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**BETWEEN LOCAL AND SLAVIC IDENTITY:
EFFORTS TO ORGANISE JOURNALISTIC STRUCTURES
AND COOPERATION AMONG SLAVIC JOURNALISTS
IN THE HABSBURG MONARCHY AT THE TURN
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY***

Abstract

This article explores the path of local journalistic associations in the Slavic countries of the Habsburg Monarchy towards international cooperation, formalised in 1898 at the First Congress of Slavic Journalists. The initiative to organise meetings of Slavic journalists persisted throughout the following years, up to 1912, and, in 1902, led to the establishment of a joint international organisation of Slavic journalists in Austria-Hungary under the name Central Association of Slavic Journalists. With the emergence of the Neo-Slavic idea, the organisation expanded beyond the borders of the Habsburg Monarchy. It evolved into the Pan-Slavic Association of Journalists, which organised, among other events, the Congresses of Slavic Journalists in Sofia in 1910 and in Belgrade in 1911. The article outlines the stages of growing cooperation among Slavic journalists, examines their aims and discussion topics, and highlights divergent interpretations of the idea of Slavic reciprocity among journalists of various national backgrounds – including the national conflicts that ultimately hindered further cooperation.

Keywords: Slavic identity, Slavic cooperation, Habsburg Monarchy, history of the press, journalists

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The second half of the nineteenth century saw a rapid growth of the press across Europe, including in the Habsburg Monarchy. This was tied to advancements in printing techniques, the rise of press agencies, the widespread use of the telegraph, and the social demand spurred by the development of mass politics, which now reached beyond the intelligentsia and property-owning groups to encompass, with the overcoming of illiteracy, the lower classes, whom the newly established parties targeted with their newspapers. Amid modernisation, the press in the Slavic countries of the Habsburg Monarchy faced new challenges driven by ideological developments in Austrian-Hungarian politics and in Europe more broadly. A key challenge for the Slavs was the emergence of Pan-German ideas, which affected the Austrian German community and were in conflict with the Czechs, as well as the rise of Magyarisation policies aimed at the Slavic nationalities in Hungary. In response to these threats, Slavic journalists in the Habsburg Monarchy, who had initially integrated into single-nation journalistic associations with a self-help or social focus, gradually began to seek ways to collaborate across national lines.

Members of the intellectual elite across the lands of Austria-Hungary played a pivotal role in integrating Slavic journalism. These individuals included not only editors of periodicals but also highly regarded writers and scientists who maintained contacts due to their work or travel. They played a significant role in shaping cooperation among Slavic journalists on the eve of the First World War and, after its end, in sustaining these relationships in the new geopolitical reality.

CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH

This article will explore the local journalistic structures across the different Slavic lands of the Habsburg Monarchy and will trace their evolution towards transnational cooperation. Until now, this issue has been approached from a particularistic perspective within the national historiographies of specific countries. In general, publications on the history of individual journalistic associations in the Habsburg Slavic lands have largely overlooked international cooperation. The oldest Czech journalistic organisation – the Association of Czech Journalists [*Spolek českých žurnalistů*] – was the first to have its history described by Josef Vejvara.¹

¹ Josef Vejvara, *Historie spolku českých žurnalistů* (Praha, 1927).

The trajectories of this and other Czech journalistic organisations have also been discussed in the monograph by Vladimír Hudec² and in the article by Barbara Köpplová and Jan Jiráček.³ Concerning Polish journalistic organisations in Galicia, the only work on the Society of Polish Journalists [*Towarzystwo Dziennikarzy Polskich*] in Lviv was produced by Alfred Toczek.⁴ The history of the Polish Literary Association [*Związek Literacki Polski*] in Vienna is still unexplored. In Croatian historiography, Srećko Lipovčan⁵ and Ida Čubelić Pilija⁶ have documented the history of the Association of Croatian Journalists [*Hrvatsko novinarsko društvo*]. The history of the Slovenian journalistic-literary organisation, initially established as the Society of Slovenian Writers and Journalists [*Društvo slovenskih književnikov in časnikarjev*] and later renamed the Society of Slovenian Journalists [*Društvo slovenskih časnikarjev*],⁷ remains unexamined. The Lviv Society of Ruthenian Journalists [*Общество русских журналистовъ*] has not been studied either.

The organisations mentioned above gradually deepened their cooperation around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; initially, they formed the Central Association of Slavic Journalists [*Ústřední svaz slovenských novinářů*] based in Prague, which was subsequently transformed into the Pan-Slavic Association of Journalists [*Všeslovanský svaz novinářů*]. To date, only the role of Polish journalists in these two transnational organisations⁸ and their interactions with

² Vladimír Hudec, *Z historie naší novinářské organizace* (Praha, 1987), 17–30.

