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## Croatian Students towards Other Slavic Student Communities from Vienna, Prague, and Graz at the Turn of the 20th Century

**Abstract:** At the turn of the 20th century, almost a third of Croatian students studied at universities and technical colleges of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Croatian academic youth were in contact and cooperated with students of other, mostly Slavic nationalities. Their networking was usually motivated by the same ideological platform. The present paper aims to shed some light on the social connections of Croatian students studying in university centres like Vienna, Prague, and Graz, with their Slavic colleagues (Slovenian, Czech, Serb, Bulgarian, Polish, Ruthenian, and Slovak students) based on the data from the private sources and articles from contemporary student journals.

**Key words:** student societies, history of universities, Austro-Hungarian Empire, history of Central Europe, late 19th century, early 20th century

### Introduction

Over the centuries students from the Croatian lands traditionally studied abroad, at universities throughout Europe, especially at the Apennine peninsula and at the universities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>1</sup> Crucial motives were the lack of

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some faculties in Zagreb,<sup>2</sup> the laws regulating the reciprocity of universities, the high quality of education, contemporary politics, the curiosity of the young, etc. An integral part of academic life abroad was sociability, including student societies. There were dozens of Croatian academic societies across the Empire. Within these societies, Croatian academic youth contacted and cooperated with students of other, mostly Slavic nationalities. This paper aims to examine these contacts in three university centres, Vienna, Prague, and Graz, where Croats studied in the largest number.<sup>3</sup>

According to Austrian statistics, more than half of the student population at Austrian universities in the winter semester of 1909/1910 were Slavic students.<sup>4</sup> Numerical scope of the Croatian student enrolment at the universities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire can be seen as an example for the academic year 1905/1906: total number of Croatian students that studied across the Monarchy was 423. In the same year at the Royal University of Francis Joseph I in Zagreb 1,092 students were enrolled, which means that almost a third of Croatian students studied abroad. In these proportions, the University of Vienna and Vienna colleges took primacy with 52%.<sup>5</sup>

This paper is focused on contacts and networking amongst foreign students at the Austro-Hungarian universities that represented a meeting point of multinational society. Of course, the work is limited to segments that are available through the research of private sources and contemporary student journals.<sup>6</sup> The study does not pretend to provide a complete picture of the situation in circumstances of the time.

When discussing the theme of student societies, we need to keep in mind that Croatian student youth at the turn of the 20th century was divided into three groups based on the different ideological platforms. There was a group of students called Progressive Youth, a liberal group, which was established after their return from

<sup>2</sup> From its foundation in 1874 until 1917, the Royal University of Francis Joseph I in Zagreb consisted of three faculties: Faculty of Law, Faculty of Philosophy, and Faculty of Theology.

<sup>3</sup> A certain number of Croats also studied in other cities of the Monarchy (Budapest, Innsbruck, Krakow, Lviv...), but these are significantly smaller numbers, so the data about these students are rare and sporadic.

<sup>4</sup> G. B. Cohen, *Education and Middle-Class Society in Imperial Austria 1848–1918*, Indiana 1996, p. 278.

<sup>5</sup> T. Luetić, “The Migration and Experiences of Croatian Students at Universities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the Turn of the Century,” in: *The Entangled Histories of Vienna, Zagreb and Budapest (18th–20th Century)*, ed. I. Iveljić, Zagreb 2015, pp. 262–263.

<sup>6</sup> Among the range of youth journals, those used in this article providing the rich source of data are: *Hrvatski djak* vols. 1–5, Zagreb–Prague, 1907–1911; *Mlada Hrvatska*, vols. 1–7, Zagreb 1908–1914; *Luč*, vols. 1–9, Vienna–Zagreb 1905–1913.

Prague, where they had been strongly influenced by Czech professor T. G. Masaryk,<sup>7</sup> with their main press organ at the beginning of the 20th century being *Hrvatski djak*. The supporters of the Party of Right, Croatian nationalist youth, also had a strong presence amongst the Croatian student population. They were called Young Croats (“mladohrvati”) after their publication *Mlada Hrvatska*. The third distinguished faction was a group of Catholic students, as a part of the Croatian Catholic movement, gathered around journal *Luč*.<sup>8</sup>

Hereafter there will be presented a brief overview of Croatian academic societies in three university centres discussed further on in the paper (Vienna, Prague, and Graz). Croatian academic societies in Vienna existed since 1865, when society “Velebit” was founded. Later on, several academic societies were active: “Zvonimir” (established in 1882) with the greatest number of members, Catholic academic society “Hrvatska” (established in 1903), several professional student societies, such as: the Society of Croatian Students of Technical Sciences, the Croatian Medical Student Club, the Club of Croatian Veterinary Science Students, the Society of Agricultural Students “Lipa.” In Vienna, there were also smaller societies based on a regional or religious basis, such as Dalmatian Student Club “Jadran,” a society “Svijest,” in which Muslim students in Vienna were organized, and “Bar-Giora,” to which belonged the Jewish students from South-Slavic countries (among them also those from Croatia). In Vienna there were also Academic Fencing Club “Svačić” and the Croatian Support Society. In Prague, first Croatian academic society called “Hrvatska” was founded in 1876. In the 1890s, during the more significant wave of arrival of the Croatian students, most of them joined the Czech academic society “Slavia” in 1896. However, the following year inside “Slavia” Croatian club was organized. Croatian students at Prague Polytechnic formed the Club of Croatian Students of Technical Sciences. In Graz, Croatian students formed academic society “Hrvatska” (1876) for the purpose of literary activities and amusement. In 1908, a Catholic academic society called “Preporod” was also founded in Graz. Prior to this, Croatian students of Catholic denomination in Graz formed their own club within Slovenian academic society “Zarja.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937), a Czech politician and university professor, a representative in the Imperial Council, and the first president of the Czechoslovak Republic. Extensively about him and his attitude towards the Croats until the First World War, see: D. Agičić, *Hrvatsko-češki odnosi na prijelazu iz XIX. u XX. stoljeće*, Zagreb 2000, pp. 222–242.

