

## SLOW FOOD AND GASTRONOMIC TOURISM IN SLOVENIA

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***Abstract:** The paper presents the role and importance of the Slow Food movement which also includes the development of gastronomic tourism in Slovenia. The aim of this paper is threefold: to find out how the Slow Food movement is understood in Slovenia, to identify its objectives and to answer the question of whether this movement is in Slovenia on the rise or perhaps in decline. It is also the aim of this paper to present the thinking of gastronomy experts in this field, endeavouring at the same time to build awareness of the importance of the Slow Food movement for human beings. In order to ensure a thorough discussion of the topic, a lot of sources have been consulted: professional literature, secondary sources and a semi-structured interview in which participated two major gastronomic experts from this field. The main research question is: "Does Slow Food have to do with hedonism or elitism in Slovenia?"*

***Keywords:** Slow Food, gastronomic tourism, movement.*

### **Introduction**

The Slow Food movement, inseparably associated with the so-called eating slowly, began to emerge on an international scale in Paris in 1989. The statutory seat of the movement, which has a snail in its placard, is the town of Bra in Piemont, northern Italy. The movement has over 77000 members in 48 countries where the members are being grouped at individual regional tables – in Slovenia as well - (Slow Food Ljubljana and Slow Food Primorska). The movement has contributed to an important degree to the reinforcement and upgrading of the heritage of regional gastronomies as well as to the selection of proper combinations of dishes and wines (Strategija razvoja gastronomije Slovenije, 2006)

Slow Food is a gastronomic movement, in the last years also referred to as an eco gastronomic movement, with the emphasis on enjoyment, availability, the significance of locally produced foodstuffs, preservation of cultural heritage, healthy nutrition and the impact of

damaging effects of globalisation on food industry (Parkins and Craig, 2006).

Slow Food defends healthy nutrition, autochthonous dishes, old forgotten dishes adjusted to today's dietary guidelines and very importantly – it emphasises the harmony of food and wine. Each event, however, has its advantages and disadvantages, which applies to Slow Food as well. The advantages of the Slow Food model of nutrition are: longer socializing and more intensive conviviality at the table, a pleasant atmosphere and more amiable communication at the meal, more thorough digestion, a variety of tastes, improvement of mental and physical welfare of an individual, revival of traditional gastronomy and better control hunger due to numerous smaller intakes of food portions. On the other hand, Slow Food has also some disadvantages, such as time-consuming preparation of food, non-rational, uneconomical nutrition, too many utensils for preparing and enjoying food, it is difficult to reconcile meals with the daily rhythm of work and transport. Of course, Slow Food is not suitable for each area or place. We cannot promote it in a settlement with many transient guests as they have no time for tasting such a culinary offer, at least not quality food. For that reason, its true value is not recognised (Maze, 2009).

### **Material and methods**

The main research question of this section is: »Does the Slovene Slow Food movement focus exclusively on hedonism or elitism?« For that reason, the purpose of this article is threefold: first, to find out how Slow Food is to be understood in Slovenia, second, to identify its objectives and third, to determine whether this movement is still on the rise or perhaps in decline. At the same time, the purpose of this article is to present the thinking of gastronomy experts in this field as well as to raise the awareness of the significance of the Slow Food movement.

The topic has been tackled with the assistance of professional literature, secondary sources and by conducting two interviews with two notable experts in the field of Slow Food in Slovenia: Mrs Mira Kos (focusing on marketing "Zidaniški turizem" – vineyard cottage tourism on Trška gora Sommelier, III. degree) and Mr Robert Gregorčič (who runs his own restaurant Oštarija in Dolenjske Toplice and who has become recognisable within the frame of the last bigger project »Hidden Chef«).

