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Ivan Smiljanić*

National Pride and Economic Prejudice: Some Effects of Economic Nationalism in Slovenian Rural Areas in Austria-Hungary

IZVLEČEK

NARODNA PREVZETNOST IN GOSPODARSKA PRISTRANOST: NEKAJ UČINKOV EKONOMSKEGA NACIONALIZMA V SLOVENSKEM RURALNEM OKOLJU POD AVSTRO-OGRSKO

Prispevek obravnava odnose med narodnimi skupnostmi Avstro-Ogrske na podeželju slovenskih dežel, še posebej v odnosu med Slovenci in Nemci. Odnosi med različnimi narodnostmi so bili pogosto antagonistični, tudi če tabori niso bili jasno opredeljeni, saj je bila identiteta posameznikov podvržena številnim vplivom in spremembam. Skupnosti so uporabljale ekonomski nacionalizem in tako skušale zavarovati svoje ekonomske interese na račun drugih skupnosti. Na individualni ravni je bilo osrednje orodje za dosego tega cilja bojkot, se pravi obiskovanje samo trgovin in obratov z blagom ustreznega nacionalnega porekla. V vsakdanjem življenju takšna delitev ni bila stroga, je pa postala veliko opaznejša v času nacionalnih napetosti, ki so se na Slovenskem zgodile po septembrskih nemirih leta 1908. Točen obseg bojkota ni znan, čeprav je jasno, da je dosegel slovensko podeželje in trajal vsaj nekaj tednov ter spotoma okrepil nacionalne identitete.

Ključne besede: ekonomski nacionalizem, ruralno gospodarstvo, gospodarski bojkot, Svoji k svojim, Avstro-Ogrska

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ABSTRACT

The article explores the relationships between the national communities of Austria-Hungary in the rural regions of the Slovenian lands, particularly between Slovenians and Germans. Interactions among different nationalities were often hostile, even when no clear divisions existed, as individuals' identities were subject to many influences and changes. Communities employed economic nationalism to protect their own interests, often at the expense of others. At an individual level, the primary means of doing this was the boycott, which involved visiting only shops and establishments that sold goods of specific national origin. In daily life, such divisions were not strictly enforced, but they became much more apparent during periods of national tension, such as after the September riots in 1908. The exact scope of the boycott remains unknown, but it is evident that it extended into the Slovenian countryside and lasted for at least several weeks, reinforcing national identities along the way.

Keywords: economic nationalism, rural economy, economic boycott, Each to Their Own, Austria-Hungary

Introduction

Economic nationalism is a specific type of ideologically driven economic programme, more aligned with ideology than with scientific theory, that advocates for the interests of one national group over those of individuals and especially over other ethnic groups.[1] Viewing issues of nationhood and the economy through the lens of economic nationalism enables us "to tell stories about the economy, wealth, power, identity, sovereignty, and space".[2] On a broad scale, economic nationalism may manifest as a state-backed policy of self-sufficiency aimed at advancing its own economic aims through various measures, most notably protectionism. It can also significantly shape the actions and business practices of individual entrepreneurs and companies at the local level, to the extent that they may behave irrationally from a purely economic standpoint. For example, entrepreneurs may refuse to do business with potential partners or serve certain customers because of differing political views or national identities. In this context, the main way for customers to express their dissatisfaction is to boycott a particular business or entrepreneur that does not align with their national identity. Therefore, when nationalism spills over into the business world, it can have a

1 The basic literature on economic nationalism in the past and present includes: Helga Schultz and Eduard Kubů, eds., *History and Culture of Economic Nationalism in East Central Europe* (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2006). Stefan Berger and Thomas Fetzer, eds., *Nationalism and Economy: Explorations into a Neglected Relationship* (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2019). Andreas Pickel, ed., *Handbook of Economic Nationalism* (Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022).

2 Natalie Koch, "The Political Geography of Economic Nationalism," in Andreas Pickel, ed., *Handbook of Economic Nationalism* (Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022), 15.

strong, often negative, impact on the economy, as it can, at least in extreme cases, lead to the financial collapse and bankruptcy of an entrepreneur. Businessmen and merchants, therefore, need to be careful about the image they project to avoid punishment, such as a broken window display or a boycott.

The ideology of economic nationalism was widespread across 19th-century Europe as a vital tool in nation-building. While the primary aims of nationalist movements were to forge nations composed of individuals with a strong sense of belonging to a broader ethnic group, it was also believed that political and cultural progress needed to be underpinned by economic strength. A well-rounded and developed nation, therefore, required a synergy of all these elements. This fostered the nationalist view that the economy should serve only a specific group, not others, in the nation's interest. Consequently, this often led to the creation of parallel economic systems, accompanied by segregation and self-imposed isolation. A typical example in Austria-Hungary was the implementation of parallel systems within the cooperative movement,[3] where the network of cooperatives was divided along national and political lines, so that multiple cooperatives in the same village were not uncommon.[4] While these ideals were successfully realised in some areas, there were many instances where this remained only a theoretical aspiration – a propagandistic call to action in the press and political speeches – since achieving complete self-reliance was a challenging, if not impossible, task. There was still considerable overt or covert collaboration among the officially competing networks. Small-scale merchants from different ethnic groups had few options available and sourced their goods from the same suppliers. In short, practice often diverged significantly from theory and political slogans.

This article examines business failures in Slovenian rural areas during the Austro-Hungarian period, largely attributable to economic nationalism. The Austro-Hungarian era was characterised by national tensions and conflicts, especially among Slovenians, Germans, and Italians. The Duchy of Carniola, covering most of present-day Slovenian territory, had a Slovenian majority, with fewer nationalist tensions. Conversely, the region of Lower Styria, in the eastern part of today's Slovenia, included towns such as Maribor/Marburg, Celje/Cilli, and Ptuj/Pettau, which had a German majority,[5] whereas the rural areas were mostly Slovenianised. For example, according to the 1910 census, six out of seven people in Ptuj declared German as the language they use daily, while in the surrounding rural areas, 95% of inhabitants – afflicted by typical peasant issues of the time, such as fragmented estates and slow agricultural modernisation – chose Slovenian as their main language.[6] A similar situation

3 Torsten Lorenz, ed., *Cooperatives in Ethnic Conflicts: Eastern Europe in the 19th and Early 20th Century* (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2006).

4 For further information on the history of Slovenian cooperative movement, see: Žarko Lazarević, Marta Rendla, and Janja Sedlaček, *Zgodovina zadružništva v Sloveniji (1856–1992)* (Ljubljana: Zadružna zveza Slovenije, 2023).

5 For further information on the history of Germans in these towns during the Austro-Hungarian period, see: Janez Cvirn, *Trdnjavski trikotnik: politična orientacija Nemcev na Spodnjem Štajerskem (1861–1914)* (Maribor: Založba Obzorja, 1997).

6 Ljubica Šuligoj, "Ptuj – 'nemška trdnjava' na slovenskem Štajerskem," in Bojan Terbuc, ed., *Septembrski dogodki 1908: zbornik* (Ptuj: Zgodovinsko društvo, 1998), 14, 17.

existed in the western Slovenian regions, roughly along today's Slovenian border with Italy: the city of Trieste/Trst/Triest, the Monarchy's main port, was mostly Italian, while the suburbs and surrounding agrarian regions were predominantly Slovenian and Croatian.

