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# Introductory remarks on Serbian-Slovak cultural ties since the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, basic outline

**Abstract:** The proto-study outlines the basic contours of Serbian-Slovak cultural relations from the 19th century to the present. It traces the genealogy of reciprocity from the idea of Slavic cooperation, represented by figures such as Ján Kollár, Pavel Jozef Šafárik, and Svetozar Miletić, through Czechoslovak-Yugoslav relations in the 20th century, to contemporary forms of exchange. It places particular focus on parallels and cultural contacts, the role of Slovaks in Vojvodina, and the activities of contemporary actors. The text emphasizes the importance of cultural cooperation as a perspective for the further development of relations in the 21st century.

**Keywords:** Serbia, Slovakia, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, culturology

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The following proto-study is a kind of introductory note presenting initial results at the outset of a research project by a Slovak scholar from Slovakia on the topic of Serbian-Slovak relations. The subject is exceptionally interesting and stimulating, and in many areas remains underexplored, which makes it valuable for understanding both cultures. For this reason, it represents a challenge for a cultural scholar, as well as a matter of responsibility toward cultural history.

## I. 19<sup>th</sup> century, maticas, Slovaks, Serbs, and Slavism

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, cultural ties between Slavic nations were created inspired by the idea of pan-Slavic reciprocity and thanks to the legends of national revivals (Kollár, Šafárik, Štúr, Palacký, Kuzmány, Karadžić, Miletić, Kopitar, Prešern, Zmaj, Gaj, Ševčenko, Mickiewicz, Pushkin, Gogol, Tolstoy), that connected Slavic national cultures and their

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national revivals, as well as the existence of *maticas* as original Slavic institutions (Matica slovenska was inspired by the Matica srpska, in which P. J. Šafárik.<sup>[2]</sup> was one of the founders). If we overview the history of communications between Slovaks and Serbs, we will find many ties through the Slavic reciprocity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, then through the communication at the Czechoslovakian-Yugoslav level, and currently once again at the Serbian-Slovak level. Stanić also points to the sonnets of Ján Kollár in Magarašević's translation in Serbian Chronicle from 1827, connected with Slavic reciprocity, adding that Kollár inspired many Serbian students, and that the title of the anthology *Slavic Tenderness* also derives from his poems about angels. The Serbian poet, literary critic, playwright, literary historian, president of Matica srpska, and university professor Dragan Stanić<sup>[3]</sup> (1956), who writes under the pseudonym Ivan Negrišorac, highlights encoun-

ters between Serbs and Slovaks in the first half and throughout the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century in Budim, Pest, Győr, Vienna, Pressburg (Bratislava), Prešov, Modra, Banská Bystrica, Kežmarok, and other cities (where they met with Kollár, Štúr, Palacký, Tomka-Sásky). Among Serbian writers, he mentions Miletić, Bošković, Trifković, Zmaj, Grčić, and others, adding that this communication was mutually beneficial (Stanić, 2024, pp. 37–65). In this context, Ľudovít Štúr, one of the most prominent Slovaks of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, writes about the Serbs as one of the “most distinguished Slavic peoples, who, in domestic, social, and public life, have preserved what is purely Slavic more than all other Western and Southern Slavic peoples” (Štúr, 1956).<sup>[4]</sup>

In the context of historical ties between Slovaks and Serbs since their medieval proximity, through Saints Cyril and Methodius, to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Stanić particularly emphasizes the ex-

[2] An international conference on this topic (collection of works in preparation) dedicated to Kollár and Šafárik was held on that topic in Martin (Slovakia).

[3] Professor Dragan Stanić attended school in Sirig, and then went on to study literature at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, while he dedicated himself during the 1960s to neo-avant-garde and Serbian poetry. He devoted his graduate thesis to a semantic analysis of Jovan Dučić. His international reputation was shaped by his work as a professor of the Serbian language at the University of Michigan, but he also worked as a dramaturge at Radio Novi Sad, and as an assistant at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš and in Novi Sad, where he still teaches today. He became secretary, and later president, of Matica Srpska, as well as editor-in-chief of the *Matica srpska Chronicles*. In addition, he is a member of the Association of Writers of Vojvodina, the Novi Sad Writers' Association, and the Slovak Writers' Association. He has received numerous awards in the field of culture and speaks several languages. Within his scholarly work in literary studies, he has focused on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Njegoš, Bečković, Radulović, Todorović, Tucić, Despotov, Petrović, Šalgo, Nastasijević, Drainac, Ristić, De Buli, Ilić, Vuk, Milovanov, Selimović, Pavlović, Danojlić, Pavić, Kapor, Nogo, Maksimović, Novaković, Sladoje). He concentrates his research on archetypal currents and fixed thematic verticals which, although they change forms under new historical circumstances, retain their fundamental function, essential for understanding Serbian literature and culture.

[4] “The most recent history of the Serbian people is similarly intertwined around two extraordinary men, Black George (Karadorde Petrović, ed. note) and Miloš Obrenović, the first of whom began the work of liberating his people from the vile four-century-long Turkish yoke, and the second carried it through and completed it. For us Slovaks, the story of Serbia's liberation is very memorable and worthy of all our attention and reflection, partly because it shows what firmness of mind, determination, and perseverance can achieve...” (Štúr 1956)

change between the journals *Slovenské pohľady* and *Matica srpska Chronicles*, the texts of Pavel Jozef Šafárik (27 texts on Pan-Slavic reciprocity), and his collaboration with Georgije Magarašević. This relates to Šafárik's work at the Novi Sad Grammar School from 1819 to 1831. For a broader understanding of Šafárik's work in the context of the South Slavs, the study by Milan Krajčovič, published in 1989, is especially valuable. He notes, for example, that Šafárik prepared his first Slavic work, *History of the Slavic Language and Literature of All Dialects*, in Novi Sad, together with Martin Hamuljak (Krajčovič, 1989). At the same time, Stanić semantically links the poems of Svetozar Miletić to the context of the historical tasks of the Slavs (the realization of universal civic ideals of freedom, brotherhood, and equality among the Slavs in the Habsburg Monarchy), as well as to mystical-messianic connections (the day of salvation of the Serbs and Slavs), in relation to Kollár's symbol of the *Angel* and Miletić's *Slav Mountain* (Stanić, 2024).

If we were to look for ideological analogies between the Serbian and Slovak contexts of national revival, they would be the May Assembly<sup>[5]</sup> of 1848 and the Memorandum Assembly in Martin in 1861 (Viršinská, 2015) (or, in the context of ideas, the progressive but unsuccessful Demands of the Slovak Nation of 1848, which, however, can more likely be traced to

the Memorandum – Stefan Stratimirović's Plan for the Liberation of the Serbs from 1804) (Sotorović, 2010). More precise chronological analogies can be found, for example, in the Slovenian context,<sup>[6]</sup> while a different context and a time shift existed between Serbian and Slovak development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although the processes of emancipation in the Serbian context began earlier, their full realisation took place only after the First World War because of complex cultural-political and geopolitical circumstances (analogies here being the formation of Czechoslovakia and the formation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia).

When significant figures are considered, Slovakia and Serbia/Yugoslavia are additionally linked by Janko Šafarik, a Serbian scholar and nephew of the famous P. J. Šafarik, who laid the foundations for systematic field archaeological research in Serbia (Hornjak, 2016); Igor Branislav Štefánik, brother of M. R. Štefánik (Kuljik, 2023); the Evangelical priest, playwright and publicist, maternal grandson of Ján Štúr and paternal grandson of Hurban, Vladimír Hurban Vladimirov (Prebučila, 2025); Ján Čajak, a Slovak writer and translator born in Bački Petrovac; Ján Branislav Mičátek, teacher, poet, linguist, and Matica worker active in Kisač (Ormis, 1935); Ján Bulík, founder of Matica slovenská in Yugoslavia and anti-fascist,<sup>[7]</sup> and his successor Samuel Štarke,

[5] Compare the terms: May Assembly and the Demands of the Slovak Nation.

[6] For example, there is the analogy of the creation of the tricolour flag in 1848; the anthem *Zdravljica* emerged at the same time as Matuška's *Nad Tatrou sa blýska*; the codification of the language was likewise based on the Central Slovak dialect; and the creation of Matica took place with a difference of only one year (1863, 1864). Matica slovenská and the project of a parallel Slovak-Slovenian history, *Matica.sk*

[7] Matica slovenská in Martin unveiled his bust in 2025. "Immediately after its founding, Matica had 350 full members. Its first president was Dr Ján Bulík, and its vice-president was Samuel Štarke, one of the proponents of the idea of founding the Gymnasium in Petrovac, a bishop of the Evangelical Church... later president of Matica slovenská in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia..." (Obšust, Kuzmanović, 2023, p. 89)

a distinguished Matica activist; the editor of *Slovenské pohľady* and *Cultural Life*, Andrej Mráz from Petrovac; and many others...<sup>[8]</sup>

