

Slovak Studies Association Newsletter

Fall 1998-Spring 1999

Volume 21 Number 1-2

The minutes for the annual meeting of the Slovak Studies Association

Friday September 25, 1998, 3:45 to 5:45 PM

Gerald J. Sabo, S.J.

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Eleven members were able to attend. Dr. Edita Bosak called the meeting to order and then introduced the new officers of the association. She then asked the persons present to approve the minutes of the last annual meeting -- November, 1997 -- in Seattle. After this, there was the annual report of the Treasurer, Dr. Patricia Krafcik. Dr. Bosak then asked for a report from the new Newsletter Editor, Dr. Martin Votruba. Dr. Votruba noted that he was establishing an e-mail newsgroup at his home university in Pittsburgh -- Slovak Studies -- that he would moderate for discussion of matters related to Slovakia, its society, history, and culture. Scholars from Slovakia were then introduced or mentioned. Dr. Daniela Slancova from Presov University in Slovakia -- a member of Slovak Studies Association -- was personally introduced. She would be presenting a paper the next day, Saturday. Dr. Bosak also spoke about Dr. Dagmar Krocanova, a Fulbright Scholar in residence at Indiana University, Bloomington. Suggestions for the *Newsletter* were then solicited. A suggestion was made that members obtaining new publications related to Slovakia, etc. -- especially those published in Slovakia -- might include such information in future newsletters.

Members will be queried in the next newsletter for other suggestions for better information dissemination and networking through the newsletters. Dr. Bosak noted that there will probably be need for updating the membership directory and to do so on a regular basis.

Then there was discussion of how best to involve as many colleagues in Slovakia in matters of the Slovak Studies Association. SSA

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members will also be queried about this and any other suggestions in the next issue of the newsletter. Under New Business, Dr. Daniel Miller mentioned the upcoming volume of *Kosmas* of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences available for subscription. Also, Dr. Gregory Ference, Secretary-Treasurer of the Czechoslovak History Conference, and Rev. Gerald J. Sabo, S.J., Secretary of SSA, discussed the best way of resolving conflicts in the annual meetings of the two AAASS affiliates.

It was decided among the members present, that the secretaries of both affiliates would write AAASS to request that next year the SSA meeting would be on Saturday afternoon and the CHC meeting on Friday afternoon, and that as much as possible no panels related that included matters on Slovakia or the Czech Republic should be scheduled at those meeting times. And beyond that, conflicts might occur, but that such situations could probably not be remedied. Also, under Announcements Dr. Bosak urged members to inform the Newsletter Editor about any panels for the 1999 AAASS meeting in early November in St. Louis. With that, the meeting was adjourned.

The financial report: Slovak Studies Association

Patricia A. Krafcik
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Here is how we began the year 1999 with regard to finances -- both the membership dues account and the SSA Prize account:

Membership account:	\$5,436.23
Prize account:	\$2,285.62

We had no expenditures this year. This was an off-year for the SSA prize, so that account was not tapped, either.

At least two Slovakia-related panels, organized by Stanislav J. Kirschbaum and Gerald J. Sabo, have been approved for the 1999 AAASS National Convention in September in St. Louis. The following information was available before the AAASS publishes full details:

11/20, 8:00-10:00 **Conspiracies in Slovak History**

11/21, 10:15-12:15 **Sesame Street: Mother Tongue Acquisition among Slav Children**

Including papers:

Edita Bosak: "M.R. Štefánik: A Conspiracy to Eliminate?"

Daniela Slančová: "Parents as Mother Tongue 'Teachers' in Slovak Families."

Lubica Babotová: "Stories for Ruthenian/Ukrainian Children."

Hélène Sanko: "Culture and Language among Ukrainian Children in the Diaspora."

— Gerald Sabo, Edita Bosak

The 30th AAASS National Convention, 1998

Slovak Topics

Abstracts of members' papers presented at the 1999 AAASS Convention and at other conferences, as well as comments by conference participants kindly submitted for a future issue of the *Newsletter* could help us all have a better understanding of what direction Slovak studies are taking.

The following is an informal overview of some of the Slovakia-related papers delivered at or planned for the convention. Full information with the titles of the panels and lectures was published in the previous *SSA Newsletter*. The choice of location and timing of the 1998 AAASS National Convention in Boca Raton, FL,

suffered from a hurricane threat. The airports were shut about 6 hours after the beginning of the conference due to the hurricane, which ultimately only produced high winds in Boca Raton.

Because of the weather, at least a third of the panels had to be called off, including our "At the European Crossroads: Slovakia's 1998 Election Strategies". Carol Leff's flight was canceled and other participants of the panel did not make it, either — Sharon Fisher (U. of London), Kevin Krause (U. of Notre Dame) and Paul Megó (U. of Alabama). David Doellinger (U. of Pittsburgh) was ready to read Sharon

Fisher's paper as arranged earlier, but given that going ahead with the panel would mean just reading other people's papers by the two of us, I canceled it early in the morning. All the copies of Sharon Fisher's paper (supplied well in advance) left next to the cancellation notice were snapped up, presumably by people who came to the panel. A few people from several universities told me later they had come to the panel in the morning.

This was followed by the roundtable "The Second Slovak Republic: The First Five Years" with Edita Bosak (Memorial U. of Newfoundland), Susan

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Mikula (Benedictine U.) and Dan Miller (U. of West Florida), where I was asked to sit in for Stanislav Kirschbaum who was at another conference. All made it.

The panel was well attended for a Slovak topic — 21 people (plus the panelists) — and almost everyone present took turn to say something. The discussion did include a few statements of the kind “I as a Slovak-American...” and there were several moments when the comments moved towards personal experiences while traveling in Slovakia and the like which may be prevented in the future, but the two hours were academic rather than the sort of social chat I experienced at “single-ethnic” Slovene or Croatian panels in the past.

