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## „Za Boha a národ!“: How the Slovak Language Press in America Helped Form Slovak-American Identity

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This research explores Slovak-American identity formation through the Slovak Language Press in late 1800s and early 1900s North America. Publications like *Jednota*, *Amerikansko-Slovenske Noviny*, and *Slovak v Amerike* promoted literacy, political awareness, and shaped much of the Slovak-American identity. Remarkably, *Amerikansko-Slovenske Noviny* had more subscribers than all Slovak newspapers in Slovakia combined, and therefore also exerted a much greater impact on the Slovak-American identity. We also examine the contrast between the press's portrayal of Slovak-American worldviews and the historical reality of their experience, as well as their current identity and worldview, as well as the enduring influence of *Jednota*, the oldest Slovak-English continuously published newspaper, on today's Slovak-American identity.

Slovak immigration, labor, strikes, literacy, Slovak language press, Slovak – American identity

The Slovak language press in the United States and Canada have helped create the self-identity of Slovak communities that live there. These newspapers and magazines that Slovak immigrants and their families consumed not only increased the literacy of the immigrant populations in Slovak, but often also in English. They helped congeal the varied local communities into larger Slovak society in the Americas, and the few Slovak-language publications still in print continue to do so today. However, these publications would often push a worldview that while was advantageous for the integration of Slovaks into American society, also did not always reflect the reality of many Slovaks' mindsets or shared experiences.

The advent of the Slovak language press in America can be traced back to *Bulletin*, the “first lithographed newspaper” published by the cousins Julius Wolf and Janko Slovensky in 1885–1886.<sup>1</sup> These two educated Slovaks from Krompachy travelled to America in 1879, which was, at the time, only fourteen years from its Civil War. America was also only two years after the Reconstruction period, which ended with the controversial election of Rutherford B. Hayes at President of the United States. While the American South ushered in the Jim Crow era of Black oppression, the Northern States were heading into the second industrial revolution. Mines, coke refineries, steel mills, and oil refineries were making a few men very rich, while the working poor, mostly immigrants, struggled to pay their debts and make a living. It was into this situation that Wolf and Slovensky entered upon their arrival into the United States.

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<sup>1</sup> Čulen, K.: History of Slovaks in America. St. Paul, Minnesota: Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, 2007, p. 161, and Čulen, K.: Slovenské časopisy v Amerike. Middletown, Pennsylvania, 1970, p. 29.

Despite their educations, they found that their only prospects for work at first were in the mines.<sup>2</sup> Wolf started working as a mason in Braddock, Pennsylvania. It was in these menial jobs that he claimed to have learned English. Slovensky also worked as a carpenter and changed jobs as he found better conditions. As Čulen points out,

“In those years, Slovak emigration to America began to gain strength. And the closest compatriots of Janko Slovenský were moving in. Poor peasants who learned that if they could earn a living at home, they would still earn a gold coin in America, and that is why they left the hard mountainous fields of Slovakia and went overseas to try their luck, so that they could finally talk about that piece of land, that pair of cows, or that horse, say: They are ours! However, social conditions in America were not as great as was often portrayed. Every dollar was hard-earned money.”<sup>3</sup>

It was not much longer, though, that Slovensky would find a place at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate in Pittsburgh. Here he began to meet his countrymen that also had emigrated to America, and were looking for answers to the rumors that they were hearing: Was it true that Slovaks in Pennsylvania would lose work? Was it true that the Slovak laborers in America would be charged high taxes upon their return, or if there would be war, or if the koruna would become valid currency? Or, would all Slovaks have to become Muslims upon their return to Austria-Hungary? Would all Slovaks that work in the United States have to pay a ten-dollar tax every month?<sup>4</sup> The rumors traveled fast among the immigrants.

