



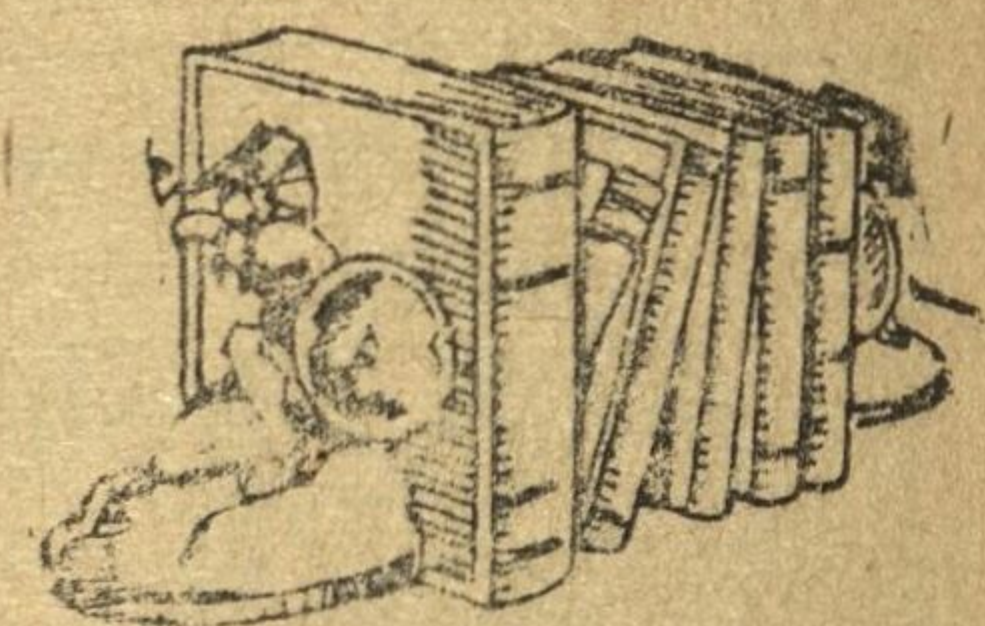
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An Answer to Brother Joseph Drasler

By Michael Vrhovnik

I'm sorry my answer to your article, which appeared in the English section of the "Napredek" on August 7th under the heading of "Brother Drasler Has His Say," had to be delayed to this week's issue. Had the Society not staged its 8th National Athletic Meet at Bridgeville last Sunday in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Federation's SSPZ Day celebration, and had not other important duties crowded my time (believe it or not), I would have seen to it that your wishes, that I EXPRESS MY OPINION on the subject of CONSOLIDATION as FRANKLY as you stated I did on the night of August 1, 1940, right after the adjournment of the Victorian meeting, were attended to in the shorest possible time.

May I be so frank as to make it clear to you at this time, that I, probably, would not give you the satisfaction of this answer and use up the space it will take, were it not for the MISSTATEMENT which appeared in a paragraph of your article in reference to the brief conversation you and I had on that date. The mis-statement referred to reads as follows: "He (meaning me) admits, however, that the merger must come about, as the entire organization has become stagnant since the Convention." Think carefully, Brother Joe, before you answer. DID I REALLY MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT TO YOU—or, is it that you misunderstood or misinterpreted the meaning of certain parts of our discussion, perhaps, unintentionally? Since you did not make use of a pencil and pad during the course of the INTERVIEW, I shall give you the benefit of the doubt as to your intentions and blame your lapse of memory for the mis-statement.

In my own defense, I can only state that I DID NOT MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT TO YOU OR ANYONE, a statement which, I consider, too ridiculous even for one who knows nothing about the true condition of our SSPZ! As for the balance of the same paragraph, I think, you have done a remarkably fine job of juggling words to suit your own personal views and desires. Spoken words can be misinterpreted so easily and twisted into a meaning entirely different from that intended, particularly, if the listener lacks sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject under discussion, or does not possess a retentive memory, or cares not to hear well. It is quite possible that you will take the stand that you did hear rightly, and your memory, thank goodness or some other power, did not fail you on that occasion. In that case, I'm afraid there isn't much chance of reversing the mis-statement you credit me with, except that it will be left to the judgment of the members, your written word against mine. However, the facts which appear in the following paragraphs may help to substantiate my denial . . .

