

## THE WORLD OF CZECH INTELLECTUALS IN THE LIFE OF ROMAN DYBOSKI

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The paper discusses the role of Czech (Czechoslovakian) intellectuals in the life of Roman Dyboski (1885–1945), professor of English philology at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Dyboski was one of just a few Polish scholars who, despite the tense political relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland at that time, advocated the idea of mutual intellectual cooperation. Roman Dyboski's position was quite specific. He grew up in the Polish-Czech border region and studied English language and literature. His chief aim was to bring closer Poland and the Anglo-Saxon world. To this purpose, he corresponded actively with scholars from Czechoslovakia, especially with experts on English studies, including Otokar Vočadlo. He also met many of them in person when he was in London as a lecturer at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies of the University College London established by Tomáš G. Masaryk. Dyboski was also one of but a handful Polish experts who spoke Czech and published in Czechoslovakia not only on Polish but also on English matters, which given the considerable level of interest in Anglo-Saxon culture in both countries brought Poles and Czechs closer together.

*Keywords:* Roman Dyboski – Otokar Vočadlo – Vilem Mathesius – Karel Čapek – Charles University in Prague – Jagiellonian University – School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University College London

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Roman Dyboski (1883–1945), born and raised in Cieszyn (Těšín), i.e. coming from the Polish-Czech borderland where there was a large percentage of Germans, is a scholar who based his whole university career on relations with the outer world. Graduate of a German high school (Gymnasium) in his hometown as well as of universities in Vienna and Oxford, he became the first professor of English philology at the university in Kraków, laying the foundations for modern English studies in Poland before World War I. It is easy to see parallels between him and Vilem Mathesius (1882–1945), founder of English studies in Czechoslovakia and professor of Charles University in Prague; they were the same age and both contributed with their extensive activity to popularizing Anglo-Saxon culture in their native countries. What is more, it is worth emphasizing that in Poland and Czechoslovakia between the wars there were four chairs of English studies, so the milieus were similar in size. Yet among Polish university Anglicists, only Roman Dyboski maintained closer relations with his Czech colleagues.

So far Dyboski's biographers have not taken into consideration the role of Czech intellectuals in the life of the scholar.<sup>1</sup> Also researchers of the contacts of Polish academics with their colleagues from Czechoslovakia have focused more on other disciplines.<sup>2</sup> This paradox stems for instance from the fact that no comparative studies have been conducted on the development of modern Western philologies in the countries of Central Europe in the interwar period, the focus being either on their native histories or contacts of individual philologists with Western intellectuals (either experts on Slavonic studies or Anglicists). Roman Dyboski is an example of a scholar who, despite building a network of English studies in Poland largely based on Anglicists and Slavists from the UK and the USA, closely followed the achievements of his colleagues from the neighboring Czechoslovakia. That largely stemmed from the fact that he had known them from their work at the School of Slavonic Studies King's College, London, which was a plane of cooperation and at the same time rivalry of East-Central European states not only in the UK but the whole Anglosphere.

This paper is largely based on the never-used correspondence of Roman Dyboski with Czech intellectuals, mainly Anglicists, philologists and historians, kept in Czech archives. Dyboski, an extremely prolific letter-writer, maintaining intensive contacts among others with scholars from Great Britain, USA, and Canada, left a large collection of missives. To Czechs he wrote in English, Polish, and German. Unfortunately, his legacy at the Archive of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and Polish Academy of Arts and

<sup>1</sup> For recent literature, see Tomasz PUĐŁOCKI, *Uczeni przeciw „milczącej otchłani”. Współpraca Moniki M. Gardner i Romana Dyboskiego na rzecz sprawy polskiej w Wielkiej Brytanii*, *Prace Historyczne. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* (later PH-ZNUJ) 141/1, 2014, pp. 101–122; IDEM, *Idea uniwersytetu według Romana Dyboskiego*, *Rocznik Komisji Nauk Pedagogicznych* (later RKNP) 69, 2016, pp. 155–173; IDEM, *English and German studies at the Jagiellonian University between the two World Wars: The ideal of a scholar and challenges of reality*, in: Maria Stinia – Tomasz Puđłocki (eds.), *W kręgu historii nauki i oświaty. Uniwersyteckie środowiska filologów krakowskich i lwowskich 1850–1939*, special issue of PH-ZNUJ 145/2, 2018, pp. 317–338; Marta GIBINSKA-MARZEC, *Roman Dyboski – pierwszy polski anglista i założyciel krakowskiej anglistyki*, *Rocznik Przemyski – Historia* (later RPH) 54/1(21), 2018, pp. 131–147; Aleksandra SUSZYŃSKA (ed.), *Roman Dyboski 1883–1945, Władysław Tarnawski 1885–1951. Materiały z posiedzenia naukowego w dniu 18 listopada 2011 roku*, Kraków 2018 (there detailed bibliography).

<sup>2</sup> There is extensive literature on that theme, that is why I will only cite several publications from Czech-Polish cultural and academic contacts here. See e.g.: Henryk BARYCZ, *Dziejowe związki Polski z Uniwersyte-tem Karola w Pradze*, Poznań 1948; Grażyna PAŃKO, *Polska i Polacy w czeskiej opinii publicznej w okresie międzywojennym*, Wrocław 1996; Marek ĐURČANSKÝ, *Członkostwo zagraniczne polskich i czeskich uczonych w akademiach narodowych: PAU i ČAVU*, *Prace Komisji Historii Nauki* (later PKHN) 6, 2004, pp. 177–207; IDEM, *Szkoła historyczna Golla i jej przedstawiciele (Goll, Pekař, Bidlo) na tle stosunków czesko-polskich*, PKHN 8, 2007, pp. 237–269; IDEM, *Od niezgody do bratniej serdeczności i z powrotem. Wydział Filozoficzny Uniwersytetu Karola w Pradze a współpraca z nauką polską (1918–1938)*, *Historia Slavorum Occidentis* (later HSO) 1(8), 2015, pp. 141–167; Witold CHMIELEWSKI, *Scientific Research of the Polish Academy of Learning in Cieszyn Silesia in 1930s (The Outline of the Problem)*, *Czech-Polish Historical and Pedagogical Journal* (later CPHPJ) 3/1, 2011, pp. 14–23; Pavol MATULA, *The Role of Professor Władysław Semkowicz and the Jagiellonian University in Promoting Polonophilia in Slovakia in the Interwar Period*, CPHPJ 3/1, 2011, pp. 124–133; Roman BARON, *Ambasadorowie wzajemnego zrozumienia. Niedocenieni twórcy pomostów między polską i cze-ską kulturą (XIX–XXI w.)*, Toruń 2013; Roman BARON – Roman MADECKI – Renata RUSIN DYBLAKSA, *History of Polish Studies at Czech Universities (Current State of Research)*, CPHPJ 11/2, 2019, pp. 3–23; Roman BARON – Roman MADECKI, *The Polish Club in Prague (1887–2020)*, CPHPJ 13/1, 2021, pp. 24–43; Joanna LASKOSZ – Marcin MACIUK, *By wnieść się ponad szczyty... Z kontaktów uczonych polskich, czeskich i słowackich w XX w.*, Kraków 2013; Roman BARON – Małgorzata MICHAŁSKA (eds.), *Śladami Polaków w Pradze (XIX–XXI wiek). Szkice i portrety historyczno-literackie*, Praga 2017; Joanna LASKOSZ – Krzysztof KARWOWSKI, *Działalność prof. Walerego Goetla na rzecz utworzenia Parku Narodowego w Pieninach oraz pogranicza parku narodowego w polskich i słowackich Pieninach*, in: Joanna Laskosz (ed.), *Dziewięćdziesiąt lat Pienińskiego Parku Narodowego, 1932–2022. Historia powstania Parku w relacjach profesora Walerego Goetla*, Kraków 2022, pp. 11–24.

Sciences (PAU) comprises merely small pieces of the rich collection that must have been part of the scholar's private archive. It is not known what happened with letters written to him, including those by Czechs, which must be largely considered destroyed or lost.

A methodological inspiration for this study are intellectual biographies increasingly popular in Poland recently.<sup>3</sup> Their role is not only an in-depth reconstruction of facts from the scholars' lives but also presentation of the development of their thought. In both cases, international contacts and the circles which influenced the academics in successive years are important components of the creative process and usually find a reflection in scientific work. I was also inspired by some ideas of the entangled history, especially represented in the collective volume *Science Interconnected: German-Polish Scholarly Entanglements in Modern History*. Jan Surman underlines there that by "taking up the ideas of the mobility and the interconnectedness of knowledge, most importantly, but not exclusively, of knowledge entanglement, one can discover a new multi-layered view that brings forward the most specific assets of Central European scholarship, its innate heterogeneity and multilingualism, which are flattened if regarded from national perspectives".<sup>4</sup> That was also the case with Roman Dyboski, for whom Czech intellectuals were, next to Anglo-Saxons, major international partners. It is evident in his letters and his writings. On the other hand, for Czech humanists, especially philologists, Dyboski was one of the few English studies experts from Poland who – despite officially cold political relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland – was not only an ambassador of his own country but also an important representative of the Anglosphere.<sup>5</sup> I am using the word Czech on purpose, as it was limited largely to the western part of interwar Czechoslovakia.

