

Stjepan Damjanović
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Matrix Croatica 1842–2017



MATICA HRVATSKA

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MATICA HRVATSKA
Elektronička izdanja Matice hrvatske

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FOREWORD

In 2017, Matrix Croatica (Croatian: Matica hrvatska) celebrated the 175th anniversary of its founding in numerous ways, both through celebration and work. That year, many texts were written on the oldest national cultural institution, attempting to show that Matrix Croatica saw culture as more than just books, periodicals, concerts, or art exhibitions—it saw culture as a relationship towards people and their creativity. It treated its members, authors, and collaborators with the utmost respect, respecting all of the cultural gifts through which they enriched the lives of others in Matrix Croatica’s publishings. Matrix sought to be a place where a synergy of various talents would be realised, a place to strive for knowledge and beauty. Matrix spread the belief that culture protects human fragility; it entreated us not to spread darkness around ourselves, but rather for each of us to light our own candle, however small, to help Croatia live and continue to live better.

At the time the text currently before readers was written, its authors served as the president (Stjepan Damjanović) and general secretary (Zorislav Lukić) of Matrix Croatica, and as such, it was their duty to ensure this celebratory year was used to spread knowledge of Matrix Croatica in numerous

places and ways. In conversation with Matrix's general secretary, our compatriots and friends from Canada and the United States expressed their desire for a comprehensive text to present Matrix Croatica to both Croatian emigrants and their American friends alike, to be published in the *Journal of Croatian Studies*—this text was, of course, to be in the English language. There was little time in which to both write and translate the text, so the two of us decided to write the text together. We considered it best to include abundant quotations from Matrix's documents and scientific literature on Matrix in order to paint the most objective picture possible of Matrix's 175 years of existence. When we completed the text, we entrusted the translation to Jeremy White. The prestigious *Journal of Croatian Studies* in New York published our text in 2018 in its fiftieth issue, for which we are especially thankful to journal editors Dr. Vladimir Bubrin and Dr. Vinko Grubišić. When the text was published, numerous friends of Matrix Croatica encouraged us to publish the text on the Matrix Croatica website, thus enabling those who do not know Croatian to learn the most important facts about Matrix's long, fruitful history. We accepted this proposal gladly. We have not altered the text for this edition, and we hereby offer it to anyone interested; we hope it will be of use to as many people as possible.

The Authors

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INTRODUCTION

During the Croatian National Revival (Illyrian Movement) of the 1830s, the need arose for a literary organisation that would publish books in the Croatian language in order to strengthen and broaden Croatian national awareness. The ideas of the French Revolution had reached Croatia, the most important of which was that the nation was the guarantee of human and civil equality, the guardian of cultural heritage, and the bearer of economic development. In the first three decades of the 19th century in Croatia, this primarily implied ensuring the Croatian language a place of honour in Croatian society, as the press was mostly published in other languages (German and Italian), and the stages of Croatian theatres had never heard a word of Croatian. It was also rare in administration and the justice system, which meant that Croatian did not function at all, or only sporadically, as a literary or standard language on its own territory. Circumstances for the Croatian nation and society were extremely unfavourable in the early 19th century. Croatia enjoyed only limited sovereignty within the Habsburg Monarchy in the small area of central Croatia and a part of Slavonia, while the broader Croatian lands were under the administration of the neighbouring great powers. In addition, three literary languages

based on the three Croatian dialects (Štokavian, Kajkavian and Čakavian) were used among the population. These circumstances meant there were many obstacles to national integration, and the leading Croatian intellectuals of the 1830s endeavoured to establish a national cultural society in order to support the cultural unification process necessary to the political integration of the Croatian nation and society. As early as 1829, Ljudevit Gaj propagated the notion of a society that would nurture the national language and literature, while in 1836, Croatian Parliament adopted a decision to establish such a society. However, in order for it to become formal and official, the consent of the Habsburg Emperor was required, and Vienna was in no hurry to provide it. Patriotic Croatian intellectuals sought ways to speed up the founding of their society, and decided to make use of the fact that public reading rooms were springing up at the time (the first were founded in 1838 in Varaždin, Zagreb, and Karlovac) and developing into focal points for raising national awareness. The most important of these was in Zagreb. In 1839, Croatian intellectuals decided to form a society within the Zagreb Illyrian People's Reading Room, a "new society called Matrix Illyrica" (Croatian Matica ilirska), to serve as a publishing house for "all kinds of useful books in the Illyrian language". After all, the main purpose of the reading room was simply "reading newspapers and books".¹ Those behind the idea of launching this new society were aware that it would be difficult to obtain official permission to found it within a short period. To avoid this problem, they decided to create a foundation, for which they

¹ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, Zagreb 1963, p. 19.



Janko Drašković, painted by Vlaho Bukovac

needed only the permission of the city magistrate. On 10 February 1842, they succeeded in launching a foundation, which they called *Matrix Illyrica*. Count Janko Drašković (1770-1856) was elected its first president, and Vjekoslav Babukić (1812-1875) its secretary. *Matrix Illyrica* operated as a foundation within the Illyrian Reading Room from 1842 to 1850. The National Theatre (1840), Economic Society (1841), and National Museum (1841) also came into being under the auspices of the Reading Room.

In 1836, alongside their request to the monarch to allow the society to begin operating, Croatian Parliament sent a set of proposed regulations, which are interesting as they constituted the foundation of the future regulations of *Matrix Illyrica/Croatia*. These regulations determined that founding members should contribute 50 forints each, in return for which they would receive complimentary copies of all of the society's publications. Members would be restricted to "Illyrian writers" and others who had demonstrated "particular merit in working for the king and the nation". There were also corresponding members, who could be foreigners. The regulations were published in Croatian, Latin, and German. Funds for *Matrix Illyrica* and other institutions were raised from many sources. By 1842, there were 150 founding members and 400 other donors, and a significant sum had been raised. Interestingly, Serbian Duke Milan Obrenović contributed 100 imperial ducats to support the "earnest labour of the noble Croats in the broad field of the Slavic peoples to organise and establish their nationhood". On the day of his election as the society's first president, Janko Drašković made a speech in the Reading Room, which included the following:

The main purpose of our society is to spread learning and literature in our national language and allow young people the opportunity to learn of their own nation. The most important aspect of this is printing excellent books at reasonable prices. We possess many renowned old works from the 16th and 17th centuries, when German literature was still in its infancy – Čubranović, Ranjina, Zlatarić, Gundulić, Palmotić, Gjorgjić, and many others. It is the unanimous desire of all those who are acquainted with the spirit and beauty of such old classics to print equally worthy books using our own organic orthography. Thus would we not only achieve fame in the literary world, but provide significant support for our own new writers who are composing work of the highest quality.²

Matrix Illyrica was thus founded as the first national Croatian publishing house, which was of particular importance, as most Croatian writers had self-published and sold their own books until this point. However, an excerpt from an earlier speech by Drašković reveals that the founders were not thinking only of language and literature.

It will benefit our beloved nation and homeland if we learn our language thoroughly and perfectly, and if we then translate the useful books of other educated nations into our own language, or if we write our own. The greatest benefit of all would come from the publishing of commercial and agricultural books, if it enables our nation to feed itself appropriately and increase its well-being.³

² Tadija Smičklas, Franjo Marković, *Matica hrvatska od godine 1842. do godine 1892*, Zagreb 1892, p. 10.

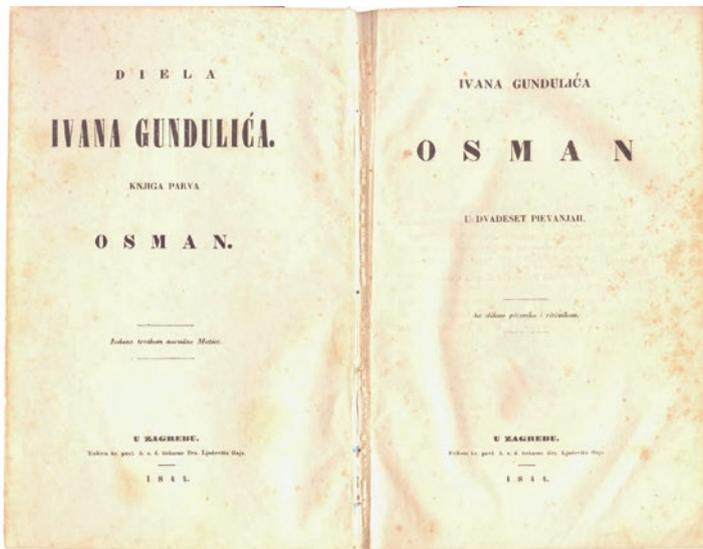
³ Croatian State Archives, Matrix Croatica Fund, Minutes of the Illyrian Reading Room 1838-1845, p. 2.

To support the claim of the wider focus of *Matrix Illyrica*'s goals, it should be mentioned that the administration of the Reading Room announced a prize of 20 ducats for a book to explain "how to export our wines", 40 ducats for a book that would show "how to train drapers and tanners", 15 ducats for a book "about paper mills", and 16 ducats for a book about the needs of the economy that "could be put to use in the classroom".⁴

⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 14-17.

THE EARLY YEARS (1842-1874)

The first presidents of the Matrix were Janko Drašković (1842-1850), Ambroz Vranyczany (1851–1857), Ivan Mažuranić (1858–1872), and Matija Mesić (1872–1874). Discussions of language developed into important actions and messages. Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski (a Matrix board member and Member of Parliament) held the first parliamentary speech in the Croatian language on 2 May 1843, and proposed that the Croatian language be declared and introduced as an official language in Croatia. In 1844, Matrix Illyrica published its first book; the epic *Osman* by Ivan Gundulić. Ivan Mažuranić completed the 14th and 15th cantos (which had been missing from the total of 20 cantos), and compiled an extensive dictionary (including some commentary) with his brother Antun. A thousand copies of the book were printed in Ljudevit Gaj's printing house. The high quality of the book (which was to become a tradition for the Matrix) and its significance, as well as the general "hunger" for books in the national language, contributed to the edition being quickly sold out. Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski wrote about the early days of the Matrix and the publication of its first book.



Ivan Gundulić, *Osman*, 1844

Increasing numbers of Croatian intellectuals began to gather around the Matrix, which was then the only literary society in the land. So when the Matrix' first book, the immortal Gundulić's timeless *Osman*, was launched abroad, the entire world could not express sufficient admiration for this magnificent poet. The people had long forgotten that the Croats had had their own skilled poets two or three hundred years earlier, who had stood shoulder to shoulder with Tasso, Ariosto, and Petrarch, on an equal footing with the voices of the poets of other modern nations.⁵

⁵ Ive Mažuran, Josip Bratulić, *Spomenica Matice hrvatske 1842-2002*, Zagreb 2004, p. 96.

Gundulić's Ijekavian-Štokavian in the Matrix's publication united the Croatian cultural sphere, as Radoslav Katičić emphasises.

The publication of Gundulić's *Osman* in 1844 was a key event in shaping a new, universal, authoritative literary language. It thoroughly established the continuity of Štokavian dialectal features in the literary language, from the golden age of Dubrovnik's literature to the modern era, on the threshold of a future that was just peering over the horizon at the time.⁶

In 2017, to mark its 175th anniversary, Matrix Croatica (Croatian Matica hrvatska) published a commemorative edition of its first book. In the foreword, Lahorka Plejić-Poje writes:

This edition of the most comprehensive, most important work of old Dubrovnik literature, a work that formed the cornerstone of the Croatian National Revival, can be read as a dedication to the great, pioneering publishing enterprise which was to be of decisive importance in nineteenth-century linguistic standardisation and literary culture (...) Matrix Illyrica's publication of *Osman* played a vital role in Croatian cultural history. The *unattainable height* of Ivan Gundulić, in whose opus *Osman* occupies the most significant place and which was able to withstand the ideological and aesthetic demands of the time, was one of the pillars upon which the modern Croatian nation was created.⁷

While *Osman* was being prepared for publication, the Matrix was considering publishing a contemporary work

⁶ Radoslav Katičić, *Hrvatski jezik*, Zagreb 2013, p. 170.

⁷ Ivan Gundulić, *Osman*, Zagreb 2017, xiii-xiv.

alongside Gundulić's great work of the Croatian literary past. The choice fell on *Teuta* by Dimitrije Demeter; it was published the same year. The author's reputation was an advantage, along with the fact that the manuscript had already passed censure in Vienna (books that made any mention of an "Illyrian" tendency were granted permission more easily in Vienna than in Zagreb).⁸ However, the foundation was still not registered separately and officially with the monarch's approval. On 1 May 1845, the president, Janko Drašković, renewed the application and took it in person to the emperor. A copy was sent to all the Croatian counties, with the recommendation that their Members of Parliament support a parliamentary decision to appeal to the emperor once more. Drašković used his connections to shield the Reading Room and Society. He returned satisfied from Vienna and said, "The king is the father of all his peoples, and does not allow one to oppress another, and he wished to placate those who complain about the Illyrian name". After a noticeable pause, a great deal of money was raised again to achieve an old desire – that of purchasing or building a suitable home for the Croatian cultural society, a "National Home". This was realised when the building at what is now 18 Opatička Street in Zagreb was purchased, where the Matrix was headquartered until 1877. Interestingly, there was an early proposal for the building to house a casino as well, but Ljudevit Gaj

⁸ The Illyrian Movement was a political movement that developed in Croatia, which strove for the cultural and political unity of all "Illyrians" – South Slavs. It lasted from 1830 to 1943. The founders of the Illyrian Movement acknowledged only part of the Orthodox population in Croatia and some Slovenes in Carinthia and Styria, but not the centres of the Serbian and Slovenian national movements. Thus, the Illyrian Movement developed as a movement to awaken Croatian national awareness.



Dimitrije Demetar, *Teuta*, 1844

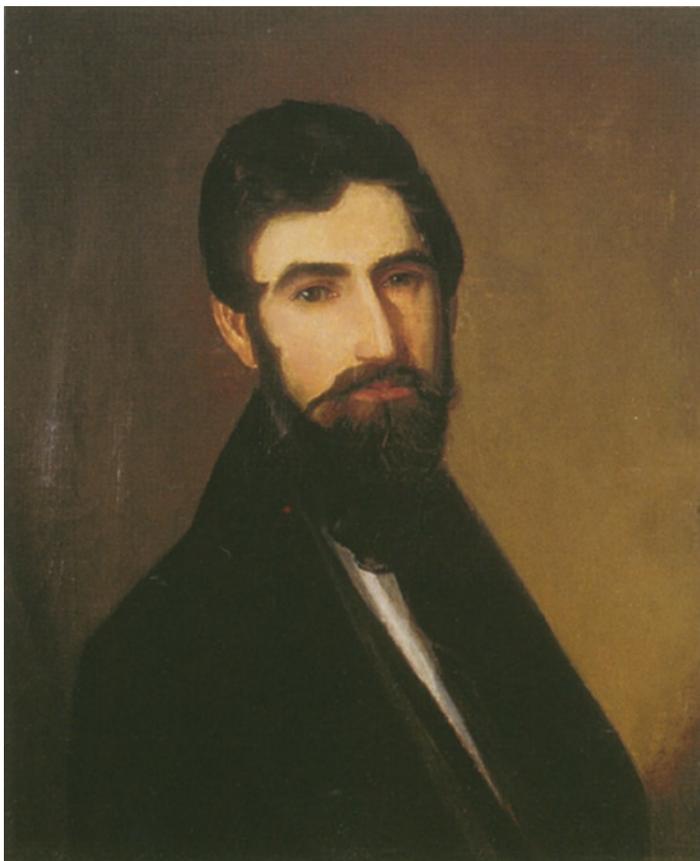
protested, writing “This building shall be our ‘ivory tower’, our altar, and it shall display our effort, care, work, loyalty, dedication, and love for our dear homeland”. He also wrote, “The National Home is a sacred home. It is first of all a place for the muses. I proclaim that fifty rooms will not suffice in ten years time for our museum, if our nation and our spirit survive, God willing.”