Although the division between urban and rural areas across Slovenian lands was not entirely based on ethnicity, the dominant belief at the time was that "[w]hoever came from the countryside was without exception Slovenian-national".[7] The border regions were hotspots of tension in both urban and rural environments, and these tensions often spilled over into the economic sector. An example illustrating these divisions is a story from the memoirs of Ruda Jurčec, who recalled a large fire at a merchant's storage – a German-sympathising Slav (so-called *Deutschtümler*) – in Ormož/Friedau during the final years of Austria-Hungary, where both German and Slovenian fire brigades responded:

> I heard the merchant's name mentioned among the people – he was a Croat by birth but had Germanised his name – saying that he was nowhere to be found, that no one knew his whereabouts. That was why the fire brigades were slower, and the members of the German fire brigade (mostly Slovenians who served the Germans) simply refused to move. It was as if no one was in a hurry to put out the fire; they only cared that it did not spread. […] When the fire had subsided, and the firefighters were lazily leaving, one of the women whispered into my sister's ear: "You know, he set the fire himself, the sloppy Deutschtümler; he was on the brink of bankruptcy and thinks he will get away with it …" […] The fire destroyed the warehouse of a merchant who was not dear to our hearts. I heard the word "bankruptcy", and it sounded as if there was death in it. A few years later, the German store in fact disappeared.[8]

Choosing and Projecting an Identity or Avoiding It[9]

Before we delve deeper, it is essential to pause and consider the nature of national identity. The process of nationalisation is complex, influenced by various forces that shape an individual's identity. Some aspects are chosen freely by the individual; others are shaped by environmental pressures that force a decision. Contemporary research shows that the paths of national identification – which may seem straightforward at first glance – can be complex and lead to ambiguous, variable outcomes. While nationalist struggles were undeniably significant in the Slovenian lands within Austria-Hungary (and beyond), recent scholarship indicates that it is incorrect to assume these divisions were always clearly defined in the sociopolitical sphere. Who constitutes "us" and who

7 Fran Šuklje, *Iz mojih spominov: I. del* (Ljubljana: Katoliško tiskovno društvo, 1926), 14.

8 Ruda Jurčec, *Skozi luči in sence I: prvi del (1914–1929)* (Ljubljana: Prešernova družba, 1991), 21–22.

9 The chapter is based on previous research synthesised in Žarko Lazarević and Ivan Smiljanić, "Vmesna identiteta in podjetniki v avstro-ogrski dobi," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 65, No. 2 (2025): 31–53.

are "they" was not always obvious or seamlessly incorporated into everyday situations; instead, national identity was often fluid, and sometimes muddled or contradictory.[10]

The category of in-between national identity, which could be supranational, non-national, or a hybrid of multiple identities, was universally adopted as a pragmatic strategy for everyday survival. Newspapers and documents available to researchers analysing such questions were most often based on strong positions of particular national and political beliefs; sources reflecting more complex identities are comparatively rare and limited to individual cases. However, unshakeable beliefs should not be attributed to the entire society, which was willing to negotiate its identity to a greater extent. For example, due to indifference,[11] fickleness, and, above all, pragmatism from day to day and even from situation to situation,[12] many Slovenians would present themselves as Germans on a particular occasion, and vice versa. This fluidity, while difficult to conceptualise today, was a widespread occurrence that usually prevailed among peoples who cohabited, except during periods of national tensions and consequent (temporary) polarisation. The economic world operated according to similarly loose and pragmatic laws, except that here the risk was greater and the penalty for mistakes could be harsher, easily affecting the financial and material status of the "delinquent".

What did all this mean for a typical rural small-scale entrepreneur, merchant or craftsman in the remote Lower Styrian or Carniolan countryside? The majority were far more vulnerable than large-scale national or international companies, so they behaved accordingly – that is, pragmatically, even though their methods could be elusive. There was no simple, universal recipe for staying out of trouble. If one decided to openly promote their firmly established national identity, they risked a boycott by a large part of potential customers. A shop vocally promoting itself as Slovenian, German, Italian, Hungarian, etc., could attract enough nationalist clientele, even if that meant the rest of the shoppers avoided it. However, if it provided poor service, it alienated even its loyal base, which could be a death sentence. Shoppers stopped boycotting the "national enemy's" shops for many reasons, ranging from poor service and competitors' lower prices to the "enemy" shop simply being closer to their homes.[13] On the other hand, those merchants who tried not to meddle with national

10 Janine Schemmer and Klaus Schönberger, "Doing In-Between in the 19th Century in the Alps-Adriatic Region: Everyday Forms and Subjectivation Beyond Nationalising and Ethnicising Subjection," *Traditiones* 53, No. 3 (2024): 21–44.

11 For further information on the role of national indifference in Austria-Hungary and elsewhere, see: Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2006). Tara Zahra, "Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis," *Slavic Review* 69, No. 1 (2010): 93–116. Pieter Judson, "Nationalism and Indifference," in Johannes Feichtinger and Heidemarie Uhl, eds., *Habsburg Neu Denken: Vielfalt und Ambivalenz in Zentraleuropa: 30 kulturwissenschaftliche Stichworte* (Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2016), 148–55. Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

12 Gábor Egry, "Beyond Politics: National Indifference as Everyday Ethnicity," in Maarten Van Ginderachter and Jon Fox, eds., *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe* (Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2019), 145–60.

13 For an early discussion on these questions, see: "Bojkot in geslo 'Svoji k svojim!'," *Edinost*, 20 September 1908, 1.

identity and wanted to push it into the background, or simply expressed general indifference to the topic, risked being branded as indecisive and lukewarm when it came to fighting for the national cause. Regardless of the merchants' personal opinions of themselves, they were easily branded in the public eye as members of one group or another, a label that was very difficult to erase. In practice, perhaps the best results were achieved by those merchants whose national background was well known to the public, neither intentionally obstructed nor loudly promoted, and who offered good service. The quality of service or goods was the best advertisement for any businessman, regardless of their identity.

Although experts confirm that the influence of politics on the economic environment was significant during the period under discussion, it remains difficult to discern the finer details, particularly how people managed this issue in everyday life, where pragmatism should not be underestimated. Unless there was a time of tension requiring everyone to take a clear stance on the national stage, people were not consistently devoted followers of the nationalist ideology; they could and often did behave in a relatively pragmatic manner. The writer and liberal politician Josip Vošnjak described a situation in a small Lower Styrian town in the late 19th century, which he stated "was the same everywhere", as follows:

> Artisans and merchants preferred to earn a lot without working too much. The vast majority […] were indifferent to public affairs, whether political or national. Everyone visited the taverns in the morning for the 'Gabelfrühstück' and in the evening for dinner, and the cafés for black coffee and cards after lunch. They showed no interest in reading newspapers. The greatest amusement was when a small scandal arose, which was then discussed until a new minor affair took its place.[14]

Rural merchants and craftsmen had to be cautious to avoid being boycotted for political reasons, but in reality, it is difficult to definitively identify any cases of a rural merchant's financial collapse or bankruptcy directly caused by such a boycott. This is because sources are both limited and biased, and the reasons for financial failure are often complex and not attributable to a single factor. The article should therefore be regarded as a basis for further research on the topic, rather than a comprehensive or final contribution.