### **The plane of communication – the School of Slavonic Studies, King's College, London<sup>6</sup>**

Dyboski knew Czechs and the Czech language (rather passively) from his childhood and education in Cieszyn as well as studies in Vienna. We know that on 1 January 1910

<sup>3</sup> See e.g.: Maria Rosa ANTOGNAZZA, *Leibniz. Biografia intelektualna*, trans. by Zuzanna and Łukasz Lamżowie, Kraków 2018; Ryszard SZAWŁOWSKI, *Rafał Lemkin. Biografia intelektualna*, Warszawa 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Jan SURMAN, *Re-connecting Central European Science: An Introduction*, in: idem et al. (ed.), *Science Interconnected: German-Polish Scholarly Entanglements in Modern History*, Marburg 2022, pp. 1–35, here p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g.: *Kulturní drobnosti z Polska*, Český deník 16/98, 9. 4. 1927, p. 2. About political relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland, see among others: Jindřich DEJMEK, *Edvard Beneš a Polska międzywojenna (uwagi w związku z jednym z aspektów polityki zagranicznej Beneša)*, Dzieje Najnowsze (later DN) 2, 2000, pp. 89–118; IDEM, *Edvard Beneš: politická biografie českého demokrata. Část první, Revolucionář a diplomat (1884–1935)*, Praha 2006; IDEM, *Diplomacie Československa, I, Nástin dějin ministerstva zahraničních věcí a diplomacie (1918–1992)*, Praha 2012; Jindřich DEJMEK – Janusz GRUCHALA, *Czeskie środowiska polityczne wobec spraw polskich 1920–1938*, Katowice 2002; Marek Kazimierz KAMIŃSKI, *Szkie z dziejów Polski i Czechosłowacji w latach trzydziestych XX wieku*, Warszawa 2014; Marek Kazimierz KAMIŃSKI – Michał Jerzy ZACHARIAS, *Polityka zagraniczna II Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1987; Piotr WANDYDZ, *Polska a zagranica*, Warszawa 1988; Piotr ŁOSSOWSKI (ed.), *Historia dyplomacji polskiej, IV, 1918–1939*, Warszawa 1995; Anna SZCZEPAŃSKA, *Czechosłowacja w polskiej polityce zagranicznej 1918–1933*, Szczecin 2004; Andrzej ESSEN, *Polityka Czechosłowacji w Europie Środkowej w latach 1918–1932*, Kraków 2006; Piotr KOŁAKOWSKI, *Między Warszawą a Pragą. Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki wojskowo-polityczne 1918–1939*, Warszawa 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Today's The UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies.

he – newly appointed assistant professor of English Philology at Jagiellonian University – wrote in Polish to Adolf Černý, professor of Slavonic studies at the Faculty of Philosophy of Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague and editor of *Slovanský přehled*, asking him to agree to discuss in the magazine his book *Literatura i jazyk středniowiecznej Anglii* (Kraków–Warszawa 1910).<sup>7</sup> Those contacts until 1914 were incidental.

With the outbreak of World War I, the young Kraków scholar was called up to serve in the Austrian army where he fought against the Romanov Empire. Already in the first weeks of the conflict he was taken prisoner. Between 1915 and 1922 spent in Russia and Siberia, where he often encountered Czech and Slovakian soldiers. There were quite a lot of academics among them, POWs like himself.<sup>8</sup> Dyboski did not try to conceal it that mutual reluctance between Poles and Czechs made military cooperation difficult at the moment when in consequence of the revolution, the troops of both nationalities could fight their way through the cordon of Bolshevik troops eastwards. He wrote: “The profound difference between national characters, silent aversion between Poles and Czechs in captivity, stemming from the Czechs’ extreme Moscovophilia, finally the echoes of disputes in Europe over Silesia in the form of a virulent anti-Polish campaign from Siberian Czech press (they even called one of Czech armored trains ‘Těšín’) – all that soured the atmosphere between the military formations who shared so obviously identical interests.”<sup>9</sup> It seems that Dyboski, despite having a definitely Polish stance as regards the mutual controversial issues, particularly concerning the borders between Poland and Czechoslovakia, did discern enormous problems resulting from the nationalist policy. The latter also blinded the Polish side. Successive years, especially those spent in Great Britain, were to reinforce that belief in him. The fact that his Russian memories and contacts with Czechs and Slovaks were noticed also in Czechoslovakian circles is confirmed by minor notes about them in the press.<sup>10</sup>

When in 1922 the Polish government funded a scholarship for a lecturer in Polish literature at the School of Slavonic Studies of King’s College, it was decided to send Dyboski there. The scholar, although not an expert in the desired field, was known for his broad horizons, ability to adapt to various conditions as well as his personal charm; thus he was granted a leave from the Jagiellonian University.<sup>11</sup>

Before he had arrived in London, Polish matters at the School of Slavonic Studies (later SSEES) looked rather miserable – quite contrary to the history and culture of Czechoslovakia and Russia. Czechs’ position was much stronger than Poles’. There were a few reasons for that. First of all, the founder of the School in 1915 was Czech Philosopher, Tomáš G. Masaryk, from 1918 President of Czechoslovakia, who personally saw to it that the Czechoslovakian government funded the chair of Czech and Slovakian languages and literatures, which was taken up in 1920 by František Chudoba.<sup>12</sup> Czechoslovakia’s Russophile

<sup>7</sup> Masarykův ústav a Archiv Akademie věd České republiky (hereinafter MUA), Fond Černý Adolf, signature II b1, inv. no. 465, letter from Dyboski Roman, Jan 1, 1910.

<sup>8</sup> See Roman DYBOSKI, *Siedem lat w Rosji i na Syberii (1915–1921). Przygody i wrażenia*, Warszawa – Kraków 1922, pp. 59–60, 66–67, 76, 91–92, 107–108, 112–113, 116.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 113.

<sup>10</sup> *Kulturní hlídka*, Legionářská stráž 8/27, 29. 6. 1928, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Cf.: Tomasz PUDŁOCKI, *Ambasadorzy idei. Wkład intelektualistów w promowanie pozytywnego wizerunku Polski w Wielkiej Brytanii w latach 1918–1939*, Kraków 2015, pp. 219–245.

<sup>12</sup> See Chudoba’s letters to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Archiv Masarykovy Univerzity (hereinafter AMU), Fond: B 95 – František Chudoba, record unit: 1, inv. nos. 236, 237.

policy met with the approval of the School's headmaster, Sir Bernard Pares, who had been to czarist Russia several times and knew the Russian language. Also Moravia and Bohemia were known to Pares. At the turn of July and August 1922, he spent a few weeks in Czechoslovakia with his eldest son, from where – seen off by František Chudoba – he headed for Bavaria.<sup>13</sup> Pares was also chairman of the Anglo-Russian Literary Society, which functioned at King's College.

In the late summer of 1922 Chudoba was replaced at his post in London by Otakar Vočadlo. They had known each other from Prague but were also regular correspondents.<sup>14</sup> Vočadlo was one of the most gifted linguists of his time. Already as an eighteen-year-old he knew twenty languages. After the Great War Vočadlo moved to the British Isles with his new wife, Ludmila Kruisova. There he was a lecturer at the London School of Slavonic Studies, giving tutorial classes for Cambridge University on modern drama.<sup>15</sup> Already a few days after taking the post, in a letter of 18 September 1922 he was encouraged by Pares to get engaged in co-editing *The Slavonic Review* published by the School. Their later correspondence confirms they remained in excellent relations.<sup>16</sup> Pares would often invite Vočadlo to his home and when he travelled to America, he even let him stay at his house.<sup>17</sup> Norman Brooke Jopson, who in 1922 became reader in Comparative Slavonic Philology in the University of London, did not conceal his admiration for the Prague scholar either. Jopson and Vočadlo might have also been brought closer together through their exceptional linguistic skills. It was only years later that Jopson got closer to another Polish Anglicist – professor of King John Casimir University in Lviv Władysław Tarnawski<sup>18</sup> but generally he too, thanks to his experience of Bohemia and Russia before World War I expressed his liking for scholars from those countries. The preserved correspondence proves that Jopson and Vočadlo promptly took to each other and consulted a lot of linguistic questions with each other.<sup>19</sup>

Robert William Seton-Watson, who had played a prominent role in establishing the SSEES in 1915 and was a member of its staff, informed Chudoba in the letter of 30 September 1922 about Dyboski's arrival: "*probably as the inaugurator of a Polish readership like your own*".<sup>20</sup> It was not Chudoba Dyboski was to have direct contact with, though, it was his successor. Vočadlo's letters to Dyboski have not been preserved, but from what Dyboski wrote, they quickly became real friends; they wrote to each other regularly and frequently met in the professional context and in private.

In the letter of 8 November 1922 Dyboski excused his absence from the inaugurating lecture. The absence was unplanned and was a result of an emergency.<sup>21</sup> However, he

<sup>13</sup> Literární archiv Památníku národního písemnictví v Praze (hereinafter: LA PNP), Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 2135-2249, letter from Chudoba František, Aug. 17, 1922.

<sup>14</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 2135-2249, letter from Chudoba František, June 17, 21, 27, Nov. 4, 1921, Aug. 18, 1922.

<sup>15</sup> See more: Murial Clara BRADBROOK, *Otakar Vočadlo (1895–1974)*, *The Slavonic and East European Review* (later SEER), 53/133, 1975, pp. 579–581.

<sup>16</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 3732-3833, letter from Pares Bernard, Sept. 18, 1922.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, letter from Pares Bernard, Nov. 18, 21, 1922.

<sup>18</sup> Cf.: Tomasz PUDŁOCKI, *Szeksypr i Polska. Życie Władysława Tarnawskiego (1885–1951)*, Rzeszów – Warszawa 2023, pp. 214, 507.

<sup>19</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 2349-2370, letters from Jopson Norman Brooke.

<sup>20</sup> MU, Fond: B 95 – František Chudoba, arch. unit 3, inv. no. 11, letter from Seton-Watson R.W., Sept. 30, 1922.

