 1918, this measure was extended to non-naturalized German women residing in the U.S.¹⁹

On May 16, 1918, the U.S. Congress broadened the *Espionage Act* of 1917 with the introduction of the *Sedition Act*. This act extended the scope of punishable offenses to encompass not only actions but also speech and expressions of opinion that portrayed the government or the war effort negatively, hindered the sale of government bonds, or employed disrespectful or abusive language about the U.S. government, its flag, or its armed forces. While it wasn't explicitly directed at enemy aliens, its broad language allowed for the prosecution of individuals, regardless of their citizenship status, who were deemed to be undermining the war effort or promoting dissent. The *Sedition Act* marked a peak in the U.S. government's efforts to control dissent, enemy aliens and other perceived threats during World War I (Phelps, 2010).

DOCUMENTED CASES OF REPRESSIVE MEASURES AGAINST MEMBERS OF THE SLOVENIAN-AMERICAN AND OTHER ETHNIC IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES FROM AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

The measures aimed at enemy aliens exhibited a seemingly peculiar nature in that, even after the American declaration of war on Austro-Hungary, when non-naturalized Slovenians residing in the U.S. legally became enemy aliens, most of the formal applications of these measures *de jure* did not extend to them or other immigrant ethnic communities from the Danubian monarchy, or they were milder in nature. Wilson (Phelps, 2010, 93) himself pointed this out, although, according to Josephus Daniels, the then American Secretary of the Navy, the American president initially had a different opinion (Cronon, 1963, 275). With

the presidential decree of 11 December, it was formally forbidden for these immigrant ethnic communities to leave and for other citizens of the Danubian monarchy to enter the U.S., and there was also the possibility of their internment in case of suspicious behaviour or evidence of anti-state activity (Capozzola, 2008, 26). Consequently, intercontinental travel was severely hindered for the vast majority of the non-naturalized members of the Slovenian-American community between April 1917 and November 1918. This is evidenced by the preserved request of Joe Tomazetič from Chisholm, Minnesota. Tomazetič, wishing to visit Italy, turned to the Supreme Committee of SNPJ. Their response was more than telling: "The Society cannot issue a passport anywhere as long as the war lasts."²⁰ Additional documented cases of repression, violence, and internment in this part of the article underscore that, despite the peculiarities in the formal application of these measures, the Slovenian-American and other immigrant ethnic communities from Austria-Hungary did, in fact, suffer from them, experiencing significant and adverse effects.

One such notable case involved the 35-year-old Austrian citizen Joseph Kovath, who worked in a steel mill in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.²¹ His refusal to buy war bonds led to a brutal public shaming: about 40 to 50 workers from a nearby factory first soaked him in a "concrete bed," then smeared his palms and face with grease, and dragged him bound through the streets. An unnamed Justice Department employee commented that this was not "cruel or violent treatment." He concluded that the established norms at the time were "greatly beneficial to the alien population." After the humiliation, Kovath purchased a \$100 war bond (two thousand U.S. dollars in 2022) – a significant sum at the time – and was allowed to return to work. His assailants went unpunished. There were many similar cases; over 70 ended in the victim's death (Hazemali & Matjašič Friš, 2018, 913; Capozzola, 2008, 10).

Among those affected were also confirmed members of the Slovenian-American community. In May 1918, in Staunton, Illinois, an attack by the "public" targeted an unknown member of JSZ Lodge No. 100.²² The reason for the attack remains unknown. Editor Jože Zaverčnik was also among those affected. Although he did not suffer physical injuries, he experienced property damage

18 IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1916–1917, Ivan Molek, Seja gl. upravnega odbora 1. avgusta 1917.

19 Clevelandka Amerika, 9. 5. 1917: (Uredništvo), Selitev Nemcev iz nevarnih krajev. Popis vsega nemškega prebivalstva, 1.

20 In this context, a passport did not mean a document of identity issued by the state but metaphorically meant a document that allowed the holder to travel to a certain country or part of it and still be insured by the fraternal support organization. The reason for this was mainly economic: workers who had moved to the U.S. from the poorer regions of the Danubian monarchy predominated in the production of weapons and ammunition and in the mining and metallurgical sectors critical for wartime conditions (IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1916–1917, Joseph Kuhelj, Seja gl. upravnega odbora 21. novembra 1917).

21 With a strong Slovenian-American community in Johnstown, one might wonder if Kovath had Slovenian roots (Klemenčič, 1987, 66).

