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THE WOMAN QUESTION IN SLOVENE OPINION JOURNALISM

(from the 1870s to the first half of the 1890s)

Žensko pitanje u slovenačkoj publicistici

(od 1870-ih do prve polovine 1890-ih)

A nőkérdés a szlovén vélemény-újságírásban

(az 1870-es évektől az 1890-es évek első feléig)

Based on historical research and publications in the Slovene press, this work analyses characteristic features of the views on the woman question in Slovene opinion journalism of the 1870s to the first half of the 1890s. In the same way as it was among other Slavic peoples of the Habsburg Empire, the women's movement among the Slovenes was mainly oriented at solving national problems, and social problems were also considered by them in this vein. The article highlights the process of shaping a new image of the ideal Slovene woman by the Slovene press: an ardent patriot, educated, and participating in the national life of her people in full awareness, she is also a faithful companion and friend to her husband and a mother who fosters in her children love for their native language and people. The author retraces the evolution of the Slovenes' ideas about the role of women in the family and society and comes to the conclusion that in the first half of the 1890s, the publications in the student magazine *Vesna* and the liberal newspaper *Slovanski svet* brought the discussion of the woman question to a new level and in many respects paved the way for the subsequent development and formation of the women's movement.

Keywords: the woman question, Slovene press, 1870s–first half of 1890s, national self-awareness, education, professions, women's societies

Introduction

The issue of women's equality was first raised in Europe as early as during the Great French Revolution, and a lively discussion of the woman issue commenced in the 1840s. In the 1860s–1870s, there were women's gymnasiums (i.e. high schools) in some European countries, women were granted the right to study at a number of universities: in 1863, in Zurich; in 1870, in Cambridge; etc. (Božinović 1996, 17–18); women founded their own organizations and published women's newspapers and magazines, fought for participation in political life and women's suffrage. Although compulsory primary school education was introduced in the Austrian Empire for children of both sexes in the 1770s owing to the reforms of Empress Maria Theresa, women's education in Austria-Hungary was less developed a century later if compared with more progressive European states. The first women's gymnasium in the Austrian part of the empire appeared only in 1887 in Prague, and women were allowed to enter some departments (philosophical and medical) of universities only in 1896 (Šatej 1999, 97).

The movement for women's rights in the Slavic lands of Austria-Hungary began to develop later than in the advanced European countries, Russia, and America, and had its own specific features. In the period under consideration, 'nationalism and feminism had not closely intertwined in it, since the latter began to spread as a movement for women's rights only at the end of the century' (Mihurko Poniž 2009, 177–178). It was originally focused on the solution of national tasks and was an integral part of the struggle of the Slavic peoples for their rights. As N. Stegmann wrote, women primarily acted 'not as fighters for their unjustly infringed rights but as co-architects of national hierarchical patterns' (Mihurko Poniž 2009, 192). Thus, a 'harmonious alliance between feminist advocates and . . . national politicians' was created (Muradova 2002, 147). Although women were deliberately assigned only the role of assistants to men in the national movement, participation in it became an incentive for them to enter public life.

These features were also characteristic of the development of the women's movement in the Slovene lands. It began to take shape later than similar movements among the Czechs, whose example it followed, or among the Poles in Galicia. This was largely due to the fact that the Slovenes did not have the traditions of statehood and their own ruling classes; they represented the lower and middle strata of the population (80 per cent of them were peasants). The patriarchal way of life, which was widespread among the peasantry, influenced the development of self-awareness of Slovene women for whom it was difficult to move away from its stereotypes. In the 1870s – the first half of the 1890s,

there were no Slovene women's societies or the press, and the woman question was considered mainly by men and predominantly in the national rather than social context.

Although the women's movement in the Slovenian lands has been attracting close attention of Slovenian historians since the 1970s, the period under consideration has not been sufficiently studied so far, probably because it was the stage of the formation of views when the movement itself was still in its infancy and had not taken a clear shape. Among the studies touching upon the interpretation of the woman question in Slovene opinion journalism of the time, the first to be pointed out is the conceptual article by P. Vodopivec on the participation of Slovene women in public life in the nineteenth century (Vodopivec 1994), as well as the works by P. Rustija (Rustija 1995), K. Mihurko Poniž (Mihurko Poniž 2009), and M. Verginella (Verginella 1993, 2004) that consider a number of aspects of the woman question as covered by Slovene opinion journalism. Some materials on this topic can also be found in the essays by A. Štebi, M. Justinova, M. Govekar, and V. Dobova that were included in the collection *Slovenska žena* [Slovenian Woman], published in 1926 in honour of the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Slovene General Women's Society (*Slovenska žena* 1926). Of great interest are also the works of Slovene authors that consider various spheres of life of Slovene women of that time: the activities of the women's branches of the Society of St. Cyril and Methodius (Devetak 2020), the status and employment of Slovene women (Šatej 1999, Žnidaršič Žagar 2003), the studies of female students from Carniola at the University of Vienna (Cindrič 2013). This article also refers to the works of Russian and foreign scholars on discussions of the woman question and the women's movement in Russia, the Congress Kingdom of Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, and Serbia (Božinović 1996, Lobacheva 2022, Matveeva 2009, Muradova 2002, Regaliuk 2008, States 2004, Schwartz 2008). These works are important for both a better understanding of the typology of those movements and for broader coverage of the topic, as well as a comparative analysis of the status of women and the interpretation of the woman question in different regions.

Based on the method of content analysis, the present historical study examines the process of formation and evolution of views of nationally oriented Slovene men and women on the woman question as reflected in Slovene opinion journalism of the 1870s – the first half of the 1890s, which was the period that preceded the inception of the women's movement in the Slovene lands. For the first time, the author considers in detail and analyses a number of publications, including an article by F. Celestin and materials from the section 'Women' in the newspaper *Slovanski svet* [The Slavic World].

