

**The Czech and Slovak History Newsletter**

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**Czechoslovak Studies Association Annual  
Meeting will be held**

**During  
The 43<sup>rd</sup> National Convention of the American Association for the  
Advancement of Slavic Studies  
At: 8:00-9:45 am, Presentation Hall Studio 10  
New Orleans Marriott Hotel  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
Friday, November 16, 2012**



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**“The Czech and Slovak History Newsletter exist to express interests in the history of Czechoslovakia, its predecessor and successor states, and all its people within and without its historic boundaries.”**

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President Cynthia Paces



Message



Dear CSA Members:

This year, the Central Europeanists' receptions will be bar near the conference hotel. I hope to see many of you there.

Informal Networking for Central Europeanists

Pre-Dinner Networking and Drinks

Bar R'Evolution

777 Bienville Street (at Bourbon Street),  
New Orleans

Friday, November 16, 2012 at 7:30pm

The annual Central Europeanists' Reception, reconfigured as an informal event and lead-in to dinners and formal receptions.

It will be held in a beautiful venue just outside the conference hotel.

Cynthia Paces  
CSA President

### Czech Studies Workshop Report:

On April 27-28, 2012, The University of Texas at Austin hosted the Thirteenth Annual Czech Studies Workshop. Participants came from both American and international universities, including speakers from, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, and Germany.

The first panel, entitled "Health, Housing and Property Rights," addressed issues of space and hygiene in the communist and post-communist period. The discussant was Mary Neuberger, from the University of Texas at Austin. The first paper, presented by Bradley Moore was entitled "The Dialectics of Health: Ideology, Environment, and Hygienic Science in Czechoslovakia, 1952-1962." Moore's project responded primarily to Soviet

historiography regarding the role of ideology in the scientific context. He suggested that Czech hygienists during the early communist period embraced both Marxist-Leninism and the notion of dialectical materialism—which supposed that the health of the body was dependent on outside factors, such as the environment, rather than on biology. By including the issue of hygiene in the broader context of rational scientific planning, the hygienists could include themselves in the move toward the increasing importance of science as a tool of social control in communist Czechoslovakia.

The next project, presented by Kimberly Zarecor, was titled “Ordinary Modernism: Ostrava and Socialist Urbanism after 1960” and examined the shifting landscape of Ostrava from the 1960s through the present. Zarecor defined “ordinary modernism” as the implementation of the modernist program for the development of ordinary—that is, a non-capital—cities in the postwar period in the Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union; this includes such developments as pedestrian thoroughfares, automobile-friendly streets, the creation of a public transportation system. Although Ostrava was an industrial city even before the communist period, the

communists utilized this, creating an urban infrastructure that remained viable after communism. Zarecor points out that the nodes and connection points in Ostrava are not centralized like in most socialist cities, but are interspersed with green spaces, which is uncommon in other such ‘satellite cities,’ where the focus is usually on density.

The final paper in the first panel was entitled “Post-Communist Property Rights” presented by Jeremy King. King examined the instance of a single apartment house in the Brno to observe the importance of housing in understanding historical motivations. The house was built in 1932, taken from the family that owned it “under duress” in 1960, and returned to the family in 1991. Because people feel ‘ownership’ in their flats—even if they are only renting and do not own—King argues that understanding housing markets and the shifting situations of the tenants can provide a perspective on issues of space, shifting political regimes, and the relationships between individuals residing in urban spaces. King points out that there were approximately 700,000 flats in the Czech lands similar to those that he describes: the rent contracts were not terminated with the fall of the communist regime and the result was conflict between the long-term tenants

and the newly restituted owners. Although the new state pushed for a neo-liberal property-rights system, politicians needed votes and a large percentage of their constituency consisted of renters. According to King, the resulting clash between the poor renters, who had been offered cheap housing by the socialist state, and the private owners created a long period of difficulty with regard to renovation and the re-drawing of a post-communist urban landscape and has resulted in an increase in owner-occupants in recent years.

