

IN MEMORIAM HENRY A. CHRISTIAN

Ruefully the editors of the review *Acta Neophilologica* announce the loss of our co-worker Henry A. Christian, Professor of American Literature at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey. He died on 4. April 1997 on his estate at Millburn in New Jersey. For many years he paid in his scholarly researches special attention to the problems of cultural contacts between Slovenia and the United States in which also Slovenes living in America play an important role: he has approached these problems as an Americanist, interested in the history of American civilization. This is why we wish to remember him on our pages.

He was born in 1931 in New Jersey. Among his ancestors were immigrants from Bohemia, Slovakia, and Italy. With this family background he was naturally interested in the problems of the contribution of immigrants from Central Europe to the American culture and civilization. After elementary schooling in New Jersey he came in 1948/49 to England with the schoolboy exchange programme between Great Britain and United States. In England he attended schools in Peterborough and Cambridge. In 1949-53 he studied at Yale College (BA in English in 1953), followed in 1954 with MA in English and American Studies at Yale University. In 1967 he obtained his doctorate at Brown University, R.I., with the dissertation "Louis Adamic: Immigrant and American Liberal."

In 1955 Professor Christian began to work at Yale University in the programme of American Studies for Foreign Students. During the school year 1958/59 he worked as Fulbright Professor of American Studies at Danish universities. After his return to USA and a shorter employment at Brown University he began in 1962 to work at Rutgers University in Newark, N.J. Here he was in 1967 elected Assistant Professor for American Studies, and in 1989 Full Professor.

In his research work Professor Christian was primarily interested in the life and work of Louis Adamic, immigrant from Slovenia, during the first half of this century author of numerous books on American ethnic problems. Professor Christian was unquestionably the leading American expert on Louis Adamic. When after World War Two the society of Progressive Slovene Women of America purchased Louis Adamic's papers from Adamic's heirs and presented them to the Princeton University Library, Professor Christian was made their custos. In 1971 he published at Kent University, Ohio, a one volume bibliography of Louis Adamic which covered both Louis Adamic's own publications and studies on Adamic. In this bibliography he included also material from Slovenia. This led him to establish contacts with American Slovenes and with Slovenia. From now on he contributed his studies not only to the leading American scholarly journals, but also to periodical publications in Slovenia, among others to *Zbornik občine Grosuplje*, an organ of the Community of Grosuplje, the birthplace of Louis Adamic, and to our review *Acta Neophilologica*, as well as to several other Slovene literary journals. Actively he participated at numerous

conferences organized in the United States under the sponsorship of the Modern Language Association (MLA), American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS), and Society for Slovene Studies (SSS), and in Slovenia by the universities of Ljubljana and Maribor, from the conferences of St. Louis in 1976 and Cleveland in 1977, and up to the conferences at Minneapolis in 1981, Ljubljana 1981, Bled 1991, and Maribor in 1991 and 1994, to mention only a few. In the proceedings published in connection with these symposiums, we can find also his interesting contributions. In Slovenia he published one of his most important works, selection of letters by Louis Adamic. They were published in 1982 in Slovene translation by the publishing house Cankarjeva založba. These letters, and letters by Adamic which Professor Christian published in various American periodicals, show how wide and significant were Adamic's contacts with the leading American authors of his time, from H.L. Mencken, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, Robinson Jeffers, and Upton Sinclair, and up to Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis and Carl Sandburg. In this way Professor Christian knew to extend his researches on Louis Adamic to provide fresh important material for researches on the central American literary figures of the twenties and thirties. In acknowledgment for his work in the field of the cultural history of Slovene immigrants in America, Professor Christian was awarded in 1981, on the occasion of the Ljubljana symposium on Louis Adamic, the golden plaque of the town of Ljubljana by the mayor of the town.

Professor Christian was an outstanding lecturer and experienced scholar, grown up in the American liberal tradition and inspired by it. With his departure the researches in American ethnic culture have lost one of its most remarkable representative.

UDK 012 Christian H.A.

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