<sup>8</sup> T. Luetić, “The Catholic Youth and Student Conflicts at the University of Zagreb in the Early Twentieth Century,” in: *Science and Catholicism in the Universities of South-East Europe 1800 to 1920*, eds. A. Biočić, I. Mršić Felbar, Peter Lang 2023, pp. 45–47.

<sup>9</sup> For more on Croatian academic societies abroad, see: T. Luetić, “The Migration and Experiences of Croatian Students at Universities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the Turn of

## Vienna

The overview of contacts and cooperation between Croatian students and their other Slavic peers began in Vienna at the end of the 19th century, considering the number of Croatian student colonies there<sup>10</sup> and considering the academic, cultural, and social importance of Vienna at the turn of the 20th century.<sup>11</sup> One of the first academic societies of Croatian students in Vienna was the academic society “Zvonimir.”<sup>12</sup> Apart from the official data presented in social reports and journal news, the general social atmosphere is revealed by sources of a private nature. As it can be seen from the diary entries of Velimir Deželić senior, medical student in Vienna, a future writer and lexicographer, “Zvonimir” was not a hermetically closed group. Students from other societies in Vienna attended its meetings, such as ones from the Slovenian society “Slovenia,” Serbian “Zora,” Slovakian “Slovenský akademický spolok Tatran, Viedeň,”<sup>13</sup> Ruthenian “Bukovina.”<sup>14</sup> Particularly close relations were established with Slovenians and Bulgarians. While enjoying a glass

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the Century,” in: *The Entangled Histories of Vienna, Zagreb and Budapest (18th–20th Century)*, ed. I. Iveljić, Zagreb 2015, pp. 278–279.

<sup>10</sup> On Croatian students in Vienna, see: I. Iveljić, “Kroatische Studenten und Professoren in Wien (1790–1918),” in: *The Entangled Histories of Vienna, Zagreb and Budapest (18th–20th Century)*, ed. I. Iveljić, Zagreb 2015, pp. 291–356; V. Švoger, “Students from the small country in the big city: Croats studying in Vienna in the nineteenth century,” *History of education & childrens literature* 2020, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 207–224.

<sup>11</sup> From the rich bibliography on this issue, we select only a few titles: W. M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History 1848–1938*, Berkeley 1972; C. E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, London 1980; J. Neubauer, *The Fin-de-Siècle Culture of Adolescence*, New Haven–London 1992; S. Beller, “The City as Integrator: Immigration, Education and Popular Culture in Vienna, 1880–1938,” *German Politics & Society* 1997, vol. 15, no. 1 (42), pp. 117–139; S. Beller, ed., *Rethinking Vienna 1900*, New York 2001.

<sup>12</sup> About “Zvonimir” extensively see in: B. Vranješ-Šoljan, “Croatian student societies in Vienna,” in: *The Entangled Histories of Vienna, Zagreb and Budapest (18th–20th Century)*, ed. I. Iveljić, Zagreb 2015, pp. 371–377.

<sup>13</sup> About “Tatran” see more in: R. Letz, “Die slowakischen Vereine in Wien und Niederösterreich (1870–1993),” in: *Die unbekannte Minderheit. Slowaken in Wien und Niederösterreich im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. E. Hrabovec, W. Reichel, Frankfurt am Main 2005, p. 38; D. Fleck, *Die Stellung der Slowaken in Österreich – der lange Weg bis zur Anerkennung als eigenständige Volksgruppe*, Diplomarbeit, Universität Wien, Wien 2011, (especially the chapter: “Die slowakischen Vereine in Wien bis 1918”), pp. 52–56.

<sup>14</sup> See Velimir Deželić’s memoirs: *Kakvi smo bili? Zapisi mojoj unučadi*, knj. I, Zagreb 2011, p. 347; T. Luetić, “The Migration and Experiences”, p. 282; T. Luetić, “Velimir Deželić st. i Bugari,” in: *Bugari i Zagreb. Povijest, kultura i politika / Българи и Загреб. История, култура и политика*, eds. D. Karbić, T. Luetić, H. Mihanović-Salopek, Zagreb 2019, p. 70.

of good wine, they “talked about politics, drafted programmes as well as created friendships and camaraderie for future times.” Deželić singled out Croatian friendship with Bulgarian students, who studied there in large numbers.<sup>15</sup> He also wrote about a big manifestation of support in 1885, when Bulgarians were leaving Vienna as volunteers for the Serbo-Bulgarian war. Their Slavic colleagues: Croats, Slovenians, Slovaks, Czechs, Poles, Ruthenians, but also Italians, gathered in the streets of Vienna to see them off. Before the ceremonial send-off in the city, the Croatian students organized a festive party for the Bulgarians, together with Slovenians, Czechs and Slovaks. The party was organized with the participation of the “Zvonimir” *tamburitza* (a string instrument) ensemble. Deželić describes the whole atmosphere as warm and close, with the words that “all men were brothers at that time.”<sup>16</sup> Among other nationalities, Deželić noted contacts with Ruthenian students gathered in their society “Bukovina,” with whom he had got acquainted on “ideological” grounds, since he was interested in nihilism.<sup>17</sup> Journal *Mlada Hrvatska* wrote about Croatian students in Vienna: “Croatian student in Vienna was thrilled with the perspective of creating closer ties between Slavic nations, which was expected, since he was surrounded by many Slovenians, Czechs, Bulgarians ...”<sup>18</sup> Beside formal societies, in the foreign world, in some sense, taverns represented the illusion of home, where students felt a special connection, like in “Arkaden Café” in Vienna, notable as the meeting point of South-Slavic students.<sup>19</sup>

