



# SLAVIC HORIZON

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**5TH CONGRESS OF MATICAS  
AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE  
SLAVIC NATIONS**

**A NEW CENTER FOR SLAVISTIC  
AND BALKANISTICS HAS BEEN  
CREATED**

**THE POET OF THE UNIFICATION  
OF THE SLAVS JÁN KOLLÁR**

**THE SLAVIC UNION OF  
SLOVAK MATICA WAS  
ESTABLISHED**

**CELEBRATIONS OF THE 160TH  
ANNIVERSARY OF SLOVAK  
MATICA**

**LUSATIAN SERBIAN MATICA  
MEMBERS HONoured WITH  
AWARDS IN 2023**

**IMPORTANT MEETING  
OF SLAVISTS**

**INTERVIEW WITH THE  
CHAIRMAN OF SLOVAK MATICA  
IN SERBIA**

**Editorial**

Mutual professional cooperation takes us to new dimensions 3

**Overview from the Slavic world**

About forms and visions of mutual cooperation. Commentary and communiqué on the 5th Congress of Matikas and Institutions of Slavic Nations 4

A new center of Slavic studies and Balkan studies was created 8

July 13, 1941 – The year of the uprising and pride. Preserving the memories of the most important moment in the history of Montenegro 11

The Martin Kukučín Day in Jasenová also presented the history of Matej Bencúr's foreign monuments 12

23th Days of Slovak culture in Rijeka 14

Celebrations of the 160th anniversary of Slovak Matica 16

The Slavic union of Slovak Matica was established 19

Lusatian-Serbian Matica members honoured with awards in 2023 20

An important meeting of Slavists 21

Multi-layered expansion of cultural cooperation between Serbian Matica and Slovak Matica 23

Together against purposeful revisions of historical events 26

**History**

The Slavic family and today, part 1 28

**An interview**

An interview with Branislav Kulík, the chairman of Slovak Matica in Serbia 31

**Giants of the Slavs**

Poet of the unification of the Slavs, Ján Kollár 34

**Library of the Slavic world**

Dušan Tóth: My journey (autobiography) 38

**We remind**

40

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## Mutual professional cooperation takes us to new dimensions

Pavol Madura, scientific secretary of Slovak Matica, editor-in-chief of the magazine

The year 2023 really flew by and you are already holding in your hands the second issue of this year's Slavic horizon magazine, while from an overall point of view, this sixth issue concludes its third year of operation. Slavic horizon firmly established itself in the Slavic cultural and professional media space and was able to create a mutual information platform. It is precisely the absence of two-way communication and information that has persisted for a long time between Slavic matrices and Slovak expatriate organizations abroad. Our joint cooperation takes us to new dimensions and practical experience brings its quality. The Serbian language mutation introduced since the last issue also received a positive response, while we will try to add other language mutations as well. Every new addition to the magazine gets new collaborators, and we bring an expanded forty-page source of information from the broad Slavic cultural space.

In early August 2023, Slovak Matica in Martin organized the 5th Congress of Maticas and Institutions of Slavic Nations in modern history. 19 delegations from 11 European countries applied for the Congress. Representatives of the Silesian, Serbian, Lusatian Serbian and Slovenian Maticas were present. In addition to the domestic Slovak Matica, Slovak Maticas from Serbia and Rijeka, Croatia also participated. Slovak expatriate associations from Poland, Hungary, Montenegro and Serbia were also numerous represented. We also welcomed delegates from the Institute of Russian Studies of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Prešov in Prešov, the Serbian-Slovak Forum from Serbia and the Russian Historical Society. The Ruthenian cultural movement was represented by the Council of Ruthenian Regions of Slovakia and the Interest Department of the Matica of Slovak Slovak-Ruthenian Mutuality by A. I. Dobriansky. Unfortunately, due to the events of the war, it was not possible for our Slovak compatriots from the Regional Cultural and Educational Organization Slovak Matica to travel to Ukraine, and the representatives of Bunev Matica similarly apologized at the last minute. The negotiations took place in a working but also in a friendly atmosphere and in a fraternal Slavic spirit, and the participants also traditionally accepted the final communique. Its first tangible result is the establishment of the Slavic union of Slovak Matica. As its name implies, the purpose of the activity is the field of Slavic studies, Slavic history and literature, culture, science, personalities, art, ethnography and the like. The goal is to develop scientific, professional and popularizing activities, publish professional and popular-educational literature and

periodicals and other related activities. The fifth edition of the congress was a fixed part of the wider program of celebrations of the 160th anniversary of Slovak Matica, as well as the 30th anniversary of the Slovak Republic.

The jubilee celebrations of Slovak Matica had a really rich program. After the congress, the celebrations continued with the unveiling of the bust of the president of the Slovak Matica Abroad Inc. and the exiled Greek Catholic priest Mons. František Jozef Fuga, the staged founding general assembly of Matica from 1863, namely the arrival of Štefan Moyses, the future chairman of the institution, in a historic carriage. Before the evening gala program, many folklore groups from all corners of Slovakia and abroad performed. As part of the festive gala program, there were speeches by representatives of the state and local government, as well as performances of folklore and modern music genres.

Mutual cooperation at the highest academic level is evidenced by the establishment of the new Department of Slavic Studies and Balkan Studies at the Minsk Theological Academy. When establishing the department, Metropolitan Veniamin said that in the current period of division that has engulfed the Slavic world, such projects are extremely relevant. Montenegro Matica prepared an exhibition project on the occasion of the commemoration of the nationwide uprising of the Montenegrin people against the fascist occupation. They consider the uprising to be the most important moment in the history of Montenegro and commemorate it as the largest and most organized resistance against the occupation in Europe in 1941. In Rijeka, Croatia, they held the 23rd Day of Slovak Culture with international participation. During these days, Slovaks present their culture and heritage to the inhabitants of the city and its visitors. Our Lusatian Serbian partners presented the highest Lusatian Serbian awards for outstanding results in the field of Lusatian Serbian culture, art and science. In the Russian space, scientists met at an important interdisciplinary meeting of Slavists. Twenty-eight sections during three days discussed a wide range of issues of Slavic history and culture. The delegation of Slovak Matica visited Serbian Matica on November 13-16, 2023 as part of wider cultural cooperation, but also visited Slovak Matica in Serbia. Right with its chairman We present an interview with Branislav Kulík in this issue. As part of the series Giants of the Slavs, we also remember the author of *Slávy dcéra* Ján Kollár, who indelibly entered Slavic history. We present these and other topics in the current issue of the magazine.



Participants of the 5th Congress of Maticas and Institutions of Slavic Nations in a meeting in the headquarters of the Slovak Matica in Martin before voting on the final communiqué of the congress on August 4, 2023. Photo: Ján Seman

## About forms and visions of mutual cooperation

### Commentary and communiqué on the 5th Congress of Maticas and Institutions of Slavic Nations

Pavol Parenička, Slovak Literary Institute Slovak Matica, Slovakia

In order, the 5th congress of matrices and institutions of the Slavic nations, which was held for the fourth time in Slovakia on August 3 and 4, 2023, in the representative premises of the Turčianska gallery in Martin, again at the initiative and under the auspices of the Slovak Matica on the occasion of the celebration of its 160th anniversary of foundation and at the same time 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Slovak Republic, had a ceremonial and focused work part. In its introduction, the chairman of Slovak Matica Marián Gešper acted as host, reminding congress delegates from several countries (Czech Republic, Montenegro, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Germany, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia) that in addition to these two anniversaries, In 2023, Slovaks and all Slavs also commemorate other significant anniversaries of these Slovak and at the same time Slavic personalities: the 230th anniversary of the birth of the poet bard of the Slavs and ideologist of Slavic mutuality Ján Kollár (born on July 23, 1793 in Mošovce in the district of Turčianske Teplice, he is buried in the Olšany Cemetery in Prague); 210th anniversary of the birth of the poet, writer and historian Samuel Tomášik (born on February 8, 1813 in Jelšavská Teplice, today a local part of Gemerské Teplice in the district of Revúca), author of the hymn song, generally considered the pan-Slavic anthem, known as Hey, Slovaks (in translations Slavic languages: Hey, Slované; Hey, Sloveni – Хей, Sloveni; Гей, славяне; Hey, Slavs; Hey Slavs; Ej, Slovenians; Hey Slavs; Гей, слов'яни; Hey, Słowianie), with which he poetically responded to the contemporary Germanization of the Czech population at the turn of October and November 1834 in Prague during his trip to Berlin for university studies; 100th anniversary of the birth of the third chairman of Slovak

Matica Abroad Inc. and expatriate actor František Jozef Fuga (born on June 9, 1923 in the Zemplín village of Vinné in the Michalovce district and died on November 9, 1987 in the Canadian city of Hamilton in the province of Ontario).

In the working part of the contribution, which had a programmatic nature, Marián Gešper focused and proclaimed eight theses in broader dimensions within the perspective of presentation and cooperation of matrices and cultural institutions of the Slavic nations, especially in the area of common information, media contents and outputs and closer cooperation in organizing cultural activities. In this context, he called for the establishment of an information committee of Slavic matrices with the aim of deepening mutual relations, especially with regard to future joint projects. According to Marián Gešpar, one of the focal points in this direction should be the establishment of special Slavic departments within individual institutions (note: in this context, on September 26, 2023, the Slavic Department of Slovak Matica was founded in Martin with this mission and under its chairman elected Pavol Madura, scientific secretary of Slovak Matica) and the establishment of the function of trustees or representatives, who would work within their own and with other similarly oriented foreign trustees on the concept of activities related to Slavic mutuality, especially in editorial activities through a holistic periodical at least in electronic form (for now this news function is fulfilled by the magazine Slavic horizon with the subtitle Slovak Matica Information Bulletin for the Slavic World and Slovak Abroad, published in four versions: Slovak, Russian, Serbian and English). Similarly, a separate „Slavic“ column should be estab-



lished in existing print or internet periodicals of Slavic matrices. This publishing activity would gradually expand to publishing joint books and other scientific, popular science and fiction publications, e.g. editions of contemporary and classic Slavic authors. Furthermore, Marián Gešper suggested organizing mutual exchange work trips and study stays, which would primarily concern young scientific and cultural-organizational workers as well as members of individual matrices. As part of these working and research contacts, a documentary film would be prepared about the history and presence of today's existing and functional matrices.

Serbia was represented by a large number of participants at the congress, where the life of the motherland pulsates vividly in several national-cultural national-majority Serbian and national-minority Slovak national dimensions. In his contribution, the chairman of the historically oldest of all Slavic maticas Serbian Matica Dragan Stanić focused on the approaching two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Serbian Chronicle, which began to be published in 1825 and in 1826 became the press organ of Serbian Matica (as *Letopis Matice srbske* – *Yerbook of Serbian Matica*), while belonging to the oldest European cultural and scientific journal with almost continuous continuity. Furthermore, Dragan Stanić devoted himself in detail to the life and work of Georgij Magarašević, the first editor of the Serbian register annals, in connection with his 230th anniversary of birth (he

Slovak expatriate community in Hungary.

The chairman of Slovenian Matica based in Ljubljana, Aleš

was born on September 10, 1793 in the Serbian village of Adaševci in Vojvodina). He also drew attention to Teodor Pavlović (1804 – 1854), from 1837 the first secretary of Serbian Matica, who in the years 1832 to 1841 was also the editor of the *Yerbook of Serbian Matica*.

Other contributions with a Slovak-Serbian context were dominated by cultural-historical and informational-balance topics. In this spirit, Slavko Ljubinković spoke on behalf of the Slovak-Serbian Forum (SSF), who evaluated the cultural cooperation of Serbs and Slovaks, while also mentioning the national policy, its legislation and legal aspects. Slovak Matica in Serbia was represented by its chairman, Branislav Kulík, and the local union of Slovak Matica in Báčsky Petrovec was represented by Katarína Melegová-Melichová, who informed about the activities of their parent organizations.

These contributions, with a more news focus, were followed up by other referees, similarly devoted to the history and present of their own institutions (Anja Pohončowa from Lusatian-serbian Matica and Anna Konderlová from Silesian Matica). The chairman of the Association of Slovaks in Poland, based in Krakow, Ľubomír Molitoris, spoke in the informative section, and Michal Hrivnák, an important writer of the Slovak minority in this country, greeted the congress proceedings on behalf of the



The working presidency of the congress during the meeting (from left): scientific worker of Slovak Matica Pavol Parenička, chairman of Slovak Matica Marián Gešper, scientific secretary of Slovak Matica Pavol Madura. Photo: Ján Seman



Participants of the 5th Congress of Maticas and Institutions of Slavic Nations in Martin. Photo: Ján Seman



The chairman of Serbian Matica Dragan Stanić during his speech at the congress. Photo: Ján Seman



Participants of the 5th Congress of Maticas and Institutions of Slavic Nations in Martin. Photo: Ján Seman



Gabrić, historian, pedagogue and cultural manager, gave a report on the successful professionalization and introduction of modern technologies into the registry work in Slovenia, especially in the field of library, literary and publishing activities. In addition to modernization, Slovenian Matica also devotes itself to the patriotic education of the young generation of Slovenians and undertakes actions to improve their reading literacy. Slovenian registrars currently help and cooperate with Ukrainian war refugees who are in the Republic of Slovenia. In this context, they pay particular attention to Ukrainian literature and writing as such. We must note that due to the ongoing tragic and fratricidal war conflict in Ukraine, its regular participant Jozef Hajniš, chairman of the regional cultural and educational organization Slovak Matica in Transcarpathia, based in Uzhgorod, could not come to the congress in Martin, with whom Slovak Matikas maintains close working contacts. Leading Russian historian Ruslan Grigorievich Gagkuev, who represented the Russian Historical Society, together with the former cultural attaché at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Slovak Republic in Bratislava, Vladislav Genadievich Kulikov, also spoke in the congress debate, which brings together 150 scientific associations and institutions in

the Russian Federation. Internationally recognized historical authority Gagkuev focused in his historical contribution on mutual relations between Serbian-Russian and Slovak-Russian in the second half of the 19th century. In the second part of his paper, he addressed the Second World War and the decisive role of the Soviet Union and its Red Army in the victory over Nazi Germany and its satellites, while criticizing the current unscientific and political questioning of this basic historical premise, which results in the distortion, rewriting and falsification of the history of the second World War and the Great Patriotic War. Alternative views on Russian-Slovak relations through the prism of Štúr's political science work *Slavs and the World of the Future* resonated in Erik Germuška's historical interpretation. The renowned Russianist, Slavist and linguist Jozef Sipko from the Institute of Russian Studies of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Prešov in Prešov devoted himself to the interesting ethnolinguistic issue of comparing the vocabulary of Slavic languages and using their individual examples in broader frameworks illuminated the principle of cultural communication. At the end of the congress proceedings and after a general public discussion, the delegates adopted a *communiqué*.

#### COMMUNICATION OF THE 5TH CONGRESS OF MATRICES AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE SLAVIC NATIONS

We, the participants of the 5th Congress of Matikas and Institutions of the Slavic Nations, which was held at the initiative of the Slovak Matica on August 3 and 4, 2023 in Martin on the occasion of the celebration of its 160th anniversary and at the same time the 30th anniversary of the Slovak Republic, as their presiding officers or authorized representatives, we have agreed on this *communiqué*:

In the current complex and complicated international situation, when the Slavic and the wider world, and especially Europe, is reeling in a series of the worst crises since 1945, in which the field of culture is at the very edge of the interest of political representatives, we undertake to be even in these difficult and unfavorable times to continue to cooperate closely in the field of culture and to continue cultivating Slavic mutuality. Despite all these crises and unfavorable circumstances in the majority of the so-called of progressive liberalism, we adhere to traditional conservative values, based on the principles of healthy nationalism and Christianity, especially the Cyril-Method tradition. In this context, as the successors of the work and legacy of the Slavic apostles St. Cyril and Methodius will also be remembered for their founding educational mission in intentions, as it and its founders were declared in 1980 by the first and only Slavic Pope St. John Paul II. for cultural heritage and they are the spiritual patrons of Europe. In today's information age, continuous on-line and Internet, but also personal personal communication and mutual exchange of relevant information is required to the maximum extent from the matrices and institutions of the Slavic nations. Therefore, we recommend applying this information strategy on a regular and systematic basis, while within the framework of this cooperation we would familiarize ourselves with current issues in the area of parentage, national, nationality and other cultural issues. For this reason, we propose that the Slavic matrices create one common Slavic department, to which they would delegate their workers or permanent members as initiators, coordinators and informaticists in the field of their scientific, professional and social activities. One of the significant crises of today is also aging and natural extinction with the decline of the elderly population, which we are also witnessing in the Slavic countries of Europe. This population development also negatively threatens the future of the Matica membership and activity. Therefore, it is necessary to involve the younger and youngest generation in the activities of the matrices and institutions of the Slavic nations and to educate them in a patriotic spirit. In this concept, it is also necessary to implement a cooperation project of Slavic registers, based on excursions of young registers and longer study or study stays, providing scholarships and announcing international auditions, in the creation of collectives of young scientists of the Slavic nations and establishing their educational programs. In this area, we will ask for help from the relevant governments and ministries in individual Slavic countries, which are responsible for culture and education, including the creation of study funds named after important personalities of Slavic science, such as Copernicus or Comenius.