Before the revolution of 1848, the obstetrics school in Ljubljana was the only educational institution for Slovene women (Dobova 1926, 237). Even progressive Slovene national figures believed that women should be able to read and write, and no further than that; their place was exclusively in the family. Parents who wanted to educate their daughters hired home-teachers for them. For the first time in the Slovene press, poems by two Slovene poetesses were published in 1848–1849; stories by Josipina Turnograjska were published in the 1850s; the leading Slovene newspaper *Kmetijske in rokodeljske novice* ([Agricultural and Craft News] hereinafter *Novice*) published poems by Luiza Pesjak from time to time in the 1860s. However, Slovene women had hardly taken any part in public life until the early 1860s. With the beginning of the constitutional period in the Austrian Empire, which caused a powerful surge in the national movement of the Slovenes, Slovene patriots began to draw women into national life. According to the Austrian laws, women could neither become members of societies nor engage in political activities, but their participation in the organization of non-political events held by societies and in the work of reading halls was not forbidden. As A. Štebi wrote, for decades 'a Slovene woman appeared in public life only when she was invited to cooperate in national events, celebrations, theatrical performances, etc.,' but her activity back then was caused by the necessity 'to openly show her national conviction' (Štebi 1926, 161). In the 1860s, Slovene women took the first step from home to society, from the German cultural space to the Slovene space (Vodopivec 1994, 35). Back in 1864, in her 'Open Letter to Slovene Mothers,' L. Pesjak appealed to her female compatriots to love their homeland, to teach their children the Slovene language, and to perfect their own skills in it (*Novice* 1864, I VI, 176). In the early 1870s, Marija Hornik Murnik founded the first Slovene women's circle in Ljubljana. Its members encouraged Slovenes not only to learn their native language but also to do charity work and participate in Slovene events (Vodopivec 1994, 36).

The woman question in the publications of the Slovene press in the 1870s–1880s

In the early 1870s, the articles devoted to the woman question started to appear in the pages of Slovene newspapers and magazines. When delivering a speech in the Ljubljana reading hall in 1871, writer, poet, and liberal politician Radoslav Razlag seriously raised the issue of granting women certain independence for the first time. The text of his lecture was published in the *Novice* newspaper in April 1871 (*Novice* 1871, 12 IV, 116–118). Naturally, he did not dispute the dominant role of men in family and social life, but at the same time he noted

that 'new times gave rise to new needs. . .' and women were becoming 'a major factor in national life.' He wrote that there were more and more single men and women in the educated strata of Europe, and there was a tendency for women to have a profession. In America, England, Russia, the Czech lands, and Germany, there were educational institutions for women who were forced to live without the support of men. Razlag outlined the range of professions suitable for women. Firstly, that was medicine, which is expected because with certain diseases, 'shame prevents women from seeing a male doctor.' Then, it is obvious to everyone that 'women are the best teachers for girls.' They also have access to the professions that do not require great physical strength. 'Most of the postal and telegraph affairs could be handled by women.' Why should they not have equal rights with men in trade, some crafts, and bookkeeping because they 'are perfectly good at these professions?'

Razlag believed that the independence of women is important for social, national, and political life. Men need to think about the progress of their people. 'Our people will be happy if Slovene wives become 'wise queens of their homes,' 'strongholds of their families and the whole people,' and widows and single women will find independence in their homeland in order to be able to live a worthy life. He considered it extremely important that Slovene women should be given an opportunity to receive a secondary education. Lyceums for women had already been opened in Russia. 'In Ljubljana, we especially need a **women's institution** of public education reasonably based on scientific principles…' In conclusion, Razlag suggested that his female compatriots should 'combine Slovene tender sensibility with American practicality, and a happy united Slovenia will be born then.'

It is obvious that he considered the woman question as an integral part of the national question. There were neither any comments on the article nor further development of the topic in the *Novice*. Probably, Razlag's ideas appeared to be too modern for the Slovene public (Vodopivec 1994, 37). The problem of establishing secondary education institutions for women raised by Razlag began to be solved in the Slovene lands much later than in many European countries. For example, colleges for women began to appear in England in the late 1840s (Božinović 1996, 17). The first women's gymnasium in Russia was opened in Kostroma in 1857, and by 1874 there had been 189 of them with a total number of 25,565 students (Regalyuk 2008, 24). In the 1860s, higher schools for women began to appear in the Austrian lands, and their curriculum was similar to that of men's gymnasiums. The Higher Women's Courses in Krakow opened in 1868; the Higher Women's School in Prague, in 1863. In Serbia, the first state secondary women's school – the Higher Women's School – was opened

in Belgrade in 1863. And in the Slovene lands, the Higher Women's School was opened in Ljubljana only in 1896.

Some of the Razlag's ideas about women's professions soon came to fruition. After the adoption of the law on schools in 1869 (in addition to teaching handicraft to girls, it allowed women to teach all children in primary school), women's teachers' schools were opened in Klagenfurt (1870), Ljubljana (1871), Trieste (1872), and later in Gorica, Graz, and Maribor (Cindrič 2013, 63; Božinović 1996, 98). The government allowed family members of postal employees, including women, to work in the postal business, and the first female postal employee started work in Ljubljana in 1872 (Vodopivec 1994, 40). As for the right of women to receive medical education, in the 1870s–1890s women could study at the medical faculties of some European universities, but not in Austria-Hungary.

In 1875, Slovene philologist and philosopher Janko Pajk published a short article in the literary scholarly journal *Zora* [Dawn], of which he was the publisher. In the article, he pointed out the direct dependence of the national consciousness of Slovene women on the general level of national development of the Slovene people. He wrote, 'Our women will become more national when we, men, begin to accomplish our national tasks in reality because they simply follow our example' (*Zora* 1875, 1 VIII, 122).

