

**SLOVENE INTELLECTUAL EMIGRANTS:
BETWEEN MYTH AND LOYALTY,
SLAVDOM AND DYNASTY**

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This paper considers the representative views of three Slovene intellectuals and two politicians towards ideas of Slavic accommodation within Austria and their understanding of the Austrian state itself. While Janez Trdina (1830–1905) stood for romantic Pan-Slavism and firmly believed in the dynasty and state, Ivan Hribar understood the Slavic idea from a more practical, pragmatic, and political perspective. Martin Bole idealized the Russian state his entire life, but Fran Celestin's idealization of Russia and its leading role in Slavic cooperation ended rather quickly. Nevertheless, he continued to believe in Russian potential, as did Janez Evangelist Krek. Although the latter believed in some imaginary Slavic solidarity based upon Christianity or, more specifically, Catholicism, he was an exception among Slovene Catholics because he viewed Russia as an acceptable "companion" of Austrian Slavs. Leopold Lenard, in contrast, firmly opposed Austrian Slav accommodation with Russia.

After 1848, Austrian authorities interpreted Pan-Slavism and Russophilism as disloyalty. Already in 1849, the Austrian regime implemented a rigorous policy of Germanization. It was Prime Minister Bach's intention to unify the monarchy through Germanization. In the area of school reform, this meant personnel changes. The Austrian authorities believed that by moving state officials out of their native countries they could avoid opposition to official policy. On the other hand, the authorities also supposed that loyal state officials of Slavic origin might create a useful link between the state (Austrian policy) and the Slavic population. Austrian authorities moved many Czech officials, including teachers, to Slovenia, while the Slovenes (and a few Czechs) were sent to Croatia. The Slovenes reassigned to Croatia were often labeled "politically suspicious," "Pan-Slavs," or "Russophiles."

Janez Trdina, a writer, teacher, and historian, was one of the first Slovene victims of Bach's regime, although he did not participate in political activities. In 1848, Trdina predicted a "golden time" of freedom for the Slavs, when the state would finally acknowledge their importance for its existence, even "if not out of gratefulness but at least politically to recognize us, the Slavs, as a foundation, as a hinge and as a pillar of the state..." (Trdina 1946: 189) Trdina was confident in Emperor Franz Joseph I, particularly when he proclaimed the equality of all the nations and languages in Austria, which Trdina saw as the emperor's reward to the

Slavs for rescuing Austria (Trdina 1946: 189). Trdina expressed confidence in Austria when he wrote that

within myself there was a strong flame for Austria, I found it as my wider homeland and Slovenia as my smaller homeland... I could not imagine Slovenia without Austria, within which we have all kinds of brothers: Croats, Czechs, Poles, Serbs etc. But there is another wish: I would love to join this alliance also the Russians and the Turkish Slavs to live together then...Here we can see some sort of Pan-Slavism under the Austrian flag!... (Trdina 1946: 188)

Although disappointed in Bach's Austrian policy which caused his move to Croatia, Trdina kept trusting in Austria as protector of the Slavs: he believed that the Slavs in the Austrian state might have lived in much worse conditions "if they did not defend Austria and the Kaiser – being fully aware of their nationality, against the rebellion Italians, Germans and Hungarians. God knows, if it would disintegrate into the pieces..." (Trdina 1952: 180). Nevertheless, his activities in Croatia were limited to educational work. His experience in Croatia deepened and strengthened his belief in Slav mutuality, particularly in Russia. He motivated and stimulated Croatian pupils to use their own language in a protest against Bach's Germanization and Hungarization, respectively. His promotion of South Slav feelings or Croatian consciousness among Croatian youth in Rijeka was even more strident.