³ Barbara Köpplová and Jan Jiráček, 'Počátky spolkového života českých novinářů', *Acta Musei Nationalis Pragae – Historia litterarum*, liii, 1–4 (2008), 27–33.

⁴ Alfred Toczek, 'Towarzystwo Dziennikarzy Polskich we Lwowie (1893–1918)', in Jerzy Jarowiecki (ed.), *Kraków–Lwów: książki, czasopisma, biblioteki XIX i XX wieku*, vol. 6, p. 2 (Kraków, 2003), 125–40.

⁵ Srećko Lipovčan, 'Društvo novinara između interesa javnosti i zahtjeva vlasti', in *Spomenica Hrvatskog novinarskog društva 1910.–2000*. (Zagreb, 2000), 31–60.

⁶ Ida Čubelić Pilija, 'Zamisli o udruzi i pripreve za osnivanje', in Mario Bošnjak, Ida Čubelić Pilija, Ante Gavranović, Srećko Lipovčan, and Božidar Novak (eds), *HND – prvo stoljeće, Hrvatsko novinarsko društvo 1910.–2010*. (Zagreb, 2010), 21–54.

⁷ It is important to mention the memoirs of one of the society's founders, Rasto Pustoslavšek, 'Začetki stanovske organizacije slovenskih novinarjev (Memoarski oris)', in *Razstava Slovenskega novinarstva v Ljubljani* (Ljubljana, 1937), 243–62.

⁸ Adam Świątek, 'Polacy w Centralnym Związku Dziennikarzy Słowiańskich i Wszechsłowiańskim Związku Dziennikarzy', *Galicja. Studia i Materiały*, 10 (2024), 422–41.

Czech journalists,⁹ – who were the key influencers of the initiative's ideological stance – have been examined. From its inception, the association took charge of organising nearly annual Congresses of Slavic Journalists. These gatherings were held in Prague (1898),¹⁰ Kraków (1899),¹¹ Dubrovnik (1901),¹² Ljubljana (1902),¹³ Plzeň (1903),¹⁴ Opatija and Volosko (1905), Uherské Hradiště (1906),¹⁵ then again Ljubljana (1908), and, outside the Habsburg Monarchy but with Austro-Hungarian Slavs in attendance, in Sofia (1910),¹⁶ Belgrade (1911), and finally, just before the First World War, again in Prague (1912). The literature has addressed some of these congresses, usually focusing either on the involvement of journalists from specific nationalities in this international initiative or on the press of a given nation's opinions towards the congresses or other

⁹ Id., 'Kontakty polskich i czeskich środowisk prasowych na przełomie XIX i XX wieku w kontekście współpracy dziennikarzy słowiańskich jako nierozpoznany problem badawczy', *Historia Slavorum Occidentis*, xv, 2 (2025), 169–201.

¹⁰ Damir Agičić, 'Hrvatski tisak o proslavi stote obljetnice rođenja Františka Palackoga i Prvom kongresu slavenskih novinara Austro-Ugarske u Pragu 1898. godine', in Ivo Goldstein, Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević and Marijan Matićka (eds), *Spomenica Ljube Bobana 1933.–1994.* (Zagreb, 1996), 223–35; Adam Świątek, 'Polacy na uroczystościach ku czci Františka Palackiego i I Zjeździe Dziennikarzy Słowiańskich w Pradze w 1898 roku', *Galicja. Studia i Materiały*, 6 (2020), 450–91.

¹¹ Slaven Kale, "Poljaci, naša braća na sjeveru". *Hrvatska javnost o Poljacima 1860–1903* (Zagreb, 2019), 39–53; Adam Świątek, 'II Zjazd Dziennikarzy Słowiańskich w Krakowie w 1899 roku', *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne*, cxlvii, 2: *Współpraca Słowian i jej zwolennicy w Europie Środkowej i na Bałkanach w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku*, ed. Antoni Cetnarowicz and Adam Świątek (2020), 375–99.

¹² Kale, "Poljaci, naša braća na sjeveru", 53–73.

¹³ Irena Gantar Godina, 'Ljubljana – gostiteljica 4. vseslovenskega časnikarskega kongresa maja 1902', *Kronika*, 1, 3 (2002), 375–84.

¹⁴ Jaroslav Douša, 'Sjezd slovanských novinářů v Plzni v roce 1903', in Zdeněk Hojda, Marta Ottlová and Roman Prahel (eds), "Slavne slavně slávu Slávův slavných". *Slovanství a česká kultura 19. století. Sborník příspěvků z 25. symposia k problematice 19. století, Plzeň, 24.–26. února 2005* (Praha, 2006), 92–4.