The attendance may have been boosted by the more limited choice of panels due to cancellations, but I recalled that the panel Carol Leff (U. of Illinois), Paul Mego (U. of Alabama), Ed Snajdr (U. of Pittsburgh) and I took part in and Kevin Krause (U. of Notre Dame) contributed to in Seattle in 1997 had close to 20 people, too.

This roundtable prevented me from going to a talk on the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam.

Patricia Krafcik (Evergreen State College) prepared a paper on a Rusyn newspaper published in Slovakia. Tatiana Jarošová (John Carroll U.) was unable to deliver her advertised paper on a Slovak film about a Gypsy girl.

Eva Jenkins (U. of Miami) delivered a paper on Slovakia not being invited to join NATO which I thought a good survey of HZDS’s conduct in this matter based partly on interviews with Slovak government officials, without much harping on the HZDS.

Cynthia Paces (College of New Jersey) said in her paper dealing with the creation of competing myths of Hus and Nepomucene in Czecho-Slovakia after 1918 that the Czech Catholics’ attempt to promote the myth of St. John Nepomucene as a replacement of the myth of Jan Hus for the Czechs might have been more suitable in building religious bridges from the Czech lands to Slovakia. This was about the only Slovak point in her paper on national myths in Czechoslovakia.

Martha Pereszlenyi-Pinter (John Carroll U.) talked about the production of an old French play which she happened to see in Martin, Slovakia. In line

with her specialization, the author focused to a large degree on the play’s role in the history of French theater; her presence at the performance was the result of circumstances.

Two papers on the Slovak language and one on literature were delivered at a panel sponsored by the SSA. Mark Lauersdorf (U. of Kansas) speculated what would have happened if Literary Slovak were not codified in the last century and guessed that the three emerging spontaneous written norms (West, Central and East Slovak) he discovered earlier when analyzing texts from the 16th century might have developed into three different standards. Paul Magocsi (U. of Toronto) and myself (discussant) wondered about the proposition of a particular development of literary languages without speculating under what historical and political circumstances this would have taken place. Dana Slančová (U. of Prešov) said there was a multitude of levels of communication in Slovak corresponding to a multitude of sets of linguistic means. Gerald Sabo (John Carroll U.) gave the background and a detailed account of the plots of plays by a Franciscan clergyman which he recently discovered. —M.V.

SSA Members at Work

R. Vladimír Baumgarten requests memorabilia from participants and/or witnesses of the 1944 uprising, regardless of allegiance. His comment on developments in Slovakia is “This country needs several years of boring, uninspired leadership in order to integrate itself into the Central European community.”

Josef Kalvoda has had two publications. *Genese Československa*. Praha: Panevropa, 1998. 607 pp., photographs 14 pp., Notes, bibliography, Index. It is a translation of his *The Genesis of Czechoslovakia*, New York: Columbia U. Press, 1986. “Z bojŮ o zítřek.” in *Historické eseje*, vol. III (*Fighting for tomorrow. Historical Essays*). Kladno: Dílo, ed. Pamůt, 1998. 271 pp., photographs 16 pp.

Mark R. Lauersdorf presented two papers. “Kultúrna slovenčina administratívno-právnych textov zo 16. storočia — Čo s fonológiou a morfológiou?” at the conference “VII. kolokvium mladých jazykovedcov”, Modra-Piesok, Slovakia, December 1997. “The Development of the Slovak Literary language(s!): What if...?” at AAASS, Boca Raton. September 1998.

Thomas D. Marzik participated in a two-hour documentary film on Jan Masaryk produced by Czech Television that was telecast in March 1998 in connection with the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Jan Masaryk. The first hour was devoted to the life and career of Masaryk, the second to the several possible scenarios concerning Masaryk’s mysterious death. Marzik commented in the first part specifically on his research of Masaryk’s little known stay in the United States between 1906 and 1913 and his marriage (1924-1931) to American Frances Anita Crane Leatherbee, daughter of the “Godfather to Czechoslovakia”, Charles R. Crane. Czech viewers — most for the first time — learned about Masaryk’s brief stint as an office boy in a title insurance firm in Manhattan (1906-1907); his employment as a worker in the Crane Company foundry in Bridgeport, Connecticut (1907-1912); and his nine-month residence at the New Jersey Training School for Feeble-Minded Girls and Boys in Vineland, New Jersey (1912-1913). The film elicited considerable interest and some controversy in the Czech Republic.

Thomas D. Marzik was awarded the Presidential Gold Medal by Slovak President Michal Kováč for his contribution to the history of the Slovaks and Slovakia. The Medal was presented to Marzik by Ambassador Branislav Lichardus in a special ceremony at City Hall in Philadelphia on May 15, 1998.

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Thomas D. Marzik was the recipient of a Summer Research Grant from St. Joseph's University, which he used in Prague this summer to study the relationship between Alfons M. Mucha and Charles R. Crane, who bankrolled (to the tune of \$100,000) Mucha's version of the history of the Slavs. Mucha and Crane formally donated the paintings to the City of Prague in 1928. Plans are under way to bring from their temporary home in Moravský Krumlov the twenty canvases of the "Slovanská epeje" to a permanent exhibition site in Prague.

Thomas D. Marzik presented a paper entitled "Milan R. Štefánik and the Creation of Czecho-Slovakia: October 1918" held at the Library of Congress on October 8, 1998.

Paul Mego defended his Ph.D. thesis in political science at the University of Alabama on March 5, 1999. Its topic was "Nationalist Rhetoric and Political Competition in Slovakia, December 1989 - June 1992." He is actively looking for a position in academia or government and would appreciate information about any possibilities.