Because the matrices of the Slavic peoples were originally created primarily as scientific, literary and publishing associations, we propose holding joint scientific conferences, seminars and colloquia. Subsequently, from these events, we want to publish anthologies, prepare collective monographs, but also produce popularization works and encyclopedic works. At the same time, as part of the publishing activity, we will also support the artistic life, focused on the creation of fiction and literary essays, compiling anthologies of writers of the Slavic nations and promoting their work by creating a special book edition. We will prepare an updated re-edition of Michal Eliáš's publication on the history of Slavic matrices. Last but not least, in addition to the cultural and scientific cooperation of the institutions and institutions of the Slavic nations, they will also address the issue of the relationship between national and relevant national minorities, monitor national and minority issues, draw attention to possible shortcomings and consult them with competent relevant government bodies or diplomatic missions.



Friendly conversations also took place during the break. The chairmen of Slovak Matica, Serbian and Slovenian are discussing.  
Photo: Ján Seman



The chairman of Lusatian-serbian Matica, Anja Pohočowa, receives the memorial letter to the congress. Photo: Ján Seman



Scientific worker of Slovak Matica, doc. Pavol Parenička during the announcement of the final communiqué. Photo: Ján Seman



The chairman of Slovak Matica Marián Gešper at the signing of the ceremonial signature document of the congress.  
Photo: Ján Seman



The chairman of Slovenian Matic, Aleš Gabrič, takes the Commemorative List to the congress after signing the ceremonial signature document. Photo: Ján Seman





From the ceremonial opening of the Department of Slavic Studies and Balkan Studies in Minsk on June 26, 2023. Source: authors of the post

## A new center of Slavic studies and Balkan studies was created

Mikhail Yurievich Dronov – Sergey Mikhailovich Sloistov, Institute of Slavic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia

In recent years, cooperation between the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ISI RAV) and secular and church scientific and educational centers of the Republic of Belarus has significantly intensified.

Mutually beneficial relations between Belarusian Slavists and colleagues from other countries have a long history. Today, the scientific and educational structures of the Belarusian Orthodox Church (BPC) have become an important platform for their interaction. The BPC Synodal Historical Commission (SHK BPC) created in 2021 tried to strengthen existing traditional scientific ties with Slavists from the first days of its activity. Under its auspices, at first there was the usual attraction of experts from Russia, Serbia, Poland and other Slavic countries to participate in scientific conferences, round tables and the like. Then there was a need to raise this successfully launched joint work at the organizational level.

BPC SHK thus concluded a cooperation agreement with a partner from Belgrade – the Institute for Political Studies. Its signing took place at a ceremony on February 10, 2023 in Minsk on the premises of a branch of the Russian State Social University (RSSU). In addition to the Belarusian and Serbian parties who visited hospitable Minsk, representatives of the Russian Slavic Scientific Society and the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Belarus were also present at the event. As is known, Balkan studies have always been among the primary interests of church historians and philologists. This area can rightfully be considered a priority in the work of BPC SHK. The decision of its leadership that Serbian issues will initially occupy one of the key positions in the commission's activities opened up an opportunity not only to strengthen contacts between the Belarusian and Serbian sci-

entific communities, but also to continue creating a scientific environment in Belarus, necessary for the study of the Balkans.

To achieve this goal, a policy of multilateral cooperation between the scientific and educational departments of the Belarusian Exarchate and foreign partners was chosen. On the one hand, there are contacts with researchers from the countries of the researched region (primarily Serbia), on the other hand, cooperation with Slavists from Russia, in connection with whom it is most optimal (using materials already available from Soviet times) to implement interesting projects, including in the field of Balkan studies. Experts from the Institute of Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences evaluated this approach positively, as it allows us to expand the existing interaction with Belarusian colleagues. Representatives of the humanities of both countries perfectly understand the inseparability of the traditions of domestic Slavic studies – pre-revolutionary and Soviet. Bearing in mind the significant contribution of the Slavists associated in Belarus to its success, the chairman of the SHK BPC, the head of the department of church history and church-practical disciplines of the Minsk Theological Seminary, archpriest Alexander Romančuk, repeatedly drew attention to the issue of the systematic joint work of the members of the commission with their Russian colleagues. In particular, he noted the need to increase the level of integration of experts participating in its activities, to make the general results of their work available to other Belarusian scientists and to ensure their use for the young generation of young researchers.

In October 2022, a meeting of the vice-chairman of the SHK BPC AD Gronskey with the authors of these lines took place in Moscow – the potential possibilities of realizing these fair,



long-term tasks set for all those involved in the world of Slavic studies of the Union State of Belarus and Russia were discussed. M. J. Dronov and S. M. Sloistov, after the approval and support of the director of the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences KV Nikiforov, prepared the concept of creating the Cabinet of Slavic Studies and Balkan Studies (KSaB) on the basis of one of the scientific and educational departments of the Belarusian Exarchate.

This initiative was made possible thanks to the efforts of the rector and staff of the Minsk Theological Academy named after St. Kirill Turovsky (MinDA), who expressed great concern about this common issue. The position of the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Science on the creation of KSaB on its basis, for this purpose attracting professional personnel from among its scientific and pedagogical employees and setting aside the necessary (note, relatively large) material. The funds from the modest budget of the theological school received the blessing of the ruling bishop - His Eminence Metropolitan Veniamin of Minsk and Zaslavsk (Tupeko).

The work on the coordination of all conceptual and organizational matters was managed with special attention by the rector of the Ministry of Education and Science, Archimandrite Afanasy (Sokolov). The Department of Church History and Church Practical Disciplines became the basic department of the Ministry of Education and Science for relations with Moscow colleagues. The well-known Belarusian church historian V. A. Teplova, who led it, showed sincere interest in this commitment and created the necessary conditions for its implementation at the department.

The Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences undertook the scientific support of the project (elaboration of a detailed thematic program for the functioning of the KSaB, filling it with professional Slavic literature, etc.). Through SHK BPC, Slavic historian K. V. Ševčenko, head of the Center for Eurasian Studies of the RSSU branch in Minsk, also joined the collaboration on the creation of the cabinet.

On May 30, 2023, a teleconference was held between ISI RAS and MinDA. Director of ISI RAS K. V. Nikiforov and Rector of the Ministry of Education and Science Archimandrite Afanasy (Sokolov) signed a cooperation agreement. Addressing the audience, the rector of the Ministry of Education and Science touched upon the history of fruitful relations between Minsk theological schools and universities of the Russian Orthodox Church (RPC) in Russia, as well as issues of interaction with Russian secular scientists and teachers. In his reply, the director of the Institute of Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences emphasized the importance of strengthening joint Belarusian-Russian projects in the field of humanitarian research and shared the positive experience of the participation of the staff of the Institute of Languages of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Orthodox clergy in joint events dedicated to the celebration of the Day of Slavic Literature and Culture. On behalf of the Russian diplomats, the head of the Russian House in Minsk J. A. Makushin, who focused on the importance of using the potential of the two institutions for training humanities students. The long-term scientific cooperation between Moscow Slavists and colleagues from the main educational institution of the Belarusian Exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church thus received a legal form. The first results of the signing of the agreement were not long in coming. Less than a month later, on June 26, the ceremonial opening of KSaB, a joint project

of the school and ISI RAV, took place in the walls of MinDA.

The invited guests had the opportunity to personally evaluate the collection of scientific publications on Slavic studies and Balkan studies prepared by ISI RAV staff. The book fund of the cabinet was systematized into various headings, among which were „Handbook editions“, „History. Sources“, „History of Slavic studies“, „History. Western Slavs“, „History. Southern Slavs“, „Linguistics and ethnolinguistics. Paleo-Slavic studies“, „Literary science. History of culture. Slavic book studies“ and others. A significant part of them covers church issues. Specialized periodicals are also available. Scientific literature is available in Slavic and other languages, including Slovak and Serbo-Croatian. Some publications concern important Slavic personalities, for example the Serbian Patriarch Pavel (Stojčević) or Ľudovít Štúr, who are known far beyond the borders of the Slavic world. On the walls hung: a copy of Ľubor Niederle's „Ethnographic Map of the Slavic World“, restored by S. G. Žitko, a graduate of the MinDA, portraits of famous Russian Slavists and, important for the successful functioning of the cabinet, modern equipment specially ordered by the MinDA leadership. The event was led by His Eminence Metropolitan Veniamin of Minsk and Zaslavsky (Tupeko), patriarchal exarch of all Belarus, without whose full support, sincere interest and special participation this Belarusian-Russian effort in the field of Slavic studies could not have taken place.

In the introduction, the rector, Archimandrite Afanasij, spoke briefly about the contents of the Cabinet, starting with the icon of the enlighteners of the Slavs, Saints Cyril and Methodius, drawing attention to the contribution to Slavic studies in later historical epochs of other church scholars - those who directly belonged to the clergy or the secular, and graduated from priestly educational institutions. Portraits of Metropolitan Eugene (Bolchovitinov, 1767 – 1837), founder of Slavic-Russian paleography and historian, Metropolitan Makarios (Bulgakova, 1816 – 1882), author of basic works on church history, and EF Karský (1860 (1861) – 1931), a classic of Belarusian literature, philologist and ethnographer, gave clear testimony about this.

Metropolitan Veniamin cut the ribbon, which started the activity of KSaB. In his welcoming address, the bishop noted that in the current period of division that has gripped the Slavic world, such projects are extremely relevant. The bishop also presented a facsimile edition of Tur's Gospel as a gift to the opening cabinet. Subsequently, letters of thanks from the Patriarchal Exarch were handed over to several employees of MinDA and ISI RAV.

M. J. Dronov, ISI RAV researcher, read the welcome speech of KV Nikiforov. Director of ISI RAV, emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation between Belarusian and Russian colleagues, expressed the hope that the opening of KSaB „will contribute to the popularization of complex knowledge about Slavic studies in the church and secular environment“. (A letter of thanks from Metropolitan Veniamin was handed over to KV Nikiforov a day later, at a meeting of the ISI RAV Scientific Council on June 27). Then the chairman of the Standing Committee for Education, Culture and Science of the Chamber of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, the well-known historian IA Marzajuk, addressed the audience. The speech of the member of the Belarusian parliament focused on several theses. First, he emphasized the contribution of Belarusians to the development of Slavic studies. Among the important Slavists he named: archbishop Mikhail Bobrovskij (1784 – 1848), E. F. Karskij (1861) – 1931), V. I. Piceta (1878 – 1947) and I. I. Nosovič (1788 – 1877). Second-

ly, he stated that „Slavic studies and the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, as one of the leading such institutions in the world, is a very important panacea and a cure for the most diverse phobias“, and therefore emphasized the importance of greater consideration of the views of Slavists by politicians, including in relation to a current acute problem „in our long-suffering land of historical Russia“.

Thirdly, talking about Slavic studies and its development, he highlighted the „deed of a great academician“ of NI Tolstoy (1923-1996), who devoted a lot of time and effort to the ethnolinguistic expeditions of the Institute of Slavic Studies and Balkan Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR to the Belarusian Polesia. Finally, even the famous L. Niederle believed that these territories also belong to the original homeland of the Slavs, which is also confirmed by contemporary researchers. Therefore, scientists from the institute „have been systematically studying this treasury of Slavic folk tradition, Proto-Slavic culture for decades, because Poleslav dialects are more than just Belarusian or Ukrainian dialects, they are the preserved Proto-Slavic dialect of the oldest culture“. In the end, he drew attention to the importance of Slavic studies, which gives us answers to the questions: „what is our civilizational code“ and „how should we build our future“. „I am glad that the Cabinet is opening, it is very joyful, and I am very sorry that there is no Institute of Slavic Studies in the system of the Belarusian Academy of Sciences... At the end of his speech, the deputy sincerely encouraged the words of the incumbent politician and scientist: „Today is a very important and significant day, but everything depends on the efforts of all of us: on the desire for cooperation, on the desire for what in Greek is called a symphony and in Slavic - assembly“. Ministerial Counselor of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Belarus P. V. Frolov spoke on behalf of the diplomatic corps. Quoting the hero of IS Turgenev's novel „On the Eve“ that „a Russian should know all Slavic dialects“, the diplomat shared his thoughts on the importance of studying languages and history. „The Balkans and Slavic studies are the cosmos! Balkan languages are such a charming combination of sounds and colors that you can't tear yourself away from!“

The representatives of the scientific community of Minsk also spoke to those present: the professor of the Belarusian State University (BSU) I. A. Charota and the deputy director of the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus P. A. Trubčik. Academician of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts I. A. Charota analyzed the phenomenon of Slavic mutuality, the issue of „the drama of Slavic studies, the fate of the Slavic peoples“ in his presentation. If the unity of the Slavs was initially programmed, it was checked in the course of history. There was even such a characteristic of this situation as „Slavic non-reciprocity“, in contrast to the original Slavic reciprocity. At the same time, attention must be paid to the polycentricity of Slavic studies and Slavic love, which are not unicentric. There were „those who, from the outside and with not very kind inclinations, tried to formulate it in such a way that it is a purely Russian, Moscow product, and therefore harmful to all other Slavs“. „In reality it is not like that“,



Metropolitan Veniamin with M. J. Dronov from RAV.  
Source: authors of the post

because the ideas of Slavic studies and Slavic unity are polycentric. However, there were always many contradictions. One of them was that during the Soviet period Slavic linguistics developed more because it was less susceptible to politicization. Unfortunately, we have to admit it, we don't want to blame anyone, but in the second half of the

twentieth century there was a certain deviation from Slavic studies for various reasons, including the need to stimulate Belarusian studies in the first place. It can also be explained by the fact that it was also realized internally as part of Slavic studies. The organic nature of the creation of the cabinet on the basis of the I. A. Charota church school was also justified by the examples of personalities of prominent Slavists. To illustrate this and other theses, which he touched upon in his speech, the professor mentioned such well-known personalities of Slavic studies connected with Belarusian countries as archeographer Protojer Ioann Grigorovič (1792 – 1852), father of the already mentioned V. I. Picheta, rector of the Vitebsk Spiritual Seminary of Protojer Ioann Picheta (1844 – 1920), who studied in the seminary, linguist AS Budilovich (1846-1852), professors of the Kyiv Theological Academy, church historian I. I. Malyshevskii (1828-1897) and archaeologist V. Z. Zavitnevich (1853-1927), and especially honored, as already mentioned, the Belarusian scholar E. F. Karskij (1860 (1861) – 1931), rightly criticized for his alternative views to classical secular and church science, but the outstanding Yugoslav and Belarusian scholar V. K. Zaitsev (1917 – 1992). At the end of his speech, I. A. Charota emphasized that „for all its polycentricity, Slavic studies could not be objectively different from Russocentric, Russia had to be, really as it was in the 19th and 20th centuries - the main, center of gravity, the core of Slavic studies, as well as Slavic love“. Together with his younger colleague from BSU, philologist and Serbian A. N. Naumová, he presented the cabinet with a selection of thematic scientific literature. At the end of the official part, Rector Archimandrite Afanasij emphasized that the event, which is coming to an end, was not only festive, but also had a rich scientific content. The exchange of views that took place during the guests' speeches is very valuable and will serve for practical work. The opening of the KSaB aroused the genuine interest of journalists. Several republican television channels (ONT, STV, RTR-Belarus) brought reports dedicated to the festive event. News about the event was broadcast on the radio and appeared on the websites of well-known news agencies (BelTA, Minsk-Novosti, Sputnik Belarus). Later, news about the opening ceremony appeared in many other Belarusian and Russian Internet publications. Thanks to the well-coordinated joint work of researchers in Minsk and Moscow, KSaB officially begins its activities today. With the beginning of the academic year, it is already accepting the first visitors, especially those interested from the ranks of MinDA students. We hope that even after the celebrations, the functioning of the Cabinet will remain in the crosshairs of the state authorities responsible for science and education. Since this project is largely based on pure enthusiasm, the help of the relevant state structures could be a guarantee for the further development of the cabinet so that this joint effort can continue with even greater efficiency and effectiveness.





Participants of the opening during a tour of the exhibition in Nikšić on June 26, 2023. Photo: Montenegrin Matica

## July 13, 1941 – the year of the uprising and pride

### Preserving the memories of the most important moment in the history of Montenegro

Montenegrin Matica, Montenegro

On the occasion of the commemoration of the nationwide uprising of the Montenegrin people against the fascist occupation - the Thirteenth of July Uprising in 1941, Montenegrin Matica prepared an exhibition entitled JULY 13, 1941 – THE YEAR OF UPRISING AND PRIDE in cooperation with the National Community of Montenegrins of Croatia.

The uprising of July 13, 1941 is one of the brightest moments in the history of Montenegro. The people of Montenegro took up arms at a time when fascists controlled the whole of Europe. In all parameters, this act represents a military and political phenomenon of the Second World War. This uprising will be remembered as the largest and most organized resistance against occupation in Europe in 1941. The act of defiant resistance against fascist occupation is a historically constitutive moment of contemporary Montenegrin political subjectivity and national self-awareness.

At the end of the First World War, the state of Montenegro disappeared, and the uprising of July 13, 1941 returned our country to the map of the historical nations and states of Europe, while only after the Second World War, Montenegro re-existed in the Yugoslav Federation as one of the six republics. The date July 13 is particularly important for Montenegro, because on the same day in 1878, Montenegro received unconditional international recognition at the Berlin Congress, and therefore July 13 is celebrated in Montenegro as a national holiday – Statehood Day.

