

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE EMERGENCE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK, SLOVENIAN AND CROATIAN OREL/ORAO MOVEMENTS

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The beginnings of the Orel movement can be found in the Czech lands and Slovakia at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where it was a response to liberal trends and the Sokol organization, but also a movement founded in the Slav/cultural discourse which aspired to Orel mutualism, cultural unity and equal status as creators of European thought and socio-cultural renewal. The Orel movement came via Slovenia to Croatia, where the unified orientation of the Croatian Orao movement was determined by Ivan Merz through the introduction of the a specific course for the Croatian Orao movement, particularly apparent in the guidelines set forth in the encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei*: political neutrality, a new approach to physical culture and comprehensive personal growth. This article analyzes the activity of the Orel/Orao movement in Czechoslovakia, Slovenia and Croatia and ascertains the specific aspects of the Croatian Orao Federation, summarizing them under the term *Croatian Orao specificum*.

**Key words:** Czechoslovak Orel movement, Slovenian Orel movement, Croatian Orao movement, Croatian Orao Federation, *Croatian Orao specificum*.

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## Introduction

The beginnings of the Orel/Orao ('eagle') movement can be found in the Czech at the end of the nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries, where it constituted something of a response to the appearance and influence of liberal trends and the Sokol organization, and it began to spread to Slovenia, whence it also made its way to Croatia, where, under the influence of Dr. Ivan Merz, it underwent thorough changes and obtained a new orientation, creating a specific Croatian Orao course and a unique recognisability. In line with the geographic location of its emergence, the development of the Orel/Orao movement was visible primarily in the countries inhabited by Slavs. However, even though it spread to the United States of America, the Orel/Orao movement eschewed cosmopolitanism, considering itself part of "the great Slavic Orao tradition."<sup>1</sup> Established on the basis of this Slavic key, the Orel/Orao movement was based exclusively on the overriding cultural context and Cyrillo-Methodian discourse that was not only considered within the historical framework, but also aspired to Orel/Orao reciprocity, cultural unity and ties as "equal creators of the European spirit"<sup>2</sup>

Under post-war circumstances, a new generation of youths began to become publicly active by organizing various associations, very often with a focus on education, but also on physical exercise with the objective of holistic development. One of the determinants which served as a basis for the popularity of the Orel/Orao movement among youths was physical culture and physical exercise, which was initiated by the formation and activity of gymnastics sections and youth associations from which the Orel/Orao organization developed in all of its segments. Orel/Orao associations differed from their education-oriented counterparts primarily in their serious, more systematic and planned conduct of physical exercise, and the movement's tasks were reflected in the creation of "a new race and through it a new national future."<sup>3</sup> Given that Orel/Orao thought exerted an attractive force, its members very quickly became the drivers and agents of these ideas in society, whereby the Orel/Orao movement became an expansive and creative force in public and social life.

## Development of the Orel Movement in the Czech Lands and Slovakia prior to the First World War

The Orel movement in the Czech lands (Moravia and Bohemia) and Slovakia had its origins in small local sections of the Catholic educational associa-

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<sup>1</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo* (Zagreb: Hrvatski orlovski savez, 1926), p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> František Hanzelka, "Slavenska orlovska uzajamnost", *Orlovska straža V* (1927), No. 10: 286.

<sup>3</sup> M. Lehpamer, "Osnovi organizovanog pokreta", *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1927-1928), No. 6: 71.

tions that formed as a response to the Hussite social reforms and the emergence of the Sokol ('falcon') movement and liberalism which, by 1918, had "seeped into all pores of society".<sup>4</sup> The Orel movement offered an alternative approach to these newly-emerging circumstances with "actually brilliant and unexpected success".<sup>5</sup> In the period prior to World War I, the Orel movement was not particularly numerous; however, at that time it recorded its first organizational progress, which would rapidly lead to the creation of a powerful and popular organization.

An association was formed in Prague in 1896 which may be seen as a sort of precursor to the Orel movement. However, it was only in 1902 that more intensive work commenced, which resulted in the establishment of a gymnastics section of the Catholic workers association in Lišan, next to Brno.<sup>6</sup> After several years of activity, more intense development became apparent in 1908, when the functioning of 12 sections with a total of 828 members was recorded in the Czech lands.<sup>7</sup> A year later, in 1909, 38 Orel associations were active in the Czech lands, and publication of the periodical *Orel* began,<sup>8</sup> while in 1913 the Orel movement in the Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia numbered as many as 196 associations with 7,600 members. The enthusiasm and zeal with which the Orel idea was accepted in these lands was reflected in the 1,000 Orel associations and 150,000 members and the high number of academies, courses and meets held, which was accomplished in only two years of work.<sup>9</sup>

## Development of the Orel Movement in Slovenia prior to the First World War

Given the aforementioned European circumstances, the first attempts to organize the nascent Orel movement in the sense of Catholic physical exercise and educational associations appeared in Slovenia at virtually the same time as in the Czech lands and Slovakia. As in the Czech and Slovak cases, the Slovenian Orel movement developed with similar features, particularly given its mass character, which may be interpreted as due to geographic proximity that resulted in joint international meets of the aforementioned nations in Ljubljana and Maribor.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [No author], "Čehoslovačko Orlovstvo u danima borbe", *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 6-7: 131.

<sup>5</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> [No author], "Čehoslovačko Orlovstvo u danima borbe", *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 6-7: 133.

<sup>10</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 49.

The Orel movement arrived in Slovenia from the Czech lands and Slovakia by presenting itself as the “youngest branch of the Christian Social movement founded by Antun Mahnić<sup>11</sup> and Janez Krek<sup>12,13</sup>” Krek attempted to establish a Catholic national Sokol in 1896, but he temporarily backed down from his intent due to the great difficulties involved.<sup>14</sup> The beginnings of the Orel movement in Slovenia are tied to the Christian Social movement which was actively worked toward a renaissance in Slovenian religion, social welfare and society in general, and since this movement implied the involvement of young people, with time the need for the establishment of independent youth organizations was acknowledged.<sup>15</sup> In this vein, the formation of Catholic physical exercise sections in Slovenia was also advocated by Anton Korošec, who recommended their establishment at the general assembly of the Catholic Social Federation on 4 September 1905. It may be concluded that Korošec wanted to facilitate the equal development of all gymnastic associations alongside the already existing Sokol for the purpose of “filling out the Cath. youth movement”.<sup>16</sup>

Following the idea of implementing the recommendation for the further advancement of youth organizations, the kernel of the Orel movement in Slovenia may be recognized on 18 November 1906, when the president of the Slovenian Christian Social Federation, Janez Krek, opened the first physical fitness hall, called the Union, in Ljubljana, turning it over to the Federation’s gymnastics section and underscoring that “the physical exercise branch of educational work must become a quality of the entire nation”.<sup>17</sup> In Slovenia, as in other countries in which the Orel movement was active, the aim underlying

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<sup>11</sup> Antun Mahnić, (Kobdilj na Krasu, 14 Sept. 1850 – Zagreb, 14 Dec. 1920), founder of the Croatian Catholic Movement (1903-1941) as a major religious, cultural and social push which constituted a response to liberal trends in Croatia in the early twentieth century. Antun Mahnić, *Knjiga života*, (Osijek: Prva hrvatska dion. tiskara, 1923), pp. 5-8.

<sup>12</sup> Janez E. Krek (Sveti Gregor, 27 Nov. 1865 – Šentjanž, 8 Oct. 1917), active Slovenian politician, sociologist, theologian, current affairs writer, professor and priest and one of the central personalities of the Slovenian Catholic Movement.

<sup>13</sup> Josip Jeraj, “Preko Orlovstva do kršćanskog društva i naroda”, *Orlovska straža* V (1927), No. 5: 152; Zvonimir Dugački, “Slovensko Orlovstvo”, *Orlovski kalendar za prostu godinu 1929*. VI (1929), No. 1: 81.

<sup>14</sup> Srijemski, “Bit orlovstva”, *Luč* XVIII (1923), No. 7-8: 150.

<sup>15</sup> Josip Jeraj, “Preko Orlovstva do kršćanskog društva i naroda”, *Orlovska straža* V (1927), No. 5: 152.

<sup>16</sup> Srijemski, “Bit orlovstva”, *Luč* XVIII (1923), No. 7-8: 150. On this occasion, Korošec stated that “our associations are living in friendly relations with the already existing exercise associations [meaning the Sokol organizations], as long as they are not dominated by a spirit that opposes our principles”. Josip Jeraj, “Preko Orlovstva do kršćanskog društva i naroda”, *Orlovska straža* V (1927), No. 5: 152.

<sup>17</sup> Josip Jeraj, “Preko Orlovstva do kršćanskog društva i naroda”, *Orlovska straža* V (1927), No. 5: 152; A.[ntun] Šenda, “Veliki socijalni radnik – otac Orlovstva”, *Orlovska straža* V (1927), No. 11: 322.; Ž. Donadini, “Dr Krek kao Orao”, *Orlovska straža* V (1927), No. 11: 323.

the formation of Orel associations was presented as “the upbringing of an educated and physically fit society consisting of proper patriots and upstanding individuals”.<sup>18</sup> In this manner, the spread of physical exercise as a national virtue gained momentum, and in 1907 there were as many as 20 physical exercise sections, which led to the establishment of the Federation of Gymnastics Sections as the predecessor to the Yugoslav Orel Federation.<sup>19</sup>

Noteworthy is that in 1908 the Federation of Physical Exercise Sections began to publish its own bulletin, *Mladost*, which was edited by Franc Terseglav, who would go on to write the Slovenian *Zlatna knjiga* (“Golden Book”).<sup>20</sup> At the same time, in Škofja Loka on 26 July 1908, the first public performance by 300 gymnasts was held “in front of 5,000 participants from throughout Slovenia, in which 34 gymnastics sections were operating at the time”.<sup>21</sup> The gymnastics sections grew into a comprehensive youth, educational and physical fitness organization, and their growth was confirmed by a general assembly held in Bohinjka Bistrica on 19 March 1909.<sup>22</sup> That year was particularly important for the Orel movement, since the Federation of Gymnastic Sections became the Orel Federation, and the exercise sections were proclaimed Orel sections and their members were called *Orlovi* (‘eagles’).<sup>23</sup>

As a result of the active work of the Orel Federation, the Orel Movement spread throughout Slovenia, enrolling 6,000 members in a few years.<sup>24</sup> The Orel movement was additionally defined by the provisions of its Standing Orders, which were released in their supplemented edition in 1910, the same year as the “Golden Book.” The significance of publication of the “Golden Book” was primarily recognized in the ideal definition of the Orel movement, while the Standing Orders defined the organizational structure and methods for Orel work, which would contribute to the even more intense growth that was observed in 1910, when 128 Orel associations were active with 3,691 members, 2,526 gymnasts, 1,171 subscribers to *Mladost*, 151 public appearances held, 1,887 uniforms made and 661 lectures delivered.<sup>25</sup> An important international meet was held in

<sup>18</sup> [No author], “Orlovi”, *Mladost* II (1922), No. 8: 107.

<sup>19</sup> The first president of the Federation of Gymnastic Sections was Ivan Podlesnik, an accountant. Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 48.; Srijemski, “Bit orlovstva”, *Luč* XVIII (1923), No. 7-8: 150.

<sup>20</sup> Josip Jeraj, “Preko Orlovstva do kršćanskog društva i naroda”, *Orlovska straža* V (1927), No. 5: 152.

<sup>21</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 47.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Srijemski, “Bit orlovstva”, *Luč* XVIII (1923), No. 7-8: 150.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Thus, for example, after five years of work, i.e., by 1911, the Slovenian Orel Federation gathered 148 associations with 4,025 members, 2,526 gymnasts, and 2,410 uniforms, while just prior to the First World War the number of members had increased to 6,000. Josip Jeraj, “Preko Orlovstva do kršćanskog društva i naroda”, *Orlovska straža* V (1927), No. 5: 153.

Ljubljana in 1913, significant because 800 Slovenian and 100 Czech Orel members appeared together before 32,000 spectators. Noteworthy also is that on that occasion the women's branch of the Orel movement appeared for the first time, as 32 *Orlice* ('she-eagles') performed at the meet.<sup>26</sup> As part of the meet in Ljubljana, an Orel assembly was held, attended by "2,000 uniformed *Orlovi*, 300 Czechs and quite a few Croatian youth organization members".<sup>27</sup>

From 1909 until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the Orel movement in Slovenia grew into a considerable youth organization with a clearly defined educational and social platform and established contacts in the international field, particularly with the Czechs in 1907, the French in 1909, and with the Croats through the "Orao association in Dalmatia".<sup>28</sup> Prior to the First World War, the Orel movement in the Czech lands, Slovakia and Slovenia grew into a powerful, mass and well-organized youth organization with a focus on working toward the balanced development of each individual.