Suzanne T. Polak successfully defended her dissertation at Indiana University on April 19, 1999. The title of her thesis was "In the Spirit of Democratic Unity: The Slovak Democratic Party and the National Front of Czechs and Slovaks, 1945-48." Her advisor was Prof. Charles Jelavich. She and her husband, Robert Birkenes, also had a baby daughter on July 30, 1998, Adele Catherine.

Ed Snajdr defended his Ph.D. thesis in anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh in April 1998. Its topic was "Green Mask, Green Mirror: Environmentalism, Culture and Politics in Slovakia's Transition from Socialism." He has been teaching courses on Eastern Europe and anthropology at the U. of Pittsburgh and has served as a consultant for the Heinz Foundation on an environmental project in Poland. He will be moving to Florida.

Paul Wilkes was named the Visiting Welch Professor in the department of American Studies at Notre Dame for the spring semester, 1998. His 14th book *The Seven Secrets of Successful Catholics* was recently published by Paulist Press. He is a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, where he lives.

Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, acquired a collection of 13 subtitled Slovak films on video. They are listed at www.pitt.edu/~slavic/slovak.html

The West and the Slovak Press

Jan George Frajkor (School of Journalism, Carleton U.) gave a talk at the Slovak Studies Program, U. of Pittsburgh, April 11, 1999, on “The West and the Slovak Press: Aid or Interference? Effective or Wasteful?”. It was the annual Thomas Kukucka Memorial Lecture. Two students in the Slovak Studies Program were

The West — George Frajkor’s specific references throughout his lecture were only to the US, occasionally to Canada — has mostly provided assistance to a group of Slovak media whose reporting on Slovakia has had a negative bias and who are out of touch with the society they live in.

presented with the Thomas Kukucka awards for academic travel to Slovakia. The following synopsis is mine and has not been reviewed by George Frajkor gfrajkor@ccs.carleton.ca. —M.V.

Some of these journalists obtained an early access to the West through their former contacts with or participation in dissident groups with established links abroad. These Slovak journalists are educated, well-traveled, urbane and speak foreign

languages. They have learned little from the Western newspapers, though. Their journalism is sanctimonious and they view their perceptions of what democracy is as absolutely right and everyone else’s as absolutely wrong. The political preferences of their readers show a strong partisanship for the Slovak Democratic Coalition. The daily newspaper *Sme* is their most prominent periodical.

An example of the West’s favoritism for this specific faction — instead of the desirable support of the development of objective reporting — is that *Sme*, owned by multimillionaire Majský, received Western financial aid, while Radio Twist, owned by less affluent Andrej (Andy) Hric, did not. Yet, independent surveys repeatedly rated Radio Twist’s newscasts as Slovakia’s most balanced. The US made a comparable error in the past when it took the people close to the Shah of Iran to be its window on Iranian society and hoped to build bridges to the Iranians through them. The Slovak journalists that the West relies on are inclined to characterize the political attitudes of rural Slovakia as incomprehensible, yet these same journalists present themselves as speakers for their country.

The West needs to know more about the people in Slovakia than it can learn from the “ex-Public-Against-Violence” journalistic faction. Former instruments of communist propaganda like *Pravda* and *Práca*, and new papers like *Národná obroda* have evolved and are now closer to Western-style journalism than *Sme*, or than its pro-Mečiar counterpart at the other end of the spectrum, the *Slovenská republika*, which — rightly — did not receive any support from the West. The readers of

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Pravda, *Práca* and *Národná obroda* match the spectrum of Slovakia's society more closely and therefore are better vehicles to assist Slovakia along the road blocked by communism in the past. The journalists in these newspapers, especially in *Pravda*, have also been critical of Vladimír Mečiar's government, but their reporting showed a much greater balance. That is where Western assistance should be channeled.

Slovakia's new ambassador

Slovakia's new ambassador to the US Martin Bútora and his wife Zora gave a talk at the Slovak Studies Program, U. of Pittsburgh, on April 16, 1999. It was Bútora's first lecture after he took office in early March. Before his appointment, he was the president of the Institute for Public Affairs in Bratislava.

In the late 1960s he was an editor in the student weekly *Echo* and then in *Kultúrny život*. He later worked as sociologist and psychotherapist at the Center for Alcohol and Drug abuse and became a free-lance writer by the end of the 1980s. In 1989 he helped to found the Public Against Violence and then became adviser to President Václav Havel. He has published and lectured extensively on Slovak politics and society, including, e.g., *Slovensko v šedej zóne? Rozširovanie NATO, zlyhanie a perspektívy Slovenska*, co-edited and co-authored with František Šebej of Slovakia's small Democratic Party. Bútora's work has been mostly critical of the government of Vladimír Mečiar. He is the first Slovak ambassador to the US appointed after the coalition led by Mečiar lost the elections.

His wife Zora, née Takáčová, has worked as a sociologist for most of her professional life. She was a researcher in the Institute for Public Affairs before arriving in Washington, D.C. She, too, has published and lectured extensively on Slovak politics and society.

Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, purchased the entire professional library of the late Slovak linguist Jozef Orlovský (1908-1990). The estimated number of titles is close to 2,000. The books and journals focus on Slovak language and literature and were published during Orlovský's life and earlier. The Orlovský Collection should be processed and available for borrowing by the spring of 2000.

—M.V.

