

## Associations of Slovenian Immigrants in Canada and Cultural Preservation

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As of the last census of Canadian population in 2001, there were approximately 30,000 Canadian citizens that identified themselves as Slovenians.<sup>1</sup>

For a long time, Canada was relatively unknown to Slovenes. Until to 1926, due to Canadian laws, it was not the first country of choice for Slovene emigrants.<sup>2</sup> A very small Slovenian immigration occurred during WW I and shortly thereafter. By that time the U.S. was already home to thousands of economic immigrants, as well as hundreds who had fled from military duty. Immediately after WWI, U.S. regulations temporarily curbed emigration. However, in the 1920s it accelerated again due to many factors, especially the extreme suppression of Slovenian culture and language in the sections of annexed by neighboring states. Unbearable political and psychological pressure on the Slovenians, and poor economic circumstances, contributed to massive emigration, which in some cases led to virtual abandonment of certain geographic areas. While not the subject of this article, the main reasons for the emigration must be mentioned. The historical motivation for Slovenian emigration helps explain the strength and inspiration to form Slovenian Canadian cultural associations, to be able to maintain their language and cultural traditions, and to create a better way of life.

In spite of a lack of education and experience, Slovene immigrants adapted to numerous jobs and conditions in an era of rapid industrial growth. The majority of the early immigrants worked in the forest industry, wood mills, and highway construction. Many worked in

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<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Urbanc, "30,000 Slovencev v Kanadi," *Rodna gruda* 50.6 (June 2003): 42–43. In Ontario there are 19,835 Slovenians, in British Columbia 3,355, in Alberta 2,665, in Quebec 1,670 and the remainder in the other provinces. The fewest Slovenians are in Newfoundland (only fifteen). The largest numbers in urban areas are in Toronto (10,505), Hamilton (1,930), Vancouver (1,780), Montreal (1,530), and Edmonton (1,285).

<sup>2</sup> In 1869 the first Canadian immigration act was written to better organize immigration to Canada, but in 1910 new and more restrictive immigration legislation came into force. Only certain immigrant profiles were desirable.

the mining territories and on farms. Quite a few were employed as craftsmen and artisans; some worked in small trades or were even small store owners. Livestock ranchers, farmers, and fruit and grape growers emerged in the mid 1960s, when the first immigrants with meager savings earned in the Canadian north started moving into the warmer Greater Niagara region and purchasing land for agriculture to improve their living standards.

Canada, in contrast with most countries in the Western hemisphere, accepted the fact of being a multicultural society with the passage of the Multicultural Act of 8 October 1971. The increase of new Slovenian immigration was also due to a more lenient Canadian immigration policy after 1952, according to which Slavic people were no longer categorized as "non-preferred." After 1967, the technical skills and qualifications became very important for the applicants to immigrate. Canadian immigration policy was clearly expressed in the White Book (1964) and the Green Book (1975).<sup>3</sup>

Slovene immigrants in Canada undertook a variety of activities that helped preserve their traditions: fraternal benefit societies, cultural clubs and associated dance groups, vocal, instrumental and drama groups; educational activities; activities within Slovenian Catholic parishes; individual and group sports; media; individual contributors to the Canadian and Slovenian cultural heritage (by writers, poets, painters, scholars, and others).<sup>4</sup> Slovenian immigrants' eagerness to preserve their cultural heritage is similar to that of other ethnic groups in Canada which strive to preserve their culture and traditions. The policy of multiculturalism in Canada values this experience.

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<sup>3</sup> Rado Genorio, *Slovenci v Kanadi/Slovenians in Canada*, Geographica Slovenica 17 (Ljubljana 1989).

<sup>4</sup> Information on organizations has been obtained from the archives of the Slovenian Immigrant Society in Ljubljana and the archival sources from the various Slovenian-Canadian cultural clubs in Canada. The photocopies are, thanks to the understanding of clubs' committees, already being kept as a special collection in the National Archives of Slovenia in Ljubljana. With further fieldwork and persistence, more data will still be discovered. In my eighteen years of experience, I have found exceptional cooperation, patience and willingness among the Slovenian-Canadians to preserve as much of their cultural heritage as possible.

