

THE CZECH MINORITY BETWEEN GLOBALISM AND MONARCHISM

Vlatka DUGAČKI*

The purpose of this work is to examine the similarities and differences between the development, organization and status of the Czech minority in Croatian territory over the past century, from the years 1911 to 2011. A reference to its present status constitutes an attempt to show that it is also a result of many centuries of effort initiated in the area which the members of this minority inhabit even today.

Key words: Czech minority, Republic of Croatia, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Introduction

The intent of this work is to present the development, organization and status of the Czech minority in Croatia during the past one hundred years, from 1911, when their first newspaper was launched in today's territory of Croatia, to 2011. This shall also entail a comparative analysis of the organization of the Czech minority in the interwar period, i.e., in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (hereinafter SCS Kingdom, 1918-1929) and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929-1941), when the organization of minority life truly began, and its present status in the Republic of Croatia at the threshold of accession to the European Union, as well as its stance toward with the Republic of Czechoslovakia and vice versa. In order to understand the current status and organization of the Czech minority, the work has been conceived as a reverse chronology, setting forth from the present status and situation of the minorities in general and the Czech minority specifically, and returning to the past, to the

* Vlatka Dugački, Ph. D., The Miroslav Krleža Institute of Lexicography, Zagreb, Croatia

onset of the twentieth century, when it began to organize. This is why this paper was given the title “The Czech minority between globalism and monarchism”.¹ In this regard, the work has been divided into two basic chapters under the headings *globalism* and *monarchism*, thus underlining the dominant feature of the given period. The comparative analysis of the status and level of organization of the Czech minority was prompted by the fact that the Czech minority is not among those minorities covered in scholarly research. It was not necessarily marginalized, but at the same time there has been no comprehensive historiographic study on its development, particularly in the aforementioned period, not to mention the comparison to its present-day status. It may be said that the Czech minority belongs among the “generally accepted” minorities. Its existence in Croatian territory is generally known, and everyone has heard of the term “*Pemec*”, as the members of this minority were called in derogatory fashion,² and is familiar with the first Zagreb bishop, Duh, and Daruvar as this minority’s centre. However, this is where all knowledge and interest ends.

Since the intention of this work is not to provide an overview of the historiography on the Czech minority, it should be noted that besides the numerous lexicons and encyclopaedias in which it or its representatives are mentioned, some of the more important authors who dealt with it are Jan Auerhan, Josef Matušek and Damir Agičić, as well as Zoran Janjetović, who compiled an overview of all minority communities in interwar Yugoslavia.³ Besides published materials on the Czech minority, unpublished archival materials held in the Croatian State Archives, the State Archives in Osijek and the State Archives in Bjelovar and the official legislation of the Republic of Croatia were also consulted in the preparation of this work. Over and above all of the materials consulted, thanks for their kindness and for providing information go to Libuša

¹ The backbone of this work emerged for the needs of the Round Table on “National Minorities in the Age of Globalization – Croatia and Europe”, organized by the Migrations and Nationalities Institute, Zagreb 12 May 2011.

² The original inhabitants called the first Czech newcomers the derogatory names *Pemec*, *Pemci*, *Pemak*, or *Pemija* according to the names from church registers for Czech settlements (*Pagus Bohemicus*, *Pagus Bohemiae*, *Colonia Bohemica*, *Colonia Bohemia*). Jan Auerhan, *Československá větév v Jugoslavii* (Prague: Knihovna Československého ústavu zahraničního, 1930).

³ See also: Stanoje Stanojević, *Narodna enciklopedija srpsko-hrvatsko-slovenačka*, 4 vols. (Zagreb: Bibliografski zavod d.d., 1925-1929); *Hrvatska enciklopedija*, 5 vols. (Zagreb: Naklada Konzorcija Hrvatske enciklopedije: Naklada Hrvatskog izdavačkog bibliografskog zavoda, 1941-1945; *Hrvatski leksikon*, 2 vols. (Zagreb: Leksikon d.o.o., 1996-1997); *Mali hrvatsko-češki biografski leksikon* (Prague: Veleposlanstvo Republike Hrvatske u Pragu, 2002); *Hrvatska opća enciklopedija*, 11 vols. (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 1999-2009); *Zagrebački leksikon*, 2 vols. (Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2006); Jan Auerhan, *Čehoslovaci v Jugoslavii, v Rumunsku, v Mađarsku a v Bulharsku* (Prague, 1921); Josef Matušek, *Česi u Hrvatskoj* (Daruvar: Jednota, 1996); Damir Agičić, *Hrvatsko-češki odnosi na prijelazu iz XIX. u XX. stoljeće* (Zagreb: Ibis grafika, 2000); Zoran Janjetović, *Deca careva, pastorčad kraljeva, Nacionalne manjine u Jugoslaviji 1918-1941* (Belgrade: INIS, 2005).

Stranjikova, the editor of the newspaper *Jednota*, Vjenceslav Herouta, the manager of the Czech Alliance archives, and the Office of the Czech and Slovak Representative, Zdenka Čuhnil, in the sixth convocation of the Croatian Parliament.

In order to facilitate easier consultation of the text, certain terms, not otherwise original, were used in the presentation of the development of the Czech minority organization. This mostly pertains to the names of minority associations, for which the original names were used, but with the Croatian adjective as currently established (Češka beseda Zagreb, Čehoslovačka obec Osijek). The names of Czech periodicals mentioned in the work, as well as the names of Czech events, are written in original form, but with a translation when first mentioned to allow for a better understanding of the topics being discussed. The titles of articles in the footnotes are specified in the original without translation, as opposed to citations, which have been translated. The names of the authors of articles in Czech periodicals were also cited in their original form as they appeared in the by-lines accompanying the text.

It is worthwhile noting that the territory of the former Sava Banovina, in which the highest number of this minority lived, was used as representative for research into the interwar period. The members of the Czech minority had been active there – as will be seen below – since the end of the eighteenth century, when they began to be resettled here more intensively. This became particularly notable at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, slowing down somewhat during the First World War, but then intensifying again in the interwar period.

Since the overall results of the 2011 census had not yet been published during the preparation of this work, the author was compelled to use the 2001 census, and the data had an exclusively model character, i.e., they served to obtain a general picture of the number of Czech minority members in Croatia and for comparison with the numerical data from the interwar period, whereby the aspiration was to obtain the most comprehensive possible insight into the status of the Czech minority over the past one hundred years.

Globalism

Minorities

Prior to examining the topic at hand, it would be worthwhile to clarify the term “minority” and the status of national minorities in the independent Republic of Croatia. According to contemporary political theory, minorities are “...groups of inhabitants of a state, who by their ethnicity differ from the majority of that state’s population”, and who are “most often components of nations which are the majority nation in another state (or states), such as, for

example, the Czech, German or Italian minorities in Croatia”⁴ More specifically, a minority is a “stable group of people who racially, culturally (linguistically) or religiously/confessionally differ from the majority population or components of the population of a given state”.⁵ The status of national minorities in the independent Republic of Croatia began to be regulated in the first years of its existence. According to its Constitution, the Republic of Croatia is established “as the nation state of the Croatian nation and the state of the members of its national minorities: Serbs, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews, Germans, Austrians, Ukrainians, Rusyns, Bosniaks, Slovenians, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Russians, Bulgarians, Poles, Roma, Romanians, Turks, Vlachs, Albanians and others who are its citizens and who are guaranteed equality with citizens of Croatian nationality and the exercise of their national rights in compliance with the democratic norms of the United Nations and the countries of the free world”⁶ Under its Standing Orders adopted in March 1992, the Croatian Parliament established the Human Rights Committee and the Interethnic Relations Committee,⁷ while under the Standing Orders of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia adopted on 24 September 1992, these two committees were merged into the Committee on Human Rights and Rights of Ethnic and National Communities and Minorities; on 19 June 1998, the name was once more changed to the Human and National Minority Rights Committee.⁸ The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was ratified in 1997, while in 1998 the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages entered into force.⁹ Pursuant to Articles 3, 14 and 15 of the Croatian Constitution, the Croatian Parliament, in the desire to safeguard human and national rights and enable citizens from numerically smaller ethnic and national communities to freely develop their specific qualities within the framework of the

⁴ *Hrvatska opća enciklopedija*, s. v. “etnička ili nacionalna manjina”, 3: 526-527; Emil Heršak, ed., *Leksikon migracijskoga i etničkoga nazivlja* (Zagreb: Institut za migracije i narodnosti: Školska knjiga, 1998). s. v. “etnička manjina”, p. 54, s. v. “manjina”, pp. 132-134.