22 IHRCA-1149, JSF, 1, Executive Committee, Minutes, 1915–1920, J. Horvat, Zapisnik seje eksekutive J. S. S. dne 11. maja 1918, 245.

by unknown perpetrators because of his subscription to a pacifist publication, according to *Prosveta's* assistant editor at the time Ivan Molek (1882–1962) (Molek, 1979, 193). In May 1918, JSZ Secretary-General Frank Petrich reported to the alliance's leader that government detectives had "inspected all correspondence and literature since April 1917" in his office. They also took some correspondence and literature.²³ Law enforcement was particularly ruthless towards individuals who refused to respond to the military draft. The Immigration History Research Center archives contain a note about an unnamed secretary of SNPJ Lodge No. 110 from Chisholm, Minnesota, who ended up in jail in the summer of 1917. The SNPJ's Supreme Committee concluded on 27 June that this was because he "did not want to register."²⁴

At the same meeting, they also discussed a letter from M. E. Sostarič of Chisholm, also a member of SNPJ Lodge No. 110. Sostarič addressed the letter to the editorial office of *Prosveta*. Sostarič's letter is one of the few preserved and discovered testimonies from the period in question in the Slovenian language, reflecting the uncensored experience of propaganda and repressive measures by a member of the Slovenian-American community in the U.S., making it worthy of quoting in full:

*Dear Brother Editor!*²⁵ *It is impossible to judge how a person like you can fall so low and write in favour of our exploiters and murderers. You have crossed all the boundaries of an honest worker's editor. Do not think that only "radical" socialists who keep watch do not agree with your low writing and dog-like loyalty, but our entire nation is outraged, and you can believe me that "Prosveta" will lose thousands of subscribers. You have become more disgusting than other Slovenian editors in America. And be assured that what you have achieved with years of hard work, you now want to destroy if you continue this way.*

*I have nothing against you being convinced that America is fighting for "freedom" and that your sympathies are with the allies, but to lose one's mind and cross all boundaries of humility and chauvinism is too much. I am convinced that if you lived here under the fist of the U.S. Steel trust, you would change your mind about writing about "freedom" in America. Oh, freedom, "keep your mouth shut and obey the law," arresting a man without a warrant, shooting a man in the middle of the street like a dog, and why? Because he did not register. Comrade, will your conscience not burn when you think that you are also guilty of the murder of thousands of innocent poor? But it is not worth appealing to you for anything sensible at this time, but rest assured that the number of subscribers to Prosveta will bring you to your senses.*²⁶

The SNPJ Supreme Committee members commented on the letter, which they called an "attack on the editorial office," merely stating that Sostarič was an agitator who wanted people to "violate military law" and "support anarchy."²⁷ They did not comment on Sostarič's shocking descriptions of warrantless arrests, shootings of people "in the middle of the street" for failing to respond to the draft, etc.²⁸

Enemy aliens, even their naturalized family members, also became targets of crimes unrelated to the war. One such case occurred in December 1917 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Deputy Sheriff Schoppe arrested Erich Pohl, an Austrian citizen and engineer living in Salt Lake City with his wife and three children. As noted by American historian Nicole Phelps, Schoppe was interested in Pohl's wife. He allegedly harassed her family for months and pressured her into divorce, among other things. In prison, Erich Pohl was told that the federal authorities did not even know he was an alien without citizenship before his case (Phelps, 2010, 97).

23 IHRCA-1149, JSF, 1, Executive Committee, Minutes, 1915–1920, J. Horvat, Zapisnik seje eksekutive J. S. S. dne 11. maja 1918, 245.

24 IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1916–1917, John Vogrich in Ivan Molek, Seja gl. upravnega odbora 27. junija 1917.

25 He was addressing Jože Zavertnik, as confirmed by those present (IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1916–1917, John Vogrich in Ivan Molek, Seja gl. upravnega odbora 27. junija 1917).

