

The dichotomy of students and university teachers of Slovenian descent between academic careers and the expectations of the Slovenian nationalists

From the March revolution to the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy

ANA CERGOL PARADIŽ – ŽELJKO OSET

Abstract. The subject of our research will be a graphical representation of the number of Slovenian students at individual Austrian universities for the period from the second half of the 19th century until the First World War. This will be followed (mainly through biographical method) by the analysis of the complex and ambivalent relationships between (especially natural) scientists of Slovenian descent, whose main professional goal was to successfully function in the academic field, and the Slovenian nationalists, whose long-term goal was to form the Slovenian national identity and the Slovenian nation.

Dichotomie studentů a univerzitních vyučujících slovinského původu mezi akademickou kariérou a naděje slovinských nacionalistů od březnové revoluce po rozpad habsburské monarchie. Předmětem výzkumu bylo grafické znázornění počtu slovinských studentů na jednotlivých rakouských univerzitách v období druhé poloviny 19. století do 1. světové války. Následovala (především biografickými metodami) analýza složitých a ambivalentních vztahů mezi vědci (zejména přírodovědci) slovinského původu, jejichž hlavním profesním cílem bylo úspěšně působit na akademickém poli, a slovinskými nacionalisty, jejichž dlouhodobým cílem bylo formovat slovinskou národní identitu a slovinský národ.

Keywords: students • scientists • Austrian universities • Slovenia • 19th century • Jožef Stefan • Franc Miklošič • Angela Piskernik • Boris Zarnik • Maks Samec • Josip Plemelj

Slovenian political demands and the founding of Slovenian literary society (Slovenska matica)

In the second half of the 19th century, Slovenian demands were aimed at ensuring a constitutionally warranted equality. At the outbreak of the revolution, these demands were articulated exactly by the Slovenian students and young doctoral

students in Vienna and Graz. Looking also to other national groups, they demanded: national equality in education, public life, and the founding of (Slovenian) university in Ljubljana as the land capital of Carniola with majority Slovenian population.¹

Student demands, acknowledged as their own by Slovenian patriots, were addressed to the government in a memorandum by the Carniolan provincial assembly. In view of the circumstances, the government granted some minor concessions, among others the funds for civil law lectures in Slovenian at the University of Graz, which took place between 1849 and 1854.²

After a decade of calm in the 1850s, Slovenian demands were articulated again at the beginning of the constitutional period. As a rule, the government was reserved toward Slovenian politicians' demands, rejecting them with the argument that there was no need to introduce Slovenian textbooks, nor were there qualified Slovenian teachers, and no established terminology existed. Arguing that there were no trained officials, it also opposed the functioning of public offices and courts in Slovenian.³ Etbin Costa perceived the government's stance as a vicious circle, hindering the development of Slovenian nation, and rendering impossible the enforcement of constitutionally warranted equality. Therefore, Costa suggested founding an association for the publishing of expert Slovenian books, the Slovenian Literary Society (*Slovenska matica*), which was to function following the examples of the Czech (1831), Serbian (1826), and Croatian (1842) literary societies (*maticas*). Costa and other Slovenian nationalists looked up to the Czech national-representative institutions and literary society (*matica*) respectively, due to their success,⁴ and due to Czech political strength in the national assembly. Croatian national-representative institutions or literary society (*matica*), also represented a model because of the geographical proximity and the social network of Slovenian cultural workers and teachers who worked in Croatia at

¹ Stane GRANDA. *Prva odločitev Slovencev za Slovenijo* [Slovenes' first decision for Slovenia]. Ljubljana, 2000. Helmut RUMPLER – Martin SEGER. *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918. Sozialen Strukturen: Bd. IX/2*. Wien, 1910, pp. 64–65.

² Janko POLEC – Bogumil SENEKOVIČ. *V senčičski zbornik* [College Miscellany]. Ljubljana 1902, pp. 106–298.

³ Vasilij MELIK. *Slovenci 1848–1918* [Slovenes 1848–1919]. Maribor, 2002, pp. 78–85, 127–140.

⁴ Etbin Henrik COSTA. Die 'Academia Operosorum' in Laibach. *Mitteilungen des historischen Vereines für Krain*. June 1861, pp. 41–46; Joka ŽIGON. *Veliko pismo slovenske združitve. Ustanovitev Slovenske matice*. [The great letter of Slovenian unification. The founding of Slovenian Literary Society]. Ljubljana, 1935, pp. 10–26.

the time, especially in Croatian high schools. It was these very teachers who also authored the majority of the first high school textbooks issued in Slovenian during the 1860s and 1870s.⁵

The textbooks were written with Croatian ones in mind, whereas high-school textbooks in Slovenian language issued after the March revolution served as linguistic examples. Thus, a linguistic standard for the Slovenian language was established, conceived in the bilingual German-Slovenian official gazette published during 1849–1851, where Franc Miklošič and Matej Cigale among others collaborated⁶.

