

## The Educational Work of the Slavic Women's Union in Poland (and Czechoslovakia) during the Interwar Period – Ideas, Postulates and Selected Examples

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*The beginning of the work of Slavic associations ought to be connected with the idea of Slavic alliance – the idea of Pan Slavism – which was reborn after World War I. It was argued that Slavic nations needed to be united on equal rights, without the supremacy of any single nation. This cooperation (bringing together, improving relations) was to take place, first of all, in economy (according to the idea of economic unity), and also in politics (political alliance), and culture (the idea of common acquaintance, understanding, promotion of culture) and it was to involve all Slavic nations.*

*What may serve as an example of such cooperation can be the Polish-Czechoslovakian relations, in spite of their political and social difficulties. Throughout the years 1929–1939 associations of Slavic women were established and active in Poland as well as Czechoslovakia. The forms of their work as well as aims and tasks were similar. They would implement similar ideas. Their statutes clearly defined the aims and the forms of work in education; they were: establishing and fostering friendly contacts between Slavic nations, learning about the culture and the life of Slavs, promoting, supporting, and bringing together Slavic nations by all means permitted by law, and improving economic and cultural cooperation in the spirit of Slavonic mutuality. The broad and diverse educational work of the Slavic women's associations in Poland and Czechoslovakia contributed to the improvement of the good relations and bringing together the two nations.*

Key words: *Games; Women's Union; educational work; interwar period*

In Poland the rapprochement of Polish and Czechoslovakian nations and states was actively supported mainly by the intellectuals belonging to social and cultural Czechoslovakian-Polish and Polish-Czechoslovakian

associations for mutual friendship,<sup>1</sup> aided by few politicians and officials. In Czechoslovakia the associations and organisations aiming to bring a rapprochement with Poland were first founded with the attempts to improve the Polish-Czech relations initiated by Czech persons of culture and business.<sup>2</sup>

One of the greatest proponents of a union of Poland and Czechoslovakia was the chairperson of the Polish-Czechoslovakian Society of Poznań, Kazimierz Kierski, who presented the idea of an economic union and a political union (political alliance). Kierski perceived a great role in bringing the nations together in, among others, the work of all the clubs and Polish-Czechoslovakian associations. He wrote that "(...) these associations, regardless of what they are called and where they are, ought to unite all their efforts towards realising the idea of a Polish-Czechoslovakian union. To achieve this a dialogue needs to be initiated and intensive propaganda developed, so that the broad social strata in which they work – from the lowest to the highest – are instilled with the awareness of the necessity of such an alliance."<sup>3</sup>

The main idea behind the founded and developed Czechoslovakian-Polish and Polish-Czechoslovakian associations was "the Slavophilian thought, the idea of a Slavic unity, that is deeply rooted in the older generation of Czechs and Poles – men of science and culture."<sup>4</sup> Both in Poland and in Czechoslovakia the regaining of independence was accompanied by a rapid boost in the number of Slavophilian organisation – especially among Polonophilian and Czechophilian societies. These organisations were founded in both countries mostly in 1922 – however, one could witness their greatest growth in the years 1928–1934.<sup>5</sup>

The worsening of the political situation in 1934 "resulted in a change in the attitudes of Polish and Czechoslovakian authorities towards social

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1 More on Czechoslovakian-Polish and Polish-Czechoslovakian associations for mutual friendship: Piwowarczyk, M. (2010). Polish and Czech cooperation exemplified by the Polish-Czechoslovakian Club in Lviv (Lwów) in the period between 1926–1935 (38). *Czech-Polish Historical And Pedagogical Journal*. Volume 2, Brno, pp.17–33.

2 Jasiński, Z. (2005). Wystawa czechosłowacko-polska w Hradcu Kralove w 1933 roku. *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska*, vol. LX Sectio F, Lublin – Polonia, pp. 109–120.