It was to answer the preceding rumors that Slovensky and Wolf published the first Slovak-language newsletter: *The Bulletin*. Though the first issue from 1885 is now completely lost, we do know that *The Bulletin* was successful among the patrons of Wolf's bar: he hung the first issue on the wall “like a picture.”<sup>5</sup> The bar was full of patrons waiting for a new copy to learn what was new “back home.” Every issue had four pages and each was dedicated to a theme: “What is new in the world?”, “What is new at home?”, and the other two for information about jobs, living in America, and other important topics. *The Bulletin* was written in what Slovaks would understand as a general Eastern dialect but using Hungarian orthography.<sup>6</sup> Today, not one copy of *The Bulletin* is known to exist.

While *The Bulletin* grew in popularity, Slovensky determined that a larger, legitimate Slovak journal was appropriate for distribution. On October 21, 1886, Slovensky published the first issue of *Amerikanszko-slovenszke noviny*, again, in a general Eastern dialect of Slovak but with Hungarian orthography. The newspaper had a pro-Hungarian outlook, though this was tempered through its reporting on domestic and foreign affairs, as well as its focus on American issues that directly affected the Slovak immigrant. The publication, though, would pick up a Slovak nationalist air when Wolf and Slovensky hired, as the Editor-in-Chief, Peter V. Rovnianek. However,

<sup>2</sup> Čulen, K.: Slovenské časopisy v Amerike, c. d., p. 161. See also Slovenský, J. [Čulen, K.]: Životopis zakladateľa prvých slovenských novín v Amerike. Winnipeg, Canada, 1954, pp. 86-89.

<sup>3</sup> Slovenský, J. [Čulen, K.]: Životopis zakladateľa prvých slovenských novín v Amerike, c. d., p. 87. Translation mine.

<sup>4</sup> Čulen, K.: History of Slovaks in America. St. Paul, Minnesota: Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, 2007, p. 161, and Slovenský, J. [Čulen, K.]: Životopis zakladateľa prvých slovenských novín v Amerike, c. d., pp. 90-91.

<sup>5</sup> Slovenský, J. [Čulen, K.]: Životopis zakladateľa prvých slovenských novín v Amerike, c. d., p. 99.

<sup>6</sup> Slovenský, J. [Čulen, K.]: Životopis zakladateľa prvých slovenských novín v Amerike, c. d., p. 99, and Čulen, K.: Slovenské časopisy v Amerike, c. d., p. 29.

a certain J. E. Schwartz-Markovic, or F. Schwarz-Markovic,<sup>7</sup> came to America after charges of embezzlement in his homeland forced him to emigrate. He was offered a position to be the New York reporter for *Amerikanszko-szlovenske noviny* if he would also stop pressing a paper that Schwartz-Markovic began publishing out of Streator, Illinois: the Slovak nationalist *Nova Vlast*. He agreed but also discovered that Wolf and Slovensky ran an article that incriminated him in embezzlement, forcing Schwartz-Markovic to leave publishing and reporting altogether; he became a restaurateur in New York.

This may be the first instance of competition between Slovak newspapers in America. As different organizations and fraternal orders, like the First Catholic Slovak Union, Sokol, and the National Slovak Society, formed and grew, so did the amount of Slovak-language newspapers. Soon, there were more subscribers to *Amerikánsko-slovenské noviny* (the spelling after the newspaper began publishing in formal Slovak) than to all Slovak periodicals in the Old World at that same time.