The contacts between Slavic students in Vienna continued at the beginning of the 20th century, especially when it came to relations between South Slavic youth. The cooperation of the societies of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes became increasingly prominent. It was all about the politically progressive youth who had the majority among the immigrant students and among whom the idea of Yugoslavism was in-

<sup>15</sup> About Bulgarian student emigration see in: P. Прешленова, *По рѣтищата на европеизма. Висшето образование в Австро-Унгария и България*, Sofia 2008; R. Preshlenova, “Emancipation through Education: Some Bulgarian Experience since the 19th Century,” in: *The Role of Education and Universities in Modernization Processes in Central and South-Eastern European Countries in 19th and 20th Century*, eds. P. Vodopivec, A. Gabrič, Ljubljana 2011, pp. 53–62; R. Preshlenova, “State, Society and the Educated Elite in Bulgaria, 1878–1918,” in: *Universities and Elite Formation in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe* [Transkulturelle Forschungen an den Österreich-Bibliotheken im Ausland, Bd. 11], eds. F. Bieber, H. Heppner, Wien–Zürich 2015, pp. 13–23.

<sup>16</sup> T. Luetić, “Velimir Deželić ml. i Bugari...,” pp. 72–74; T. Luetić, “The Migration and Experiences...,” p. 281.

<sup>17</sup> T. Luetić, “The Migration and Experiences...,” p. 281.

<sup>18</sup> “Prilike hrvatskog djaštva na visokim školama u Beču,” *Mlada Hrvatska*, vol. 3, no. 6, Zagreb 1910, p. 166.

<sup>19</sup> T. Luetić, “The Migration and Experiences...,” p. 283.

creasingly promulgated.<sup>20</sup> Thus, Yugoslav meetings were organized by the Croatian “Zvonimir,” the Serbian “Zora” and the Slovenian society “Slovenija.” Through lectures, declamations and entertainment, they discussed the cultural, economic, and political situation of individual South Slavic nations.<sup>21</sup> The new Academic Club of Croatian progressive youth in Vienna cooperated mostly with Slovenian students from the academic society “Slovenija” but also with the Ruthenian student society “Bukovina.” They visited lectures and libraries and opened a Russian language course within the Croatian society.<sup>22</sup> The students of agronomy in Vienna had a separate club, and Croatian, Slovenian, and Serbian students rented common rooms where they visited each other.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, this cooperation of Croatian students with Serbs and Slovenes in Vienna was strongly condemned by right-wing Croatian students, centred around “Mlada Hrvatska,” who emphasized that “Slavophilism and Serbophilism are our failures!”<sup>24</sup>

Joint actions with other Slavic students are also mentioned in the studied journals, for example, joint demonstrations of Slavic students in Vienna in November 1907 due to an incident with German colleagues who attacked them for using their native languages on the university premises. With this intention, the Slavic students in Vienna elected their delegates and drew up a statement after the rector of the university gave the right to the Slavic students.<sup>25</sup>

In Vienna there was a strong organization of Catholic academic youth, gathered around the “Hrvatska” society at the beginning of the 20th century, the meeting point of future Croatian Catholic intelligentsia.<sup>26</sup> The student youth of Catholic

<sup>20</sup> The idea of Yugoslavism was created among the students themselves earlier in Prague. Progressive youth saw the danger of German penetration to the Slavic east. They believed that a unique resistance to the German breakthrough can only be insured through joint Slavic cooperation. This is where the idea of the joint actions of Croatian, Serbian, and Slovenian youth came from, opposing the conflict between Croatian and Serbian civil parties in the country. This idea of joint cooperation was developing from the concept of Croatian-Serbian cooperation and acquaintance to the unitary idea that Serbs and Croats are a unique people. Yugoslavism spread especially among young people towards the beginning of the First World War. It was gradually adopted by political circles in the country (M. Gross, “Studentski pokret 1875–1914,” in: *Spomenica u povodu proslave 300-godišnjice Sveučilišta u Zagrebu*, vol. 1, Zagreb 1969, p. 460).

<sup>21</sup> “Jugoslavenski đački sastanci,” *Hrvatski djak*, vol. 1, no. 2, Zagreb 1907, p. 59.

<sup>22</sup> “Klub Hrv. Naprednog akad. djaštva u Beču,” *Hrvatski djak* 1908, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 119–120; “Akademski klub hrv. naprednog djaštva u Beču,” *Hrvatski djak* 1909, vol. 3, no. 6, p. 183.

<sup>23</sup> “Hrvati na bečkoj Bodenkulturi,” *Hrvatski djak* 1909, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 54.

<sup>24</sup> “Pismo iz Beča,” *Mlada Hrvatska* 1908, vol. 2, no. 2, p. 72.

<sup>25</sup> “Život hrvatskog djaštva u Beču,” *Hrvatski djak* 1908, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 26–27.