Another Slovene patriot who wrote under the pseudonym Dr. Ahascerus touched upon the woman question more deeply in the article 'A Word about Our Women,' which was published in 1881 in the literary scholarly journal *Kres* [Bonfire]. He reproved the Slovenes for neglecting this problem despite the fact that 'modern civilization certainly required educated women; modern national idea required nationally educated women.' He raised the burning problem of the underdevelopment of national self-awareness among the Slovene women and quite reasonably connected that situation with the fact that they were 'mostly peasant women' and could not receive education like men. Moreover, in his opinion, it would be only injurious for peasant women until educated women became independent and could live in accordance with their education. The Slovene language was spoken only in commoners' families, and most women from among the Slovene intelligentsia did not know it or knew it poorly. Therefore, the Slovenes needed good national primary and secondary schools for girls. The state refused to open them, but Slovenes could do it themselves, all they needed was the initiative and subsidies from private individuals. These schools should follow the model of the best institutions of other civilized peoples (*Kres* 1881, 5, 269–271).

The problem that worried Slovene patriots very much was that of the underdevelopment of Slovene women's national self-awareness and the connection of this circumstance with the fact that they belonged to the lower and middle

strata of society. The situation was difficult indeed. Peasant women were little interested in the national issue, and more educated female representatives of the middle strata often did not know their native language well. In an effort to establish themselves in the higher strata of society, they often neglected it and preferred to speak German and Italian. Even in Carniola, where the rapid process of Sloveneization took place in the 1880s, national priorities changed with difficulty. Recalling the situation in Ljubljana at that time, Ivan Hribar, one of the Slovene liberal leaders, noted the 'purely German character' of the city and complained that the Slovene women from the educated strata were 'ashamed to speak Slovene in the street' (Kirilina 2020, 95). The situation was even worse in Styria and Carinthia that were most prone to Germanization. That is why Slovene patriots considered it important to give women an opportunity to receive education in their native language and thus to contribute to the development of their national identity.

The article by Dr. Ahascerus further specifies what kind of knowledge women should receive first of all. They do not need 'scholarliness' but they rather need general education and upbringing. Their education should not be superficial, but first of all it should be made practical because women do not care about 'philosophical speculation and empty theories.' The main task of education for women is to help them become good housewives and mothers. At the same time, care must be taken to ensure that women can live independently and in accordance with their education or qualifications. According to the author, the level of women's education is 'a measure of the cultural progress of each nation' (*Kres* 1881, 5, 273–274).

The latter idea was developed in the article 'Women's Issue' by Fran Celestin, a writer, literary historian, and literary critic, which was published in 1884 in two issues of the largest literary magazine *Ljubljanski zvon* [Ljubljana's Bell]. He believed that 'a healthy education. . . gave women more rights, developed their strengths more, and used them for general progress.' The current time showed that women had achieved success 'in science and art, and even in an increasingly obvious struggle with the stronger half of humanity.' The conclusion that they could not reach the level of men was 'completely unfair and clearly not logical.' At the same time, the development of women could be as high as that of men, but not identical to it. The male mind is more sophisticated, but that does not mean that the female mind cannot develop. According to Celestin, the question whether a woman was capable of abstract mathematical thinking could not be decided unequivocally in favour of men, 'since neither in Europe nor in America, women had not had a centuries-long or even millennium-long opportunity to prove themselves in this area' (*Ljubljanski zvon* 1884 , 2, 90–92).

Celestin also touched upon the topical issue of women's employment. It should be noted that the number of female Slovene teachers grew in the 1880s, especially in Carniola, which became a Slovene province. There were 250 female teachers there in 1890; 500 in 1900; more than 1000 in 1910; and on the eve of the First World War as many as half of the teachers were women (Žnidaršič Žagar 2003, 57). In connection with the rapid development of trade and industry, more and more women started working in those areas, especially at the factories and craft workshops, at the post and telegraph offices. At the end of the nineteenth century, more than 50 per cent of workers in manufactories and textile industry were women and children (Božinović 1996, 98). Generally, women performed unskilled work, their working conditions were often worse than those of men, and their wages were lower. In his article, Celestin pointed to those new circumstances: women now worked at schools, post and telegraphs offices, and other places. Progress required more and more physical and mental strength from them because their work was paid worse. According to the author, women's competition was not to the liking of many men, but it had already become a fact, and 'there remained only one thing for them to do – to come to terms with it and use it for the benefit of the national life.' After all, women were not only competitors, but they were friends and mothers to their children in the first place. They needed to have economic knowledge, but not only that. They needed 'more spiritual food! And we, men, must give it!' But not 'dry scholarship.' It was necessary to adapt the knowledge that men had for women, to advise them what to read, and to discuss with them what they read. Thus, women would develop patriotism faster (*Ljubljanski zvon* 1884, 3, 161).

Celestin studied and then taught in Russia in the late 1860s–early 1870s. He was struck by the differences in the behaviour and level of development of Russian and Slovene women. Indeed, Russian women were considered the most educated women in Europe at that time. Some of them received education not only at gymnasiums and the Higher Women's Courses but also at some European universities and took an active part in public life. The discussion of the woman question was conducted in the Russian press as early as in the 1850s–1860s. In the early 1860s, the first women's organizations appeared, newspapers and magazines for women were published (Stites 2004). All this did not escape Celestin's attention. In his article, he compared the role of women in the lives of the Slovenes and the Russians, and the comparison was not in favour of the Slovenes. Their men discussed what interested them with friends, in taverns, but not at home with their wives. And in Russia, 'women constantly communicated in a lively manner with men, at home or with friends, at the table with a samovar on it, keeping lively conversations... about what was written in this or that

book or magazine.' He believed that in Russian society 'there was much more seriousness and real life, sincerity and cordiality than in ours' (*Ljubljanski zvon* 1884, 3, 163–164).

In conclusion, Celestin formulated the 'sacred task' for the Slovene men 'to awaken and develop women as much as possible' and to turn them 'into a strong pillar of national life.' In order to do that, it was necessary to develop a 'clear, simple, but not too narrow program of national action, embracing the progress of the whole people.' The inclusion of the woman question in the program would also better the lot of those Slovene women who failed to get married by means of 'encouraging awareness of independence that came from knowledge and the work combined with it.' The author was aware that such a program was difficult to draw up, and 'independent, conscious women would be very helpful to men' in that matter (*Ljubljanski zvon* 1884, 3, 164–165).

