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OURS AND YOURS

On the history of Slovenian newspaper discourse
of the 19th and early 20th centuries

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MW   MEDIAWATCH

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

"I do not know who was that wise man who said that journalism was the sixth largest power in the world; unless he was making wisecracks about journalism, he must have been out of his mind. /.../ Much work – low earnings, much resentment – little honor, much responsibility – nothing certain, and a journalist who puts his pen to rest today may perhaps be without a lunch tomorrow."

JAKOB ALEŠOVEC, *Ljubljanske slike*, 1879.

At times, the past strikes one as being the present or even the future. Historians often find in history things that remind us of the present. However, are these analogies justifiable or are they simply a result of our mental representations? There is no simple answer to this question. One should be cautious when comparing the present and the past. It is not possible to gain a complete understanding of the past, much as it is impossible to completely understand the present, the time in which we live.

Most of this book was written between 2007 and 2010. Or rather, we were writing the book without knowing it. We had believed that we were writing essays on the history of the Slovenian public sphere for the *Media Watch Journal* until the editor, Brankica Petković, drew our attention to the fact that throughout this time we were writing a book, indeed. We then decided to put the idea into practice, but our work was far from finished at that moment. The articles had to be revised, some parts were added, and most importantly, the texts had to be given a theoretical framework and placed in space and time (hence the longish introduction to this book). All of this would have been impossible without Brankica's unselfish assistance and the help of the Peace Institute and the Slovenian Book Agency. We are grateful to all those who made this book possible.

The book consists of six chapters on Slovenian media history.[1] All the subjects (censorship, political struggles, the economic crisis, the Balkans, folk songs and racism) are as topical today as they were at the time when they were discussed. What has changed then? Obviously, "time" has changed, since "space" is more or less consistent. And yet, this is only partly true. Symbolic-geographical space is like

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1   The English translation is provided for the introductory chapter only.

an accordion that stretches and shrinks under the pressure of historical change. Furthermore, topicality depends on writing style, among other things: by combining traditional historical analysis and a journalistic-literary style, we have tried to relativize the image of the contemporary media landscape and lend it a historical dimension. To achieve this, we quoted interesting passages from old newspapers whose archaic discourse illustrates the language of Slovenian journalism of the time. We hope that the book will be equally interesting for readers who are not well acquainted with this subject as well as for social scientists who study the contemporary media.

Every book needs a title. Why have we chosen *Ours and Yours*? The reason is that the most conspicuous feature of the Slovenian media discourse of the time was sharp divisions: between us and them, Slovenes and Germans/Italians, liberals and clericals, Europeans and Negroes, us and Jews, and so on. This is not to say that divisive discourse was a Slovenian peculiarity; in this respect, the Slovenian public sphere was in sync with the wider, European space.

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The story about the emergence of the Slovenian media is, in the wider sense of the word, a story about the emergence of the public sphere and Slovenian nationalism. If the political public sphere is "a multitude of communication forms which in principle have free access, are not limited by membership and in which individual and collective protagonists express their opinion about political topics in front of the broader public," [2] then in the case of Slovenia, too, the story should begin with the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere in the 18th and 19th centuries. The public sphere and public education (closely related to the Enlightenment) are a direct outcome of the disintegration of the vertical society organized by the professional classes and the parallel formation of a modern, functionally differentiated society.[3] According to Habermas, the bourgeois public sphere was a side effect of the development of capitalism in Europe. When the bourgeoisie became economically powerful, it tried to influence state politics. The public emerged

2 Gabriele Melischek, Josef Seethaler: Presse und Modernisierung in der Habsburgermonarchie (The Press and Modernisation in the Habsburg Monarchy). In: Helmut Rumpler, Peter Urbanitsch (ed.): Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918 (The Habsburg Monarchy 1848–1918), Band VII/2. Wien 2006, p. 1535 (hereafter: Melischek, Seethaler, Presse und Modernisierung).
3 Ibid.

as an intermediary between the authorities and the private interests of individual bourgeoisie members. The crucial step at this stage was the differentiation between the public and the private spheres. The public sphere, however, not only functioned as an intermediary but also promoted the bourgeoisie's self-understanding. The bourgeois subject was shaped through the public sphere, and the bourgeois literary public sphere had invented the tools of social criticism even before the political public sphere (political journalism) appeared on the scene.[4] Although in principle the bourgeois public sphere was open for everyone to join, limitations nevertheless existed in practice. Workers and other lower classes were excluded from the public debate. Conflict of interest between workers and the bourgeoisie was not the subject of public debate at all. "True" members of the public were meant to be homogeneous in terms of power and economic interests; individual differences between members of the bourgeoisie were supposed to be simply differences in economic interests that were regulated by the market.[5]