Right after the same meeting, I was approached by a member of the Victorians, who is also a member of the SNPJ and who happened to be with your group for a while during the meeting. He asked me in a serious tone: "What's the matter with the SSPZ—Do we really have to merge—Are we going on the rocks, or what?" I was surprised to hear the questions put to me in that manner and I answered, truthfully, in words to this effect (After you read this, Joe, you will probably jump to this conclusion: THERE, DIDN'T I TELL YOU! HE'S AGAINST THE MERGER, TOO!):

THERE IS NOTHING THE MATTER WITH THE SSPZ EXCEPT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY TOO MANY UNNECESSARY, PERSONAL ARGUMENTS BROUGHT OUT IN CONNECTION WITH THE CONSOLIDATION QUESTION, WHICH HAVE TENDED TO HARM THE SOCIETY AND THE ISSUE ITSELF . . .

THE SSPZ WAS NEVER IN A BETTER FINANCIAL CONDITION THAN IT IS TODAY! IT HAS A SOLVENCY RATIO OF MORE THAN 123%, WHICH DOES NOT INCLUDE THE CONTINGENCY RESERVE, SET ASIDE FOR POSSIBLE LOSSES, AND CERTAIN VALUED UNLISTED ASSETS. THE MORTALITY RATE HAS BEEN UNDER THE 85% MARK IN FOUR OF THE LAST FIVE (5) YEARS; TRULY A REMARKABLE RECORD. ALL INSURANCE CERTIFICATES ARE BASED ON THE AM. EX. OF MORTALITY. THE MEMBERSHIP HAS GROWN STEADILY SINCE 1934. THE SSPZ HAS PAID DIVIDENDS TO BOTH ADULTS AND JUVENILES IN 1938 AND 1939, AND IS, AGAIN, IN A POSITION TO DECLARE ANOTHER IF THE CONSOLIDATION AGREEMENT DOES NOT MEET WITH FAVORABLE APPROVAL BY THE OTHER TWO NEGOTIATING SOCIETIES . . .

WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY STAGED (8) NATIONAL ATHLETIC MEETS IN A ROW (more than any other Slovene Society), AND CONSOLIDATION OR NO CONSOLIDATION, WE ARE PREPARING TO HOLD THE FOURTH (4th) NATIONAL BOWLING TOURNAMENT AT INDIANAPOLIS IN 1941. WE HAVE TO OUR CREDIT MANY JUVENILE ACHIEVEMENTS, THE NATIONAL VRTEC CULTURAL FESTIVAL AND INTER-CITY FESTIVALS, FOR EXAMPLE, WHICH NO OTHER SLOVENE SOCIETIES HAVE EQUALLED. THE SSPZ HAS A RECORD THAT EVERY MEMBER CAN TRULY BE PROUD OF!

In the light of all these facts, does it appear logical to you that I would say, "The merger must come about, as the entire organization has become stagnant since the Convention?" Nearly all of the above facts were pointed out to you, too, but you failed to mention one word of it in your article. YES, I DID SAY, AND SAY SO AGAIN, THAT MOST OF THE ARGUMENTS, WHICH HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL ORGANS OF THE SSPZ AND THE SNPJ SINCE OUR CONVEN-

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Penn'a SSPZ Day Successful

By Ernest Kvartich

The SSPZ Day and the 8th National Softball Tournament is down in history as the second greatest SSPZ affair in Western Penna., second only, to the similar, but three day celebration in Bridgeville back in 1938. The committee in charge, in behalf of the West. Penn'a Federation and the Progressors, take this opportunity to thank every one that made this such an outstanding event. In particular we thank the Women's Club of Sygan, for their help in the stands, the members who worked at the bar and ticket booths, the speakers on the program, the three singing societies from Pittsburgh, Library, and Strabane, and last but not least the many visitors and contestants from near and distant communities who attended in great numbers to make up the enormous crowd that witnessed the tournament and later in the afternoon attended the picnic. It was not until the early hours of the morning that the last picnicker departed and the committee began the cleaning and checking up.