The exhibition consists of twenty-two illustrated panels with photographs and documents from the period of preparations for the uprising and the events that followed it. The accompanying catalog, like the exhibition, is bilingual, in Montenegrin and English. The authors of the exhibition are the

historian Dr. Adnan Prekić, historian Ing. Jadranka Selhanović, Ivan Ivanović – general secretary of Montenegrin Matica and Danilo Ivezić – chairman of the National Community of Montenegrins in Croatia. The text for the exhibition catalog was written by Dr. Adnan Prekić and Suzana Pajović is in charge of the design. The exhibition was presented in several cities of Montenegro.

At the opening of the exhibition in Nikšić on June 26, 2023, the chairman of Montenegrin Matica, Ivan Jovović, noted that the exhibition represents a significant contribution to the cultivation of a culture of memory, which society desperately needs. „The courage that the Montenegrin people have always shown in war brought them fame far beyond the borders of Montenegro. Nevertheless, the losses, especially of humanity, left a deep scar on the being of the Montenegrin people, therefore we should treat their victims with special piety, because they enabled a better future, i.e. a social perspective for their descendants. With the anti-fascist struggle in the Second World War, the Montenegrin people managed to return to the political scene of Europe, considering that the July 13 uprising was a model for other Yugoslav nations in their struggle for freedom, and its echoes were good. They heard about the uprising and followed suit in the then free world, from Moscow to London to Washington. The authors of the exhibition and catalog presented all the most important components of the Thirteenth Uprising not only in text, but also with numerous facsimiles of documents, maps and photographs. It should be noted that the authors emphasized the contribution of Montenegrins in provoking uprisings in other republics of the former Yugoslavia and their participation in foreign missions during the war,” Jovović recalled.





Martin Kukučín Park with a statue by Ján Kulich and the Jasenovský church. Photo: J. Burgan

# Martin Kukučín Day in Jasenová

## History of Matej Bencúr's foreign monuments

Mária Rapošová, Slovak National Library, Slovakia

At the end of May 2023, all-day celebrations of Martin Kukučín took place in Orava on the occasion of the 163rd anniversary of the writer's birth and 95th anniversary of his death.

Martin Kukučín, whose real name was Matej Bencúr, was one of the most important Slovak writers and doctors, as evidenced by several monuments and respect for him not only at home, but also abroad. He was born on May 17, 1860 in the village of Jasenová on Orava. As the youngest child in the family, he had no hope of inheriting a field that would support him, so his teacher and the parish priest advised his parents to send him to schools. He first studied to become a teacher, then taught for six years in his birthplace and later studied to become a doctor in Prague. As a medical graduate, however, he could not find a job in Hungary, so the Didoli family invited him to work as a doctor on the island of Brač in the Adriatic Sea. He accepted the offer with the intention that as soon as he earns and pays off his debts from his studies, he will return home to Slovakia. But it didn't work out – not through his fault. He remained in emigration throughout his life, and even died abroad.

He married Perica Didolić on the Croatian island of Brač. But when the Didolićs lost their leading position in the administration of the island, he gave up his position as a doctor despite strong resentment and despite the islanders' protests, and left with his wife to work in South America. He settled in the southernmost big city in the world – in Punta Arenas.

He was a very conscientious doctor who treated the poor for free. But he was respected by all strata of the population, up to the family of the Chilean president Arturo Alessandri Palma. He became the founder of the Chilean Red Cross and one of the founders of Chilean pediatrics. Despite the general popularity in Punta Arenas, he longed to return to Slovakia. After the end of the First World War and the liberation of the Slovaks from the Hungarian yoke, he did so. They welcomed him in the Czech Republic and Slovakia with great pomp, they gave him banquets, but they did not give him a suitable job. They wanted to make him – an excellent doctor and writer – a member of parliament, a politician or a civil servant in the health sector. Disappointed,

he went to Croatia, where he fell ill with pneumonia and pleurisy and died prematurely.

He was buried very ceremoniously at the Croatian National Cemetery Mirogoj. Only a few months later, Slovak Matica managed to obtain a state permit and transport his remains home to the National Cemetery in Martin. He had the grandest funeral in history among all Slovak writers.

The first Czech expert on Kukučín's work, the literary historian Jan Menšík (1886 – 1949), called Kukučín: „the best Slovak short story writer, the master of Slovak prose“.

The Slovak poet Ján Smrek (1898 – 1982), who already knew Martin Kukučín intimately in his youth, said about him on June 6, 1934 to Prague radio: „There was no writer in Slovakia to whom the nation had such a tender relationship as Kukučín. In Bohemia, Alois Jirásek enjoyed almost absolute devotion and respect, who was always and everywhere addressed only as Master. Alois Jirásek. Above all, there was a lot of love for Kukučín, you know, for his work. And of course respect, devotion and admiration already belonged to her“.

The Slovak writer Vladimír Mináč (1922 – 1996) said about Kukučín that „with his prose, but not only with it – especially with his whole personality, he transcended the borders of Orava and Slovakia: He is a global Slovak in the deepest and most noble sense of the word...“

William Edward Harkins (1921 – 2014), an American professor of Slavic studies at Columbia University in New York, said of M. Kukučín that he is „perhaps the greatest author who came out of the Slovak nation“.

Czech literary scholar, professor of the Masaryk University in Brno, Ivo Pospíšil (\*1952) electrified the audience at an international conference on May 14, 2010 in Prague with the statement that: „Martin Kukučín is one of the most valuable things that Slovakia gave to Europe and the world.“

Matej Bencúr is still considered to be an extremely important figure in Slovak history, despite the fact that he



lived abroad. Several foreign doctors and literary scholars commented on it, and several monuments to him were created abroad before in Slovakia.

Martin Kukučín already became the most widely read Slovak novelist during his studies. The most popular were his short stories from the village environment. They filmed many of them. He also wrote other prose, novels, travelogues and plays abroad. Martin Kukučín is the founder of Slovak realistic prose and one of the founders of Chilean Patagonian literature.

The village of Jasenová organized this spring (2023) in cooperation with the local parish and the Žilina self-governing region and with the participation of Slovak Maticaska and the staff of the Literary Department of the Orava Museum in Dolní Kubín, which was honored with the presence of guests from Banská Štiavnica, Žilina, Martin, Ľubochňa, Hubová, Ružomberok... Visitors were also delighted with the program by local theater and folklore volunteers. Especially special guests of the event were the nephews of the rescuers of the international statue of Martin Kukučín, Juraj Rudinský and Bystrík Paňák and their families.

In the morning, a memorial service was held in the local Evangelical church, then the Orava Museum opened Matej Bencúr's birthplace to the singing of a local folklore group, and after a tour of the house, participants laid wreaths at the monumental statue of Martin Kukučín by national artist Ján Kulich.

The main topic of the afternoon program was the presentation of Matej Bencúr's foreign monuments, especially the dramatic fate of the international statue - a different statue than the one standing in the Jasenów park. It was a statue of Martin Kukučín by the sculptor Ivan Meštrović, which was created in America as the first Kukučín statue in the world, twenty years before the statue by Ján Kulich in Slovakia, which is a historically surprising phenomenon. The very first Kukučín monument in the world was a tombstone. It was created by Croats on Brač in the early thirties of the 20th century, after Kukučín in He died in Pakrac in 1928. The monument came to Slovakia to Martin by train. The second monument was created around the same time by the Chileans in Patagonia in the form of a commemorative plaque with the first plastic likeness of Matej Bencúr in the world. One board was also sent as a gift to Slovakia and is located in the Literary Museum of the Slovak National Library in Martin. Another commemorative plaque with a sculpture of Martin Kukučín was realized by the Argentines and sent to Chile in 1959. The fourth monument in the form of a larger-than-life statue was modeled in 1959 in the USA. It was cast in bronze three times in South America.

Just as Matej Bencúr himself became, in the words of the writer Vladimír Mináč, a „world Slovak“, so too his first statue in the world is international and an artistic gem. It is the result of the artistic work of the world-renowned sculptor Ivan Meštrović in the USA, as well as the ocean-going cyclists in Argentina, but mainly it is the result of long-term efforts, fundraising and other self-sacrificing acts of exiles in America

and Europe. That's why we talk about it as international. This rarest sculptural representation of the Slovak writer in history was modeled in 1958-1959 from clay and cast from plaster in North America (in the USA at the University of Notre Dame). From there, the sculptor sent him by ship to South America. It was cast from bronze in the capital of Argentina, Buenos Aires, due to various problems only in the seventies. It was done successively in three castings. Then, over the course of several years, the castings traveled across two oceans and

three continents of the world. They were revealed in Canada, the USA and Argentina. It was only after a few years that the third one – an Argentinian cast – finally reached Slovakia, while the first placed in Canada and the second unveiled in the USA in front of the Oregon State University remained in the states of North America and do honor to the Slovak writer and the Slovak nation in dignified public spaces to this day. Something like this has no parallel in the history of Slovaks in the world.

It was only in 1984 that the head of the Slovak government at the time, Peter Colotka, achieved that the third cast could be accepted and ceremoniously unveiled in the Medical Garden of the Slovak capital in Bratislava. However, the merits of foreign initiators were not allowed to be mentioned, because it was politically unacceptable for the communist regime that the statue was initiated by exiles.

Many people took part in this great historical political-cultural act, but the biggest were two

teachers of the Oregon State University in the USA – university professor Július Alexander Rudinský and his wife Norma Leigh Rudinský, who with a great commitment of strength, their own finances and diplomatic skills stirred up Slovaks abroad, because the fragile plaster cast in Argentina was already in danger of disintegrating after more than ten years of decline in activity. The Rudinskis sent money from the USA to South America for casting, but also for high production tax, and for shipping expenses from their own family savings for their children's studies and from a large bank loan. In addition, they sacrificed a lot of effort and diplomatic skills in several countries at the expense of their health, and perhaps even their lives. The American professor Július Alexander Rudinský did not live to see the statue transported to Slovakia or its installation in Bratislava, although he was not yet very old. But his widow Norma Leigh Rudinská bravely fulfilled the last will of her beloved husband until she failed in 1984. She herself then donated archival documents about it to Mother Slovakia and finally begged to be buried next to her husband in Slovakia.

The Drama of the International Statue of Martin Kukučín was created from her archival materials and many others, which was presented in words and pictures in Jasenová and which together with the book Life Odyssey of Martin Kukučín could be purchased after the ceremony in Jasenová. Both books were published by the Slovak National Library in Martin in 2020 and 2022.



Covers of two Kukučín books





In front of the memorial plaque of Svetozár Hurban Vajanský in Voloske. Photo: Miloslav Strehársky

## 23th Days of Slovak culture in Rijeka

Miloslav Strehársky, Slovak Matica in Rijeka, Croatia

Slovak Matica from Rijeka, in cooperation with the representative of the Slovak National Minority (SNM) in the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County (PGŽ), Miroslava Gržinić, organized the 23rd Days of Slovak Culture – Rijeka 2023 with international participation from June 22 to 25. During these days, Slovaks present their culture and heritage to the inhabitants of the city and its visitors. The event was held with the support of the Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad (OSLA), PGŽ, the City Council in Rijeka, the Union of Slovaks in Croatia and Miroslava Gržinićová, representative of the SNM in PGŽ. The program was supported by Radio Rijeka, Novi List, Kanal R, Croatian Radio and Television and Radio OK.

The participants this time were Slovak Matica from Rijeka – Folkloric and singing group Slovenka led by Melita Bahničková, Margita Rekičová Grolmusová and Laura Mandekičová, the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in the Republic of Croatia, the Mother's Heart Association from Lalița (Serbia) led by Mária Macková, the Choir of the Evangelical Gymnasium (VG) from Banská Bystrica (Slovakia) led by Petra Volontierová and conductor Petr Bibza, Rijeka Palady from Rijeka led by Sanje Čavalova and longtime collaborators Anna and Juraj Kulichovci from Považská Bystrica (Slovakia).

First day with started in the premises of Slovak Matica in the Slovak House at 5 pm in the presence of guests from Slovakia, Serbia and Croatia, representatives of national minorities in Rijeka as well as our close neighbors. After the Croatian and Slovak national anthems were played on behalf of the host, the president of the World Cup from Rijeka, Miroslava Gržinićová, welcomed the esteemed attendees: deputy for the Czech and Slovak national minority in the Croatian Parliament

Vladimir Bilek, first vice-chairman of Slovak Matica Marek Hanuska, director of EVG in Banská Bystrica Slavomír Hanuska, chairman of the Local Community Lalić Janka Benka, secretary of the Local Community of Lalita Dušan Parnický, chairperson of the Community of Hungarians in Rijeka Zdenka Šibalinová Klepacová, as well as the participants of the program and their leaders. She wished everyone a pleasant experience at the cultural program and then invited those present to a tour of the exhibition of photos of Slovakian folk costumes and paintings of the art section of the World Championships in Rijeka, as well as an exhibition of Slovak folklore accessories presented by Anna Kulichová's production party inspired by traditional wedding parties from Slovak villages. All groups received letters of thanks for their participation.

Deputy Vladimír Bílek, 1st vice-chairman of the Slovak Matica Marek Hanuska and chairman Mária Macková gave a short welcome speech. This was followed by a cultural program in the yard in front of the house, in which the vice-chairman of Slovak Matica in Rijeka Margita Rekičová Grolmusová read her own poem, the children's group of the Slovak Matica from Rijeka sang the songs It's raining, it's raining only, and I hope the devils will take you, you young men, and performed two movement games: Bear, give me a paw and Oli, Oli Janko. They were followed by the EVG Choir, which, in addition to several folk songs, also sang the song Vtáča by priest Roman Dovala. Juraj Kulich from Slovakia performed with a fujara, and Rijeka matriarch Marienka Šikičová entertained those present by playing the guitar and singing Slovak and Croatian songs. In the continuation of the cultural program, the folklore group Rijecké Palady from Rijeka also performed. At the end of the





Karolína Rijecká Pier – participants in the ceremonial act of lowering the wreath into the sea. Photo: Miloslav Strehársky



Zdenko Galbavý, Miroslava Gržinićová and Margita Rekićová Grolmusová with a wreath. Photo: Miloslav Strehársky



Performance of the choir of the Evangelical Gymnasium in Banská Bystrica. Photo: Miloslav Strehársky

cultural program, participants and guests had fun together at a small reception organized by the Slovak Matica in Rijeka.

Second day the presentation of Slovak culture continued at the Square of the 111th Brigade of the Croatian Army. Members of Matica from Rijeka have traditionally offered potato pancakes, bryndza dumplings, buns with nuts and jam, and nut sourdough. The stand of the Mother's Heart association offered various sweet and savory specialties from its region. The stand of the Kulichs was richly decorated with Slovak folklore accessories. All the stands were heavily visited by locals and tourists. At the beginning, President Gržinić greeted those present and especially the Deputy Ambassador of the Slovak Republic (SR) to Croatia Zdenek Galbavý and his wife. Z. Galbavý emphasized that the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Slovak Republic and the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Slovakia and the Republic of Croatia will be celebrated in 2023. He then presented and opened the exhibition Slovakia 1993 – 2023, consisting of ten panels, which was created for this occasion. Zoran Čuk, the honorary consul of the Slovak Republic in Rijeka, was also present. A cultural program followed. Samples of folk songs entertained the numerous local Rijeka audience, as well as many tourists who enjoyed various gastronomic specialties and colorful culture.

After the end of the program, at 1 p.m., the participants moved to Karolíny Rijecká Pier. After another cultural program, M. Gržinićová dropped a wreath into the sea, as a memory of the evicted Slovaks who sailed to the world from the Rijeka province. The ceremony continued with a cultural

and artistic program starting at 6 p.m. in the premises of the Italian Community – Circolo, where the founding meeting of the Slovak Matica from Rijeka was also held.

On the third day the guests from Slovakia as well as some registrars met in the town of Volosko near Opatija in front of the building on which there is a commemorative plaque of Svetozár Hurban Vajanský. The memorial plaque to the Slovak writer, publicist, literary critic, journalist and politician who participated in the congress of Slavic journalists in Volosko in 1905 was unveiled here in 2006 in cooperation with Slovak Matica and on the initiative of Stanislav Bajaník, a former official of Slovak Matica. Members of Matica in Rijeka commemorate this event every year during the Days of Slovak Culture. The celebration continued at 5 p.m. on the Square of St. Ivana in the town of Lovran, near Rijeka. The stand of the Kulichs was set up here, richly decorated with Slovak folklore accessories, the stand of the Mother's Heart association with sweet and salty specialties, as well as the panel exhibition Slovakia 1993 – 2023. After the end of the cultural program in Lovran, everyone came to the Slovenské dom, where they had fun together until late in the evening. On the fourth and last day of the event, everyone gathered again in the Slovak House, where a short cultural program took place in the yard in front of the house. After lunch, the hosts exchanged small gifts with the guests, said a warm goodbye to all the participants, thanked them for their participation and wished them a happy journey and return home. In conclusion, we can state that these Days of Slovak Culture also fulfilled their purpose – the presentation of Slovakia, its culture and gastronomy.





