

and customs. The special feature of the sixth SE in Rožňava was field research, specifically into seminar discussions on the subject "Material folk culture and its changes after village socialisation," which was the 'logical' consequence and reflection of the general social or political situation in Slovakia at that time. The seventh and last Slovakian SE took place in 1974 in Opatovská dolina in the Trenčín region, where the central seminar theme was "Tradition and the Present". This theme included individual areas of material culture, e.g. architecture, the economy, diet, dress and handicrafts. After seven successful years of organising SE, it was Prof. Ján Podolák's desire that the original model of the summer ethnological school be transferred to other countries. Poland and Hungary were originally enthusiastic about taking on the organisation. The next SE was organised by the Poles, though I did not attend as I was on my military service in the Yugoslav army. The ninth SE was organised in 1976 in Prijepolje, Serbia in the then Yugoslavia. In terms of organisation and content that SE was a disaster, and represented the final demise of the first and only international ethnological summer school.

The SE was a unique and original seminar for the "east and west" of Europe of the day. The participants made great strides in their knowledge of field research. The dynamic talks in the field and the exchange of theoretical and academic views in afternoon and evening seminars expanded the methodological and subject boundaries of our future academic (and pedagogical) efforts. Students, colleagues and professors, we together created personal relations and connections. For all of us who were students and then in the first years after graduating it was exceptional and above all equal and collegiate gathering with the best known ethnological European names of the day.

SE is an excellent example of inter-faculty and inter-university cooperation in the 1960s and 1970s. It is also an example of integration and connections within a discipline that today continues to grow in importance within a union of European regional cultures. All seven years of the Slovakian Seminarium Ethnologicum remain written in the history of European ethnology, not only due to the attempts of the time to open Europe's east and west up and bring people closer together, but also as an exceptional organisational undertaking that no European social and cultural environment can repeat today, despite our current openness and democracy.

*Janez Bogataj*

**My (our) contacts and relations with the ethnologists  
from the Department of Ethnography and Folklore  
Faculty of Philosophy at the Komenský University in Bratislava**

*Those memories I recall somewhat from two points of view, my own personal one and that of an institution where I have worked and which I have led for several years. That is why I specify in the title: my (our) contacts.*

*It all began for me in 1970 when as an assistant of Prof. Mieczysław Gładysz I came with him to Slovakia as a participant of the Slavic Conference and Seminarium Ethnologicum that took place in Oravská priehrada. However, we began our visit in Bratislava where we met Prof. Ján Mjartan, the then retired head of the Bratislava Ethnographic Institute of Slovak Academy of Sciences. He received us very warmly and he was very happy that the contacts between Polish and Slovak scholars were revived. According to him, the contacts should be based upon the tradition of Slavic discussions of Kazimierz Moszyński.*

*The conference itself was highly interesting to me. On behalf of the then USSR science it was supervised by Prof. Julian Bromley, who performed the function of a political officer and communicated to us (the remaining Slavic participants of the conference) a certain neo-Stalinist theory of a nation presented as a concept of "ethnos and etnikos". He did it in a way that did not allow any discussion. He listened to my objections with a poker face and he did not answer any of my inquiries. Whereas I, a young enthusiast, thought that other ways of defining those phenomena were worth considering. That is why when in a coach taking us to a field research he expressed a will to talk to me in private, nobody asked me afterwards what the subject of our conversation was. I can confess it now after all those years. The professor wanted to know where in Kraków it is possible to buy tights and chocolate.*

*Now I am wondering, who of all the people present there knew about such eminent experts on the subject of Slavs as Vjačeslav Ivanov, Vladimír Toporov, Jurij Lotman, Sergej Averincev and Boris Uspenskij. It seems to me that the role of Bromley was to protect us from those names for as long as it was possible.*

*The beginning I mentioned had its second act, Seminarium Ethnologicum, an excellent initiative of Prof. Ján Podolák. His idea was to organize field research for students from different Slavic countries. While together with Polish student and young members of the University faculty we were participating in the annual meetings in Slovakia and later also in Poland, we could get to know ethnographically interesting regions, and, what was equally important, we formed friendships that stood the test of time. When we were young, Slovak wine was very helpful on such occasions, because the seminar days often ended with parties and long discussions and as we all know: in vino veritas. When I think about Slovakia of that time, I recollect wonderful girls who later became members of the university faculty or took up posts in museums. The feminization of ethnological studies was evident, but it goes without saying that I did not mind it at all.*

*For many years our Department of Slavic Ethnology, and later the Institute of Ethnology and the Department of Ethnography and Folklore at Comenius University in Bratislava maintained the student and faculty exchange programs. The person who brought Slovak students and young scholars to Kraków was our dear friend Assoc. Professor Kornélia Jakubíková (whom her friends call Biba). That beautiful and graceful woman, brave and confident in her beliefs was a participant of our field research and conferences, and in Slovakia she was our best guide.*

*I am writing now in the plural form because apart from me she was befriended also with Dr. Małgorzata Maj and with all members of our institute who were interested in the Carpathian culture. On such occasions it is often the case that we focus rather on publications, field research, conferences while the personal aspect of mutual contacts with our Slovak friends tends to disappear. But those elusive matters remain part of our individual memory. It happened very often that with many of the people that we met in Slovakia, right from the very first meeting we felt like old friends. I had that feeling when I met Milan Leščák in Bratislava (If I may speak personally here). Maybe it is one of characteristics features of the Slovak – their straightforwardness.*

*It is good that times changed. Our friendship was at the beginning supervised by a USSR professor who, as a scholar, quickly fell into oblivion. Our cooperation has lasted, and it seems that we did not need Prof. Bromley to achieve this. However, he might have been useful in one thing: he inspired us to speak with one voice, and in his self-righteousness he did not even realize it. Let us stop this “veterans’ ponderings”, the real understanding and friendship exists between people who are free. When I talk about it now, I would like to remind you that our cooperation began in troubled times. The fact that we could somehow set those troubles aside constitutes the greatest value of our cooperation.*

**Czesław Robotycki**

### **The Seminarium Ethnologicum and the Seminarium Ethnologicum Szegediense**

*I was a third-year university student when on 10 – 22 September 1971 my professor, Béla Gunda (1911 – 1994), announced that students who spoke English or German could apply for the summer student seminar, the Seminarium Ethnologicum, to be held by the Department of Ethnology of the Komensky University in Bratislava. He told us that the seminar was being organised by Professor Ján Podolák, and would be attended not only by students from Slovakia but also from Poland, Romania, Ukraine, Hungary and possibly other countries, each accompanied by a teacher. During the seminar students would do fieldwork somewhere in Slovakia, forming thematic groups each under the guidance of a teacher or researcher. These group leaders would be leading researchers from Slovakia and abroad. I liked the idea and applied with the recommendation of Béla Gunda. That year Iván Balassa (1917 – 2002), deputy director of the Museum of Agriculture in Budapest was present from Hungary as a researcher and I represented the Debrecen Department of Ethnology.*

*It was a long trip by bus from Bratislava to the place where we were to stay that year, Vyšné Ružbachy. This is a well known spa in the Spiš region. We were*