¹⁵ Blanka Rašticová, 'Sjezd slovanských novinářů v Uherském Hradišti', *Slovácko*, xxxviii (1996), 209–12.

¹⁶ Damir Agičić, 'Hrvati i slavenski kongresi u Sofiji 1910. godine', in *Българи и хървати през вековете*, book 2: *Материали от конференцията, проведена в София (20–22 май 2001)* (София, 2003), 172–84; Кирил Илиев, 'Неославянското движение и Деветият конгрес на славянските журналисти в София', in Тина Георгиева and Юра Константинова (eds), *Русия: погледи от Балканите (XIX–XX в.)* (София, 2023), 272–86.

nationalities.¹⁷ The one article that provides a brief overview of all the congresses was written by Yevgeny Firsov.¹⁸ The cooperation among Slavic journalists was also mentioned in passing in works exploring the phenomenon known as Neo-Slavism,¹⁹ which emerged at the close of the first decade of the twentieth century and sought to create a common, and this time political front, among Slavic nationalities against German-Hungarian dominance in the region.

NATIONAL JOURNALISTIC ORGANISATIONS IN THE HABSBURG MONARCHY

However, neither the integration of journalists nor efforts to build cooperation among editors of different nationalities would have been possible without the prior development of press institutions in the Habsburg Monarchy's crown lands. The history of journalistic organisations in the Habsburg Monarchy dates back to 1859, when, in Vienna, to mark the centenary of the birth of German poet Friedrich Schiller, the self-help journalists' association 'Concordia' was established. The key mission of the organisation was to help German journalists in Austria and their families in need (e.g., after the death of a journalist who was the sole breadwinner).²⁰ It was the Viennese organisation's model that inspired the establishment of similar societies among the Habsburg Slavs.

¹⁷ Cf. Irena Gantar Godina, *Neoslavizem in Slovenci* (Ljubljana, 1994), 71–85, 133–42, 163–7, 169–72; Damir Agičić, 'Slavenski novinarski kongresi 1903–1908. godine', in Mirjana Matjević Sokol (ed.), *Spomenica Filipa Potrebiće* (Zagreb, 2004), 321–30; Kale, 'Poljaci, naša braća na sjeveru', 39–73; Adam Świątek, 'Udział Polaków w Zjazdach Dziennikarzy Słowiańskich przed I wojną światową', in Antoni Cetnarowicz (ed.), *Słowiańska wspólnota? Relacje między Słowianami w Europie Środkowej i Południowo-Wschodniej w XIX w.* (Kraków, 2024), 143–206.

¹⁸ Евгений Фирсов, 'Съезды славянских журналистов (1898–1912)', in *Славянское движение XIX–XX веков: съезды, конгрессы, совещания, манифесты, обращения* (Москва, 1988), 147–70.

¹⁹ Cf. Paul Vyšný, *Neo-Slavism and the Czechs 1898–1914* (Cambridge, 1977); Antoni Giza, *Neoslawizm a Polacy 1906–1910* (Szczecin, 1984); Paweł Piotr Wieczorkiewicz, 'Udział Polaków w ruchu neosłowiańskim a stosunki polityczne polsko-rosyjskie (1908–1910)', *Pamiętnik Słowiański*, 28 (1978), 133–68.

²⁰ *Zur Geschichte des Wiener Journalisten- und Schriftsteller-Vereines Concordia 1859–1884* (Wien, 1884), 3–12.

The first of them was the Association of Czech Journalists, founded in 1877. The catalyst for its creation was the death of the 35-year-old journalist František Šimeček, which left his family without any means of support.²¹ Over time, the organisation expanded beyond its initial self-help functions to take on representative roles. In 1898, it was invited to join the International Union of Press Associations, becoming a member three years later, and from 1902, it co-founded the Central Association of Slavic Journalists.²² Initially, the association counted only 44 members,²³ but over time its membership doubled (85 members in 1918).²⁴ However, the organisation's numerical growth was constrained by its desire to maintain exclusivity (age limit, substantial entry fee), which eventually led to the creation of competing Czech journalistic associations, such as the Union of Czech, and later Czechoslovak, Journalists [*Jednota českých/československých novinářů*] in 1902, or the Syndicate of Prague Journalists [*Syndikát pražských deníkářů*] in 1911. There were also local organisations like the Association of Journalists of Plzeň [*Sdružení českých novinářů v Plzni*] and the Association of Journalists of Moravia and Silesia [*Sdružení českých novinářů Moravy a Slezska*].