Graduate projects

Christian Boulanger (Free U. of Berlin) — A comparison of Hungarian and Slovak constitutional development after 1989 against the background of “longue-durée” socio-historical structures. boulang@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Karen Buerkle (U. of California, San Diego) — The structure of voluntary associations in Slovakia and the Czech Republic from 1918 to the present. kbuerkle@ucsd.edu

Zsuzsa Csergo (Washington U.) — Linguistic territoriality in Romania and Slovakia. csergo@gwu.edu

David Doellinger (U. of Pittsburgh) — Religious-based opposition groups in Slovakia and East Germany before 1989. dpdst3+@pitt.edu

Sharon Fisher (U. of London) — Nationalism and state-building in Slovakia and Croatia. fisher@ibm.com

Eben Friedman (U. of California, San Diego) — Ethnic politics and the political integration of Roma (‘Gypsies’) in Slovakia and Macedonia. efriedma@ucsd.edu

Madeline Greenlick (U. of Pittsburgh) — Microcredit lending for Roma minority in Slovakia. magst78+@pitt.edu

Anna Grzymala-Busse (Brookings Institution) — “Redeeming the Past: The Reinvention of the Communist Successor Parties in East Central Europe after 1989”; the regeneration of the communist successor parties in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary. agrzymalabusse@brook.edu

Eva Jenkins (U. of Miami) — The relationship among norms, identity and national security in Slovakia. esjenkins@aol.com

Kevin Krause (U. of Notre Dame) — State, party and nation in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. krause.4@nd.edu

Charles Sabatos (U. of Washington, currently U. of Istanbul) — An authorized translation of *Večne je zelený...* a novel by Pavel Vilikovský. Charles Sabatos has also translated chapters from *Navrávačky* by Dominik Tatarka, a sketch by Milan Lasica and Július Satinský and the 16th century market song *Siládi a Had'máži*. He is looking for a publisher. None of these works have appeared in English before. csabatos@hotmail.com

Generosity for the sake of self-interest The basis of democracy between elections

Kevin Deegan Krause (U. of Notre Dame) krause.4@nd.edu

John Gould (Columbia U.) Jagou@aol.com

Slovakia's new majority campaigned on the grounds that it was different from the governing coalition. Now it must make good on this promise. A good first task is to restore the political rights that were taken away from the opposition in 1994. Ironically, this will improve the position of the same parties that revoked those rights in the first place. To some, this may appear overly generous and potentially dangerous.

It is needed, however, if the new majority is to secure its own interests in the future. To understand why, it needs to look to its own recent experience in the opposition and look forward to the unavoidable day when it will once again be out of power.

The biggest danger posed by the outgoing government was its willingness to subjugate and silence institutions that should, in a democracy, be more independent. Through a variety of mechanisms, the HZDS-led government silenced vital committees and oversight boards, including those in charge of intelligence, privatization and media broadcasting. In addition, to repeat the familiar litany, HZDS reduced the powers and resources of the

presidency, eliminated the independence of individual members of parliament; ignored rulings of the constitutional court, and undercut the rule of the electoral commissions, and potentially much more.

The new majority can, if it desires, behave similarly. Thanks to four years

An abbreviated Slovak version of this paper appeared in *SME* 14 November 1998, p. 4.

of HZDS leadership, the rights of the political opposition in Slovakia are weaker than in most

established democracies. Now with a constitutional majority, the next government could increase its power further by excluding HZDS and SNS from any oversight of important political, economic and security functions, and greatly limit their broader ability to participate in any discussions about the best future path for Slovakia.

These sanctions would perhaps be a fitting and satisfying punishment against a party that has for so long sought political hegemony between elections. Such sanctions would also minimize the threat that an angry and vindictive HZDS-led opposition will obstruct policy making and manipulate national symbols for its selfish partisan and economical interests. But if the

next government is to ensure the democratic development of Slovakia, it must ensure that neither this, nor any future majority ever again rules with the arrogance and impunity that characterized the rule of HZDS, SNS and ZRS between the last two elections.

In practice, this is likely to be extraordinarily controversial. It means, for example, that the next government should guarantee HZDS and SNS proportional representation on all parliament-appointed boards and committees. Additional steps must also be considered with a blind eye to the question of who benefits. The powers and budget of the presidency, for example, should be fully restored – regardless of who occupies the presidency. The previous electoral law should also be reenacted – even though as incumbents, the next government could benefit from changes currently in place. And finally, elected regional governments should be considered as buffers against centralized control – even though many will be dominated by HZDS or its allies.

Self-interested generosity is based on self-limitation. An additional task is thus for Parliament to enhance the ability the Constitutional Court to check parliamentary power. This can be done if Parliament grants the President a more meaningful role in appointing constitutional court members (under current practice,

Parliament can assure its top 10 picks merely by choosing 10 others who are unacceptable to the President). Parliament should also consider introducing a system of staggered terms for constitutional court members. This will ensure that the entire judicial system is not the product of a single group of like-minded deputies.

The government must also limit its own ability to engage in economic clientelism. This means eliminating the option of following in the path of individuals in HZDS who made an art out of tapping the country's economic resources for their own personal and partisan advantage. Checks and oversight of economic decision-making procedures must be established wherever possible. Decision making must be as transparent as possible and open to allowing external review; selection procedures must be fair and competitive; and objective decision making criteria must be publicly made known at a reasonable time prior to any state choice. Once again, these steps will generously give the HZDS-led opposition greater rights and more information than HZDS ever gave its opponents while it was in power. But the measures will also reduce corruption in fact and in perception, improve the quality of government economic decision making, and set a path towards achieving greater respect for both public officials and institutions.

Observers who know HZDS well will wisely worry that the principle of self-interested generosity could be useless in the long run. Once HZDS regains power, they will argue, it will simply undo all that its predecessors have done. Recognizing this, additional safeguards need to be introduced. Thus, once a balance of institutional power has been restored; once the rights and responsibilities of the opposition have been reassured; and once transparency, competition and the rule of law have been reintroduced into the Slovak political economy, the government must lock these changes in place through its constitutional majority. This can be done by transferring the most important of these steps to the constitutional level, and by raising the threshold for a constitutional law from Slovakia's current low 3/5ths majority to the 2/3rds majority that is more common elsewhere in the world.