Panel number two, entitled “Photography, Puppet Theater, and Musical Memory” addressed various incarnations of the Czech cultural and artistic contributions. The discussant was Jindřich Toman from the University of Michigan. The first presentation was given by Eva Čermanová, whose project “Josef Sudek and the Inanimate” examined the bleak images of this communist-era artist. Čermanová suggested that Sudek’s bleak landscapes subverted the narrative of communism and the aesthetic of socialist realism by creating a bleak, post-ideological reality and implying that destruction and apocalypse were imminent. Using an analysis based on Walter Benjamin, Čermanová argued that Sudek’s work exposed the inner void in the

context of commodity exchange by representing the inhumane industrial landscape of Czechoslovakia and the catastrophes of Czech history: the disappearance of the Jews, the expulsion of the Germans, the Slansky trials and the invasion of Prague by the members of the Warsaw Pact in 1968.

The next presentation, by Adam Siegel, “Říše Loutek: The Czech Puppet Theater and Interwar Avantgarde,” examined the uniquely Czech cultural contribution to interwar theater. He also pointed out the overlap between high culture and dětská literature—particularly in puppet theater—in the work of such authors as František Langer and the Čapeks, pointing to the intimacy of Czech cultural life in the 1920s and 30s. Siegel argued that the movement away from normal and natural movement and toward the unnatural and grotesque exemplified the work of the Prague School and was influential abroad.

The third paper, presented by Ulrike Präger, and titled “Musical Relations between Czechs and Germans in the Sudetenland: Deciphering ‘Czech-German Biculturalism’” looked at the role of music in the forced migration of Sudeten Germans out of the region in the postwar period. Präger compiled a selection of “musical

remembrances” in which she interviewed Germans who had lived in this in-between space. She concluded that her subjects had a shared identity from a musical perspective: not only did their ‘musical identity’ easily cross national borders, but until the 1930s, their perspective was Czech-German, rather than one or the other. It was only when they were forced by nationalist tensions to choose, that the transcultural nature of their ‘musical identity’ became monolithic.

Panel Number three, “Stalinism in Czechoslovakia: Deportations and the Effects of Repression” examined deportations during Stalinism and rehabilitation in the wake of de-Stalinization in Czechoslovakia. The discussant was Tatjana Lichtenstein, from the University of Texas at Austin. The first presentation, given by Milada Poliřenská, “Deportation of Civilians from Czechoslovakia to the Gulag: Current Research Issues and Discourse,” took a closer look at the deportation of Czechoslovak citizens and other inhabitants of Czechoslovakia to the Gulags. According to Poliřenská’s research, the majority of these deportations were from southeast Czechoslovakia in the months of January through March in 1945. When the Czechoslovak government protested the deportations, the Soviet Union forced them

to negotiate for the return of each individual prisoner. The prisoners who returned were labeled as criminals against the Soviet State and often had problems getting work and integrating back into society. Poliřenská’s list estimates that some 7,700 civilians and approximately 70,000 Slovak prisoners of war were interned in the Gulags.

The second paper, presented by Klára Pinerová, was entitled “Rehabilitation and the Life after Release of non-Communist Victims of Stalinist Repression in Czechoslovakia.” Pinerová questioned whether it was possible for former prisoners to have happy, fulfilling and normal lives in the wake of their imprisonment. In the years 1953, 1956, and 1960, there were a large number of political prisoners who were granted amnesty and released. However, Pinerová argues, these released prisoners were still regarded as criminals and discriminated against. Rather than full professional and social rehabilitation, these prisoners often found that their quality of life suffered, although this varied based on their prior levels of education and social status. In attempting to create a neutral space into which to reintegrate, Pinerová found that the prisoners’ success was often contingent upon maintaining contacts with former political prisoners.