14 Josip Vošnjak, *Spomini: prvi zvezek: prvi in drugi del 1840 do 1867. l.* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 1905), 110–11.

The Golden Age of Economic Nationalism in Austria-Hungary

Although the term itself was not in public use before the 1930s, economic nationalism was a widely held philosophy across Austria-Hungary, including the Slovenian lands. Research indicates that "over time[,] market integration became systematically biased: regions with a similar ethno-linguistic composition of the population displayed significantly smaller price gaps between each other than regions with different compositions"; therefore, "intensifying intra-empire nationality conflicts led to severely asymmetric patterns of market integration – economic nationalism mattered".[15] Given the ethnically diverse nature of the Habsburg territory, it was relatively easy for national groups to blame one another for their financial losses.

The economic effects of national disputes are evident in many examples among the ethnic groups that made up Austria-Hungary. One of the main divisions was certainly between the two main parts of the empire: Austria and Hungary. In 1906, the latter established the so-called National Tulip Garden Association (*Országos Tulipánkert Szövetség*), whose members – many of whom were women – promoted Hungarian economic independence and encouraged the purchase of Hungarian goods by organising social events such as fairs, parties, and concerts. Exclusivity also became common at the local level. Jewish entrepreneurs, for example in Croatia, often felt that such initiatives were aimed primarily against them.[16] When merchants tried to be inclusive, they faced a different kind of problem. At the turn of the century, the press reported on a well-known Viennese mail-order salesman, Emil Storch, who found himself nearly bankrupt; he mainly attributed his difficulties to the need to print his catalogues, posters, and other materials in all 18 languages spoken in the Monarchy, which forced him to drastically scale back and focus only on German-speaking customers.[17] The opposite scenario could also invite criticism; when, in 1911, chicory producer Norbert Minibek in Vuhred/Wuchern, Lower Styria, went bankrupt, he was criticised in the Slovenian press for using only German on his products.[18]

As mentioned, the main method available to a regular customer wishing to express dissatisfaction for any reason was a boycott, described as "a legitimate method of political struggle".[19] Any type of establishment could be boycotted: a small merchant, a bank, a cooperative, or a nationwide company. Instead, buyers were encouraged to purchase goods or conduct business only at establishments owned by members of the same ethnic group, thereby strengthening their national and patriotic feelings and fostering national unity, all while supporting the development of the local economy.

15 Max-Stephan Schulze and Nikolaus Wolf, "Economic Nationalism and Economic Integration: The Austro-Hungarian Empire in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Economic History Review* 65, No. 2 (2012): 654.

16 "Ratno gospodarstvo i Židovi," *Židov*, 15 November 1917, 2.

17 "Oglasil konkurz zaradi jezikovnih razmer v Avstriji," *Soča*, 15 May 1900, 3.

18 "V Vuhredu," *Slovenski narod*, 1 April 1911, 2.

19 Žarko Lazarević, *Plasti prostora in časa: iz gospodarske zgodovine Slovenije prve polovice 20. stoletja* (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2009), 314.

"The call for a boycott was typically made not offensively but defensively, as a positive, inward-looking motto aimed at maintaining economic ties solely within one's own national group and purchasing only goods of 'domestic' origin."[20] This economic philosophy evolved into a movement that produced a well-known motto, which can be translated as "Each to Their Own" or "Stick to Your Kind". The Slovenian version is "*Svoji k svojim*", while the German equivalents are "*Jeder zu den Seinen*", "*Eigene zu Eigenen*", or, for Slovenian lands, "*Hie Deutsche, hie Slowenen*". Other versions found in the Habsburg territories include the Czech "*Svůj ke svému*", which is very likely the original form adopted by other Slavs, the Polish "*Swój do swojego*", and the Croat "*Svoj k svome*" or "*Svoj k svomu*".[21] The phrase was also chosen by the aforementioned Josip Vošnjak as the title of his 1889 comedy play, although he intended it more in a cultural than economic context.[22] Other variations also appeared. A milder version of the motto, commonly used among Slovenians, was "Isn't it nicer to trade among ourselves?",[23] while in the Croatian Istrian press, the version "Stick to your kind and everyone will be better off" can be found.[24]

Sometimes, a merchant's strong promotion of their national identity could backfire if they did not provide quality service. For example, some Slovenian merchants exploited nationalist struggles by offering so-called national goods (*narodno blago*) – products made, distributed, and sold entirely by Slovenians – which were of poor quality. While they relied on the expectation that "their own" would still buy Slovenian goods rather than purchase them from stores owned by supposed national enemies, customers' pragmatism often prevailed. Public calls emerged to adapt the "Each to their own" motto into a more precise version: "Let the national merchant be the one who has the best national goods, and at the best price!"[25] Therefore, sticking to buying only from members of the same national group had its limits.

The Slovenian Interpretation of the "Each to Their Own" Doctrine

Most researchers agree that the roots of economic nationalist struggles in Slovenian lands date back to the late 1860s, with the mid-1870s marking the first time these efforts became more prominent publicly. Slovenian newspapers reported

20 Rudolf Jaworski, "Zwischen ökonomischer Interessenvertretung und nationalkultureller Selbstbehauptung: Zum Wirtschaftsnationalismus in Ostmitteleuropa vor 1914," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 53 (2004): 266.

21 Ibidem, 265–66. Božidar Jezernik, "'Svoji k svojim!': politične in družbene dimenzije slovenskega narodnega vprašanja," *Etnolog* 18, No. 1 (2008): 66–67. Filip Čuček, *Svoji k svojim: na poti k dokončni nacionalni razmejitvi na Spodnjem Štajerskem v 19. stoletju* (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2016), 8–9, 79, 135. Karel Müller, "Heslo 'svůj k svému' v hospodářské emancipaci české společnosti: česká společnost, nacionalismus a národní hospodářství," *Střední Evropa: revue pro středoevropskou kulturu a politiku* 89 (1999): 109–23; 90 (1999): 88–104.

22 Josip Vošnjak, *Svoji k svojim: veseloigra v enem dejanji* (Ljubljana: Narodna tiskarna, 1889).

23 Dragan Matić, *Nemci v Ljubljani: 1861–1918* (Ljubljana: Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete, 2002), 129. Lazarević, *Plasti prostora in časa*, 313.

24 "Pozor čitatelji," *Omnibus*, 15 October 1907, 1.