## **MOVEMENT, PHILOSOPHY OF SLOW FOOD IN SLOVENIA AND WORLDWIDE**

The Slow Food movement emerged at the end of the last millennium in Italy as a response (even rebellion) to the unhealthy American way of eating, typically labelled as fast food. The expression Slow Food should not be translated word by word as the movement stands for more than just slow consumption of chosen food. The movement has a snail in its logo, symbolizing a unique way of food consumption which includes a longer duration of a meal, a greater number of courses than people consume at usual meetings. Slow Food is a synonym for discovering the wealth and variety of tastes and their harmonious combination – it is about the culture of tastes. The philosophy is based on the safety and reliability of a food chain which should be as short as possible, from the earth to the plate and the logic of nutrition adjusted to the crop produce typical of the season. The members of the movement who hang out at various tables are trying to preserve heritage foods which are suitable and important nutritional ingredients of a modern man's diet, for that reason they belong to the promoters of the revival and preservation of local, original gastronomy. Years ago the project Arca was introduced and through this project certain cereals, onions, wines and old recipes were saved from oblivion and put again on the map of tastes. The most recent project, called Terra Madre, addresses direct food producers all over the world, particularly in those parts of the world which are not economically developed and which have preserved the integrity of crop land (without chemical fertilizers and sprays). A great deal of fees collected worldwide are intended for direct support to the farmers who are in this way assisted in creating conditions for normal management, finding the way to the market without a crowd of intermediaries. Apart from that, the Slow Food movement activists take care of the farmers' education and organise them – if they cannot do it themselves – into village communities – ca. 5000 individuals are temporarily a part of the project. Only the members of permanent tables meet on a permanent basis, for that reason we propose a greater promotion of the movement and its mission (Strategija razvoja gastronomije Slovenije, 2006).

### **Jeonju, Republic of Korea, UNESCO city of gastronomy – a case study**

The city of Jeonju in the Republic of Korea was in May 2012 nominated as the fourth UNESCO city of gastronomy. The nomination acknowledges the city's obligation to protect its culinary heritage by

taking effective measures, such as the encouragement of local food and culture in an integrated way. That reveals the excellency in culinary infrastructure with numerous unique foodstuffs and sources which are presented at different festivals and in lively local markets. The city also endeavours to foster environmental and sustainable development with the assistance of environmentally friendly local food production and environmentally friendly policy of dealing with food waste (Jeonju, Republic of Korea, 2012).

Jeonju is a city with 1200 years of history, the birth place of the Late Dynasty Baekje and Dynasty Joseon. The culinary culture of the city has its roots in its impressive historical background, traditional restaurants and food industry companies which evolved accordingly to the circumstances. The city is recognisable in the first place as a city of taste, with autochthonous dishes, such as Jeonju Bibimbab, which is nowadays internationally recognised as the most representative Korean traditional dish. Apart from that, Jeonju is famous for its traditional food markets which owe their existence to the wealth and abundance of naturally produced food which developed in suitable climate and natural environment (Jeonju, Republic of Korea, 2012).

### **The Slow Food movement and philosophy worldwide – Slow Food and enjoyment**

»A slow food intake during the day could be the way of interrupting a regular rhythm momentarily. You can switch off the tempo and distance yourself from 15 hours of labour and adrenalin at its peak. Such a break is useful and pleasant.« (Parkins and Craig, 2006: 89).

Here a fundamental question is being raised, namely whether it is possible to catch moments on a daily basis, considering the tempo in which we live. This a challenge which is emphasised by the Slow Food movement. »By combining food and enjoyment on a daily basis we achieve that the pleasure moves back to the level of the ordinary, the pleasure is no longer a bonus, no longer a reward but it becomes a central aspect of everyday life.« (Parkins and Craig, 2006).

The Slow Food movement operates according to the principles of emphasised enjoyment, wishing to translate enjoyment into knowledge, being able in this way to connect the movement with cultural capital. The movement wishes to educate people in the sphere of culinary pleasures, giving most emphasis to authenticity, typical of an individual environment. The problem emerges because the movement stresses the separation of a working environment from a food environment in which we can afford enjoyments but at the same time it tends to forget the

values such as tradition, home, family and familiarity. These values, however, are very important for providing everyday pleasures (Parkins and Craig, 2006).