In spite of the great efforts made, publishing activities were quite modest, and this caused some dissatisfaction



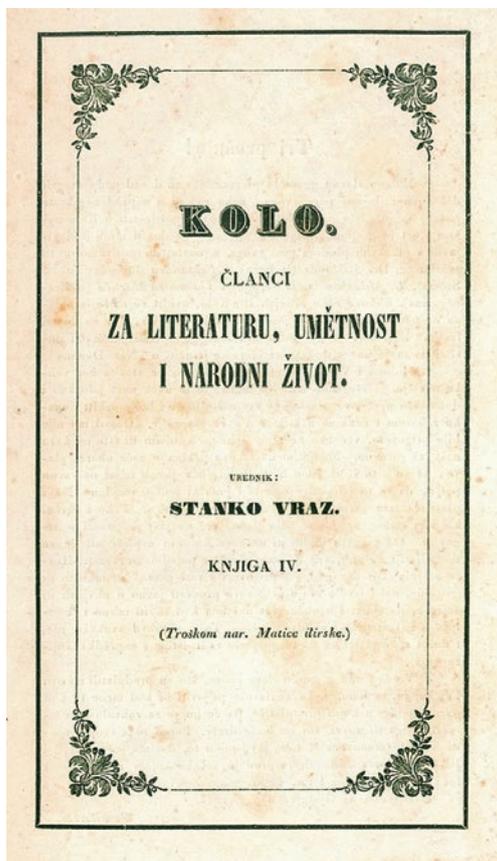
“National Home”, residence of Matrix Croatica between 1847 and 1877

among the organisation’s members. However, 1847 brought a turning point. A second book by Gundulić was published (*Različite pjesni – Various Verses*) and three volumes of the magazine *Kolo* were printed. The Matrix took over the magazine fully; it was edited by Stanko Vraz, assisted by Ljudevit Vukotinović and Dragutin Rakovac. It bore the subtitle “Articles on literature, art, and national life”. In October 1847, the long-awaited ruling from Vienna arrived. On 10 July, the emperor signed a document affirming the foundation of the learned society in Zagreb. The ruling declared that it must not bear the Illyrian name, but could be known as the “Croatian-Slavonian Literary Society”. The joy with which the ruling was greeted and the dissatisfaction concerning the name were both tempered in the following ‘revolutionary’ year. It was expected that the newly affirmed organisation



Stanko Vraz, painted by Michael Stroy

would set to work in earnest. The board met on 16 March 1848, the same day on which news arrived of a revolution beginning in the imperial capital. The next board meeting did not take place until the end of the year (28 December), when the president, Janko Drašković, explained why its activities had been halted. The minutes recorded that, “due to the



Kolo, 1847

turbulent, difficult times, which have also affected our country, it has been almost impossible to think of anything other than war and the defence of our homeland.”⁹ Better days

⁹ Tadija Smičiklas, Franjo Marković, *Matica hrvatska od godine 1842. do godine 1892*, pp. 18-19.

were expected, but new, unpleasant surprises were in store in the form of a new constitution that reduced or abolished many earlier rights. Serious work would only begin in 1850, though in 1849, the Society published its *Illyrian-German-Italian Small Dictionary with Basic Illyrian Grammar (with German and Italian interpretations)*. The dictionary was written by Josip Drobnić and printed in Vienna. In 1850, Matrix Illyrica began to operate independently, rather than as part of the Reading Room (which ended its noble life on 27 April 1850). On 9 September, the board met headed by former Reading Room vice-president Canon Mate Vuković, and decided that Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski and Vjekoslav Babukić should produce new regulations for the Matrix. Early in 1851 (9 February), these new regulations were adopted. They prescribed that the organisation should be run by a board consisting of a president, two vice-presidents (the heads of the literary and business committees), and six members of each committee.¹⁰ It is interesting that the emphasis on publishing changed, and pride of place was given to “generally useful” books rather than “Illyrian classics”. At the general assembly held on 27 February 1851, a new leadership was elected. The president was politician and economist Ambroz Vraniczany (1801-1870), who held the position until 1858. The secretary was politician and writer Andrija Torkvat Brlić (1826-1868), the literary committee was presided over by Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, and the business committee was headed by Naum Mallin (1816-1893), a renowned businessman of Greek heritage who had been vice-president of the First Croatian Savings Bank for 31 years and was one of the founders of the Croatian

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 21.



Ambroz Vranyczany Jr.

Commercial Bank. Brlić drafted the “Regulations of Matrix Illyrica in Zagreb, produced on the basis of those of the Matrix dated 1842”. On 20 May, Stanko Vraz died. He had been born in Slovenia, and was a great “Illyrian” and member of the organisation. He had also edited the seventh issue of *Kolo* and part of the eighth, which was completed by Brlić. The ninth issue was edited by Mirko Bogović (1852), after

which it was discontinued until 1905, when it was revived by *Matrix Croatica*. The minutes of the *Matrix*'s administrative bodies note more than once that the manuscripts submitted were of an unsatisfactory quality. Money was available for publishing, so it was decided to launch competitions. In March 1851, a competition was announced for the “best folk history of the South Slavic nation”. The board members wanted it to have both patriotic and critical character, and wanted it to be finished within a year. However, none came forward to write it. The *Matrix* then tried a different approach. Vjekoslav Babukić and Antun Mažuranić were invited to “compile a collection of the best philological pieces from old memorials of our language, so that its spirit, development, order and beauty can be appreciated”. These efforts led to a secondary school textbook, *Čitanka za više gimnazije (Reader for Secondary School)*, which served for twenty years as a teaching tool for Croatian language and literature in all Croatian secondary schools. In 1852, the Society launched *Neven*, a weekly educational and entertainment publication. The first issue came out at the end of the year, and there were almost 700 subscribers (400 were required to make it a going venture). The editor was Mirko Bogović. The 38th issue (still in the first year) carried a poem by Ivan Filipović entitled “Domorodna utjeha” (Patriotic Solace), which included these lines:

Had we been wiser,
Dreamt less,
Worked harder,
The goal would now be nearer.

The poet and editor were both sentenced to two years in prison, because the poem was seen as an attack on the

NEVEN.

Zabavni i poučni list.

Odgovorni urednik:

Mirko Bogović.

Ovaj bibliotički časopis izlazi tiskom Matice hrvatske svake nedjelje jednput i to u četvrtak na oštom arku. Cijna mu je na godinu za domaću bez poštarina 4 flor. sr. — za inozemsku s poštarijom 5 flor. sr. Predplata na pol ili na četvrt god. primljena je gore naznačenaj vrijedninaj efor.

Broj 1.

U Četvrtak 1. Sčnja 1852.

Tečaj I.

Pësma o Nevenu.

od M. B.

Neven nije ko ružica draga,
Lër, karantil ili slično cvëće,
Što se u srëd perivoja blaga
Sa ponosom na svom busu kreëe.

Neven u je zasvim prosto bilje,
Nit se ono cvëtom odlikuje
Nit mirisom, veë ko god i smilje
Il kovilje — tako ti se štuje;

Al se ipak štuje i spominje!
U narodu svak nevena znade:
Što ovija ovdë skale sinje,
A tam opet cvëtne hvoje mlade.

Neven ti se lahko pripitomi,
Kud ga metneš, odmah sve prikrije,
Ali — kad se jednom gdë udomi —
Izkorenit njega, — lahko nije.

Evo i Vami, bratjo i sestrice,
Neven-listak, primito ga miho,
Usadite slabohne mu klice
U èeënjah ðomorodnih kriho!

Pa èete na skoro vidit tada,
Kak se huëe Neven taj razplodit,
Te kakovim — ak nevara nada —
Još i plodom danas sutra urodit.

Samo treba, da taj list ogrje
Ljubav Vaša, tad se i ledene
Svud naoko zime hojat nije,
Naš bo Neven, znam, da nepovene.

Hajduk Gojko.

od M. B.

I.

Jeste li veë štogod èuli o hajduku Gojku? — Nemislim! — A nije baš ni èudo, jer tko bi sve junake i hajduke znao što ih narod naš spominje! — Ta ima ih, kako kažu, unprav kao u dubravi lišnja ili bëla pokraj mora žala. Svaki skoro pre-

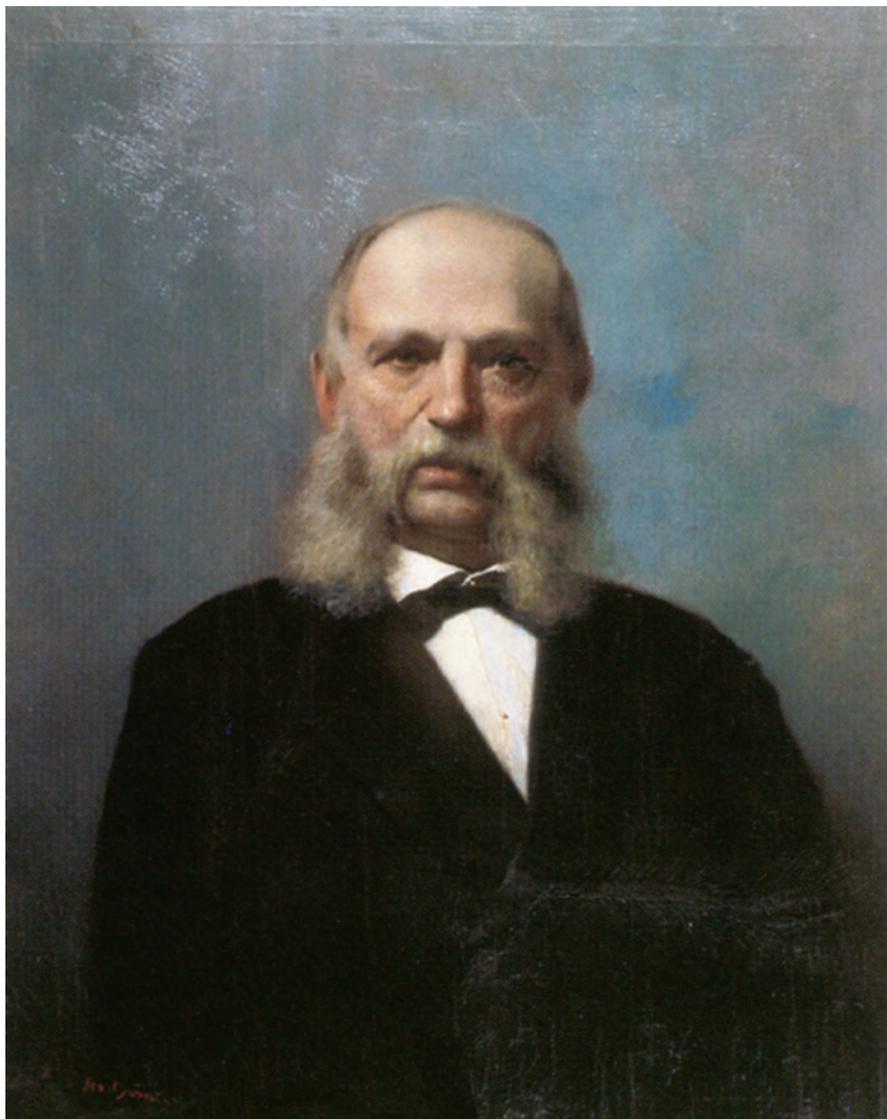
state system. They served six months each. At the general assembly on 9 June 1854, vice-president Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski confirmed that the work of the Matrix had been dealt a blow and said,

The cause of this lethargy is the general apathy and indifference shown towards national issues in recent years. This sad state of affairs would beat down all our hopes for a better future, were we not to realise that the time has come for all noble, patriotic souls to once more seek and nurture the cradle and temple of our nationhood in literature ... for our own public at home to realise that literature in the present age is the main herald of sacred nationhood, and that neglecting our literature robs us of the last and only guarantee of national development.¹¹

Since the first edition had sold out, a second edition of Gundulić's *Osman* was printed in 1854.

The Matrix entrusted the editorship of *Neven* to Josip Praus, a “learned Czech”. He decided it should retain its education and entertainment sections and continued to publish it, now as a quarterly. Matrix Illyrica elected a new leadership at its general assembly on 3 March 1858. Ivan Mažuranić (1814-1890) became the president. He was a poet and politician, and later served as the Croatian Ban. He remained in charge for fourteen years, until 1872. The new secretary was Adolf Veber Tkalčević (1825-1889), and the vice-presidents were Matija Mesić (who headed the literary committee) and Mijo Krešić (a merchant who headed the business committee). The Matrix was in flux, and neither Ivan Kukuljević nor Petar Preradović were re-elected to the board. The new leadership decided to compile a condensed

¹¹ Ibid, p. 29.



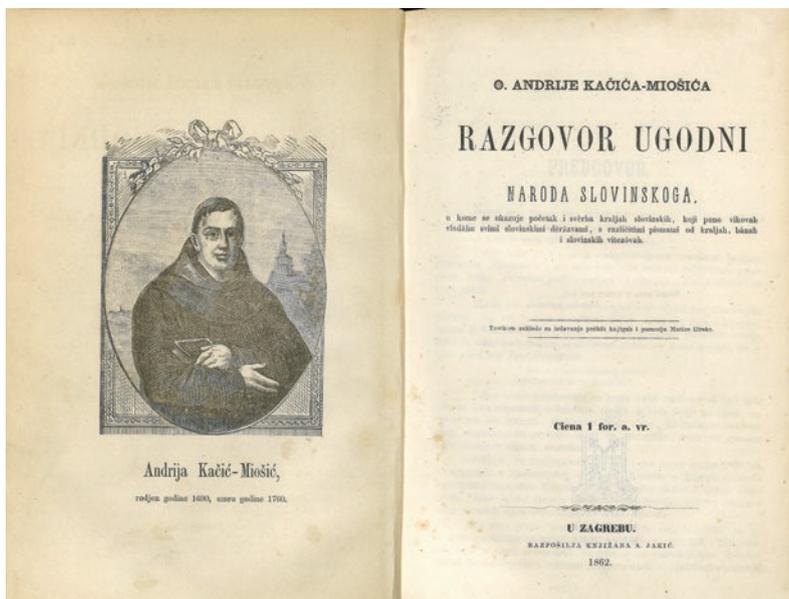
Ivan Mažuranić, painted by Joso Bužan

report on the organisation's work and finances from 1 January 1854 to 31 December 1857, to make an inventory of its holdings, and draw up a plan to improve its work. However, the new board did not arrive at any better solutions to strengthen publishing, because as before, it simply waited for writers to show up and submit books. Bogoslav Šulek offered the second part of his botany textbook, the first part of which had been published in Vienna in 1856, following his efforts (and those of Jelačić) to provide textbooks in the natural sciences for Croatian children in their own language. "Biljarstvo" (Botany) was the title of the second part, and the Matrix's members were given both parts in 1859 (the second part was printed by the Matrix, and enough copies of the first part were purchased to satisfy the members). Šulek aptly described the kind of battles that raged at that time; "Botany is perhaps the only branch of science that our young people can be taught or can teach themselves in their native tongue, since all others are provided in foreign languages."¹² In 1860, Ivan Mažuranić was appointed Chancellor of the Croatian Court Office in Vienna and was no longer able to attend meetings of Matrix Illyrica's bodies, not even the general assembly, though he was again elected its president. In 1862, Matrix Dalmatica was established in Zadar, as Matrix Illyrica was unable to operate there, even though its publications were widely read. Its founding president was Božidar Petranović. He conducted a similar programme, with similar regulations to Matrix Illyrica. The following year (1863), it released *Narodni koledar (National Caroller)* magazine, which was published until 1910. In 1869, Matrix Illyrica celebrated the centenary of the death of Andrija Kačić Miošić

¹² Ibid, p. 35.