The plan to found a Yugoslav academy of sciences and arts also had important influence on the founding of the Slovenian Literary Society as the first Slovenian scientific association in 1864. Most politically active Slovenian cultural workers supported the founding of the Literary Society. They wished the society to perform the tasks of a Slovenian academy of sciences – that is, the collecting and processing of material for the publishing of Slovenian literary language dictionary – and to collaborate with Croatian national-representative cultural institutions as an equal central Slovenian cultural institution. A smaller group, however, opposed the founding of the Literary Society (*matica*), and suggested collaboration in establishing an academy in Zagreb. This debate ceased when Josip Juraj Strossmayer, an initiator of founding the Zagreb Yugoslav academy of sciences and arts, financially supported the founding of Slovenian Literary Society with a donation.⁷

Collaboration between Slovenian and Croatian cultural workers began to decline after 1867, since the majority of Slovenian professors and officials had been moved to the Austrian part of the monarchy. Deeper political and cultural collaboration reoccurred at the end of the 19th century.⁸

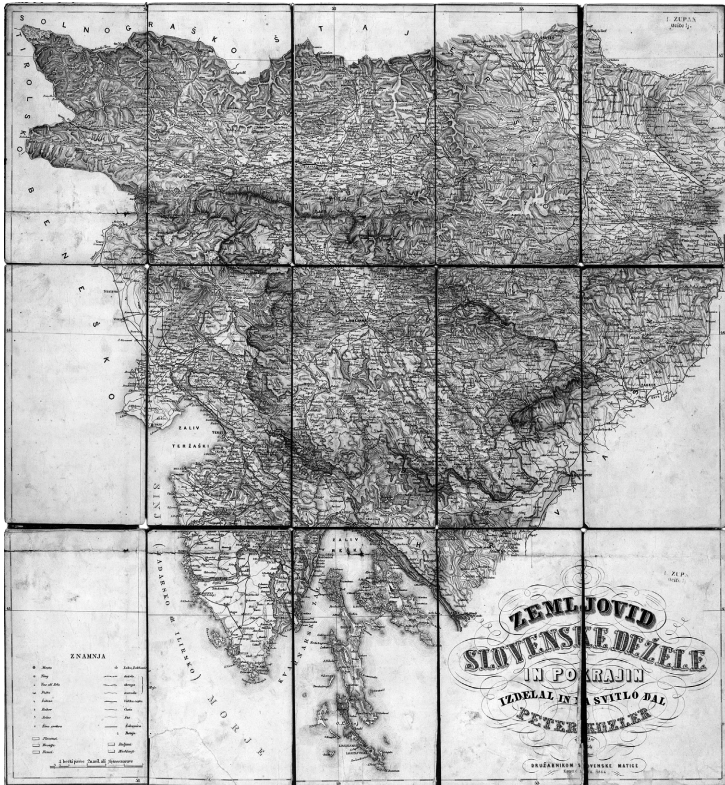
⁵ J. ŽIGON. *Veliko*, pp. 17–18; V. MELIK. *Slovenci*, pp. 222–244, 687–694.

⁶ Janez KRANJC. Prispevek Frana Miklošiča k oblikovanju slovenske pravne terminologije v prvem letniku dvojezičnega izhajanja državnega zakonika in vladnega lista avstrijskega cesarstva [Contribution of Fran Miklošič to the forming of Slovenian legal terminology in the first bilingual volume of state code and government gazette of the Austrian empire]. In Jože TOPORIŠIČ (eds.): *Miklošičev zbornik* [Miklošič miscellany]. Ljubljana, 1992, pp. 117–134.

⁷ Željko OSET. *Zgodovina Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti* [The history of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts]. Ljubljana, 2014, pp. 35–38.

⁸ Ž. OSET. *Zgodovina* [History], pp. 35–41; Andrej RAHTEN. *Zaveznitva in delitve. Razvoj slovensko-brvaških političnih odnosov v habsburški monarhiji 1848–1918* [Alliances and divisions. Development of Slovenian-Croatian political relations in the Habsburg monarchy 1848–1918]. Ljubljana, 2005.

The Slovenian Literary Society (*Slovenska matica*) functioned as an organizational hub, connecting a geographically dispersed network of national Slovenian societies. In the first two decades, it had between 1000 and 2500 members, but after 1890, the membership constantly increased, rising to approximately 5000 society members before the war. In the fifty years before First World War, the society published around 100 scientific and around 200 belletristic books. By publishing scientific works, it decisively influenced the formation of Slovenian expert terminology in the fields of geography, botany, geology, and history. An important turning point in the process was the issuing of a dictionary of Slovenian scientific terminology, the life work of Mateja Cigale, in 1880.⁹ Systematic efforts to publish



The map “Zemljovid Slovenske dežele in pokrajin” [of Slovenian land and provinces] made by Peter Kozler in 1853.¹⁰

⁹ France BERNIK (ed.). *Slovenska matica 1864–1964* [Slovenian Literary Society 1864–1964]. Ljubljana, 1964.

¹⁰ ARS, AS 621, b. 69, no. 1271.

an integral natural dictionary occurred after 1900, following the strengthening of efforts to found a university in Ljubljana. Of course, the society importantly contributed to the forming of the national self-image, historical memory, and Slovenian nationalist conceptions. This is proven by the fact that the Society handed its members as a present the the map “Zemljovid Slovenske dežele in pokrajin” [of Slovenian land and provinces], made by Peter Kozler in 1853.¹¹

The activities of Croatian and Czech national-representative institutions were strongly reflected in those of the Slovenian Literary Society. Especially worth pointing out is the foundation of the Franz Josephs Czech Academy of Sciences, Literature and Arts in 1890, called only the Czech Academy of Science and the Arts (Česká akademie věd a umění) after 1918, and the Association for the Fostering of German Science, Arts and Literature in Bohemia (Gesellschaft zur Förderung deutscher Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur in Böhmen, founded according the model of the Czech Academy in 1891. Reforming the Slovenian Literary Society was opposed by the majority of members, who were afraid of the belletristic publishing program being tarnished. Since the Society board had not managed to secure adequate state support equivalent to that received by the academies of sciences in the monarchy, the plan failed. A Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts was only established in 1938. Likewise, the Slovenian university in Ljubljana was founded only after the First World War. Until then, Slovene students had to study at other (Austrian) universities.¹²