25 Janko Sernec, "Železne postave," *Slovenski narod*, 21 August 1881, 2. Jezernik, "'Svoji k svojim!'," 68–69.

that Slovenian women in Ljubljana/Laibach/Lubiana were boycotting non-national merchants, opting to buy only from merchants of the same nationality. This initiative was likely motivated by the recent German takeover of the Carniolan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and by alleged manipulations that occurred during the process. The main aim of this and subsequent boycotts was to persuade the opposing side to consider not only economic, but also political and cultural interests of the entire national group. This deeply unsettled the German press, which questioned the emergence of what it described as an allegedly unnatural trait in women's character.[26] It was during this period that the motto "Each to Their Own" became embedded in the Slovenian press. Before long, it became a common feature in nearly every article on the state of the Slovenian economy, almost serving as a rallying cry. A frequently-quoted passage from the *Slovenski narod* newspaper states:

> The previously silent unrest is beginning, which signals to our Slovenian compatriots: buy everything you need and can from Slovenian retailers; continue working and sourcing all you require, if possible, from local Slovenian craftsmen. Do not enter a Deutschtümler store or visit the workshop of the Germanised individual who works, votes, and shouts with the Deutschtümler. – Each to their own![27]

From that time onwards, Slovenian newspapers waged an all-out cultural struggle or *Kulturkampf* against the Germans living in Slovenian territory. They were filled with a particular sentiment that could be described as "economic Schadenfreude". Whenever a German company, large or small, went bankrupt, the press reported it with undisguised joy, claiming it demonstrated the further decline and moral (as well as financial) decay of their national enemies. Bankrupt German businessmen targeted in this way were explicitly declared enemies of the Slovenians. Understandably, most merchants treated in this manner came from urban centres; a few, however, were more active in (semi-)rural areas. When German or German-supporting Slovenian rural landowners, timber merchants, and others went bankrupt, the Slovenian press rarely failed to mention that the event severely harmed local peasants.[28]

In Carniola, the rural region that drew the most attention from an economic nationalist perspective was the forested area around the town of Kočevje/Gottschee, where the Gottscheers, a group of medieval German settlers who maintained their Germanic identity, resisted the Slavic and Slovenian political and economic influence, although they remained bilingual and in constant contact with them.[29] Consequently, on the rare occasion when a Gottscheer faced a setback, the Slovenian press celebrated the event. The *Slovenski narod* newspaper reported with joy on the bankruptcy

26 Matić, *Nemci v Ljubljani*, 129–31.

27 "O nemškutarskih trgovcih in obrtnikih," *Slovenski narod*, 22 April 1875, 1.

28 For example: "V konkurz," *Slovenec*, 10 September 1913, 3.

29 For a critical view of the concept of an isolated German linguistic island which has gone unquestioned for decades, see: Anja Moric, "A German 'linguistic island' or a linguistically mixed region? Multilingual practices in the Kočevska (Gottschee) area," *Traditiones* 50, No. 2 (2021): 123–40.

of the Kočevje iron merchant Josef Barthelmä, describing him as a "well-known Germanophile and intolerant fanatic" who "drove the Slovenian peasants out of his store, although he could not exist without them at all".[30]

In Lower Styria, the situation was even more difficult than in Carniola due to the more balanced distribution of Slovenians and Germans. From the German perspective, the boycotts by Lower Styrian Slovenians were "of a different, much more tragic nature" than those in Carniola, as this was "where the pan-Slavic movement fought not against powerful German companies, but against small, weak businesses" – that is, small merchants and craftsmen who posed no real threat and whose decline only harmed the local economies as a whole.[31] The Slovenian press, however, was very explicit in its demands:

> Slovenians, we are being defeated by our own humility, which is already absurd, and cowardice, which deserves nothing more than school beatings! Slovenians of Lower Styria: Boycott the Celje Germans and Deutschtümlers, and you […] will step on their necks. Do not support them in any way – instead, avoid them always and everywhere, and you will see how humble they will become before you. […] Ergo – to work![32]

Slovenian newspapers in Lower Styria frequently criticised Slovenian buyers for being excessively submissive to German merchants. One such example was a certain Steinklauber, owner of a brick factory in Pragersko/Pragerhof, who also established a local German school attended by Slovenian children. This was seen as a blatant attempt at Germanising young Slovenians by a hypocritical businessman who had become wealthy through Slovenian capital but was politically antagonistic towards Slovenians.[33]

Another Lower Styrian example was the Laško/Tüffer brewer Julius Larisch – according to the Slovenian press, "the leader of the party opposing us in Laško, the founder of the local group of the German *Schulverein* [School society] there, and an opponent of the Slovenians in everything". When he went bankrupt in 1885, the *Slovenski narod* newspaper did not fail to note that "his friends in Laško will be pretty badly affected by his economic demise".[34] Larisch's bankrupt brewery was acquired by the Žalec/Sachsenfeld brewer Simon Kukec, who, to the delight of Slovenians, transformed it into a local pillar of Slovenian national identity.[35]

Similar patterns can be observed in Carinthia. The most notable example from the region is landowner and factory owner Martin Pleschiutschnigg from near Slovenj Gradec/Windischgrätz, who owned extensive estates and was described by the Slovenian press as "our national opponent and an 'excellent' supporter of the German-Liberal Party". When he went bankrupt in 1895 due to the collapse of a Klagenfurt/

30 "Konkurz je napovedal v Kočevju," *Slovenski narod*, 13 May 1912, 4.
31 Karl Linhart, *Der Abwehrkrieg des unterländischen Deutschtums* (Pettau: Deutscher Verein, 1910), 52.
32 "Tako pišejo pristni Nemci," *Domovina*, 13 August 1897, 3.
33 "Iz Slov. Bistrice," *Domovina*, 7 June 1907, 4.
34 "V Laškem trgu," *Slovenski narod*, 28 August 1885, 3.
35 Edo Jelovšek, "Zgodovina pivovarništva v Laškem," in Jože Maček, ed., *Laški zbornik 2002* (Laško: Knjižnica, 2002), 214–16.

Celovec merchant to whom he had lent money, it was reported that he escaped to Germany.[36] The Klagenfurt Slovenian newspaper *Mir* noted: "Martin Plešivčnik, a large landowner below Uršlja Mountain, a supporter of the German Liberal Party, disappeared. He left extensive debts; his liberal creditors are now scratching their heads."[37] A subsequent account (from the socialist Yugoslav period) suggests that Pleschiutschnigg was far from popular among the Slovenian peasantry in Carinthia; he was described as a heartless plunderer of the Carinthian forests who enjoyed flaunting his wealth, until it all collapsed due to excessive spending. This version claims he fled to the United States and eventually ended up with his son in Tarvisio/Trbiž/Tarvis and finally in Graz/Gradec, where he died in obscurity. His estates were mostly purchased by an enigmatic Italian figure, Marquis Dominique Pandolfi, Prince de Guttadauro, who was apparently also unsuccessful in managing them, as he went broke in just three years.[38] The Slovenian press suggested that Pleschiutschnigg's surname was a Germanised version of Plešivčnik, and some earlier reports indeed used that version and spoke highly of him, praising him as a successful Carinthian businessman.[39] With his changed identity, he went from being celebrated to people rejoicing in his downfall.

Is it possible to argue that economic nationalism contributed to the downfall of Pleschiutschnigg and others? The absence of accessible data prevents us from definitive conclusions. However, it is clear that ethnicity played a significant role in the Slovenian press when reporting on the failures and bankruptcies of German or German-sympathising businessmen. Yet, the "economic Schadenfreude" in such reports was certainly not exclusive to the Slovenian press.