Participants of the festive program celebrating the 160th anniversary of the founding of Slovak Matica and the 30th anniversary of the Slovak Republic. Photo: Ján Seman

# Celebrations of the 160th anniversary of Slovak Matica

Ján Seman, Information secretary of Slovak Matica, Slovakia

From August 3 to 6, 2023, nation maticas celebrations took place in Martin on the occasion of the 160th anniversary of the founding of Slovak Matica and the 30th anniversary of the independent Slovak Republic (SR). The celebrations started with the two-day Fifth Congress of Maticas and Institutions of the Slavic Nations in the premises of the Turčianska Gallery. The 19 delegations from 11 European countries applied for the congress. Representatives from Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, the Czech Republic, Montenegro, Russia, Poland, Hungary and other countries were present. The visit of the chairman of Slovenian Matica, representatives of Silesian Matica, chairman of Lusatian-serbian Matica, chairman of Slovak Matica and presidents of other Slovak Maticas abroad and other expatriate associations was rare. The official program on Friday, August 4, continued in the afternoon with the unveiling of a bust in front of the second building of Slovak Matica to the president of Slovak Matica Abroad Inc. and an exiled Greek Catholic priest who lived in Canada, Mons. František Joef Fuga. The bust was blessed by Archbishop Emeritus of the Prešov Archeparchy Ján Babjak SJ. The Deputy Chairman of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Juraj Blanár, was present, who thanked Slovak Matica for not forgetting this native of ours, who was born exactly one hundred years ago. Among family relatives, the nephews of František Jozef Fuga, the Cupák brothers, were present. After the ceremonial unveiling of the bust, the entrance program of the festivities took place in front of the headquarters of the Slovak Matica in the park of St. Cyril and St. Method. The program began with a staged founding general assembly of the Slovak Matica from 1863, with the arrival of Štefan Moyses in a historic carriage. In the skit, members of the Theater union of Slovak Matica and Young Matica presented the dramatic events of the General Assembly. The speech-

es of the representatives of domestic and foreign delegations were also heard on the spot. Ivan Gašparovič, the former president of the Slovak Republic, was the first to speak, who emphasized that Slovak Matica has its own history and its place in our society. „And every Slovak should respect this institution. It is a piece of our history. It is part of our fight for freedom and independence.“ In the early evening, the audience could watch the Tea at Five staged by actors from the Komora Theatre, the first professional theater in Komárno, which operates near the Slovak Matica house in Komárno.

On Saturday morning, a ceremonial meeting of the Council of Slovaks living abroad took place at the Slovak Matica. The afternoon program was originally supposed to take place in the outdoor spaces in front of the Slovak Matica building. However, due to unfavorable weather, it was moved to the Sports Hall in Martin-Podháň. Before the evening gala program, many folklore groups from all corners of Slovakia and abroad performed. As part of the festive gala program, after the national anthem of the Slovak Republic was played, the Chairman of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Boris Kollár, gave his speech, who stated with pleasure at the beginning that representatives of various political parties across the entire political spectrum came to these festivities. In his speech, he emphasized that Slovak Matica plays an important role as a modern national institution and has enormous potential to further fulfill its mission of building and consolidating Slovaks' national consciousness and a deep, strong relationship with our state. At the same time, he thanked all the members of the National Council of the Slovak Republic present, who last year legally fixed the amount of its special-purpose state subsidy.

The chairman of Slovak Matica Marián Gešper reminded that this year the Slovak nation is celebrating great anniver-





The staged symbolic arrival of Štefan Moyses in a carriage to the founding general meeting of Slovak Maticas on August 4, 1863. Photo: Ján Seman



Staged founding general meeting of Slovak Matica from August 1863. Photo: Ján Seman

saries, such as the foundation of Slovak Matica and the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic. „It is no coincidence that Slovak Matica was founded in 1863. It happened on the thousandth anniversary of the arrival of Saints Cyril and Methodius, who not only brought faith, but also a serious international-political act by strengthening the sovereignty of the then Great Moravian state.“ He further emphasized in his speech. “The bitter truth is that the attacks on Matica have always been a barometer of attacks on the Slovak nation, a barometer of how sovereign Slovakia is. Despite the fact that Slovak Matica was buried almost every 20 years, Slovak Matica successfully survived many political regimes, governments and economic or power systems. Members of Slovak Matica always recovered and renewed Matica, always moving its activity to a new dimension. We have a Slovak homeland, a Slovak nation, but also a Slovak family. It is through these essential categories that the world belongs to us, it is through these categories that we can conceptually conquer the world, build e.g. European and other structures. But first we have to build our own, national, and only then can we serve foreigners. Otherwise, the idea of European integration is just an empty phrase.” The Mayor of the City of

Martin, Ján Danko, thanked Slovak Matica for its activities to date and noted that if it were not for Matica, Martin would never have become such an important political and cultural center of the time in which they worked, found a home, but also the final resting place of an important personality of the Slovak nation. At the same time, he highlighted the unifying role of Slovak Matica in the formation of national consciousness in the 19th century and also its merits in the establishment of the Slovak Republic. After his performance, as a sign of respect and gratitude on behalf of the City, Martin handed over a commemorative letter to the chairman of the Slovak Matica on the occasion of the 160th anniversary of the founding of Slovak Matica. After singing the matica's anthem *Kto za pravdu horí* (Who burns for the truth), the program continued with a performance by the Slovak Folk Art Collective (SLUK) and concerts by popular singers Veronika Rabada and Zuzana Smatanová. Maticas festivities were officially concluded on Sunday, August 6, with a Catholic Holy Mass, a Greek Catholic service and the evangelical services of God. More than two thousand visitors took part in the celebrations. Only during the performance of SLUK, there were almost fifteen hundred people present in the hall.





A view of the participants of the program in front of the seat of Slovak Matica, from left: member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic T. Taraba, chairman of the Slovak Matica M. Gešper with his wife, member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic and former Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic Ľ. Laššáková, ex-president of the SR I. Gašparovič, administrator of the MS M. Smolec. Photo: Ján Seman



Members of the Theater union of Slovak Matica and Young Matica presented the dramatic events of the general assembly in skit. Photo: Jan Seman



Archbishop Emeritus of the Prešov Archeparchy Ján Babjak, SJ, during the unveiling of the bust to the chairman of the Slovak Matica Abroad Inc. Mons. František Jozef Fuga. Photo: Ján Seman





Participants of the founding meeting of the Slavic union of Slovak Matica. Photo: Peter Schvantner

# The Slavic union of Slovak Matica was established

Peter Schvantner, secretary of Slovak Matica, Slovakia

During September, the headquarters building of Slovak Matica in Martin became in a short time the place of establishment of two new scientific unions of Slovak Matica. First, on September 12, 2023, the Cultural and Philosophical Union of Slovak Matica was established. Subsequently, on September 26, the Slavic Union of the Slovak Matica was founded. The founding general assembly was led by the chairman of Slovak Matica Marián Gešper. In the beginning, he explained the reasons and the idea of establishing the department. These relate to the historical experience of the operation of such a union in the Slovak Matica, as well as in the broad scientific and activism activities in the field of Slavism and cooperation between Slavic peoples. This cooperation is anchored in the organization of congresses of maticas and institutions of the Slavic peoples, as well as in the publication of the Slavic Horizon magazine. Now it has become stronger with the creation of the Slavic union. With this scientific union, we naturally continue the tradition of the Slavic union, which was founded in Slovak Matica in 1923 by co-chairman of the Slovak Matica Jur Janoška, the first general bishop of the Evangelical Church in Slovakia. When it was founded, representatives of several Slavic nations met, which we can consider a kind of predecessor of today's Slavic maticas congresses. The union had a relatively large publishing and publication activity. Its members published in Slovak views (*Slovenské pohľady*), while they were also activists from Slavic maticas. After the Second World War, the union devoted itself primarily to the victory over pan-Germanism and German Nazism. A separate matica's press body was also created. Since in 1954 the original membership base was abolished by the regime at that time, this union also ceased to exist. The name Slavic union thus follows on from the maticas traditions. It is also more appropriate for the department's activities - compared to the originally proposed name of the Branch of Slavic Mutuality - since the department will not be interested only in Slavic mutuality, but in the topic of Slavism in a bro-

ader sense. Branislav Kulík, the chairman of Slovak Matica in Serbia, as well as Michal Hrivnák, a Slovak writer living in Budapest, were present online at the meeting. In the future, membership will also be offered to other Slavic maticas and Slavic institutions.

Pavol Madura, scientific secretary of the Slovak Matica, was unanimously elected as the chairman of the department. The newly elected chairman then presented the possible activities of the union. According to him, the Slavic union of the Slovak Matica as a scientific department should focus more broadly on Slavic studies, i. e. the science of Slavs and Slavism, specifically on Slavic literature, science, culture and other areas. He noted that Slovak Matica has been devoted to the topic of Slavism since its foundation in 1863, the mutual contacts of Slavic maticas are particularly well known. This international cooperation continues to this day, as evidenced by the recently organized congresses of maticas and institutions of the Slavic nations.

Matica publishes the magazine *Slavic horizon*, which acts as an information correspondent of the Slovak Matica for the Slavic world and Slovak abroad, of which it is also the editor-in-chief. Well, this magazine can be the press organ of the union. As part of its activities, the Slavic department should commemorate important Slavic personalities and events, both in a scientific and popularizing form, publish literature focused on Slavic studies, or establish a Slavic library edition.

These plans are being developed for 2024 and beyond. The purpose of the activity is the area of Slavism, Slavic history, culture, personalities, literature, art, ethnography and the like. The goal is to develop scientific, professional and popularizing activities, to publish professional and popular literature and periodicals and other activities. It will continue to develop the cooperation of the matrices and institutions of the Slavic nations.





Jan Budar (Director of the Foundation for the Lusatian Serbian People), Natalie Pawlik (Member of the National Parliament), Jurij Łuščanski (Chairman of Lusatian-serbian Matica 2016-2020), Marko Kowar (Chairman of the Foundation Board). Photo: Jurij Helgest

## Lusatian-Serbian Matica members honoured with awards in 2023

Anja Pohončowa, president of Matica Lusatia, Germany

The Foundation for the Lusatian-Serbian People awards the Čišinski Prize for outstanding achievements in the field of Sorbian culture, art or science. It is also the highest Sorbian award, commemorating a classic of Sorbian literature Jakub Bart-Čišinski (1856–1909). The foundation dedicates this prize every second year to important personalities from Upper and Lower Lusatia. The Čišinski Prize was awarded on Saturday, October 14, 2023 at the Schmochtitz educational estate (near Bautzen) by Ms. Natalie Pawlik, Federal Government Representative for Resettlement Issues and National Minorities and Member of the Bundestag.

The Čišinski Prize 2023 was awarded to Jurij Łuščanski for his versatile work for Sorbian culture and art as well as for his continuous contact maintenance with his Slavic neighbours for the benefit of the Sorbian people. He was a member of the board of Lusatian-Serbian Matica from 1991 to 2020 and its chairman from 2016 to 2020. What should be highlighted is his commitment to collecting paintings, sketches, and drawings with Sorbian or Lusatian motifs. Jurij Łuščanski was particularly enthusiastic about the extensive work of the Czech painter and folklorist Ludvík Kuba. Through meticulous research, Jurij Łuščanski managed to supplement the list of paintings and drawings with Lusatian motifs created by Ludvík Kuba. Łuščanski was also able to track down previously unknown paintings as well as Kuba's first diary with drawings about his hike in Lusatia, buying some of them himself or transferring them to the Sorbian museums in Bautzen and Cottbus. He also revealed to the Sorbs a number of works of art by other artists, including the

Slovenian painter Ante Trstenjak, the English-born Ann Siebert from Dresden, the Czech Alena Čermáková, the German painter Dottore, and the painter Georg Heine, who came from Bautzen but worked in Italy. With his collecting activities, Jurij Łuščanski has made a significant contribution to the preservation of evidence of the Sorbian cultural heritage.

Furthermore, Dr. Pěťš Šurman was awarded the Domowina Prize 2023 for his volunteer work. After the fall of the Wall, he

campaigns for the revival of Lusatian Serbian Matica Serbska and has headed its Lower Sorbian department, Lusatian-Serbian Matica, since 2006. The historian and research assistant at the Sorbian Institute is also involved in the Domowina umbrella organization. He has been a member of the board of the Lower Lusatian regional association (župa Dolna Łužyca z.t.) since 2013 and has been chairman (župan) of the largest regional association since 2021. In his publications he also devoted himself inten-



The chairman of Domowiny Dawid Statnik (left) congratulates the laureate of the Domowiny Prize 2023 dr. Pěťšej Šurmanejov (chairman of the Lower Lusatian department of Lusatian-Serbian since 2006). Photo: Jurij Helgest

sively to the history of Lusatian-Serbian Matica as well as advertising work in Sorabistics to young people.

The Domowina Prize is awarded every year for outstanding achievements in the preservation and promotion of Sorbians. It is the Sorbs' most broadly based prize; after all, it honours the national works of the Sorbs in a wide variety of areas - not just culture, science or art. The chairman of Domowina, the umbrella organization of Sorbian associations and political spokesperson for the Sorbs, Dawid Statnik awarded the Domowina Prize on Friday, October 20, 2023 in the Bautzen House of the Sorbs.



From the plenary session of Slavists. During three days, up to 28 sections worked. Source: Russian Academy of Sciences

## An important meeting of Slavists

N. S. Gusev, Institute of Slavic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia  
Translation from Russian: Viktória Viktorovna Nadolska

On October 24 to 26, 2023, the III. All-Russian meeting of Slavists. It is organized every ten years by the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences with the aim of coordinating the activities of Russian scientists in the field of study, teaching and promotion of the history and culture of the Slavic peoples.

The proceedings began with a plenary session. K. V. Niki-forov, director of the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, with a report on the state of Russian Slavic studies over the last decade, N. E. Ananjeva, head of the Department of Slavic Philology of M. V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, with a methodological report on the teaching of the Polish language at universities, associate professor of the Faculty of History spoke at it Lomonosov Moscow State University Z. S. Neňaševa - with a story about the history of the All-Slavic congresses of historians-Slavists in the second half of the twentieth century. Corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences B. N. Florya (ISL RAV) presented various paths of development of Eastern and Central Europe in the early and early developed Middle Ages, academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences AA Gippius (ISL RAV/NIU HSE) spoke about the achievements of Russian epigraphy in the last decade, the most important findings and new interpretations of hitherto known inscriptions on the walls of Old Russian temples.

This was followed by three days of work by 28 sections dealing with the widest range of issues of Slavic history and culture, two of which were held at the State Public Historical Library of Russia and the Russian State Humanities University.

Several interdisciplinary sections were also organized. One was devoted to the teaching of Slavic studies. It discussed the

traditions of Russian centers for teaching the languages and history of foreign Slavs, as well as the new conditions dictated by the reform of higher education in Russia. A session on the history of Russian Slavic studies and current trends in modern historiography was held in the Historical Library. The section dedicated to the publication of sources for the history and culture of the Slavic peoples touched upon the application of innovative methods and presented new projects for the publication of Slavic manuscript books and documents, they also talked about the Czech Slavist František Jezber.

The history sections covered a wide range of topics from the Middle Ages to the events of recent weeks. Thematically, the sessions devoted to the Middle Ages, the issue of East Slavic ethnonyms, Slavic-Ottoman interactions, multinational empires in the Balkans, the history of the interwar period, the history of Poland, the history of the post-war and modern periods stood out.

Three days of the conference were held in the Linguistics section, 42 presentations were given by scientists from 9 cities of Russia, a third of them by young scientists under 40 years of age. The topics of the presentations covered a wide range of issues. The most contributions were devoted to Slavic dialectology (18 contributions), ethnolinguistics (11 contributions) and lexicology (9 contributions). They also addressed the issues of Slavic lexicography (3 papers), morphology (3 papers), phonetics (3 papers), etymology (3 papers), accentology (1 paper), contactology (4 papers), corpus linguistics (3 papers), language analysis fiction and folklore (2 papers) and the history of Slavic linguistics (2 papers). Many contributions were interdisciplinary in nature. The meeting included a two-day conference on 50 years of research on inter-Slavic literary





and cultural relations. Memory of S. V. Nikolský and L. N. Budagová. Organized jointly with the Russian State Humanities University. The first day of the conference was held at ISL RAV, the second day at the Russian State Humanities University. There were 36 contributions to the issue of comparative Slavic literary science. Some contributions were interdisciplinary in nature, they also touched on issues of art history (relationships between fiction, film, painting, etc.).

The second section was the History of Slavic book science: language, text, image, which included five subsections dedicated to the Old Slavic language and its heritage in modern Slavic languages, Old Russian writing, language and textology of Church Slavic monuments XI. – XVIII. century, Church Slavonic grammatical reflection and interaction between the medieval Slavic book and audiovisual tradition. A total of 26 papers were presented, the thematic spectrum of which was

quite varied and included a wide range of current issues of Paleo-Slavic studies, from word formation in Old Slavic to accent in contemporary Church Slavic.

During three days, approximately 240 speakers from 49 universities, research institutes, museums and libraries from Bryansk, Vladimir, Voronezh, Yekaterinburg, Izhevsk, Kazan, Kaliningrad, Moscow, Perm, Samara, St. Petersburg, Saratov, Tver, Tyumen, Ufa, Yaroslavl, from 4 Belarusian institutions, as well as scientists from Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Turkey, China, Croatia and the Czech Republic. It is obvious that there is interest among Russian Slavists after such events. This gives rise to some optimism in the matter of maintaining a high level of Russian Slavic studies and gives hope for the renewal of international Slavic cooperation (a more detailed report on the All-Russian Meeting of Slavists will be published in the journal *Slavistika* in 2024).