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40 | When researching relations between Serbs and Slovaks, one cannot fail to mention the publication by Michal Eliáš, in which the author also deals with Matica srpska, noting that Serbian history was shaped by centuries of battles with the Turks, while the Battle of Kosovo and the fall of Smederevo caused the long-term subjugation of the Serbs and, consequently, the absence of their own literature, science, newspapers, etc. Eliáš emphasises that the impetus for the founding of Matica srpska was the establishment of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1825), while its founding is linked to the meeting of its founders on Saint Sava's Day<sup>[9]</sup>, initiated by J. Hadžić, and to the periodical *Letopis* (he also highlights P. J. J. Šafarik, who influenced its chief editor, Magarašević). He adds that the first phase was marked by disputes over language, the suspension (1835) and renewal of activity (1836), later the move from Pest to Novi Sad, the revival of activity in 1864, multiple attempts to shut it down, the modernisation of *Letopis*, the publication of Čajak's survey of Slovak literature and the translation of Vajanský's novel *Suchá Ratolesť*, the celebration of its centenary in 1926 and resistance to political

attacks, the period of occupation administration, post-war renewal and expansion of activities, the publication of the Serbo-Croatian orthography together with Matica hrvatska, the adoption of the Law on Matica srpska in 1992, and the publication of a bilingual collection on Serbian-Slovak literary ties (1991) (Eliáš, 2010, pp. 20–25). The study by Maroš Meliharek (Meliharek, 2023) also delves deeply into the period of the founding of Matica srpska, informing the Slovak reader about the contexts surrounding its establishment. If, up to this point, we have written about Slovaks from Serbia or about Serbs, in this case we are dealing with a text by a Slovak from Slovakia, devoted to Karadžić, the Serbian uprising against the Ottoman Empire, the national revival of the Serbs, or the Yugoslav partisans. Meliharek emphasises that Matica srpska, which in 2026 celebrates two hundred years of existence (founded in 1826, it was the first in the family of Slavic Maticas), was the first major social, cultural, and publishing association of the South Slavs. According to the author, the roots of the emergence of national movements and the creation of Maticas also came indirectly from the Great French Revolution, whose ideas of sovereignty, self-determination, and equal rights also influenced the peoples of the Balkans (the author notes that Stefan Živković translated Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract* (cf. Perný, 2012)), who at that time were living under the rule of the

[8] Ján Sirácky, Štefan Homola, Branislav Abafi, Miloš Krno, Ján Kvačala, Ján Palik, Ján Branislav Mičátek, Academician Ján Kmeť, the Štúr follower Jozef Podhradský, and others. Aleksander Matuška also visited Yugoslavia; likewise, the DAV movement writer Andrej Sirácky from Petrovac was born and worked there, as was the poet and physician Andrej Ferko from Kisač.

[9] Saint Sava is a respected and significant political and religious figure of the Serbs, the first Serbian archbishop who negotiated the independence of the Orthodox Church.

decaying Ottoman Empire, while he also conveys a more detailed picture of Serbian history connected with the uprisings, the exodus of the Serbs, and the diplomatic policy of Miloš Obrenović. It should be added here that, for a basic knowledge of the history of Serbian culture in the Czech and Slovak environment, the illustrated collective monograph of the same title, published in 1995 in the Czech language, is indispensable (Group of authors 1995); in 2013, the book *History of Serbia*, the work of six historians, was also published, and it likewise includes an expansion into Czech-Serbian relations (Pelikan, Havlikova, 2013). In his study, Meliharek points out that Vojvodina constituted the core of Serbian intellectual life. Matica srpska was founded by intellectual circles from Pest and Novi Sad, with an executive board, councils, and various types of membership, while Magarašević, Šafarik, and Mušicki founded *Letopis*, which is still published today and deals with topics of language, literature, history, religion, folklore, and Serbian culture. Figures involved in the founding of Matica srpska included the writer Jovan Hadžić, who also took part in the preparation of the *Civil Code* and wrote a history of the Serbian Uprising, as well as Gavriilo Bozítovac, Jovan Demetrović, Josif Milovuk, Petar Rajić, Avram Rozmirović, Georgije Stanković, and

Teodor Pavlović, who also founded *Serbski narodni list* in Budim. However, Matica srpska and its beginnings were also connected with language disputes (Vuk's language reform versus Hadžić). *Letopis* also published reviews of the works of Bernolak, Kolar, Šafarik, and Herkeľ (Schwarz, 2026). Meliharek adds that the first phase of Matica srpska's existence laid a stable foundation for further development of its activities, when it began a rich publishing and scholarly work.

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The writer and social scientist, current director of the Archives of Vojvodina, member of Matica srpska and Matica slovenská, the Society of Writers of Vojvodina, and the Society for Culture, Art and International Cooperation "Adligat" Nebojša Kuzmanović, PhD (1962, Gradačac) was awarded the Extraordinary Prize of Matica slovenská in 2025 at the VI Congress of Maticas and Institutions of Slavic Peoples, precisely for the development of Slovak-Serbian cultural relations (this award is by no means merely formal but is based on actual cultural practice).<sup>[10]</sup> Kuzmanović, who previously published the significant book *Romanticism in Serbian-Slovak Literary Relations* (Kuzmanović,

[10] Nebojša Kuzmanović, PhD, graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, where he studied Serbian and comparative literature (he wrote a rare and essential doctoral dissertation on Serbian-Slovak literary relations during the Romantic period and has been systematically researching this topic for years). After his studies, he worked as chief editor and editor for several periodicals and publishing houses, where he published his essays, reviews, and studies, becoming known to both Serbian and Slovak readers. He also became actively involved in cultural policy (roles in the municipality of Bačka Palanka, Provincial Deputy Secretary for Culture, etc.). He has published dozens of books focusing on philosophy, cultural studies, intercultural relations, ethnology, and literary history. He has received more than fifteen awards. His most recent was awarded by Matica slovenská in 2025 (also presented to the translator of this work, Martin Prebudila) for the development of Slovak-Serbian cultural relations, symbolically at a conference dedicated to the figures who connect Slovaks and Serbs—Ján Kollár and Pavel Jozef Šafárik.

2023), has just published another work, a book of essays entitled *Toward the Slavic Equivalence* (Kuzmanović, 2025), with the subtitle *Writings on Literature*, translated by Martin Prebudila, a Slovak writer living in Serbia (1960, Obrenovac, Serbia).<sup>[11]</sup> Kuzmanović oscillates between philosophy, literary criticism focused on the analysis of poetry, aesthetics, and cultural studies in general. This study and the initial motivations for interest in the topic of Serbian-Slovak cultural relations are based on the foreword of that book; however, it builds on the author's other varied works (Kuzmanović/Kuzmanović 2023a; 2023b; 2024; 2025a–f; Obšust, Kuzmanović, 2023). In his new book, Kuzmanović opens the doors to unknown worlds of research at the intersection of philosophy, history, and poetry, extending even to mystical reflections on who we are, why we are here, and what the meaning of human existence—whether Serbian, Slovak, or Slavic—lies behind the backdrop of cultural history.<sup>[12]</sup> Although Danilo Kiš states that a person writes out of despair and hopelessness—when there is nothing else to do, referring to the idea that enlightening people is a futile task, since only a fool would write books knowing that no one will read them—this existentialist observation should be supplemented by the fact that Kuzmanović's books already have

a real impact on Serbian-Slovak literary relations. They have the potential to be read, reflected upon, and even to influence the future, at least among intellectuals in Slovakia and Serbia. These are not texts for the general public, but they will be appreciated by people in the intellectual sphere who raise serious questions in the fields of history, philosophy, and literature.

Daničić, Zmaj, Vuk, and Miletić are also connected with Slovakia, Kuzmanović emphasises. Essentially, one can speak of the penetration of the second and third waves of national revival with Serbian figures, which was also confirmed at the Martin Conference on the second wave of national revival.

The first of those to whom Kuzmanović, referring to Kovijanić (Kovijanić, 1939), dedicates his study is Đuro Daničić, who, as a seventeen-year-old, becomes acquainted with Štur's followers as a representative of the Pan-Slavic idea. It is precisely in that environment, where he becomes Štur's student, that he translates, writes poems, aphorisms, and treatises, and the idea of reforming the literary Serbian language is born, even before he meets Karađorđe in Vienna. Daničić was acquainted with Slovaks Janko Štur, Andrej Hodža, and Pravoslav Červenak (Kuzmanović, 2024).

[11] Martin Prebudila has also made a significant contribution to the development of contemporary, especially literary, relations between Slovakia and Serbia, which was also the subject of his presentation at the VI Congress of Matica and institutions of Slavic peoples. Martin Prebudila is the author of numerous translations of Serbian and Slovak poetry and prose. Together with Miroslav Demak, in collaboration with Matica srpska and the Slovak Literary Centre, he participated in publishing a bilingual anthology of Serbian and Slovak poetry after 1945, entitled *Slavic Tenderness*.

[12] The author wrote the texts during his postgraduate studies at the Faculty of Arts in Novi Sad. The year 1999 was marked by tragic events affecting the Serbian, Slovak, and Yugoslav people during the US bombing. It is not surprising that the author, with his deep reflections on the world, turned to existentialism, which is also developed in his philosophical books (Kuzmanović, 2025e; 2018).

The second is Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, who also enrolled in the Evangelical Lyceum in Bratislava in 1850 at the age of 17, but also worked in Modra and Trnava, attending both Catholic and Evangelical schools. He passed his exam under the Slovak language reformer Martin Hattala. The author also learned that Zmaj's father had been educated in Slovakia, which contributed to Zmaj's admiration for the Slovaks. This was reflected in his writing of protest poems against the closure of *Matica slovenská*. Zmaj also called for better understanding among Slavic peoples and the strengthening of relations both with the Slovaks and with the Serbs and Croats. Zmaj's bust was unveiled in Modra, Slovakia in 2016.<sup>[13]</sup>

As a third, Kuzmanović mentions Svetozar Miletić, a prominent fighter for the national rights of Slovaks, Serbs, and Romanians, who has a commemorative plaque on the building of *Matica slovenská* / originally the Slovak League in Bratislava. Miletić advocated for the Slovaks when *Matica slovenská* was closed and protested this act in the Hungarian Parliament. He spent three years in Bratislava, worked in both Evangelical and Catholic educational environments, and, according to Kovijanić, formulated his views directly under the influence of Štur, whom he regarded as a supporter of Pan-Slavic solidarity and an adherent of Kollár, Čomjakov, and Mickiewicz.