## **Development of the Orel Movement in Czechoslovakia after the First World War**

The First World War was the prime cause of stagnation in the activity of all organizations, including the Orel movement. Once it was over, however, Orel organizations were re-established and resumed their activities, and their intense growth and relevance were reflected in both their mass character and their internal development. The end of World War I and return of Orel members from the battlefields created the conditions for the revitalization of the Orel movement, which was formally launched by the large Orel assembly held in Czechoslovakia on 8 December 1919.<sup>29</sup> Growing into a numerically powerful and influential organization, the Orel movement – together with the peasant and worker youth – was joined by pupils and young intellectuals, whereby the focus of Orel thought and action turned to the idea of creating a new generation of youths through intense activity in the fields of education, publishing and special methods to conduct physical exercise. Rapid development was recorded in the field of publishing, thanks to the printing of Orel books and magazines which greatly contributed to the development of culture in these countries, and at the end of the First World War intensive cultural activities commenced, which was particularly reflected in printing and publishing.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 49.

<sup>27</sup> [No author], "Orlovi", *Mladost* II (1922), No. 8: 107.

<sup>28</sup> Josip Jeraj, "Preko Orlovstva do kršćanskog društva i naroda", *Orlovska straža* V (1927), No. 5: 153.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>30</sup> It should be stressed that the "Orel members (...) were acknowledged as the first combatants for Catholic rights and the pioneers of education in the Czechoslovak nation." [No author],

In the post-war years, the development of the Czechoslovak Orel movement became increasingly visible, in that it “numbered 346 associations with 40,000 members”,<sup>31</sup> while in 1922 these figures increased to 1,118 associations with 122,182 members.<sup>32</sup> In 1927, the Slovak Orel movement held 19 minor meets, 76 academic ceremonies, 51 outings with public performances and 55 Orel instructional courses, while in 1928 it numbered 20,000 members, of whom 11,000 were gymnasts. In Czechoslovakia in 1929, there were 150,000 Orel members gathered in 1,000 associations, 300 Orel exercise facilities and as many as “ten times the number of other citizens who sympathize with Orel thought”,<sup>33</sup> and lectures were delivered by respected experts which were broadcast by radio.<sup>34</sup> A particularly interesting fact is that the Orel organizations in both countries owned as many as 76 cinemas. The Czechoslovak Orel movement had cinemas at its disposal at 33 locations, and 27 new requests for concessions and the opening of more Orel cinemas were submitted in 1927.<sup>35</sup> The greatest move in this field was made by Czech Orel poet Karel Dostál-Lutinov, who formed an Orel cinematographic network throughout Czechoslovakia under the name Pax-Film.<sup>36</sup>

The Czechoslovak Orel movement was sub-divided into “parishes”, that is, small Orel groupings which gathered Orel associations in a specific geographic area, and by 1929 there were approximately thirty such “parishes”. The seat of the organization was located in Brno, and it operated under the name “Central Council of the Czechoslovak Orel”, to which the “parish councils” were subordinate. The education committee handled all educational and training activities, while exercise activities were the concern of the “Council of Directors”, and the general assembly constituted the highest body of the Czechoslovak Orel, which decided on all more important organizational matters.

In the field of publishing, the Czechoslovak Orel movement published its own official and most important periodical under the title *Tatranski Orel*, which came out biweekly, while *Kvety mladi* (‘Flowers of Youth’) was published for children and adolescents. *Orelska osvjeta* (Orel Education) was a journal

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“Čehoslovačko Orlovstvo u danima borbe”, *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 6-7: 132.; Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>31</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 50.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>33</sup> [Editorial], “Orlovstvo i država”, *Orlovska straža* VII (1929), No. 10: 193.

<sup>34</sup> These were experts such as Dr. Nadel, a well-known composer, as well as Dr. Šetin, Klimeš, Dr. David, Sadil, Prof. Vraštil, Nemeč and others. [No author], “Iz slavenskog orlovstva”, *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 5: 155.

<sup>35</sup> [No author], “Na orlovskoj straži – Orlovski kinematografi u Čehoslovačkoj”, *Orlovska straža* V (1927), No. 12: 361.

<sup>36</sup> [Iz slavenskog orlovstva], “Čehoslovačko Orlovstvo i kinematografi”, *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 7-8: 221.

dedicated to education and upbringing which had a yearly output of several volumes that served as textbooks for instructors who held courses. Besides various educational themes, this journal also covered the dramatic arts, which were presented in plays and recitals. The journal *Tělesna výchova* (Physical Education) was published to cover the field of physical exercise. Besides these publishing activities, individual “parishes” independently published their own bulletins, such as the organizational periodical of the Slovak parishes called *Straža Tatier* (Tatra Sentry), while the youth paper *Orlík* (‘Eaglet’) was published for children and adolescents. Additionally, the central council of the Czechoslovak Orel published its own books, brochures and other printed matter, also running a retail outlet to sell uniforms and other Orel accessories.

The Czechoslovak Orel’s social work encompassed a variety of branches, such as organizational activities, cultural/educational and exercise programs, and educational lectures on various topics, as well as cinematography, photography, the dramatic arts, music, and library activities accompanying physical exercise courses. The members of the Czechoslovak Orel movement were divided into women’s and men’s associations, which were then further sub-divided into Orel youth generations in two categories: youths up to 14 years of age, youths aged 14 to 18, and full members who had to be adults.

## The Great Orel Meet in Brno in 1922

The Great Orel Meet in Brno was organized in order to highlight the strength and mass character of the Orel movement and secure the “Catholic rights of the Czechoslovak nation”,<sup>37</sup> but also the first gathering of the entire membership of the Czechoslovak Orel movement from both at home and abroad and the Second Slavic Orel Muster, thereby emphasizing a Slavic discourse.<sup>38</sup> In line with the intensive development that resulted in the mass character and popularity of the Orel movement, a great deal of public interest was aroused by the meet in Brno, which resulted in the arrival of 10,000 spectators. With considerable response from various countries, Orel representatives of various nationalities participated in the meet, including “Croats, Yugoslavs, Rusyns, Poles, Slavs from Germany, Austria and America and participants from France, Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Ireland and England”,<sup>39</sup> which clearly illustrated the popularity of the Orel movement in different countries and among different nationalities.

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<sup>37</sup> [No author], “Čechoslovačko Orlovstvo u danima borbe”, *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 6-7: 133.

<sup>38</sup> [Presidency of the Czechoslovak Orel], “Katolicima Jugoslavije”, *Mladost* II (1922), No. 1: 1.

<sup>39</sup> [No author], “Orlovski tabor u Brnu”, *Mladost* II (1922), No. 3-4: 48-50.



**Při koupí a předložení jízdenek předložte bez vyzvání.**

**Orasítejte osobní pobitáina v čes. pohraniční stánici při jízdě do Brna.**

Místo pro kotel.

Slet Československého Orelstva v BRNO 1922.

**Legitimační listek**  
pro zahraničního účastníka Sletu Československého Orelstva v Brně, konaného ve dnech 11.–16. srpna 1922.

Jméno: *Bjelen Vilma*  
Zaměstnání: *bank. úřednice*  
Byt: *Sarajev - Jugoslavijs*  
Jest členem:\*) *Orlovski Podgorice-Lajpek*

Ústřední Rada Orla Československého. *J. Juncić*

Vlastní podpis účastníka. Místostarosta Čsl. Orla, *Vilma Bjelen*  
Za zahraniční odbor sletový.

Legitimační listek jest platna pouze tehdy, je-li majitel její opatřen sletovým plakátem v právním horním rohu této legitimace vyobrazenou.

\*) Nám a místo zahraniční úřední nebo sportovního úřadu, příslušnost účastníka k této korporaci musí prokázat účastník legitimací.

Tiskárna „Typos“ v Brně.

**Pr. 49**  
**A présenter aux guichets de gare et aux contrôleurs.**

A oblitérer à la caisse de la station frontière au voyage pour Brno.

Concours international de l'U. I. O. C. E. P. à BRNO 1922.

**Carte de légitimation**  
pour le participant étranger au Concours international de l'U. I. O. C. E. P. (Sletu Československého Orelstva) à Brno qui a lieu du 11 au 16 août.

Noms: *Bjelen Vilma*  
Profession: *bank. úřednice*  
Domicile: *Sarajev - Jugoslavijs*  
Membre: \*) *Orlovski Podgorice-Lajpek*

Ústřední Rada Orla Československého. *J. Juncić*

Signature du participant. La viceprésident de l'Orla, *Vilma Bjelen*  
Commission étranger de l'Orla.

La carte de légitimation n'est valable que si le détenteur possède l'insigne du Concours dont la copie se trouve sur cette carte.

\*) Nom et lieu de la société gymnastique ou sportive étrangère; l'adhésion à cette société doit être prouvée par la légitimation de carte de membre.

The card for the meet in Brno in 1922

A total of 4,288 Orel men and 3,328 Orel women and 1,200 Croats<sup>40</sup> and Slovenes<sup>41</sup> performed as the part of the exercise program carried out in the exercise arena. The success of the meet in Brno, with 50,000 participants – of whom 30,000 were Orel men and 20,000 were Orel women, whose “blue colour inundated Brno”<sup>42</sup> – additionally reinforced and changed public attitudes and perceptions of the Orel movement, which began to be seen in the wake of the meet as a serious, powerful and relevant movement with considerable influence on the formation of social events in the country and abroad, thereby surpassing the national framework of a single country. In this vein, the meet in Brno may be perceived as an exceptionally important event which signified a key turning

<sup>40</sup> Besides participating in activities in the exercise arena, the Croatian *Orlovi* – who set off for the Great Muster in Brno on Wednesday, 9 August 1922 – also appeared at the academic ceremony in the Brno theatre, where they carried out an exercise routine written and prepared by Dr. Stjepan Vladarski. The appearance at this ceremony with their own routine was rather significant, because when the Croatian *Orao* movement first became active, only routines translated from Slovenian into Croatian were done. [No author], “Za tjelesnu kulturu”, *Orlovska straža* VII (1929), No. 4: 99.

<sup>41</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 52.

<sup>42</sup> [No author], “Čehoslovačko Orlovstvo u danima borbe”, *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 6-7: 133.

point and affirmation of the Orel movement on the Czechoslovak and international scene, but also additionally reinforced other Orel organizations elsewhere, such as the Croatian one, bringing it even closer to unification and independence and the creation of an ideal Orel movement as the principal organization of the Catholic youth cutting across class lines.<sup>43</sup> The meet in Brno may also be observed in the context of the driving force of the Orel movement's new popularity, which was evident in the subsequent period when increased interest and many new young members in Orel associations were recorded.

## The Orel Grand Meet in Prague in 1929

The Grand Orel Meet in Prague was a part of the program to observe the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the [Czechoslovak] Republic, on which occasion major ceremonies were organized in 1929 to commemorate the martyrdom of St. Wenceslaus, the founder and unifier of the Slav tribes in Bohemia and the "leader and patron"<sup>44</sup> of the Czechoslovak Orel movement.<sup>45</sup> Besides marking this anniversary, the meet was supposed to demonstrate to all nations that the "idea of the Catholic popular renaissance among the Slavs is mighty and irrepressible"<sup>46</sup> and which, through Orel thought, would ensure progress in social circumstances.<sup>47</sup> The Grand Orel Meet in Prague had an extensive event schedule which began on 28 June and lasted until 8 July 1929, and the meet's importance was also demonstrated by the arrival of representatives from many nations, such as: "English, Irish, Belgians, Dutch, French,

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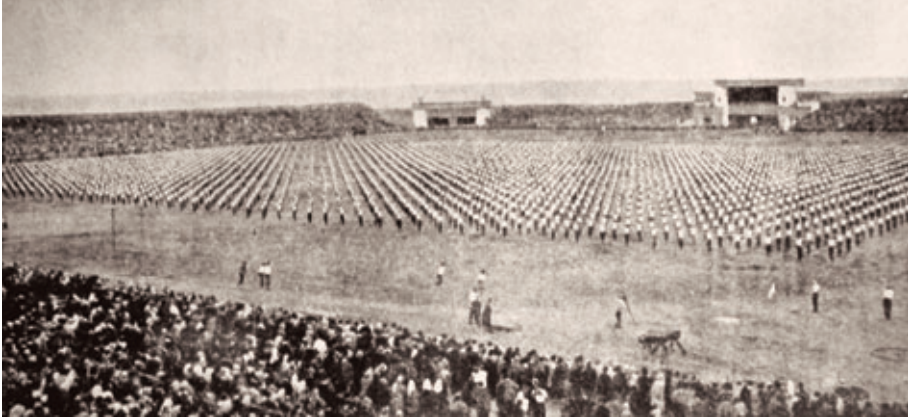
<sup>43</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, pp. 70-72.

<sup>44</sup> F. Hanzelka, "U Prag", *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 4: [no page number].

<sup>45</sup> The official symbol of the grand Orel meet in Prague, which was done in bronze by the artist Šejnosta, featured an image of St. Wencelsaus as a prince wearing a knight's uniform and holding a shield with an eagle engraved on it, which was "featured on the shield of St. Wencelsaus 1,000 years before", [No author], "Sletski znak", *Orlovska straža* VII (1929), No. 3: [no page number].