3 Kierski, K. (1931). *Problemat Polsko-Czeski*. Poznań, p. 17.

4 Doliwa, J. (1987). Towarzystwa czechosłowacko-polskiej wzajemności na terenie Kraju Morawsko-Śląskiego w okresie międzywojennym, część I (1918–1934). *Zeszyty Muzeum Ziemi Kłodzkiej*, Issue 2, p. 46.

5 Ibidem, pp. 46–47.

and cultural organisations promoting Polish-Czechoslovakian rapprochement in Poland as well as Czechoslovakia. The negative political situation was not without consequences for the already existing societies<sup>6</sup>, “there was an intensifying bad atmosphere around the organisations striving for Polish-Czechoslovakian cooperation,”<sup>7</sup> they lost political support and began to be criticised by the people. The situation remained virtually unchanged until 1939.

In Poland the first society for Polish-Czechoslovakian cooperation, founded in 1923 and active until 1938, was the Polish-Czechoslovakian Society in Poznań. The society that was a model for most Polish clubs considered their main aim – as proposed in their statute – to be “bringing together both the nations and maintaining mutual friendship through getting to know each other better in the fields of literature, art, and culture, as well as enterprise.”<sup>8</sup>

Following the example of the Society after 1923 there were more Polish-Czechoslovakian associations established, and later (after 1929) also other organisations for broader cooperation – Slavic associations and Slavic nations’ unions. The majority of them were modelled on the Society in relation to their aims, tasks and forms of cooperation, dissemination of the proposed and realised ideas, as well as education. That is why, just as the Polish-Czechoslovakian associations for cooperation, the Slavic societies in their statutes defined the forms of educational work that was to be aimed to initiate and maintain friendly contacts between Slavic nations, to study the life and the culture of Slavs, to promote, support, and realise bringing together of Slavic nations by all legal means, and to strengthen economic and cultural cooperation in the spirit of a Slavic mutuality. What was needed at the same time was to nurture Slavic mutuality and to teach the societies about the culture and the life of other Slavic nations through, i.a., organisation of lectures on culture, economics, history, and geography, organising official celebrations of national holidays of Slavic nations, organising social and cultural events such as concerts, plays, exhibitions, evenings with literature, dances, organisation of trips to Slavic countries, promotion of Slavic unity through articles in local and national press, and publications and leaflets of the organisations, as well as speeches on the radio, establishment of club libraries and reading

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<sup>6</sup> Ibidem, p. 58.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, pp. 64–65.

<sup>8</sup> Kierski, K. (1933). *Dziesięciolecie Towarzystwa Polsko-Czechosłowackiego w Poznaniu*. Poznań, p. 6.

rooms with Slavic literature, and organisation of lectures, readings, and courses of Slavic languages.<sup>9</sup>

The beginning of the work of the Slavonic associations in Poland and in Czechoslovakia needs to be connected with the founding of Slavic Women's Union (hereinafter SWU) in Prague on January 20, 1929. Its president for many years was Bohumila Smolařová-Čapková.<sup>10</sup> The organisation had its Circles in Brno, Olomouc, Moravská Ostrava and Bratislava and since the spring of 1929 cooperated with numerous organisations in Poland, among others with the Association for Women's Citizen Work (hereinafter ZPOK), Association of Women Landowners in Warsaw, People's Schools Society, Union of Patriot Women in Kraków.<sup>11</sup>

On February 5, 1930 in Prague in "Zlatá Husa" hotel the First Congress of the All-Slavic Union of Slavic Women was held. There were delegations of women's organisations from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia (Polish women's organisations were represented by Stefania Laudyn-Chrzanowska – representative of the Associations of Catholic Women in Lwów, dr Hanna Hubicka, a delegate of ZPOK and the Military Family in Warsaw as well as Jadwiga Grudzińska (representing ZPOK).<sup>12</sup>

