

SLOVENE STUDENTS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE UP TO 1918

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A detailed account of the Slovene emigration processes which aims to describe the real political, economic and social conditions in Slovenia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the 19th century should necessarily be supplemented with a survey of temporary emigration, including the case of Slovene students abroad which, in fact, is neither emigration in the original sense of the word nor economic emigration. But while Slovene economic emigrants in the 19th century were driven to seek work outside the Empire, Slovene students remained in Austria-Hungary but until 1919 were forced to study at non-Slovene universities, most of which were in a German environment and used the German language. Up to 1895 the majority of Slovene secondary school students enrolled in the universities in Vienna and Graz¹ where the influence of the German language and culture was inevitable and intentional on the part of the ruling German nation. The 1890s, and in particular the period following 1897, saw an immense increase in German pressure and the concomitant Slovene fear of excessive Germanisation as well as consternation about the possibility that a large number of Slovene students might remain in Vienna or Graz and become Germanised (to mention only some Slovene scholars who remained in Vienna: F. Miklošič, J. Kopitar, etc.). From 1848 onwards, Slovene intellectuals were very active in their endeavours to establish a Slovene university in Ljubljana, or possibly Trieste, but since it did not seem to them that they would soon be successful, Slovene intellectuals, students and secondary-school pupils began to advocate non-German, that is, Slavic universities within Austria. They were convinced that studying at Slavic universities, initially especially the Czech university, would significantly help to preserve both the Slovene and Slavic identity of Slovene

¹ Vasilij Melik, Peter Vodopivec, "Slovenski izobraženci in avstrijske visoke šole 1848-1918", *Zgodovinski časopis*, Vol. 40, 1986, No. 3, pp. 269-282.

intellectuals. It was apparent that even in the matter of selecting the right Slavic university, the Slovenes were politically divided into two camps: Liberal and Catholic. Liberal intellectuals strongly supported Prague as the student centre for Slovenes, since for them Prague and the Czech nation in general represented the fortress of freedom of thought and Slavic brotherhood. One of the most important reasons for this was the establishment of the Czech university in Prague in 1882, where T. G. Masaryk was employed as a professor. Dr Ivan Žmavc arrived in Prague in 1895 and was one of the first Slovenes to study there. At first he attended Masaryk's lectures in sociology, and later on went to a German university, completing his studies of philosophy in 1898. Žmavc remained in Prague where he died on 22 November 1956². In the period between 1882 and 1916 the Czech university in Prague awarded 85 doctorates to Slovenes, of which 78 were law degrees, four were doctorates in philosophy and three were in medicine, while no one was awarded a doctorate in theology. A number of intellectuals remained there permanently; among them were Oton Berkopec (Slavic studies), Jožef Kranjc (law), Matija Murko (literary historian and ethnologist) as well as many others.

Matters relating to secondary schools and universities were a frequent subject of discussion among Catholic scholars, some of whom were strictly against co-operation between Slovene and Czech students. One such scholar was Anton Mahnič³ who considered Prague to be extremely dangerous for Catholic students due to Czech Liberalism and the fact that the lack of Catholic enthusiasm would ostensibly corrupt the Slovene students⁴. There were many other Slovene Catholic intellectuals who were opposed to the education of Slovene students at the University of Prague, but although they were aware of the negative influ-

² Irena Gantar Godina, "Ivan Žmavc – prispevek k njegovemu življenjepisju", *Prispevki za zgodovino delavskega gibanja*, 1985, No. 1–2, pp. 39–48.

³ Anton Mahnič (1850–1920), in 1896 appointed Bishop of Krk. From 1888 to 1896 he published the magazine *Rimski katolik*, in which he revealed his views on Slovene policy, criticised Slovene and Czech Liberals and argued in favour of Slovene co-operation exclusively with Catholic Czechs.

⁴ Anton Mahnič, "Slovinci, pazimo s kom se bratimo", *Rimski katolik*, 1889, p. 386.

ences of Vienna and Graz, they did not advocate other universities such as the Polish ones in Kraków and Lvov. The reasons for this were not only connected with Liberalism but also with the Catholics' scepticism towards the Poles and their attitudes and policies towards other Slavic nations in Austria. For a long time the Catholics believed that the Poles avoided associating with other Austrian Slavs and that they had no particular sense of Slavic brotherhood. (In spite of this, the number of Slovene students in Prague increased every year, so it became impossible for them to continue avoiding this question.)