<sup>46</sup> A curiosity of the Grand Orel Meet in Prague was the membership of Renata Tyrš, the widow of Sokol movement founder Miroslav Tyrš, in the steering committee of the Prague Meet and the Wenceslaus Anniversary, causing "great consternation among the ranks of the Czech Sokol." Renata Tyrš was the daughter of Dr. Fügner, Tyrš's main associate in establishing the Sokol movement, and she wrote an article in which she condemned the "anti-religious and anti-clerical spirit which she believed was predominant in the Sokol movement", [No author], "Renata Tyršova i Večeslavská proslava", *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1928/1929), No. 5: 71-72.; Zvonimir Dugački, "Sveorlovski slet u Pragu 1929", *Orlovski kalendar za prostu godinu 1929*. VI (1929), No. 1: 78-79.

<sup>47</sup> A special issue of *Les Jeunes*, the vocational bulletin of the International Union of Catholic Gymnasts, was largely dedicated to the Prague Meet, with a wealth of illustrations on the Orel movement, which served to additionally popularize it. Also, in this year, a special edition of the almanac of the Czechoslovak Orel was published "in honour of the 1,000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wencelsaus", which together with news on the meet also contained statistics and information on the operating methods and preparations for the Wenceslaus Orel Meet [No author], "Praški slet", *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1928/1929), No. 5: 71.



Performance of 4000 "Eagles" at the meet in Prague in 1929

Spanish, Germans, Luxembourgers, Austrians, (Lusatian) Sorbs, Poles, Americans, Finns, Japanese, Romanians and Portuguese<sup>48</sup> and Croats, represented by 1,300 members of the Croatian Orao movement.<sup>49</sup> The meet began on St. George Square with the early morning formation of an Orel procession, while the grandstands – which were a kilometre long and 30 meters wide – were filled to the last seat and numbered 90,000 spectators and numerous notable guests.<sup>50</sup> The meet's program encompassed the performance of demanding Prague exercises which were very precisely carried out by 4,000 Orel men and 4,000 Orel women.<sup>51</sup> The Prague meet also included the performance of group exercises which involved many Orel members and represented a special component of the program, and the Czechoslovak Orel movement presented four exercise scenes of which each portrayed a single major idea, each performed by one "Czechoslovak province".<sup>52</sup> In addition to the Czechoslovak Orel move-

<sup>48</sup> [No author], "Sveorlovski slet u Pragu 1929", *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 9: 245; F. Hanzelka, "U Prag", *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 4: 98; [No author], "Finska na Orlovskom sletu", *Orlovska straža* VII (1929), No. 6-7: 145.

<sup>49</sup> [No author], "U oči velikih dana", *Orlovska straža* VII (1929), No. 6-7: 130; [No author], "Spremajmo se u Zlatni Prag!", *Orlovski vjesnik* I (1928), No. 7: [no page number].; [No author], "Sveorlovski slet u Pragu 1929", *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 9: 243.

<sup>50</sup> The guests who attended the ceremony on 5 July were Papal Nuncio Ciriaci, Cardinal Bourne from London, Polish Cardinal Hlond from Poznan, Croatian Archbishop Dr. Bauer, Prague Archbishop Dr. Kordač, Polish Archbishop Dr. Teodorović from Lvov, and the following bishops: Dr. Mileta, Dr. Jeglič, Dr. Kašpar, Dr. Barta, Vojtašak, Dr. Kmetko, Dr. Podlaka, French Bishop Chaptal from Paris, Czechoslovak Prime Minister František Udržal and seven cabinet ministers, the supreme command of the Czechoslovak army and diplomats and ambassadors from France, Poland, England, Bulgaria and Belgium, as well as Czechoslovak President Tomáš Masaryk. [No author], "Večeslavsko orlovsko slavlje u Pragu", *Orlovska straža* VII (1929), No. 10: 195.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 197-198.

<sup>52</sup> [No author], "Slikovite vježbe na praškom sletu", *Orlovska straža* VII (1929), No. 6-7: 145.

ment, the group exercises also presented the Croatian and Slovenian Orel/Orao movements with a special joint routine.<sup>53</sup>

## Growth of the Orel Movement in Slovenia after the First World War

As opposed to the Croatian Orao movement, which was still in its beginnings in the years after the First World War, the Slovenian Orel Federation after the war consisted of “140 associations with 3,956 members, 2,423 gymnasts and 2,241 youth members with 658 uniforms made”,<sup>54</sup> which may be observed in the context of a developed organization with a stable financing system. The further growth in the popularity of the Slovenian Orel movement was noted, as it encompassed “220 associations in 33 districts with approximately 8,00 members and 4,000 youth members”.<sup>55</sup> Besides the Orel associations, Orel activity was also recognized in the activities of “220 Orel sections and 89 Orel youth sections and 3,000 members of the women’s generation”,<sup>56</sup> which grew on the idea of “unifying gymnasts in a chivalric spirit”.<sup>57</sup> Such intense developmental activity was particularly reflected in the very successful participation at international events, such as the “Catholic Olympics in Strasbourg in 1922 and Paris in 1923, and then the Pan-Slavic meet in Brno in 1922 and Cologne in 1928, where the Slovenian Orel movement became the world champion in physical exercise”.<sup>58</sup> Alongside the evident strength of the Slovenian Orel organization, the successful implementation of physical exercise appearances and activities, the seriousness of its work was visible in its financial stability as well, which particularly came to the fore in financing the construction of the largest Orel stadium/exercise arena in the region.

## The Orel Muster in Maribor in 1920

The Orel movement continued to grow even more intensively after the First World War, greatly surpassing the pre-war Orel activities. In this regard, the “Maribor Muster”<sup>59</sup> held from 29 July to 1 August 1920 had particular sig-

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<sup>53</sup> [No author], “Za tjelesnu kulturu”, *Orlovska straža* VII (1929), No. 5: 120; [No author], “Savezna natjecanja u Zagrebu”, *Orlovska straža* VII (1929), No. 6-7: 146.

<sup>54</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 50.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>56</sup> Srijemski, “Bit orlovstva”, *Luč* XVIII (1923), No. 7-8: 150.

<sup>57</sup> Josip Jeraj, “Slovensko Orlovstvo”, *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 5: 136.

<sup>58</sup> Zvonimir Dugački, “Orlovska i Orlička organizacija u Sloveniji”, *Orlovski kalendar za prostu godinu 1929*. VI (1929), No. 1: 82.

<sup>59</sup> The Maribor muster was also called the Maribor Orel Meet or the 1<sup>st</sup> Slovenian Orel Meet, and it constituted “a day of celebration for the Yugoslav Catholic peasant, worker and student youth”. [No author], “Slavlje katoličkog daštva u Mariboru”, *Luč* XV (1920), No. 12-13: 85.

nificance, for the Orel movement once more demonstrated its strength, and the Maribor days served as a decisive factor in setting the future course of Orel development.<sup>60</sup> Besides reactivating the Orel movement, the significance of the Maribor Muster was also reflected in its international character, because it was precisely at this event that Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes and Croats performed together for the first time, thereby demonstrating Orel/Orao bonds rooted in the Slavic key. The success of the Maribor Muster also confirmed the mass character of the Orel movement, as shown by the 50,000 participants, of whom, as a part of the physical exercise activities, there were performances by “1,700 Orel men and 780 Orel women in the procession and 800 Orel men and 500 Orel women in the exercise arena”.<sup>61</sup>

The Maribor Muster was particularly important to the development of the Orao movement in Croatia, and the performance by 5,000 Croats who were joined by “500 Czechoslovak Orel members”,<sup>62</sup> and may be viewed as setting the first formal foundation of the Croatian Orel movement. Besides influencing the Slovenian and Croatian Orel/Orao movements, the Maribor Muster also served as a new impetus in the region, which became particularly apparent in the even more intense and notable Orel work that followed after the conclusion of the Maribor event. The contribution to the Maribor Muster was clearly reflected in the field of physical culture, when, parallel to an Orel meet “a course was held for the leaders of physical exercise sections in Sveti Vid, and for female pupils in Ljubljana”.<sup>63</sup>

As part of the events which preceded at the Maribor Muster, a major Pan-Slavic gathering was held which was spurred by the Maribor initiative, and at which, on 3 July 1920, Dr. Ivan Merz delivered a lecture on “The International Union of Catholic Pupils”, which resulted in the adoption of several significant conclusions and facilitated student exchanges and better cooperation between states in post-war Europe.<sup>64</sup> Merz’s views here were based on his previously published article in the newspaper *Luč* under the headline “Novo doba” (‘A New Era’),<sup>65</sup> which may be observed in the context of designating the future

<sup>60</sup> Mahničevski, “Uspomene”, *Orlovska misao* IV (1928/1929), No. 3-4: 35.

<sup>61</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 50.

<sup>62</sup> J. Vratarac, “Maribor – Brno”, *Mladost* II (1922), No. 6-7: 88.

<sup>63</sup> It should be noted that at the Orel pupils’ course held in Sveti Vid, near Ljubljana, from 9 to 14 July 1922, 40 Croatian pupils also attended, testifying to the organized work with the pupil population in Croatia. [No author], “Slavlje katoličkog đastva u Mariboru”, *Luč* XV (1920), No. 12-13: 85.

<sup>64</sup> Božidar Nagy, ed., *Ivan Merz – Sabrana djela*, 2 vols. (Zagreb: Postulatura za kanonizaciju bl. Ivana Merza, Filozofski fakultet Družbe Isusove, Glas Koncila, 2011), p. 29; [No author], “Studij dra Ivana Merza”, *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1927-1928), No. 9: 126-128.

<sup>65</sup> This was the first published article by Ivan Merz in which he presented his own experience acquired during his time on the battlefields of the First World War. Ivan Merz, “Novo doba”, *Luč* XIV (1919), No. 9-10: 210-214.; Dragutin Kniewald, *Dr. Ivan Merz – život i djelovanje*, (Zagreb: [no publisher], 1932), p. 107.



Dr. Ivan Merz



Dr. Ivan Protulipac

developmental path of the Croatian Orol movement and Merz's own program of activity.

It is important to note that during the Maribor Muster, a lecture was also delivered by Dr. Ivo Protulipac, the future president of the Croatian Orol Federation and a close associate of Merz, and it was precisely these lectures and the Maribor Muster which constituted the moment when these two future leaders of the Croatian Orol movement presented themselves to the public and Maribor became the place where "the first ideational, organizational and technical foundations for the Orol movement"<sup>66</sup> in Croatia were set.

The Maribor Muster showed that after an interruption of several years, the Orol movement had grown into the leading youth organization, gathering youths from all social classes, and the physical exercise sections in which the associations did their educational work were the foundation of this rapid growth. Despite various forms of resistance along the way, the associations managed to achieve independence without creating ties to other associations, as their reasoning was rooted in the idea of the Orol organization as the fullest and most all-embracing educational movement. It was in fact this autonomy which facilitated an even stronger ascent of Orol thought, with particular emphasis on the development of Orol cultural work, while the mass character of the Orol movement was enhanced by a system based on "physical exercise, universal education and love of Orol fraternity".<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Dragutin Kniewald, *Dr. Ivan Merz – život i djelovanje*, p. 159.

<sup>67</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, pp. 53-54.

The rapid development of the Orel movement in Slovenia after the First World War was based on a new approach to physical exercise, which was transformed from standard activities into Orel rhythmic exercise that “harmoniously trained and developed the entire body [with the aim] of a healthy and harmoniously developed man”,<sup>68</sup> and the development and progress of the Orel system of physical exercise in Slovenia was under powerful international influence which came via international appearances and exchanges of experiences of the Slovenian Orel members. It was precisely at this time that the Slovenian Orel movement decided to build its own Orel physical exercise system based on the principles of universality, rectitude, modernity and success with the incorporation of the entire nation in physical exercise on an equal basis, regardless of age, sex or educational level.<sup>69</sup> In order to additionally present and disseminate this new method of physical exercise work by the Slovenian Orel movement, a series of courses were held in Ljubljana from 4 to 11 March 1923 by many exercise sections. A Croatian Orao team with its own advanced exercises also participated in these events, demonstrating the emergence and establishment of the Croatian Orao movement to the public, which was very significant to the Croatian branch of this movement, because these exercises showed the first complex Croatian Orao exercises, thus giving a new impetus to the Croatian Orao movement which until then had only performed Slovenian Orel exercises. Besides serving as a showcase for a new approach to physical exercise, the Orel week in Ljubljana also showed how serious Orel work was, particularly in the field of “spiritual and physical education, as demonstrated by the interest of 2,000 spectators at the closing academic ceremony”.<sup>70</sup> The further development of the Orel movement in Slovenia was characterized by extensive development and noted public appearances, such as the “Catholic rally in Ljubljana in 1924, when 1,900 gymnasts performed for the first time in the Orel stadium”.<sup>71</sup> Two years later, in 1926, the organization numbered “220 Orel associations sub-divided into 21 departments”<sup>72</sup> with active publishing and literary activity, which included editions of Orel booklets, the special children’s bulletin *Orlič* and a bulletin for older youths, *Mladost*, thereby reflecting the dynamic development of Orel thought in Slovenia.<sup>73</sup>

Besides the male branch of the Orel movement, in Slovenia a women’s Orel movement also developed simultaneously through the Orlička (‘she-eagle’) organization, which began to function during the lifetime of Janez Krek, who may

<sup>68</sup> Josip Jeraj, “Slovensko Orlovstvo” *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 5: 137.