At the Congress questions connected with the aims and the organisation of the work of the Union were discussed. The delegates debated the contents and the methods of the work of women's organisations in the particular countries. It was emphasised that, as Bohumila Smolařová-Čapková stated in her speech, "(...) every method of work ought to be a basis for the better mutual understanding and bringing together the Slavic tribes."<sup>13</sup> What was discussed in detail were the problems of education of youth, women, and the society in the spirit of the Slavic idea. It was postulated that action be taken to promote the cultural heritage of Slavic nations through: (1) education on the history, culture, and traditions of the particular nations; to this end, newspapers of all the Slavic countries were to be employed, as well as women's magazines,

<sup>9</sup> Cf.: Doliwa, J. (1987). *Op. cit.*, p. 49; Kellner, A. (1935). Deset let Československopolského klubu v Brně (1925–1935). In *Jdeme dál! K desátému výročí Československopolského klubu v Brně (1925–1935)*, Brno, p. 10; Tobjański, Z. (1994). *Czesi w Polsce*. Kraków, p. 148.

<sup>10</sup> SWU was located at: Praha-Dejvice, Velflíkova ulice, č.1427, and since the end of November 1930.: Praha-Ořechovka, Dělostrelecká ulice, č. 264/47.

<sup>11</sup> Державний Архів Івано-Франківської Области [hereinafter: DAIFO], f. 362, op. 1, spr. 2, k. 2.; Also: DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 6, k. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Центральний Державний Історичний Архів України, м. Львів ([hereinafter: CDIAL], f. 841, op. 1, spr. 78, k. 7.

<sup>13</sup> CDIAL, f. 841, op. 1, spr. 78, k. 7.

and periodicals of the associations; these articles were to be published discussing the work of the Slavic circles and the heritage of the Slavs in the form of descriptions and photographs of "landscapes, villages, folk clothes, national traditions", (2) organisation in each country of "all-Slavic literature evenings", lectures about different Slavic countries and nations, exhibitions of art and craftsmanship.<sup>14</sup>

The question of student exchanges (from higher schools as well as vocational ones) for summer holidays was discussed. The students were to be educated in the spirit of "unity".

An instruction proposed by H. Hubicka was accepted. It pertained to the education of youth, women, and societies "towards an objective view on the Slavic race, its historical and contemporary international and local situation."<sup>15</sup> It was accepted that the following are necessary for Slavic education and raising the awareness of national and international citizens' duties:

- teaching history of the particular Slavic nations, their culture, traditions, and needs;
- looking into the reasons for disharmony between the Slavic nations and aiming to find opportunities to remove them;
- teaching respect for national and Slavic literature and a critical attitude to foreign literature;
- education towards a conscious Slavic conduct with the awareness of the cultural traditions of Slavs;
- appreciation of the work of great individuals of the nations;
- maintaining friendly relations between women's organisations in Slavic and non-Slavic countries;
- exchanging books in order to teach about literature and Slavic languages, and organising language courses;
- education in economics (with emphasis placed on Slavic economies).<sup>16</sup>

What is more, it was accepted that the local organisations of the SWU (local Clubs of the SWU subordinate to the Board) in the particular countries (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria) were to belong to the All-Slavic Union of Slavic Women (hereinafter: ASUSW), and the members of the ASUSW could be: central women's organisations (with their local departments) of the particular Slavic nations and Slavic women's organisations in non-Slavic countries.<sup>17</sup> During the Congress in Prague the representatives of the Polish women's organisations – in light

<sup>14</sup> CDIAL, f. 841, op. 1, spr. 78, k. 8–10.

<sup>15</sup> CDIAL, f. 841, op. 1, spr. 78, k. 8–10.

<sup>16</sup> CDIAL, f. 841, op. 1, spr. 78, k. 8–10.

