

VTISI 30

Spomini Slovenk in Slovencev po svetu
na priznanje samostojne Slovenije

IMPRESSIONS 30

Memories of Slovenians Abroad upon
recognition of the independent Slovenia



SLOVENSKI
ETNOGRAFSKI
MUZEJ

VTISI 30

Razstava

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**Spomini Slovenk in Slovencev po svetu
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23. junij 2021 – 2. januar 2022

Exhibition

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upon recognition of the independent Slovenia**

23 June 2021 – 2 January 2022



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Ljubljana 2021

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Spremna publikacija ob razstavi / Exhibition publication

Izdal in založil: Slovenski etnografski muzej / Published by: The Slovene Ethnographic Museum, zanj /
represented by Natalija Polenec

Uvodno besedilo / Introduction text: dr. Tanja Roženberger, SEM, Helena Janežič, NUK

Uredili / Editors: dr. Tanja Roženberger, Nina Zdravič Polič, SEM

Grafično oblikovanje / Graphic design: Janžej Marinč, TAK Kolektiv

Prevod / Translation: David Limon

Lektoriranje uvodnega besedila / Proofreading of the introduction text: Vilma Kavšček

Tisk / Print: Medium Žirovnica

**Razstavo sta pripravila Slovenski etnografski muzej (SEM) in Narodna in
univerzitetna knjižnica (NUK) / The exhibition was prepared by the Slovene
Ethnographic Museum and the National and University Library:**

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Silvester Lipovšek, Boštjan Marolt, tehnična podpora / technical support

Sodelujoče ustanove in posamezniki pri razstavi / Contributing Institutions and individuals for the exhibition:

Slovenski etnografski muzej, Kustodiat za slovenske izseljence, zamejce in pripadnike narodnih manjšin in
drugih etnij v Sloveniji / Slovene Ethnographic Museum, Department for the Slovene emigrants, the Slovene
ethnic minorities in the neighbouring countries, and the members of the national minorities and other
ethnicities in Slovenia

Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Zbirka knjižničnega gradiva Slovencev v zamejstvu in po svetu / National
and University Library, Slovenian Diaspora Publications Collection

Arhiv Republike Slovenije, Archives of the Republic of Slovenia

Avtorji in avtorice vtisov / Authors of impressions

Zahvala / Acknowledgment:

Zahvala vsem avtoricam in avtorjem vtisov. / Sincere thanks to all authors of impressions.

Ljubljana, junij 2021



SLOVENSKI
ETNOGRAFSKI
MUZEJ



NARODNA IN
UNIVERZITETNA
KNJIŽNICA



SLOVENIJA 30



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
MINISTRSTVO ZA KULTURO

Spomini Slovenk in Slovencev po svetu na priznanje samostojne Slovenije

Pred 30 leti smo z razglasitvijo neodvisne države Slovenije stopili na samostojno pot. Nedvomno je ta prelomni čas Slovenkam in Slovincem VTISnil številne spomine, ki so po treh desetletjih še vedno živi in prisotni. Tako tisti, ki so že postali del kolektivnega spomina, kot osebni, ki jih poznajo le posamezniki in posameznice in jih kot osebno izkušnjo morda pomnijo le sami.

Ob letošnjem jubileju smo v Slovenskem etnografskem muzeju in Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici povabili rojake, ki med osamosvajanjem Slovenije niso živeli v matični domovini, da z nami podelijo osebna razmišljanja o tem edinstvenem obdobju. Ob kratkem vprašalniku, ki smo ga razposlali na različne naslove po svetu in doma, so se ponovno prebudili številni spomini. Našemu povabilu se je odzvalo 67 pričevalk in pričevalcev, o tem prelomnem času so v svojih spominih spregovorili posamezniki in posameznice različnih kulturnih, profesionalnih in socialnih ozadij in različnih starostnih skupin. Vtise so prispevali Slovenci in Slovenke iz slovenskega zamejskega prostora, držav nekdanje Jugoslavije, Evrope, Amerik, Azije, Avstralije ter povratnice in povratniki v matično domovino.

Raznovrstni, bogati in pogosto s čustvi prepleteni so spomini na trenutek, ko je Slovenija razglasila samostojnost, ter na dogodke, ki so do tega pripeljali. V času, ki je sledil razglasitvi, so obarvani s strahom, pa tudi s spominom na akcije, demonstracije, pisanja pisem in srčna prizadevanja, da bi dežele, v katerih živijo oziroma so takrat živeli, priznale našo mlado državo. Vtisi sežejo vse do začetka leta 1992, ko je Slovenijo priznala večina evropskih in tudi čezmorske države; k temu so prispevale mnoge osebne, na razstavi predstavljene pobude, dejavnosti in stremljenja.

Zbrana pričevanja so pomembni dokumenti časa, ki urejeni tvorijo Fond pričevanj v Oddelku za slovenske izseljence, zamejce in pripadnike narodnih manjšin in drugih etnij v Sloveniji Slovenskega etnografskega muzeja in dopolnjujejo Zbirko knjižničnega gradiva Slovencev v zamejstvu in po svetu v Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici.

