

# Slovenian Emigrant Writers In Other Parts Of Europe

*Janja Žitnik Serafin*

I begin this review paper<sup>1</sup> with a brief introduction to the 'prehistory' of literary creativity among Slovenian emigrants in other parts of Europe. I shall then outline the history of Slovenian emigrant newspapers in western Europe in the period before the Second World War and the literary contribution of the most important authors of that period – with a special emphasis on Professor Vojislav Mole, who lived in Krakow. This will be followed by a concise historical review of Slovenian emigrant writers in other parts of Europe who left Slovenia after the Second World War, where I shall limit myself to the 16 most notable authors. I shall conclude by attempting to shed some light on certain issues surrounding their literary bilingualism. The method employed in the paper is that of the review study: I shall compare the main findings of my own research to date with the relevant findings of other authors and attempt to supplement them with the results of more recent research in the context of the subject under discussion. One new aspect of this paper is the triple comparison of the position of the authors covered, namely a comparison of the position of emigrant authors in different historical

periods, a comparison of the position of Slovenian emigrant writers in other countries of Europe with the position of Slovenian emigrant writers in other parts of the world, and a comparison of their position with that of immigrant writers in Slovenia.

## **Early History of Slovenian Emigrant Literature in Other Parts of Europe**

The early history of Slovenian literary creativity in other parts of Europe can be covered by considering three distinct categories. The first category is the consequence of the fact that all Slovenian writers who enrolled as university students at any time before 1919, the year Slovenia gained the first university of its own, did so in other parts of Europe. Many would remain abroad, meaning that they found employment there, wrote and published there, and made their mark in various parts of the Europe of that time.

The largest number of Slovenians of course studied in Vienna, which up until the founding of the University of Ljubljana was not 'abroad' for them, but the capital of their homeland. In the sixteenth century, for example, Slovenian

students represented almost a quarter of all the students enrolled at the University of Vienna, while in 1535 they actually accounted for more than 70 percent (Ožinger 1994: 36). Also surprising is the large number of Slovenian *magisters* and university lecturers there, as well as canons of the Vienna cathedral chapter, particularly in the sixteenth century, when their ethnic origin even provoked the protests of local nationalists (Simoni, 1994: 27). In the sixteenth century the majority of Slovenians belonging to the academic circle of Baron Herberstein taught at the University of Vienna; others from his circle made their mark in other parts of the empire. It was also more or less in this period that Primož Trubar and Adam Bohorič, the founders of standard literary Slovenian, enrolled at the University of Vienna.

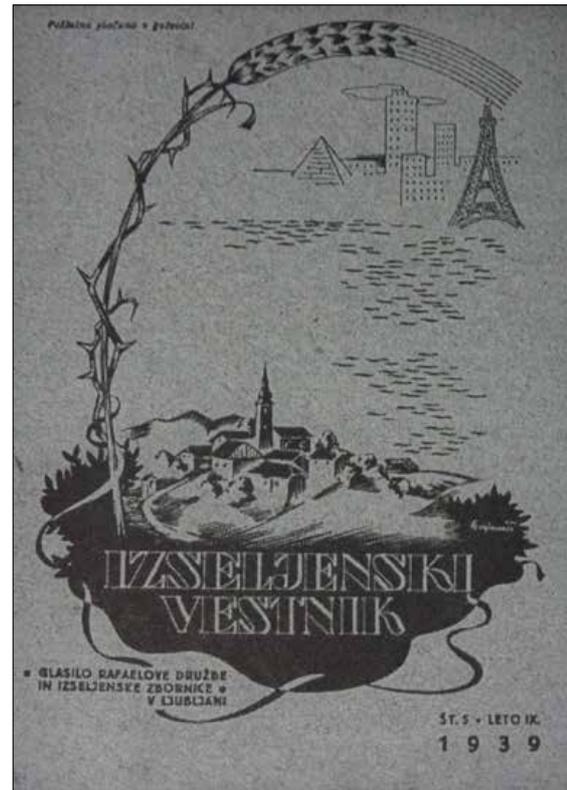
From the eighteenth century onwards the most important Slovenian writers and linguists, from the Carniolan revivalists to representatives of the Slovenian *moderna*, enrolled at the University of Vienna. In the earlier periods they included almost all the celebrated names. In the first decade of the 20th century, too, the remarkably strong generation of Slovenian academics born between 1876 and 1890, who would later come to prominence in various branches of the humanities, particularly literature and philosophy, studied at the University of Vienna. The same applies to the last years before the First World War and the years immediately following it. It is therefore entirely comprehensible that some of these writers should have remained in Vienna for a lengthy period, sometimes several decades, and in some cases for the rest of their lives. The most