Bogoslav Šulek



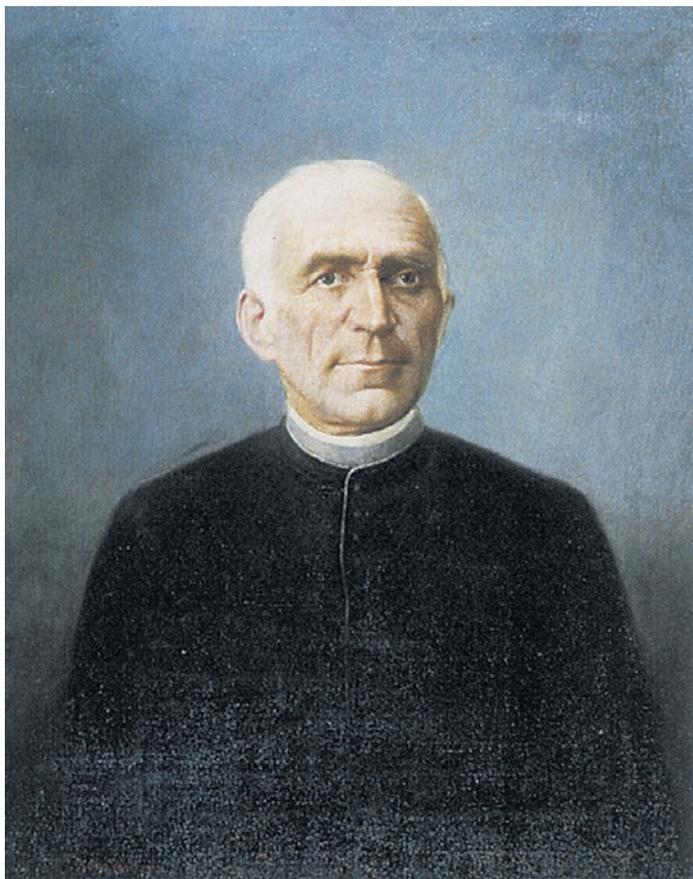
Andrija Kačić Miošić, *Razgovor ugodni naroda slovinskoga*, 1862

by printing 4,000 copies of his *Razgovor ugodni naroda slovinskog* (*Pleasant Conversation of the Slavic People*). It had first been published in 1862 and sold at the price of one forint per copy. This was intended to convey the message that the book must be priced low in order for it to spread to parts of Croatia where it was little known. The Matrix also began its translation activities in 1862. Works by popular German writer Joachim Heinrich Campe (1746-1818), *Lines from the Life of Columbus, or the Discovery of America* (translated by Božidar Budinjački) and *Cortes, or the Discovery of America* (translated by Tadija Smičiklas) were followed in 1863 by *Pizarro, or the Discovery of America* (translated

by Božidar Budinjački). In fact, Božidar Budinjački was the pseudonym of Vaso Bratelj, who translated other books for the Matrix in later years. In 1864, the *First Dalmatian-Croatian-Slavonian Exhibition* was held in front of the Rectorate of the University of Zagreb, where various products, including books, were displayed. Matrix Illyrica was awarded a silver medal for being “the first promoter of our books and the centre of our literary life: the only true publisher”.¹³ The 300th anniversary of the death of Nikola Šubić Zrinski was commemorated in 1866. Matrix Illyrica published its most important scholarly work thus far, *The Life and Death of Nikola Zrinski, Hero of Siget*, by Matija Mesić. *The Star of Zrinski: the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Hero of Siget*, containing three poetic works in honour of the “Croatian Leonides” was also published. The authors were Ivan Trnski, Vladislav Vezić and Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski. This year was a fruitful one, as the third volume of Vraz’s collected works was also released. The leaders of the Matrix were now well prepared to answer complaints that too few titles had appeared. In 1869, the first issue of *Vienac* was released, with the subtitle “Entertainment and Learning”. A large number of important Croatian writers were involved. Its first editor was Đuro Deželić, who was succeeded by Ivan Perkovac, Ivan Dežman, Franjo Marković, and Vjekoslav Klaić. *Vienac* soon became the most important Croatian literary magazine, and it remained unchallenged up to the end of the 19th century. In his first editorial, Đuro Deželić wrote to its readers;

Whatever any other entertainment journal might boast, you shall find in ours as well, along with superb poems and stories,

¹³ Ibid, p. 39.



Matija Mesić, painted by Joso Bužan

as well as translations of both, educational articles on the theatre, on the education of young women, on skills of all kinds, on the progress and ails of our dear homeland, on movements and

trends in domestic and foreign literature, and all manner of fine and pleasant things.¹⁴

In the sixth issue in February 1869, Vatroslav Jagić addressed the readers on behalf of *Matrix Illyrica*.

Matrix Illyrica, desiring through its annual production to be of as much service as possible to Croatian literature, and in line with its conviction and dedication to thoughtful patriotism, has decided that, in the current literary state of affairs, it is most necessary to support the development of the belles-lettres to promote popular entertainment. So the idea has arisen to publish a suitable magazine at our own expense, in which the hands of many writers will participate, and their efforts systematically and unconditionally rewarded in a way hitherto unknown in our literature. ... So *Matrix Illyrica* will endeavour, as far as it can, to facilitate the publication of excellent writing, which will elevate and advance our literature on the one hand, and open new paths to our national literature and win it new friends on the other.¹⁵

Nearly every important Croatian writer of the time contributed to the first years of *Vienac*, including August Šenoa, Ivan Trnski, Josip Eugen Tomić, Ivan Dežman, Ivan Perkovac, Blaž Lorković, Adolff Veber Tkalčević, Franjo Marković, and Đuro Arnold.

In 1872, the general assembly elected historian Matija Mesić (1826-1878) as its new president. Although he had been a member since 1858, he remained in the post for only two years, as he was elected rector of the newly-founded University of Zagreb in 1874. In *Vienac* no. 30 (1874), Tadija

¹⁴ *Vienac: zabavi i pouci*, no. 1, 23. 1. 1869, p. 24.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, no. 6, 27/2/1869, p. 144.

VIENAC

ZABAVI I POUCL.

Broj I.

U ZAGREBU DNE 23. SIEČNJA 1869.

God. I.

Izlazi svake subote, — Godišnja cijena 6 for.; poštom i danatim u kuću 7 for. — Rakopisi se ne vraćaju.

Zabava: Pjerna na vienac — Kolčina-jarsa — Boga — Pavla — Puka: O pjesni — Naše kazalište — Spragovot „Vp“. — Kojicevost: Živi li, napredje li naša kojicevost. — Polakice. — Poziv na predstavi.

Pjesma uz vienac.

Spijeva ju I. T.



Ajte, cvieće da beremo,
Dok nam krasni cviet se mili;
Ajte, vienac da vijemo,
Dok se niesmo zemlji svili!

Al po izbor dajte cvieća,
Vriedna oči zamamiti,
Da nam bude dika veća
Vienac sestram ponuditi!

Dajte smilja ponajviše
I bosilja mirisnoga,
Da iz vienca duša diše
Običaja narodnoga.

Dajte ruže napupile,
Jer na ruže nalikuju
Našeg roda čerke mile,
Ruže ljubav naslućuju.

I ljubice dajte sinje,
Skromne, čedne poniznice,
Slike čudi golubinje
A i nade tješilice!

I tratora i djurdjice
Vratizelje, dragomilja,
Miloduha, nizalice,
Perunike i kovilja.

I božura i nevena,
I naliepa i netika
Krasna cvata i imena,
Nek je slika i prilika!

I čajovko duhovite
Dajte braćo pjesmoplodna,
Da plemkinjo plemenite
Što u vienac nadju srodna.

A uz cvietak dragocieni
Jagodice vrzte zrele,
Veselo se da erljjeni
I slast nudja omiljelju!

I po koju vlat pšenice
Uvijte mi pored cvieta,
Da u vienac golubice
Nadju zrnce mudra svjeta.

A trobojnom i trostrukom
Vrpcom vienac zapletimo,
Te ga liepom preporukom
U rod mili naputimo.

Vij se vienće ugodice
Oko mladog naraštaja,
Oko srea ljepotice,
Da ju cvieće s rodom spaja!

Vij se vienće oko živih
I pokojnih ljubimaca,
Da nam ponos pobudljivi
Spojiš s dikom praotaca!

Kô što tvomu kolobaru
Kraja nitko nesmislio:
Tako našem sloznu maru
Viek se nikad nedovio!

Smičiklas assessed the work of Matrix Illyrica to date, as well as its future (under a new, Croatian name).

During that first period, when it was possible for Illyrian writers to find themselves in daily conversation about the people's welfare at the Reading Room; when the Matrix was the only institution from which books and teaching for the Croatian people issued; at that time, the Matrix was a true academy. This changed when the 'Illyrian Circle' widened significantly, and particularly when other societies arose, when the entire national society changed completely after 1848. Since then, the Matrix has been no more than a publisher, but one that has formed the main pillar of Croatian literature. It is enough for me to mention *Neven*, *Književnik*, and *Vienac*. Yet there were gaps in its life when it did not publish any periodicals, when its members asked – is the Matrix still alive? Many patriots have long been troubled by the notion of how to inject some life into its dealings, to ensure its progress, and to make it more fruitful and productive. This is now the task of Matrix Croatica. Matrix Croatica must be what Matrix Illyrica was in its inception: a living academy. We hope that it will be just that, with the support of a broader circle and a greater number of workers.¹⁶

¹⁶ Tadija Smičiklas, Franjo Marković, *Matica hrvatska od godine 1842. do godine 1892*, Zagreb 1892, p. 43.

THE SECOND PERIOD (1874-1917)

The presidents during this period were Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski (1874–1889), Tadija Smičiklas (1889–1901), Ivan Trnski (1901–1902), Đuro Arnold (1902–1908), and Oton Kučera (1909–1917).

The final general assembly of Matrix Illyrica was held on 29 November 1874, when the organisation was renamed Matrix Croatica. Politician, historian, and writer Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski (1816-1889) was elected president. Smičiklas explained the name change as follows:

We acknowledge that, thirty years ago, the Illyrian name reflected the nation, and even more than this, as it brought together the scattered limbs of the people into a single living body; we acknowledge that the best, most enthusiastic period of Croatian history flourished under this name. But the entire nation has buried the name, and even we cannot now build a temple to it. The name Croatica is stronger and summons Croats to gather beneath the national flag; it promotes national awareness, and is spoken aloud with every breath the people take.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 44.

Kukuljević invested great efforts, and largely succeeded, in making *Matrix Croatica* an effective initiator of artistic and scientific creativity, an institution that was not closed, but instead gladly received influence from abroad. Within two years, the *Matrix*'s publishing activities began to flourish, and during Kukuljević's presidency, more than 120 important works came out; anthologies, translations, scientific works, and works by Croatian writers. Another important moment came in 1874 with the appointment of August Šenoa, a talented writer and dedicated patriot, as the editor of *Vienac*. Franjo Marković assessed Šenoa's editorship in these words in 1892:

Since Šenoa took over as editor of *Vienac* early in 1874, and in fact right up to his death, almost each issue has borne the imprint of his great spirit, his singular working energy, and his broad intellectual horizons. Alongside beautiful poems, novellas, and novels, Šenoa has included a host of critical articles about national theatre, national art, and literature, interesting sketches from Croatia's past, particularly that of Zagreb, witty feuilletons from our own educational and social life, and pithy notes from Southern and Northern Slavic literature, etc. Everywhere his eye has caught the wide horizon of everything Croatian and the Slavic intellectual life in general.

He has welcomed each new force in Croatian literature with joy, generously met and advised new writers, and brought a good number of them into the literary world through *Vienac*, encouraged them with his words, and won them over with his wonderful works for the nation's education."¹⁸

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 199.



Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, painted by Albert Moses

At the general assembly in 1875, Kukuljević Sakcinski spoke about the pause in the Matrix's work and in the development of Croatian culture in general. He criticised the Croatian aristocracy and citizenry for their negligence, emphasised that writers had too little time to spend on literature, and praised individuals from the Military Frontier and the priesthood who had helped the Matrix. Ivan Kostrenčić (1844-1924) was elected treasurer in 1877 and secretary in 1878. He continued to serve as treasurer for 25 years. It would be difficult to find a better example in the Matrix's history of a person so skilled in raising funds and managing them wisely. Smičiklas said, "Today, we all know that our secretary and treasurer does not spare his own health and has dedicated his life's energy to this organisation, alongside his official work. Our entire nation knows this too. It is evident from the thousands of letters, notices and encouragements inviting people to join the Matrix, and they have come from all over the world, wherever Croats live."¹⁹

On 17 December 1876, a special general assembly was held at which some board members tendered their resignations and asked to be replaced by younger people, as "the future successful work of our literary institute, which has recently been revived under a new name, again requires new intellectual forces".²⁰ From the minutes, it is not clear who actually resigned and who was newly elected. Kukuljević gave a speech full of fervent messages, which to a large extent outlined the Matrix's basic national plan of action and work. He emphasised that he wanted to

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 47.

²⁰ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, p. 99



Ivan Kostrenčić

“alert young members of the fact that this institute, just like the entire literary and political national revival movement in our homeland, progressed quite successfully at its outset exclusively because everyone worked with enthusiasm, friendly understanding, mutual consultation, and open, noble conduct;

however, when –albeit veiled – the loose passions, secret plotting malicious taunts and slander of certain workers began to occur, strength began to drain on all sides, and occasionally, complete chaos ensued.

The greatest inherent fault of our nation, which is quite conservative by nature, is that it lacks perseverance and consistency, it is prone to actions that raise the passions, and when it is forced to be patient, it either falls into lethargy or ill-considered, dangerous scheming. I am convinced that none of us wishes our organisation to fall into the same trap, as our noble task is to lead the Croatian nation to enlightenment and towards general well-being and progress, to elevate it to a proud place at the table at which the educated nations around us sit.”²¹

At the general assembly held on 30 January 1877, Kukuljević Sakcinski tendered his resignation as president, because “at the special general assembly, and in public, voices had been raised against him, as though he were responsible for the organisation’s failings, and he asked that his successor be elected at the next session”. However, he retracted his resignation at the unanimous request of the members of the board .

The Matrix published translations of Jules Verne’s *From the Earth to the Moon* and *Around the Moon* in 1875 and *Around the World in Eighty Days* in 1876. In the following period, a large number of translations of works by world-famous authors were published, including Anderson, George Sand, Edmond de Amicis, Turgenev, Pushkin, Shevchenko, Goethe, Sienkiewicz, etc.

²¹ Ibid.



Jules Verne, *Izvanredna putovanja*, translated by Tomo Maretić, 1876

The publication of Croatian folk songs was discussed. The Matrix received many collections as donations, the first of which came from its president, Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski. In 1878, a ‘Call for the collection of Croatian folk songs’ was announced, written by Tadija Smičiklas. The result was extraordinary; collections arrived from across the Croatian lands (from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina). They were later entrusted to the South Slavic Academy of Sciences and Arts (today Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts) for safekeeping and study. After the renaming, Matrix Croatica began to create a network of commissaries, whose task was to increase membership and sell as many books as possible. There were 54 of these commissaries in 1877; by

the following year, there were 81, and later there were several hundred.