»The crust of mountain bread is soft, even though crispy and brown. You can taste rye and fennel seeds. If you spread butter over bread and eat bread together with some Irish smoked salmon, then you have a feeling that with one foot you are already in gourmet heavens.« (Petrini and Padovini, 2005)

A leisurely and slow tempo is at the heart of Slow Food philosophy, where slowness derives its roots from the understanding of enjoyment, taste, locality, the value of local products, and culture, thus exceeding the limits of its activities and becoming, as Deborah Madison says, a blind man caressing an elephant in order to change the elephant's nature (Parkins and Craig, 2006).

The movement functioned first as a political manifesto and/or the opposition to the Italian leftists. In Petrini's book the beginnings of the movement could be dated back into the time when the edition of the first number of the newspaper Campo Rosso was published, the manifesto, issued by the movement, in the year 1974. The official beginning of the movement, as known by the public, is marked by the establishment of the group Arcigola 1986, in the town of Bra-Piedmont. The group expanded its membership from 500 to 8000 members. The credit for this enlargement goes to advertising projects, organised events based on degustations of various types of foods and drinks as well as the reviews associated with restaurants or degustations of various wines and which were published by the movement. The conceptual leader of the movement was and still is Carlo Petrini (Parkins and Craig, 2006).

The Slow Food movement expanded its principles into more countries with which it remained in touch through the organisation of international events whose main purpose was to present smaller local producers of food and wine. At the same time the care was taken to publish various publications and design the website (Petrini and Padovini, 2005).

An important milestone for the movement is the foundation of Città Slow, 1999, which stands for the project, which in translation means "slow city", a city with a slow, leisurely way of life, a city which challenges globalisation. In the first place, the project was supported by the following cities: Bra, Orvieto, Positano, Greve and Chianti. The next important milestone is the opening of Agenzia di Pollenzo, the seat of the University of gastronomic sciences. The first students began to

attend the university in the academic year 2004/05 (Petrini and Padovini, 2005).

### **Hedonism or elitism**

The Slow Food movement believes that everyone has the basic right to enjoy and be consequently responsible for protecting culinary heritage, tradition and culture which all together make such enjoyments possible. There is a significant emphasis on philosophy, i. e. ecological gastronomy, which binds together nutrition and our concern for the environment (Delicious Slovenia, 2010).

The essential emphasis in the quotation above is on the word "each". Slow Food is not a movement which would emphasise elitism in its philosophy, on the contrary, it is a movement which wants to make enjoyments available to anyone. Elite restaurants are not a part of the philosophy defining the Slow Food movement which is associated with restaurants serving local specialties. It is even better if local specialties are the fruit of labour done by local producers for whose protection the movement fights (Parkins and Craig, 2006).

Slovenia joined the Slow Food movement in 1995, being therefore among the last countries associated with the movement. At the first meeting in Dorenberk, it was decided that the following convivia were to be founded: Koper, Ljubljana, Maribor, Gorenjska and Dolenjska.

Today three convivia are officially registered: the convivium of Primorje, the convivium of Ljubljana and the convivium of Zasavje (Delicious Slovenia, 2010).

In Slovenia, it was Aleš Kristančič who was chosen for the president of the Slow Food movement on the grounds of his active participation in the movement, being its leader for several years. He, however, has been recently more preoccupied with marketing a trade mark of wines, Movia, and for that reason he passed his leadership to Mrs Tatjana Butol from the tourist farm Butul, who is in charge of the convivium of Primorska.

The movement has spread exceptionally rapidly in Slovenia. The reasons for this fast development are to be attributed to a relatively isolated position of Slovenia in the Yugoslav era, which impeded the arrival of foreign industry and globalisation which we witnessed in western countries. In this way Slovenia has preserved a great deal of its cultural heritage.