The keynote speech, given on Friday April 27th by Michal Kopeček was entitled “From Politics of History to Memory as Political Language: Czech Dealings with the Communist Past after 1989.” Kopeček examined Czech dealings with their communist past as a means of gaining legitimacy as a democracy. He suggested that the years from 1989 to the mid 1990s were crucial in recreating the nationalist narrative. The issue of lustration and the rising anti-communist sentiment led to a rise in the government’s desire to purge communists. This combined with international discourse surrounding ‘transitional justice’ and the domestic narratives of former dissidents to shape the way in which post-communist ‘justice’ played out. Kopeček suggested that ‘transitional justice’ provided a solid foundation for moving forward and created an alternative to violent justice or simply forgetting the past. He went on to argue that the memory politics in Czechoslovakia after 1989 created a dichotomy between the idea of reconciliation and that of justice and that the conservative movement in Czechoslovakia (and then the Czech Republic) used the politics of history to strengthen their influence in the public sphere.

On Saturday, April 28th, the panels continued with the fourth panel, entitled “Writers and Censors.” The discussant was Libuše Heczková, from Charles University. The first paper was given by Michal Chvojka, entitled “School of Public morality or Instrument of Political Repression: Censorship between Vienna, Brno, and Opava, 1780s-1840s.” In his presentation, Chvojka examined the censorship of theater in Moravia and Silesia during the reign of the Habsburg Monarchy. He suggested that although Joseph II’s reforms in literary and cultural life had made literature more free, the same was not true for theater. These reforms disallowed theaters from portraying anything “immoral,” or “bawdy” or even including anything with double meaning in order to try to prevent any sort of incitement to revolution. The censorship of theater was based dependent on both internal (political and moral) and external (for example, the revolution in Greece) factors and theater censorship varied from town to town, which indicated the increasing tension between local and central policing.

The next paper, given by Abigail Weil was “Transitional Fiction: Cibulka’s Dramatic Personae” in which Weil used the novel *Two Murders in my Double Life* by Josef Škvorecký in order to examine the

fictionalization of the accusations against his wife Zdena Salivarová and the issue of transitional justice more broadly. Weil argued that Škvorecký explores the murky nature of guilt and innocence by the act of confession. She explored the way in which rumor and gossip could be more damning to an individual's life than actual guilt and that writing serves as the only truly redemptive act. Weil pointed out that according to Škvorecký, ultimately it is only the artist that can understand the in-betweenness of justice.

The final paper in the fourth panel, presented by Andrea Orzoff, was entitled "Writing through the Curtain: West German PEN and Czech Dissidents, 1968-1980." Orzoff examined the genesis of PEN as a non-political affiliate of the League of Nations, which was meant to support the freedom of the arts in Europe. However, during the communist period, the organization is split into East and West PEN. West PEN tried to help the Czechs to be allowed to publish in Czech abroad; although they are unsuccessful, they do manage to get some money to Czech authors illegally. Orzoff points out that the power struggle and interplay between these two groups is indicative of the way in which the shadow of World War II extended well into

the Cold War and that 'cross-curtain' relations, while sometimes politically useful, could turn into suspect activity from one moment to the next in both the east and the west.

The final panel was entitled "Czechs in America." Zach Doleshal, from the University of Texas at Austin was the discussant. The first presentation was given by David Chroust and titled "Good Conductors of their Affairs: The Hospodař Newspaper and Czech America, 1891-1989." In his paper, Chroust examined Czech communities in America during the mass migration period and the contention between the Catholic Czechs and the 'freethinkers' community. The latter did not have the same level of organization, but was very active in the Czech press and attempted to create and sustain a Czech print culture in the United States.

Second, Marek Vlha presented his paper "The Bohemian National Cemetery of Chicago: An Analysis of the Czech-American Freethinker Movement." In his presentation, Vlha pointed out the heterogeneity in the "freethought" movement. The movement was rather anti-clerical and Catholic than in possession of any concrete ideological objective. The cemetery in Chicago, which housed the



largest Czech community in the United States after the Civil War, was used as a center for ethnic and secular festivities, with no regard for the religion of those buried there (45,000 by 1925). According to Vlha, the Catholic and Protestant Czechs remained antagonistic toward the “freethinkers,” labeling them as a business rather than a religious or ideological group.

