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THE LOCAL BRANCH
OF SLOVAK MATICA IN RIJEKA
IS THIRTY YEARS OL

160 YEARS OF
THE SLOVENIAN MATICA

STRONG LOWLAND BONDS

INTERVIEW WITH
THE CHAIRMAN
OF THE SLOVENIAN MATICA

SLAVIC FAMILY AND TODAY

PAVOL JOZEF ŠAFÁRIK

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On the cover: Representatives of Slavic Maticas in Ljubljana on February 2, 2024. First row from left: Chairman of the Croatian Matica Miro Gavrán, Scientific Secretary of the Slovak Matica Pavol Madura, Chairman of the Slovenian Matica Aleš Gabrič, Secretary of the Slovenian Matica Ignacija Fridl Jarc, Chairman of the Serbian Matica Dragan Stanić. Top row from left: Researcher of the Slovak Matica Lukáš Perný, Secretary of the Slovak Matica Peter Schvantner, Chairman of the Slovak Matica Marián Gešper, Chairman of the Montenegrin Matica Ivan Jovović, Deputy of the Croatian Matica, General Secretary of the Montenegrin Matica Ivan Ivanović. **Photo:** Slovak Matica

The editorial team requires that contributions be shortened. The authors are responsible for the accuracy of the data in individual contributions.

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Let's protect our cultural and spiritual values

Katarína Koňariková, director of the Compatriot Museum of the Slovak Matica

Dear readers,

I am honored to present to you the latest issue, which focuses on important anniversaries, events and personalities from the Slavic world. In this issue, our editorial team has decided to focus on topics that connect our rich Slavic culture and history with the modern challenges we face.

It is with great pleasure that we bring you an overview of significant moments and projects that touch on the Slavic Maticas and their mutual relations. 160 years ago, the Slovenian Matica in Ljubljana was founded, only a few months after the Slovak Matica in Martin, which we will discuss in this issue of Slavic Horizon. We will also focus on maintaining the strong Slovak lowland bond that connects us through culture, traditions and national awareness. We commemorate important personalities, including Dr. Michal Eliáš, whose contribution to the scientific and cultural cooperation of the Slavic Maticas left a significant mark.

We also include an interview with the chairman of the Slovenian Foundation, Mr. Aleš Gabrić, who will tell us about the current state of Slovenian culture and our joint efforts to preserve Slavic heritage. At the Slovenian Foundation, we plan to implement several major projects, including a project of parallel Slovak-Slovenian history, which expresses our common history and cultural heritage. We also do not forget the Slovenian Foundation in Rijeka, which has been shedding light on

the Slovak cultural sphere abroad for thirty years. In this context, we turn once again to our greats. Pavol Jozef Šafárik and Rastislav Surový are two personalities who, with their lives and work, forever influenced the fate of our nations. Their legacy is extremely important, and therefore we do not forget it in this issue. I would also like to highlight the continuation of our series on the Slavic family, which this time focuses on the challenges of the present time and their impact on our identity and values. In this section, we reflect on how we can preserve our spiritual and cultural legacy even in the age of globalization and technological change.

Dear readers, Slavic Horizon is here for you as a space for mutual dialogue, cooperation and the dissemination of our common values. We are convinced that our mission – to spread traditional conservative values, to support Christianity, patriotism and the Cyril-Methodist tradition – is more relevant today than ever before. And this magazine is a tool for us to work together to preserve our Slavic identity and culture.

We believe that every article, interview and contribution in this issue will contribute to bringing us even closer to our common goals – the protection of our cultural and spiritual values in these rapidly changing times. Thank you for being with us on this journey. We look forward to your reactions, ideas and contributions that will inspire us to further develop our magazine.



Joint dinner of Slovenian Maticas with delegates of the Maticas of Slavic nations. Photo: Martin Hajník

160 years of the Slovenian Matica

Lukáš Perný, Slovak Matica, Martin

On February 2, 2024, in the building of the Slovak Matica (Slovenská Matica – which is the original name of the Slovenian Matica), a ceremonial academy was held in Ljubljana to mark the 160th anniversary of the Slovenian Matica in the presence and under the auspices of the Slovenian President Nataša Pirc Musar, the Chairman of the Slovenian Matica Aleš Gabrič, the Chairman of the Slovak Matica (MS) Marián Gešper, the Chairman of the Serbian Matica Dragan Stanić, the Chairman of the Croatian Matica Miro Gavran, the Chairman of the Montenegrin Matica Ivan Jovović, but also with the participation of prominent writers and cultural figures of Slovenia such as the writer Dušan Jelinčič and the former Chairman of the Slovenian Matica, academician Milček Komelj.

The event was also attended by the Deputy Slovak Ambassador to Slovenia, Peter Bak. In addition to the Chairman of the MS, the Slovak delegation consisted of the Secretary of the MS Peter Schvantner, the Scientific Secretary of the MS and Chairman of the Slavic Department of the MS Pavol Madura, the Director of the Membership Headquarters of the MS Martin Hajník, the Chairman of the Cultural and Philosophical Department of the MS, the Vice-Chairman of the Association of Slovak Writers and Chairman of the Ladislav Novomeský Society, Lukáš Perný, and the Deputy Director of the Neografia Printing House, Štefan Topľanský.

President Nataša Pirc Musar, who also took over the honorary patronage of the ceremony, in her speech, among other things, recalled the conscious individuals who, through their work and often voluntary contributions, enabled the existence and uninterrupted functioning of this important institution. In his speech, the Chairman of Slovenian Matica

Aleš Gabrič looked back on the history of Slovenian Matica and highlighted its efforts to establish the University of Ljubljana and SAZU (Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts). The Slovak Matica in Martin, represented by Marián Gešper, honored Slovenian Matica on its extraordinary jubilee at the event and presented Aleš Gabrič with rare facsimiles from the Archives of Slovak Matica in Martin, as well as the Golden Prize of Slovak Matica. Writer Dušan Jelinčič gave a speech on the 160th anniversary of Matica entitled *The Journey to the End of the Night or The Darkest Hour is Just Before Dawn*. The musical part, which was performed by the Slovenian anthem written by the "Slovenian Štúr" Franjo Prešeren, was provided by tenor Žiga Čopi, pianist Beáta Ilona Bercza, soprano Talita Sofija Komelj and sisters Patricija and Klára Avšič. The event was also attended by Slovenian media, including state television, which prepared several reports. The presence of the Slovenian Chairman also resonated significantly. At the end of the event, a statement was presented, mainly addressed to European institutions, oriented towards the protection of languages, traditions and cultural identities in the era of globalization. In the evening, the second, literary and musical part of the event took place, where prominent Slovenian writers Miljana Cunta, Uroš Zapan and Brane Senegačnik performed. The musical program was provided by Amadej Lah, Meira Smailovič, Tara Bregant and Mate Beštek.

In his speech, the Chairman of the Slovak Matica, Marián Gešper, mentioned the significant historical and cultural connections between Slovakia and Slovenia, which are the names of the same Maticas celebrating their 160th anniversary with a difference of only a few months, sim-

ilar national flags and a common Cyrillic-Methodist tradition. We must not forget the ancient common roots in the Samo Empire from 623, in which the ancestors of Slovaks, Slovenians, Moravians, Czechs and Lusatian Serbs united. Last year it was 1400 years since the establishment of this pre-state entity of the Western Slavs. During the official discussions, the influence of Slovaks Ján Kollár and Pavol Jozef Šafárik on the founders of the Slovak Matica and many other common historical connections were also emphasized. "The MS archive revealed that we have had rich correspondence, book exchanges and many other scientific connections since the 19th century. We have created a facsimile, which I will hand over. „I wish the numerically small but spiritually great Slovenian nation under the Alps much success in economic, political and political matters. I wish the Slovenská Matica in Ljubljana to continue to guard its nation, because we know very well that we live in a troubled Europe, in a troubled world, and maintaining our statehood and culture is just as difficult as winning it in the 19th or 20th century," said Gešper, who immediately presented Aleš Gabrič with the Slovak Matica Gold Medal with the image of Karol Kuzmány and Štefan Moyses, and symbolically shook hands with the President of Slovenia, Nataša Pirc Musar.

The Slovak Matica actively cooperates with foreign Maticas, both by regularly organizing Congresses of Maticas and Institutions of Slavic Nations (last year the fifth one was held, on the occasion of the 160th anniversary of the Slovak Matica in Martin, also with the presence of the Slovenian Matica in Ljubljana), and by publishing proceedings from the Congresses and the magazine *Slavic Horizon*, which is also published in various language versions. As part of the event, a cultural exchange was also established between Slovenian writers and the magazine of Slovak Matica *Slovak Perspectives*. A more detailed report from the event is being prepared by the Slovak Matica.

The Slovenian Matica in the past and today, Personalities of Slovenian culture

The Slovenian Matica is the second oldest institution in Slovenia. It was founded on 4 February 1864 as an institution for the scientific and cultural advancement of the Slovenian people. The Slovenian Matica was established at the suggestion of several Slovenian patriotic associations and individuals from Maribor, who urged the establishment of an institution publishing advanced professional literature in the Slovenian language, supporting the spread of culture among the Slovenians and the development of scientific terminology in the Slovenian language. The consortium was founded with private capital, as well as with the capital of



View of historic Ljubljana from Castle Hill. Photo: Martin Hajník

the Voivodeship of Carniola and several cultural associations. The Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I also contributed a significant financial amount. It reached its peak at the beginning of the 20th century. At that time, it functioned as an ordinary publishing house on the free market and at the same time fulfilled the role of an academy of sciences, cultivating high culture and maintaining close contacts with the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade, as well as with similar institutions abroad.

During World War I, the association was closed down and its assets confiscated by the Austro-Hungarian authorities. During the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, it expanded its publishing activities and in 1938 was one of the co-founders of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. During the Italian occupation, the Matica leadership collaborated with the Slovenian People's Liberation Front. In 1944, the Nazi German authorities closed it down. At the end of 1945, the authorities of the newly formed Slovenian People's Republic within the Yugoslav Federative People's Republic allowed it to be re-established. Although the state nationalized most of its assets, it allowed it to continue its activities and later allocated significant subsidies. The institution's activities were also revived in the 1980s, when it began to systematically publish translations of prominent Western philosophers and political theorists.

The chairman of the Slovenian Matica is Dr. Aleš Gabrič, under the chairmanships are prof. Dr. Alojz Kralj and prof. Dr. Vesna Mikoličová. The secretary of the Slovenian Matica is Dr. Ignacija Fridlová Jarcová. Interestingly, the Slovenian Matica is called *Slovenska matica* in Slovenian. Slovenians are also called *Slovenci*, women *Slovenky* and, for example, their mountains are *Slovenske gory*. Even the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts is called *Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti*.

The Slovenian Matica has several pillars, but few for civil servants. Unlike the Slovak one, it does not have local departments. The pillars or sections are historical, natural science and engineering, for the Slovenian language, philosophical, publishing. However, its commitment to the benefit of Slovenian culture is exemplary and it must be said that, unlike the attacks of previous years on the Slovak Matica in Martin, Slovenian Matica enjoy respect in the public and the scientific community, as well as among writers.

Personalities of the current Matica

The Chairman of the Slovenian Matica, Dr. Aleš Gabrič, is a historian who researches the recent cultural and political history of Slovenia. He is employed at the Institute of Recent History in Ljubljana. He is the author of several historical works and numerous scientific and professional



The headquarters building of the Slovenian Matica. Photo: Slovenian Matica

contributions, especially on the history of Slovenians in the 20th century, including several articles on the history of the Slovenian homeland. He was involved in the activities of the Slovenian Matica by participating in its organized symposia and publishing contributions in its publications. Given the topic of his research, he significantly participated in the preparation of the compilation *Slovenian Matica – 150 years' work for Slovenian culture*. He is a member of the board of directors and several of its sections at the Slovenian Matica, according to the official website.

The secretary of the Slovenian Foundation is **Dr. Ignacija Fridl Jarc**, who is also a prominent philosopher. Ignacija Fridl Jarc graduated in comparative literature and philosophy from the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. She has published more than three hundred reviews, notes and studies on contemporary Slovenian and world drama, prose and theatre. In 2000, she received the Stritar Award for Young Critic for her critical work. She has been part of many professional juries. In 2006, she received her doctorate in Plato's Theory of Truth from the Perspective of Beauty and Art. Her professional bibliography includes extensive articles on Plato's philosophy and the aesthetics of light in ancient philosophy, as well as the monograph *Language in the Philosophy of the Ancient Greeks* (2001). As a translator from ancient Greek, she participated in the Slovenian edition of the *Pre-Socratic Fragments*. During her professional career, she worked as an independent cultural worker, assistant at the Department of Philosophy, head of the editorial and design program, and deputy director. On May 1, 2018, she became the secretary-editor of *Slovenian Matica*. In March 2020, she temporarily suspended this position and took over the position of State Secretary at the Ministry of Culture. After the end of her mandate, she returned to the position of secretary-editor of *Slovenian Matica* from September 1, 2022. She even has a page on the Slovenian Wikipedia.

Dr. Vesna Mikolič graduated in Slovenian language and literature and Italian language and literature at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, in 1989. In 2001, she received her master's degree in Slovenian language and stylistics (course in sociolinguistics) and in 2004, with her doctoral dissertation *Language as a reflection of ethnic consciousness in the ethnically mixed region of Slovenian Istria*, she received her doctorate in linguistics at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. She is employed full-time at the Koper Scientific Research Centre (ZRS Koper), where she heads the Institute of Linguistics. She is a member of the Scientific Council and Election Commission of the ZRS Koper and the Editorial Board of the *Annales ZRS* publishing house.

The event also featured prominent figures from contemporary Slovenian literature, such as poet, professor **Brane Senegačnik**, essayist, classical philologist and translator.



President of the Republic of Slovenia Nataša Pirc Musar.
Photo: Slovenian Matica

In 1994, Senegač graduated from the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana in classical philology, where he also obtained a position, doctorate and qualification as an assistant to the board in 1995. He translated Sophocles' play and published several essays. Senegačnik's poetry is a unique synthesis of sophisticated aesthetics, melodic verses and confession of existence. With a collection of poems in traditional forms, especially the sonnets *Nam temnem prahu upa* (1996), he expressed basic existential and religious feelings with a refined poetics and sometimes classically simple style. He received the Sovret Prize (2012), the Prešeren Foundation Prize (2021) and on 1 June 2023 he was elected an extraordinary member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in the category of art.

Uroš Župan is a Slovenian poet and translator. He has published numerous poetry collections and his poetry has been translated into German, Polish, Czech, Slovak, English, Serbian and Croatian. Župan was born in Trbovlje in 1963, where he lived until he went to study comparative literature and sociology of culture at the University of Ljubljana. He works as a translator from English, Croatian and Serbian into Slovenian. He has translated works by Yehuda Amichai and John Ashbery into Slovenian. In 1996 he received the Prešeren Foundation Prize for his poetry collection *Odpiranje delte* (Opening the Delta) and in 2000 the Jenko Prize for his poetry collection *Drevo in vrabec* (Tree and Sparrow).

Miljana Cunta is a Slovenian writer, editor and publicist. Miljana Cunta studied comparative literature and literary theory, as well as English, in Ljubljana, where she has lived since 1995. From 2005 to 2009, she directed the *Vilenica* literary festival and in 2010 the *Fabula* literary festival. She also participated in the EU project *Živa coprnija* (Living Magic), which seeks to revive the cultural heritage of the Pohorje and Istria regions through stories and integrate them into the existing tourism program. She regularly publishes articles in the Slovenian daily *Delo*.

Excursion into Slovenian culture and personalities of the Slovenian Matica

During my trip to Slovenia, I was also interested in historical and contemporary personalities of various political factions of the Slovenian Matica. I will start with a person who knew Kollár and Šafárik. **Davorin Trstenjak** (November 8, 1817 – February 2, 1890) was a Slovenian writer, historian and Roman Catholic priest. He studied at the lyceum in Maribor and later in Graz, where he became a follower of the Illyrian movement, a romantic national cultural movement that spread from neighboring Croatia and advocated the cultural and linguistic unification of the South Slavs. Trstenjak collaborated closely with the Slovenian-Croatian poet and ethnologist Stanko Vraz. Trstenjak was influenced by the theories of Ján Kollár and Pavol Jozef Šafárik, two



The secretary of the Slovenian Matica, Ignacija Fridl Jarc, was the moderator of the ceremonial academy. Photo: Slovenian Matica

influential Slovak philologists who preached Pan-Slavic ideals, and wrote several historical books in which he claimed that the Slavs were the oldest nation in Europe (a precursor to the so-called Venetian theory). We further learn that Trstenjak was also a writer and poet. He wrote in a typically romantic style modeled after Franc Prešeren and Josipina Turnograjská. In 1863, he was one of the co-founders of the prestigious publishing house and scientific society Slovenian Matica.