<sup>21</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, Nov. 8, 1922.



attended another lecture, on 20 November, even though he slipped out of the discussion following Vočadlo's lecture in order to see the play *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, an English Renaissance drama, the most popular play by Philip Massinger at the Old Vic. He wanted to express his gratitude to his colleague for emphasizing the problems Polish scholars had in the 19th century in development of Slavonic studies. He wrote: "I quite agree with you about [Aleksander] Brückner, whom you characterized excellently. In the printed copy I wish you would, besides [Kazimierz] Nitsch and [Jan] Łoś, mention old [Jan] Badouin de Courtenay, and [Jan] Rozwadowski, both of them Slavonic philologists of merit, although professedly comparative philologists, – and certainly both of them men of original ideas, although not voluminous writers."<sup>22</sup>

Dyboski also suggested including scientific work of other Poles. In conclusion, he informed his colleague that he was leaving for Cambridge but he hoped they would meet when he returned.<sup>23</sup>

Apart from lectures, another plane of cooperation for the SSEES<sup>24</sup> lecturers was *The Slavonic Review*. Their correspondence proves that Dyboski and Vočadlo exchanged comments on the contents of particular issues and conversations with Pares.<sup>25</sup>

Vočadlo was interested in Dyboski's research on Shakespeare. Dyboski explained that in Poland he was expected to publish a major monograph on Shakespeare, a continuation of his previous work, in particular, *O sonetach i poematach Shakespeare'a* (Kraków 1914), whereas he was working on a completely new look at Shakespeare. The English version of Dyboski's work was published by the Shakespeare Association as *The Rise and Fall in Shakespeare's Dramatic Art* (London 1923) and its theses were based on the Polish-language monograph *Rytmika wysiłku i znuzenia w twórczości Shakespeare'a* (Moscow 1917). Both publications were slightly different. As Dyboski explained to his colleague, "the Winter's Tale is placed before the Tempest (in accordance with the convincing arguments of Mrs Stopes<sup>26</sup>) – the change does not seriously affect the main thesis; and 2<sup>o</sup>, I have gone back on my judgment defective by its obscurity: 300 years of theatrical and literary success, after all, are a test. «Securus iudicat orbis terrarum»".<sup>27</sup> However, Dyboski's theses met with no big response.<sup>28</sup>

On a postcard of 9 December 1922 Dyboski wrote he was happy Vočadlo had recovered from an illness. As his colleague from Prague was interested in reading the prewar Polish edition of Shakespeare's works edited by Dyboski, the latter promised to send them to him on his return to Kraków.<sup>29</sup> He also shared his findings on Russian scholars' achievements in English studies, which he made while in Moscow in 1915. Krakow Anglicist while in

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, letter from Dyboski Roman, Nov. 21, 1922.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>24</sup> I use this acronym even if the official name, so School of Slavonic and East European Studies was introduced a bit later.

<sup>25</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, Feb. 22, 1923.

<sup>26</sup> Charlotte Brown Carmichael Stopes (1840–1929) – a British scholar, campaigner for women's rights, and author of several books relating to the life and work of William Shakespeare.

<sup>27</sup> Original in Latin. Dyboski refers to St. Augustine, "The verdict of the world is conclusive". LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, Dec. 6, 1922.

<sup>28</sup> Cf.: T. PUDŁOCKI, *Ambasadorzy idei*, pp. 265–266.

<sup>29</sup> Roman DYBOSKI (ed.), *William Shakespeare. Dzieła dramatyczne w dwunastu tomach z portretem autora*. Przekłady J. Kasprowicza, J. Korzeniowskiego, St. Koźmiana, K. Ostrowskiego, A. Pajgeta, J. Paszkowskiego, E. Porębowicza i L. Ulricha. Życiorys Shakespeara i poszczególnych utworów opracował... Studium

Russia was under the impression of works of such authors as Alexander Nikolayevich Veselovsky and Nikolai Ilyich Storozhenko, but also the younger, contemporary group of literature historians. Their achievement in the field of English studies was great and in his opinion should be better known outside of Russian academic circles.<sup>30</sup>

The academics would also visit each other. For instance, on 19 April 1923, Dyboski wrote that he was looking forward to spending an afternoon at the Vočadlo, where he hoped to meet Paul Selvey, translator of Karel Čapek's plays; he also hoped they would be joined by Leonard C. Wharton, one of the lecturers of the SEESS and employee of the British Museum. Dyboski said that he had not known the Brothers Čapek or their plays before but he thought that due to the popularity of *R.U.R* and *The Life of Insects* shown at the time in London theatres, he was going to quickly catch up.<sup>31</sup> A few days later he thanked for the nice time spent with the Vočadlo and for Vočadlo's articles which he found interesting.<sup>32</sup>

After seeing both plays by Čapek, Dyboski could not contain his admiration. What is more, he decided to do something that was typical for his post-WW1 writing – to publish on topics he was not a specialist in, mostly because of personal contacts with Vočadlo and to be trendy.

Dyboski devoted a detailed study to Čapeks in *The Slavonic Review*<sup>33</sup> and, in a modified version, in the Czech *Apollon*.<sup>34</sup> The texts were very enthusiastic and the London version even started as follows: “*It is not too much to say that the production of two Czech dramas by the brothers Čapek has been one of the outstanding features of the present theatrical season in London.*”<sup>35</sup> He wrote to Vočadlo about the stories behind the creation of both texts in a letter of 13 June 1923. First of all, he complained that Pares had made him significantly shorten the original and the article would appear in the periodical published by the School of Slavonic Studies in a cut version. As he explained: “*It has occurred to me, that it would be a genuine service rendered to the cause of better relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia if you got from Pares a copy of the full text of my article in galley-proof, and sent that to Prague, for somebody to translate it and publish it in a Czech periodical, with just a few words of explanation about my person. If you should see fit to do so, I should be glad to have a printed copy of the Czech version. You might add, in writing to Prague, a few words about the excellent personal relations which, I am happy to say, have existed all along between you and me here. I shall be very glad to cultivate them further by a visit to your country in Summer, of my family affairs and other engagements allow of it; but that it still ‘on the knees of the Gods’.*”<sup>36</sup>

Judging by the familiar tone Dyboski used when writing to Vočadlo, they must have been close friends. On 31 May 1923 Dyboski sent his colleague greetings from Edinburgh, inquiring about Vočadlo's impressions of his articles on the Čapek plays.<sup>37</sup>

„Shakespeare w Polsce” napisał dr Ludwik Bernacki. Wybory przekładów dokonał Stanisław Krzemiński, Warszawa – Lublin – Łódź – Kraków 1912–1913.

<sup>30</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, Dec. 9, 1922.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, letter from Dyboski Roman, April 19, 1923.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, letter from Dyboski Roman, April 23, 1923.

<sup>33</sup> Roman DYBOSKI, *The Two Czech Plays on the London Stage*, SEER 2/4, 1923, pp. 194–199.

<sup>34</sup> See: *Apollon*, 2/5, 1924, pp. 76–78.

<sup>35</sup> R. DYBOSKI, *The Two Czech Plays*, SEER 2/4, 1923, p. 194.

<sup>36</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, June 13, 1923.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, letter from Dyboski Roman, May 31, 1923.

The fact that Dyboski really cared about maintaining good relations with Czechoslovakia through the academic world, was also proved by Pares' letter to Vočadlo of 21 May 1923. The School's head emphasized that on the initiative of the Polish scholar it was decided to send a cable with condolences to President Masaryk after the death of his wife Charlotte Garrigue-Masaryková. The author of the words in the document was Dyboski.<sup>38</sup> Since Dyboski's contract in London was coming to an end, Pares wrote on 18 June 1923 to Vočadlo, "it would be a nice thing if we showed out appreciation of the great comradeship of Dyboski while he has been here by giving him a dinner and a present from all of us".<sup>39</sup> During the meeting, a commemorative photograph was taken, preserved in the School's collection.

### Fascination with Karel Čapek's work and failed attempts to promote it

After returning to Kraków, Dyboski remained in touch with Vočadlo. On 11 September 1923, on the occasion of commencing the second year of lectures in London by the Czech scholar, he sent him his early poem *Kenilworth Castle* written on 1 May 1906, published years before in *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*.<sup>40</sup> Dyboski said expressly that he was very impressed by the young Anglicist. As he wrote, "[...] you know you are to me an image of my far-off youth".<sup>41</sup> He thanked him for a beautiful postcard from the Czech mountains and he wished his second year of work was less intensive than the first one, which would allow him to enjoy the beauty of English landscapes, which already on the outskirts of London make one delight in the beauty of nature. He also informed his colleague about a holiday meeting with historian of Polish literature Marian Szyjkowski on the Baltic Sea. To Szyjkowski, who had just published *Dzieje tragedii polskiej: Typ szekspirowski* (Kraków 1923) and was about to take up the newly created chair of Polish studies at the University of Prague, he recommended getting acquainted with Vilém Mathesius. The head of the chair of the English studies at Charles University in Prague was well-known to Dyboski but at the same time, he asked Vočadlo to recommend Szyjkowski as a reliable scholar to Mathesius.<sup>42</sup>

An opportunity for resuming the relation between Dyboski and Vočadlo a few months later was Karel Čapek's visit to London; he was invited by the International Centre of the P.E.N. Club in the spring of 1924.<sup>43</sup> Since the writer's arrival in London on 28 May 1924, Vočadlo was the key figure during the playwright's stay in Great Britain. He invited him to the house at 33, Adelaide Road, Surbiton (Pares' residence, where Vočadlo was living and taking care of when the owner was in the USA). He accompanied him during his travels in the British Isles and also introduced him to George Bernard Shaw, Herbert George Wells, and Gilbert Keith Chesterton.<sup>44</sup> Čapek received a grand welcome from his P.E.N. colleagues

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, inv. no. 3732-3833, letter from Pares Bernard, May 21, 1923.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, inv. no. 3732-3833, letter from Pares Bernard, June 18, 1923

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, inv. no. 1309-1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, Sept. 11, 1923.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem. I have not been able to determine how and when Dyboski and Mathesius first met.

<sup>43</sup> See more: Bohuslava R. BRADBROOK, *Letters to England from Karel Čapek*, SEER, 39/92, 1960, pp. 61-72.