It is not possible to imagine the emergence of nationalisms in the 19th century without the public sphere. Some theorists (Karl W. Deutsch) argue that social communication is the essence of nationalism. For Deutsch, nations are "multipurpose human communication networks," while nationalism is a feeling prioritized by national communication.[6] In contrast to Deutsch's schematic and mechanistic theory, Benedict Anderson emphasized the significance of the media in the formation of nations as imagined communities. Nationalism could begin to flourish only when printing technology became widely accessible. A member of an imagined community cannot know all other members of that same community, so such a community can exist only through the media.[7] The significance of the print media for the expansion of nationalism is unquestionable, but this phenomenon can be viewed through various lenses. The nationalist print constructs and promotes the feeling of belonging to a group (Brubaker uses the term "groupness"), but this does not mean that such a group actually exists.[8] However, at the same time it

4 Andrew Edgar: Habermas, The Key Concepts. Routledge, New York, 2006, p. 124–127 (hereafter: Edgar, Habermas).

5 Jürgen Habermas: Strukturne spremembe javnosti (Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit). Studia humanitatis, Ljubljana 1989, p. 95–105.

6 For more on Karl Deutsch, see Christian Jansen, Henning Borggräfe: Nation, Nationalität, Nationalismus (Nation, Nationality, Nationalism). Campus Historische Einführungen 2007, p. 83.

7 Benedict Anderson: Zamišljene skupnosti, O izvoru in širjenju nacionalizma (Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism). Studia humanitatis, Ljubljana 2007, p. 68.

8 Rogers Brubaker: Ethnicity Without Groups. Harvard University Press 2004, p. 13.

repeatedly reflects on and reconstructs collective/group identity and symbolic boundaries with regard to Others. Group identification is created in a process that goes beyond group boundaries - through interaction with others (Jenkins).[9] The print media of the 19th century and the early 20th century were important protagonists of these processes. Viewed from the perspective of national cultural patterns, the print media is a space for inventing tradition (modernist perspective),[10] or a space for the revival of old myths and symbols (ethno-symbolic perspective).[11]

The 19th century media are primarily media of the word. The history of the public sphere is also the history of words, ideas and notions. Intellectual history and history of ideas dating from the first half of the 20th century treated ideas outside the socio-political context, as trans-historical entities. The history of ideas was often related to idealist philosophy and traditional "Rankean" historiography of grand personalities.[12] Marxist humanist publications deviated from this tradition by placing ideas within Marx's concept of ideology (production relations determine the basis, the basis determines the superstructure, and the superstructure determines dominant ideology). A new history of ideas and notions that became predominant within international historiography was shaped in the West after the Second World War. In addition to Marxist sensitivity to the relationship between ideas and society, the new history of ideas was largely marked by Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics (1857–1918): language is a social phenomenon, a structured system that has both a diachronic and a synchronic dimension; language changes over time but retains firm structure through all stages.[13] Undoubtedly, the new history of ideas is anything but a uniform paradigm.

Reinhart Koselleck, one of the fathers of *Begriffsgeschichte*, argues that society and language are part of the meta-historical givens, without which history cannot be

9 Richard Jenkins: Social Identity, Third Edition. Routlege, London/New York, p. 44. Jenkins and Brubaker differ in their definitions of the notions of group and identity; see the work quoted above, pp. 3–14.

10 Eric Hobsbawm: Introduction: Inventing Traditions. In: Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger (ed.): The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge 2008, p. 6.

11 Anthony D. Smith: Nacionalizem, Teorija, ideologija, zgodovina (Nationalism : theory, ideology, history). KRT, Ljubljana 2005.

12 Luise Schorn-Schütte: Neue Geistesgeschichte. In: Joachim Eibach, Günter Lottes (eds.): Kompass der Geschichtswissenschaft (The Compass of Historiography). Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, UTB, Göttingen 2006, p. 270 (hereafter: Schorn-Schütte: Neue Geistesgeschichte).