26 Original: "Cenjeni Brat urednik! Nemogoče je presoditi kako da človek kakor ste vi more pasti tako nisko in pisati vprid naših iskoriščevalcev in morilcev. Viste prekoračili vse meje poštenega delavskega urednika. Nikar ne mislite da samo "radikalni" socialisti oko straže se ne strinjajo z vašim niskim pisanjem in pasjo lojalnostjo ampak ves naš narod je ogorčen in lahko mi verjemete da "Prosveta" bo izgubila na tisoče naročnikov. Vi ste postali gnjus večji kakor so drugi slovenski uredniki v Ameriki. In bodite uvereni da ono kaj ste leta in leta steškim naporom postigli hočete zdaj vničiti če tako dalj bodete šli. Nimam nič protiv toga česte vi prepričani da se Amerika bori za "svobodo" in da so vaše simpatije na strani saveznikov, ampak da bi človek zbog toga pamet izgubil in prekoračil vse meje ponižnosti in soviniizmu, je preveč. Prepričan sem da kad bi živeli tukaj pod pestjo U. S. Steel trusta, da bi vas misel prešla pisati o "svobodi" v Ameriki. Oh, svoboda, "keep your mouth shut and obey the law", aretirati človeka brez waranta, vstreliti človeka na sred ulice kakor psa in zakaj? Zato ker se ni registriral. Sodrug, ali vas ne bo savest pekla kedaj si pomislite da ste vi tudi krivi umora tisočernih nedolžnih revežev? Ampak se ni vredno na vas apelirati za kaj pametnega v tem času, ali bodite prepričani da število naročnikov na Prosveto vas bo že k pameti dognalo (IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1916–1917, John Vogrich in Ivan Molek, Seja gl. upravnega odbora 27. junija 1917).

27 IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1916–1917, John Vogrich in Ivan Molek, Seja gl. upravnega odbora 27. junija 1917.

28 IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1916–1917, John Vogrich in Ivan Molek, Seja gl. upravnega odbora 27. junija 1917.

Concurrently with the search for the 'internal enemy' among non-naturalized immigrants from enemy countries, the U.S. authorities attempted to suppress the pacifist stance of socialists, which also affected the Slovenian-American community (Miller, 1970, 398–411). The testimony of Frank Kalan, secretary of SNPJ Lodge No. 313, about the activities of the "Socialist Club J. S. Z." in West Frankfort, located in southern Illinois, has been preserved. The club opened its doors in May 1917 but "collapsed due to war conditions" by 1918 (Zavertnik, 1925, 331). The reasons for the collapse likely lie somewhere between the club's ideological orientation and a high likelihood of non-naturalized members.

According to German historian Jörg Nagler, by the end of the war, there were about 6,300 enemy aliens in American prisons (Nagler, 2000, 537), including 150 citizens of Austria-Hungary (Phelps, 2010, 95).²⁹ He adds that many internees were German soldiers whom the U.S. authorities had imprisoned upon seizing their warships in American ports. This occurred after the enactment of confiscation in May 1917 (American Society of International Law, 1918b, 22–23). The U.S. committed to treating the internees in accordance with the *Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field*, adopted on 6 July 1906, in Geneva (American Society of International Law, 1918a, 7). However, the statistics do not tell us much in this case, as the above figures only apply to selected American prisons that were specially adapted for prisoners of war. We know of a case of a non-naturalized Croatian, Ante (Anton) Yakubin, who was interned on 15 March 1918 for pro-German cheers and transferred to Fort Oglethorpe prison (Cross & Myers, 2012, 233–259). In his preserved letter dated 20 November 1918, in which he asks for release, Yakubin mentions that there were 45 of 'his fellow citizens' in prison at that time, by which he probably meant all those with Austro-Hungarian passports (Worldwar1centennial.org, 2022). How many members of the Slovenian-American community were in this prison is unknown, but it is one of the many questions that should be investigated in this context in the future. An unknown but significantly larger number of enemy aliens, including American citizens, were imprisoned elsewhere, often wrongly, for crimes they may never have committed (Nagler, 2000). Specifically of the Slovenian-American community, Ivan Molek poignantly wrote: "Those of our American Slove-

nians who were still Austrian citizens and who showed even a word of sympathy for Austria were immediately interned" (Molek, 1979, 192).

WEATHERING THE STORM – BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND DEFIANCE

Slovenian-American and other immigrant communities in the U.S., originating from the Danube Monarchy, resisted this life trial in various ways and with varying success, mainly at the local level. One method was to declare their allegiance to their 'new homeland' through oaths and small gatherings. In Cleveland, Ohio, the then largest 'Slovenian' city in the U.S., Pirc helped organize a well-attended rally in support of the American war effort.³⁰ The Slovenian Political Club operating in Cleveland, through its president Pirc, shortly thereafter sent a pledge to President Wilson, expressing the commitment of Slovenians in Cleveland to the American state. The transcript of the pledge was published on April 20 in the Cleveland based Slovenian-American newspaper *Clevelandska Amerika*:

*2,500 Slovenians in Cleveland gathered at the meeting of the Slovenian Political Club send you their expressions of loyalty to the constitution and principles of the United States and express their satisfaction for your step, which you took when you declared war on the German imperial government. At the same time, Americans of Slovenian descent thank you for your splendid performance in favor of the freedom and national happiness of small nations in the future. American citizens of Slovenian descent are deeply convinced that the German imperial government is responsible for the violent, bloody European war because it wanted to dominate with fire and sword all small nations and endanger the future peace and freedom of nations. We swear, on behalf of the entire Slovenian nation in the United States, that we will stand with the American government and fight against the imperial German government with all the strength and sacrifice at our disposal. Mr. President, we see you as our leader, we will follow you under our beloved American flag wherever you send us, and wherever the American flag of freedom and justice will lead us.*³¹

²⁹ *Clevelandska Amerika*, 4. 5. 1917: Ujeti Nemci pridejo v Ameriko, 1.