In the 1880s, the newspaper *Učiteljski tovariš* [Teacher's Companion] also purveyed the idea that in order to run the household and raise children, women should be educated (Vodopivec 1994, 38). At the same time, women also joined the discussion of the woman question in the Slovene press. In 1884, the magazine *Ljubljanski zvon* published an article by Franja Robidovec, which was a kind of response to the article by F. Celestin and was directed against 'learned women' and women's emancipation. The author believed those views to be 'ridiculous and impractical.' A woman did not need emancipation, but she should strive to reach the level of her husband and to become his friend. To fulfill her true purpose as a wife, mother, and patriot, she needed to learn. Education and work would make her more serious and independent (*Ljubljanski zvon* 1884, 4, 232–236). The article 'National Women' by Marica Nadlišek, published in the newspaper *Edinost* [Unity] in 1888, was written in similar vein, but the emphasis was placed on the tasks of national development of women. She argued that 'a woman could do much more than skilful housekeeping dictated to her,' she should become the best teacher for her children and instil in them love for their motherland and native language 'from an early age.' The author sharply condemned 'stupid and low-down behaviour' of the Slovene women who were ashamed of their native language and sowed disdain for it in their children as well. By doing so, they were destroying what the Slovene patriots had achieved with difficulty and 'were pushing their own people to collapse' (*Edinost* 1888, 24 III, 1–2).

In terms of contents and form of narration, the two articles written by women seem to be weaker than the articles by male authors. This is quite natural, since they had not yet had much experience in journalism. Male authors articulated their views more clearly and had a broader outlook. The fairly traditional views of F. Robidovec and M. Nadlišek were generally favourably accepted by the Slovene

public, but the position of poetess Pavlina Pajk, one of the first Slovene women who fought for women's emancipation, seemed too radical to the Slovenes. In an 1884 article published in the journal *Kres*, she expressed the opinion that it would be possible to discuss the differences in the abilities of men and women only when they attended the same schools and did the same work. At the same time, she agreed in principle that the destiny of a woman was to be a wife and mother and she divided women into married and single ones, believing that it was the latter who needed more opportunities for education (Vodopivec 1994, 38–39; Mihurko Poniž 2009, 185).

In the first half of the 1890s, the Slovene national movement entered a new stage of its development, political parties (Catholic and liberal) took shape in it, and the process of consolidation of the Social Democrats began. Both national and intra-party contradictions escalated. Changes also occurred in the attitude of the Slovenes to the woman question, as more and more Slovenes started to support women's education and equality. This was largely due to the intensification of Germanization and Italianization processes, as a result of which fewer and fewer Slovenes from many nationally mixed and borderline regions decided in favour of their nationality. In the 1880s, the peoples of Austria-Hungary created a wide network of national societies for national defence. Following the example of the German *Schulverein* [School Society] and similar Italian organizations and in opposition to them, the Slovenes founded the Society of St. Cyril and Methodius, the goal of which was to support and develop Slovene schools, establish kindergartens, publish Slovene books, etc. (Devetak 2020, 370). Slovene women were active participants in the society, especially in the Slovene Littoral. The first independent women's branch of the society was opened in 1887 in Trieste, and in 1896, there were 28 of them in the Slovene lands (*Slovanski svet* 1896, 15 IV, 127). It was the first organization to include women from all walks of life. While working for it, Slovene women were able to gain leadership and organizational experience and take a prominent place in public life (Devetak 2020, 378).

Vesna Student magazine on the woman question

In 1892, a student at the University of Vienna, historian and publicist Janko Vencajz began publishing the magazine *Vesna* [Spring], which reflected the views of the members of Vienna and Graz student societies (Rustija 1995; Churkina 2017, 398–400). The magazine focused on the national issue, and one of its tasks was to attract women to national activities, to provide them with higher education, and to increase their independence and weight in public life (*Vesna*

1893, 15 I, 8–10). The woman question was actively discussed among the students at that time. In 1891, the demand for the political equality of women was even included in the program of the congress of representatives of the progressive Slavic students of Austria-Hungary (Muradova 2002, 149). Slovene students in Vienna and Graz were well aware that women were studying at many European universities and tried to convey the information about their success to their compatriots. The information section of the *Vesna* magazine included articles about the women's movement (for example, in 1892 it published the program of the first Austrian women's congress, which was not held at that time), about the studies of Russian and Polish girls at the universities of Belgium, France, Switzerland, USA, Vienna, etc. (Rustija 1995, 68–69).

A number of publications in the *Vesna* touched upon the problem of the close connection between the development of national self-awareness of Slovene women and the opportunities they had to receive national upbringing and education. For instance, the author of the article 'Upbringing of Girls and the People' pointed out that the education of girls in German schools was one of the reasons that the Slovene people 'did not develop politically and economically as they should have done.' Slovene girls should study at Slovene educational institutions and be brought up in the national spirit (*Vesna* 1892, 15 IV, 26–27). Most of the publications on women's education were written by J. Vencajz. In the article 'Our National Women,' he noted that the Slovenes paid insufficient attention to the process of national education of women that is 'vital for the people.' Slovene women had neither appropriate schools nor women's societies. However, 'women had access to many areas that men could leave them without fear and without regard for competition.' According to Vencajz, the problem of national self-awareness of Slovene women was particularly urgent in the cities, primarily in Ljubljana, and the female Slovenes of Trieste and Gorica, where the women's branches of the Society of St. Cyril and Methodius operated, were most advanced in this regard. To overcome this situation, Vencajz put forward the task of teaching Slovenes in their native language (*Vesna* 1892, 15 VI, 104–105). He developed this subject in the article 'Women in Our Cities and Villages.' In it, he pointed out the need to establish women's national societies, which would set as their goal 'the opening of higher educational institutions for women and the dissemination of correct national upbringing...' (*Vesna* 1892, 15 XI, 178–179).