However, in spite of the principles and determination to support local producers and smaller family restaurants offering traditional local dishes, the Slow Food has manifested itself in the form of more

expensive, elitist restaurants, even though that was not the original intention of the movement. It is a sad fact that these restaurants very often do not act according to the principles of the Slow Food movement and as a result, genuine slow food restaurants hardly exist in Slovenia (Šinik, 2008).

Initially the movement should be supporting local producers and encouraging the sale of local products. The restaurants which are a part of the movement should be affordable to everyone, in line with the principle of availability of pleasure for all. In Slovenia the movement was put into practice in more expensive restaurants, intended for the elite. In Slovenia, it is tourist farms which have most faithfully embraced the principles of the movement with their own food products and catering offer.

»I ate pasta, prepared a la carbonara, jer, made of ham, mushrooms and pasta. It was really good, the plate full to a satisfactory degree and so was the glass. All that because we had a hedonistic weekend and for that reason we ate, drank and spent money in a careless manner. It was excellent, champagne ....« (Warde and Martens, 2000: 19)

»The term hedonistic means 'work with pleasure', its meaning being derived from the philosophy of hedonism whose fundamental principle is that enjoyment is the highest good and the cause of all human behaviour.« (Cardello, 1996: 7)

### **Other types of associations**

A special emphasis is given to the encouragement of connections according to the principles of the Slow Food movement and some other associations, mentioned in Alsace (Txokos) and Baskia (»Stammtischi« and fraternities). There we have in mind more or less informal meetings in the form of permanent tables and promotion of their mission (Strategija razvoja gastronomije Slovenije, 2006).

A vital role in the penetration of Basque cuisine in the international markets have gastronomic associations (bas. Txoko, phonetic, Slovene: corner, spa. Unión Artesana). There are many of them (their exact number is unknown), in their home province as well as worldwide, everywhere where Basque emigrants live, belonging to the first, second and third generation. They are a kind of predecessors of the Slow Food International, established much later in Torino (Italy) and which have been dedicated from the very start to the fidelity towards home traditions, wines and spirit drinks which, however, are today made in a more acceptable way, relying on strictly organically produced foodstuffs, without synthetic additives. Olive oil is at the forefront but the classical

cuisine does not avoid using lard either which, however, can be consumed in a rational, harmless manner, for example, together with liquids (drinks) which melt fat and neutralise negative cholesterol. The philosophy of Basque culinary circles and Slow Food is in fact highly comparable. Alcohol plays an assistant role, supporting the cuisine and being enjoyed in harmony, with common sense. Alcoholism in Baskia has never been a problem (Strategija razvoja gastronomije Slovenije, 2006).

### Results

I used the qualitative research methodology and within its frame a half-structured interview consisting of 16 questions. In my work I tried to analyze how the participants in the interview are being interviewed by Mrs Mira Kos (she is active within Vineyard cottage tourism on Trška gora, Sommelier, Level 3) and Mr Robert Gregorčič (who runs his own restaurant Oštarija in Dolenjske Toplice, becoming even more recognisable within the framework of the last bigger project »Hidden Chef«), who have been working in catering/hospitality business for decades, and as such they truly understand Slow Food in Slovenia. The data obtained from the interview together with theoretical facts enabled me to reach conclusions given in Chapter 3.

The interpretation of results is presented through the answers to the questions addressed to the interviewees and in such a sequence that Y stands for replies given by Mrs Mira Kos and X stands for replies given by Mr Robert Gregorčič:

*Is eating in Slow Food restaurants in Slovenia to be regarded as hedonism or elitism?*

*Y:»Both, as the meaning of the Slow Food movement has not been understood by all.«*

*X:»From my point of view, the presentation of Slow Food is about pure hedonism and even more than that. The time spent by the guests on slow eating is intended for raising gastronomic culture and socializing with the loved ones. In short, Slow Food helps to raise the culture of eating, combination of wine and food and socialising.«*

On this point, the interviewees partly contradict each other. Mrs Kos claims that Slow Food is about hedonism as well as elitism. Mr Gregorčič, by contrast, claims that Slow Food is about hedonism and more than that.