Each publication reflected the attitudes of their editors and readership, and in turn, the publications affected the worldviews of their readership. Taking *Amerikánsko-slovenské noviny* as a generalized case study, the publication under Wolf and Slovensky had a pro-Austrian-Hungarian bias. As Slovensky worked in the Austrian-Hungarian consulate in Pittsburgh, it would be natural that this bias should show up in this newspaper. When Rovnianek, who was expelled from seminary for his Slovak nationalistic views, took over *Amerikánsko-slovenské noviny*, one would expect the paper to espouse then his views – as it did. In fact, Rovnianek was considered a “pan-Slav scoundrel” by some accounts from letters to the editor for his articles decrying Madarization in the homeland.<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, from an interview with Angie,<sup>9</sup> a Slovak-American in her late 60s, the sentiment that her grandparents held from reading these articles still exists with her today: “Absolutely Rovnianek was a scoundrel and cost us much money with his crazy investments, my grandma said. But he was absolutely right about the Hungarians. My family still resents how they oppressed us Slovaks and made us peasant servants.”<sup>10</sup> Her husband also concurred with this statement, though he also offered that his family did not lose money in Rovnianek’s financial ventures.<sup>11</sup> One can be sure that the readership was strong with this newspaper not just because they shared their worldview with the paper, but because it also agitated their worldview through its articles – creating a self-sustaining cycle of confirmation and agitation of a predominant anti-Madarization that was strong in the United States. It also helped this newspaper that such sentiments could be freely published in the United States, as well as dissenting pro-Hungarian views. The free market of ideas in the United States, even among those speaking Slovak and other languages, would determine what worldview would win; among Slovak-Americans, it seems, Rovnianek’s anti-Madarization sentiments were those that have still kept hold.

More and more Slovak language newspapers published in the United States. Some, like *Jednota* from the First Catholic Slovak Union and *Slovák v Amerike*, kept publishing until the twenty-first century while most other newspapers published for a much shorter time. Some, such as

<sup>7</sup> Oddly, Čulen gives the name of this publisher both ways between two books: Čulen, K.: *History of Slovaks in America*, c. d, s. 161, and Slovenský, J. [Čulen, K.]: *Životopis zakladateľa prvých slovenských novín v Amerike*, c. d., pp. 90-91.

<sup>8</sup> Stolarik, M.: *Immigration and Urbanization: The Slovak Experience, 1870–1918*. Dissertation: University of Minnesota, 1974, pp. 142-143.

<sup>9</sup> The names of my interviewees are changed to protect their identities in accordance with the GDPR, as this article is meant for publication in the European Union.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Angie, conducted in English on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

<sup>11</sup> For these ventures, M. Mark Stolarik and Konstantin Čulen wrote extensively on them over many works. Even Rovnianek himself refers to them in his autobiography, *Zápisky zaživa pochovaného*.

the socialist newspapers *Fakla* and *Rovnost' l'udu*, has much shorter printing runs. *Fakla*, for example, seems to have been printed only in 1894 and was one of few Socialist Slovak-language newspapers in America. *Rovnost' l'udu*, however, was a socialist paper that had a much better publication run from 1906–1935. Extant copies prove that it was akin to *The Masses*, an English-language socialist illustrated publication, in its higher-quality presentation, and this probably helped it survive longer in a very pro-capitalist America. It also helps that *Rovnost' l'udu* was first published in 1906: the Industrial Workers of the World formed in 1905, showing that the ideals of democratic socialism and anarcho-syndicalism were much more acceptable at that time in America than in 1894 when America was still reeling from the Haymarket Affair in 1886. It is primarily from those extant facsimiles of *Rovnost' l'udu* that we can find examples of some leftist Slovak worldviews. Unfortunately, not one copy of *Fakla* seems to exist.

It is also interesting to note that *Rovnost' l'udu* predated and outlasted *The Masses*. *The Masses* printed from 1911–1917, ending after its editors were put on trial under the Espionage Act. *The Masses* contained contributions from Pablo Picasso, Upton Sinclair, and Carl Sandburg; *Rovnost' l'udu* may have been protected by not having such popular contributors and also being in Slovak, which would have ensured that *Rovnost' l'udu* would not be as widely distributed and therefore not prioritized by the United States federal government for prosecution. This is especially evident by the fact that *Rovnost' l'udu* survived the Espionage and Sedition Acts of 1917 and 1918, as well as the Palmer Raids of 1919–1920.