⁵ Dieter Nolan, ed., *Politološki rječnik. Država i politika* (Osijek-Zagreb-Split: Pan liber, 2001), s. v. “manjina”, p. 195.

⁶ Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, <http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/232289.html>.

⁷ Standing Orders of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia, http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1992_03_17_401.html.

⁸ Standing Orders of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia, http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1992_09_59_1578.html, Decision on Amendments to the Standing Orders of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia, http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1992_09_59_1578.html.

⁹ Aleksander Tolnauer, “Ostvarivanje prava nacionalnih manjina – primjer Republike Hrvatske”. In: Siniša Tatalović, ed., *Etničke manjine i sigurnost u procesima globalizacije: zbornik radova* (Zagreb: Centar za sigurnosne studije Fakulteta političkih znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu: Politička kultura, nakladno istraživački zavod, 2007), pp. 163-170.

majority community of citizens or majority communities (without abuses by either the majority or minority) enacted the Constitutional Act on Human Rights and Freedoms and the Rights and Freedoms of National Communities or Minorities in the Republic of Croatia in 2000,¹⁰ while the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act was passed on 13 December 2002.¹¹ This legislation stipulated national minorities in the Republic of Croatia and their rights for the first time, and also clearly defined the term “national minority”. According to Article 6 of the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act, these are “groups of Croatian citizens whose members traditionally reside in the territory of the Republic of Croatia, and they have ethnic, linguistic, cultural and/or religious traits and are guided by the desire to preserve these traits”.¹² Article 7 of this same law guarantees national minorities the right to use their languages and scripts privately, publicly and officially, to education in the languages and scripts that they use (more thoroughly stipulated in Article 11), the use of their emblems and symbols, the right to cultural autonomy through maintenance, development and expression of their own culture and preservation and protection of their cultural resources and traditions, the right to practice their religions and to establish religious communities together with other members of these faiths, access to means of public communication and public media activities (receiving and disseminating information) in the languages and scripts that they use, self-organization and association in order to further common interests, representation in representative bodies at the national and local levels and in administrative and judicial bodies, participation by members of national minorities in public life and administration of local affairs through national minority councils and representatives, and protection from any action which threatens or may threaten their existence and the exercise of their rights and freedoms. It is particularly important to stress that under the same Constitutional Act national minority councils were established at the local level to secure participation of national minorities at the local level (Article

¹⁰ Decision on the Proclamation of the Amendments to the Constitutional Act on Human Rights and Freedoms and the Rights and Freedoms of National Communities or Minorities in the Republic of Croatia, http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000_05_51_1127.html, Constitutional Act on Human Rights and Freedoms and the Rights and Freedoms of National Communities or Minorities in the Republic of Croatia http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000_10_105_2072.html.

¹¹ The law is aligned with the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, the principles of the United Nations charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Final Act of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Paris Charter for a New Europe and other OSCE documents pertaining to human rights http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2002_12_155_2532.html. On 16 June 2010, the Amendments to the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act were enacted, http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2010_06_80_2275.html.

¹² See also: Siniša Tatalović, *Nacionalne manjine u Hrvatskoj* (Split: Stina, 2005), p. 22.

23-33).¹³ Councils of the Czech national minority operate in Sisak-Moslavina, Bjelovar-Bilogora and Požega-Slavonia Counties, in the cities of Zagreb, Daruvar, Kutina, Grubišno Polje, Lipik and Pakrac and in the municipalities of Končanica, Dežanovac and Sirač.

In the interest of participation of national minorities in Croatia's public life, and particularly in the interest of consideration and proposal of management and resolution of issues tied to the exercise and protection of national minority rights and freedoms, Article 35 of the Constitutional Act stipulates the establishment of the state-level National Minorities Advisory Board. In this vein, the Advisory Board cooperates with the relevant national and local authorities, national minority councils and representatives, national minority associations and legal persons engaged in activities in which national minority rights and freedoms are exercised. The National Minorities Advisory Board consists exclusively of minority representatives, seven nominated by the national minority councils and five from the ranks of distinguished cultural, scholarly, professional and religious personalities nominated by minority associations and other organizations. It is important to stress that the representatives of national minorities in Parliament are also members of the Advisory Board. The Czech and Slovak minorities have elected their joint representative to Parliament since 1993. It is also vital to point out that the finances at the Advisory Board's disposal are secured from the central state budget, and every year HRK 3,500,000 are allocated for the needs of the Czech minority, while at the same time, the Czech Republic has assisted Czech associations and schools in Croatia during the 1997-2008 period with almost HRK 15,000,000.¹⁴

The Czech minority

According to the 2001 census, 22 minority communities live in Croatia, among them the Czechs. The Czech minority community in Croatia is not the most numerous, but it is considered among the best organized Czech communities in Europe. Thus, it would be worthwhile to ascertain the relevant statistics. According to the already mentioned census (in the expectation of the official results from the 2011 census), a total of 10,510 persons in Croatia declared themselves members of the Czech national minority, or 0.24% of the total population. Out of this number, most are in Bjelovar-Bilogora County,

¹³ In self-governmental units in which the members of individual national minorities account for a minimum of 1.5% of the total population or in local self-governmental units in which over 200 members of a national minority live or in regional self-governmental units in which over 500 members of a national minority live, the members of such national minorities are entitled to elect national minority councils. 10 members are elected to municipal national minority councils, 15 are elected to city national minority councils, and 25 are elected to county national minority councils.

¹⁴ České besedy http://savez-ceha.hr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4&Itemid=5

with 5.33% (7,098), followed by Požega-Slavonia County with 0.9% (775) and Sisak-Moslavina County with 0.36% (670), while the smallest number of members of the Czech minority according to this same census are in Lika-Senj County with 0.02% (or only 10 declared persons).¹⁵ Looking at the percentages of Czech minority members among the municipalities and towns/cities in comparison to the overall percentage in individual counties, the most Czechs in Bjelovar-Bilogora County are in Končanica (46.67%), Dežanovac (23.48%) and only then in Daruvar (18.9%), in Požega-Slavonia County the most Czechs are in Lipik (3.52%) and Pakrac (3.03%) and Kaptol (2.49%), while in Sisak-Moslavina County the most Czechs are in Lipovljani (2.43%). Even though the accepted view is that in Croatia there are “almost no territorially homogenized national minorities”, because all “national minorities, including the Serbian community, are dispersed”,¹⁶ it may be said that the Czech minority is among the exceptions, for – as will be shown – since they first arrived they have resided in virtually the same area.

Today 28 Czech associations are active in the territory of the Republic of Croatia. They are united in the Czech Federation in Croatia, established 1921 as the Czechoslovak Federation, which will also be discussed in greater detail below.¹⁷ The Federation’s seat is in Daruvar, in Bjelovar-Bilogora County which, as noted above, has the highest concentration of Czechs. The Federation handles the cultural, social and educational activities of the Czech minority (including associations, schools and publishing). The operations of the various Czech associations proceeds in the Czech national halls, mostly built during the interwar period, with the first built in Hercegovac in 1930, followed by Zagreb in 1937. Thirteen associations have their own national halls, eight associations received premises from municipalities on a permanent basis, while three were accorded such premises for use. In them, these associations support the work of folklore groups, amateur theatre troupes, brass bands, choirs, social libraries and handicraft clubs. In general, today 110 of the most diverse groups function within the framework of these Czech associations, all with the objective of nurturing their mother tongue and preserving their cultural heritage. The activity of these groups comes to the fore during the observation of important dates in Czech history, both at home and abroad. The Czech Federation also organizes the Amateur Theatre Review, the Review of Czech Songs, and the observation of the establishment of the Češka Beseda associations, and among the most notable are the children’s folklore review

¹⁵ 2001 census: <http://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/censuses/Census2001/Popis/Hdefault.html>.

¹⁶ Siniša Tatalović, *Nacionalne manjine*, pp. 21-22.

¹⁷ Češka beseda associations operate in Daruvar, Doljani, Prekopakra, Kaptol, Bjeliševac, Nova Gradiška, Slavonski Brod, Rijeka, Jazvenik, Međurić, Ljudevit Selo, Dežanovac, Zagreb, Treglava, Lipovljani, Sisak, Gornji Daruvar, Daruvarski Brestovac, Hercegovac, Virovitica, Bjelovar, Končanica, Veliki and Mali Zdenci, Ivanovo Selo, Donji Sredani, Garešnica, Dubrava and Šibovac, and Golubinjak.