<sup>17</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 5, k. 26 (the statute of the All-Slavic Union of Slavic Women).

of the resolutions of the Congress to “aim to establish a special association in every Slavic country” (which was the result of the idea of all-Slavic unity, the idea of Panslavism, which was reborn after World War I and which disseminated the slogan of an alliance on equal rights, without the supremacy of any single nation: the free with the free, the equal with the equal – that was the motto of relations between Slavs) – made the decision to establish first Clubs of the SWU: in Kraków, chaired by Maria Siedlecka, and in Zakopane, chaired by the initiator of the SWU in Poland, Stefania Laudyn-Chrzanowska.<sup>18</sup>

In July 1930 in Zakopane a conception was developed of the work and the development of SWU Clubs in Poland with the help of B. Smolařová-Čapková, arrived from Prague. Polish SWU was to be a non-political, non-partisan association aimed to “bring Slavic nations together in the field of national culture and nurturing the noblest of the relations between the nations, with the exclusion of everything that could hurt the noble brotherhood.”<sup>19</sup>

Soon, new Clubs were founded; there were 21 of them, located in Biała Podlaska, Będzin, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Katowice, Kielce, Lwów (2), Milanówek, Mława, Płock, Poznań (2), Pułtusk, Sosnowiec, Stanisławów, Toruń, Warsaw (with the Board of the SWU with its offices at Marszałka Focha Street 12/8), Włocławek, Wyszaków.<sup>20</sup>

On April 19, 1931 in Kraków the First Meeting of the Polish SWU was organised. There the statute was accepted and the Board were elected. The tasks of the Board were, among others, “organisation of all the efforts to realise the ideas and the goals of the SWU, namely: all-Slavic meetings, concerts, lectures, performances, trips.”<sup>21</sup> In the Board of the SWU there were, among others, member of parliament H. Hubicka (president), MPs Maria Jaworska and Ludwika Wolska (vice-presidents), Jadwiga Grudzińska (secretary) and Wanda Pełczyńska (treasurer and spokesperson).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> The vice-president of the Kraków Club of the SWU was Henryka Braunowa, steh secretary – Maria Zamorska, the treasurer – dr Wanda Wistocka, and the members, among others: Wanda Chodorowska, Wanda Grabowska, and Felicja Kowalewska.

<sup>19</sup> CDIAL, f. 841, op. 1, spr. 85, k. 2.

<sup>20</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 5, k. 45.

<sup>21</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 1, k. 6–7 (project of the statute of the SWU in Poland).

<sup>22</sup> A general member of SWU could be any women of Slavic ethnicity over the age of 21. Women older than 18 could cooperate with the SWU. A member of the SWU needed to have a “perfectly clear reputation as a citizen”. A honorary member – according to the statute – could be anyone, regardless of gender, who “contributed substantially to carrying out the aims of the SWU as a member of a Club or had major achievements in the field of the promotion of the all-Slavic idea without being a SWU member”; DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 1, k. 3 (draft of the statute of the SWU in Poland).

According to the statute the aim of the SWU was to promote “the meeting and the unity of Slavic nations and working towards nurturing and developing original Slavic traditions.”<sup>23</sup> The ways to achieve these goals were:

- “founding Clubs in all of the Republic of Poland and in Polish circles abroad;
- maintaining close contacts with Slavic organisations representing the same ideology in other countries;
- organising national and all-Slavic meetings;
- education in Slavic languages, intellectual life, economies and social life of Slavic nations;
- exchange of propaganda of works of folk craftsmanship and the national traditions in general;
- organising lectures, plays, informative discussions and propaganda exhibitions;
- organising and facilitating trips to Slavic countries, student exchanges;
- promoting the idea of the SWU in press and our own publications.”<sup>24</sup>

Until the end of 1932 the SWU Board conducted a very energetic educational action aimed to “develop the Slavic movement and awaken Slavic interests”. A series of lectures was organised in most of the Clubs. For instance, the Club in Poznań (the most active of all the Clubs in Poland) organised evening lectures on, among others, Sorbian culture, Kashubian culture or outstanding politicians (a lecture titled “Mrs Masarykova” was given by the Czechoslovakian consul Jaromír Doležal). The Board also organised a series of courses and discussions (with the use of educational films) that promoted Slavic ideas and the culture of Slavic peoples among the students of state schools, gymnasiums, and vocational courses (having received permission of educational authorities). They cooperated in the field of the promotion of the idea of Slavic unity with similar associations in Poznań, among others, with the Polish-Czechoslovakian Society, the Slavic Society, the Polish-Yugoslavian Society, the Society of the Friends of the Sorbs, and with the Academic Club of the Friends of Czechoslovakia.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 1, k. 2 (draft of the statute of the SWU in Poland).