Since Trdina had never been to Russia, his sympathies and observations of Russia were academic, based on Russian literature and Russian scholars. Discussions among Slovenes between 1848 and 1866 of Russia as a greater Slavic state were rare.¹ But the attitude of the Slovenes towards Russia during the Crimean war, and particularly after inauguration of dualism in Habsburg Monarchy in 1866, changed in general. The sympathies of Austrian Slavs for Russia increased after the 1867 ethnographic exhibition in Moscow. Austrian Slavs interpreted Tsar Alexander II's meeting there with participating Slavs, including Slovene ethnographer Matija Majar, as progress in cooperation with Russia. Many Slovenes saw the meeting as proof that the Slavs finally came to an agreement, particularly Austrian Slavs (Zedinjenje Jugoslovanov 1870). After the exhibition, Slovene interest in Russia grew rapidly.

¹ Up to 1866, the Slovenes' attitude toward Russia, at least publicly, was not in the forefront of political discussions. At that time the Slovenes did not acknowledge Russia as a possible ally of the Austrian Slavs. In spite of this, Slovene cultural workers, politicians, and intellectuals were interested in Russian literature and, most of all, in learning the language.

Following the 1864 educational reforms, the Russian government invited Austrian Slav teachers. The call met with a wide response among Austrian Slavic (including Slovene) intellectuals, whom the Russian government thought could improve the quality of schooling. When the announcement was published in 1867, many Slovene intellectuals, sympathizers of Russia, decided to accept the offer, which brought substantially higher wages than in Austrian schools.

One of the first Slovene intellectuals who sent information from Russia was Martin Bole. As soon as he arrived in 1871, he began to publish his impressions in Bleiweis's *Novice*. His first information was about Petrograd and its cultural life. He tried to convince readers of Petrograd's highly developed culture and the tidiness of Russian towns: "If one lived in some centre of Central European culture where everything that one could read and heard about Russia was roughness or brutishness and barbarianism, and then find oneself in Petrograd on the river Neva, one could believe that the train was lost, that one found oneself in Leipzig or any other 'paper' city, but not in Petrograd..." (1871a). Bole was most delighted to see numerous daily newspapers, magazines, and literary monthlies, not only in Russian but also in French and German. He was surprised and pleased that books were sold in Petrograd, "as pears are in Ljubljana..." He visited numerous second hand bookshops and was enthusiastic about Russian literature itself, particularly Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, and Krylov. He discovered Krylov for Slovenes (Bole 1871b).

Bole underlined the fact that in Russia one can witness that much of what was written by mainly Prussian and Austrian journalists was untrue. Their reports from and about Russia were not just false but also frightened "our government with Pan-Slavism, which reached such a power in Russia that it jeopardized even the state and family order in empire..." (1871d)

In Bole's comparison of the Russian and Austrian political situations, in contrast to descriptions by many Slovene Pan-Slavs or Austro-Slavs, one notices his confidence in the Russian system. He saw a comparative advantage in Russian absolutism over constitutional Austria: "What people in constitutional diets 'decide,' the constitutional ministry usually rejects; what is here by '*zemskaia guberniia*,' competent societies and public opinion in general recognized as useful it is realized by Russian absolutist ministry by order of the autocratic tsar." (1871c) Therefore, Bole did not see such "a monster" in Russian absolutism since he found *zemskie zbory* fully competent to decide tax, educational, and other affairs. He believed that *zemskie zbory* represented people's wishes (1871e). He did not find the absence of a constitution a disadvantage because the Russian people preparing for it as grammar school pupils prepare for higher schools (1871e). As proof that Russia was on the right track, Bole mentioned the increasing number of women in grammar schools, some of whom had

aspirations to university study.² Bole remained in Russia but his further fate is unknown.

Another Slovene intellectual who decided to emigrate was Fran Celestin (1843–95). In the eyes of the authorities his convictions were too pro-Slav or even worse, Russophile. Therefore he could not find a proper job and was forced to emigrate. Soon after the Russian government published its appeal he applied for a scholarship in Petrograd. After he successfully passed exams in Greek, Latin, and Russian and exams in Russian history and geography, he was employed as a gymnasium professor in Vladimir.