Naše jaro ('Our Spring') and the traditional *Dožinky* (harvest festivities). The *Dožinky*, organized by the Association of Rural Youth in Končanica in 1935, were partially filmed, and this is how the first documentary on the life of the Czech minority in Croatia was made.¹⁸ Naturally, attempts to preserve the traditional use of the Czech language are not limited to the work of various associations, but also by means of schooling in Czech. The right to education in their languages and scripts is exercised by national minorities in compliance with the Croatian Constitution, the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act, the National Minority Language and Script Education Act and the National Minority Language and Script Use Act, and in this regard the Municipality of Končanica and the City of Daruvar guarantee the official use of the Czech language in their charters.¹⁹ Members of national minorities may receive education in their mother tongue at all levels, from preschool to college.²⁰ Their constitutional right to education is exercised according to three models and special forms of schooling. These are model A: instruction in a national minority language and script, whereby the Czech minority is educated in primary schools; B: bilingual instruction, whereby the Czech minority is educated in secondary schools; and C: nurturing language and culture, which is also done by the Czech minority.²¹ To be sure, minority representatives propose and select the model and curriculum themselves in line with existing laws and their capabilities for implementing curricula. For example, in 2008, the Czech minority had 920 attendees in 22 institutions.²² Czech minority pupils attend-

¹⁸ Josef Matušek, *Česi u Hrvatskoj*, p. 143.

¹⁹ Decision on Proclamation of the Republic of Croatia National Minority Language and Script Use Act http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000_05_51_1128.html, Decision on Proclamation of the National Minority Language and Script Education Act http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000_05_51_1129.html, Correction of the National Minority Language and Script Education Act http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000_06_56_1258.html, Daruvar City Charter, <http://www.daruvar.hr/docs/STATUT%20GRADA%20DARUVARA.pdf>, Končanica Municipal Charter http://www.koncanica.hr/sluzbeni_glasnik/Sluzbeni_glasnik_03.2009.pdf.

²⁰ According to the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages, and the Decision on Ratification of the European Charter on Regional or Minority Languages, the languages in which instruction is conducted may be classified into two groups, so-called territorial or minority languages and non-territorial.

²¹ Report on implementation of the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act <http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?sec=3154>.

²² Instruction in the Czech language based on model A is conducted in the Jan Amos Komensky Primary School in Daruvar, the Josip Ružička Primary School in Končanica and the Ivan Nepomuk Jemeršić Primary School in Grubišno Polje. Model B is implemented in the Daruvar classics gymnasium with bilingual instruction (in Czech and Croatian), while the schools with instruction (nurturing) of the Czech language and culture under model C are the Dežanovac Primary School, the Ivan Nepomuk Jemeršić Primary School in Grubišno Polje, the Czech Josip Ružička Primary School in Končanica, the Vilim Korajac Primary School in Kaptol, the Banova Jaruga Primary School in Banova Jaruga, the Lipik Primary School in Lipik, the Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević Primary School in Zagreb, the Vladimir Nazor Primary School and the Ivana Brlić

ing classes in the Czech language are also able to choose whether they wish to take the national Czech language matriculation examination in Czech or Croatian.²³ In compliance with Article 15 of the National Minority Language and Script Education Act, educational institutions with instruction in national minority languages and scripts may use textbooks from their mother countries. Thus, for example, 27 translated textbooks, 23 imported textbooks from their original homeland and 3 specifically written textbooks were used for the needs of the Czech minority in 2008. Also noteworthy is that the Faculty of Arts and Letters of the University of Zagreb offers undergraduate and graduate double majors in the Czech language and literature.²⁴ The professional qualification of facilitators, teachers and lecturers is carried out by the Education Agency, while seminars are held in both Croatia and the Czech Republic. Czech kindergartens also operate in Končanica and Daruvar.

The Czech language is also nurtured through publishing activities, such as the Czech minority newspaper *Jednota* (Unity), which was launched in 1946 as something of a successor to the newspaper *Jugoslávští Čechoslováci* (Yugoslav Czechoslovaks; 1922-1941). Its mission is to inform members of the Czech minority of all social, cultural and educational events relevant to them, and beyond, and to report on current events from the Czech Republic, which for most members of the Czech minority is their sole contact with the Czech press.²⁵ A semi-annual supplement in *Jednota* is *Studnice* (Wellspring), which since 1961 has published literary works by the members of this minority community. *Český lidový kalendař* (Czech National Calendar) has been published since 1953, providing an overview of the activities of the Federation and all minority associations and schools. *Přehled kulturních, literárních a školních otázek* (Overview of Cultural, Literary and Educational Issues) has been published since 1962, when it was edited by Josef Matušek, whose aim was to complete the cultural awakening of the Czechs in Croatia. Today it may be considered something of a Slavist anthology specializing in Croatian-Czech relations, with emphasis on literature, linguistics, economics and ethnography.²⁶ The

Mažuranić Primary School in Virovitica, the Zdenko Turković Primary School in Kutjevo, the Josip Kozarac Primary School in Lipovljani, the Sela Primary School in Sela, the Sirač Primary School in Sirač, the Podmurvice Primary School in Rijeka, the 22. lipnja ('22 June') Primary School in Sisak, and the Bjelovar Primary School in Bjelovar. http://savez-ceha.hr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=41&Itemid=10.

²³ Rules on taking the national matriculation examination: http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2008_08_97_3007.html.

²⁴ Based on this author's experience, during the 1990s, it was less a matter of ethnic Czechs than it was lovers of Czech culture who enrolled in this major.

²⁵ During the 1966-1969 period, *Jednota* had a circulation of 9,000, of which 6,000 went to Czechoslovakia, while today the circulation is 1,500, which more than clearly testifies to assimilation, as well as a lack of understanding or interest in knowing the Czech language by the younger generation.

²⁶ Jaroslav Pánek, "Přehled kulturních, literárních a školních otázek-svědectví o vkladu české menšiny v Chorvatsku do české a chorvatské vědy", *Přehled kulturních, literárních a školních*

Jednota publishing concern was established in 1965, and besides the newspaper of the same name, it also publishes other Czech periodicals, such as the children's magazine *Dětský koutek* (Children's Corner), which has come out continually (as a supplement and then independently) since 1928,²⁷ as well as numerous historical and ethnographic studies, illustrated children's booklets, the book series *Knihovna Jaro* (Spring, since 1954) and *Knihovna krajanské tvorby* (Minority Creativity, since 1961), textbooks for Czech minority schools in Croatia (since 1951) and other publications, all with the financial support of the National Minorities Advisory Board.²⁸ Additionally, the station Radio Daruvar airs programs in the Czech language every day. Since the Constitutional National Minority Rights Act allows the use of national symbols together with the official symbols of the Republic of Croatia, since 2007 the Czech minority has had its own flag and coat of arms.²⁹ Worth mentioning also is that the members of the Czech minority worldwide are also linked by the website www.krajane.net, which complies with the stance of representatives of the Czech minority in Croatia: "Assimilation cannot be stopped, but it can be slowed".³⁰

Monarchism

Cultural contacts

After this overview of the more than well organized Czech minority in the Republic of Croatia, let us now return to the beginning and their arrival, to see how the Czech minority was organized in comparison to the present, and particularly how its status was regulated by legal norms. One of the oldest instances in which Croatian-Czech relations were mentioned is the legend of the brothers Čeh, Leh and Meh,³¹ while the first Croatian-Czech contacts began

otázek, 17(1997):15-26; Josef Matušek, "Znovuvydávání českých novin v Chorvatsku po r. 1945", *Přehled kulturních, literárních a školních otázek*, 17(1997): 5-14; "50 let vydavatelské činnosti. Přehled vydání 1946-1996", *Přehled kulturních, literárních a školních otázek*, 17(1997): 49-60.

²⁷ Alois Daněk, "60 let Dětského koutku", *Přehled kulturních, literárních a školních otázek*, 16(1996): 51-86.

²⁸ The Advisory Board provides 70% of the finances, while the remaining 30% is generated by advertising and subscription fees. http://jednota.hr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=238&Itemid=34.

²⁹ This Czech flag is identical to the flag of the Czech Republic: white and red rectangular stripes with a blue triangle next to the hoist with its tip at the halfway point of the white and red rectangles. The emblem is a shield with three fields: red, white and blue, with a red and white chessboard at its base. A silver lion is in the middle. Above the shield there is a gold banner bearing the inscription "Češi v Republice Chorvatsko" ('Czechs in the Republic of Croatia'). Czech National Minority Council: <http://www.cesi-zagreb.hr/Index-hr.asp>.