notable among them are Pohlin, Kopotar, Miklošič and the physicist, poet and essayist Jožef Stefan, who lived in Vienna until his death in 1893. Others who studied in Vienna and then took up employment there included Stritar, Trstenjak, Murko and Vidic, and later Kidrič. Prežihov Voranc, who had attended a cooperative college in Vienna before the First World War, wrote the majority of his most important works during his emigrant years between the wars.

Slovenian students in other parts of Europe were responsible for a whole range of Slovenian literary publications during or shortly after their studies. In Vienna these ranged from Levstik's *Pavliha* and Stritar's *Zvon* in the 1870s all the way up to the illegal literary gazette founded at the University of Vienna during the Second World War by the group of Slovenian writers that formed around Janez Remic (Pibernik 1991). Even today, the Club of Slovenian Students in Vienna (KSŠSD) periodically publishes the student paper *Punt* and the occasional anthology of works by its members, for example *Smrt samokruhnosti: Pesmi in proza* (Leben 1993).

Before 1919, when the University of Ljubljana was founded, many Slovenians also studied in Graz and Prague and at universities in Italy, while individual students also studied at other European universities. Some remained there and forged careers for themselves as writers, teachers or academics. In the period before the Second World War they functioned as active intermediaries between Slovenian culture and the culture of their new homeland.

The second category of the earlier history of Slovenian emigrant literature in other parts of Europe is not connected to Slovenians studying at universities there, in other words to the study years of Slovenian writers, and is not at all comparable to the aforementioned category of rich literary production, either in content or in volume. This category includes the usually anonymous original emigrant literary writings that appeared in Slovenian emigrant periodicals in Europe between the wars. Ten 'Yugoslav' emigrant newspapers in which Slovenians were involved were published in western Europe in this period (Drnovšek 1992: 273–282), and around 20 communist or left-wing workers' papers, in which Slovenians were also involved; some of these papers even had supplements in Slovenian (Drnovšek 1992: 289–302). Of the five Catholic newspapers for Slovenian emigrants, two were published in Slovenia and three in western Europe (Drnovšek 1995: 449). Most interesting from the point of view of literary contributions are the monthly *Naš zvon* (1925–27), published in Westphalia, and *Rafael* (1931–1935), published in Heerlen in the Netherlands with various subtitles, the last of which was *Glasilno jugoslovanskih izseljencev v zapadni Evropi* (Newspaper of Yugoslav Emigrants in Western Europe). Despite the 'Yugoslav' in the subtitle, the paper appeared exclusively in the Slovenian language. In 1935 the Heerlen-based *Rafael* merged with the Ljubljana-based *Izseljenski vestnik* and from then on appeared as *Izseljenski vestnik Rafael*.



*Izseljenski vestnik (Emigration Herald), 1939*

The texts in these publications do not have noticeable artistic ambitions and are interesting above all as historical documents in which the experiences and feelings of Slovenian emigrants, particularly in the mining districts of western Europe, are reflected in a picturesque manner. This applies as much to the attempts at poetry as it does to short prose works. For this reason Slovenian emigrants in Westphalia, the Rhineland and elsewhere greatly enjoyed reciting these poems at their cultural events, for example at gatherings of miners' wives, etc. Among the authors of literary and semi-literary pieces in these publications – mainly poems, sketches, introductions and essay-like reports on visits to emigrant communities – who at least

occasionally signed their names, are Antonija Rože, who published poems, including those for specific occasions (e.g. Rože 1933), and spoke in public to the Slovenian community in France, and the editor of *Naš zvon*, Janez Evangelist Kalan (Žitnik 1999: 91). His Westphalian letters and some introductions are a typical example of the semi-literary genre, which might be characterised as an essay-like combination of literary and journalistic elements written in a distinctly individual style. Among examples of a clearly individual style are Kalan's speech in Ljubljana, published in 1927 (*Naš zvon* 3 (10): 6). It is, in fact, from the recognisable style of these pieces that we are able to conclude that Kalan is also the author of some anonymously published sketches.

