

ADVENTURES OF ACADEMIC MOBILITY: ROMAN JAKOBSON IN SLOVAKIA

MARÍNA ZAVACKÁ

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The study focuses on the repeated visits of Russian-born Harvard linguist Roman Jakobson to Slovakia. The author traces Jakobson's Slovak contacts from the interwar period up to 1968. Based on analysis of secret police documents and memoir literature, the research offers an insight into contemporary academic and cultural life in 20th century Czechoslovakia.

Jakobson's first Slovak contacts in the 1920s were linked to his activities in the Prague Soviet legation and the Charles University. In the 1930s he visited Bratislava more frequently, while teaching at Brno University.

During the Stalinist era in Czechoslovakia, a number of his friends and colleagues were politically prosecuted. Only in 1957, was he able to return to Czechoslovakia for Slavonic Studies conferences in Prague and Olomouc, using this occasion to give a lecture also in Bratislava. In the approaching wave of hate-campaign against local "unreliable intellectuals" he was denounced as a "cosmopolitan" and "Western agent". Subsequent attempts for Jakobson's academic and public rehabilitation, urged by his Czechoslovak friends, became a reality only during his visit in 1968.

The presentation ceremony of the Golden medal of the Slovak Academy of Sciences to Roman Jakobson was scheduled in Bratislava on August 21, 1968, the day of the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact.

Key words: Roman Jakobson. Structuralism. Linguistics. Slovakia. Czechoslovakia. Communism. Travel.

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"Western Slavists among us" was the title of a report in the Bratislava *Večerník* (*Evening News*) about an unusual event held on 2 February 1957 in the back wing of the Slovak National Museum.¹ The text stated that there had been a lecture by the *"American Professor"* Roman Jakobson, who had come to speak *"together with his Dutch colleague C.H. Schoneveld"*.² In spite of the fact that

1 STANISLAV, Ivo. Západní slavisti medzi nami. (Western Slavists among us.). In *Večerník*, 6 February 1957, p. 3.

2 Cornelis H. Schoneveld (1921 – 2003), Dutch linguist working at Leiden University and as

the *Večerník* was a new publication in this period and seen as a result of the political thaw, more open to politically controversial themes,³ this information on a visit by a world famous academic was published only after the event as a small note on page 3. The editors also avoided any mention of the personal relationship of R. Jakobson to Czechoslovakia or his roots in Russia.

A little more space was devoted to this event, although with even more delay, in the bi-monthly journal *Slovenská reč* (Slovak Speech) no. 4 from 1957. Its chief editor at the time was the linguist Eugen Jóna. As a student in Prague, Jóna had participated in the First Congress of Slavonic Philologists in 1929. The ideas of the Prague Linguistic Circle were presented there for the first time, and Jóna took the opportunity to attend more lectures by its members.⁴

According to the report in *Slovenská reč* signed by the young linguist Matilda Hayeková, “a large number of linguists, literary scholars and ethnographers” attended the lecture by Professor Roman Jakobson from Harvard University. The American linguist answered “a multitude of written and oral questions about the organization of Slavonic studies in the USA and about new methods of research there”.⁵ In spite of high attendance from the academic community, this report remained an isolated public statement on the event. Its author, who came from the Institute of the Slovak Language of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, which published the journal, was dismissed in summer 1958 in the framework of another wave of political purges.⁶ Half a year later, the executive editor Marta Marsinová was also forced to leave the institute.⁷

editor for the publishing house Mouton.

- 3 In the first years from 1956 *Večerník* was published by the Slovak Committee of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, later with the cooling of the political situation, the editorial office was placed under the City Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia
- 4 Eugen Jóna (1909–2004). In 1957 However, Jóna’s employer was not the institute but the Vysoká škola pedagogická (Teacher Training College). ONDREJOVIČ, Slavomír. Odišiel nestor slovenskej jazykovedy. (The Grand Old Man of Slovak linguistics has departed). In *Slovenská reč*, 2004, year 69, no. 5-6, p. 98-99. ISSN 0037-6981. Accessible on the Internet: http://www.juls.savba.sk/ediela/sr/2004/5-6/sr2004_5-6.pdf . (cit. 15 Feb 2018).
- 5 HAYEKOVÁ, Matilda. Slavisti R. Jakobson a H. C. Schoneveld v Bratislave. In *Slovenská reč*, 1957, year 22, no. 4, p. 266. Accessible on the Internet: < <http://www.juls.savba.sk/ediela/sr/1957/4/sr1957-4-lq.pdf>> (cit. 15 Feb 2018).
- 6 Ústredný archív SAV, (Central Archive of the Slovak Academy of Sciences – ÚA SAV), fund (f.) OS, THS ÚSV, carton (c.) 66, inventory number (i. no.) 957. Matilda Hayeková (1922–2009) was dismissed on 30 June 1958. See also c. 990, i. no. 3114, Pracoviská – výročné správy (Work places – annual reports).
- 7 Marta Marsinová (1922–2010) was arrested on 10 January 1959 and convicted of subversion against the republic. As a member of the Third Order of Franciscan Sisters she participated in religious activities prosecuted by the communist regime.

Not only Roman Jakobson's visit to Bratislava in 1957 passed without much public attention, but by coincidence his next visit – in August 1968 – was also publicly played down for a long time.

Although these were not very important moments from the point of view of his academic career, the wider contexts are interesting. Just as the international political situation of the time is reflected in microcosm, these contexts enable an intensive sounding into the academic and cultural life in Czechoslovakia at the time. They provide the possibility to trace not only Jakobson's Slovak contacts, but also the later changes in the memory of his post-war visits.

The history of Roman Jakobson's academic and social contacts with Slovak cultural figures goes back to his time in inter-war Czechoslovakia. He came in 1920, initially as part of a Russian mission of the Red Cross, but he soon began to continue his study of philology at Charles University and at the German University in Prague. At the same time, he worked for the Soviet trade mission and later for the Soviet diplomatic office in Prague, where he held the position of head of the press department in 1925.⁸ In spite of the gradually increasing cadre requirements, the head of the mission Vladimir A. Antonov-Ovsejenko⁹ succeeded in keeping Jakobson as an external associate of the Soviet representative office until the end of the 1920s. In this period, R. Jakobson established friendly contacts with various prominent visitors to the famous Villa Tereza in which the mission was located. Among these, we can mention the Slovak communist writer, poet and later politician Laco Novomeský, one of the creators of the literary review DAV,¹⁰ who captured the atmosphere of these meetings in a poem named after the villa.¹¹

Jakobson's circle of colleagues and friends also extended into the wider sphere of Czechoslovak academic and social life.¹² Through the Prague linguistic cir-

8 GLANC, Tomáš (Ed.) *Roman Jakobson. Formalistická škola a dnešní literární věda ruská. (The Formalist School and recent Russian literary science)*. Brno 1935. Praha: Academia 2005, 272-275. ISBN 8020012117.

9 Vladimir Alexandrovič Antonov-Ovsejenko (9. (21.) March 1883 – 10. Feb 1937), Soviet diplomat, in 1924–1928 plenipotentiary representative of the USSR in Czechoslovakia.

10 Ladislav (Laco) Novomeský (1904–1976), teacher, editor, poet, member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia from 1925, participant in the anti-fascist struggle, politician (deputy chairman of the Slovak National Council during the Slovak National Uprising of 1944–1945, commissioner for education and public information 1945–1950), member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPS, political prisoner (1951–1955 convicted of bourgeois nationalism). After being released he worked at the Prague Museum of Czech Literature, and after being rehabilitated in 1963 in the Bratislava Institute of Slovak Literature of the SAS. After the invasion by Warsaw Pact troops he again accepted the position of member of the Presidium of the CC CPS and chairman of the Matica slovenská cultural organization.

11 NOVOMESKÝ, Laco. *Vila Tereza*. Bratislava: Slovenský spisovateľ, 1985, p. 28.

12 According to Miloš Tomčík's information in the introduction to Bakoš's book "*part of Slovak*

cle¹³ he also got to know Ľudovít Novák,¹⁴ a student at Charles University later an important Slovak linguist and his colleagues. The importance of Jakobson's influence on the students and teachers of this generation was also reflected in his place in a table of the development of Slovak linguistics through the generations, where he appears as one of the most influential formative personalities.¹⁵ In the first half of the 1930s he became Professor of Russian Philology at Masaryk University in Brno.

At this time, the work of new departments at the university in Bratislava was limited by the small number of academics and kept going only with the help of "travelling professors" from Prague or Brno, who invited further colleagues and friends to join them for guest lectures, discussions, field research and excursions.¹⁶ The same applied to theatre, literature and other fields of culture, where intensive Czech – Slovak contacts were cultivated. For example, Tido J. Gašpar, then a theatre dramaturge and publicist mentioned in his memoirs how Vladimír Clementis repeatedly brought to his home for visits Ilya Erenburg,¹⁷ Roman Jakobson and other similar guests. "I had the impression that he liked to present me to foreigners as a sort of Slovak rarity."¹⁸

The directness of this cultural diffusion is also illustrated by the memory of the writer Zuzka Zguriška,¹⁹ who lived in Bratislava in the 1930s. She described how she got to know Jakobson as follows: During one of their frequent visits to the opera and Theatre in Brno, Zguriška and her husband got to know the painter Josef Šíma, who lived in Paris, but often came to Brno to visit his father and

culture was in lively contact with the Czech surrealists" as was shown, for example, by "a discussion of surrealism in Prague" with the participation of R. Jakobson, Jan Mukařovský, Karel Teige, Adolf Hoffmeister, Vítězslav Nezval, Ladislav Novomeský and others from the Czech and Slovak sides. BAKOŠ, Mikuláš. *Avantgarda 38. Štúdie, články, dokumenty. (Avant Garde 38, Studies, articles, documents)*. Bratislava: Slovenský spisovateľ, 1969, p. 18.