13 Iain Gampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree: A Comparative Perspective on Conceptual History – An Introduction. In: Iain Hampsher-Monk (ed.): History of Concepts, Comparative Perspectives. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 1998, p. 2.

imagined.[14] Koselleck makes a clear distinction between social history, which he takes as a point of departure, and the history of concepts or the history of notions. "That which really happened" is believed to be more than mere "linguistic interpretation." *Begriffsgeschichte* cannot exist on its own, but plays the role of intermediary between two separate areas: the linguistic/conceptual and the social/material. Social and concept histories are believed to have both diachronic and synchronic dimensions. Institutions and rules of behavior[15] are two of the "non-linguistic" preconditions for historical events.

Anglophone historiography interpreted the relation between "historical reality" and language/speech in a different way. Quentin Skinner embarked on historical analysis using the theory of speech acts developed by the British philosopher, John Austin. He focused on individual usages of language/speech. History should rely on the analysis of individual speech acts within the framework of the given language. Language is not only a tool used in describing the world, but an important part of the world. Words do not only describe acts; words are acts (Austin).[16] For political history (or rather the history of politics), this is of great importance; if we understand political acts as speech acts, then speech (or a newspaper article, a book, a poster etc.) must also be an act.[17] According to Skinner, a historian must take into account Austin's differentiation between an illocutionary speech act (doing by saying) and a perlocutionary speech act (bringing about something by saying something). In order to identify what a protagonist wanted to say while performing a speech act, a historian should thoroughly understand the illocutionary dimension of speech, meaning that he/she must be well acquainted with the linguistic norms observed by the author in question. This is also a way to discover innovation in individual speeches.[18] A speech act

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14 Ibid, p. 4.
15 See: Reinhart Koselleck: Einleitung (Introduction). In: Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck (eds.) Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe (Basic Concepts in History), Band 1, A – D. Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1972. For more on the relation of notions and social history, see: Reinhart Koselleck: Pretekla prihodnost, Prispevek k semantiki zgodovinskih časov (Vergangene Zukunft). Studia humanitatis, Ljubljana 1999, pp. 103–124.
16 For more on Skinner and Austin's influence, see Iain Hampsher-Monk: Speech Act, Languages or Conceptual History? In: Iain Hampsher-Monk (ed.): History of Concepts, Comparative Perspectives. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 1998, p. 42 (hereafter: Hampsher-Monk: Speech Act).
17 Schorn-Schütte: Neue Geistesgeschichte, p. 277.
18 Quentin Skinner: Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas. In: Quentin Skinner: Visions of Politics, Volume I: Regarding Method. Cambridge University Press 2002, p. 87.

has two levels: a conventional and a subversive one. The subversive level draws on the conventional one and can turn into the conventional level over time.[19] While Skinner took an individual speech act as a subject of analysis, another representative of the Anglophone tradition ("Cambridge School"), John Pocock, focused on the study of collective expressions of the political. The main task of a historian of political ideas, says Pocock, is to identify and reconstruct the language used to "perform" politics, and to describe its changes over time.[20] How does a researcher know that a specific political language truly existed in the past and that it is not just a product of the historian's mental representations? A political language is a complex structure with a specific vocabulary, grammar, rhetoric, various uses, assumptions, and implications and it is used by a loose community of users for political purposes.[21]

The relationship between social reality and ideas is also a subject of the French Annales tradition that developed the influential history of mentalities. The notion of mentality is much broader than that of idea or concept. Research in this field is longue durée, the approach that is frequently used is the quantitative method, and the subjects of analysis are general human topics (death, fear and the like, but also the revolutionary mentality).[22] Usage of the notion of discourse is even more heterogeneous. In journalistic usage, discourse is a multitude of statements interconnected through a certain common topic. For Habermas, discourse is a process through which statements uttered by participants in a conversation are the subject of open discussion and criticism.[23] Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, uses this notion in a quite different way: discourse is a controlled group of statements having internal rules and mechanisms. It joins those statements that have meaning, power and consequences within a social context. "A discourse related to power becomes constituted and organized through exclusion, implying also the naturalization of the stated. The things that can be talked about appear as given and natural, but their naturalness is a result of the exclusion of that which

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19 Hampsher-Monk: Speech Act, p. 44.

20 Ibid, p. 40.

21 For more on Pocock, see Hampsher-Monk: Speech Act, p. 46. For a more precise definition of Pocock's criteria concerning political speech, see John Pocock: The Concept of Language. In: John Pocock: Political Thought and History. Cambridge University Press 2009, p. 94.