The third category of 'early' Slovenian emigrant literature in Europe, which partially coincides in chronological terms with the second group, consists of the finest creators of Slovenian emigrant literature in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century, who, however, did not publish their work in the emigrant publications mentioned above. The most notable of them is the poet, writer, translator, art historian and classical archaeologist Vojeslav Mole, who lived in Kraków for 33 years. Since his life is closely connected with the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, the host of this year's AEMI conference, a brief biographical outline is appropriate here.

He was born in 1886 in Kanal ob Soči. While a *Gymnasium* student he published literary pieces in *Ljubljanski zvon* and *Omladina*, the latter being the publication of the Vienna-based academic society 'Slovenija'. In 1906,



Vojeslav Mole (1886 - 1973) The most notable creator of Slovenian emigrant literature in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century

after passing the *Matura* examination, he enrolled at the University of Vienna. Beginning in the autumn of 1908 he spent a year attending lectures on Polish literature and Slavonic linguistics in Kraków, where he also began to publish his first scholarly papers. He spent 1909 and 1910 in Rome preparing to study the history of art, continuing and concluding his studies in Vienna with a doctorate in 1912. He then spent a year travelling around Italy, with the help of a scholarship from the Austrian government, and in the autumn of 1913 took up a post with the Central Commission for the Protection of Monuments in Vienna, which assigned him to the conservation office in Split.

At the outbreak of the First World War he was called up into the Austrian army, but by September 1914 he was a prisoner of war in Siberia, where he would remain for six years. In 1917 he married Ela, a Polish former colleague from the university in Kraków, by proxy. The autumn of 1919 saw him teaching at the university in Tomsk, where he attained habilitation. Again in 1919, he was among the co-founders of the weekly Slovenian publication *Naš list* in Omsk. In the spring of 1920 he returned to Kraków and then, with his wife, moved to Ljubljana for five years, taking up a post as professor of classical archaeology and Byzantine art. In 1925 he and his family moved to Kraków and remained there for 14 years until the outbreak of the Second World War, and for a further 19 years after the war. In Kraków he was elected to the post of full professor of the history of the art of the Slavonic nations at the newly founded Institute of Slavonic Studies at the Jagiellonian University – serving as the Institute's director from 1936. Following the German attack on Poland, he and his family were evacuated to Lvov, from where they travelled to Ljubljana, where Mole again became a professor of Byzantine studies. After the war he returned to Kraków and continued to teach at the Institute of Slavonic Studies. In 1950 he became the director of the History of Art Institute at the Jagiellonian University and took up the chair of Medieval Art.

Mole published three independent literary works: two poetry collections and an autobiography. His second collection of poems, entitled *Tristia ex Siberia* (Mole 1920), was written while

he was a POW in Russia. In addition to literary works he published a whole series of scholarly works, for the most part in Polish academic journals. He retired in 1960. In 1947 he was elected a full member of the Polish Academy of Science in Kraków, and in 1961 he became a corresponding member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. In 1966 he and his wife went to live with their daughter in Oregon, USA, where Mole died in 1973.<sup>2</sup>

The other significant creator of Slovenian emigrant literature in pre-war Europe was the story writer, poet, literary historian and critic Janko Lavrin (1887–1986), for many years professor of Russian literature at the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom. Lavrin, who likewise became a corresponding member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and an honorary member of the international Society for Slovene Studies published poems and prose in the Prague-based publication *Domači prijatelj* between 1906 and 1909 and, 10 years later, in the Chicago-based publication *Čas*. A fascinating collection of his autobiographical sketches appeared posthumously.<sup>3</sup>

Also important in this period is the work of two Slovenians in France – the literary and translation work of the artist Veno Pilon (1896–1970) and the French poetry (12 collections) and some translations by Vladimir Kavčič, who wrote under the name of Jean Vodaine (1921–2006). Both of them – like Mole and Lavrin – were pre-war emigrants but the focus of the literary and translation work of all four writers is situated in the period after the Second World War.