Doživljaji so našli mesto tudi v knjižni obliki, bodisi takoj ob osamosvojitvi ali kot spominska literatura, in bili objavljeni kasneje. Prelomni čas je zabeležen v proznih delih, odmeva pa tudi v verzih in različnih dokumentih ter spominskem gradivu. Izbrane primere predstavljamo na razstavi skozi gradivo, ki ga hranita Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica in Arhiv Republike Slovenije.

Dr. Tanja Roženberger,
Slovenski etnografski muzej

Helena Janežič,
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica

Memories of Slovenians abroad upon recognition of the independent Slovenia

Thirty years ago, Slovenia declared its independence and began to follow its own path. Undoubtedly, this milestone IMPRESSED numerous memories in the minds of Slovenes, which after three decades are still alive and present. This applies both to those that became part of the collective memory, as well as personal ones perhaps known only to individuals.

To mark this year's anniversary, the Slovene Ethnographic Museum and the National and University Library invited compatriots who were not living in the mother country when independence was achieved to share with us their thoughts about this unique period. In response to a short questionnaire which was sent to various addresses at home and abroad, numerous memories were reawakened. Our invitation received 67 replies from those who were witness to this historic time, drawn from different cultural, professional and social backgrounds, as well as different ages groups. Impressions were contributed by Slovenes from border areas in neighbouring countries, countries of the former Yugoslavia, Europe, America, Asia, Australia, and from those who have returned to the mother country.

The memories of the moment when Slovenia declared its independence and of the events that led up to this are varied, rich and often interwoven with emotion. In relation to the time that followed this declaration, they are coloured by fear, as well as by memories of action, demonstrations, writing letters and heartfelt efforts to ensure that the countries where they lived recognised our young country. The impressions go up to early 1992, when the majority of European and non-European countries recognised Slovene independence; a contribution was made to this by many individual initiatives, activities and efforts, which are presented at our exhibition.

The Department for the Slovene emigrants, the Slovene ethnic minorities in the neighbouring countries, and the members of the national minorities and other ethnicities in Slovenia and supplement the Slovene Diaspora Collection at the National and University Library.

Some of these experiences have also appeared in book form, either at the time of independence or as memoirs published later. This milestone is recorded in prose works and it has also resonated in verse, as well as various documents and commemorative material. Selected examples are presented at the exhibition from the material kept by the National and University Library and the Archive of the Republic of Slovenia.

Dr Tanja Roženberger,
Slovene Ethnographic Museum

Helena Janežič,
National and University Library

Miroslav Košuta

OKNA MOJE HIŠE

Gledam skozi okno:
v gmajni brin sameva,
ampak malo dalje,
v njivi v drugem oknu
žito dozoreva.

In odprem še tretje
na nasprotni steni,
vidim: sinje morje
se v valovih peni
in čez te valove
belo jadro plove.

Združena tri okna
v sliko pretresljivo
shranim za spomin:
jadro plove v njivo,
v gmajni žitno klasje,
a samotni brin
sredi morja rase.

... sliko pretresljivo
shranim za spomin:
jadro plove v njivo,
v gmajni žitno klasje,
a samotni brin
sredi morja rase.

Miroslav Košuta
30.3.2021

Avtorice in avtorji vtisov na razstavi /
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Simona Bennett, Stanislava Gillgren, Tončka in
Jože Šimc, Uši Sereinig, Vera Hrga, Vera Tuta,
Vilma Rojic, Zvezdan Pirtošek

Odlomki iz pričevanj

Marko Hawlina

(Združeno kraljestvo, Slovenija), zdravnik, oftalmolog

Skupaj s somišljeniki smo ustanovili tako imenovan »Committee for defence of democracy in Yugoslavia«. Začeli smo z aktivnostmi, srečevanjem, pisanjem pism v londonske časopise in organizacijo mreže v Londonu živečih rojakov. Ob večerih sem klical eno številko za drugo...ljudje so bili začuden, tudi nezaupljivi... spominjam se le Jane Valenčič, ki je takoj in brez sumničavih vprašanj pristala na sodelovanje in sestanek.

Marija Mojca Terčelj

(Mehika, Slovenija), visokošolska predavateljica in raziskovalka

...skočila sem na kolo in brez prestanka pritiskala na pedala v več kot 10 km oddaljeno vas Chamula (Čamula), v cocilsko (Tzotzil) staroselsko svetišče »San Juan«. Solze so mi tekle vso pot, kričala sem: »Zakaj!?«... kot nora sem hitela v klanec, čutila nisem mišic, samo odmev v svoji glavi! V vasi sem najprej kupila dve sveči (barve – sprave po nesporazumu)....šla naravnost skozi vrata svetišča (nihče od šamanskih stražarjev se me sploh ni upal ustaviti, čeprav običajno t.i. 'stražarji vrat' strogo nadzorujejo vhod....!) ... vrgla sem se na kolena, prižgala sveči in tulila.... tulila in rotila....zakaj in kako in prosila, naj se ta situacija vendarle pravično uredi....naj je ne 'požrejo' nikogaršnji 'apetiti'..... še danes vonjam borove vejice in vršičke, ki so bili na podu svetišča....še danes vidim svojo rdečo in belo svečko, kako počasi, a vztrajno izgorevata medtem, ko jaz jočem in kličem na pomoč...