This student magazine also published the works of some Slovene poetesses and female writers. Teacher Marica Strnad was the most active of them. She published seven poems in which she urged Slovene women to abandon passivity and engage in national work (Rustija 1995, 70–71), and she also expressed her views on the woman question in detail in the article 'A Word to Our Women.'

'We do not worry about learned women, but we need educated women first of all,' she argued. Strnad put forward the idea of creating schools for women in the style of teacher's colleges. In her opinion, girls needed to be taught less than boys: 'We cannot approve of girls spending as much time at school as our boys. The education of women should be completed earlier, and therefore, our existing schools for girls should be reformed in the first place.' She considered the establishment of a society similar to the Czech Minerva Society to be an ideal solution (*Vesna* 1893, 15 I, 10–11). The Minerva Society was founded in Prague in 1890 for the purpose of helping women enter higher education institutions. In order to prepare women for higher education, the society opened a gymnasium, which, according to researchers, was 'a turning point in the development of the women's movement in the Czech lands.' Incidentally, this gymnasium served as a model for the opening of a private women's gymnasium in Vienna (Muradova 2002, 149, 151). For the Slovenes, it also became a sort of a standard in the field of female secondary education.

In 1891, one of the main ideologists of Slovene Catholicism Anton Mahnič, professor of theology in Gorica at that time, published an article on the purpose and upbringing of women in his journal *Rimski katolik* [Roman Catholic]. In that article, he expressed the view that was common among the Catholics of the time that a woman should obey a man in everything. That is what the Creator wanted, and submission is her punishment for Eve's sin. The mind prevails in men while the heart prevails in women. A human being is distinguished primarily by reason (Vodopivec 1994, 41). This article aroused a protest in the progressive circles of educated Slovenes, including students. In 1893, a controversy with Mahnič unfolded in the pages of the *Vesna* magazine. In the pages of the journal *Rimski katolik*, Mahnič criticized the policy of the students' publication, accusing it, among other things, of striving for the emancipation of women (*Vesna* 1893, 20 III, 40–42). The editors of the *Vesna* denied his accusations, saying that they did not advocate 'political or even social equality,' it was impossible and unwise to demand it and it was not in the interests of most men. Women needed to be given freedom, and then their nature would help them find their place in life. Counter-accusations were brought against Mahnič: 'He knows that women have the greatest influence on upbringing, which is why he would like to leave them in ignorance. . .' (*Vesna* 1893, 20 IV, 57–59). The *Vesna* advocated granting women the right to higher education because students believed that the absence of 'the cooperation of enlightened women" in their society was a sign of the political 'underdevelopment' of countries (Vodopivec 1994, 41). An ingenuous reply was given to Mahnič's point that the magazine's correspondents believed that women showed greater ability than men when studying at universities:

'We admit that women are usually more diligent than men, but men are more brilliant' (Rustija 1995, 72).

We can agree with the conclusion of Slovene historian P. Vodopivec that the publications in the student magazine *Vesna* did not contain fundamentally new conclusions on the woman question. Moreover, in some ways the ideas of J. Vencajz were less progressive than the views of R. Razlag, who advocated teaching medicine to women. In 1894, the *Vesna* described this requirement as 'absurd' (Vodopivec 1994, 42–43). At the same time, in my opinion, it should be borne in mind that in 1871, when delivering his lecture on the woman question, Razlag was already 45 years old and he was a mature politician, whereas Vencajz was still full of youthful maximalism typical to the student environment and we cannot known how his views would have been subsequently transformed had he not died of an illness at the age of 22. In a more explicit way than the publications of the 1880s did, his magazine advocated women's access to higher education and encouraged women to national development and to the establishment of their societies and also informed the Slovenes in much more detail about the solution of the woman question in more progressive countries.

'*Women*' *Section in the newspaper Slovanski svet*

The discussion of the woman question was brought to a new level in the articles of the liberal Russophile newspaper *Slovanski svet* [The Slavic World], published by the liberal publicist Franz Podgornik, who adhered to Russophile views. Minka Govekar, a teacher, translator, and activist of the women's movement of the late nineteenth– the first half of the twentieth century, believed that 'Podgornik had the greatest merit in the cause of awakening our women,' he was 'the teacher of our authoresses and poetesses.' At the suggestion of opinion writer Marija Skrinjar, he introduced the section called 'Women' in his newspaper in 1895 (Govekar 1926, 202). The purpose of the section was 'to arouse a greater interest in Slavism among women and to instil in them a living Slavic self-awareness' (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 17 VIII, 313). Both men and women participated in the discussions of the woman question in that section. It was there that Slovene women first had an opportunity to express their views in detail, and some of them became active contributors to the newspaper.

Slovene female journalists focused their attention on the problems of upbringing and education of women in the national spirit, which had been repeatedly raised earlier; it was also typical of both the female writers who represented other Slavic peoples of the empire and the Hungarian authoresses who considered women's education necessary for the survival of the nation