### Recent History of Slovenian Literary Creativity in Other Parts of Europe

With the end of the liberation war and the victory of the Yugoslav socialist revolution in May 1945, more than 20,000 political refugees left Slovenia. There were many well-established writers among them who continued to write and publish even during the refugee period 1945–50, publishing a number of periodicals and even printing some original literary works in refugee camps in Austria and Italy (Žitnik 2007). Among those who – either directly from the homeland or following a period in the camps – withdrew into European exile, the most important figures in the literary field are Vinko Beličič, Stanko Janežič and Franc Jeza, who lived and

worked in Trieste, Vladimir Truhlar and Rafko Vodeb, who were active in Rome, Metod Turnšek, who in 1956 moved from Trieste to Austrian Carinthia, and Dimitrij Oton Jeruc, who after periods living in various parts of Europe finally settled in Belgium. Some of them, particularly the clerics, returned to Slovenia after several decades. Janežič returned in 1969 while Truhlar and Vodeb returned in the 1970s.

In the early 1950s the successful story writer Igor Šentjerc moved to Germany, where he would publish 23 novels in German, for the most part historical novels but also romances and crime stories; some of his works have been translated into various European languages. Post-war emigrant authors writing in both languages – Slovenian and German – include Venčeslav Šprager and Maruša Krese in Germany, the poet Tea Rovšek-Witzemannin in Vienna and the late poet and prose writer Milena Merlak Detela and her husband Lev Detela, who moved to Vienna in 1960. The poet, prose writer, translator and editor Lev Detela, the author of 40 books in Slovenian and German, is among the more prolific and original contemporary Slovenian emigrant writers, and without a doubt among the bolder ones in the literary sense (Žitnik Serafin 2010). In recent years Maruša Krese and Lev Detela, who first found success in the German-speaking world, have also become well established within the cultural context of Slovenia. In 2008 Maruša Krese even won the Fabula award, an important literary award in Slovenia.

It is also characteristic of other Slovenian bilingual writers that, as a result of the long blockade of Slovenian emigrant

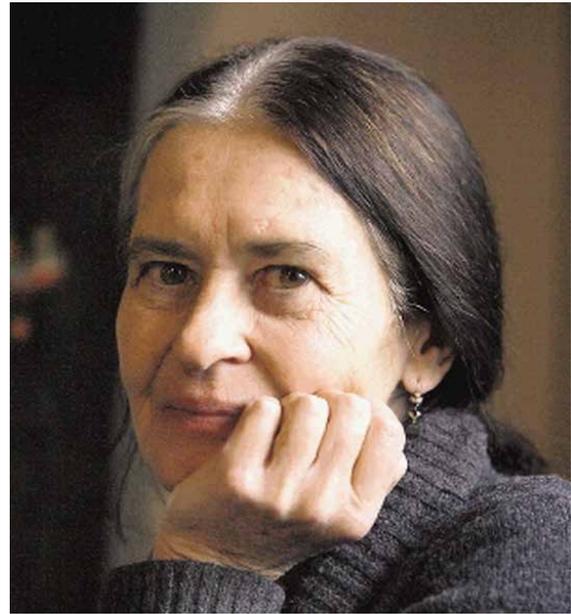


*Veno Pilon (1896–1970)*

literature within Slovenia itself, they initially found success in the language of their new homeland or in the wider area in which that language is spoken, and only then, in most cases from the end of the 1980s onwards, in Slovenia as well. Similarly, those who wrote exclusively in Slovenian first broke through in the context of the Slovenian emigrant press and the press of the historical Slovenian communities just across the borders of Slovenia, but did not achieve success in Slovenia itself until the lifting of this blockade in 1991, when Slovenia became independent. This of course only applied to 'political' emigrants.

Among the post-war emigrant authors living in France, the best known in Slovenia are the photographer, philosopher and essayist Evgen Bavčar and the popular bilingual writer Brina Svit (Brina Švigelj Merat), who has lived in Paris since 1980. Her novels are published by, among others, the prestigious French publisher Éditions Gallimard, translations of her works in various languages are also published elsewhere, and new editions and new impressions of her Slovenian works and Slovenian translations of her French novels are constantly appearing in Slovenia.

The poet and essayist Ifigenija Simonovič lived in England for almost 25 years before returning to Slovenia in 2003. The literary legacy and current work of Slovenian writers in other parts of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are still awaiting a more serious literary historical and literary critical evaluation. There are a number of authors working in Sweden who are best known for their publications in periodicals, while they also occasionally



*Maruša Krese who first found her success in the German-speaking world, won the 2008 Fabula award, an important literary award in Slovenia*

publish books.<sup>4</sup> Among leading Slovenian writers, there are also, of course, some who have spent longer or shorter periods living in other parts of Europe, or are still living there, but given their more or less uninterrupted involvement in publishing within the context of Slovenia, we have never considered them to be emigrant authors.