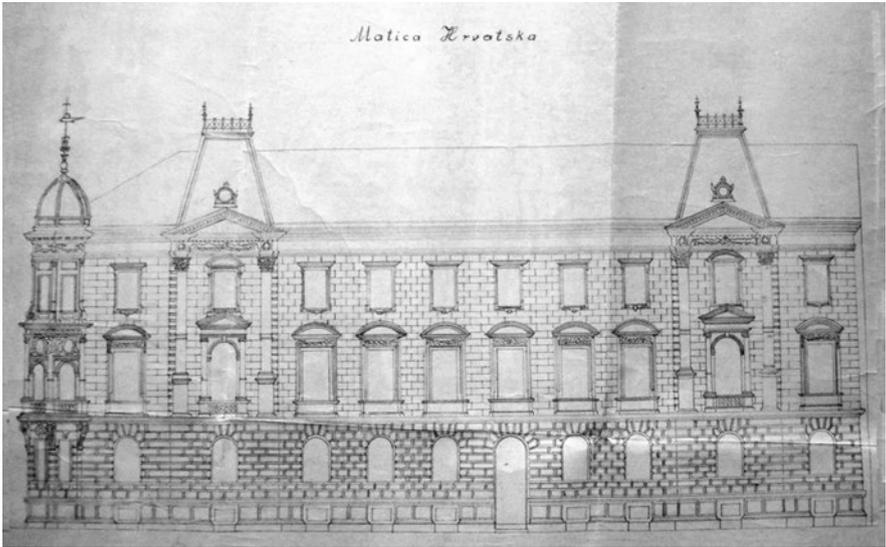
As the great European powers had given Austro-Hungary a mandate to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina at the 1878 Congress of Berlin, Ivan Kostrenčić immediately proposed that the Matrix publish a book about Bosnia, and suggested Vjekoslav Klaić write it. He accepted, and *Bosna. Podaci o zemljopisu i povijesti Bosne i Hercegovine (Bosnia. On the Geography and History of Bosnia and Herzegovina)* was published in 1878. A greater sense of need was felt to depict the history and current state of particular Croatian areas, so this first work was followed by Radoslav Lopašić's *Karlovac. Poviest i mjestopis grada i okolice (Karlovac. A History and Description of the Town and Surroundings)* and other similar books. One of the crowning achievements of the Matrix's publishing activities at the time was Smičiklas's 500-page *Poviest hrvatsku, Dio drugi godine 1526. do 1848. (A History of Croatia, Part Two, 1526-1848)*, which was released in 1879. Many considered Smičiklas's work the first critical synthesis of Croatian history. At the general assembly held on 22 May 1879, Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski held a keynote speech in which he stressed,

Truth be told, political circumstances have never favoured the Croatian nation as they have other, more advanced nations, which have been able to use their more fortunate positions to further their literature in the fields of all branches of sciences. The divided nature of our regions, the religious divisions amongst our people, the use of different scripts, the powerful influence of other cultures on everything – particularly in the upper echelons of society – and our constant subjugation to the rule of others have prevented us from developing a national spirit and our national literature from flourishing, and this continues even today.

My intent is not to discuss the various obstacles that hinder our work for our nation, but simply to caution against these disadvantages, prompting all those who work with literature to be more persistent so that we might better our nation. For I believe that it is only upon literature that we can freely and unhindered build the foundations of a basic future and the greatness of our nation. (...) In addition to astute diplomats and military leaders, writers are called first and foremost to determine the fate of the nation, to sow seeds in the fields of spiritual work, which must bear fruit for all future ages.²²

In 1882, the Matrix first began to publish works of classical Greek and Roman literature, which would later become its trademark. Tomo Maretić edited Homer's *Odyssey*, and Adolf Veber Tkalčević edited Sallust's *The Conspiracy of Catiline* and *The Jugurthine War*. Earlier efforts were renewed to publish more works of Slavic literature (Pushkin, Turgenev, and Kraszewski). In 1885, the Matrix numbered 6,200 members, the highest number to date. Over several years, the government granted 2,000 forints annually for the publication of classics and folk songs (it seems this can be greatly attributed to the good relationship between President Kukuljević and Chancellor Ivan Mažuranić). A subcommittee to build a home for Matrix Croatica had been long operating, and it was concluded that the Matrix should submit an application to the city authorities regarding a plot of land on Zrinski Square in March of 1886. The land was allocated to the Matrix free of charge, and at the general assembly on 2 May 1886, it was decided to build a two-storey building

²² *Matica hrvatska 1842-1962*, edited by Josip Bratulić, Zagreb 1997, p. 23-24.



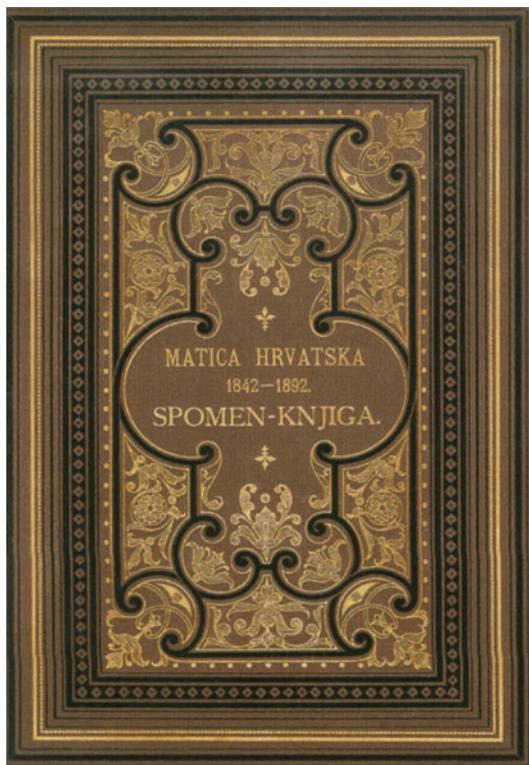
Matica's palace, the main façade. Ferdo Kondrat, november 1886

according to an existing design at a cost of 70,000 forints. Ferdo Kondrat, president of the Engineers' Club, was appointed as the architect. The building was slated for completion by the end of 1886, with the aim of making it available to the Matrix by the end of July 1887. At a meeting on 13 May 1887, the secretary was authorised to move the Matrix's books into the new building, and the board members decided to purchase new furniture, as the Matrix did not have any. On 1 August 1889, Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski passed away. At his memorial service, Ivan Kostrenčić said that when Kukuljević became president, the assets of the Matrix amounted to 30,000 forints, but that at the time of his death, its assets included a building valued at 60,000 forints and cash in the same amount. Of course, material indicators



Tadija Smičiklas, painted by Zlatko Šulentić

were not the only arbiters of value –publishing activities had far exceeded those of former times. On 15 December, the general assembly elected a new governing body. At its head was Tadija Smičiklas (1843-1914), a historian and university professor. The literature committee was led by Eugen Tomić, and the business committee by Radoslav Lopašić.



Spomen-knjiga Matice hrvatske, 1892

Ivan Kostrenčić continued to hold the post of secretary-treasurer. In 1891, a competition was announced for additions to the Matrix building, and the best tenders were accepted in June this same year. Ferdo Kondrat was again selected as chief engineer. In May 1852, the building was completed and its house rules compiled. This was a particularly significant way of celebrating the Matrix's 50th anniversary. A memorial book, *the Matrix hrvatska od godine 1842. do*

godine 1892 (Matrix Croatica, 1842-1892) was published. The first part, 'The History of Matrix Croatica' was written by the president, Smičiklas, and the second, 'Prominent members of the Matrix Croatica Board' by Smičiklas (who wrote about Janko Drašković, Ivan Mažuranić, Matija Mesić, Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski, Vjekoslav Babukić, Ivan Nepomuk Drašković, Dušan Kotur, Antun Mažuranić) and Franjo Marković (who wrote about August Šenoa, Janko Jurković, Stanko Vraz, and Adolfo Veber Tkalčević). Thus, in addition to a history of the Matrix, readers were provided with several solid portraits of its members. The Matrix was doing well in organisational and financial terms: in 1892 it had 9,117 members and published nine titles with an average run of 9,000 copies, all of which sold out quickly. The regular general assembly for 1894 was held on 23 June 1895. President Smičiklas expressed his great satisfaction with the Matrix's success.

The numerosity of this organisation's members makes it possible to state that it resides in the heart of the entire nation, and that the majority of the nation feels every fortune and misfortune that befalls it. This is a great solace to us, as we can see that the Croatian people are becoming a conscious society that acknowledges the burning need for united, strong progress worthy of the name and honour of an advancing nation.²³

He cautioned that, with this in mind, criticism should be both sought and heeded, and that situations should be avoided in which the Matrix might hinder national progress.

²³ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matiea hrvatske 1842-1962*, Zagreb 1962, p. 119-120.

In 1895, it was noted that Matrix Croatica had provided Croatian society with a million books since its inception.²⁴ At the general assembly held on 26 June 1898, Smičiklas responded to complaints by younger members, who wanted to see a much greater variety of world literature in Croatia. He told them that a unified Croatian society had yet to be formed, that the nation was fragmented at the state level, and that a citizenry that would “give the nation strength” was only being created.²⁵ On 25 June 1898, a group of writers in the literary committee under the name of *Mladi (the Youth)* sent a copy of the rules of their future literary organisation to the authorities for approval, and this was discussed heavily in the Matrix during this same year. The Matrix wanted to prove that all were welcome under its roof (both literally and metaphorically). In late October of 1899, the Matrix invited 60 writers to a meeting, however the total attendance was only 19, including the members of the board. Kostrenčić asked whether literary meetings were actually necessary within the Matrix, and if so, what form they should take. He also asked those present about the need for or usefulness of public lectures. After some discussion (Tadija Smičiklas, Petar Tomić, August Harambašić, Ante Tresić Pavičić, Jovan Hranilović, Milan Grlović, Robert Pinter, Nikola Andrić, Đuro Deželić), it was concluded that a literary organisation such as the one envisaged could not organise its activities on the Matrix’s premises, nor could it consist only of the Matrix’s writers. Deželić proposed that all writers should be consulted to see “how a pan-Croatian literary organisation could be created in Zagreb”. It should be mentioned that the

²⁴ Ibid, p. 121.

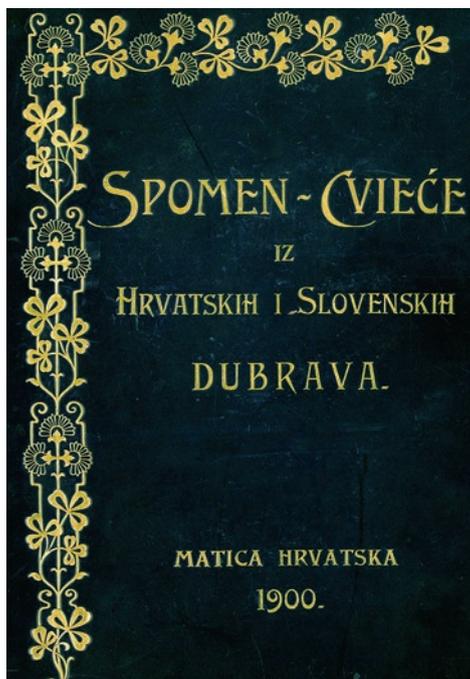
²⁵ Ibid, p. 123.

Croatian Writers' Club began operating informally in 1897. The proposed rules for a separate literary organisation were rejected, so the various factions met on 11 October 1899 and concluded that such an organisation should be founded ("generally and jointly"). The Matrix acted as an arbiter in disagreements between the Old Guard - who founded their worldview on religious and family values, and contended that the national identity should be built upon these values - and the Youth. The new rules of the literary organisation were submitted on 24 October 1899 and approved by the government on 17 March 1900. The founding assembly of the Croatian Writers' Association was held on 22 April 1900 in the Matrix Croatica Palace, and its first president, Ivan Trnski, was elected. After this point, Matrix Croatica and the Croatian Writers' Association cooperated as two independent institutions. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Josip Juraj Strossmayer's appointment as bishop (1900), a commemorative edition in his honour was published by the Matrix, *Spomen-cvijeće iz hrvatskih i slovenskih dubrava (A Memorial Flower from the Croatian and Slovenian Woods)* with the bishop's portrait, 18 art reproductions, and 29 illustrations in the line text itself. It contained 68 contributions by 47 Croatian and 21 Slovenian writers and cultural and scientific workers across 655 pages, and featured a preface by the Matrix's president Tadija Smičiklas. The contributors were the leading names in Slovenian and Croatian cultural circles. In 1901, the Matrix marked the 400th anniversary of the first edition of Marko Marulić's *Judita* by republishing it with original illustrations by Oton Iveković and Celestin Medović. At the general assembly held on 21 July 1901, Smičiklas announced that he had been elected president of the South Slavic Academy of Sciences and Arts and would



Ivan Trnski, painted by Joso Bužan

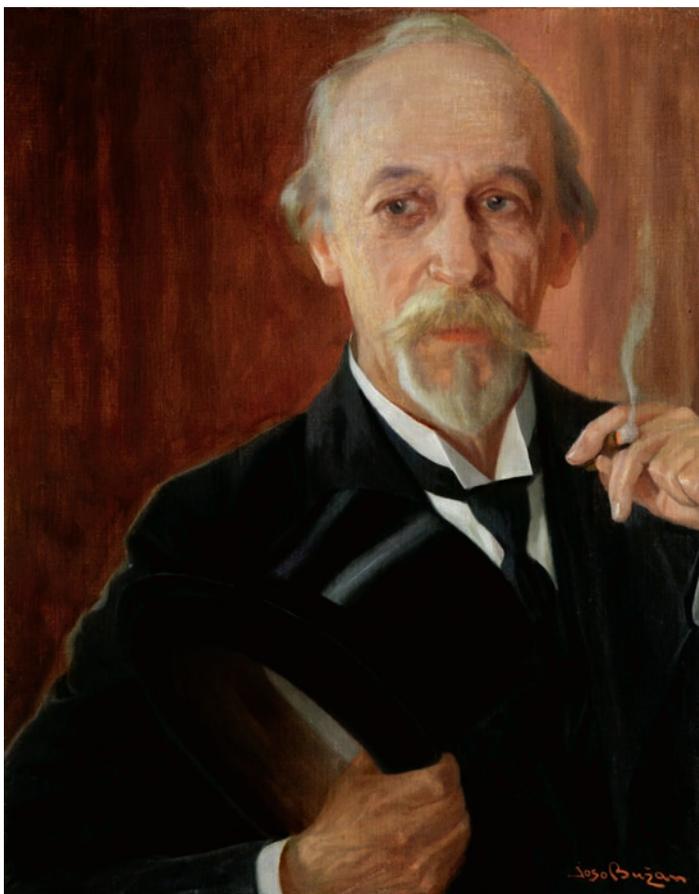
be resigning from his duties at the Matrix, which he had served in different roles for 28 years. His successor was Ivan Trnski (1819-1910), who had already been elected president of the Croatian Writers' Association. He was over eighty years old, and served as president of the Matrix for only a



Spomen-cvieće, 1900

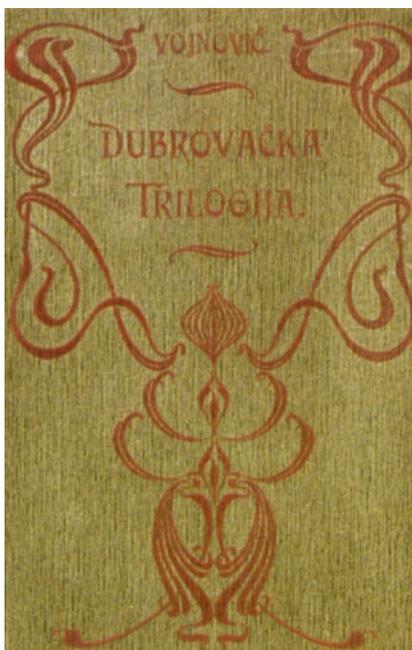
year. In 1902, philosopher, educator, and writer Đuro Arnold (1853-1941) was elected president. At the general assembly held on 13 July 1902, he gave an important speech outlining his policies:

Matrix Croatica exists to bring together the entire Croatian nation culturally. But where today is the man or institution to deal exclusively with literacy among the entire Croatian people? Or perhaps we do not need to know how to read? If we do, who is to collect the material, process it, and provide it to the people at an affordable price if not the Matrix? (...) Who will present the



Đuro Arnold, painted by Joso Bužan

image and demonstrate the value of the entire Croatian lands if not the Matrix? (...) In short, gentlemen, I fear that we are still foreigners in our own lands and amongst our own people, in the field of our deliberation and work. It is foreigners who teach us about our own circumstances and issues to further alienate us



Ivo Vojnović, *Dubrovačka trilogija*, 1902

from our home and people. But I say to you: fair be the nature of the whole planet and the beauty of the whole world – but for us, the Croatian homeland and the Croatian people come first.²⁶

In 1902, the Matrix published Ivo Vojnović's significant *Dubrovačka trilogija* (*Dubrovnik Trilogy*), and published six of his books during his lifetime. In the same year, *Djevojački svijet – Izabrane pripoviesti čeških spisateljica* (*The Woman's World – Selected Stories by Czech women writers*) came out,

²⁶ *Enciklopedija Matice hrvatske*, vol. 1, Zagreb 2015, p. 136.

edited by the young Stjepan Radić. At the general assembly held in 1903, Arnold gave an interesting speech on the freedom of artistic creativity. He agreed that books should be dealt in national issues, but warned that it was possible to write about victories, the homeland and its adversaries in an unpatriotic spirit. He was apparently responding to criticisms, as he went on to say, “Whoever observes poetry or works of art in a perverse mood or with hysterical excitement will find a heated, unhealthy atmosphere everywhere – simply because he has brought it with him.”²⁷ Arnold’s speech was criticised by clergyman Ante Alfirević (under the pseudonym “the Guardian from the Adriatic”), the editor of *Hrvatska straža*, a magazine of the Croatian Catholic movement founded at the time, headed by Bishop Antun Mahnič. Alfirević maintained that Đuro Arnold’s speech had been a response to those who had criticised *Vienac* because it “trampled on faith and morals”.²⁸ The circle surrounding *Hrvatska straža* demanded that the Matrix withdraw its support for *Vienac*, which was edited by Ksaver Šandor Đalski and Milivoj Dežman at the time. The same critics attacked the Matrix’s books for the naturalism and liberalism they found in them, more so because the Old Guard was dominant in the Matrix’s administration at the time. On the Croatian social scale, it seems that the Old Guard belonged to the moderates. At the general assembly on 16 October 1904, Arnold spoke about understanding and judging literary history.