Slovene students at Austrian universities

Between 1875–1911, there were also students who had stated Slovene as their mother tongue (Muttersprache) in all of the universities in Cisleithania. According to the data of the Austrian statistics, 56 % of “Slovene” students¹³ attended the university in Vienna, 34 % the one in Graz, and 8 % the universities in Prague (the German and Czech universities together) in that period. Only a few of all “Slovene” students attended the university in Krakow, or the universities in Innsbruck, Lvov, and Chernivtsi (see Chart 1).¹⁴

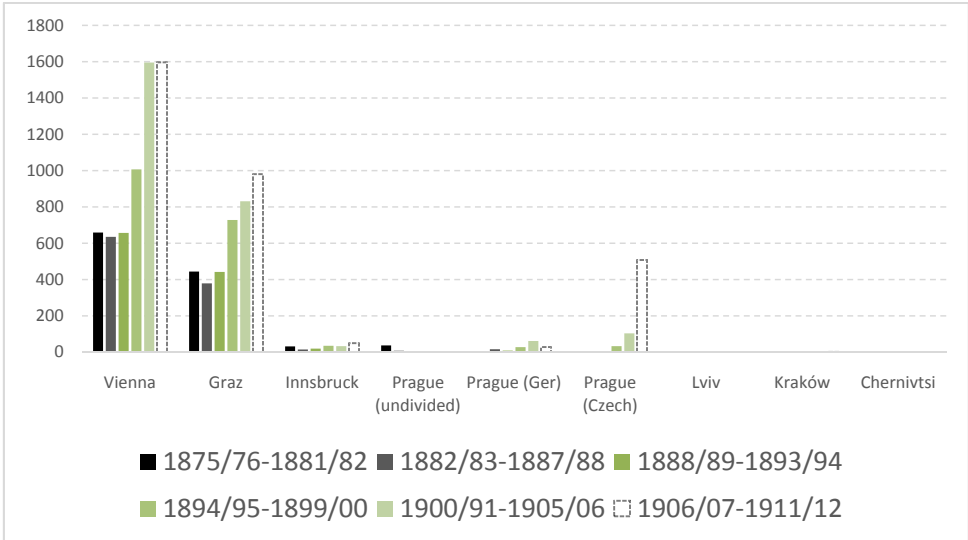
¹¹ Archives of the Republic of Slovenia (ARS), AS 621, box 1–2, 6.

¹² Ž. OSET. *Zgodovina*, pp. 38–96.

¹³ “Slovene” students refers to those students, who had stated Slovene as their mother tongue (Muttersprache).

¹⁴ *Statistisches Jahrbuch. Für das Jahr.* Wien, 1875–1881; *Österreichische Statistik.* Wien, 1882–1912.

Chart 1 Number of “Slovene” students at Austrian universities (*Statistisches Jahrbuch. Für das Jahr. Wien, 1875–1881. Österreichische Statistik. Wien, 1882–1912*)



Of course, some “Slovene” students also studied beyond the borders of Cisleithania, or even the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but they were very few. A similar distribution of “Slovene” students in individual towns of Cisleithania is shown by the Institutes of Technology (Technische Hochschulen) (See Chart 2),¹⁵ or by analyzing where the professors, who immediately after 1919 taught at the University of Ljubljana, completed their studies (see Chart 3),¹⁶ and also by analyzing where the first members of the Slovenia Academy of Sciences and Arts (founded in 1938) completed their studies (see Chart 4).¹⁷

¹⁵ *Statistisches Jahrbuch. Österreichische Statistik*; Vasilij MELIK – Peter VODOPIVEC. Slovenski izobraženci in avstrijske visoke šole 1848–1918 [Slovenian intellectuals and Austrian colleges 1848–1918]. *Zgodovinski časopis* [Historical Review], 1986, no. 3, pp. 269–282.

¹⁶ <http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/>.

¹⁷ Ž. OSET. *Zgodovina*, pp. 68–100.

Chart 2 Number of “Slovene” students at Austrian Institutes of technology (*Statistisches Jahrbuch. Für das Jahr. Wien, 1875–1881. Österreichische Statistik. Wien, 1882–1912*)

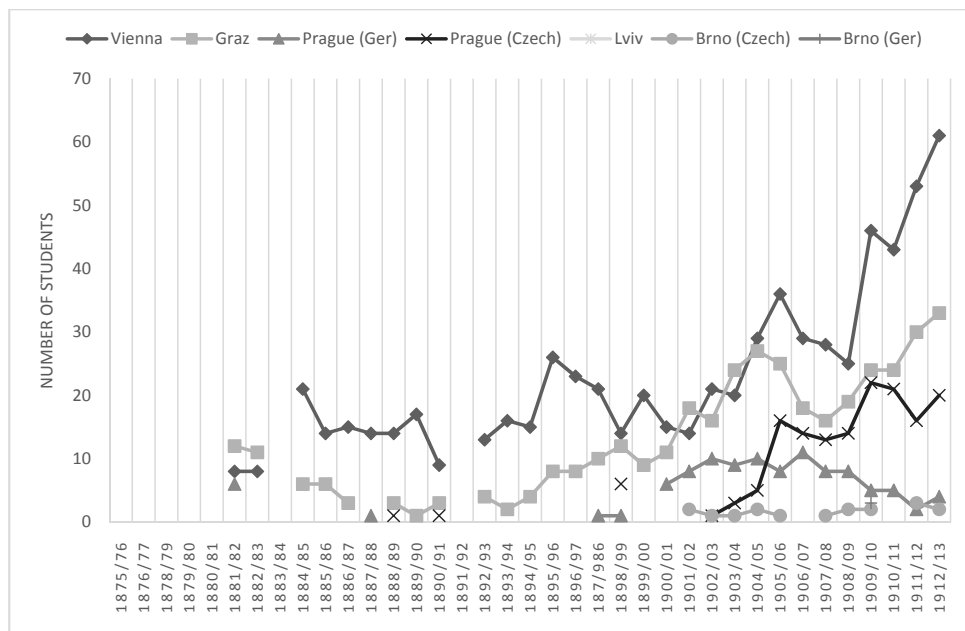


Chart 3 Chart that shows where the “Slovene” professors, who immediately after 1919 taught at the University of Ljubljana, completed their studies (<http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/>)