On Saturday afternoon, participants went on an excursion to the Hill Country, where they visited the painted churches and cemeteries of the old Czech communities in Praha and Dubina. Zachary Doleshal, of the University of Texas at Austin, guided the tour. The workshop was concluded with a dinner of traditional Czech fare at the historic Sengelmann Hall in Schulenburg, Texas.

This workshop was sponsored by the generous support of the UT Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies and the Czech Chair, the UT Department of History, the UT Center for European Studies, the UT Center for the Study of Modernism, the UT Department of American Studies, the UT Department of Theatre and Dance, and the Czechoslovak Studies Association.

Submitted by Elana Thurston-Milgrom

## News from Membership



**Josette Baer**

### **Publications:**

Books: As editor: *From Post-Communism toward the Third Millennium: Aspects of political and economic development in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe from 2000 to 2005*. Peter Lang: Bern, 2011.

### Publications in Reviewed Journals:

1. “Rousseau in k.k. Austria-Hungary? Natural law, positive law, or Czechoslovakism as *r ligion civile*? An interdisciplinary inquiry.” Forthcoming in *Review of Central and East European Law—Law in Eastern Europe LEE*, Brill Publishers, Leiden, University of Trento, Italy, autumn 2011.

2. “Das Tatra-Gebirge als politisches und nationales Symbol der Slowakei.“ In Werner M. Egli and Ingrid Tomkowiak (eds.). *Berge*. Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2010, 139-150.
3. “Franco Vit’azoslav Sasinek—the Slovak Palacký? Attempt at an intellectual portrait.“ *KOSMAS. Czechoslovak and Central European Journal* 24, no. 1 (2010): 57-70.

#### **Paulina Bren**

##### **Publications:**

*Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe*, eds. Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger (Oxford University Press, 2012)

#### **David L. Cooper**

##### **Papers presented:**

“Mystifications and Ritual Behavior in the Czech National Awakening.” Center for Polish and European Studies, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Kyiv, Ukraine. May 16, 2012.

#### **Thomas Fudge**

##### **Promotions, recognitions, jobs, or address changes:**

In September 2012, Professor Fudge took up a tenured faculty appointment at the University of New England in Armidale, Australia where he will teach Medieval History and continue his research on Hussite Bohemia.

New address: School of Humanities,  
University of New England, Armidale,  
NSW 2351, Australia

#### **Jeanne E. Grant**

##### **Recognition:**

Ms. Grant is serving as Secretary for the Midwest World History Association (<http://mwwha.org>), 2012-2014; every two years the executive officers are elected.

#### **Milan Hauner**

##### **General News Items:**

1. May 27: 70th Anniversary of the Assassination of Reinhard Heydrich in Prague. Participated in radio and newspaper discussions, lectures in Prague, Paris, Dijon.
2. May 28-29: Conference of the Life and Work of Gordon Skilling, Czernin Palais, Prague. Presented

paper "Skilling's 'Lions or Foxes: Heroes or Lackeys?' after twenty years."

3. June 7: Talk at the Czech Embassy, Paris: "Le versant londonien de l'operation ANTHROPOID."
4. June 8: Lycee Carnot, Dijon: Introducing the Czech film "Lidice."

### **Karla Huebner**

#### **Paper Presented:**

"Women's Magazines in Interwar Czechoslovakia," Women in Magazines Conference, Kingston University, London, June 2012.

### **Owen V. Johnson**

#### **Publications:**

"Entertaining the People, Serving the Elites: Slovak Mass Media Since 1989," in *Fighting Windmills: A Retrospective on 20 Years of Media Transformation in the Post-Communist World*, edited by Peter Gross and Karol Jakubowicz (Lexington Books, scheduled for publication in November 2012)

#### **Papers presented:**

1. "The Impact of Media Economics on the Role of Mass Media in U.S. Politics and Society," at the conference, "Reset: Russian-

American relations in the Age of Obama," Russian State University of the Humanities, Moscow, Apr. 11.