<sup>69</sup> Zvonimir Dugački, “Orlovska i Orlička organizacija u Sloveniji”, *Orlovski kalendar za prostu godinu 1929*. VI (1929), No. 1: 84.

<sup>70</sup> [No author], “Orlovski tjedan u Ljubljani”, *Mladost* III (1923), No. 4: 49.

<sup>71</sup> J.[osip] Jeraj, “Preko Orlovstva do kršćanskog društva i naroda”, *Orlovska straža* V (1927), No. 5: 154.

<sup>72</sup> Josip Jeraj, “Nova vremena”, *Orlovska straža* IV (1926), No. 4: 10.

<sup>73</sup> Josip Jeraj, “Preko Orlovstva do kršćanskog društva i naroda”, *Orlovska straža* V (1927), No. 5: 154.

be deemed the initiator of the women's Orel organization.<sup>74</sup> The work of the Orel women's branch began on 6 September 1919, when the Orlička federation was formed, and its members appeared at the Orel muster in Maribor in 1920 in their own uniforms for the first time. Only two years later, they were represented by 60 women Orel members at the Orel meet in Brno. After three years of work, in 1922 the Orel Federation created the conditions for more intense educational work through the introduction of its own bulletins under the titles *Slovenka*, *Mladost*, *Vigred* and *Predavanja za djevojačke sastanke* ('Lectures for Girls' Meetings').<sup>75</sup> The organizational structure of the Orel women's branch was improved pursuant to the conclusions of the general assembly adopted in 1922, when the Orlička associations were sub-divided into municipalities with a series of directives, such as the introduction of printed matter and women's uniforms, mandatory membership fees, strengthening of youth sections and introduction of Orel holidays and educational/exercise competitions.

The Orlička movement in Slovenia grew intensively, functioning at the international level as well, and conducting an exercise course for their Croatian counterparts ('Orlice') in Zagreb in 1923, which helped strengthen the women's branch of the Orazo movement in Croatia.<sup>76</sup> Two years later, in 1925, the Orlička Federation changed its name based on the provisions of its charter into the Slovenian Orlička Federation, and joined the Yugoslav Orazo Federation.<sup>77</sup> In the further phase of its activities, the Slovenian Orlička Federation intensified its work in education, publishing and the dramatic arts, and participated in the work of the Social Procurement Cooperative, the Pčelice (honey bees) and Stadion Orel Housing Cooperative, underscoring both the popularity and need for a women's branch in the Slovenian Orel movement.<sup>78</sup>

## The Appearance and Significance of the Croatian Orazo Movement

The circumstances surrounding the development of the Croatian Orazo movement were largely contingent upon certain cultural and national specificities, as well as general social determinants in Croatia which reflected post-war circumstances in other European societies. The Orazo movement came to Croatia via Slovenia, where its activities constituted a significant factor in the development and creation of ties between the people, ethical values in society

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<sup>74</sup> The first appearance of the Slovenian women's Orel movement was recorded in 1913, when the Slovenian Orlice performed a joint routine with the Czech Orlice during the "Catholic meeting". Zvonimir Dugački, "Orlovska i Orlička organizacija u Sloveniji", *Orlovski kalendar za prosto godinu 1929*. VI (1929), No. 1: 85-86.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 87.



and the renewal of international ties between states. Additionally, the Orao movement also constituted something of a response to the new circumstances pushed forward by the appearance of European liberalism, the Sokol organization and the return of proponents of liberal thought from the university in Prague, which led to ferment of liberal ideas in public life, which was the most apparent in the press, journalism, literature and politics.

The Croatian Orao movement, on the other hand, was built upon the Croatian Catholic Movement led by the bishop of Krk, Dr. Antun Mahnić, who resolutely opposed some of the new phenomena in society by establishing the magazine *Hrvatska straža* ('Croatian Sentry') in 1903, which may be seen as something of the initial impetus for social organization that resulted in the formation of the first academic association, called Croatia, in Vienna in that same year.<sup>79</sup> Two years later, in 1906, this was followed by the publication of the pupil newspaper *Luč* (Torch) and the establishment of an association called Domagoj in Zagreb, which may be viewed as the initial organizational infrastructure upon which the Croatian Orao movement would later grow.<sup>80</sup> The next phase of social organization mostly gathered youths who would constitute the foundation of a new movement based mainly on school-age adolescents who would be joined by young and highly-educated individuals and workers, forming a "unified youth organization"<sup>81</sup> characterized by class equality.<sup>82</sup> This marked the beginnings of a youth organization through the establishment of youth associations, which spread rather quickly in Dalmatia, resulting in the publication of a newspaper for rural and working class youth called *Mladost* in Split and numerous related social activities, such as various congresses and meetings. Despite the new enthusiasm engendered by this so-

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<sup>79</sup> It is necessary to point out that through his articles in *Hrvatska straža*, Bishop Mahnić began to define the renewal of Croatia by setting forth from the individual and his heart and mind as the starting point and primary aim of this work. Also, the "First Croatian Catholic Congress, held in Zagreb on 3-5 September 1900, extensively dealt with the social question in Croatia" and may be seen as the first contemplation of the coming changes. Nikola Jagetić, "Orlovski pokret i zadrugarstvo", *Organizacijski vjesnik* IV (1926), No. 2: 14.; K. Eterović, "Pismo katol. Hrv. Omladini", *Hrvatska straža* XV (1917), No. [no number]: 133; Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 56. Also notable is that it was Merz who was restored the Croatia Association, where he worked as its secretary, while the renewal process was described by his contemporary Avelin Čepulić: "There were four of us left who renewed the Croatian Catholic academic association called Croatia, and these were: Mato Filipović, D. L., philosophy degree candidate, Ivo Merz, philosophy student, Dragan Marošević, agronomy student (+1927) and Avelin Čepulić. All except one of us met in the Augustineum dormitory." Avelin Čepulić, "Iz đlačkih dana dra Ivana Merza", *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1927-1928), No. 9: 130.

<sup>80</sup> The Croatian Orao phenomenon is significant, particularly given its modest beginnings and the "meagre organization whence the entire movement grew, and the primary reasons for its success were recognized in the clarity of Orao principles and programs and the systematic nature and commitment to work and activism". Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, pp. 58, 105.

<sup>81</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 59.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

cial ferment and the formation of youth associations, the lack of an organization rooted in firm tenets was acknowledged. However, even though these attempts at organizing were halted by the First World War, it is noteworthy that they actually constituted a beginning that would lead to a renewal of work by youth associations after the war's close, a predecessor and further essential component of the Croatian Orao movement.

After the end of the First World War, the Croatian Catholic National Federation in Zagreb initiated the renewal of youth associations. However, care for youth associations in the organizational sense was assumed by the National Federation, which instituted the systemization and coordination of their work.<sup>83</sup> This operational system and program was reflected in the establishment of youth sections in the National Federation and the restoration of already existing youth associations, as well as the formation of new one, which would ultimately lead to the establishment of the Youth Sub-federation.<sup>84</sup> This organizational structure resulted in significant changes in the field of publishing, leading to the renewed printing of the magazine *Mladost* and the formation of youth choirs that would later prove important to the growth of the Orao movement.<sup>85</sup>

## The Beginnings of the Orao Movement in Croatia after the First World War

After the close of the First World War, the conditions arose once more for social activities which inherited the social structure of the youth associations. In line with the parallel process of revitalizing youth associations, Orao thought appeared and while gathering already existing pupil and youth associations subsequently grew into an organization based on a "consolidated platform (...) and defined system of work".<sup>86</sup> It was precisely the pupil organization that would prove to be the developmental path for the creation of the Croatian Orao movement, on which Dragutin Kniewald exerted considerable influence, as in 1919 he introduced pupil organizations to the Orao movement, attempt-

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>84</sup> The youth sections as part of the National Federation were established on 20 February 1919, when Fr. Kujundžić, D.I. was elected as their director, together with his main associates Rev. Jesih and Ivšić. It was precisely by introducing a new organizational system on 24 April 1921 that the National Federation set forth in the establishment of the Youth Sub-federation that would constitute a further organizational move toward the creation of conditions for the acceptance of the Croatian Orao movement. Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>85</sup> The magazine *Mladost* once more began to come out on 1 May 1921, the same year that youth assemblies began to be held, especially in Ludbreg on 1 August, in Đakovo on 15 August and Ivanić grad on 31 August 1921. Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> *Orlovska organizacija – đaštvo i katolički pokret*, (Zagreb: [Vodstvo Hrvatskog orlovske saveza i Sveze hrvatskih orlica], 1926), p. [no page number].

ing to achieve political independence from the very start.<sup>87</sup> Kniewald provided the impetus and made the final decision to introduce the Orao movement to Croatia after he attended the “the course conducted by the Catholic intelligentsia that was held from 1 to 5 August 1919 in Homac, where the idea on establishing the Orao movement [in Croatia] was underscored”.<sup>88</sup> Upon the completion of the course in Homac, Kniewald went to Senj and launched “the establishment of pupil Orao and Orlić sections”,<sup>89</sup> while in Zagreb at the same time Pavao Jesih stressed the need for “the formation of the Orao idea as a component of the Orao youth”.<sup>90</sup> These early organizational efforts by Kniewald and Jesih may be seen as the beginnings of the Orao movement in Croatia, which began in the form of gymnastic sections of educational associations, without the introduction of the Orao name and insignia at the time. Propelled by this new impetus, gymnastic sections began to work in Senj in September 1919 with the introduction of physical exercise and the design of uniforms, and in that same year youth associations began functioning in Zagreb.<sup>91</sup>

### The Significance of the Maribor Meet to the Development of the Croatian Orao Movement

Although there were occasional cases of the establishment of individual Orao sections in Croatia even before the Maribor Meet was held, a major organizational step forward and enhanced organizational activities were recorded after the close of the meet in Maribor, particularly through the organization of

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<sup>87</sup> Dragutin Kniewald (Zagreb, 23 June 1889 – Zagreb, 5 May 1979), priest, university professor and public activist; after completing his study of philosophy and theology in Rome, he worked as a teacher in Senj and Zagreb. He earned a doctorate in philosophy at the Gregorian Pontifical University in 1911, and a further doctorate in theology in 1915, while also engaging in significant scholarly research in the field of liturgy. Kniewald dedicated himself to work with the youth. Kniewald cooperated with Ivan Merz, who as one of the founders of the Croatian Orao Federation introduced the principles of Catholic Action and “the direct jurisdiction of the bishop” to the Orao movement, which would become a specific aspect of the Croatian Orao movement. Fabijan Veraja, “Hrvatski katolički pokret ‘potpuno zakazao i neuspio?’”, *Crkva u svijetu* XL (2005), No. 3: 336.

<sup>88</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 61.

<sup>89</sup> Fabijan VERAJA, “Hrvatski katolički pokret ‘potpuno zakazao i neuspio?’”, *Crkva u svijetu* XL (2005), No. 3: 337.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 338.

<sup>91</sup> Noteworthy is that the first pupils’ Orao performance was held in Senj on 8 December 1919, while the “youth course at which Orao exercises were demonstrated” was held in Zagreb in 1920, which would result in the more intensive participation of Zagreb gymnasts at “meets in Slovenia, appearing publicly for the first time in Rajhenburg”. On the other hand, after four years of work, the Senj gymnastic sections held public appearances on 8 December 1923. [No author], “Za Orlovstvo ili proti Orlovstva”, *Orlovska straža* IV (1926), No. 5: 20.; Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 63.

courses for Orao pupils, both boys and girls.<sup>92</sup> The organization and holding of the Maribor Meet can therefore be viewed through the prism of its decisive influence on the future development of the Orao movement in Croatia, because the many international organizations that visited the meet included a Croatian delegation, consisting of members of gymnastic sections of pupil associations who participated in an Orao course for the first time together with five thousand Orel/Orao sympathizers.<sup>93</sup> However, besides the Orao course with which Orao physical exercises set one of the developmental paths toward the future Orao organization in Croatia, the first interim committee was also formed, which may be seen as the foundation of the future Gymnastic Section Federation,<sup>94</sup> representing the “first hub of the Croatian Orao movement”,<sup>95</sup> whereby the Orao movement in Croatia became an “organization of the entire youth, both pupils and non-pupils”.<sup>96</sup> The significance of the specification of the Croatian Orao movement as a unified organization of the entire youth must be seen in the context of the previous practice of having associations divided by age groups, in which the Orao movement introduced a novelty in the field of social organization in Croatia. It is necessary to stress that alongside the male branch of the Orao movement’s predecessor in the sense of the Gymnastic Section Federation, there was also an organizationally defined women’s branch though an associa-

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<sup>92</sup> Dragutin Kniewald, *Dr. Ivan Merz – život i djelovanje*, p. 159.