### **Fraternal Benefit Societies (Insurance Companies)**

The earliest associations were established as fraternal benefit societies since the workers had no other legal or financial protection in case of accidents at work, which were often fatal. They were the first social insurance organizations since effective labor unions did not yet exist; nor did health and accident insurance exist at the time. At first the Canadian Slovenes joined the two fraternal associations already established and functioning in the United States: The Slovene National Benefit Society (SNPJ), founded in 1904 in the U.S., with 1,200 members in their lodges across Canada, mostly in Western Canada and Ontario,<sup>5</sup> and the Carniolan Slovenian Catholic Union (KSKJ), founded in 1894 in the U.S., with some divisions consisting of one hundred members or more. Years later there was the Association of Western Slavs (Zveza zahodnih Slovanov), which consisted of a few sections organized on national basis and also the All Slavic Committee of Benefit Societies (Vseslovanski odbor podpornih društev) to which our natives joined. Along with the insurance companies in 1942 there was the establishment of the Association of Canadian Slovenes (Zveza Kanadskih Slovencev) in Toronto, Ontario. Its first branch, established in 1944 in Kirkland Lake, Ontario, numbered around sixty members. In 1945 all of the above mentioned Canadian Slovene groups merged into the "Council of Canadian Southern Slavs" (Svet Kanadskih Južnih Slovanov) which lasted a very short time.<sup>6</sup>

The Slovenian Canadian Benefit Society was founded at Kirkland Lake, a small place in Northern Ontario, famous for its gold mines. Very soon it became a multiethnic city. In February 1933 the Slovenians established the first Canadian Slovenian Support Group (Slovensko podporno društvo) with ninety-one members. However, the

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<sup>5</sup> Milica Trebše Štolfa, "Slovenci in njihove organizacije v Kanadi," *Slovensko izseljenstvo, Zbornik of 50-letnici SIM* (Ljubljana: Slovenska izseljenska matica, 2001) 211.

<sup>6</sup> In the archives of Slovenska izseljenska matica, Ljubljana, obtained data show that even in 1968 there were still nine lodges of the S.N.P.J. in Canada (Canmore, Coleman, Nanaimo, Fernie, Vancouver, Kirkland Lake, West Toronto, Schumacher and Waterford) with some hundred members. In 1925 Jože Zavertnik (*Ameriški Slovenci*, [Chicago: SNPJ]) reported that in 1923 there were 186 members in only four active lodges, all in the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia.

Canadian government did not allow them to offer insurance until 1938, neither in Ontario nor in other parts of Canada. Membership grew exceptionally fast.