The nation does not exist for writers and literature, rather writers and literature exist for the nation. The least the people can

²⁷ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, Zagreb 1962, p. 132.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

expect of writers is that they should be understandable, and this will only happen if their works truly reflect their opinions and feelings. I am afraid that, in this sense, we have set ourselves at too great a distance from the nation, and that we cannot continue to blame the lack of interest in good books on illiterate, estranged minds.

He added,

Or perhaps some believe that *l'art pour l'art*, that gospel of artistic freedom, is something other than egoism transferred to the field of art.²⁹

Đuro Arnold attributed particular value to oral folk creativity, which, alongside “historical material” and the life of the nation “as lived in the villages and towns”, should be the main source for contemporary writers. Some writers did not agree with him (most of whom belonged to the Young Guard), and at a special general assembly held in 1904, they sent him this message:

The undersigned Croatian writers, starting from the standpoint that Matrix Croatica, as a national institution and property of the entire nation, must be the faithful mirror of our entire contemporary intellectual life, and not a stage for only one literary current, reject the unilateral statement by the president of Matrix Croatica as contrary to an understanding of true patriotic duty and freedom of artistic creativity among all cultured nations of our time.³⁰

²⁹ Ibid, p. 133.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 136.



Matica's palace in the early 20th century



The statement was signed by many writers, including some whose works had been regularly published in the Matrix. However, this dissent had not begun with Arnold's speech, nor had his speech addressed the main reasons for its existence. These were more to do with seeking new paths, the publishing of *Vienac*, etc. Milivoj Dežman, Josip Pasarić, Đuro Šurmin, Milan Ogrizović, and even vice-president (head of the business committee) Ksaver Šandor Đalski all tendered their resignations. In any case, Đalski had not got on well with his fellow vice-president and literary committee head Vjekoslav Klaić, nor with Antun Radić and some others. Their disagreements were of a political nature, because Đalski promoted "cultural unity among the Southern Slavs"³¹, seeing this as the only way to develop books in the native language for fear of a flood of texts in German and Italian. Klaić, who was close to the Croatian Party of Rights, thought otherwise.

The minutes of the Matrix's governing bodies had so far shown no trace of direct political confrontation. However, in 1907, Antun Radić opposed the printing of Matija Lisičar's prose "because this writer has shown that he is not a Croat and hates all things Croatian, and secondly, because there would be hardly anything left of his novellas if the immoral and vulgar parts were left out, as suggested by the reviewer, our board member Professor Pinter."³² The other board members paid little attention to Radić's words, but agreed with Pinter that Lisičar's prose needed some improvement. Lisičar is found among the Matrix's authors only in 1910. In fact, he was the person to whom Antun Gustav Matoš

³¹ Ibid, p. 137.

³² Ibid, p. 142.

dedicated his poem *Pri svetom kralju (Before the Holy King)*, which contains the famous line “I dok je srca, bit će i Kroacije” (So long as our hearts beat, there will be a Croatia).Recent historical research has shown that Lisičar played an important role on behalf of Croatia in border negotiations with Hungary after World War I. In 1908, the Matrix published a lavish edition of *Posljednji Zrinski i Frankopani (The Last Zrinskis and Frankopans)*, with contributions by (among others) Vjekoslav Klaić, Ferdo Šišić, Rudolf Horvat, Kerubin Šegvić, Emiliy Laszowski, and Oton Kučera. An important event occurred on 20 December 1908 in Split – the ‘Confidential Meeting of Croatian Writers’. Milan Begović convened this meeting of Croatian writers in Dalmatia, which was chaired by Dr. Ivo Tartaglia and had three items on its agenda. The first was the conflict between several Croatian writers and Matrix Croatica; it was concluded that the difficulties should be overcome, as they were of no benefit to anyone. The second item concerned Matrix Dalmatica. It was decided that a small library of publications should be launched, and that as soon as the conflict between the group of writers and Matrix Croatica was resolved, the two Matrices should be united. The third item concerned a periodical to be launched in Split in the form of a family review.³³ At the general assembly held on 25 March 1909, Oton Kučera (1857-1931), a mathematician, physicist, astronomer, and founder of the Zagreb observatory, was elected president of Matrix Croatica. He immediately delivered an account of the material state of the Matrix, which was negative and surprised many, as little remained of the institution’s earlier stable finances. At the very first

³³ Ibid, p. 143.



Oton Kučera, painted by Bela Čikoš Sesija

board meeting after his election, stabilisation measures were passed, including the stipulation that the Matrix would no longer offer advances, and that half of author's' fees would be paid when the book went to print, and half when it was released. The minutes show that it was extremely difficult to implement these decisions in practice. The new president

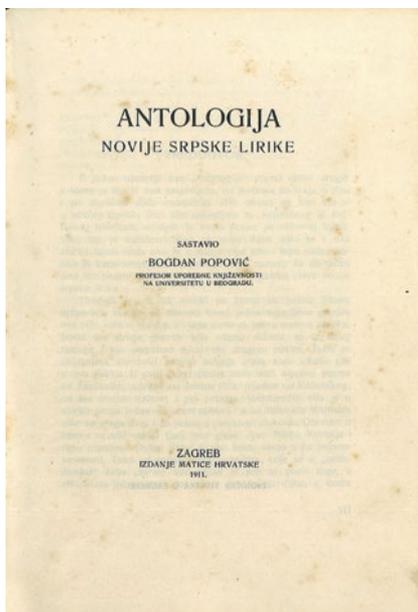
also set to work on resolving the conflict with the Croatian Writers' Association. His initiative was well received, however problems arose when specific issues were addressed. Both sides chose representatives for the negotiations. There were many changes in the mood and many statements issued in the press. Finally, the following statement was published in the last issue of *Glas Matice Hrvatske* (*Voice of Matrix Croatica*):

As this agreement removes all obstacles to the harmonious, united work of all Croatian writers, Matrix Croatica and the Croatian Writers' Association consider the conflict resolved. Therefore, there is no further need to publish *Glas Matice hrvatske*, and from now on, all official notices will be issued under the same name in *Savremenik* [*The Contemporary*].³⁴

This was obviously an attempt by the Matrix to help the Youth and their *Savremenik*, which was in difficulties; there was no other way for the Matrix to do so as it had scant material means at the time.

In 1911, debate intensified regarding the need for the Matrix to have its own printing house. Members frequently reminisced on their earlier success with the Matrix building, however times had changed; there was less and less enthusiasm in society at large, and perhaps less capability among the Matrix's leaders. Attempts were made to regulate the relationship between bookshops, publishers, and authors, and writers were told to always ask for receipts and report booksellers who refused to provide them. The year was an interesting one in terms of publishing. Bogdan Popović, professor of comparative literature at the University of Belgrade,

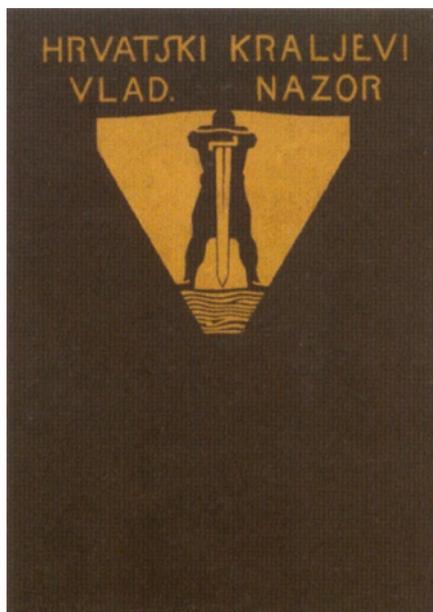
³⁴ Ibid, p. 146.



Antologija novije srpske lirike, 1911

edited *Antologija novije srpske književnosti* (*Anthology of Recent Serbian Literature*) which became quite popular.

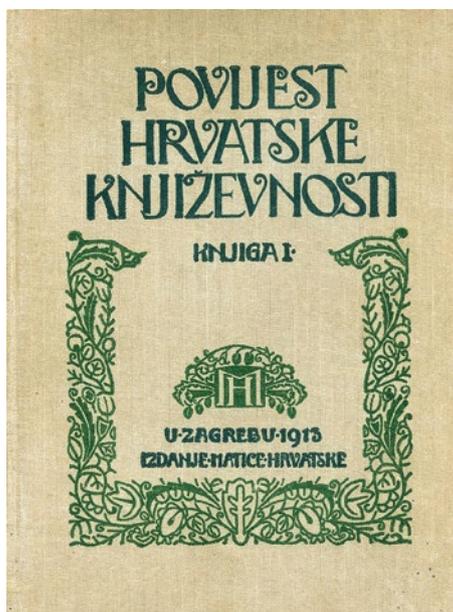
Matrix Croatica, Slovenian matrix and Serbian Matrix issued joint reports from the *South Slavic Cultural Organisations Fair* held in Ljubljana in 1910, at which Albert Bazala spoke about Matrix Croatica. In 1913, the Matrix had 11,112 members. The Matrix's commissaries sold 11,000 copies of its books in 40 days. Josip Marohnić of Pittsburgh ordered 1,000 copies of various editions. In 1935, Antun Barac wrote about the pre-war surge in the Matrix's publishing activities.



Vladimir Nazor, *Hrvatski kraljevi*, cover design by Ljubo Babić, 1912

Matrix Croatica was the most important factor in the distribution and sales of Croatian books. After its reorganisation in 1874, it succeeded in spreading hundreds of thousands of books among the people. Until 1874, when it was reorganised, it had only 400 members; this number had raised to 1,299 by 1877. By 1880, runs of its books had increased to 5,000 copies; in 1881, 6000; in 1891, 7,000; in 1892, 8,000; and in 1893, 9,000. This number continued to grow, reaching 12,000 in the pre-war years. All the efforts of private publishers in Croatia before the war pale in comparison to these numbers.³⁵

³⁵ Antun Barac, *Članci o književnosti*, Zagreb 1935, p. 110.



Branko Vodnik, *Povijest hrvatske književnosti*,
design by Tomislav Krizman, 1913

From 1912 on, Matrix Dalmatica functioned as a part of Matrix Croatica. Perhaps the most important of its publications in 1913, Vodnik's *Povijest hrvatske književnosti* (*History of Croatian Literature*) bears the inscription "A publication of Matrix Dalmatica. Published by Matrix Croatica". The same was true of Nazor's *Hrvatski kraljevi* (*Croatian Kings*) a year earlier. Clearly, the merger between the two Matrices was planned to be as painless as possible. On 25 June 1914, the last meeting of the administrative board before the outbreak of World War I was held, as the Ban's decree of 27 July 1914 halted the work of many

organisations, including Matrix Croatica. Its leaders met at conferences and were allowed to resolve “current issues”; on 21 November 1914, the Matrix’s board decided to issue a war loan to aid Croatian soldiers on the battlefields. The Matrix sought permission to resume at least some activities, and in 1915, it received permission to complete literary work that already begun, to undertake preparatory activities undertaken for future publishings, and to undertake tasks relating to the Matrix’s holdings. During the war, permission was granted twice (in 1915 and 1916) for meetings to be held “in the presence of a police commissioner”.³⁶ All the board members except one attended these meetings.

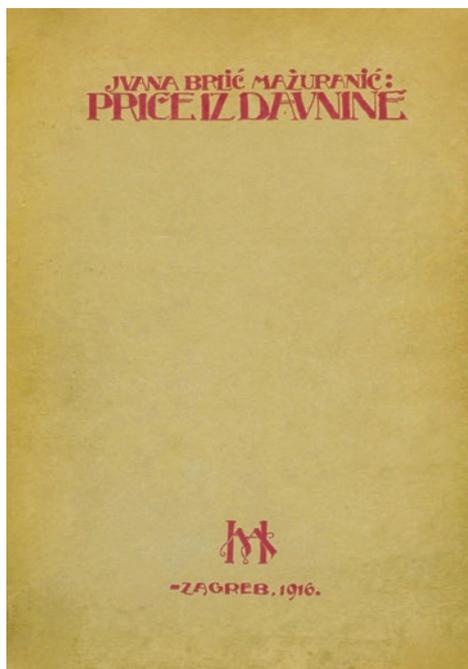
The Matrix received permission to return to its regular business according to its bylaws on 11 January 1917. The first board meeting was held on 5 February, and Kučera warned members that the times were grave, but that he was happy to report that the Matrix’s assets had been kept intact and many new books had been prepared for publishing. In spite of the difficult war years, several important books were published at that time: Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, Plato’s *Defence of Socrates and Phaedo*, Ferdo Šišić’s *Pregled povijesti hrvatskoga naroda od najstarijih dana do godine 1873 (Historical Review of the Croatian Nation from its Earliest Days to 1873)*, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić’s *Priče iz davnine (Croatian Tales of Long Ago)*, Homer’s *Odyssey*, and *An Anthology of Ancient Greek Lyric Poetry*. At a meeting on 5 February 1917, Kučera emphasised that the mandates of all board members had expired and a general assembly needed to be convened. It was held on 29 June 1917, on which occasion Kučera said:

³⁶ Izvještaji Matice hrvatske za godine 1914, 1915 i 1916, Zagreb 1917, p. 14.