It cannot be said, though, that the Slovak-language press in the United States was more radical than the English-language press. After all, newspapers must thrive on advertisements and subscriptions for funding, and American businesses have never been wont to support any anti-capitalist endeavor. Therefore, the newspapers that were more apt to see wide distribution, in any language, would be those that also can get the most sponsors, necessitating that these publications be pro-business and adhere to the current status quo. Therefore, the readership of *Jednota*, *Slovák v Amerike*, and *Amerikánsko-slovenské noviny* garnered much more readership than the more radical newspapers. This adherence to the American status quo, though, would shape worldviews that were not always in line with the reality of the Slovak immigrant's actual experience. Also, in many instances, these newspapers taught Slovaks, in the words of Robert Zecker, “to think like white people.”<sup>12</sup>

In many instances, newspapers such as *Slovák v Amerike* attempted to define, by the emulation of American newspapers, the place that good, white Slovaks should begin to inhabit in American society. On June 26, 1903 *Slovák v Amerike* ran a story of the lynching of George F. White, allegedly for rape, in Wilmington, Delaware.<sup>13</sup> The article relays the lynching as justified against the “criminal” and “nigger,” lauding the actions of the mob and describing them in detail. The article in *Slovák v Amerike* assumes Whites guilt and dehumanizes him by its repeated use of the slur.<sup>14</sup> It is most telling that the article describes George White in such terms when he was not afforded a hearing, a trial, and all evidence was circumstantial; George White did not fight his arrest but denied being involved in the rape and death of the girl that sparked this lynching.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Zecker dedicated an entire book to this concept: Zecker, R.: *Race and America's Immigrant Press: How the Slovaks were Taught to Think Like White People*. New York City, New York, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> *Slovák v Amerike*, June 26, 1903, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Zecker, in his book, translates the term “niger” as “negro.” However, “negro” would be “černoch”, not “niger.” It is interesting that he softened the term in his translation, but returning to the original article shows that his point in his book about breeding racism in Slovak immigrants in the early 1900s is even more correct than he implies with the mistranslation.

<sup>15</sup> Pfeifer, M. J.: *Lynching Beyond Dixie: American Mob Violence Outside the South*. Champagne, Illinois, University of Illinois Press, 2013, pp. 235-237.

*Slovák v Amerike*, again, in 1906 took to portraying Asians as the “other.” In a caption of a picture of Pilipino residents of Sulu and Jolo, the people are primitives that “the Spanish were unable to maintain... even under the American freedom they are unhappy.”<sup>16</sup> *Jednota*, however, was much more apt to be less condescending toward the Pilipino, as they were also Catholic; “*Slovák v Amerike* and *New Yorkský denník*, secular papers, were more consistent in labeling Filipinos as innately savage, thieving, and violent.”<sup>17</sup>

Often, certain jokes in these newspapers served as deft warnings for the greenhorn immigrants. In 1921 and 1922, *New Yorkský denník* ran two jokes about immigrants. On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1921, a Slovak woman from Humenné met a Black man that spoke perfect Slovak. He warned her that he was from Humenné, but if she were not careful in America, she would become black too.<sup>18</sup> The other joke was about a black man warns his boss that as an enslaved person purchased for \$50, he was more expensive than an Irishman that could be paid just \$2 for the same work.<sup>19</sup> While these jokes do remind the immigrant of “the low regard with which their employers assessed them,”<sup>20</sup> the warning that these Slovak immigrants must look after their reputations and occupy a certain white space in American society is also apparent in these. The immigrant is warned that they could become “Black” or worse should they not assimilate into white society, replete with that society’s prejudices and racism.

Interestingly, the younger Slovak American generations reject this racism that was taught to the greenhorn immigrant. “I sometimes feel that I want little to do with my heritage as a Slovak American woman in her thirties,” says Alex, a young second-generation Slovak American woman who holds a Master’s degree and works as a counselor. “I reject the reactionary outlook that my grandparents had, certainly. I find the older generation’s racism to be abhorrent and somewhat ironic, considering they also faced prejudice in America.”<sup>21</sup>