The German Responses

The German community went along with it. The German-sympathising newspapers from Carniola and Lower Styria, especially *Deutsche Wacht* and *Štajerc* (published in Slovenian and aimed at attracting the Lower Styrian countryside away from Slovenian national struggles towards cooperation with German peasants, craftsmen and merchants),[40] were filled with cynical reports and commentaries mocking the Slovenian economic situation and reassuring readers that the German economy remained as strong as ever. "Isn't it amusing," *Deutsche Wacht* wrote, "when Pervaks [Slovenian political leaders] who display the slogan 'Each to their own' on their banners, get upset about alleged defamation and want to parade around with a crippled sense of justice? Comedians!"[41] However, there were also many complaints about

36 "Konkurz," *Slovenec*, 30 April 1895, 4.
37 "Na Štajerskem," *Mir*, 10 May 1895, 61.
38 "Aus Windisch-Graz," *Deutsche Wacht*, 10 October 1895, 4. Fr. Sušnik, "Naša gora," *Koroški fužinar*, 27 August 1952, 2.
39 "Iz Celovca 22. julija," *Slovenski narod*, 23 July 1886, 3.
40 Šuligoj, "Ptuj – 'nemška trdnjava'," 20–21. Kristina Šamperl – Purg, "Septembrski dogodki v luči časopisa Štajerc in nekaj izhodišč za opredelitev leta 1908 kot prelomnega v slovenski zgodovini," in Bojan Terbuc, ed., *Septembrski dogodki 1908: zbornik* (Ptuj: Zgodovinsko društvo, 1998), 69–79.
41 "Die 'Domovina'," *Deutsche Wacht*, 14 August 1904, 3.

the unfairness of Slovenian boycotts, describing them as a ruthless, fanatical "holy war" full of blind nationalist rage and outright lies, such as widespread claims that Slovenian peasants were being beaten by German merchants. What the Lower Styrian Slovenians perceived as German control of the largest cities and therefore the entire region, the local Germans viewed as pockets of German urban influence surrounded by a threatening ocean of Slovenian rural enemies.[42] What particularly offended rural Germans was the Slovenian view that their ancestors had encroached on this land and were living off Slovenian bread. Since Maribor, Ptuj, and Celje relied on their rural surroundings, the complaint that "the peaceful Slovenian rural population is being incited against the German working classes to a ruthless national boycott"[43] was common in the German press. This is why the German community strongly supported criminalising incitement to business boycotts, as this could prevent "the mischief of the Slovenian hate press, which aims to starve German merchants and business owners".[44]

The methods employed by the Germans to counter Slovenian economic pressure were quite broad. To start with, since the late 19th century, they published semi-secret brochures – guides to German-loyal companies meant to help German buyers choose suitable businesses from Carniola, Lower Styria, Carinthia, and other regions.[45] During times of strained relations, it was apparently common for German entrepreneurs to dismiss some or all of their Slovenian workers or to prohibit them from using Slovenian-owned shops and inns, even though most of their profits came from Slovenians themselves.[46] It should be noted that these claims were mainly published in the Slovenian press in a defamatory manner, so the true scale of this phenomenon remains uncertain. Another innovative German tactic was propaganda through simple poems. Just before World War I, the Slovenian press was disturbed by the following German verses, inspired by nursery rhymes designed to teach children about Christian values:

> Let German craftsmanship adorn your house,
> Never decorate it with foreign goods;
> Whatever is in your rooms –
> Show that you are a German.
> You must support your own people,
> Not always use other people's purses;
> Therefore, your first principle should be:
> "I buy only from Germans".[47]

42 Karl Linhart, *Der Abwehrkrieg des unterländiscen Deutschtums* (Pettau: Deutscher Verein, 1910), 52–53.
43 "Die neueste Blüthe des wirtschaftlichen Kampfes der slovenischer Volksverhetzer," *Deutsche Wacht*, 28 January 1900, 1–2.
44 "Ein neues Pressgesetz," *Deutsche Wacht*, 15 June 1902, 2.
45 "Opozarjamo," *Domovina*, 6 July 1908, 2. "Kdo je začel z bojkotom?," *Notranjec*, 2 January 1909, 5.
46 "Celjski izgredi," *Slovenec*, 19 August 1899, 5. "Boj nemških trgovcev proti slovenskim trg. pomočnikom," *Slovenec*, 14 November 1903, 4.
47 "Bojkotiranje Slovanov – prva nemška dolžnost," *Slovenski narod*, 2 January 1913, 4.

Slovenian dissatisfaction with double standards was palpable. In their view, the poem attested "to the intensity and consistency with which the Germans wage their economic struggle against the Slavs", while also demonstrating how unrestricted the German press freedom was: "Among the Slavs, even the slightest hint at economic matters is impossible […], while the Germans are allowed to unabashedly announce the boycott of the Slavs in prose and verse".[48]

Perhaps the most effective German measure took place in 1889. As *Deutsche Wacht* stated:

> Truly, serious deliberations are necessary! The economic question has become central to the national struggle. Indeed, the "Each to their own" stance of our opponents has already, with terrible bitterness, elevated the economic boycott to the most important and vigorous national weapon. But we, Germans, have also not remained inactive in this regard. In the most problematic zones, we oppose the boycott on national grounds with a national protection policy that aims to strengthen and safeguard endangered German livelihoods, including those of the German peasants and entrepreneurs. This is the formation of the German Protection and Defence Association, "Südmark".[49]

Südmark was a German nationalist society aimed, according to its supporters, at assisting endangered Germans living in ethnically mixed regions of Austria-Hungary (such as Lower Styria) by providing economic and financial support to peasants and artisans and by purchasing rural land to settle new German colonists.[50] As such, it directly challenged Slovenian rural economic interests and was often subjected to heavy criticism or mockery by the Slovenian press. "This association," the reports claimed, "is nothing more than a union of Germans and *Deutschtümler* Slovenians, which boycotts Slovenians […] and endeavours to completely collapse our nation." Thus, it has become "a legitimised means of boycotting Slovenians, standing in the service of the Great German thought".[51] Slovenian reports about bankrupt Germans who were also members of *Südmark* were thus especially cynical and mocking. One such example was the case of the innkeeper and landowner Jakob Novak from Lovrenc na Pohorju/Sankt Lorenzen am Bachern, who was criticised as a supporter of the *Grossdeutscher* whose inn was a meeting place for the Germans and *Deutschtümler*. The fact that he had to spend a week in prison for fraudulent bankruptcy in 1913 was particularly highlighted.[52]

48 Ibid.
49 "Heil Südmark!," *Deutsche Wacht*, 7 September 1899, 1.
50 Šuligoj, "Ptuj – 'nemška trdnjava'," 22.
51 "Utrinki iz naše kranjske politike," *Slovenski list*, 14 May 1898, 1.
52 "Zopet eden," *Slovenec*, 9 October 1913, 3.