In his opening remarks at a round-table discussion on Slovenian writers in the European Union in 2010, Lev Detela (2010) pointed out, among other things, that the situation of Slovenian writers in Europe or today's EU differs in terms of its structural conditions from the situation of other Slovenian emigrant authors, above all in Argentina but also in the USA, Canada and Australia. Typical for Slovenian writers in other continents is (was) a stronger involvement in the broader cultural activities of the Slovenian communi-

ties living there, in emigrants' organisations with many cultural initiatives of their own, literary and other events and, often, their own newspapers. Particularly in Argentina, Slovenian literary and cultural activity was given a special impetus 35 years ago with the founding of the cultural organisation *Slovenska kulturna akcija* and the cultural journal *Meddobje*, which brought together numerous expatriate authors (for the most part with a Catholic orientation) who had settled in Argentina after the Second World War. This journal, which is still published today, has seen and occasionally still sees, alongside the contributions of Argentine Slovenians, contributions from emigrant authors in other parts of the Americas, Australia, Asia and, in individual cases, Europe and sometimes even Slovenia. Detela does, however, admit that the energy of their literary mission has faded significantly everywhere in the world, with the passing of the generation that was very active in the first decades following the Second World War.

On the other hand Slovenian emigrant authors in Europe were to a certain extent isolated figures, suggests Detela, since their situation following the departure overseas of the main body of Slovenian anti-communist cultural figures – and thus after the cessation of the various cultural and literary activities in refugee camps in Austria and Italy – differed from the situation of the more interconnected and numerous authors who were members of the historical Slovenian minorities in Austria and Italy. Detela (*ibid.*) claims: 'Many emigrant authors who did not emigrate to America or Australia lived among the Slove-

nians of Trieste, Gorizia and Klagenfurt or other parts of Austrian Carinthia, but for various reasons, frequently ideological and mental, they remained fairly distant from Slovenian organisations and groups in those places. They represented a kind of unique cosmos, and more or less remained a special *corpus separatum* with unique literary characteristics – for example Vinko Beličič and Franc Jeza in Trieste or Metod Turnšek in Carinthia.'

Of course – despite the common experience of separation from home – literary isolation and solitude are far more understandable in the case of Dimitrij Oton Jeruc in Belgium and Saša Jerman in England than in that of the emigrant writers in the historical Slovenian communities outside the borders of Slovenia, since Belgium and the United Kingdom did not have strong Slovenian communities with a sufficiently ramified cultural infrastructure to provide the necessary support to writers with literary ambitions. Among these solitary figures or – better – loners, we may include with little hesitation contemporary and still active Slovenian literary figures in other parts of Europe. Although Slovenian communities exist in the countries where these authors live, and although the activity of these communities continues even in the present day, these authors do not as a rule form ties with them or do so only exceptionally or on a more or less ad hoc basis.

This does not, however, apply to the majority of Slovenian authors in Sweden, who – quite the opposite – are characterised by a vital connection with the Slovenian community there and with its organisations and societies. A typical example of an author who is

closely involved in the activity of the Slovenian community in Sweden is Avguštna Budja. Collective anthologies of Slovenian poetry and prose in Sweden, including, for example a Slovenian anthology from the late 1970s (Budja, Hriberšek, Jakše and Zavodlov 1979) and bilingual or multilingual or 'Yugoslav' anthologies, two from the 1980s (*Šesti festival poezije in proze 1983* and *Sedmi festival poezije in proze 1984*) and one from 1990 (*Ett öppet fönster/Odprto okno*), are also eloquent evidence of this.

### Literary Bilingualism

For emigrant writers, literary bilingualism of sufficient quality, something that as a rule is the privilege of the educated, is the most reliable way of breaking through to different target audiences. In Germany, some of the most successful Slovenian expatriate writers, e.g. Šentjerc and Šprager, had practically no connection with the Slovenian community there, for the most part because they wished to hedge themselves off from its internal ideological quarrels. For this reason, as regards use of their mother tongue, they lived in linguistic isolation, which further contributed to their decision to give up writing in Slovenian and – in order to succeed in the majority language of their new homeland – dedicate themselves entirely to writing in German. As mentioned above, Šentjerc was very successful in this.