One of the 28 sections that dealt with the widest range of issues of Slavic history and culture. Source: Russian Academy of Sciences





The chairman of Slovak Matica M. Gešper (left) in a welcoming conversation with the chairman of Serbian Matica Dragan Stanić in the building of Serbian Matica in Novi Sad. Photo: Peter Schvantner

# Multi-layered expansion of cultural cooperation between Serbian Matica and Slovak Matica

Lukáš Perný, Peter Schvantner, Marián Gešper, Slovak Matica, Slovakia

Slovak Matica received a great honor when it was invited at the highest level to Serbian Matica in Novi Sad by an important representative of Serbian cultural and scientific life, Professor Dragan Stanić, who is the long-term chairman of Serbian Matica. It should be emphasized that the Serbian Matica the very first historical matica among the Slavic nations and was founded in 1826. It was on the basis of its model that the other Slavic matrices were also created, including the Slovak Matica. An important work trip of representatives of Slovak Matica to Serbia, consisting of chairman Marián Gešper, secretary Peter Schvantner, editor-in-chief of Slovak views Radoslav Žgrada, vice-chairman of the Association of Slovak Writers Lukáš Perný, began on November 13, 2023, with the aim of deepening the historical cultural ties between the two close Slavic nations. The business trip was accompanied by authentic Serbian hospitality, which is truly admirable.

## A trip to Serbia and a visit to Matica

With great gratitude, the delegation accepted Professor Dragan Stanić's interest in the history and current status of Slovak perspectives, but also in the Slovak Matica itself, which he himself praised as one of the most active and important

maticas. Marián Gešper's words about the personality who connected Serbian and Slovak culture – Pavlov Jozef Šafárik, who sent a letter from Novi Sad to Martin Hamuljak in 1827 with the idea of founding Slovak Matica – were already heard at the beginning. Šafárik himself was a co-founder and member of Serbian Matica and Czech Matica (1831), he actively contributed to the first Serbian journal Yearbook of Serbian Matica.

An important factor in the invitation from Serbian Matica was 4th and the 5th Congress of maticas and institutions of Slavic nations in Martin, which took place on June 5-6, 2019 and August 3-4, 2023, with the participation of Serbian Matica representatives.

The Slovak delegation arrived in the afternoon and then visited the headquarters of Serbian Matica in Novi Sad. The building is truly monumental, filled with beautiful romantic paintings and in the foreground are busts of national figures of Serbia.

The original Serbian Matica was founded in 1826 in Pest by Jovan Hadžić as the first ever Slavic Matica. Its seat was moved to Nové Sad only in 1864. Although it originally carried out a wide range of cultural activities, nowadays its fun-





The delegation of Slovak Matica at the headquarters of Serbian Matica is having an interview with journalists from the daily Dnevnik.  
Photo: Peter Schvantner

ction is primarily scientific, with book culture dominating. The discussion, as a form of cultural exchange between representatives of matrices, Serbian writers and scientists, lasted two hours. It was attended by Marián Gešper, Dragan Stanić, Peter Schvantner (also for the Young Matica), Lukáš Perný, Selimir Radulović (Letopis Matice srpske), Zdenka Valent Belić (Novi život and translator), Jela Maricević (chairman of the committee of Serbian young registrars), writer Zoran Đerić, director of the Cultural Center of Vojvodina, publisher, poet and critic Nenad Šaponja and other important personalities.

While Slovak Matica has faced constant attacks from the state throughout history, Serbian Matica is recognized and widely supported by the Republic of Serbia, which should be a role model for our Slovak politicians! The president of Slovak Matica expressed the hope that the new government will support the institution, as is the case with the Serbian matriculation institution. In this context, Gešper recalled the role of Slovak Matica in ensuring the historical continuity of the national movement, the protection of the original national culture, the national-cultural heritage and, last but not least, in the education of a new intellectual national elite. In addition to a special column for Serbian-Slovak literary exchange in Slovak Views, he also proposed a working meeting of numerous representatives of young Serbian and Slovak registrars. The result of the discussion was an agreement on several forms of cooperation. On the one hand, there will be the mentioned column of cultural exchange in Slovak perspectives, cooperation in publishing joint bilingual books and also a scientific conference on Slovak and Serbian literature, or historical intersections, mutual participation of Slovak and Serbian young registrars in joint activities of registers. Two newly established main departments (Slavic and Cultural and Philosophical) were also mentioned as other platforms for scientific cooperation.

The internal discussion was followed by the scientific part of the Matica slovačka and the journal Slovak views (Slovenské pohľady). The event was introduced by Professor Stanić, who welcomed and introduced the guests. Subsequently, Marián Gešper presented to those present a detailed historical journey of Slovak Matica and its current tasks and status as a public institution. Michal Harpaň spoke in Serbian about the history of the magazine Slovak views, Radoslav Žgrada about the history and present of the magazine Slovak views, Lukaš

Perný about the function and importance of the magazine, Zdenka Valent Belić talked about the cooperation between the magazines Novi život and Slovak views and read her poetry. In the evening, part of the delegation visited the city center, which lives with an active collectivist, social and extrovert spirit until late at night. The fact that the people of Novi Sad are naturally collectivist was confirmed by Dragan Stanić himself. Practically every evening, even during the working week, you can hear live music from local musicians singing both Serbian and world hits in the establishments. Nationalism is a really strong idea in Serbia, as evidenced by the ubiquitous national monuments and national symbols. The Slavic hospitality of the Serbs is grandiose (generous and varied, tasty portions of food only complement the overall picture of Serbian hospitality). The legendary rakija (most often a version of djula) dominates the drinks, pleskavica (enriched with an excellent salad with Balkan cheese and fresh pita bread), burek and the famous „sausages“ in Báčsky Petrovac.

#### Belgrade, Serbian writers and J. B. Tito

The following day, the delegation visited the capital of Serbia, where the seat of the Association of Serbian Writers is located. The translation was provided by the excellent Slovak writer and columnist Martin Prebudila. The delegation got to know important personalities of Serbian literature (Veselin Misnic, Radomir Andrić and others) and re-emphasized the need to intensify mutual cultural exchange in all directions, which was an insistent idea of all the discussants. The building of the association is monumental. It is a shame that the Slovak writers could not keep their building (I also express this indignation as vice-president of the SSS, criticizing the predecessors – note L. Perný). After an extensive discussion, the handing over of gifts, and a ceremonial toast, the scientific part was again followed by the speeches of Vidak Maslovarić, the vice-president of the Association of Serbian Writers, the chairman of Slovak Matica, the chairman of Serbian Matica, the editor-in-chief of Slovak views and the vice-president of the Association of Slovak Writers. Contributions that were presented in Novi Sad were heard, while it was emphasized that during the previous day there were already agreements on cultural cooperation, which will





The chairman of Slovak Matica in Serbia, Branislav Kulík, welcomes the delegation of Slovak Matica in their headquarters.  
Photo: Peter Schvantner

also be extended to the Association of Serbian Writers. Gešper once again emphasized the history, but also the future vision of Slovak-Serbian cultural cooperation. The delegation expressed the hope that it will continue the work that Miroslav Bielik started exactly ten years ago, but which has stagnated in recent years.

After the official part, the delegation visited the resting place of Josip Broz Tito in the House of Flowers, who, with the creation of Yugoslavia after 1945, significantly contributed to the Slavic idea of a common state life of the southern Slavs, which was predicted by Slovak visionaries from the second wave of national revival, Ján Kollár and Pavol Jozef Šafárik. We must not forget that the anthem of Yugoslavia, until its complete fall, was the song and words written by the Slovak nationalist Samuel Tomášik „Hey Slovania!“. Those present in the garden near the mausoleum thoughtfully discussed the positives and negatives of the vision, or the almost fulfilled utopia of a unified South Slavic state as realized and relentlessly promoted by Josip Broz Tito. The later breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991 was as if foreshadowed a decade in advance by the death of Tito himself in 1980, which his supporters and supporters had a hard time surviving. Today, his final resting place is also a decent museum of the era of Tito and the defunct socialist Yugoslavia. The exhibition is enriched with donations, newspaper articles, and photographs from Tito's funeral, which was attended by hundreds of state representatives from around the world, including the president of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Gustáv Husák. It should be emphasized that today's Serbia is primarily oriented towards the legacy and tradition of the first politically conservative Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which existed from 1918 to 1941, or the historically older Serbian monarchy. Subsequently, the delegation returned to Novi Sad, where Dragan Stanić invited the delegation to a working dinner. Serbian cuisine is truly excellent.

#### Báčsky Petrovec – center for Slovaks in Serbia

Even before the third stop, the delegation moved again to Serbian Matica, where Serbian journalists (journalist from Dnevnik Miroslav Stajić) were waiting. They asked in particular about Slovak Matica, Slovak views, but also about its youth section Young Matica. The translation was mediated by Zdenka Valent Belić. The delegation then said goodbye to the chairman of Serbian Matica and expressed great gratitude for facilitating the entire event. The last stop was Slovak Matica in Serbia, which is headed by Branislav Kulík. After a two-hour discussion on the possibilities of further cooperation, the presentation of Slovak views took place again, even in the presence of local media such as RTV, TV PETROVEC and local radio. Vladimír Valentík, a poet from Serbia from the Slovak Publishing Center, also participated in the event, who praised the cooperation with the Slovak Writers' Association, and reminded that it is exactly ten years since the conclusion of the cooperation agreement, which is symbolic of the renewal of this cooperation.

There were also words of praise for the Slovak literary critic Dalimír Hajko. Hajko has been devoted to Serbian literature and the literature of the Lowland Slovaks for a long time. Multitalented pianist Marek Stupavský, a Slovak living in Serbia, also played at the event.

At the end, members of the delegation gave interviews for local television and radio. After the event, further discussions awaited the working dinner, to which the delegation was invited by B. Kulík, and the return to Novi Sad.

In the early morning of the next day, the delegation set off from Novi Sad across the long flat plains of Hungary to the Slovak border. Around one o'clock she arrived in Košice and around six o'clock in Bratislava.

Already during the visit, they published photos from the visit on social networks, which caused a response and positive reactions.





General Assembly of the Russian Historical Society. Source: Russian Historical Society

# Together against purposeful revisions of historical events

**Yevgeny Eremkin, Press Secretary of the Russian Historical Society, Russia**

As part of the cooperation between Serbian and Russian scientists from both countries, more and more joint Russian-Serbian projects devoted to the popularization of history and the preservation of historical memory are implemented: research is carried out, popular scientific works are published, exhibitions and expert discussions are organized. Members of the Russian Historical Society (RHS) make a significant contribution to the development of scientific relations.

## History of the Russian Historical Society

The founding date of the Russian Historical Society (as it was called at the time of its creation) is considered to be June 4, 1866, when Tsar Alexander II. approved its status. From the very beginning, the activity of the Russian Historical Society was patronized by the royal house: the future Tsar Alexander III. he was an honorary member of the RHS, and for several years after its foundation the society was called the Imperial Russian Historical Society. Her activity focused on publishing research in the field of history. The last chairman of the Russian Historical Society, Grand Duke Nikolai Mikhailovich, was shot in January 1919 in the courtyard of the Petropavlovsk Fortress. In 1920, the Russian Historical Society was dissolved by the General Assembly of the Academy of Sciences due to lack of funds to continue its activities. After almost 100 years, in 2012, which was declared the Year of Russian History, several prominent Russian historians took the initiative to revive the Historical Society. On June 20, 2012, 27 leading Russian educational, scientific and cultural institutions, research foundations and mass media revived the Russian Historical Society. According to its statutes, its goal is to unite the efforts of society, the state, scientists and history enthusiasts to create an all-Russian historical culture based on the objective study, coverage and popularization of national and world history and the preservation of national memory.

To date, RHS members are more than 600 people – prominent scientists, teachers, public figures, representatives of

museums, foundations and state bodies, more than 145 legal entities – museums, archives, libraries, universities, publishing houses and public organizations. Branches of the Russian Historical Society were established in 64 regions of the country.

## Together against the revision of events from the past

In recent years, Russian historians are increasingly attracted to the policy of reinterpretation of history, which has developed in some countries – historical events are falsified and scientifically proven facts are replaced by fictitious ones. Some politicians and historians are calling for a reassessment of the Soviet Union's role in World War II, declaring it an aggressor on par with Nazi Germany. From time to time, materials appear in the mass media, according to which, for example, the Battle of Kursk, one of the largest battles of the war, did not have a significant impact on the course of the fighting, and the heroic defense of the Brest Fortress allegedly did not take place at all. At the same time, collaborators who exterminated the civilian population of European countries try to present themselves not as criminals, but as fighters for national independence. At the same time, a wave of demolishing monuments to Soviet soldiers and officers is developing in some countries. These include the confrontation over the Bronze Soldier in Tallinn, the demolition of the monument to Marshal Konev in Prague and the decommunization laws. The Russian Historical Society unites historians in Russia and other countries to oppose the falsification of historical events.

## International projects of the Russian Historical Society

An important area of international historical cooperation is cooperation with Slavic states, which share a common history dating back hundreds of years. Already at the time of the first Russian tsar, Peter the Great, there were many natives from Eastern Europe in the Russian service, and one of the tsar's closest collaborators was Savva Lukič Raguzinskij Vladislavić, a Serbian businessman and diplomat who represented Russia

in Rome, Venice and the Qing Empire. The memory of him, Mikhail Il'jič Miloradović, Matvej Christoforović Zmajević and many others unites our nations to this day.

The Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878 is still a current page in our history. In the battles for the independence of the Slavic peoples from the Ottoman Empire, in the battles of Plevna and Šipka, Russian soldiers showed courage and heroism, restored the independence of Bulgaria and gave the peoples of Serbia, Montenegro and Romania the opportunity to embark on the path of free development. Despite the existing differences, the history of friendship and martial brotherhood of the Slavic peoples always serves as a connecting link in the work of historians. In 2021, on the occasion of the 144th anniversary of the conquest of Plevna, a delegation of the Russian Historical Society handed over copies of documents about the conquest of the city to the mayor of Plevna. And in 2022, historians under the auspices of the RHS participated in a conference on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the founding of the Church of the Nativity in Šipka (Bulgaria).

In connection with the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the liberation of European countries by the Red Army, the events of the Second World War are again becoming relevant and are becoming the subject of lively discussions in the scientific and public spheres. The Red Army lost approximately 600,000 men in the liberation of Poland alone, while approximately one million Soviet soldiers and officers were killed and wounded during the liberation mission. Preserving the memory of the courage of our liberators and European partisans who did not break under the oppression of the occupation is one of the priorities in the work of the Russian Historical Society. Eternal flames lit in many European cities today commemorate their heroic deeds.

The first of them was built in Sarajevo in 1946. It is not a coincidence, because during the years of occupation, the peoples of Yugoslavia suffered the heaviest losses, who heroically fought against the Nazis until the complete victory over the occupiers. To commemorate these events on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the beginning of World War II, in 2019, with the support of the Russian Historical Society, a piece of the Eternal Flame was delivered from Moscow to Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia. It is the first time that a piece of the Eternal Flame has been transported from Russia - from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier near the Kremlin Wall - to the capital of a European country that was not part of the Soviet Union. In 2020, the first Serbian eternal fire was lit in Belgrade.

A major project connected with the Eternal Fire was implemented in 2021 by the partners of the Russian Historical Society from Slovakia - members of the Brat za Brata motorcycle association. At that time, more than 3,000 candles from the Eternal Flame were lit at 926 memorial sites, the event involved more than 6,000 people from 123 Slovak towns and cities. In 2022, motorcyclists visited Russia with a ride of freedom, dedicated to the heroes of the Red Army, the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps and the Slovak National Uprising, who fell in the battles of the Second World War, and in 2023 they visited Volgograd, where on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the victory in the battle of Stalingrad honored the memory of its participants. And recently, on the occasion of the Day of Remembrance of the Deceased, which is celebrated annually in Slovakia on November 2, the association Brat za Brata organized a memorial event dedicated to the memory of fallen Soviet soldiers. As part of it, Slovak citizens sent more than 20,000 photos of lit lamps at the monuments of Soviet soldiers and officers. The Russian Historical Society realizes

several cycles of international historical and documentary exhibitions. One of them is the exhibition project It is not forgotten. The crimes of the Nazis and their accomplices against the civilian population during the Second World War, which aims to remind the international community of the sacrifices made by the peoples of the USSR to save the world from Nazism. The tables present documentary evidence of Nazi atrocities: documents, testimonies of surviving concentration camp prisoners, photographs from crime scenes. The exhibition, which is part of the No Time Limitation project, has been translated into all European languages and adapted for each country separately. Exhibitions within the project were opened in Germany, France, Slovakia, Romania, Serbia, Denmark and Republika Srpska.