One of the more famous examples of the popular Slovak-language press not being in line with the experienced immigrant reality is the Connellsville Coal Strike of 1891 and how *Amerikánsko-slovenské noviny* reacted to Slovak participation to the strike. When many Slovaks, alongside other nationalities walked off their jobs in the mines in protest to cut wages, *Amerikánsko-slovenské noviny* ran articles to encourage the workers to return to their jobs. Certainly, the articles had the desired effect. Yet, in June of 1894, *Slovák v Amerike* published four letters between Wolf and Rovnianek proving that they accepted bribes to sway Slovak sentiment.<sup>22</sup> Rovnianek, in his autobiography, denies the veracity of these letters to no avail; their authenticity is certain.<sup>23</sup> Even though this scandal occurred in the 1890s, some of the sentiments of Slovak-Americans in the Pittsburgh area again betray the influence of these types of articles. For example, Joe, a Slovak-American in his late 70s indicated in an interview, “My ancestors here were not the kind to strike. In fact, while others struck, my ancestors were at work in the mines. They were thankful for what they had and received from their work.”<sup>24</sup> Yet, this sentiment does not mesh with the reality of Slovaks working in those mines; we know that Slovaks were often on strike and often were the first to strike in solidarity. In fact, we know that in 1897 the Anthracite Strike was mostly Slovak

<sup>16</sup> *Slovák v Amerike*, June 12, 1906, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Zecker, R.: Race and America’s Immigrant Press: How the Slovaks were Taught to Think Like White People, c. d., p. 122.

<sup>18</sup> *New Yorkský denník*, June 4, 1921, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> *New Yorkský denník*, August 12, 1922, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> Zecker, R.: Race and America’s Immigrant Press: How the Slovaks were Taught to Think Like White People, c. d., p. 204.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Alex, conducted in English on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> Čulen, K.: History of Slovaks in America, op. cit., pp. 105-109.

<sup>23</sup> Rovnianek, P.: Zápisky za živa pochovaného. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1924, pp. 244-248.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Joe, in English, conducted on October 20, 2021.



miners oppressed by the Reading Coal and Iron Company as well as literacy tests implemented by the State of Pennsylvania to limit Slavic immigration.<sup>25</sup> Slovaks were involved in the Homestead Strike in 1892, one of the bloodiest labor battles in American labor history. Finally, the Slovak Strike of 1910–1911 gets its name because most estimates put the number of Slovaks in this strike to be at 70%.<sup>26</sup> These facts are in stark contrast to how many modern Slovak Americans view their history; while they believe that their ancestors worked when others did not, the truth is that Slovaks were often deeply involved in union activity and labor strikes. This narrative, in part, derives from such articles in the Slovak-language press in America. Angie stated, “Many Slovak Americans believe that they would never strike, and that they were willing to work as scabs. Yet, I know that my own family has a long history of proud union membership.”<sup>27</sup> It is interesting that even in Angie’s dissenting view of the notion of the “non-striking Slovak,” she still admitted that this was the prevalent view held by other Slovak Americans around her.

In fact, as we will soon see, it seems that as the younger Slovak Americans, many of whom no longer read or speak Slovak, begin to reject the worldviews held by their relatives, they still maintain that the worldview exists and is the status quo.

The modern Slovak American press no longer publishes, on the whole, in Slovak only. In fact, such newspapers and newsletters that once published primarily in Slovak now publish primarily in English. Newspapers, such as *Slovák v Amerike* and *Amerikánsko-slovenské noviny* no longer are in print, even online. *Slovák v Amerike* held the status of being the oldest constantly published newspaper until July, 2020, when it stopped publishing online. The online archive is no longer accessible for this publication.<sup>28</sup> However, *Jednota*, the publication for the First Catholic Slovak Union, is still extant. The online archive, at the time of this writing, extends back to November 29, 2006.

Yet, it is here that we can still see, in the most widely-spread publication for the Slovak American community, how the Slovak American community still attempts to maintain its identity, and yet how it has slowly changed. *Jednota* still published in Slovak, though it is primarily in English. In 2006, however, the periodical’s Slovak pages were strictly in Slovak, and in 2023, the Slovak pages are in both Slovak and English, demonstrating a desire to maintain its Slovak identity while necessarily translating the short articles for *Jednota*’s Slovak American audience.