- 13 VACHEK, Josef. *Prolegomena k dějinám pražské školy jazykovědné (An introduction to the history of the Prague school of linguistics)*. Praha: H+H, 1999, 136 p. ISBN 8086022129.
- 14 Ľudovít Novák (1908–1992), linguist, studied 1926–1932 at Charles University in Prague, in 1932–1934 at the Sorbonne.
- 15 BAKOŠ, ref. 12, p. 170.
- 16 DUCHÁČEK, Milan. *Václav Chaloupecký: hledání československých dějin. (Václav Chaloupecký: The search for Czechoslovak history)*. Praha: Karolinum, 2014, p. 139. ISBN 9788024624822.
- 17 Il'ja Grigorievič Erenburg (1897–1967), Soviet writer, publicist and translator.
- 18 Vladimír Clementis (1902–1952), lawyer, publicist, communist politician. Tido Gašpar (1893–1972) writer, dramaturge, journalist, friend of the DAV group, in the period 1941–45 head of the Propaganda Office of the wartime Slovak state. GAŠPAR, Tido J. *Pamäti II. (Memoirs II)*. Bratislava: SSS, 2004, p. 103. ISBN 808875367.
- 19 Zuzka Zguriška, real name Zuzana Dvořáková, born Šimonovičová, (1900–1984), writer and translator.

brother. Later she also met the poet Vítězslav Nezval, also a friend of Šíma, and his circle of friends. As a result portraits of Nezval, Zguriška and Jakobson's first wife Sofia (Soňa) Feldmann hung next to each other in an exhibition of Šíma's pictures at the Artists' Club in Bratislava.²⁰

After a time, Nezval also brought Jakobson himself on a trip from Brno to Bratislava. On a Sunday morning, Zguriška and her husband took Nezval, Jakobson and Jan Mukařovský, who lectured on aesthetics at Bratislava University, by car to the country hamlets near her native Myjava.²¹ This contact may appear "Czech" in official reports, since Zguriška was the wife of the Czech lawyer Jaroslav Dvořák, so she was named Dvořáková. Another woman, the publicist Nina Fajnorová-Wollmanová²² is similarly "hidden". She came from a notable family of Slovak Evangelical patriots and married the well-known Czech linguist Professor Frank Wollman, who belonged to the circle of Jakobson's colleagues.

Soon after getting divorced in 1935, R. Jakobson married the Czech linguist Svatava Pírková.²³ They emigrated at the beginning of the war. After a short stay in Scandinavia they ended up in the USA, where he began to cooperate with the Czechoslovak resistance movement in exile.²⁴ For example, he actively participated in establishing the Masaryk Chair of Czech Studies at Columbia University in New York, which originated as a symbolic protest against the forcible closure of universities in the territory of the Protectorate by the Nazis.

However, he regarded his stay in the USA as a temporary solution. In spring 1945, immediately after the renewal of telegraph communication with Brno, he

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- 20 According to information from Josef Mojmir Weimann from 1996 the picture is now the private property of the descendants of Sofia Feldman-Haasová (1899–1982), specifically of her daughter Olga Smrčková-Haasová. WEIMANN, Josef Mojmir. Trojí setkání s Romanem Jakobsonem. (Three encounters with Roman Jakobson). In *Litteraria humanitas IV*, 1996, p. 183. ISBN 8021014377. Accessible on the Internet: <https://digilib.phil.muni.cz/bitstream/handle/11222.digilib/132378/LitterariaHumanitas_004-1996-1_20.pdf?sequence=1> (cit. 2018 Feb 15).
- 21 ZGURIŠKA, Zuzka. *Strminou liet. (On a Steep Path of Years)*. Bratislava: Slovenský spisovateľ, 1972, p. 151-152.
- 22 Anna Emília (Nina) Fajnorová-Wollmanová/Daxnerová (1902–1984), translator, writer, editor.
- 23 Svatava Pírková-Jakobsonová (1908–2000), Czech sociologist, ethnographer and translator.
- 24 The results of cooperation with Czechoslovak wartime propaganda included publication of JAKOBSON, Roman. *Moudrost starých Čechů. Odvěké základy národního odboje. (The wisdom of the old Czechs. The age-old foundations of national resistance)*. New York: Československý kulturní kroužek, 1943. This academic – patriotic work was republished and made accessible to the domestic public for the first time as: HERMANN, Tomáš – ZELENKA, Miloš. *Roman Jakobson – Moudrost starých Čechů. Komentovaná edice s navazující exilovou polemikou (The wisdom of the old Czechs. Annotated edition with subsequent exile polemics)*. Praha: Pub. P. Mervart; ÚSD AVČR, 2015, 384 p. ISBN 9788074651120, after a delay of 70 years.

confirmed to colleagues from Masaryk University that he was prepared to return to his post as a professor there. At first he even rejected the offer of a place at Harvard because of his plan to return to Czechoslovakia.²⁵ However, his return to Brno was bureaucratically delayed because of the strengthening influence of the communists at the university and in the apparatus of the Ministry of Education. In the atmosphere of political-bureaucratic procrastination, Laco Novomeský also tried to enter the game by suggesting to Jakobson that he might instead accept an invitation to the university in Bratislava.²⁶ After the February coup of 1948 all the possible ways of returning to Czechoslovakia were out of the question.

In post-war Prague, the activity of the linguistic circle was successfully revived for several years, and at the end of 1945 the second generation of Slovak structuralists now established at Comenius University, founded a sister linguistic circle in Bratislava.²⁷ Apart from organizing their own events, they exchanged domestic and foreign guests when possible. After 1948 some of the leading personalities lost their academic positions with the label “bourgeois nationalist”, while others subjected themselves to the “new trends” in linguistics according to the Soviet model and the activity of the circles was extinguished. The leader of the Bratislava linguistic circle Eugen Pauliny²⁸ was sent from the university “*to do productive work*”. He only gradually returned to academic life through the position of librarian.

Those who were willing to participate in the changed conditions also soon felt the instability of their situation. For example, in the course of a few months, under the influence of Soviet brochures and teachers, they ostentatiously praised and accepted the theories of the linguist Nicholas Yakovlevich Marr as “*Soviet*” and so “*model*”, only to abandon them as quickly when they were re-evaluated by Stalin as harmful “*Marrism*”.²⁹

25 HAVRÁNKOVÁ, Marie – TOMAN, Jindřich. *Quadriolog. Bohuslav Havránek, Zdeňka Havránková, Roman Jakobson, Svatava Pírková-Jakobsonová. Vzájemná korespondence. (Quadriologue. Bohuslav Havránek, Zdeňka Havránková, Roman Jakobson, Svatava Pírková-Jakobsonová. Mutual correspondence)*. Praha: Karolinum 2001, p. 81. ISBN 8071849359.

26 Letter from Laco Novomeský to Roman Jakobson, 30 August 1946. DRUG, Štefan (Ed). *Umenie politiky, politika umenia. Z listov Laca Novomeského I. (The art of politics, the politics of art. From the letters of Laco Novomeský I.)*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1988, p. 242. ISBN 8022201588.

27 ĎUROVIČ, Ľubomír. Začiatky štrukturalizmu na Slovensku a Bratislavský lingvistický krúžok. (The beginnings of structuralism in Slovakia and the Bratislava linguistic circle). In *Jazykovedný časopis*, 2000, year 51, no. 2, p. 88-89. ISSN 0021-5597. Accessible on the Internet: <http://www.juls.savba.sk/ediela/jc/2000/2/jc2000_2.pdf> (cit. 2018 15 Feb).

28 Eugen Pauliny (1912–1983), linguist.

29 PETRÁŇ, Josef. *Filozofové dělají revoluci. (Philosophers make a revolution)*. Praha: Karolinum, 2015, p. 197-201. ISBN 9788024629940.

The methods of more acceptably depicting their own academic past also included efforts to improve the image of domestic inter-war linguistics at the expense of the “foreign” bearers of unwanted influences. Verbal attacks on R. Jakobson, Nicholas S. Trubetskoy and other elite representatives of the Russian inter-war exile community not only opened the way to new cadres, but also enabled older ones to distance themselves from their past.

A hate campaign against Jakobson was unleashed in the Czechoslovak press in 1951. Its face was the young linguist Petr Sgall,³⁰ author of the first of a series of attack articles in the journal *Tvorba* (Creation). According to the then officially approved version of reality: “*The great majority of the members of the Prague linguistic circle were outstanding progressive linguists and honourable adherents of socialist thought*”, anti-fascist, anti-bourgeois and endeavouring to cooperate with Soviet science. As examples he mentioned Prof. Bohuslav Havránek, František Trávníček, Vladimír Skalička, Vilém Mathesius “*and others*”. However, foreign elements “*especially the anti-Soviet emigrant, cosmopolitan and hidden Trotskyite, the real villain of our linguistics, Roman Jakobson*” allegedly strove to introduce these and others into bad ways.³¹ Other linguists, whether mentioned by Sgall or not, successively joined in this “*free discussion stimulated by the editors of Tvorba by publishing of this article*” with self-critical statements.³² They appealed to their colleagues “*to free themselves from cosmopolitanism, renounce the idealistic structuralist approaches, build a linguistics in the service of our nation and learn from Soviet linguistics, derived from the teachings of Stalin*”.³³

30 Petr Sgall (1926), linguist, pioneer of computational linguistics. Memoir work SGALL, Petr. *Zažil jsem toho dost. (I experienced a lot)*. Praha: Karolinum, 2014, 166 p. ISBN 9788024624457.