Another series of historical and documentary exhibitions The road to victory: the testimony of historical sources is devoted to the history of the liberation of European countries by the Red Army. It is based on archival documents, including hitherto classified, which tell about the course of combat operations, the interaction of the Soviet army with the local population and help in returning to a peaceful life. The geography of the project consists of Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary and other countries. A key element of preserving historical awareness is the popularization of high-quality historical knowledge. With this intention, the Russian Historical Society participates in many scientific conferences and other events in cooperation with foreign historians. I am referring to the conference of 1939 - the turning point. Slovakia and Europe at the beginning of the Second World War, which was held in 2019 in Slovakia, and the 5th Congress of Matrices and Institutions of Slavic Nations, which was held in 2023 in Slovakia, and other meetings. Important international scientific events are also held in Russia. For example, in June 2023, the House of the Russian Historical Society hosted a discussion on the Nazi extermination policy during World War II. It was attended by representatives of the Republic Center for the Study of War, War Crimes and the Search for Missing Persons of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Russian and Serbian historians. Several important international scientific events were also held at the International Research Center for the Second World War in Maribor, Slovenia. The center was established in 2017 on the initiative of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Slovenia - the initiative was supported by Russian President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin at the time. During the war, a concentration camp for Soviet prisoners of war was located here, in which more than 5,000 Red Army soldiers who were captured in the first months of the fighting died in the course of 1941 - 1942. The main international publishing project of the Russian Historical Society is the recently prepared book The Soviet Union in World War II, specially created for Russian compatriots living abroad and foreign citizens. The publication deals with the main events of the pre-war period - the policy of appeasement, the Munich Agreement that followed, and the course of military operations in the USSR and Central Europe. Over time, the book will be translated into all UN languages, as well as into Slavic languages, at least into Serbian and Slovak.

Several important dates await us next year, including the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the liberation of Eastern Europe and the 145th anniversary of the end of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. Therefore, it is to be expected that cooperation between Russian historians and their foreign partners will continue to develop.





Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin – Russian romantic poet and novelist

# The Slavic family and today, part 1

Jozef Sipko, University of Prešov in Prešov, Slovakia

## Introduction – Bismarck's forecasts

In 1848, when large-scale revolutionary unrest was taking place in Europe, one of the greatest politicians of his time, later after the creation of a unified Germany in 1871, his chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, uttered memorable and very instructive words: „If someone wants to defeat Russia, he must first to separate Ukraine from him and then to incite other Slavic nations against him, because only the Slavs represent a race capable of destroying itself. With their help, it will be possible to defeat Russia as well. After his defeat, these Slavic peoples will be left without protection...” It should be added that Bismarck was the ambassador of his country in St. Petersburg for three years, spoke Russian fluently and had a wealth of knowledge not only about this great nation, but also about the Slavs in general. He used all his experience and indisputable personal qualities already as chancellor to create a unified Germany in 1871. One of his political principles was not to go to war with Russia, as an example was the defeat of Napoleon in 1812. And although his army occupied Moscow, in the end the Russian Tsar Alexander I entered Paris on a white horse. The new German chancellor, Bismarck, was fully aware of this, and that is why he conducted his policy in such a way that Germany would not get into an armed conflict with Russia. However, the new and essentially the last German emperor, Wilhelm II. recalled the experienced Bismarck and thus had a free hand in preparing for war with Russia, while the last Russian tsar Nicholas II. he was his cousin! As a result of the above-mentioned short-sighted policy of the German elites, Germany at that time lost the First World War, and the following representatives of Germany did not learn from it either when they invaded the USSR in 1941.

Currently, even based on the aforementioned experience, Germany is not preparing for war against the Eastern Slavs, but interesting observations have appeared: Germany lost two

world wars. It has now taken over much of Europe without war. It is enough to notice the German dominance, especially in the economy, within which it controls many companies in other countries. Many of our citizens work in the mentioned companies here, for example, the Volkswagen car factory in Bratislava. Around 40,000 Slovenian women basically work as maids in German and Austrian families, where they are called opera-siders. Seasonal workers, mainly from Romania, are massively employed on German farms, and their inhumane working conditions have already been officially criticized by high-ranking government officials. These short stories confirm the long-term tendency of the West to control and dominate the East.

Bismarck's words are also extremely instructive for our generation, because they reflect many fateful events in the life of the Slavic peoples. Their languages, mentality, culture, customs and rich expressions of national identity point to common ethno-cultural starting points, and there is no doubt that in the past all Slavs formed a common ancestral nation. To put it more figuratively – the Slavs essentially form one big joint family. But this family, as our rich history teaches us, has been full of misunderstandings and conflicts for a long time, which are extremely subtly provoked and supported by our non-renters with the generous help of sellers from our ranks. This unfavorable situation still applies today, as we can regularly see for ourselves in any significant situation, currently especially in connection with the war in Ukraine.

## Lackeys and henchmen among the Slavs

In the destinies of the Slavic peoples, traitors from their own ranks played a very tragic role when they served the enemies of their own nation. During World War II, our soldiers also fought against the Eastern Slavs on the side of fascist Germany. Although they were sent to the Eastern Front by force,



some of them committed serious war crimes against civilians in Ukraine and Belarus. After all, the leaders of Slovakia at the time must have known about the plans for the extermination of the Slavs by the Germans! And yet they served the German fascists. I guess one of the most shameful actions was the honoring of German murderers by the then Slovak president J. Tis in the square in Banská Bystrica after the suppression of the Slovak National Uprising at the end of October 1944. Puškin will help us understand this more precisely:

Unlucky is the state where lackey and henchman,  
They are close to the throne,  
And by heaven chosen prophet,  
Is silent and looks down.

We find Pushkin's rascals and swindlers in our Slavic world all the time. Let's just remember how some former comrades, who shouted on the stands: With the Soviet Union forever (!), were transformed in the new political conditions into slaves and dupes of the West. There are many examples of similar transformations. One of them, for example, made a career under socialism at the Political College of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia, later as chairman of the foreign committee of the Slovak National Council he approved the bombing of Yugoslavia as a lesser evil and was subsequently in the diplomatic structures of the Democrats and Liberals. Such people are still at the top of the power table. And the prophet, filled with sorrow, is silent and suffers because almost no one listens to him. Our ancestors used the word *Puturčenec* (assimilated Turk) to call similar sellers, which is reflected in the well-known saying: Worse *Puturčenec* than Turk. It was based on centuries of experience at the time, when some of our people sold themselves to the Turks and betrayed their fellow citizens. There is a similar proverb in Russian – *Nezvannyj gosht chuzhe tatarina*. In both examples, it is underlined that the worst are traitors from their own ranks.

We encounter many examples of primitive hostility in the Slavic world, unfortunately, even in our times. When Russians celebrate Victory Day, they wear a *Georgievskaja lentochka* – a *Georgievskaja* ribbon, the symbol of which is based on the image of George the Victorious. The ribbon has a red-black color combination, and to one minister of Ukraine it started to resemble a potato mandolin in the context of Russophobia – in Russian: *koloradskij zuk*. The mentioned Ukrainian minister called the Russians who pinned this ribbon – *colorados* (perhaps: *mandolinists*), which was and still is an immense insult to those who perished in the war, among whom were millions of Ukrainians. Another high-ranking Ukrainian official declared that when Soviet troops were liberating Ukraine, that was the beginning of its occupation. A. Merkel even had to correct him.

### Czechs and Slovaks in the Slavic world

Currently, there are around 300 million Slavs living on our Mother Earth, but as it turns out, the Slavic world has never been so divided and hostile as it is today. Former American President B. Obama once expressed admiration for Czechs and Slovaks when he assessed their mutual relations after the division of Czechoslovakia in 1993. Among other things, he emphasized that Czechs and Slovaks can be a model for other nations where long-term conflicts are ongoing. Although the natural differences in the mentality and history of our nations sometimes caused certain misunderstandings, in es-

sence, there were never fatal conflicts between Czechs and Slovaks. On the one hand, the Czech countries were clearly economically more advanced, and during the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918-1939) many Slovaks went to the Czech Republic to earn money, the same trend continued after the Second World War and, in fact, nowadays many Slovaks are also employed in the Czech Republic. Although there were also shady sides in this sphere, when before the Second World War there was a dismantling of industry in Slovakia, because some Czech industrialists considered Slovakia to be only an agricultural or raw material appendage of Bohemia. However, in their essence, clearly favorable relations prevailed and still prevail between Czechs and Slovaks for a long time. In this place, joint football or hockey teams can be mentioned, in which Czech and Slovak football and hockey players played together. 8 Slovaks played in the Czechoslovak football team, which won the title of European champion in Belgrade in 1976! Although the Czechs and the Czechs were the main representatives of the common state, the mutual relations between our two nations were strong and inherently friendly. It was mostly mentioned abroad, as for example in the USSR: *Naši igraut s Cechami*. More than once while studying at the Kuban State University in Krasnodar, the locals addressed us: *Nu, kak, Czechs?* But our friends, who knew the national basis of our country, corrected their compatriots: *Eto ne Czechs, eto Slovaks*.

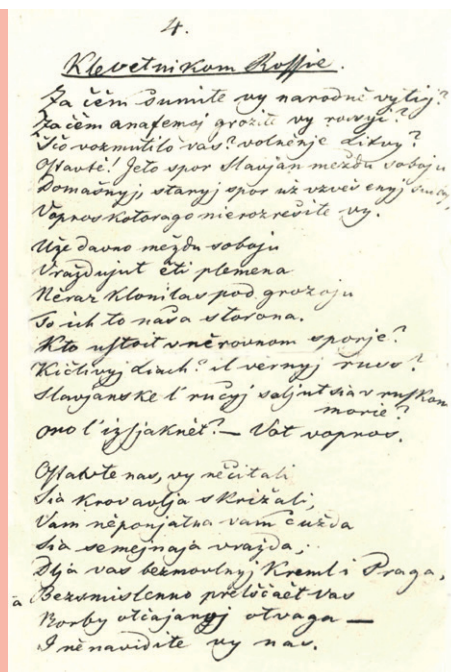
It is requested to give one example about Czech-Slovak relations. Large international tourist events are regularly organized in the Austrian town of Knietelfeld, in which tourists from twelve to fourteen countries participate. During the opening ceremony, among other things, the national anthems of all participants are played in alphabetical order. When they welcomed the Slovak tourists, we all stood up, there were more than a hundred of us, and we started singing *Nad Tatrou se blýska*. It surprised the organizers quite a bit, because until then none of those present had sung their national anthem. An even bigger surprise came when they started playing the Czech national anthem – Czechs were in last place in the local alphabet – *Tschechei*. There were only about twenty Czechs. The entire large Slovak group stood up again and we sowed *Kde domov můj*. Many present were visibly surprised to the point of astonishment that the Slovaks were singing the Czech national anthem, because after the division of Czechoslovakia, the media regularly published materials about a number of complex and possible conflict situations between Czechs and Slovaks. In the following days, the locals occasionally asked us if we were friends with the Czechs, and our positive answers were quite unexpected for them. After all, the whole of Europe was shaken by the war conflict in Yugoslavia, the growing tension between Russia and Ukraine, the long-term conflict relations between Russia and Poland, etc.

A huge number of similar examples can be given, but our peoples coexist in true friendship even after the aforementioned division, and we often hear that the current relations between Czechs and Slovaks are better than they were in the common state. Although the relatively recent past in the relations between our two nations is marked by several tragic events, especially from the period of the Second World War. I will choose one more example from personal experiences. When we were in southern Bohemia as a large group from Prešov, we visited the famous castle *Orlík nad Vltavou* as part of a rich program. There was a long line at the ticket office, and I casually asked the cashier with a cheerful intention:





Otto von Bismarck – the founder of Germany, the first chancellor of the German Empire. Source: internet



Pushkin's poem Klevetnikom Rossie (in Ján Kalinčiak's handwriting). Source: Slovak National Library

„Please, do you also sell tickets for foreigners?“ She emphasized in a very serious tone: „You are not foreigners, you are ours after all!“ This literally brother-sister the answer elicited hilarious reactions and genuinely happy laughter from our group. We also experienced similar moments in the famous Mastné krámy restaurant in České Budějovice, where our group had lunch together. Afterwards, we started singing Slovak folk songs, which the locals were probably not used to, but when we played the legendary Slovak folk song Na Kráľová holi, other guests joined us and it was clear how friendly and friendly they were towards us. I have already experienced several similar situations with the Czech brothers, and it always occurs to me that B. Obama was right. If he could say that about the mutual relations of other Slavs! And such realistic brother-sister moments remain permanently in our consciousness. And that's all it takes - mutual understanding and tolerance.

#### Leave this dispute between the Slavs

Unfortunately, in relation to other Slavic peoples, Bismarck's words are more valid. It is surprising and sad how the peoples of the former Yugoslavia, especially the Serbs and Croats, Russians and Ukrainians, could be angered. For a long time, we have recorded a great ethnophobia between Poles and Russians, which has its complex historical roots. AS Pushkin already drew attention to this in his well-known poem Slanderers of Russia - Slanderers of Russia, when he responded to the anti-Russian uprising of the Poles in 1831. In the said poem, there are words that seem to remind the Russians and Poles of their common tragic past, but also our contemporaries, when he recalls:

More than once she burned under her feet,  
Once theirs, once our country...

It is enough to recall only the period of the Sorrows and the False Dimitriad at the beginning of the 17th century, when Moscow was occupied by Polish troops and various impostors were placed on the tsar's throne – the False Dimitriys, who were

supposed to be the sons of Ivan IV. Terrible. Pushkin turns to the West in the aforementioned poem:

Leave this dispute of the Slavs  
among themselves...

The great Russian spirit accurately understood the West's long-term interest in angering the Slavs and continues to do so. How many tragedies and sorrows have been brought by the disputes between the Slavs in the past centuries alone! Bismarck seems to have given precise instructions to the enemies of the Slavs on how to proceed in weakening their positions.

As I mentioned above, the Slavic peoples were driven to fight each other in the First World War. In 1914, the Austro-Hungarian government forcibly sent around 400,000 Slovaks and Ruthenians to fight against the Eastern Slavs, of which 70,000 died at the front.

Our other Czech, Slovak and Ruthenian ancestors had to fight on the southern front against the Serbs. At that time, men between the ages of 18 and 40 had to enlist, and those who refused were shot. Similarly, our ancestors had to go to the Eastern Front in World War II.

Many of them perished there, many went over to the Soviet side, and some of them were awarded the highest Soviet honors. For example, a Slovak teacher, Captain Ján Pýtkové was awarded the title of Hero of the USSR, he died heroically near the Ukrainian city of Ovruch. Czech captain Otakar Jaroš died in the battle near Sokolov and was also awarded the title of Hero of the USSR. A film was made about this battle under the direction of the well-known director Otakar Vávra.

These heroes and their followers could not be manipulated into fighting against the Slavic brothers. The fate of our soldiers on the Eastern Front during the Second World War is very interestingly described in Rudolf Jašík's novel The Dead Do Not Sing, which has been translated into Russian and is an example for today's generations of Slavs not to be manipulated against each other. After all, Pushkin would have something to write about even today.

To be continued



## An interview with Branislav Kulík, the chairman of Slovak Matica in Serbia

Viliam Komora, secretary of Slovak Matica, interviewer

From 2021, the current chairman of Slovak Matica in Serbia is PhDr. Mgr. Branislav Kulík, DPA. He comes from Kysáč, where he spent his childhood and attended the Ľudovít Štúr elementary school. He graduated from the Svetozár Miletic High School of Economics in Novi Sad. He graduated from the Evangelical Theological Faculty of the Comenius University in Bratislava, and received his doctorate in philosophy from the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra. He became an evangelical priest and currently works as a parish priest in Novi Sad in the Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Serbia. Together with his wife Alena, born Gajanová, who works as a catechist in the church choir and works in regional television, they have and are raising three children, son Rastislav and daughters Alžbeta and Katarína. They are also expecting a new baby.

**Mr. Chairman, Slovak Matica in Yugoslavia was founded in 1932, church worker and lawyer Dr. was elected as its first president. Janko Bulík and the evangelical priest and teacher Ján Kvačala as the honorary chairman. Let's mention that after the German-Hungarian occupation of Novi Sad, the chairman Janko Bulík was arrested by the Nazis in 1941 and terrorized a lot, he died in January 1942 in the concentration camp in Mauthausen. Can you elaborate on the activities of Matica in the early years?**

Slovak Matica in Yugoslavia was founded by the will of the Slovak nation at the Slovak National Festival, in the courtyard of the Ján Kollár Gymnasium. Which is actually the largest and oldest Slovak grammar school, outside the borders of Slovakia. Matica gathered Slovaks and deepened cooperation with Slovaks in Czechoslovakia. She took care of the political rights of Slovaks, supervised the educational processes, but also the economic life. In this and the following year, we are publishing with Dr. Ján Babiak (former chairman of the MSS) monumental three-volume work, which brings this first and second period of Matica's activity in Vojvodina closer. In the state at that time, the so-called The May dictatorship. After

Dr. Bulík, the post of chairman was held by Bishop Samuel Štarke.

**The Slovak Matica in Yugoslavia was restored in Bácský Petrovec in 1990. Can you describe its main activities and presidents in the following years up to the present?**

After the restoration, Matica's greatest success was the restoration of the Slovak National Festival, which is still our biggest and most visited holiday. They are organized annually in Petrovac. After the restoration, the first chairman was Michal Spevák, followed by the parish priest Juraj Šefčík. They were followed by Rastislav Surový, Dr. Ján Babiak, Branislav Slivka, Katarína Melegová-Melichová and my predecessor was Ján Brtka. After the change of the name of the state, Matica was also named Slovak Matica in Serbia. In addition to organizing Slovak national celebrations, Matica organizes a number of other cultural-artistic as well as scientific events aimed at preserving and improving Slovak culture and language. It is also active in the field of enrolling pupils in schools with the Slovak language of instruction. With the chairman of Slovak Matica Marián Gešper, we





Branislav Kulík with his wife and children.  
Photo: archive of the author



During the performance at the Slovak National Festival.  
Photo: archive of the author

launched an excellent campaign to help first-year students at Slovak secondary schools, where we donate laptops to them with the financial support of the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad.