<sup>44</sup> M. C. BRADBROOK, *Otakar Vočadlo*, s. 579. See more: Bohuslava R. BRADBROOK, *The literary Relationship between G.K. Chesterton and Karel Čapek*, SEER 39/93, 1961, pp. 327-338.



and June 3, 1924 reception to his honor was a spectacular success. Among the guests were John Galsworthy, John Drinkwater, and Queen Marie of Rumania.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time, i.e. from 23 May 1924, Dyboski again delivered lectures at the School of Slavonic Studies,<sup>46</sup> but he did not have an opportunity to see the writer. The pretext for making contact was the performance of *R.U.R* at the Juliusz Słowacki Theater in Kraków on 26 and 27 June 1924. Dyboski, who did not go to see it as he was in London at the time, decided to give Čapek via Vočadlo the poster for the play and a press review, which he had managed to obtain from Kraków. He said the review had appeared just a few days before and was written by a professor of Classical studies of the Jagiellonian University, Tadeusz Sinko.<sup>47</sup> The letter must have gone unnoticed, as on 9 July 1924 Dyboski wrote to Ludmiła Vočadlová, asking her for mediation and giving Čapek more press articles showing the Kraków reception of *R.U.R*. The writer and Vočadlo were staying in Scotland at the time. The reception of the play was mostly very positive as – it was argued – it was “a ‘fascinating’ work [...], whose many topical motifs prompt enthusiastic ovations”.<sup>48</sup> Dyboski did mention that not all reviews were positive, as for instance Emil Haecker in the socialist *Naprzód* paper generally deemed the play a nonsense, a muddled allegory and a vision by no means apocalyptic.<sup>49</sup> Dyboski stressed, however, that “*all who discuss it, seem to have been stirred very deeply by it, and I am sure it will leave as permanent a trace behind in Polish thought as it did in London last year*”.<sup>50</sup> Dyboski only requested that the writer send a few words of thanks to the director of the Juliusz Słowacki Theater, Teofil Trzcziński, who had collected the articles. He suggested writing in Czech, which Trzcziński knew well. Concluding, Dyboski said that he was going to the French coast and was sorry not to be able to say goodbye to the Vočadlos personally.<sup>51</sup>

After returning from Brittany to London, on 28 July Dyboski invited Vočadlo to join him and Janko Lavrin, professor of Slavonic languages at the University of Nottingham, three days later during the meeting at the Anglo-Russian Literary Society. He also thanked his colleague for another attempt to arrange a meeting with Čapek. As he wrote, however: “[...] *I fear Fortune is not favourable to our meetings; but he may be assured I remain one of the most sincere heralds of his genius.*”<sup>52</sup>

In the successive years Dyboski had lectures at the School of Slavonic Studies only occasionally. When the lectures were taken over by Julian Krzyżanowski, Dyboski would come to Britain to conduct research and as a lecturer but not as a permanent associate of the SSEES.<sup>53</sup> However, he tried to keep up to date with London news, e.g. he wrote to Vočadlo that he had read his letter to *The Observer* with real interest. He also tried to appear as a promoter of Czech culture. In the letter of 9 November 1925, he informed his colleague

<sup>45</sup> B.R. BRADBROOK, *Letters to England*, p. 63.

<sup>46</sup> T. PUDŁOCKI, *Ambasadorzy idei*, p. 243.

<sup>47</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letters from Dyboski Roman, June 27, 1924, June 30, 1924. See more: T.S[jinko], *Z teatru. R.U.R., dramata utopijnego w 3 aktach z komedią w prologu Karola Capka w teatrze miejskim im. J. Słowackiego*, Czas 76/141, 25. 6. 1924, pp. 2–3.

<sup>48</sup> *Z teatru im. Słowackiego*, Czas 76/142, 26. 6. 1924, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> E. HAECKER, *Z Teatru. Teatr im. Słowackiego: R.U.R. (Rossmus Universal Robots), dramata utopijnego z komedią w prologu Karola Czapka, przekład z czeskiego Władysława Mergla*, *Naprzód* 33/141, 25. 6. 1924, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlová Ludmiła, inv. no. 9031, letter from Dyboski Roman, June 9, 1924.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>52</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, July 28, 1924.

<sup>53</sup> See T. PUDŁOCKI, *Ambasadorzy idei*, pp. 243–260.

that he had just delivered an open lecture in Kraków on Karel Čapek and his *Letters from England* translated by Paul Sever. The lecture was published as an article *Najzabawniejsza książka o Anglii* – a topic was chosen not incidentally, the book had as many as five editions in the spring of 1925 alone.<sup>54</sup> Although the discussion on the works of the Brothers Čapek, including *The Letters* was by all means favorable, Dyboski tried to show the links between them and the works of George Bernard Shaw, Herbert George Wells, and even Jonathan Swift, Vočadlo did not entirely agree with his comments. His response to Dyboski's article has not been preserved, yet, judging by a postcard by the Kraków scholar of 1 January 1926 and by the context of the correspondence, Dyboski had confused the works of the Brothers Čapek, attributing some works by Josef to Karel and vice versa. This might not have met with a positive reaction from the Czechs. Dyboski apologized to Vočadlo and to Karel Čapek himself for his ignorance.<sup>55</sup> As he admitted: “*In my sinful ignorance (shared, alas, by many Poles who ought to know more about your literature!) I do not even know of the existence of your ‘Letters from Italy’: on barely glancing through them I find them so delightful that I shall certainly act against your express warning and take them with me whenever the Gods allow me to see all the lovely places you describe. I hope they will also allow me to see your golden city of Prague in the near future: it is a shame never to have been there yet when one is a next-door neighbor. And I do hope we may welcome you here some day.*”<sup>56</sup>

The Anglicist thanked the writer for the letter and his two books enclosed to it and hoped to be able to meet him and Professor Mathesius during his visit to Prague.

At the end of June 1927 Dyboski came to London again. This time it was in connection with representing Polish universities at the ceremony of 100-th anniversary of the University College of London.<sup>57</sup> Dyboski had sent a few messages to Vočadlo. Judging by the preserved letters, the colleagues exchanged cables and letters but were not lucky enough to be able to arrange a meeting. That was partly Dyboski's fault, who apologized to his colleague for not having the time to meet either him or Chudoba. As he stressed, “*My time, alas, is taken up with all sorts of functions and invitations till the end of this week; on Saturday I am to go to Oxford, and on Sunday to the Chestertons at Beaconsfield*”.<sup>58</sup> He saw Chudoba only from a distance during one of the parties, but because there was a crowd, he could not make his way to greet him, though he wanted to finally meet him in person. He tried to contact him, explaining that due to the pressure of work he had not been able to come to Vočadlo's lecture on 26 June and make the Brno Anglicist's acquaintance in person, therefore he invited him to dinner.<sup>59</sup> As there was no response, he asked Vočadlo to tell their colleague about the invitation. Dyboski hoped Chudoba would be able to find the time to discuss the details of his autumn visit at Masaryk University.<sup>60</sup> While he was afraid

<sup>54</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, Nov. 9, 1925. See more: R. DYBOSKI, *Najzabawniejsza książka o Anglii*, Przegląd Współczesny (later PW), 4/15, 1925, pp. 440–454.

<sup>55</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, Jan. 1, 1926.

<sup>56</sup> LA PNP, Fond Čapek Karel, inv. no. 1107, letter from Dyboski Roman, Jan. 30, 1926.

<sup>57</sup> See more: R. DYBOSKI, *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, Czas 79/159, 16. 7. 1927, pp. 1–2. Cf. T. PUDŁOCKI, *Ambasadorzy idei*, pp. 297–298.

<sup>58</sup> He meant Gilbert Keith Chesterton, popular British writer, and a great Polonophile, and his wife, living in Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire. LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, June 28, 1927.

<sup>59</sup> AMU, Fond: B 95 – František Chudoba, arch. unit: 1, inv. no. 37, letter from Dyboski Roman, June 29, 1927.

<sup>60</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, June 25, 1927, June 27, 1927, June 29, 1927.

that the head of the English studies in Brno had managed to return to Czechoslovakia, he hoped Vočadlo would find the time to meet him or at least accept his invitation to dinner. For instance, at the London University Club on 30 June (at 21, Gower Street, W.C. 1) he was having dinner with a historian, a professor of Charles University in Prague, Josef Šusta and he invited his colleague to join them.<sup>61</sup>

## Lectures in Prague and their reception

For the first time Dyboski was in Prague in August 1926. He made a detour while getting back from the 19th Conference of World's Alliance of Young Men's Christian Association from Helsingfors (Helsinki) and through Stockholm and Copenhagen, he reached Prague.<sup>62</sup> His first impressions from the capital of Czechoslovakia were overwhelming. He described them in a rather lofty manner: "When I stood in that historic window of the Hradčany Castle, out of which Austrian officials were thrown, and when I looked at the forested slopes around, at the old streets beneath, at the ribbon of the river with its emeralds of islands and a beautiful series of bridges, at the sea of rooftops and towers across the city – a scream of delight escaped my lips. The Vltava in this place is comparable with both the Seine near the Notre Dame and the Thames near the Westminster Parliament."<sup>63</sup>

The scholar was impressed with the city's monuments, churches, theatres and museums, but also the many newly constructed public buildings which gave the capital an air of dynamism and escape from the provincial character of the Habsburg times. A few months later he had an opportunity to be in Prague a little longer.

It is hard to say who put forward the proposal to invite Dyboski to deliver lectures at Charles University. That might have been an aftermath of Vočadlo's or Szyjkowski's conversations with Mathesius, or the initiative of Dyboski himself, who remained in a direct contact with the head of English studies in Prague. Eventually, the Polish professor was invited by the Faculty of Philosophy at Charles University in Prague to deliver a series of lectures on contemporary England and his official supervisor on behalf of the university was Mathesius. Arriving in Prague, Dyboski was not some unknown Polish professor. Occasionally Czechoslovak press (but German language one) had informed about his lecturing in London or his publishing and academic activity,<sup>64</sup> and he also knew at least a few Czech scholars. It is actually quite noteworthy that this was done through the medium of German and not really Czech. To be honest, Poles were actually not that popular in the Czech press at the time, but Dyboski's presence in the Czech press resulted among others

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem, letter from Dyboski Roman, June 26, 1927.

<sup>62</sup> R. DYBOSKI, *Wrażenia z siedmiu stolic*, Czas 78/296, 25. 12. 1926, p. 3; 78/297, 29. 12. 1926, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> „Gdym stanął w owym historycznym oknie zamku hradečkańskiego, z którego zrzucano radców austriackich na początku wojny trzydziestoletniej, i gdy spojrziałem na lesiste zbocza wokół, na stare uliczki w dole, na srebrną wstęgę rzeki z jej szmaragdami wysp i przepięknym szeregiem mostów, na morze dachów i wież po stronie przeciwnej – okrzyk zachwytu wyrwał się z mych ust. Włtawa w tym miejscu zaiste godna jest porównania i z Sekwaną koło Notre-Dame i z Tamizą koło parlamentu westminsterskiego”. R. DYBOSKI, *Wrażenia z siedmiu stolic*, Czas 78/297, 29. 12. 1926, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Sborník Filologický 6, 1917, p. 203; Prager Presse 4/191, 12. 7. 1924, p. 4; Prager Presse 3/43, 14. 2. 1923, p. 4; *Im "Przegląd Warszawski"*, Prager Presse 3/108, 21. 4. 1923, p. 4; Prager Presse, 3/323, 24. 11. 1923, p. 4; Prager Presse, 6/130, 12. 5. 1926, p. 6; *Einige Studie über Byron*, Prager Presse 7/57, 27. 2. 1927, p. 7.

from his contacts with the editor of *Prager Presse*, Antonín Stanislav Mágr, a literary critic, Slavist, and translator, who would publish in the paper translations from Slovakian, Polish, and Czech literature and edited the cultural column.