It was only after 1897 and particularly after 1900 that the issue of taking up studies at Polish universities became topical. During the period following 1897, after the meeting between the Czech and Polish national deputies which was held on 12 and 13 December in Kraków⁵, at which resolutions on inter-Slavic co-operation were adopted, the Polish were supposed to prove their willingness to co-operate with other Slavic countries, this issue being most enthusiastically supported by the Polish deputy Michael Danielak. The Polish reversal was welcomed with excitement in both Liberal and Catholic circles in Slovenia. One of the prime influences behind the Poles' rapid association with other Slavs was the introduction of the monthly magazine *Swiat Slowianski* in 1900, edited by Feliks Koneczny, a historian and curator of the Jagellonian library. Another contribution to this movement was made by Franc Grivec in 1902, when he published in *Katoliški obzornik*⁶, a translation of the letter written to the newspaper *Slovanský Přehled* by Marian Zdziechovski in 1899.

As a consequence of this, opinion on Polish commitment and their inclination towards the Slavic issue and Slavic brotherhood changed radically and it was then that the Catholic circles began to advocate closer co-operation with the Poles as a counterbalance to Prague and the Czechs, while at the same time they started persuading Slovene students

⁵ The meeting was organized by the Czech and Polish national deputies, e.g. members of the Young Czech Party, 20 Polish politicians and three representatives of SKNZ.

⁶ Franc Grivec, "Slovanska ideja in Poljaki", *Katoliški obzornik*, 1902, No. 6, p. 220.

to enrol in the two Polish universities in Kraków and Lvov. The main reason behind this was the Polish commitment to the Catholic Church and their opposition to the establishment of political and cultural links with Russia.

One of the first Slovenes to respond to appeals made by the Catholic circles to study at Polish universities was Leopold Lenard, who first enrolled in the university in Lvov and then in Kraków. As a priest, he began his theological studies in 1902 in Innsbruck, while later on Archbishop Anton Bonaventura Jeglič sent him to Lvov, where he studied philosophy in 1903 and 1904. At the same time he lived and worked as a Catholic intellectual in both the Warsaw and Kraków dioceses. During the winter semester of 1906, he enrolled in the Faculty of Arts in Kraków⁷, where he attended Slavic seminars, while in Warsaw in 1907 he was unable to attend lectures because the Imperial University was closed for five years as a result of the students' strike in 1905. He was forced to complete his studies in Vienna, which was perhaps why he was unable to successfully defend his doctoral thesis, but the Polish theologian and philosopher Marian Zdziechowski labelled Lenard's dissertation on pan-Slavism⁸ as "immature and unintelligent" and consequently rejected it⁹. Lenard's major interest was the Slavic idea and inter-Slavic co-operation with a special stress on closer relations between the Slovenes and the Poles. He considered Poland to have the highest degree of statehood and highest level of cultural development, which was why he supported and adopted the programme designed by the group *Klub Słowiański* (Slavic Club) in Kraków¹⁰. After he had re-

⁷ Barbara Oczkova, Lenardov "Rozwoj historyczny gramatyki Słowenskiej", *Obdobja IV.*, Part II, pp. 295–303; Irena Gantar Godina, "Dr. Leopold Lenard", *Zgodovinski časopis*, 1992, No. 3, pp. 395–400.

⁸ Pamphlet *Panslavismus, Eine Nationalpolitische Betrachtung*, published in Celje in 1906, probably a draft of the dissertation which was later defended successfully.

⁹ Vojeslav Molè, *Iz knjige spominov*, Slovenska matica, Ljubljana 1970, p. 65.

¹⁰ The club was founded by a group of intellectuals with the purpose of spreading the Slavic idea among the Poles; it would make detailed efforts among the population. In 1912 they founded Towarzystwo słowanskie,