³⁰ Jednota: http://jednota.hr/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogsection&id=5&Itemid=27

³¹ Ljudevit Gaj, *Die Schloesser bei Krapina* (Karlstadt: Gedruckt bei Joh. Nep. Pretner, 1826), pp. 10, 14-23; Vjekoslav Klaić, "Krapinski gradovi i predaje o njima", *Vjesnik hrvatskog arheološkog*

with the brother saints, Cyril and Methodius.³² Individual migrations began in the eleventh century with the first bishop of Zagreb, Duh (Duch), who was of Czech origin.³³ He was followed by many Czech clergymen, but also soldiers who took part in the anti-Ottoman wars.³⁴ The age of manufacturing in Croatia was marked by the intensified arrival of Czech artisans, most notably printers and glassblowers.³⁵ Czechs began to arrive to a greater degree after 1791, when they settled in Croatia in two large waves of migration. The first wave proceeded from 1791 to 1830, while the second wave occurred after the Military Frontier was decommissioned in the 1870s, and lasted until the 1920s. Namely, after the Great Turkish War (War of the Holy League) of liberation (1683-1699), which ended with the Treaty of Karlowitz, the Austrian-Ottoman border moved to the Sava and Danube Rivers, and the Military Frontier was reorganized. In an effort to revitalize its devastated and largely deserted lands, especially Slavonia, the Austrian authorities encouraged the settlement of Czechs and Germans in the newly-liberated territories. The Czech settlers were

društva, 10(1908-1909): 1-32; Vjekoslav Klaić, "Priča o Čehu, Lehu i Mehu", *Obzor*, 12 February 1889, pp. 1-2; Ferdo Šišić, *Povijest Hrvata u vrijeme narodnih vladara* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1925), pp. 182-183; Stjepan Ortner, *Povijest gradine i trgovišta Krapine* (Zagreb, 1899), pp. 15-25; Nikola Maslač, *Čeh, Leh i Meh, hrvatska poviest od najstarijih do najnovijih vremena* (Varaždin, s. a.); Marijan Tenšek, *Krapina i priče o Čehu, Lehu i Mehu* (Krapina: Elektronika-Nakladnik, 2005).

³² Jovan M. Popović, "Kulturne veze Čehoslovaka sa Srbima, Hrvatima i Slovencima", *Narodna prosveta*, 10. October 1929, p. 3; 17. October 1929, p. 3; 20 October 1929, p. 3; 24. October 1929, pp. 3-4; 27. October 1929, p. 4; Vaclav Burian, "O kulturno-nacionalnim odnosima između Čehoslovaka i Jugoslovena", *Sokolski glasnik*, 25 June 1930, pp. 8-9; Julius Dolanský, "Československo-jihoslovenské vztahy v oblasti kultury", *Přehled kulturních, literárních a školských otázek*, 3(1964): 1-27.

³³ Franjo Buntak, *Povijest Zagreba* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1996), pp. 36, 41, 45; Lelja Dobronić, *Biskupski i kaptolski Zagreb* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1991), pp. 5, 10, 137; Nada Klaić, *Povijest Zagreba* (Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber, 1982), pp. 301, 306-307, 312, 398, 487-488, 491, 517; Nada Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata u srednjem vijeku* (Zagreb: Globus, 1990), p. 152; *Zagrebački biskupi i nadbiskupi*, (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1995), pp. 1-2; Josef Matušek, "Vnykající Češi v životě Chorvatska", *Naš koutek*, 58(1992), no. 2: 20; Marijan Lipovac, *Biskup Duh* (Zagreb: Hrvatsko-češko društvo: Vijeće češke nacionalne manjine grada Zagreba, 2006).

³⁴ [Josef Matušek], "Jihoslované a Češi v minulosti", *Jednota*, 3 March 1979, p. 15; 10 March 1979, p. 15; 17 March 1979, p. 15; 24 March 1979, p. 15; 7 April 1979, p. 15; Josef Matušek, "Češi v jihoslovenských zemích", *Jednota*, 22 January 1983, p. 19; Josef Matušek, "Vnykající Češi v životě Chorvatska", *Naš koutek*, 58 (1992), no. 3-4: 20-21.

³⁵ Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević, "Čeh Vinko Vošicki (1885-1957) zlatni tiskar Koprivnice", *Přehled kulturních, literárních a školských otázek*, 18 (1998):77-90; Vjekoslav Klaić, "Zagrebačke štamparije do osnutka Gajeve tiskare", *Grafičke revija*, 3 (1925), no. 6: 173-182; Miroslava Despot, "Staklana *Perlasdorf* i njen vlasnik markiz Perlas de Rialp", *Starine*, 49(1959): 321-348; Miroslava Despot, *Pokušaji manufakture u građanskoj Hrvatskoj u 18. stoljeću* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1962), pp. 34-45; Miroslava Despot, "Postanak, razvoj i proizvodnja staklane u Sušici", *Zbornik muzeja primenjenih umetnosti*, 4 (1958), no. 3-4: 151-155; Rudolf Bičanić, *Doba manufakture u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji (1750-1960)* (Zagreb: Izdavački zavod Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti, 1951), pp. 121-122, 321.

mostly from eastern and southern Bohemia, and they mostly moved to the Sava-Drava interfluvium, with their highest concentration in the wider environs of Daruvar.³⁶ As opposed to rural villages, the movement of Czechs into Croatian towns and cities proceeded individually from the mid-eighteenth century. These were civil servants, artisans, teachers, soldiers and musicians, and many played a vital role in the development of Croatia's scholarly and cultural life. Most of them were active in Zagreb as a cultural hub. They assisted the establishment of today's Croatian Academy of Arts and Science, and they were noted as the first professors at the University of Zagreb.³⁷ According to the census of Croatia and Slavonia in 1890, the highest number of Czechs moved to the territory of today's Požega-Slavonia County (11,782), followed by these historical counties: Bjelovar-Križevci (9,738), Virovitica-Podravina (2,876), Zagreb (1,642) and Srijem (975), while the fewest settled in the territory of Modruš-Rijeka (174) and Lika-Krbava Counties (56).³⁸ In the interwar period, according to the 1921 census conducted in the SHS Kingdom, there were 46,777 Czechs, or 32,424 in Croatia, Slavonia and Međimurje, and 348 in Dalmatia.

³⁶ Karl Czööring, *Etnographie der österreichischen Monarchie* (Vienna, 1857), p. 63; Jan Auerhan, *Čechoslováci v Jugoslavii*; Jan Auerhan, *Československá větev v Jugoslavii*; Zlatko Pepeonik, *Česi u Hrvatskoj, Prilog poznavanju dijela Savsko-dravskog međurječja* (Zagreb, 1968).

³⁷ Josef MATUŠEK: "Češi v Záhřebu", *Jednota*, 15 January 1994, pp. 19-20; 22 January 1994, pp. 19-20; 29 January 1994, pp. 19-20; 5 February 1994, pp. 19-20; 12 February 1994, pp. 19-20; 19 February 1994, pp. 19-20; 26 February 1994, pp. 19-20; 5 March 1994, pp. 19-20; 12 March 1994, pp. 19-20; 19 March 1994, pp. 19-20; 26 March 1994, pp. 19-20; 2 April 1994, pp. 19-20; 16 April 1994, pp. 19-20; 23 April 1994, pp. 19-20; 30 April 1994, pp. 19-20; 7 May 1994, pp. 17-18; 14 May 1994, pp. 19-20; 21 May 1994, pp. 19-20; 28 May 1994, pp. 19-20; 4 June 1994, pp. 19-20; 11 June 1994, pp. 19-20; 18 June 1994, pp. 19-20; 25 June 1994, pp. 19-20; 2 July 1994, pp. 19-20; 9 July 1994, pp. 19-20; 16 July 1994, pp. 19-20; 23 July 1994, pp. 19-20; 30 July 1994, pp. 19-20; 20 August 1994, pp. 19-20; 27 August 1994, pp. 19-20; 3 September 1994, pp. 19-20; 10 September 1994, pp. 19-20; 17 September 1994, pp. 19-20; 24 September 1994, pp. 19-20; 1 October 1994, pp. 19-20; 8 October 1994, pp. 19-20; 15 October 1994, pp. 19-20; 22 October 1994, pp. 17-18; 29 October 1994, pp. 19-20; 5 November 1994, pp. 19-20; 12 November 1994, pp. 19-20; 19 November 1994, pp. 19-20; 26 November 1994, pp. 19-20; Marijan Lipovac and Franjo Vondraček, *Česi Zagrebu - Zagreb Česima* (Zagreb: Vijeće češke nacionalne manjine Grada Zagreb, 2009); Ivan Esih, *Što su Česi i Slovaci dali Hrvatima? Uloga Čeha i Hrvata u izgradnji hrvatske kulture* (Zagreb, 1939); Ivan Esih, "Što su Česi i Slovaci dali Hrvatima", *Nova riječ*, 24 November 1938, pp. 2-3; 1 December 1938, pp. 2-3; 8 December 1938, pp. 2-3; 15 December 1938, pp. 2-3; Ivan Esih, "Co dali Česi a Slovaci Charvatum", *Československo-jihoslovenská revue*, 9(1939): 147-156; "Česi među prvim nastavnici na hrvatskom sveučilištu u Zagrebu", *Alma Mater Croatica*, 1 (1937-1938), no. 7: 203-209; *Češi a Jihoslované v minulosti. Od nejstarších dob do roku 1918*. (Prague: Academia, 1975), p. 527.