Miran Košuta

(Italija), univerzitetni profesor

Celotno obdobje od razglasitve plebiscita 26. decembra 1990, prek proglasitve neodvisnosti 25. junija 1991, do vojne na Slovenskem, premirja, odhoda Jugoslovanske ljudske armade, sprejetja ustave in mednarodnega priznanja Slovenije sem doživljal gregorčičevsko. Kakor protagonist Gregorčičeve pesmi Človeka nikar, ki mu je dano zreti v božjo delavnico, tako sem tudi sam takrat začudenih oči strmел v varnico zgodovine, ki je kalila Slovencem nekaj še nejasnega, negotovega, toda epohalnega in prelomnega.

Jožek Debeltak Žakelj

(Argentina), gospodinja

Sklican je bil plebiscit! Pri tem sem sodelovala! V Buenos Airesu so takoj sprožili zbiranje podpisov, da simbolično podpremo glasovanje. V nekaj dneh so zbrali okrog 3.000 podpisov, kar je bilo zelo težavno v tako velikem mestu. Med temi polami podpisov je bila tudi ena s tucumanskimi podpisi, ki sem jih zbrala v enem dnevu in jih poslala v Buenos Aires kar z letališča. In drugi dan jih je že imel v rokah moj brat Tine Debeljak, ki je nesel pole v Slovenijo. To je bil simbolični doprinos naše argentinske skupnosti k slovenski osamosvojitvi. Naši glasovi niso imeli veljave, ker nismo bili priznani državljani. Naš doprinos pa je pokazal, da trpimo in se veselimo z matično Slovenijo.

Anica in Lojze Markič

(Avstralija), upokojena zdravstvena delavka in upokojeni gradbenik

Še isti dan smo se sredi dneva zbrali v naši slovenski cerkvi Svetih bratov Cirila in Metoda in skupno, močno ganjeni, čustveno molili za našo domovino, za njeno uspešno in varno bodočnost. Sledila je slovenska pesem vrh stopnic, na katerih smo nazdravili novorojeni državi s šampanjcem. Žareli smo od sreče in veselja.

Zvezdan Pirtošek

(Združeno kraljestvo, Slovenija), zdravnik, nevrolog

Ko je bolj ali manj jasne grožnje pričela izrekati tudi vojska (JLA), smo skupaj s kolegom oftalmologom Markom Hawlino in hrvaškim internistom Dragom Štambukom ustanovili Odbor za obrambo demokracije, ta pa je kasneje prerasel v Slovenski krizni center. V tem civilnem gibanju sem bil »odgovoren« pred vsem za stike s parlamentom, političnimi strankami. Stike sem navezoval tudi z bolj in manj znanimi osebami (pisana družčina tistih bolj znanih je segala od sir Russel Johnstona, Dalai Lame, canterburijskega nadškofa Roberta Runcia, do jugoslovanskega kronskega princa Aleksandra) in pomagal skrbeti za stike z mediji.

Cvetka Kocjančič

(Kanada), publicistka

Za informiranje širše kanadske slovenske skupnosti sem že 11. julija pripravila publikacijo *Vojna v Sloveniji*, ki je bila razdeljena Slovincem po celi Kanadi. Brošura je bila skupaj s prošnjo za sodelovanje pri zbiranju denarja, ki so jo podpisali Jože Slobodnik, Leander Škof in Lojze Kocjančič, poslana številnim posameznikom in slovenskim društvom v Kanadi.

Berta Jereb

(Švedska, ZDA, Slovenija), upokojena zdravnica

Tako sva po 12 letih v Stockholmu in nato še osmih letih dela v New Yorku prišla nazaj v domovino. Počutila sva se neranljiva, ekonomsko neodvisna, oba ugledna v svoji stroki, ničesar nisva želela zase. Želela sva storiti kaj za domovino, kakor se to patetično sliši, je res.

Vera Tuta

(Italija), upokojena profesorica

Danes sem državljanka Slovenije. Tudi mož in dve hčeri imajo slovensko državljanstvo, vsi iz nacionalnega ponosa. Čeprav smo tudi državljani Italije, razlikujemo med pripadnostjo eni in drugi državi: Slovenija je naša domovina, prepoznamo se v slovenskih državnih simbolih, zastavi in himni; v Italiji pa imamo organizirano bivanje, spoštujemo njene zakone in plačujemo davke, a italijanska zastava ni naša zastava in himna še manj!