In Galicia, the earliest journalistic association to emerge was the Mutual Aid Society of Polish Journalists [*Towarzystwo Wzajemnej Pomocy Dziennikarzy Polskich*] in Lviv. Its statute was drafted in 1892, and its activities began the following year. Teofil Merunowicz, a politician and journalist, became its first president. The Society had the first opportunity to showcase its activities during the Second Congress of Writers and Journalists, held in Lviv in 1894. In 1895, the association was renamed the Society of Polish Journalists [*Towarzystwo Dziennikarzy Polskich*] and operated under this name until the end of the monarchy. Initially, it had 50 members (as of 1895), and over time it grew: by 1912, it counted 64 regular members. Like its Czech counterpart, it also introduced age limits.²⁵ In 1897, the Society joined the International Union of Press Associations, and in 1902, it co-founded the Central Association of Slavic Journalists. In 1909, the Lviv society

²¹ Vejvara, *Historie spolku*, 9.

²² Jiráček and Köpplová, 'Počátky spolkového života', 31–2.

²³ Vejvara, *Historie spolku*, 14.

²⁴ Jiráček and Köpplová, 'Počátky spolkového života', 30.

²⁵ Toczek, 'Towarzystwo Dziennikarzy Polskich', 125–9, 136–8.

was one of the organisers of the inter-partition Association of Polish Journalists [*Centralny Związek Dziennikarzy Polskich*].²⁶ Following the society's name change, Liberat Zajączkowski was elected the first president of the Society of Polish Journalists. After his death in 1901, Adam Krechowicki, editor of the daily *Gazeta Lwowska* and novelist, succeeded him and held the position until 1918.²⁷ The Society of Polish Journalists provided financial aid, organised jubilees, defended 'freedom of speech', supported journalists during court trials, lobbied for the abolition of the so-called newspaper stamp [*Zeitungsstempel*],²⁸ campaigned for the construction of a telephone line from Vienna to Lviv, and sought to establish a correspondence office in Kraków. In addition to the Society of Polish Journalists in Lviv, the Syndicate of Kraków Journalists [*Syndykat Dziennikarzy Krakowskich*] was established in 1912, but its activities fall outside the scope of this study.²⁹

Another Polish journalistic organization was the Polish Literary Association, founded in 1904 by correspondents of the Polish press who lived permanently or temporarily in Vienna. The organization was also known as the Literary Circle [*Koło Literackie*]. A key role in its founding was played by the comedy writer and Viennese correspondent for Polish newspapers in Warsaw and Saint Petersburg, Stefan Krzywoszewski.³⁰

Based on the current state of research, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive history of the Society of Ruthenian Journalists. The organization's statute was prepared in 1902, and it began operating in 1903³¹. It soon joined the Central Union of Slavic Journalists. Osip

²⁶ Id., 'Związek Dziennikarzy Polskich we Lwowie (1909–1914)', in Halina Kosętko (ed.), *Kraków–Lwów: książki, czasopisma, biblioteki*, vol. 7 (Kraków, 2005), 428–43.

²⁷ Toczek, 'Towarzystwo Dziennikarzy Polskich', 126, 129.

²⁸ The newspaper stamp was a form of tax on printed copies of newspapers, which increased the costs of their production and sale. Introduced in the Habsburg Monarchy during the reign of Joseph II, it was abolished during the 1848 revolution, reinstated in 1857, and remained in effect until 1900. Numerous press and political circles campaigned for its abolition. Cf. Thomas Olechowski, *Die Entwicklung des Presserechts in Österreich bis 1918. Ein Beitrag zur österreichischen Medienrechtsgeschichte* (Wien, 2004), 187–9, 287–8, 367, 421–2, 498–500.

²⁹ Jerzy Jastrzębski, 'Syndykat Dziennikarzy Krakowskich 1912–1939', *Studia Środkowoeuropejskie i Bałkanistyczne*, 28 (2019), 39–48.

³⁰ Romas Taborski, *Polacy w Wiedniu* (Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków, 1992), 121.

³¹ 'Towarzystwo dziennikarzy ruskich', *Słowo Polskie*, 608 (1902), 4; 'Towarzystwo dziennikarzy ruskich', *Gazeta Narodowa*, 35 (1903), 2.

Markov became its first chairman. Notably, these Ruthenians were aligned with Russophile sentiments, favoured close cooperation with Russia and sometimes even identified as Russians.³²

The Society of Slovenian Writers and Journalists [*Društvo slovenskih književnikov in časnikarjev*] was founded in 1905, at the initiative of Fran Govekar. That same year, the organisation joined the Central Association of Slavic Journalists, and, in 1907, it was involved in organising the grand celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the birth of Primož Trubar, a Renaissance-era Protestant clergyman, writer, and translator of the Bible into Slovenian. The celebrations took place in 1908, and their programme included the Slavic journalistic congress in Ljubljana as one of the jubilee events.³³ In 1909, the Society shifted its focus exclusively to journalism, renaming itself the Society of Slovenian Journalists [*Društvo slovenskih časnikarjev*].