<sup>24</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 1, k. 2 (draft of the statute of the SWU in Poland).

<sup>25</sup> Starting with 01. 10. 1932 the Board of the Poznań Club included: Zofia Kawecka (president), Marcela Cosieniecka (vice-president), Bożena Stelmachowska (secretary), Aniela Sowówna (treasurer), Leonia Madurowiczówna, Maria Grossmanówna, Maria Zakrzewska (Board members); DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 5, k. 11–16.

At the beginning of April 1933 there were 18 Clubs of the USW in Poland, located in Dąbrowa Górnicza, Kraków, Katowice, Kowel (Wotyń), Kielce, Lwów, Łódź, Milanówek, Mława, Poznań, Pułtusk, Płock, Stanisławów, Sambor, Toruń, Włocławek, Wyszaków, and Zakopane<sup>26</sup>. On April, 4 a new board was organised, which included Jadwiga Łypacewiczowa (president), Józefa Bratkowska, member of parliament L.Wolska and J.Grudzińska (vice-presidents), Zofia Mańkowska (secretary), Maria Siennicka and Zofia Januszewska (assistant secretaries), Zofia Mikołów (treasurer), Rita Bogustawska, Jadwiga Kurnatowska, Wanda Pełczyńska, Jadwiga Szadurska, and Maria Zaleska (members of the Board). The new Board organised specialist commissions: the press commission, chaired by M. Zaleska, the bulletin commission, chaired by M. Siennicka, and culture and propaganda commission, chaired by J. Grudzińska, and the commission of non-regular income with Helena Lesser as its chairperson. Even in the first months of its work the new Board held a number of cultural events that promoted the material and musical culture of Slavs. They were, among others, concerts of Slavic music with lectures (April 11 and 14, May 30, 1933),<sup>27</sup> and lectures of Kazimierz Wyszomirski on the subject of "Villages and cities in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia" (April 17 and 28, 1933) and of Stanisław Zakrzewski on the history of Poland (June 1933).<sup>28</sup>

The action of lectures for school children and youth was continued to promote folk traditions of Slavic people (starting with February 20, 1934 a series of discussions titled "Slavic embroidery and clothes" was organised in girls' vocational schools in Warsaw, where the art of embroidery in Bulgarian, Czechoslovakian, and Yugoslavian clothes was presented)<sup>29</sup> as well a series of training courses for teachers where they were instructed how to hold theatrical plays, concerts, and screenings that could allow young people to become accustomed with Slavic culture. Through a special Social-Propaganda Commission (Komisja Towarzysko-Propagandowa) the Board organised in Warsaw Slavic dances and theatrical plays to raise funds, and in cooperation with Bulgarian, Czechoslovakian, and Yugoslavian associations it initiated a tourist and training exchange for state school teachers which was aimed to not only

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<sup>26</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 5, k. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Bulgarian, Czechoslovakian, Polish, Russian, Yugoslavian compositions were performed under the artistic supervision of the pianist Lucyna Robowska, cello player Kazimierz Witkomirski, a choir of Bulgarian students and a Ukrainian Lysenko choir.

<sup>28</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 5, k. 5-6; 24.

<sup>29</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 6, k. 13.

go sightseeing in the countries of destination but also to make the teachers familiar with the schooling and the family life there.