I wish to congratulate the tournament winners on their victories and I'm hoping they shall prize and display their crowns in their respective communities, thereby advertising their local lodge and the SSPZ as a whole. I also want to congratulate all who participated for their display of sportsmanship and fair play throughout the tournament. Each and every team began and continued, until the last batter was out, with that determination to be victorious. Not until the last bat-

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Danica News

Indianapolis, Ind. — With the blare of our horns, and the constant shouting and waving to the newly made friends as well as the old, we started on our trek homeward, thinking not of the distance before us, but only of the moments of enjoyment we left behind. Indeed, our stay in Bridgeville was very short, yet we fulfilled our one desire, "to have a good time," thus making the Eighth Annual SSPZ National Softball Tournament, a remembering one. Much credit, however, for the success of this Meet is given to the committee who diligently worked for this end, and the Danica lodge and Vrtec No. 9 take this opportunity to thank them for their accomplishments.

Our trip to the Quaker state was not in vain, as we feel proud of the fact that the Danica team was runners-up thus making a good showing in their first venture of senior competition and our Vrtec team, inexperienced as they were, gave proof that they will be the team to watch in 1941. To Lodge No. 41 of Ambridge, Pa., we send our congratulations and to the Challenger Jrs. felicitations, Seniors and Juniors, Champions of 1940, respectively.

It Really Happened

Whoever heard of a Croatian named Rosenberger? He would not make good gun-fodder for Hitler's army. Incidentally, this particular Rosenberger is a star third baseman of the championship Ambridge team.

What two well-known Hoosiers forced two other Hoosiers into an osculating clinch? Would his face be red if the two Sygan gals were present when exalted happiness prevailed in those short seconds.

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Evasion Is A Poor Answer

Bro. Joseph Drasler is a clever young man—at least he thinks he is. In a foot-note to one of his articles I used the occasion to point out certain facts which are the REAL reason for the hue and cry raised by him and others like him in regard to the merger issue now before the members of this Society. But instead of answering my statements, he simply ignores them and takes refuge in evasion. Clever, but not quite clever enough.

The high praise of SNPJ principles by Bro. Drasler is duly acknowledged. Did I ever say that anything was wrong with the principles of SNPJ? I did not. I merely had the unheeded of audacity to point out that the manner in which those principles were applied has done more harm than good to the cause of a sound labor and youth movement among the Slovenes in America. I tried to cover that point more thoroughly in my article on merger, which was published in translation on this page of Napredek. So far, not a single E. S. lodge member of the SSPZ has seen fit to contradict my analysis.

In addition, let me state that I am a member of SNPJ of 19 years' standing and have helped to organize two SNPJ E. S. lodges in Cleveland. Can Bro. Drasler say as much for himself?

Bro. Drasler's concern over my "diastros political career" moves me almost to tears. Yes, twice in my life, I've had the courage to enter the political arena and challenge the reactionaries on their own ground. I was licked, of course, but I have the satisfaction of knowing what it means to battle,

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SSPZ Day Happenings In Pennsylvania

CONGRATULATIONS to our new Senior National Softball Champions, Lodge No. 41 of Ambridge, Penn'a. With the title passing into their possession by virtue of three shutout victories on the day of the National Meet, it marked the first time a Slovene Speaking Lodge won this honor in the history of SSPZ sports. The names of the players so honored are: FRANK ROSENBERGER, CLEMENT KOSELA, WILLIAM KNAPFELC, JOHN UHERNIK, AUGUST ROSENBERGER, FRANK KOSELA, JAMES SEKANICK, RUDOLPH ROSENBERGER, ANDREW SOPIRAK, WILLIAM BONO, JOSEPH TEKSTAR, JOSEPH SUMROK and LEOPOLD GRANDOVIC . . .