³⁸ Croatian State Archives (hereinafter: HDA), Provincial administration for Croatia and Slavonia, Presidency, National minorities – data for execution of International Treaty, vol. 6-14, 10605-11350/1922, box 27; Report of Esad Ćimić to the Internal Affairs Ministry, State Protection Department, HDA, Presidency of the provincial administration, vol. 6-14, 10605-11350/1922, box 27; Marko Rimac, "Etnička i socijalna struktura stanovništva Hrvatske i Slavonije prema popisu iz 1890. godine", *Zbornik Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti zavoda za povijesne i društvene znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti*, 25(2007): 269-270.

According to the 1931 census, based on nationality there was a total of 110,662 “Czechoslovaks”, or 35,372 of them by nationality and 43,728 by mother tongue in the Sava Banovina, and 479 by nationality and 539 by mother tongue in the Primorje (Littoral) Banovina. Looking at Czech as a mother tongue, according to the 1931 census there were 1,715 Czechs in the Bjelovar District, and 632 in the town of Bjelovar itself, 8,426 in the Daruvar District, 2,682 in Pakrac, 2,806 in the Požega District, and 241 in the town of Požega.³⁹

In the new homeland

After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the creation of new states, among them the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, some of the denizens of the former Monarchy became national minorities in them. The obligation to protect national minorities were imposed upon defeated states by peace treaties,⁴⁰ while in international law the system of protecting national minorities began within the framework of the League of Nations, and the Nationalities Congress sat in Geneva once every year until 1938.⁴¹ Nonetheless, the status of national minorities in the SCS Kingdom was not, as a rule, regulated and mostly depended upon their numbers and population density, financial aid from their ‘mother’ country, and ratified bilateral treaties between the latter and the SCS Kingdom. In the SCS Kingdom, Slavic minorities were treated as “little brothers”, who were accorded somewhat greater rights than non-Slavs, but their status was still not equal to those of the “members of the leading Yugoslav nations”.⁴² Thus, the Czech minority, as “Slavs”, with a native country, the newly established Czechoslovakia, that formed the Little Entente with the SCS Kingdom and Romania from 1920 to 1921, had a somewhat more favourable status. This status was partially regulated by a decision of the Interim

³⁹ HDA, fund 367, Republic Statistics Bureau of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (RZZS SRH) (1857-1948/1961), Census of 1921, box 47; HDA, fund 367, Republic Statistics Bureau of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (RZZS SRH) (1857-1948/1961), Census of 1931, box 53. According to the 1921 census, there were 1,897 Czechs in the Bjelovar District, 609 of them in the city of Bjelovar, 8,378 in the Daruvar District, 2,244 in the Pakrac, 2,407 in the Požega District, and 270 in the city of Požega.

⁴⁰ Under the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye signed on 10 September 1919 between the Entente and Austria, the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy was confirmed and the matter of the newly-established states was regulated. Besides establishing the League of Nations in Article 1, under Articles 51-52, the SCS Kingdom undertook the commitment to respect the rights of national minorities, and to adopt new agreements that would regulate these issues, while Articles 56-57 required Czechoslovakia to respect the rights of national minorities and to adopt new agreements to regulate these issues. See also: Livia Kardum, “Pitanje jednakosti velikih i malih država na primjeru zaštite nacionalnih manjina”, *Međunarodne studije*, 8(2008), no. 3-4: 69-80.

⁴¹ Klemens Ludwig, *Leksikon etničkih manjina u Europi* http://dokumenta.scd-lunjina.org/free/Leksikon_manjina_Evrope.pdf.

⁴² Zoran Janjetović, *Deca careva*, p. 445.

National Assembly and the Vidovdan (St. Vitus Day) Constitution (1921), while under Article 9 of the electoral law of the Interim National Assembly citizenship (for the purpose of elections) was recognized for all persons who up to the time of compilation of the electoral rolls had been permanently settled in any municipality in the SCS Kingdom insofar as they were ethnically and linguistically Slavs. Suffrage for the Constitutional Assembly elections was therefore granted to all permanently residing Czechs, who were once more enjoyed a far better status than the non-Slavic minorities.⁴³ After obtaining suffrage, one of the greatest problems confronted by the Czech minority during the interwar years was the genuine acquisition of citizenship. For, as stated, after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and unification on 1 December 1918, no legislation governing citizenship was enacted.⁴⁴ According to Article 70 of the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, all residents who had rights to citizenship in territories formerly within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were granted nationality in that state which obtained sovereignty over that territory, even though those who acquired rights to citizenship after 1 January 1910 in the territory accorded to the SCS Kingdom or Czechoslovakia gained nationality only insofar as this was approved by the state whose nationality they sought.⁴⁵ However, since a large number of Czechs had not resolved their citizenship rights, they were unable to settle the issue of nationality and the SCS Kingdom essentially had no obligations to them.⁴⁶ Although the Citi-

⁴³ Nada Engelsfeld, *Prvi parlament kraljevstva Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca. Privremeno narodno predstavništvo*, (Zagreb: Globus, 1989), p. 257; Ferdo Čulinović, *Državnopravna historija jugoslavenskih zemalja XIX. i XX. vijeka*, 2 vols. (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1959), pp. 243-245. Suffrage for the Constitutional Assembly elections was denied to most national minorities, with the exception of the Czechs, Slovaks and Rusyns, with the justification that it would have been “pointless to grant the right to decide on the constitution to outgoing citizens, enemies of our country who will later become the citizens of other countries”. Branislav Gligorijević, *Parlament i političke stranke u Jugoslaviji* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju: Narodna knjiga, 1979), p. 70.

⁴⁴ Even though Stojan Protić, the minister in charge of preparing the Constitutional Assembly and the alignment of laws, proposed a citizenship law to the Interim National Assembly in May 1919, which underwent procedures and passed a vote during a general debate, during an examination of the details in June 1919 it was set aside. Nada Engelsfeld, *Prvi parlament*, p. 250.

⁴⁵ Insofar as this was not sought nor acquired, these persons were granted citizenship in that state which exercised sovereignty over the territory in which they had domicile rights (Art. 76). Art. 78 stipulated the one-year right to opt for those who lost Austrian nationality, while Art. 80 granted the members of national minorities the right to opt for Austria or some other successor state. *Službene novine Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, 6 December 1920, p. 1; Otomar Pirkmajer, *Zakon o državljanstvu sa tumačenjem i Zakon o manjinama* (Belgrade: Izdavačka knjižara G. Kona, 1929); Zoran Janjetović, *Deca careva*, p. 139.

⁴⁶ An additional problem for the Czechs in gaining nationality was that they did not seek admittance to Croatian territoriality, which according to the Territoriality Act for Croatia and Slovenia of 30 April 1880 was tied to the citizenship rights, and territoriality could be acquired “only by the citizen of a Hungarian crown land”, while each citizen had to have territoriality, and only in a single municipality. See also: Koloman MUTAVDJIĆ: *Zavičajno pravo. Zakon od 30. travnja 1880. ob uređenju zavičajnih odnošaja i prijašnji propisi o stečenju i gubitku zavičajnoga*

zenship Act become effective on 21 October 1928, while the Czechoslovak Federation called on all members of the Czech minority to file their nationality requests, only a small number of them did so.⁴⁷ At the time of establishment of the Banovina of Croatia in 1939, many members of the Czech minority still did not have their citizenship status resolved, and instructions for acquiring it were once more issued.⁴⁸