*What reasons induce people to visit restaurants?*

*Y:»Exoneration, taking pleasure in various tastes, pampering.«*

X: *»The reasons are different: the basic need for eating, celebration of personal events, business events, seduction and quite simply, socialising with friends at good food and drink.«*

According to Parkins and Craig (2006), Slow Food which is a gastronomic movement has in recent years also developed into an eco-gastronomic movement, with the emphasis on enjoyment, accessibility, the meaning of locally produced foodstuffs, preservation of cultural heritage, healthy nutrition and the awareness of damaging impacts of globalisation in food industry.

*Which of the reasons would you single out as being the most important?*

Y: *»The way of life and pressures.«*

X: *»Nowadays socialising is the most important issue, in the recent decade we have lost a sense of socialising, our fast way of life has brought about asociality. The restaurant is a place dedicated socialising.«*

Both gastronomy cannoisseurs agree that the main reason for visiting restaurants is associated with a life-style.

*What influences an individual's choice of a type of restaurant?*

Y: *»Good food, price and well-being.«*

X: *»Recommendations, a guest's feelings during his last visit, type of food, current mood, fixed ideas, perception of an individual restaurant.«*

Mr Gregorčič and Mrs Kos agree that food and well-being influence the choice of a restaurant.

*Which qualities of a restaurant, mentioned above, do you think, are the most influential?*

Y: *»Food quality in proportion to the price and quantity.«*

X: *»Food quality, food serving, ambience, experience, a personal note characterising a restaurant.«*

*What people, in your opinion, visit particular types of restaurants? Let me enumerate the most frequent ones:*

- *Traditional inn - Y: »Older and family-oriented population.«  
X: »Older population 50+, people with clear, fixed ideas of what they would like to eat.«*
- *Restaurants within a higher price range (including restaurants with foreign cuisines) - Y: »Businessmen and people who*

*appreciate good food.« X:»Businessmen, gourmets with special experience.«*

- *Pizza restaurant - Y: »The young and people under time pressure.« X:»Younger generation 50-, quickly and simply.«*

The interviewees provide answers to the question: what people in their opinion visit a particular type of a restaurant and their replies are identical.

*What is the first thing to enter your mind when I mention Slow Food?*

*Y: »Something traditional.«*

*X:» Enjoyment of food and drink – emotional.«*

On the other hand, Parkins and Craig (2006) refer to Slow Food as a movement which objects to international corporations on one side and which on the other side endeavours to educate people about gastronomic peculiarities of small regions. That could be in their opinion a simple definition of the movement.

*And what idea enters your mind at the thought of Slow Food in Slovenia?*

*Y: »The movement which has left a strong mark in Slovenia in the sphere of cuisine.«*

*X:»I can proudly point out that we have somewhere to go to, all we need to do is to decide on how much we are going to invest in it and what experience we want to achieve.«*

*Has the Slow Food movement in Slovenia emerged in its true form, or does it in any way deviate from the original Italian movement?*

*Y: »Initially that was a true form but later the movement was misunderstood and believed it was a way of food serving.«*

*X: »I am not familiar with the activities of Slow Food....I know that 20 years ago in Novo mesto we had the first restaurant in Slovenia where they started to serve food according to this principle. Today I think this offer has firm roots and we do not even talk about it. We are referring exclusively to five or eight courses with wine companion.«*

On the other hand, Parkins and Craig (2006) talk about the essential emphasis of the word »every«. Slow Food is not a movement which would emphasise elitism in its philosophy, it is a movement which wants to grant an enjoyment to everyone. Elite restaurants are not a part of Slow Food philosophy. The movement, on the contrary,

favours restaurants which offer local specialties. So much the better if local specialties are the fruit of labour of local producers for whose protection the movement fights.