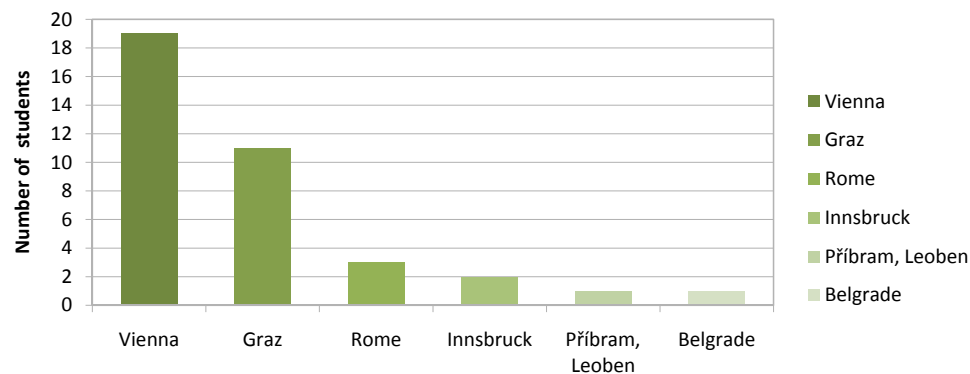
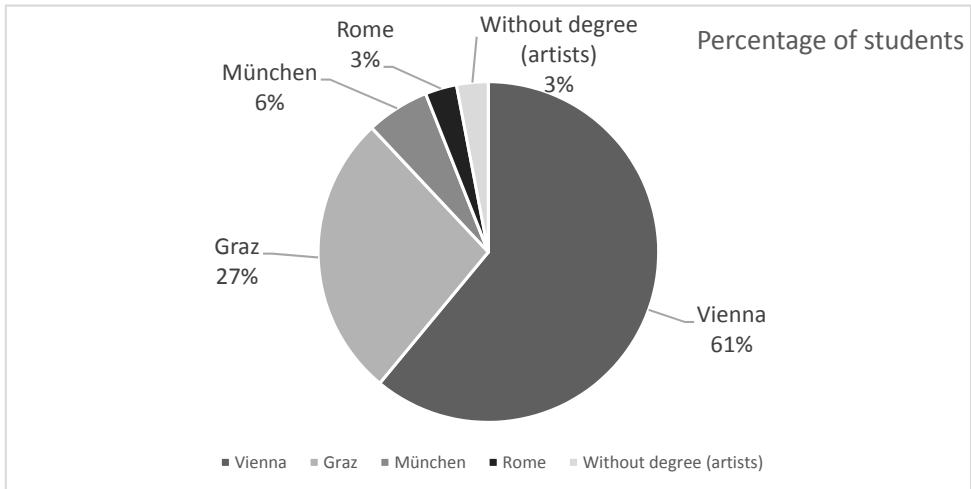


Chart 4 Chart that shows where the first members of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (founded in 1938) completed their studies (Ž. Oset: *Zgodovina*, pp. 68–100)



Why did Slovene students prefer to study in Vienna, even though the universities of Graz and Zagreb were closer? Vienna had the advantage of being the political and cultural center of the Monarchy, and offered more opportunities for subsistence. In Vienna, the support association for Slovene students was formed earlier than at other university centers (1888). Another reason for not choosing the nearby university in Zagreb was its location in the other half of the state. Hence, if they wanted to work in Cisleithania later, they would need to have their diplomas certified or take differential exams.¹⁸

Towards the end of the 19th and in the early 20th century, the number of Slovene students generally increased, most rapidly in Prague.¹⁹ Due to the escalating national conflict with the Germans, Slovene students increasingly chose Slavic towns for their studies. Studies in “liberal” Prague soon became a problem for the Slovene Conservatives, who had the political supremacy in Slovenian lands. Slovene Conservatives preferred to send students to the more Catholic-oriented Krakow. However, their initiative did not have a major impact.²⁰

¹⁸ V. MELIK – P. VODOPIVEC. Slovenski izobraženci, pp. 269–282.

¹⁹ *Statistisches Jahrbuch. Österreichische Statistik.*

²⁰ V. MELIK – P. VODOPIVEC. Slovenski izobraženci, pp. 269–282. On Slovenes at University of Vienna see also Alojz CINDRIČ. *Študenti s Kranjske na dunajski univerzi 1848–1918* [Carniolan Students at Vienna University]. Ljubljana, 2009.

The agitation for Krakow was not the only way in which Slovene Conservatives tried to steer the opinion of Slovene students in this period (1848–1918). Here is another example. In 1865, there was an initiative in support of the chancellor of the University of Graz, who was a strong supporter of evolutionary theory. Some Slovene students welcomed the initiative, but the conservative Slovenian newspapers did not approve of their reaction and tried to obstruct them. A suggestion was even written that parents should stop offering material support to their children if they advocated evolutionary theory. Due to these narrow ideological standpoints, several promising young intellectuals separated themselves from the nation.²¹

Lastly, the statistical data reveals another speciality of Slovene students. It can be seen from the chart that the majority of them chose to study humanities.²²

Table 1 Number of »Slovene« students at Austrian faculties (*Statistisches Jahrbuch. Für das Jahrb. Wien, 1875–1881. Österreichische Statistik. Wien, 1882–1912*)

	Number of "Slovene" students
<i>Theological Faculties and Theol. Schools</i>	7441
<i>Faculties of Law</i>	6686
<i>Faculties of Medicine</i>	1764
<i>Faculties of Arts</i>	2602
<i>Technical learning centres</i>	1645
<i>»Berg-Akademie« (Academy of mining)</i>	345
<i>»Hochschule für Bodenkultur« (College for Soil Culture)</i>	109
<i>Veterinary school</i>	144

²¹ Željko OSET. Acceptance of modern scientific achievements in Slovene communication network. Example of evolution theory and the formation process of the Slovene technical terminology. In Peter VODOPIVEC – Aleš GABRIČ (eds). *The role of education and universities in modernization processes in Central and South-Eastern European countries in 19th and 20th century*. Ljubljana – Wien, 2011, pp. 181–197.