All the aforementioned contexts are elaborated in detail in the seminal book *Romanticism in Serbian–Slovak Literary Relations* (Kuzmanović, 2023). In the first part, Kuzmanović examines

the historical background (from Great Moravia, through the Enlightenment and rationalism, to Romanticism among the Serbs), then proceeds to Slovak Romanticism. The culmination of the book is a detailed analysis of the relationships of the aforementioned Serbian figures, specifically the attitudes of Daničić, Karadžić, and Zmaj toward the Slovaks, and finally of other Serbian Romanticists toward the Slovaks. This is accompanied by sections on Serbian literary societies in Slovakia and a list of Kovijanić's works in the Slovak language, with the author identifying Rista Kovijanić and Ján Kmeť as the key figures of his research.

The renowned Vuk Karadžić, Kuzmanović notes, began collaborating with the Slovaks in the early 1820s, specifically with Martin Hamuljak (they exchanged around ten letters), but he also cooperated with Czech and Slovak classicists such as Palacký, Kollár, Šafárik, and Benedikti-Blahoslav, particularly on collections of folk poetry and through mutual influence within the context of Pan-Slavic reciprocity (Kollár admired the Serbian language and also influenced the Yugoslav idea). What connects him with Štur is that both were codifiers of their respective languages; they even met (in 1845 in Bratislava and in 1846 in Vienna) and exchanged books. Kuzmanović adds that, in the case of Štur and Vuk, this represents a symbolic link between the Serbian and Slovak literary languages, mutual assistance during the Revolution of 1848, as well as exchanges between Serbian and Slovak literature (Kuzmanović, 2023, pp. 92–98). Petar Petrović Njegoš met Štur in Vienna,

[13] Jovan Jovanović Zmaj (1833–1904), *Epocha*.

and Štúr was familiar with his work, held him in high regard, and published one of his poems in the journal *Orol tatranský*, translated by Štúr's follower Bohuslav Nosák, although there is speculation that the poem may have been dedicated to Štúr himself. Even in a brief overview, one cannot omit mentioning Branko Radičević in the context of Štúr's critique of his poetry (Kuzmanović, 2023, pp. 102). Kuzmanović also mentions Jozef Podhradský in the context of literary criticism, likewise a follower of Štúr who worked in Serbia and was the only one to convert to Orthodoxy. Podhradský is discussed in detail by the Matica scholar Jozef Schwarz, who notes that he spent two-thirds of his life in Serbia, wrote in the Serbian language, and that his daughter Albina was the author of the first drama written in Serbian.<sup>[14]</sup>

Kuzmanović's writings extend into cultural anthropology, ethnology, and ethnoculturology, as he seeks to identify comparative, archetypal analogies within Slavic literature and mythology (with significant overlap with the work of the Russian-American linguist Roman Jakobson and the structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss—

here focusing primarily on Serbian–Russian connections). He frames this within an analysis of Serbian–Slovak relations<sup>[15]</sup> as a paradigmatic example of Slavic reciprocity, as initiated by Kollár and Šafárik. The author is also well-versed in and cites major philosophers and cultural theorists, from Kant and Lipovetsky to Spengler, which lends his texts a higher intellectual dimension. In a 2001 essay on Slovak–Serbian relations, Kuzmanović synthesizes this knowledge and raises questions concerning serious cultural and philosophical issues related to the crisis of Western cultural development (the decline of postmodernism, Western European uniformity, the suppression of small cultures, comparisons with the Tower of Babel), while identifying in Slavic reciprocity a response for both Slovaks and Serbs as a defence against these processes.

In its concrete, practical form of Slavic reciprocity, Nebojša Kuzmanović refers to Slavic studies congresses, film, music, church exchanges, and mutual visits. In his contribution, he notes that the least cooperation had occurred in the field of literature, which is a situation that has changed significantly

[14] Jozef Podhradský, *Matica.sk*

[15] Kuzmanović highlights the often-overlooked fact that from the late 17th century to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more than 2,500 Serbian cultural figures and intellectuals, writers, philosophers, teachers, and scholars, were educated in Bratislava, Košice, Kežmarok, Modra, and other Slovak towns. He also emphasizes the influence of Šafárik, Kollár, and Štúr on Serbian culture and the Yugoslav idea. He notes that the Serbs maintained the closest relations with the Slovaks among all nations. He further points to the connection through Tomašik's anthem-like song *Hey, Slavs*, for which Kovijanić remarks that only a small number of Yugoslav citizens were aware of the Slovak origin of the Yugoslav anthem. Perhaps the Sixth Congress of Nationalities and Institutions of Slavic Nations, together with the scholarly conference on the second wave of national revival, as well as research on Serbian–Slovak relations conducted in the summer of 2025, have at least partially corrected this situation. On the other hand, in the 19th century Slovaks were familiar with a poem by the Romantic poet Juraj Zvestoň Bula, which links the defeat at Bratislava (in 907 CE, when the Great Moravian ruler Mojmir II was killed) with the Battle of Kosovo: "Bratislava, Bratislava, There fell the glory of the Slavs... Hey, Kosovo, fair field, You brought sorrow to the Serbs. Above you flew the banner of Tsar Lazar, Of him an ancient tale still lives...").

since the time of his writing, as will be discussed at the end of this study. Through Kollár, he here draws on Milosavljević, Kmeť, and Kovijanić. This contribution demonstrates that Kuzmanović does not understand the program of Slavic reciprocity merely as a theoretical construct, but has also personally contributed in practice to the realization of this idea, which in the 19<sup>th</sup> century appeared utopian, and yet, thanks to small steps, has produced very concrete results, at least in the cultural sphere.

In the context of analysing Serbian authors, in his most recent book Kuzmanović devotes considerable attention to the poetry of the Serbian/Yugoslav neo-symbolist Ivan V. Lalić. In it, he reconstructs profound philosophical undertones within so-called protohistory and explores various reflections on how history might have developed had it not been “written by the victors,” thereby questioning official history. In this view, each layer of time carries its own history, and past events are intertwined with our own constructions.

An essay on the Serbian poet, critic, and Nobel Prize in Literature nominee Miodrag Pavlović is dedicated to the field of theology, specifically comparative religious studies, primarily reflecting sceptically on the pre-Christian period and its merging with Christianity. There is a provocative dualist thesis that Serbs are simultaneously pagans (in the sense of Slavic cultural foundations) and Christians (Orthodox), and that if Serbs forget their distant past, they will be left without a future.

Another author who attracted Kuzmanović’s attention is the first Serbian postmodernist, Dani-

lo Kiš. He examines Kiš’s texts on the meaning of literature, traces the roots of his thinking to Sartre, analyses his anti-ideological stance, and critiques chauvinistic nationalism, which arises from destruction and denial born of fear, envy, and a lack of knowledge of other languages and cultures (for example, when major literatures fail to recognise minor literatures or the literatures of national minorities). By describing individual authors, Kuzmanović brings insights into Serbian literary culture closer to the Slovak reader.

For the Serbian-Slovak context, perhaps the most significant aspect is the presence of Slovaks—more precisely, Lower Slovaks (also referred to as compatriots, Slovaks abroad, Vojvodina Slovaks, and before 1989 as Yugoslav Slovaks) in Serbia (compare: Sirácky, 1968, pp. 181-191)<sup>[16]</sup> (specifically in parts of Vojvodina)—an ethnic group of Slovaks, mostly Evangelicals, who settled in parts of Serbia in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as in Hungary, Romania, and Croatia in several waves, seeking religious freedom (for more details, see Sirácky, 1985; Bednarik, 1966). In Serbia, the Slovaks established their own *Matica slovenská* in Yugoslavia (for mutual education, it is important to mention the trilogy by Ján Babjak, which deals with the history of *Matica slovenská* in Yugoslavia, published by the Archive of Vojvodina) (Babjak, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c). They also founded various associations, educational, cultural, or church institutions, theatres, dance and folklore societies, libraries, artistic associations, and so on. It is significant that the Slovaks in Slovakia

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[16] Note: However, the 80-year-old Association of Slovaks from Yugoslavia, led by Samuel Jovanković, is still active today and publishes its yearbook.

(compare: Perný, 2023) and the Slovaks in Bački Petrovac created the first credit cooperatives as collective units based on the principle of “one person, one vote” in all of Europe, even under the same name “Gazdovsko društvo,” which may explain why the idea of self-management was so popular in former Yugoslavia. From the latest cultural research—conducted in collaboration with the author of this text and Evangelical pastor Dr Branislav Kulik—among Slovaks from Serbia and Serbs, on a sample of 100 respondents from 8 to 16 August 2025, it emerges that Slovaks and Serbs maintain above-standard relations (positive attitudes in the context of coexistence prevailed both from Slovaks toward Serbs and from Serbs toward Slovaks), and that thanks to institutions, churches, monuments, or named schools and streets, there remains a strong awareness of the visionaries of Pan-Slavic mutuality: Kolar and Šafárik on the Slovak side, and Miletić and Karadžić on the Serbian side, as well as a generally positive attitude in terms of Yugoslav identity.<sup>[17]</sup> In the research by Kuzmanović and Obšust, frequently citing Ján Siracki, it is noted that the maintenance of the Lower Slovak identity in Serbia was supported by Lutheran confessional identities, education (the

“Ján Kollár” Gymnasium), Matica slovenská in Serbia, and Slovak national celebrations (Obšust, Kuzmanović, 2023, p. 89).