Although, it is without question that the entire team played bang-up ball, the battery of CLEMENT KOSELA as the receiver and FRANK ROSENBERGER as pitcher featured in each of the three games . . . DANICA of Indianapolis, another Slovene Speaking Lodge, entered a very prospective looking team in the Meet, made up of practically the same players who defeated the Ambridge boys as Vrtec Contestants at Bridgeville two years ago, won their way into the 1940 finals by downing the defending Champs, SPARTANS of Cleveland, but failed to take their "Bridge-town" fellow-rivals into camp, losing to them by the score of 5 to 0 . . . But, regardless of which team won, the

winner had to be a representative of a Slovene Speaking Lodge . . . Six carloads of players and rooters, a total of thirty-six in all, with the players led by EDWARD BENCIK and "FROSTY" QUALIZA and the rooters by FRANK MIVEC and ELMA QUALIZA, made the long trip from Indianapolis without mishap . . . All were out for a week-end of fun, arriving early Saturday morning, and stayed until late Sunday evening . . . One carload, containing FRANK MIVEC, JOHN PRAPROTNIK, ANTHONY BAYT, LOUIS ZNIDARSICH, FRANK ZAKRAJSEK, and

NOTICE TO ALL UTOPIAN BOWLERS

A special meeting will be held on August 25th at 2 o'clock at the Slovenian Workmen's Home bowling alleys for all Utopian members who wish to bowl in the league. All those who cannot attend this meeting and wish to join must leave their name and address with Tony Skufka. The reason for this rush is that we desire to start the league in the second week of September.

—Committee

SPARTAN SPORTS

Spartan baseball players are requested to attend a practice game held Thursday evening, August 22 at Gordon park, diamond No. 3, at 6:00 sharp. All players are to be present and on time, for it is very important.

MARTIN DRAGAN, however, remained over until sometime Monday, when they left for Cleveland to visit friends a day or so, before journeying back to the Hoosier Capitol to work or more play . . . A group of some thirty SPARTANS and UTOPIANS motored to Bridgeville for the day's festivities and Softball Meet . . . STANLEY ZAGAR, "UNCLE" CHARLIE KOMAN, FRANKIE KONCAN, FRANK LEKAN, EDDIE TOMSICH, LUDWIG BATIS, and the rest of the Spartan boys dropped the only game they played to DANICA, while NICK SPEHAR, JOHN ZAMAN (JR.), WILLIAM STREETER, AL BOHINC and the remainder of the UTOPIANS, UNFORTUNATELY, ARRIVED TOO LATE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE SOFTBALL SCHEDULE . . . VATRO GRILL, who delivered the principal talk on the SSPZ Day program, his son RAYMOND, who is now spending a part of his summer vacation with his grandparents, GREGOR and ANNA BERGOC, in Strabane, MATTHEW DEBEVEC, President of the Spartan Lodge, who brought along with him the softball Traveling Trophy (and accompanied by his best girl friend), and ALBINA GRUDEN, formerly of Meadowlands, Penn'a, were among the Cleveland delegation of visitors . . . Missed Rudolph Lisch, Ann Opeka, Antonia Zagar, Joe and Henry Zorman, Marge Jeric, Joyce

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FOR A SOUND MERGER

By Vatro J. Grill

(This is the third and final article in a series of three, translated from Slovenian, dealing with the question of merger, which has become controversial in connection with negotiations carried on by this Society with SNPJ and JSKJ.)