With the governmental permit issued on 4 March 1940, the already functioning groups constituted the Bled Mutual Benefit Society (BLED M.B.S.) with its main branch in Kirkland Lake, Ontario. The newly re-established association became BLED branch 1 at a 14 May 1940 meeting attended by seventy-two members.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> On 1 January 1941, branch 2 LJUBLJANA, Val'dor, Quebec, founded with six members, joined the BLED M.B.S., although if had established on 14 December 1939; however, due to the new permit it had to be reconfirmed. Other branches and the founding dates were: branch 3 KRKA, Timmins, Ontario, with twelve members (21 April 1940); branch 4 TRIGLAV, Noranda, Quebec, with twenty members, (January 1940; on 31 December 1992 it joined with branch 1); branch 5 SLOVENSKI RUDAR, Malartic, Quebec, with twelve members (19 January 1941 - 31 December 1947); branch 6 ZVEZDA, Vancouver, B.C., with thirteen members, (December 1941, still functioning); branch 7 JADRAN, Port Arthur-Thunder Bay, Ontario, with thirteen members, (April 1941, still in existence); branch 8 – PLANINSKA ROŽA, Pascalis-Perron, Quebec, with thirteen members, (Sept 1941 until mid-1949); branch 9 ZARJA, Sudbury, Ontario, with twenty-four members (19 October, 1941); branch 10 SLAVČEK, Amherstburg-Windsor, Ontario, with twelve members (April 1942 - June 1949 and February 1953 - December 1958); branch 11 EDINOST, Toronto, Ontario, with thirteen members (14 May 1942 – joined by branch 18 in 1969); branch 12 NOVO MESTO, St. Catharines, Ontario, one of the strongest groups, and still operating (February 1943 and was confirmed by Bled M.B.S. in April the same year); branch 13 PLANINA, Hamilton, Ontario, with seven members (14 April 1943 - 16 December 1963), joined branch 19 PLANICA, and remaining under the name PLANICA 13, still one of the strongest and most active branches of BLED M.B.S.; branch 14 SLOGA, Kirkland Lake, Ontario, with twenty-seven members, created as an addition to branch 1 (14 April 1943); branch 15 VIDMAR, Mountain Park, Alberta, with thirteen members, (10 July 1944 - September 1950); branch 16 NOVA GORICA, New Toronto, Ontario, with 13 members, (January 1954); branch 17 TURJAK, Noranda, Quebec, (20 December 1956, confirmed by Executive board on 13 January 1957); branch 18 BELA KRAJINA, Toronto, Ontario, with twenty members (1 July 1958, confirmed by Executive board 13 July 1958 and operated until 1969, when it joined branch 11); branch 19 PLANICA, Burlington, Ontario, with twenty members (20

Sections of the BLED M.B.S., called branches, were established by at least five persons sending an application form to the society's headquarters stating their desire to expand the society to their region. Formal establishment of the new branch took place on the date it was declared by the executive board of the society and accepted at a formal meeting where by-laws and principles of BLED M.B.S. were distributed for the new members.

A decision was made at the 1978 BLED M.B.S Convention to move the headquarters to Beamsville, Ontario, where it is still located. Conventions are still held every four years and conducted in Slovenian. Transcripts are available in both Slovenian and English. This fraternal society has played a very important role in Slovenian language and culture preservation in their new homeland. From 27 to 29 June 2003, BLED M.B.S. celebrated its seventieth anniversary. During the festivities on BLED property in Beamsville, Ontario, the Society dedicated a monument, a sculpture symbolizing a miner, in memory of all members of the Society. Member craftsmen designed and created the monument made of bronze, financed by members, other donors, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia.<sup>8</sup>

Due to changes in living conditions, out-migration of members and/or job improvement, some BLED M.B.S. branches have closed. Though there are only four or five branches still operating, BLED remains a wealthy and strong Slovenian Canadian fraternal society.

### **Cultural Clubs and Cultural Associations**

Establishing cultural groups is of utmost importance for the organized preservation of the Slovenian cultural heritage. Activities of groups, drama clubs, learning the Slovenian language in so-called

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September 1959 - 16 December 1962), joined branch 13 with its new Headquarters in Beamsville, Ontario; branch 20 SLOVENIJA, Kitchener, Ontario, with seven members (December 1963 and confirmed by Executive board 12 January 1964); branch 21 OTON ZUPANČIČ, Oshawa, Ontario, with sixteen members (in 1965); for a very short time branch 22 IVAN CANKAR existed in Downsview, Ontario, with thirteen members (Fall 1977, confirmed by Executive board 15 January 1978.)

<sup>8</sup> My estimate is that the monument must have cost close to \$20,000 CAD.

Saturday schools, choirs, folklore dance groups as well as musicians from numerous clubs, were extensive, even though many of the vocal or instrumental groups later split up into different instrumental and singing groups. The interest groups grew much bigger and became widely known after the strong immigration of the younger, post-WW II generation, especially in the 1960s. The Slovenes' enthusiasm for cultural activities was motivated by their need to associate, to overcome homesickness and culture shock, and often also by their geographic origin.

During nearly two decades (starting in 1985) of systematic summer fieldwork on archival preservation of Slovenian cultural associations' records, I was able to contact and work with numerous cultural clubs and associations.