## II. Cultural intermezzo: 20<sup>th</sup> century, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia

Although the presented study focuses on the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the present, it is impossible to avoid informative development of the relations between Serbs and Slovaks in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Basic information is provided by the collection of papers published in 1968 by the Slovak Academy of Sciences (Hrozienčik, 1968). F. Jakab emphasises that this topic is addressed in numerous studies by Gladky, Hrobák, Deák, Hradečný, Stojkov, Mitić, Starčević, while the author notes that “sensitive contacts between both partners – Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia – were visible throughout the interwar period...” (Jakab, 2025). A dedicated conference on this topic was also held in Belgrade in 2018.<sup>[18]</sup> Slovakia and Czechoslovakia, as well as Serbia and Yugoslavia (the fact that both nations were part of common states cannot be overlooked when considering cultural history),<sup>[19]</sup> share the historical experience of

[17] A separate study will be published on this topic: Kulik, Branislav, Perni, Lukáš, *Research Among Slovaks and Serbs*.

[18] Regarding the history of relations between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, see *Glas naroda*.

[19] Trade exchange was extensive (for example, the company Jugočeska); weapons were exported, and the Škoda and Brno Zbrojovka factories were also active. Yugoslavia, in turn, supplied Czechoslovakia with grain, tobacco, and ores. There was also an exchange in the field of technical expertise (for example, the architect Jiří Stibral designed spa facilities in Kupari, Croatia, while Jože Plečnik contributed to the transformation of Prague Castle from the opposite side). For the Czechoslovak context, Vegeta was popular. A film about Štefánik is also being made, played by the Yugoslav actor Zvonimir Rogoz. Miletić Street in Bratislava, named after the renowned Serbian, is also a symbol of cultural bridging between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. A commemorative plaque in honour of Miletić was placed on the Matica slovenská building in Bratislava. For interest, it should be added that Masaryk was also a follower of Kolar (Czechoslovak–Yugoslav relations, *Wikipedia*).

multiethnic states that emerged after the collapse of Austria-Hungary. Already in the interwar period, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia (between 1918 and 1919, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes) cooperated within the defensive bloc, the Little Entente, against the revision of Trianon (Deák, 1968, pp. 235–268). When Czechoslovakia was established, during the demarcation of borders, the creation of a corridor along Lake Neusiedl to Yugoslavia was even considered, which would have connected the Slavic territories present there at the time, but that project was rejected. Instead, Czechoslovak trains were permitted to operate on the Bratislava–Rijeka line (Klimko, 1980, p. 110). The context of compatriots at the time of Czechoslovakia's formation was analysed in more detail by Jan Bočík, who refers to Sirácky, noting the founding of the Czechoslovak Union in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (1921) to encompass the activities of compatriot associations. It gathered 73 Czech and Slovak settlements (Petrovac, Gložan, Pivnice, Kovačica, Padina, Aradac, Erdveik, Stara Pazova,

etc.), with the most active associations being those of academics and women (Bočík, 2014, pp. 12–17). The first cooperation between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, which had also developed into cultural exchanges among scientists and artists, was cut short by the complex political context of the Second World War, as well as domestic political problems. In the context of the pre-Munich situation, it is worth highlighting a statement of solidarity made by the speaker at the Yugoslav demonstration of Yugoslav–Czechoslovak friendship, Ivo Lola Ribar: “If Czechoslovakia is attacked, Yugoslav youth will be ready to defend it...”, while according to student registrations, as many as 60,000 people were prepared to voluntarily defend Czechoslovakia's independence (Čutkova, 1968, p. 345). The Czechoslovak–Yugoslav context is linked by anti-fascist resistance – on the Slovak side, the Slovak National Uprising and the Slavic dimension of liberation (the post-war renaissance of Slavic messianism in new conditions),<sup>[20]</sup> and on the other side, the Yugoslav anti-fascist resistance led by Tito, which is

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The topic of relations between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia is studied at the Department of Balkan Studies at Masaryk University in Brno.

[20] Mass celebrations at Devin Castle, the symbol of the Štur family, were held in a pro-Slavic spirit, as documented in a rare book. Devin scholar Michal Chorváth writes in the introduction: “Therefore, it is no surprise that the idea of Slavic reciprocity strongly revived during this war. The Germans ensured this, fully understanding that in the modern world, the Slavs carry the idea of social progress and are deeply concerned with issues of their political freedom... The idea of Slavic reciprocity is nothing new, and in its noble Kollár form, in which it was upheld by oppressed Slavic peoples, it threatens no one. Its victory in this Second World War is a victory for humanism and for the right of Slavic peoples to their independence alongside other free peoples of the world.” Chorváth adds that the Slovak nation has a tradition in Kollár, Šafárik, Holý, and Štúr. The founding of the All-Slavic Association and All-Slavic Day at Devín is experienced as a magnificent manifestation of freedom. The future president of the Czechoslovak Republic, and in the meantime political prisoner, Gustáv Husák, writes about the unification of Slavic peoples in the ideas of Holý, Kollár, Šafárik, and Vajanský in the context of “when you say Slav, let a man speak.” Laco Novomeský here mentions Cyril and Methodius, their persecution, and also Kollár; he additionally highlights the context of equal belonging of Slavic peoples in the All-Slavic world. The poet and politician L. Novomeský was simultaneously the president of the All-Slavic Association in Bratislava. The speech of the Davist and future executed political prisoner Vladimír Clementis begins with letters from Šafárik from Novi Sad, letters from Kollár from Pest, and letters from

analysed in greater detail in the latest studies in the *Matica slovenská* proceedings.<sup>[21]</sup> In this context, Hrozič notes, for example, that Radio Free Yugoslavia broadcast information about the Slovak National Uprising, and in turn, the insurgent *Pravda* reported on the struggle of the Yugoslav army, while a greeting telegram from the Slovak National Council to Marshal Tito's General Staff contained text in the spirit of anti-fascist solidarity: "Your country itself has never given up the active fight against German fascist invaders and was able to resist for a long time successfully, isolated from the main Allied armies. We know that we, like your partisans, are part of the vast Allied armies..." (Hrozič, 1968, pp. 389, 391). After 1945, embassies were established in Prague and Belgrade, consular offices in Bratislava and Zagreb, and the Society of Friends of Tito's Yugoslavia was founded, which lat-

er merged with the Czechoslovak–Yugoslav Society for Cultural and Economic Relations (Kolaržova, 2014). The first successful economic agreement was also established.<sup>[22]</sup>

In 1946, Tito<sup>[23]</sup> visited Prague, and Czechoslovak experts helped implement major construction projects in Yugoslavia. In the context of culture, it should not be forgotten that in 1948 Czechoslovakia published *The Bridge on the Drina* by Nobel laureate Ivo Andrić (Andrić, 1948). Tito also met with representatives of the National Front, the Slovak intelligentsia, which had emerged through collaboration in the processes of the Slovak National Uprising. They also sympathised with representatives of the patriotic, Pan-Slavic, and federalist-oriented intelligentsia, which had developed from members of the modernist journal DAV, published during the interwar period.<sup>[24]</sup>

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Štúr from Modra, which were found with Srezniewski. He does not forget Palarik, Radlinský, Holý, nor Saints Cyril and Methodius. This rare publication is both a testimony and a document of the Slovak intelligentsia's initiative to follow the Slavic path after the war. Quote according to: Mrlian, 1945.

[21] The publication *They Fought for Our Freedom* (Koňariková, 2024) contains chapters prepared by the authors that map the fates of *Matica Slovenská* members in the resistance and partisans who operated in Yugoslavia, specifically in the region of Vojvodina (northern Yugoslavia), and vice versa, Yugoslavs, including Serbs, who operated in the town of Turjec alongside the brothers William and Bohuš Žingor. The book does not focus solely on Slovak territory but also covers the activities of Slovak actors abroad — including in Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Bulgaria — and their participation in the European anti-fascist movement. The book presents specific cases of cooperation or parallel resistance activities between Slovaks and Yugoslavs. It identifies at least 50 individual participants of the Slovak National Uprising from the Slovak communities in Vojvodina — from the regions of Bačka, Srem, and Banat. Contributions by S. Jovankovič, A. Chorváth, and K. Obšust point to specific military units, diplomatic missions, crimes against the Slovak population, and the significance of cultural figures in Yugoslavia. The book contains the first historical study of war crimes against Slovaks in Vojvodina, based on documents from the Archive of Vojvodina. J. Tkač, in his contribution on the Vojvodina Slovaks in Yugoslavia during the Second World War, describes the founding and operations of the Slovak brigade, which operated on the Srem front (1944–1945).

[22] Imports included grain, raw materials, and semi-finished products; Czechoslovakia sent industrial machinery and fuel, assisting in the reconstruction of industry.

[23] Tito also visited the Barrandov television studios.

[24] DAV – a generation of interwar leftist artists, critics, and politicians gathered around the eponymous journal, whose members, after the journal was banned, became involved in the anti-fascist resistance, the establishment of the insurgent

As a result of the split between Stalin and Tito in the post-war period, relations cooled. DAVists<sup>[25]</sup> such as Husák, Clementis, Okáli and others came under suspicion in the state security investigation because of their positive views towards the federalist concept of Yugoslavia and Tito, also in the context of the so-called *trials against Tito's spies and subversives in Czechoslovakia*<sup>[26]</sup> (because of his views, Clementis was accused and labelled a *Titoist, Zionist, bourgeois-nationalist traitor in the service of American imperialism*) (cf.