The 1908 Escalation

The most significant turning point in the polarised Slovenian-German relations was the events of 1908. The situation grew increasingly tense throughout the year, and references to a Slovenian boycott were already emerging in the summer. In the Littoral region, Italian merchants became unwelcome at local fairs,[53] and the same was happening in Lower Styria, as a declaration by the *Sokol* gymnastics society illustrates: "On 15–16 August, there will be a large *Sokol* celebration in Ljutomer/Luttenberg. In addition to Slovenian innkeepers, a few German ones also wish to attend. We will only support those who have decorated their tents with [Slovenian] tricolours and boycott all others."[54] In September (hence the name "the September events"), an assembly of the Slovenian national defence organisation Cyril-Methodius Society was held in Ptuj, which was traditionally regarded as a German city, so the local Germans perceived it as an obvious provocation. As a result, a group of German demonstrators disrupted the event. This caused an uproar among Slovenians and led to widespread demonstrations. Matters escalated on 20 September in Ljubljana, where the army fired on a group of Slovenian protesters, killing two: Ivan Adamič and Rudolf Lunder. They immediately became Slovenian martyrs and symbols of the deeply felt anti-German sentiment. While the events also sparked German demonstrations across Austria-Hungary, including in Klagenfurt, where the provincial government ordered the physical protection of Slovenian buildings, the Slovenians collectively regarded the Germans as responsible for the events. The political crisis spilled over into the economic sphere. First, Slovenians demanded, and sometimes carried out, the removal of German inscriptions from shops in Ljubljana. Then, they used their primary weapon against the German economy: a boycott. The main institution targeted by Slovenian anger was the Carniolan Savings Bank in Ljubljana, regarded as the backbone and principal financier of the German economy throughout the duchy. A bank run was organised to deplete the savings bank's funds and render it insolvent, but the effort only made a dent in its financial stability. For at least a few weeks, enthusiasm for the widespread boycott was high, but soon news of Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina became the new focus.[55]

As mentioned, we can only discuss large-scale boycotts during periods of national tension, when a struggle for the national cause replaces everyday pragmatism. The year 1908 was the most notable example in Slovenian territory before World War I, although it should be noted that even on that occasion, the Slovenian political camp was not united. The boycott was primarily a liberal initiative, promoted in the liberal newspaper *Slovenski narod*, as conservatives and social democrats regarded it as either

53 "'Svoji k svojim' na Goriškem," *Naš list*, 27 June 1908, 4.

54 "Iz Ljutomera," *Narodni list*, 23 July 1908, 3.

55 Matić, *Nemci v Ljubljani*, 345–54. Branko Goropevšek, "Kaj takega je mogoče pri nas v Avstriji sedaj v 20. stoletju? Odmev in pomen septembrskih dogodkov leta 1908," in Bojan Terbuc, ed., *Septembrski dogodki 1908: zbornik* (Ptuj: Zgodovinsko društvo, 1998), 47–61. Nataša Henig Miščič, "Carniolan Savings Bank and Slovenian-German relations in 1908 and 1909," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 60, No. 1 (2020): 47–70.

illegal or too risky due to its potential to destabilise the economy or as an attempt by the liberal bourgeoisie to profit from boycotting German institutions.[56]

After the burst of spontaneous reactions, a question arose among the Slovenian public that initially seemed to have an obvious answer, at least before it was examined in detail: which companies are genuinely Slovenian, and which are German? Which of them should be boycotted? *Slovenski narod* elaborated in a short essay: "A somewhat peculiar question at first glance, because one might assume it would not be difficult [...] to distinguish a Slovenian from a non-Slovenian. However, through our long-standing indifference and hastily satisfied national indulgence, it has developed to the point where it is now common to regard a very colourful company as Slovenian." The newspaper suggested that wealthy and influential patrons had established many friendly business contacts and a complex network of protections. At the same time, many important details – such as "whether the merchant employs Slovenian workers in his shop, whether his relatives speak Slovenian, whether there is a Slovenian spirit among his relatives, whether the children are brought up in the Slovenian spirit, and whether he directly or indirectly supports German organisations by providing them with money" – were not discussed. The new requirement for who a Slovenian businessman should be, the newspaper claimed, was anyone who not only had Slovenian roots and political convictions but also clearly demonstrated, through their public acts and financial support, that they were an adherent of Slovenian institutions, from schools to humanitarian societies.[57]

Despite philosophical debates, the Slovenian public paid little attention to the details in everyday life. Boycotts and occasional assaults on German-owned shops spread beyond urban centres, incited by fiery articles in Slovenian newspapers, lists of recommended Slovenian stores, and forbidden Germanophile outlets, along with new slogans accompanying "Each to their own", such as "When paying a krone or a heller, always say: I remember Ptuj" and "Slovenian men and women should only buy from Slovenians".[58] Articles revived old stories about German settlers living lavishly off the labour of impoverished Slovenian peasants and showing not even a shred of gratitude. Timid Slovenians, the newspapers argued, had accepted the situation and continued to support German businesses with their money – but after the September events, this had to end immediately, and they should instead support only their compatriots, even if the lower prices of German merchants seemed tempting.[59]

Slovenian politicians from the liberal spectrum immediately became actively involved in the events. The representatives of the National Party for Styria (*Narodna stranka za Štajersko*), a Slovenian liberal party, stated at their November 1908 meeting:

56 Božidar Jezernik, *Mesto brez spomina: javni spomeniki v Ljubljani* (Ljubljana: Modrijan, 2014), 292–94.

57 Sl., "Razbistrimo pojme!," *Slovenski narod*, 17 October 1908, 3.

58 Goropevšek, "Kaj takega," 59.

59 "Nemška hvaležnost in slovenska nezavednost," *Slovenski narod*, 16 May 1908, 1. "Kranjskih Nemcev gospodarska vojska zoper kranjske Slovence," *Slovenski narod*, 20 July 1908, 2. "Nemci bojkotirajo slovenske trgovce," *Slovenski narod*, 28 September 1908, 2.

> As a party for farmers, the National Party fulfilled its tasks to the best of its ability. However, it also dedicated all its energies to labourers, officials, tradesmen, and artisans, recently especially to the latter two, as it began organising the strictest boycott movement. This movement does not merely represent revenge for Ptuj or Celje but a vital economic movement with noble aims: to strengthen our commerce and crafts, consolidate this group, displace German merchants and artisans, bolster our middle class, establish a Slovenian officialdom, and ultimately, secure the Slovenian character of what are still our Deutschtümler cities and markets. Slovenian Styria will thus acquire a new identity, and consequently, Slovenian industry will develop, allowing many businesses to thrive in Slovenian lands! From this standpoint, the boycott movement is noble. Therefore, it must not waver but must continue to grow stronger. We must rid ourselves of the parasites to finally become masters of our land![60]

By late October, the Slovenian Lower Styrian press reported that the boycott's effects were already affecting local German merchants, as widespread fear of bankruptcy had arisen among them,[61] except for the few that had not participated in the Ptuj attacks. While those merchants faced ostracism from other Germans, Slovenians began to frequent their shops.[62] Reports mentioned letters written by German merchants, pleading with Slovenian peasants to return to their shops and promoting low prices and the quality of their goods.[63] However, the rural population remained steadfast and was praised as the group demonstrating extraordinary self-sacrifice, while the urban, wealthier Slovenians were criticised for their lukewarm support of the boycott.[64] Additionally, rural Slovenians started to produce "memorial cards", which were given to every German travelling salesman:

> How dare you travel alone through Slovenian lands when you keep shouting in German newspapers that neither your property nor your life is safe? You should be accompanied by armed men or soldiers. Are you not ashamed of the unbelievable lies with which you slander us peaceful Slovenians and call on the government, armed men, and soldiers to help? You are hungry for Slovenian money; you are thirsty for Slovenian blood. Go away! I will not buy anything from you and tell your masters not to send their agents to the Slovenians, whom you Germans hate with such passion.[65]

At the same time, the Slovenian press argued that the Germans were spreading false propaganda, claiming that the boycott of German merchants was hurting Slovenian peasants because no Germans wanted to buy Slovenian goods any longer. The Slovenian press called this a blatant lie, citing a story about a group of German

60 "8. november 1908," *Narodni list*, 12 November 1908, 1–2.
61 "Bojkot nemških trgovcev in obrtnikov," *Domovina*, 26 October 1908, 2.
62 "Nemški bojkot," *Slovenec*, 29 October 1908, 3.
63 "Nemškim trgovcem," *Slovenski gospodar*, 5 November 1908, 4.
64 "Nemške trgovine v Ptuju," *Edinost*, 14 November 1908, 4. "Resen opomin celjskim Slovencem in Slovenkam!," *Narodni list*, 19 November 1908, 2. "Zavednost okoliških Slovencev okrog Ptuja," *Narodni list*, 19 November 1908, 4. "Svoji k svojim," *Jutro*, 10 April 1910, 2.
65 "To je mož!," *Slovenski narod*, 28 September 1908, 2.

buyers from Graz who arrived to purchase wine from a Slovenian winery near Ormož and, while waiting, began shooting their pistols for fun. When asked about the meaning of this behaviour, they explained that they had armed themselves because the German press had warned them against the Slavic savages, but after seeing that they were among good people, they could use their bullets for target practice.[66]

Understandably, the Carniolan and Styrian Germans perceived the situation quite differently. Since *Štajerc*, which extensively covered the Ptuj events and their repercussions, was meant for Slovenian rural readers, it made clear that the peasants were not responsible for the attacks taking place in the countryside; after all, diligent farmers had their fields and cattle to care for and did not involve themselves in political conflicts.[67] The real economic interest for a Slovenian peasant, the newspaper emphasised, was not the Slovenian journalist who wrote scathing anti-German articles, but a cultivated German from urban centres. "What would happen, for example, if Germans did not want to buy Styrian wines, cattle, fruit, and so on?", *Štajerc* asked.[68] "Each to their own" was declared to be the motto of those who sought to exploit the peasantry under the pretext of national struggle and to sell their poor-quality goods.[69]

> This is the slogan the Prvaks use to control the peasants. Peasants should be patriotic, meaning they should support only their own leeches! Peasants should be patriotic, meaning they should buy from the 'national' shops just to please the Prvaks. Peasants should be patriotic, meaning they should pay much more for poor-quality goods than for quality goods from progressive merchants. […] No, never! Slovenian peasants and German citizens depend on each other! They cannot survive without one another! "Each to their own" is the motto of those seeking to exploit the people. We say: buy where you get the best price![70]

The Slovenian boycott movement, which was compared to Orientalist fanaticism in the German press,[71] was declared not only technically illegal under Austrian criminal law[72] but was also perceived as an arrow pointing at the archer.[73] The German community was convinced that Slovenians could not survive without them. The logic was simple: if bankrupting German merchants were economically feasible for Slovenians, they would have done so long ago, but they understood that doing so would mean the end of the Slovenian-based economy[74] (this is why the press mocked the German-language poster advertising Postojna/Adelsberg Cave, which had not been removed,

66 "Nemškutarji – gospodarski škodljivci našega kmeta!," *Narodni list*, 12 November 1908, 4.
67 "Ne igrajte se z ognjem!," *Štajerc*, 18 October 1908, 2.
68 "Bojkot," *Štajerc*, 20 September 1908, 2. Karl Linhart, ed., *'Štajerčevi' kmetski koledar za leto 1911* (Ptuj: 'Štajerčevo' tiskovno društvo, 1911), 87–90.
69 "Svoji k svojim!," *Štajerc*, 4 October 1908, 1.
70 "Svoji k svojim!," *Štajerc*, 27 September 1908, 1.
71 "Deutsche Abwehr," *Deutsche Wacht*, 24 October 1908, 1.
72 "Bojkot kazniv!," *Štajerc*, 31 January 1909, 3.
73 "Deutsche Abwehr," *Deutsche Wacht*, 30 September 1908, 1–2.
74 "Slovenische Boycott-Drohungen," *Deutsche Wacht*, 19 September 1908, 4.

implying that wealthy German visitors were still welcome).[75] Nevertheless, indignation still persisted. The German community was offended by the tone of reports in the Slovenian press, especially in *Slovenski narod*, which described them as "outrageously brutal, unspeakably mean, full of envy and malice, and filled with lies and slander".[76] Another contentious issue was the participation of many (mostly female) servants, apprentices, assistants, and factory workers employed by German employers and companies in anti-German demonstrations, which was seen as disloyalty to the hand that fed them,[77] as was the treatment their compatriots received in rural areas. In Carniola, the press claimed, many bilingual inscriptions were removed, destroyed, or smeared; travelling salesmen were harassed; German stores were monitored and their customers intimidated; and at times, German merchants were expelled from towns (in Kranjska Gora/Kronau, this was apparently done by the mayor himself).[78]

The German responses to the boycott were quite varied. Some Germans from Slovenian towns prepared documents written in Slovenian for the rural population, aiming to appease rural Slovenians and highlight the slander and libel spread by the Slovenian press, which incited unnecessary hatred and violence.[79] To strengthen the German economic position, Germans from other parts of Austria-Hungary were encouraged to do business with German and loyalist Slovenian merchants in Lower Styria, especially in rural areas, by purchasing wine, fruit, and crops,[80] and by limiting the influx of Slovenian sellers into regions with a German majority, such as Klagenfurt.[81] More specific measures at the individual level included evicting Slovenian tenants from German-owned buildings[82] or preventing them from settling there in the first place,[83] as well as forming an anti-boycott movement, which involved boycotting shops that publicly promoted the "Each to their own" motto, sometimes with posters.[84] The new slogan became: "Boycott those who are boycotting!"[85]

The extent of the boycott's damage to German merchants and craftsmen remains unknown and was never measured. However, news reports suggest that some bankruptcies resulted directly from the boycott, especially due to the actions of the peasantry: "The Mattheis store in Brežice/Rann is up for sale. Yes, indeed: our peasantry is waking up; therefore, it is necessary to secure the profits of their hardships in time."[86] The bankrupt German merchants from Lower Styria continued to use the Slovenian boycott as an excuse for their financial downfall for quite some time after the September events, as late as 1911.[87]