<sup>26</sup> About society “Hrvatska” see more in: Z. Matijević, “Politička orijentacija Hrvatskog katoličkog pokreta u posljednjim godinama postojanja Austro-Ugarske monarhije i prvim danima stvaranja Kraljevstva SHS (1903.–1918.),” *Društvena istraživanja* 2001, vol. 10, nos. 1–2 (51–52),

denomination showed the greatest activity in networking with students of other Slavic nationalities, above all with Slovenians, Czechs, and Poles. They cooperated primarily through their societies that maintained close ties, and made contacts in the form of mutual visits to social lectures, celebrations and parties. Also the pages of their journals are testimony of their collaborations, where they report on events important to their academic environment. Also, society libraries received magazines and newspapers from other Slavic societies (e.g., the exchange of the Czech magazine *Studentska Hlidka* and Croatian magazine *Luč*). Courses in learning other Slavic languages were also organized. Just as the liberal progressive students in Prague were organized in 1908 at the secretariat level, the Catholic societies in Vienna were organized into the League, and they functioned very similarly only on other ideological bases. There was a specific cooperation of all Catholic academic societies in Vienna networked into the Slavic League of Catholic Students. Croatian Catholic students were represented in that League through their academic society “Hrvatska.” Besides “Hrvatska,” the Slavic League consisted of: the Czech Academic League,<sup>27</sup> the Slovenian academic society “Danica,” the Slovenian society “Zarja” from Graz,<sup>28</sup> Polish academic society in Vienna “Polonia,” the Czech Catholic society the Association of Czech Academicians and together amounted to more than 250 members. The members were expected to be in good acquaintance with one another, learn other Slavic languages, and all libraries and magazines were made available to them. The League also published an almanac and held regular meetings.<sup>29</sup> The one for 1911 was organized in Ljubljana.<sup>30</sup> The aim of

p. 144; A. Božanić, “Djelovanje biskupa Mahnića na formaciji i organizaciji katoličkog laikata do 1912. godine,” in: *Hrvatski katolički pokret, Zbornik radova s Međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa održanog u Zagrebu i Krku od 29. do 31. ožujka 2001.*, ed. Z. Matijević, Zagreb 2002, pp. 279–280; J. Krišto, *Hrvatski katolički pokret 1903.–1945.*, Zagreb 2004, p. 40; T. Luetić, “Časopis Luč o dokolici i društvenom životu katoličke mladeži početkom 20. stoljeća,” *Croatica Christiana periodica* 2012, vol. 36, no. 69, pp. 59–60.

<sup>27</sup> About “Česká liga akademická” see more in: V. Nikolova, *Svatováclavská Liga*, unpublished Bachelor’s thesis, The Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Praha 2021, pp. 10–13.

<sup>28</sup> About Slovenian Catholic societies see more in: V. Melik, P. Vodopivec, “Slovenski izobraženci in avstrijske visoke šole, 1848–1918,” *Zgodovinski časopis* 1986, vol. 40, no. 3, p. 277; B. Šuštar, “The historical development of the formation of the elite in the south of the Habsburg Empire. Slovenes and the schooling of the intellectual class in the late 1800s and early 1900s,” *History of Education & Children’s Literature* 2015, vol. 10, no. 1, p. 519, 526; M. Černe, *Arhivsko gradivo Jugoslovanskega katoliškega akademkega društva »Danica« med obema vojnama*, unpublished Master’s thesis, University of Ljubljana, The Faculty of Arts, Department of History, Kranj 2020, pp. 8–13.

<sup>29</sup> “Slavenska Liga katoličkih akademčara u Beču,” *Luč*, vol. 5, no. 6, Zagreb 1909/1910, pp. 299–300.

<sup>30</sup> “II. Hrvatsko-slovenski svedrački katolički sastanak u Ljubljani 1911.,” *Luč*, vol. 6, nos. 9–10, Zagreb 1911, pp. 391–393; “S. Liga K. A.,” *Luč*, vol. 6, nos. 9–10, Zagreb 1911, p. 437.



this organization was the defence of Christian values among the academic youth, who at this very time rejected religion and accepted liberal ideas in increasing numbers. There were also Polish and Czech language courses. The library of the League included informative books for all Slavs, books of grammar and dictionaries of particular languages, as well as overviews of literary and cultural history. The League received many Czech and Polish magazines, and its first almanac was being prepared for 1911.<sup>31</sup> Before the founding of the Student Catholic League in Vienna, *Luč* mentions the foundation of the Committee of Slavic Academic Societies in Vienna, whose member organization was Croatian Catholic society “Hrvatska.”<sup>32</sup> The Committee included Slavic academic societies in Vienna, but there was already a disagreement when drafting the resolution related to the “Wahrmund Affair,” which was an affair involving a professor of church law Ludwig Wahrmund in Innsbruck. In fact, it was a clash between the clerical and anti-clerical currents over his dismissal. The affair started when Wahrmund in his lectures publicly criticized the new “antimodernism.” In one of his pamphlets, he attacked the Catholic Church and Pope Pius X. Catholics led by the Jesuit Leopold Fonck defended themselves in a large number of articles and assemblies. Many Austrian liberals and a Prague professor T. G. Masaryk took Wahrmund’s side. Vienna authorities relegated him from Innsbruck to the German University in Prague.<sup>33</sup> The Slovenian Catholic society “Danica” and Croatian Catholic society “Hrvatska” disagreed with the resolution (unlike the liberals in society “Zvonimir”) and therefore left the committee.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> “‘Slavenska Liga katoličkih akademičara’ u Beču,” *Luč*, vol. 5, no. 6, Zagreb 1909/1910, pp. 299–300.

<sup>32</sup> “Kulturna pitanja i slavenski interesi,” *Luč*, vol. 3, nos. 9–10, Zagreb 1908., pp. 611–612.