In March 1936 a new Board of the USW was formed. The president was Maria Bogucka, the vice-presidents – Maria Siennicka and Józefa Bratkowa, the secretaries – Maria Rudniewska and Irena Biedrzycka, and the treasurer – Jadwiga Nikołowowa<sup>30</sup>. Unfortunately, with the end of that year the activity of the SWU would gradually decrease until eventually fading away.

On the days June 10 to 12, 1931 the Second Congress of the All-Slavic Union of Slavic Women was held in Warsaw. There arrived the delegates of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria (B. Smolařová-Čapková, Ludwika Mašnerová-Vebrova, Iška Gollová, Ludmila Stejskalová-Rabašová) and Poland (i.a. H. Hubicka, M. Jaworska, Józefa Szebeko (representing the National Women's Organisation – Narodowa Organizacja Kobiet), J. Grudzińska, Anna Paradowska-Szelągowska (of ZPOK). During the Congress the statute of the All-Slavic Union of Slavic Women proposed by Poland was accepted and Smolařova-Čapkova was elected the president of the Union.

During the Congress (June 12) there was also the Meeting of the Polish SWU which at a programme panel accepted the programme of educational work for the Union. That was how it was made mandatory for the Clubs to:

- promote through press, spoken word, images (cinema) the spiritual and material culture of Slavs, i.e. science, history, ethnography, philosophy, literature, art, geography, natural resources and industry, and in this propaganda they ought to emphasise all the ideas connecting the Slavic peoples;
- conduct the education of youth in the Slavic idea through: proper training of teachers, conducting the lectures, especially in history and geography, about the role and the importance of Slavs in the past, the future, and the contemporary world; organise camps for the youth in Slavic countries and develop their interest in geography;
- properly train (educate) teachers for the role of leaders of youth in the spirit of the Slavic idea;
- emphasise the work of Slavic women in all fields and departments; lead a common fight for women's rights in Poland; communicate with all the international congresses to take a common stance;
- promote Slavic folk embroidery and support it by holding exhibitions as well as trade with the help of social and economic organisations, preferably women's organisations;

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<sup>30</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 8, k. 8.

- initiate and support trade and facilitate the exchange of goods among Slavic nations;
- set up a correspondence network between the members on the particular Slavic countries in order to be brought together closer and to get to know each other better;
- organise days of Slavs at the same dates in all Slavic countries;
- set up Slavic departments in the existing ethnographic museums;
- hold concerts of Slavic music, played on the radio; evenings with Slavic songs, evening events with folk dances in folk outfits;
- organise with every congress exhibitions of women’s works and fairs;
- collect photographs of historic buildings, art, folk celebrations, properly describe them and send them to other clubs of the associations in other Slavic countries to be used by the press, particularly women’s magazines;
- develop biographies of women who have contributed to the Slavic idea and the history of the relations between Slavic women;
- support the initiatives to organise lectures in administration and economics in Gdynia and in particular hold international presentations on the problems of immigration and care for women immigrants;
- promote studying literature, history, and the art of Slavic peoples in Poland and other Slavic countries;
- cooperate in initiating direct relations among the local clubs through help and support in organising field trips, holiday camps, and facilitating the exchange of information pertaining to the work of the associations focused on the same areas, while at the same time aiming to exchange instructors and other professionals, if necessary;
- promote the idea of economic cooperation among the Slavic countries, based on the combined economic power of the bloc of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria in alliance with Romania.<sup>31</sup>

During the Congress reports of the work of the Union in the particular countries were presented and lectures on programmes and ideas were given. Some of them pertained to the educational work of Slavic associations. For example, I. Gollova in her lecture titled “The all-Slavic educational activity” she stated that what needed to be done was intensive educational work to facilitate closer contacts and better understanding among the Slavic peoples, to increase cooperation, to organise themselves. She proposed to “organise cultural work in schools

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<sup>31</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 5, k. 30–31; Also: DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 2, k. 10.