(Schwartz 2008). M. Skrinjar, who wrote under the pseudonym Zmagoslava (Mihurko Poniž 2009, 186), covered those problems in detail in the essay 'Slovene Woman.' In her opinion, a conscious Slovene woman 'would be a faithful and devoted daughter to her homeland, would love it with all her heart, and would try her best to be of use to it' without neglecting her household chores. Men needed to teach women to love their homeland and language, to raise children, and to keep the house; advise and support her so that she does not go astray!' (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 8 VI, 218–219) A mother should 'inculcate modesty and meekness of behaviour and clothes into her daughter,' to teach her 'industriousness and frugality,' and the ability to think so that she could become the 'closest friend' to her husband (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 17 VIII, 314). Skrinjar complained that Slovene peasant women were forced to look for work in the cities, where they mostly became servants. They occupied lower positions, which was humiliating for the Slovenes as a people. Few of the women who had left for the city 'remained faithful daughters of the motherland.' 'Almost every one of them was losing her nationality and was raising Slovene "renegades".' Teachers were an exception, as they were 'the most conscientious Slovenes' and 'the most selfless ones.' Noting that the path to national education was closed even for the women from the middle class, the authoress called for the opening of special schools in all Slovene regions, where women would learn various female professions, such as weaving, knitting, etc. (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 20 IX, 340). Other contributors to the *Slovanski svet* considered the problems of Slovene women in the same vein. For instance, in the article 'A Beautiful Woman,' the authoress under the pseudonym Tugomira claimed that the beauty of a Slovene woman was the beauty of the spirit, the desire for knowledge, and love for the motherland, which were brought up through the 'conscious work' of female patriots. She appealed to her female compatriots: 'To work, dear Slovene women!', 'for the sake of progress and true philanthropy' (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 17 VIII, 314–315).

However, Slovene authoresses also touched upon a number of new topics in their articles. For the national progress of the Slovenes, Ljudmila Roblek (pseudonym Mokronoška) (Mihurko Poniž 2009, 188) proposed the following: 'Let us speak only Slovene, and a foreign language only when necessary.' She believed that the credit for the women's involvement in the national issue should be given to the Society of St. Cyril and Methodius in the first place and after that to the newspaper *Slovanski svet* (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 6 IX, 322). In another article, she described in detail the activities and achievements of the Society of St. Cyril and Methodius and asked Slovene women to join its women's branches and to support it with voluntary donations (*Slovanski svet* 1896, 15 IV, 126–127).

The majority of the first female Slovene opinion journalists lived and worked in the Slovene Littoral, and a number of their articles were devoted to the situation of Slovene women in that region. For instance, M. Nadlišek was very concerned about the Italianization of Slovenes in the vicinity of Trieste. Many peasant children went to Italian kindergartens and schools there and spoke Italian. She suggested that rallies and meetings should be organized where Slovene women should be induced to reveal national consciousness, and she also called on her female compatriots to open a Slovene kindergarten (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 4 X, 359).

Persuading Slovene women to show devotion to their people, the authoresses did not avoid excesses. In order to improve the national situation, M. Strnad (pseudonym -ova) put forward the slogan 'our own to our own!' She believed that family life needed to be 'cleansed' of foreign impurities. Slovene women should be provided with schools where they would be taught so that they could become 'useful comrades in life' to their husbands. 'Our own to our own, choose your compatriots as wives and husbands!' (*Slovanski svet* 1896, 5 I, 7–8). And a certain Dolenjska Slovenka [a Slovene woman form the Lower Carniola] suggested that children should be given Slavic names only (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 4 X, 359).

A number of publications in the newspaper also raised the question of who was to blame for the fact that Slovene women had an insufficiently developed national self-awareness. Typically, the blame for that was laid on Slovene men. In the article 'Our Fault!' the male author (***) admitted that the insufficient development of Slovene women's national self-awareness was largely the fault of men who did not create suitable conditions for their development and did not open Slovene schools. Women 'learnt and got used to the German language, maybe to French, but they did not learn the Slovene language, and therefore they were ashamed to speak their native language making mistakes and incorrectly, but they preferred to converse in foreign languages.' He lamented, 'Instead of encouraging them to learn the language we, men, are more willing to speak with them in a foreign language.' Slovene women read mainly foreign books and magazines, preferred to visit foreign theatres, and 'participated too little in active national work.' Men should make efforts to make the number of 'ardent and conscious female patriots' grow faster (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 17 VIII, 313). Women continued the discussion of this topic in the corresponding section. M. Nadlišek wrote that hard was the life of Slovene peasant women whose husbands spent all their evenings in taverns. Referring to the words of 'one Slovene professor who had been living in Russia for many years' (she probably meant Davorin Hostnik who moved to Russia in 1879 – *L.K.*), she contrasted the Russian customs with the Slovene ones. In Russia, there were meetings at the home of one or another family, tea parties and conversations about important things. '... Russians have many better and more intelligent women because their husbands respect them

as their friends, trust them with their worries, talk to them about everything, spending evenings at home they have a greater influence on raising children,' Nadlišek wrote. The picture of the relationship between Russian women and men presented by her is similar to that drawn by F. Celestin in 1884, and it is obvious that the Russian intelligentsia was meant here. As an example to Slovenes, the authoress cited not only Russians but also Italians: their men also devoted more time to the family, spending weekends with their wives and children. Nadlišek concluded that no one else but the husbands were to blame for the fact that the Slovenes 'did not have intelligent, reasonable wives, devoted to the national cause, and the children were not brought up in the national spirit' (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 18 X, 377). Ljudmila Roblek, who accused men of not helping women develop nationally, came to the same conclusion *(Slovanski svet* 1895, 6 IX, 322).

The issues of receiving higher education by Slovene women and their professional jobs were considered in the article 'Some Thoughts on the Education of Women at University' by writer and playwright Fran Govekar. He wrote that women had proven themselves capable of studying at universities and it would be unfair 'to deny them the possibility of this education, which... would remain limited to isolated cases, since women would continue to seek and find their main goal in family life; and higher education was not required and not suitable for it.'

That was followed by his reflections on what professions women should pursue. First of all, it was teaching. Even then there were many female teachers and officials, and they worked successfully. They should not be limited in their access to 'teaching and professorial service,' for which they should receive the same pay as men and should have equal rights with them. Govekar believed that women should teach at women's schools. Women rarely practiced law, but there were many of them in offices and shops where they 'did the work of men to the full extent, but they were usually paid almost half as little.' 'Is it not a shame to use physically weaker women to cut one's expenses?' 'Same duties, same work, same pay' is what should be aimed at in Govekar's opinion. Moreover, he was convinced that if a woman mastered legal science, she should not be prevented from occupying top positions in institutions, banks, etc. Until then, women had devoted themselves mostly to medicine, 'although it is most alien to the female nature and least suitable for it.' The author believed that women should study the whole medicine, 'but not to the same extent as men.' In addition to general medical education, they needed to know 'gynecopathy and infantine diseases, since women would have more patients in their own circle.'