turned to Ljubljana, he wrote articles for various Catholic magazines, including the Catholic secondary school students' magazine *Zora*, urging them to take up studies in Poland, since, in his opinion, Slovene intellectuals were still excessively under the influence of German culture. Despite the fact that he considered the departure of students to Prague to be positive simply because in this way they avoided the pressure of German culture, he himself considered Kraków to be more advantageous in many respects. One of the advantages was that "Kraków is a purely Slavic city. German culture only has a very small effect on this city even indirectly. On the other hand, old and profound influences can be felt from other world cultures, such as France, England and Italy. It was also possible to detect the proximity of Russians and Ruthenians..." At the same time he believed that the Slavic-Polish tradition "will undoubtedly have a positive influence on the development of the spirit and thinking of our students. Kraków is the most Slavic city of all because its traditions stretch back to mythological and pre-historic times... Kraków is the centre of political thought. Here, a Slovene will find no party with which he would completely agree, he will not hear any of the political and nationalist phrases to which people have become accustomed elsewhere... Theories of political, religious and economic Conservatism, professorial Liberalism, Socialism and Nationalism are developed here with all the necessary clarity and consistency..." Lenard saw in Kraków the centre of Slavism, "not so much in words than in programmes". He considered the Poles to be "without doubt the nation with the highest degree of tactfulness and with the best manners among all the Slavs", which would also have a positive influence on Slovene students. Last but not least, he saw in Kraków a city of science and art, a city with well-developed systems of university and secondary education, and he was convinced that the Poles would appropriately accept the Slovene students¹¹. The editors of *Swiat Słowianski* responded to Lenard's appeals, assuring the Slovenes that they could expect the "best reception possible"¹².

which established reading clubs, libraries, lectures, courses in Slavic languages, etc. Lenard conducted courses in Slovene within the framework of this association.

¹¹ L. Lenard, *Naše gorje*, *Zora*, 1907-08, No. 4, pp. 53-54.

¹² Listek - *Swiat Słowianski*, *Zora*, 1907-08, No. 5, p. 79.

Independently of the Catholics' support of Kraków University, Vojislav Molè became one of the first Slovene students to study at the Jagellonian University in Kraków, where, during the 1906/07 academic year, he attended lectures in the history of Polish literature and Slavic linguistics, although, as he himself wrote, he intended to continue his Romance studies. He was persuaded to study in Kraków by two Polish students named Roman Pollak and M. Grzechowicz, whom he met during an excursion to the Adriatic coast. Molè stayed in Kraków for one academic year, which was enough for him to become thoroughly familiar with the conditions for studying in this city. He later continued his studies in Rome and Vienna, where he obtained a doctorate degree in 1912. In 1926 he returned to Kraków where he lectured on the history of art of the Yugoslav nations until 1939 when he returned to Ljubljana. He went back to Kraków in 1946 and lectured at Jagellonian University until 1966, when he went to the USA.

Josip Stuller, who commenced his law studies in Vienna, continued his studies in Kraków at the same time as Molè; it is not known, however, how long he stayed in Kraków and whether he completed his studies or not.

The Liberal and Catholic newspapers continued their discussions on co-operation with the Czechs or Poles – not only in academic areas – and the debate became increasingly intense in the period after 1908, the time of the Neo-Slav movement. Both stressed the good and bad sides of Czech and Polish policies and the positive and negative influences of their universities. The most important ties for secondary school and university students were those between the secondary school student newspapers – *Omladina*, the newspaper of the Liberal, that is, independent and radically nationalist movement, and *Zora*, the newspaper representing the national Catholic movement of secondary school students. On the one hand there was the Liberal stream, which supported the consolidation of both the national and Slavic identity, a person's right to make a private choice with regard to religion (this issue was, to a great extent, influenced by Masaryk), the separation of the Church from the schools and that secondary school and university students should carry out various political tasks (in the manner suggested by T. G. Masaryk, i.e. that politics should be socialised), while on the other

hand there was the Catholic movement, which gave priority to religion and national interests and rejected the interference or participation of students in politics. Both sides resisted German policy towards non-German nations in Austria, including Germanisation and Italian nationalism.

In 1908 and 1909 Josip Stuller, the correspondent for the Catholic national newspaper *Zora*, tried to encourage Slovene students to enrol in the Jagellonian University in Kraków. In his opinion, the essential difference between Prague and Kraków lay in the fact that "the name Prague has associations with the concept of 'freedom of thought', while the name Kraków implies 'conservatism'. Conservatism because the members of the Slavic Club were all those who represented the strongest opposition to anti-Slavic-oriented politicians, while cultural workers took the side of Slavic solidarity and acted in favour of brotherhood between the Slavs. On the other hand, Stuller mostly addressed the richer students¹³, urging them to take up studies in Kraków, while disapproving absolutely of their studying at the Lvov university. Not only did he claim that Lvov was too far away, but that its critical political position, resulting from the conflict between the Polish and the Ruthenians, made it a dangerous place.

