

Note

RECENT INTEREST IN SLOVENE STUDIES IN THE SOVIET UNION

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For a long time no special interest in Slovene language, literature, and cultural history could be noticed in Russian Slavic studies. Recently, however, a number of studies, monographs and articles have appeared which deserve our attention. Some of them are entirely informative, others are documentary, dedicated to pre-Soviet contacts between Russia and the Slovene lands and their scholars during nineteenth century. They all reflect a new broadening of scholarly topics in Soviet slavjanovedenie, in particular in such scholarly centers as the Institut slavjanovedenija i balkanistiki AN SSSR in Moscow, which directs South Slavic research in the Soviet Union.

By far the most prolific Soviet scholar in Russian slovenovedenie today is Iskra V. Čurkina whose study on Matija Majar-Ziljski (1809-1892) appeared in 1974. Her monograph Matija Majar-Ziljski (some 80 pages), published in Razprave SAZU, Razred za zgodovinske in družbene vede, VIII (2) (Ljubljana, 1974), offered new material for a better understanding of the Pan-Slavic and Illyrian fascinations of Slovene writers and scholars during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Not long ago, Čurkina dedicated a study to J. Baudouin de Courtenay. Her paper: "I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay in Slovenci," which appeared in Goriški letnik 4/5 (Nova Gorica, 1978), pp. 117-137, once again, after Nikita I. Tolstoj's documentary study of 1960 ("O rabotax I. A. Boduèna de Kurtenè po slovenskomu jazyku," in: I. A. Boduèn de Kurtenè - k 30-letiju so dnja smerti [Moscow, 1960], pp. 67-82), surveys the contacts of the famous Polish Slavist (1845-1929) with Slovene scholars of his time.

A monograph in Russian by Čurkina deals with the Slovene national awakening in the nineteenth century and its echoes in Russia. The monograph of 392 pages appeared as a book with the title Slovenskoe nacional'no-osvoboditel'noe dviženie v XIX v. i Rossija (Moscow: Nauka, 1978). The volume deserves to be reviewed by a historian in Slovene Studies.

And still another study by Čurkina, perhaps the most recent, is dedicated to Jernej Kopitar and his contacts with Russian Slavists. Entitled "E. Kopitar i pervye russkie slavisty," the essay appeared in the volume Študije z dejfn svetovej slavistiki do polovice 19. storočia (ed. by J. Hrozienčik) (Bratislava: SAV, 1978), pp. 371-392, a publication representing the second volume of Issledovanija po istorii mirovoj slavistiki, sponsored by the Komissija po istorii slavistiki of the Meždunarodnyj komitet slavistov. In this article Čurkina deals with Kopitar's cooperation with P. I. Keppen and A. X. Vostokov, two founders of Russian Slavic studies in the first half of the nineteenth century. Her main source is the correspondence between Kopitar, Dobrovský, Keppen and Vostokov, preserved in Russian archives and published by Vatroslav Jagić. Čurkina's evaluation of the Slovene as a scholar quite correctly separates the personal features of Kopitar's character from his scholarly activity and his contributions to the development of Slavic philology. Although her English "Summary" at the end of the article still repeats the old clichés on Kopitar's "pro-Austrian and anti-Russian feelings" (e.g., "he did not like Russia and was afraid of it," sic!, p. 391), her article appears to be a good signal that a rehabilitation of Kopitar's reputation in Russian scholarship may be on its way.

A better understanding of the Russian side of the contacts between Slovene and Russian cultures is to be found in an article by M. I. Ryžova, in which she surveys the interest in Russian literature in Slovene society before World War I. The article "Russkaja literatura v slovenskom žurnale Ljubljanski Zvon (1881-1918)," appeared in the volume of essays entitled Zarubežnye slavjane i russkaja literatura, edited by M. P. Alekseev (Leningrad: Nauka, 1978), pp. 106-155. It seems to be, though, with a greater attention to detail, a continuation of the well-known and fundamental essay "Fragmenti o slovensko-ruskih stikih," of Bratko Kreft (Slavistična revija, XI, Ljubljana, 1958, pp. 90-108).

Another prolific Soviet Slovenist is O. S. Plotnikova, a linguist who recently published the first description of the Slovene language in Russian for the volume Slavjanskije jazyki, Očerki grammatiki zapadnoslavjanskix i južnoslavjanskix jazykov (ed. by A. G. Širokova and V. P. Gudkova) (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1977), pp. 289-332. The description is short, but concise, based on Slovene standard textbooks, and essentially informational.

It appears in a book which offers similar descriptions of the Polish, Czech, Slovak, Lusatian, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian and Macedonian literary languages.

O. S. Plotnikova has also published a study on the evolution of the Slovene literary language during the period of the Slovene national awakening: "Stanovlenie slovenskogo literaturnogo jazyka v period nacional'nogo vozroždenija." The essay appeared in Nacional'noe vozroždenie i formirovanie slavjanskix literaturnyx jazykov (edited by S. F. Bernštejn and others) (Moscow: Nauka, 1978), pp. 329-353, in a volume which brings thematically parallel studies on the Czech, Slovak, Upper Lusatian, Bulgarian and Serbian literary languages.