In Prague, Dyboski checked into Grand Hotel Šroubek, an impressive neo-Renaissance edifice situated in the heart of the city in Václavské náměstí. Already on 23 October he gave an interview, which two days later appeared in a German-language *Prager Presse* as *Die intellektuelle Kollaboration mit Polen. Ein Gespräch mit Professor Roman Dyboski, Krakau*. Dyboski, citing among others Marian Szyjowski, expressed his admiration for the development of Slavonic studies in Prague. He emphasized, however, that also the Jagiellonian University could be credited with achievements in that field, and he actually made another step towards bringing Poles and Czechs closer together. Right before his leaving for Prague, the Faculty of Philosophy decided to establish a separate scholarship for students from Czechoslovakia who would like to study in Kraków. Dyboski was involved in an intellectual Polish-American collaboration under the auspices of the Kościuszko Foundation in New York. As he informed his interlocutor, the Foundation granted scholarships to Poles and Americans and he planned to go to the USA in May 1928 to deliver a series of lectures.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, Dyboski talked about the Schools of Political Sciences at the universities in Kraków and Warsaw, which produced future diplomats but also journalists whose task was among others to build future Polish-Czechoslovakian collaboration.<sup>66</sup>

The main reason for his arrival in Prague was to deliver the lecture *Some Aspects of Contemporary England*. It was divided into three parts, made on 24, 25 and 26 October, and organized in the building of the Faculty of Philosophy at 5, Břehová St. The event was widely advertized in the local press<sup>67</sup> and judging by Dyboski's reaction, very successfully. The professor was very happy about his reception in Prague, and he wrote to his sister Jadwiga Buzkowa on 24 October: "At my today's lecture I had about a hundred people from the Prague elite, including over a dozen university professors. The rector introduced my performance and Mathesius also talked about myself and my work. Great success. The Polish Legation was presented."<sup>68</sup>

Dyboski wrote down his first impressions on a postcard to Vočadlo. On 25 October he said that his lectures enjoyed great popularity and he met with enormous friendliness everywhere, particularly from Mathesius. He also sent regards from Trnka.<sup>69</sup> Present at the lectures was Czech medievalist Otakar Odložilík, who had worked in England before. As

<sup>65</sup> Eventually the trip took place between the early fall of 1928 and spring 1929 – for more see: Tomasz PUDŁOCKI, *Z dziejów relacji polsko-amerykańskich – Roman Dyboski jako wykładowca Uniwersytetu Chicagowskiego*, in: Tomasz Pudłocki – Krzysztof Stopka, Amico, socio et viro docto. Księga ku czci profesora Andrzeja Kazimierza Banacha, Kraków 2015, pp. 243–264.

<sup>66</sup> *Die intellektuelle Kollaboration mit Polen. Ein Gespräch mit Professor Roman Dyboski, Krakau*, Prager Presse 7/294, 25. 10. 1927, p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> See e.g.: *Vorträge, Veranstaltungen*, Prager Presse 7/292, 23. 10. 1927, p. 7; *Vorträge, Veranstaltungen*, Prager Presse 7/293, 24. 10. 1927, p. 2.

<sup>68</sup> "Na dzisiejszym wykładzie miałem około stu osób z elity Pragi, w tym kilkunastu profesorów Uniwersytetu. Rektor zagajał, Mathesius jeszcze osobno mówił o mnie i o moich pracach. Sukces wielki. Poselstwo było." Archiwum Nauki PAN i PAU w Krakowie [The Archive of Science of Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAU) in Kraków] (hereinafter AN PAN/PAU), K III – 90 Roman Dyboski (uncatalogued).

<sup>69</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, Oct. 25, 1927.

he noted down in his diary, his experience was comparable with the lecturer's but thanks to his words he moved back in his thoughts to London and his walks in Hyde Park.<sup>70</sup>

Moreover, invited by the Academic Association of Friends of Poland in the building of the Academic House in Prague III, on 25 October Dyboski had a lecture *On Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski*. The meeting was introduced by the Association's curator Prof. Marian Szykowski. Among those present were Mathesius, Trnka, writer Josef Müldner, and the *Prager Presse* editor Antonín Stanislav Mágr. The evening ended with a dancing party.<sup>71</sup>

Dyboski's arrival coincided with the Festival of the Czechoslovak Republic, commemorating the day of establishing independent state of Czechs and Slovaks in 1918. On 28 October Dyboski had an opportunity to see a military parade from the windows of a civilian office of President Masaryk. As he noted: "During that celebration, two things struck me: first, it seemed to have been deliberately given a rather modest character as regards military splendor. Only troops of newly sworn recruits of the Prague garrison marched past the President of the Republic. The sole purpose was then to instill in those several thousand recruits a memory of that parade in front of President, the head of state; secondly, the performance of president himself was as if deliberately unimpressive.

I had been looking forward to seeing him. The great man appeared accompanied by a few officers, one of whom was carrying a small president's pennant. The president stood on a protrusion and before each battalion he would only raise two fingers to his hat; he did not even take his hat off before the flag. Masaryk is 77 now but he did not look even 60 to me. There was one more thing that struck me during that celebration. The parade had ended and I raised my arm and was about to shout out 'Long live the president!', when an official standing next to me admonished me that one did not shout then, only when the president appeared on the balcony. The crowds were silent and indifferent; it was indeed only when the president appeared on the balcony that everyone understood it was the moment to shout. In a way that moment illustrated to me their national discipline."<sup>72</sup>

Dyboski made it clear that Masaryk was perceived by intellectuals as an embodiment of the Platonic idea, i.e. a philosopher ruling the country. And even though he had not made a name for himself in philosophy, his skills in governing the country were widely stressed.

<sup>70</sup> Otakar ODŁOŽILÍK, *Deníky z let 1924–1948, I, 1924–1939*, ed. Milada Sekyrková, Praha 2002, p. 215.

<sup>71</sup> Ústav dějin Univerzity Karlovy a archiv Univerzity Karlovy, Fond Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy 1882–2011, karton 162: Akademické kolo přátel Polska, Korresp. + current agenda, st. 1925–33, Zpráva o činnosti Akademického kola přátel Polska v Praze v správním roce 1927–1928. See e.g. *Československá Republika* 248/253, 25. 10. 1927, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> "W czasie tej uroczystości uderzyły mnie dwie rzeczy; pierwsze, że jakby rozmyślnie utrzymano ją w nastroju raczej skromnym, co do przepychu wojskowego. Oto przed prezydentem republiki przedfilowały jedynie oddziały nowo zaprzysiężonych rekrutów garnizonu praskiego. Chodziło tu więc wyłącznie o to, aby w tych kilka tysięcy rekrutów wpoić wspomnienie tej defilady przed prezydentem państwa; drugie: że jakby rozmyślnie nieokazało było wystąpienie samego prezydenta. Z wielkim napięciem oczekiwałem momentu żeby go zobaczyć. Wielki człowiek pojawił się w towarzystwie kilku oficerów, z których jeden niósł mały proporczyk prezydencki. Prezydent stanął na wysuniętym miejscu i przed każdym batalionem podnosił tylko dwa palce do kapelusza, nawet przed sztandarem kapelusza nie zdjął. Masaryk liczy obecnie lat 77, ale nie zrobił na mnie wrażenia nawet 60-letniego człowieka. Jedno jeszcze mnie podczas tej uroczystości uderzyło. Defilada już się skończyła i już podniosłem rękę do góry, by krzyknąć: „Niech żyje!”, gdy stojący obok mnie urzędnik zwrócił mi uwagę, że teraz się nie krzyczy, dopiero aż prezydent pokaże się na balkonie. Publiczność zachowywała się milcząco i obojętnie, dopiero kiedy prezydent istotnie pojawił się na balkonie zrozumieli wszyscy, że teraz jest rozkaz krzyczeć. Był to dla mnie do pewnego stopnia moment ilustrujący karność narodową." *Przemówienie prof. Romana Dyboskiego*, *Czas* 79/265, 18. 11. 1927, p. 2.



On that day Dyboski also made use of the cultural offer of the capital. First, he went to the Dramatic Theatre to see the play *Falkštejn* by Jaroslav Hilbert of 1903. He did not conceal his admiration for the plot, direction and performance. In the evening he went to see *Lohengrin* by Richard Wagner but he considered that performance to be rather conventional.<sup>73</sup>

Apart from Masaryk, Dyboski finally had an opportunity to meet Karel Čapek (unless they had managed to meet back in England). He visited the writer during the meeting of young Prague writers, where there was a heated debate on topical political and religious issues. The Anglicist believed that the latter was of interest to Czechs mainly with respect to establishing a national Church, which – according to its advocates – would be an answer to Czechs’ general rationalism or even opportunism. Dyboski made it clear that while he understood Czechs’ practical approach to life, the same kind of attitude towards religion surprised him.