<sup>33</sup> It was one of the most famous scandals related to the violation of university autonomy within the Habsburg Monarchy. At the same time, this affair caused semester-long student protests at Austrian and Czech universities, giving a support to professor Wahrmund and believing that his academic freedom was limited. There were also university closures and fierce parliamentary debates (T. Luetić, “The Catholic Youth...,” p. 61). For exhaustive account of this affair see in: J. Surman, “University scandals and the public sphere of Imperial Austria: the Wahrmund and Zimmermann affairs,” *European Review of History* 2018, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 1–25; J. Surman, *Universities in Imperial Austria, 1848–1918. A Social History of a Multilingual Space*, Purdue University Press 2019, pp. 225–228.

<sup>34</sup> “Kulturna pitanja i slavenski interesi,” *Luč*, vol. 3, nos. 9–10, Zagreb 1908, pp. 611–612.



## Prague

Prague, as a university centre, was particularly attractive to Croats because of the Slavic element, but also because it was considered a progressive and liberal milieu.<sup>35</sup> It was an environment where Croatian academics were transformed into domestic students, with no special interest for founding their own society. For the generation who enrolled in Prague in 1895, the crucial goal was to acquaint themselves with the Czech atmosphere and local students. Stjepan Radić, one of the youth leaders, wrote about students expelled from the University of Zagreb in 1895 after the political incident with the burning of the Hungarian flag<sup>36</sup>: “My opinion is that everyone should go to Prague. [...] The Czechs will be Croats’ teachers in everything for a long time, especially in politics and state law.”<sup>37</sup> For this purpose, the first Croatian students in Prague joined the Czech academic society “Slavia” in 1896.<sup>38</sup> Student Milan Krištof wrote to Stjepan Radić: “We didn’t come here to play president, secretary etc., but to learn Czech language, study about Czech’s conditions, and for that purpose we need to hang with Czech students.” What fascinated him the most were the serious manners of local students when discussing problems, without loudness and fuss.<sup>39</sup> This fascination with Czech colleagues can be seen in the letter of student Milivoj Blažeković: “And who once lived in Prague, absorbed all its culture and got to know the realism and progressiveness of the Czechs – that person cannot come back but

<sup>35</sup> In the period 1886–1918 at the Charles Ferdinand University in Prague 444 students from Croatia were enrolled (at the Faculty of Law 290 of them, at the Faculty of Philosophy – 91, and at the Medical School – 63). This research was conducted by Damir Agičić (D. Agičić, *Hrvatsko-češki odnosi...*, pp. 262–290).

<sup>36</sup> In October 1895 during the visit of Emperor Francis Joseph I to Zagreb students burned the Hungarian flag. With this manifestation, they wanted to show the Emperor that Croatia had not been converted into an obedient Hungarian region. Students were punished and expelled from the University of Zagreb. Academic youth continued their education all over the Monarchy. About this episode, see more extensively in: S. Kent, “State Ritual and Ritual Parody: Croatian Student Protest and the Limits of Loyalty at the End of the Nineteenth Century,” in: *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial symbolism, popular allegiances and the state patriotism in the late Habsburg Monarchy*, eds. L. Cole, D. L. Unowsky, New York 2007, pp. 162–177; F. Šimetin Šegvić, *Patriotizam i bunt: Franjo Josip I. u Zagrebu 1895. godine*, Zagreb 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Letter from Stjepan Radić to Šime Mazzura, Bjelovar, 19 February 1896 (*Korespondencija Stjepana Radića (1885.–1918.)*, vol. I, ed. B. Krizman, Zagreb 1972, s. 173; see also: D. Agičić, *Hrvatsko-češki odnosi...*, p. 136).

<sup>38</sup> D. Agičić, “Hrvatski studenti na češkom sveučilištu u Pragu 1882.–1918. godine,” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 1998, vol. 30, no. 2, p. 300.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from Milan Krištof to Stjepan Radić, Prague, 22 April 1896 (*Korespondencija Stjepana Radića...*, p. 185).

to become a progressive and democratic citizen... Other Slavs, especially we Croats, can learn a lot from more advanced Slavic people like the Czechs.”<sup>40</sup>

However, the next year inside “Slavia” a Croatian-Slovenian club was organized. Under the influence of the Czech environment, professors and students there, Croatian students in Prague launched two significant journals, “Hrvatska misao” (1897) and “Novo doba” (1898), promoting progressive ideas.<sup>41</sup> In the editorial of “Hrvatska misao” S. Radić points out: “From Czechs and Poles, Croats can learn real politics, patriotism, and a deep understanding of European conditions.”<sup>42</sup> No student group had such a political significance and left such a mark as the “generation of 1895.” The formation of this group called Progressive Youth, influenced by the ideas of Professor T. G. Masaryk was a frequent topic of Croatian historiography.<sup>43</sup> From Masaryk but also from Czech student colleagues, Croatian students studying in Prague adopted the idea of “political realism” against the idea of “political romanticism.” The idea of political realism arose among students in reaction to the previous constitutional policy of the Croatian opposition. The studied student groups in Prague adopted Masaryk’s ideas of political realism, demanded the implementation of realistic politics in Croatia as well and the rejection of political romanticism, which included fruitless state-legal and “quasi-patriotic” policy full of romantic patriotic phrases and demanded concrete solutions to actual social and economic issues. These ideas emphasized individualism, denial of authority, interest in the situation of the lowest layers of the society and social reforms, especially “organic work” among the common people and thereby their training for a later more effective national struggle. Politics was perceived not as the declamation, but as the work, and not as the most important field of work. The most important thing was the cultural, moral and material well-being of the people. Student adopted the idea that it was necessary to create a healthy national intelligence and they aimed to work mostly in the cultural field. Besides, Croatian students adhered more strongly to the idea of Slavic unity because of the fear of German aggressive policy

<sup>40</sup> M. Blažeković, “Prag,” *Hrvatski djak* 1907, vol. 1, nos. 6–7, pp. 168–170.