Yet the publication, understandably, is still decidedly Catholic. While maintaining this character, it also helps promulgate Catholicism and the Slovak American heritage through its articles. It does not, however, focus on world events as much as it does on Slovak American events and gatherings. In some ways, though, this publication still proliferates the Eastern dialects that the first Slovak immigrants spoke. For example, in an article advertising Youngstown’s 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Mohoning Valley Slovak Fest, they state that for dinner will be “holubky (stuffed cabbage) and potato/cheese pirohy (bandurky a syr).”<sup>29</sup> Holubky are more prevalent in Eastern Slovakia and still very popular in Pittsburgh and Cleveland, and even more telling is the inadvertent use of the Saris dialect’s word for potatoes (bandurky).

<sup>25</sup> Greene, V.: A Study in Slavs, Strikes, and Unions: The Anthracite Strike of 1897. In *Pennsylvania History*, 1964, vol. 31, issue 2, pp. 203-205.

<sup>26</sup> McDonough, J.: Worker Solidarity, Judicial Oppression, and Police Repression in the Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania Coal Miner’s Strike, 1910–1911. In: *Pennsylvania History*, 1997, vol. 64, issue 3, pp. 384-406.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Angie, conducted in English on June 5, 2021.

<sup>28</sup> *Slovák v Amerike* was available at <http://www.slovakvamerike.com/index.php>. While the main webpage still exists, the archives were published with Adobe Flash, which is no longer an application that functions on the web. Emulators, as well, do not allow access to these newspapers.

<sup>29</sup> *Jednota*, “Youngstown’s 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Mohning Valley Slovak Fest: Celebrate your Heritage!” August 9, 2023, 6.

The only points within the publication that focus on world events are the bilingual snippets in “News from Slovakia – Spravy zo Slovenska” that are translated reruns from TASR, the Vatican, and other news sources that publish in Slovak.<sup>30</sup> No longer do these articles openly present a worldview that previous Slovak-language publications in America presented; instead, one may find the worldview only by noting which articles are published. They are certainly all focused on Slovak-centric events, for example the summoning of Hungary’s ambassador over statements about Slovakia – but the old attempts at defining the worldview of the Slovak Americans are gone.<sup>31</sup>

Yet, one could also argue that it is precisely in this that the American worldview is reinforced. No longer is it as necessary for an immigrant to assimilate into American culture at the expense of their home culture. The American worldview is now much more apt to celebrate the conglomerate of cultures that make up its society than it was at the turn of the Twentieth Century, and this is reflected in *Jednota*’s adherence to publishing mostly non-biased short articles that affect only Slovak affairs without passing judgment within the articles. In short, no longer is it necessary for the Slovak immigrant or their descendants to occupy a space of Whiteness.

When speaking to a Slovak American college student in Pittsburgh, Emily, she made it clear that her generation rejects much of what previous generations of Slovak Americans accepted as integral characteristics of their culture. At a talk focusing on Slovak Catholicism and its relationship to Slovak Americans over time at the University of Pittsburgh, she quipped, “This is a talk my grandmother would enjoy. Me? I am not so devout and while I am proud, I don’t think that my being Slovak means that I also must be a pious Catholic. I don’t think I have to be conservative. I mean, I am learning the language and I love it, but I don’t have to be so stuffy or whatever. I think the history is neat, but many of the people we heard about were just priests. Again, my parents and grandparents would love this talk, but it does nothing for me personally.”<sup>32</sup>

Interestingly, again, Emily’s rejection of what being Slovak American was defines for the observer what it certainly was for previous generations. *Jednota*, it seems, has also followed suit to match the worldview of the modern Slovak American to a point, but it still focuses on news from the Vatican and publishes homilies delivered in America and in Slovakia, for example. In the August 9, 2023 edition, *Jednota* published the “Homily of the Most Rev. Larry J. Kulick, Bishop of Greensburgh Diocese Saints Cyril and Methodius Celebration.” This homily, given in Nitra, Slovakia, was delivered in English, published in English, and expounds Catholic ideals while encouraging the preservation of Slovak American culture and a bit of conservatism. “Do not look to others and “what’s the latest trends or newest styles” of living. Believe me, secularism, materialism, and self-centeredness can ravage a nation, its people, culture, and faith more severely than communism ever could.”<sup>33</sup>