*How do you estimate a current development of the Slow Food movement in Slovenia?*

*Y:»The objective has already been achieved, the governor Aleš Kristančič said that a great deal has been done, as a result of this, our home-made forgotten dishes began to be appreciated, new combinations of dishes emerged on the plate....«*

*What are in your opinion the main principles of the Slow Food movement?*

*Y:»The movement was established as a protest against fast food. The emphasis is on originality, ...«*

*X:»Enhancement of the culture of gastronomy.«*

*Do you believe that it is the matter of principle, which induces people to eat in such restaurants or is it a current trend?*

*Y:»Now this is no longer a current trend. This aim has been achieved and those who like find it most enjoyable.«*

*X:»Presentation of foods and wines is more perfected. This way of food servicing gives the creators greater room for creativity. I am convinced that this will become an increasingly popular manner of socialising.«*

*We can say that the main principle of the Slow Food movement is to emphasise the right to enjoyment accessible to everyone. But is it really accessible to everyone?*

*Y: »Of course. There is no need for prestige. The real movement is felt more intensively in simple dishes, acts, crop cultivation ... it is the way of life.«*

*X: »Accessibility is a relative concept. Nowadays it is not accessible to everyone. The middle class can afford it a few times a year – to give relevant facts, that they are willing to spend on that between 35 – 70 € per person.«*

*How would you describe a typical guest visiting Slow Food restaurants and what is the main reason for his visits?*

*Y:»A person willing to investigate, who eats healthily and tastes dishes.«*

*X:»There are fewer and fewer of typical Slow Food guests... there are only guests in search of new experiences. I am pleased there is an increasing number of young people who want to enjoy in gastronomy..«*

*Do you think that the prices in slow food restaurants justify their culinary offer?*

*Y:»A difficult question, as you probably have in mind the restaurants which offer different dishes. If a restaurant offers a real slow food menu consisting of more original courses the price can be high but you can taste many novelties. In case there is only one dish (žlikrofi, škofjeloška smojka), the price is not necessarily high. But if it is, this is justifiable as a lot of work and effort have been invested in it.«*

*X:»In most cases the answer is positive.«*

Slow Food is a synonym for discovering the wealth and variety of tastes and their harmonious combination – it is about the cultivation of tastes. The philosophy is based on the offer of food chain as short as possible from the earth to the plate, adjusted to the seasonal crops. The members of the movement who gather at individual tables, endeavouring to preserve heritage dishes which are suitable and important nutritional ingredients of modern man's diet and for that reason can be regarded as promoters of revival and preservation of local, original gastronomy.

*How do you see the development of the Slow Food movement in the future?*

*Y:»The movement has reached its objectives! It is the base for today's different expression of culinary offer, such as the menu for culinary pleasures, the menu for gourmets, the chef recommends, the excellent food, the perfect wine is recommended, and then a culinary delight is perfect.«*

*X:»The main objective has been achieved. The guests have accepted this as a way of socialising, which means there is no need to fear the future.«*

## **Discussion**

A final, concluding chapter is dedicated to the presentation of the findings which are the result of theoretical and practical research. In the first part, theoretical points of departure are presented, while the nucleus of the second part is the research on Slow Food in Slovenia and the understanding of this phenomenon as seen by Mr Gregorčič and Mrs Kos, two distinguished connoisseurs of gastronomy.

Theory claims that the Slow Food movement is accessible to anyone, stressing pleasures, the importance of locally produced foodstuffs, preservation of cultural heritage, healthy nutrition and warning the public of harmful impact of globalization in food industry.