Those who became clearly bilingual writers as emigrants chose a surer but more difficult route to different readers. Since their personal links with publishers were weaker, it was usually more difficult for them to publish in the lan-

guage of the new homeland than it was for native writers. For the most part they did not cultivate connections with their own immigrant community and its media, which could have made it easier for them to publish in Slovenian. Consequently, their success depended above all on their own enterprise, self-promotion and lobbying in the dominant publishing circles in both the old and new homelands. More recent authors of Slovenian origin have also begun to get involved in foreign-language writers' societies and cultural organisations. The socially critical poet and prose writer Maruša Krese, who divides her time between Berlin, Graz and Slovenia, has attracted considerable interest both in Slovenia and internationally. The author of several books in Slovenian and German, she lives 'in the global world' (Detela 2010). Literary works in Slovenian and German have also been published by the three Vienna-based Slovenian authors mentioned earlier, and by Venčeslav Šprager, who lives in Bavaria and who, having strengthened contacts with the country of his birth in recent years, has renewed and consolidated his knowledge of his mother tongue to such an extent that he can now publish bilingual works even without the help of translators and editors (for example the poetry collection *Augenblicke/Trenutki*, Šprager 2006).

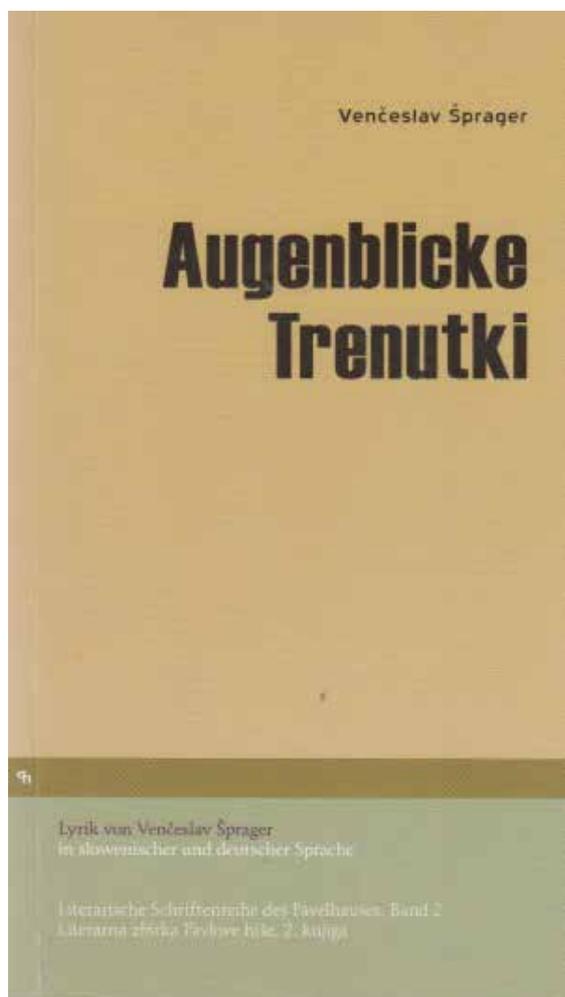
Even Brina Svit, 'our biggest writing star' (Hrastar 2006), who in the 1980s and 1990s published three novels in Slovenian – *April* (1984), the epistolary novel *Navadna razmerja* (1988) co-written with Peter Kolšek and the novel *Con brio* (1998), which was nominated for

the Kresnik award – has in recent years written works in French and then herself translated them into Slovenian, e.g. the novel *Odveč srce* (Svit 2006), translated as *Un coeur de trop*. By contrast, her novels *Con brio* (Svit 1998) and *Smrt slovenske primadone* (Svit 2000) have been translated from Slovenian into French for Gallimard.<sup>5</sup> Brina Svit, who is undoubtedly the most productive Slovenian emigrant author (and one of the most productive Slovenian authors in general), has received many literary awards and prizes, among them

the Académie Française's Prix Maurice Genevoix for the novel *Un coeur de trop* (2006), the Belgian Prix Licorne and the independent bookshops prize Follies d'Encre (Topolovec 2008) for the French version of the novel *Coco Dias ali Zlata vrata* (2007).