Nevenka Golc-Clarke

(Avstralija), založnica in proizvajalka marketinškega materiala

V Viktoriji je že deloval Slovenski narodni svet (SNS) v sklopu Avstralsko-slovenske konference. V podporo Sloveniji so 28. junija 1991 organizirali shod. Vprašala sem jih, če lahko spregovorim na shodu, kar so z veseljem sprejeli. Pripravila sem dokaj jezno »pismo« g. Bakerju, takratnemu tajniku ameriške administracije, ki je odkrito podpirala jugoslovansko vlado.

Milka Olip

(Avstrija), upokojenka

Iz Slovenije je v Sele prišlo kar nekaj »beguncev«, ki so se pred vojno umaknili čez mejo. Vojakov, sorodnikov in raznih drugih. V hiši, kjer sem takrat stanovala, je kakšen mesec bivala družina iz Pirana. Pri bratu je bivalo nekaj vojakov, eden od njih je ostal dalj časa. Bil je po poklicu mizar in je bratu mdr. pomagal pri mizarških delih za našo novo hišo, ki je takrat nastajala. Brat je bil potem tudi poročna priča pri poroki tega mizarja, stiki so ostali do danes.

Franco Košuta

(Italija), ladjedelski inženir

Ko je bil referendum za samostojno državo dne 23. decembra 1990, sem bil z družino v New Yorku. Dne 24. decembra sem prebral iz časopisa, da so Slovenci plebiscitarno volili s kar 88,5% za samostojno in neodvisno državo. Bil sem presrečen za rezultat, ampak istočasno tudi zaskrbljen za nadaljnji razvoj demokratizacije Slovenije.

Jožica Čeč Drese

(Nizozemska), upokojenka

Seveda sva bila (z možem, op. ur.) zelo aktivna. Prebirala sem časopise in vse objave o Sloveniji prevedla in poslala na Ministrstvo za zunanje zadeve in časopisno hišo Delo. Z nizozemskimi prijatelji smo ustanovili Klub Independent Slovenija, tiskali mape in papirje z našim logotipom. Kasneje so na Nizozemskem živeči Slovenci ustanovili društvo Prijatelji Slovenije.

Elena Isabel Likozar

(Argentina), tehnica svečanosti in protokola, učiteljica

Neodvisnost Slovenije je zame pomenila obnoviti mojo lastno zgodovino. Že od majhnega so me od drugih otrok razlikovale navade in drugače izgovorjene besede. Samo pomislite, da nismo znali špansko, ko smo začeli hoditi v argentinsko šolo, govorili smo le slovensko. Razlagati, da so moji starši Slovenci, ni bilo enostavno.

Jasna Simoneta

(Italija), etnologinja in kulturna antropologinja

Po nekaj letih, ko se je Slovenija osamosvojila, sem si med študijem uredila slovensko državljanstvo. Moja mama je namreč iz Slovenije in mi je po njej pripadalo. Študirala sem v Ljubljani in če se Slovenija ne bi osamosvojila, se verjetno ne bi odločila za ta korak. Takrat sem Slovenijo gledala z veliko mera idealizma.

Mira Kosem Borštnik

(Združene države Amerike), upokojena medicinska sestra

S sinom Jimom sva bila v nošah tudi v procesiji v clevelandski katedrali, kjer smo imeli priliko podpisati peticijo, da bi vlada ZDA priznala Slovenijo. Klicali smo tudi v Washington za priznanje neodvisnosti. V spominu mi izstopa klic sina Jima, ki je solzen prosil, naj pomagajo Sloveniji in jo rešijo Jugoslovanske armade, ki je napadla našo domovino.

Alfred Brežnik

(Avstralija), podjetnik

Lobirali smo pri politikih, članih parlamenta, neposredno pri ministru za zunanje zadeve Garethu Evansu in predsedniku vlade Robertu Hawku. Tudi sam sem pisal pisma in bil član delegacij, ko smo uradno obiskali predsednika vlade, zunajnega ministra in druge politike.

Oskar Molek

(Argentina), publicist in fotograf

Seveda, aktivno sem sodeloval na področju kulture, saj sem bil zelo povezan s slovenskimi izseljenskimi ustanovami, tudi preko osebnih stikov v Ljubljani. Sodeloval sem z našimi rojaki v društvu SJPD Triglav na raznih prireditvah, ki smo jih takrat pripravili. Pa tudi v argentinskih kulturnih krogih, kjer smo povedali za željo slovenskega ljudstva.

Martina Repinc

(Italija), TV in radijska urednica

Ob 10-letnici samostojnosti R. Slovenije sva s kolegom Fabiom Gergoletom pripravila dokumentarec "Pričevanja o uresničeni sanji". Dokumentarni zapis v štirih sklopih obravnava ključne dogodke Slovenske pomladi«. V njem so pričevanja in komentarji protagonistov takratnega "slovenskega trenutka", ki so obdobje osamosvojitve doživljali kot akterji na takratni nacionalni sceni.