<sup>93</sup> After the conclusion of the meet, the course was held as the first Croatian pupils’ technical-organizational course at which 21 secondary school and eight pupils and youth members participated. The course was led by Dr. Dragutin Kniewald, with lectures by Dr. Josip Jeraj, Dr. Capuder and others, and at its conclusion the participants, led by Drago Zudenigo, began organizing the Orao movement in Croatia. Srijemski, “Bit orlovstva”, *Luč XVIII* (1923), No. 7-8: 150.

<sup>94</sup> The Gymnastic Section Federation would indeed serve as the foundation for development of the future central Orao youth federation that was first established under the Orao name and rules on 6 July 1922 under the name Orao Sub-federation, at a time when more intensive Orao activities in Croatia began to be recorded. In this vein, parallel to the Orao Sub-federation with its seat in Zagreb, the Orel Sub-federation with its seat in Ljubljana was established in Slovenia, and these two organizations would ultimately establish the Yugoslav Orao/Orel Federation with its seat in Ljubljana.

<sup>95</sup> The interim committee of the future Gymnastic Section Federation was formed on 4 August 1920, which may be viewed as the date of establishment of the Federation itself, i.e., under its full name Federation of Gymnastic Sections of Catholic Secondary School Pupil Organizations, when Drago Zudenigo was elected chairman and the first decision to draft the Standing Orders and Exercise Book were made. *Orlovska organizacija – đastvo i katolički pokret*, (Zagreb: [Vodstvo Hrvatskog orlovskog saveza i Sveze hrvatskih orlica], 1926), [no page number]; Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 64.

<sup>96</sup> Besides the initiative of those who attended the course, the aforementioned developmental path of the future Croatian Orao movement was also rooted in the consolidation of existing youth associations united in the Croatian Catholic Youth Federation and youth sections united in the Croatian Catholic National Federation, which would ultimately result in the establishment of the Gymnastic Section Federation based on Orao operative guidelines. *Orlovska organizacija – đastvo i katolički pokret*, [no page number].

tion under the name Gymnastic Section Union.<sup>97</sup> Organized gathering in this manner based on the initiative of participants in the course at the Maribor Meet constituted the starting point of Orao development which Dragutin Kniewald underscored as the “germ of the future Croatian Orao movement.”<sup>98</sup>

Even though the Orao movement in Croatia spread among different age groups, the most intensive growth was recorded in the pupil movement that would later constitute a considerable portion of the Orao organization that would encompass all age brackets. Very vital support in the incorporation of the Orao idea into the pupil movement and its spread to all age groups in society came from Bishop Mahnić, who sent an epistle to the pupils at the time of the Maribor Meet in which he recommended introduction of the Orao movement to Croatia.<sup>99</sup> Besides Mahnić, a significant contribution to the development of the Orao movement was made by the future president of the Croatian Orao Federation, Dr. Ivo Protulipac, who recommended to Croatia’s pupils “that they seek in the Orao movement, hope, orientation and path in work”,<sup>100</sup> which the pupils received with particular delight, by showing that this “orientation was already in the hearts of the pupils as a well perceived but only implicit path and program”.<sup>101</sup>

In line with the initial intensification of activities in the field of organization, the first results were achieved in September 1920 when work began by “30 boys and girls Orao sections in secondary school organizations and in youth associations”.<sup>102</sup> Two years later, in 1922, the Orao movement gathered 684 members, 520 youths and 42 Orao sections and 305 women members and 238 youth girl members.<sup>103</sup> This rapid growth, accompanied by the popularity of the new Orao idea, was reflected in the broad base upon which the Croatian Orao movement emerged, encompassing the entire youth, encouraging democratic action with the objective of nurturing an awareness of solidarity and care for one’s neighbour and disseminating a cultural program and exercise which the youth receive with particular interest.<sup>104</sup> A further developmental direction

<sup>97</sup> Dragutin Kniewald, *Dr. Ivan Merz – život i djelovanje*, p. 159.

<sup>98</sup> Fabijan Veraja, “Hrvatski katolički pokret ‘potpuno zakazao i neuspio’?”, *Crkva u svijetu* XL (2005), No. 3: 339.

<sup>99</sup> Bishop Mahnić in his epistle to the pupils explicitly upheld the Orao idea as a movement of all youth without differences: “In today’s era, I advise you in particular to study and disseminate the idea and organization of the Orao movement, not only in your own ranks, but among the rural and urban youth as well”. Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 63.

<sup>100</sup> Mahnićevski, “Uspomene”, *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1928/1929), No. 3-4: 36.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Fabijan Veraja, “Hrvatski katolički pokret ‘potpuno zakazao i neuspio’?”, *Crkva u svijetu* XL (2005), No. 3: 340.

<sup>103</sup> Srijemski, “Bit orlovstva”, *Luč* XVIII (1923), No. 7-8: 150.

<sup>104</sup> Ivo Guberina, *Zelena knjiga*, (Zagreb: [no publisher], 1933), p. 106.

became visible in 1923 with the establishment of the Academic Orao as an independent organization of university students which represented “a logical consequence of the Maribor orientation of Croatian secondary school pupils”.<sup>105</sup> Only several days after the establishment of the Academic Orao, the Croatian Orao Federation was established, “in whose leadership Ivan Merz played a crucial role”,<sup>106</sup> which secured sturdy foundations for further intense development of the Croatian Orao movement.

However, despite its intensive work and popularity, the Croatian Orao movement confronted considerable resistance, particularly in the establishment and enrolment of school-age populations into Orao associations, which were largely prevented and impeded by official state policy.<sup>107</sup> Besides resistance from the state authorities, Orao development was also hindered by social organizations, which was mostly manifested in the question of the inclusion of the pupils’ movement into the Croatian Orao movement, particularly opposed by the Yugoslav Catholic Pupils’ League. Since the League undertook everything to prevent the pupils’ movement from joining the Orao movement, Kniewald decided to resign from the League and dedicate himself to development of the Orao movement, since “the urban youth and pupils need movement, hiking, air, light, sunshine, discipline and a fighting spirit”<sup>108</sup> which the Orao movement in fact brought. However, besides popular gymnastic and public appearances, Kniewald was resolute that the Orao movement must base its action on “religious life”<sup>109</sup> and complete political neutrality, or rather a separation from politics, which Ivan Merz also accepted, thereby setting one of the specific aspects of the Croatian Orao movement.

The Gymnastic Section Federation’s move toward to the Orao movement became apparent on 12 December 1920, when it joined the Slovenian Orel Federation, which would lead to the rapid development of the Orao movement in Croatia, as well as the beginning of “ideological divergences”,<sup>110</sup> particularly

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<sup>105</sup> The desire to further development the Orao movement was expressed by Protulipac at the constitutive assembly of the Academic Orao, demonstrating the direction and objectives of the new society, and stressing “how to finally break the unjustifiably placed bond and allow the new spirit of our society to freely disperse like birds in flight”. Mahničevski, “Uspomene”, *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1928/1929), No. 3-4: 36.

<sup>106</sup> Božidar Nagy, ed., *Ivan Merz – Sabrana djela*, 2 vols. (Zagreb: Postulatura za kanonizaciju bl. Ivana Merza, Filozofski fakultet Družbe Isusove, Glas Koncila, 2011), p. 29.

<sup>107</sup> Zvonimir Dugački, “Sveorlovski slet u Pragu 1929.”, *Orlovski kalendar za prostu godinu 1929*. VI (1929), No. 1: 82.

<sup>108</sup> Fabijan Veraja, “Hrvatski katolički pokret ‘potpuno zakazao i neuspio?’”, *Crkva u svijetu* XL (2005), No. 3: 339.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Slavko Šarić, “Ivan Merz i provođenje Katoličke akcije u Hrvatskoj”, *Obnovljeni život* 34 (1979), No. 4: 340.

in the field of “religious and moral upbringing”.<sup>111</sup> Based on existing differences, differing approaches and further development, the desire to make the Croatian Orao movement independent became increasingly evident, and this came to the fore in 1921, when work began on the creation of an organizational structure and the specification of fields for future development. The still current ban on Orao nomenclature was an additional exacerbating circumstance.<sup>112</sup> These activities should be viewed through the prism of the informal beginnings of the Croatian Orao movement, while the next phase in the Orao movement’s validation was the reformation of the Gymnastic Section Federation into the Orao Sub-Federation in Zagreb, whereby the gymnastic sections became Orao sections and officially introduced Orao nomenclature for the first time in precisely this manner.<sup>113</sup> Official policy proved to be a significant obstacle, as in early January 1922 the Education and Religion Commission of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes issued a ban on the participation of pupils in the Orao movement, to which the Croatian Orao organization responded in an article under the headline “Facing a New Struggle”, defining this decision as a violent act intended to suppress the Croatian Orao movement.<sup>114</sup> The significance of this ban must be viewed in the context of the pupils’ movement as a numerically important part of the newly-established Orao Sub-federation, so the ban was supposed to annihilate the entire Orao organization.

However, despite the rescission of the ban on admitting pupils into the Orao movement, the Orao Sub-federation continued to represent a “general pupils’ organization”<sup>115</sup> with the parallel existence of the Croatian Catholic Youth Federation as an independent organization, which meant that the idea of the Orao movement as an organization of entire youth was not implemented. The process of gathering the entire youth began at the general assembly of the Orao Sub-federation, where the idea of merging youth and pupils’ organizations as an integral component of the Croatian Orao movement was in fact put forward.<sup>116</sup> The idea of unification and independence was practical in nature, and attempts to

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.; Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 64.

<sup>112</sup> The news of the ban on use of Orao terminology was published on 31 January 1921 in the first issue of *Vjesnik Saveza gimnastičkih odsjeka*, the bulletin of the Gymnastic Section Federation.

<sup>113</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 69.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> [No author], “Orlovstvo u prošloj godini”, *Mladost* VI (1925/26), No. 1: 19.

<sup>116</sup> The general assembly of the Orao Sub-federation was held during the Eucharistic Congress organized in Zagreb on 17 August 1923. On this occasion, the general assembly established the new presidency of the Orao Sub-federation, to which the Youth Federation activists Ivan Merz and Fr. Bruno Foretić were elected. Dr. Josip Andrić was elected president, Ivan Merz was elected vice president, while its other members were Ivan Oršanić, Juraj Dušak, D. Radica and B. Gottfried. Several days after the assembly, on 20 August 1923, the first Orao event was held in the garden of the archdiocesan seminary in Zagreb, at which 200 male and female Orao members participated from all parts of Croatia, as well as members from Slovenia, Sarajevo and Đakovo. Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, pp. 72-73.

resolve the difficulties surrounding dual functioning involved various accords. However, the division of educational work nonetheless proved unfeasible, which served as a powerful argument in favour of creating a common and consolidated organization that would gather the youth scattered among various associations. On the other hand, the numerous specific aspects of the Croatian Orao movement clearly underscored the need to separate from the Slovenian Orel movement in the sense of a unified Croatian Orao organization.

Also, pursuant to the organizational parallels in the Orao, pupil and youth sections, the idea of unifying the Croatian Orao movement into a central organization gained increasing traction. In this vein, the Youth Federation organized the “2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Congress”<sup>117</sup> which may be seen as something of an introduction to the main assembly of the Youth Federation at which the idea of making the Croatian Orao Movement independent and unified was put forward. However, formal implementation of the idea of independence was carried forward on 16 December 1923 at the extraordinary session of the Youth Federation’s Steering Committee, which followed after the constituent assembly of the Croatian Catholic Orao Federation.<sup>118</sup> Thanks to the initiative of Ivan Merz, who had a clear vision and recognized the signs of the time, the Youth Federation was dissolved and merged into the Orao organization, which marked the beginning of intense work and growth on the part of the Orao movement in Croatia.<sup>119</sup>

## Independence and Unification of the Croatian Orao Movement

The emergence of the Orao organization in Croatia was preceded by a period in which a specific form and “stylization of Orao thought” were being conceived and sought out,<sup>120</sup> whereby the philosophical/apologetic and organizational/social prerequisites and basis for a youth movement were created. However, the youth movement became extensive with time, and alongside attempts “to create

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<sup>117</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Congress was held in St. Jerome Hall at 1:30 p.m., with 200 youths from different parts of Croatia, as well as representatives from France and Slovenia in attendance. [No author], “Kongres i glavna skupština Omladinskog saveza”, *Mladost* III (1923), No. 8: 106.