2. "Changing Concepts of Journalistic Professionalism: Implications East & West," [plenary session], Polish Communication Association, Gdańsk, Sept. 14.

### **Optional:**

"In September I read my file at the Archive of the Security Services in Prague. This file, the third kept on me in Czechoslovakia, was opened in April 1988, and reported on the visit that I made to Prague as part of the exchange agreement between Indiana University and Charles University. The file was originally opened because the police thought, among other things, that I was going to spread pacifist and environmental views among the students. In fact, I was invited to speak to one class and to answer questions, but most of the time on that visit was spent interviewing high media officials, including the editor of *Rudé právo*, the head of Czechoslovak Television, the government press spokesman, etc. Funding for the visit was provided by the National Council on Soviet and East European Research. The police file somehow changed this to my

being supported by the ‘unfriendly’ Russian and East European Institute at IU.”

**Promotions, recognitions, jobs, or address changes:**

2012-2013 NCEEER Research Grant  
Recipient for a book project on Slusovice.

**Publications:**

August 1, 2012 publication of *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe*, eds. Paulina Bren and Mary Neuburger (Oxford University Press).

**Michael J. Kopanic, Jr.**

**Promotions, recognitions, jobs, or address changes:**

Dr. Kopanic was granted the Teaching Recognition Award at the University of Maryland University College (UMUC), where he has taught since 2007. He received the award at a banquet in Adelphi, Maryland on May 8, 2012. Later in the newsletter appears a photo of Dr. Kopanic with the Provost Dr. Lehman and Dr. Marie Cinci, the Dean of Academic Affairs, one with some colleagues, and a copy of his certificate awarded.

Since coming to UMUC, Dr. Kopanic has been nominated every year for the Teaching Recognition Award (TRA), and received the award in his first year of eligibility. In fall 2011, UMUC promoted

him from his position as Adjunct Associate Professor to his current rank as Adjunct Professor.

In the summer of 2012, he also received a scholarship from the Slovak Ministry of Education to pursue Advanced Studies in the Slovak Language at Studia Academica Slovaca, the summer language and culture course at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. He studied there in the second half of the summer this year. Dr. Kopanic had a superb time in Bratislava and further improved his Slovak. You can read more about Dr. Kopanic’s trip thirteen the newsletter.

**General news items:**

While in Slovakia, Dr. Kopanic spent the most time with the librarian and bibliographer, Mgr. Alžbeta Sedliaková, who has meticulously compiled bibliographical work of historical studies on Slovak history. She requested that all historians abroad submit their academic studies to her attention so she may include them in the bibliographies, which she updates regularly online. Her e-mail address is: [histalse@savba.sk](mailto:histalse@savba.sk).

The Historical Institute’s website is: <http://www.history.sav.sk/> and it also sponsors the website, <http://www.dejiny.sk/>.

One may search the database which contains most works on Slovak and Czech history published since 1990:

<http://databazy.dejiny.sk/> .

**Publications:**

1. "Slovaks in America," Hungary through the Centuries. *Studies in Honor of Steven Béla Várdy and Ágnes Huszár Várdy*. Ed. Richard P. Mulcahy. (Boulder: East European Monographs, distributed by Columbia University Press, 2011: pp. 431-450.
2. "Going Bananas after a Gorilla in Slovakia? The Latest Slovak Political Scandal," *Jednota* (Feb. 29, 2012).
3. "The Passing of Václav Havel, the last president of former Czechoslovakia," *Jednota* (Jan. 18, 2012).

**Bradley Matthys Moore**

**Recognition:**

Moore's essay, "For the People's Health: Ideology, Medical Authority, and Hygienic Science in Communist Czechoslovakia, 1952-1962," won the 2011 Roy Porter Memorial Student Essay Prize for the best original and unpublished graduate work in the social history of

medicine. The award was presented by the Society for the Social History of Medicine.

**Caitlin Murdock**

**Publications:**

Caitlin E. Murdock "The Politics of Belonging: Citizenship, Community, and Territory on the Saxon-Bohemian Frontier, 1918-1924" *Austrian History Yearbook* Vol. 43, 2012. 59-74.