Perný 2023b, *Rudé právo*, 20. 11. 1952, pp. 3–6). Participants in the Slovak National Uprising, Ernest Otto and William Žingor, as well as the historian Ján Sirácky, were also accused of Titoism<sup>[27]</sup> (Koňariková, 2025). The DAVists were rehabilitated in the 1960s, although this did not restore their health, nor Clementis's life. Symbolically, the rehabilitated Dr Gustáv Husák, already president of federal Czechoslovakia, visited the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Macedonia) in 1973, where he met Marshal Tito.<sup>[28]</sup>

underground Slovak National Council, the Slovak National Uprising, and the post-war period. They were tried in the 1950s in staged trials for their patriotic, Slavic, and federalist views. They were rehabilitated in the 1960s, contributing to the establishment of the Czechoslovak federation. The generation also included future officials of Matica slovenská — Novomeský, Clementis, Okáli — as well as the future president of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Gustáv Husák. The DAVists emphasised the contribution of Kollár, Šafárik, and Štúr and updated it for the post-war context of the modern unification of the Slavic peoples (Perný, 2021; 2022; 2023b).

[25] For the Serbian-Slovak context, and for the DAVists in particular, it is extremely important that Andrej Sirácky — teacher, philosopher and political scientist — worked in the educational circle of *Sládkovič* and served as editor of the journals *Národný život* and *Slovenská jednota*. He also headed the public education department of Matica slovenská in Yugoslavia (see: Sivičková, 2014).

[26] Compare: The Trial of the Titoist Spies and Subversives in Czechoslovakia, *Wikipedia*; The Trial of the Subversive Group of Bourgeois Nationalists in Slovakia, *Wikipedia*.

[27] Interestingly, the English version of Wikipedia cites the Polish author Maria Turlejska under the heading “Titoism”, writing that at the time it seemed that Clementis would play the role of the “Czechoslovak Rajk”, while the scope of suspicion spread across southern Moravia to Prague; Otto Šling, more than 50 people, Šling, Švermová, Clementis, Husák and Novomeský were arrested and labelled traitors, spies, saboteurs or wreckers. As a result of torture and threats, the charges were confirmed, but the only one who did not confess despite torture was the future president, Gustáv Husák (thereby saving the lives of, for example, L. Novomeský, D. Okáli and other DAV members). Compare: “Titoism”, *Wikipedia*, and Perný 2023b; 2025.

[28] In 1973, Dr Gustáv Husák met Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia during an official visit to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and at the same time to the Socialist Republic of Serbia in Belgrade. At that time, already a modern city of one million inhabitants, Belgrade had become a symbol of modernisation, as had the Macedonian city of Skopje, rebuilt after the earthquake, which Husák also visited. In this anti-fascist context, Husák laid a wreath of red carnations at the Monument to the Unknown Hero on Avala near Belgrade in memory of the “sons and daughters of the Yugoslav peoples who fell in the struggle for freedom and independence”. Husák also planted a tree in Friendship Park in New Belgrade, which had been established on the occasion of the first Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries in 1961. During the official talks between Tito and Husák, they discussed securing lasting peace in Europe and reaffirming friendly relations between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The visit also included issues of economic cooperation and visits to enterprises

From the late 1950s onwards, relations between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia gradually began to improve. In the 1960s, Yugoslavia concluded an agreement with the CMEA, Antonín Novotný visited Yugoslavia, and Josip Broz Tito came to Prague (interestingly, he also visited the Slovak village of Špačince). As part of the Prague Spring, the Yugoslav model of self-management also became popular in Czechoslovakia (*Bóka*, 2017), where it inspired economic reformers (e.g. Šik, 1965).

In Czechoslovakia, Yugoslav filmmakers such as Lordan Zafranović, Rajko Grlić, Srđan Karanović

and Goran Paskaljević studied or worked at FAMU (Barešová, 2019), as did even the world-famous Emir Kusturica, who was inspired by the Czech director Otakar Vávra, whose work thematically intersects with the magical realism of Juraj Jakubisko's films, which was also the subject of a comparative thesis (Sláviková, 2021). In the context of film culture, Yugoslav and Czechoslovak partisan films made to the same formula<sup>[29]</sup> as well as comedies that became well known in both cultures.<sup>[30]</sup> Slovaks also acted in Yugoslav films.<sup>[31]</sup> In Czechoslovakia, films about Native Americans<sup>[32]</sup> were also known for their Yugoslav context (locations, actors).

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(a chemical plant from which Czechoslovakia imported synthetic fibres and plastics; the tobacco factory in Prilep; and the agricultural combine in Belgrade). Yugoslavia was presented in the television documentary by “Filmske novosti” as a dynamically developing socialist country, and at the end it quotes Tito: “*The visit of Comrade Husák and his associates was a major contribution to the further development of relations between our two countries.* It showed that our peoples have much in common and that it is essential for us to develop our mutual relations together...” (Filmske novosti 46/1973, Gustáv Husák in Yugoslavia, 1973, *ČSFD.sk*)

[29] In the SFRY, these included films such as *Three* (1965), *The Demolition Squad* (1967), *The Battle of Neretva* (1969), *The Bridge* (1969), *Walter Defends Sarajevo* (1972), *Sutjeska* (1973), *Partisans* (1974), *Partisan Squadron* (1974), and *The Fall of Italy* (1981). In Czechoslovakia, they included *Wolf's Holes* (1948), *Captain Dabač* (1959), *Death Is Called Engelchen* (1960, 1963), *Zvoni za bos* (1965), *The Day That Never Dies* (1979), *Insurgent History* (1984), the co-production *Soldiers of Freedom* (1977), and especially *Occupation in 26 Pictures* (1978). See more in the journal *DAV DVA*.

[30] In the SFRY, for example, there were *Hot Wind* (1980), *Who's Singin' Over There?* (1980), *The Adventures of Borivoje Šurdilović* (1980), and *The Marathon Family* (1982), while in Czechoslovakia there were, for example, *Lemonade Joe* (1964), *Mareček, Pass Me the Pen!* (1976), and *Run, Waiter, Run!* (1981). (For more information, see Barešová, 2019).

[31] For example, Ivan Palúch appeared in the film *The End of the World Is Almost Here* (1968), while Rapačová and Furková appeared in the SFRY–Czechoslovak film *The Death of Mr Goluža* (1982). Among the first films of Slovak-Vojvodinian production was *Mišo* (1985), a Yugoslav film adaptation of a short story by J. Čajak Jr., with the actor Dušan Jamrich in the leading role.

[32] The adventure westerns of Harald Reinl and Harald G. Petersson, starring Pierre Brice and Lex Barker, were based on Karl May's *Winnetou* books (the first instalment was filmed in 1963 and became the second most-watched film, seen by 12 million viewers), although filming did not take place only in Yugoslavia (Plitvice Lakes). Among the actors and extras were also Yugoslav performers such as Milivoj Popović-Mavid, Hrvoje Svob, Sime Jagarinac, Gojko Mitić, Vladimir Krstulović and Ilija Ivezić.

In the Yugoslav westerns *The Big Snake Chieftain* (1967) and *Sons of the Great Bear* (1966), alongside Yugoslav actors there were also Slovak actors, for example Ľapák, Majerčík, Adamovič and Jablonský.

**Lukáš M. Perný**

Introductory remarks on Serbian-Slovak cultural ties since the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, basic outline



Marshal Tito visiting Prague in 1968 alongside Svoboda and Dubček

Source: Novi Sad Radio

As for music, it should be recalled that the popular singer Karol Duchoň, winner of the Golden Lyre<sup>[33]</sup> and the subject of the recent film *Duchoň* (2025), not only had a mother from Petrovec (Olga Lačoková), but also popularised two originally Yugoslav songs: “Song About December” (1971) (“Jedne noći u decembru” by Kemal Monteno, 1971) and “Elena” (recorded by Pro Arte, composed by Đorđe Novko-

vić, 1974), the latter appearing as the B-side of the 1976 single “Po slovenských dolinách”. Slovaks also associate Yugoslavia with the release of foreign LP records by the record label *Jugoton*, which were also distributed in Czechoslovakia (unofficially on the black market).<sup>[34]</sup> Yugoslav music production was known mainly to those Slovaks from Czechoslovakia who visited the SFRY during their holidays.<sup>[35]</sup>

[33] Analogies to this include, for example Hasan Dudić or Predrag Živković Tozovac.

[34] Music lovers still have records by The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and Deep Purple in their collections to this day.

[35] Among the best-known Yugoslav musicians in Czechoslovakia were the Croatian group Srebrna krila, Oliver Dragojević, the Bosnian band Bijelo dugme (featuring the famous Goran Bregović), the Croatian-Macedonian singer Ljupka Dimitrovska,

If we focus on Serbian-Slovak exchanges in visual arts (in “both Yugoslavias”), this includes the well-known Kovačica naïve art (Zuzana Halupová, Martin Jonáš, etc.)<sup>[36]</sup> listed by UNESCO, as well as modern creators such as Zuzka Medvedová, Cyril Kutlik, Jan Konjarek, Mira Brtka, Milan Sudić, Pavel Pop, Pavel Čan, and many others, whose works are analysed by the art theorist, Slovak from Vojvodina, Vladimír Valenčík (Valenčík 1997; 2004; 2022; 2023; 2025). In the context of exchange, the exhibition *Yugoslav Art* at the Slovak National Gallery emerged, recorded in Film Week,<sup>[37]</sup> which included works by Mladen Srbinović, Jakob Savinšek, Miljenko Stanic, and Zlatko Price. In the context of art, one can mention Ivan Meštrović (the statue of Martin Kukučín in Bratislava), and for a purely Serbian context with European influence, the artist Nadežda Petrović is notable.