A number of fine emigrant writers who wrote exclusively in their mother tongue – in particular those working in the first decades following the Second World War – remained until their deaths accessible only to members of their own language community. Since at that time the majority of European countries did not yet recognise the principles of integration and intercultural transience at the national level, which includes material support for the translation and publication of minority or immigrant literature, the literary contribution of post-war Slovenian migrant authors was marginalised in their new European homelands. Their literary work in their mother tongue represents a characteristic and interesting though isolated and unintegrated foreign body in their new homeland, which accepted them into its economic, legal and political system but not into its culture. Until recently, immigrant writers in Slovenia were in a very similar position, since Slovenian readers did not have an opportunity to discover their literary work written and published in their own mother tongues (Dimkowska 2005). Although some shorter works have appeared in the literary journal *Paralele* (Dimkowska 2006), which focuses on the writings of minority authors, Slovenian translations of their books have been more the exception than the rule (Mugerli 2005).

In 2010, however, there was a notice-



Venčeslav Šprager: *Augenblicke/Trenutki* (2011)

able shift in the attitude of the Slovenian literary establishment towards immigrant authors. Until recently, the statute of the Slovenian Writers' Association (*Društvo slovenskih pisateljev*; DSP) read as follows: 'Any Slovenian writer, poet, prose writer, dramatist or essayist writing in Slovenian may become a member of the Association.' With the new Founding Act of the Slovenian Writers' Association, debated by members at the general assembly on 29 March 2010, this condition has become much more open: 'Any Slovenian writer (poet, prose writer, dramatist, essayist) writing in Slovenian or in any other language, or citizen of the Republic of Slovenia or writer with the right of residence in Slovenia who is not Slovenian by nationality but who writes in Slovenian *or in his or her own mother tongue* [emphasis mine] may become a member of the Association. Slovenian writers who do not live in the Republic of Slovenia may, regardless of citizenship, become members of the Association under the same conditions' (Founding Act of the DSP 2010: 3).

I believe that an amendment of this kind may accelerate, at least slightly, positive processes in Slovenian culture, which is evidently still in the transitional period of forming the intercultural consciousness and multicultural national identity of its members. Perhaps writers who have come to Slovenia from other countries will gain, also through membership of different Slovenian cultural and literary organisations, concrete new opportunities to establish themselves more widely in the culture of their new homeland.

## Conclusion

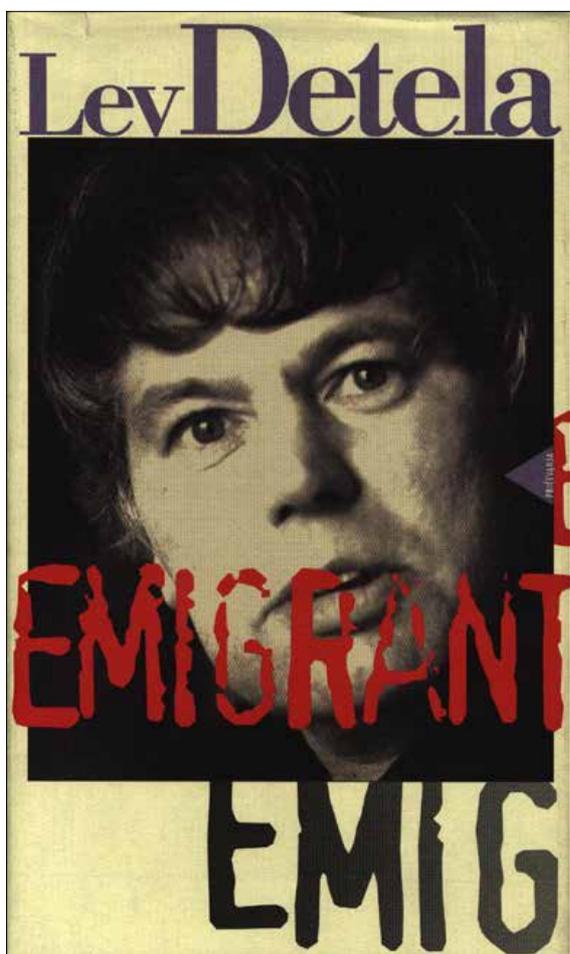
Today there are almost no Slovenian writers left of the generation that emigrated from Slovenia to other parts of Europe at the end of the Second World War. 'We are actually standing on the graves of this unique literary phenomenon, which was still very much alive in the 1960s and 1970s,' writes Detela (2010). According to the poet, writer and dramatist Lev Detela – who, following his emigration to Austria in 1960 himself relied on the global Slovenian diaspora community, and who is still today co-editor of *Meddobje*, the Buenos Aires-based journal of Slovenian emigrant culture around the globe – the energy of the literary mission of post-war Slovenian emigrants is fading everywhere because the generation that was so active in the first decades following the Second World War is dying out. And yet Detela, who considers himself one of the 'last representatives of the so-called second wave of emigrant Slovenian writers, who, before the democratisation and independence of Slovenia were not recognised in their homeland', is a surprising example of an artist whose energy, even after half a century of continuous writing and publishing, shows no signs of fading. Quite the opposite: in recent years his annual average number of new books has actually increased. To a slightly lesser extent this also applies to his Slovenian contemporaries in other parts of Europe. In 2009, three years after her award-winning prose collection *Vsi moji božiči*, Maruša Krese returned with a new collection, *Vse moje vojne*. Last year, after a break of five years, Pavelhaus in Graz published a new novel by Venčeslav Šprager in Slovenian