22 The history of mentalities can be defined as the study of mediations of and dialectical relationships between the objective conditions of human life and the ways in which people narrate it, and even live it." In: Michel Vovelle: Ideologije in mentalitete (Idéologies et mentalités). Studia humanitatis, Ljubljana 2004, p. 23.

23 Edgar, Habermas, p. 42.

is virtually unutterable."[24] This notion introduced into historiography the awareness that social phenomena of the past were culturally determined and discursively constructed.[25] In addition, it alerted historians to the significance of that which is not uttered; that which was not recorded by the newspapers is also important.

THE HABSBURG FRAMEWORK

While on the eve of the 1848 Revolution, the Austrian Empire was an absolutist state, it entered the First World War with (limited) parliamentary democracy in place. In 1867, the empire was reorganized into Austria-Hungary. The "two halves" had a joint foreign policy, army, economy and ruler. The Slovenian public sphere was dominated by lively political developments in the "Austrian" part of the state. At the Vienna Parliament, the future of the state was discussed by representatives of sixteen lands representing eight nations and several dozen political parties. Centralism or federalism? Equality of all nations or equality of "large" ones only? Over the past twenty years, historians have been using two concepts when referring to the complex political situation in this state: political culture and civil society.

For the Austrian historian, Ernst Hanisch, political culture is "a web of orientations, moods and attitudes to political processes and structures." Political culture is a "relevant political image of the world as seen by the population, large social groups and functional elites."[26] Austria developed a strong tradition of state bureaucracy. As a rule, modernization was implemented from above, while civil society did not completely liberate itself from the influence of the state. On the other hand, this situation is believed to have enabled a relatively early development of the welfare state.[27] The Monarchy's political culture was the opposite of that

24 This short and precise definition of Foucault's notion of discourse occurs in Roman Kuhar: Media Representations of Homosexuality. Peace Institute, Media Watch, Ljubljana 2003, p. 14.

25 In the theory of history, discourse is considered an important and problematic notion. For more on this, see Robert Jütte: Diskursanalyse in Frankreich. In: Joachim Eibach, Günter Lottes (eds.): Kompass der Geschichtswissenschaft (The Compass of Historiography). Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, UTB, Göttingen 2006, pp. 307–317.

26 Peter Vodopivec: Politične in zgodovinske tradicije v srednji Evropi in na Balkanu (v luči izkušnje prve Jugoslavije) (Political and Historical Tradition in Central Europe and the Balkans (in the Context of the First Yugoslavia)). ZČ, 59 (2005), 3–4, p. 461, 462 .

27 Ernst Hanisch: Der lange Schatten des Staates. Österreichische Gesellschaftsgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert, Österreichische Geschichte 1890–1990 (Hg. Von Herwig Wolfram) (The Long Shadow of the State. Social History of Austria in the Twentieth Century, History of Austria 1890–1990). Ueberreuter, Wien 1994, p. 15 (hereafter: Hanisch: Der lange Schatten des Staates).

found in the contemporary Anglo-Saxon world, which focused on civil society and representation. However, the American historian, Gary B. Cohen, offers another perspective. He draws attention to the fact that it was precisely the Habsburg state that made possible the development of political and institutional spaces allowing the evolution of modern civil society. In the 19th century, civil society included the print media, voluntary organizations, political movements and, naturally, political parties.[28]

Liberal social and media laws during the 1860s treated the right to association as a basic right.[29] The government was held by a succession of political parties elected through limited suffrage. Nevertheless, civil society stretched far beyond the limitations of the electorate. The relationship between civil society and the state became very dynamic after 1890. The state administration was confronted with pressure from civil society, "from below", while high officials endeavored to maintain the established tradition of "top-down" state administration. The broadening of suffrage and radicalization of politics were characteristic of Europe as a whole. During the 1890s, mass political movements in the Monarchy endangered the positions of the long-established parties of large landowners, the conservative clergy and the bourgeoisie. New movements introduced a changed, populist understanding of the community, no matter whether they promoted secular, radical nationalism or anti-Semitism, Catholic or secular agrarianism, urban social Catholicism (in Vienna) or social democracy.[30] However, the main factor of political instability in the country was national animosity. The parliamentary crisis caused by Badeni's language ordinance of 1897 relating to Bohemia and Moravia brought the controversies between the Czechs and the Germans to the boiling point.[31] Obstruction in the Vienna Parliament became a common method of achieving "national" political goals. The reform that introduced general suffrage for men in 1906 eliminated neither conflicts between nations nor political instability.[32]

28 Gary B. Cohen: Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy. Central European History, Vol. 40, No. 2 (June 2007), p. 245 (hereafter: Cohen, Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society).