The last moments Dyboski described on a postcard to his sister Jadwiga written from Prague on 31 October 1927: “Dear Jadwiga, this morning I paid a farewell visit to the Polish Legation (which, to be honest, has done nothing for me!) and went to see an exhibition of contemporary Czech art. On return to my hotel, I found a gift from the mayor: an album of Czech art. In the evening I’m going to see Mathesius and Szyjkowski with a group of Polish students (he’s followed the Czech example<sup>74</sup>). Tomorrow morning, I will already be in Gummy.”<sup>75</sup>

Obviously – as contemporary historian Roman Baron aptly noted – Dyboski was not the only one entertained by young Czech Polonophiles. In the period under consideration, Prague hosted a lot of representatives of cultural and academic circles, including professors Ignacy Chrzanowski, Tadeusz Grabowski, Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński and others with their lectures.<sup>76</sup>

Dyboski shared his impressions from Prague *ex post* with Vočadlo twice. On 23 November 1927 he wrote: “*My dear Vočadlo, thanks for your p[hone] c[all]. I had a delightful time at Prague, where I stayed far more than a week. The kindness of Mathesius was really unspeakable. I saw something of the country, too (Louny, Křivoklát, Karlův Týn) in the most glorious weather.*”<sup>77</sup>

On 27 December Dyboski wrote to Vočadlo from London to Krynica, sending him New Year’s greetings. Having found out that his colleague had been to Prague, he shared an impression of his own last visit: “*I hope Mathesius does not remember my visit as a nuisance: he took no end of trouble! I have carried away the most delightful impressions, and shall always remember those Prague days.*”<sup>78</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>74</sup> Dyboski means Szyjkowski who finally – according to him – realized that the Krakow professor needs a bit more attention also from the Poles living in Prague, not only from the Czech hosts.

<sup>75</sup> “K[ochana] J[adwigo], dziś rano jeszcze byłem z wizytą pożegnalną w Poselstwie (które, prawdę powiedziawszy, nic dla mnie nie zrobiło!) i zwiedziłem wystawę współczesnej sztuki czeskiej. Po powrocie w hotelu zastałem dar od prezydium miasta: album sztuki czeskiej. Wieczór na kolei będzie Mathesius oraz Szyjkowski z grupą studentów Polaków (wziął sobie do serca przykład Czechów). Jutro rano już będę w Gumnach.” AN PAN/PAU, K III – 90 Roman Dyboski (organizing in progress).

<sup>76</sup> Roman BARON, *Misja życia. Praski polonista Marian Szyjkowski (1883–1952) a idea polsko-czeskiego zbliżenia na polu kultury*, Warszawa – Praga 2019, p. 88.

<sup>77</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski, Nov. 23, 1927.

<sup>78</sup> Ibidem, letter from Dyboski Roman, Dec. 27, 1927.

Dyboski was very satisfied with his stay in Prague, which he admitted publicly during the annual dinner of the friends of the Kraków daily *Czas*. His words were published; he expressed a lot of appreciation for Czechs – their flair for economy and their hospitality. He agreed with the axiom that Prague should be deemed one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, adding that it was at the same time a rapidly developing metropolis. In terms of the pace of life and movement Dyboski thought it exceeded Warsaw, though it seemed not to equal the Polish capital in nightlife. He noticed the development of public buildings, including university ones, the Ministry of War and the Catholic Theological Seminary. He admired the parks, castles and the Czechs being widely read. He discerned Prague's attraction as a "Slavonic Mecca", extremely popular among the many countries of East-Central Europe, but he also noticed that not all Czechs supported Masaryk and Beneš' policy. He also thought that despite the Czech-German tensions, a lot had been done to improve the relations between the two nations. The German language could be heard in the streets and most tourists communicated with the locals in that language; moreover, two Germans had recently been appointed to the Czech government. Dyboski emphasized the popularity of English and English matters, which was exemplified by English-language weeklies published in Prague, numerous conversations he heard in English, and the number of participants of his lectures. As he emphasized, there were usually 100–150 of them every time. "How many of them actually knew the language and understood my lectures, and how many came out of snobbery, I cannot obviously tell."<sup>79</sup>

A permanent trace of Dyboski's stay in Prague was the publication of his lectures in the form of a paperback, *Some Aspects of Contemporary England. Three Lectures* (Prague 1928). They inaugurated "The English-Speaking World Series" edited by Jiří V. Daneš, Simeon Potter and Bohumil Trnka. In the preface Dyboski thanked "the University and all my Prague friends – particularly my colleague Professor V. Mathesius – for the cordial hospitality which I enjoyed during my stay in their beautiful old capital".<sup>80</sup> A review of Dyboski's publication appeared in the German-language *Prager Presse*. H.S. focused on presenting the contents, however, emphasizing the usefulness of the publication published by The Anglo-American Club Union of Czechoslovakia.<sup>81</sup> The lectures were also discussed with enthusiasm in the 3. issue of the magazine *Literární svět*.<sup>82</sup>

## After returning from Prague – the 1930s

It is worth emphasizing that Dyboski is one of the few Polish humanists, and definitely the only English studies professor, about whose academic work the Czech press informed its readers so broadly. That stemmed mostly from the themes, mostly concerning Anglo-Saxon literature, which was of considerable interest to Czechs and Slovaks in the period under discussion.<sup>83</sup> As Dyboski wrote, Mągr was a man with an excellent command of Polish and

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem, letter from Dyboski, Nov. 23, 1927.

<sup>80</sup> R. DYBOSKI, *Some Aspects of Contemporary England. Three Lectures*, Prague 1928, p. 8.

<sup>81</sup> H.S., *Amerika von heute*, Prager Presse 10/189. 12. 7. 1930, p. 8.

<sup>82</sup> Československá Republika 248/266, 10. 11. 1927, p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> See among others: Jaroslav PAPOUŠEK, *Kronika československé a světové politiky za rok 1935*, Praha 1935, p. 53; *Pologne Littéraire*, Prager Presse 8/194, 14. 7. 1928, p. 5; *Archivum Neophilologicum*, Prager Presse

well-read in Polish literature: “When I was in his office, I saw all the recently published Polish books. As this paper is read by all foreigners in Prague, we should not forget the significance it has for us as regards promoting Polish culture abroad.”<sup>84</sup>

Ever since his lectures in the autumn of 1927, Dyboski used to receive the issues of the paper free of charge and made it clear he was impressed with the scale and the quality of work of the editors. He stayed in touch with the editor-in-chief Arne Laurin, and at Mágr’s request he sent in an article for the 10th anniversary of the daily.<sup>85</sup> He would also occasionally publish other texts. When columnist and teacher Karel Velemínský died, Dyboski wrote to Laurin on 16 November 1934, sharing his memories about the deceased. He had met him in 1929 in Cambridge during the World Conference on Adult Education and as deputy head of the World Federation of Adult Education and chairman of its Polish branch, he asked the editor-in-chief to express grief in the paper because of the passing away of the outstanding specialist teacher and one of the major initiators of international cultural collaboration on adult teaching. *Prager Presse* not only occasionally published Dyboski’s texts and informed the readers about his achievements but also called him “trefflicher Krakauer Anglist”, i.e. “excellent Kraków Anglicist”.<sup>86</sup>

In the 1930s Dyboski exchanged letters with Mathesius, Chudoba and Trnka and – as he informed Vočadlo – they all regularly exchanged their publications with one another. As there is no documentation preserved, it is hard to establish if the contact was genuine or whether it was just occasional pleasantries.<sup>87</sup> On the occasion of Chudoba’s 60. birthday on 4 June 1938 Dyboski not only extended best wishes to him but also wrote to him that he was a regular reader of *Prager Presse*. He admitted: “*Having like you, made it my task both to interpret England to my country and my country to England, I am in a position to appreciate the extent of your efforts and the eminent quality of your achievement. Nor am I likely to forget how our common friend, Sir Bernard Pares, welcoming me in the School of Slavonic Studies in 1922, said to me: ‘You cannot do better than follow the example of Chudoba, who had a wonderful way of spreading a better knowledge of his country here through every conceivable channel.’*”<sup>88</sup>

Czech Anglicists were not the only ones he kept in touch with. Among his correspondents were among others Jiří Horák – a Slavist, ethnographer and comparatist, professor of Charles University in Prague and a medieval historian Otakar Odložilík. Horák would send Dyboski some of his works, for which the addressee thanked him.<sup>89</sup> Dyboski wrote in the letter of 18 October 1930 that the local community was touched by the sentiment the Czech showed in his works to the late specialist in Polish studies, Józef Kallenbach.

10/332, 4. 12. 1930, p. 6; *Im Kampfum die Universitätsreform im Polen*, Prager Presse 13/20, 20. 1. 1933, p. 6; *Aus den Zeitschriften*, Prager Presse 14/15, 16. 1. 1934, p. 6; *Englisches Schulwesen*, Prager Presse 14/187, 12. 7. 1934, p. 6; *Literatur*, Prager Presse 14/116, 29. 4. 1934, p. 11; *Zwischen Literatur und Leben*, Prager Presse 16/192, 15. 7. 1936, p. 6.

<sup>84</sup> *Przemówienie prof. Romana Dyboskiego*, Czas 79/265, 18. 11. 1927, p. 2.

<sup>85</sup> MUA, fond Laurin Arne, inv. no. 96/50, letter from Dyboski Roman, Oct. 17, 1930.

<sup>86</sup> *Zwischen Literatur und Leben*, Prager Presse 16/192, 15. 7. 1936, p. 6.

<sup>87</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, Feb. 23, 1935. Only three messages from Dyboski to Chudoba have been preserved – see AMU, Fond: B 95 – František Chudoba, arch. unit: 1, inv. no. 37, letters from Dyboski Roman, June 29, 1927, June 6, 1928, June 4, 1938.

<sup>88</sup> MU, Fond: B 95 – František Chudoba, arch. unit: 1, inv. no. 37, letter from Dyboski Roman, June 4, 1938.

<sup>89</sup> MUA, fond Horák Jiří, signature II b1, inv. no. 282, letters from Dyboski Roman of Oct. 18, 1930, Jan. 15, 1932.