<sup>118</sup> Worthwhile noting is that the agenda of the extraordinary session of the Steering Committee, besides operating reports, included a second item entitled “Unification of the Catholic youth movement”, about which Ivan Merz talked, and a fourth item entitled “Reorganization of the Youth Federation and the relationship with the Croatian Catholic Orao Federation”, upon which the decision on unification was based. [No author], “Kongres i glavna skupština Omladinskog saveza”, *Mladost* III (1923), No. 8: 106.

<sup>119</sup> The constitutive assembly of the Croatian Catholic Orao Federation was held at 8:30 a.m., while the extraordinary session of the Youth Federation’s Steering Committee was held at 10 a.m. in the premises of the Croatian Catholic National Federation, and it may be assumed that the committee members of both organizations attended the sessions of the elective bodies. [No author], “Poziv na izvanrednu glavnu skupštinu Omladinskog saveza”, *Mladost* III (1923), No. 12: 186.

<sup>120</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 11.



an intelligentsia, it did not succeed in becoming a national movement".<sup>121</sup> On the other hand, the Orao movement based its own program equally on the tenets of "a religious, cultural and national movement",<sup>122</sup> emphasizing religious instruction, social/organizational and literary/artistic activity as well as physical exercise.<sup>123</sup> In this vein, the Croatian Orao movement functioned in this region until 16 December 1923 as part of the Yugoslav Orao Federation with its seat in Slovenia, and the reasons for the parting of ways between the Slovenian Orel and the Croatian Orao movements became apparent primarily in the move of the Yugoslav Orao Federation toward partisan politics and differing views on the further Orao development, such as the question of priests and the guidelines of Catholic Action, which would later become a specific aspect of the Croatian Orao movement as implemented by Ivan Merz.<sup>124</sup> The move toward unification of the Croatian Orao movement was particularly emphasized by Merz, believing that a new orientation for the youth organization had already been necessary for a longer period, which necessitated urgent reforms precisely due to its functioning parallel to the Orao movement, whereby "two centres were administering the same associations".<sup>125</sup> In this regard, an agreement was reached on the existence of only one "religious youth organization which must be an essential part of Catholic Action in the Croatian lands and have its seat in Zagreb",<sup>126</sup> and which would result in the establishment of the Croatian Orao Federation, taking the Croatian Orao movement to a new level.

## Establishment of the Croatian Orao Federation

It is noteworthy that originally the Orao was an exercise movement that attracted a high number of youths already enrolled in youth organizations, which led to needless double membership and, among other things impelled

<sup>121</sup> Antun Šenda, "I svjetlost u tami svijetli", *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1928/1929), No. 1: 10.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> A document issued by the Republic Internal Affairs Secretariat also speaks of the emergence of the Croatian Orao movement: "But among the Catholic ranks opposition quickly arose against the work of the Croatian Popular Party and the seniority under the Catholic Action, which opposed the use of Catholic descriptors by any political party. The main advocate of this tendency was the Orao movement, a religious gymnastic organization founded as a counterweight to the Sokol movement, headed by Protulipac, Ivan Merz and Avelin Čepulić". Croatian State Archives, RSUP SRH, 001. 4. 2, Domagojsko-seniorska organizacija - elaborat, p. 1.

<sup>124</sup> In Slovenia, a priest was involved in the Orao association just as any other member, while the Croatian Orao movement advocated the status of a priest as the spiritual leader of a given association, municipality, district or federation. Given the diverging views of this topic and the refusal of such subordination by the Slovenian Orel movement, the establishment of the Croatian Orao Federation as the central organization of the Orao movement in Croatia was the logical next step.

<sup>125</sup> Ivan Merz, "Nove smjernice omladinskog pokreta", *Katolički list* [no volume] (1920), No. 1: 10.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

the establishment of the Croatian Orao Federation<sup>127</sup> as a central and consolidated organization of the Croatian Catholic youth.<sup>128</sup> Thus, according to the Golden Book, the Orao movement was a “Catholic organization of the Croatian youth with the purpose of joining in a single company the Croatian Catholic youth who would receive education in the religious, intellectual, moral, social and physical fields, so they unified all organizations which operated in different fields and gathered youth”.<sup>129</sup>

The implementation of these specific aspects was secured through the unification of the Youth Federation and the Orao Sub-federation at a joint session of both leaderships, which preceded the constitutive assembly of the Croatian Orao Federation, as an “independent and sole central organization for all Orao and youth associations”<sup>130</sup> and the “centre of all youth action in the Croatian lands”.<sup>131</sup> Those invited to the “constitutive assembly”<sup>132</sup> of the Croatian Orao Federation included Croatian Catholic youth and educational associations, Orao associations, Orao sections and other associations, with the aim of unifying the Orao movement into a central organization under the initial “name of Croatian Catholic Orao Federation”,<sup>133</sup> a name that would be changed at that same session of the Croatian Orao Federation.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Protulipac defined the Orao movement in the following manner: “Orao is a Catholic educational and exercise-oriented instructional people’s youth organization, which uses special means to educate the national youth to create a Christian, spiritually and physically healthy, educated and organized nation”. Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko Orlovstvo* p. 9.

<sup>128</sup> Božidar Nagy, “Ivan Merz – apostol hrvatske mladeži (1896-1928)”, *Susreti – Zbornik radova Susreta hrvatskih studenata u tuđini*, [no volume] (1986), No. 6: 39-49.

<sup>129</sup> Pursuant to this, the Croatian Orao movement was specified as “a Catholic educational and exercise-oriented instructional people’s youth organization, which uses special means to educate the national youth to create a Christian, spiritually and physically healthy, educated and organized nation”. *Zlatna knjiga hrvatske katoličke omladine*, Orlovska knjižica – organizacijsko idejni dio, 2 vols., (Zagreb: [no publisher], 1924), p. 7; Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 9.

<sup>130</sup> The session was held in the facilities of the Croatian Catholic National Federation in Zagreb, Kaptol 27/I, on Sunday, 16 December 1923 at 8:30 a.m. I.[vo] Protulipac, “Na petu godišnjicu”, *Orlovska straža* VI (1929), No. 1: [no page number]; Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, 74.

<sup>131</sup> Ivan Merz, “Nove smjernice omladinskog pokreta”, *Katolički list* [no volume] (1920), No. 1: 10.

<sup>132</sup> The assembly was convened by Dr. Ivo Protulipac, undersigned as interim president, and Jerolim Malinar as the interim secretary. [No author], “Poziv na konstituirajuću glavnu skupštinu Hrvatskog katoličkog orlovske saveza”, *Mladost* III (1923), No. 12: 186.

<sup>133</sup> Ivan Merz Archives, “Zapisnik Hrvatskog orlovske saveza”, Zagreb, 16 December 1923 – 3 August 1927, p. 1.

<sup>134</sup> The change in name was voted on at the proposal of Dr. Šimrak, and prior to the vote on the name, Merz explained the reason for incorporating the adjective Catholic in the new organization’s name, basing his observation on the fact that “Catholic organizations throughout the world are called by their Catholic name, so why should the Orao be an exception?” After the vote on the Federation’s new name as the Croatian Orao Federation was passed, Merz sought that the minutes reflect his stance, i.e., his proposal for the name: Croatian Catholic Orao Fed-

The given feature of the *Croatian Orao specificum* was marked by Ivan Merz, who immediately after its establishment and with authorization from the Croatian Orao Federation, compiled a circular which he sent to all Croatian dioceses, informing them of the establishment of the Orao pursuant to the encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei*,<sup>135</sup> and particularly underlining the role of priests in the Orao movement and “dependence on the bishop and work according to the principles of Catholic Action which are set by the Holy See”.<sup>136</sup> At Merz’s proposal, the Croatian Orao Federation introduced priests into Orao associations as representatives of clerical authority and not just as ordinary members, which had been the practice until then in Orao organizations in other European countries. The introduction of these guidelines constituted one of the *Croatian Orao specifica* which was a differential characteristic between the Croatian, Czechoslovak and Slovenian Orel/Orao movements, and something particularly significant that would characterize the Croatian Orao movement and differentiate it from the other Orao organizations, thereby creating its own unique quality that was apparent in the status of priests in Orao associations.<sup>137</sup>

Precisely due to the Croatian Orao movement’s new orientation based on implementation of Catholic Action, which were supposed to mutually link and coordinate all Catholic organizations, a rift emerged with the Slovenian Orel movement, which wanted to retain its status as an organization dedicated exclusively to exercise.<sup>138</sup> However, at Merz’s proposal, the Croatian Orao movement introduced an additional *specificum* in implementation of Catholic Action by consolidating the physical and spiritual components of activity programs, seeing “gymnastics as an integral component of social life and using it

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eration. Ivan Merz Archives: “Zapisnik Hrvatskog orlovskog saveza”, Zagreb, 16 December 1923 – 3 August 1927, p. 1.

<sup>135</sup> The encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei* was released on “23 December 1922, pub. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XIV (27 Dec. 1922) 18, 673-700. *L’action catholique*, pub. ‘Documentation catholique’, Paris, 1933, 260-299.” Franjo Šanjek, “Katolička akcija: zašto novi način katoličkog udruživanja”, *Hrvatski katolički pokret, Zbornik radova s Međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa održanog u Zagrebu i Krku od 29. do 31. ožujka 2001.*, Zlatko Matijević, ed. (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2002), p. 625.

<sup>136</sup> With the permission of the Croatian Orao Federation’s leadership, Merz prepared the Federation’s first formal act in January 1924 under the designation “Letter to the Conference of Bishops”, which may be viewed as a sort of declaration on the guidelines and course of further work and activity. Dragutin Kniewald, *Dr. Ivan Merz – život i djelovanje*, p. 162.; D.[ušan] Žanko, “Svjetlo na gori”, *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 6: 164.

<sup>137</sup> In the Croatian Orao Federation, a priest exclusively performed the duties of spiritual advisor and “representative of the diocesan bishop, whereby the Orao association was independent of the Seniorate and under the direct authority the bishop”, while in the Slovenian Orel organization, priests were ordinary members. Dragutin Kniewald, *Dr. Ivan Merz – život i djelovanje*, p. 164.; Fabijan Veraja, “Hrvatski katolički pokret ‘potpuno zakazao i neuspio?’”, *Crkva u svijetu* XL (2005), No. 3: 343.

<sup>138</sup> [No author], “Orlovska organizacija i Kat.[olička] Akcija”, *Orlovski vjesnik* I (1928), No. 3-4: [no page number].

to expand Catholic Action as the ideational part of the Orao movement”<sup>139</sup> In this manner Merz advocated the instruction of youths via exercise, which became a supplemental means to achieve spiritual virtue and a means to build “a strong, beautiful and limber body – the weapon of the noble soul”<sup>140</sup> so that the Croatian Orao movement could not simply be a gymnastics organization, “but also be a Catholic, educational and youth movement which in its programs conducts physical exercise of the youth and, to their finest points, the guidelines given by the Holy See to Catholic Action”<sup>141</sup> Merz set forth a new developmental path based on the philosophical/spiritual context of physical culture and man’s spiritual enlightenment, grafting onto Orao physical exercise a spirituality and higher purpose, while the Croatian Orao Federation began to actively propagate the creation of “harmony between the soul and body”<sup>142</sup> with the aim of the complete development of the human being.<sup>143</sup> Besides the Croatian Orao Federation, the Czechoslovak Orel movement was considering bodily exercise in the context of “ascetic means”<sup>144</sup> whereby the body and soul formed “a natural unity: the whole man.”<sup>145</sup>

The second *Croatian Orao specificum* which Dr. Ivan Merz introduced to the Croatian Orao Federation was the apolitical nature of the Croatian Orao organization, which was instituted in the first article of the association’s by-laws, thereby clearly stressing the priority mission in the field of development and education of youths to the fullest extent of their personalities. Activity “above and beyond”<sup>146</sup> partisan politics would earn the Croatian Orao movement a reputation of integrity, for in its work it did not depend on any party or political option – as opposed to other organizations of the day which were considerably inclined toward partisan politics – rather it advocated uniform development of society and all of its members based on a democratic ap-

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<sup>139</sup> I. Akvilovsky, “Značenje Orlovstva za hrv. kat. Akciju”, *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1927–1928), No. 7: 112.

<sup>140</sup> Srijemski, “Bit orlovstva”, *Luč XVIII* (1923), No. 7-8: 151.

<sup>141</sup> I.[van] Merz, “Hrvatsko orlovstvo”, *Kalendar Presveta srca Isusova i Marijina XXI* (1926), No. [no number]: 146-147.

<sup>142</sup> J. Herceg, “Intelektualci i orlovstvo”, *Luč XVIII* (1922), No. 1-2: 113.

<sup>143</sup> [Avelin] Č.[epulić], “Tjelesna kultura i orlovstvo”, *Luč XVIII* (1922), No. 3-4: 58; [No author], “Gimnastička izobrazba”, *Orlovska straža VI* (1928), No. 1: 20.