29 Helmut Rumpler: Von der "Bürgerlichen öffentlichkeit" zur Massendemokratie. Zivilgesellschaft und politische partizipation im Vielvölkerstaat der Habsburgermonarchie (From the "Bourgeois Public Sphere" to Mass Democracy. Civil Society and Political Participation in the Multinational State of Habsburg Monarchy). In: Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918 (Hg. Helmut Rumpler, Peter Urbanitsch), Band VIII, 1. Teilband. Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 2006, p. 9.

30 Cohen, Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society, pp. 249–267.

31 Hanisch: Der lange Schatten des Staates, p. 230.

32 Cvirn: Razvoj ustavnosti in parlamentarizma v habsburški monarhiji (The Development of Constitutionality and Parliamentarism in the Habsburg Monarchy), p. 214.

THE SLOVENIAN FRAMEWORK

The shaping of Slovenian nationalism can be most easily described using Hroch's model for the development of "small European nations."[33] The first wave of modernization was a result of state intervention. Extensive reform undertaken in the second half of the 18th century by the Habsburg rulers, Maria Theresa and Joseph II, included the introduction of modern administration and the tax system, Church reform, the introduction of a general school system etc. This was followed by intellectual interest in the life and language of "people" during the last decades of the 18th century (Hroch's Phase A).[34] Small groups of intellectuals undertook the task of "cultivating" the folk language on the basis of an old Slovenian literary standard created in the 16th century by Protestants. The imagined national space was divided into several lands (Kranjska/Carniola, Štajerska/Styria, Koroška/Carantania, Istra/Istria, Trst/Trieste, Goriška, and part of Ogrska/Hungary), with centrally located Carniola, where Slovenes were in the majority, having the potential to become the center. Since Slovene was considered "the language of peasants," German and Italian were predominantly used in towns. In line with Hroch's scheme, the beginning of national propaganda (phase B) can be dated to the 1840s, the period of what was called Metternich Absolutism when dissatisfied Slovenian patriots began to recruit like-minded people to advocate the "national issue." The revolutionary year 1848 produced the first Slovenian political program of "united Slovenia." It demanded the unification of all Slovenes into one political unit (within the Habsburg state), or in other words, the alteration of old land borders on the basis of "national criteria."[35] The second half of the 19th century was marked by the intensification of modernization processes: the final disintegration of feudalism, the introduction of the railway, (modest) capitalist production, the development of trade, the print media, the school system and representative parliamentarism. The Slovenian national movement

33 See: Miroslav Hroch: Društveni preduvjeti nacionalnih preporoda u Europi (Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe). Srednja Europa, Zagreb 2006.
34 Miroslav Hroch, Can Nation-Forming Processes Be Used as a Criterion of Uneven Development? In: Miroslav Hroch, Luda Klusakova, Criteria and Indicators of Backwardness, Essays on Uneven Development in European History. Prague 1996, p. 134. In the opinion of the historian Joachim Hösler, the transition from Phase A to Phase B occurred later. See: Janez Cvirn has rejected this thesis. See: Janez Cvirn: Joachim Hösler, Von Krain zu Slowenien, the book review (From Carniola to Slovenia). In: Zgodovinski časopis, year 2010, No. 3–4, p. 492.
35 Vasilij Melik: Leto 1848 v slovenski zgodovini (The Year 1848 in Slovenian History). In: Vasilij Melik: Slovenci 1848–1918. Litera, Maribor 2002, p. 36.

transformed into a political movement that endeavored to penetrate state institutions.[36] The transition to Hroch's Phase c (mass national movement) could be dated to the period 1868–1871, when Slovenian leaders organized mass demonstrations demanding a "United Slovenia" and equality for the Slovenian language. Slovenian nationalism during the last three decades of the Habsburg monarchy was characterized by a political split between the liberals and the Catholic conservatives (clericals), large regional differences, a pro-Yugoslav orientation (aspirations towards political or cultural association with the South Slavs), the flourishing of culture (proliferation of literary and other art works with a Slovenian character), and the formation of the economic background.[37]