Franc Miklošič (November 20, 1813, Radomerščak – March 7, 1891, Vienna) was a Styrian and Austrian linguist and philologist specializing in Slavic languages, a politician of Slovenian nationality, and a member of the Austrian Reichstag during the revolutionary year of 1848. In 1852, he published the study *Vergleichende Lautlehre der slavischen Sprachen*, which was praised by František Palacký and Pavol Jozef Šafárik. During the revolutionary year of 1848, he was significantly involved in political events. In 1848, he was the chairman of the Slovenija association, wrote its proclamation, in which he spoke out in favor of the establishment of a Slovenian kingdom within Austria and for linguistic equality in schools and offices. He contributed to the development of the Slovenian language. In 1849, he helped translate the code into Slovenian for several months, stabilizing Slovenian legal terminology.

Lovro Toman (10 August 1827 – 15 August 1870) was a Slovenian romantic national revolutionary activist during the 1848 revolution, a prominent national pioneer who raised the Slovenian tricolor for the first time in history (on the German flag raised on top of the Ljubljana Castle) at Wolfova Street No. 8 in Ljubljana. He later helped found the Slovenian Matica. He was a Slovenian national conservative politician and member of the Austrian parliament. Together with Janez Bleiweis and Etbín Henrik Costa, he was part of the leadership of the Old Slovenian Party.

Fran Levstik (28 September 1831 – 16 November 1887) was a Slovenian writer, political activist, playwright and critic. He was one of the most prominent representatives of the Young Slovenians political movement. Levstik was the first significant writer of Slovenian epic prose. His best-known works include the short story *Martin Krpan From Vrh* (*Martin Krpan z Vrha*), which has become a classic of Slovenian

literature, and the itinerary *Popotovanje iz Litije do Čateža* (*Cesta z Litije do Čateža*), which is also a literary manifesto. In the critical essay *Napake slovenskega pisanja*, he revealed his views on the development of the Slovenian literary language. Levstik was one of the main representatives of the Young Slovenians, a progressive and radical political group similar to the Young Czechs in the Czech lands, which challenged the then influence of conservatives led by Janez Bleiweis within the Slovenian National Movement. Later, he became closer to Pan-Slavic ideals.

Josip Vidmar (14 October 1895 – 11 April 1992) was a prominent Slovenian literary critic, essayist and politician. From 1944 to 1946 he was the chairman of the Slovenian People's Council for Liberation (Slovenian parliament). From 1952 to 1976 he was the President of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts and from 1950 to 1964 he was the head of the Academy's Institute of Literature. Vidmar was the President of the Yugoslav Federal Chamber of Nations (later the Chamber of Republics and Provinces). He was a close friend of the Croatian writer Miroslav Krleža. In Slovenia, he had a great influence on the cultural policy of the Tito regime from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s. Vidmar translated works from Russian, French, Italian, German, Czech, Croatian and Serbian into Slovenian, mostly plays and works by playwrights Alexei Arbuzov, Gogol, Griboyedov, Krlež, Molière, Nušič, Pushkin, Alexei Tolstoy and others.

Juš Kozak (26 June 1892 – 29 August 1964), also known by the pseudonym *Jalanov*, was a Slovenian writer, playwright and editor. He is best known for his autobiographical novels, such as *Celica* (*Celka*) about his experiences as a political prisoner and *Lesena žlica* (*Drevenka*) about his life during World War II. During World War II, he collaborated with the Liberation Front of the Slovenian People. In 1942, he was arrested by the fascist authorities of the Italian-occupied province of Ljubljana. After the armistice with Italy, he joined the partisan resistance. After the war, he devoted himself to writing. From 1946 to 1947, he was editor-in-chief of the literary magazine *Nový svet*. As editor of *Ljubljansky zvon*, he opened the magazine to Marxist and communist authors who published their articles under pseudonyms. He worked as a director of the Drama Theatre in Ljubljana from 1948 to 1955. In 1961 he became a member of the Slove-



Chairman of Slovak Matica Marián Gešper giving a speech at the ceremonial academy. Photo: Slovenian Matica



Participants in the ceremonial academy marking the 160th anniversary of the founding of the Slovenian Matica in its headquarters building in Ljubljana on February 2, 2024. Photo: Slovenian Matica

nian Academy of Sciences and Arts and in 1963 he received the Prešeren Prize. He died in Ljubljana.

Ivo Urbančič (12 November 1930 – 7 August 2016) was a Slovenian philosopher. He is considered by many to be one of the fathers of the phenomenological school in Slovenia. Urbančič wrote several works on the history of philosophy in Slovenia.

Etbin Henrik Costa (18 October 1832 – 28 January 1875) was a Slovenian national conservative politician and writer. Together with Janez Bleiweis and Lovro Toman, he was one of the leaders of the Old Slovenian political party. Costa was active in many Slovenian cultural, political and sports associations. Among other things, he served as the chairman of the Slovenian Matica and the Slovenian section of the Sokol movement.

Albin Prepeluh (22 February 1881 – 20 November 1937) was a Slovenian left-wing politician, journalist, editor, political theorist and translator. Before World War I, he was a leading Slovenian Marxist revisionist theorist. After the collapse of Austria-Hungary and the declaration of the State of Slovenians, Croats and Serbs, he took a job at the Slovenian Commission for Social Welfare, where he worked under the supervision of Christian social thinker Andrej Gosar. It was the only public political position he ever held in his life. In the mid-1920s, he also became an editor at the publishing house Slovenian Matica, run by his friend Dragotin Lončar. In 1902, he corresponded with the German Marxist theorist Karl Kautsky about the possibilities of activating the peasantry in favor of socialism. In the same year, he founded the magazine *Naši zapiski*, in which he

promoted radical socialist reformism. The magazine soon became the mouthpiece of young Slovenian reformist social democrats, including Anton Dermota, Dragotin Lončar, and Josip Ferfolja.

Vasilij Melik (17 January 1921 – 28 January 2009) was a Slovenian historian who dealt mainly with the political history of the Slovenian lands in the 19th century. He first devoted himself to economic history, then moved on to political history, especially the history of legal and political institutions. His study of elections in Slovenia from 1861 to 1918 is particularly significant. He also researched the history of everyday life, especially the period of modernization and industrialization of the Slovenian countryside in Carniola and Lower Styria. In the 1980s, he collaborated with the Slovenian Matica publishing house on critical editions of the memoirs of prominent Slovenian politicians of the 19th century, including Ivan Hribar and Josip Vošnjak (Wikipedia).

Tine Hribar (born 28 January 1941) is a Slovenian philosopher and public intellectual, focusing on interpretations of Heidegger and his role in the democratization of Slovenia between 1988 and 1990, known as the Slovenian Spring. He is the husband of author, essayist and political commentator Spomenka Hribarová. He is politically right-wing, anti-clerical. He has written for the journals of Slovenian Matica.

Oton Župančič (23 January 1878, Vinica – † 11 June 1949, Ljubljana) was a Slovenian poet and playwright, one of the four leading representatives of Slovenian modernism. His first collection of poetry, *Čaša opojnosti* (1899, The

Cup of Intoxication), is marked by the moods and feelings of the fin de siècle; in it, Župančič introduced free verse to Slovenian poetry. In his next collection *Čez plan* (1904, *Rovinou*), tones of a newly understood patriotism are heard, which were then fully resounded in the collection *Samogovi* (1908, *Monologues*). He expressed the suffering of the Slovenian nation during World War I in the collection *V zarje Vidove* (1920, *To the Summer Dawns*). After many years of silence, when he devoted himself mainly to translation work - he translated a total of 18 Shakespeare plays and a number of prose and poetry works from French, German, Russian and Czech literature - after the liberation of 1945, he published the collection *Wintergreen under the Snow* (1945), summarizing his work from the years of occupation and World War II.

Drago Jančar (born 13 April 1948) is a Slovenian writer, playwright and essayist. Jančar is one of the best-known contemporary Slovenian writers. He is also known in Slovenia for his political commentary and civic engagement. Jančar's novels, essays and short stories have been translated into 21 languages and published in Europe, Asia and the USA. The most numerous are translations into German, followed by Czech and Croatian translations. His plays have also been performed by several foreign theatres, and at home they are often considered the highlights of the Slovenian theatre season. He lives and works in Ljubljana. From 1987 to 1991, Jančar served as Chairman of the Slovenian PEN Centre, and through this role he also actively supported the emergence of Slovenian democracy.



A tour of archive gems on the history of the Slovenian Matica.
Photo: Martin Hajník

Jančar's prose is influenced by modernist models. One of the central themes of his works is the conflict between individuals and repressive institutions such as prisons, galleys, psychiatric hospitals, and military barracks. He is famous for his laconic and highly ironic style, which often uses tragicomic twists.

From the history of the Slovenian Matica

As we mentioned, it is the second oldest publishing house in Slovenia, founded on February 4, 1864 as an institution for the scientific and cultural advancement of Slovenians. The institution reached its peak at the beginning of the 20th century. At that time, it operated as an ordinary publishing house on the free market, publishing books for the general public, many of which became bestsellers; at the same time, it also fulfilled the role of an academy of sciences, fostering high culture and maintaining close contacts with important Yugoslav institutions. During World War I, the society was closed and its property confiscated by the Austro-Hungarian authorities. The alleged reason was the publication of the book *Gospodin Franjo* (Mr. Franjo) by the Slovenian author and officer of the Austro-Hungarian army Fran Maselj (code name: Podlimbarski), which was a strong satirical criticism of the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

During the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, it expanded its publishing activities and in 1938 was one of the co-founders of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. During the Italian occupation, the Matica leadership collaborated with the Slovenian People's Liberation Front. In 1944, it was closed by the Nazi German authorities. The institution's activities were revived in the 1980s, when it began to systematically publish translations of prominent Western philosophers and political theorists such as Heidegger, Machiavelli, Jan Patočka, Unamuno, José Ortega Gasset, Aurelius Augustinus, and the complete works of Nietzsche.

Many prominent figures served as editors and clerks (chief secretaries) of the institution. The most prominent of them were Fran Levstik, Josip Vidmar, Juš Kozak, France Bernik and Drago Jančar. Several others collaborated with the institution, among them philosophers Ivo Urbančič and Tine Hribar, historian Vasilij Melik and political theorist Albin Prepeluh.



Ceremonial speech by the Chairman of the Slovenian Matica, Aleš Gabrič, on the 160th anniversary of its founding. Photo: Slovenian Matica



From left: Rastislav Popovič, HE Alexander Nakić (Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia), Samuel Jovankovič (Chairman of the Association of Slovaks from Yugoslavia), Dragan Zurovac. Photo: Katarína Koňariková

Strong Lowland bond

Katarína Koňariková, Director of the Compatriot Museum of the Slovak Matica, Slovakia

On April 13, the annual membership meeting of the Association of Slovaks from Yugoslavia was held, chaired by Samuel Jovankovič. The Association brings together compatriots resettled from the territory of the former Yugoslavia to the then Czechoslovakia in an action known as *Mať volá*. During the years 1945–1949, approximately three thousand five hundred Slovaks emigrated from Yugoslavia, and the Association of Slovaks from Yugoslavia is one of the lowland associations that gradually emerged after the repatriation of compatriots from Hungary – the Association of Slovaks from Hungary, Romania – the Association of Slovaks from Romania, and Bulgaria – the Association of Slovaks from Bulgaria. Although little is known about these associations, their activities significantly contribute to the preservation of Slovak lowland culture and traditions in Slovakia.

Each of the Associations has a different story of its origin, but they all have one thing in common – a strong lowland and family bond. The impetus for the establishment of such Associations was the collective memory of compatriots. Members are united by a common emigration fate, a shared past, and these are enduring values, the source of their group identity. It is remarkable how this identity remains despite the fact that these are already the third or fourth generation of repatriates.

The first to be established in 1945 was the Association of Slovaks from Yugoslavia, based in Bratislava. Its aim was cultural, socio-educational and social activities, as well as care for resettled people and cooperation with the relevant state authorities in re-emigration. Although the Association ceased to exist in 1949 for political reasons, it was re-established in 1991. Its current mission is to strengthen the

sense of belonging of Slovaks to the country, to preserve the cultural heritage of Yugoslav Slovaks, to promote the identity of the Slovak minority in Yugoslavia/Serbia and to contribute to friendly relations between the Slovak and Serbian peoples, as evidenced by the presence of the Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia Aleksandar Nakić, First Counselor Dragan Zurovac and translator Rastislav Popovič at the aforementioned meeting of the Association.

Among the distinguished guests were also the chairmen of the aforementioned associations of Lowland Slovaks – Eva Kmet'ová (Association of Slovaks from Hungary), Rudolf Hajduk (Association of Slovaks from Romania) and Katarína Koňariková, who represented the Association of Slovaks from Bulgaria and addressed the compatriots also from the position of director of the Folk Museum of Slovak Matica. The meeting was also attended by Ľubomír Kmet', chairman of the Association for Genealogical Research of Lowland Slovaks, who informed about the genealogical research of Lowland Slovaks, which he would like to expand to the territory of Vojvodina.

As we heard from the chairman Samuel Jovankovič, the Society has gained new members, the younger generation is interested in genealogy and the lives of their grandparents. The Society has had a successful year and is planning a number of new and interesting activities, including trips with a national undertone. The Society's committee is aware of the importance of modern communication, and is therefore taking steps in this direction. It is expanding information channels on the social media and email communication platform. It periodically publishes the SSJ Yearbook, which summarizes all activities, meetings and professional articles.

Members of the Society are also active in participating in lectures called Podvečery. These lecture meetings take place every third Wednesday of the month, except during the summer months, in the premises of the Municipal Library in Bratislava and are sponsored by the Association of Lowland Slovak Associations. They have an important

position in cultural and professional terms and are of social importance for compatriots.

Thanks to the initiative committee of the Association of Slovaks from Yugoslavia/Serbia, ties between compatriots do not disappear, strong feelings and bonds of belonging, as well as a common cultural adaptation, continue to persist.



Speech by HE Alexander Nakić at the annual membership meeting of the Association of Slovaks from Yugoslavia. Photo: Katarína Koňariková



Members of the Association of Slovaks from Yugoslavia at the annual members' meeting. Photo: Katarína Koňariková



After the seminar, a portrait of Michal Eliáš was ceremonially unveiled in the premises of the headquarters building. Photo: Slovak Matica

A significant figure in Pan-Slavic cooperation

Memorial event for Michal Eliáš

Viliam Komora, Secretary of Slovak Matica, Slovakia

The ninetieth anniversary of the birth of Dr. Michal Eliáš was commemorated by the Slovak Matica at the end of September (September 23, 2024) in Martin. PhDr. Michal Eliáš, CSc. was born on September 19, 1934 in Velčice near Zlaté Moravce, and passed away on April 2, 2018 in Martin, the city in which he lived almost his entire fruitful literary, scientific and creative life. With a commemorative event, the Slovak Matica and the Slavic Union of the Slovak Matica commemorated this distinctive and significant Matica personality, who forever left a significant work and memory among us.

Michal Eliáš worked as a high school and university teacher, Matica's official, literary and cultural historian, literary scholar, archivist, editor and publicist, book author, as well as a visionary of Slavic cooperation. The Slovak Matica Committee Room was filled with former colleagues and co-workers of the jubilee and his wife, current employees of Slovak Matica, the Slovak Matica and members of the Slovak Matica Committee, chairmen and members of the Local Branches in Turiec, but also Maticas from Lučenec and Bratislava. The main organizer of the program, moderator and secretary of the MS Dr. Viliam Komora greeted and thanked the mayor of his native Velčice, Ing. Štefan Eliáš, for organizing the commemoration, as they greatly value the jubilee, and for that reason they will unveil a memorial plaque for him on his birthplace in the coming days. The moderator also thanked PhDr. He especially welcomed his son, RNDr. Pavol Eliáš, to Viera Sedláková for contacting the descendants of the jubilee, and to his family.

The Chairman of the Slovak Matica, JUDr. Marián Gešper, PhD., delivered a ceremonial speech in which he emphasized that the history of Slovaks did not stop in the middle of the 20th century; on the contrary, the subsequent development brought about exceptional figures in Slovak national and matric history who fundamentally

influenced our present. Among them is the registry official Dr. Michal Eliáš. Dr. M. Gešper went directly to the lecture in which he approached the Slavic question in the work of M. Eliáš, focusing in particular on his book and journalistic work, activities to research cooperation between Slavs, and partnership between matriculation and institutions of Slavic nations. He also mentioned the individual matriculation workplaces where the jubilee worked: as the director of the Literary Archive of the Slovak Matica, director of the Slovak Literature Memorial, and a researcher at the Slovak Literary Department. The current Chairman of the Slovak Matica, JUDr. Marián Gešper, PhD., in his work follows the personality of PhDr. Michal Eliáš, CSc. in the field of the Pan-Slavic idea and scientific, professional and cultural cooperation between Slavic nations and their institutions.