Slovakia's new majority needs to look ahead to the day when it will again be in the opposition. By adopting the principle of self-interested generosity today, it guarantees its own interests in

the future. Self-interested generosity ensures that losing elections in Slovakia need not threaten the vital interests of the losers. It does this by limiting the ability of those in the majority to make changes that are catastrophic to those in the minority. And by establishing checks on the majority, it ensures that individual institutions have less power – hence people will fight less bitterly to win control over them.

The next government has really two choices: it can show some generosity toward its opposition now and in so doing, secure future generosity for itself. Or, it can continue HZDS's past practices of subordinating the democratic value of institutions to its own power concerns. Before it takes steps down the latter path, however, the next government should to think hard about the effects of its actions on the intensity of political competition and on the polarization of political society. Most of all, however, it must think about itself, the future and a time when they might need to ask for generosity from an incoming government that is not inclined to give it.

Call for Conference Papers — Between the Bloc and the Hard Place: Moving towards Europe in Post-Communist States?, 6-7 November 1999. The research students of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, with the support of the School's academic staff, are organizing an interdisciplinary conference which, coinciding with a new era of expansion for the European Union, aims to contribute to a wide-ranging analysis of the competing legacies the post-communist states must contend with, and of the relative weight their traditions and aspirations carry in each of these countries. For more

information check www.ssees.ac.uk and about the submission of papers and abstracts contact: Roman Zyla or Elizabeth Skomp romanzyla@hotmail.com —Edita Bosak

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“Ten Years After”

Slovakia’s new Ambassador to the US, sociologist Martin Bútora and sociologist Zora Bútorová gave a talk at the Slovak Studies Program, U. of Pittsburgh, April 16, 1999, on “Ten Years After: Democracy and Civic Society in Slovakia.” The following synopsis is mine and has not been reviewed by the presenters. —M.V.

Martin Bútora: The election of 1998 was Slovakia’s “second Velvet Revolution”, reminiscent of 1989. What they had in common was the dramatic change, but there were differences between them, too. In 1989 people thought that a change was needed, but held a variety of views on why. In 1998 people had a greater understanding of democracy and saw it as their goal. Unlike in 1998, the leaders in

The elections in 1998 were not about the left against the right, but about the choice between authoritarianism or the rule of law and about similar ideals.

1989, including Václav Havel, were unknown. In 1989 people accepted the changes as a gift. They had to fight for the change in 1998.

This had not run its course after 1989 because — unlike its communist neighbors — Slovakia was not prepared. One explanation is its legacy. Slovakia is unique in Central Europe, because it has gone through a wider variety of experiences: pre-World War II democracy, an authoritarian Nazi-leaning government, a large resistance movement, communism, Dubček’s rule. Slovakia did not merely endure these events, but contributed to and was shaped by them. After the invasion of 1968, a survivalist model formed within families.

By comparison to the Czech part of the Federation, Slovakia was closer to Hungary in its unfinished modernization, i.e. delayed industrialization which did not stimulate individualism; rather, it supported dependence on government. A common belief was that the process of civilization was possible without freedom or democracy. Slovak political elites did not feel responsible for the development of their country, having been used to a history of taking their cues from Vienna, Budapest, Prague or Moscow. Feelings typical of small countries were present — of being a victim of larger countries and circumstances.

Consequently, Slovakia got the image of a country unable to cope. This was partly based on a theoretical assumption that elections in countries such as Slovakia were believed by some authors to bring to power old or new autocrats, or result in coups. However, Slovak experience shows that elections can be instruments of democratization. Before 1998, Slovakia had two marketable assets

— a vibrant civic society and a well-functioning, non-interfering army. And the opposition elites learned to join forces.

Zora Bútorová: Slovakia was not prepared for privatization, because its economists knew nothing about it. Most Slovaks believed that only minor changes were necessary after 1989. After the split of Czecho-Slovakia which few people supported, it lacked an atmosphere of pride and energy to build a new country.

Even before 1998 Slovak sociologists knew that popular attitudes contained potential for a change.

Now, a greater polarization of opinion is in place with the educated and younger people more likely to see changes as necessary.

Resistance grew to Vladimír Mečiar's rule among academics, in the health-care sector, in the churches and in the unions. Non-governmental organizations stimulated more people to vote than in 1994 with innovative methods. While the 1994 elections were more along the Southern European pattern when the rural population was over-represented among the voters, in 1998 the balance among the rural and urban voters was equal and young voters were represented in proportion to the whole society.

After the 1998 elections, more people appreciate Slovakia's perception abroad as pro-western under the new government. The government has chances to carry out economic reforms, because the Slovaks have realistic rather than exaggerated expectations in this area, e.g. they do not expect a drop in unemployment. Government's ratings have remained the same or grown since the 1998 elections. Still, it will be a challenge for the new government to handle a growing democracy, but a faltering economy.

Slovak Elections as Opinion Polls

Martin Votruba (U. of Pittsburgh)

votruba "at" pitt "dot" edu

The results of Slovak elections have often been used by the media to make generalized statements about Slovak society. This is as much of a misrepresentation, as it would be to say that "the Americans are Republicans" on the basis of the Republican Party's current majority in Congress. Yet, two claims about the political attitudes in Slovakia derived in a similar manner circulate in the media.

The first row in the table on the next page shows how people voted in the 1994 parliamentary elections and the second one in 1998. Italics indicate that the party did not reach the parliamentary threshold in

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the given year. A dash shows that the party did not exist in 1994. An arrow indicates parties which merged in the SDK in 1998. The table does not show that several minuscule coalition parties are hidden in the numbers for their dominant partners and that the ethnic Hungarian party is composed entirely of such minuscule parties.