CONTENT

Today official or state censorship is unknown. Nevertheless, the Slovenian media space is shaped by factors that in reality restrict media freedom: the irresponsibility of media owners, the precariousness of the journalistic profession, control of content by withholding (private or state) advertisements etc.[38] State censorship was a fact during the period of the Habsburg Monarchy. It appeared along with the birth of the modern state and the public sphere during the period of enlightened absolutism, and it reached its peak during the first half of the 19th century, when the task of censorship was entrusted to the police force. During the period 1863–1918, control over the print media was in the hands of state prosecutors' offices which had to be supplied one issue of each newspaper at the beginning of its distribution. It was prohibited to make offensive remarks about "morals and modesty," to incite "hostile clashes" among nations, to commit the crime of "disrupting religion", to "foment acts aimed against state or provincial authorities," and to commit the crime of "offending his Majesty and other members of the imperial origin." Even contemporaries considered these provisions very elastic (hence they dubbed them "rubber paragraphs"), arguing that no great ingenuity

36 Peter Vodopivec: Od Pohlinove slovnice do samostojne države, Slovenska zgodovina od konca 18. do konca 20. stoletja (From Pohlin's Grammar to an Independent State. Slovenian History From the End of the 18th Century To the End of the 20th Century). Modrijan, Ljubljana 2006, p. 81.
37 Ibid, p. 111–147.
38 Cf: Brankica Petković, Sandra B. Hrvatin: You Call This a Media Market? The role of the state in the media sector in Slovenia. Media Watch, Ljubljana 2007.

was needed to restrict critical newspapers by implementing these provisions. Another instrument used by the state to control the print media was economic pressure, for example, through high sums of caution money and contributions, which primarily affected those newspaper projects that had weak financial backing. The Slovenian media went through hardships during the 1860s and 1870s: i.e., the period when German liberals were at the helm of the country.

PICTURE 1: JAKOB ALEŠOVEC

The editor, writer and conservative satirist, Jakob Alešovec (1842–1901), began to lose his sight late in life. Gradually, he neglected himself and ended his life as a pauper. The newspapers took advantage of Alešovec's death in 1901 to launch a political war. *Slovenski narod* noted that the clericals had discarded Alešovec as a "squeezed citrus." *Slovenec* responded that his colleagues had helped him as best they could and advised the liberal author to leave Alešovec alone "because it is still to be seen what his own end will be."

The satirist Jakob Alešovec wrote in 1879 that an editor of a Slovenian newspaper was no stranger to hell because he encountered it in this world. "His most sinister

oppressor is a public prosecutor who often ruins through confiscation everything that he has been constructing for days with great effort." In addition to financial penalties, a public prosecutor could kindly arrange for an editor to spend "a few days in the isolated room at 'Žabjek'" (Žabjek was a Ljubljana prison). However, claims Alešovec, educative punishments failed to fulfill the purpose: "The editorial beast would return from the menagerie even angrier and would only become somewhat more cautious."[39] True media freedom lay somewhere between the legislation and the political and economic power relations in society. Is it any different today?

Since the mechanisms of media control focused on the criticism of the state as epitomized by the emperor and state bodies, inventive editors won for themselves spaces of freedom elsewhere. If we compare political antagonism in the contemporary media with those at the Slovenian print media of the period studied here, we cannot but admit that the political struggles of the past were much more amusing. However amusement had its dark side, too: the use of hate speech was much "freer" than it is today. Labeling an opponent a scoundrel, a rascal or a pest was the order of the day. Local and global social relations were, as a rule, interpreted using simple generalization. The essence of newspaper writing was not a reported event but the reinforcement of black-and-white relations between Us and Them. Let us take a look at one such example. In 1904, a fierce struggle was raging in the Carniola Diet between the clericals and the liberals. The two party leaders engaged in a vulgar argument during the session held on October 7th. The official stenographer recorded that Tavčar (the leader of the liberals) accused Šušteršič (the clerical leader) of lying. The latter left the speaker's stand, went to the place where Tavčar was sitting, pounded the table, threw papers into the air and screamed: "Liar! Shame on you!" Tavčar supposedly responded by calling him a "beast."[40] The Catholic newspaper *Slovenec* wrote that the upset Šuštaršič was justified in calling Tavčar a liar. The liberal *Slovenski narod* saw the situation differently. Šušteršič allegedly "howled like a