Dante Alighieri, *Divine Comedy*, translated by Iso Kršnjavi,
cover design by Ljubo Babić, 1909

(...) We are still in the throes of a great war. We do not know when the peace we long for will come, or what it will be like. Nonetheless, we must even now think of our tasks, of what awaits us when peace is concluded. (...) The generation to come, which has the task of bringing culture to the world – true culture in which there will be both personal and public life, fortune and duty, effort and order, nature and spirit, two sides of the same being, when one will need to conceal nothing gentle and dear to one's soul if one wishes to live a full life. If this is true of the most cultured nations, it must be even more true of the Croatian people. Though we are small and modest,



Ivana Brlić Mažuranić, *Priče iz davnine*, 1916

our task now is to prepare the way for a new culture, as far as we can. (...) Forbearance, tolerance, and mutual respect must enter all parts of public life. Our adversaries must be equally acknowledged: until proved otherwise, let us assume that they are honest people, Croats who love their homeland. (...) Much of this will rely on the press. Let it be boldly said that the inner peace of the Croatian nation and healthy public opinion are in its own hands. After all the disappointments of this terrible war, I still have faith in humankind in general and in the Croatian people in particular. (...) In a word, first of all, human needs are very important to us, and when peace comes, we will need

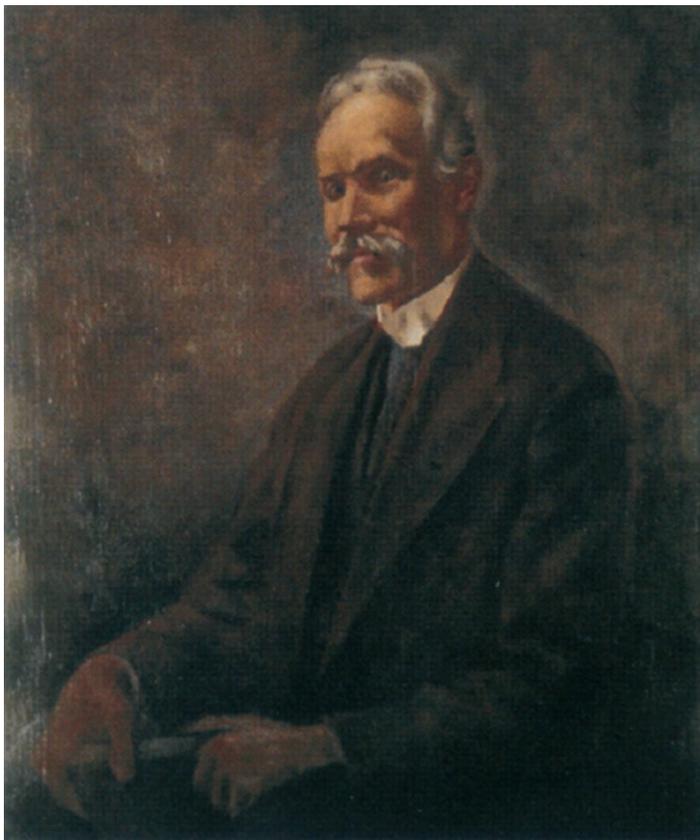
to redouble our efforts, as far as possible, if we wish to sustain our independent cultural nation and state. As people learn perseverance through consistent, thorough, good books with broad horizons, a great, wonderful task awaits Matrix Croatica in the immediate future, as the nursery of all learning and good, indigenous books. It was decreed that the best sons of the triune nation should come together in this task. Seventy-five years ago, the whole nation was summoned under the name of Illyrica, and how poorly understood this was outside Croatian circles! On our 75th anniversary, the idea of the national and cultural unity of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs has become nearly universal, and is proclaimed aloud even in the legislative bodies of the monarchy...³⁷

Secretary Albert Bazala addressed some complaints that the Matrix had failed to take into account the extraordinary times in which it was operating. However, the board had ensured that the Matrix's position in hard times remained unshaken, as was apparent from its financial indicators and publishing activities. In a series of interesting observations, he declared,

The time has passed when the majority of literary and scientific and educational production issued from Matrix Croatica. Today's literary circumstances demand the work be shared. Matrix Croatica must urgently decide how to respond to these circumstances. It is certain that neither its organisation as it is now, nor its cultural tasks, will allow it to become merely a publisher.³⁸

³⁷ Ibid, pp. 8-10.

³⁸ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matiea hrvatske 1842-1962*, p. 155.



Krsto Pavletić, painted by Zlatko Šulentić

Krsto Pavletić (1865-1919, the previous vice-president of the literature and arts committee, was elected president at this meeting. Writer Tugomir Alaupović (1879-1958) was elected secretary, editor, and administrator.

THE THIRD PERIOD (1917-1945)

The presidents during this period were Krsto Pavletić (1917–1919), Fran Tućan (1919–1920), Dragutin Domjanić (1921–1927), Albert Bazala (1927–1928), and Filip Lukas (1928–1945).

Many new ideas were presented to the Matrix, and it disseminated them. At a meeting held on 2 March 1918, the need for a work entitled *The Croatian Dictionary of Sciences and Arts* – a sort of national encyclopaedia – was raised once more. The board members were encouraged by a letter from the head of the regional government’s religion and teaching department, Milan Rojc, in which he requested the Matrix participate in a conference at the department building. Secretary Tugomir Alaupović attended and returned with the news that the regional government had decided to print the dictionary and take the technical and financial aspects of production upon itself. The government would decide on the scope of the work, the size of the run, the Croatian dialect to be used, the orthography, the script, and the price. Rojc asked the Matrix to recommend a Croatian public figure to be the editor-in-chief, and to delegate someone from its own ranks to work with representatives of the Academy and the Croatian Writers’ Association in the final assessment of all

edited items. At one meeting, Albert Bazala mentioned that there had already been discussion of a similar work in the Matrix and the Academy, that it involved rather complex issues concerning the choice of Croatian dialect and orthography, and – most interestingly – that he thought encyclopaedias were overrated and used rarely by scholars, and even less by laypeople. However, he stressed that such an encyclopaedia would be “the final result of all the knowledge and skills of one nation”.³⁹ The Matrix appointed Bazala as its representative for the project, and proposed Fran Tućan, Josip Pasarić, or Đuro Szabo as editor-in-chief. The project was a frequent point of discussion in the Matrix, and a special memorandum was passed at a meeting held on 8 March 1918 welcoming the government’s idea, but expressing the prevailing opinion that it would have to wait until the end of the war.

On 29 June 1918, the general assembly for 1917 was held, and a new tone could be discerned in the words of the president, Krsto Pavletić:

That the objection to Matrix Croatica on the grounds of a nationalism is unjustified can be proven by the board, which has selected members from all Croatian regions, awakening in them love for their language, their customs, their land, their history, and their name through books – in general, providing them education as the stoutest shield against the onslaught of others, who threaten us on every side. So as not to be isolated in this battle for our nationhood, we seek allies in our closest Serbian and Slovenian brethren, who are threatened by the same danger from the same enemy. Moreover, we seek intellectual support from our more distant kindred, the Czechs,

³⁹ Ibid, p. 159.

Poles, and Ruthenians, to withstand attack and preserve our Croatian individuality.

We want the name of Croatia to be cherished among the Slovenes and Serbs, just as they wish the Croats not to despise the names of Serbia and Slovenia. After such bitter experiences, we long for brotherly understanding and harmony, for a modest reconciliation is far better than a great battle. (...) We will not, even if we could, swallow the name of Serbia or Slovenia, nor they ours, because each nation's stomach and body would suffer, even without regard to external perils. Let us be satisfied that of our countless names – Kranjac, Gorenjac, Zagorac, Primorac, Morlak, Vlah, Dalmatin, Dubrovčanin, Bokelj, Hercegovac, Bošnjak, Šumadinac, Gejak, Mačvanin, Slavonac, Šokac, Bunjevac – only three remain: Slovene, Serb, and Croat. They stand as national emblems to which history has dedicated the blood, glory, and misfortunes of our forefathers, and the present has carved them deep into our hearts so that the future may not root them out. Let us not fear the steadfastness of our own name.⁴⁰

On 29 October 1918, the Croatian Parliament voted to join the independent State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs. On 5 November, the Matrix's board applauded the decision. "For the first time in the new state of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs... at a great watershed, the ideals of our national revivalists and the founders of Matrix Croatica are coming to fruition." Tugomir Alaupović left to become the Commissioner for the People's Education and Teaching in Herzeg-Bosnia, and writer and translator Iso Velikanović was elected secretary in his place.

At a meeting held on 25 November 1918, educator and writer Jure Turić, who was prominent in efforts to reform

⁴⁰ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1917.*, Zagreb, 1919, pp. 5-6.

Matrix Croatica, spoke of the changes he deemed necessary. He particularly advocated expanding the Matrix's publications to cover economic and social topics, and spoke in favour of each author having a mentor on the administrative board with whom they could establish a writing methodology before beginning to write. He was also strongly in favour of popularising science, as this would raise the level of general knowledge in Croatian society. The circle of member-writers needed to be expanded. Turić's ideas led to polemical discussions, as some people believed elements of his proposals limited freedom and individual work.

On the day of unification on 1 December 1918, the Matrix sent a telegram greeting Regent Alexander Karađorđević, in which it stated that it welcomed, "faithful to the sacred traditions of our founders, the first self-determined Yugoslavs in the Balkans, the unification of our triune nation into a strong political and cultural unity under the leadership of the illustrious and glorious house of Karađorđević." The Regent thanked them for their words, describing the Matrix as a Croatian organisation that had worked from its inception for the unification of "... our people in the Slavic South. Continue your work, spreading the healthy, mature seed of education and wisdom amongst broad swathes of our people. We must show our adversaries, who called us barbarians while we were dying for the freedom of Europe and European culture, that we can step forward in our new, united country, shoulder to shoulder with the most highly cultured of nations."⁴¹ The general assembly of Matrix Croatica for 1918 was held on 29 June 1919. Krsto Pavletić had died

⁴¹ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, p. 164.



Fran Tučan

some weeks earlier (on 9 April), so the meeting was chaired by Vice-President Fran Tučan (1878-1954), who was elected the new president. He was a well-known mineralogist and petrographer. He made a speech about the new opportunities to be welcomed, particularly cooperation with the Matrices of Slovenia and Serbia. (“The work of our Matrices should not be separate, but complementary, to meet national needs. This work must from here on be organised so that the three Matrices are not merged into one society, but such that each functions like the branch of a single tree, bearing the fruit of their work throughout our home from Soča to Vardar.”) He reminded his audience of the reputation *Matrix Croatica*

enjoyed among the people, and expressed the desire for the Matrix to elevate the people culturally as it had nationally.⁴² The regular editions of the Matrix in this year were printed in runs of 10,000 copies each, while special editions were printed in runs of 5,000. Although business operations were still difficult, sales were quite good.

At a board meeting in February 1920, a debate took place about the central government in Belgrade and its non-transparent distribution of support to writers and artists. The board sought ways to reduce protectionism and monitoring the situation.

The general assembly for 1919 was held in July 1920. President Tućan spoke of the high price and scarcity of paper:

(...) In spite of this, the Matrix has had an unusually industrious year, and while some Croatian cultural organisations have ceased releasing their publications, we have published several works that portray the direction that the Matrix intends to take in this new era. These works show that we have begun to complete the programme we developed when we took the Matrix's management into our own hands and, if circumstances allow, we are convinced that our work will be felt strongly among our people. (...)

I maintain that it would be superfluous to point out the importance of the sciences to the cultural and economic development of the nation, for this importance is felt at every step. If we wish to elevate and strengthen ourselves, we must embrace the programme left to us by the founders and reformers of Matrix Croatica. The new circumstances in which our united homeland finds itself require this now more than ever. The work of

⁴² *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1918.*, Zagreb, 1920, p. 13.

the Matrix once served to raise national awareness, allowing us to free ourselves from foreign influence, and we succeeded in doing so. Today, circumstances are different, and the work of the Matrix must support the cultural and economic development of our nation.⁴³

Secretary Iso Velikanović emphasised that he could hardly imagine worse circumstances for publishing, as the “endless rises in the price of paper, endless increases in printing costs, and the wild contest between the interests of workers and businesses in printing have forced publishing to a point where it must halt.”⁴⁴ The guidelines President Tućan presented were not supported by the general assembly. After the president, secretary, and treasurer had all spoken, Filip Lukas, a professor at the College of Economics, asked to take the floor. He read a circular letter sent by Fran Tućan to the administrators of secondary schools when he served as the government commissioner for education and religion, intended to prevent a strike by clerical staff. Lukas claimed that this act made Tućan unworthy of the presidency of Matrix Croatica. Lukas was supported by Vjekoslav Klaić and Kerubin Šegvić, and sought a vote of no confidence. However, before this could take place, Tućan tendered his resignation, aware that the majority would vote against him, and the general assembly accepted it.⁴⁵ Vice-president Dragutin Domjanić took over in the interim before a special general assembly was held to elect a new president. In 1920, Miroslav Krleža appeared for the first time as one of

⁴³ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1919.*, Zagreb, 1921, pp. 4, 8.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

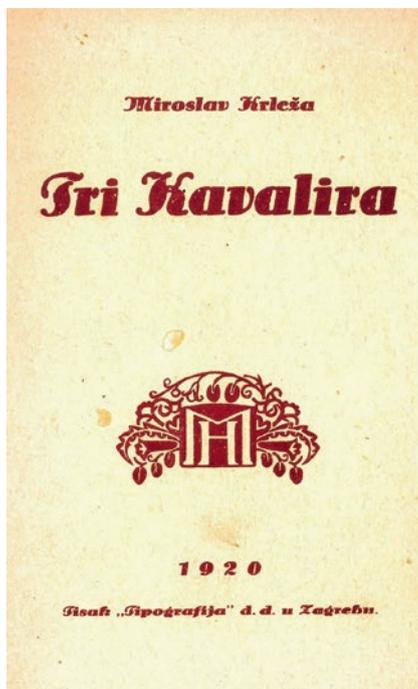
⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.



Dragutin Domjanić

the Matrix's authors, when *Tri kavalira gospodjice Melanije* (*Miss Melanie's Three Cavaliers*) was published. On 24 April 1921, the general assembly elected poet Dragutin Domjanić (1875-1933) as president. It was concluded that the Matrix needed to bring together all Croatian literary institutions and become the “meeting point of our cultural life”, with special connections to the Croatian Writers' Association. The idea of an encyclopaedia was raised once again, albeit in a more modest format of two or three volumes.⁴⁶ The assem-

⁴⁶ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, p. 170.



Miroslav Krleža, *Tri kavalira*, 1922

bly unanimously accepted Kerubin Šegvić's proposal "to celebrate the passing of a millennium since the coronation of Tomislav, the first Croatian king, by publishing a work worthy of the Croatian nation, its great glory, and our Matrix Croatica."⁴⁷

The 300th anniversary of the birth of Petar Zrinski (5 June 1621) was due to be celebrated in June. Some voiced the opinion that many of the Zrinskis' actions had been negative

⁴⁷ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1921.*, Zagreb, 1922, p. 12.

and that the truth would remove the halos from their heads, while others stressed their merits and struggles against centralism. Regardless, the celebration went ahead as planned on 5 June 1921.

As there were murmurings among the public seeking the closure of Matrix Croatica, on 6 June 1922, Ksaver Šandor Đalski wrote a letter to Matrix president Dragutin Domjanić, which he requested be read at the general assembly on 11 June. In it, he noted the following:

I have heard from the press that some sort of campaign is being planned to change the current organisation and direction of the work of Matrix Croatica, and that there are plans to merge it with other organisations – a general campaign against the Matrix as a Croatian organisation. If any such decision should be adopted by the general assembly, I would protest it in the strongest terms, and retain all my rights ... to defend both the organisation of Matrix Croatica and its assets before the public authorities and the courts.