At the outset, Croatian journalists were organised within the Society of Croatian Writers [*Društvo hrvatskih književnika*], which established a journalistic section in 1900. However, in 1907, a few journalists (Mile Maravić, Dragan Krvarić, Mirko Dečak, and Ferdinand Pajas) took efforts to establish a separate entity. The Society of Croatian Journalists [*Hrvatsko novinarsko društvo*], conceived as an association of newspaper editors representing various political backgrounds, was officially established in late 1910. It initially included 30 men and one woman (Marija Jurić-Zagorka), but after numerous Croatian newspapers were invited to join, it soon expanded to 53 members. Their purpose was to improve the social status and authority of journalists, which was considered essential for the press to fulfil its mission for the nation.³⁴

THE FIRST CONGRESSES OF SLAVIC JOURNALISTS

The first step in establishing institutional cooperation was to foster direct relationships among staff members of prominent periodicals from across the Habsburg Monarchy. This was prompted by the elaborate

³² A prominent figure in this milieu was Dmitriy Vergun, who not only wrote in Russian but also published the neo-Slavic newspaper *Slavianskiy vek* [*Славянский векъ*]. He was even arrested in 1897 for his activities on behalf of Russia, and 10 years later he ultimately relocated to the Russian Empire.

³³ Damir Globočnik, 'Trubarjev spomenik v Ljubljani', *Zgodovinski časopis*, lxxiv, 3–4 (162) (2020), 390–3, 403–7.

³⁴ Lipovčan, 'Društvo novinara', 32–7; Čubelić Pilija, 'Zamisli o udruzi', 22–8.

centennial celebrations honouring the birth of František Palacký. In addition to laying the foundation stone for the monument to this Czech national activist, the First Congress of Slavic Journalists was also held on 19 June 1898, along with balls, performances, and parades.³⁵ Notably, that year also marked the 50th anniversary of the Prague Slavic Congress held during the Springtime of Nations (1848). Therefore, the congress was not organised by chance, and the historical and ideological references guided the congress participants towards the concept of Slavic reciprocity, championed by Palacký and introduced at the Slavic Congress in 1848.³⁶ The congress was inaugurated by Emil Bretter as the chairman of the Association of Czech Journalists. During the sessions, the journalists in attendance reported on the progress and restrictions on press freedom in their respective countries. The congress concluded with six resolutions, which highlighted the necessity of cooperation, condemned the persecution of the Slavic press, and furthermore announced cooperation to establish a Slavic correspondence office and to form a Slavic journalistic organisation.³⁷ It is clear that efforts to establish a joint journalistic organisation began at the very first gathering of Slavic journalists, and this issue was revisited at the following congress.

The Second Congress of Slavic Journalists was held in Kraków from 23 to 25 September 1899.³⁸ Emil Bretter, the editor of *Politik*, was appointed as its chairman, with Platon Kostecki from the Lviv democratic newspaper *Gazeta Narodowa* as the second deputy. During the congress, an issue emerged regarding the invitation of Slovak journalists,³⁹ who were banned by Austrian authorities from giving papers. One of the key achievements of this congress was the adoption

³⁵ *Sjezd slovanských novinářův v Praze* (Praha, 1899).

³⁶ 'Slavic reciprocity' has never been clearly defined. The leading Slavophiles of the Romantic era, such as Ján Kollár, Pavol Jozef Šafárik, Adam Mickiewicz, Ľudovít Štúr or the aforementioned František Palacký, had varying understandings of 'Slavic reciprocity'. Slavic journalists invoked Palacký only as a symbol, and his views were not regarded in definite or precise terms as the sole basis for their cooperation.

³⁷ Ibid., 80–3; Świątek, 'Polacy na uroczystościach', 474–5.

³⁸ *II. Zjazd Dziennikarzy Słowiańskich w Krakowie* (Kraków, 1900).

³⁹ The Slovak delegation was small, comprising just four members, primarily representing the newspaper *Národné noviny*. However, the highlight was the invitation of Svetozár Hurban-Vajanský, a Russophile, to deliver a lecture.

of a resolution on 'Slavic reciprocity', aimed at being achieved through the establishment of the already mentioned Slavic correspondence office, the founding of a journal dedicated to Slavic affairs, and, most importantly, the establishment of the Association of Slavic Journalists. This last proposal came to fruition during the Third Congress of Slavic Journalists, held in Dubrovnik, on 8 and 9 April 1901. The congress resolved to begin drafting the statute for the future Association of Slavic Journalists.

CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF SLAVIC JOURNALISTS

The statute of the newly formed organisation was prepared by Czech journalists and approved by state authorities on 14 May 1902.⁴⁰ The entity was composed of delegates from journalistic societies. According to its statute, the organisation's goal was to promote cooperation among Slavic journalists from the Habsburg Monarchy in journalistic matters, while excluding political, religious, or national issues. Its primary role was to organise congresses, with attendance henceforth restricted to individuals authorised by societies affiliated with the association.⁴¹

The association's operations were formally launched during the Fourth Congress of Slavic Journalists, held on 18 and 19 May 1902 in Ljubljana. The new organisation consisted of members from the Lviv Society of Polish Journalists and from the three Czech societies: the Association of Czech Journalists, the Association of Journalists of Plzeň, and the Association of Journalists of Moravia and Silesia. Michał Chyliński (the editor of *Czas*, a Polish conservative daily) was elected president, and Josef Holeček (journalist of the Czech newspaper *Národní listy*) its vice-president.⁴²

As evidenced by the records of the Lviv Society of Polish Journalists, the Czech side alone drafted the first statute. This included provisions

⁴⁰ *Stanovy Ústředního svazu novinářů slovenských* (Praha, 1902).

⁴¹ *Sprawozdania Towarzystwa Dziennikarzy Polskich we Lwowie za czas od dnia 1. kwietnia 1902 roku do dnia 30. kwietnia 1903 roku, wraz ze szkicem pierwszego 10-lecia Towarzystwa przedłożone Walnemu Zgromadzeniu Członków w dniu 10. maja 1903 r.* (Lwów, 1903), 6–7.

⁴² *Zpráva Ústředního svazu slovanských novinářů za rok 1902–1903* (Praha, 1903), 5; *Sprawozdania Towarzystwa Dziennikarzy Polskich*, 6.

that did not sit well with the Poles who were primarily concerned with the Czechs' overly dominant position in the Association. While Polish journalism was represented by only one journalistic association, the Czechs had several of them, which gave them an advantage in leading the new organisation, despite the fact that the presidency was held by a Pole, i.e., Chyliński. Additionally, there were fears that the Association's leadership might arbitrarily intervene in conflicts between journalists of different nationalities, and that only editors with sufficiently long experience should be allowed to join the Central Association of Slavic Journalists to prevent undesirable individuals from enrolling. Therefore, in early 1903, the leadership of the Central Association of Slavic Journalists appointed a committee to review proposals for amending the statute. These suggestions were to be discussed during the 1903 congress, but no information on this matter can be found in the official congress publications, suggesting that the statute likely continued in effect without modifications.⁴³

Throughout its first year of existence, the Association of Slavic Journalists made efforts to bring in journalists of other Slavic nationalities. Invitations were extended to Southern Slavs and Galician Ruthenians. The latter joined the ranks of the organisation after founding the Society of Ruthenian Journalists.

Formally, according to its report, in the first year of existence, the Association of Slavic Journalists had 59 members from the Society of Polish Journalists, 70 members from the Association of Czech Journalists, 50 members from the Union of Czech Journalists, six members from the Association of Journalists of Plzeň, 10 members from the Association of Journalists of Moravia and Silesia, and 13 journalists from the Lviv Society of Ruthenian Journalists, i.e. 207 members in total. Additionally, a journalist from Olomouc was granted membership.⁴⁴

Beyond organising subsequent congresses, the association's leadership took steps to set up a Slavic correspondence office as a counterbalance to the Austrian German-dominated Vienna Correspondence Office [*k.k. Telegraphen-Korrespondenz Bureau*].

Another congress was held in Plzeň, from 30 May to 2 June 1903. Among other topics, participants discussed the reform of press law in Austria, a subject on which journalists could not reach an agreement,

⁴³ Świątek, 'Kontakty polskich i czeskich środowisk', 180–1.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

as well as the need to compile a Slavic topographical dictionary.⁴⁵ After the congress, elections were held for the new association authorities, with Chyliński remaining president and Holeček re-elected as his deputy. It was also decided that some meetings of the association's leadership, which was formally headquartered in Prague, would henceforth be held not only in Czech cities but also in Lviv.⁴⁶ However, it is difficult to confirm whether such meetings were actually held in the Galician capital. Given the numerically dominant Czech side, gatherings usually took place in Czech cities, with only a small number of Polish and Ruthenian representatives attending. The situation did not change much after a minor adjustment in 1904, which slightly shifted the national proportions within the association in favour of the Poles. Back then, the Society of Polish Journalists had 70 seats, the Association of Czech Journalists had 60, the Union of Czech Journalists had 50, the Association of Journalists of Moravia and Silesia had 14, and the Association of Journalists of Plzeň had six, making a total of 130 Czechs. Additionally, there were 14 Ruthenians from the Society of Ruthenian Journalists. In total, at that time, the Central Association of Slavic Journalists consisted of 214 members. It is unclear whether the second Polish organisation – the Association of Polish Writers in Vienna – joined the Central Association of Slavic Journalists in 1904 or in 1905.