SDK	KDH	DS	DÚ	SDE	SOP	Hun.	SNS	HZDS	ZRS	Other & “lost”	Non- voters
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People's Choice

—	7.5%	2.5%	6.4%	7.7%	—	7.6%	4.0%	25.9%	5.5%	8.6%	24.3%
1994											1994
1998											1998
22.0%	←	←	←	12.2%	6.7%	7.6%	7.6%	22.5%	1.1%	5.6%	15.7%

Unlike the usual election results, this table shows the percentages based on all the eligible voters, i.e. they are representative of the preferences of Slovakia's population in general, not just of that segment whose parties made up the parliament. They point to a different picture from what the composition of Slovakia's parliament or even just of the government appears to tell the media about “the Slovaks”.

Before 1998, Western and Slovak media sometimes said that Vladimír Mečiar was elected, because he personally, his party and his coalition partners met the Slovaks' expectations. In reality — as the table shows — only about a quarter of the adult population supported the HZDS in 1994 and just over a third supported the whole ruling coalition. Another quarter of the population did not have preferences strong enough to vote. Close to half

the population voted for parties that were opposed to Mečiar's government.

It was the enormous dispersion of the votes of about a half of the adult population — unusual even in post-communist Central Europe — which made it possible for Mečiar to form a government. The causes or significance of the dispersion may be indicative of a variety of things, including — as I suspect — the differences in Slovak parties' electoral campaigns.

But regardless of that, saying that a party or a group of parties had the Slovaks' support makes little sense when about a quarter to a third were for them and close to a half were against them.

After the 1998 elections, many Slovak commentators have been saying that the Slovaks were so dissatisfied with the former coalition that they turned away

from them. In reality — as the table shows — they turned away to a significant degree only from the self-proclaimed Marxist ZRS.

What happened in 1998 was that more of the former non-voters were drawn to the election booths and that the larger parties attracted some of the former supporters of the marginal parties. These people voted for the opponents of the former coalition and thus reduced its representation in parliament.

However, the HZDS lost only 3.4% of the adult population in comparison with its 1994 totals and the SNS actually gained 3.6%. That is to say that in absolute numbers, slightly over 50,000 *more* people voted for the HZDS and SNS combined in 1998 than in 1994, not fewer. To be precise, the HZDS lost 98,385 people between 1994 and 1998, i.e. about 10% of its

voters, while the SNS gained 149,480 new supporters, almost doubling in size. After 1998, it still does not make sense to say that these two parties represent the opinions of the average Slovaks, but it does not make sense, either, to claim that they lost the support they had.

The 1998 opposition victory came about as a result of the higher turnout among coalition opponents, their greater savvy in not “wasting” their votes on small parties, and more efficient campaigning, not a significant turnaround in Slovaks’ attitudes. In fact, they have remained — in the media parlance — about as “pro-democratic” or “anti-democratic” as they were before. What has undergone a political makeover is the reading and the projection of the election results onto the Slovak society at large by the media.

Books

Rudolf Lesňák (1998) *Listy z podzemia: Kresťanské samizdaty 1945-1898.*

Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo USPO. 488 pp. ISBN 80-88717-26-4

A collection of categorized excerpts from mostly Catholic samizdat publications in Slovakia covering the whole period of communist rule with a comprehensive list of their sources and an index. If ordering through the usual channels proves difficult, the publisher may be contacted directly: Peter Smolík, Špitálska 16, 811 08 Bratislava. —M.V.

Zora Bútorová, et al., (1996) *She and He in Slovakia: Gender Issues in Public Opinions.* Bratislava: “financed by the European Union, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Aliancia žien Slovenska, Focus” 138 pp. ISBN 80-88717-11-6

A rare book in English on gender issues in Slovakia (no obvious publisher given); chapters include premarital sex and cohabitation, abortion, size of

families, sexual harassment, feminism, perceptions of advantages men and women have over each other and more. —M.V.

Milan Majtán (1998) *Názvy obcí Slovenskej republiky (Vývin v rokoch 1773 - 1997)*. Bratislava: VEDA Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied. 600 pp. ISBN 80-224-0530-2

*The book includes a brief detailed review of the baffling number of occasions on which official place-names were changed. It should be useful for those bombarded with questions from people tracing their genealogy. Unlike the encyclopedic *Názvy obcí...* from 25 years ago, it does not give other details about the villages themselves. Its main part is an index of all the officially recorded names and spelling variations of Slovakia's villages, including those which were later incorporated in other villages, with the years of use — over 22,000 place-name entries in the index cross-referenced with the names of close to 3,000 current villages and towns. —M.V.*

Martin Bútora and Thomas W. Skladony, eds., (1998) *Slovakia 1996-1997: A Global Report on the State of Society*. Bratislava: Institute for Public Affairs. 217 pp. ISBN 80-967739-4-1

The latest volume in IPA's series of statistics and views on the developments in Slovakia by well published authors and critics of the former government coalition, with chapters on politics, foreign policy, economics, culture and the non-governmental sector. The authors include current Minister of Economy Ivan Mikloš and the Minister of Culture in the 1990 government Ladislav Snopko. —M.V.

Periodicals

Slovakia — Volume XXXVI, Numbers 66-67, 1998; \$8.00

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Passaic, NJ 07055

Table of Contents:

Articles

M. Mark Stolarik: "Slovak Fraternal-Benefit Societies in North America: An Overview (1883-1993)."

David M. Crowe: "The Roma of Slovakia since 1939."

Ján Chrystozom Cardinal Korec: "Reflections on the Downfall of Communism and the Transition to Capitalism."

Spencer Žifčák: "The Battle over Presidential Power in Slovakia."

Stanislav J. Kirschbaum: "The Cleveland and Pittsburgh Documents."

Štefan Polakovič: "Une oraison de messe: Monument culturel européen."