Among the Catholic students, there were many who studied in Vienna while at the same time favouring studies at Polish universities. The two most active students were France Stelè and Andrej Veble, who became enthusiastic about Poland during their military service in Lvov. Through various articles in *Zora*, they urged Slovene students to undertake studies in Kraków. France Stelè even published an appeal to all Slovene students to volunteer themselves for military service in Galicia. He quoted a number of reasons why they should go there rather than some other area: its people were not only the "most interesting Slavic people", they were also an "explicitly Catholic race" and an "explicit representative of Slavism". Moreover, Stelè claimed that Galicia was the land which "among the Polish provinces has the highest level of freedom and has developed the most favourable conditions for its peo-

¹³ Josip Stuller, "Kraków in – slovensko dijaštvo", *Zora* 1908–1909, No. 9–10, p. 180.

ple..." He also mentioned Lvov and the conflicts between the Poles and the Ruthenians, all this being of considerable interest for the Slavs¹⁴. It is not known, though, whether his appeal produced any results.

Slovene students established contacts with their Polish counterparts only after 1908 when *Omladina* published an article on Neo-Slavism by a student named Boczkowski. Until his death in 1904, the liberal students were strongly influenced by Fran Podgornik, a "Slavophile" who published the magazine *Slovanski svet* in 1888 and 1889. Podgornik was very sceptical towards the Slovene-Polish friendship since he was wary of the Poles because of their, as he put it, anti-Russian and anti-Ruthenian policy. His ideas were supported by many students but opposed by most politicians.

In 1909 the first visit to Ljubljana by Polish academics took place. On 23 September 1909, Ljubljana was visited by the Academic Drama Association of Kraków. As early as one month before the visit, the Catholic newspaper *Slovenec* urged all Slovenes, and in particular the students, to prepare "the best reception possible in Ljubljana on the occasion of the first ever Polish visit to Ljubljana".¹⁵

In 1910 the Association of Friends of the Polish Nation was founded and the following year the Association of Friends of Yugoslavs was established in Kraków. The initiator of the association was Stanislav Jasinski, the president of the Christian Socialist Federation in Kraków, and its members included Professor Marian Zdziechowski, Felix Konecny and many others. On this occasion, provincial leader Fran Šuklje and nine members of his delegation arrived in Kraków. They talked about encouraging Slovene students to study in Kraków; Evgen Lampe stressed that the Poles are the nation which is closest to the Slovenes, while Šuklje added that this would mean not only the emancipation of Slovene students in Vienna and Graz but also that artists would be enabled to "create profoundly domestic art" at the Polish academy. By the

¹⁴ France Stelè, "Kam k prostovoljcem?", *Zora* 1907-1908, No. 9, p. 143.

¹⁵ "K zletu poljskih akademikov v Ljubljano", *Slovenec*, No. 193, 25 August 1909.

time the Slovenes founded their own university¹⁶, they were also considering introducing Slovene chairs at Kraków University. In his report, Stelè stressed that so far "our agitation has not produced satisfactory results", and that the time had perhaps come to re-consider this particular issue. He did not, however, support the introduction of Slovene chairs since he believed that there was an insufficient number of Slovene students in Kraków for the plan to be really feasible.

The Polish students sent an "Appeal to the Slovenes!"¹⁷ to the editorial board of *Omladina*. In this the federation of academic associations of Polish youth, *Ogniva*, invited Slovene students to take up studies at Kraków University. Soon after that, Leopold Lenard responded in *Zora* and drew the attention of students to the favourable conditions for study in Kraków, although it was more expensive than Vienna. He was particularly in favour of studying at the medical and agricultural faculties, the trade academy and the academy of fine arts. He addressed a special invitation to girls to enter the Baraneum private girls' school.¹⁸

The question of why more Slovene students did not respond to the appeal by their older colleagues to study at Polish universities may be answered in several ways. One of the most important reasons was undoubtedly the great geographical distance, which dissuaded the less wealthy students – as an initial argument – from their plans. Furthermore, they were not yet able to establish Slovene students' organizations at the Polish universities, which would provide assistance in finding accommodation, offer financial help and so on. The linguistic barrier was not as significant as the fact that the influence of the Liberal movement was substantially greater, given that the newspaper *Omladina* had a significantly larger number of readers than *Zora*. A considerable obstacle was presented by Polish policy itself, of which detailed reports were published in Slovene newspapers, which also printed critical articles by Polish and Slovene politicians on Polish policy and on the association of the Poles with other Slavs.

¹⁶ "Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Słowian południowych", *Zora*, No. 6, 1911–1912, p. 116.

¹⁷ *Omladina* 1909–1910, p. 9.

¹⁸ "V Krakov", *Zora*, No. 8, 1911–1912, p. 161.