Lucija Srnec (Avstralija)

Hvala in čast vsem, ki so se borili za samostojno Slovenijo. Z veseljem in hvaležnostjo se spominjam moje nove domovine Avstralije, katera je bila prva prekomorska država, ki je priznala Slovenijo za neodvisno – samostojno državo.

Jože Pirjevec

(Italija), *univerzitetni profesor*

Dogodke sem vsak teden komentiral v Primorskem dnevniku, kjer sem objavljaj svoje »glose«. V odločilnem trenutku med letoma 1990 in 1991, pa je sodelovanje tedanji urednik prekinil, ker sem preveč odločno zagovarjal osamosvojitve Slovenije.

Uši Sereinig

(Avstrija), *znanstvena sodelavka*

Seveda imam veliko osebnih spominov na to prelomno leto, saj sem takrat žvela na kraju samem in imela med študenti dobre prijatelje. Parčku iz Istre je na začetku vojne uspelo z avtom neopazno priti čez mejo k meni domov na Koroško. Drug prijatelj je bil vpoklican v TO v Ilirsko Bistrico, kjer bil položaj zaradi vpadne ceste za tanke JLA resen. Vsak večer sem bila z njim telefonsko povezana in seveda z njim trepetala.

Ivan Stanislav Prosenak

(Avstralija), *upokojen trgovski poslovođa*

Nedvomno smo Slovenci v Avstraliji s svojimi aktivnostmi doprinesli malenkostni delež nadvse potrebnega obveščanja in seznanjanja tujcev z zgodovinsko pravico malega slovenskega naroda v srcu Evrope do samoodločanja na svoji zemlji.

Rok (Ignacio Roque) Fink

(Argentina), *diplomirani ekonomist, psihološki svetovalec, glasbenik in pevec, taksist...*

Takoj po mojemu prihodu v hotel sem poklical mamo, ki mi je vsa objokana povedala, da je videla na televiziji Ljubljano in da nas bodo Srbi potolkli. Nato je bila organizirana javna proslavitev dogodka na ulici pred parkom Paseo de las colectividades s številnimi zastavami, tudi našo. Igrala je pihalna godba, navzoči so bili predstavniki krajevne oblasti, peli smo Naprej zastava slave, da je odmevalo iz vseh koncev.

Erika Jazbar

(Italija), *časnikarka*

Zelo prepričano sem si s svojim prvim denarjem kupila ponatis 57. številke Nove revije, branje mi je bilo sicer težavno, tako z vsebinskega kot tudi z jezikovnega vidika. Brala sem Mladino, še danes mi zveni glas Toneta Pavčka, ki bere Majniško deklaracijo, ob vsakem obisku v Ljubljani sem si na stojnici na Čopovi nakupila značk, nalepk, zastav in zastavic, majic, svinčnikov s slovenskimi simboli, ki sem jih nato lepila na vidno mesto na platnice zvezkov in knjig, jih delila med prijatelje, vrsto let sem vozila avto z nalepko karantanskega panterja...

Breda Strojin Wilkinson

(Združeno kraljestvo), upokojenka

Naša hiša je po razglasitvi slovenske samostojnosti postala center komunikacij z vodstvom v Sloveniji in UK. Posredovali smo razna sporočila, aktivno pa sem lobirala tudi pri članih britanskega parlamenta. Nastopila pa sem še na televiziji v glavnih novicah dneva, kjer sem zagovarjala samostojnost Slovenije, nasproti v studiu pa je sedel predstavnik jugoslovanske ambasade v UK. Moj odločni nastop in zagovarjanje slovenske samostojnosti sta bila tudi razlog, da sem izgubila službo.

Miroslav Košuta

(Italija), pesnik, dramatik in prevajalec

Občutke sem izrazil v pesmih in spisih, v govorih in intervjujih, a povzel v Pismu Cirilu Zlobcu, 8. februarja 1996 za Sodobnost (ponatis v spominih Na zmajevih krilih, 2020).

Ana Stegu Vičič in Karlo Vičič

(Francija), upokojenca

19. januarja 1990 smo se množično udeležili manifestacije na Trocaderu, na Ploščadi človekovih pravic pri Eifflovem stolpu. Slovenska in hrvaška skupnost sta želeli skupaj opozoriti francosko javnost o vojaških premikih jugoslovanske armade. Prisotni smo bili s številnimi napisi in gesli, odvijali so se nagovori v prisotnosti francoskih medijev.

Ivo Jevnikar

(Italija), upokojeni časnikar

Naša Mladinska sekcija je zbirala podpise in prirejala protestna zborovanja ob procesu proti četverici, skupno z drugimi organizacijami pa potem ob napadu na Slovenijo. Naši predstavniki so med samo vojno za Slovenijo vodili visoke italijanske politike na srečanja v Ljubljano.

Draga Gelt

(Avstralija), učiteljica in kulturna delavka

Bila sem članica Slovenskega Narodnega Sveta Viktorije v Melbournu. Skupno smo se pripravljali za shode, demonstracije, pisali nešteta pisma v avstralski parlament in tudi drugim državam.