He went on to say that, for thirty years, he had been an apostle of “harmony, love, and unity between the Croatian and Serbian peoples. However, this salutary, splendid notion would not benefit from any potential decision affecting the independence of Matrix Croatica and merging it with any new organisational forms. As any form of centralisation is fatal to the idea of national unity, the people have been led to a level of dissent and division never before seen between Croat and Serb, Serb and Croat... In the interests of the harmony, love, and unity of the Croatian and Serbian peoples, Matrix Croatica must remain Matrix Croatica, just as no one believes, nor should dare to believe that the Serbian Matrix

in Novi Sad and the Serbian Writers' Union in Belgrade should cease to be Serbian."⁴⁸

At the general assembly on 11 June 1922, after stating that "Croatian writers have long implemented cultural unity", Domjanić succeeded in finding a way to emphasise the importance of national individuality:

It is self-evident that one should not insult others, that one should respect other's sacred heritage and take pride in their own. For the most sacred thing to a nation is its name. Therefore, although I have heard that such people exist, I cannot believe that objections have been raised to *Matrix Croatica* bearing its own, Croatian name. (...) And the *Matrix* has no cause to be ashamed of its Croatian name, which we have all always defended as we would our own honour, and of which we are proud today. In the same way, the Serbian *Matrix*, the Serbian Royal Academy of Sciences, the Serbian Literary Cooperative, and the Serbian Literary Herald are all proud of their Serbian names, and the Slovenian *Matrix* is proud of its Slovenian name. (...) It does not bother the Croatian associates of the Serbian Literary Herald, such as Nazor, Krleža, and myself, that it bears a Serbian name. Fortunately, I believe that none among us resent *Matrix Croatica* for what others take pride in.⁴⁹

Domjanić and Đalski were in fact responding to the increasingly overt centralist and Yugoslav nationalist attempts to merge all Croatian cultural associations into one, and then submerge them into a "supreme Yugoslav unity".

⁴⁸ *Izvještaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1922.*, Zagreb, 1922, p. 20.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

The presence of a police representative at the general assembly of the oldest Croatian cultural national institution is an indication of the level of repression that surrounded Matrix Croatica and Croatian society as a whole at the time. This police official did not only observe the work of the assembly, but actually intervened in it, prohibiting Stjepan Radić, a member of Matrix Croatica and president of the Croatian Peasants' Party, from speaking. Radić had objected to the political views expressed by Deputy Secretary Miroslav Petanjek, and the president asked Radić not to mention politics. The police representative gave Radić a warning, and when Radić resumed speaking, forbade him to continue.⁵⁰ Although the minutes do not record why Radić was dissatisfied with Petanjek's speech, the political context of his words can be gleaned from this excerpt:

On 16 August last year, His Majesty King Peter the Liberator, first King of the united Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, closed his weary eyes. On 18 August, Matrix Croatica held a session of mourning, at which the president, Dragutin Domjanić, stressed the merits of the late King Peter I and his noble character, after which the following telegram was sent to the Court Chancellor in Belgrade: "Matrix Croatica, which has been the bearer of the concept of national unity since its inception, is deeply grieved by the death of His Highness, under whose rule the Croatian, Serbian, and Slovenian people were united. Long live King Peter I. President Domjanić."⁵¹

Within a discussion of the Matrix's governing bodies regarding the expansion of the Matrix's activities at a meeting

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 20.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 15.

on 14 May 1924, the members spoke of the need to establish subcommittees in places outside Zagreb that would be tasked with implementing “cultural and educational tasks in their own towns, supporting courses for the illiterate, holding debates on special occasions, amateur theatre productions, etc.”⁵² To this end, the Matrix amended its regulations at the general assembly held on 6 July 1924 (“For the purpose indicated in paragraphs 26 and 27, Matrix Croatica will establish subcommittees in other cities and towns outside Zagreb”),⁵³ and the formation of these committees began. The first was established in Varaždin on 29 March 1925, and committees were formed in Bjelovar, Dugo Selo, Split, and Mostar later this same year.⁵⁴

At the general assembly on 6 July 1924, Dragutin Domjanić discussed objections to the work of Matrix Croatica, particularly accusations that its relations with the bloc of Croatian political parties headed by the Croatian Peasants’ Party had become too close.

The Matrix has been accused “not only of being an opponent of Serbianism, but of stubbornly silencing Croats who do not agree with the bloc’s policies”. Whoever makes such claims is either misinformed or speaks with ill intent, and is no friend of the Matrix. This slander is completely unfounded. (...) I have said many times here, in my own name and that of Matrix Croatica, that none of the many present members has complained, and I claim again today, in my own name and that of the Matrix, that Matrix Croatica respects the Serbian and

⁵² Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, p. 174

⁵³ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1924.*, Zagreb, 1925, p. 20.

⁵⁴ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1925.*, Zagreb, 1926, pp. 15, 16.

Slovenian names as it does its own, but demands that they also respect our Croatian name.⁵⁵

The general assembly in 1926 was held on 29 June. The speeches and discussions were typical, regarding daily tasks, the receipt of manuscripts, the printing and sale of books, and requests sent and received. Domjanić stated that the situation was becoming more difficult. “Culture is still considered a luxury in our country. The dinar has increased in value, but the spending power of the people has declined; weakening under increasing burdens while hearing rosy words about democracy and equality from all sides, the nation faces economic ruin.” He confirmed that the Matrix had finally been included in the state budget, and declared straightforwardly that this was because a Croat was minister of education (Stjepan Radić), “while before, when other organisations were granted support – some quite generously – the Matrix’s applications were simply ignored”.⁵⁶

Domjanić again responded to criticism directed at the Matrix.

Matrix Croatica has never hung on the coattails of any government or political party, and I hope it never will.

Some have objected that it is not Croatian enough. In fact, a correspondent from Split for a Zagreb newspaper (which I believe no longer exists) noted that, when the monument to Marko Marulić was unveiled in Split, Matrix Croatica laid a wreath with the Yugoslav flag; this same correspondent bemoaned and condemned this act with poignant abhorrence. The

⁵⁵ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1924.*, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁶ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, p. 175.

truth is that Matrix Croatica laid a wreath with the Croatian flag. (...)

Another critic resented the Matrix because its Anthology was too Croatian and was written only by Croats. My God, was this a mistake when we were celebrating the passing of a millennium since the coronation of Croatian King Tomislav?

What matters is that both of them admit that the Matrix is Croatian! It has been and shall remain so, whether people like it or not. It has never been ashamed of its Croatianhood, and I have never suppressed it.⁵⁷

The next general assembly was held on 29 June 1927, when university professor Albert Bazala (1877-1947) was elected president, and Filip Lukas (literature and art committee) and Rudolf Erber (business committee) were elected vice-presidents. Erber later became the mayor of Zagreb. On 28 December 1927, the centenary celebrations of the Serbian Matrix were held in Novi Sad, where Albert Bazala gave a speech. At a separate conference, the opportunity and need to establish a Central Education Alliance for the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was discussed, and Bazala was appointed to a committee to produce the regulations for such an alliance. The president's report (submitted at the meeting in January 1928) led to significant changes in the Matrix.

After Bazala's report on events in Novi Sad, the idea of establishing a Central Educational Alliance (an alliance of all cultural organisations in the state, according to the Matrix's Report for 1928) was immediately attacked by Filip Lukas, and word began to spread amongst the public about a crisis in Matrix Croatica. Bazala convened a joint meeting of the

⁵⁷ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1926.*, Zagreb, 1927, pp. 9-10.



Albert Bazala

board and administration, at which he expressed his regret that an inaccurate account of matters had leaked outside the organisation. A heated debate began regarding “cooperation with Serbs”, and opinions were expressed that proved hard to reconcile. At the next meeting, Bazala claimed that he had been referring to the Croatian Educational Alliance, but Lukas accused him of overstepping his authority again, that the Matrix’s board was thus superfluous, and that he was ready to tender his resignation. In reply, Bazala said he would resign, and invited Lukas (a vice-president) to chair

the meeting, upon which he left the room. Bazala's fiercest opponents, apart from Lukas, were Mile Budak and Rudolf Horvat.

In 1928, *Hrvatska revija* (*Croatian Review*) was launched, edited in its first year by Branimir Livadić, and by Blaž Jurišić from 1930 to 1941. Livadić presented the magazine's policies in the first issue:

According to the usual demands made of reviews in cultured regions, *Hrvatska revija* will attempt to provide its readers with a generous discussion of all issues regarding literature, the fine arts, music, and science. This is best achieved through the particular style and form of informative articles. Cultured nations have used such efforts to develop a special literary genre to perfection. Its ideal is the impeccable essay. It is an art form that allows its readers to enjoy the artistic skills of the author along with particular – personal – information in a limited space. We need not recall that our successes in this genre to date have been few, and that it is in fact one of the most delicate means of measuring national literacy in general, and thus Matrix Croatica is greatly devoted to cultivating it.⁵⁸

Hrvatska revija demonstrated its lofty goals in the very first issue by selecting texts by the best Croatian writers of the day: Milutin Nehajev, Miroslav Krleža, August Cesarec, Slavko Batušić, Filip Lukas, Nasta Rojc, Josip Kosor, Ljubomir Maraković, Julije Benešić, Gjuro Szabo, etc.

A general assembly was held on 20 May 1928 at which Filip Lukas (1871-1958), professor and rector of the Commercial College in Zagreb (today's Faculty of Economics and Business), was elected the new president. He headed Matrix Croatica for longer than any other president

⁵⁸ *Hrvatska revija*, Zagreb, 1928, no.1/2, p. 192.



Filip Lukas

(until 1945). He won 255 votes as a presidential candidate, while his opponent, former president Albert Bazala, won only 13. Franjo Jelašić was elected secretary and Oto Bošnjak was elected treasurer. In his speech, Lukas said:



First issue of *Hrvatska revija*, editor Branimir Livadić, 1928

Given the huge importance of the Matrix in educating the Croatian people – particularly its masses – and since no other cultural institution can measure up to it, our annual general assemblies are a record of our cultural creative strength and a review of our spiritual elite.

History has taught us that nations can stand the test of time even amidst the most unfavourable geopolitical positions and most crucial political circumstances if they have learned to

inscribe the dual traces of their being – material creation in space and spiritual creation in time.

Economically strong nations and culturally strong nations are somehow doubly aware of their strength, and have therefore been able to defy the most adversarial of powers and retain their national being amidst the fluctuating rhythm of life, realising new advances and progress from time to time. (...)

In our Croatian nation, simply looking at the past century, we see all those tendencies typical of the rest of Europe are lined up on the fields of the arts and literature, and so we can be content that our efforts have helped keep the Croatian nation in step with the great cultured nations of the world, and we can be even more content that our writers and artists have always depicted and developed our national spirit in their works.

We must emphasise that, immediately after colonising its modern-day territory, the Croatian nation began to engrave the sign of its cultural and political creation in time and space, and this historic action has continued unbroken ever since. (...)

As a cultured nation, the Croats have always created cultural works in all areas of human activity, energetically at times, and weakly at others, but much more strongly than many other nations. In fact, especially in the age of humanism, cultural creation was stronger than political action, and this is the best indicator of internal activity.⁵⁹

At the general assembly held on 22 June 1930, Lukas gave a speech entitled *On the Spirit of Croatian Culture*, which was considered unfit to publish by the state censor and prevented from appearing as planned in *Hrvatska revija*

⁵⁹ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1928.*, Zagreb, 1928, pp. 3, 15.

or the Matrix's report for 1930. In this speech, which was finally published in 1944, Lukas said:

Placed marginally at the outset of their migration, on the periphery of two worlds of the time, undeveloped, primitive and nearly prehistoric in the East and complete in the West, the Croats' yearnings, in accordance with their spiritual agility, were to adapt to the higher Western culture and join with it. This acceptance of a foreign, complete culture to which they were bystanders, created before them and without their participation, and the shaping of that culture according to their inherited mass, can be interpreted as the psychological principles of authority and conservatism, which have been noted as a thread in the history of the Croats to date.

But the Croats were unable to break with the East, as it was their biological source and was the home of their ethnographic connectedness. The arch that they had to constantly hold up between these two worlds never broke. The spirit of Croatian culture emerged from this very dualism. On the one hand, we have the shared linguistic and (partly) racial Slavic origins and deep emotional values, and on the other, we have the developed Western world of cultural values, merged at the beginning of their development in a Roman synthesis, and later in a general Western synthesis.

What is characteristic of the Croats, perhaps more than of any other Slavic nation, is their spirit of idealism, pacifism, authority, and a great sensitivity that consciously diverts their gaze from true realities towards fantastic illusions and hopes. A lack of realism is one of the characteristics of the Croatian being and culture. Croatian culture is full of a sort of softness, an eternal hope in the victory of justice and truth in the world. This goodness is elementary, often naïve and undifferentiated, and bears little activism.

These essential traits of the Croatian being are present to a lesser or greater extent in each Croat, and are constants that override local, religious, or class differences. The Croats have never broken with the East and the Slavic nations; in fact they have contributed not one, but many ideologues of Slavic solidarity to the Slavic nations, and have given active assistance in all the battles of the Slavs according to their capabilities. If they were unable to do anything else, then they described and idealised them in their writings— Gundulić in his *Vladislav*, Kačić in his songbook, Križanić, Kavanjin, Marković, and many others. None who loves freedom can judge the Croats for wanting to remain faithful to their spirit and build up their culture and organisation, least of all the other Slavic nations, unless they are ready to be judged on the same principles on which they created and built their own homes and own nationhood.⁶⁰

The lavish plans to mark the Matrix's 90th anniversary in 1932 (*A History of Matrix Croatica, A History of Recent Croatian Literature, An Anthology of Croatian Poetry, The Matrix Croatica Anthology...*) became more modest, and the long list of planned works was reduced to the artistic *Anthology of Matrix Croatica*. In 1931, the Croatian Secondary School Teachers' Association was legally liquidated, and the Matrix took it under its wing, saving its two magazines, *Nastavni vjesnik (Teachers' Herald)* and *Omladina (Youth)* in the process. In addition to *Kolo* and *Hrvatska revija*, the Matrix now had a respectable range of periodicals. In 1930, the Matrix's Small Library was launched; it was intended to spread general education, with editions four to five printing sheets in size.

⁶⁰ Filip Lukas, *Hrvatski narod i hrvatska državna misao*, Zagreb, 1944, pp. 129-130

The first in the series was Milutin Nehajev's *O stogodišnjici hrvatskog preporoda (1830-1930) (On the Centenary of the Croatian Revival)*. In 1932, the Matrix had 8,030 members. The records show that it received an extraordinary number of manuscripts, but the reviewers judged many to be either too poor in quality or not in line with the Matrix's aims, so many were returned to their authors.

President Lukas debated energetically with authors of varying world-views: Kerubin Šegvić, Stjepan Banović, and August Cesarec, who was a board member. It is not always easy to differentiate in the writings of his opponents whether they were attacking Lukas in person or the Matrix itself. It is clear, however, that social issues were on the agenda, and there were widely varying reactions to news from Soviet Russia. August Cesarec left the board after being denied permission to challenge an article by the president in *Hrvatska revija* 7/1933 ('Russian Communism Versus the National Principle'), in which Lukas sent this message to certain writers:

Writers and artists can never completely detach themselves from their biological and national homeland, so if they want to deny its positive advantages, they cannot deny the drawbacks of the community out of which they grew. Like it or not, they have a spiritual connection with their homeland, because otherwise, if they were not its intellectual components, they would not know how to use all those psychological nuances and insights to emphasise or suppress their homeland.

If they invalidate national isolation and want to work towards reconciliation with foreign nations, they cannot do so by denying their background and national psyche, or by emphasising some sort of abstract universalism in which all differences would disappear, and even less so by merging with



August Cesarec

global cosmopolitanism; they can do so best by deepening their knowledge of their own national being, its characteristics, and the differences that exist between nations, as well as by aligning them with other members of humanity.

It is so apparent that the Croats have their own culture, and that they have conveyed it into the present and gained awareness of themselves as individuals in both their actions and tradition, is so obvious that to deny it would imply knowing nothing of the past and seeing nothing of the present. If writers can separate themselves from themselves, then they can separate themselves from their nation, because the former are included in the latter, as the group comes before the individual.⁶¹

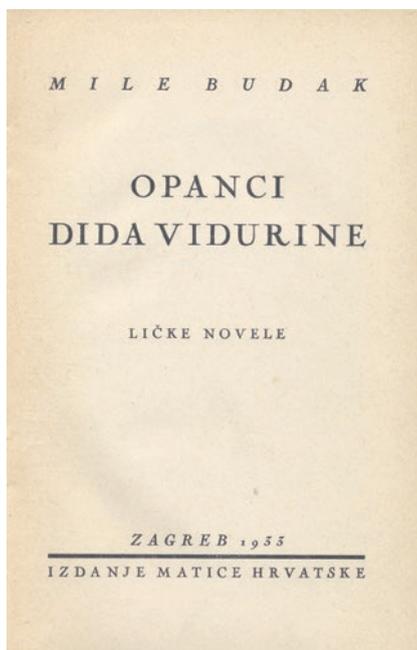
⁶¹ *Hrvatska revija*, Zagreb, 1933, no. 7, p. 386.