**Claire Nolte**

**Recognition:**

Received a Fulbright scholar grant to undertake research on nineteenth-century Prague in the Prague City Archives.

**Publications:**

"Inter army silent Musae? Culture in Wartime Prague," *Kafka, Prag und der Erste Weltkrieg/Kafka, Prague, and the First World War*. Eds. Manfred Engel and Ritchie Robertson. Oxford Kafka Studies II. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2012, 93-105.

**Papers Presented:**

1. "The Nation on Display: Exhibitions in Prague, 1891 and 1895," Conference of the European Association for Urban History,

Prague, Czech Republic, August 2012.

2. "The Czechs in Historical Perspective", Fulbright Orientation Conference, Prague, September 2012.

### **New Members:**

Martin Nekola  
Jesovska 303/2A  
Prague 5, 150 00  
The Czech Republic.

Mr. Nekola is a grad student in the Dept. of Political Science at Charles University where he works on the Czechoslovak exile during the Cold War and the East European anti-Communist exile in the USA.

### **Other News**

#### **A Member's Death**

Longtime member Walter Ullmann passed away on 11/4/2011 at the age of 87. A professor emeritus of history at Syracuse University, he was born in České Budějovice and attended Charles University before immigrating to Canada. He earned a BA and MA at the University of British Columbia and received his PhD from the University of Rochester. Prior to taking a position at Syracuse in 1964, he taught for

several years at Wayne State University. He authored a number of articles and the book, *The United States in Prague, 1945-1948* (1978). (Article taken from a Syracuse newspaper.)

### **M. Mark Stolarik's Forthcoming Book**

After ten years of effort, M. Mark Stolarik published his "Magnum opus," *Where is My Home? Slovak Immigration to North America, 1870-2010* (Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Oxford, Wien: Peter Lang Publishing, 2012), xix-394 pp., maps, illustrations, bibliography, index. ISBN 978-3-0343-1169-4 (publication date: October 31, 2012) This book tells the story of over half a million Slovaks who migrated to the USA and Canada in the period 1870-2010. Like other ethnic groups from eastern and central Europe, they headed principally to the industrial triangle of the USA and to central Canada's cities in search of work. Finding themselves in strange surroundings, they quickly established institutions that helped them to survive in a capitalist economy and to preserve their religion, language and culture. As for many other ethnic groups, the border between the USA and Canada was irrelevant. Slovaks crossed it according to

economic need and stayed in touch with each other through their organizations and newspapers. Meanwhile, they also remained in touch with their friends and families in Europe and helped their people to survive Magyarization in Austria-Hungary, to achieve self-determination in the new Republic of Czechoslovakia and, finally, independence.

For the first time ever, the author has told the epic story of Slovak immigration to North America. This work reflects forty years of archival and library research, supplemented by the life histories of over two dozen families scattered across the USA and Canada. Lavishly illustrated with maps and photos, this book will satisfy both academics and the general public who have long been waiting for a comprehensive history of this significant member of the family of Slavic nations.

The book may be purchased by going to the following website: [www.peterlang.com](http://www.peterlang.com) or by contacting the following offices: In the USA: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 29 Broadway, New York, NY 10006; tel: 1-800-770-5264, e-mail: [customerservice@plang.com](mailto:customerservice@plang.com) ; In Europe: Peter Lang AG, Moosstrasse 1, Postfach 350, CH-2542 Pieterlen, Switzerland; tel:

+41 (0)32 376 17 17, e-mail:

[info@peterlang.com](mailto:info@peterlang.com)

### **T. Mills Kelly Honored**

Professor Kelly was named one of the Top Ten Most Creative People in Higher Education Today according to Onlinecolleges.net (the website that recognized Kelly), “In T. Mills Kelly’s course, Lying About the Past, students are actually encouraged to come up with lies to post about Wikipedia. Although these students ‘really, really annoy’ Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales and challenge the goodwill of the site, Kelly’s experiment is an incredibly creative way to learn about modern-day lies in history. It’s also a great lesson in the effectiveness of Wikipedia’s model, which quickly sniffed out the fakes planted by Kelly’s students. This time around, anyway.”