In this paper I set up a chronological order of the cultural associations, regardless of in which part of Canada they were founded. It is too late to find written documents of the first immigrants' experiences in attempting to maintain the cultural traditions of their homeland. There are many pictures of family and long forgotten events that may still illustrate the efforts Slovenian ancestors made to preserve their language, national songs and traditional dances.

The earliest established group was Club Lira, organized in 1927 in Windsor, Ontario, where in 1928 the Slovenian cultural club Zvon was also established. Hopefully, there may still be a chance of discovering documents and photographs with details of the earliest cultural activities of these Slovenian communities. (In the same in 1943 the Slovenian choir Zvon was formed. It continued the traditions of the Lira Choir). Unfortunately, the written sources of this club have not yet come to light.

In Kirkland Lake, the recreational club PIPA was formed in 1932 according to the by-laws of the similar PIPA clubs in Slovenia. There was also drama club there that presented two comedies by Linhart *Županova Micka* (*The Mayor's Daughter*) and *Trije tički* (*Three Rascals*), which seem to have been the first performances in the Slovenian language in Canada, put on the stage in 1932. On 20 October 1933, they also founded the first Slovenian singing group in Canada, named Triglav, which became the first Slovenian immigrant cultural association in Canada. For the next three decades they successfully captured the hearts and spirits of their friends and compatriots. Their junior choir alone numbered thirty girls and boys. Before long, the existing drama club joined the new cultural club, Triglav. In 1938, the club merged with the

library, which had been its own entity until that time and was the only Slovenian library in Canada.<sup>9</sup> In 1936 another singing group, by the name of Vigred, sprang up in Sudbury. The documentation to confirm its activities has, regrettably, to date not been found.

During and after WW II, rather than being entirely cultural, the groups concentrated more on the goal of helping Slovenia and restoring the war-torn country. Their activities were well organized. Assistance in the form of financial help and medical equipment from Canada continues to the present day.<sup>10</sup>

Cultural activities expanded when a massive influx of immigrants came to Canada from refugee camps in Italy and Austria. The Frederick Baraga group was formed on 17 June 1951 in Montreal. This group still gathers from time to time even though some of its cultural activities were absorbed by the Slovenian parish of St. Vladimir, founded on 1 December 1963, and having a beautiful cultural and social center in the vicinity of Montreal.<sup>11</sup>

The Slovenian Club in Manitoba was established in 1951 in Winnipeg and in 1996 was renamed the Canadian Slovenian Cultural Society. After the name change, women were permitted to join the club. In March of 1953, the Slovenian cultural club Slap was formed in Welland, Ontario. Unfortunately, it ceased functioning in 1961. Some photos of its activities and two issues of the "Slap/Falls" newsletter are evidence of its existence. The first issue was restored from its damaged state, at the State Archives of Slovenia in Ljubljana and returned to the owner in Welland.

In Western Canada, the Slovenian Society was established in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1958. The members were mostly from

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<sup>9</sup> The history of this society was presented by Rado Genorio in 1986 in the annual *Slovenski izseljenski koledar (Slovenian Immigrant Calendar)*.

<sup>10</sup> Medical equipment was sent to hospitals, first to Golnik in 1946, and later to different hospitals in Slovenia; the most important was the ultrasound machine for the Klinični center in Ljubljana in early nineties. Much help was also given to the people who suffered from natural disasters. When Slovenia started to go its own way apart from Yugoslavia, special fund raising activities were initiated to help Slovenia on its way to independence.

<sup>11</sup> Vladimir Urbanc described the association in the Slovenian bi-monthly "The Voice of Canadian Slovenians," published in Toronto.

the Prekmurje and Primorska regions. The society still preserves Slovenian cultural tradition, having a mixed choir and a folk dancing group.