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Martin Votruba, 1417 CL - Slovak Studies Program, University of Pittsburgh, PA 15260*

Reviews

George J. Demko: "Paul R. Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe*"

Gregory C. Ference: "Anton Špiesz, *Dejiny Slovenska na ceste k sebauvedomeniu.*"

R. Vladimír Baumgarten: "Richard Marsina a kolektív, *Slovenské dejiny.*"

Duncan B. Gardiner: "Katarína Štulajterová, *Najstaršie rody na Slovensku.*"

Stanislav J. Kirschbaum: "James Felak, *At the Price of the Republic: Hlinka's Slovak People's Party.*"

Gerald J. Sabo: "Emil Krapka and Vojtech Mikula, eds., *Dejiny Spoločnosti Ježišovej na Slovensku.*"

Robert K. Evanson: "Jifí Hochman, ed., *Hope Dies Last: The Autobiography of Alexander Dubček.*"

Keith P. Dyrud: "Paul R. Magocsi, *The Rusyns of Slovakia.*"

Paul R. Magocsi: "Ann L. Pawliczko, *Ukraine and Ukrainians throughout the World.*"

John M. Kochik: "Nina Trnka, *Slovak-English/English-Slovak Dictionary.*"

Insights and Impressions from the Bratislava SVU Congress Unforgettable Moments

Miloslav Rechcigl, SVU President

rechcigl@aol.com

The consensus among all of us who took part in the SVU Congress in Bratislava is that this was a truly extraordinary event.

Most of the participants started arriving in Bratislava on Sunday July 5 and were accommodated in modern hotel rooms at SUZA or Družba. In the afternoon there was an open house at SUZA, i.e. a continuous Social Get-Together with flowing open end sandwiches and other refreshments which were constantly being replenished. This gave an opportunity for meeting old friends or making new acquaintances from both sides of the Atlantic. The general mood was festive and very cordial.

The opening ceremony of the 19th SVU World Congress took place at 10 A.M. on Monday, July 6, in the beautiful "Aula" Hall of the Comenius University, Šafárik Square 6. The event started with the academic procession of Rectors, Deans and other university dignitaries, dressed in their colorful academic gowns and golden chains, signifying their university rank, with trumpets playing. It was an unforgettable sight.

The large gathering of SVU members and invited guests which filled every available seat of the magnificent Hall, was officially welcomed by the Rector of Comenius University Prof. Ing. Ferdinand Devínsky, DrSc., who hosted the meeting. He was followed by Dr. Ing. Igor Hudoba, CSc., Rector of the Slovak Technical University, who greeted the gathering on behalf of the Slovak Conference of University Rectors, of which he is President. The SVU Congress was officially opened by the President of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Miloslav Rechcigl. The next speaker was His Excellency Ralph Johnson, the Ambassador of the U.S., who presented his views on the future relations of the U.S. and Slovakia. Then came an

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enjoyable music interlude by the chorus “Technik,” followed by brief addresses of Dr. Jaroslava Turková, President of the Prague SVU Chapter and Prof. RNDr. Ing. Alexander Tkáč, President of the SVU Chapter Bratislava and the Chairman of the Bratislava Organizing Committee. The ceremony was closed with *Gaudeamus igitur*. In the afternoon there was a plenary session held in the Moyzes Hall at the Music Conservatory, comprised of six major addresses, including that of Miloslav Rechcigl, Juraj Štern, Jozef Tino, Zlatica Plasienková, Ján Morovic and A. Tamir. The festive day was concluded with a reception and a cultural program of folk music and dance at SUZA.

Tuesday morning, Wednesday morning and afternoon and Thursday morning were devoted to academic sessions, many of which reflected the central theme of the 19th SVU World Congress: “Sciences and Arts on the Eve of the 21st Century.” In addition, the program included a variety of symposia, and panel discussions on various topics, organized by different disciplines of human endeavor.

Tuesday afternoon was reserved for a guided tour through the historical Old Town, followed by a concert at the St. Martin’s Cathedral, with the participation of the opera singer Zuzana Vašeková, Maroš Kittner, organ, Milan Vonderka, violin, Lucia Majerská, violin, Dimitrij Kopčák, Eva Sochmanová, viola. The music repertoire included music of J. S. Bach, F. Handel, W. A. Mozart, A. Dvořák, F. Schubert and M. Markiezy. The program included words of welcome by Father Anton Srholec and poetry reading by Ladislav Chudík. The Congress participants were then received in the Lord Mayor’s Office at the Primacial Palace and treated to the music of W. A. Mozart and Antonín Dvořák by the Bratislava Capella Istropolitana Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Robert Mareček. The extraordinary evening was concluded by a hospitable reception of scrumptious food and wine.

On Wednesday evening the Congress participants were taken by bus to the Bratislava castle to view the art exhibits and hear music by Mikuláš Schneider, Ludwig van Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, Fryderyk Chopin and Antonín Dvořák. The performers included two leading opera singers: Zuzana Vašeková, soprano and Peter Mikuláš, baritone and two piano virtuosos: Daniela Varínska and Marián Varínsky. Then followed a reception with light refreshments to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences.

The Thursday afternoon program comprised of two plenary sessions, one of which was devoted to a historical overview of the work of SVU local chapters throughout the world. The academic program was concluded with three keynote addresses, beginning with that of Petr Zuna, Rector of ČVUT in Prague, who talked about the role of the Czech technical universities at the turn of the new millennium. The other two speakers included Father Anton Srholec from Bratislava who talked on the subject “Role of God in the Contemporary World,” and Igor Kiss “Is Humanity on the Way Out?” The talks by the representatives of the Catholic and Protestant faiths, respectively, were duly followed by an extemporaneous presentation of Prof. Pavel Traubner, M.D., Ph.D., Honorary President of the Union of Jews in Slovakia. The

academic program was formally closed by the SVU President who expressed thanks to his American collaborators and the Bratislava co-organizers, headed by prof Tkáč, for the time and effort they put into organizing the 19th SVU World Congress. On Thursday night there was a farewell reception in SUZA with a cultural program, featuring a virtuoso on a cymbal whose mastery cannot be equaled.