However enthusiastic he was about Russia, his first impressions of Moscow were not very positive. He was disappointed in the wooden houses and also in people, mostly merchants, in whom he noticed “a national feebleness” and lack of conscientiousness. “The more sweet-spoken they are, the more they praised their products, the worst for you; if you do not know how to buy, you are cheated ...” (Celestin 1871a) On the other hand, Celestin had a very positive opinion of Russian schools, universities, and gymnasiums. He found them to be the most beautiful buildings in town: “...Also the inner parts of the schools are pretty compared to the schools in Austria (not even in dreams); everything clean, everything polished, shining, the floor, etc...” The gymnasium in Vladimir, where he taught also impressed him; he found the school building the most beautiful in town (Celestin 1871b). Celestin admired the Russian school system because it contained a variety of institutions.³ He pointed out that more than half the university students received a stipend. He was also impressed by the progress of general public education, pointing out that every *zemstvo*⁴ was founding and maintaining elementary schools.

Celestin believed Russian educational efforts were aimed to counter the fact that “the whole of Europe spoke ill about or slandered the Russian nation... which forced the Russian aristocracy not to be separated from its nation, education and by doing that shame their kind slanderers...”

² At the beginning women in Russia could only enrol in the University of Medicine. The first Slovene doctor of medicine Eleonora Jenko Gruyer studied in Petrograd, too, and finished her studies in 1907. She was the daughter of an ardent Slovene Russophile Professor Ljudevit Jenko and his wife Terezina Mikhailovna. Although she could have studied at one of the Austrian universities, her parents insisted she enrol in a Slav university in a Slavic *milieu*. They sent their second daughter, Ana Jenko to study at the Czech Prague University in 1911.

³ Progymnasiums: equivalent to the four first years of gymnasium.

⁴ *Zemstvo*—a form of local government instituted during Alexander II’s reforms. The first *zemstvo* laws were promulgated in 1864. After the October 1917 revolution, the *zemstvo* system was shut down.

Nonetheless, he was critical of the very superficial knowledge of Russian youth. In general, Celestin was convinced that Russia was capable of overcoming its differences with the West and that the Russians would be able “to ruin the Chinese wall not only with education but also with a huge production of books, translations...” (Celestin 1871c)

Celestin, like Bole, was—at least at the beginning—fairly uncritical towards Russian domestic policies. He found Russian laws “wonderful” and accused the bureaucracy of being unwilling to implement them. But he firmly believed that “something will be done by this nation...In its struggle for education and freedom which already—though not loudly yet—began, in its struggle for the results of the life of the people, the weakness of the nations will disappear, and its right hand and mind will prevail...” (Celestine)

When he returned from Russia, Celestin had to accept employment in Croatia at the newly founded (1874) Zagreb University, where he worked until his death in 1895. As Celestin became more closely acquainted with Russian conditions, he could no longer hide his disappointments. In 1875, he published a brochure, *Russland seit Aufhebung der Leibeigenschaft* (Russia after abolishing serfdom), in which he openly spoke of the unacceptable aspects of Russian society. His disappointment lasted only three years, until Russia’s victory over the Ottomans in 1878, when he put aside his unpleasant experiences and expressed hope that the Russian state would be capable of realizing its mission to free Slavic nations.

Ivan Hribar (1851–1941), unlike Trdina, Bole, and Celestin, was not an emigrant. He was one of the most influential liberal politicians at the end of the nineteenth century. From 1892 to 1908 he was an efficient mayor of Ljubljana. He began to demonstrate his pro-Slavic affiliation in 1884 by editing a pro-Slavic weekly named *Slovan*. One of the major aims of *Slovan* was to earn Slovenes’ approbation for the Slav idea, to raise Slovenes’ Slav self-confidence and pride.