31 SGALL, Petr. Stalinovy práce o jazykovědě a pražský lingvistický strukturalismus. (Stalin’s works on linguistics and Prague linguistic structuralism). In *Tvorba*, 1951, year 20, no. 28, p. 674-676.

32 BĚLIČ, Jaromír. Překonáním strukturalismu k marxistické jazykovědě. (Overcoming structuralism, towards a Marxist linguistics). In *Tvorba*, 1951, year 20, no. 41, p. 987-989.

33 TRÁVNÍČEK, František. Strukturalismus – nepřítel naší jazykovědy, (Structuralism – enemy of our linguistics). In *Tvorba*, 1951, year 20, no. 37, p. 893-894; BĚLIČ, Jaromír. Překonáním strukturalismu k marxistické jazykovědě. (Overcoming structuralism, towards a Marxist linguistics). In *Tvorba*, 1951, year 20, no. 41, p. 987-989; SKALIČKA, Vladimír. Ke kritice strukturalismu. (To criticism of structuralism). In *Tvorba*, 1951, year 20, no. 42, p. 1011-1012; SGALL, Petr. Odezva na články Tvorby K diskusi o strukturalismu v jazykovědě. (Response to articles in Tvorba: to the Discussion of structuralism in linguistics). In *Tvorba*, 1951, year 21, no. 2, p. 50. Shortened articles are cited in. GLANC, ref. 8, 210-233.

The series of articles concerned with Trávníček also included FISCHER, Jan Otokar. Do boje proti kosmopolitismu v západní filologii. (Let’s fight against cosmopolitanism in Western philology). In *Tvorba*, 1951, year 20, no. 49, p. 1180-1182, Do boje...II., *Tvorba*, 1951, year 20, no. 50, p. 1204-1206 and BURIÁNEK, František. Proti nacionalistické, kosmopolitní li-

The strategy of diverting attention also appeared in the practice of labelling academics from other disciplines as Jakobson's domestic followers or fellows. "The cosmopolitan Karel Teige",³⁴ who was picked to play "the same role in literary science and criticism", since, among other things, back in 1929 he had dared to argue with the ever-dogmatic Ladislav Štoll³⁵ about the use of internationalisms, did not survive the tension and died of a heart attack in autumn 1951. Another of Jakobson's verbally attacked colleagues, the literary critic and historian, "the Trotskyite Závěš Kalandra" had been executed more than a year before.³⁶

Some of Jakobson's Slovak friends also became victims of Stalinism in this period. We can start with Vladimír Clementis the post-war Foreign Minister, who ended up on the gallows as a victim of a political trial, and continue through the convicted Commissioner for Education and Public Information Laco Novomeský and the physician Arnošt Ungár from Dolný Kubín, brother-in-law of the executed Závěš Kalandra.

Meanwhile in the USA, the MacCarthyites tried to label Jakobson as a communist. Friends from his war-time cooperation with the Czechoslovak government in exile in the West, now active under the name Council of Free Czechoslovakia, helped to clear him. The chairman of the council at the time was Juraj Slávik-Neresnický, a native of Dobrá Niva, Minister of the Interior in the government in exile during the war and Czechoslovak ambassador to the USA in

terární „vědě“ Arne Nováka I. (Against the nationalistic, cosmopolitan literary "science" of Arne Novák I.). In *Tvorba*, 1952, year 21, no. 6, p. 142-144, Proti nacionalistické... II. *Tvorba*, 1952, year 21, no. 7, p. 162-165.

- 34 Karel Teige (1900–1951) died on 1 October 1951 of a heart attack. The first part of the poisonous article by M. Grygar in *Tvorba* mentioned his "cooperation with the Trotskyite Jakobson". GRYGAR, Mojmir. Teigovština – trockistická agentura v naší kultuře, I. (Teige-ism – a Trotskyite agency in our culture, I.). In *Tvorba*, 1951, year 20, no. 42, p. 1008-1010; GRYGAR, Mojmir. Teigovština... II. In *Tvorba*, 1951, year 20, no. 43, p. 1036-1038; GRYGAR, Mojmir. Teigovština... III. In *Tvorba*, 1951, no. 44, p. 1060-1062. On the campaign see also: CLYBOR, Shawn. Socialist (Sur)Realism: Karel Teige, Ladislav Štoll and the Politics of Communist Culture in Czechoslovakia. In *Avatars of Intellectuals under Communism. History of Communism in Europe*, 2011, no. 2, 143-167. ISBN 9786068266145.
- 35 Ladislav Štoll (1902–1981) literary critic – a "Zhdanovite" (follower of Andrei Zhdanov), communist politician, in 1953 Minister of Universities, 1953–1954 Minister of Education, 1954–1960 Minister of Culture, a long-term member of the Central Committee of the Communist Part of Czechoslovakia (CC CPC – ÚV KSČ), 1949–1952 Rector of the University of Political and Economic Sciences, 1956–1961 Rector of the Institute of Social Sciences of the CC CPC, 1962–1968 and again from 1972 until his death director of the Institute of Czech and World Literature of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.
- 36 Závěš Kalandra (1902–1950) was convicted in the fabricated trial of Milada Horáková and executed.

1947, who had supported Jakobson's attempt to return to Masaryk University.³⁷ In connection with accusations of “*un-American activities*”, they succeeded in gaining the personal support of President Eisenhower for Jakobson. His academic contacts with Czechoslovakia were naturally entirely broken in this period.

The gradual revival of academic contacts with the Czech and Slovak academic linguistic environment was connected with the general relaxation in international political relations between the powers competing in the Cold War in the mid 1950s. This was first manifested in Yugoslavia, which symbolically confirmed its line as a socialist state, but one inclined towards the West and independent of the Soviet Union, by conspicuously inviting personalities from Western science. Thus, R. Jakobson was already invited in 1955 to the Third International Congress of Slavonic Studies in Belgrade, where he was elected to the International Committee of Slavists and made an honorary member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. He also gave lectures at the universities of Zagreb and Ljubljana. In 1956, when some selected Czechoslovak scientists also got the chance to travel to Yugoslavia, Jakobson met Andrej Mráz,³⁸ Bohuslav Havránek and apparently other Czechoslovak linguists at the International Conference of Slavonic Studies in Belgrade.³⁹

The Czechoslovak linguists could not hold a similar event at home yet, but they began to try. They were encouraged by the fact that in the same year, R. Jakobson was invited to participate in the first meeting of the International Committee of Slavists in Moscow.⁴⁰ When the Soviet government decided to allow him to visit Moscow, the Czechoslovak authorities lost their main argument for blocking his entry. This relaxation of atmosphere was reflected in linguistic periodicals by statements clearly indicating retreat from “*Sgall's*” theses.⁴¹

37 MICHÁLEK, Slavomír et al. *Juraj Slávik-Neresnický – od politiky cez diplomaciu po exil.* (*Juraj Slávik-Neresnický – from politics, through diplomacy to exile*). Bratislava: Prodama, 2006, p. 279-338. ISBN 8096955586; Letter from R. Jakobson to Professor dr. Jaroslav Stránský, Minister of Education and Public Information, 28 October 1947. In HAVRÁNKOVÁ – TOMAN, ref. 25, p. 81.

38 Andrej Mráz (1904–1964), literary and theatre historian and critic.

39 Archiv bezpečnostních složek (Archive of the Security Services) of the Czech Republic (ABS ČR), f. 305, c. 740, inv. n. 2, p. 110.

40 He travelled by air with a stop in Prague and allegedly the academic B. Havránek succeeded in meeting him at Ruzyně Airport. Report by Mittelmann-Dedinský from 6 March 1957, *ibid.*

41 An interview of P. Sgall by the State Security Service on 21 June 1957. “*He no longer considered (his earlier evaluation of structuralism) to be entirely correct*”, but “*the evaluation of the person of R. Jakobson from the political point of view was entirely correct*”. He stated that “*in 1956 some things about Academic Havránek from the article in Tvorba were withdrawn in the linguistics journal on instructions from the editors. The withdrawal was published in issue no. 4 from last year*”. ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2 (Action BOR 5), p. 124.

In such situation it was only necessary to find a sufficiently appropriate and politically “unassailable” reason for Jakobson’s visit. In the end it was the Czechoslovak Slavist conference around the turn of January and February 1957. A session of the organizers of the International Committee of Slavists was held in Prague before the conference to prepare for the international conference to be held in Moscow in 1958. On 27 January 1957, after almost twenty years, R. Jakobson came back to Czechoslovakia as a member of the committee, accompanied by his wife.⁴²

The four day closed working session of the organizing committee, held with the participation of about twenty foreign linguists and about ten of their Czechoslovak colleagues, was continuously monitored by members of the Czechoslovak State Security Service. They clearly had mixed feelings, since they spontaneously described it in their records as “*a celebration lasting four days*”.⁴³ The sessions of the Czechoslovak Conference of Slavists were then held in Prague and Olomouc. They were directed towards the historical-comparative study of morphological structure, syntax and word stock. R. Jakobson participated with papers and lectures in Prague, Olomouc and finally also Bratislava.