³⁰ *Clevelandska Amerika*, 11. 4. 1917: Ljudski shod Slovencev. Slovesna manifestacija Slovencev v četrtak.

³¹ Original: "2500 Slovencev v Clevelandu zbranih na shodu Slovenskega Političnega Kluba vam pošilja svoje izraze lojalnosti napram ustavi in postavam Zjed. držav in izraža svoje zadoščenje radi vašega koraka, ki ste ga naredili tedaj, ko ste napovedali nemški cesarski vladi vojno. Obenem se Vam Amerikanci slovenskega pokoljenja zahvaljujejo za vaš krasen nastop v prid svobode in narodne sreče malih narodov v bodočnosti. Ameriški državljani slovenskega pokoljenja so globoko prepričani, da je Nemška cesarska vlada kriva silovite, krvave evropske vojne, ker je hotela zagospodovati z ognjem in mečem vsem malini narodom in ogrožati bodoči mir in svobodo narodov. Prisegamo, v imenu vsega naroda slovenskega v Zjed. državah, da bomo stali z ameriško vlado in se borili proti cesarski nemški vladi z vsemi močmi in požrtvovalnostjo, ki nam je na razpolago. Gospod predsednik, v vas vidimo svojega voditelja, sledili bomo vam in naši iskreno ljubljeni ameriški zastavi, kamorkoli nas boste poslali in kamorkoli nas bo ameriška zastava svobode in pravice vodila" (*Clevelandska Amerika*, 20. 4. 1917: Hon. Woodrow Wilson. President of United States, Washington, D. C., 1).

Also worth highlighting are the gatherings of the Slovenian-American community from Indianapolis, the capital of Indiana, and from Rock Springs, Wyoming. According to American historian Nancy Gentile Ford, 350 Slovenians gathered in Indianapolis on 4 July 1918, including a group of Slovenian women dressed in traditional Slovenian dress, carrying the sign: "We Are For America First, Last and All the Time." The number of Slovenians and their descendants who gathered for the celebration in Rock Springs on the same day is not known, but Gentile Ford found that they also carried a banner, which read: "Your Allies the Jugo-Slavs" (Ford, 2001, 27).

The Slovenian-American community also demonstrated American patriotism by serving in the military, some voluntarily³², but most were drafted.³³ The military became attractive because soldiers could receive citizenship through an expedited process. Although the *Selective Service Act* of 1917 prohibited enemy aliens from joining the American armed forces either voluntarily or through conscription, in practice this did not hold up, and by the end of 1917, tens of thousands of enemy aliens were included in the then innumerable units of the American armed forces. The greatest danger for them did not lie in the legislation that the American state had adopted for dealing with them, but in the fact that as enemy aliens they risked being judged and put on trial as traitors in case of capture by the enemy, that is, by the countries of which they were citizens. These trials would result in death. Consequently, enemy aliens in active service were given the option of either being discharged from the armed forces or transferred to ordnance (logistics and supply) units in the rear of the front (Provost Marshal General, 1919, 104). The War Department simultaneously began to educate officers about the various ethnic/national affiliations of immigrants, and officers sought 'loyal' and 'disloyal' immigrants in their ranks. Many of those who fell into the category of 'disloyal', the imprisoned Yakubin being one of them, were detained and sent to specially established prisons across the country. The final solution for all enemy aliens in active military service came with another change in relevant legislation on 9 May 1918 (Chambers II, 1987, 231). From then on, every alien

who served in the American armed forces could apply for American citizenship without proving other requirements. Non-naturalized Slovenians and non-naturalized members of other ethnic immigrant groups in active military service no longer had to demonstrate proof of arrival on American soil, permanent residence in an American state, nor did they have to file an intention to acquire citizenship. The Chief of the Military Police, Enoch H. Crowder (1859–1932), estimated after the war that 155,000 immigrants had obtained citizenship through military service since the adoption of the May legislation until the end of World War I.³⁴

Slovenian-American fraternal benefit societies employed other measures. For example, according to Slovenian Historian Darko Friš, the KSKJ suspended the membership status of all the members living in the "old homeland", upon the news of America's entry into the war to show their American patriotism and support for the American war effort. This decision was not revoked until 1923 (Friš, 1995, 83).