In 1959 a culturally and socially very active Slovenian Cultural Association Triglav was established in London, Ontario. The same year Slovenian-Canadians in Toronto organized the first special Folklore Group Nagelj, which still enriches the Slovenian community and frequently performs in Slovenia. In 1960, a new society, the Slovenian Association Sava of Breslau, Ontario (Kitchener-Waterloo region), came into existence. In Pickering, Ontario, the Slovenian group Holiday Gardens was established in 1961 and started functioning in 1964. The Edmonton, Alberta, group formed Slovenian Canadian Association, which was initiated late in 1963 and founded in 1964. Already a year before the club was established, the Edmonton Slovenians sponsored an octet, Edmontonski Fantje, which was later renamed to Triglavski fantje. The same year a new cultural club was founded in Kitchener, Ontario, under the name of Slovenski Park. In 1965 the Slovenian Canadian Club in Calgary, Alberta appeared. In 1967 the association Lipa Park laid the foundation for the Slovenian National Home Lipa Park, which opened in 1969 in St. Catharines, Ontario. All of these clubs are still active. At the end of 1967 another Slovenian cultural club was formed in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Besides culture it focused mostly on social and sports activities. In 1968 the Slovene Society of Sudbury was formed. The last two clubs do not exist any more and, unfortunately, the documents are no longer available.

Among the younger culturally active groups, the new Slovenian Society in Ottawa was founded in 1975 and registered in 1976. The society issued and printed its own newsletter "Med Nami" (Among Us) over a four-year period. In 1981, the Slovenian Club of Okanagan was established in Kelowna, British Columbia. The youngest association among Slovenian cultural clubs in Canada was established in 2001 and registered as the Slovenian-Canadian Club of Winnipeg, Manitoba. It already involves close to 100 members.

Slovenians formed their groups not only according to their living neighborhood, but also by their original homeland areas. For example: In 1956 the Slovenian Prekmurska Group Večerni Zvon (Evening Bell) was founded in Scarborough, Ontario. People born in the vicinity of the Hungarian border in the northeast part of Slovenia joined. In 1959,



Slovenians coming from the southwest (Primorska) in the vicinity of the Italian border, formed the Slovenian Cultural Association Simon Gregorčič. Some years ago, the third such cultural club was formed on a regional basis and named Bela Krajina. Its members originate in the southeast of Slovenia along the Croatian border.

### **Folklore**

Folklore dances and traditions are preserved by several individual folklore groups and by sections of cultural associations across Canada. In the 1970s and 1980s, there were many dancing groups; however, the numbers have decreased steadily. The first folklore group, Nagelj, was founded in 1959 by the choreographer Ciril Sorsak, who is still actively involved and leading the group. A year later the folk group Biser was formed for a short time. In 1972, the group Triglav, in Winnipeg, Manitoba started entertaining club members and has evolved into three age groups: Triglav, Mladost and Zvonček. In 1973, in Toronto, Mladi Glas was organized. In 1979, the group Planika, a section of BLED M.B.S. Planica number 13 in Beamsville, was formed. In the 1980s it was the most authentic of such groups. Planika entertained for twenty successful years. Other folklore groups across the country are still active to a certain extent. They include dance groups in Vancouver, Edmonton, London, Montreal, the Soča group in Hamilton, and some others. The only senior dancing group, which has been performing for the last ten years or more is the Lipa Park Senior Dancers, lead by Francka Seljak, presenting traditional Slovenian social dances.

### **Music**

There are numerous Slovenian-Canadian musical ensembles, whose membership is open to those of different fraternal associations. In the 1970s, two very successful all-Canadian festivals of Slovenian national music were organized; Slovenian American groups were also invited to compete. The winner of both festivals was the well-known Toronto ensemble Veseli Vandrovčki. Much fieldwork and research still has to be done to describe the activities and the history of numerous instrumental ensembles that kept the Slovenian spirit and Slovenian musical tradition alive in Canada.