<sup>41</sup> For more information about the launch of the magazine *Hrvatska misao* in Prague, its content, its influence on young people in Croatia and the public’s reaction to it, see: D. Agičić, *Hrvatsko-češki odnosi...*, pp. 141–152; D. Agičić, “Hrvatski studenti...,” pp. 301–311. About journal *Novo doba* see in: D. Agičić, *Hrvatsko-češki odnosi...*, pp. 153–155 and D. Agičić, *Hrvatski studenti...*, p. 312; See also: T. Luetić, *Studenti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu (1874–1914). Društveni život, svakodnevnica, kultura i politika*, Zagreb 2012, pp. 375–379.

<sup>42</sup> S. Radić, “Hrvatski ideali,” *Hrvatska misao* 1897, vol. 1, p. 8.

<sup>43</sup> On the influence of professor Masaryk on Croatian youth in Prague, see: D. Agičić, *Hrvatsko-češki odnosi...*, pp. 159–164; A. Suppan, *Oblikovanje nacije u građanskoj Hrvatskoj (1835.–1918.)*, Zagreb 1999, pp. 254–259.

towards the Slavic East (*Drang nach Osten*). Students experienced and witnessed in person the aggressiveness of German nationalist students at Austrian universities.<sup>44</sup> These ideas, especially the idea of Slavic unity were followed by the majority of Croatian student emigration. Through academic youth, these ideas entered Croatian civil circles through ex-student leaders, who had begun to work as politicians, publicists, writers, and journalists.<sup>45</sup>

A new wave of Croatian student emigration arrived in Prague in 1908 as a result of a major strike at the University of Zagreb due to a violation of the university's autonomy.<sup>46</sup> During the strike, they were warmly welcomed by both professors and students. The Czechs provided them with material assistance, allowed them to enroll without paying enrollment fees, and appointed four assistant professors for Croatian students. Slavic reciprocity was seen in action, as they wrote: "Slav to Slav, brother to brother."<sup>47</sup> A Croatian journal reports the support to the Croatian strikers also by the Polish students in Lviv who issued a resolution supporting Croatian student emigration and condemning the violation of university autonomy in Zagreb.<sup>48</sup>

During the stay of a large number of Croatian students in Prague, a student congress was held on 24–30 June 1908. Progressive youth of all Slavic nations gathered in Prague to emphasize that only progressiveness can be the basis of Slavic Reciprocity. They discussed the topics of secondary schools, higher education among the Slavs, and the idea of Slavic Reciprocity (the idea promoting solidarity between the Slavic peoples, first in the cultural field and then in the political sense, starting from the middle of the 19th century). The congress was attended by 8 Russians, 13 Ruthenians, 11 Poles, 3 Belarusians, 1 Bulgarian, and many Czechs, Croats, Serbs, and Slovenians.<sup>49</sup> Based on this congress, in the winter of 1908/1909 the Slavic

<sup>44</sup> M. Gross, *Studentski pokret 1875–1914...*, pp. 459–460; D. Agićić, "Hrvatski studenti...", p. 308; A. Suppan, *Oblikovanje nacije...*, pp. 258–259; T. Luetić, "The Migration and Experiences...", p. 286. Examples of these episodes are described in: "Život hrvatskih djaka u Beču," *Hrvatski djak* 1908, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 26–27, "Iz sveučilišta," *Luč* 1905–1906, vol. 1, p. 15.

<sup>45</sup> T. Luetić, "The Migration and Experiences...", p. 286.

<sup>46</sup> T. Luetić, *Studenti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu...*, pp. 389–391.

<sup>47</sup> "Exodus," *Hrvatski djak* 1908, vol. 2, nos. 6–7, pp. 185–187.

<sup>48</sup> "Poljska omladina za emigrante," *Hrvatski djak* 1908, vol. 2, nos. 6–7, p. 190.

<sup>49</sup> "Kongres slavenskog naprednog i slobodoumnog djaštva u Pragu," *Hrvatski djak* 1908, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 24–25. It was no coincidence that the all-Slavic student congress was held just before the Neo-Slavist congress in Prague, the largest meeting of supporters of Slavic solidarity and mutual cooperation of the Slavic peoples at the beginning of the 20th century. The influence of Neo-Slavist ideas on the student youth is evident in different points of the programme. However, it will soon become clear that the congress had an utopian meaning, as the problems and unresolved issues among the various Slavic nations would lead to conflicts and escalations in the years that followed. For more on the Neo-Slavist congress, see: L. Levine, "Pan-Slavism and European Politics,"

Student Secretariat was founded in Prague and organized a series of informative lectures about the Slavic peoples.<sup>50</sup> The Slovak student Bogdan Pavlu was among the first to held a lecture on 17 November 1908, with the topic “Slavs and electoral reform in Hungary.” Besides the lectures, the Secretariat opened Russian and Polish language courses, and Croatian was also being prepared. They gathered in the venues of the Union of Czech-Slavic Students (Czech: Svaz česko-slovanskeho studentstva). The Union of Czech-Slavic Students invited all academic societies of the South Slavs to join the Czech progressive youth at their so-called *večirki* (parties) to seize the opportunity to have met with literary and political circles.<sup>51</sup> It should be pointed out that the right-wing, “Croatian nationalist students” journal *Mlada Hrvatska*, emphasized that none of this group participated at the congress of all-Slavic progressive students, which clearly indicates that they did not share same ideological background.<sup>52</sup>