Finally, but not least importantly, during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, this period is represented by architectural modernism and late modernism, monumental monuments, experimental or structural urbanism in the SFRY (commonly referred to as brutalism), documented on the SPOMENIK website,<sup>[38]</sup> which also reflects modernism in the development of Czechoslovakia.<sup>[39]</sup>

Regarding the cultural context, it should be added that the Yugoslav coast was among the most popular destinations for Czechoslovak citizens during the socialist period, and tourist contacts were the first lively elements of mutual relations. For Slovaks in Slovakia, Serbia, and the former SFRY, it remains an extremely attractive destination, largely thanks to the tourism experience of

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the Serbian-Yugoslav singer Miki Jevremović, the Bosnian rock band Divlje jagode, and many others, although these performers were known mainly to those citizens who visited Yugoslavia, for example during their summer holidays. At present, J. Handlovská (whose mother is originally from Sarajevo), who sings Serbian, Croatian and other songs, deserves credit for popularising Balkan music. The popularisation of Balkan songs was also supported by DJ Fero Hora, who edited the programme *Pop Antikvariát* on Slovak Radio and introduced the segment *Melódia Stredomoria*. Fero Hora, *STVR*.

[36] Zuzana Halupová, Wikipédia; Martin Jonáš, Galéria insitného umenia.

[37] *Yugoslav Art at the Slovak National Gallery, 4th edition, SFD, 1958.*

[38] Compare: <https://www.spomenikdatabase.org/what-are-spomeniks>; Brutalism in Yugoslavia, Wikipedia; in the context of monuments and memorial sites in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, see: Skrak 2023a, 2023b, 2024, 2025

[39] The rebuilt Skopje, destroyed by an earthquake, is considered unique, as are the residential district of New Belgrade, Sava Centre, Genex Tower, Novi Zagreb, SPENS in Novi Sad, Hotel Haludovo Palace, Hotel Zlatibor, and Hotel Vrbak. In the Czech Republic, buildings such as the headquarters of ČSSZ in Prague or in Drakulov were constructed in this style. Classic examples of modernism, late modernism, and brutalism in Czechoslovakia include the SNP Bridge in Bratislava, the Monument to the Slovak National Uprising in Banská Bystrica, the Slovak National Gallery building, the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, the now-demolished Historpolis building or the spa in Trenčianske Teplice, Slovak Radio, the new building of the Slovak National Theatre, the Crematorium in Bratislava, the Federal Assembly building in Prague, the New Stage of the National Theatre in Prague, and the thermal complex in Karlovy Vary. Currently, the popularisation of the topic of brutalism is being undertaken, for example, by: Peter Salaj (author of the books *Modern Bratislava* and *Guide to the Architecture of Bratislava*). On the Yugoslav side, these include, for example, architects Bogdan Bogdanović, Dušan Džamonja, Miodrag Živković; on the Czechoslovak side, for example, Vladimír Dedeček, Ivan Matušík, Martin Kusý, Josef Lacko, Konček Skokek Titl, Dušen Kuzma, and Ferdinand Milučký.



Gustáv Husák and Marshal Tito in Belgrade, 1973

Source: Film News

the whole generation of “Husák’s children”<sup>[40]</sup> with the former Yugoslavia.<sup>[41]</sup> Slovaks experience the peoples of Yugoslavia through a nostalgic lens (the phenomenon of Yugonostalgia)<sup>[42]</sup> as a community of nations and multiethnic relations based on

the harmonising and peacekeeping dominance of Slavic culture, pluralism, equality, tolerance, and independence (membership in the Non-Aligned Movement).<sup>[43]</sup> Slovaks in Slovakia generally continue to view Yugoslavia positively as a society in

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[40] “Husák’s children” is the term for a generation of children born during a significant population wave in Czechoslovakia, which resulted from pro-family policies (loans for new parents, birth allowances, housing solutions, and mass construction of apartments), leading to an increase in the birth rate. See entry: Husák’s children, Wikipedia.

[41] For example, Plavi Horizonti, a well-known beach on the Luštica Peninsula near Tivat (Montenegro), was one of the most popular destinations for tourists from Czechoslovakia in the 1970s and 1980s (Visit of regional representatives: Montenegrin Tivat has more than just tourist potential, Dnevnik CZ).

[42] The term “Yugonostalgia” resonates as both a cultural and political phenomenon, see: Yugonostalgia, Wikipedia.

[43] Non-Aligned Movement, Wikipedia.

which every nation had equal rights. They experienced it as freer, more democratic, and more self-managed, and it also opened the doors to Western culture and emigration (Yugoslavia became the only place where Eastern inhabitants could meet those from the West, a kind of link between two worlds), with freer access to Western music and products, as well as the famous Yugoslav hospitality.<sup>[44]</sup> There is less information, for example, about the persecution of churches and their representatives or political opponents, which was the other side of the project. Although it can be said that these Yugonostalgia attitudes among Slovaks in Slovakia are idealised, recent research shows that even today, among Slovaks in Serbia with more experience, there is a positive view of the former Yugoslavia. There is also a dual identity: many, in addition to their Serbian, Bosnian, Rusyn, or Slovak ethnic affiliation, also embraced a Yugoslav identity as a symbol of the equal-concept (now non-existent) state. Mixed Serbian-Slovak marriages also contribute to the Yugoslav identity in Serbia.

### III. The breakup of Yugoslavia, problems, and visions of the Slavs with question marks

After Tito's death, but even more so after 1989 – also as a result of various geopolitical contexts (the breakup of the Yugoslav federation), changes in political regimes (the installation of Western capitalism), wars (ethnic and religious conflicts, the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, the Serbian-Croatian conflict, the Kosovo issue, the secession of Montenegro, etc.), and other complex circumstances – ties were once again severed and complicated. Since the breakup of Czechoslovakia and the SFRY, only fragmentary texts can be found analysing solely Slovak-Serbian, Slovak-Macedonian, Slovak-Slovenian, Slovak-Croatian, Czech-Serbian, etc. relations, and this knowledge is scattered like shattered glass.<sup>[45] [46]</sup> Dragan Stanić writes that in the days following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Slovak Republic, while resolving its issues with the Czech Republic, moved towards European

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[44] These ideas are reflected in the nation's collective consciousness through media images, articles, blogs, reports, etc., with different focuses, such as: Đivanović, TV News, SME, Travelistan, Blog N, Pravda, Dobre Novine, Emefka. Jancura, in an article for *Pravda*, writes that “[...] it was therefore not easy to obtain the necessary documents for traveling to Yugoslavia. This involved a foreign exchange certificate, i.e., a permit for selling currency issued by the Czechoslovak State Bank, and an exit clause for the passport from the then police, called the SNB... However, Belgrade readily approved entry visas for Czechoslovak citizens, especially after August 1968. At that time, around 80,000 Czechs and Slovaks were vacationing in Western countries and the former Yugoslavia.” [...] In the summer of 1988, almost a quarter of a million Czechoslovak tourists visited resorts on the Adriatic. According to data from the 1980 *Encyclopaedia of Slovakia*, the largest number of people took part in foreign holiday travel through trade unions. In 1979, this amounted to around 31,000 people. In addition, 9,850 children of trade union activists took part at that time in international Pioneer holiday programmes in Eastern Bloc countries.

[45] Studies and publications described as “compatriot-oriented” dominate, i.e. those focused on the Lowland Slovaks in Serbia, but the relationship between Serbs and Slovaks in Slovakia is also analysed separately.

[46] For example, V. Malperová, E. Maňová, T. Móri, Koprivicová, Petrovičová, Štěpánek, and Hladký.

integration, whereas Serbia drifted and, in the course of the programmed breakup, attempted to protect Yugoslavia and the part of the Serbian people living in various parts of Yugoslavia (Stanić 2024, p. 53). This process of transformation is also reflected by the Canadian-Yugoslav director Boris Malagurski in the film *The Weight of Chains*, in which he argues that the breakup of Yugoslavia was planned by the West,<sup>[47]</sup> although it must also be acknowledged that this was connected to Slavic divisions (which only needed to be slightly inflamed, for example through various national campaigns, in order to flare up again). Ján Kollár described this very aptly: “Let us protect ourselves from dull, intolerant, and hateful patriotism, for it is often merely an excuse for the darkest deeds, recognises no one but the enemy alongside one’s compatriots, and often serves as an apparent justification for violated human rights and the abuse of violence against weaker neighbours or compatriots belonging to another nation...” (Kollár, 1954). This criticism was directed at anyone who is uncritically and excessively “proud of their nationality and their people”, thereby preventing unity. Kollár, who promoted the unification of the Slavs, and, as Timura notes (Timura, 2018, pp. 224, 225), reproached the Slavs for quarrelling. Samuel Jurkovič felt similarly, stating that the greatest obstacles are our “selfishness and mutual slander”, by which we harm ourselves (Perný, 2023a, p. 19). Kollár and Šafárik, aware of the weaknesses of the Slavs (“stinginess”, “greed”, “quarrelsomeness”) and their disunity, therefore had only minimalist aims

during the monarchy – cultural, literary, book, and scholarly exchange.