### **The Studia Academica Slovaca Summer School—A Memorable Immersion in Slovak Culture**

For any Americans or foreigners wishing to immerse themselves in Slovak culture and the Slovak language, the summer school at Comenius University offers a wonderful opportunity. The Faculty

of Philosophy at Comenius University (Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Komenského – FFUK) in Bratislava sponsors this annual program. For the past 48 years, Studia Academica Slovaca – the Center for Slovak as a Foreign Language, has regularly offered the course of study for three weeks in August. Known to participants as SAS, it offers a rigorous program of Slovak language study which includes small class sizes, lectures on the Slovak linguistics, history, and culture, and three days of enjoyable excursions around the country. Attendees include Slavic linguists, university students, professors, retirees, and just about anyone interested in fine-tuning and honing their Slovak language skills.

In 2012, 155 participants (frekventati) from 28 foreign countries attended the SAS summer session, which took place from August 5 to August 25, 2012. Participants stayed at the Družba dormitory on Botanická ulica, about 3 miles from the center of Bratislava. Each room had internet access, which facilitated communication and enabled participants to keep in touch with family at home. All classes and lectures took place at the Philosophical Faculty building of Comenius University in the center of Bratislava, adjacent to the Danube River.

Participants hailed from a variety of countries -- Japan, India, China, Egypt, Malaysia, South Korea, Israel, Palestine, Russia, Georgia, Moldavia, Ukraine, Belarus, Croatia, Serbia, most every European Union country, and of course, the USA, which sent 8 participants, including yours truly, Professor Michael Kopanic. Thus SAS constitutes not only a Slovak experience, but also a multinational one. While participants learn Slovak, they also acquire a truly global exposure to other peoples and their customs.

Except for formal ceremonies, dress for daily classes was very casual, and that was welcoming, especially considering the humid heat wave (horúčava) that engulfed all of Slovakia for most of August. Temperatures averaged above 30 degrees Celsius, or above 90 degree Fahrenheit.

### **Organization of SAS**

SAS accepts applicants who wish to learn Slovak at all levels of study, from beginner to advanced learners. There are three main levels: *začiatocníci* (beginners with little or no knowledge of Slovak), *stredne pokročilí* (intermediate learners with some background and training in Slovak), and *pokročilí* (advanced learners). The application process determines which



category one belongs to, and then each group is divided into classes of about 10-15 students based on performance on a timed test given on the first day.

Starting on day two, participants attended daily language classes in the morning until 12:30 pm, from Monday through Saturday. After lunch, beginners returned to language lessons, but intermediate and more advanced learners could attend a variety of lectures, mainly in Slovak, but a few were in English as well. For instance, Dr. Martin Vašš delivered a lecture on 20th Century Slovak History in the Slovak language, while Dr. Alžbeta Sopusková, (who was this author's adviser in 1982-83 when doing doctoral research) lectured on the same topic in English. A few of the other interesting topics included Professor Marta Botíková's presentation on "Ethnological Studies in Slovakia," Dr. Ľuboš Kačírek's lecture on the New School of the late 19th century national movement, Docent Marek Rybář's analysis of the 2012 elections in Slovakia, and many other talks on Slovak culture, literature, and linguistics. One of the most popular presentations, which nearly all attended, demonstrated various Slovak folk instruments. Other very interesting sessions included a workshop teaching several Slovak folk tunes, and

another singing more modern and popular Slovak songs.

In addition to class and lectures, SAS also organized a number of afternoon and evening events for education and entertainment. After opening ceremonies in the main university building, the professional Slovak singer Janais dazzled the audience with her amazing voice. Afterward, all enjoyed a scrumptious meal at the university's indoor glass-covered courtyard and danced to a variety of Slovak folk songs. Day 2 featured the premier of Slovak movie, *Tanec medzi črepinami* (Dance on Broken Glass), directed by Marek Ťapák, who also starred in the film. Day 4 offered another film, *Eštebák*, about someone compelled to join in assisting Slovakia's secret police (Štátna bezpečnosť) during the years of the totalitarian communist regime.