The life and work of M. Eliáš was presented by the principal researcher of the Slovak Literary Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, a university teacher, a prominent Slovak expert in biographical studies and a well-known culturologist, doc. PaedDr. Pavol Parenička, CSc. He mentioned the jubilee's education, erudition and acquisition of academic degrees, his teaching career first at a secondary school in Komárno, later at a university in Nitra. He mentioned his subsequent work at the Slovak Academy of Sciences in the fields of literature and archival science, mentioned his numerous works and work, as well as several colleagues and collaborators in the field of literature. He gave a highly professional assessment of his work, activities, work and contribution to scientific, professional, as well as literary and archival research, in general in the field of culture.

Principal researcher, historian from the Slovak Historical Institute of the Slovak Republic, Mgr. Jaroslav Durec, PhD., presented the topic of M. Eliáš's book creation and publishing activities, as well as broader connections associated with his personality. He stated that the beginnings of book creation were during his time at the Faculty of Education in Nitra,

he mainly devoted himself to Slovak literature, history, archival work, and mentioned his work in the Literary Archive of the Slovak Republic. He particularly presented his book *Vojak v poli alebo Opísanie zážitkov Jána Ignatyho* (Soldier in the Field or Description of the Experiences of John Ignatius), as well as his journalism in the field of Slovak Perspectives. He published books in several publishing houses, while also dealing with those personalities who had not been given sufficient attention. He also mentioned his book production, which focused on the area of his native village of Velčice, books about the Eliáš family, as well as the town of Martin, in which he lived, the work and books about the Memorandum of the Slovak Nation, about the Slovak Matica or the important book *Matica Slavic Nations* (1996) and the most famous work that influenced the cooperation of Slavic Maticas, entitled *From the History of Matica Slavic Nations* (2010). The moderator V. Komora gave word to RNDr. Pavol Eliáš, who brought up several family and work memories of his father, pointed out in particular the ties to Velčice and the rest

of the family, the creation of the book about Velčice and wider contexts, and also shared humorous memories. The moderator welcomed the colleagues of the jubilee's wife, Mgr. Anna Eliášová, the event was attended by high school professors Mgr. Viera Sabršulová, Mgr. Libuška Polásková, Mgr. suddenly apologized. Ivan Sabo.

V. Sabršulová particularly brought to light the high level of education and vast outlook of M. Eliáš. This was followed by the ceremonial unveiling of the portrait of PhDr. Michal Eliáš, CSc., which was carried out by the Chairman of the Slovak Republic JUDr. Marián Gešper, PhD. and RNDr. Pavol Eliáš. At the end of the program, the participants viewed an exhibition of photographs and books by M. Eliáš in the Slovak Republic Library. In this way, the Slovak National Register also commemorates and preserves the memories of the personalities and works of important member of Matica s, figures and officials of the Slovak nation, cultural, literary and spiritual life. It thus builds respect for Slovak culture, science and national life.



Participants in the commemorative event for the 90th anniversary of the birth of Michal Eliáš during a speech by his son Pavol. Photo: Slovak Matica



Exhibition of photographs and books by Michal Eliáš in the research room of the Archives of Slovak Matica. Photo: Slovak Matica



From left in the photo: administrator of Slovak Matica M. Smolec, Slovenian ambassador in Slovakia S. Raščan, scientific secretary of Slovak Matica P. Madura with the historical cover of the Slovak Matica Statutes, chairman of the Slovak Matica M. Gešper, MS Presidium member L. Kleštinec and secretary of Slovak Matica V. Komora after a tour of archival treasures in the Archives of Slovak Matica. Photo: Slovak Matica

Slovenian Ambassador to Slovakia visited Slovak Matica

Ján Seman, Secretary of Slovak Matica, Slovakia

Slovenian Ambassador in Slovakia Dr. Stanislav Raščan visited Slovak Matica in Martin on April 9, 2024. In the Matica headquarters building, which is currently a national cultural monument, he met with its chairman Dr. Marián Gešper and Matica's officials. During the talks, they discussed not only the history of the institution, but also its current and future activities and plans.

The Ambassador looked around the premises of the historic registry building and the archival documents with interest. Of interest were the statutes of the Slovak Matica from 1862, which were approved by the Austrian emperor, Czech and Hungarian king Franz Joseph I. We presented the Ambassador with a set of archival documentary and photo-documentary materials with reference to various interactions between the Slovak Matica and the Slovenian Matica. The oldest document attesting to the good and friendly relations between the two Maticas of Slavic nations is a letter from the newly established Slovenian Matica addressed to the Slovak Matica dated July 17, 1864, with the attached statutes of the Slovenian Matica and a written acceptance of mutual cooperation in accordance with the appeal of the Slovak Matica dated September 22, 1863. Among the documents we can also find a large number of congratulatory letters and telegrams for various anniversaries and celebrations, as well as letters documenting the donation of books between the two institutions. The MS archive revealed that we have shared rich correspondence, book exchanges and many other scientific connections since the 19th century. After touring the archive, we introduced the ambassador to the extensive publishing activities and production of Slovak Matica. In a short historical document, we presented him with the active 160-year history of Slovak Matica.

They then discussed the 160th anniversary of the founding of the Slovak and Slovenian Maticas and their rich cooperation with the Chairman of the Slovak Matica,

Marián Gešper. The Chairman of the Slovak Matica recalled the significant historical and cultural connections between Slovakia and Slovenia, which include the same names of the Maticas celebrating their 160th anniversary with only a few months' difference, similar national flags and the common Cyril-Methodist anniversary of 1863, which marked the founding of both Maticas. We must not forget the ancient common roots in the Samo Empire from 623, in which the ancestors of Slovaks, Slovenians, Moravians, Czechs and Sorbians were united. Last year it was 1400 years since the founding of this pre-state entity of the Western Slavs. During the discussion, he also emphasized the influence of Slovaks Ján Kollár and Pavol Jozef Šafárik on the founders of the Slovenian Matica, as well as many other common historical connections.



Slovenian Ambassador in Slovakia S. Raščan, accompanied by the Chairman of the Slovak Chamber of Deputies M. Gešper, inspects the publishing production of Slovak Matica. Photo: Slovak Matica



After the meeting at the Forum of Slavic Cultures. From left: Peter Schvantner, Director of the Forum Andrea Rihter, Marián Gešper, Katarína Koňariková, Lukáš Perný. Photo: Slovak Matica

A unique project of Slovak-Slovenian history

Marián Gešper – Viliam Komora – Lukáš Perný, Slovak Matica, Slovakia

The delegation of Slovak Matica, consisting of the Chairman of Slovak Matica (MS), Marián Gešper, Peter Schvantner, Katarína Koňariková, and Lukáš Perný, visited the capital of Slovenia, Ljubljana, and important Slovenian institutions from 3 to 5 December 2024, with the aim of cultural, scientific and professional exchange. At the same time, part of the delegation visited the Croatian city of Rijeka, where a celebration was held to mark the 30th anniversary of the Local Branch of Slovak Matica in Rijeka.

At the University of Ljubljana, the chairman of Slovak Matica, Marián Gešper, and researcher Lukáš Perný gave a bilingual presentation on Slovenian-Slovak history to students of Slovak studies. The new director of the Slovak Matica Museum, Katarína Koňariková, also gave a lecture on the remarkable topic of Slovaks in Bulgaria. The lecturers were introduced by Slovak expert Jozef Pallay, who works at the Department of Slavic Studies at the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana. The lecture presented fundamental facts about common features within the history of national revival. Independently of the Slovaks, the Slovenians created their flags, anthems, cultural and political programs at the same time, they have mirror-like personalities and at the same time the Matica was founded (the inspiration for its foundation was also the Cyril-Methodist connections of the thousandth anniversary), which also initiated the establishment of other scientific and educational institutions, such as the University of Ljubljana or the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti – SAZU). The roots of the similarities can be found in the very name Sloveni, Sloven, Slovenka, Slovensky or in the common Old Slavic mythology (the sacred mountain Triglav, the Slavic deity Trihlav as the equivalent of the mountain Kriváň). Finally, it is the proto-state entity Samo Empire, of which both Slovaks and Slovenians were part.

One of the main themes of the lecture was the influence

of Ján Kollár and Pavol Jozef Šafárik on personalities of the Slovenian national revival, such as the linguist, philologist and politician Franc Miklošič (1813 – 1891), who was directly praised for his work by Šafárik and Palacký. The Slovenian writer, historian and priest, one of the most prominent members of the Slovenian Matica Davorin Trstenjak (1817 – 1890), was directly influenced by the philosophical and historical theories of Kollár and Šafárik. They also influenced older figures, such as the founder of Slovenian drama Anton Tomaž Linhart (1756 – 1795), who can be compared to the Slovak playwright Ján Chalupka (1791 – 1871), or Janez Svetokriške (1772 – 1849), who, as a representative of Slovenian literature, was dedicated to the national revival and cultural revival of the language in the national movement. In the center of Ljubljana, there is a huge statue of the romantic poet France Prešeren (1800 – 1849), who is the author of the anthem Zdravljica and also a symbol of Slovenian national pride, in a way he appears as the equivalent of Ľudovít Štúr or Janko Kráľ. Prešeren created Zdravljica at the same time as Janko Matuška's Nad Tatrou sa blýska, i.e. precisely in 1844. Another parallel is the emergence of „Slovak“ flags and coats of arms, because both are called Slovak in their own language and both contain the tricolor and similar three peaks (Tatra, Matra, Fatra vs. Triglav). The flag was first raised in history in Ljubljana on the castle hill by Ľovro Toman (1827–1870). He has his mirror personalities in Štúr, Hurban and Hodža, who also created the prototype of the Slovak flag in the revolutionary year of 1848 as part of the revolutionary changes and the establishment of the Slovak national council in 1848. It is also interesting that when codifying the literary language, the Slovenians, like the Slovaks, were based on the Central Slovenian variant. However, the Slovenians did not have three waves of national revival (Bernolák, Všeslavia, Štúr) with various confessional and political differences, which is why, for example, ecumenical

initiatives do not arise here as in Slovakia. Another difference is the primacy in the codification of the language, as Primož Trubar wrote the first Slovenian catechism in 1550, translated the New Testament in 1564, Marko Pohlin later translated the Bible into Slovenian (1768) and the first Slovenian grammar was created by Jernej Kopitar in 1808, while the Bernolák codification was created in 1787, the Štúr codification in 1843 and the Hodžov-Hattalov reform only in 1851. Another difference is that the Slovenians do not use hard y, as if a reform similar to the Hodžov-Hattalov reform had not taken place in Slovenia.

At the same time, the Requests of the Slovak Nation and the United Slovenia program were created almost at the same time. However, both actions were equally temporarily unsuccessful, but they stimulated other initiatives that were manifested, for example in our country in the Memorandum of the Slovak Nation, where Štefan Marko Daxner demanded autonomy, i.e. the establishment of a Slovak district called the Slovak Surroundings. While Štúr founded the Slovak National Newspaper in 1845, the Ljubljana News was established in Slovenia as early as 1797.

Ivan Hribar, a Slovenian politician, neo-Slavist, diplomat, a kind of equivalent of Milan Hodža, who, together with Ivan Tavčar, was a leading figure of the Progressive Party and a member of the Austrian National Assembly, is also extremely respected in Ljubljana. He also founded a bank and rebuilt Ljubljana after the earthquake.

Finally, there is the figure of Jernej Kopitar (1780–1844), who significantly contributed to the modernization of the language, which is in line with Kollár's ideas about strengthening national identity through language. There is evidence that Kopitar met Šafárik twice and there was also an exchange of correspondence between them. We should not forget the influence of the famous work Slava's Daughter, which influenced the entire Slavic revival in the European context.

Kollár and Šafárik were key figures in the broader Slavic national revival, which included not only Slovaks and Slovenians, but also Czechs, Serbs and Croats. Šafárik can be seen as the founder of scientific Slavic studies, who is also scientifically reflected in Western Europe as a leading pioneer of European science. It is demonstrable that Kollár and Šafárik had an undeniable influence on intellectuals, artists and scientists in almost all Slavic countries, which allows these Slovak personalities to be ranked among the European elites.

Thanks to the philosophical influence of the humanizing cultural cooperation of the Slavic nations, Kollár and Šafárik had a direct influence on the establishment of the Matica as unique Slavic cultural institutions (Šafárik himself was not alive to establish the Serbian Matica, Croatian Matica and Czech Matica, Slovak and Slovenian, however, he did not live to see it). Finally, the Kollár-Šafárik idea had a direct state-building influence on the emergence of Czechoslovakia, as well as Yugoslavia, of which Slovenia was also a part. While the Slovenians emancipated themselves from German hegemony, the Slovaks from Hungarian or Austrian hegemony. The national revival in Slovenia was launched during the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte, who enabled the development of education in the Slovenian language and the access of the Slovenians to political power, which is why the Slovenians are the only Slavic nation to have a monument to him in their capital in a historically positive sense. In our country, the equivalent is the influence of Joseph II. to the Bernolákists, who, as part of the reforms, enabled the establishment of the General Seminar, where the idea of codifying a single language was also born. At the end of the lecture, Gešper stated



Chairman of Slovak Matica Marián Gešper and Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Slovenia Peter Zeleňák. Photo: Slovak Matica

that both nations have almost the same constitutional development, i.e. progress from nations under the Austro-Hungarian Empire without self-government and political and social rights, to the emergence of self-governments through symmetrical models of federation in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, to the emergence of modern republics in the early 1990s. These similarities and close similarities arose at the same time, almost without mutual interaction and independently of each other.

The delegation consisting of Gešper, Schvantner, Koňariková, Perný participated in negotiations on cooperation with the Forum of Slavic Cultures headed by Andreja Rihter, the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic in the Republic of Slovenia Peter Zeleňák and finally with the Chairman of Slovenian Matica Aleš Gabrič. The result of the negotiations is a planned book project of parallel Slovenian-Slovak history, but also a continuation of the book Conquerors of Time II. about the second wave of national revival and its influence in Slavic countries. At the same time, part of the delegation visited the Croatian city of Rijeka as part of a working trip, where the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Local Department of Slovak Matica took place (Slovak Matica was awarded recognition for long-term cooperation and support from Miroslava Gržinić, which was received by the Secretary of the MS Viliam Komora and the Secretary of Young Matica in Slovakia Lukáš Havlík). The event was attended by Vladimír Bilek, a member of the Croatian Parliament, who is also the chairman of the Club of Deputies of National Minorities in the Croatian Parliament and a representative of the Czech and Slovak national minorities in Croatia. Viliam Komora presented the Silver Award of Slovak Matica to the Local Branch of Slovak Matica in Rijeka. Slovak Matica also cooperates with Croatian folklorists and educational workers, which creates cooperation at the Croatian-Slovak level in a broader cultural and social context.

The matriculation officials in Ljubljana also emphasized the importance of organizing the Congresses of Maticas and Institutions of Slavic Nations, which are the practical outcome of Kollár's and Šafárik's idea of cultural cooperation, as well as the visit of representatives of Slovak Matica to Matica Srbská from 13 to 16 November 2023 in Novi Sad and Belgrade. In addition to its primary mission, namely the development of Slovak culture, Slovak Matica also develops the idea of cultural and scientific exchange between Slavic nations.



Linden tree planting ceremony. Photo: Miloslav Strehársky

The local branch of Slovak Matica in Rijeka is thirty years old

Miloslav Strehársky, Local branch of Slovak Matica in Rijeka, Croatia

The local branch of the Slovak Matica (MO MS) in Rijeka was founded on December 3, 1994. The ceremonial academy, where we celebrated thirty years since its founding, was also held on December 3 in the same premises of the Association of the Italian National Minority - Circolo, where the founding assembly of the Matica was also held.