Croatian progressive youth found their blueprint for action in Czech students, who at the same time demanded that their authorities abolish church rites at the beginning of the academic year, exclude the Faculty of Theology from the University of Prague, and introduce departments of theology and history of religion and churches at the Faculty of Philosophy.<sup>53</sup> This very idea was adopted by Croatian students who, upon their return to Croatia, put it as a request to exclude the Faculty of Theology from the University of Zagreb, but to no success whatsoever.<sup>54</sup> Another of the concrete actions of Croatian students, encouraged and inspired by cooperation with Czech colleagues, was the establishment of the Association of Croatian University Citizens for the Instruction of Illiterates in 1907 in Zagreb, based on the idea of realistic approach and grassroots work among the lowest strata of society. The association gave a large number of lectures to the illiterate people in Croatia and gathered a large number of students.<sup>55</sup>

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*Political Science Quarterly* 1914, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 664–686; D. Agičić, “Chorwaci a zjazd neoslawistów w Pradze w 1908 roku (na podstawie ówczesnej prasy chorwackiej),” *Prace Historyczne* 2020, vol. 147, no. 2, pp. 361–373.

<sup>50</sup> “Slavenski djački sekretarijat u Pragu,” *Hrvatski djak* 1908, vol. 3, no. 3, p. 93.

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>52</sup> “Sastanak naprednog i slobodomislenog slavenskog djačtva,” *Mlada Hrvatska* 1908, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 21–22.

<sup>53</sup> “Češko djaštvo proti bogoslovnom fakultetu,” *Hrvatski djak* 1907, vol. 1, no. 26, pp. 53–56. See also: P. Frohlich, “Praško diaštvo protiv teološkog fakulteta,” *Hrvatski djak* 1907, vol. 1, pp. 198–199. See also: T. Luetić, “The Catholic Youth and Student Conflicts...,” p. 58.

<sup>54</sup> J. Janušić, “Za odijeljenje Teologije od Sveučilišta,” *Hrvatski djak* 1907, vol. 1, pp. 16–17. See also: T. Luetić, “The Catholic Youth and Student Conflicts...,” pp. 57–59.

<sup>55</sup> “Iz Društva za poduku analfabeta,” *Hrvatski djak* 1907, vol. 1, pp. 87–88.

During the Croatian academic emigration in 1908, the members of Catholic youth had interesting experiences which opposed the dominant narrative about Prague as an exclusively liberal-progressive environment. The Catholic journal *Luč* concluded there were no reasons to fear Prague, as a new academic environment. The experience of staying there for Catholic youth was actually quite positive, in terms of getting to know their Czech Catholic counterparts, with whom they would spend time socially and launched a joint initiative to publish a Catholic student journal. As for the reception upon arrival in Prague, Czech Catholic academicians organized a friendly evening gathering for Croatian students.<sup>56</sup> They admitted that until then they had been somewhat sceptical about the Czech youth: “We did not know anything about the young Czech Catholic life, which is developing wonderfully. Croatian Catholic academicians in Prague gain new strength and new views.”<sup>57</sup> The Czech Catholic Student Association (Czech Catholic League) welcomed several Croatian students,<sup>58</sup> and the society also received Croatian Catholic newspapers. The memoir of one of the students, Rudolf Eckert, contains a description of the experience of the Croatian Catholic youth in Prague during the student emigration. He admired the Czech students for openly representing Catholic principles. Based on the presentation from the progressive newspapers, he thought that Prague was exclusively a social democratic and liberal environment, but he soon realized that he had been mistaken.<sup>59</sup> Socializing with Czech colleagues continued in the years after the strike.

## Graz

The third university centre with a strong significance for Croatian youth was Graz. The University of Graz is considered one of the universities with a strong Slavic element. Croatian students point out that various Slavic languages are heard in its venues, especially Slovenian and Croatian, mostly at the Faculty of Medicine.<sup>60</sup>

In the first period, Croatian students of a Catholic denomination in Graz did not have their own society, and though in Graz Croatian academic society “Hrvatska”

<sup>56</sup> “Prijateljsko veče u čast Domagojcima,” *Luč* 1908, vol. 3, nos. 9–10, p. 616.

<sup>57</sup> Belić, “Štrajk na hrvatskom sveučilištu,” *Luč* 1908, vol. 3, nos. 9–10, pp. 609–610. See also: T. Luetić, “The Catholic Youth and Student Conflicts...,” p. 61.

<sup>58</sup> J. Kratochvíl, “Založení studentské hlídky,” in: *Česká liga akademická 1906–1916*, Praha 1916, p. 15.

<sup>59</sup> P. Grgec, *Dr. Rudolf Eckert*, Zagreb–Rijeka 1995, p. 56.

<sup>60</sup> K. Bošković, “Đačke prilike u Grazu i naš Preporod,” *Luč* 1912/1913, vol. 8, nos. 4–5, p. 126.

existed, Catholic youth was rather joining Slovenian academic Catholic society “Zarja,” since they thought of their own national society as too “progressive,” and therefore inappropriate.<sup>61</sup> In Slovenian society “Zarja,” they formed their own club, emphasizing the similarity of these two nations and similarities of the Croat and Slovenian Catholic movement: “Slovenes and Croats are always like brothers!”<sup>62</sup> The similarities between these two peoples and especially the Croatian and Slovene Catholic movement, which was considered as the basis of rapprochement, were emphasized. After the Croatian society “Preporod” was founded in Graz in 1908, it shared the same venues with the Slovenian “Zarja.” They visited each other at lectures, and debate nights, discussing the history, literature and social condition of both peoples. On one occasion, *Luč* also mentions hosting of dr. Janez Ev. Krek, a Catholic priest, a member of the Carniola National Assembly and deputy in the Imperial Council in Vienna, who gave a lecture on Balkan crisis. This visit was jointly organized by Slovenian and Croatian students. Writing about Croatian-Slovenian cooperation, *Luč* uses the term “national equalization” in bold letters. It should be kept in mind that it was a period shortly before the outbreak of the First World War when the South Slavic (Yugoslav) idea was rampant among the Catholic youth.<sup>63</sup>