The surviving records of the police monitoring of his movements in Prague and Olomouc include notes on his routes with data on official and academic meetings in academic institutions and cafes, including conversations in Prague with Zuzka Zguriška and Laco Novomeský, as well as tapping of the hotel telephones.⁴⁴

However, attempts to find information about the Bratislava phase of his visit proved to be much more complicated in spite of the large number of people who attended his lecture as stated by M. Hayeková. According to the reports of the State Security Service in Prague from Friday 1 February 1957, R. Jakobson went to the buildings of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, but “*his departure was not seen because of bad weather*” which “*made it difficult to see cars leaving the building of the academy*”. Therefore, the members of State Security waited at the Paris Hotel, but he did not come up to 23.30. The final report from the agent in the field, apparently working at the reception of the Paris Hotel, confirmed that Jakobson “*had gone on the night train to Bratislava*”.⁴⁵ He again came to the attention of the Prague State Security on 4 February at 9.25 AM at the Central Station in Prague.⁴⁶

42 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 2.

43 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 19.

44 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, passim.

45 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 31.

46 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 19.

Although the documentation of the State Security Service from monitoring of the Bratislava part of Jakobson's visit may still be found somewhere, the question arises whether he might have succeeded in organizing his visit to Bratislava without attracting the attention of the local State Security Service. At first sight it appears improbable, because organizing a lecture by a guest speaker required at least some direct contacts, which would certainly not escape the attention of the appropriate authorities.

However, the fact that as actual witnesses of Jakobson's lecture in Bratislava – Professor Ľubomír Ďurovič⁴⁷ and senior lecturer Gerhard Baláž⁴⁸ – confirmed to me, the two linguistic circles had created a system for exchanging guests between Prague and Bratislava, and had been running it for years. Therefore it was enough to apply well-established mechanism. Apart from a one-time personal confirmation of the time it was not necessary to transmit any written or telephone information, which could be caught by the State Security Service. The organizers also benefited from the fact that, considering the large number of foreign participants in the conference, not only the personnel of the Prague State Security Service, but also the informers from the ranks of the academic staff and students were not able to sufficiently quickly identify Jakobson's old Bratislava friends, who came to meet him in Prague only very briefly.⁴⁹

Another factor that could have contributed to the smooth course of Roman Jakobson's visit to Bratislava was the decision to hold the lecture in the premises of the Institute of Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, which was then located in the back part of the Slovak National Museum. By its very nature, this institution appeared to be unproblematic. The fact that it was on a Saturday did not need to influence the intensity of monitoring because it was still a working day. In contrast to the Prague sessions, the Bratislava lecture was practically public, there was no secrecy and it did not arouse suspicions, although it was not actively promoted.

It was only a month later that one of the State Security agents from the literary academic environment – the Slovak theatre expert and translator Moric Mittelmann-Dedinský – was asked to submit a more detailed report on the event.⁵⁰

47 Ľubomír Ďurovič (1925), linguist.

48 Gerhard Baláž (1930–2016), linguist, Russianist.

49 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 12. For example, there is a mention of a man from the circle of people Jakobson met, who got on the Slovenská strela train in Prague on the evening of 31 January 1957. He got into one of the carriages, “*but immediately he got out and ran towards the back of the train. At the last moment he got into the last carriage and the train left at 18.20. His identity was not ascertained*”.

50 Mórica Mittelmann-Dedinský, (1914–1989), Slavist and Germanist, in the inter-war period a leftist publicist, during the war persecuted “*for racial reasons*”, from 1949 to 1953 imprisoned in connection with an accusation of “*Trotskyism*” and the investigation of other fabri-

According to his statement, he learnt about the lecture only by accident from a colleague a short time before it happened. In his report to the State Security Service, he described his impressions, giving the names of some participants and probable organizers. He also mentioned a subsequent meeting of Jakobson's circle of friends in the restaurant of the Devín Hotel.⁵¹ Mittelmann-Dedinský allegedly did not know Jakobson personally up to that time, but the guest behaved trustingly to him, knowing that he had been imprisoned for several years in the first half of the 1950s. It is not known whether R. Jakobson was aware of the possibility that past imprisonment did not exclude active informing.

After being released from prison and in the course of his gradual professional rehabilitation Mittelmann-Dedinský got so immersed in the offer to become the first translator of Goethe's *Faust* into modern Slovak that he more or less identified with him. He used his natural skill in social contact and trustfulness of his surroundings, which approached the victims of political persecution with empathy, to build a career as an informer who was oriented and difficult to replace. In his reports to the State Security Service, he took the initiative in adding to the basic facts about "who said and did what and where" his own unforced personal impressions and views. He supplemented these with contextual explanations, which could harm the relevant persons even more.

He started his analysis of Jakobson's lecture, written on 6 March 1957, with an excursion into Jakobson's inter-war career. He showed Jakobson's importance with the description "*friend of Mayakovsky and Yesenin*", but he did not forget to mention that more than twenty years before Jakobson "*had written a sharply anti-Soviet article in the Lidové noviny, and essentially placed himself in agreement with Karel Teige's surrealist group in a position close to Trotskyism*". Concerning the fact of Jakobson's activity in the American academic world during the war, he emphasized that "*it is interesting that his assistant here was Klement Šimončič, a close friend of Dr. Bakoš, the surrealist. Šimončič briefly came to Czechoslovakia after the war as a high ranking American officer and met Fabry and Bakoš*".⁵² This was a clear case of "excessive work". To improve his own position or only because of his feeling of importance, he did not hesitate to damage Bakoš's already shaky employment at the Czechoslovak-Soviet Institute.⁵³

cated cases.

- 51 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p.110-111. Agent's report no. 472 from 6 March 1957, Mittelmann-Dedinský signed the report with his cover name as agent "Bliska".
- 52 Mikuláš Bakoš (1914–1972), literary theorist and translator. Klement Šimončič (1912–2010), linguist, Slovak language teacher in Strasbourg, exiled in the USA, a volunteer American soldier on the Western Front, editor for Radio Free Europe. Rudolf Fabry (1915–1982), super-realist poet.
- 53 ÚA SAV, f. Riadiace orgány (Governing bodies), c. 1111, no. 3239, pracoviská SAV, organizačné materiály, Čs.-sovietsky inštitút.

Concerning the lecture itself, Mittelman-Dedinský reported that Roman Jakobson had spoken “*very sharply*” about “*some things*”. For example, “*He made jokes about how structuralism was labelled formalism and that was declared to be idealism.*” He also made “*constant attacks*” on “*remnants of Stalinism and that we maybe see fewer ‘horned devils’ everywhere*”. He laughed at the fact that all events in the capitalist states “*were described in these gloomy years as swinish*” and contradicted this: “*there is much good there*”. He “*highly praised*” American science, stating that “*together with Soviet science it was decisive for the world*”.

In the continuation of the report on the course of the meeting in the Devín Hotel, Mittelman-Dedinský stated that R. Jakobson knew him by name. He mentioned that in their conversation, he noticed it due to his “*long-time imprisonment in relation to the case of Clementis*”. Here Mittelman-Dedinský again put the additional information, that “*Jakobson was a friend of all the members of the DAV group*”.⁵⁴ Then Jakobson asked him about his current work and invited him to a meeting planned for the next morning before the journey to Prague, but Mittelman-Dedinský apparently missed it. At least he reported that “*as far as I know, he met Bakoš, Mráz, Pauliny (linguists), Ružička⁵⁵ and others in Bratislava*”.

He added second hand information he had received about Jakobson’s lecture in Olomouc, where the honoured foreign guest had been invited by Alexander Isachenko, another Russian emigrant, who had earlier worked in Bratislava. His daughter told Mittelman-Dedinský and so also the State Security Service, that “*Roman was very witty, sharply anti-Stalinist and very positive about recent Soviet Slavonic studies. He apparently said that he would like to go to Moscow at least for several years if not permanently.*” He also showed off his knowledge with information from Prague from Arnošt Ungár and Novomeský, that Jakobson “*had demonstratively visited Laco Novomeský and embraced him when they met*”.⁵⁶

There is little concrete information about other participants in the lectures. According to data from the later report, Mittelman-Dedinský, was invited by Michal Chorvát, who probably also participated.⁵⁷ Jakobson also succeeded in personally informing the linguist Ľudovít Novák about his planned visit to Bratislava. At this time, Novák was living a sort of internal exile at Stará Ľubovňa.⁵⁸ Novák was also the only person whose name was connected in this report with

54 The circle of authors of the Slovak inter-war leftist literary revue *DAV*.

55 Jozef Ružička (1916–1989), linguist.

56 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 111.

57 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 209, report by agent “Blíska” from 24 Sept 1957.

58 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 209, report by agenta “Blíska” from 24 Sept 1957.

both the lecture and the subsequent social gathering “*at a wine-cellar*”, like in earlier times. However, it is not clear whether it was a meeting of two people, or a continuation of the discussion between various people after the lecture.

According to Prof. Lubomír Ďurovič’s information, which confirms the reports to the State Security Service from the monitoring in Prague, R. Jakobson preferred conversations with one person at a time, so instead of communal debates he had discussions with individual friends at thirty minute intervals. After half an hour, he would either change his discussion partners or move alone from one table in a cafe to another. “*Jakobson deliberately met people individually. He always claimed that a meaningful discussion could only happen between two people alone, otherwise it was only a conversation*”.⁵⁹ This also protected his sources to some degree against the risk of informing, whether deliberately or through carelessness. The effectiveness of this measure is also shown in a statement from Mittelmann-Dedinský about a meeting with Jakobson in Prague. He had to wait at a different table while the American professor finished a discussion with a previous partner. According to his report, it was only after a further three quarters of an hour that he could ascertain it was with Paul Garvin,⁶⁰ but he still knew nothing about the content of the discussion.⁶¹

The files of the State Security Service from the postal censorship department include a copy of a letter from Ján Komorovský,⁶² who then devoted his attention to old Russian literature, addressed to Jakobson on 15 June 1957. The text shows that he had already sent Jakobson some of his studies of folklore and asked him for texts of some of his articles, which he had read about in letters from another of the Russian professors active in Bratislava before 1948: Petr G. Bogatyrev.⁶³ In the conclusion of the letter, J. Komorovský apologized for not attending the February lecture. He was sorry that he had not learnt about it in time because he was spending the winter holiday with his parents in Trenčín. From other Bratislava people who remembered the event, the Russianists Ema Panovová and Štefan Švagrovský confirmed their participation to me.⁶⁴ The date of this lecture during the winter holiday or the break between semesters appears to be the reason why it was not remembered by younger people, who were students at the time.