First steps

Regardless of the legal regulations, due to the growth in the number of Czech emigrants the need for gathering the Czech minority arose. While much of the peasant population was preoccupied by the struggle for existence, while the working classes were assimilated, intellectual circles in the cities attempted to establish a link with the original homeland through national, cultural and sporting associations. Prior to the First World War, Czech associations were few in number. Besides the *Češka beseda* in Zagreb, established in 1874, the *Češka beseda* in Dubrovnik, established in 1899, and the *Češka beseda* organizations in Daruvar and Prekopakra, established in 1907, the establishment of Czech associations was in a nascent stage, so that members of the Czech minority in all of the South Slav lands gathered around the minority newspaper *Český list*, launched in Zagreb in 1911. Upon the establishment of the SCS Kingdom, the number of Czech associations grew, under the names *beseda* or *obec*, with the modifier *Češka* (Czech) or *Čehoslovačka* (Czechoslovak). The number of associations was the highest during the 1930s, while in the latter half of that decade many of them ceased functioning, primarily on financial grounds.⁴⁹ Their purpose was to engage in educational/instructional and entertainment activities, while politics were generally excluded. Due to growth in the number of Czech associations, and with the objective of linking not only associations but also the Czech and Slovak minorities, an initiative was launched to establish an umbrella organization under the name *Československý Sváz* (Czechoslovak Federation), which was established in Osijek in 1921. Novi Sad was selected as the Federation's first seat. It was then in Belgrade from 1924 to 1937, and in Zagreb from 1937 to 1941.⁵⁰ This is actually the Czech Federa-

prava (Zagreb: Naklada Knjigotiskare C. Albrechta, 1894); Otomar Pirkmajer, *Zakon o državljanstvu*, pp. 390-391; Dalibor Čepulo, "Pravo hrvatske zavičajnosti i pitanje hrvatskog i ugarskog državljanstva 1868-1918., pravni i politički vidovi i poredbena motrišta", *Zbornik Pravnog fakulteta u Zagrebu*, 49(1999), no. 6: 795-825.

⁴⁷ -ž-: "Stydět se musíme", *Jugoslavští Čechoslováci*, 16 May 1929, p. 1.

⁴⁸ Bjelovar State Archives (hereinafter: DAB), *Češka obec Bjelovar, 1935.-1940.*, General files, 344, box 3.

⁴⁹ Jos. Bezdiček, "K nové práci", *Jugoslávští Čechoslováci*, 2 February 1939, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Establishment of the Federation was endorsed by 19, mostly Czech, associations: *Čehoslovačka obec* in Belgrade; *Čehoslovačka obec* in Osijek; *Čehoslovačka obec* in Zagreb; *Čehoslovačka obec* in "Međurič" (članak V. Dugački); *Čehoslovačka obec* in Subotica; *Čehoslovačka obec* in Usora,

tion in Croatia, which still operates today. The Federation was intended to play a supporting role, and it was supposed to be an apolitical organization, with the objective of bringing together the members of the Czech minority, “who are today neither Czechs nor Croats” with the Slovaks.⁵¹ The Federation was supposed bring together all members of the “Czechoslovak nation who live in the territory of the SCS Kingdom into common cultural, national economic and national political work and to provide mutual moral support and national representation”.⁵² It was also supposed to foment the process of assimilation and elevate the national consciousness to a higher aim, which was, they believed, the nurturing of Slavism.⁵³ Views somewhat less predisposed to assimilation appeared simultaneously, stressing that “assimilation is inevitable, the laws of nature need not be resisted, but we can slow it down until such time as our environment is such that this assimilation will not mean a minus for the Yugoslav side but rather a plus for the Czechoslovak side”.⁵⁴ The Czechoslovak Federation generally advocated and furthered the interests of the Czech minority, but it also upheld the policies of Yugoslav unitarism and centralism, which led to a rift within the Czech minority itself, i.e., between a smaller group led by the newspaper *Jugoslávští Čechoslováci*, seated in Daruvar, and the Federation, seated in Belgrade.⁵⁵ After the division of the country into provinces, or banovinas, in 1929, all branches of the Federation in the Sava Banovina operated in Zagreb, thus successfully unifying most members of the Czech minority in Croatian territory. The Federation also had numerous de-

Češka beseda in Sarajevo, Češka beseda in Dubrovnik, Češka beseda in Zenica, Češka beseda in Tomašica, Češka beseda in Prekopakra, Čehoslovačka beseda in Prijedor, Čehoslovačka beseda in Karlovac, Čehoslovački kružok in Tuzla, the Czech Club in Maribor, Čehoslovačka beseda in Binguľa, Čehoslovačka beseda in Derventa, and the Industrial Readership Circle in Bački Petrovac.

⁵¹ Since the Federation, in line with the policies of Czechoslovakism, did not accord excessive concern to the interests of the Slovak minority in the SCS Kingdom, later Kingdom of Yugoslavia, in 1932 the independent Slovak organization *Matica slovačka* was established, which aroused the ire of the Czech minority leadership until 1934, when a formal truce was signed, after which *Matica slovačka* became a permanent member of the Czechoslovak Federation. “Založenie Matice slovenskej v Juhoslávii”, *Národná jednota*, 20 August 1932, p. 1; “Zakladajúce valné shromaždenie Matice slov. v Juhoslávii”, *Národná jednota*, 20 August 1932, pp. 1-3; J. Kvačala, “Pri otváraní činnosti matičnej”, *Národná jednota*, 1 October 1932, p. 1; J. Kvačala, “Pri otváraní činnosti matičnej”, *Národná jednota*, 8 October 1932, p. 1; M. Topolský and J. Bulík, “Matica slovenská”, *Národná jednota*, 1 October 1932, p. 1; Dr. Milutinović, “Slováci a Srbi vo Vojvodine”, *Náš život*, 1 (1933), no. 3-4: 133-136; “II. výročná zpráva Matice slovenskej v Juhoslávii na rok 1933.-34.”, *Náš život*, 2 (1934), no. 2: 83-96.

⁵² The Belgrade-based associations *Havliček* and *Lumir* began working on the Federation’s establishment in 1919. *Československé listy*, 12 March 1921, p. 1.

⁵³ Franta Burian, “Zůstaneme Čechoslováci?” *Československé listy*, 17 February 1921, p. 1.

⁵⁴ Stanislav Kukla, “Svaz československých spolků v Jihoslávii”, *Československé listy*, 18 March 1921, p. 1; Dr. F. Smetánka, “V Zahřebě, 31. března”, *Československé listy*, 2 April 1921, p. 1.

⁵⁵ DAB, Češka obec Bjelovar, 1919-1934, General files, 344, box 2; J. P.: “O našem tisku”, *Jugoslávští Čechoslováci*, no. 12, 22 March 1923, pp. 88-89; Alois Munzar, “O našem tisku”, *Jugoslávští Čechoslováci*, 24 December 1925, pp. 481-482.

partments. With the aim of organizing and promoting minority schooling, in 1926 the *Matica školska* (Schooling Matrix) was established as a working body of the Federation. All Czech schools and courses in the territory of the Sava Banovina, and then the Banovina of Croatia, came under its wing. The Education and Economics Committee was established in 1931 with the objective of developing the cultural and social life of the Czech minority in the Sava Banovina. The Education and Economics Committee and the *Matica školska* also functioned jointly in the establishment of schools, but as soon as this task was accomplished, *Matica* took over sole concern for such schools.⁵⁶

For the question of minority schools was not resolved immediately upon establishment of the SCS Kingdom, so during the 1918-1922 period, the newspaper *Československé listy* vigorously advocated for their establishment, and it published the Czech language primer in 1920.⁵⁷ The publication of this Czech language primer prompted Czech associations to join the campaign for the establishment of schools. Since minorities were granted the right to instruction in their native languages under the Vidovdan Constitution of 1921,⁵⁸ already in the next year the first Czech schools were opened, as up to that point most Czech children attended the Hungarian Julian schools.⁵⁹ During the 1922-1925 period, Czech private and supplemental schools were established at an intense rate. In 1922 the Czech private Jan Amos Komenský School was established in Daruvar, which also organized a course in Czech orthography and Czech history for adults.⁶⁰ During 1922, the Czechoslovak Education Min-

⁵⁶ Josef Matušek, *Česi u Hrvatskoj*, p. 109.

⁵⁷ The primer was published as part of the section "České mládeži, která chodí do srbsko-chorvatské školy nebo ji vychodila" (Czech youths who attend or have completed Serbo-Croatian schools), *Československé listy*, 15 May 1920, p. 2.

⁵⁸ Article 16 of the Vidovdan Constitution: "minorities of other races and languages shall be granted an elementary education in their mother tongues under arrangements to be stipulated by law". Ferdo Čulinović, *Dokumenti o Jugoslaviji. Historijat od osnutka zajedničke države do danas* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1968), p. 218.