The progressive youth in Graz gathered in the society “Hrvatska” cooperated with the Slovenian progressive societies “Triglav” and “Tabor”<sup>64</sup> and the Serbian society “Srbadija.”<sup>65</sup> They spoke out together, for example, while making a statement regarding the Wahrmud Affair and formed a joint Yugoslav student committee. The committee consisted of twelve members, three from each society (two Slovenian societies, one Croatian, and one Serbian). Croatian society “Hrvatska” and Serbian “Srbadija” also prepared a welcome for emigrants from the Croatian university during the student strike in Zagreb. They collected financial resources for the needs of incoming students in Graz.<sup>66</sup>

Although members of “Hrvatska” were of the same nationality, they had no contacts with Croatian Catholic society. Also, they did not socialize with liberal German academic societies.<sup>67</sup> Regarding progressive students, *Luč* mentions an

<sup>61</sup> “S univerze u Gracu,” *Luč* 1907, vol. 2, no. 8, pp. 417–418.

<sup>62</sup> Lj. H., “Hrvatsko đaštvo u Grazu,” *Luč* 1909, vol. 4, nos. 6–7, pp. 374–375.

<sup>63</sup> K. Bošković, “Đačke prilike u Grazu i naš Preporod,” *Luč* 1912/1913, vol. 8, nos. 4–5, pp. 126–127.

<sup>64</sup> About Slovenian student societies in Graz see in: V. Melik, P. Vodopivec, *Slovenski izobraženci...*, pp. 276–277.

<sup>65</sup> “Slovenski i hrvatski djaci u Gracu,” *Hrvatski djak* 1908, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 53–54.

<sup>66</sup> “Naše đaštvo u Gracu,” *Hrvatski djak* 1908, vol. 2, nos. 6–7, pp. 189–190.

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem.

episode in which Croatian progressive youth, together with Serbian students from the society “Srbadija” and Slovenian liberals, took part in riots during the doctoral promotion of a German student, a member of the German academic Catholic club “Carolina.”<sup>68</sup> Group around *Mlada Hrvatska* wrote about society “Hrvatska” in disparaging way, criticizing its inactivity, but especially cooperation and connections with Serbian students from academic society “Srbadija,” with whom they shared the same place.<sup>69</sup> The latter group finally formed their own club called “Starčević” in 1911 within the society “Hrvatska.”<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusions

Through the analysis of sources and relevant literature, this paper shed some light on the connections and networking that Croatian students in Austro-Hungarian university centres sustained with their Slavic colleagues. Most often these contacts were accomplished through their student societies, visiting each other, organizing various courses and lectures, and sometimes joining together in wider clubs and associations based on the same ideological interests. The most frequent contacts Croatian students studying in Vienna, Prague, and Graz maintained with their Slovenian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Czech, Slovak, Polish, and Ruthenian colleagues. Besides the Slavic element and the idea of the Slavic Reciprocity, which had an extremely large influence among the academic youth at the turn of the 20th century, their mutual networking was also based on other ideological bases: students of the progressive-liberal group, as well as students of the Catholic societies, achieved a strong connection with like-minded students of other Slavic nations. These collaborations they achieved during their student days certainly had an impact not only on their further personal development and activities after their return from studies, but also on public life in general and the development of new tendencies during the 20th century in their homeland.

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<sup>68</sup> M. Med., “Št. Gradac,” *Luč* 1908, vol. 3, nos. 9–10, p. 597.

<sup>69</sup> “Hrvatsko djaštvo u Grazu,” *Mlada Hrvatska*, vol. 3, no. 3, Zagreb 1909, pp. 74–75.

<sup>70</sup> “Dopisi,” *Mlada Hrvatska*, vol. 4, no. 6, Zagreb 1911, pp. 170–171.



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Tihana Luetić

## Studenci chorwaccy wobec innych słowiańskich wspólnot studenckich z Wiednia, Pragi i Grazu na przełomie XIX i XX wieku

### Streszczenie

Na podstawie źródeł i literatury przedmiotu autorka próbuje w artykule rzucić światło na relacje i kontakty chorwackich studentów uczących się na uniwersytetach austro-węgierskich z ich słowiańskimi kolegami. Najczęściej do kontaktów tych dochodziło w ramach organizacji studenckich, w trakcie wykładów, spotkań, a także gdy łączono się w kluby i stowarzyszenia, którym przyświecały te same idee. Najczęściej chorwaccy studenci studiujący w Wiedniu, Pradze i Grazu nawiązywali relacje z kolegami słoweńskimi, bułgarskimi, serbskimi, czeskimi, słowackimi, polskimi i rusińskimi. Oprócz elementu słowiańskiego i idei słowiańskiej wzajemności, które odgrywały ogromną rolę wśród młodzieży akademickiej na przełomie wieków, wspólne relacje budowano również na innych podstawach ideologicznych. Studenci zarówno z grupy postępowo-liberalnej, jak i z katolickich stowarzyszeń nawiązali silne więzi z podobnie myślącymi studentami innych narodów słowiańskich. Relacje, jakie ukształtowały się między młodymi ludźmi podczas studiów, bez wątpienia wpływały nie tylko na ich dalszy rozwój osobisty i działalność po powrocie z uniwersytetów, lecz także na ich późniejszą działalność publiczną w XX wieku.

Słowa kluczowe: towarzystwa studenckie, historia uniwersytetów, Austro-Węgry, historia Europy Środkowej, koniec XIX wieku, początek XX wieku