59 Private correspondence between the author and Prof. Lubomír Ďurovič, 6 May 2016.

60 Paul Garvin (1919–1994), American socio-linguist. He studied medicine in Czechoslovakia before emigrating in 1938.

61 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 209.

62 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 739, no. 2, p. 147-148. Ján Komorovský (1924–2012) Russianist and Comenius scholar. After 1989 he founded the Department of Religious Studies at Comenius University.

63 Petr G. Bogatyrev (Bogatyryov) (1893–1971), folklorist, ethnologist, linguist.

64 Ema Panovová (1925), Štefan Švagrovský (1931), Russianists. Telephone conversations on 5 June 2016.

Jakobson visited Czechoslovakia again in autumn 1957 but did not go to Slovakia. Open problems of a political nature already appeared before the journey. The State Security Service contacted people who had asked him for sending of academic literature at the beginning of the year. Pressure was put on them to distance themselves from him and to describe the delivered books as “*unwanted*”, “*hostile literature*” or “*unscientific propagandist works*”.⁶⁵ Jakobson’s wife, who was going to accompany him on the trip to Europe, was not granted the requested entry visa. Although Jakobson reached Czechoslovakia, the organizers of the conference on Comenius to which he had been invited, strategically decided to avoid public attention and left his name out of the official programme. Apparently this enabled them to partially avoid pressure for his exclusion from the programme and cancellation of his presentation of a paper.⁶⁶ This strategy was clearly successful, because the chairman of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences Zdeněk Nejedlý declared in a discussion with Vladimír Štěpánek, author of an article in *Rudé právo* on 2 May 1958, that the invitation of Jakobson had been an impermissible “*arbitrary act*”. Allegedly Nejedlý should not have agreed to the invitation because “*he knew Jakobson well from the inter-war period*” when “*he always propagated reactionary theories in art and science with all the –isms that existed in the period*”. He threatened that “*in spite of the fact that I am already old, I will show them that I am still the chairman of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, so I should be informed about such invitations*”.⁶⁷

Apart from reports by other agents and members of the State Security Service, a report from agent “Blíska”, that is Mittelmann-Dedinský, is also available for this action.⁶⁸ According to the diction of his report, this time he had been instructed to actively have discussions with participants in the conference. After a private discussion with Jakobson, he reported that the foreign guest had asked him about the fate of his still imprisoned friends: Daniel Okáli and Ivan Horváth.⁶⁹ He also cited Jakobson’s exasperated commentary that “*Czechoslovakia is the only country where no rehabilitation has happened, none at all.*”

65 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 739, no. 4. The declarations about unwanted books alternate with State Security Service “analyses” of the faults of their content and private correspondence that had been intercepted and censored.

66 International conference on research into the life and works of J. A. Comenius. Prague, 23–29 Sept 1957. Program. ABS f. 305, c. 140, no. 2, p. 148, also ABS, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 210, report from agent “Blíska” from 24 Sept 1957.

67 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 739, no. 4, p. 136.

68 ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 212, report from agent “Blíska” from 24 Sept 1957.

69 Daniel Okáli (1903–1987), lawyer, politician, literary critic, founder member of DAV; Ivan Horváth (1904–1960), writer, diplomat, communist politician. Both were imprisoned for almost ten years as “bourgeois nationalists”.

Jakobson described the complete failure to rehabilitate Vladimír Clementis as “*really swinish*”.

Mittelmann-Dedinský diligently asked Jakobson about the objects of his interest and the interest of his directing bodies. Faithful to theatrical practice, he put into the report a whole discussion in the form of dialogue with direct quotations. Jakobson’s cited statements indicate that he avoided going into detail, but some of his judgements were formulated rather harshly. To a question about Klement Šimončič, Jakobson said that “*he is lazy as a louse*”. He was indignant that although he could get a doctorate and continue into an academic career, “*he is not doing anything. He married into a rich Slovak farming family, and for decoration he held on to a job teaching Slovak at Columbia University. He has enough to live modestly and does not want more, when he has fame. He lives in New York and is one of the honoured members of the cultural commission there*”. With regard to Professor Dieška⁷⁰ he made clear that “*Dieška is no longer a Ľudák, he now supports existentialism*” and “*former leftists also group themselves around him*”.

The State Security Service was clearly also interested in information about the situation among American communists. However, R. Jakobson avoided commenting on questions about Josef Guttman, formerly a leading communist publicist living in the USA since 1939 and according to Mittelmann-Dedinský’s information a contributor to the *Partisan Revue*, a leftist journal that had gradually turned against Soviet policy. He only said that it was not very interesting reading. He gave a more sharply defined view on the former American communist Howard Fast. In answer to a direct question, he replied that Fast “*is a sort of hooker. First he was a slave to the party and now he is a willing slave to its enemies*”.⁷¹ He used a similar expression to answer a question about how former colleagues had welcomed him in Czechoslovakia, including, for example, the Professor of Aesthetics Jan Mukařovský: “*I think that on this question, the people of Czechoslovakia are united in the view that Mukařovský is a swine. But now he meddled around me quite a lot, more than in the past, when he was cooler.*”

Commenting on the quality of the conference, R. Jakobson spoke very positively about the lecture by Dr. Čaplovič. He mentioned that he “*appropriately praised*” him in a public discussion. and then privately asked from where the speaker was familiar to him: During the war Ján Čaplovič was also active in the resistance.⁷² Mittelmann-Dedinský was also interested in the Bratislava na-

70 Jozef Dieška (1913–1985), professor of philosophy and sociology, active in the USA after 1948.

71 Howard Fast (1914–2003), American writer, from 1943 a member of the Communist Party, winner of the Stalin Prize. He left the movement in the mid 1950s.

72 Ján Čaplovič (1904–1961), Evangelical pastor, historian, bibliographer and journalist. During

tive, sociologist László Porzolt (Lars Porsholt).⁷³ He asked Jakobson about the “*Norwegian-Swedish fellow migrant*”, but Jakobson denied knowing him.

This report also provides the basic information that Jakobson was aware of the bullying from the State Security Service inflicted on him and all the colleagues and friends with whom he had contacts in autumn 1957, his second visit that year. “*Generally they are behaving terribly to me. They follow me. I know this from the fact that they check the identity cards of everybody I have met. People tell me this.*” He was preparing to “*sharply protest*” against this practice on the last day of his stay in Prague.

In 1958 another wave of hatred was unleashed against Jakobson in the Czechoslovak press. This was linked to an intensified campaign for ideological purity throughout the state, accompanied by purges in the academic community. *Rudé právo* described him as an agent of American intelligence, a “*lifelong cosmopolitan*”, who had cooperated with the services of the “*bourgeois*” Czechoslovak exiles during the war and now continued by sending out “*publications full of imperialist propaganda*” and “*invitations to study visits*”. In this way, he was trying “*under the cover of academic contacts, to interest young academics in direct contact with the American Embassy*”.⁷⁴ His labels from the inter-war period, such as “*anti-Soviet schemer and literary white guardist*”, who “*developed theories about the fascistization of the Soviet regime*” were remembered. The repeated protests from Roman Jakobson against these aggressive attacks received no replies.⁷⁵

In this purge, in Slovakia dozens of linguists were either dismissed or “*freed by re-organization*” from academic work. They included the above-mentioned Dr. Hayeková, who was again burdened by her class origin, “*idealistic world-view*” and foreign contacts. The hunt for local Slovak “*Trotskyites*” was re-

the war he worked for the Czechoslovak government in exile in Paris and London. On this occasion, Jakobson also asked Mittelman-Dedinský about Dezider Benau, who he knew as “*Čaplovič’s secretary*”. He learnt only that this inter-war leftist activist had been imprisoned in the first half of the 1950s and worked as a corrector after his release.

73 László Porzolt (Lars Porsholt) (1906–1970), sociologist, working in the inter-war communist circles of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia, living abroad after the Second World War.

74 ŠTĚPÁNEK, Vladimír. Kde už nejde o vědecké styky. (Where it was no longer a matter of academic contacts). In *Rudé právo*, 26. April 1958, p. 2. Partially used outlines for defamatory articles are also preserved from this period. They include: “*Návrh článku k odhalení činnosti R. Jakobsona*”. (Proposed article unmasking the activity of R. Jakobson). ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 131-136; “*Návrh článku redaktora Rudého práva K. Vaňka Profesor? Ne, špión*”, (Proposed article for the editor of *Rudé právo* K. Vaňek Professor? No, spy.). ABS ČR, f. 305, c. 740, no. 2, p. 137-140.