He complained that due to the pressure of his work as a dean he could not return the favor with any major work. He also informed him that Kraków had just hosted Václav Kredba, a Czech translator from Polish and Russian, whom Dyboski called “*an indefatigable compiler of the Czech book collection of Sienkiewicz*”.<sup>90</sup> In a short passage he compared the lectures of Horák and Kredba: “*I went to his lecture on the cult of Sienkiewicz in Czechoslovakia and that reminded me of your lecture over here on the same topic; there could not have been such terrific anecdotes in Mr Kredba’s lecture like the one in yours about reading Sienkiewicz under a school desk and getting in the clink for it.*”<sup>91</sup>

Dyboski also looked forward to meeting Horák once again at the 7th Convention of the International Intellectual Union in Kraków. The convention took place on 23–25 October 1930 led by Count Aleksander Skrzyński. In the buildings of Jagiellonian University and Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, it gathered many eminent guests from all over Europe. Indeed, they both had an opportunity to meet during that event. Horák was one of the four representatives of Czechoslovakia, next to, among others Václav Tille, expert on literature and theatre, and professor of Charles University in Prague. The only Czech who delivered a lecture then was Otakar Španiel, a Czech sculptor and engraver, who spoke on *The spirit of art*.<sup>92</sup>

Odložilík and Dyboski got closer together because they shared the experience of having worked in London. The Czech lectured at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies in the years 1928/1929 and 1929/1930.<sup>93</sup> When in 1934 Odložilík was appointed associate professor at the Faculty of Philosophy of Charles University in Prague, Dyboski hastened with his congratulations. He found out about the younger colleague’s promotion from *Prager Presse*. He wished him all the best not only in his new post but also in enhancing Czech-English and Czech-Polish relations, on account of the themes of his research.<sup>94</sup> Odložilík remained in touch with Polish medieval historians, carrying out research at the archives in Poznań (1928) or Warsaw (1934).<sup>95</sup> Four years later Dyboski thanked his colleague for a gift he had received – a reprint of his article on his research on Wycliff.<sup>96</sup> As he mentioned, the work was of sentimental value for him, as it concerned the subject of research of Michał Dziewicki, his master as far as the English language was concerned.<sup>97</sup>

Among the people Dyboski regularly wrote to until the end of World War II was however above all, Otakar Vočadlo. The Anglicist from the Czechoslovakia, who eventually took the chair of the English studies at Comenius University in Bratislava and ultimately at Charles University in Prague, became one of the major Czech philologists of his generation. The two scholars exchanged occasional greetings, informing each other about current events

<sup>90</sup> Ibidem, letter from Dyboski Roman, Oct. 18, 1930.

<sup>91</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>92</sup> See e.g.: *Zjazd Międzynarodowej Unii Intelktualnej*, Czas 82/244, 23. 10. 1930, p. 2; *Obrady F.I.D.U.I.*, Czas 82/246, 25. 10. 1930, p. 2; *Lista uczestników kongresu F.I.D.U.I.*, Czas 82/246, 25. 10. 1930, p. 2, *Obrady F.I.D.U.I. Dzień trzeci*, Czas 82/247, 26. 10. 1930, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> MUA, fond Odložilík Otakar, signature I b1, inv. no. 3. Curriculum vitae.

<sup>94</sup> Ibidem, inv. no. 80, letter from Dyboski Roman, Sept. 6, 1934.

<sup>95</sup> See among others MUA, fond Odložilík Otakar, signature Ia, inv. no. 2. Letter from the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts of 19 XI 1934; LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 3578-3671, letter from Odložilík Otakar, June 15, 1928.

<sup>96</sup> The second edition of *Wycliffe’s Influence upon Central and Eastern Europe*, which appeared in *The Slavonic and East European Review* 7/21, 1929, pp. 634–648.

<sup>97</sup> MUA, fond Odložilík Otakar, signature II b1, inv. no. 80, letter from Dyboski Roman, Jan. 12, 1938.

in their personal and professional lives. They were not always able to help each other out: when Vočadlo asked Dyboski for an article on Polish themes for a collection he was editing, Dyboski referred him to Krzyżanowski.<sup>98</sup>

In 1928 both Dyboski and Vočadlo found themselves in the USA. The Czech delivered lectures at the Summer School of Columbia University on Czech literature and history, and on comparative literature; also at fourteen other universities.<sup>99</sup> The Pole for a few months from the fall of 1928 until the spring of 1929 ran classes and open lectures at over a dozen American and Canadian universities. Incidentally, the Czech press informed its readers that the Polish academic, “an ardent promoter of Anglo-American civilization in Poland”, lectured in the USA.<sup>100</sup> It is hard to confirm if the two friends met in America. It does not seem so. For instance, on 11 October 1928 Dyboski wrote that he would not be able to meet with Vočadlo in New York before December as he had just started a lecture tour of American universities on behalf of the Kościuszko Foundation. He described his plans to his colleague, regretting they had missed each other, both being on American soil.<sup>101</sup>

In successive years the scholars kept in touch, though much less so. In January 1930 Dyboski informed Vočadlo that in September he would have to leave again for three months to the USA to lecture there. Meanwhile, he was waiting for a publication of his impressions from his first two stays in America.<sup>102</sup> On 3 September 1930 Dyboski apologized to Vočadlo for a delay in responding but he was overwhelmed with his dean duties at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University. The content of the letter suggests that Vočadlo had asked him for Polish-language literature on the United States. Dyboski referred him to his recent book *Stany Zjednoczone Ameryki Północnej* (Lwów: Książnica-Atlas 1930), expressing regret that the edition had been sold out immediately and he was not able to send him a copy. On a postcard of 26 April 1931, Dyboski thanked Vočadlo for the opportunity to publish in *Central European Observer*.<sup>103</sup> He also congratulated him on intensive academic activity which he was closely following. He excused himself that due to the dean’s duties his own academic research had decreased and he had to cancel his trip to the USA. He was still considering travelling overseas, though he hoped that first of all he would be able to return to his English literature studies.<sup>104</sup>

In the letter of 14 September 1931 Dyboski wrote to Vočadlo that they were not going to meet in Paris after all during the International Congress of Technical Education, planned for 24–27 September. Judging by the structure of the letter, it was an answer to a series of questions from Vočadlo. Dyboski was happy that the year of his term as a dean had ended and he could finally return to writing the book *Poland* for Benn’s *Modern World* series, which he had started three years earlier and still could not finish. Vočadlo must have been interested in Polish travelers and explorers, as the Polish colleague recommended

<sup>98</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, Nov. 23, 1927.

<sup>99</sup> M. C. BRADBROOK, *Otakar Vočadlo*, p. 580; Clarence Augustus MANNING, *Die Slawische Wissenschaft in den Vereinigten Staaten*, Osteuropa 5/3, 1928, p. 177.

<sup>100</sup> *Kulturní drobnosti z Polska*, Český deník 16(63)/98, 9. 4. 1927, p. 2. See more in: T. PUDŁOCKI, *Z dziejów relacji polsko-amerykańskich*, pp. 243–264.

<sup>101</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, Dyboski Roman to Vočadlo Otakar, Oct. 11, 1928.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibidem*, Dyboski Roman to Vočadlo Otakar, Jan. 11, 1930.

<sup>103</sup> I have not been able to determine whether Dyboski actually had an article published in that periodical or was just politely thanking for a proposition of publication.

<sup>104</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, letter from Dyboski Roman, Apr. 26, 1931.



to him get acquainted with Edmund Strzelecki, Benedykt Dybowski, General Bronisław Grąbczewski and Jean Dybowski (some of mixed origins and ethnicity), whose examples showed a wide range of Polish scholars' interests from Australia and Siberia to Sahara. As far as new publications on English literature were concerned, he recommended Władysław Tarnawski's *Z Anglii współczesnej. Pięć szkiców* (Lwów: Ossolineum 1927) and Stanisław Helsztyński's *Liryka angielska XIX wieku* (Warszawa: Hoesick 1929), as well as Volume 3 of *Wielka Literatura Powszechna* published by Księgarnia Wydawnicza Trzaska, Evert i Michalski, where a chapter on American literature was written by Tadeusz Grzebieniowski and on English literature by Władysław Tarnawski.<sup>105</sup>

That Dyboski was genuinely interested in the world of intellectuals, was proved by the fact that he closely watched the activity of the Academic Association of the Friends of Czechoslovakia, whose curator was a geologist and ecologist, professor of Kraków universities Walery Goetel. On 16 January 1930 Dyboski wrote to Goetel:

„My very dear Colleague,

Thank you so much for sending me the report on national parks and I am very happy for you that thanks to the effort of your group the idea is advancing in our country.

I would like to use this opportunity to suggest an idea, which might have already occurred to you, for the Academic Association of the Friends of Czechoslovakia you are a curator of to celebrate Masaryk's 80. birthday (on 8 March) with an event at the University.

My sincerest regards and best wishes for the new 1930 year.

Yours truly,

R. Dyboski<sup>106</sup>

When on 21 March 1932 the Polish-Czechoslovak Society was set up at the Kraków Municipal Office, Dyboski had to be there. Among the 47 people who represented different groups in the city (e.g. universities, Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, officials, merchants), Dyboski, next to Goetel and an outstanding Slavist and linguist Tadeusz Lehr-Splawinski, was elected to the organizational committee of the new society. As it was emphasized, the aim of the new organization was to bring Poland and Czechoslovakia closer together through implementing various initiatives in the fields of science, art, culture, physical education, sports and economy. Dyboski, addressing the audience, emphasized the significance of peaceful cooperation between the two countries. Three months later, i.e. on 21 June, there was a meeting at which the society's board was established. The board included over a dozen people from different walks of life. The chairman became Goetel and deputy chairman Dyboski; it was also they who chaired the institution following the elections on 20 March

<sup>105</sup> Ibidem, letter from Dyboski Roman, Sept. 14, 1931.

<sup>106</sup> „Wielce Szanowny i Kochany Panie Kolego, bardzo dziękuję za przesłane mi łaskawie sprawozdanie o parkach narodowych i cieszę się serdecznie wraz z Panem, że dzięki wysiłkom Waszej grupy ta idea robi postępy na naszych ziemiach. Przy sposobności ośmielam się poddać myśl, która może już także z innej strony tymczasem została poruszona, mianowicie, żeby Akademickie Koło Przyjaciół Czechosłowacji, którego Pan jest kuratorem, uczciło przypadające na 8 marca 80. urodziny Masaryka jakąś Akademią w Uniwersytecie. Łączę przyjazne pozdrowienia i najlepsze życzenia na ten nowy rok 1930. Szczerze oddany R. Dyboski.” AN PAN/PAU, sign. K III-36 Walery Goetel, 1/9/1.