The distinguished guests gathered at the headquarters of our Matica in the Slovak House early in the afternoon. At the beginning, we met in the garden of the house, where we planted a linden tree, a symbol of the Slavic nations. The singing group Slovenka of the Slovak Matica in Rijeka, which operates under the leadership of Melita Bahníková, sang the song *Na Kráľová holi*. The Chairperson of the MO MS Miroslava Gržiničová recalled that the ancient Slavs lived in linden forests, that before converting to Christianity they valued the spirituality of the forest, and therefore were connected in thoughts with the linden tree. The custom of linden worship was also preserved among the Slavs, who believed that the linden tree protects against lightning and fire. The Chairperson also noted that when the linden tree grows, the matica members will be able to relax in the shade of its crown during hot days. A popular proverb says: "Blooming linden tree, you are in my whole heart. Not even Perun will strike with a fiery arrow!" As we mentioned, a linden tree was ceremoniously planted at the end.

The next program included the opening of an exhibition entitled *Inspiring Member of Matica s*. The exhibition was realized by the Slovak Cultural Center (SKC) in Našice and Slovak Matica in Slovakia. The exhibition contains thirteen panels with accompanying text in the Slovak language. The exhibition was opened by the Chairman M. Gržiničová and a few words about the exhibition were said by the secretary of Slovak Matica from Martin, Viliam Komora. All those present moved to the premises of the Italian com-

munity Circolo, where the ceremonial academy program began at 6 p.m. At the beginning, the Slovenka singing group sang the anthems of Croatia and Slovakia. Then the moderator of the academy, the Chairman of the Croatian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic, Mario Gržinič, called on those present to dedicate a moment of silence to the memory of all members of the MO MS in Rijeka who have left us in recent years. Today, we especially remember the memory of the first Chairman of the MO MS in Rijeka, Marta Uremovičová, and the long-time active member Daniel Turčan. Margita Rekičová Grolmusová then recited her poem *Our Fairy Tale* dedicated to this occasion.

The moderator then gave a short introduction about the MO MS in Rijeka with the following words: „Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, allow me to warmly welcome you to the ceremonial academy on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the MO MS in Rijeka. The MO MS in Rijeka, founded on December 3, 1994, is a significant organization of Slovak expatriate life in Croatia. Its mission is to maintain and develop Slovak culture, language and traditions among Slovaks living in this country. Over the three decades of its activities, Matica has organized numerous cultural events, such as the Days of Slovak Culture, exhibitions, concerts, and has significantly contributed to the deepening of relations between the Slovak and Croatian communities.“

In the next part of the program, the moderator welcomed the distinguished guests: Member of Parliament for the Czech and Slovak national minorities of the Croatian Parliament Vladimír Bilek, Secretary of the Slovak Matica for issues of national minorities and foreign expatriate organizations Viliam Komora, Advisor for Protocol and International Cooperation in the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County

Dorian Celcer, Honorary Consul of the Slovak Republic in Rijeka Zoran Ćuk, Chairwoman of the Rijeka City Council Ana Trošeljová, Vice Chairman of the Croatian-Slovak Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic Jozef Krška, Secretary of the Mlada Matica in Slovakia Lukáš Havlík, Chairman of the Cultural and Artistic Association Štefánik z Lalić in Serbia Dušan Párnický, Opera prima donna Olga Kaminská with her husband Viktor, representatives of cultural and educational institutions and minority associations in Rijeka and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. He also read out congratulatory telegrams from the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Zagreb and the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad in Bratislava, announcing that their representatives would not be present at today's academy. The chairman of the Association of Slovaks in Croatia, Mirko Vavra, also apologized by phone.

The chairwoman warmly welcomed all those present at this annual celebration and outlined the historical circumstances of the establishment of the Local Branch of the Slovak National Union in Rijeka and its further development: „Exactly thirty years ago, we met in this hall, which became the site of a historical moment - the establishment of the Local Branch of the Slovak Matica in Rijeka. Sixty members signed up at the founding meeting, which was a courageous and inspiring beginning. The idea to create an association of Slovaks was brought by a native of Slovakia, Mrs. Eva Dobrotová, with the support of her husband Milý. Although Slovaks had lived in Rijeka since the beginning of the 20th century, perhaps even earlier, their joint efforts led to us laying the solid foundations of our organization. The first meeting was held in the premises of the Evangelical church, where we gathered in a modest number of seven Slovaks. Each of us brought others, and at the next meeting there were sixteen of us. At the first meeting, we decided to establish Matica in Rijeka, and the initiative was then taken by Mr. Hriešik together with other members. People with Croatian citizenship helped us in registering the association, including Zdenko Bahnik, Anna Đurović, Andrej Hriešik, Margita Rekić and Marta Uremović. Some of them are still with us, for which we are sincerely grateful. We received great support in the beginning from the city of Rijeka, the Luka Rijeka company and other benefactors, as well as from Cirkol. The founding assembly was held on December 3, 1994, with the participation of representatives of the Association of Slovaks from Našice, of which we are also members. During these thirty years, we have had several Chairmen who contributed to the development of our Matica with their efforts: the first Chairman was Mrs. Marta Uremović, who led us for five years. This was followed by Mrs. Miroslava Gržinić (eight years), Mr. Slavko Pavlović (two years), again Mrs. Miroslava Gržinić (six years), Mrs. Margita Rekić-Grolmusová (two years) and finally again Mrs. Miroslava Gržinić, who has been the chairperson for the last seven years. The Slovak Matica in Rijeka has achieved many successes in three decades, but it has also encountered challenges. We are like one big family – sometimes we disagree, but we always unite and move on. Our activities present not only Slovaks and our Matica, but also the city of Rijeka and the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County at home and abroad. We have proudly represented our community in Italy, France, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia and especially in Slovakia. Over the years, we have organized exhibitions, concerts, literary and art colonies, Slovak language courses and theater groups. Today, the folklore and singing group, as well as traditional gastronomic and photographic activities, are still active. Our biggest event is the Days of Slovak Culture, which take place every year in

June and last three to four days. Today's celebration began symbolically - with the planting of the Tree of Life, a linden tree, in the Slovak House in Hostiach. We continue where we started thirty years ago. On Saturday, we cordially invite you to the Czech House for a cultural program of Matica and its friends. Our greatest success is our Slovak House, the purchase of which was financed by the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad. The Union of Slovaks, the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and the city of Rijeka helped us with the reconstruction. Thanks to them, we have modernized premises today, for which we owe a big thank you to everyone. Our Matica is a bridge between Slovakia and Croatia. Although we are a small Matica located 450 kilometers from the center of Slovaks, our determination is great and together we have overcome three decades. Finally, let me thank all active members who keep our activities alive with their energy and dedication, but also those who help us, whether they are Slovaks or Croatians. Special thanks go to all our supporters, sponsors and partners: the City of Rijeka, the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, the Union of Slovaks, the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad, the Council for National Minorities and Mr. Vladimír Bilek. Thank you to everyone who stood by us, supported our ideas and contributed to us being able to celebrate our 30th anniversary here today. I wish you a pleasant rest of the evening and I hope that we will enjoy this special day together.“

After the speech, the singing group Slovenka sang two songs: My Slovakia, My Fatherland and Along the Embankment, a Horse Runs.

Viliam Komora presented the Silver Award of Slovak Matica with the figures of Štefan Moyses and Karol Kuzmány and said: „We are pleased that the Slovak Maticain Rijeka continue to prosper and remain an important bridge between Slovakia and Croatia. We look forward to further joint activities and long-term cooperation.“ As the first chairman of Slovak Matica, Bishop Štefan Moyses, said: ‚Whoever thinks conscientiously of the Slovak nation must care about the preservation, consolidation and flourishing of Slovak Matica!‘ We believe that he would be proud of the work that Slovak Matica has been doing in Rijeka for 30 years.‘ Vladimir Bilek also spoke with beautiful words: ‚Slovak Matica in Rijeka is a pearl among Maticas, and even though it is difficult to work there due to the fact that it is far from the center in Našice, it still works successfully, which is to be commended.‘ Dušan Párnický and Ana Trošeljová spoke with the words: ‚Your efforts to preserve and promote Slovak culture, language and traditions through organizing numerous events and participating in them have truly enriched our city, which has always been proud of its multiculturalism. The crowning glory of all was certainly the opening of the Slovak House three years ago, which is a symbol of your commitment and belonging, and a space where valuable ideas and projects are developed“, and on behalf of the City of Rijeka and the City Council, she wished even more successful work in the coming decades. The Chairman presented the deserving Maticas with the Recognition for their long-term dedicated efforts, support and assistance in the work of preserving and presenting the culture, language, customs and national identity of Slovaks in Croatia and abroad.

The program continued with a performance by the opera singer of the Croatian National Theatre in Rijeka, Olga Kaminská, who sang three beautiful pieces: Ave Maria by composer Giulio Caccini, Serenade by composer Josip Hatze, and the Ukrainian song Moon in the Sky. During the program, a video projection of historical photographic footage of the World Cup in Rijeka was shown.



On Babia Hora. Photo: Slovak Matica

The Slovak national climb to Babia Hora also had a Slavic legacy

Viliam Komora, Secretary of Slovak Matica, Slovakia

This year's 5th National Ascent to Babia Hora was organized by the Association of Slovaks in Poland; it took place on the last day of August, as part of the XXXI Days of Slovak Culture in Lesser Poland. The event had excellent participation and level, and was very positively promoted and perceived by the media and the public.

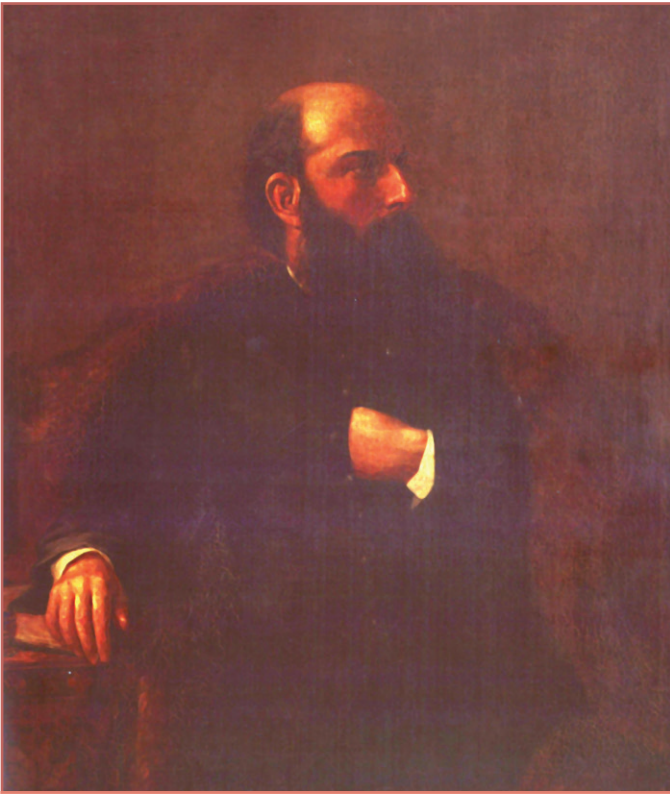
The Association of Slovaks in Poland deserves admiration and recognition for maintaining and developing the Slovak national consciousness of the Slovak minority living in the territories of northern Spiš and upper Orava. The event on Babia Hora was attended by many young Slovaks from Poland, and other tourists from Slovakia and Poland, including Poles. At the top, the participants sang the anthem of the Slovak Republic *Nad Tatrou sa blýska*, which was symbolically written 180 years ago by Janko Matúška from Dolný Kubín. After descending from Babia Hora to Staňcová in Veľká Lipnica, in the part of upper Orava that has belonged to Poland since 1924, the organizers opened the exhibition of the Slovak Matica The Legacy of the Štúrov Generation. The Secretary of the Slovak Matica for National Minorities and Foreign Expatriate Organizations Viliam Komora ceremonially opened the exhibition in his speech. He mentioned Ľudovít Štúr, Janko Matúška and other personalities, recalled this year's event, which took place at Slovak Matica in Martin, and celebrated Anička Hurbanová, née Jurkovičová. He then introduced the new director of the MS Publishing House, Ingrid Majerikova, and thanked her for installing the exhibition, displaying the registry books, and thanked the Association of Slovaks in Poland and their general secretary Ľudomír Molitoris for what they do for our Slovak brothers

and sisters. The wonderful event raised hope for the Slovak nation, for Slovaks from Poland, as well as from Slovakia. Slovaks celebrated their own nation, their own language and their own Slovak culture.

In a broader context, the event also had pan-Slavic cooperation, as our Slovak brothers live in northern Orava and Spiš together with the Slavic Polish nation.



Some of the participants with their participation diplomas. Photo: Slovak Matica



Lovro Toman, chairman of the Slovenian Matica 1865 – 1868.
Photo: Slovenian Matica



Fran Levček, chairman of the Slovenian Matica 1893 – 1907.
Photo: Slovenian Matica

Slovenian Matica (brief history)

Prepared by: Peter Schvantner, Secretary of Slovak Matica, Slovakia

The Slovenian Matica, which in Slovenian is called Slovak, belongs to the family of Slavic Maticas, after which it was established. It took a long time, two decades, to be established, under difficult internal political and cultural conditions. The first attempt to establish it was made by Anton Martin Slomšek, later a bishop, in 1845. The main task of the Matica was to publish cheap Slovenian books that would unite all Slovenians, lead them to love for the nation and form them spiritually. The regional administration rejected Slomšek's proposal without any justification.

The revolutionary year of 1848 was also reflected in the growth of national awareness among the Slovenians, and the idea of establishing a Matica was revived. The initiator of the idea of establishing a Slovenian Matica during this period was J. Šubic. In the magazine NOVICE in 1850, he defined its role as a "publishing plant (association) for higher literature." His proposal was questioned by several prominent Slovenians – the owner and editor of the magazine Novice Dr. Bleiweis, Professor Anton Janežič and others – claiming that the personnel and material conditions were not suitable for building a quality publishing association. Janežič and Einspieler argued that in order to create and publish "higher literature", a language reform must first be carried out, an artificial Illyrian language mixture must be introduced. True, the main reason for their position was that they were against the establishment of a separate Slovenian Matica and advocated for a unified Yugoslav Matica. However, they were aware of the need for a publishing literary association and advised to establish not a national, but a general, simple literary association to support popular folk literature. Its aim would be to educate the common people, support domestic literature and materially assist writers. Their proposal was also met with understanding by supporters of the Matica idea, e.g. A. M. Slomšek,

and following the example of the Czech Association of St. John of Nepomuk, they founded the association MOHORJEVA DRUŽBA. It was popular with the Slovenians, and had about eighty thousand members before the First World War.

The revival of the Matica idea in 1860 was facilitated by the Russian Slavophile Ivan Aksakov. While traveling through Slovenia, he convinced the nationalists to establish the Matica as a scientific society. At the same time, he promised to send books published from Moscow to the formed Matica. At that time, Novice also published articles about the need for national awareness and the necessity of the emergence of the Slovenians as an independent, separate nation. Their author, Ferdo Kočvar-Zavčanin, proposed solving the financial difficulties of the forming Slovenian Matica by transferring the money collected to the monument to Valentin Vodnik, and thus „the most beautiful monument to the great man would be erected“. The proposal was not accepted, mainly due to the opposition of Janežič and his group, who wanted to include Slovenian scientists in the Yugoslav Academy and proclaimed the need for Slovenian scholars to write in the Illyrian-Croatian language.

The opening of the Slovenian Matica was decided by the thousandth anniversary of the arrival of the Slavic apostles St. Cyril and Methodius – similarly to the Slovak Matica. In January 1863, a new political magazine NAPREJ began to be published in Ljubljana. On March 8, 1863, a ceremonial discussion was held in the Ljubljana Reading Room, which can be considered the unofficial day of the founding of the Slovenian Matica. The discussion resulted in a response formulated by Dr. Bleiweis: „The Slovenian Matica, so long desired and so necessary for our literature, rise up for eternal remembrance on today's holiday“. The Matica was understood not only as a literary, but also as a national representative association. Lovro Toman stated in this context: „We Slovenians do not

want to disappear, we want to live, strengthen ourselves and be equal to other nations.”