Simona Bennett

(Združeno kraljestvo), upokojena profesorica tujih jezikov

Povezala sem se s Slovenci v Londonu in se udeležila demonstracij pred jugoslovansko ambasado v Kensingtonu in pred Parlamentom, nekajkrat tudi skupaj s člani slavistike londonske univerze. Pisali smo tudi svojim poslancem, naj glasujejo za osamosvojitve.

Lenti Lenko

(Avstralija), učitelj klavirja, orgel, klaviatur in glasbene teorije

1990 in 1991 sta bili leti, ko smo bili Slovenci vseh političnih in ideoloških prepričanj enotni za skupno stvar slovenske neodvisnosti in mednarodnega priznanja. Škoda, da ta enotnost ni trajala in da danes nekateri razmišljajo, da samostojna Slovenija, ki jo je takrat obljubljalo njeno politično vodstvo, ni tista država, na katero so upali pred 30 leti.

Lučka Koščak Kaegi

(Švica), kiparka

V Ženevi nas je bilo le nekaj Slovenk in Slovencev in slabo smo se poznali med sabo. Osamosvojitve nas je združila v društvo, začeli smo izdajati svoj časopis Ženevske novice, kjer sem sodelovala in mnogo let kasneje tudi prevzela uredništvo.

Maša Arko

(Francija, Švica), osebna asistentka predsednika UEFA

Strašen je občutek nemoči, ko si tako daleč stran od svojih in ne veš, ali so na varnem, kaj se bo zgodilo. In totalen občutek nerealnosti, ko hodiš po Parizu, kjer življenje teče, kot da ni vojne za vogalom, kot da se to nikogar ne tiče.

Extracts from the testimony

Marko Hawlina

(United Kingdom, Slovenia), *doctor, ophthalmologist*

A group of us founded the 'Committee for defence of democracy in Yugoslavia'. We began with activities, meetings, writing letters to English newspapers and organising a network of fellow countrymen living in London. In the evenings I called one number after another... people were surprised, also mistrustful ... I remember only Jane Valenčič, who immediately and without asking suspicious questions agreed to cooperate and take part in meetings.

Marija Mojca Terčelj

(Mexico, Slovenia), *higher education lecturer and researcher*

...I jumped on my bike and pedalled non-stop to the village of Chamula, 10 km away, to the Tzotzil indigenous shrine of San Juan. I was in tears the whole way, shouting 'Why?!'... I rode up the hill like crazy, I couldn't feel my muscles, only the echo in my head! ... In the village, I first bought two candles (the colours of reconciliation) ... went straight through the door of the shrine (none of the shaman guards dared to stop me, although usually they guard the entrance very jealously!) ... I threw myself on my knees, lit the candles and howled ... howled and pleaded ... why and how, and asked that the situation sort itself out in a just way ... let it not be devoured by any 'appetites' ... even today, I can still smell the pine branches and shoots that were on the floor of the shrine ... even today I can see my red and white candles slowly burning while I cried and called for help...

Miran Košuta

(Italy), *university professor*

The whole period from the announcement of the plebiscite of 26 December 1990 to the declaration of independence on 25 June 1991, to the war in Slovenia, the ceasefire, the departure of the Yugoslav People's Army, the acceptance of the constitution and international recognition of Slovenia, I experienced like the protagonist in Gregorčič's poem Man, Never, who can look into God's workshop. I could also then look with amazed eyes into the workshop of history, which was moulding for Slovenes something unclear, uncertain, but epochal and historical.

Jožejka Debeljak Žakelj

(Argentina), *housewife*

A plebiscite was called! I played a part! They immediately started collecting signatures in Buenos Aires to symbolically accompany the voting. In a few days more than 3,000 signatures were gathered, which was difficult in such a large city. Among the sheets of signatures was one from Tucuman province, which I collected in one day and sent to Buenos Aires from the airport. And the next day, they were in the hands of my brother, Tine Debeljak, who took them to Slovenia. This was a symbolic contribution of our Argentinian community to Slovene independence. Our signatures were not valid, because we were not officially citizens. But it showed that we suffered and celebrated with Slovenia, our motherland.

Anica and Lojze Markič

(Australia), retired health worker and retired builder

On the same day, around midday, we gathered at our Slovene church of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Kew and together, powerfully moved, we prayed emotionally for our homeland, for its safe and successful future. This was followed by Slovene song at the top of the steps, where we toasted the new born state with champagne. We were glowing with happiness and joy.

Zvezdan Pirtošek

(United Kingdom, Slovenia), doctor, neurologist

When more or less explicit threats began to be made by the Yugoslav People's Army, with my ophthalmologist colleague Marko Hawlina and the Croatian internal medicine specialist Drago Štambuk, we established the Committee for the Defence of Democracy, which later became the Slovene Crisis Centre. Within this civil movement I was 'responsible' primarily for contact with parliament and political parties. I also got in touch with some public faces (a varied group, ranging from Sir Russell Johnston, the Dalai Lama, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, to the Yugoslav crown prince Aleksander) and helped deal with media contacts.