75 GLANC, ref. 8, p. 234-258.

vived.⁷⁶ Ladislav Novomeský, who was still threatened with continuation of a suspended sentence, considered it necessary to send the Minister of the Interior Rudolf Barák an explanatory letter on his own initiative on 29 April 1958. The letter stated that he had twice met Jakobson in the previous year, but their discussion was limited to consideration of new findings in Moravian archaeology and Slovak literature. As a result of the fact that L. Novomeský was in hospital during the second visit, R. Jakobson had offered to provide him with antibiotics that were difficult to obtain, and he actually sent them. Novomeský emphasized that he had received “no packages of a different type” from Jakobson. He stated in the conclusion of the letter that he considers that from the point of view of the minister or in relation to the “the matter with which Rudé právo is concerned” these facts or are unimportant, but he writes them with the intention “of avoiding possible speculation and misunderstanding”.⁷⁷ It is symptomatic that he did not have the courage to cast doubt on the actual media campaign and associated purge.

It again became more useful to keep quiet about the Prague and Bratislava meetings with the American professor. Jakobson himself continued to travel to conferences in Moscow, Budapest and other academic centres of the Eastern Bloc, where he also published his studies. Soviet colleagues he met preserved his sarcastic statement that in this period, Russians dared to talk to him in conference halls, Hungarians in the corridors and Czechoslovak academics only in the toilets.⁷⁸

A further advantageous moment for an attempt to renew contacts and achieve the academic rehabilitation of Roman Jakobson, which had been unsuccessfully demanded immediately after the publication of Štěpánek’s defamatory article in *Rudé právo*, came in Czechoslovakia only in the mid 1960s. A period of perceptible relaxation again influenced the political atmosphere, and the approach of his 70th birthday on 11 November 1966 provided a worthy pretext.⁷⁹

76 “The members of M. Tušera’s group and associates” were arrested in August 1957. Among other things, they had allegedly spread Trotskyite literature. MARUŠIAK, Juraj. *Slovak Policy 1956–60*. Praha: OSF REsearch Support Scheme, 2000, p. 15-16. Accessible on the Internet: <<http://www.akademickyrepozitar.sk/sk/repozitar/slovenska-politika-1956-1960.pdf>> (cit. 15 Feb 2018), also Slovenský národný archív (Slovak National Archives – SNA), fund ÚV KSS : P. David, c. 2248.

77 DRUG, Štefan. Prípád Jakobson. (The Jakobson case). In *Romboid*, 1990, year 24, no. 6, p. 33. ISSN 0231-6714.

78 ИВАНОВ, Вячеслав В. О Романе Якобсоне. (Главы из воспоминаний). (IVANOV, Vyacheslav. On Roman Jakobson. Chapters from memoirs). In *Zvezda*, 1999, year 75, no. 7. Accessible on the Internet <<http://magazines.russ.ru/zvezda/1999/7/ivanov.html>> (cit. 15 Feb 2018).

79 MORÁVKOVÁ, Alena (ed.). *Roman Jakobson Z korespondence*. (Roman Jakobson. From

However, the veteran of the Stalinist cultural struggles Prof. Ladislav Štoll had only just been installed in the position of director of the Institute of Czech and World Literature of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague. In his new book *On shape and structure in verbal art*,⁸⁰ Štoll had again confirmed his rejection of Jakobson and his school. It was futile to hope for a change in Štoll's position also for another reason. He had not been promoted into his position as director in 1962, he had declined into it from government and party posts, precisely as a result of de-Stalinization and the rising power of the opponents of his views.

Therefore, Jakobson's friends decided that instead of uselessly attacking the barrier in Prague, they would try to get around it through Brno and Bratislava. Instead of an "apology", which still could not be expected from the party leadership or from the editors of its newspaper, they wanted to celebrate his birthday with some sort of public expression of professional recognition in the academic field. At the same time, the official version of his contribution to linguistics would be less controversial if it concentrated on the inter-war activities, without mentioning older and more recent political disputes.

The literary historian Štefan Drug reconstructed the development of efforts to achieve Jakobson's academic rehabilitation on the basis of surviving correspondence between Jaroslav Seifert, Laco Novomeský, R. Jakobson and others.⁸¹ He showed that the initiative for this method of correcting matters came from Jakobson himself, who confirmed to Novomeský on 31 May 1966 that he would be pleased to meet him and travel to Czechoslovakia, but the unwithdrawn defamations still burdened him. He directly stated that he was not interested in apologies from his defamers, but "*in a dignified expression of recognition from the academic and literary Avant-Garde circles*". He expressed the hope that "*for example, on my approaching seventieth birthday, a friendly gesture may come from the Union of Slovak Writers, Bratislava University or the Academy of Sciences, which would overcome my bitter feeling of estrangement*". This would also motivate him to change his "*preliminary decision to refuse to participate in the prepared international congress of Slavonic Studies*".⁸²

the correspondence). Praha; Litomyšl: Paseka, 1997, p. 24. ISBN 8071851507.

80 ŠTOLL, Ladislav. *O tvar a strukturu v slovesném umění*. (*On shape and structure in verbal art*). Praha: Academia, 1966, 185 p.

81 DRUG, ref. 77, p. 32-37; DRUG, Štefan. Ešte raz k prípadu Jakobson. (On the Jakobson case again). In *Romboid*, 1990, year 24, no. 10, p. 118. ISSN 0231-6714; DRUG, Štefan. Dodatok k Jakobsonovmu prípadu. (A supplement on the Jakobson case). In *Slovenská literatúra*, 1991, year 37, no. 5-6, p. 406-414. ISSN 0037-6973.

82 DRUG, ref. 76, p. 33.

Jakobson tried to move on with rehabilitation of his expert reputation in the Czechoslovak environment also through other channels. In a letter to his former wife Sofia Haasová living in Brno, he wrote on 21 September 1966: *“I still unshakably insist that if even one of the Czechoslovak universities or academies does not give me a worthy recognition of everything I did for them, which would automatically negate all the attacks, I will not change my decision to refuse to participate in the coming Slavist congress, and I will consider not even going to Oxford, where the preparatory commission for the congress is going to meet. Now, it is the turn of the above mentioned institutions.”*⁸³

L. Novomeský had already addressed J. Seifert, to whom he confirmed on 2 July 1966 that academic circles had already selected a *“deputation”* entrusted with explaining to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia *“the relationship of our science to Jakobson”* and to request *“an honourable satisfaction”* for him.⁸⁴ However, this process could be excessively extended and there was a danger that if the Czechoslovak authorities refused to grant Jakobson a visa or they otherwise engaged in some chicanery against him before the prepared Sixth International Congress of Slavists in 1968 it could lead to a boycott by other Western scholars in solidarity with him.

By the time he replied to Novomeský on 28 July 1966, Seifert had found out whether it would be possible to obtain such an expression through the Institute of Czech Literature. Colleagues there confirmed that they agreed with the proposal but that they had no chance to get it past the head of the institute L. Štoll. Seifert also rejected an attempt to engage the central writers’ organization as futile, since in his view this organization was *“entirely degenerate and almost powerless”*. He confirmed that he had already informed Jakobson of this in a separate letter. He again turned to Novomeský with a sigh, that he *“really does not know what to do, but perhaps the Slovaks could engage in it a bit more, since they are anyway more able to do such things. Also, they are more united than us here, who argue and cannot move”*.⁸⁵ He further proposed to Novomeský that the two of them together or with the support of other linguists and intellectuals, should turn in a letter to President Antonín Novotný. L. Novomeský also approved this idea, and commented with enthusiasm on the information from Brno university (no longer named after Masaryk, but after the natural scientist J.E. Purkyně) about their

83 KULDANOVÁ, Pavlína. Roman Jakobson a Československo. In *Litteraria humanitas IV. Roman Jakobson*. Brno: 1966, p. 179. Accessible on the Internet: <https://digilib.phil.muni.cz/bitstream/handle/11222.digilib/132377/LitterariaHumanitas_004-1996-1_19.pdf?sequence=1> (cit. 15 Feb 2018).

84 DRUG, ref. 77, p. 34. *“B. Havránek, F. Vodička, Karol Rosenbaum and others”* are mentioned here.

85 DRUG, ref. 77, p. 34.

already openly proclaimed intention to award Jakobson an honorary doctorate on the occasion of his birthday.

However, since these initiatives did not acquire real contours up to the beginning of autumn 1966, and Jakobson's jubilee was rapidly approaching, the friendly academics began to concentrate more on systematic insertion of his name into positive contexts in academic and gradually also more popular publications. In September 1966 Jaroslav Seifert in an interview⁸⁶ for the *Literární noviny* on the occasion of his approaching 65th birthday "mentioned his name" in a public periodical without any reaction from the censors. He even accompanied the name with the adjective "brilliant" and expressed gratitude that Jakobson "acquainted us with all the note-worthy Soviet poets". Novomeský commented on this with enthusiasm as a good sign.⁸⁷ Professor Felix Vodička⁸⁸ also prepared a special birthday article for the *Literární noviny*, unleashing a vigorous discussion on its pages with Ladislav Štoll.

The Bratislava journal *Kultúrny život* joined in the wave of congratulation by publishing two birthday texts: *Why are we grateful to Jakobson?* by Eugen Pauliny and *Jakobson and modern science* by Šimon Ondruš.⁸⁹ The literary-critical journal *Romboid* was not left behind. It published a brief biography of Jakobson by the literature expert Nora Krausová, and a translation of an essay by Jakobson under the title *Retrospective*.⁹⁰ A thematic issue of the journal *Slovenská literatúra* dedicated to Jakobson's seventieth birthday also appeared with delays only at the beginning of 1967.⁹¹

86 JELÍNEK, Antonín. Chvíle s Jaroslavem Seifertem. (Moments with Jaroslav Seifert). In *Literární noviny*, 1966, year 15, no. 39, p. 1.