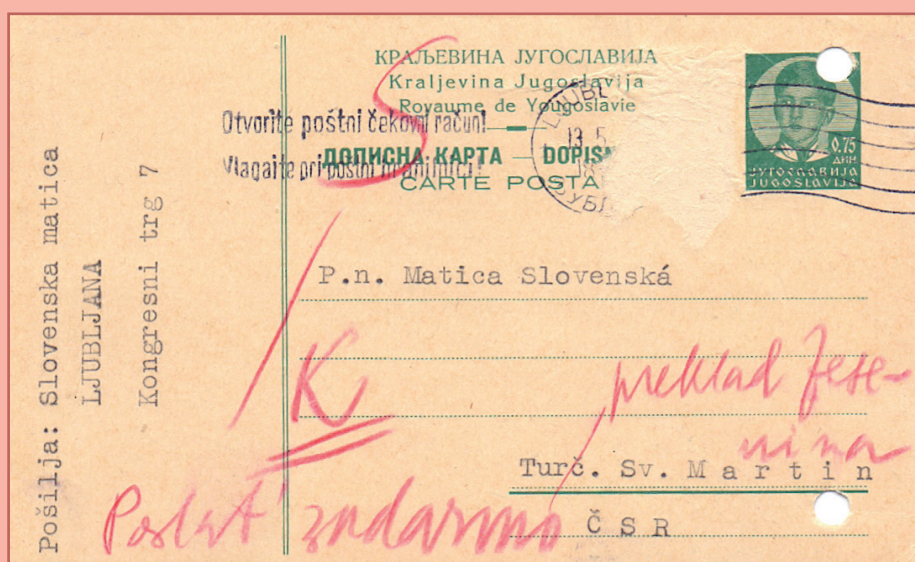
František Levstik was the most intensive in preparing the Matica. Among the donors was Bishop Jozef Juraj Strossmayer, a supporter of Slovenian literature and culture, who donated a thousand gulden. The government approved the statutes of the Slovenian Matica on February 4, 1864. The Slovenian Matica was a literary association whose main goal was to spread culture by publishing books. The Slovenian Matica, like the Slovak Matica and other Slavic Maticas, did not have its own local organizations - the government did not allow them to be established, so its confidants operated in individual cities and villages, who maintained and ensured contact with members. Anton Zois was elected the first chairman, but he resigned due to poor health and was replaced by Lovro Toman.

Right from its inception, it began to fulfill its main task – to publish scientific, entertaining and educational literature. In the first year, it managed to publish only a calendar, then it also published LETOPIS. The „golden age” of Slovenian Matica is considered to be the years of the presidency of Franc Levec (1893 – 1907) and Anton Melik (1950 – 1960). Until 1918, it was the central cultural institution in Slovenia, and it also responded to cultural and political events in the country. Then it grad-

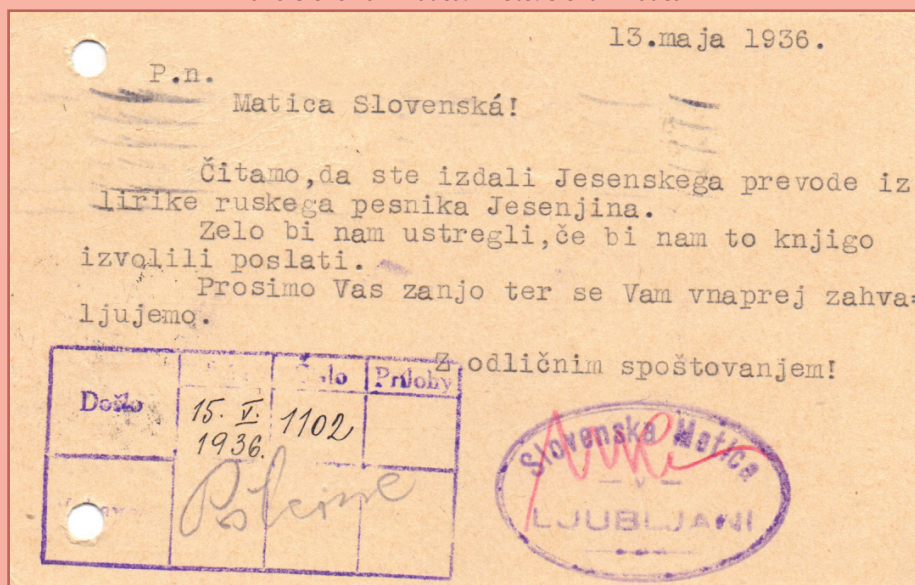
ually transferred some functions to the newly established university and academy. It collected a large library for the University of Ljubljana and, after the establishment of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences (1938), modified its focus and publishing orientation. After the war, it also revived its association and, above all, publishing activities. The dilemma of what to do with Matica as (according to some) a „conservative” institution was also resolved positively. The position was clearly taken – maintain and develop!

Since 1978, the Matica has been in contact with its members through the Voice of the Slovenian Matica (GLASNIK SLOVENSKE MATICA), which is still published today. The Slovenian Matica has survived all political changes. Even after the social changes in 1990, it remained a scientific and publishing association. Unlike the Slovak Matica, it does not have local organizations. It deals with issues of social and natural sciences and has a strong national and Slavic orientation. The Slovenian Matica has cooperated with Slavic Maticas and other cultural and scientific associations since its inception. Its cooperation with the Slovak Matica in Martin has been and still is lively. It includes the exchange of books and magazines, working and official visits, membership and honorary membership of some Matica officials. The current chairman of the Slovenian Matica is academician Prof. Aleš Gabrič.

Source: Michal Eliáš. From the history of the Maticas of Slavic nations (2010)

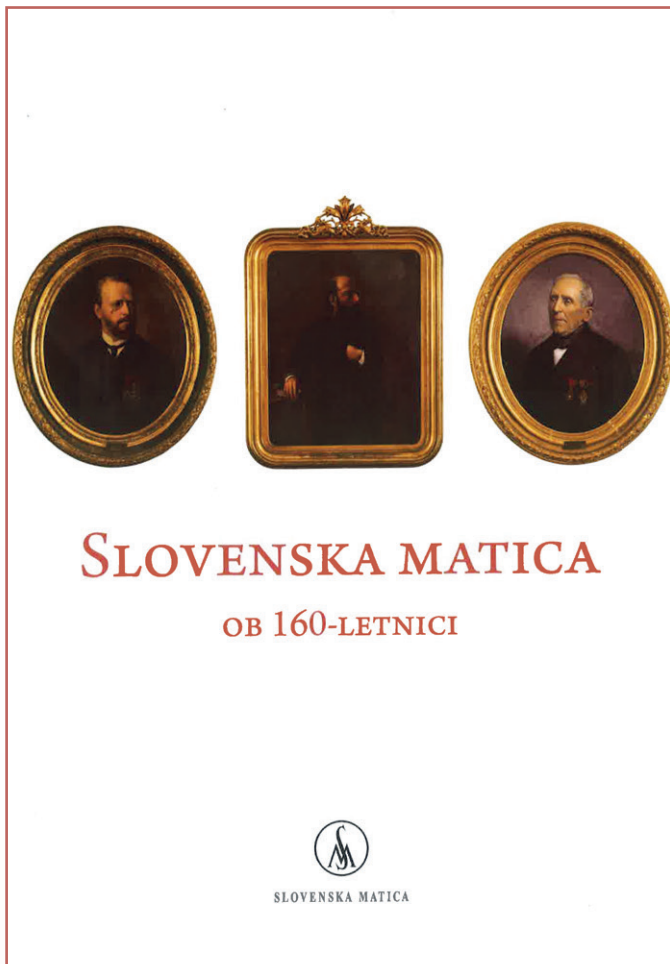


Correspondence from the exchange of publications between Slovak Matica and Slovenian Matica. Photo: Slovak Matica





Anton Melik, chairman of the Slovenian Matica 1950 - 1966.
Photo: Slovenian Matica

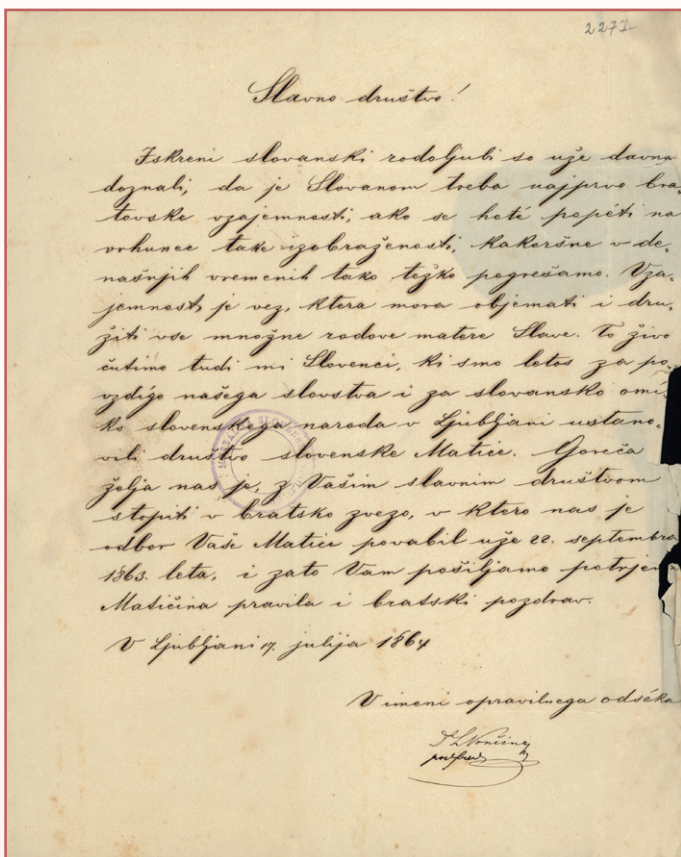


SLOVENSKA MATICA OB 160-LETNICI

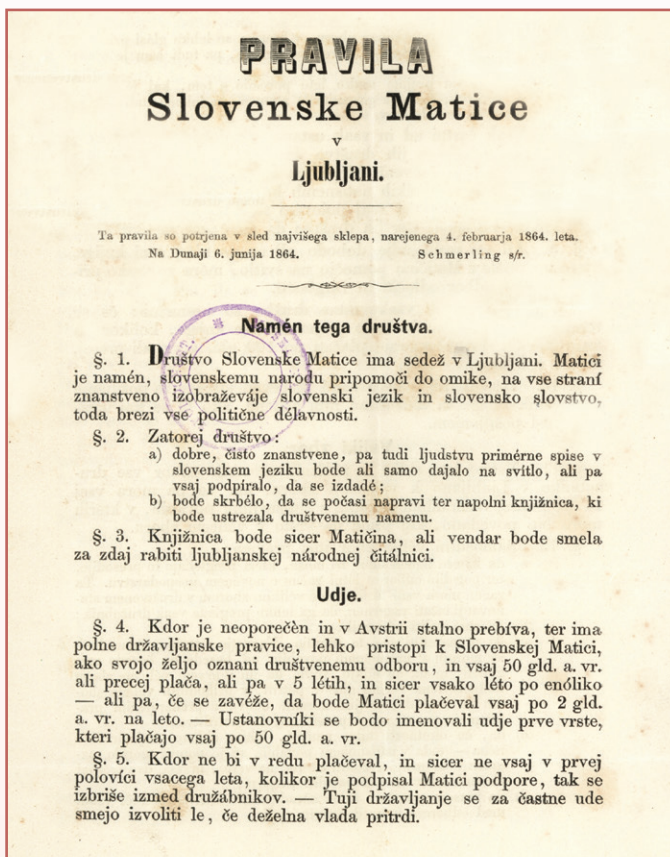


SLOVENSKA MATICA

Cover of the Commemorative Book published on the 160th anniversary of the founding of the Slovenian Matica



Letter from the newly founded Slovenian Matica to Slovak Matica dated July 17, 1864, with the attached statutes of Slovenian Matica, in which it accepts cooperation in accordance with the appeal of the Slovak Matica dated September 22, 1863. Photo: Slovak Matica



PRAVILA Slovenske Matice v Ljubljani.

Ta pravila so potrjena v sled najvišjega sklepa, narejenega 4. februarja 1864. leta.
Na Dunaji 6. junija 1864. Schmerling sfr.

Namén tega društva.

- §. 1. Društvo Slovenske Matice ima sedež v Ljubljani. Matiči je namén, slovenskemu narodu pripomoči do omike, na vse stran znanstveno izobraževaje slovenski jezik in slovensko šlovstvo, toda brezi vse politične délavnosti.
- §. 2. Zatorej društvo:
- dobre, čisto znanstvene, pa tudi ljudstvu primérne spise v slovenskem jeziku bode ali samo dajalo na svitlo, ali pa vsaj podpiralo, da se izdadé;
 - bode skrbélo, da se počasi napravi ter napolni knjižnica, ki bode ustrezala društvenemu namenu.
- §. 3. Knjižnica bode sicer Matičina, ali vendar bode smela za zdaj rabiti ljubljanskej národnej čitálnici.

Udje.

- §. 4. Kdor je neoporečen in v Avstrii stalno prebiva, ter ima polne državljanske pravice, lahko pristopi k Slovenskej Matiči, ako svojo željo oznaní društvenemu odboru, in vsaj 50 gld. a. vr. ali precej plača, ali pa v 5 lélih, in sicer vsako léto po enóliko — ali pa, če se zavéže, da bode Matiči plačeval vsaj po 2 gld. a. vr. na leto. — Ustanovniki se bodo imenovali udje prve vrste, kteri plačajo vsaj po 50 gld. a. vr.
- §. 5. Kdor ne bi v redu plačeval, in sicer ne vsaj v prvej polovici vsacega leta, kolikor je podpisal Matiči podpore, tak se izbrisé izmed družábnikov. — Tuji državljanje se za častne ude smejo izvoliti le, če deželna vlada pritrdi.

The first page of the Statutes of the Slovenian Matica.
Photo: Slovak Matica



Depiction of the Battle of Kosovo by Adam Stefanovic, 1870. Photo: internet

The Slavic family and today, part 2

Jozef Sipko, University of Prešov in Prešov, Slovakia

Serbs and their fate

In the 1990s, there was a war in Yugoslavia, for which the mainly pro-Western media blamed the Serbs. In fact, in 1999, NATO, without a UN mandate and in violation of international law, bombed Serbia and its capital Belgrade for 78 days, killing several thousand Serbian citizens, but pro-Western propaganda also claimed in our country, as I mentioned above, that the bombing of Serbia was a lesser evil. There were even claims that it was a humanitarian bombing. I had the opportunity to see the results of this bombing in Belgrade. Later, individual representatives of Serbia were brought before the International Court in The Hague, where some of them tragically and under unclear circumstances died or publicly committed suicide. But when the then prosecutor of the aforementioned court, Carla del Ponte, wrote a book about the crimes of local Albanians against Serbs, directly accusing the later prime minister and later Chairman of Kosovo, Taci, of crimes against humanity, this was not taken into account at all in the West. Only recently were criminal proceedings initiated against him, since Taci and his followers murdered young Serbs and traded in their organs. The Serbs were not guilty of similar crimes in the aforementioned war. However, during the aforementioned bombing of Serbia, they showed their pride and extraordinary bravery. In Belgrade, there are still ruins of buildings that were destroyed mainly by bombing, and among other things, a third of the Serbian Television building is in ruins after being hit by an American missile. Around twenty employees there died in its ruins. I have not found any mention of this in our media. When I asked the locals of Belgrade how it was that the bridges

over the Sava River were not destroyed during the bombing of their capital, I received the following answer: „When there was an air raid alert, thousands of mainly young Serbs held hands, went out onto the bridges and sang Serbian folk songs. The Americans did not dare to bomb them.“

In this courageous act, primarily by young Serbs, the etymology of the word Serb was probably most clearly manifested - one version explains it as brave. After all, the Serbs have shown their courage and bravery several times in their history. When the Ottoman expansion into the Balkans began, the local Slavs formed a Serbian-Bosnian-Bulgarian coalition and defeated the Turkish tribes in the Battle of Pločnik nad Toplica. The Turks then organized a large army, against which the Serbs, practically the first to stand against the Ottomans, led by their prince Dmitry, on June 28, 1389, in the Battle of Kosovo Polje, where a large part of them and their prince perished. The course and significance of this battle is also evidenced by the fact that Sultan Murad I himself perished in it. His son Bayezid I took over the command and the Turks managed to win, which had far-reaching consequences for the entire Balkans. Characteristic of the events at the time on the Kosovo field was the behavior of the Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg, who, instead of coming to the aid of the Serbs, attacked them from the north, thereby sealing the fate of Christian Serbia for many centuries. The Turks uncompromisingly exterminated the entire Serbian nobility (Sloboda, 2021, p. 92). This haughty and short-sighted policy of the Hungarian King Sigismund towards the Orthodox South Slavs continued in many other events, especially in southern and eastern Europe, which was felt especially by the nations of the Orthodox faith in the 20th century. Finally,



Memorial at the site of the Battle of Kosovo. Photo: internet

the other inhabitants of Hungary also paid the price when the Turks occupied and plundered Buda in 1541 and annexed a large part of Hungary to their empire. The severe consequences of the Turkish occupation were also felt in the southern regions of today's Slovakia. It is from those times that the proverb „A worse Turk than a Turk“ comes from. In 1683, the Turks even besieged Vienna, but thanks mainly to Polish troops led by King Jan Sobieski, the capital of the Habsburg Monarchy was saved.