**This year is somewhat symbolic, as several municipalities in Serbia, but also in Romania and Hungary, are commemorating the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the Slovaks. Members of Matica also participate in these events. What are the main celebrations and where did you prepare them?**

But the village of Jánošík was 200 years old from the arrival of the Slovaks. Báčsky Petrovec had 200 years of consecration of the Evangelical church there. Many associations and societies, both folklore and sports, have their centenaries this year. The oldest continuously operating Slovak educational institution in the world, the Primary School of the hero Janko Čmelík in Stará Pazova, has celebrated 250 years. Every year we commemorate something and, of course, registrars are in the forefront both as organizers and implementers of such events. When you have one third of the population as members, it is difficult to organize anything without registrars.

**In mid-August, as Slovak Matica in Serbia, you were one of the organizers of the Slovak National Festival in Báčsky Petrovec, which is an important holiday for Slovaks not only in this town, but in all of Serbia, but also in the wider European area. This year was already the 31st after their renewal. Tell us about the more important events organized by Slovak Matica in Serbia?**

The historical core of the national festivities is the MSS General Assembly. This usually takes place on Saturdays. SNS lasts three days, although the accompanying events begin in May. Matica organizes two gala concerts, namely adult folklore groups on Saturday and children's folklore groups on Sunday

evening, as the highlight of the celebrations. But also a soccer and bowling tournament, a meeting of Slovak Lowland teachers, a meeting of Slovak student youth, and participates in every single event that is organized within the CIS.

**Why is it that you have over fifteen thousand members, i. e. almost every third Slovak in Serbia is also a member of Slovak Matica in Serbia? After all, your Matica is the largest of the matrices among all Slavs, in terms of percentage representation of the number of members of the given nation.**

As the leading personalities of the Slovak nation stood at the very restoration of Matica, such as senior, later bishop Samuel Vrbovský, senior Pavel Andrášik, emeritus bishop Juraj Struhárik and others, the nation saw Matica in a positive light and the enthusiasm for the Slovak cause was great. The membership was immediately large. It certainly grew over time also because membership in the MSS helped applicants for the Certificate of a Slovak living abroad. Personally, as someone who is close to sociology and culturology, I see it as follows – the absence of a direct connection to the state budget means that we have to carry a large part of the burden through voluntary work. It makes organizing anything more difficult, but also transparent and engaging. In the long run, it resulted in today's situation.

**You also work in the National Council of the Slovak National Minority, you were also the chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Institute for the Culture of Vojvodina Slovaks, you also perform other functions and perform other tasks in your church as well. Is it possible to pursue it at all and what are the most significant achievements you have achieved in these institutions?**

The fight for the Slovak cause is still ongoing. For example, in





With his wife at the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Belgrade. Photo: archive of the author

education every year we fight for new Slovak classes, when organizing festivals every year we fight for finances and volunteers, when protecting the official use of Slovak, we have to be on the lookout every day where and how signs are put up, or whether there is discrimination against Slovaks in any office. Sometimes we manage to stop something ahead of time, other times we have to fix things. There are successes, but, unfortunately, there are also failures. As in everything in life, so also in this. The biggest failure is when people are not interested in their rights. We achieved many things through legal means, that is, by writing requests, complaints and the like.

**At the same time, can we claim that it is your Slovak Evangelical church in Serbia that fulfills a special position within the Slovak national minority in Serbia?**

Yes, both in history and at the same time. This topic is something we could have a separate conversation about. It is something complex, but the easiest way to clear it up is that the evangelical church combines the national feelings and needs of Slovaks, which is very high both here and elsewhere; it is connected with a person's spiritual need, which is also prominent among Slovaks. With this connection, we are in today's situation, where the

church represents one of the measures of national belonging.

**You are also actively involved in the activities of Slovak Matica in Slovakia, you are a member of the Council for Slovaks living abroad, you participate in Matica events in Slovakia. What are the other cooperation possibilities of our Matikas?**

At the founding of Slovak Matica in Yugoslavia, Dr. Bulík said that for legal reasons we are a special institution, but in terms of feelings, we are a union of „Martin's Matica". We are sister institutions and in the family of Slavic mothers we are twin sisters. Of course, like my predecessors, we are also involved, co-organize and support each other. It would be good if the chairman of the Slovak Matica and the chairman of the Slovak Matica in Serbia, in addition to the mentioned Council for Slovaks, also had more formal functions from the office in the other Matica. The function of a special adviser or something similar. That's for thinking about the future.

**Thank you very much for the interview and I wish you a lot of success for you personally, your family, for Slovaks in Serbia, but also for all Slovaks around the world and especially for all Slavs. May the benevolent Lord God help you, us and all of us.**

God be with you!



With the parish priest from Partizánská Ľupča. Photo: archive of the author





## Poet of the unification of the Slavs, Ján Kollár

Lukáš Perný, Slovak Matica, Slovakia

The vision of united and cooperating Slavic nations was the dream of the great Ján Kollár. 230 years ago, in the picturesque village of Mošovce (near Turčianske Teplice) in Slovakia, the author of *The Glory of Daughters* was born, the first chairman of the Association of Lovers of Slovak Language and Literature, who entered the history of both the Slovak and Czech nations, and after whom the planet is named (20991) Jánkollár. In Kollár's birthplace there is his monument and memorial room (even though the original house burned down, the stone granary that houses the museum remained), but he is buried in the Olšan Cemetery in Prague at the intersection of the main roads. He also has a bronze bust in the Pantheon of the National Museum in Prague. Kollár's legacy of cultural cooperation of the Slavs is fulfilled by Slovak Matica, both through the Congresses of Matrices and institutions of Slavic nations, as well as through specific cooperation with representatives of Slavic nations (such as the last two delegations of registrars in Serbia in October 2023).

Vladimír Clementis wrote in the work *Slavism then and now*: „Kollár's emphasis that reciprocity does not matter in the political unification of all Slavs, that is, in the creation of a unified Slavic state, and his concentration of reciprocity in the field of literature and culture resulted from a realistic estimate of the possibilities and situation of the Slavic peoples at the time.” Kollár was too great a spirit not to be aware of the political roots and political impact of the literary reciprocity he proclaimed. The response that his *Glory*

daughter and study on Reciprocity, especially among Czechs, Yugoslavs and Ukrainians, caused could not leave anyone in doubt about this matter.” These words perfectly concentrate Kollár's contribution.

### Let us celebrate gloriously the glory of the Glorious

Ján Kollár (July 29, 1793, Mošovce – January 24, 1852, Vienna) was born into a peasant-craftsman family, studied in Mošovce, Kremnica, Banská Bystrica and finally at the Evangelical Lyceum in Bratislava (at that time Prešporok). He learned Greek, Latin, read German classics, but also contemporary literature. Kollár obtained the means for education by procuring private lessons in wealthier families. For a short time, he worked as a tutor in the Kolbenhayer family in Banská Bystrica, where he also passed the candidacy exam, which was a condition for a scholarship to study in Germany. He ran an orphanage for a while. From Slovakia, he moves to the German university city of Jena, where he studies evangelical theology and gets to know German theological and philosophical thinking. In addition to theology, he also studies natural sciences, history and philology. With a high probability, it was here that he became acquainted with the philosophy of the Enlightenment, but above all with the philosophy of Herder and his „prophecy” about the peace-making mission of the Slavs. In Loebed, he meets Frederika Schmidtová, the daughter of a German pastor, whom he calls Mína in his poems (however, she does not become his wife until 1835; they had



a daughter, Ľudmila). He moves from Germany to the capital of Hungary, where he works as an evangelical pastor. Kollár confirmed both Petőfi and Kossuth here (since 2011 there is also a commemorative plaque). In the meantime, he still appears in Prague, where he meets with Czech patriots. During the revolution, he works in Vienna as a confidant of the government for Slovakian issues, while submitting a proposal for the self-government of Slovakia and for Slovak schools with the Czech language of instruction, which became a controversial moment in the history of the national revival. After the revolution, he becomes an extraordinary professor of Slavic archeology at the University of Vienna, which was negatively received by some members of the Štúr's. After serving as a minister, he works for the University of Vienna, where he is to lecture on Slavic antiquities and Slavic mythology. He does not enjoy his new place for long. After moving, she catches a cold and falls ill (catarrh of the upper respiratory tract). His beloved Frederika comes to Vienna and together with her daughter Ľudmila they celebrate Ján's name day. After he received his professorship in Vienna, he was also honored by Prague's Charles University (honorary doctorate) as a gift for his sixtieth birthday. According to Winkler, Kollár lectured from memory, quoting German, Latin and Greek quotations from memory. In 1852, he visits Baron Geringer and talks about Slovak Matica, which, according to Kollár, should be founded, Winkler reports. However, his illness worsens, he starts delirious. The great spirit begins to break down and soon dies. He is buried in Vienna with the greatest honors.

#### Kollar's work

„Love is the beginning of all great deeds.“

– Ján Kollár

Kollár's contribution to the Slovak cultural structure, as well as to Slovak philosophy and literature, is monumental and extends to the entire Slavic circle, as he laid the foundation for the modern Slovak philosophy of history, as well as the idea of all-Slavic reciprocity. Kollár's first work is the poem Lamentation over the current conditions in Hungary, and he reacts to the post-Napoleonic times. The following is the debut collection of Poems by Ján Kollár published in Prague. The poems were marked by censorship, which did not release several sonnets of patriotic content, and J. Jungman, who was

in charge of publishing the collection, did not even dare to submit the poem The Patriot to censorship because of its anti-feudal character. The poems include two cycles of sonnets, elegies, patriotic poems and epigrams. The pre-romantic poems, which go beyond the existing rococo-sentimental framework, contain a protest against wrongs and oppression, civil disobedience, depict the inner life of a person freeing himself from social bonds. Here, nature is not just a backdrop, but a stage of life, that is, a concrete place. Kollár made an indelible mark in Slovak as well as Czech cultural history with the cyclic composition *Slávy dcéra* containing 150 sonnets in 3 cantos. Kollar's life work, inspired by Dante's Divine Comedy, in the first edition contained a prelude (verse in time), while the second was enriched with two more cantos, *Léthé* and *Acherón* - the Slavic heaven and hell. He divided the sonnets into three cantos according to the Elbe, Danube and Sála rivers. The poet, the main character, travels through the

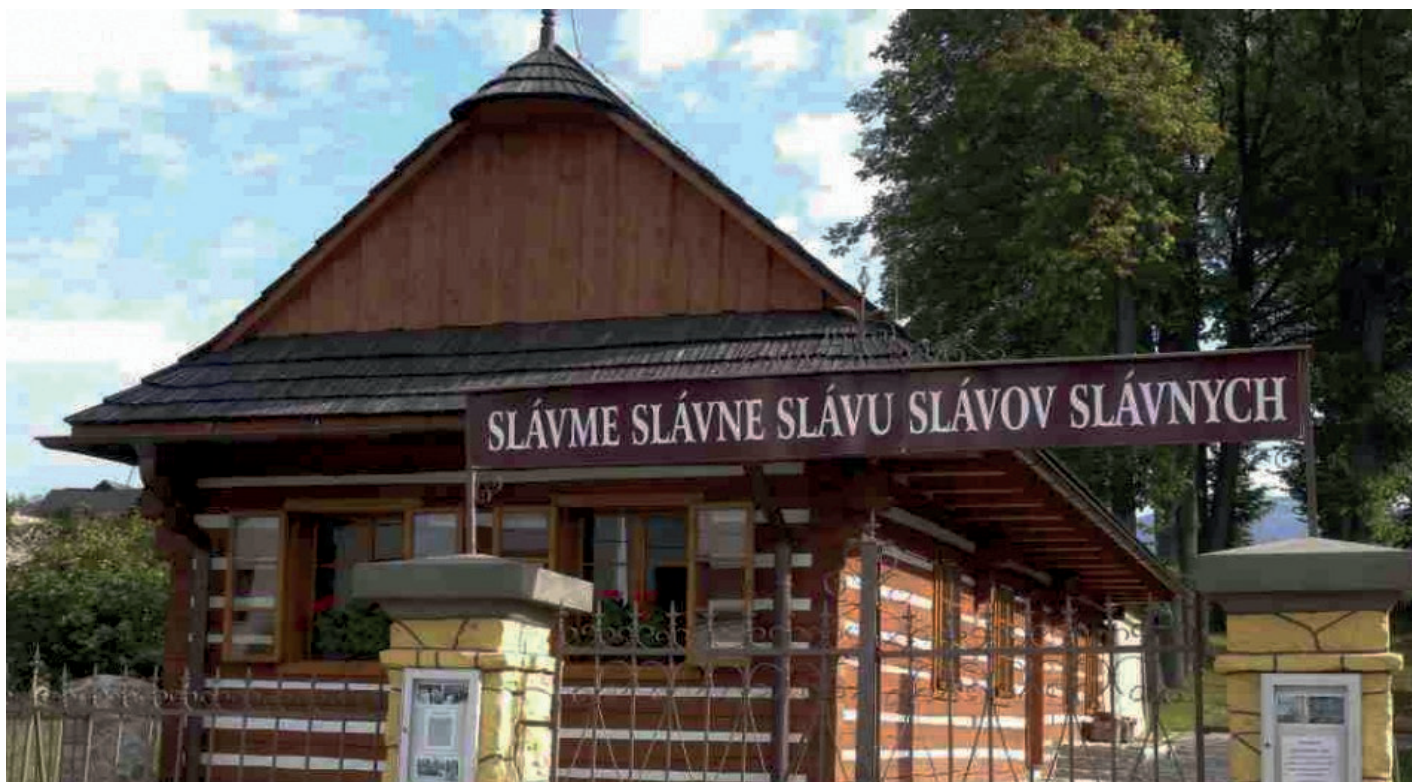
regions where the Slavs lived, up to the Slavic heaven and hell. The collection was inspired by his personal grief from a breakup. Kollar's verses aim at the present by indicting the past, condemning the oppressors of the unfree Slavic peoples. By homeland he does not mean only the territory, but mores, speech, basically national identity. In addition to poetry, he also devoted himself to journalism, cultural-political and scientific activities. With the text *Something about the Hungarianization of Slavs in Hungary*, he expressed his protest against the administrative and criminal practices of the then feudal authorities regarding the language in evangelical churches and schools, where officials in-



Statue of Ján Kollár. Photo: Viliam Komora

troduced Hungarian. He also fulfilled the national awareness mission with his sermons. Following the German philosopher Herder, he defines the characteristics of the Slavs as piety, innocent cheerfulness, love for their native language, and tolerance. Kollár rejected chauvinism, or the superiority of one nation over others. Kollár also wrote several textbooks (*Reader*, *Slabikář*), scientific works (*On the Literary Reciprocity between Slavic Tribes and Dialects*, *The Glory of the Goddess and the Origin of the Name Slavův or Slavjanův*, *Paměti*), preaching texts, travelogues, memoirs, and finally poetry. Last





Ján Kollár Museum in Mošovce. Source: internet

but not least, he collected and wrote folk songs (in collaboration with Pavel Jozef Šafárik and Ján Blahoslav-Benedikti). He was literally enthusiastic about collecting folk songs. In 1823 he published the first volume of Songs of the Slovak People in Uhřy and in 1827 the second volume. In the prefaces, Kollár emphasized the importance of songs for the national cultural structure, pointing out that they are an image of the national character, a history of the inner world and life of the nation. He continued collecting even later, when he published *Národné zievanky*, the most widespread publication of the texts of Slovak folk songs. They played an important role in the very development of Slovak literature. Paradoxically, by publishing the collection, Kollár increased interest in Slovak before the Štúr reform, which he later opposed. Basically, Kollár discovered an interest in Slovak folk songs. As part of the scientific contribution, Kollár's texts connected with the analysis of the etymology of the word Slav should still be emphasized. In addition, several manuscripts, sermons, reflections, contributions to magazines, as well as linguistic works have also been preserved.

Kollár fought for literary reciprocity between the Slavic tribes, he considered the Slavs as a nation with only four basic dialects – Russian, Polish, Serbo-Croatian (Illyrian) and Czechoslovak. The work on literary reciprocity between Slavic tribes and dialects is a theoretical treatment of the idea of all-Slavic reciprocity. Kollár also collaborated significantly with another great of the All-Slavic Generation, Pavel Jozef Šafárik.

#### Philosophical starting points and consequences of Kollár's work

„He who is worthy of freedom himself knows how to value freedom for everyone, he who binds slaves is himself a slave.”