Besides the instrumental and vocal groups the Slovenians have many mixed, ladies' and men's singing choirs. The first ones to appear after WW II were the mens' choirs Fantje na vasi, led by Ignac Križman, and Simon Gregorčič, in Toronto, led by Justina Grison from Trieste. An independent group since 1962, the Edmonton men's choir Edmontonski fantje (later Triglavski fantje) with conductor Walter Kravanja, is still active. In Winnipeg there is a singing group named Zvon, conducted by Miha Zobarič. The men's choir named Majolika in Hamilton, Ontario, has been singing for three decades. Most of the time it has been conducted by Franci Slobodnik. Recently a promising new group, the men's octet Bled, started performing under the leadership of Egidij Kodarin in Beamsville. The most outstanding, internationally recognized group is the Toronto young women's choir Plamen, under Marija Ahačič-Pollak.

### **Drama**

Besides the above mentioned pre-war drama activities, Slovenians are able to praise their work with the Professional Theater founded in 1959 in Toronto, and from time to time they still perform. Some clubs have formed drama sections, such as the Slovenian-Canadian Association in Edmonton. The Slovenian National Home Lipa Park, established a drama group fifteen years ago, and also performs works from the Slovenian national treasury of drama works. This is the only Slovenian emigré drama group to have toured Slovenia (in 1998). It performed a comedy *Naročena zmešnjava* (*Ordered Chaos*). The most often staged play in Canada has been the comedy *Vdova Rošlinka*. (*The Widow Rošlinka*).

### **Education**

Parental efforts and formal lessons in so-called Saturday classes have preserved the Slovenian language in Canada. Classes have been attended by large numbers of pupils, especially in Edmonton, Ottawa, Vancouver, St. Catharines, and in Slovenian Catholic parishes throughout Canada. The Cardinal Newman Comprehensive High School in Hamilton, Ontario, offered Slovenian as a second language courses. Between 1982 and 1984, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Education of British Columbia recognized Slovenian language courses taught at the Vancouver cultural club. The school was founded in 1969

and had up to 62 students. In the same years in Edmonton, there were classes of just about the same size. Unfortunately these schools no longer exist. Canadian boards of education provided financial support to the cultural clubs for the teachers of the Slovenian classes with more than fifteen children. Even without financial aid, many Slovenian clubs organized language courses not only for their adult members, but also for their non-Slovenian partners. In the 1970s, the Ontario Ministry of Education supported three regular full-time Slovenian classes in Toronto, organized by Canadian-Yugoslav organization "Mother and Child."

### **Recreation Grounds**

Nearly all Slovenian clubs in Canada very carefully saved money to acquire and purchase a piece of land where they could build a hall. These generally well-maintained facilities and grounds host various activities. Some have swimming pools and lawn bowling courts, and children's playgrounds. Many of these places can accommodate trailers and campers.

The upkeep of these so-called farms is expensive. For this reason many clubs have opened their facilities to other users, including other ethnic communities for weddings, picnics and other special occasions. These rentals help cover maintenance costs.

Besides the Slovenian churches, the Slovenian immigrants in Ontario have also built two retirement homes. One such home is Dom Lipa in Mississauga, and the other one is Vila Slovenija in Hamilton.

Since the independence of the Republic of Slovenia, the Slovenian associations in the Ontario region have celebrated "Slovenian Day," the last Sunday of June every year. The regional celebration is held each year at a different club. Every year each club also prepares a special cultural program on Preseren's Day in February.

### **Slovenian Catholic Parishes**

Missionaries organized and developed Slovenian Catholic parishes after WW II. In 1954 the parish of Marija pomagaj (Mary of Perpetual Help) was established in Toronto. This and the next four

parishes organized were also involved in cultural, educational, and economic activities. The parish of Brezmadežna s čudodelno svetinjo (Virgin Mary with Immaculate Medal) was founded in Toronto in 1960. Our Lady of Lourdes was founded in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1962, and St. Gregory the Great in Hamilton, was founded in 1965. The founders of the latter were the members of the Slovenian Catholic Society of St. Joseph in Hamilton, Ontario, formed in 1937. The fifth parish, St. Vladimir, was founded in 1963 in Montreal, Quebec. The majority of the smaller Slovenian communities across Canada occasionally invite Slovenian priests from the Toronto diocese. All parishes regularly issue their own bulletins. There is also the well-known bi-monthly "Božja beseda" ("Words of God"), which has connected Slovenian-Canadian Catholics with cultural activities for more than half a century.