In our opinion there is no real reason why three of our fraternal societies which are fundamentally related to each other, the SNPJ, JSKJ and SSPZ, couldn't be consolidated into one sometime in the near future. For some reason it may be advisable that the consolidation should first be limited to two of them; this may also be more practical, whereupon further steps should be taken for the inclusion of the third and of the others whose membership differs little or not at all from the standpoint of ideas. However, that such a consolidation is not only desirable but also possible, we think no seriously minded person among us would dispute.

What, then, should we have before our eyes, first of all, in order that such an action, when and if it is consummated, should bolster up the respect of the Slovene community in America, make it morally stronger and take care so that our cause in America will not die when Slovene speech becomes silent? In other words, when Slovenes in America will be able to live and endure only as a concept, as a cultural and a moral force. That this is possible, clear evidence is offered by other, older immigrants in America who have long since ceased to exist as linguistic groups but who have, nevertheless, left a definite imprint in the life of this country, contributed significant lines in the formation of its cultural, social and political development, and who, at the same time, retained their identity. (Typical examples of such groups are the immigrants from Scandinavian, German and Anglo-Saxon countries.) This isn't important only because of ourselves, it is even more important on account of America. This isn't a matter of nationalistic selfishness or of being in love with ourselves, as if we thought that Slovenes are a special or superior human breed, but the question involved here is whether we understand, or do not understand, the role given us potentially, to contribute our share to the growing civilization of America. That's what is at stake—no more, and no less.

With nations possessing an old culture hallowed by tradition, this question was never a problem. Those who belong to nations that had built empires, discovered new continents and directed the cultural course of mankind have never felt the need of learning self-confidence, which, however, is of tremendous importance in the formation of a virile character; they were born with it, so to speak, and it remained a part of them no matter where life's fate took them. It is different with small peoples like the Slovenes. We are burdened with a feeling of inferiority, which is nowhere so clearly shown as in our eagerness to proclaim that we are "proud" to be Slovenes, and in the satisfaction which it gives us to point out that someone who is somebody is "not ashamed" to be known as a Slovene or that his parents were Slovene. To members of nations with a great past the need of being proud, or of being ashamed of their background wouldn't even occur. Louis Adamic has written a great deal about the feeling of inferiority among the children of immigrants from Southern and Central Europe—New Americans, as he calls them—and that this is no fiction will be admitted by everybody who moves among our young people, and tries to understand and aid them in their efforts to free themselves from the psychological dilemma in which they find themselves by reason of their background.

Some time ago we said that we are opposed to a merger which would mean nothing more than a joining of treasuries and home offices, in other words a merger that would merely result in a big insurance company, which, although it could be strong financially, would be only "business." We still hold to that opinion. We believe that a great task is waiting our fraternal societies—to use their combined power for an objective, serious and carefully planned educational movement for the benefit of our American-born youth. For a movement, which will be something more than the haphazard amateurishness with which we have been operating all too long, fooling ourselves with the idea that we are "educating" our sons and daughters into good, constructive Slovene Americans. To speak concretely—it will be necessary to conduct regular educational courses, to write and publish books, and to perform countless small tasks, if we desire our young people really to know something about the nation out of which they come; so that they will understand why we are what we are—know our weaknesses, understand their causes and not consider them virtues, but that they will also know our virtues, recognize them as such and not be ashamed of them. To the average American-born Slovene our past is a closed book; he knows very little or nothing about the people from which he comes. This is why he would like to shake off as fast as possible. There can be no doubt that feelings of shame and inferiority which burden him represent veritable psychological dynamite.

A lot of water has gone over the dam in this respect, but there is still time and opportunity to do some of the work that was left undone, provided there is enough intelligence, willingness to work, and understanding among us. A strong organization would be equal to this task, no less important for us than for America itself. The future will show whether we are big enough for it.

In unity there is power. Very true, indeed. We should not forget, however, that power is beneficial only when the ends for which it is being used are good and beneficial.

NOTE: I hope that the readers of the English section have kept in mind, while reading these articles, that they were written

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