through personal relations and cultural propaganda”, she advised to promote the works of culture through the press (“run Slavic columns in newspapers, publish magazines, illustrated magazines, organise libraries, bookshops and reading rooms, scientific libraries, publish scientific papers, as well as popular articles and brochures about Slavs”), spoken word (“organise lectures of national and international experts on all-Slavic subjects, evenings with recitation, evenings of Slavic folk songs, as well as artistic and musical events, and language courses”), images (“organise screenings, collect copies of the works of painting and sculpture, drawings, organise exhibitions of original artworks, painting galleries, art fairs, museums of folk art”), and to hold “events with folk art, evenings with Slavic art, national dances lessons, all-Slavic exhibitions.”<sup>32</sup>

L. Mašnerová-Vebrová, in turn, in her lecture titled “The education of youth for the aims of all-Slavic alliance” she called for the Slavic associations to take care to have the youth of every Slavic nation brought up in the ideas of bringing the Slavic peoples together. As to these aims and tasks she stated: “it is mandatory to endear schools, educators, teachers, and it is necessary that in the curricula, in the school subjects (literature, history, geography, music) all that is related to the Slavs is emphasised (...), at the same time, teachers ought to create such atmosphere in schools as to allow the children to get to know the Slavic culture and to love it with all their hearts”. Apart from education Mašnerova-Webrova called for the holding of lectures of teachers and individuals “who work for science, for the nation, for the arts, and the subject of those ought to be historical events, anniversaries, the lives of those who have contributed to the good of the different Slavic nations”. She emphasises that all the work needs to be governed by one rule: “always and everywhere only present the things that unite Slavic peoples, without discussing the issues that divide them”. She claimed that outside the school there is the need to organise concerts of Slavic songs, academies, theatrical plays and film screenings for young people; she accentuated the necessity to have the youth meet (on trips, field trips, holiday camps), where they could get to know each other, to get to know the literature, the countries, the culture, and the history of other Slavic nations, which would contribute to the creation of an atmosphere of friendly unity.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 5, k. 32.

<sup>33</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 5, k. 40–42.

On October 14–17, 1933 the delegates of the Polish SWU took part in the Third Congress of the All-Slavic Union of Slavic Women in Belgrad. The Polish delegation was led by H. Hubicka and it included: J. Łypacewiczowa (president of the Board), Maria Siennicka (secretary of the Board), dr Zofia Kawecka (vice-president of the Poznań Club of the SWU), Zofia Tyszkowa (president of the Lwów Club of the SWU), Małgorzata Bogusławska and L. Wolska (vice-president of the Board, who presented the organisers of the Congress in Belgrad with a gift from the Polish SWU in the form of works of folk ceramics of the Hutsul, Volhynian, Kashubian, and Łowicz culture, Polish embroidery patterns, samples of folk art textiles from all the regions of Poland, folk textiles from all the regions of Poland, traditional corsets from Kraków, and two works by Stryjeńska – “Polish dances”, and “Polish clothes”). During the Congress Z. Kawecka, a teacher of Serbo-Croatian at the University of Poznań gave a lecture titled “Women’s schooling in Poland” in the context of the conducted reform of schooling in Poland.<sup>34</sup> The lecture of Z. Zalewska was titled “The Slavic press”, and of H. Hubicka “The international role of the SWU.”<sup>35</sup>

During the congress the task commissions of the ASUSW – organisational, cultural, and press commissions accepted their resolutions. The Press Commission obliged the national Clubs to: (1) promote the Slavic ideas in the press; (2) exchange newspapers and semi-official documents with clubs, cafes, reading rooms, universities, and secondary schools; (3) exchange illustrated children’s magazines.