The first Catholic resort in Canada was founded in 1958 as Slovensko Letovišče in Bolton, near Toronto. It is still the biggest place of its kind for gatherings of Slovenian immigrants and their families.

Pastoral councils govern parishes and help organize cultural, sporting, recreational and other events. The church has the financial institution, The Parish Savings and Loans Bank of Slovenia.

## **Sports**

Sports activities are the second most popular kind of events among Canadian Slovenians. The majority of the sports clubs are sections of cultural associations. Only a few of them function as independent entities. The first one, the Slovenian Gymnastic Association, was established in 1950 and was meant to continue the European Sokol tradition. The Sports Club of Toronto and the Slovenia Sports Club were founded in Toronto in 1959. The Hamilton sporting group Slovenia was established in 1969. In 1976 the Slovenian sports club Triglav was established in Montreal, Quebec. Most common sports played by Slovenians in Canada are volleyball, hockey, soccer, gymnastics and lawn bowling. In 1979 the Slovenian-Canadian Association in Edmonton decided to encourage more young people to join their activities. They started up a volleyball team, which reached provincial level status and won many silver and gold medals. In 1998 the men's soccer team was reestablished and in 2000 a women's soccer team was added. Besides group sports, second generation Slovenians won medals in individual sports such as gymnastics, skiing, and table tennis.

Hunting and angling have become part of the recreational sports activities, and has become widely accepted. Hunters' families are either connected to other clubs' activities or they function independently. Financial and membership strength appear to be strongest in the Toronto area. The Hunters and Anglers Club, founded in 1971, built an extensive recreational park and facilities in Alliston, Ontario, and issues the annual *Hunters' Magazine*.

## Media

**Radio.** A very important addition to the culture is the Slovenian radio program on CHIN FM (100.7) in Toronto, which keeps the Slovenians in Canada in touch with local and homeland news. The first radio program, "The Caravan of Friendship," was broadcast in 1968. The "Yugoslav Radio Program" was shared by all five Yugoslav nations and languages. Between the years of 1977 and 1986 "Slovenian Evening" and "Slovenian Radio Hour" were introduced, as a part of activities of The All-Slovenian Cultural Committee, which also purchased an addition to the existing rights to extend the program to one full hour every Sunday morning. The new program remained "The Voice of Canadian Slovenians". Recently, the Sunday afternoon "Slavic Program" in Winnipeg, Manitoba started reporting Slovenian news.

**Film.** In 1977 the Ministry of Culture of the Province of Alberta financed and produced a twenty-minute movie showing the life and culture of Slovenians in Alberta. So far this is the only movie on an ethnic community in Alberta.

**Newspapers.** The first effort at a newspaper, in 1929–30, was *Kanadski glas (The Canadian Voice)*, about which little is known. The newspaper *Borba (The Struggle)* started a ten-year run in 1932. The next Slovene newspaper, in Toronto, was monthly *Edinost Unity*, 1942–50). Later, its weekly edition had around a thousand readers. In 1950 the Slovene Vincentian fathers in Toronto started publishing *Božja beseda (Word of God)*. It still is the most widely read publication among Slovenian Catholics. In 1954 the editorial office of the newspaper *Slovenska država (The Slovenian State)* moved from Chicago to Toronto. Another newspaper *Slovenska misel (Slovenian Thought)* was published in Toronto by

the Slovenian association Baraga.<sup>12</sup> Besides occasional issues of newsletters such as "Bulletin of BLED M.B.S.," published in Kirkland Lake in the 1950s, and *Med nami* in Ottawa, the first Slovenian-Canadian cultural diary was the monthly *Dnevnik/Diary*, 1976–79. The founder and the editor was a professional journalist, Ivan Dolenc.<sup>13</sup> For the first three years the coeditor was Cvetka Kocjančič. In 1979 it was renamed *The New Canadian Slovenian Diary* in Toronto. Since 1997 the All Slovenian Cultural Committee has issued *Glasiilo/The Voice of Canadian Slovenians*, which is published bimonthly. The annual *Hunters' Magazine/Lovski vestnik* (1979–) is prestigious and has 8000 subscribers.