Members of the Slovenian-American community also demonstrated their 'Americanism' by purchasing war bonds, mainly at the level of associations, unions, or organizations, and other securities, such as war savings stamps.³⁵ In this regard, on 12 December 1917, the then U.S. Secretary of the Treasury William Gibbs McAdoo (1863–1941) organized a conference for representatives of all immigrant ethnic communities.³⁶ The SNPJ was also invited to this conference. The conference, attended by 229 fraternal benefit societies and other ethnic immigrant societies and alliances, was missed by the SNPJ's Secretary-General John Verderbar. Nevertheless, he and ten other representatives were received by McAdoo at a meeting the next day.³⁷ The host appealed to those present to "recommend" to their members the spread of purchasing war loans and patriotism. He said, "The American flag must be in every hall where society meetings are held." At the meeting, a resolution was adopted, stating that the present organizations would continue to support the government and show favour "and goodwill to cooperate in these critical times, to end the war as soon as possible with the victory of democracy." After the meeting, the attendees were invited to the White House, where they were received by President Wilson. Verderbar noted that he was told that the

32 During WWI, American patriotism often coincided with anti-Austrian sentiment even prior to the declaration of war between the two countries. Notably, hundreds of South Slavic immigrants from Austria-Hungary enlisted in the Serbian armed forces even before the U.S. entered the war, reflecting a complex intersection of immigrant loyalties (Tasić, 2021, 703).

33 *Clevelandska Amerika*, 20. 4. 1917: Vojaška služba pride za vse, 1–2; *Enakopravnost*, 11. 9. 1918: Slovencem, kateri se morajo registrirati, 1; *Clevelandska Amerika*, 21. 5. 1917: Dne 5. junija je vojna registracija, 1; *Clevelandska Amerika*, 23. 5. 1917: Sedem glavnih točk registracije, 1.

34 *Clevelandska Amerika*, 16. 4. 1917: Kako postanete ameriški državljani, 2; *Clevelandska Amerika*, 7. 5. 1917: Kaj pomeni prvi državni papir?, 1.

35 *Amerikanski Slovenec*, 9. 4. 1918: Rojaki, kupujte Liberty Bonde!, 1; *Amerikanski Slovenec*, 30. 4. 1918: Slovenci, kupujte Liberty Bonde, 1; *Glas naroda*, 18. 10. 1918: Naprej k zmagi! V boj za posojilo!, 1; *Prosveta*, 24. 4. 1918: S.N.P.J. je posodila vladi 105.000.00\$: Krajevna društva naše jednote tudi vrše svojo nalogo. Rudarji kupujejo bonde, 1; *Enakopravnost*, 19. 8. 1918: Novice: Vrednost prvih vojnih zadolžnic očitno raste, 2.

36 IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1917–1918, Seja gl. upr. odbora 3. januar 1918.

37 IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1917–1918, Seja gl. upr. odbora 3. januar 1918.

president “does not receive private citizens in the current wartime, but he made an exception for us because he considers that the benefit societies are the flower of the American nation.”³⁸ At the SNPJ main committee meeting on 3 January 1918, the leadership adopted a resolution, the conclusion of which read as follows:

*The main committee members of the Slovenian National Benefit Society, gathered at the annual session on January 17, 1918, fully approve that the Secretary-General and the Treasurer, in agreement with other members of the main executive committee, invested \$30,000 of the society's funds in the war loan of the United States or liberty bonds. The United States, according to President Wilson's solemn declaration, is fighting for the democracy of the entire world and for the freedom and self-determination of all nations. This means that they are also fighting for our Slovenian nation, which has been oppressed and suppressed for centuries. As citizens of the great American republic, we are aware that true freedom will not exist in the world until militarism and crowned and uncrowned autocracy fall, and until every nation, no matter how small, has the right to decide its own fate. The United States is fighting and striving for these goals, so it is the duty of our progressive organization to provide the government with all possible moral and financial support for this purpose. For these reasons, and considering that liberty bonds, backed by the entire nation of the United States, are absolutely safe and well-interesting, and can be immediately exchanged for cash if necessary, the main committee of the S. N. P. J. instructs the Secretary-General and the Treasurer to invest as much as possible of the society's assets in these government securities in future war loan calls.*³⁹

This resolution was published in *Prosveta* on 30 January of that year.⁴⁰

Upon the announcement of the fourth series of war bonds on 28 September 1918, the KSKJ leadership also committed to purchasing them in the amount of \$100,000, which would have amounted to nearly two million U.S. dollars in 2022. According to Friš, this action was particularly welcomed by U.S. government services (Friš, 1995, 83–84).