Let's examine first what theory says about the connection between Slow Food on one side and hedonism and elitism on the other side. Bourdieu mentioned different tastes of different social classes. Those better educated or occupying higher positions in companies are in their taste for food more inclined to favour everything extraordinary and enlightened. That separates them from the popular culture of the working classes which favour heavy food, rich in fats (Bourdieu, 1984). The taste for food is also expressed by visiting a particular type of restaurants. The offer of slow food could be something enlightening and special and for that reason interesting for the members of upper social classes. But a decisive factor concerning a type of restaurant is not only the taste but also the amount of income owned by members of one particular social class. The research carried out by Calman and Cant reveals that the cost is a fundamental factor in choosing food by working class women, while women representatives of the middle and upper classes are more focused on the quality of food rather than on the cost (Beardsworth and Keil, 1997). The research was directed in particular towards the selection of quality food and less on visiting restaurants. In fact, healthy quality food is typical of Slow Food restaurants.

Tasting novelty foods constitutes an important part of the culinary offer available in Slow Food restaurants. Cardello (1996) says that it is this tasting of novelty foods which is a source of enjoyment. If that was true, the pleasures of eating would be restricted to the upper social classes. But the working classes find culinary pleasures elsewhere, for example, in the abundance of food (Warde and Martens, 2000).

If tasting food is a source of pleasure, then this is accessible to the upper classes only. The truth is that the working classes find culinary pleasures elsewhere. It has been confirmed that the lower classes take most pleasure in the quantity of food gained in exchange for the particular cash value, while members of upper classes pay more attention to the food quality (Warde and Martens, 2000). According to Warde and Martens (2000), enjoyment also stands for leisure and appreciation that somebody took care of us and our company partaking of the meal.

The fact is that the Slow Food movement in Italy endeavours to make culinary pleasures accessible to all, in order to educate all people, to make healthy local foodstuffs accessible to all, but in Slovenia all this

ended in the restaurants determined to be priced in a higher price range which care little about the principles of the Slow Food movement. For that reason, the movement in Slovenia is in slow decline. A few restaurants which still operate according to the principles of the movement cannot revive it. The projects undertaken by the movement, unfortunately, died out in Slovenia. Only the results of the projects have remained, revealing the actual meaning of the movement. The movement, for example, managed to revive buckwheat, which is the result of the project Noah's ark (Akro of taste) which endeavours to revive and protect foodstuffs and/or the dishes which are slowly disappearing from our kitchens.

The restaurants belonging to a higher price range, as in Slovenia, cannot be regarded as a part of the Slow Food movement, on the contrary, it is the projects protecting local producers, the projects which counter global nutrition corporations, the projects protecting disappearing foodstuffs and the projects which educate people in the area of taste which can be regarded as such: »Tradition is such as it is and encompasses everything which has taken place up to the twentieth century. As a result, in the genuine orthodox Slow Food movement there should be no place for genetically reared animals and plants. The Slow Food movement strongly objects to such practices, willing merely to revitalise certain foodstuffs and raw products which because of globalisation became marginalised and as such they are more difficult to produce.« Considering Italian starting points, Slow Food in Slovenia today is far from being what it should be. It is therefore necessary to confirm the thesis that the Slow Food movement in Slovenia deviates from the original Italian one. Due to the manifestation of the movement in the restaurants within the higher price range, the movement has obtained an elitist connotation, which should not have happened if the movement had followed original Italian principles.

Today we can see the beginnings of new projects which on a smaller scale operate according to the principles of the Slow Food movement. One of the projects is The Inn of Slovenia which is, unfortunately, at a standstill and needs revitalisation. The project (designed and realised in the cooperation with the Jezeršek family and Professor Bogataj) is based on the trade name which under its umbrella unites Slovene caterers, takes care of the quality of catering services, sustainable development and preservation of local and regional visibility of Slovene cuisine. Even the inns which are more affordable than the Slovene slow food restaurants take part in the project.

I am finishing this article with the thought derived from the manifesto of the Slow Food movement: »The essence of true culture is to develop the taste, not to suppress it. What can be a better creation of that, if not an international exchange of experiences, knowledge and projects.« (Parkins and Craig 2006: 141)

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