²² *Statistisches Jahrbuch. Österreichische Statistik.*

This was to a certain degree due to the influence of Slovene opinion leaders, who believed that an educated humanistic workforce would significantly contribute to the formation of the Slovene nation.²³ The relatively lower number of Slovene natural science students proved to be a problem when the University of Ljubljana was founded after the First World War. Since Slovene lecturers in these disciplines could not be found, the University of Ljubljana employed refugees from Russia who had fled to Yugoslavia, and also Czech professors, who lectured in German at first.²⁴

Working at »foreign« universities

We have thus presented some data on students. We will continue by focusing on “Slovene” university professors. Special attention will be paid to natural scientists, who have so far remained on the margins of the historiographical interest and subject to the stereotype that, due to the nature of their work, they were less involved in national disputes than humanists.

In the academic field, a clear national definition and the associated political engagement was more of a hindrance than an advantage for a professor in the multi-national Austro-Hungarian Empire. Therefore, it is not surprising that, until the 1890s, there were relatively few nationally conditioned disagreements among university professors. However, at the end of the century, nationalism found its way into the academic field. This is proven by the example of Gregor Krek, a Slovene full professor of Slavic studies at the University of Graz. After the protest of German student against Slovene demands for the introduction of some Slovene departments at the university in 1900, Krek chose early retirement. As he wrote in a letter to his son, he could no longer bear the attacks of German nationalist students, who had the support of an important part of professors and the government.²⁵

Beside Krek, it is also necessary to mention Franc Miklošič, a professor of Slavic studies at the University of Vienna, a member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, and an avid supporter of Slovene demands during the outbreak of the March Revolution. Miklošič soon distanced himself from political demands, but as a university professor he participated in forming Slovene legal terminology

²³ Milan VIDMAR. *Spomini* [Memoirs]. I. Maribor, 1964, pp. 192–194.

²⁴ Milan VIDAR (ur.). *Zgodovina slovenske univerze v Ljubljani do leta 1929* [The history of Slovenian university in Ljubljana until 1929]. Ljubljana, 1929, pp. 309–314, 501–533.

²⁵ ARS, AS 812, box 1, Letter to Bogumil Krek (16. 3. 1902).

and in writing Slovene textbooks for high schools.²⁶ Because of his restrained attitude towards Slovene political demands, Miklošič was labeled the “prodigal son of mother Slavija” and even a “German pig” by Slovene nationalists. They specifically blamed Miklošič for being strongly opposed to the invasion of nationalism in the scientific sphere. However, the homeland’s attitude towards Miklošič changed significantly in the 1880s. The opinion prevailed that with his work he drew the attention of the cultural world to Slovenes and Slavs, and thus indirectly contributed to the nation’s cause.²⁷

A serious personal dilemma between the demands of national engagement and those of an academic career was also confronted by other natural scientists of Slovene descent. An excellent example was Jožef Stefan (1835–1893), who, as a young student in Vienna, wrote several patriotic songs and substantial articles, through which he got involved in Slovenian nation-forming activities. Already at the age of 19, he advocated, e.g. in the article *O domačem slovstvu* (*On home literature*), the need for an educational role of home literary production, which should also focus on the popularization of natural and technical knowledge. He then personally contributed to this goal by publishing popular science articles on a wide variety of topics. After 1858, however, he completely abandoned publishing in the Slovenian language. He presumably reached such a decision mainly because of the demands of research work, but also because Slovenian cultural space was not particularly receptive to his popular science writing. In the same year a polemic appeared in *Glasnik Slovenski* (Slovene Herald), where Stefan also published, on the need to publish natural scientific texts in Slovenian. The editor, Valentin Janežič, pointed out that Slovenians were falling behind in this area. Up until then, that is 1858, only four natural scientific monographs had been issued in Slovenian: a book on viticulture and farming chemistry, a book on veterinary science, another on economics and the first physics textbook, written by Karl Robida, Stefan’s high school teacher. Janežič called in his article for the Slovenian press to pay more attention to such writing, but sided entirely with *applied science*, declaring that research science was commendable, but useless or not (yet) achievable for Slovenes. He also intervened in the discussion on natural scientific terminology, and called for naming common to all Yugoslav nations.

Writer Fran Levstik responded sharply to the article by Janežič, opposing excessive purism in terminology and the adoption of new »jargonisms« from Yugoslav languages. Above all, he believed that Slovenes do not yet need natural

²⁶ J. KRANJČ. Prispavek [Contribution], pp. 117–134.

²⁷ Ž. OSET. *Zgodovina*, p. 47.

science, with the argument that one should first strive for general literacy, which was easier to achieve through belles-lettres, and only then publish more demanding educational literature.