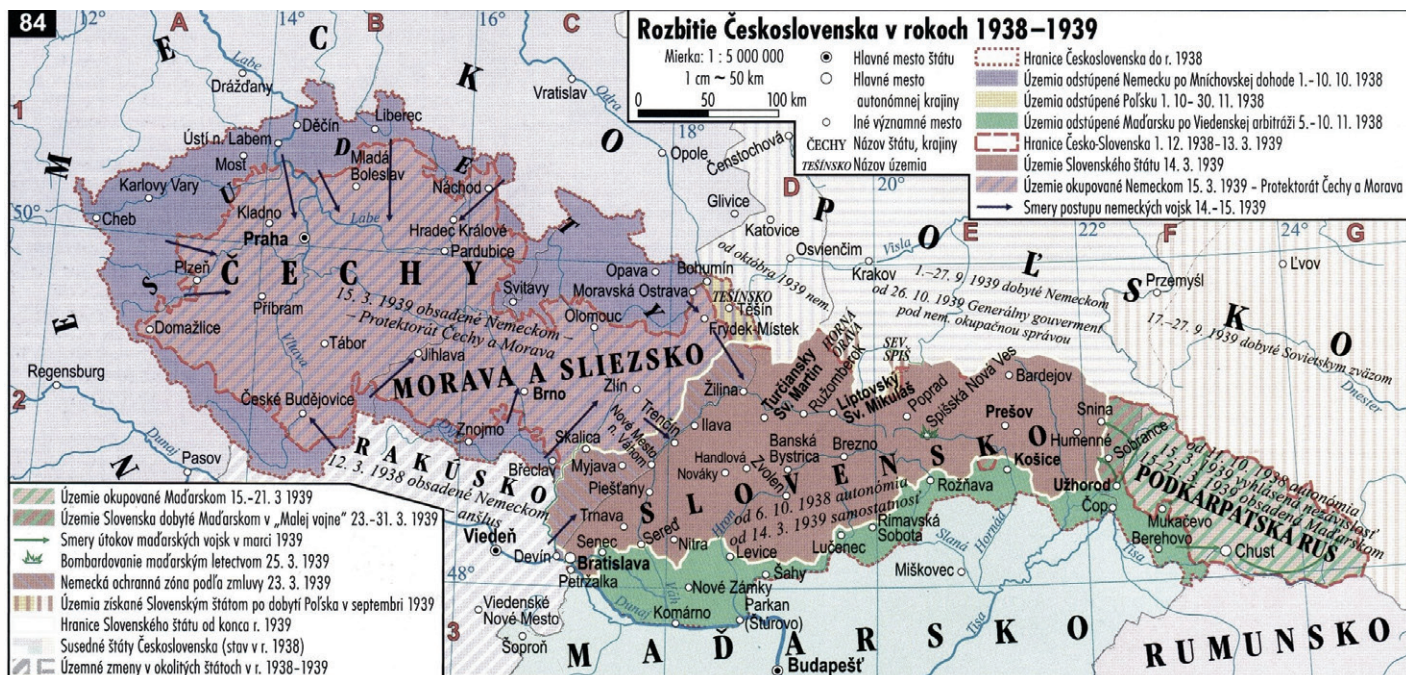
Serbs still rightly feel great resentment that the West took away their sacred Kosovo (Drozdovo) and allowed the creation of the second Albanian state in Europe there. In today's Kosovo, there is the second largest American military base in Europe - that is, in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, during the existence of which, however, no foreign troops were ever there. Kosovo Field represents an analogy with the Russian legendary place where a similar battle took place for the Slavs in 1380 - the Battle of Kulikovo Field, in which the Russians defeated the Tatars supported by Western mercenaries. We also find such associations about the immense significance of the victory in the Battle of Kulikovo in our times: Velikaya Pobeda in 1941-1945 has its roots on the Kulikovo Field. The Battle of Kulikovo is very strongly connected in value with such legendary figures as Dimitrij Donskoj and Andrei Peresvet. And the same can be said about the Kosovo Polje, which the West tore away from Serbia.

The legendary place mentioned by the Russians remained, but the no less legendary area of the Srom was taken by the current Anti-Slavs. This is mainly attributed to the then US President B. Clinton and his Secretary of State M. Albright (her father was the Czechoslovak ambassador to Yugoslavia before World War II), whose companies acquired great wealth in the „Albanian“ Kosovo. It

was these Western politicians at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries who essentially prevented the investigation of these events, which Carla del Ponte writes about in her book. Since Clinton and Albright no longer have a significant political influence on world events, attempts to investigate the crimes of Taci and his followers, who as a result resigned from his highest office, have been renewed in a sense. The story of Kosovo, today the second Albanian state in Europe (!), clearly speaks of the anti-Slavic policy of the current political leaders of the West, which is essentially a continuation of the anti-Slavic policy of previous periods. And this anti-Slavic policy of the West is long-term, I remind you - with the help of our modern-day Turks. During World War II, the Yugoslavs created the largest partisan movement against the Germans, led by Josip Broz Tito (father Franjo Broz, a Croat, and mother Marija, a Slovenian, born Javeršek). The Germans tried with great determination to destroy the Titoites, but thanks to the bravery and heroism of the Yugoslav partisans, they failed. A major military clash occurred, which remained in the history of World War II known as the Battle of the Neretva. In 1969, a co-production film was made about this heroic epic, in which the main character was played by the famous American actor Yul Brynner, but other important foreign actors such as Franco Nero, Orson Welles, Hardy Krüger, Curd Jürgens and Sergei Bondarchuk also appeared in the film. Special German diversionary units, whose commander was the notorious O. Skorzeny (famous for kidnapping Mussolini from captivity), tried to kidnap him, but thanks to the great sacrifice of ordinary Yugoslav partisans in particular, Tito was saved. As the chairman of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the President of Yugoslavia, he was received with the highest honors after the war by the leaders of the USSR, the USA, China, India and other states, especially within the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement. While JB Tito lived, Yugoslavia also lived and had great respect during the Cold War. After the collapse of



Dmitry Donskoy in the Battle of Kulikovo Field, Adolphe Yvon, painting from 1859. Photo: internet



Breakaway territories of the Czechoslovak Republic 1938 to 1939 - map. Photo: internet

Yugoslavia, a war began, unleashing national hatred at all levels.

Serbs still feel justified resentment over the way “human rights defenders” treat the victims of Serbs during World War II. The most tragic fate of Serbs was suffered in the concentration camp in Jasenovac, Croatia, which was established in the German-controlled so-called Independent State of Croatia in August 1941, where literally hundreds of thousands of people were brutally murdered, mainly Serbs, but also Jews, Roma and Croats – anti-fascists. There are various figures on the number of those murdered, but at the head of these brutal crimes were the fascists collaborating with the Germans, the so-called Ustaše. Even one of the commanders of the extermination camp in Jasenovac was a former Jesuit priest – a supporter of the Ustaše! Some historians also state the number of victims: over a million people. Unlike Auschwitz, where people were mainly liquidated in gas chambers, in Jasenovac the local Ustasha „Turkish” murdered their victims with special Serbo-Croatian knives. Individual fragments of these crimes have a diabolical appearance. This racist genocide is hardly talked about in our country either, and many of our people and citizens of other Slavic countries have never heard anything about the crimes in Jasenovac. Similarly, about the crimes against Serbs in the 1990s. During our stay in Belgrade at an international Russist conference in 2009, local citizens stopped us three times when they learned that we were from Slovakia: „You our adopters, you do not recognize Kosovo!” - and they immediately welcomed us. A taxi driver even took us to the Belgrade stadium, where our footballers, as I mentioned above, won the European Championship title in 1976, defeating the then reigning world champions – the Germans – in the final. Many Serbs remember this success with great joy and considered Czechoslovakia’s success at that time almost their own.

Similar memories of Serbian friendship and kindness can be continued. My grandfather, my father, his brothers and other compatriots of mine went to Serbia and later to Yugoslavia for many years to tinker, and they retained beautiful memories of the Slavic sentiment of the Serbs

throughout their lives. The Ruthenian author Kindja (2019) already writes about this, who tinkered in Serbia before the First World War since he was thirteen years old. Our tinkers often sang Serbian folk songs in their homeland. Nowadays, thanks to TV Folklorika, we have the opportunity to get to know the national culture of Slovaks, who have lived among the Serbs for almost three hundred years. It can be said with certainty that nowhere in the world has Slovak culture been preserved in such a convincing original version as in Serbia. Old Slovak folk songs, the original Slovak language, beautiful folk costumes and many stories from the lives of our compatriots in Serbian Vojvodina have been preserved to a large extent thanks to the fact that the Serbs still treat us literally as brothers. This was finally demonstrated by their representatives during the beautiful program Zem spieva on RTVS.

Munich and the fate of the Slavs

Even during the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1939), Yugoslavia was our closest ally, when together with Romania these three states formed an alliance called the Little Entente. However, the Western “allies” betrayed us and abandoned our countries to fascist Germany. The highest representatives of Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany forced the Czechoslovak government to cede the Sudetenland to the Third Reich. The then British Prime Minister N. Chamberlain showed the Munich Agreement at London Airport and announced that peace in Europe had been saved for the next fifty years. World War II would begin in less than a year! The governments of Poland and Hungary, our closest neighbors, also joined the Hitlerites at that time. It is still necessary to recall in this context that the Munich Agreement or the Munich Betrayal on September 29-30, 1938 was also implemented thanks to the aforementioned neighboring states. The Kingdom of Hungary received southern Slovakia as a reward after the so-called Vienna Arbitration held on November 2, 1938, and Poland received the Czech part of the Cieszyn region, part of northern Slovak Orava and Spiš. Did it help them? The stupidity of the elites of that time is also evidenced by the fact that Hitler was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for the Munich Agreement! Less than a year



From left to right: Neville Chamberlain, Édouard Daladier, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini and Galeazzo Ciano before the signing of the Munich Agreement. Photo: internet

later, on September 1, 1939, the Germans invaded Poland, which is considered the official beginning of World War II, in which around 6 million Polish citizens died. However, the Germans had a plan to completely exterminate the Polish Slavic nation as one of the first, which their leaders did not hide at all. KH Frank, the then chief representative of the German occupation power in Poland, based in the royal castle of Wavel in Krakow, had already carried out the genocide of Poles during the occupation. His son spoke about this directly after the war in the TV documentary Project Nazism (ČT2 9. 2. 2021). The aforementioned memories of Frank the Younger are very open and in one fragment he mentions how his mother treated Poles in a condescending and harsh manner. In one case, she even hit a local shop assistant and immediately afterwards took a very expensive dress and paid only a symbolic amount. Another memory is related to how the older son asked KH Frank's father: „What kind of corpses are these under the castle of Wavel?” The father became so angry that he forbade his sons to talk about similar topics - that is, about the mass murder of Poles. I emphasize that these are the memories of the son of the war criminal KH Frank, who was sentenced to death at the Nuremberg Trials after the war, although he was the only one of all German war criminals to have repented and confessed to the crimes that the Germans committed during World War II. It is still necessary to emphasize that the pre-war Polish political elites closely collaborated with fascist Germany. The Polish Royal Castle in Wavel, among other well-known figures of

Poland, is where the pre-war Polish leader Józef Klemens Piłsudski is buried. After his death in 1936, Marshal Piłsudski was honored by Adolf Hitler himself when he attended a funeral ceremony in Berlin at a symbolic coffin draped in a Polish flag with an eagle. However, the fact of the Polish state's cooperation with Hitler's Germany before World War II speaks of very tragic consequences for the Poles themselves and other Slavs. As late as the 1970s, during our visit to Warsaw, Polish guides showed us, as students, places where the Germans had mass-shot Poles – right on the streets of Warsaw, which they had eventually practically destroyed. In the same years, the Germans were also brutally persecuting ordinary Polish residents in the Polish countryside. One elderly Pole recalled that they were taken to Auschwitz for failing to meet the prescribed deliveries of agricultural produce or for secretly breeding domestic animals. The inhabitants of Poland during the war years were cruelly persecuted, and this primarily concerned the Polish intelligentsia, which the Germans planned to liquidate in Slavic countries at the very beginning of their genocidal policy. For example, the creative staff of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow were summoned to a public meeting and from there they were taken directly to concentration camps, from which many never returned.

The above-mentioned fragments from the tragic fates of the Slavs as a direct consequence of the Munich Agreement clearly testify to the long-term patronizing relationship towards us on the part of the West. After all, Hitler had his supporters in the highest circles, especially the British

elite, and even the brother of the then English king supported him. This is, among other things, a manifestation of the centuries-old tendency of these circles to assert their Western dominance. Will Slavic reciprocity be created? Our centuries-old enemies continue their long-term efforts to break up the Slavic world, knowing that the biggest obstacle in their efforts is Russia. Of course, they do not directly state their intentions publicly, but they are constantly trying to achieve their own anti-Slavic policies using various sophisticated methods. First of all, they focused on isolating Russia from the rest of the Slavic world, which they are succeeding in. In our media, we practically do not find positive information about Russia; most often, only various negative data is offered. When the Alexandrov concerts were being prepared in Slovakia, advertisements about their performances were broadcast on RTVS, which brought considerable profits to the television. However, the television did not broadcast a single footage or report of the eight concerts. At the same time, tens of thousands of our citizens attended these performances, for which it was very difficult to get tickets. In fact, all events with a Slavic theme are ignored by the media, most of them are owned by pro-Western oligarchic groups. At the same time, in various media appearances, some „experts“ (among them former employees of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism) draw attention to „Russian manipulations“ and Russian influence on our public opinion. Just look at the weekly overview of television programs and count the Russian and Western programs! On individual TV channels, we also find twenty American and Western films in 24 hours, dominated by thrillers and other literally anti-cultural productions or productions of the culture of death, as some thinkers call it.

Where is the Slavic world heading? When I ask this question, I see the painting by the famous Russian painter Vereshchagin, *The Warrior at the Crossroads*, which faces a choice: which direction should I take? Every person is faced with such a decision many times. This fully applies to the Slavic nations, which our national revivalists once wanted to unite. Today, they are often condemned as carriers of dangerous Pan-Slavism. In one issue of the magazine *Týždeň*, a photomontage of *Ludovít Štúr* in a Guards uniform was published on its cover page! In fact, his lifelong pro-national and pro-Slavic efforts were disgraced. The magazine in question writes: We are the West, not the East. What would *PJ Šafárik*, who vehemently and scientifically defended Slavic roots in Europe in his magnificent work *Slavic Antiquities (Slavjanskije drevnosti)*, say about this? And how would the greatest Ukrainian poet *TH Shevchenko*, who wrote in honor of *PJ Šafárik*, perceive it:

Glory to Tobi Šafárik, Forever and ever, What are you doing in one place?	Glory to You, Šafárik, Forever and ever, That you have led me into one place.
sea Slavyanskije riki.	sea, Those Slavic rivers.

These great Slavs of ours, such as *Pushkin*, *Shevchenko*, *Šafárik*, *Štúr*, *Duchnovič* and many others, would be very unpleasantly surprised by what is found in the flow of today's Slavic rivers. Nevertheless, we have and must protect our Slavic family, because no one else will do it for us. All the more so because in the current world, Slavic culture, the Slavic world and the Slavs in general are constantly belittled by its powerful component. It is not the first time.

Conclusion – let's learn

The Germans during the Third Reich had the General Plan Ost, in which they focused on the liquidation of the Slavs. Even before the war, a „scientific“ approximately one hundred-page book was published in Hitler's Germany under the title *Untermensch - Subhuman*, which, among other things, outlined plans for how to deal with the nations that the Germans considered subhuman. A classification of these people into four groups was created:

1. The first group included people destined for immediate liquidation. This primarily concerned representatives of the Slavic intelligentsia. The Germans already had experience in this diabolical activity, especially with gas chambers.

2. People who could be Germanized were included here. According to the German racist criteria of the time, this group was to include mainly young Slavs who had certain genetic characteristics close to German superhumans. For example, they were to have blond hair, blue eyes, certain body measurements, etc. Demonstrations of racial theory took place on the streets of German cities. For example, the heads of selected people were measured and their racial suitability or racial inferiority was pointed out. For example, according to this theory, *LN Tolstoy* was racially inferior to many other personalities of the Slavic world. When his birthplace, *Jasná Polyana*, was occupied by the Germans, they defecated on his grave.

3. This group was to include the Slavs, who were automatically considered inferior and their lives were to take place in difficult conditions in labor and concentration camps, where they were to be gradually liquidated. The Germans already had extensive experience in this, gained in many concentration camps during the existence of the Third Reich. Plans were even created, according to which time limits were determined, within which the Germans planned to liquidate millions of Slavs.