The JSZ was also successful in purchasing American securities. Between May 1917 and May 1918, it “sold” its members as many as 17,526 stamps of various values.⁴¹ During this time, there was also a general break in the JSZ's attitude towards World War I. They held their first serious discussion on their risky pacifist stance for those conditions in May 1918:

The executive committee of the joint socialist party had a session on 6 and 7 May of this year, during which it discussed the situation in which the party finds itself due to the rapidly developing political and economic conditions in Europe and America following the war, as well as other difficulties that have arisen due to new laws related to the conduct of the war.

The committee declares that, in view of all this, there is a movement within the party for a change in the war stance that the party has taken since the last convention. The committee believes that this cannot now be resolved in the form of referendums, because under these circumstances only one side would have a voice and not the other side. Therefore, the committee asks comrades not to initiate proposals related to the tactics of the war issue.

*The committee acknowledges that the war conditions have changed significantly recently and that the party will have to take a positive and united stance with regard to these changes.*⁴²

38 IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1917–1918, Seja gl. upr. odbora 3. januar 1918.

39 Original: “Glavni odborniki Slovenske narodne podporne jednote, zbrani na letni seji dne 17. januarja 1918, popolnoma odobravajo, da sta glavni tajnik in glavni blagajnik v sporazumu z ostalimi člani glavnega upravnega odbora naložila \$30,000 enotnega denarja v vojno posojilo Združenih držav ali liberty-bonde. Združene države se po slovesni izjavi predsednika Wilsona bore za demokracijo vsega sveta in svobodo ter samoodločevanje vseh narodov. To pomeni, da se bore tudi za naš, stoletja tlačeni in zatirani slovenski narod. Kot državljani velike ameriške republike se zavedamo, da prave svobode ne bo na svetu, dokler ne pade militarizem in kronana ter nekronana avtokracija in dokler nima pravice vsak še tako majhen narod odločati sam o svoji usodi. Združene države se bore in streme za temi cilji, zato je dolžnost naše napredne organizacije, da nudi vladi vso možno in moralno ter finančno pomoč v to svrhu. Vsled navedenih razlogov in z ozirom na dejstvo, ker so liberty-bondi, za katerimi stoji ves narod Združenih držav, absolutno varni in se dobro obrestujejo, ter se morejo v slučaju potrebe takoj zamenjati za gotov denar, nalaga glavni odbor S. N. P. J. glavnemu tajniku in glavnemu blagajniku, da pri bodočih razpisih vojnega posojila naložita kolikor največ mogoče enotnega premoženja v omenjene vladne zadolžnice” (Zavertnik, 1925, 610).

40 Prosveta, 30. 1. 1918: Letna seja Glavnega odbora S.N.P.J., 2.

41 IHRCA-1149, JSF, 1, Frank Petrich, Poročilo stranki, 250.

42 Original: “Eksekutiva skupne socialistične stranke je imela dne 6. in 7. maja t. l. sejo, na kateri je razpravljala o situaciji, v kateri se stranka nahaja vsled hitro se razvijajočih političnih in gospodarskih razmer v Evropi in Ameriki vsled vojne, kakor tudi drugih potežkoč, ki so nastale vsled novih zakonov v zvezi z upravljanjem vojne. Odbor izjavlja, da je z ozirom na vse to v stranki gibanje za izpremenitev vojnega stališča, ki ga zavzema stranka od zadnje konvencije. To, meni odbor, se v obliki referendumov sedaj ne da rešiti, ker bi prišla pod temi razmerami samo ena stran do glasu in ne druga stran. Zato prosi odbor sodruge, da naj ne iniciirajo predlogov, ki so v zvezi s taktiko o vojnem vprašanju. Odbor priznava, da so se vojne razmere v zadnjem času v marsičem izpremenile, in da bo morala stranka zavzeti z ozirom na te izpremembe pozitivno in enotno stališče” (IHRCA-1149, JSF, 1, Tajništvo J. S. Z., Članom Jugoslovanske socialistične zveze, 239).