One may assume that Jožef Stefan felt shoved away to a later time upon these affirmations of a Slovenian literary authority, Fran Levstik,²⁸ and that the »nationalization of science«²⁹ had not advanced enough in the Slovenian cultural environment of the time. However, it was not the high expectations of the nationalists that discouraged Stefan from writing in Slovenian, but rather the *absence* of such expectations, and the fact that he did not have a suitable scientific terminology at his disposal, as he himself wrote: “I stand before you with a large pile of German knowledge and a fistful of Slovene words.” Stefan then decided to devote himself to his academic career and abandon nationalist aspirations, and thus his “trail was lost” in Slovene historical memory. The first extensive article about him was only published in 1950. However, today the largest Slovenian research institute is named after him.³⁰

Working at home

Slightly different dilemmas were experienced by the generation of Slovenes who had already been intellectually formed in the time of the Habsburg Monarchy, but also continued their work after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia).³¹ Among them was, for example, Josip Plemelj.

Josip Plemelj (1873–1967) decided to study mathematics at the University of Vienna. After obtaining a doctorate degree in 1898, he was employed as an assistant at the statistical institute, which was then considered as a wellspring of professorial staff. In 1899, he earned a travel scholarship for the University of Berlin, and next year for Göttingen as well. Especially the latter proved to be a turning point in his academic career. In Göttingen, the local mathematicians

²⁸ Sandi SITAR. *Jožef Stefan*. Ljubljana, 1993.

²⁹ Term adopted after: Mitchell G. ASH – Jan SURMAN (eds.). *The nationalization of scientific knowledge in the Habsburg empire, 1848–1918*. Houndmills, 2012.

³⁰ Lavo ČERMELJ. *Josip Stefan. Življenje in delo velikega fizika* [The life and work of the great physicist]. Ljubljana, 1950. Anton PETERLIN. My scientific life. Vili BUKOŠEK (eds.). *Anton Peterlin 1908–1993. Življenje in delo/His Life and Work*. Ljubljana, 2008, pp. 29–30.

³¹ Ervin DOLENC. *Med kulturo in politiko* [Between culture and politics]. Ljubljana, 2008.

were intensively dealing with linear integral equations. Plemelj published several papers about the problem, which attracted the attention of the mathematical community. This is how a door opened for him into the academic world; he became a private lecturer at the College of Engineering (Technische Hochschule) in Vienna. The peak of his career is represented by his solution of the so-called Riemann problem in 1908. He later became an associate and then full professor at the university in Chernivtsi. Since Plemelj was publicly known as a Slovene nationalist, and thus spiritually belonged to the new generation of professors, which, unlike the older generation, did not avoid expressing its national definition, the process of appointing him an associate and then full professor was quite lengthy. He was appointed only after the intervention of his professor, Georg von Escherich, who stressed Plemelj's international reputation and the possibility of scandal if he was not chosen.³²

Plemelj had problems because of his clear national definition in 1916 as well, when the police suspected him of “russophiler Gesinnung” (Russophile attitude), for which he was interned and put under the watchful eye of the police. He was then helped by a colleague, who provided him a job in Vienna. After the war, Plemelj returned to Ljubljana, despite the invitation of the Romanian Government to continue to lecture at the university in Chernivtsi. Afterwards, he became the first chancellor of the University of Ljubljana, founded in 1919. However, since he was not a good organizer, according to his own assessment, he could not adapt to this position.³³ He was becoming unsatisfied with the situation at the university, so he considered accepting the offer for a position at the University of Graz in 1927. But when, in 1928, he was conferred a high state decoration and promised additional resources by the ministry, he rejected the position in Graz.³⁴ In letters to Georg Faber, a German mathematician whom he met in Göttingen, he lamented over his loneliness in Ljubljana, and wrote about his awareness that the peak of his career was already behind him.³⁵

Just the opposite is true for Maks Samec, who, like Plemelj, studied in Vienna, made the first steps of his academic career there and, after the war, returned to Ljubljana, where he succeeded. He became a full professor at the University, and the founder of the Slovene school of chemistry. Samec hoped that, in this challenging venture, he would be helped by his professor Wolfgang Pauli, but the university council objected to his appointment explaining they

³² ARS, AS 2012, box 1, no. 1–13.

³³ ARS, AS 2012, box 1, no. 12–13.

³⁴ Archives of Yugoslavia, AJ 66, 66-228-230, 1931, no. 4/31.

³⁵ ARS, AS 2012, b. 10, no. 188.

did not want a Jew among them. In organizing the study of chemistry in Ljubljana, Samec followed the Vienna model. As is often the case in science, the biggest obstacle was modest funding. Since public funds were insufficient, he collected high student fees for the period from 1919 to 1945 as head of the Institute of Chemistry, because he wanted relevant scientific literature and well-equipped laboratories to be available in Ljubljana.³⁶

Like other professors of the University of Ljubljana, Samec also remained attached to the intellectual and collegial network formed before the First World War. Due to his successful research on starch and his good collegial contacts, he regularly received invitations to symposiums and lectures from Germany, France and Austria. In 1922, he founded with his German colleagues the *Kolloid Gesellschaft*, based in Cologne. He received numerous awards: Due to his reputation and the cooperation with German scientists, he received an invitation to move to the Reich in the autumn of 1941, when the Italian army occupied Ljubljana, but he refused. In the autumn of 1943, he also rejected the offer of the German occupation authorities to become the mayor of Ljubljana. After the war, also because of the mentioned awards and offers during the war, the new communist authorities deprived him of habilitating at the University of Ljubljana. As a distinguished expert and organizer, he was allowed to found a chemical institute within the Slovenia Academy of Sciences and Arts.³⁷

For Samec, it is clear that he strongly wanted an academic career, and was thus looking for a position in Vienna. He was never given this kind of opportunity, but, after the war, at the newly established university in Ljubljana, where there were poor conditions for research, he shone as a scientist who had gained an international reputation. A completely different example is Plemelj, who experienced his academic peak before First World War, but could not return on his track afterwards and was no longer as successful. The paradox is that Plemelj was a very conscious Slovene and nationalist, while Samec did not pay much attention to the matter. This suggests that national definition was not always a factor that would have a decisive impact on the success of research work. However, it is important to note that the national orientation of Slovene scientists was in itself often fluid and changed through time.

