



PISALI STE NAM: Ponovno obiskana Vrnitev

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Pisanje avtorja Alojza Adamiča, ki zgovorno izraža svoje občutke in upanja, ki jih goji za svojo domovino ob vrnitvi na Kranjsko leta 1932:

"Jugoslavija je redka, redka država. Ko bom pisal o njej, mi po vsej verjetnosti ne bo uspelo ustrezno opisati njenih lepote in slikovitosti, drame njenega nacionalnega življenja ... Je potencialno zelo bogata država. Razvita in pametno upravljana, lahko bi bila skoraj samozadostna ob svojih naravnih virih.

Ljudje, mislim maso navadnih ljudi, so, z nekaj izjemami, sijajni, sposobni velikih žrtev; najboljši človeški material, s katerim bi se lahko pravila nove države začela, če bi iskreno in inteligentno načrtovala ustvariti dobro, napredno civilizacijo."

To je glas avtorja Alojza Adamiča. Pri starosti 33 let se je vrnil z Guggenheimovo štipendijo, potem ko je pri štirinajstih imigriral v ZDA kot sin kmetov. Njegove izkušnje in refleksije iz tistega časa so ga napeljale na to, da je napisal »Vrnitev v rodni kraj«, delo, cenjeno zaradi poznavanja problematike vzhodnoevropskih imigrantov zgodnjega dvajsetega stoletja.

Avtor se je vrnil v deželo, ujeta med dve svetovni vojni. Ob odhodu, tik pred prvo svetovno vojno, je njegova provinca Kranjska pripadala avstrijskemu imperiju. Med devetnajstletno odsotnostjo je njegov domači teritorij prišel v novo ustanovljeno Kraljestvo Srbov, Hrvatov in Slovencev in potem postal del še novejšje države Jugoslavije. Biti odsoten 19 let v prvi polovici dvajsetega stoletja je pomenilo zapustiti državo, ki je bila več kot stoletje pod fevdalno vladavino, in se vrniti v novo zavezništvo južnih Slovanov.

V devetnajstih letih takrat - od 1913 do 1932 - so se Slovenci spremenili iz podložnikov v državljane. V devetnajstih letih zdaj - od 1989 pa do danes - je novi neodvisni narod Slovenije postal vodja Evrope.

V okoli 1200 letih, odkar so njihovi predniki poselili pokrajino od madžarskih ravnin do Jadranskega morja, so Slovenci končali, kjer so začeli. Zgodovina pripoveduje o demokratičnih običajih nežnega ljudstva, ki se je združilo pod Samom, da bi odbilo svoje napadalce. Čeprav je njihovo mirno življenje znano po kratkotrajnosti, potem ko je bilo enkrat doseženo, se je okus po svobodi očitno prenesel iz generacije v generacijo.

Pred devetnajstimi leti, leta 1989, so Slovenci postali še bolj vztrajni pri doseganju večje avtonomije znotraj Jugoslavije. Leta 1991 je Slovenija razglasila neodvisnost kot svoboden narod. Leta 2004 je postala članica Evropske unije, leta 2007 prevzela evro in leta 2008 predsedstvo nad Evropsko unijo.

V zadnjih 19 letih je slovensko življenje skočilo na sodobno sceno na način, ki mu v svoji zgodovini ni para.

Alojz Adamič se je vrnil in v vsakodnevem življenju leta 1932 odkril isto esenco iz prejšnjih časov kot takrat, ko je leta 1913 odšel. Nasprotno se današnja Slovenija zdi zelo oddaljena od življenja v letu 1989, še ne pred dvema desetletjema.



V elegantnem, a vendarle pogovornem slogu nam je Alojz Adamič podal delčke dnevnega življenja v zgodnjih tridesetih letih. Kmetje so peljali svoje vole po netlakovanih cestah. Dekleta so prala težko, doma tkano perilo, udarjajoč z njim po velikih, gladkih kamnih na rečnem bregu. Pometači cest so držali brezove metle in prižigalci uličnih svetilk so s svojimi dolgimi palicami ugašali luči ob polnoči. Ko je za trenutek uzrl dimnikarja, prekritega s sajami, je avtor iz navade za srečo zgrabil gumb na svojem plašču.

V ljubljanskih kavarnah so moški še vedno igrali šah, brali časopise in govorili z globokimi glasovi. Knjižne založbe, pevske in gledališke skupine so cvetele. Velika slavja so zahtevala veliko vina in rejeno tele. Kmetije in vasi so pripadale zemlji - »Izgledata, kot da so zrasla iz tal.«

Leta 1989 že ni bilo več mogoče zanikati, da se je prizorišče spremenilo. Traktorji so zamenjali vole in več in več blatnih cest se je spreminjalo v asfalt. Dekleta, ki so v potokih prala doma tkano perilo, so bila zdavnaj pozabljena preteklost.



V zadnjih 19 letih

sta dve avtocesti prekrizali državo;
 se dve evropski poti sekata tik pod Ljubljano;
 je postalo lažje iti skozi mesto in najti parkirno mesto za kolo kot za avtomobil;
 je mogoče dobiti uvoženo blago iz vsega sveta;
 so osnovnošolci začeli klepetati po mobilnih telefonih;
 so se najstniki pričeli zbirati na koncertih mednarodnih rock skupin;
 ljudje svobodno potujejo brez mej in brez potrebe po menjanju denarja;
 sta se računalniška pismenost in obvladanje angleščine približali univerzalni.