87 DRUG, ref. 76, p. 36.

88 VODIČKA Felix. Ne jen jubilejně. (70 let Romana Jakobsona). (Not only a jubilee tone. On the 70th birthday of Roman Jakobson.). In *Literární noviny*, 1966, year 15, no. 41, p. 5; ŠTOLL, Ladislav. Političnost skutečná a domnělá, (Politics – real and imaginary.). In *Literární noviny*, 1966, year 15, no. 45, p. 5; VODIČKA, F. Kritéria historického hodnocení, (Criteria of historical evaluation). In *Literární noviny*, 1966, year 15, no. 48, p. 5; ŠTOLL, L. Objektivní historická kritéria. (Objective historical criteria) In *Literární noviny*, 1966, year 15, no. 51, p. 5.

89 PAULINY, Eugen. Za čo vďačíme Jakobsonovi. (Why are we grateful to Jakobson?) In *Kultúrny život*, 1966, year 20, no. 42, p. 8, ISSN 1338-015X; ONDRUŠ, Šimon. Jakobson a moderná veda. (Jakobson and modern science). In *Kultúrny život*, 1966, year 20, no. 42, p. 9.

90 KRAUSOVÁ, Nora. K 70. Romana Jakobsona. (On the 70th birthday of Roman Jakobson). In *Romboid*, 1966, year 1, no. 2, p. 31-32; JAKOBSON, Roman. Retrospektiva. In *Romboid*, 1966, year 1, no. 2, p. 33-37, výber z (selection from) JAKOBSON, Roman. *Selected writings, Phonological studies*. The Hague: Mouton, 1962. Translated by V. Z., apparently Zora Váleková.

91 *Slovenská literatúra*, 1967, year 13, no. 1. NOVOMESKÝ, Ladislav. S avantgardou a v avantgarde (poznámky pri sedemdesiatinách R. J.) (With the avant-garde and in the avant-garde)

Participants in this “rehabilitation” attempt were well-aware of the changeability of the political situation. Šimon Ondruš, the author of a brave article praising Jakobson in *Kultúrny život*, stated in his published memoirs that he decided it was better not to send this issue of the journal from Czechoslovakia to Jakobson by post so that the censors would not see it. Instead, he asked for help from a colleague who was lecturing on the Slovak and Czech languages in Cologne.⁹² The graphic designer of the journal *Slovenská literatúra* decided not to put Jakobson’s name directly in the title of the birthday issue so that copies would not immediately attract the attention of the uninitiated.⁹³

The members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, who had been approached, used delaying tactics and could not be pushed into any activity in their own territory. On the contrary, at the international meeting of Slavists in October in Great Britain, also held in connection with Jakobson’s birthday, they sent Professor Bohuslav Havránek as a negotiator with the message that they were willing to tolerate Jakobson entering the country on the invitation of academic institutions, but they had no intention to issue any official apologies for the campaign against him. Any of their further decisions should derive from Jakobson’s reaction at this meeting on British soil, namely whether it would pass “*in a rebellious or peaceful atmosphere*”. At the end, nothing seriously faulty from the point of view of the Czechoslovak communist elites occurred at the discussions between the Slavists in Oxford, and Jakobson did not significantly ventilate his bitterness towards them in public. He regarded the positive media reports in cultural periodicals and the plans to grant him honorary awards at the university in Brno and the Slovak Academy of Sciences as sufficient proof of good will from the Czechoslovak side for the time being. He decided to accept the conditional “*invitation without apology*” to the next Slavist congress, to be held in Prague.

(notes on the 70th birthday of R.J.). p. 3-10; ŠTRAUS, František. Poznámky k metódam výskumu slovenského verša. (Notes on the methods of researching Slovak verse). p. 11-43; KOCHOL, Viktor. Štúrovský desaťslabičník a srbský desaterac. (Two variants of decametric verse: that of Štúr’s generation and the Serbian ‘desaterac’), p. 44-54; ŠABÍK, Vincent. K sedemdesiatinám profesora Romana Jakobsona. (On the seventieth birthday of Roman Jakobson), p. 55-66; JAKOBSON, Roman. Gramatická štruktúra veršov Janka Kráľa. (Grammatical structure of the verses of Janko Kráľ), p. 67-78; ČEPAN, Oskar. Slovenská literárna veda v rokoch 1945 – 1966. (Slovak literary science, 1945–1966.), p.79-97; V. Z. (probably VÁLKOVÁ, Zora). K otázkam štruktúrálnej poetiky. (On questions of structural poetics), p. 98-103; PRÍDAVKOVÁ-MINÁRIKOVÁ, Marianna. Sovietska diskusia o textológii a vydávaní klasikov. (Soviet discussion of textology and publication of the classics), p. 103-109.

92 ONDRUŠ, Šimon. Chvilé s Romanom Jakobsonom. (Moments with Roman Jakobson). In *Literárny týždenník*, 1996, year 8, no. 44, p. 3-4. ISSN 0 862-5999.

93 DRUG, ref. 77, p. 37.

Thus, Jakobson's official personal symbolic rehabilitation in Czechoslovakia was delayed from the original initiative connected with his seventieth birthday, for another two years until the summer of 1968. His official working conference programme was again combined with further trips in the country with old friends. However, in contrast to 1957, he began his visit to Czechoslovakia by travelling from Vienna to Bratislava, and he also returned home through Vienna.

According to a letter to Sofia Haasová from 19 June 1968, he originally planned his visit to Czechoslovakia as follows: He would travel to Bratislava at the end of July with the Polish linguist Krystyna Pomorska, his wife at this time. He would stay there "*at the invitation of the Slovak Academy of Sciences until the journey to Prague*" for the Sixth International Congress of Slavists from 7 to 13 August. Then he would return through Brno. However, the programme of events planned in his honour changed a little and so the official visit to Bratislava was moved to the end. On his last day in Prague, 13 August, he received an honorary doctorate from Charles University, followed on 15 August by the university in Brno.⁹⁴

The Presidium of the Slovak Academy of Sciences participated in Jakobson's symbolic rehabilitation by awarding him the Gold Medal of the Slovak Academy of Sciences on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the passing of the statute on the SAS.⁹⁵ The Presidium of the SAS approved on 24 June 1968 its list of laureates⁹⁶ which had been proposed "in accordance with the discussions of the Presidium on 24 January 1968". The explanation described Roman Jakobson as "*a Professor from Harvard University*", who "*worked in Czechoslovakia as a scientist and university teacher*" and "*had to leave Czechoslovakia in 1939 because of the fascist occupation*". It also mentioned his academic positions in the USA, especially holding the chairs of Slavonic philology and general linguistics at Harvard. The cited document emphasized that "*he has devoted considerable attention to the Slovak language and literature in his research and educational work*". For example, his 1931 study "*From the phonology of standard written Slovak (Slovenské miscellanem, Bratislava 1931)*" laid the foundations "*for the structural and functional analysis of the phonic system of Slovak*". Finally, it stated that "*in the journal of the Philosophy Faculty of Comenius University*

94 Accessible on the Internet: <<http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/zpravodajstvi-brno/extra/192007-exkluzivni-video-nevitany-vitany-svetovy-lingvista-roman-jakobson-v-brne/>> (cit. 15 Feb 2018).

95 Ústredný archív SAV (Central Archives of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, herein after ÚA), f. Riadiace orgány, c. 2422, no. 4986, Významovania, ceny, Medaily SAV – návrh na udelenie v r. 1968 (Awards, prizes. Medals of SAV – proposals for 1968.).

96 Akademician K.I. Skryabin, USSR; Akademician I. Ruzsnyák, Hungary; Akademician V. Laufberger, Czechoslovakia; Prof. R. Jakobson, USA; Risto Kovijanič, Yugoslavia,

Philologica XVI from 1964 he wrote about the linguistic structure of verses by the Slovak poet Janko Kráľ”,⁹⁷ although such a study is not found in the quoted publication; the reference most probably refers to the text published later in *Slovenská literatúra* no. 1 from 1967.

In general, these formulations apparently derived from a proposal submitted by the Scientific Committee for Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in March 1968. Already then it was reinforced with a statement that Jakobson is “the first personality in world linguistics today” and supported with references to his participation in recent world congresses. The final argument was that “awarding the Medal of the SAS to this leading representative of world linguistics will also be a great honour for Slovak science”.⁹⁸

Jakobson travelled from Brno to Bratislava on 19 August so that in the afternoon he could lead a discussion at the Ľudovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics on the theme: “Classification and the place of linguistics”. The evening programme again ended with the traditional session in a wine cellar. On the next morning he went to a further discussion at the Institute of Slovak Literature of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. The following festive lunch took place outside the city at an old mansion belonging to the Union of Slovak Writers at Budmerice in the company of other old friends and colleagues including the linguist P.G. Bogatyrev. Both left a permanent record of the event in the memory book of the 11 year old daughter of one of the guests, the future professor of Russian literature Maša Kusá.⁹⁹ At about eight in the evening they returned from Budmerice to the city.

It is very probable that a mention in the memoirs of Žo Langerová, widow of the inter-war communist intellectual, wartime exile in the USA and post-war political prisoner Oskár Langer, also concerns Jakobson’s stay in Bratislava. On the evening of the 20 August she had dinner “in a luxury restaurant at the Castle”, in the company of an unnamed “older American professor, who was going to lecture in Russia”, two foreign journalists or Kremlinologists and her old friends the couple Eugen and Fritzi Löbl. The economist Eugen Löbl had worked with the revue *DAV* when he was young.¹⁰⁰

97 JAKOBSON, Roman. Gramatická štruktúra veršov Janka Kráľa. (The grammatical structure of verses by Janko Kráľ). In *Slovenská literatúra*, 1967, year 13, no. 1, p. 67-78.