A complicated, ambivalent, and somewhat varying attitude to Slovenity is reflected in the already presented biography of Jožef Stefan, but also in the career and life of biologist/zoologist Boris Zarnik. Zarnik, who was an assistant at

³⁶ Tanja PETERLIN-NEUMAIER (eds.). *Življenje in delo akad. prof. dr. Maksa Samca* [Life and work of acad. prof. dr. Maks Samec]. Ljubljana, 2015 (in print).

³⁷ Ibidem.

the biologist Boveri in Würzburg, preserved contact with the Slovenian intellectual environment at first, in spite of his studies (Jena, Cluj-Napoca, Würzburg) and work abroad.

He had his doctorate certified in 1906 at the University of Innsbruck because, as he himself wrote, there was talk about founding the Slovenian University in Ljubljana.³⁸ He also published in Slovenian newspapers, and edited a scientific column.³⁹ However, his popular science writings were not always met with a favourable response in the conservative Slovenian environment. In the years 1904–1907, as a result of the articles on Weissman and Häckel, he got involved in controversy with the Catholic newspaper *Slovenec* [Slovene].⁴⁰

In 1911, Zarnik became an assistant professor at the University of Würzburg. On the occasion, the German newspaper in Graz, *Tagblatt*, was appalled by the fact that a Slovene obtained a position at a German university.⁴¹ Zarnik himself quickly responded to *Tagblatt*'s article with a letter, in which he wrote that his father was ethnically conscious “but that he had never been an arrogant Slovene”⁴² and that “he drew all of his erudition from German sources (...).” He even emphasized that, over time, “he has (...) become a good Bavarian.”⁴³

The affair between Zarnik and the *Tagblatt* was described in detail by a liberally oriented Slovene daily newspaper, *Jutro* [Morning], which took advantage of the affair to use it as a starting point for presenting the general problems of Slovenes in gaining the habilitation at various foreign universities – quote: “if a Slovene habitates at a German university, he is attacked by the Germans, if he habitates at the Slavic Czech University, he is attacked by Slovene clericalists”.⁴⁴ When mentioning the attacks of the clericalists, the reporter referred to the controversy regarding the habilitation of the Slovene psychologist Mihajlo Rostohar at the Czech Charles University in Prague the same year. The appointment of Rostohar in fact upset the Slovene conservatives, because they did not want the “liberal” Prague to become the university centre that would “germinate” the

³⁸ Archives of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA), Boris Zarnik (personal folder).

³⁹ *Veda*. 1911, no. 1; *Veda*. 1915, no. 5.

⁴⁰ See for example: Boris ZARNIK: Katoliška polemika [Catholic polemic]. *Slovenski narod* [Slovenian nation], 17. 4. 1907, pp. 1–2.

⁴¹ Nemška in slovanska kratkovidnost [German and Slavic short-sightedness]. *Jutro* [Morning], 30. 8. 1911, p. 1.

⁴² Ibidem.

⁴³ Ibidem.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

human resources for the future Slovene university.⁴⁵ However, due to political and personal reasons, Rostohar did not teach at the University of Ljubljana later.

As for Zarnik, he was appointed associate professor at the University of Würzburg in 1915. But due to the intensified war circumstances and because of his Slovene origin, he (just like Plemelj) did not acquire the position quite smoothly. In fact, at the beginning of the war, he was under a military-police control. He was denounced by Anton Chorust, a historian from Graz. Consequently, his appointment was at first rejected, but then most of the faculty council, especially Boveri, sided with him.⁴⁶ So Zarnik got the position in spite of complications, but he left for Constantinople the same year. After the war, with the desire to work in his homeland, he moved to Zagreb (even in 1918 he still did not believe that establishing a Slovene university was possible). On this occasion, Zarnik again showed a shift in his attitude toward the national question. If he had been relatively in favour of Slovenian national aspirations in the first decade of 20th century as the editor of a Slovenian column, and later publically declared himself to be a “good Bavarian”,⁴⁷ he was now, in 1918, closer to the idea on a common Yugoslav nation. It was in this spirit that he also advocated the aim that the lectures be held in Serbo-Croatian instead of Slovenian at the university in Ljubljana, when it was founded in 1919. As a consequence, he presumably lost the favor of the autonomist or Slovenian oriented founders of the university, and did not get an opportunity in Ljubljana. He was more welcome at the university in Zagreb, where he obtained a lecturer position already in 1918.⁴⁸ At the newly founded faculty in Zagreb, he then taught biology, histology and embryology, and helped build the modern morphological and biological institute. He organized the institute following the example of the anatomical-biological institute in Berlin, led by Hertwig,⁴⁹ who was, like Zarnik, Haeckel’s student.⁵⁰

Organizational and pedagogical work prevented Zarnik from doing intensive research work after returning to Zagreb, as was the case with many other Yugoslav or Slovene scientists. His most original and important scientific studies are thus

⁴⁵ Kaj to pomeni? [What does it mean?]. *Slovenec* [Slovene], 12. 8. 1911, p. 5.

⁴⁶ SASA, Boris Zarnik (personal folder).

⁴⁷ Nemška in slovanska kratkovidnost [German and Slavic short-sightedness]. *Jutro* [Morning], 30. 8. 1911, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Library of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, R 46/III-74:5.

⁴⁹ Zdravko LORKOVIĆ. Boris Zarnik. *Lijecnicki vjesnik* [Medical Courier], 1945, pp. 44–47.