⁵⁹ The establishment of Hungarian schools in the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia was conducted through the Julian culture and education association, and particularly between 1904 and 1919 these schools were called Julian. A series of Julian schools functioned in Daruvar in the 1904-1921 period. The Julian schools could be established in Croatia not only on the basis of valid Hungarian legislation, for they were also aided by the Croatian Schooling Act, which allowed the establishment of public, rural, remote, confessional and factory schools, which opened the doors wide to the Hungarian Julian campaign, as well as similar German and Italian campaigns. See also: Ivan Balta, "Pravnopovijesni hrvatsko-mađarski odnosi od dualizma do propasti monarhije, s posebnim osvrtom po pitanjima obrazovanja", *Zbornik Pravnog fakulteta u Splitu*, 43(2006), no. 2-3: 61-475; Ivan Balta, "Julijanska akcija kroz mađarske škole u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji te Bosni i Hercegovini krajem XIX. i početkom XX. stoljeća", *Motrišta*, 5(2001), no. 22: 79-96.

⁶⁰ DAB, Češka osnovna škola "J. A. Komenský" Daruvar 1923-1938, General files, 359, box 52; DAB, J. A. Komenský Czech Primary School, Daruvar, 1923-1927, Records of the School Board, 359, box 56; DAB, J. A. Komenský Czech Primary School, Daruvar, General files, 1939-1941, 359; box 53, DAB, J. A. Komenský Czech Primary School, Daruvar, Class directory, 1933-1934,

istry began to compile a list of teachers who would be willing to work in the SCS Kingdom, who would be paid by the Czechoslovak ministry.⁶¹ At the same time, a teacher-training course for Czechs outside of their homeland was organized in Prague. The unfulfilled wish of the Czech minority in the interwar period was the establishment of a secondary school in Daruvar, but a major problem was the shortage of pupils, teaching staff and supplies.⁶² However, in 1927 the *Prokúповé odborné hospodářské školy* (Prokup Vocational Economic School) was established in Veliki Zdenci. For a time, Czech lectures were held in the classics gymnasias in Daruvar and Bjelovar in the form of language course and, for a brief time, at the teacher academy in Pakrac, while attempts to teach the Czech language also appeared in Osijek. In Osijek during the 1937/1938 school year, the Czech language as a non-mandatory elective was introduced in the Royal State Mercantile Academy, and in the form of courses for higher level pupils at the State General Gymnasium and the Men's Real Gymnasium. As of November 1940, a Czech language course was held for pupils of the Bjelovar State General Gymnasium in the Masaryk School and it had 33 attendees.⁶³ The educational activity of the Czech minority during the interwar period proceeded with the great assistance of the Czechoslovak Education Ministry, which besides instructing teachers, also provided funds for the construction of school premises and the overall form of educational activity of the underwriting association Ilova in Chicago,⁶⁴ and up to 1927 minority schools were financially supported by the Komenský Association from Prague, which already in 1925 sent a letter to the Czech associations in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia that it had no financial possibility for the further opening and construction of minority schools.⁶⁵ As of 1927, the Czechoslovak Education Ministry also reduced its allocations for minority schools, and most of the burden fell on the back of the Czechoslovak Federation's Matica školska. This aid ceased with the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in 1939, and Matica školska was financed by Čehoslovačka banka (called Čehobanka as of 1941),⁶⁶

359; box 1, DAB, Register of school decisions, J. A. Komenský Czech Primary School, Daruvar, 1922-1941, 359. A decision of the Education Ministry dated 11 October 1926 stipulated the curriculum for national minority schools, whereby all of them had to retain four hours weekly for the native language and four hours for the official state language.

⁶¹ "Československé besede Daruvar", *Jugoslávští Čechoslováci*, 1 and 15 July 1922, p. 47.

⁶² F. B., "Česká střední škola", *Jugoslávští Čechoslováci*, 28 July 1927, pp. 243-244.

⁶³ DAB, Češka obec Bjelovar, 1935-1940, General files, 344, box 3.

⁶⁴ The association was established in 1913 by Václav Procházka from Veliki Zdenci. *Jugoslávští Čechoslováci*, 2 May 1940, p. 1.

⁶⁵ DAB, Češka obec Bjelovar, 1919-1934, General files, 344, box 2.

⁶⁶ DAB, Češka obec Bjelovar, 1919-1934, General files, 344, box 2. DAB, J. A. Komenský Czech Primary School, Daruvar 1923-1938, General files, 359, box 52. In 1922, the Czechoslovak Education Ministry already cautioned the Jan Amos Komenský School that it did not have sufficient funds for its complete maintenance and that local residents would have to help defray these costs.

until April 1941 when Matica ceased functioning.⁶⁷ In July 1940, Ivan Šubašić, the ban (governor) of the Banovina of Croatia, issued a decision to open primary schools for minority children.⁶⁸ Czech minority schools functioned until 16 June 1941, when Mile Budak, the religion and education minister of the pro-Axis Independent State of Croatia, issued a decision to abolish “all Serbo-confessional primary schools, all private Czech primary schools, and all departments in Croatian primary schools with Czech instruction throughout the entire territory of the Independent State of Croatia.”⁶⁹

Besides the Czechoslovak Federation, the Češka beseda associations and the Czech supplemental and private schools, as well as amateur theatre (including puppeteering) troupes, numerous libraries also operated during the interwar years, which fostered the Czech written word. Some Czech associations had their own libraries, but there were also mobile libraries which attempted to reach the Czech then largely rural minority. Thus, in 1928 the Czechoslovak Federation’s Central Library was established with its seat in Daruvar, while in 1932 this institution was divided into the Czech Federation Central Library and the Štefánik Slovak Central Library of the Czechoslovak Federation with its seat in Stara Pazova. Since the Czech minority’s social activities in interwar Yugoslavia were quite diverse, many Yugoslav-Czechoslovak leagues dedicated to promoting Panslav solidarity were also active during this period.⁷⁰ Besides these leagues, which were established on a mass basis from 1932 to 1935 in both urban and rural areas, as of 1934 the Academic Section of the Yugoslav-Czechoslovak League operated at the University of Zagreb. The Czechoslovak Commission functioned in 1920-1921. It was established by 25 respected “Yugoslav culture activists” precisely during the time when the Little Entente treaties were signed, with the primary goal of promoting Yugoslav-Czechoslovak reciprocity.⁷¹ Although the existence of this organization should not be overlooked, it did not in fact have any contacts with the Czech minority, and although it was established as a non-political association it nevertheless rather obviously played something of a political role, given that it was dissolved after the signing of all treaties which led to the formation of the Little Entente.⁷² Besides all of the

⁶⁷ HDA, Čehobanka d.d. (1921.-1948.), 526; Josef Matušek, *Česi u Hrvatskoj*, p. 111.

⁶⁸ DAB, Češka obec Bjelovar, 1935.-1940., General files, 344, box 3; “Otvaranje pučkih škola za djecu manjina”, *Novosti*, no. 197, 19. VII. 1940.

⁶⁹ DAB, Češka obec Bjelovar, 1935-1940, General files, 344, box 3.

⁷⁰ State Archives in Osijek (hereinafter: DAO), Yugoslav-Czechoslovak League of Osijek, 1933-1939, 387, bk. 1, box 1; *Pravila Saveza Jugoslovensko-čehoslovačkih liga u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji* (Belgrade, 1936), pp. 1-3. Since neither the Czech nor Slovak minorities did not show any interest in the league’s work, by decision of the Czechoslovak Federation in 1926, all of the Federation’s members, meaning all associations, had to become members of the Central Alliance of the Yugoslav-Czechoslovak League, established in Rogaška Slatina in 1925.

⁷¹ HDA, Czechoslovak Commission (1920-1922), 1216.

⁷² *Hrvatska opća enciklopedija*, s. v. “antanta”, 1: 268.

above factors, during the interwar period the Czech minority was also superbly economically organized, for already in 1921 an incorporated Czechoslovak bank (Čehoslovačka banka d.d.) began operating in Daruvar. In 1929, it moved its head office to Zagreb, while in 1930-1931 it took over the Slovak bank in the Danube Banovina.⁷³

Even though members of the Czech minority lived in the territory of the Sava Banovina, much of what was achieved would not have been possible without the bond that brought together the Czech minority: the minority press. Without the latter, research into the status and activity of this minority would have been largely incomplete, and perhaps even attempting to do so would have been pointless. The Czech minority press not only brought the members of the Czech minority together in both its urban and rural centres (Zagreb-Daruvar), it also gave them organizational guidance. As already noted, the first Czech minority newspaper in the territory of today's Croatia were already published during the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Zagreb in 1911 under the name *Český list* (Czech News), and it was highly successful until the outbreak of World War I. During the interwar period, the newspapers *Československé listy* (Czechoslovak News, 1919-1921), *Hlas* (Voice, 1922-1923), *Jugoslávští Čechoslováci* (1922-1941) and *Daruvarčan* ('Daruvarite', 1924-1935), with numerous and very interesting supplements, and among the latter, *Dětský koutek* became a separate magazine in 1932, and it is still published today.