4. The fourth group of Slavs was to guard the Slavs from the third group, while helping the Germans in the liquidation of the largest mass of the Slavic population. These were traitors and collaborators who had already actively cooperated with the Germans during World War II in burning and murdering villages with Slavic populations. For example, in Belarus, 628 villages were burned down in this way, along with their inhabitants. This is evidenced by the film version of the novel *Khatynskaya apovesé (1972)* by the Belarusian writer *Ales Adamovič*, filmed in 1985 under the title *Idi i smotri (Go and Look)* by director *Elem Klimov*. In Slovakia, German security forces burned down 119 villages in this way, and some villages were still burning at the beginning of 1945, when Soviet soldiers were approaching Berlin. At this point, one can mention the village of *Kremnička* and the lime kiln in *Nemecká* in central Slovakia, where German Nazis and Slovak guardsmen shot hundreds of Slovak and Jewish civilians, partisans and anti-fascists. In our time, a memorial has been erected there. The most urgent call in this context is still: **Slavs, let's come to our senses!**

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Interview with the chairman of the Slovenian Matica, Aleš Gabrič

Interviewed by Katarína Koňariková, Director of the Folk Museum of Slovak Matica, Slovakia

What cultural and educational obstacles did Slovenians have to overcome before the establishment of Slovenian Matica?

The significance of the founding of our association and its activities in the following decades can also be compared through the prism of the spiritual state of Slovenians before and after the establishment of Matica. Let us choose the period when the poet of the Slovenians anthem Zdravljica came to Ljubljana, then still only a regional capital. When France Prešeren attended grammar school in Ljubljana, he was taught only in German. If he wanted to go to the theater, he could only watch performances in German. He also read newspapers in this language, since Slovenian ones did not yet exist or only began to be published towards the end of his life. At the beginning of the 20th century, similar conditions were outlined by his daughter Ernestina Jelovšek, who wrote in 1883 memoirs of her father, the author of today's Slovenian anthem, in German, because she had lived her entire life among Germans and had no Slovenian literature at her disposal.

How did the Slovenian Matica contribute to the rapid cultural development of the Slovenians?

The Slovenian Matica played a crucial role in increasing literacy and access to literature in the Slovenian language. This cultural rise was not only noticed by the Slovenians themselves; in 1896, Professor Ludwik Gumplowicz of the University of Graz described the rapid cultural develop-

ment of the Slovenians in the Parisian journal *Revue internationale de sociologie* as an example that young cultural nations no longer need centuries to reach the level of older cultural nations. This article was translated into Slovenian and published during the first heyday of the Slovenian Matica, when it was led by the literary historian Fran Levec.

How did the cultural and educational opportunities of Slovenians change at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries?

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Slovenians, unlike in Prešeren's time, had the opportunity to attend Slovenian schools, read Slovenian newspapers, and attend Slovenian theater performances and concerts. The more educated could access professional and scientific literature in Slovenian, which strengthened Slovenian professional terminology. Many joined the Slovenian Matica, an association that offered these opportunities.

Why was the Slovenian Matica considered a key institution in the effort to establish a Slovenian university and academy?

Matica, also known as „our little academy,” was an institution for educated Slovenians that was also supposed to see to the establishment of a Slovenian university and academy. At the end of the 19th century, when these ideas were re-emerging, Matica members were the most vocal supporters of this effort. Student Ivan Prijatelj, later a pro-



Slovak Matica, represented by its chairman Marián Gešper, honored Slovenian Matica on its extraordinary 160th anniversary, with the chairman of Slovak Matica presenting the Slovak Matica Gold Award to the chairman of Slovenian Matica, Aleš Gabrič. Photo: Slovenian Matica

fessor and member of the first faculty of the University of Ljubljana, emphasized at a 1901 assembly of Slovenian students that the fight for Slovenian equality and cultural values was clear.

What role did the Slovenian Matica play during both world wars and how did it respond to the pressure of the fascist occupying forces?

The Slovenian Matica was important during both world wars, when its activities were interrupted twice. The Matica and its members did not deviate from their mission, they were the initiators of the establishment of the first Slovenian university and later the Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana. Even after the division of Slovenia and the occupation in 1941, the Matica refused to submit to the demands of the fascist occupying forces and was persecuted for its uncompromising stance.

What significance does the Slovenian Matica have

for Slovenian identity and culture today, and how has its role changed compared to the past?

Today, when Slovenians commemorate Prešeren Day as a cultural holiday, the conditions for our cultural and scientific activities cannot be compared to those of the times of the author of our anthem. The tasks that Matica fulfilled in its first decades are now being taken over by the main Slovenian professional cultural and scientific institutions. However, Slovenian Matica remains an important part of Slovenian identity. Despite political disagreement, the law on Slovenian Matica was adopted unanimously in 2017, which confirms that many conscious Slovenians perceive Matica as a building block of Slovenian culture. Our efforts are not a nostalgic return to the past, but a commitment to enrich Slovenia's scientific and artistic achievements with each passing year and to pass on to future generations of Slovenians the „Magna Carta of the Cultural Development of Our Nation“ in the best possible form and in high condition.



Pavol Jozef Šafárik (1795 – 1861)

Erik Germuška, Slovak Matica, Slovakia

Language is the consciousness of a nation, it is its spirit in its highest manifestation, it is a magically powerful bond that binds child to mother, brother to brother, family to family and unites them all into a nation."

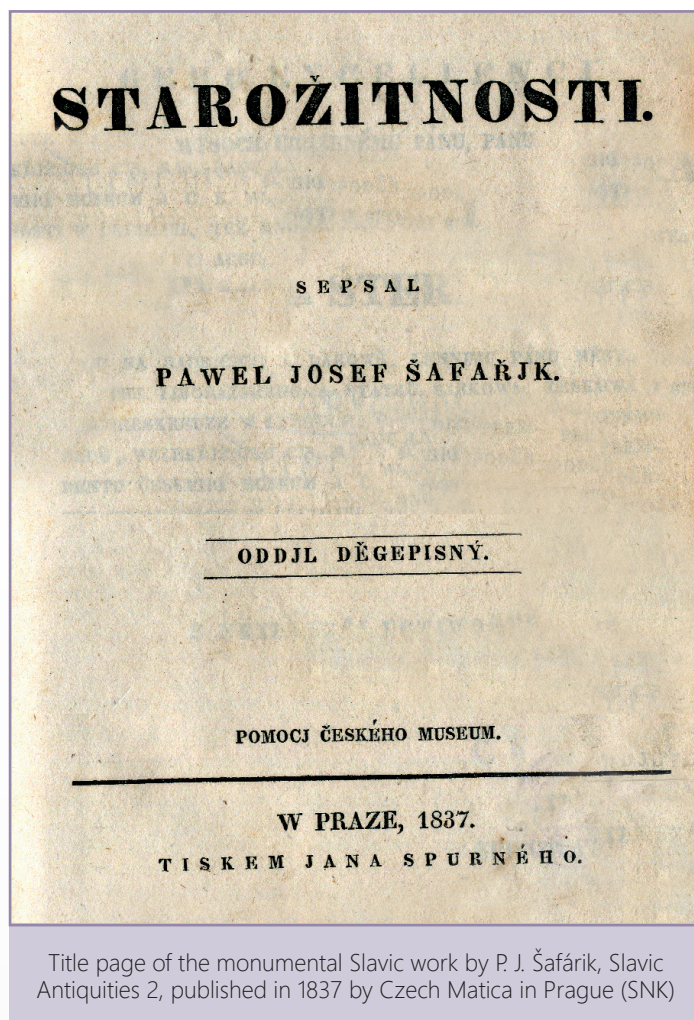
An exceptional Slovak, the founder of modern scientific Slavic studies, a supporter of Slavic mutuality while respecting the individual national specificities of the Slavs, a scientist and popularizer of the Slavic idea in the difficult political and existential position of the Slavic nations of the 19th century. Šafárik can be described as one of the fathers of the Slovak nation, who, despite many historical vicissitudes, aimed not only at the creation of a modern nation, but also at its own statehood and Slavic civilizational anchoring in the European family of nations. Šafárik significantly contributed to the cultural self-identification of the Slovaks, which was the precursor and outline of further, not only political, creation of the nation.

In the Slavic environment, Pavol Jozef Šafárik is perceived as one of the founders of the pan-Slavic idea of Slavic mutuality. The pair Šafárik and Ján Kollár are perceived by history as an inseparable Slovak and Slavic tandem, who dreamed of the glory of the famous Slavs and their bright future. Šafárik, as the founder of modern Slavic studies, was scientifically based and had his feet

firmly on the ground in his perception of the Slavs. Kollár, on the other hand, was faithful to his romantic view of Slavism and its place in the world, which he passionately celebrated in his poetry. For a more diverse view of the work of Pavol Jozef Šafárik, I will present several quotes from a non-Slavic cultural environment. Robert Pynsent, an English literary scholar, writes about Šafárik: "Unlike Kollár, Šafárik was a very pleasant man. Both were enthusiastic about the Slavic cause (initially Kollár inspired Šafárik), but Šafárik applied his enthusiasm to scientific work and Kollár to poetry, half to political theory and wild fantasizing." Canadian historian Peter Brock mentions Šafárik: "A more elaborate concept of a separate Slovak identity in the Czechoslovak entity was presented by Šafárik in 1826. He focused mainly on linguistic and literary aspects. Šafárik intellectually surpassed Kollár and soon became one of the most important scholars of Slavism." Philosopher Roger Scruton writes: "It is Šafárik who could be a symbol of Slovakia as a real entity among the civilized nations of the world." (Káša, Phenomenon of Slavism, p. 84)

Šafárik and the geopolitical context of Europe in the 19th century

„The first thing that catches the eye when considering the ancient Slavs is the enormous size of this tribe of about 50-60 million people, occupying almost half of Europe and a third of Asia, divided by all sorts of names and settlements into numerous branches and offshoots and connected only by the important link of a common language, although fragmented into several dialects. From Dubrovnik on the Adriatic, to the north to the shores of the Arctic Ocean, to the right to Kamchatka near Japan, to the left to the Baltic Sea, Slavic populations can be found everywhere, somewhere ruling, somewhere subject to other nations.” (Šafárik, *History of the Slavic Language and Literature of All Dialects*, 1992, p. 17) Šafárik considered the tribe of Slavs to be originally European and at least as old as the other original populations of Europe. „Accordingly, we are forced by valid reasons and grounds to accept as correct that the Slavic tribe is as old in Europe as its related Lithuanian, German, Celtic, Latin and Thracian tribes, that its settlements in the most ancient times extended from the Adriatic Sea to the Baltic, from the coast of the Oder to the sources of the Dnieper and Don, and that in its population it was already equal to or even exceeded the most populous European tribes. The assumption of some that the Slavs invaded Europe only at the time of the great migration of the Ural peoples or somewhat earlier, is already presented to us in its correct light, that is, in all its futility and meaninglessness. Such large tribes, as we see the Slavic tribe at the end of this part and at the beginning of the next, never come from somewhere else all at once, but grow up on the spot. Large and populous tribes send their families, the surplus of their population, like swarms to foreign lands: however, the paternal race itself does not move from the inherited land, fertilized by its own blood, either voluntarily or by force, but grows there, matures there, and also dies there. The Slavs are therefore the original inhabitants of Europe.” (Šafárik, *Slavic Antiquities 1*, p. 346) The Slavophile movement of the 19th century is therefore a natural image of the emancipation of the Slavic peoples, most of whom lived as a suppressed national entity in large multinational units in the Austrian monarchy and the Ottoman Empire. Slavophileism gradually took on a new and nascent geopolitical dimension at that time, most prominent in Russian philosophical thought, the most prominent representative of which was Nikolai Danilevsky with his cultural-historical types, i.e. civilizations, among which he included Slavic civilization. We encounter the problem of distorting history and various historical epochs in almost every historical stage of humanity. Finding a true picture of us Slavs is the legacy of Šafárik's scientific work for the present, in his most important work, *The Writings of Pavol Jozef Šafárik*, which consists of *Slavic Antiquities*, *Slavic Ethnography*, and *History of the Slavic Language and Literature of All Dialects*. Šafárik notes: “Finding Slavism in Slavism, that is, researching the true origin of our tribe, combined with a careful investigation of the origin and ancient history of other, neighboring tribes, will in the future, as we firmly hope, prevent any blind and meddling association of Slavs with Scythians, Sarmatians, Huns, Avars and other foreign tribes, by which our history has been so horribly infected by both domestic and foreign peoples and turned into a stinking quagmire of nonsense.” (Šafárik, *Slovanské starožitnosti*, p. 347). Eduard Chmelár confirms

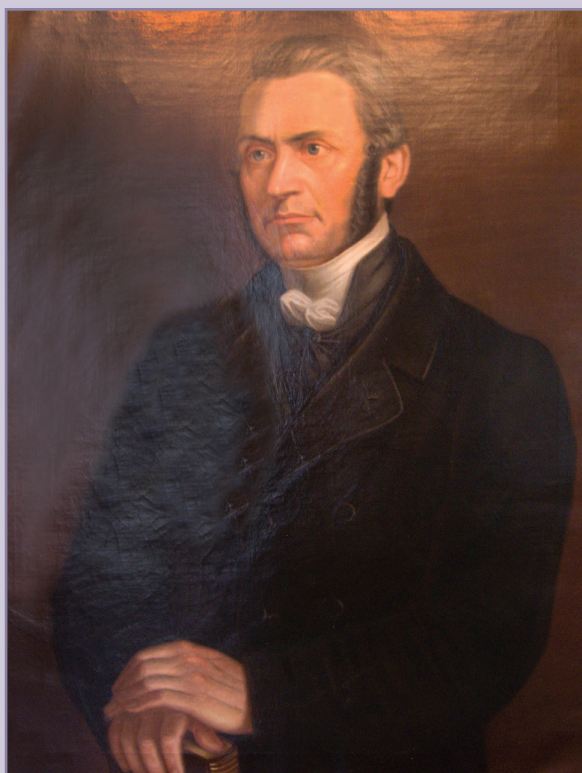


Title page of the monumental Slavic work by P. J. Šafárik, *Slavic Antiquities 2*, published in 1837 by Czech Matica in Prague (SNK)

the correctness of Šafárik's assumptions and notes: “The latest research indicates that Pavol Jozef Šafárik's theory that the Slavs belong to the original inhabitants of Europe may not be completely wrong. We consider the widespread opinion that the Slavs arrived in the territory of present-day Slovakia only at the turn of the 5th and 6th centuries to be untenable” (Chmelár, *Reconstruction of Slovak History*, p. 10).