The following congress, held from 14 to 16 May 1905, in Opatija and Volosko in Dalmatia, took place in the midst of significant geopolitical developments: Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War and the outbreak of the 1905 Revolution in the Russian Empire. Despite this, in keeping with its guidelines, the association and subsequent congresses continued to steer clear of political matters. Rather than reacting to these pivotal political events, congress participants focused more on social and recreational pursuits, encouraged by the picturesque scenery and the tourist and health infrastructure of the Adriatic resort. A novel feature at the congress was the reading of reports on the activities of individual Slavic journalistic organisations, which offered members insights into the structures and operations of each society.

The Seventh Congress of Slavic Journalists took place on 8 and 9 September 1906, in the small town of Uherské Hradiště in Moravia.

⁴⁵ Rajmund Cejnek, *Sjezd slovanských novinářů v Plzni* (Praha, 1903), 47–8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

The location evoked a sense of proximity to Slovak lands, where it was impossible to organise the congress due to the lack of support from Hungarian authorities – a concern frequently voiced by journalists. More importantly, it was held near Velehrad, the legendary (though archaeologically unsubstantiated) capital of the Great Moravian state, where Saint Methodius, the apostle of the Slavs, was believed to have died. Despite this historical setting, political issues were once again left unaddressed, and the press paid little attention to the proceedings, unlike earlier congresses.

PAN-SLAVIC ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS

The situation was about to change with the Eighth Congress of Slavic Journalists in Ljubljana, held on 8 and 9 September 1908. This congress took place less than two months after the Second Prague Slavic Congress, which had led to key agreements aimed at strengthening Slavic cooperation across political, social, and cultural spheres. Some journalists who had attended previous congresses were present at this event,⁴⁷ along with Russians. One of the key issues at stake was the effort to broker a Polish-Russian agreement. Therefore, the Prague meeting gave new momentum to the Ljubljana congress, fostering cooperation among Slavic journalists. The congress primarily voiced its solidarity with the resolutions of the Prague meeting and resolved to implement the idea put forward in Uherské Hradiště in 1906: transforming the Central Association of Slavic Journalists into an organisation extending beyond the borders of the Habsburg Monarchy.⁴⁸ While Austrian Poles hoped this reorganisation would include Poles from the Polish territories under German and Russian control, ultimately this change also resulted in inviting journalists from the Balkans (Serbia, Bulgaria) and Russia to cooperate.

The association was renamed the Pan-Slavic Association of Journalists and, although its statute was adopted on 26 December 1908,⁴⁹ it officially commenced its activities on 15 May 1909. At its inception,

⁴⁷ Giza, *Neoslawizm a Polacy*, 104.

⁴⁸ *Sprawozdanie Towarzystwa Dziennikarzy Polskich we Lwowie za czas od 10. maja 1906 do dnia 7. kwietnia 1907 roku przedłożone Walnemu Zgromadzeniu Członków w dniu 7. kwietnia 1907 r.* (Lwów, 1907), 10–11.

⁴⁹ *Stanovy Všeslovanského svazu novinářů* (Praha, 1909).

the entity had 280 members, representing various organisations, including: the Association of Czech Journalists – 75 members, the Society of Polish Journalists – 63 members, the Union of Czechoslovak Journalists – 54 members, the Society of Ruthenian Journalists – eight members, the Association of Czech Journalists of Moravia and Silesia – 17 members, the Association of Polish Writers in Vienna – 23 members, and the Society of Slovenian Writers and Journalists – 40 members.⁵⁰ Notably, the new organisation was chaired not by Chyliński, but by Josef Holeček, a Czech Slavophile, with Kazimierz Ostaszewski-Barański as his deputy.⁵¹ Holeček had been one of the key promoters of Slavic journalistic cooperation from the very beginning, and now, as he formally headed the organisation, its operations would expand to Slavic countries beyond the Habsburg Monarchy's borders. However, the Poles withdrew from the initiative as a result.

The Pan-Slavic Association of Journalists sought to organise its upcoming congress in Zagreb and Warsaw, but when this attempt failed, the meeting was instead held in Sofia, where it was notably influenced by the actions of Karel Kramář, a Czech neo-Slavist activist. The Ninth Congress of Slavic Journalists took place from 4 to 6 July 1910, preceding the Slavic Congress held in the Bulgarian capital. Additionally, Holeček extended invitations to the congress to Russian journalists, including editors of nationalist newspapers, which led to the formal withdrawal of the Association of Polish Journalists' delegation from the congress. During the congress, discussions centred on the need to establish a Slavic correspondence office, and an executive committee was even appointed to implement this idea. However, the committee consisted of delegates from all Slavic nationalities, with the exception of the Poles. Despite the absence of the Polish delegation in Sofia, Polish journalists were appointed *in absentia* to a new term in the leadership of the Pan-Slavic Association of Journalists. In practice, however, the Czech Slavophiles, led by Josef Holeček, persisted in advancing their vision of building Slavic cooperation among journalists, while the Polish contingent lost its influence, further exacerbating mutual animosities.