1933, 15 May 1934 and 27 May 1935.<sup>107</sup> Years later, Walery Goetel reminisced that the preparatory work on establishing the society was accompanied with some friction owing to persisting resentments on both sides of the border, as well as not the best relations between the two states, especially after the Polish-German declaration of non-aggression of 1934, Polish objection to creating the Eastern Pact, and 1935 Czechoslovak-Soviet alliance agreement.<sup>108</sup> He even received a warning from his students that if the establishment of the society succeeded, he would get in trouble and the meeting would be interrupted. Then Roman Dyboski helped him out with his authority as a curator of youth unions at the university.<sup>109</sup>

The preserved documentation proves that Goetel was the person who set the tone to the organization. On account of a major discord in Polish-Czechoslovakian relations in 1935, the Society suspended its activity. When, a few years later, i.e. on 2 May 1939, the last general meeting was called, only a few members turned up. Dyboski, who was absent, had signed Goetel's motion to close down or further suspend the Society and to assign its funds to immediate relief for the political refugees from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Those present encouraged everyone to get involved into the work of the Committee for Relief to Czech and Slovak political refugees staying in Kraków, and the Society's files were handed over to the Archive of Historical Records of the City of Kraków. The minutes of the last meeting were concluded with an appeal to the members to re-establish the Society "at an appropriate moment".<sup>110</sup>

Dyboski and Vočadlo resumed their relationship in 1935; paradoxically, in a not-too-good geopolitical context, as the Polish-Czech relations were deteriorating at that time. They were burdened by the issues of Trans-Olza, Cieszyn Silesia, and the discriminatory policy of the Czech government against the Poles from that region, which had already seen some local disputes. Moreover, any agreement was made difficult due to the fact that in the eyes of Czechoslovakia Poland was getting closer to Germany and Poles blamed the Czechoslovakian government for being too pro-Soviet. As a result, there were hostile relations between both countries, and they both acted to each other's disadvantage. Poland supported Slovakian nationalists and Czechoslovakia – Ukrainian ones.<sup>111</sup> Dyboski realized that the relations were getting tenser and tenser, that's why he made it clear that the colleague's letter made him very happy:

*"You are very sensible and sympathetic in what you say about the recent estrangement between our two countries. Remaining Vice-President of the Polish-Czechoslovak Society at Krakow (which I have been since its foundation), I continue to hope that an improvement will come again ere long, – and not being an active politician, I believe in all of us 'doing our bit' by way of maintaining the old good relations in the sphere of our intellectual and professional interests."*<sup>112</sup>

Dyboski's assessment of the official relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia might have been a bit of wishful thinking, as he believed that personal contacts between

<sup>107</sup> Archiwum Narodowe w Krakowie [The National Archives in Kraków] (hereinafter ANK), sign. 29/574/0 The Polish-Czechoslovak Society in Kraków; J. PĄPOUŠEK, *Kronika československé a světové politiky*, p. 53.

<sup>108</sup> See more: Karolina GAWRON, *Stosunki polsko-czechosłowackie w latach 1918–1939 jako przyczynek do badań and konfederację polsko-czechosłowacką 1939–1943*, *Historia i Polityka*, no. 1, 2015, p. 64–65.

<sup>109</sup> Walery GOETEL, *Droga Towarzystw Przyjaźni Polsko-Czechosłowackiej*, *Życie Słowińskie* 3/12, 1948, pp. 506–508.

<sup>110</sup> ANK, sign. 29/574/0 The Polish-Czechoslovak Society in Kraków.

<sup>111</sup> J. DEJMEK, *Edvard Beneš a Polska międzywojenna*, pp. 111–115.

<sup>112</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 1309–1340, Dyboski Roman to Vočadlo Otakar, Feb. 23, 1935.

academics could in the first place contribute to their improvement. As Vočadlo was in the 1930s the head of the chair of English studies in Bratislava, which was geographically closer to Kraków than Prague, Dyboski hoped they would meet again. He suggested the Tatra Mountains. He did not only hope to see Ludmila Vočadlova, of whom he had the best recollections, and their son Velen; he also wanted to meet the second son of his old friend. He informed Vočadlo that his status had not changed – he remained a bachelor and his house was kept by his sister and niece. He also mentioned his academic plans: books to write and a trip to the USA in 1936 to the celebration of the 300th anniversary of Harvard University.<sup>113</sup> The plans fell through, both the American trip and the meeting in the Tatras. This is what we can conclude from Dyboski's letter of 9 May 1938, which was a response to some correspondence from Vočadlo. Dyboski hoped they might meet in the summer in Switzerland but he added reasonably: "*But it is so difficult to make plans in these restless days. The international situation is making us very anxious.*"<sup>114</sup> He also shared a few remarks on translation of English literature into Polish and he promised to convey Vočadlo's remarks on the activity of the Polish language teacher at the University of Bratislava to those who had been responsible for his appointment. It is now hard to figure out what objections Vočadlo might have had to Władysław Bobek, associate professor from the Jagiellonian University, who had been teaching Polish at Comenius University since 1928; it is possible that Vočadlo accused him of avidly supporting Slovak nationalists, particularly as Bobek supported the effort of the Kraków historian Władysław Semkowicz – one of the head of the Slovak interest at Jagiellonian.<sup>115</sup> Dyboski also promised to his colleague that should Emlyn Williams, Welsh writer, and playwright, come to Poland, he would be happy to receive him in Kraków.<sup>116</sup> Vočadlo knew the Welshman very well and their relation must have been well-known if other people mentioned it.<sup>117</sup>

## Post-scriptum

The role of Czech intellectuals in the life of Roman Dyboski was much more significant than his biographers had believed so far. Concentrating mainly on his achievements in English studies in Poland, or his contacts with the Anglosphere, they tended to ignore the other important community in his life – the Czech academic world. Roman Dyboski was one of the few Polish scholars who – despite the tense relations between Czechoslovakia and Poland at the time – promoted the idea of shared intellectual collaboration. Contrary to appearances, the community of Polish Czechophiles was not that small and included scholars representing various fields of learning, like e.g. Tadeusz Grabowski, Tadeusz Kowalski, Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński, Marian Szyjkowski, Walery Goetel. Among them the role of Roman Dyboski was specific: coming from the Polish-Czech borderland, Anglicist by education, advocate of Poland and Anglosphere getting closer together, he actively

<sup>113</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>114</sup> Ibidem, letter from Dyboski Roman, May 9, 1938.

<sup>115</sup> P. MATUŁA, *The Role*, pp. 131–132; por. *Placówki polonistyczne za granicą*, I, *Placówki Wydziału Nauki i Szkół Wyższych Min. W.R. i O.P.*, Nauka polska: jej potrzeby, organizacja i rozwój 22, 1937, pp. 161–167.

<sup>116</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>117</sup> LA PNP, Fond Vočadlo Otakar, inv. no. 3578-3671, letter from Odložilík Otakar, June 4, 1929.

corresponded with scholars from Czechoslovakia, particularly Anglicists, including Otokar Vočadlo. For Dyboski and his correspondents the plane of agreement was the School of Slavonic and East European Studies of the University College London and the fact that the Anglicist from Kraków would openly express his Czechophilia as deputy chairman of the Polish-Czechoslovak Society in Kraków. These are not only but probably the most important entanglements showing that even in new, post-WWI realities and national-states the interconnectedness of knowledge, as well as knowledge entanglement were extremely important. Arenas of encounters, multilingualism, international education as well as participation in international scientific life, following the new discourses and intellectual trends cannot be put aside while researching the life of interwar Anglicists. Therefore, the analysis of the intellectual life of the epoch limited into the national discourse or direct interstate relations is definitely not enough. It is worth remembering also one more aspect. Dyboski was also – or perhaps above all – one of the few Polish specialists speaking and publishing in Czechoslovakia not on Polish themes but English ones, which, what with considerable interest in Anglo-Saxon culture in both countries, brought Poles and Czechs closer together.

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TOMASZ PUDŁOCKI

## Svět českých intelektuálů v životě Romana Dyboského

### RESUMÉ

Príspevok pojednáva o roli českých (československých) intelektuálů v životě Romana Dyboského (1885–1945), profesora anglické filologie na Jagellonské univerzitě v Krakově. Byl jedním z mála polských vědců, kteří (i přes tehdejší napjaté politické vztahy mezi Československem a Polskem) zastávali myšlenku vzájemné intelektuální spolupráce. Role Romana Dyboského byla specifická: vyrůstal v polsko-českém pohraničí, vzděláním anglista, především zastávce sbližování Polska a anglosféry, aktivně korespondoval s československými vědci, zejména s odborníky na anglistiku, včetně Otokara Vočadla. S řadou z nich měl možnost se setkat v Londýně jako přednášející na School of Slavonic and East European Studies (Škole slovanských a východoevropských studií) na University College London, zřízené Tomášem G. Masarykem. Dyboski byl také jedním z mála polských odborníků, kteří v Československu hovořili a publikovali nikoli o polských, nýbrž o anglických záležitostech, což při značném zájmu o anglosaskou kulturu v obou zemích sblížilo Poláky a Čechy.

## Die Welt der tschechischen Intellektuellen im Leben des Roman Dyboski

### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Beitrag befasst sich mit der Rolle tschechischer (tschechoslowakischer) Intellektueller im Leben von Roman Dyboski (1885–1945), Professor für englische Philologie an der Jagiellonen-Universität in Krakau. Er war einer der wenigen polnischen Gelehrten, die – trotz der damals herrschenden Spannungen in den politischen Beziehungen zwischen der Tschechoslowakei und Polen – den Gedanken intellektueller Zusammenarbeit vertraten.

Die Rolle Roman Dyboskis war von besonderer Art: aufgewachsen im polnisch-tschechischen Grenzgebiet, von Beruf Anglist, vor allem Verfechter der gemeinsamen Annäherung Polens und der Anglosphäre, korrespondierte er rege mit tschechoslowakischen Gelehrten, insbesondere mit Fachleuten der Anglistik, einschließlich Otakar Vočadlo. Einer Reihe von ihnen konnte er in London begegnen, wo er an der von Tomáš G. Masaryk eingerichteten School of Slavonic and East European Studies des University College London las. Dyboski war zugleich einer der wenigen polnischen Fachgelehrten, die in der Tschechoslowakei nicht über polnische, sondern über englische Angelegenheiten sprachen und publizierten, was angesichts des beträchtlichen Interesses an der angelsächsischen Kultur in beiden Ländern Polen und Tschechen einander näherbrachten.

Deutsche Übersetzung Wolf B. Oerter

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