Further, Govekar emphasized that he was striving for the equality of women, but his ideas about it were rather narrow: 'In principle, I recognize the right of women in everything, equal rights with men. But, of course, I would like women

not to be too eager in pursuit of these seemingly brilliant places and not to neglect their first and main calling.' While the vocation of men is to support a family and engage in social activities, for women it is 'family and personal life.' In his opinion, in order to avoid excessive enthusiasm of women for study and profession, it was necessary 'to formalize in legislation the percentage of female students from the very beginning.' He believed that giving women the opportunity to engage in work, science, art etc. should be considered as a privilege granted to those single women who were especially gifted and capable, and not as a universal domain. 'It is unlikely that Slovene women will become mature enough to study at university very soon, but I consider it necessary that they also learn about the aspirations of women in other countries...' (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 20 VII, 278–279).

Perhaps for the first time after Razlag's speech in 1871, this article by Govekar addressed the issue of women's professions in so much detail. By that time, the number of female teachers in the Slovene lands had become considerable, and the number of female nursing staff – nurses and midwives – was also growing. These professions were rapidly feminized (Žnidaršič Žagar 2003, 57). But the issue of women's access to higher education in the empire had not been resolved. Women began to enter the University of Zurich and a number of French universities as early as in 1863; many European universities in the 1870s; and even Turkish universities in 1894. Austria-Hungary, Prussia, and Russia lagged behind in this respect. In Austria-Hungary, women received the right to study at the University of Vienna only in 1896, only at the Faculty of Philosophy at first, and also at the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy in 1900. However, the first Slovene female students entered the University of Vienna only 10 years later, in 1905–1906 (Cindrič 2013, 64–66, 71).

Govekar's doubts that Slovene women had already become mature enough to study at universities were not groundless. It is significant that in their publications in the newspaper *Slovanski svet*, even quite progressive and active Slovene women did not pay much attention to the issue of higher education, considering it not necessary for a woman, although they believed that a woman should have a profession. M. Skrinjar argued that Slovene men should provide their women with a decent education on a national basis, but it should not be 'excessive,' they should be taught 'fewer subjects, but thoroughly' (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 8 VI, 219). In the article 'Thoughts on the Woman Question among the Slovenes,' recalling that there were 'many learned and enlightened women' in America, England, France, and Germany, M. Strnad called on the Slovene women to learn everything that was possible, however, 'only for the greater adaptation to their natural calling.' She agreed with the idea expressed in the *Vesna* magazine that the Slovenes did not need 'learned women.' There was no need to look back at

other peoples; they should develop 'in accordance with local conditions.' What was the benefit for Slovene women to study at gymnasiums where an alien, non-Slavic spirit prevailed? '... A good wife and mother does not need to know classical languages in order to raise her children and understand her husband.' First of all, she needed knowledge of pedagogy.

In the same article, Strnad put forward the idea of establishing Slovene women's societies for the first time in Slovene opinion journalism. They were needed to reach a proper level of women's enlightenment because 'it was with the help of societies that women of other civilized nations had risen to a relatively high level of emancipation.' Female Slovene patriots should establish a society in Ljubljana or Trieste, and its branches in other cities and villages. She believed that the main task of women's societies was 'to awaken morality in women from low strata, to inspire them with a national cause, and generally to comprehensively teach and improve them, and accustom them to everything that a respectable mother needs. . .' In Strnad's opinion, membership fees should be spend on good books for the society's library, and the remaining money should be put in a public fund, which would be replenished by means of charity. The fund would help to provide support for the education of gifted girls at suitable schools. 'A women's society should also concern itself with opening the way for women to all professions and crafts that are possible for them and of which they are capable, and female doctors would be especially needed!' Strnad emphasized that, of course, family remained the main purpose of wives, but single women must improve themselves 'in certain professions' and work 'in the same way as men did' (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 25 II, 65–67).

Gynaekophil, one of the permanent contributors to the section, indirectly spoke in favour of political equality of women in the article 'Political Rights of Women.' He retold the contents of the speech that was delivered in Vienna by one of the activists of the German women's movement, 'the wife of a Social Democrat from Berlin.' Refuting all objections to women's equality, she declared, "The idea of women's emancipation is victoriously advancing in all countries; in some of them quickly, in others slowly, but everywhere constantly.' 'Women's political equality is only a matter of time, and women must promote it with the help of a single consent-based organization and the tireless struggle of each woman individually' (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 27 XII, 468). Unlike the Slovene women, the representatives of the Austrian and Hungarian women's movements were already familiar with the suffragette ideas and promoted contacts with the like-minded women from Germany (Schwartz 2008). Telling his female compatriots about the trends that were characteristic of the women's movements of more advanced nations, Gynaekophil obviously hoped to get Slovene women interested in them and to encourage them to start fighting for their political rights.

Apparently, social democratic ideas, which were gaining little popularity with the Slovenes at that time, were not alien to Gynaekophil. In one of his contributions, in order that Slovene women could become 'progressive and modern,' he recommended that they should read a number of books, among which was *Woman and Socialism*, a well-known work by A. Bebel. Bebel's advice was severely criticized by Gynaekophil. Having left out of account Bebel's calls for freedom and equality of women, he focused solely on the fallacy of his views on morality (Bebel considered marriage to be a 'private contract' and advocated complete freedom in the relations of the sexes). In contrast to his position, the author cited the statement made by T.G. Masaryk, an ideologist of Czech 'realism,' who argued that pure and orderly family life was one of the means to preserve small peoples (*Slovanski svet* 1895, 20 X: 385–386). Gynaekophil shared this conviction completely, as did the overwhelming majority of the Slovenes.