Historian Viktor Timura highlights Pavol Jozef Šafárik as one of the Slovak researchers who were not satisfied with the superficial theory of the arrival of the Slavs on the territory of Europe and Slovakia in the 5th century. „The theory, starting with the history of the Slavs and Slovenes - Slovaks in the 5th - 6th centuries AD, is not an invention of Slavic or Slovak historians. It has its origins in Western historiography and linguistics of the 19th century, especially German, from where historians adopted it. However, our historical science incomprehensibly persists in this untenable idea and theory, relying on archaeological knowledge from the first half of the first millennium AD.” (V. Timura, *Slovakia – hidden history dejiny*, p. 9)

Pavol Jozef Šafárik was influenced by the great Slavophile and visionary Ján Kollár, who presented the politically awakening Slovak nation with an ideologically and philosophically broader, i.e. more global dimension of its own existence with his humanistic vision of pan-Slavic mutuality. “With increasing mutuality, mutual love and unity will grow. We will always hate and despise each other less, the more we communicate with each other orally or in writing. A common literature and the exchange of spiritual gifts will fill minds tired of disputes with mutual trust, hearts desolate with mutual love, souls with a sense



Poet, historian and Slavist P. J. Šafárik (1795-1861), co-founder and collaborator of the Serbian Matica and Czech Matica, in 1827 the initiator of the idea of establishing the MS (Bohúň, PM: Portrait of Pavol Jozef Šafárik, oil, SNLM)

of the common interest of the whole." (J. Kollár, *On Literary Mutuality Between Different Tribes and Dialects of the Slavic Nation*, p. 450) Along with the awakening of national emancipation efforts among the subjugated, especially among small Slavic nations, confrontational forces also grew stronger, which aimed to suppress and delay the inevitable collapse of multinational monarchies. Štefan Marko Daxner commented on the increasing Magyarization of Slovaks: "Let anyone who knows Hungarian society better compare its character with that of the former Cumans, and similar features will appear to him. The same arrogance, individuality and pride; The same desire for power and a tendency to abuse the weaker, the same intolerance and hatred of everything that is different, characterizes Hungarian society even now, as historians have noted about the Cumans... Such is the centralizing system of Magyarization, in which there is and cannot be any place for the free development of non-Hungarian national elements, because intolerance does not tolerate its equal." (J. Sopko, P. Dvorák, *Chronicles of Medieval Slovakia*, p. 295)

Conclusion:

What is Šafárik's message for today's Slavic youth and Slovaks already inhabiting their own nation-state in the era of contemporary cultural, value and political globalization? Geopolitical unipolarity, cultural uniformity, suppression of the national is in direct contradiction with the precious heritage of our generations of national awakening. Just as Šafárik perceived the Slavic world itself as diverse and heterogeneous, striving for equal status with other nations of Europe, so too today the Slavic nations should not merge into one prevailing globalized mass professing foreign values and cultures. „Providence has already decided that the Slavs should not flourish like a palm tree with a single trunk, but like a multi-branched, far-reaching, shade-giving oak, branched as diversely as possible, bearing fruit of various kinds in various forms." (Šafárik, *History of the*

Slavic Language..., p. 54) The life and work of Pavol Jozef Šafárik is connected with the creation of a national idea and national self-identification. He perceived language as the first step towards the revival of the nation and national life. While our ancestors faced strong Magyarization, we are currently facing excessive Westernization of our society and Anglicization of the literary language. During his studies in Jena, Germany, Šafárik was influenced by Herder's idea of the natural principles of the existence of each nation and Jungmann's discourse on the value of the mother tongue and national education. „A young Slavic man with higher goals, in whose chest a desire to penetrate deeper into his native language has been born, either accidentally or by law; only in the native language can one achieve true perfection of language and spirit, never loses courage in a hard fight with countless and unexpected obstacles, often with hostile efforts of every kind, on the contrary, he remains even more firmly with the recognized jewel of the inherited language and national peculiarity and finally wins." (Šafárik, *History of Slavic Dialects...*, p. 14)

„A nation that is aware of the importance of a natural language for its higher spiritual life, rejects it and renounces it, commits suicide and thus interrupts the eternal laws of God." (Pavol Jozef Šafárik)

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Rastislav Surový in eternity. Farewell to the former chairman of Slovak Matica in Yugoslavia

Viliam Komora, Secretary of Slovak Matica, Slovakia

Rastislav Surový, the long-time chairman of Slovak Matica in Yugoslavia and honorary chairman of Slovak Matica in Serbia, passed away on the evening of Saturday, January 13, having lived to the respectable earthly age of 88 years.

„A great nationalist has left us unexpectedly,... who stood out for his impact on the nation in a hereditary role!“ informed the general public in Serbia and Slovakia, as well as our Slovak Matica, Pavel Surový, deputy of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in the Republic of Serbia, chairman of the Slovaks, Forward party and director of the Kysáč Cultural Center. P. Surový added that „Rastislav Surový was also the long-time chairman of the Local Branch of Slovak Matica in Serbia in Kysáč, as well as a former teacher and director of the Ľudovít Štúr Elementary School in Kysáč, a man with a big heart and enthusiasm, who stood up for our Kysáč and for Slovaks in Serbia until the last moment. As we called him: our uncle Mirko is an example for all of us of how a person should work until the last moment, not give up and always be active, work and participate in social and cultural life! He represented us with dignity at home and abroad at all levels and before all delegations. He worked and fought for our Kysáč and us Slovaks! Uncle Mirko, you will remain forever in our hearts! May he be eternally glorified! „concludes Pavel Surový.

The media in Serbia and other expatriate press also reported on his departure to eternity. Let us add that he concluded his earthly pilgrimage suddenly. He left his family and wife Elena Surová, née Hansmanová, with whom he spent almost his entire life. Kulpin.net recalls that he and his wife were peers, they attended the Slovak Gymnasium in Petrovec for eight years, which they graduated in 1953. Subsequently, they continued their studies together at the Higher Pedagogical School in Novi Sad, where Rastislav studied history and geography, which he subsequently taught. Together with his wife, they worked as teachers at the Primary School in Kysáč. However, they also participated in cultural and social events in this „Slovak“ village in Serbia, as well as in surrounding villages, helping to build Slovak culture and social awareness. We must also add that during the last August Slovak National Festival in Báčski Petrovac, Serbia, he dedicated himself to and brought closer the culture and activities of Slovaks in Serbia to our registry delegation from Slovakia, and was alert and actively engaged with registry officers from Slovakia.

Rastislav Surový was born in Kysáč on September 11, 1935, where he also finished elementary school. He completed his lower and upper secondary education and the school leaving exam in Petrovec at the Slovak Gymnasium. He graduated in history and geography at the Higher Pedagogical School in Novi Sad.

He later taught these subjects at the Ľudovít Štúr Elementary School in his native Kysáč, where he was later the principal for twelve years. He helped build a modern school building with a gymnasium, sports complex and the entire environment. He retired from the post of school principal in 1997. Already during his active working life, he became involved in the cultural and social environment and built Slovak national awareness in what was then Yugoslavia. He was actively involved in the work of the Slovak Matica in Yugoslavia, later becoming the chairman of the Local Union of the Slovak Matica in Yugoslavia in Kysáč, then the vice-chairman of the Local Union of the Slovak Matica in Yugoslavia in Bácska, and in the years 1997-2005 he was the chairman of the Slovak Matica in Yugoslavia. Under his leadership, active cooperation with the Yugoslav, Serbian and Slovak governments and political representatives was maintained and developed. There was also very active cooperation with artistic, cultural organizations and with Slovakists in Vojvodina. He helped to purchase and repair the headquarters building in Báčsky Petrovec. He also participated in the renovation of the Slovak National House in Kysáč, which is the seat of the Local Union Slovak Matica in Serbia. While serving as the chairman of the MSJ, he also served as a member of the National Council of the Slovak National Minority. The Slovak Matica (in Slovakia) awarded him the title of honorary member in 2004, and the Slovak National Union in Yugoslavia awarded him the title of honorary chairman in 2005. To this day, his portrait stands out among other chairmen at the headquarters of the Slovak Matica in Serbia in Báčsky Petrovec.

For the Slovak Matica, for the Slovak nation, and we believe that also for the Slovak Republic, to express Eternal Memory to this personality and may he rest in peace. We believe that the Slovak nation in Serbia, as well as in Slovakia, as well as the wide family of members of Maticas will not forget Rastislav Surový and he will continue to be a part of our great Slovak family.

May Rastislav Surový be remembered eternally!



Portrait of Rastislav Surový in the Slovak Matica in Serbia headquarters building. Photo: Viliam Komora



Rastislav Surový as a candidate for the National Council of the Slovak National Minority. Photo: Pavel Surový

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Slovak-Serbian Maticas cooperation bears further results

Radoslav Žgrada, editor-in-chief of Slovak Perspectives, Slovakia

Cultural cooperation among Slavic nations has a long tradition dating back to the beginnings of their national emancipation movements. All ethnicities and nationalities of the Western and Southern Slavs were for centuries under the domination of other nations: Germans, Hungarians, or Turks. The Serbs managed to break free from Ottoman rule in the second half of the 19th century, even if in part of their territory. Slovaks had to suffer national oppression until the Great War shattered the Habsburg prison of nations.

The desire for freedom made its way only slowly and cautiously. In difficult times, Slavic nations strove to be a support and inspiration for each other in the cultural field. After all, the establishment of the Serbian Matica in 1826 was an impulse and a shining example for the Maticas of other subjugated nations. The first historically recorded idea that captures the desire for the establishment of the Slovak Matica belongs to Pavol Jozef Šafárik in a letter dated July 19, 1827 addressed to Ján Kollár, where he argues precisely with the positive example of the Serbian Matica.

The fates of Serbs and Slovaks are similar in many ways. We are united by more than belonging to one of the European ethnic tribes, we are united by the tears and sorrow of long centuries of lack of freedom, oppression, loss of loved ones and the arbitrariness of powers in modern history. Serbs (just like us) sought a place and recognition as a cultural nation in adverse conditions. Serbia is a beautiful country with open and hospitable people, which has had something to offer European literature and the world since the first conception of the modern Serbian language by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić. It was his work, also known to our national revivalists, that expanded the cultural awareness of Serbia in contemporary Europe.

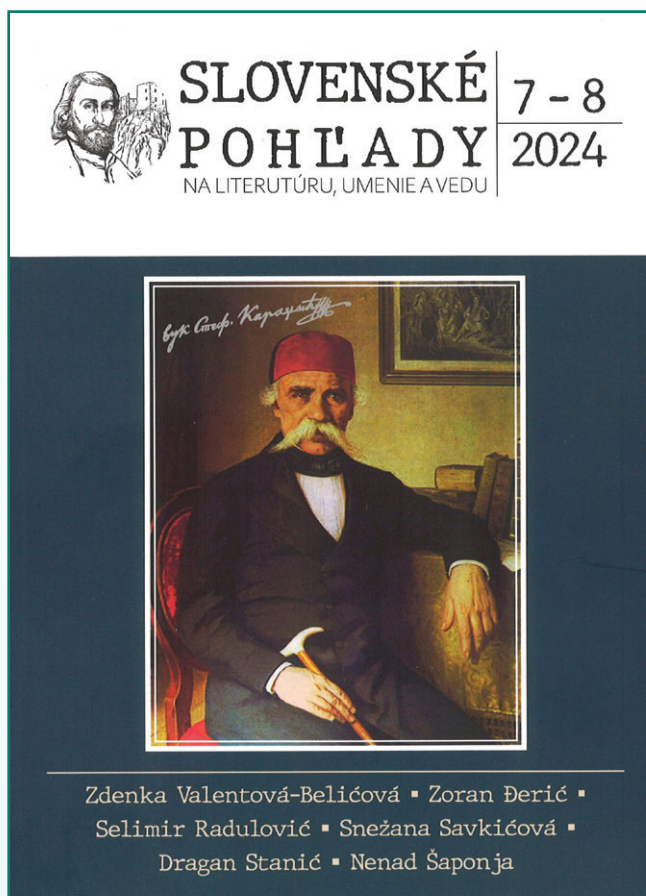
The new generation of writers who adopted Karadžić's linguistic codification (Branko Radičević or Đuro Daničić were among them; the latter slightly modified Karadžić's spelling) strengthened the importance and value of Serbian culture with their work. The prominent authors of romantic literature in Serbia and Montenegro also included Petar Petrović Njegoš or Jovan Jovanović Zmaj,

whose work can be found in the renewed Slovak Perspectives from the time of the leadership of Vajanský and Škultéty. It was the Serbs and Slovaks who were the most ardent supporters of the ideas of Pan-Slavism, Pan-Slavic mutuality or Slavophilism. Among the authors of the 19th century, let us mention at least Svetozar Marković, Petar Kočić, Borislav Stanković or Branislav Nušić. In the 20th century, with the advent of modernity, we encounter the names of Gustáv Matoš, Pavle Popović, Jovan Skerlić or Simo Pandurović. This generation forms the "golden age of Serbian literature". With the emergence of a common independent Yugoslav state in the more open conditions of the interwar period, their literature reflected all contemporary trends (surrealism, expressionism and others), absorbed and reflected modern

trends in the domestic and wider European space. Let us mention the names Oskar Davičo, Marko Ristić, Aleksandar Vučo or Dušan Matić... In post-war work, it is impossible not to mention the success of Yugoslav (Serbian) literature in the form of Ivo Andrić being awarded the Nobel Prize in 1961 for his lifetime contribution, primarily for the novel *The Bridge on the Drina*. The book is a story about the collective life and consciousness of the town and its inhabitants in the period from Turkish rule to the end of the Austro-Hungarian rule. The individual stories are connected by the Visegrad Bridge on the Drina, an old and unique building serving people as a symbol of permanence and immutability.

The dictates of socialist realism were milder in Yugoslav conditions than in our literature. In addition to the aforementioned, the most significant figures of modern Serbian literature include Ivo Andrić, the poet Miloš

Crnjanski, or Branko Ćopić, a famous author of novels. Many other Serbian writers returned to the historical theme of the national liberation struggle, in whose ranks they spent their formative years. These included, for example, Dobrica Ćosić - the later Chairman of Yugoslavia, Mihail Lalić, Skender Kulenović, or Meša Selimović. Among the representatives of Serbian postmodernism, Milorad Pavić stood out with his novel *The Dictionary of the Khazars*. Radoslav Petković's novel *Fate and Comments*, which has been awarded several prestigious literary prizes, is also highly regarded in this field.



WE REMEMBER



JOSIP JURAJ STROSSMAYER

210. výročie narodenia
a 120. výročie úmrtia

February 4, 1815, Osijek, Croatia – May 8, 1905, Đakovo, Croatia

Croatian Roman Catholic bishop, national revivalist, patron and politician, leader of the Croatian People's Party. As a Croatian patriot and supporter of Slavic mutuality, he demanded national rights for the Slavs in the Habsburg Monarchy. He maintained contacts with Ján Kollár, František Palacký and Fratišek Ladislav Rieger, supported the Serbian Matica, was a founding member of the Illyrian (Croatian) Matica and the Slovak Matica. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Yugoslav (Croatian) Academy of Sciences and the University of Zagreb. The Josip Juraj Strossmaer Museum is located in Đakovo. Photo: internet

240th anniversary of birth

JÁN HOLLÝ

March 24, 1785, Borský Mikuláš, Slovakia – April 14, 1849, Dobrá Voda, Slovakia

Slovak Roman Catholic priest, national figure and participant in the Bernolák movement, poet and translator. As a poetic bard, together with Ján Kollár and Adam Mickiewicz, he became one of the most important poets of Slavism in the era of the revival of Slavic nations. He was the top representative of Slovak classicist poetry, and his work includes the national epics Svätopluk (1833) and Cyrillo-Methodiáda (1835). He also wrote lyric poetry, occasional and spiritual poetry, author of the Catholic Songbook (1842), and translated ancient poets. Photo: internet



PAVOL JOZEF ŠAFÁRIK

230th anniversary of birth

May 13, 1795, Kobeliarovo, Slovakia – June 26, 1861, Prague, Czech Republic

Slovak poet, philologist, literary scholar, historian, folklorist, ethnographer, Slavist, pedagogue, editor, librarian and national figure of Slovak origin, together with the Czech Josef Dobrovský and the Slovenian Bartolomej Kapitar, co-founder of Slavic studies as an independent scientific discipline. He worked as a teacher in Novi Sad and Prague, where he was also the editor of the magazine Světozor, custodian and director of the university library. As a representative of literary classicism, he wrote the poetry collection Múza tatranská s lyrou slovanskou (1814). In the field of Slavic research, he presented himself with the following fundamental works: Dejiny slovanskej reči a literatury vo všetkých nárečiach (1826), Slavonic Antiquities (1837), Slavonic Ethnography (1842). He was a founding member of the Matica Srbská, Matica Česká and the Czech Museum. The name of Pavol Jozef Šafárik is borne by the University of Košice in Slovakia. Photo: internet

210th anniversary of birth

ĽUDOVÍT VELISLAV ŠTÚR

October 28, 1815, Uhrovec, Slovakia – January 12, 1856, Modra, Slovakia

Slovak politician, journalist, editor, publicist, historian, philosopher, literary scholar, aesthetician, Slavist, linguist and codifier of standard Slovak, poet and educator, leading figure, main ideologist and creator of the cultural and political program of the Slovak national movement, leader of the Štúr generation, the romantic Štúr poetic school and in 1848 and 1849 of the Slovak Uprising, supporter and representative of Slavic mutualism, Slavophilism and Russophilism. From 1845 to 1848, editor and publisher of the Slovak National Newspaper with the literary supplement Orol tatranský. Among his linguistic works, the works Nárečie slovenské or nepreda písania v tomto nárečí and Náuca reči slovenskej (both 1846) have a codifying character, while among his scientific Slavic works, the works O natálných piesňach a povestiach plemien slovanských (On national songs and legends of the Slavic tribes) (1852) and Slavism and the world of the future (first published in Russian in Moscow in 1867) stand out. Photo: internet



JÁN SIRÁCKY

100th anniversary of birth

May 29, 1925, Báčsky Petrovec, Serbia – October 28, 1998, Bratislava, Slovakia

Slovak historian and cultural worker from the Lower Land. He worked as a researcher at the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, and from 1968 at Matica slovenská, where he founded and headed the Institute for Slovaks Abroad as director, and compiled the constitutional collection Slovaks in the World. In his scientific work, he focused on the history of Slovak emigration, especially to the Lower Land, and the life of compatriots. His masterpiece is the monograph Dlhé hľadanie domova (The Long Search for Home) (1985). Photo: Slovak Matica