One must mention, as a special phenomenon, the Slovene scholars who departed for Russia, that is to say, a country outside the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The emigration of intellectuals to Russia began at a significantly earlier stage than departure to other Slavic universities and may be – conditionally – compared to the “brain drain” which is taking place today. The Slovenes did not go to Russia just because of the dissatisfaction (of Slavic nations) with Austrian policy, but also because of the traditional sympathy with the largest Slavic country. In the period following 1866, after the introduction of dualism, the idea of pan-Slavism became the major element of Slavic loyalty among Slovenes. Searching for protection, many Slovene intellectuals interpreted the concept of pan-Slavism as protection against Germanisation and Italian nationalism. They believed that Russia alone was able to confront the pan-Germanism and that it could offer assistance and protection to other Slavic nations within the areas of culture, economy and politics. In the late 1960s the most active group were Slovene secondary school and university students, who strove, among other things, for literary uniformity among Slavs and for a common Slavic language. All this took place at the same time as Russian invitations for teachers of classical languages to move to Russia from Austria. Iskra Čurkina¹⁹ states that this type of invitation was published by some of the Slavic newspapers as early as 1866. A letter saying a similar thing, written by Fran Celestin, was published in *Slovenski narod* and Vienna’s *Zukunft*. It is apparent from the class journals of the Slavic Teachers’ Institute in Petersburg, which operated between 1866 and 1882, that 14 Slovenes were registered among its 213 scholarship holders²⁰. These students obtained information on study and work in Russia largely from a circle of Liberal Slovene “Russophiles”, among whom were Levstik, Stritar and others. Many of them remained in Russia and taught at Russian grammar schools all over the country. Some returned home, like Fran Celestin, who, in 1872 left Russia in an embittered state of mind. Despite his desire to return to Russia, he was unable to do so because he did not receive a positive evaluation of his work at one of the grammar schools. Linguists formed the largest group among Slovene emigrant

¹⁹ Iskra Čurkina, *Rusko-slovenski kulturni stiki*, Slovenska matica, Ljubljana 1995.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

intellectuals in Russia. It is impossible to say whether all the Slovenes who worked in Russian schools intended to stay for good or just temporarily, but there are some, Franc Siftar for example, who became Russian citizens and converted to the Orthodox religion.

Irrespective of the mostly difficult conditions that were imposed on Slovene students studying outside their homeland (such as studying in a foreign language, the lack of funds, even national intolerance and chauvinism in some environments), many of them became reputed scientists, cultural workers or politicians. Some of them returned to work in their homeland after they had completed their studies, while some of them worked elsewhere in Austria-Hungary and in other foreign countries. The Slovene cultural, economic, scientific and political scenes benefited from the infiltration of numerous new and fresh ideas from elsewhere, a broader understanding of conditions in Austria and other countries and familiarity with a wide range of languages, which were introduced by those who returned home. In addition to this, during their studies these students made a significant contribution by acquainting other nations with Slovene culture, art, science and Slovene political conditions. They also made a great many different acquaintances and friendships, some of which have been preserved to the present day.

POVZETEK

SLOVENŠKI ŠTUDENTJE V SREDNJI IN VZHODNI EVROPI DO LETA 1918

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Prispevek je prikaz t.im. začasne emigracije slovenskih izobražencev, ki so morali študirati na neslovenskih univerzah vse do leta 1919. Večina slovenskih študentov je sprva obiskovala nemške univerze

na Dunaju in v Gradcu, veliko jih je tam tudi ostalo, zato so se pojavile težnje po obiskovanju slovanskih univerz. Med najbolj cenjenimi in obiskovanimi je bila češka Karlova univerza v Pragi, kamor so hodili predvsem liberalno usmerjeni študentje. Glede na to, da so raziskave o študiju Slovencev na Češkem že bolj ali manj izdelane, se je avtorica osredotočila predvsem na oris želja in usmeritev katoliške strani na Slovenskem, ki si je prizadevala usmerjati dijake v manj liberalna okolja, to je v Galicijo, na univerzi v Krakovu in Lvovu. Kljub širokim propagandnim akcijam so imeli malo uspeha, saj je v Galiciji študiralo zanemarljivo število slovenskih študentov. Med najbolj znanimi Slovenci sta v Krakovu študirala duhovnik Leopold Lenard in umetnostni zgodovinar Vojoslav Molè, vendar sta oba končala študij drugod.

V prispevku je avtorica na kratko omenila tudi prostovoljno odhajanje slovenskih izobražencev v Rusijo, katerih motivov ni mogoče primerjati z motivi slovenskih študentov.