As mayor of Ljubljana, Hribar was both independent and committed to Liberal party policies. Among his priorities was cooperation with Slavic countries, among which he perceived Russia to be the strongest. He participated in the so-called Neo-Slav movement from the start, in 1898, when the leader of the Young Czech Party, Karel Kramář, inaugurated the new Slavic policy aimed at closer cooperation between Austria with Russia. Hribar was successful in providing finances for two all-Slavic congresses of journalists in Ljubljana, in 1902 (Gantar Godina 2002) and in 1908. In spite of his devotion to the Slavic and, after 1908, Yugoslav idea, he remained loyal to the emperor. Even in 1914, when the Austrian authorities arrested

him for being too pro-Serbian, he remained loyal; his imprisonment until 1917 did not cause him to abandon Austria.⁵

One of the most eminent pro-Slav Slovenes was Janez Evangelist Krek (1865–1917), a politician, sociologist, novelist, theologian, and journalist. While Slovene Liberals and independent intellectuals had increasingly strong Slavic sentiments, there were few Catholic intellectuals of similar bent. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Slovene Catholic intellectuals showed little interest in Austroslavism.⁶ They found the Czechs too liberal, Russian Orthodoxy alien to them, and the (albeit Catholic) Poles too pro-Austrian.

J. E. Krek was one of the rare Catholics who favored Slav mutuality. He approved of Austrian cooperation with Russia. He agreed with the Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovev,⁷ who regarded Christianity as the most natural and harmonious religion for the Slavs; Krek also believed that the future of Christianity was in a union of Western and Orthodox churches, which, he believed, could contribute to Slavic unity, particularly in resisting Pan-Germanism. In 1894 at the Catholic meeting in Brno, Krek presented his understanding of Slavic idea and Slavic mutuality. In contrast to Moravian Catholics who protested against liberalization and against adoration of Jan Hus in Bohemia, he focused his attention upon the closer cooperation of the Slavic Catholics and their concrete tasks. He believed that Catholic Slavs should work toward strengthening Slav mutuality. He saw Christianity as an essential component of Slavdom.

He participated in most Slavic Catholic gatherings to demonstrate his opposition to certain forms of Slavic cooperation, like Pan-Slavism and Neo-Slavism. Although, beginning in 1898, he agitated for a closer political cooperation between Austria and Russia (Krek 1898); he also rejected the Neo-Slav movement. Krek found the links between Austria and Germany harmful not only for Slavs, but also for Austria itself since it had an impact upon the domestic development of the Austrian Empire's constituent nations. He was one of the few Slovene Catholics who did not consider Russia an enemy. According to Krek, one of the most important missions of the Russian state was to morally support the Slavs against Pan-Germans.

⁵ In 1941 Hribar committed suicide to protest Italian occupation of a large part of Slovenia.

⁶ One of the reasons were the activities of Anton Mahnič, a bishop, novelist and editor, who in an 1889 letter to Slovene youth, "Slovenci, pazimo s kom s bratimo" warned Slovenes against the excessively liberal Czechs. He claimed that the Slovenes should put religion and loyalty to Austria and the emperor first.

⁷ Vladimir Solovev (1835–1900), Russian poet, philosopher, publicist, and mystic who argued for theocracy and unification of Western and Eastern Christians. He was an ardent Slavophile and opponent of revolution.

His deep devotion to Slavdom was intertwined with his concern for the Austrian state itself, which was for him the most natural “frame” for the Slavs. As a counter balance to Slovene and Czech Liberals, Neo-Slav Slovene Catholics founded a Slavic league of Catholic Academics (SLKA, 1908), which unified Slovene, Czech, Polish, and Croatian students. Since the SLKA was not as successful as he expected, Krek returned to political work. He founded a new parliamentary group, the *Slovanska jednota* (Slavic Union) in 1909 which consisted of almost all the Slavic deputies with the exception of the Poles and a few Ukrainians.

Krek welcomed the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908, seeing in it another boost to Austria’s Slavic character. In 1914, when WW I he intensified his plans for all-Slav cooperation. He advised Slovene intellectuals to study the history of Slavic nations, their cultures, philosophies, and societies in order to overcome their divisions.