V stotinah let, odkar so slovanski predniki imigrirali v to regijo, sta ti dve kratki obdobji po 19 let najbrž vsebovali najbolj dinamične državne zgodovinske trenutke. Od tistih zgodnjih imigracij v sedmem stoletju sta vojna in zatiranje pogostokrat prisilila Slovence v emigracijo in v iskanje sreče drugje. Zadnje strmo rastoče migracijske številke kažejo, da se je tehtnica nagnila v stran, ki odseva na novo odkrite slovenske zaklade. Te dni prtok v Slovenijo veliko presega vsakršne odhode.



Videl je spremembe, ki jih je 19 let pustilo med leti 1913 in 1932, kako pa bi Alojz Adamič gledal na spremembe v zadnjih 19 letih? Najbrž bi oboževal borovničev sladoled in sovražil reklamne panoje.

Revisiting The Return

Yugoslava is a rare, rare country. When I write of it, very probably I shall not succeed in adequately describing its beauties and picturesqueness, the drama of its national life . . . It is potentially a very rich country. Developed and wisely administered, it could be almost self-sufficient in its natural resources. The people, I mean the mass of plain people, with few exceptions, are splendid, capable of great sacrifices; the best human material with which the rules of a new state could start if they honestly and intelligently planned to create a good, progressive civilization.

This is the voice of author Louis Adamic eloquently expressing his sentiments and hopes for his homeland upon return to Carniola in 1932. At age 33 he had come back on a Guggenheim Fellowship after immigrating to the US at age fourteen as the son of peasants. His experiences and reflections from that time led him to write "The Native's Return," a work revered for its insights on Eastern European immigrants of the early 20th century.

The author came back to a land caught between two World Wars. At the time he left, just before World War I, his province of Carniola had belonged to the Austrian Empire. During his nineteen-year absence his home territory had come into a newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, and then had become a part of the even newer country of Yugoslavia. Being away for nineteen years at the first part of the twentieth century meant leaving a country that had been under feudal rule for more than a century and coming back to a new alliance of southern Slavs.

In 19 years then - from 1913 to 1932 - Slovenians changed from serfs to citizens.

In 19 years now - from 1989 to the present - a new independent nation of Slovenia has become leader of Europe.

In some 1200 years since their ancestors settled the lands from the plains of Hungary to the Adriatic Sea, Slovenians have come full circle. History tells of early democratic practices of a gentle people who united under Samo the Frank to repel their attackers. Although their peaceful existence is reputed to have been short-lived once achieved, the taste of freedom seems to have passed down through the generations.

Nineteen years ago, by 1989, Slovenians had grown ever more insistent on obtaining greater autonomy within Yugoslavia. By 1991 Slovenia had declared its independence as a free nation. In 2004 Slovenia became a member of the European Union, took the Euro as its currency in 2007, and the European Union presidency in 2008.

Within the last 19 years Slovenian life has leaped onto the contemporary stage in a way unparalleled in its history. Louis Adamic came back to find everyday life in 1932 with its essence of earlier times, from when he had left in 1913. In contrast, today's Slovenia seems far removed from life in 1989, not even two decades ago.

Written in his elegant yet conversational style, Louis Adamic gave us snapshots of day-to-day living in the early 1930's. Peasants drove their oxen on the dirt roads. Girls washed heavy homespun linen, slapping it on big smooth rocks at the river's edge. Street sweepers held long birch brooms and lamplighters extinguished the lights at midnight with their tall poles. When he caught a glimpse of a chimneysweep covered with soot, out of habit the author grabbed the button on his coat for good luck.

In Ljubljana's coffee houses the men still played chess, read newspapers and spoke in low voices. Book publishers, singing and theater groups thrived. Big festivities called for lots of wine and the fatted calf. Farmhouses and villages belonged to the land - "They appear to have grown out of the soil."

By 1989 there is no denying that the scene had changed. Tractors had replaced the oxen, and more and more dirt roads turned into asphalt. Long gone were any girls washing homespun linens in the streams.

Within the last 19 years
two fast "interstates" crisscross the country;
two Europaths intersect just below Ljubljana;
it's easier to get through cities and find parking by bike than by car;
you can find imported goods from all over the world;
grade school kids chatter on cellphones;
teen-agers flock to concerts by international rock bands;
people travel freely without borders and without changing money;
computer literacy and English fluency has become close to universal.

Within the hundreds of years since Slavic forebearers immigrated to the region, these two short periods of 19 years may hold the country's most dynamic historical moments. Since those early 7th century immigrations, war and oppression often have caused Slovenians to emigrate out of the country and seek their fortunes elsewhere. The latest skyrocketing immigration figures suggest that the tide has turned to reflect Slovenia's newfound fortunes. These days the flow into Slovenia far exceeds any departures.

Having seen the difference 19 years made between 1913 and 1932, how would Louis Adamic view the changes of the most recent 19 years? A good guess has him loving the wild blueberry ice cream and hating the billboards.