75 "Deutsche Reklame für Adelsberg," *Deutsche Wacht*, 14 October 1908, 6.
76 "Die Boykotthetze," *Deutsche Wacht*, 23 December 1908, 5.
77 "Wie du mir, so ich dir!," *Deutsche Wacht*, 19 September 1908, 3.
78 Matić, *Nemci v Ljubljani*, 350–51.
79 Ibid., 351.
80 "Proti slovenskemu bojkotu nemških trgovcev," *Slovenec*, 24 November 1908, 6.
81 "Nemški meščani," *Slovenski gospodar*, 8 October 1908, 3.
82 "Nemški bojkot v Ptuju – na vidiku?," *Narodni list*, 17 September 1908, 2–3.
83 "Nemški bojkot," *Straža*, 29 August 1910, 3.
84 "Svoji k svojim – Grenadierwirt und Pletersky," *Deutsche Wacht*, 31 October 1908, 4.
85 "Kdo je kriv?," *Štajerc*, 15 November 1908, 1.
86 "Trgovina Mattheis," *Slovenski gospodar*, 5 November 1908, 5. "Trgovina Mattheis v Brežicah," *Domovina*, 6 November 1908, 2.
87 "V konkurz," *Narodni list*, 21 January 1909, 3. "Iz Ptuja," *Slovenski narod*, 30 January 1911, 2.

Conclusion

Economic nationalism, though not known by that name, was apparent in both urban and rural regions of Austria-Hungary. In daily life, people acted pragmatically and paid little attention to the national affiliations of merchants, craftsmen, and others from whom they purchased goods and services. However, during periods of nationalist unrest and increased tensions, such distinctions became much more marked and divisive. This trend can be traced in the Slovenian territory from the 1860s, but most notably in 1908. The main tactic at that time was to boycott shops, goods, and services perceived as hostile to Slovenians. The true extent of the boycott is difficult to determine, as most evidence is anecdotal and from sources with a nationalist bias. Nonetheless, it is clear that, after a few months or at most a year, pragmatism once again took precedence. Principles, it appears, have an expiration date.

The 1908 affair, like other similar Austro-Hungarian examples, shows that "boycotts only had a chance of temporary success in manageable and therefore socially controllable small-town environments", which was even harder to achieve in the countryside, where a lack of public space and centralised coordinated action made systematic initiatives difficult to implement.[88] Even though those who initiated a boycott might not admit it, in many cases, the boycotted merchants were a vital part of the local economies; their disappearance would cause significant, if not irreplaceable, damage.

However, the real scope of a boycott and its financial impact – information that is certainly not very clear for the Slovenian rural environment – may not be the most important measure. The symbolic effects of constant calls for a boycott, and thus effective national differentiation and a display of national solidarity, were noticeable and visible. For a time, the prevailing emotions helped national factions consolidate and form identities for those in between.[89] That may be the true goal behind such initiatives; while it was clear that a boycott would never be so consistent or prolonged as to bring an entire ethnic group to its knees, it was a useful tool to strengthen national battle lines in both urban and rural areas.

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88 Jaworski, "Zwischen ökonomischer," 267.

89 Ibid., 267–68. Lazarević, *Plasti prostora in časa*, 314.

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NARODNA PREVZETNOST IN GOSPODARSKA PRISTRANOST: NEKAJ UČINKOV EKONOMSKEGA NACIONALIZMA V SLOVENSKEM RURALNEM OKOLJU POD AVSTRO-OGRSKO

POVZETEK

Ekonomski nacionalizem je poseben tip gospodarskega programa, ki v svoje središče postavlja interese nacionalne skupnosti na račun preostalih skupin. Na državni in meddržavni ravni se odraža predvsem v protekcionističnih ukrepih, na lokalni in individualni stopnji pa v instrumentu bojkota, torej namernega izogibanja uporabljanja dobrin in storitev, ki ne prihajajo iz istega nacionalnega tabora. Namen tovrstnega obnašanja je ne zgolj financiranje »domačega« gospodarstva, temveč tudi boj zoper gospodarske sisteme drugih skupin, ki so percipirane kot konkurenčne in ogrožajoče. Četudi je težko ocenjevati vpliv in domet bojkotov v preteklosti, je morda še pomembnejša funkcija takšne aktivnosti strnitev vrst in preštevanje članstva, ki zvesto stojijo za nacionalno zastavo. V praksi so se kupci obnašali pragmatično, bojkoti so prej ali slej izzveneli in še zdaleč niso dosegli dušitve sovražnega gospodarstva. Prav tako zaželena delitev gospodarstva, ki so jo propagirali podporniki programa, v praksi ni bila nikoli zares uresničena, saj so pripadniki različnih nacionalnih skupin odkrito ali prikrito še vedno sodelovali med seboj. Upoštevati je treba tudi neabsolutnost nacionalnih identitet, ki niso nikoli povsem jasno razdeljene; številni posamezniki gojijo kompleksne vmesne ali ne- oziroma nadnacionalne identitete.

Študijski primer ekonomskega nacionalizma v ruralnem okolju, predstavljen v članku, temelji na slovenskem prostoru v času Avstro-Ogrske, s poudarkom na gospodarskih odnosih med Slovenci in Nemci. Od konca šestdesetih let 19. stoletja so se nasprotja med skupinama občasno zaostrovala in v teh primerih je bil bojkot ena izmed možnosti, po katerih so lahko posegli razgreti kupci. Vsesplošno razširjeno geslo »Svoji k svojim« je podčrtovalo pomen gospodarske podpore lastnega naroda. Situacija je bila napeta predvsem na Spodnjem Štajerskem, kjer je obstajala delitev na urbane centre z nemško večino in podeželskim zaledjem z večinskim slovenskim prebivalstvom, kar je redno povzročalo trenja. Med slovenskimi političnimi tabori so predvsem liberalci spodbujali bojkot kot sredstvo za boj proti nemškemu vplivu v gospodarstvu ter k temu spodbujali v svojem tisku. Nemško časopisje je odgovarjalo na marsikdaj strupene napade na različne načine, med drugim z brošurami s seznami nemških ustanov, pesmimi in društvom *Südmark*, ki je podpiralo spodnještajerske Nemce.

Do eskalacije napetosti je prišlo septembra 1908, ko so se na Ptuju in v Ljubljani zvrstili nemško-slovenski pretepi in demonstracije, ki so pripeljali do smrti dveh slovenskih demonstrantov. Slovenski liberalni tisk je besno pozival k bojkotu vsega nemškega, Slovenci pa so z nemških trgovin odstranjevali nemške napise in se izogibali nakupom ter storitvam v lasti in izvedbi Nemcev. Nemški tisk je odgovarjal, da slovensko gospodarstvo ne more preživeti brez nemškega, in poudarjal, da so slovenski kmetje povsem odvisni od svojih kupcev, ki so v veliki meri nemški meščani. O tem, kako obsežen in globok je bil pravzaprav bojkot, podatki niso znani, četudi so v naslednjih mesecih in letih nekateri bankrotirani nemški trgovci kot razlog za svoj propad navajali prav slovenski bojkot.