Still, the imperative shared in this article is not as clear as the definition of the American worldview that the article depicting George White’s lynching is; there is little overtly stating what a worldview must entail in the latest edition of *Jednota*. There is nothing demanding that the readership be united in more than its Slovak heritage and Catholicism, and even this is just recommended.

In conclusion, the Slovak American worldview is changing, and it seems that the Slovak American press is as well. Interestingly, it is precisely by documenting the changes that we find

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<sup>30</sup> *Jednota*, 14.

<sup>31</sup> *Jednota*, 14.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Emily, born 2003, conducted in English on April 10, 2022.

<sup>33</sup> *Jednota*, August 9, 2023, 4.

that the rejection of the previous conservative Slovak American worldview defines both the old and the new, more liberal, perceptions. This is both propelled by, and reflected in, the Slovak American press, and most notably today, in *Jednota*.

### **„Za Boha a národ!“: La presse en langue slovaque aux États-Unis a contribué à la formation de l'identité slovaque américaine**

Ben Sorensen

Cet article documente le rôle de la presse de langue slovaque aux États-Unis et décrit comment la presse a contribué à créer l'identité propre des communautés slovaques aux États-Unis. L'article décrit brièvement l'histoire de la presse de langue slovaque en Amérique, remontant au «premier journal lithographié», *The Bulletin*, publié par Julius Wolf et Janko Slovensky en 1885–1886. L'article place cette publication particulière dans son contexte historique de la politique américaine et de l'immigration slovaque à l'époque de la fin de la Reconstruction et de l'ère Jim Crow. Il explique également comment *The Bulletin* a contribué à réduire la propagation de la désinformation parmi les immigrants slovaques et à favoriser l'alphabétisation au sein de la classe ouvrière immigrée slovaque. Il documente que *The Bulletin* a donné naissance à *Amerikanszko-slovenszke noviny* en 1886. Ce nouveau journal adopterait une perspective pro-hongroise avant d'embaucher Peter Rovnianek comme rédacteur en chef, qui lui a donné une saveur nationaliste slovaque. L'article documente également comment d'autres journaux ont vu le jour, ainsi que certaines intrigues qui ont affecté *Amerikanszko-slovenszke noviny* sous la direction de Rovnianek. À l'aide d'entretiens ethnographiques, l'article montre comment la presse de langue slovaque a créé une inertie au sein de la vision du monde des Slovaques américains, qui perdure encore aujourd'hui, plus d'un siècle plus tard, en ce qui concerne leurs sentiments envers les Hongrois aujourd'hui.

L'article documente également que d'autres journaux de langue slovaque soutenaient des opinions politiques de gauche, comme *Fakľa* et *Rovnosť ľudu*. Cependant, ces publications, qui étaient quelque peu similaires à la publication socialiste populaire *The Masses*, n'ont pas réussi à obtenir le lectorat que les publications grand public telles qu'*Amerikanszko-slovenszke noviny* ont obtenu. Une partie de l'article vise ensuite à démontrer que la thèse de Robert Zecker, selon laquelle les Slovaques étaient encouragés à s'assimiler à l'Amérique blanche, est en fait vraie, parfois plus que ne le suggère son œuvre fondatrice intitulée *Race and America's Immigrant Press: How the Slovaks were Taught to Think Like White People*.

Enfin, grâce à des entretiens avec de jeunes Slovaques américains, l'article montre que l'inertie de la vision du monde des Slovaques américains perdure même à travers le rejet juvénile de cette vision du monde, ce qui ironiquement renforce cette vision du monde en tant que statu quo. L'article se termine par un bref aperçu du contenu du dernier journal de langue slovaque encore publié, *Jednota*.