⁵⁰ Compare: <http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi856618/> and <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v163/n4146/abs/163596a0.html>

from the time when he was still working in Würzburg.⁵¹ However, Zarnik, then a Yugoslav nationalist and even a zealous advocate of eugenics,⁵² did not regret his later deviation from scientific work. As he wrote, he “willingly sacrificed those years because he worked for a nation that was in greater need of doctors than of scientific works”.⁵³

Conclusion

Towards the end of the 19th century, ethnic struggles started to be increasingly reflected at the level of universities. Slovene nationalists expressed their expectations from Slovene students: in accordance with the national interests, they tried to influence their choice of the place and field of studies. Even scientists of Slovene descent were repeatedly required to declare themselves nationally or politically. They responded differently. We have presented examples of scientists who contributed to the development of Slovene scientific terminology (Jožef Stefan), publicly opposed anti-Slavic initiatives at Austrian universities (Miklošič, Krek), and later participated in the establishment of the Slovene university (Josip Plemelj) or in the pursuit of political goals of Slovene nationalists in general. However, Slovene scientists frequently encountered problems because of their ideological beliefs or because of the discord *within* the nationalist camp (between liberals and conservatives). Because of this, and due to personal or professional reasons, some of the academics discussed here distanced themselves from the demands or some of the requirements of Slovene nationalists *temporarily or permanently*. Consequently, they were faced with accusations by national notables (Miklošič), or their scientifically important work did not receive appropriate recognition in Slovene collective memory temporarily (Jožef Stefan).

Scientists of Slovene descent, who tried to build a career at foreign universities, occasionally found themselves under pressure from foreign, especially German opponents of the Slovene national movement (Plemelj, Zarnik). However, this did not jeopardize their academic careers in the long-term, because they had the support of their mentors and German academic colleagues who put scientific interests in the first place and were thus not involved in national disputes (Boveri in case of Zarnik).

⁵¹ Ibidem.

⁵² See for example: Boris Zarnik. »Zemelji i ciljevi eugenike«. *Priroda*, 21, 1931, pp. 35–47.

⁵³ SASA, Boris Zarnik (personal folder), Curriculum vitae.

Slovene scientists maintained intense scientific contacts with German colleagues even after the First World War, when they were already working at Yugoslav universities. Their previous involvement in the German intellectual milieu remained decisive for them. They brought to Slovenian space German scientific schools (such as Pauli's school), organizational models, and academic standards. Once again, we have to stress the primacy of Vienna, where most of them were granted the doctorate. Even before, Slovenian intellectuals searched for examples and connections in Croatian and Czech intellectual environments. Especially noteworthy is the Croatian and Czech example in forming the Slovenian Literary Society and the forming of Slovenian scientific terminology, especially in writing the first school textbooks.

Working within the new state framework led to new challenges for Slovene scientists. They were faced with demanding organizational work and low research funding. In such situations, some Slovene scientists assessed that they had already reached the peak of their research career before the war (Josip Plemelj, Boris Zarnik). The ones to succeed were especially those who had proven to be capable organizers, and those who were still significantly involved in the Central-European scientific network (for example Maks Samec).

Summary

Although Slovene nationalists were constantly striving for the establishment of a Slovenian university in the second half of the 19th century, this was not realized until 1919. Therefore, Slovenian-speaking students mostly studied at Austrian universities. By far the most studied in Vienna and Graz, while some studied in Prague or other university towns. Slovenian-speaking scholars, who had previously studied at Austrian universities, often functioned as important carriers of cultural transfer “from the centre to the periphery”, that is from more developed urban centres (campuses), Vienna in particular, to Slovenian lands. But their role was not always supported and understood, since the opinion makers saw them as possible propagandists of liberal ideas. Also, they were occasionally criticized for their lukewarm attitude towards the national question.

However, not all Slovene scientists were reluctant to be involved in the pursuit of political goals of the Slovene nationalists. Participating *in the nation forming* process in different ways, contributing to the development of Slovene scientific terminology, they wrote Slovene popular science articles, publicly opposed anti-Slavic initiatives at Austrian universities, and later helped establish the Slovenian university.

The establishment of the Slovenian university after the First World War *brought new opportunities to Slovene scientists*, but new challenges as well. Although

in a different way, they still remained torn between their academic careers and national aspirational.

Resumé

Ačkoli slovinští nacionalisté stále usilovali o ustavení slovinské univerzity během druhé poloviny 19. století, vznikla až v roce 1919. Proto dříve slovincky mluvící studenti převážně chodili na rakouské univerzity. Většina studovala ve Vídni a Grazu, ale někteří byli také v Praze a v dalších univerzitních městech. Slovincky mluvící vědci, kteří původně studovali na rakouských univerzitách, často působili jako důležití nositelé kulturního přenosu „z centra na periferie“, tedy z vyvinutějších městských center (kampusů), především vídeňských, do Slovinska. Ale jejich role nebyla vždycky podporována a chápána vzhledem k tomu, že je autority utvářející veřejné mínění považovali za propagátory liberálních idejí. A také byli občas kritizováni za své vlažné postoje k národnostním otázkám.

Nicméně ne všichni slovinští vědci odmítali být zahrnuti do sledování politických cílů slovinských nacionalistů. Podíleli se na procesu *formování národa* různými způsoby, přispívali k vývoji slovinské vědecké terminologie, popularizovali vědecké články ve slovinštině, veřejně oponovali antislovanským iniciativám na rakouských univerzitách a později pomohli založit slovinskou univerzitu.

Ustavení slovinské univerzity po 1. světové válce přineslo nové příležitosti pro slovinské vědce stejně jako nové příležitosti. Nicméně stále byli rozpolce- ni mezi akademickou kariérou a národními aspiracemi, ačkoli jiným způsobem.

Authors' addresses:
Ana Cergol Paradiž
cergolana@gmail.com

Željko Oset