In 1917, as revolutionary events in Russia unfolded, Krek believed that the fall of the tsarist regime was a possible prelude to the fall of Hohenzollern Pan-Germanism as well as Habsburg Clericalism. On one hand, he considered the Russian revolution an internal affair and opposed interference, while on the other, he was convinced the revolution could mean a new era for the Russian people based upon Krek’s version of socialism. Krek was critical of Karl Marx and particularly of Ferdinand Lassalle, whose intentions he found dangerous. In Lassalle’s ideas he noticed that he “planned” to extol Germany to the detriment of Austria and its Catholic Slavs.

Krek’s understanding of the Slavic idea was distant from Pan-Slavism; he opposed romantic ideas which presumed one, united Slavic state. He was aware of the differences between Slavic peoples and therefore advocated cultural cooperation and mutuality. In contrast to Trdina and Hribar (or, for that matter, Palacký) Krek firmly believed that religion was one of the necessary foundations of the Slavs’ cultural and political fortunes.

Our final example is that of Leopold Lenard, who eventually abandoned the Church and converted to Orthodoxy after emigrating to Serbia in 1918. He worked and studied in Poland before moving to Slovenia in 1903. Lenard was one of the sharpest critics of Austrian Slav cooperation with Russia. His attitude was formed while studying in Krakow, where he met Polish intellectuals. He underlined the religious, cultural, and political differences between Russians and Poles. His 1906 brochure (in German) “Panslavism” attempted to show that expectations of an Austrian Slav understanding with Russia was wrong. He believed that cooperation with Russia depended upon the end of the Russian imperial regime. In general, Lenard attributed to a Byzantine and Tatar heritage that could not be reconciled with the Western European, Catholic of some other Slavic nations (Lenard 1909: 84).

The only Slavic program he supported without exception was that of the Polish cultural activists around the paper *Swiat Slowianski*. They advocated self-determination for each Slavic nation, Slavic political (not cultural!) mutuality, locating the center of Slavdom in Austria (not Russia), and Austrian (as opposed to Russian) South Slavic policies (Lenard 1909: 85–86). Accordingly, Lenard denied Serbia the right to play a bridge role among the Southern Slavs. Since the central problem of the Russian state was a matter of Russian domestic policy, Lenard rejected the Neo-Slav movement as well. His evaluation of Neo-Slavism was based mainly on its relationship with Russia and Pan-Slavism, which he defined as “a pale imitation of the old Pan-Slavism,” but also upon the relationship between the Catholic Church and liberalism.

Lenard’s 1912 brochure, *Krvavi list iz zgodovine ruskega sistema. Preganjanje katoličanov na Ruskem* (A bloody page from the history of the Russian system. Persecution of Catholics in Russia), sought to inform Slovenes of Russian state policies. He focused on tsarist treatment of the Poles, with examples of forced conversion of to Orthodoxy. He claimed that it was not only a matter of Russian domestic policy but also a question of human rights and religious tolerance. Lenard remained a loyal Austrian citizen, loyal to the Austro–Slav idea and to Catholicism only until 1918, when he emigrated to Serbia, married a Serbian, and converted to Orthodoxy. In late 1945 he emigrated to Argentina, where he died in 1962 (Gantar Godina 1992).

Conclusion

Most Slovene intellectuals were dedicated to achieving equality within the Austrian political framework and professed loyalty to the emperor as opposed to the German-dominated state administration. Slovene Pan-Slavs and Russophiles’ advocacy of the Slav idea was part of their devotion to their own national identity. In spite of their commitment to the Slav idea, they remained loyal to the monarchy to the end, despite the fact that the majority of Slavs found Austria’s policy towards non-German nations discriminatory. On the other hand, Slovene intellectuals’ expressions of trust in the dynasty to correct injustices of the Austrian administration were sometimes merely diplomatic. The Slav idea remained an essential and part of Slovene political, cultural, and scholarly ideology, although in the end it proved to be overvalued.

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