Inspired by Herder’s prophecy about the humanistic mission of the Slavs, representatives of the “all-Slavic” generation were convinced that the Slavic peoples were destined for humanity, humaneness, and the understanding of goodness, truth, and beauty; that the meaning of their existence was not national isolation, hostility, or war, but peace, cooperation, humaneness, and the harmonisation of reality. This utopian ideal is even more relevant in the unstable 21st century. Kuzmány also writes that humaneness must remain the highest principle of all systems concerning human activity, as well as in social life, because humaneness is the destiny of man (Timura, 2018, p. 271).

Dostoevsky built on Kollár’s ideas of cooperation among nations, stating in the journal *Grazhdanin* that the need to serve humanity and brotherly love towards other nations, even at the expense of one’s own interests, is the task of the Russians. A similar adaptation can also be found in Vladimír Mináč, who refers to Dostoevsky and believes that the mission of the Slovaks is “[...] to become a true Slovak, a complete Slovak, means to become a brother to all people...” (Mináč, 1993). Similarly, Ľudovít Štúr emphasises that “ultimately, it is about humanity, of which we, together with all the other nations of the world, are members” (Štúr, 1987, p. 20). In that spirit, Nebojša Kuzmanović also presents his book. Knowledge of one’s own culture is not possible without knowledge of another, because “learning from others helps us to know

[47] The same applies to the extensive privatisation of strategic enterprises after the breakup of Czechoslovakia (author’s note).

ourselves better and to make ourselves visible in others, because we cannot exist by ourselves. Only through diversity, and never through uniformity and monotony, does the uniqueness of a culture develop and its vitality endure..." (Kuzmanović, 2023, p. 5)

It is a historical fact that the Slavic phenomenon constituted a significant component in the state-building foundations of three states built on Slavdom and anti-fascism: the USSR, the SFRY, and the ČSSR, with interruption due to war over the course of several decades.<sup>[48]</sup> The ideas developed by Kollár, Šafárik, Holly, and Štúr were thus partially realised in practice, albeit only for a certain period and within different borders and regimes, ranging from monarchy and capitalism to socialism. Vladimír Clementis perceptively wrote that "[...] Kollár's emphasis that reciprocity 'does not consist in the political unification of all Slavs,' i.e. in the creation of a single Slavic state, and his focus on reciprocity in the literary and cultural sphere, stemmed from a realistic assessment of the possibilities and circumstances of the Slavic peoples at that time. Kollár was too great a spirit not to be aware of the political roots and political influence of the literary reciprocity he proclaimed.

The resonance of his *The Daughter of Sláva* and his study on reciprocity, especially among the Czechs, Yugoslavs, and Ukrainians, could not leave anyone in doubt on this matter..." (Clementis, 1946, p. 9). Šafárik also hinted at something similar at the Slavic Congress: "Well then, when other nations consult about us and decide our future, let us also consult about ourselves and our future..." (Šafárik, 1848).

Thus, the Slavs have historically demonstrated that they are capable of working together,<sup>[49]</sup> creating real structures, modern federal communities that generate cultural artefacts, economic relations, international cooperation, and resistance to dictatorships, fascism, and imperialism. However, the historical experience of their division, especially in the case of Yugoslavia, also reveals internal conflicts and the fragility of such cooperation, which is likewise connected to quarrels and national egoism, criticised by 19<sup>th</sup>-century figures. The Slavic peoples must learn this lesson if they do not wish to be assimilated, subjugated, colonised, or absorbed because of internal disputes.

Slovakia's four-time Prime Minister Robert Fico stated during Serbia's Statehood Day on 18 February 2026 in Bratislava, in the presence of Serbian dignitaries, that "[...] the ideas of Slavdom are becoming ever stronger and will play an ever greater

[48] Hypothesis: What the 20<sup>th</sup> century would have looked like had the SFRY, the USSR, and the ČSSR not disintegrated, had they been freer, democratically reformed, and remained cohesive and cooperative, is a question to which we do not know the answer.

[49] In general, hard work as an anthropological symbol of the Slavs, especially among the Slovaks, is described not only by Šafárik but also by the well-known Slovak writer in the popular generational novel *The Millennial Bee* (Jaroš, 2014), inspired by Márquez. The bee here, as the mother of the Slavs, is interpreted in a mythological sense, referring to hard work and perhaps also to queen bees. This is also connected with human creativity in the context of the progress of nations, with the aestheticization and humanisation of reality. This parallel is also noted by Prime Minister R. Fico, who is familiar with the context of Slovak history and who, in his address in the cited collection *Matica slovenská in national history* (p. 7), writes (also aware of the Serbian origin of the word): "When the Slovaks could not have their own king, they established a matica: 'matica,' which in the closely related Slavic Serbian language means a beehive, a source, the queen bee."

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President of the Republic of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić and Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic Robert Fico at the Trilateral Summit of the leaders of Serbia, Slovakia and Hungary in Komárno, the Slovak Republic, on 22nd October 2024

Photo: Dimitrije Gol

role in Europe”<sup>[50]</sup> These words are not merely formal, since the four-time Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic personally took part in the unveiling of the busts of Clementis (2007, 2023) and Mináč (2022). He has also paid tribute to Dubček (2016) and Husák (2024), figures who (both) met Josip Broz Tito (1965, 1973) and who transformed the idea of Slavic cooperation in practice into the modern

and anti-fascist context of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (albeit within the confines of the ideological dogmatism of the time, which these figures at times transcended on the basis of their personal qualities). If the idea of Slavic cooperation and Slavdom is to survive, it needs a new update for the contexts of the 21st century, for the present transforming world. It must respond to the contradictions of postmodernity as

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[50] Robert Fico delivered a speech on Pan-Slavic reciprocity on the occasion of Serbia’s Statehood Day, DAV DVA, 2026.

well as the post-Covid era, and refocus on the idea of social justice, cultural and economic cooperation, humanism, peace, modern patriotism, and the protection of cultural heritage (both traditional and modern). Cultural cooperation could mark the beginning of a renaissance of this idea, whether within or outside the framework of the EU.

#### IV. Current state and vision for the future

58 | There are currently Slavic countries forming autonomous republic inside and outside the EU, however, the conditions for deepening cultural and economic cooperation in the new geopolitical conditions of the 21st century are being created. However, culture, science, literature, and art must always serve as the starting point of this cooperation. In 2014, the international conference of Slovaks and Serbs was held, resulting in a collection of papers. However, here, too, we mainly find the context of Serbs and Lowland Slovaks, that is, there is no focus on Slovaks in Slovakia (collective authors., 2014). At the 6th Congress of Matica Institutions and Slavic

Nations, Martin Prebudjila provided detailed information on the genesis of literary cooperation since 2011, when cooperation between Slovaks in Serbia and Slovaks in Slovakia was agreed upon within the Association of Slovak Writers, and later continued with the visit of Radomir Andrić and the Writers' Association of Serbia in 2013. At that time, a Cooperation Agreement was established, including the participation of Serbian and Slovak writers in literary festivals, bilingual publication of books, publishing in periodicals on both sides, and mutual support of both national literatures internationally. <sup>[51]</sup> In his contribution, Prebudjila described in detail the implementation of these collaborations through concrete activities in 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017, with an overview extending to the present day.

The Slovak culturologist Dalimír Hajko published two books in 2013 and 2019 in which he analyses poetry from the lowland region as well as the poetry of Serbian authors (Hajko, 2013; 2019). In conclusion, it should be added that cooperation is currently deepening within the cultural triangle of Matica slovenská, Matica srpska, and the Archives of Vojvodina (Slovaks, Serbs, and Slovaks in Serbia). <sup>[52]</sup> This cultural exchange in Serbian takes

[51] Prebudjila states "It was in fact the result of several prior meetings, both at literary gatherings in Belgrade and Bratislava, as well as at our literary events in Bački Petrovac, and, of course, as a result of the long-standing work of the then Commission for Literary and Publishing Activities of the Committee for Culture of the Slovak National Council. Suddenly, the literature of Vojvodina Slovaks, together with translations of Serbian poetry and prose, became much more present in the pages of *Literary Weekly* and *Slovenské pohľady*, as well as Serbian translations in our journal *New Life*, but also Slovak literature in Serbian periodicals such as *Literary News*, *Matica srpska Chronicles*, and the journals *Zlatna greda*, *Stig*, and others. Considerable space would be required to list everything that has been translated and published during this period..." (Prebudjila, M., Serbian–Slovak Literary Connections at the Beginning of the New Millennium, paper from the 6th Congress of Matica Institutions and Slavic Nations, 2025, forthcoming).

[52] Delegations of both maticas also communicated with standout figures of literary culture such as Zoran Đerić, Selimir Radulović (*Matica srpska Chronicles*), Nenad Šaponja, Veselin Mišnić, Vidal Maslovarić, which resulted in Serb-Slovak issue of the magazine *Slovenské pohľady* (ed. Radoslav Žigrađa).

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President of the Republic of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić and Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic at the Palace of Serbia, during Prime Minister Robert Fico's visit to Serbia, November 21, 2024

Photo: Dimitrije Gol

place in various forms (e.g., participation in congresses of the Slovak diaspora, mutual visits and student exchanges – the International Diaspora Festival, TESLA FORUM, literary discussions for Slovaks from the lowland region, publication of books in Serbia and Slovakia, reporting on activities in journals, and active scholarly research on figures from Serbia and Slovakia).