In 1896, the 'Women' section appeared the newspaper *Slovanski svet* less and less frequently. According to the memoirs of M. Govekar, Podgornik suggested that M. Skrinjar should convince other Slovene female activists in Trieste to establish their own newspaper that would be purely women's. Such a newspaper began to be published the following year (Govekarjeva 1926, 203). Many Slovene authoresses who had written for the Podgornik's periodical became its active contributors or correspondents. A new period in the history of the women's movement in the Slovene lands began.

Conclusion

The period when, as M.V. Leskinen put it, 'the position of women and children was becoming an important criterion for determining the level of cultural development of society in general and the peasantry in particular as well as an indicator of the civilization of the people as a whole. . .' (Leskinen 2014, 23), started in the Slovene lands later than in some other Slavic lands of Cisleithania and much later than in Russia and the developed countries of Europe and America. The woman question in terms of educating women and involving them in social and national activities was put on the agenda in the Slovene lands only in the 1860s. In fact, the period between the 1870s and the first half of the 1890s can be considered as the initial, preliminary, stage in the development of the Slovene women's movement, when the views on the woman question took shape and the search for the ways to solve it began in the nationally oriented Slovene society.

Slovene opinion journalism of the 1870s – early 1890s considered the woman question mainly as an integral part of the national question. Almost all authors expressed the traditional opinion that family was the main purpose of a woman, nevertheless emphasizing the role of women in national and public life. Articles on this topic were written mainly by men, but the first women who took part in the discussion of the woman question supported this point of view. A new image of the ideal Slovene woman began to take shape in opinion journalism: an ardent patriot who worked for the good of her people, a faithful companion and friend to her husband, a mother who instilled love for her native language and people in her children. To fulfil this mission, a woman must be sufficiently (but not too much) educated. In the first half of the 1890s, the discussion of the woman question in the Slovene press reached a new level, and female writers became more actively involved in it. In addition to the problems of educating women in the national spirit, the magazine *Vesna* also raised the issue of higher education for women, and in addition to that, the newspaper *Slovanski svet* promoted the idea of establishing a Slovene women's society and even made a casual mention of the issue of women's political equality.

The discussion of the woman question in Slovene opinion journalism paved the way for the subsequent active development of the women's movement in many respects. As early as in 1897, the first women's newspaper *Slovenka* [Slovene woman] appeared in Trieste, the 'first professional political women's society' – the Society of Slovene Female Teachers – was founded in Ljubljana in 1898 (Vittorelli 2004, 17), and the General Women's Society was founded in the same city in 1901. At the end of the nineteenth century, feminism began to spread in the Slovene lands as a movement for the social and political rights of women, but it remained closely connected with the national question for a long time after that (Vittorelli 2004, 192).

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Ljubov A. KIRILINA

ŽENSKO PITANJE U SLOVENAČKOJ PUBLICISTICI

(od 1870-ih do prve polovine 1890-ih)

Na osnovu istorijskih istraživanja i publikacija u slovenačkoj štampi, ovaj rad analizira najznačajnije karakteristike pogleda na žensko pitanje u slovenačkoj publicistici između 1870-ih i prve polovine 1890-ih godina. Kao i kod ostalih slovenskih naroda Habzburške monarhije, ženski pokret među Slovencima bio je uglavnom orijentisan na rešavanje nacionalnih problema, te su i društveni problemi kod njih razmatrani u tom smislu. Rad se fokusira na proces oblikovanja nove slike idealne Slovenke u slovenačkoj štampi: vatrena rodoljupka, obrazovana i svesna učesnica u nacionalnom životu svog naroda, ona je i verna pratilja i prijatelj svom mužu, kao i majka koja u svojoj deci razvija i neguje ljubav prema maternjem jeziku i narodu. Autorka prati razvoj slovenačkih ideja o ulozi žene u porodici i društvu, i zaključuje da su u prvoj polovini 1890-ih publikacije u studentskom listu *Vesna* i liberalnom listu *Slovanski svet* podigle diskusiju o ženskom pitanju na novi nivo i u velikoj meri utrle put daljem razvoju i oblikovanju ženskog pokreta.

Ključne reči: žensko pitanje, slovenačka štampa, 1870-te – prva polovina 1890-ih, nacionalna samosvest, obrazovanje, profesije, ženska društva

Liubov' A. KIRILINA

A NŐKÉRDÉS A SZLOVÉN VÉLEMÉNY-ÚJSÁGÍRÁSBAN

(az 1870-es évektől az 1890-es évek első feléig)

A dolgozat történeti kutatások és a szlovén sajtóban megjelent publikációk alapján elemzi a nőkérdéssel kapcsolatos nézetek jellegzetességeit a szlovén vélemény-újságírásban az 1870-es évektől az 1890-es évek első feléig. A Habsburg Birodalom más szláv népeihez hasonlóan a szlovéneknél is a nőmozgalom elsősorban a nemzeti problémák megoldására irányult, és a társadalmi problémákat is ebben az irányban szemlélték. A dolgozat rávilágít arra a folyamatra, ahogyan a szlovén sajtóban kialakult az ideális szlovén nő új képe: mint lelkes hazafi, művelt, aki teljes tudatossággal vesz részt népe nemzeti életében, emellett hűséges társa és barátja férjének, valamint anya, aki gyermekeiben az anyanyelv és a nép iránti szeretetet ösztönzi. A szerző végigköveti a szlovének elképzeléseinek alakulását a nők családban és társadalomban betöltött szerepéről, és arra a következtetésre jut, hogy az 1890-es évek első felében a *Vesna* című diáklapban és a *Slovanski svet* című liberális lapban megjelent írások új szintre emelték a nőkérdés megvitatását, és sok tekintetben utat törtek a későbbi nőmozgalom kialakulásának és fejlődésének.

Kulcsszavak: női kérdés, szlovén sajtó, 1870-es évek – 1890-es évek első fele, nemzeti öntudat, oktatás, szakmák, nőegyletek