and German (Šprager 2011 and 2011a). Both are, in fact, maintaining a slightly less intense pace of publication than that which characterised earlier phases of their writing careers. This does not apply to the practically uninterrupted creative momentum of Brina Svit, the youngest of the authors covered here.

Good-quality creative bilingualism remains the best assurance of a visible presence in two literary and cultural systems. The internal visibility of literary works within the context of an in-

dividual migrant community, which until recently was still very important for conserving Sloveness among emigrants, simply no longer functions in today's increasingly 'loose' migrant communities. Perhaps it will turn out that the once productive collective energy of Slovenian migrant communities has a suitable counterweight in the remarkable individual motivation of the most successful individuals, among them contemporary Slovenian emigrant writers, in particular those who, lacking the support of the social and cultural network of a Slovenian community in their new homeland, were first compelled to establish themselves, entirely independently, in a language that was foreign to them before they could attract attention with their literary work in Slovenia itself.

This sad rule does not apply to immigrant authors in Slovenia. For them, the exact opposite applies: it is easier for immigrant writers who were well established in their native countries before immigrating to Slovenia to establish themselves in Slovenia. In other words: when it comes to including emigrant and immigrant writers in the group of prominent writers, or even in the group of 'our' writers, Slovenia is evidently very cautious. First it waits to see what others will say. After that, it is much easier and safer to decide about who deserves our recognition as well.



*Lev Detela, author of 'Emigrant' (1999) and many other books in Slovenian and German, is among the more prolific and original contemporary Slovenian emigrant writers*

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## Notes

- 1 This paper is an extended version of the following article: Janja Žitnik Serafin, Literarna zapuščina slovenskih izseljencev v drugih deželah Evrope, *Dve domovini / Two Homelands*, 2011, no. 34: 35–45
- 2 In Slovenia those who have written about Mole include Stele (1970), Cevc (1974), Jutršek (1987) and later e.g. Jež (2002)
- 3 In addition to entries in *Slovenski biografski leksikon*, *Enciklopedija Slovenije*, *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije* and biographical/bibliographical articles in the SAZU yearbook (volumes 8 and 37), studies on Lavrin and brief portraits of this eminent emigrant have been written by various authors, among them Vera Brnčič (1976) on the occasion of Lavrin's ninetieth birthday, on his death 10 years later (or on the occasion of the posthumous publication of his prose sketches), Rado L. Lenček (1985; 1986), Dušan Moravec (1986), Aleksander Skaza (1986/87), Harry Leeming (1987) and Vladimir Gajšek (1988), and more recently Viktor Baranovskiy and Irina Khlebnikova (2009)
- 4 Slovenian writers in Sweden have been written about by Avgušтина Budja (1999), who as well as presenting her own work up to that time offers a detailed presentation of the literary work of Marija Hriberšek, Mihaela Hojnik, Adi Golčman and Tone Jakše
- 5 To date Brina Svit has published six novels for Gallimard: *Con brio* (1999) and *Mort d'une prima donna slovène* (2001), that were translated from Slovenian (both translated by Zdenka Štimac), and *Moreno* (2003), *Un cœur de trop* (2006), *Coco Dias ou La porte dorée* (2007) and *Petit éloge de la rupture* (2009), which were written in French