Cvetka Kocjančič

(Canada), newspaper contributor

On 11 July, I prepared the publication *The War in Slovenia*, which was distributed to Slovene communities across Canada. The brochure was accompanied by a request for financial contributions signed by Jože Slobodnik, Leander Škof and Lojze Kocjančič, and it was sent to numerous individuals and Slovene societies in Canada.

Berta Jereb

(Sweden, USA, Slovenia), retired doctor

Thus after 12 years in Stockholm and then eight years working in New York, we came back to the homeland. We felt invulnerable, economically independent, both respected in our profession, we didn't want anything for ourselves. We wanted to do something for the homeland, however emotional that sounds, it is true.

Vera Tuta

(Italy), retired teacher

Today, I am a Slovene citizen. My husband and two daughters also have Slovene citizenship, all from national pride. Although we are also Italian citizens, our sense of appurtenance to the two countries differs: Slovenia is our homeland, we see ourselves in the Slovene national symbols, the flag, the hymn; although we live in Italy, respect its laws and pay taxes, the Italian flag is not our flag and the national anthem even less so!

Nevenka Golc-Clarke

(Australia), publisher and producer of marketing material

In Victoria there was the Slovenian National Council, operating within the framework of the Australian-Slovene Conference. On 28 June 1991, we organised a rally in support of Slovenia. I asked if I could speak at the rally, which they were pleased to accept. I prepared a rather angry 'letter' to Mr Baker, the then American Secretary of State, who was openly supporting the Yugoslav government.

Milka Olip

(Austria), retired

Quite a few 'refugees' from the war in Slovenia crossed to border to Sele/Zell. Soldiers, relatives and various others. A family from Piran spent a month or so in the house where I was then living. Some soldiers stayed with my brother, one for a longer period. He was a carpenter by profession and among other things he helped my brother with carpentry work on our new house, which was then being built. My brother was then witness at his wedding and they have kept in touch until today.

Franko Košuta

(Italy), ship engineer

When the referendum for an independent state took place on 23 December 1990, I was in New York with my family. On 24 December I read in the newspaper that Slovenes had voted resoundingly, 88.5 %, for an independent country. I was delighted by the result, but at the same time worried about the further development of democracy in Slovenia.

Jožica Čeč Drese

(Netherlands), retired

Of course, my husband and I were very active. I read the newspapers and translated all the statements about Slovenia and sent them to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the publishers of the newspaper Delo. With Dutch friends, we established an Independent Slovenia Club, printing maps and papers with our logo. Later, Slovenes living in Netherlands set up a society, Friends of Slovenia.

Elena Isabel Likozar

(Argentina), ceremony and protocol specialist, teacher

For me, Slovenia's independence meant a renewal of my own history. Ever since I was little, my habits and differently pronounced words had differentiated me from other children. Just think that we didn't know Spanish when we started to attend school in Argentina, we only spoke Slovene. Explaining that my parents were Slovene was not a simple matter.

Jasna Simoneta

(Italy), *ethnologist and cultural anthropologist*

After some years, when Slovenia became independent, I arranged my Slovene citizenship while there as a student. My mother is from Slovenia and I was entitled through her. I studied in Ljubljana and if Slovenia had not gained independence, I would probably not have decided for that step. At that time, I looked upon Slovenia with a great measure of idealism.

Mira Kosem Boršnik

(USA), *retired nurse*

My son Jim and I wore national dress in the procession in Cleveland Cathedral, where we had the chance to sign a petition calling for the US government to recognise Slovenia. We also called Washington to recognise independence. Still strong in my memory is my son asking in tears for them to help Slovenia and save it from the Yugoslav Army, which was attacking our homeland.

Alfred Brežnik

(Australia), *business man*

We lobbied politicians, members of parliament, direct with the Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans and the Prime Minister, Robert Hawke. I wrote letters and was a member of the delegation that visited the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and other politicians.

Oskar Molek

(Argentina), *journalist and photographer*

Of course, we played an active part in the field of culture, I had a strong connection with Slovene emigrant institutions, as well as through personal connections in Ljubljana. I cooperated with fellow countrymen in the society SJPD Triglav at the various events that we prepared at the time. But also in Argentinian cultural circles, where we recounted the wish of the Slovene people.

Martina Repinc

(Italy), *TV and radio editor*

On the 10th anniversary of the independent Republic of Slovenia, Fabio Gergole and I prepared a documentary, "Testimony on a Realised Dream". The four-part documentary analysed the key events in the Slovene Spring. It includes the testimony and commentaries from the protagonists of that 'Slovene moment' who experienced independence as actors on the national scene of the time.

Lucija Srnec

(Australia)

Thanks and honour to all those who fought for an independent Slovenia. I remember my new homeland Australia with pleasure and gratitude, as it was the first country outside Europe to recognise Slovenia as a sovereign, independent state.