*Dnevnik/Diary* was not simply a newspaper. The editors and contributors organized literary evenings that promoted Slovenian literature. These cultural events, Cankar Days, were held in Slovenian clubs all over the Southern Ontario. From time to time the interpreters (authors and actors) came even from Slovenia.

Coordination among various cultural groups and associations was carried out by the Canadian Slovenian Group for Cultural Exchange, which functioned between 1973 and 1983 in Toronto, and the still active All Slovenian Cultural Committee, founded in 1990, with subcommittees for the regions of Toronto and Southern Ontario. Such coordination is needed for the Slovenian cultural and other clubs in Western Canada as well. In Toronto there is also the Council of Canadian Slovenians, which was formed primarily by post-WW II immigrants.

The Canadian branch of the Slovenian World Congress played a part in the Slovenian independence movement in 1991. It has sub-branches across Canada, some of which are still active while others have declined.

The Pier 21 museum in Halifax, Nova Scotia is a monument to all immigrants who first landed in Canada. Pier 21 was Canada's front door to wartime evacuees, displaced persons, and refugees. The museum is part of Canada's past that continues to shape the future of Slovenians

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<sup>12</sup> Rado Genorio, "Slovenski tisk v Kanadi," *Dve domovini/Two Homelands* 2–3 (1991): 343–51.

<sup>13</sup> Genorio notes that Ivan Dolenc previously, in 1959, edited a monthly magazine *Povest/The Story* in Brandon, Manitoba, which appeared in only six issues. Of significance is the fact was that the contributors were from the U.S., Great Britain, Austria, Australia, and Argentina.

in Canada. The Canadian Slovenian community and the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia sponsored a memorial plaque, in both Slovenian and English, dedicated "To all Slovenian women and men who made here their first steps on Canadian soil and brought their Slovenian culture to Canada." The dedication took place on 21 November 2003.

Izola, Slovenia

## POVZETEK

### ZDRUŽENJA KANADSKIH SLOVENCEV IN OHRANJANJE SLOVENSKE KULTURNE TRADICIJE

*Kanada sprejema svoj multikulturni značaj. Priznava in finančno podpira delovanje etnišnih skupin priseljencev. Natančnega števila priseljencev slovenskega porekla ne moremo določiti, vendar rezultati popisa prebivalstva v Kanadi v letu 2001 izkazujejo natančnejše podatke, kot so nam jih nudili predhodni.*

*Avtorica v svojem prispevku, ki mu je osnova ohranjeno arhivsko gradivo in dve desetletji njenega terenskega dela med slovenskimi kulturnimi društvi v Kanadi, prikaže bogastvo in raznovrstnost ohranjanja slovenske tradicije med kanadskimi Slovenci, organiziranimi v raznih društvi. Društvene aktivnosti so prvič prikazane kronološko glede na nastanek društva od zgodnjega naseljevanja pred drugo svetovno vojno do najmlajšega društva, nastalega v letu 2001.*

*Dejavnost je obravnavana glede na vrsto aktivnosti. Vključuje zavarovalniške organizacije, samostojna kulturna društva, aktivnosti na področju ohranjanja slovenske plesne tradicije, glasbene tradicije, poustvarjanja gledališke tradicije in izobraževanja. Obravnava športne aktivnosti in rekreacijske zmogljivosti društev, navede aktivnosti na področju informativne dejavnosti (radiotelevizija, časopisi in občasniki) in ne pozabi omeniti niti veliko vrednost ohranjanja slovenskega jezika in kulture, ki so jo ohranjale in jo v svojih dejavnostih že ohranja vseh pet slovenskih župnij v Kanadi*

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