The Cultural Commission, in turn, made it mandatory for the Clubs to: (1) organise exchanges of professors, librarians, teachers, and students; (2) organise presentations of women’s literature and providing libraries with such books; (3) hold exhibitions of women’s art; (4) promote Slavic plays in the theatres; (5) increase the number of the translations of Slavic literature; (6) exchange Slavic films; (7) ask the educational authorities to introduce obligatory courses in one Slavic language and Slavic literature, and at least one hour of lecture on Slavonic questions a week; (8) promote of Slavic music; (9) hold games and balls for adults as well as children in Slavic outfits.<sup>36</sup>

The work of the Slavic organisations in interwar Poland was an expression of the interest in the all-Slavic idea and the engagement of

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<sup>34</sup> CDIAL, f. 841, op. 1, spr. 78, k. 32–33; Cf.: *Věstník Jednoty slovanských žen*, Volume II, Number 2, pp. 1–3.

<sup>35</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 6, k. 5.

<sup>36</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 6, k. 4.

a small part of the Polish society in this field. The existing Clubs of the SWU had a low number of members altogether, and the scope of their educational work would vary. Apart from the significantly active Clubs in Poznań, Warsaw, Lwów, and Silesia, the remaining Clubs were not very active, which is exemplified by, among others, the state and the work of the Club in Stanisławów.

The SWU in Stanisławów was established on April 15, 1931 out of the initiative of the member of the Polish parliament Ludwika Wolska and ZPOK. The board of the Club included: Maria Ungerowa (president), Paulina Stupnicka (vice-president), Janina Łomnicka (treasurer) and Dobruchna Lorschówna (secretary). The Club had 27 members. Soon after its inception, in June 1931, the Club organised its first cultural events. Most of the events the Club organised together with ZPOK in their day rooms. What was organised most frequently were theatrical plays and evenings for Polish youth as well as Ukrainians, which presented traditional dances and clothes of both the nations (unfortunately, due to the deteriorating Polish-Ukrainian relations the organisations stopped holding these events very soon – about the half of the year 1932), meetings, usually with teachers, where the participants could become familiar with the ideas of the SWU (one of the lectures, titled “Slavic ideas in Poland”, was given by S. Karpowa),<sup>37</sup> also often the so-called tea-parties were organised, where the participants became acquainted with Slavic literature as well as listening to concerts of Slavic choirs. The members of the Club ran the action of the collection and dissemination (also abroad) of the regional works of culture, among others, photographs of landscapes in the vicinity of Stanisławów and the outfits worn at local folk celebrations.<sup>38</sup>

After 1934 the activity of the SWU in Stanisławów visibly decreased. Only four meetings of the Club were held, as well as a discussion on the subject of “The culture of Bulgaria” (led by M. Ungerowa in April 1934).

In May 1935 new board was elected, which included M. Ungerowa (president), Stefania Karpowowa (vice-president), Stanisława Krzywińska (treasurer), D. Lerschówna (secretary) and Józefa Fuchsówna (member of the board). Leontyna Rutkowska, Leontyna Freszłowa, and Elżbieta Przystalska were elected to the Audit Commission,<sup>39</sup> and the number of members dropped to 19.<sup>40</sup> On January 30, 1936 the Stanisławów Club

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<sup>37</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 9, k. 1.

<sup>38</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 5, k. 4–5; Also: DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 2, k. 17–22.

<sup>39</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 9, k. 1.

<sup>40</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 8, k. 2–4 (Annual report of Slavonic Women's Union, Stanisławów Club, for the year 1935).

held one of its final discussions, during which a presentation titled "Cooperation of Slavic nations now and before the War" was given by the President of the Board of the SWU in Warsaw L. Wolska.<sup>41</sup> No further activity of the Club is reported after this event.

Formally the SWU in Stanisławów functioned until half of the year 1936. Later, due to the increasingly more difficult political situation in Poland (i.a. the deteriorating relations between Poles and Ukrainians in eastern voivodships) and internationally (i.a. the deteriorating Polish-Czechoslovakian relations) the Club ceased to be active.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 9, k. 9.

<sup>42</sup> DAIFO, f. 362, op. 1, spr. 5, k. 3.