39 Jakob Alešovec: Ljubljanske slike, podobe ljubljanskega sveta pod drobnogledom (Ljubljana Sketches. A Microscopic Perspective on the World of Ljubljana). Publisher Jak. Alešovec, Ljubljana 1879, p. 121, 122.
40 Rok Stergar: Dr. Ivan Šušteršič proti Grofu Jožefu Antonu Barbu-Waxensteinu (Dr. Ivan Šušteršič Versus Count Joseph Anton Barb-Waxenstein). In: Zbornik Janka Pleterskega. Založba zrc, Ljubljana 2003, p. 204.

lacerated cow" and wailed "I'll punch you in the mouth."[41]
No one gave a fig about objectivity. Editors/journalists and
politicians were often one and the same persons. In 1882,
the same Mr Tavčar mentioned above, writing as an anony-
mous correspondent, glorified the wonderful speech by Dr
Ivan Tavčar in *Slovenski narod*.

The media are always ideological – they reflect social
reality and construct imaginary relations among individu-
als and their living conditions. This is best illustrated by
reports on events that are difficult to understand. When in
1873 the Vienna stock exchange broke down, the Sloveni-
an regions were not directly affected because they were not
sufficiently developed. Unlike in the more developed parts
of the Monarchy that were engulfed by the stock exchange
fever, investors in stocks in the Slovenian regions were few.
Nevertheless, people living on the peripheries partook in
the wonders of the brave new world of capitalism (for ex-
ample, peasants became indebted because of the moderniza-
tion of agriculture and the railway, people had to fight the
competition presented by "colonial" goods etc.). Econom-
ic freedom was supported only by German liberals, while
Slovenian liberals advocated a protectionist economy. The
conservatives had it the easiest, because they were free of
doubts: the stock exchange collapse was God's punishment
for godless liberalism, which was a hypocritical invention
of the Jews. The stock exchange was, as they explained in
the conservative *Novice*, a gathering place of "people of all
provenances, the rich and the ragamuffins, Jews and Chris-
tians" who were there "to bargain with paper money." De-
spite ideological and provincial narrow-mindedness, Slov-
enian conservatives were well aware of the main problem
related to the commotion on the capitalist stock exchange.
It was the question of whether the state should or should
not step in to help. "'It is on you, the Government, to help
us now!' – scream Jewish newspapers and their followers.
But how? Certainly not by allowing adventurous specula-
tors to help themselves to our tax money!" One of the rea-
sons that led to the stock exchange collapse in 1873 was the
bursting of the real estate bubble. "The price of land where
houses should be built," reported *Novice*, "was so high that
even fools were laughing."[42] Here a comparison between
reports on the economic crisis of 2008 and that of 1873
imposes itself. Contemporary Slovenian media typically

41 *Slovenec*, 7. 10. 1904; *Slovenski narod*, 7. 10. 1904.
42 *Novice*, year 1873, No. 21, pp. 163, 164.

accept without reservations media discourse dictated by financial institutions. The Slovenian media writing in 1873 can indeed be accused of amateurism, anti-Semitism, conservativeness and provincialism, but not also of lacking a critical distance towards the economic system of that time.

PICTURE 2: *Wiener Bilder*, 26. 9. 1897

In 1897, an African village was constructed for display at the Vienna zoo and populated with Ashanti people from Africa. The *Wiener Bilder* reported that a "Negro woman" living in the zoo had delivered a child and dubbed it a Vienna Ashanti. The journalist then went on to meditate on how Vienna had become a truly cosmopolitan city and how at some point in the future the Deutschmeister imperial regiment could even include a black soldier.

While Slovenian media did keep a distance when writing about the economy, the same cannot be said about

their conduct when it came to (Yugo)Slavism, at that time part of the Slovenian national ideology. Slavism and Yugoslavism played an important role in constructing Slovenian bourgeois culture, which was constituted as a contrast to German and Italian cultures. The defiant singing of South Slavic songs at public events, the publication of newspaper articles by Slavic authors, the learning of Russian and the like were the features that differentiated the Slovenian bourgeoisie from the German/Italian bourgeoisie living in the same town. The strategy "keep to your own kind" could succeed only when the awareness of an essential "cultural" difference gained ground. When in 1875 the "Great Eastern Crisis" broke out with the uprising against Ottoman rule in Herzegovina, all Slovenian newspapers adamantly supported the insurgents, as they did the Russian army during the Russo-Turkish war. They had nothing good to say about the Turks or German liberals who sympathized with them. The Turks were described as "bloodsuckers," a plague, hereditary enemies and the like, while the insurgents were noble Christian Slavs. Naturally, German liberals responded by claiming that both the insurgents and the Turks were "savages," but the former were more dangerous because they had the support of the "Asiatic" Russia. This was an interesting case of the confrontation between two Orientalist discourses. Both believed in the superiority of "European culture" but differed as to who should bring this "culture" to the Balkans. Although the German liberals in 1878 were against the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, they were sure that "German culture" had a civilizing mission in the Balkans. The Slovenes, on the other hand, ascribed this role to the Russian empire, the slavicized Habsburg Monarchy and, naturally, to themselves. They assumed that, with respect to the South Slavs, they were "a true shield against the invasion of the German element,"[43] while at the same time their mission was to Slavicize "western culture" and transmit it "down there, to the Slavic South."[44]