98 ÚA SAV, f. Riadiace orgány, c. 2422, no. 4986, Vyznamenania, ceny. Medaily SAV – návrh na udelenie v roku 1968. (Awards, prizes. Medals of SAV – proposals for 1968).

99 Dated signatures in the memory book. Private archive of Prof. M. Kusá, Institute of World Literature of the SAS.

100 LANGEROVÁ, Žo. *Vtedy v Bratislave. Mój život s Oskarom L.* (Then in Bratislava. My life with Oskar L.). Bratislava: Marenčin PT, 2015, p. 324-325. ISBN 9788081140181. Eugen Löbl (1907–1987). Original edition: LANGER, Jo. *Convictions: Memories of a Life shared with a Good Communist*. London: André Deutsch Limited, 1979.

The time of this visit in the vacation again reduced the chances of richer personal memories of Jakobson being formed among the younger generation, especially of students, but also of scientists and other interested persons, who had gone away on summer vacations. Long-term interruption of living contact with the local academic environment was reflected in the natural choice of invited guests from the circle of “*old friends*”. For some of them, an invitation to such an important event, namely the chance to publicly present themselves “*with their old friend, a Professor from Harvard*” also meant their social rehabilitation after years of political bullying.¹⁰¹ For others it could be a confirmation that even in the atmosphere of relaxation of political taboos they did not have to feel uneasy about the higher social position they had acquired.

* * *

The last official event of Roman Jakobson’s visit to Czechoslovakia was to be the ceremonial awarding of a medal by the Presidium of the Slovak Academy of Sciences on the morning of 21 August 1968. However, in the night from 20 to 21 August 1968 he eye-witnessed the invasion of the armies of the Warsaw Pact. Since he was staying in the Carlton Hotel on Hviezdoslav Square in the centre of the city, there were Soviet tanks directly outside his windows in the morning.

The ceremonial presentation of the Gold Medal of the SAS became an unpleasant burden for both sides, hindering the possibility of his immediate departure. Any news about it in the Slovak media was drowned out by news about the invasion and the resulting political changes. In Russian sources, an erroneous version of his dramatic experience on 21 August 1968 “*in Prague*” circulates until today.¹⁰²

According to the official report on the visit produced for the leadership of the SAS by Prof. Ružička as the authorized representative of the host institution, Jakobson’s visit ended with a common lunch in the Devín Hotel. About 16.30 he travelled to Vienna by car. Ružička stated that: “*The stay of Prof. Jakobson was shortened and the programme reduced as a result of the occupation of Czechoslovakia by foreign armies.*” He added that: “*The guest departed in good health and without coming to any harm.*”¹⁰³

101 Other types of award were also presented on this occasion: The same archive document also proposes the awarding of the Honorary Plaque of Ľudovít Štúr to the linguist and old friend of Jakobson, Ľudovít Novák.

102 For example, in 2012 this erroneous version was repeated by Nikita Yeliseev in the essay *Dvoe i revolutsia*, where he writes that, “*in August 1968 Jakobson again escaped from Prague, the day after Soviet tanks rolled into the city*”. Accessible on the Internet <<http://seance.ru/blog/esse/two-revolution/>> (Cit. 15 Feb 2018).

103 ÚA SAV, f. RO SAV, c. 2698, no. Jakobson, the report of Jozef Ružička from 3 Sept 1968.

However, Roman Jakobson was not the only foreigner with an interest in the Slovak language to make an unplanned, early departure from Bratislava that day. The Studia Academia Slovaca summer school was in full flow at Comenius University. The students accommodated in the hall of residence on Dobrovičova Street (then called Suvorovova) were expecting lectures from various of his Bratislava colleagues. However, instead of teaching they only softened the panic and “directed the Western participants over the bridge to Austria”.¹⁰⁴

In the following months, Jakobson’s circles of Czechoslovak friends and acquaintances were again harshly thinned and divided according to their relationship with the new political leadership. Their biographies again included emigration, early retirement and re-assignment to unqualified work, but also career success. For example, this time, Laco Novomeský was carried by the Normalizing party purge into the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia and the leadership of the Matica Slovenská cultural organization.

Some “freer” publications with origins in the period of liberalization appeared even in 1969. They included the monograph by Mikuláš Bakoš *Avantgarda 38*, a collective portrait of the generation who began their active creative lives in the 1930s, and were strongly influenced in their artistic and scientific activities by Jakobson.¹⁰⁵ However, a selection of Jakobson’s works prepared for Czech and Slovak publication in 1970 could not be published.¹⁰⁶ It was again better to keep quiet about contacts with him.

A more substantial series of memories and especially academic reflections on Jakobson’s Czechoslovak activity appeared only in the mid 1990s, in connection with the hundredth birthday of the already departed Jakobson in 1996. A thematic issue of the *Linguistic Journal*¹⁰⁷ was devoted to him, as well as shorter

104 ONDRUŠ, ref. 92, p. 4.

105 BAKOŠ, Mikuláš, ref. 12. Bakoš already had experience of writing “risky” books. In 1942 his book *Teória literatúry* was withdrawn from public access according to the contemporary justification of J.E. Bor “for political-state reasons”. Ibid, p. 249.

106 JAKOBSON, Roman. *Lingvistická poetika. (Výber z diela). (Linguistic poetics. (A selection of works))*. Bratislava: Tatran 1991. ISBN 802220272. The publication contains an introductory study by Mikuláš Bakoš and translations of texts by Jakobson, prepared for planned but unachieved publication in 1970.

107 BOSÁK, Ján. Pri storočnici Romana Jakobsona. On the hundredth birthday of Roman Jakobson. In *Jazykovedný časopis (Linguistic Journal)*, 1996, year 47, no. 2, p. 81-86 ; SABOL, Ján. Dialóg o hľadani podstaty jazyka. (Dialogue on seeking the essence of language). Ibid, p. 87-92; HORECKÝ, Ján. Jakobsonovská terminológia dištinkatívnych príznakov. (Jakobson’s terminology of distinctive features). Ibid, p. 93-99; DOLNÍK, Juraj. O jednej jakobsonovskej inšpirácii. (On one of Jakobson’s inspirations). Ibid, p. 100-107; KRAJČOVIČ, Rudolf. Roman Jakobson a začiatky fonologického výskumu v slovenskej dialektológii. (Roman Jakobson and the beginnings of phonological research in Slovak dialectology). Ibid, p. 108-112; BLANÁR, Vincent. Roman Jakobson o význame vlastného mena. (Roman Jakobson on the

memorial articles in other periodicals.¹⁰⁸ However, as a result of the passage of time, it was already a reflection from the environment of the generations with no possibility to experience Roman Jakobson in the inter-war period, and who knew him only from the memories of their teachers and their own study in spite of the official curriculum.

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It is an extended version of the article ZAVACKÁ, Marína. Vizity Romana Jakobsona v Slovákiju v 1957 i 1968 godu. (Roman Jakobson's visits to Slovakia in 1957 and 1968). In *Slavyanovedenie*, 2017, year 52, no. 4, p. 64-75. ISSN 0896-544.

ABENTEUER DER AKADEMISCHEN MOBILITÄT: ROMAN JAKOBSON IN DER SLOWAKEI

MARÍNA ZAVACKÁ

Die, die Besuche des Linguisten aus Harvard Roman Jakobson in den Jahren 1957 und 1968 beschreibende Studie bietet außer der Reflexion der zeitgenössischen gesellschaftlich-politischen Situation auch eine Sonde ins zeitgenössische akademische und kulturelle Leben.

Sie rekonstruiert seine slowakischen wissenschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Kontakte, deren Ursprung in vielen Fällen in die Zeit seines Wirkens in der Tschechoslowakei in der Zwischenkriegszeit, in die Zeit seines Wirkens auf der sowjetischen Botschaft in Prag und an den Universitäten in Prag und Brünn reicht.

Sie beobachtet die Tätigkeit des Bratislaver linguistischen Zirkels in den veränderten Bedingungen nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg, gekennzeichnet durch den wachsenden sowjetischen Einfluss, deren Bestandteil auch eine dehonestierende Kampagne gegen die Freunde von Jakobson in der Zwischenkriegszeit war und letztendlich auch gegen ihn selbst.

Die Milderung der internationalpolitischen Anspannung in der Hälfte der 50. Jahre ermöglichte die Organisation einer internationalen Konferenz der Slawisten im Jahr 1957 unter der Anwesenheit von Jakobson, sie fand jedoch unter der Aufsicht der

meaning of his own name). Ibid, p. 113-117. Accessible on the Internet: <http://www.juls.savba.sk/ediela/jc/1996/2/JC_1996_2_LQ.pdf> (Cit. 15 Feb 2018).

108 ONDRUŠ, ref. 92, p. 3-4.

Staatssicherheit statt. Nach seinem Besuch der Tschechoslowakei folgte eine neue Welle der Hasskampagne gegen den „westlichen Agenten“.

Die Autorin analysiert in der Studie die schrittweise und nicht gerade problemfreie moralische und akademische Rehabilitation von Jakobson in der entspannten Atmosphäre der ersten Hälfte der 60. Jahre, initiiert von seinem Freundeskreis, deren symbolischer Gipfel die Offiziatschaften während des Besuchs in August 1968 sein sollten. Das feierliche Programm der Übergabe der Goldenen Medaille SAV in Bratislava, geplant auf den 21. August 1968, störte jedoch die Invasion der Staaten des Warschauer Vertrages in die Tschechoslowakei.

Mgr. Marína Zavacká, M.A., PhD.

Historický ústav SAV

P. O. BOX 198, 814 99 Bratislava, Klemensova 19

e-mail: marina.zavacka@savba.sk