<sup>144</sup> Therefore, prior to physical exercise, the Czechoslovak Orel movement introduced the performance of pious songs, short exhortations on asceticism and exercises of will lasting two to five minutes through a special booklet called “Speeches Before the Unit”. The Croatian Orao movement also attempted to incorporate such an approach to physical exercise, stressing in this way the different approach to exercise, particularly in comparison to the Sokol organization and Sokol exercises. Dragutin Zudenigo, “Pravi cilj orlovske tjelovježbe”, *Mladost IV* (1924), No. 4: 82.

<sup>145</sup> Christian Schreiber, “Tjelesna kultura”, *Organizacijski vjesnik IV* (1926), No. 2: 16.

<sup>146</sup> Slavko Šarić, “Uspomene dr. Slavka Šarića na život i rad mladih katolika svoga vremena”, *Ivan Merz, Glasilo postulaturne za beatifikaciju Dr. Ivana Merza 11-13* (1985), No. 1-3: 5.



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proach.<sup>147</sup> The Orao movement's manner of functioning encompassed a multi-disciplinary approach that particularly emphasized an apolitical orientation with the objective of building a society based on higher values, with special appreciation for each individual and development of the whole person, focused more on internal values and personal growth.

### **General Features, Characteristics and Orientation of the Croatian Orao Movement**

The Orao organization was specific to the Slav nations, and by incorporating education and physical culture into a program of activity and by merging the equal development of the soul and body with emphasis on the pedagogical component, it approached the upbringing of human beings at all levels. In this regard, the Orao movement best suited the Slavic mentality, wherein the Slav

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<sup>147</sup> Slavko Šarić, "Ivan Merz i provođenje Katoličke akcije u Hrvatskoj", *Obnovljeni život* 34 (1979), No. 4, p. 341.

and Croatian organizational specifics were not used exclusively in the organization, rather they served the dissemination of the Orao idea within the context of society as a whole.<sup>148</sup> In this manner, the tenets of the Croatian Orao movement may be observed as a dual coexisting identity rooted in the Slavic key, formed as a result of fears of Magyarization, and on national identity tied to patriotism, the nation and religion.

Through its program tenets, the Croatian Orao movement functioned as a national reawakening, aspiring to equality and the elimination of differences between the then powerfully manifested and distinctive classes in society. Equality and unity of the nation constituted the point of departure for implementation of Orao ideas on “a renaissance of the entire nation which would only be possible through the parallel participation of all national classes with particular emphasis on the intelligentsia.”<sup>149</sup> However, the Croatian Orao movement’s work program not only encompassed education, rather it also sought ways to bring highly-educated individuals closer to the people, thus creating new highly-educated cadres “who will spiritually meld with the people and already be incorporated into the people’s life when they finish their studies.”<sup>150</sup> This approach was intended to bridge the gap between classes and secure the integrity of the nation through the education of young people who during the course of their education would become members of the same organization in unity with all other members. In this manner, the Croatian Orao movement once more established communication between different classes and nations, which under post-war circumstances was perceived as a powerful contribution to the development of society as a whole and the establishment of trust between nations. However, the development of the spirit of unity and fraternity was not reserved for only a specific nation, rather it also grew through international cooperation with other countries in which the Orao movement functioned, particularly Slavic nations.

## National Discourse as a Feature of the Croatian Orao Movement

Besides its Slav roots, the Orao movement propagated a national, religious, cultural and social renaissance by creating a new generation of people in cooperation between all national classes, thereby creating “a national intelligentsia incorporated into and spiritually melded with national life”<sup>151</sup> advocating the basic idea of “renewal of national life and the creation of a generation and new

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<sup>148</sup> I. Akvilovsky, “Značenje Orlovstva za hrv. kat. Akciju”, *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1927–1928), No. 7: 112.

<sup>149</sup> M. Lehpamer, “Stvaranje narodne inteligencije”, *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1927–1928), No. 7: 96-97.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Antun Šenda, “I svjetlost u tami svijetli”, *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1928/1929), No. 1: 11.

nation”.<sup>152</sup> This procedure was mostly aimed at youths, and great attention was accorded to a complete “change in the new generation”<sup>153</sup> which would strive to create a better society.<sup>154</sup> In this regard, the Orao movement was considered “an offshoot of national life which gathers the youth of all classes and occupations, offering Orao members an opportunity to grow in unity with brothers from different classes”,<sup>155</sup> and thus form a community with equal rights and duties. This is precisely the reason why the Orao program was aimed at the broad development of “national life by gathering all national forces and classes, giving them a common Christian culture and binding them together in a society of class harmony and good order”.<sup>156</sup> In this manner, the Orao organization “instructed with deep faith, with a broad view of education, and with cheer and joy in leisure, stressing the social and democratic principles of quality without class divisions”,<sup>157</sup> seeking “the great idea of contemporary Christian democratism”.<sup>158</sup>

In its approach to moral instruction, the Croatian Orao movement placed particular emphasis on patriotism, which was apparent in its social engagement in the field of spirituality and education in compliance with the idea of “an enlightened nation which may solely in this manner properly comprehend national freedom”.<sup>159</sup> It was precisely through joint work that the Croatian Orao movement accomplished the most for society, by offering individuals an opportunity to build their character and a sense for educational and socio-economic activism, while members had to be prepared to invest intense efforts for the betterment of the nation and continually work to improve their own character and discipline.<sup>160</sup> The Orao movement specifically advocated the freedom of religion in private and public life, the social and economic betterment of society and the nurturing of the Croatian language and folk traits and, by advocating the recognition of and respect for “the religious, cultural and national rights of the Croatian nation and each of its individuals in its own and other states”,<sup>161</sup> the Orao protected “the Croatian national minority from the violence perpetrated by foreign majority nations”,<sup>162</sup> while its advocacy of national rights could not “impose guilt” upon any other nation “even if such nation imposes

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<sup>152</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 12.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> Želimir Slavski, “Današnje đastvo i Orlovstvo”, *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1928/1929), No. 3-4: 39.

<sup>158</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, p. 15.

<sup>159</sup> A.[velin] Čepulić, “Narodan smo pokret!”, *Orlovska straža* IV (1926), No. 6: 4.

<sup>160</sup> [Uredništvo], “O našem narodnom radu”, *Orlovska straža* VII (1929), No. 5: 106.

<sup>161</sup> *Zlatna knjiga hrvatske katoličke omladine*, Orlovska knjižica – organizacijsko idejni dio, 2 vols., pp. 52-53.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

trespass upon trespass”,<sup>163</sup> rather it aspired to the eternal happiness of its own nation by helping it in the religious, educational, economic, cultural and social segments, safeguarding religious freedom, the Croatian language and culture and fulfilling “the honourable name of *antemurale Christianitatis*”.<sup>164</sup>

## The Social and Sociological Significance of the Croatian Orao Movement

From the standpoint of sociological discourse, the Croatian Orao movement was an association of youths of all classes gathered for the purpose of education of a socially sensitive population prepared to help their neighbours, thereby “effecting a general social rapprochement and balancing of class interests and aims”.<sup>165</sup> Orao social activism was aimed at fostering “awareness of proper and just class rights and duties fulfilled by the equal rights and tasks”<sup>166</sup> of each individual, and through its own work programs the Croatian Orao movement “reinforced and invigorated the idea of social fraternity and class harmony among members without impinging upon the cultural significance of class belonging nor educational development according to class needs”.<sup>167</sup> In this regard, the Croatian Orao movement represented a solution in the form of Orao fraternity that was not only theoretical but rather “practical, lived and publicly expressed in the life of each Orao member and in the life of the entire organization as a whole”.<sup>168</sup> By thus influencing equality and the elimination of differences between people, especially through joint public appearances, each Orao association was deemed a second family which in its functioning did not exclude the biological family, rather enriching it, and Orao members considered each other friends and brothers. The significance of the family and helping others in trouble was considered “the essential and most foundational preparation for social work among the people and humanity”.<sup>169</sup> However, this equality and brotherly relations did not exclude the personal growth of each member in line with his individual and culturally specific traits, whereby the Croatian Orao movement viewed a person as a living human being and not as an abstract member. In this manner, the principles of Orao action were implemented according to the formula of an ideal-based society and the objective of “promoting freedom, truth and goodness”,<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., pp. 46-56.

<sup>165</sup> Ivo Protulipac, “Orlovstvo i staleške razlike”, *Organizacijski vjesnik* IV (1926), No. 2: 2.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Franc Terseglav, “Prva socijalna vrlina”, *Orlovska misao* [no volume] (1927-1928), No. 7: 95.

<sup>170</sup> [No author], “Kršćanski društveni poredak”, *Orlovski vjesnik* I (1928), No. 2: [no page number].



while the Orao was conceived as a pillar of society and a community raised in the spirit of a socially-sensitive person.

### International Cooperation by the Croatian Orao Federation

The Croatian Orao Federation was an Orao organization that was not tied exclusively to geographic position, rather it fulfilled the duty of a central organization in all regions inhabited by Croats. In this manner, ties were maintained with neighbouring countries, and even with the United States, Australia and New Zealand, particularly through regular correspondence and international cooperation.<sup>171</sup> Given the notable geographic dispersion and priority of maintaining the unity of the Croatian Orao movement based on regular communication, the Croatian Orao Federation set about establishing additional organizational bodies with the intention of improving cooperation and closer ties among the Orao movement in Croatia. Exceptionally important is that by introducing Orao local organizations (Orao district, Orao municipality) that operated as integral components of the Croatian Orao Federation, the Croatian Orao movement carried out a form of decentralization in order to insure the development of local Orao associations in line with their actual needs.<sup>172</sup>

Following the movement of Orao members abroad, Orao development was even recorded in the United States of America where, for example, “an Orao federation was established”<sup>173</sup> and “an Orao association in Chicago was initiated by Rev. Vj. Vukonić”,<sup>174</sup> who maintained regular contacts with Orao members in Croatia. A letter from a Fr. Vanin testifies to the relations of the Croatian Orao Federation with the United States, as he reported on the spread of the Orao movement on American soil. Merz maintained correspondence with him.<sup>175</sup>

The Croatian Orao Federation maintained firm ties with Catholic youth and Orao organizations in Poland, Austria, Spain, Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Slovenia, and relations with the Slovenian Orel organization were good, and gratitude was expressed for its assistance when Orao organizations in Cro-

<sup>171</sup> [No author], “Veliki napredak Orlova u Americi”, *Orlovska straža* VII (1929), No. 11: 234; Ivan Merz Archives, “Zapisnik 49. redovite sjednice predsjedništva H.O.S. – 28. V. 1926.”, signed by: Ivo Protulipac and Dragutin Cerovac, *Zapisnici sa sjednica Hrvatskog orlovske saveza* Zagreb, 16 December 1923 – 3 August 1927, p. 68.

<sup>172</sup> Ivo Protulipac, *Hrvatsko orlovstvo*, pp. 88-90.

<sup>173</sup> Ivan Merz Archives, “Zapisnik 20. sjednice predsjedništva HOSa održane 1. XII. 1926.”, signed by: Ivo Protulipac, *Zapisnici sa sjednica Hrvatskog orlovske saveza*, Zagreb, 16 December 1923 – 3 August 1927, p. 89.

<sup>174</sup> [No author], “Vijesti HOS-a”, *Orlovska straža* IV (1926), No. 5: 30.

<sup>175</sup> Ivan Merz Archives, “Zapisnik 49. redovite sjednice predsjedništva H.O.S. – 28. V. 1926.”, signed by: Ivo Protulipac and Dragutin Cerovac, *Zapisnici sa sjednica Hrvatskog orlovske saveza*, Zagreb, 16 December 1923 – 3 August 1927, p. 68.

atia began to function.<sup>176</sup> Particularly sincere and fraternal relations reigned between the Croatian Orao Federation and the Czechoslovak Orel organization, and the presence of Czechoslovak Orel members was recorded at meets in Šibenik, Sarajevo, and other Orao events in Croatia. The Croatian Orao Federation regularly exchanged information on the status of the Orao movement, new literature, exercises and generations with the Czechoslovak Orel organization, and these good relations were demonstrated by regular visits between Orao/Orel delegations between the two countries. Thus, in the summer of 1928, the Croatian Orao Federation was visited by a delegation of the Czechoslovak Orel organization headed by J. Matoušek.<sup>177</sup> Additionally, the Croatian Orao Federation received a letter from Msgr. Josip Málek, a canon and spiritual leader of the Orel movement in Stara Bratislava, in which he invited the Croatian Orao members to the religious festivities for St. Wenceslaus in Prague in a very special manner.<sup>178</sup> The ties between the two organizations were also reinforced by working meetings, such as, for example, one held on 13-14 April 1928, when the envoy of the Croatian Orao Federation, Avelin Čepulić, stayed in Brno on an official visit in order to become acquainted with the specific aspects of the Czechoslovak Orel movement and intensify international cooperation between the two organizations and work out the details concerning the arrival of Croatian Orao members to the meet in Prague.<sup>179</sup>

Besides these ties with Orao organizations, the Croatian Orao Federation maintained contacts with other international organizations, which was particularly visible in the Orao march in Rome.<sup>180</sup> The Croatian Orao Federation was invited to the International Catholic Youth Conference held in Lourdes on 15-18 September 1928, and through regular correspondence it maintained contact with the International Catholic Youth Federation in Rome, the *Association catholique de la Jeunesse française* in Paris, the Federation of Italian Catholic Sports Associations (FASCI) with its seat in Italy, the *Association catholique de la Jeunesse Belge*, Louvain, and the *Reichsbund der kath. deutschen Jugend Osterreichs* from Vienna, which the Croatian Orao Federation invited

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<sup>176</sup> [No author], "Razno", *Orlovska straža* VI (1929), No. 12: 257.