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In 2014, the bilingual anthology of Slovak and Serbian poetry *Slavic Tenderness* (Stanić 2024) was published, with an introductory commentary by the President of Matica srpska, Dragan Stanić.<sup>[53]</sup> The anthology features authors born after 1945 who have experienced socialism, the construction

[53] It contains works by Serbian authors Rajko Petrov Nogo, Stevan Tontić, Miroslav Maksimović, Miloslav Tešić, Milan Nenadić, Duško Novaković, Radmila Lazić, Novica Tadić, Zlata Kocić, Vojislav Despotov, Bratislav R. Milanović, Selimir Radulović, Đorđe Sladoje, Nikola Vujčić, Ivan Negrišorac, Đorđe Nešić, Dragan Jovanović Danilov, Saša Radojčić, Dragan Hamović, and Milena Marković, as well as Slovak authors: Michal Huda, Miroslav Demák, Miroslav Bielík, Zlata Matláková, Ján Švantner, Ján Tazberík, Peter Mišák, Margita Ivaničková, Dana Podracká, Juraj Kuniak, Jozef Leikert, Martin Prebudjila, Ladislav Čáni, Erik Ondrejčka, Pavol Tomašovič, Igor Válek, Ingrid Lukáčová, Olga Glušiková, and Martin Hudík.

of capitalism, as well as open military imperialism in 1999.

Stanić compares Milan Rúfus and Gojko Đogo, adding that both poets reflect the division of the world into two blocs. According to Stanić, the fate of Slovakia is neither heroically rebellious (Jánošík), nor Catholic-Enlightenment (Bernolák), not Evangelical-Lutheran (Štúr, Hurban), nor Czechoslovak (Kollár, Masaryk), nor state-communist or reformist (Dubček); however, this fate was best understood by Rúfus through his poetic vision of Slovakia (Stanić 2024, pp. 49, 50). On the other hand, in his critical poetry he cites the poet Đogo, calling for freedom of speech while criticizing atheism and dogmatism. In this context, Stanić the liberalization of the SFRY, but also the bloody outcome of the disintegration of the multinational state,<sup>[54]</sup> as well as the “barbaric”

NATO bombing of the Yugoslav/Balkan peoples (Nogo’s poem “And Behold, the Serbs”), drawing an analogy with Western colonialism’s treatment of ethnic groups. He portrays the Serbs as the “Indians of Europe.”

Stanić emphasizes that there is a bridge between the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries in both the global and Slavic worlds, embodied in the “shame on the face of the Slavs.” It is noteworthy, and not coincidental, that even today there are studies and books which, even at the level of official scholarly institutions, promote anti-Slavic sentiment with the aim of intimidating or ostracizing Slavic cultural cooperation as a “pro-Russian agenda,” which represents a purposeful and propagandistic conflation of pan-Slavic reciprocity with pan-Russianism.<sup>[55]</sup>

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[54] In this context, it is necessary to mention the postmodern–surrealist, deconstructionist, comic, and dramatic film *Underground* (1995) by Kusturica and Kovačević, with music by Bregović. The film is essentially a parable of Yugoslav history, which it portrays, with a strong dose of irony and sarcasm, as an illusion (the resistance heroes are kept underground in the illusion of an ongoing war under the pretext of weapons production). Ultimately, however, it returns to the need for a grand narrative, as it dramatically depicts the wars and the breakup of Yugoslavia as a nostalgia for unity. The film portrays the spontaneity of the Balkans in both its positive and negative aspects, at times slipping into stereotypes. It combines dark humour, pain, spontaneity, love, betrayal, suffering, while, behind all the irony, ultimately opening up a call for unity and peace among peoples. The film is avant-garde in that it represents what, in accordance with the philosophy of Michael Hauser, may be described as the avant-garde of “interregnum art.” The exhaustion with grand narratives (of modernity) is to be replaced by an exhaustion with small narratives (of postmodernism and deconstruction), followed by a return to grand stories, a sense of history, narrative frameworks, and large ideas (Slavic unity, Christianity, God, social justice, nation, peace) within the context of what may follow postmodernity (i.e., from modernity, through postmodernity, to neomodernity) (cf. Perný, 2023). This return to authenticity and the desire for truth are embodied in the character of the naïve Ivan, as if invoking the biblical “blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3). He weeps, refuses to accept the loss of illusion, and rejects the fact that Yugoslavia no longer exists. He also refuses to go to Italy and symbolically encounters his lost monkey, finding himself in the midst of civil war, beating Marko, and choosing death before saying: “God, forgive me.” Biblical symbolism continues in Marko’s line: “A war is not a war until a brother raises his hand against a brother.” Amid apocalyptic scenes, a white horse and an inverted Christ appear, while the film concludes with a utopian scene in which all are young and gathered around one table, reminiscent of the Slovaks feasting for a thousand years in Jakubisko’s *The Millennial Bee*.

[55] For example, Academician J. Marušiak of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, with the aim of indirectly ostracizing Slavic cultural cooperation, and in the context of alleged “pro-Russian rhetoric” as opposed to the “Western civilizational orientation of Slovakia,” writes: “In the current period, the Slavophile discourse has primarily asserted itself as a transnational identity

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Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic Robert Fico at the reception organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in the Slovak Republic on the occasion of the Statehood Day of the Republic of Serbia, in Bratislava on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Photo: Matej Ondreicka

This is confirmed by Stanić's assertion that little has changed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the con-

text of the stereotyping of Slavs.<sup>[56]</sup> Stanić argues (Stanić, 2024) that Slovaks and Serbs have under-

project. Although its actors did not openly question the ideas of European integration and Euro-Atlantic cooperation in matters of security, they perceived them with reservation as a potential source of threat to Slovak sovereignty and the Slavic community. [...] This applies to several organizations... including Matica slovenská, where the Slavophile discourse has strengthened, particularly after the election of Marián Gešper as its chairman in 2017. He defined the partners of Matica as national and Slavic-oriented associations, alongside churches and civic organizations. [...] Pan-Slavism is considered in the context of its intersection with other ideological discourses. Its characteristic features can be defined as anti-Westernism, neoliberalism, and conservatism. It is an instrumental part of a pro-Russian agenda even among part of the left spectrum..." (Marušiak, 2023).

[56] According to the English Wikipedia, *Anti-Slavic sentiment*, anti-Slavic racism, or Slavophobia refers to various forms of negative attitudes, prejudice, collective hatred or hostility, stereotypes, discrimination, and violence (economic, physical,

stood each other well for centuries and have depended on one another, as their historical destinies have been very similar. Just as in the Habsburg Monarchy, contemporary Europe also exerts pressure toward the assimilation of Slavs or the questioning of Slavic identity. He therefore adds that even in the 21st century, Serbs and Slovaks must support one another, if only because of the risk of assimilation. Creative culture, science, and art must serve as the starting point for cooperation

between national communities. <sup>[57]</sup> The aim of this proto-study has been to contribute to an understanding of at least the basic intersections of the two cultures across different regimes, states, and historical situations; if this has been achieved even partially, the time spent writing this text will have been worthwhile. However, I would like to warn the reader that the text will be expanded, and that the present section is only an introduction to further research.

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political, psychological, verbal, etc.) directed against one or more ethnic groups of Slavic peoples. Compare with the entry: Anti-Slavic sentiment, Wikipedia.

[57] The results of research and the creative work of cultural workers in the fields of literature and science are no longer just theoretical but represent the beginning of the practical application of the Pan-Slavic idea, i.e., the idea of Kollár, Šafárik, Kopitar, Zmaj, and Miletić. Much work on active literary and cultural contacts on the Serbian side has been carried out by Nebojša Kuzmanović, PhD (and his colleagues Dunja Andrić, Miroslav Dobroňovský, Dragana Katić, Boris Bulatović, Kristián Obšust, Tatjana Jonaš), Prof. Dragan Stanić (Milena Kulík, Milan Micić and others) and their staff from the Archive of Vojvodina and Matica srpska, while on the Slovak side by Dr Marián Gešper (and colleagues Peter Švantner, Pavol Madura, Ján Seman, Milina Sklabinská, etc.) and Matica slovenská (Serbian-Slovak issue of Slovenské pohľady, cultural delegations, matica congresses), as well as the late Miroslav Bijelik (publishing Serbian literature in Slovakia and vice versa in the Society of Slovak Writers) and, on the Vojvodina scene, Martin Prebuďila (translations and event organisation), along with other cultural actors from Serbia and Slovakia (creators, critics, translators, writers), such as Miroslav Demák, Radomir Andrić, Nenad Šaponja, Zoran Derić, Zdenka Valent-Belić, Dalimir Hajko, Štefan Cifra, Katarína Mosnaková-Baglášová, Michal Harpanj, Ján Babjak, Vladimír Valentík, Pavel Čanji, and even the well-known poet Lubomír Feldek. Significant contributions to mutual cultural understanding have also been made by the Slovak photographer and designer from Kisač, Pavel Surový, and the Evangelist priest, former president of Matica slovenská, Branislav Kulík. For mutual familiarisation of both cultures, the translation of Dobšinski's fairy tales by Zdenka Valent-Belić (Dobšinski, 2024) is particularly stimulating, as is her book *The Image of Serbs in the Slovak Language* (Valent-Belić, 2022), and finally Harpanj's book *Slovak Literature in Serbian Journals of the 19th Century* (Harpanj, 2022). Within the framework of the presented study, it is not possible to include many other publishing achievements or a more detailed analysis of the books presented. In conclusion, it can be added that the journal *Slovenský horizont*, which is also published in Serbian and reports on almost all cultural exchanges between Serbia and Slovakia, including the aforementioned publications, can be considered among the most recent projects. As a Pan-Slavic journal, *Slovenský horizont* is also evidence of the practical application of the Kollár-Šafárik concept of Slavic cultural exchange. The Slovak Matica has also re-established the Slovak Department of Matica slovenská, led by Pavol Madura.

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