Friday was reserved for a bus excursion into the Slovak picturesque countryside, with a guided tour of the Devín Castle and visit of the Smolenice Palace where the participants were served lunch. The group was then taken to Dolná Krupá to view the house of Beethoven and learn about the composer's private life and productive stay in Slovakia. Then followed an unforgettable visit to Modra and its famous ceramic artistic factory and laboratories "Majolika." The very enjoyable day ended in the small Slovak village of Budmerice where the Congress participants were treated to first rate goulash and other Slovak goodies, accompanied with wholesome Slovak wine and beer. While the eating and drinking was going on, the musicians played in the background the old tunes. Then people began dancing, while others sang... I almost forgot to mention that we were first welcomed by the honorable Mayor of Budmerice who expressed his joy over our visit in his town and as a token of appreciation presented the SVU President a historical chronicle of Budmerice. As you can imagine, the overall mood was genial, exuberant, enchanted, fantastic. What a way to end the Congress!

Irrespective of the criteria used, the Bratislava Congress must be judged as a highly successful event, not only in terms of its content and quality but above all, how much it contributed to enhancing understanding between one another, between Czechs and Slovaks, as well as other nationalities, between those in our old country and those abroad, between scientists, artists and humanitarians, as well as across the gender and the age lines. It has clearly fulfilled the society's aim as a cultural, nonpartisan and nonprofit organization, dedicated to the principles of free search for truth and knowledge, free contacts among peoples and free dissemination of ideas.

"This Issue"

It was only after I took over from Carol Leff, after all those years of her wonderful *SSA Newsletters* that it dawned on me how much the *Newsletters* were really Carol's work and how much her own creativity it required to fill an entire issue with the material that became available. As a member as well as the editor, I have been worried about the enormous gap between the last issue of the *Newsletter* and this one as much as all those members who wondered about the delay and who kindly sent their expressions of interest in receiving issues more regularly. This is encouraging. We as members clearly care to know about what is going on in Slovak studies outside Slovakia. I am sure that many of us are grateful to those who have written for this issue. The reason for the delay was that while there is interest in reading the *SSA Newsletter*, there has been a lacuna in contributions.

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The *Newsletter* can include all the information or arguments we find useful. The more material members can send to me, the more quickly I will collect enough content for future issues and the more often they may appear. Finally, a few detail matters to make the process flow more quickly. Editing any material related to Slovak studies submitted by members is easiest if it is e-mailed preferably as the body of the message, or as attachment saved in the simplest of versions your word-processor allows. If you choose the electronic route, please send the document in “plain text (with or without line breaks)” format, with "quotes" like these (not “smart quotes” like these). E-mailed documents with diacritics also cause problems on many occasions, though I have received attachments which transferred beautifully, too. I am happy to supply diacritics in Slovak words in forwarded contributions, but would appreciate some indication if the necessary diacritics are less than obvious, especially in names — e.g. type Tros~ka'nko for Troškánko. Clear and well formatted manuscripts are less easy, but they can be scanned without great difficulty. Photocopies or originals of various fliers are the hardest to handle, since they need to be retyped.

Slovak studies will always remain a small field and may sometimes generate a sense of isolation. Membership in the Slovak Studies Association and exchange of ideas in the *SSA Newsletter* can remain a very useful vehicle for networking, for preliminary testing of ideas, for fellowship and its next issue can come out soon again. —M.V.

The SSA Newsletter is what we make it to be.
Kindly, send your contributions to:
votruba "at" pitt "dot" edu or to:
Martin Votruba, 1417 CL — Slovak Studies,
University of Pittsburgh, PA 15260.

On March 3, 1999, Representative John Mica (R-FL) introduced resolution HRES 92 IH in the House of Representatives “recommending the integration of the Republic of Slovakia into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.” The resolution was referred to the Committee on International Relations. Its full text is accessible through <http://thomas.loc.gov>

NATO Strategy in Operation Allied Force and Slovakia

Slovakia's government has agreed to NATO's use of its air space and the passage of NATO troops and military equipment through its territory. With neutral Austria's and Switzerland's rejection of NATO's requests on both counts, Slovakia became a key link in a land bridge from north-western Europe to the northern borders of Yugoslavia. Slovak Foreign Minister Eduard Kukan said he hoped his country's assent would help bring Slovakia one step closer to full NATO membership. Slovakia's population, on the other hand, mostly opposes the operation. The Economist/Angus Reid poll (4/99) showed the following support or opposition to NATO's air strikes in Yugoslavia. I calculated and added the attitude index by subtracting the opponents from the supporters in each country. —M.V.

Country	Attitude index	Support	Oppose	No opinion
Croatia	+75	82	7	11
Denmark	+55	74	19	7
United Kingdom	+45	68	23	10
United States	+41	68	27	5
Norway	+41	64	23	13
Canada	+31	64	33	4
Poland	+23	54	31	16
Germany	+21	57	36	7
France	+20	54	34	12
Finland	+15	50	35	16
Hungary	+7	48	41	11
Italy	0	47	47	5
Czech Republic	-22	35	57	8
Slovakia	-54	21	75	5
Ukraine	-85	4	89	7
Russia	-92	2	94	4

Updated Membership Directory

Gerald Sabo

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This is a request for those who will become or are members in good standing by having their membership dues paid through this calendar year. Would these members please send me by "snail" mail or e-mail their current addresses, phone number(s) and fax(es), e-mail address(es), and the addresses of any related internet/worldwide website site(s) for which they are responsible or in which they are included such as a member of a university department. In early 2000, I am hoping to send an updated membership directory with all the latest information to all members in good standing. My "snail" mail address is John Carroll University/University Heights, OH 44118-4581. My e-mail address is gsabo@jcu.edu. Thank you for your co-operation in all this.

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Patricia A. Krafcik, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA 98505