Not only did the JSZ leadership decide to support the American war effort owing to “newly arisen conditions,” which we must understand as an American attack on pacifists, pacifist-oriented socialists, and other like-minded people, but a few months later, on 30 September, they even withdrew from the (federal) Socialist Party of American (SPA). At this meeting, the JSZ leadership concluded that pacifism in the U.S. was over:

On 30 September 1918, comrades! The Slovenian and Serbian sections, now forming the Yugoslav Socialist Alliance, unanimously decided to withdraw from the socialist party at a conference held recently in Springfield, Ill. The reason for this step is briefly as follows: With its anti-war stance, adopted at the St. Louis convention, and with its resistance to changing it even after historical events that showed that this stance is in contradiction with the socialist spirit, and even when the membership seriously but unsuccessfully demanded a change, the party became dead as a means of propagating socialism and democracy. [...] Standing as such, the socialist party will remain only as a kind of pacifist sect, which the American people will largely consider a tool that will best serve the Junkers of the central states.⁴³

Defiance of the newly arisen conditions was risky in 1917, and after 1918, as evidenced by the uncovered cases, it became dangerous and possible only intimately, away from the eyes of law enforcement, or reflected in obscure gestures. A preserved description exists of a protest march that took place on 1 May 1917, in the mining town of Clinton in the state of Indiana, where many Slovenian families had settled (Mladineo, 1937, 256 and 276). Jože Zavertnik described the event as follows:

In 1917, public parades on the streets were prohibited. Miners celebrated 1 May every

year. And so, that year, they organized a public workers' march. At the front marched a little girl in a red dress with a small American flag in her hand. The workers followed her quietly, silently, and in rows. The march was magnificent, and city officials stated that people should not be forbidden what they were accustomed to back home.⁴⁴

The IHRCA archive holds a correspondence note from September 1918 about an unnamed actor or actors, otherwise a member or members of the SNPJ, from the town of Franklin in the state of Kansas, which contained attacks on the American government and “praises of Austria.”⁴⁵ The *Prosveta* editorial office, to which the correspondence was sent, immediately reported the actor(s) to the competent authorities.⁴⁶ Given the date, the note is considered an example of one of the latest known incidents of defiance against the American repressive apparatus during World War I.

Immigrants from the Danube Monarchy living in Calumet, Michigan, adopted a completely different approach to resisting the described conditions, serving as the concluding documented example within this part of the article. In this small mining town, where the strong Slovenian parish of St. Joseph existed at the time, the Austrian Rifle and Fishing Club wanted to rename itself the Calumet Rifle Club (Ilenich & Sprajcar, 1940, 45). The petition was signed by J. J. Wershay.⁴⁷ Instead of drawing attention to themselves and especially their allegiance to the US, the residents of Calumet chose a subtle path and preferred to rid themselves of the adjective Austrian in their name – a word that was anything but desirable at the time. Ironically, before World War I, according to Edward Gobetz's findings, Slovenian immigrants often used the adjective Austrian rather than Slovenian for their associations and choirs to avoid the sharp prejudices, which targeted Slovenians and other Slavic immigrants (Gobetz, 1980, 556).

43 Original: “30. septembra 1918 so izstopili iz ASS Sodrugi! Slovenska in srbska sekcija, sedaj tvoreče Jugosl. Socialistično zvezo, ste na konferenci, obdržavani pred kratkem v Springfieldu, Ill., soglasno sklenile izstopiti iz socialistične stranke. Vzrok temu koraku je v kratkem sledeči: S svojim protivojnim stališčem, sprejetim na st. louski konvenciji in s svojim upiranjem, da ga menja celo izza zgodovinskih dogodkov, ki so pokazali, da je to stališče v protislovju s socialističnim duhom, in še ko je članstvo resno a brezuspešno zahtevalo izpremembo, je postala stranka kot sredstvo za propagiranje socializma in demokracije, mrtva. /.../ Tako stoječa, bo ostala socialistična stranka le še kot nekakšna pacifistična sekta, katero bo smatralo ameriško ljudstvo v veliki večini za sredstvo, ki bo služilo najbolje Junkerjem centralnih držav” (IHRCA-1149, JSF, 1, Frank Petrich, Jugosl. Socialistična zveza izstopila iz Socialistične stranke, 253).

44 Original: “V letu 1917 so bile javne povorke po ulicah prepovedane. Rudarji so vsako leto praznovali prvi majnik. In tako so tudi v tem letu priredili javni delavski pohod. Na čelu je korakala majhna deklica v rdeči obleki z majhno ameriško zastavico v roki. Delavci so pa mirno, molče in v vrstah stopali za njo. Pohod je bil veličasten, in mestni uradniki so izjavili, da se ljudem ne more prepovedati, česar so bili vajeni v starem kraju” (Zavertnik, 1925, 335).

45 IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1917–1918, Joseph Kuhelj in Ivan Molek, Redna seja gl. upravnega odbora 11. septembra 1918.