Jože Pirjevec

(Italy), *university professor*

I commented on the events every week in Primorski dnevnik, where I published my commentaries. But at a decisive moment between 1990 and 1991, my cooperation was ended by the then editor, because I was defending Slovene independence too decisively.

Uši Sereinig

(Austria), *specialist support staff*

Of course, I have a lot of personal memories of that historic year, for I was living close by and had some good friends among students. At the beginning of the war, a pair from Istria managed to get across the border by car unobserved and came to my home in Carinthia. Another friend was called up for the Territorial Defence force in Ilirska Bistrica, where the situation was serious because of the approaching tanks of the Yugoslav Army. Every evening, I spoke to him on the phone and of course, trembled with him.

Ivan Stanislav Prosenak

(Australia), *retired shop manager*

Undoubtedly the activities of we Slovenes in Australia contributed a little to the necessary informing and familiarising of foreigners with the right of the small Slovene nation in the heart of Europe to make its own choices on its own territory.

Rok (Ignacio Roque) Fink

(Argentina), *economics graduate, psychological adviser, musician and singer, taxi driver...*

As soon as I got the hotel, I called my mother, who told me in tears that she had seen Ljubljana on the television and that the Serbs were going to squash us. Then a public celebratory event was organised on the street in front of the park Paseo de las colectividades, with lots of flags, including ours. A band played, all the representatives of the local authorities were present, we sang the former national anthem Naprej zastava slave, so that it resounded everywhere.

Erika Jazbar

(Italy), *journalist*

With my first money, with great conviction, I bought the reprint of the 57th edition of the journal Nova revija, although reading it was very difficult from the point of view of both language and content. I read the magazine Mladina, and I can still hear the voice of Tone Pavček reading the political statement the Ma-jniška deklaracija, and on every visit to Ljubljana, at the stand on Čopova Street, I bought badges, stickers, flags and paper flags, t-shirts, pencils with Slovene symbols, which I then stuck in a visible place to the covers of notebooks and books that I gave out to my friends, and for a number of years I had a Carantani-an panther sticker on my car...

Breda Strojin Wilkinson

(United Kingdom), retired

After the declaration of Slovene independence, our house became a communications centre with the leadership in Slovenia and the UK. We passed on various reports and I lobbied British MPs. I also appeared on the main daily news programme where I spoke in favour of Slovenia's independence, while opposite me sat a representative of the Yugoslav Embassy in the UK. My determined defence of Slovene independence was the reason that I lost my job.

Miroslav Košuta

(Italy), poet, playwright and translator

I expressed my feelings in poems and essays, in speeches and interviews, and summarised them in "Letter to Ciril Zlobec", on 8 February 1996, for Sodobnost (reprinted in the memoirs *On Dragon's Wings*, 2020).

Ana Stegu Vičič and Karlo Vičič

(France), retired

On 19 January 1990, we held a mass demonstration at the Trocadero, on Human Rights Square next to the Eiffel Tower. The Slovene and Croatian communities wanted to draw the attention of the French public to the Yugoslav Army's military manoeuvres. We were there with our banners and slogans, and speeches were made in the presence of the French media.

Ivo Jevnikar

(Italy), retired journalist

Our youth section collected signatures and organised protest marches against the trial of 'The Four', and then with other organisations against the attack on Slovenia. During the war itself, our representatives took senior Italian politicians to meetings in Ljubljana.

Draga Gelt

(Australia), teacher and cultural worker

I was a member of the Slovene National Council of Victoria in Melbourne. Together, we prepared rallies and demonstrations, and wrote countless letters to the Australian parliament and also to other countries.

Simona Bennett

(United Kingdom), retired teacher of foreign languages

I connected up with Slovenes in London and took part in demonstrations outside the Yugoslav Embassy in Kensington and in front of Parliament, some of the times together with Slavic Studies specialists from London University. We also wrote to our MPs to vote for independence.

Lenti Lenko

(Australia), *teacher of piano, organ, keyboards and music theory*

In 1990 and 1991, Slovenes of all political and ideological persuasions were unified in supporting Slovene independence and international recognition. It is a shame that this unity did not last and that today some think that the independent Slovenia is not what was promised 30 years ago by the then political leadership, it is not the country they hoped for 30 years ago.

Lučka Koščak Kaegi

(Switzerland), *sculptor*

There were some Slovenes living in Geneva, but we didn't know each other well. Slovene independence brought us together into a society, we began to publish the newspaper *Ženevske novice*, which I contributed to and also, years later, became editor of.

Maša Arko

(France, Switzerland), *personal assistant to the president of UEFA*

There is a terrible feeling of helplessness when you are so far away from your loved ones and you don't know if they are safe or what will happen to them. And the complete feeling of unreality, when you are walking about Paris, where life is carrying on as normal, as if war was not around the corner, as if it didn't concern any one.



SLOVENSKI
ETNOGRAFSKI
MUZEJ