Nationalism is an ideology that is in love with banality and the trivial. The main questions of nationalism are as follows: who are we and what connects us? How can one interconnect a multitude of people who did not have (and still do not have) much in common? The education of people in the folk spirit required approaches that addressed the

43 *Slovenski narod*, 13. 12. 1870.
44 Ivan Prijatelj, Slovenska kulturnopolitična zgodovina 1848–1895 (Slovenian Cultural and Political History 1848–1895), Volume IV, Ljubljana 1961, p. 486.

broader public. There is no better way to address masses than through folk songs. National glory can literally be sung out and everything can be connected through songs. Light songs are not concerned with large issues but rely instead on people's sentiments, and precisely this is of essential importance for nationalism. Much like contemporary Slovenian intellectuals who complain about the content of Slovenian pop-folk music, as early as 1922 the writer Anton Funtek complained about the banality of folk songs. The song entitled "On the Lake", which continues to be popular even today, opens with this stanza: "Across the lake near Mount Triglav a boat runs to and fro. A loud song is heard from the boat, echoing through the mountains." Funtek cynically observed that the line "A loud song is heard from the boat," leads "a normal man to conclude that a large company is riding in the boat. But there is no such company in the boat, which can be concluded from the next line, which runs: 'Gentle birds wake up across the valleys and mountains/On hearing my song, each chirping its own melody.' This means that only one person is rowing and singing."[45] The rationalist Funtek did not understand the essence of popular national songs. The sung words acquire power only after their meaning has dissolved. Members of a national team who mumble the text of a national anthem definitely do not know what the text says. They do, however, understand the meaning of a national anthem.

The Slovenes shaped their self-image through a hard struggle with German and Italian nationalism. Both attempted to prove that they were the carriers of "true" culture, so small nations were supposed to accept that culture and recognize its superiority. This amounted to capitulation in real life. Slovenian leaders were therefore aware of what the imposition of culture meant. But did this lead them to sympathize with those African peoples to whom "civilization" was brought by colonial powers? By no means. The newspapers depicted Africans as savages and cannibals. For example, "In Africa, the republic of Liberia was suddenly attacked by a squad of wild, pagan Negroes who cut, baked and ate 350 people. A horrible act!"[46] In addition to savagery, other characteristics emphasized were dirtiness, animalistic lust and low intelligence. One of the rare connoisseurs of Africa was Ignacij Knoblehar, a missionary in

45 Anton Funtek: O besedilu naših popularnih pesmi (On the Texts of Our Folk Songs). In: *Ljubljanski zvon*, year 1922, No. 11, p. 645.
46 *Slovenski gospodar*, 18. 11. 1875.

Sudan (1819–1858) who brought to his homeland African children to be put under the protection of and educated by Slovenian benefactors. In theory, they were supposed to return to Sudan as missionaries, but some did not wish to accept the task, preferring to wander around as marginalized individuals in the world of white people.

While in 1897 the culture of dialogue in Parliament fell to the lowest level ever (MPs insulted each other and fought), Vienna residents were given the opportunity to see how real savages lived – an African village was constructed within the Prater zoo and populated with Ashanti people from the Gold Coast (now Gana).[47] Whether these people were degraded of their own will into exhibition animals, the newspapers did not say. However one thing is certain: although the Africans were definitely not responsible for the behavior of MPs in the Parliament who pounded "tables with wooden boards and behaved like they went mad," the Slovenian journalists nevertheless reported that MPs were behaving like "Ashanti-Negroes."[48] Had this been true, the MPs would not have wreaked havoc in the Parliament but would have peacefully sat in the zoo behind the fence – like true savages.

47 *Wiener Bilder*, 26. 9. 1897.
48 *Slovenec*, 3. 6. 1897.