<sup>177</sup> [No author], "Iz Slavenskog Orlovstva", *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 2: 52; [No author], "Posjet čehoslovačkih Orlova", *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 9: 241.

<sup>178</sup> In the invitation to the meet in Prague from the Czechoslovak Orel organization to the Croatian Orao, the following was emphasized: "With you, our brother and sister Croats, with you we've endured the arduous beginnings of organization, together we have strived, and so much is similar in our social life. So we wish to share our joy with you, we wish to continue to share our victories with you". F. Hanzelka, "U Prag", *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 4: 98.; Josip Málek, "Hrvatskoj braći", *Orlovska straža* VII (1929), No. 5: 109-111.

<sup>179</sup> [No author], "Vijesti iz HOS-a", *Orlovska straža* VI (1928), No. 7-8: 210.

<sup>180</sup> These good relations were also reflected in the invitation to the meet in Požega which Merz sent to the secretary of the international federation in Rome. [No author], "Orlovstvo u prošloj godini", *Mladost* VI (1925/26), No. 1: 22; Josip Vrbaneč, *Vitez Kristov – Dr. Ivan Merz*, (Zagreb: Veliko križarsko bratstvo i Veliko križarsko sestrinstvo, 1943), p. 115.

to its own jubilee congress on 9-15 August 1927.<sup>181</sup> Cooperation with also established with the “Belgian Catholic youth”,<sup>182</sup> and Merz maintained correspondence with Paris in order to secure the Croatian Orao Federation’s membership in the International Gymnastics Union<sup>183</sup> and he regularly received mail from the International Catholic Gymnastics Federation in Paris.<sup>184</sup> Based on this, it may be ascertained that the intense presence of the Croatian Orao Federation at the international level testified to the importance of the Orao movement and the high regard accorded to the Croatian Orao organization, primarily acknowledged for its systematic and earnest work.

### Prohibition of Work and Dissolution of the Croatian Orao Federation

After he abolished the “Vidovdan Constitution and introduced a personal dictatorship”<sup>185</sup> King Aleksandar I Karađorđević banned the activity of political parties and various associations, which included exercise associations, and this pertained to the Croatian Orao Federation. In Belgrade on 5 December 1929, the king proclaimed a law which established the Sokol of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, specifying a deadline of three days in which all existing physical and moral educational associations – which included the Croatian Orao Federation as well – had to either merge with the Sokol of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia or be abolished.<sup>186</sup> The Croatian Orao members, “under pressure from the government and at the advice of the bishops”<sup>187</sup> decided to dissolve the Orao organization which, at the time of its dissolution, consisted of over 200 associations with approximately 11,000 members.<sup>188</sup> However, after the dissolution of the Croatian Orao Federation, “a new organization was established at the proposal of Fr. Josip

<sup>181</sup> [No author], “Hrvatsko Orlovstvo u godini 1926 – 7.”, *Orlovska straža V* (1927), No. 9: 265.

<sup>182</sup> [No author], “Belgijska katolička omladina”, *Orlovska straža V* (1927), No. 3: 77-80.

<sup>183</sup> Ivan Merz Archives, “Zapisnik 14. redovite sjednice predsjedništva H.O.S. – 20. X. 1925.”, signed by: Avelin Čepulić and Drago Cerovac, *Zapisnici sa sjednica Hrvatskog orlovskog saveza*, Zagreb, 16 December 1923 – 3 August 1927, p. 54.

<sup>184</sup> Ivan Merz Archives, “Zapisnik 24. redovite sjednice predsjedništva H.O.S. – 30. XII. 1925.”, signed by: Avelin Čepulić and Drago Cerovac, *Zapisnici sa sjednica Hrvatskog orlovskog saveza*, Zagreb, 16 December 1923 – 3 August 1927, p. 59.

<sup>185</sup> Zlatko Matijević, “Hrvatska pučka stranka i dr. Ivan Merz”, *Obnovljeni život* LII (1997), No. 3-4: 235.

<sup>186</sup> The decree on liquidation of all physical education associations was signed by the “minister of education and the minister of army and navy with the consent of the chairman of the ministerial council”. [No author], “Odredba o ukidanju dosadašnjih sokolskih i orlovskih organizacija”, *Orlovska straža VI* (1929), No. 12: 259-260.

<sup>187</sup> Fabijan Veraja, “Hrvatski katolički pokret ‘potpuno zakazao i neuspio?’”, *Crkva u svijetu* XL (2005), No. 3: 350.

<sup>188</sup> Ilija Jakovljević, “Smisao našeg demokratizma”, *Organizacijski vjesnik IV* (1926), No. 2: 7.

Vrbaneč modelled after the French Crusaders<sup>189</sup> which was joined by Orao members and new generations of youths, thus constituting a continuation of the Croatian Orao movement's activities under the aegis of a new organization. The ideas and program of the Croatian Crusaders were rooted in the activism and postulates of the Croatian Orao Federation, and the Crusader organization continued the work of the Croatian Orao movement, excluding only the exercise activities and name, but retaining its members, aims, orientation and programs, thereby representing the life's work of Dr. Ivan Merz.<sup>190</sup>

## Conclusion

The circumstances of the times that marked Europe, beginning with the French Revolution, which may be seen as the beginning of the liberal thought and its influence on European societies, and the First World War, as a major factor which altered social events and power relations in Europe, resulted in new socio-political orders and trends. The penetration of liberal thought into European societies created a reaction which was recognized in national Catholic movements that functioned in European states and served as a counterweight to liberalism. However, besides European national Catholic movements, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Orel movement was formed in the Czech lands and Slovakia, and these were also a response to liberalism, the liberal Sokol movement and Hussite changes in society. The Orel movement came to Slovenia from the Czech lands and Slovakia, where it became tied to the Christian social movement which functioned with the aim of fostering a renewal among Slovenian people in religion and society in general, while at the international level it became a powerful, massive and well-organized movement which focused on the uniform development of individuals and culture. Through Slovenia, the Orao movement began to function in Croatia as well, so that the Slovenian Orel movement was an important phase in the initiation of the Croatian Orao movement, which was particularly reflected during the meet in Maribor, where the first ideational and organizational foundations of the Orao organization in Croatia were established. However, after the Croatian Orao movement was launched, dualism emerged among youths in youth and Orao organizations, which led to the establishment of the Croatian Orao Federation, with a program based on religious, cultural and practical tenets, such as moral instruction, education, physical culture and engaged social work, while the unified orientation of the Croatian

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<sup>189</sup> Fabijan Veraja, "Hrvatski katolički pokret 'potpuno zakazao i neuspio'?", *Crkva u svijetu* XL (2005), No. 3: 350.

<sup>190</sup> Božidar Nagy, "Ivan Merz – apostol hrvatske mladeži (1896-1928)", *Susreti – Zbornik radova Susreta hrvatskih studenata u tuđini* [no volume] (1986), No. 6: 39-49.; Josip Vrbaneč, *Vitez Kristov – Dr. Ivan Merz*, p. 237; Lav Znidarčić, "Križarska organizacija, životno djelo Ivana Merza", *Obnovljeni život* 52 (1997), No. 3-4: 251.

Orao Federation was set by Dr. Ivan Merz through the introduction of the *Croatian Orao specificum*, particularly apparent in the Catholic Action guidelines, as political neutrality, a new approach to physical culture and comprehensive personal growth. The introduction of Catholic Action guidelines to the Croatian Orao Federation was rooted in the encyclical of Pope Pius XI, *Ubi Arcano Dei*, became a specific aspect of the Croatian Orao movement and a distinguishing feature between the Croatian, Czechoslovak and Slovenian Orao/Orel movements – thereby creating a distinction particularly visible in the status of priests in Orao associations, who became representatives of the Church in the Croatian Orao movement, while in the Slovenian Orel movement priests were only ordinary association members. With this move, Merz introduced a sharp turn in the Croatian Orao movement in comparison to previous practices, so one may even speak of a European Orao precedent, for by this procedure the Croatian Orao Federation became the only Orao organization in Europe dictated by the tenets of Catholic Action. Besides this philosophical contribution, Merz's idea and advocacy directly shifted the Croatian Orao Federation from an organization limited by a narrow scope of activity in the field of physical culture into a religious, cultural, educational, pedagogical and exercise organization with a broad spectrum of different activities aimed at the development of the whole personalities of its members. The role and activities of Dr. Ivan Merz had crucial importance to the new orientation of the Croatian Orao Federation and he secured the uniqueness of the Croatian Orao organization and its powerful programmatic development, despite intense resistance by “communist propaganda and the aggressiveness of Yugo-Orjuna<sup>191</sup> organizations”<sup>192</sup> and the complete absence of financial support from the state. Despite the separation of the Croatian Orao Federation from the Yugoslav Orao Federation, the Croatian Orao movement maintained fraternal relations with the Slovenian Orel organization and exemplary cooperation with the Czechoslovak Orel movement. Cooperation and implementation of programs between Czechoslovak, Slovenian and Croatian Orel/Orao organizations were based on intensive cooperation and exchanges of experience and quite often on similar activities. However, only the Croatian Orao Federation – at the initiative of Ivan Merz – introduced Catholic Action principles to its operating program and priests as representatives of the Church in the Orao associations, thereby creating the unique character of the Croatian Orao movement and a distinction from other Orao organizations.

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<sup>191</sup> Orjuna: Organization of Yugoslav Nationalists.

<sup>192</sup> Franjo Bučar, “Orlovska organizacija”, [typescript], Hrvatski športski muzej – Osobni arhiv Franjo Bučar, [no city and volume], p. 2.

## **Die geschichtlichen Umstände des Entstehens und die vergleichende Analyse des Wirkens der tschechischen, slowenischen und kroatischen Adler-Bewegung**

### **Zusammenfassung**

Die Anfänge der Adler-Bewegung (kroatisch: "Orlovstvo") sind am Ende des 19. und zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts in Tschechien und in der Slowakei zu erkennen, wo sie einerseits eine Reaktion auf das Auftreten von liberalen Strömungen und der Falken-Organisation darstellt. Andererseits war die Adler-Bewegung zugleich auch eine auf slawisch-kulturellen Diskurs gegründete Bewegung, die auf Wechselseitigkeit aller Adler-Vereine, kulturelle Einheit und Verbinden auf dem Niveau gleichberechtigter Schöpfer des europäischen Gedankens und der kulturell-sozialen Wiedergeburt zielte. Wichtige Merkmale, die zur bedeutenden Popularität der Adler-Bewegung in jugendlichen Kreisen beigetragen haben, waren die körperliche Kultur und körperliche Übungen, was mit Gründung und Wirken von gymnastischen Sektionen und Jugendvereinen resultierte, aus denen sich später die Adler-Bewegung in allen ihren Segmenten entwickelte. Die Adler-Vereine unterschieden sich von Bildungsvereinen vor allem durch seriöse, systematische und programmierte Durchführung körperlicher Übungen. Wichtige Aufgabe der Adler-Bewegung bestand auch in Bildung von neuen Menschen und neuer Volkszukunft. Da der Adler-Gedanke starke Anziehungskraft ausübte, wurden Promotoren dieses Gedankens sehr bald zu Trägern und Ausführenden des genannten Gedankens in der Gesellschaft, womit die Adler-Bewegung eine wichtige Expansions- und Schöpferkraft im öffentlichen und sozialen Leben wurde. Die Adler-Bewegung kam über Slowenien nach Kroatien, wo Dr. Ivan Merz die einheitliche Richtung der kroatischen Adler-Bewegung durch die Einführung des *kroatischen Adler-Spezifikums* bestimmte, das von genauerem Folgen der Richtlinien der Enzyklika *Ubi Arcano Dei*, von apolitischer Einstellung, dann von einem neuen Zugang zur körperlichen Kultur sowie von einer ganzheitlichen Entwicklung der Persönlichkeit gekennzeichnet wurde. In diesem Beitrag werden die geschichtlichen Umstände des Entstehens und Wirkens der Adler-Bewegung in der Tschechoslowakei, in Slowenien und Kroatien analysiert, dann werden die Besonderheiten des Kroatischen Adler-Bundes festgestellt und unter dem Termin das *kroatische Adler-Spezifikum* zusammengefasst.