On the topic of unifying this minority and providing guidance, it was precisely via one newspaper of that time, *Československé listy*, and its editor-in-chief Vojta Režný that the Czechoslovak Progressive Agrarian Party was established in 1920. In that same year it participated in elections for the Constitutional Assembly. That was the first, and unfortunately last, attempt at political organization by the Czech minority. Even though the party did not manage to win even a single seat and was soon dissolved, its existence highlighted the divisions among the Czech minority into a leading class, which operated in Zagreb without any insight into the actual status of the minority but with a desire to participate in the SCS Kingdom's political life, and the bulk of the Czech minority, who lived in rural areas, struggling for their basic existential needs without perceiving the need for political participation. The actual members of the Czech minority did not even show any particular interest in political events at the local level, while at the same time their leadership, in the minority press, complained that as foreigners the Czechs did not have equal voting rights and could not elect representatives even in entirely Czech-populated municipalities, while all they wanted was equality with the rest of the population.⁷⁴ An example is the fact that members of minorities were denied participation in municipal elections. In Međuriće, the local Czechs were denied

⁷³ HDA, Čehobanka d.d. (1921.-1948.), 526.

⁷⁴ Vojta Režný, "Naše státní občanství", *Československé listy*, 18 June 1920, p. 1.

the vote in municipal elections with these words: "It would be the same as though someone from Asia came and sought exercise of rights in Croatia".⁷⁵ Municipal elections in Bulinac were voided after the Czechs won more votes than the Croats, and they were denied the vote in renewed elections, while the Czechs in Dežanovac were banned from participating in elections "even though they do more than the Vlachs, who just drink".⁷⁶ What should be noted and stressed is the division of the Czech minority into those who lived in rural settlements and those in urban centres. The elections of 1936 may be cited as an example of this rift, during which there was a division between support by (most) of the Czech minority for the Croatian Peasant Party and the Yugoslav Radical Union.⁷⁷

Conclusion

The intent of this comparative analysis of the status of the Czech minority, i.e., a comparison of the number of the Czech minority had during the inter-war period and its number now, which areas it settled and which areas it lives in today, the rights they had in the SCS Kingdom/Yugoslavia and their rights in the independent Republic of Croatia, how they were organized then and now, is to demonstrate that the present status of the Czech minority ensued from the effort, advocacy or, simply, the struggle for minority rights. In any case, it grew on foundations set almost a hundred years earlier. In this regard, it is vital to stress that the Czech minority even today largely occupies the area in which it lived in the first half of the twentieth century, and thus, in contrast to most other minority groups, constituting a homogenous minority community. Even though partial assimilation has occurred in numerical terms, another cause of the reduction in this minority group's size which must not be disregarded is post-war re-emigration, rural depopulation and so forth. Regardless of this, cultural assimilation (acculturation) was successfully avoided through the nurturing of customs and traditions in a manner almost identical to that initiated at the dawn of the twentieth century. The level of social and cultural organization has remained virtually unchanged. The *Češka beseda* associations continue to function, while the Czech Federation is still the umbrella organization. Moreover, it may be asserted that the work of these associations is now even more focused on folklore elements, nurturing and reviving tradition, than in the first half of the twentieth century, when the members of minorities during the period when they were not legally protected made efforts to survive and preserve their national identity at all levels. Today they are acknowledged as a minority, specifically cited in the Croatian Constitution,

⁷⁵ "Z Medjuříče", *Český list*, 10 September 1911, p. 3.

⁷⁶ *Český list*, 17 February 1912, p. 4; *Český list*, 16 March 1912, p. 3; Ant. Vlk, "Z Malých Zdenců", *Nový český list*, 24 January 1914, p. 4.

⁷⁷ "Volby do obcí", *Jugoslávští Čechoslováci*, 12 November 1936, p. 1.

their status is legally regulated, they have the possibility of expressing themselves through the National Minorities Advisory Board, and in Daruvar and Končanica the Czech and Croatian languages have equal status. During the interwar years, they unsuccessfully attempted to participate in the political life of the SCS Kingdom by establishing a political party, while today they have a representative for the Czech and Slovak minorities in the Croatian Parliament. The question may be posed as to the extent to which local communities acknowledge and value the instructions of the Czech National Minority Council, as well as the response of this minority population to calls for participation in the Council's work. Certain problems do indeed exist, but the situation can by no means be described as similar to the past, when local communities looked upon the Czechs "as though someone from Asia who comes here seeking exercise of rights". The Czech minority, as before, receives financial aid from its core country, but today the state in whose territory they live also contributes to this financing. It is also interesting to note that the principle of regulating minority schooling does not greatly differ in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, particularly if one considers the present-day model C of nurturing the Czech language and culture, which is rather similar to the supplemental schools of the past. It is particularly noteworthy that the Czech Jan Amos Komensky Primary School established in 1922 continues to operate successfully to this day. Publishing activity still flourishes, although besides periodicals – which were once the sole means of connecting Czechs in the South Slav lands and beyond – today they are linked world-wide by the Internet, while the term *Pemec* has become so ordinary that the members of this minority no longer even see it as derogatory as it once was, which also shows that legal regulation of their minority status has contributed to a feeling of security and safety among its members. If the stance on assimilation cited at the beginning of this study, "assimilation is inevitable, the laws of nature need not be resisted, but we can slow it down until such time as our environment is such that this assimilation will not mean a minus for the Yugoslav side but rather a plus for the Czechoslovak side" is compared to the modern view, "Assimilation cannot be halted, but it may be slowed", it may be concluded that time has literally shown that the Czech minority, while straddling the line "between globalism and monarchism", has successfully done all it can to keep from being submerged.

Die tschechische Minderheit zwischen Globalismus und Monarchismus

Zusammenfassung

Aufgrund der komparativen Analyse der Lage von der tschechischen Minderheit in der Zwischenkriegszeit und heute beabsichtigte die Autorin zu zeigen bzw. zu beweisen, in welchem Maße die heutige Lage dieser nationalen Minderheit aus den damaligen Anstrengungen und Bemühungen, ihre gesellschaftliche Lage zu verbessern, oder einfach aus dem Kampf um die Minderheitsrechte hervorgegangen ist. Folgende Parameter wurden dabei untersucht: die Zahl der Angehörigen der tschechischen Minderheit in der Zwischenkriegszeit und heute und die von ihnen besiedelten Gebiete in den genannten Zeiten, das Ausmaß ihrer Rechte im Königreich der Serben, Kroaten und Slowenen beziehungsweise in Jugoslawien und in der unabhängigen Republik Kroatien sowie die Organisierung ihrer Vereine damals und heute. Ihre heutige gesellschaftliche Lage beruht jedenfalls auf den vor etwa hundert Jahren gelegten Fundamenten. Es muss dabei betont werden, dass die tschechische Minderheit auch heute größtenteils dasselbe Gebiet besiedelt, auf dem sie auch in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts gelebt hat, so dass sie, im Unterschied zu den meisten anderen Minderheitsgruppen, eine homogene Minderheitsgemeinschaft darstellt. Obwohl es, nach Zahlenangaben gesehen, zur partiellen Assimilation kam, darf man als Ursachen von Verminderung der Zahl der Angehörigen dieser nationalen Minderheit Reemigration in der Nachkriegszeit, Depopulation der ruralen Bevölkerung und andere Faktoren nicht außer Acht lassen. Unabhängig davon wurde kulturelle Assimilation (Akkulturation) dieser Minderheit durch Pflege von Traditionen und Bräuchen erfolgreich vermieden und zwar fast auf dieselbe Weise wie am Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts. Ihre Gesellschaftliche und kulturelle Organisation blieb unverändert. Wenn man die offiziellen Standpunkte über Assimilation vom Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts („Assimilation ist unvermeidbar, den Naturgesetzen sollte man sich nicht widersetzen, sie kann aber bis zu jener Zeit verzögert werden, wenn unsere Situation solche sein wird, dass diese Assimilation nicht ein Minus für die jugoslawische Sache, sondern einen Gewinn für die tschechoslowakische Sache bedeuten wird“) mit jenen zeitgemäßen vergleicht („Assimilation kann nicht aufgehoben werden, sie kann aber verlangsamt werden“), ist doch nur festzustellen, dass die Zeit wortwörtlich gezeigt hat, dass die tschechische Minderheit – „zwischen Globalismus und Monarchismus“ erfolgreich balancierend – ihr Bestes getan hat, um auf diesem Gebiet nicht zu ertrinken.