— Ján Kollár

If we want to understand the thinking of Ján Kollár, we have to take a closer look at the philosophy of the All-Slavic Generation as a whole. First of all, it should be emphasized

that the entire generation was significantly influenced by the philosophy of history of the German philosopher Herder. For Herder (writes Dupkala), man, society and nation are the basic ingredients of the philosophy of history, and according to Herder, the nation is a history-making subject. The history of mankind is made up of nations that take turns „on the stage of history” in their humanizing mission. And this idea had a significant influence on Kollár (all-Slavic reciprocity), but also on Pavel Jozef Šafárik (process of humanization). Where there is no freedom, there can be no duty, only slavery. According to Kollár, man is created for freedom. Society connects with reason and morality, which are given by nature (affection for one's own kind). According to Kollár, man is created for community, not for independence, and finally, man differs from animals in sociability (man's ability to participate in the life, destinies of others, equal to himself), he is not created for life outside of society, therefore he should contribute to the well-being of the community. A condition for community advancement is rising above personal interests. Kollár recognizes physical and mental freedom, with mental freedom being superior as the body is controlled by instincts, drives and passions. Therefore, man's task is to control the unhumanized nature in us with a humanized, cultivated and refined nature. According to Kollár, freedom without reason is just chaos. These ideas are primarily based on Herder, but they are applied to the specifically Slavic conditions of Slavic humanism, which was also evident in Šafárik's analysis of the cultural-historical connections of the Slavs. For the authors of All-Slavic, freedom is the mother of art, knowledge, enlightenment, education and culture; the assumption of creativity, application of creative forces (including activity) and creative engagement. Both Šafárik and Kollár connect freedom with the freedom of the nation, and thus human emancipation goes hand in hand with national liberation. In this context, Šafárik's motto is memorable, purely human can be achieved only nationally. Only a spiritually cultivated person is able to break free from slavery. Related to this is the question of the philosophy of history, which is un-



derstood with spiritual stage-by-stage development. The role of culture is connected with education, the spread of enlightenment, traditions, customs and progress towards a higher level of human development. Enlightenment and education should be spread at all levels of life, down to the lowest strata. The Slavic principle of culture is connected with the mission of the Slavs to humanize the world. According to Kollár, the Slavic principle is also a synthesis of previous (antique, Germanic) principles and developments. Kollár and Šafárik agree with Herder that humanity must go through stages of development and that each nation has its specific place and role in this development. Kollár perceives humanity as the human race and secondly as what is appropriate for people and humanity (opposite of cruelty, wildness and ignorance). The meaning of human existence is striving for the happiness of mankind. According to Kollár, in other nations, humanity is subordinate to nationality, but in Slavs, nationality is subordinate to humanity. The realization of humanity is connected with the realization of a higher form of freedom. From Herder onwards, Kollár took over the idea of nations alternating in the leading role at the head of history and therefore writes: „One nation is called to introduce the knowledge of the only God, another to present the models of beauty and art to the world, the third to the laws of law for life in the countries he arranged and another to educate and beautify the country.” By the latter he obviously meant the Slavs. Kollár’s idea of the origin of nations is also noteworthy. It was based on Herder’s idea, according to which nations, national subjects – after the

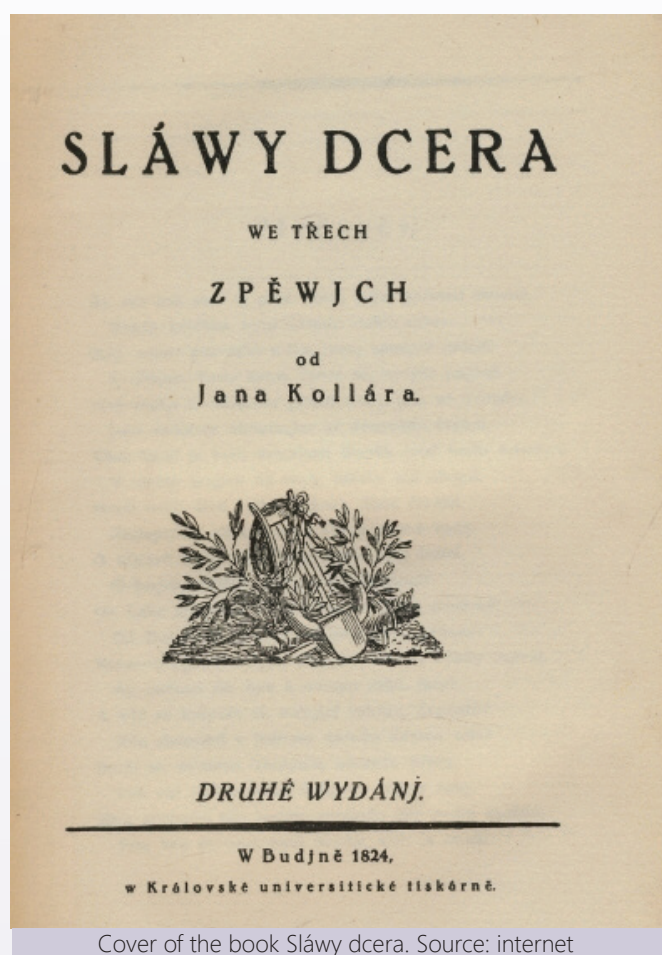


Silver coin issued in 1977 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the death of J. Kollár.  
Source: internet

disintegration of the unity of the human race and after reaching a certain level – follow the path of returning to the lost original unity, to unification, Timura states. This is the basis for the idea of Pan-Slavic unity. He associated unification with the manifestation of objective laws of human history. Kollár defined a nation as a community of people who are united by a common language, equal morals and customs. Furthermore – he exhorted Timur – Kollár considered nations as forms in which hu-

manity develops and forms. Due to the scope of the article, which is available online in its full version, we will not address the (mainly linguistic) dispute between Kollár and Štúr. An objective cultural historian must be above this dispute and perceive both rivals (both Kollár and Štúr) as an inseparable part of both Slovak and Czech culture, and perceive both their po-

sitives and negatives. It is no coincidence that Clementis saw Kollár as a prophet after World War II, who predicted the peaceful coexistence of Slavs (e. g. Tito’s Yugoslavia), and Kollár also inspired TG Masaryk (Czechoslovakia). On the other hand, for Štúr, the prophecy of Slovak political independence in the Slovak Republic was fulfilled. And so they were both partially right, but each in different historical contexts. In conclusion, it should be added that Ján Kollár belongs to the greatest giants of Slovak history. His ideas are interwoven with humanism and an optimistic belief in progress towards humanity and peaceful coexistence between nations. According to Kollár’s utopia, the world would be more beautiful, fairer and more meaningful. Only the distant future will show whether Kollár, inspired by Herder, will see the fulfillment of these ideas...



Cover of the book *Slávy dcera*. Source: internet





Rudolf Schuster  
prezident SR v.v.

S Dušanom Tóthom som sa zoznámil na poslednom Svetovom kongrese Slovákov 9. mája 1990 v kanadskom Toronte. Bol som tam pozvaný ako vtedajší predseda SNR. Mal som príležitosť spoznať ho aj bližšie, počas môjho pôsobenia ako posledného veľvyslanca ČSFR v Kanade. Podľa môjho názoru Dušan Tóth predstavuje slovenskú osobnosť, ktorá nám veľmi chýbala najmä po vzniku samostatnej Slovenskej republiky. Je to človek veľmi kultivovaný, s perfektným vystupovaním a širokým rozhľadom. Získal si dôveru medzi ľuďmi svojou skromnosťou, múdrosťou, pracovitosťou a toleranciou. Preto, nie náhodou, stal sa prirodzenou autoritou spoločenského života nielen v Kanade a USA, ale aj u nás doma. Budem si ho vždy vážiť ako vynikajúceho kamaráta a dobrého radcu.



Ivan Gašparovič  
prezident SR v.v.

Reverenda Dušana Tótha som evidoval pred rokom 1989 ako popredného predstaviteľa Svetového kongresu Slovákov. Prvý raz sme sa stretli v dobe, keď som bol predsedom NR SR. Prišiel s návrhom, ako by kanadskí a americkí Slováci mohli pomôcť pri budovaní nového Slovenska. Vtedajší predseda vlády SR Milan Čič, vždy pozitívne, oceňoval úroveň kázni D. Tótha. Jeho kázne sa živo prihovárali človeku a prenikali do srdca. Ako bývalý prezident vysoko hodnotím človeka, ktorý pomáhal pri vytváraní samostatného Slovenska a pričínal sa o pozdvihnutie národného uvedomenia Slovákov.



Joseph M. Burza  
prezident Kanadskej  
obchodnej komory

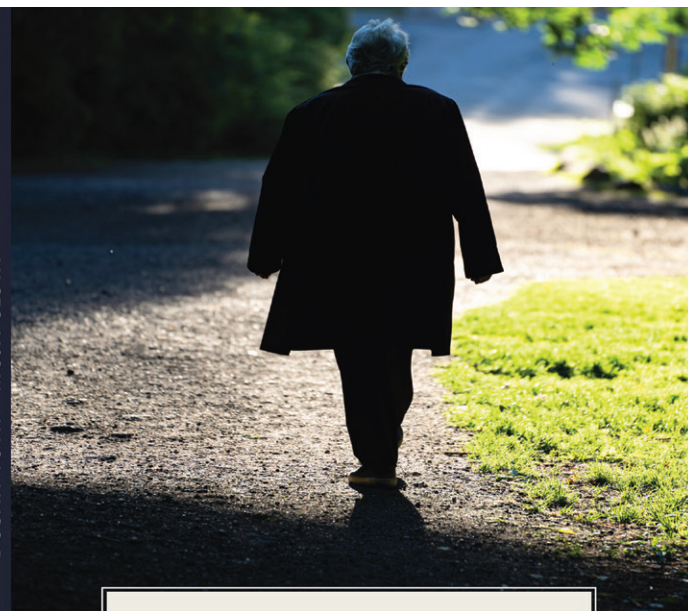
Svetový kongres Slovákov, najvýznamnejšia organizácia Slovákov v histórii, bol jasným dôkazom toho, že aj nejednotní Slováci vedia ťahať za jeden povraz. Práve Dušan Tóth, ktorý bol v rokoch 1971 až 1990 jej generálnym tajomníkom, sa snažil svojím prirodzeným entuziazmom a optimizmom naplniť ciele kongresu. Vnímam ho ako výborného rečníka, ktorý vie strhnúť ľudí pre správnu vec. Bol aj milujúcim manželom, ktorému žiaľ, už odišla jeho milovaná Valika, tiež láskavým otcom, dobrým priateľom, ktorý vždy nezištne podáva pomocnú ruku.



S finančnou podporou  
Úradu pre Slovákov  
žijúcich v zahraničí

MODRA

DUŠAN TÓTH - MOJA CESTA



MOJA CESTA  
*autobiografia*

DUŠAN TÓTH

Cover of the book My Way (autobiography)

# Dušan Tóth: My journey (autobiography)

Joseph M. Burza, president of the Canadian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce

On June 29, 2023, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic (SR) published Reverend Dušan Tóth's autobiographical book *Moja cesta* (My journey) on his 85th birthday. Dušan Tóth was born on July 2, 1938 in Modra, and for this reason, the official presentation of the book took place in the newly renovated premises of Kaštieľ in Modra. Dušan Tóth collaborated with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Slovakia two years ago, when we published the representative book *Štefan Boleslav Roman – The Uranus King*. It is dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the birth of the owner of the largest uranium mines in the world and the founder and chairman of the most important organization of Slovaks abroad in history - the World Congress of Slovaks, Štefan B. Romanov. The evangelical pastor Dušan Tóth was the general secretary of the World Congress of Slovaks (SKS) between 1971 and 1990. He held the second highest position in this important organization. Canadian ministers, US senators and congressmen, as well as many cardinals and bishops, routinely attended the general sessions of the congress. Štefan B. Roman died suddenly on March 23, 1988. Two days before the famous Candlelight Manifestation in Bratislava. After all, the impetus for the well-known Sviček manifestation came from the World Congress of Slovaks. After the death of Štefan Roman, Reverend Tóth logically became the face and symbol of the World Congress of Slovaks. In November 1989, just when the chairman of the nomination commission of the World Congress of Slovaks, Elizabeth Lipovská, presented him with an offer for the post of SKS general secretary, he opened the Bible and found the answer in it: „Go and speak

to the people.” He walked and spoke. D. Tóth took the stage at Slovak National Uprising Square in Bratislava together with Milan Kňažek. For many years during the former regime, Reverend Tóth spoke to Slovaks through the Hlas Ameriky and Slobodná Európa (Free Europe) radio stations. His meaningful and encouraging sermons influenced many people. In the spring of 1990, it was Dušan Tóth who welcomed and accompanied the first official Czechoslovak delegation headed by President Václav Havel, Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic Milan Čič and President of the National Assembly Alexander Dubček, the world-famous symbol of the spring of 1968, in Toronto at the airport.

The autobiographical book *Moja cesta* (My journey) is a sincere and intimate story of a man who left an indelible mark on the history of Slovak expatriate life, the struggle for democracy and the spread of cooperation and solidarity. And that regardless of religious beliefs or political orientation, which caused him many difficulties in his life. It is a book of unusual experiences, life turns, unusual meetings and knowledge. Reverend Dušan Tóth is an idealist, with an understanding approach and big arms.

There is a photo on the cover of the book that I would rank among the hundred best in the world. It depicts the figure of a man in years, in an unbuttoned coat, who is walking off into the distance to an unknown destination. That photo has several meanings, symbols, but also a lot of poetics and philosophy. The man in the photo is walking slowly but surely. Calm and balanced. Notice how the path is illuminated, directly irradiated. Not all of it, but the part that the man walks





Reverend Dušan Tóth

on. Who enlightened her, who guides him, who shows him the direction, who infuses him with strength, hope and perseverance? How many times did he stumble on the road, maybe even fall, and yet he got up and went on. He is also afraid of falls and pain. Be that as it may, he always walked upright and determined. God, his most faithful and devoted friend and companion, accompanies him on that path. It shows him the way and protects him. Even when he is not in control, but

also when he is happy and doing well. The man in the photo is Dušan Tóth, a wise, modest, loyal Slovak, world traveler. The author of the photo is also a world traveler, the famous Canadian photographer Yuri Dojč, originally from Slovakia.

The book reads very well and quickly, because you can't tear yourself away from it. It is written from the heart, with great sincere love. The book talks about his great love for his beloved Slovakia.



Reverend Dušan Tóth's visit from Canada to Slovak Matica on July 11, 2023, in the photo with the secretaries of Slovak Matica. From left: J. Seman, D. Tóth, P. Madura, V. Komora. Source: Slovak Matica



# WE REMEMBER



## MICHAL ELIÁŠ

90th anniversary of birth

September 19, 1934 Velčice, Slovakia – April 2, 2018 Martin, Slovakia

Slovak literary scholar, cultural historian, archivist, editor and teacher, senior employee of Slovak Matica. Author of the publication *Z dejín matic slovanské národov* (History of slavic Maticas) (2010), which provides an overview of national and cultural Slavic associations from the first Serbian Matica formed in 1826 to the present day.

Source: Slovak Matica

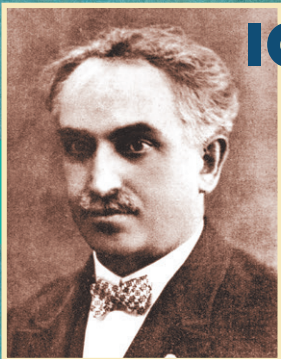
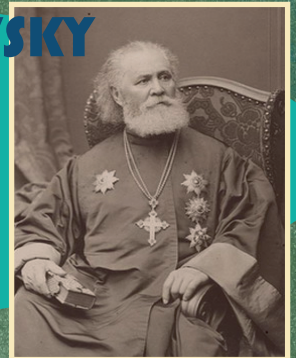
## MIKHAIL FEDOROVICH RAJEVSKY

140th death anniversary

July 30, 1811, Arzamas, Russia - May 14, 1884, Vienna, Austria

Russian diplomat, Orthodox priest, social activist, pan-Slavist, promoter of Russian culture in the environment of the Slavic nations of the Habsburg Monarchy, cleric (archier) at the Russian embassy in Vienna, founding member of Slovak Matica

Source: wikidata.org



## IGNÁC GESSAY

150th anniversary of birth

April 17, 1874, Tvrdošín, Slovakia – August 12, 1928, Bratislava, Slovakia

Teacher, journalist, editor, columnist, expatriate worker, participant in the first Czech-Slovak foreign resistance, signatory of the Pittsburgh Agreement, minoritologist. After being accused of pan-Slavism in 1898, he emigrated to the USA, where he became active in the expatriate movement. In 1907, he contributed to the establishment of the umbrella organization Slovak League in America. After returning to his homeland in 1920, he founded the Slovak League in Slovakia with headquarters in Bratislava.

Source: Slovak National Library - Literary archive

## TARAS HRYHOROVYCH SHEVCHENKO

210th birth anniversary

March 9, 1814, Moryntsi, Ukraine – March 10, 1861, St. Petersburg, Russia

Ukrainian poet, visual artist, founder of modern national literature, symbol of the country and Ukrainian culture. In 1846, he joined the secret association of the Cyril-Method brotherhood, which wanted to build a Slavic federation. After his membership was revealed, he was exiled for ten years.

Source: wikimedia.org



## LUDVÍK OCHRANA

210th birth anniversary

May 14, 1814 Champagnole, France – December 28, 1877 Stěbořice, Czech Republic

Czech Catholic priest, national revivalist in Silesia, co-founder and first chairman of Opavian Matica

Source: Silesian Regional Museum