46 IHRCA-2241, SNBS, 2, 1917–1918, Joseph Kuhelj in Ivan Molek, Redna seja gl. upravnega odbora 11. septembra 1918.

47 CR 55, 65th US Congress, 1st Session, 1047.



Figure 1: The ‘Austrian’ Cornet Band, composed of Slovenians, performed at Slovenian-American cultural, sports, and other events in Cleveland. Later, it changed the adjective Austrian (Gobetz, 1980, 556).

CONCLUSION

During World War I, the American wartime administration orchestrated a comprehensive effort to influence public sentiment in favor of the war. This involved the use of established federal agencies, defense councils at different levels, law enforcement bodies and suppressive wartime legislation backed by propaganda. The diverse range of opinions expressed by individuals and groups, regardless of their ethnic, ideological-political, or religious affiliations, underwent a significant shift. It was distilled into a binary framework: individuals were either staunch supporters of the American war effort or perceived as undesirable ‘foreigners,’ potentially categorized as internal enemies.

These measures had a significant impact on enemy aliens, referring to individuals from the Slovenian-American and other immigrant ethnic communities originating from countries at war with the U.S. Those without American citizenship or showing no inclination to obtain it found themselves navigating a challenging landscape characterized by stringent loyalty expectations.

Documented cases of repression, violence, and internment underscore that, despite the peculiarities in the formal application of these measures, the Slovenian-American and other immigrant ethnic communities from Austria-Hungary did, in fact, suffer from them, experiencing different adverse effects.

In examining how members of the Slovenian-American and other immigrant ethnic communities originating from Austria-Hungary responded to the challenges of wartime conditions, the study also reveals their diverse resilience strategies. These included statements of loyalty with oaths, small gatherings, military service to demonstrate American patriotism – Americanism, and the purchase of war bonds and other securities to express allegiance to the “new homeland.” The varied strategies employed reveal a dynamic interplay between individual, societal, and community identity, and the broader socio-political context. A handful of documented cases show that a few also dared to show defiance.

VAROVANJE SVOBODE? REPRESIVNI UKREPI PROTI SOVRAŽNIM TUJCEM IN ODPORNOST ETNIČNE SKUPNOSTI V ZDA MED PRVO SVETOVNO VOJNO: IZKUŠNJA SLOVENSKO-AMERIŠKE SKUPNOSTI

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POVZETEK

Ameriška vojna administracija se je preko vzpostavljenih zveznih agencij, obrambnih svetov na različnih administrativnih ravneh, organov pregona ter zatirajočo vojno zakonodajo lotila mobilizacije javnega mnenja v prid ameriškemu vojnemu naporu. Nekdaj svobodno izražanje mnenj na ravni posameznikov, lokalnih združenj, večjih gibanj, organizacij, zvez in strank ne glede na etnično pripadnost, ideološko-politično usmeritev ali usmeritev na verski osnovi je bilo zreducirano na zgolj eno premiso: bodisi si bil/postal podpornik ameriškega vojnega napora v najširšem pomenu te besedne zveze bodisi si (p)ostal nezaželeni ,tujec', celo notranji sovražnik. Te ukrepe so še zlasti občutili sovražni tujci – tisti pripadniki slovensko-ameriške in drugih priseljskih etničnih skupnosti iz držav, s katerimi so bile ZDA v vojni, ki še niso imeli ameriškega državljanstva oziroma ki še niso pokazali namere postati to. Ob preučevanju načinov, kako so se pripadniki slovensko-ameriške in drugih priseljskih etničnih skupnosti iz Avstro-Ogrske upirali izzivom vojnih razmer, še zlasti statusu sovražnih tujcev, raziskava izpostavlja njihove raznolike strategije prilagajanja in odpora. Od izjav zvestobe s prisegami in shodi do izkazovanja ameriškega patriotizma in ,amerikanizma' s služenjem v oboroženih silah so pripadniki teh skupnosti (po)kazali odpornost in elastičnost. Poleg tega so pripadnost »novi domovini« kazali z nakupom vojnih obveznic in drugih vrednostnih papirjev. S prikazom ugotovljenih niansiranih odzivov slovensko-ameriške skupnosti raziskava osvetluje večplastna prizadevanja njenih članov, zlasti tistih brez ameriškega državljanstva – sovražnih tujcev, s katerimi so želeli prebroditi vihar vojnih razmer.

Ključne besede: slovenski Američani/ameriški Slovenci, slovensko-ameriška skupnost, bratske podporne organizacije, prva svetovna vojna, ZDA, sovražni tujci

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