

Between Two Congresses in Prague: Relations among the Slavs in Central and South-Eastern Europe in 1848-1908

The 19th century was an era of development for most modern Slavic peoples living in Central and Southeastern Europe. In the course of that century some of them built the basics of their national identities and laid foundations of separate cultures. Others worked towards transformation of existing states (the Habsburg Monarchy, the Ottoman Empire) in a way that would enable Slavs to co-decide about them politically, meanwhile some made attempts at achieving political independence. Frequency of contacts among Slavic nations increased in that period and a feeling of the necessity of cooperation was maturing. This process was mirrored by the Prague Slavic Congress of 1848.

The second half of the 19th century saw the Slavic problem grow in importance among dominating European states of Central and Southeastern Europe: the empires of the Romanovs, the Habsburgs, and the Ottomans. The issue made its impact on their situation, every so often leading to changes in internal policy, or reaching as far as the shape of those states. The ongoing dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century allowed for the rise of Slavic states in the Balkans, and the Slavic problem crept into international relations. West and South Slavs frequently attempted to establish relations between one another. These contacts can be traced in many fields, from politics to culture (broadly understood). An array of projects was devised – they were completed only in the 20th century, though. The Habsburg Monarchy was the birthplace to ideas such as Austroslavism, the Yugoslav idea (preceded by the Illyrian movement), and the Czechoslovak idea. Projects of uniting the South Slavic peoples who cast off the Turkish yoke were taking shape since the 1840s. All things considered, the true boost to the idea of the Slavic cooperation came with the appearance of Neo-Slavism in the 1900s. The call for a second Prague Slavic Congress was put forward and it was finalized in 1908 – sadly, the promising cooperation deteriorated soon.

The **aim** of this project is research and demonstration of inter-Slavic relations in the second half of the 19th century. First is assessment of the research conducted on the subject up to date. Moreover, using chosen examples, research into how or whether any possible changes are recorded in the historiographies of the countries of Central and Southeastern Europe regarding evaluation of the issue of inter-Slavic cooperation in the region between 1848 and 1908 is due. Research into specific examples of relations among the West and South Slavs is planned as the next step. Materials collected during preliminary research shall be used for preparing detailed studies focused on selected research problems such as: a. Cooperation and competition among the Slavs in the Habsburg Monarchy; b. Slavic relations in the Ottoman Empire; c. Scale and character of Slavic relations in the Habsburg Monarchy and the Balkans; d. Polish Slavophilia.

Research within the project will be realised in a few stages. Stage one is evaluation of the state of research concerning Slavic relations in Central and Southeastern Europe in the second half of the 19th century in Poland and the region. The second, most vital stage of the project envisages conducting studies on Slavic relations in the region mentioned. This presupposes library and archive surveys in the countries whose territory was part of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, as well in Paris, where the Polish emigration (Hotel Lambert) operated on the field of Slavic questions. Researchers from selected Central and Southeastern European countries will be presented with the results for consultation. During the final stage the investigators will prepare detailed analyses of selected research topic and present them in a series of studies, which in turn will be published.

The main **reason** of the implementation of the project is to develop research on the Slavic nations in 19th century, Central and Southeastern Europe as well. The history of Slavs and their relations in the 19th century has been underappreciated, as it has been dominated by Eastern European studies: the history of Russia and the USSR. The completion of this project will raise the international profile of Polish studies about the 19th-century Slavorum. Additionally, research into Slavic relations in the second half of the 19th century will undoubtedly help in the finding a genesis of historic social and political changes in 20th century Central Europe and the Balkans, including transformations taking place since the 1990s, and will advance knowledge about the mutual perceptions of the inhabitants of this part of Europe.