On the afternoon of day three, SAS led a jaunt to Bratislava Castle, where all could relish a beautiful view of the whole city and visit the Castle Museum. Saturday afternoon offered an opportunity to visit the Slovak ceramic factory in Modra and a modern-equipped Slovak winery. The first Friday ended with an evening meal from the Slovak Cuisine (Slovenská kuchyňa) and the folk music of Maroš Mikuš to dance to.

Other evenings also featured a concert of modern music by the group In Vivo, a puppet theater (bábkové divadlo), and a concert at the Reduta symphony hall, put on by the visiting Asia-Pacific United Orchestra.

At the end of week two, four excursions traveled to different places across Slovakia so that all would see more of the whole country, and not just Bratislava. Participants signed up for whichever excursion they preferred. The 2012 SAS trips traveled to Banská Bystrica, the old mining town of Banská Štiavnica, Bojnice castle, the Tatra Mountains, the Renaissance gem of Levoča, Spiš Castle, the skanzen (Folk Village Museum) in Pribylina or in Orava, the Demänová and Dobšina ice caves, Stará Ľubovňa Castle, Trenčín Castle, and Košice. All groups stayed 2 nights in Poprad, and many of us danced the night away at the local diskotéka.

During the final week, SAS arranged a series of afternoon creative workshops (tvorivé dielne) which each individual signed up for based on his/her interests. The list of choices included the following: theater, film, photography, folk dance, folksong, creative writing, and creative art. On Thursday, each group performed to an enthusiastic audience in a cultural program

called Sami sebe (About Ourselves), which took place in the grand Moyzesová sieň (Concert Hall named after the celebrated 20th century Slovak musician, Alexander Moyzes) of the Philosophical Faculty building.

On the final Friday, following morning classes, those who successfully completed the course of study received certificates in the grand Comenius University auditorium. Afterwards, all enjoyed yet another evening of culinary delights and could dance to the music of a lively folk band.

The following day, many participants left to return to their home countries, but all came away with wonderful memories, newly found friends, and a well-rounded educational experience.

The professors were first rate, and really aimed to improve the language capabilities of every individual participant. Student assistants were always on hand to help with any concerns. SAS director, Professor Jana Pekarovičová, Ph.D., did a marvelous job in assuring that summer school would be an intellectually engaging yet enjoyable experience.

Studia Academica Slovaca is a great program of learning that is both entertaining and leads to a lifelong appreciation of

Slovak culture. Without a doubt, the experience profoundly has influenced both me and my family. As a young student, I first attended SAS in 1982, and was eager to return for advanced Slovak studies. Both of my daughters attended SAS in 2004 and 2006, and they would concur that it was one of the most rewarding and memorable experiences of their lives. I personally am looking forward to revisiting SAS again in 2014, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Studia Academica Slovaca.

Dr. Kopanic encourages others to try SAS if they are interested in learning Slovak, meeting new and interesting people from around the world, and enjoying themselves while expanding their horizons.

Those interested in attending SAS in the future may visit the website [www.fphil.uniba.sk/sas](http://www.fphil.uniba.sk/sas), contact Comenius University at the address listed below, or see the Studia Academica Slovaca website on [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) to view some photos. Studia Academica Slovaca – centrum pre slovenčinu ako cudzí jazyk  
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--Submitted by Michael J. Kopanic, Jr.  
Ph.D.



Comenius U talking with Dr. Pekarovicova



This is the new courtyard at the Faculty of Philosophy at Comenius University where participants took breaks and enjoyed several banquets.



Michael Kopanic with Prof Frantisek Vnuk from Australia



Prof Milan Durica at Matica Slovenska



Michael Kopanic with Dr. Jana Pekarovičová\_ director of Studia Academica Slovaca



Sami Sebe singing Slovak folk songs