⁵⁰ VIII. Sjezd ústředního Svazu slovanských novinářů v Lublani ve dnech 8. a 9. září r. 1908 (Praha, [1908]), 34.

⁵¹ Ibid., 34; *Sprawozdanie Towarzystwa Dziennikarzy Polskich we Lwowie za czas od 12. kwietnia 1908 do 25. kwietnia 1909 przedłożone Walnemu Zgromadzeniu Członków w dniu 25. kwietnia 1909 r.* (Lwów, 1909), 11.

The next, Tenth Congress of Slavic Journalists was again held outside Austria-Hungary, in Belgrade, from 10 to 14 July 1911. This time, too, no official Polish delegation from the Association of Polish Journalists was present (although a few Poles did attend the congress), and the reason for this was the renewed invitation extended to Russian journalists, whom the Poles accused of chauvinism.⁵² Controversies arose once again, this time regarding the playing of national anthems at the banquet, including the Russian one. While Poles were again elected to the leadership of the association, the gesture proved nominal, as they did not reengage in cooperation with the Czechs. The most unmistakable evidence of this can be found in the proceedings of the last congress held before the First World War, the Eleventh Congress of Slavic Journalists, which was held in Prague from 29 June to 3 July 1912. This time the Poles again refrained from participation. The Congress's failure was further underscored by its inability to achieve the primary objective of the joint journalistic organisation – the establishment of the Slavic correspondence office. Thus, the attempt to unify the informational interests of the Slavic nationalities within the Habsburg Monarchy – an effort that could have been facilitated by the establishment of a correspondence office as a conduit for information between Slavic newspapers across the various crown lands, without the mediation of the German-language Vienna agency – ultimately failed.

CONCLUSION

It is important to emphasise that the aforementioned Polish-Russian clash was not solely bilateral, nor was it the only conflict to emerge during congresses. Notably, the concept of Slavic reciprocity was understood differently by the Poles and the other Slavs, in particular the Czechs. Having endured the Russification policies in the Kingdom of Poland, the Poles unequivocally advocated for Slavic rapprochement based on full equality. They rejected efforts to unify the policies of all Slavic nationalities, fearing subordination to Russia, which sought to impose the concept of the 'Slavic world [*mir*]' under its leadership.

⁵² *Sprawozdanie Towarzystwa Dziennikarzy Polskich we Lwowie za czas od 7. kwietnia 1911 do 9. kwietnia 1912 przedłożone Walnemu Zgromadzeniu Członków w dniu 21. kwietnia 1912 r.* (Lwów, 1912), 10.

Although many Polish journalists expressed their views on Slavic cooperation at successive journalistic congresses, Professor Marian Zdziechowski of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, a philologist and Slavist, was the most vocal advocate, often drawing criticism, particularly from Galician Ruthenians of Russophile orientation. The conflict between Poles and Ruthenians from Galicia represented another 'bone of contention' that repeatedly resurfaced during years of journalistic cooperation, alongside the animosities between Serbs and Croats, particularly during the congress in Dubrovnik, and, ultimately, between Poles and Czechs at the final congresses, fuelled by the pro-Russian sentiment of certain key Czech journalistic figures (e.g. Josef Holeček).

It is important to recognise that, despite these disagreements and setbacks, the history of the Congress of Slavic Journalists, along with the two aforementioned Slavic journalistic organisations, illustrates the advancements made by the local press in the Habsburg Monarchy. In fact, by the end of the nineteenth century, the press had pursued almost exclusively national interests, but in the first decade of the twentieth century, it advanced to a higher level of self-organisation and cooperation. A notable success was the launch of a recurring journalistic event, organised in various corners of the Slavic world, each time attended by several dozen to over one hundred journalists. These participants represented not only different crown lands and nationalities but also different worldviews. Some of these individuals also became involved in the joint Pan-Slavic structures. This cooperation led to mutual self-discovery, the recognition of both similarities and contradictions, dialogue, and the establishment of long-lasting relationships. Despite the organisation's setbacks, these connections endured beyond the First World War. In the interwar period, and even after the Second World War, the idea of Slavic journalistic cooperation was revisited several times; several Congresses of Slavic Journalists were held, but they lacked the same significance as their predecessors.

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