In the minutes of a board meeting held on 20 October 1933, the following stance by the president of Matrix Croatica was noted: “F. Lukas adds that, although he does not agree with the views of Mr. Cesarec, he respects his opinion, and in other circumstances would be glad to debate with him on this issue. However, given everything said under the previous item, he maintains that Mr. Cesarec’s requests cannot at this time be accepted without damaging Matrix Croatica, and therefore considers it necessary to ask Mr. Cesarec to accept this and make no further issue of it.” However, Cesarec brushed Lukas’s appeal aside, and at a meeting on 15 December 1933 said that, “for reasons of principle, I am forced to abide by my decision to suffer the consequences and withdraw from the board, and I will reply to the president’s article in *Hrvatska revija* in another journal, loyally and without attacking the Matrix.”⁶²

The position of Matrix Croatica and its relationship with the state authorities at the time was clearly illustrated by the fact that on 19 October 1933, Lukas was called to the police headquarters to explain why the yearly general assembly never sent greetings to the king.

On 31 December 1933, at the general assembly, Lukas announced the resignation of the entire administration due to the frequent attacks against Matrix Croatica in the Croatian press. His proposal was not accepted, but some new faces joined the administration, including well-known literary historian Franjo Fancev. At this session, Lukas expressly stated that there had never been a historical period when social ideas were discussed as much as the present one:

⁶² Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, p. 183.



Mile Budak, *Opanci dida Vidurine*, 1933

“that they had to find a response in this country, too, if for no other reason than the socio-psychological connectivity of the entire world. It is without question that the fight for social justice, which all oppressed classes and many writers have taken part in, includes great ethical values, and the fact that some writers and educated young people have dedicated their work to this issue as the most urgent moral duty indicates the awakening of their conscience. The fact that this impulse has resulted in hypertrophy and digression among some writers, and moreover, that the claim that culture is built only on a material basis has been falsely made and represented outside the

Matrix, cannot be prevented; nonetheless, this should not lead us to reject just social opinions and yearnings *a priori*. It is my opinion that, for these very reasons, more attention should be paid to social ideas, so that many false assertions can be corrected, monitored, and implemented in the direction of national needs. This does not mean wandering into Marxist waters – in fact, I think Marxism is best refuted if the right and wrong elements in it are distinguished.”⁶³

Matrix Croatica joined other Croatian institutions in marking the centenary of the Croatian National Revival (Illyrian Movement), and at the general assembly held on 15 December 1935, Lukas stressed the historical foundations of the Illyrian Movement.

In any historical work, national energies are evident as the spirit of the age; therefore, the Illyrian Movement, however much it may have been the work of Croatian intellectuals, was also closely linked with the prevailing socio-psychological currents in the world at the time. Ljudevit Gaj and the other revivalists did not create their work on the basis of abstract ideas, but on a movement of tradition woven into our past, the spiritual dispositions of the people, and the socio-psychological trends of the time (...), forming the Croatian nation in the spirit of the national idea of the time was an original, unique enterprise – unique in terms of its propelling ideas, unique in terms of its goals, and unique in terms of its dynamics.

With this in mind, we should mention the differences between nation-building in the West and in our country. Even before they had national ideas, the peoples of the West already had states, so the state formed the people, and the identification

⁶³ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1933.*, Zagreb, 1934, p. 5.

of the people with the state was a logical consequence of this. (...). While, in the West, the state was the primary actor in forming the nation, in our case, spiritual forces were foremost in creating the nation, primarily historical awareness, tradition, language, and national roots, so that the nation was formed alongside the state, or even counter to the state. It is true that we had a political Croatian individuality, but at the same time, this existed within the framework of a great state, so there were some state attributes in common with other nations, and there was no full identification of the nation with the state, for if the state had formed the nation, the Illyrian name would not have arisen, as there was previously no state of that name. Instead of the state, the nation found a stronghold in historical tradition, above all in an internal, undying yearning for freedom, and from these strengths, it drew the incentive to achieve such wonderful successes.⁶⁴

On 30 October 1935, Croatian national political leader and president of the Croatian Peasant Party Vladko Maček wrote a declaration in which he acknowledged the huge merits of *Matrix Croatica* in the cultural life of Croatia.

Matrix Croatica is an old cultural organisation, and after its inception, it was long the sole actor in Croatian cultural life, and later became the leading actor among others. In addition, I believe that *Matrix Croatica* is the only Croatian organisation that had the temerity to resist the onslaughts of the regime throughout seven years of dictatorship, thus leaving its Croatian character unbesmirched.

⁶⁴ *Izvištaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1935.*, Zagreb, 1936, p. 14-15.

Therefore, all intelligent Croats should become members of Matrix Croatica and aid it in flourishing by purchasing its annual publications.⁶⁵

Attempts to revive the Matrix's subcommittees, clearly expressed in the summer of 1935, were of importance to the Matrix's future work and publications. Mile Starčević, supported by Filip Lukas and Blaž Jurišić, was particularly involved in this. Three subcommittees were formed in Zagreb in 1936 (the citizens', women's, and university subcommittees), and others were formed in Čakovec, Osijek, Sisak, Karlovac, Samobor, Sušak, and Varaždin.

At the general assembly held on 27 December 1936, voices were raised against those who had tried to change some attitudes towards Croatian history in the Croatian press and in lectures, particularly against some well-known figures. However, other opinions arose in the Matrix's administration. Stjepan Kranjčević, a Matrix member, sent a letter to the general assembly demanding that the Matrix stop funding *Omladina* magazine because it had published a negative article about Mihovil Pavlek Miškina, a prominent member of the Croatian Peasant Party. At the assembly, Kranjčević defended Miškina from the accusation that his criticism of the Zrinskis and Frankopans as feudal lords was communist in character, saying that he himself "could not see anything great in this part of our glorious past"⁶⁶ and that "feudal times had no bearing on the Croatian peasant, as he had no

⁶⁵ Ive Mažuran, Josip Bratulić, *Spomenica Matice hrvatske 1842.-2002.*, 47.

⁶⁶ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, 187.

past of his own, only a future”.⁶⁷ Miškina had been criticised by Vilim Peroš in an article in *Omladina*.

Apart from hatred for the (Catholic) clergy, there has been an apparent attempt here to cast Croatian historical luminaries in a different light. Thus, Miškina’s article ‘In support of Predavec’s view on the history of the Croatian nation’ seems to have been tailor-made. But let us allow Miškina to speak in his own words. “They (the Zrinskis and Frankopans) fleeced their own serfs and others, confiscated land from a free people, all for the glory and greatness of the homeland.” This is a well-known phrase, which has been fired hundreds of times from the cannons of various Marxists, and what is worse, some self-proclaimed Croatian ideologists, all with the aim of sowing confusion and chaos in the Croatian peasant movement. They emphasise incessantly that the Zrinskis and Frankopans were aristocrats who, like all of their kind, oppressed and terrorised the Croatian peasants (serfs). This notion was born in the heads of Marxists. (...). From the communist point of view, it is quite understandable that they want to sully the brilliant reputations of many of our historical heroes, because this weakens national pride (which is an important part of nationalism), and the communists’ goal is to erase all feelings of nationalism, which hinder their internationalist ideology.⁶⁸

The debate at the general assembly did not engender any serious consequences. One member, Petar Grgec, even stressed that many prominent members of the Croatian

⁶⁷ Višeslav Aralica, *Matica hrvatska u Nezavisnoj državi Hrvatskoj*, Zagreb, 2009, 64.

⁶⁸ Vilim Peroš, *Mihovil Pavlek Miškina i Zrinski i Frankopani*, *Omladina*, Year XX, Zagreb, October 1936, no. 2, pp. 72, 73.

Peasant Party were present, and that Kranjčević had no right to speak on behalf of the Party.

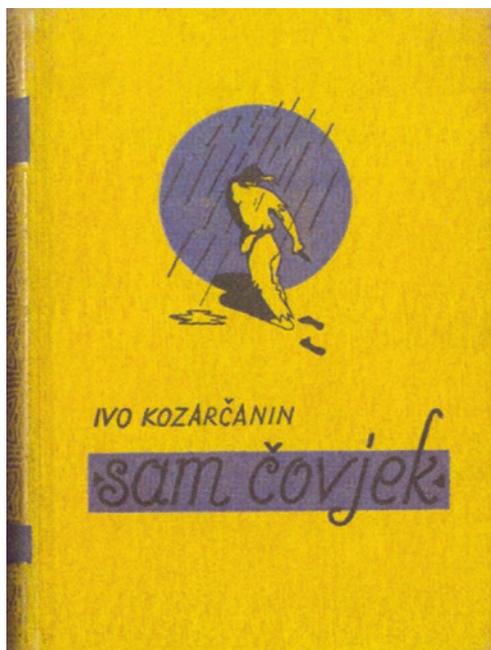
In the meantime, however, increasingly evident differences arose between those who expressed the Matrix's attitudes and those who advocated the views of the Croatian Peasant Party. At this same assembly, President Lukas said the following in his speech to the members:

The notion of the nation has always existed, just as there has always been a national spirit in the metaphysical sense. But the manifestation of this spirit has taken ages, during which the nation has become conscious of itself. It was fated to be threatened during its development, in one aspect of its essence or another; in faith, in culture, in freedom, or in state independence, in order to become aware of all components of its general national character, and then to realise its own truth as a national figure in culture, and to reflect the sense of its organisation in a state. All classes gave their part in building it, because the classes did not emerge from one another, but from the national spirit, which is shared by all members of the nation. If the national spirit is first recognised in the peasant class, that is because it formed and rooted first in the land as the primary class, but also because the national spirit is objective, and as such, is greater than the peasantry and is represented equally in all classes, regardless of their trade.⁶⁹

Lukas's opinions clearly indicated that the politics of the Croatian Peasant Party were not only the only potential form for Croatian politics to take.

The Matrix's publications in 1936 were more numerous than those in the previous year: 19 titles excluding periodicals.

⁶⁹ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1936.*, Zagreb, 1937, p. 14.



Ivo Kozarčanin, *Sam čovjek*, design by Marijan Šimunić, 1937

Two were dedicated to Ante Starčević, the ‘Father of the Homeland’. Mile Starčević wrote *Ante Starčević i Srbi* (*Ante Starčević and the Serbs*), and an anthology dedicated to the 40th anniversary of his death was also published. Requiem masses were held for Ante Starčević in February of 1937. Some board members pressed for an extraordinary meeting to discuss why the Matrix was not involved in these masses. On 28 February 1937, Lukas gave a lecture on Starčević at the Institute of Music – to which some Matrix board members also objected – in which his main theme was that the nation was not comprised solely of peasants.

... Starčević was born of peasants in the village; he came here to spread his teaching and he died here, and he asked to be buried among the peasants in the village. So, both halves of his life, the beginning and the end, his birth and death, embraced our entire nation, peasants and city folk, who form the united national being. Each class and each individual has a place in that unity, and the national spirit is evident in each, as Starčević so clearly expressed.

The classes are simply the spiritual executors of the whole, but only as specific units in the function of the whole national community. It would completely negate the concept of the nation if one class, even the most numerous, such as the citizenry in England, Belgium, Germany, and the Union, were to assume the exclusive right of the nation, or if the peasants were to be awarded this right, excluding other classes. One's nationality is not defined by one's occupation, but by spiritually invisible properties according to which all outward occupations are formed, whether peasant or worker, craftsman or city dweller. (...) Proclaiming the peasants to be the nation means abolishing its ethno-biological and spiritual basis, and it means dividing a united nation.⁷⁰

This also provoked debate amongst the ranks of the Matrix, demonstrating that the administration was increasingly divided into those who followed the politics of the Croatian Peasant Party and those who were more conservative on social issues. Lukas opposed the Matrix taking sides, especially in light of comments to the effect of "let them either take sides or take a beating". He maintained that "acting

⁷⁰ Filip Lukas, *Ličnosti – stvaranja – pokreti (People – Creation – Movements)*, Zagreb, 1944, pp. 50, 52.

under duress is not worthy of free people”,⁷¹ and that making statements regarding similar issues would draw Matrix Croatica into politics. He told members that the Croatian Peasant Party had at one time withheld 100,000 dinars from the Matrix that had been sent from Belgrade, and that in this regard, he and Ivšić had met with Maček and other foreign functionaries; one of them, Josip Predavec, vice-president of the Croatian Peasant Party, had greeted them rudely, advising them that if they refrained from smoking or drinking spritzers, the Matrix would have money. Maček had said that the Matrix would only fail if the Croatian nation failed, which shows that this conversation was not coloured exclusively by misunderstanding on both sides. However, he did warn that 98% of the Matrix’s publications were intended for the intelligentsia, and only 2% for the peasants.

In that year, the Matrix published Vinko Krišković’s *U svijetu paradoksa (In a World of Paradoxes)*, which those connected to the Croatian Peasants’ Party had characterised as anti-peasant due to the following thoughts of Krišković:

Any true son of this land knows that the peasant is the living symbol of work, the work of the primaeval Croat, the farmer, the labourer. He works to pass on our thoroughbred ethos from generation to generation, our honourable, sincere social morals, to build himself a path to life through his work and effort, and to build a home and work his patch of land by the sweat of his brow. He knows that the peasant family is the ancient guardian of thoroughbred social morals, of all of our forefathers’ inherited traditions and customs, and of the national soul. He knows that the peasant is the guardian of the nation’s

⁷¹ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, p. 188.

physical strength, as his healthy blood reinvigorates the urban population, which quickly goes barren otherwise. He knows that he is the guardian of the national character as an economically independent unit, while the children of the towns are much more in the clutches of the authorities, or are the slaves to capital, which is in our case almost exclusively foreign. It is no wonder that this consciousness is alive in every Croat, because the old feudal lords are gone, and the new lords, the townsmen, are merely country children, mostly of the first generation. The peasants are the 'nation', indeed, for what else could they be? But the nation is also workers, craftsmen, traders, and townsmen, and all those who are counted among the Croats. Now they say the peasants should have all the power, should be in charge, should rule not only their own kind, but others. And if this is to happen, then a community, a political body like a municipality, autonomous province, or state must be formed, because this is the only way to organise things so they can impose public power over others. They might take our old feudal state as a model. They simply need to overturn things, to become a 'political people', like the aristocrats and privileged class corporations, while the non-peasants would be subjugated as the peasants were before. But today, in this modern age, can the non-peasants really be lumberjacks or water-carriers for the peasants?⁷²

The daily newspaper *Hrvatski dnevnik* (*Croatian Daily*), under the influence of the Croatian Peasant Party, reacted to Krišković's book, and posed a very direct question to the Matrix's administration in an article published on 15 December 1937: "What will the board of Matrix Croatica do

⁷² Vinko Krišković, *U svijetu paradoksa*, Zagreb, 1937, pp. 96-97.

to afford the Croatian peasantry full satisfaction, and what does it intend to do to prevent such scandalous cases from recurring?” Some board members reacted firmly with the statement that there was nothing offensive to the peasantry in Krišković’s book, that it in fact praised the peasantry, but with the opinion that the peasantry alone could not fulfil general national goals in a political sense:

If we truly have democratic principles, then we must allow criticism of all occurrences in public life. None can demand that the brains of public cultural and literary workers should somehow be made uniform. (...) This criticism is not objective, as the writer of the book did not err regarding the whole nation or its core – the Croatian peasantry. The writer – without any offence – simply expressed a critical opinion about the notion that the peasantry alone can fulfil general national goals in the political sense.⁷³

This was the dominant view of the Matrix’s administration. Lukas was reelected president at the yearly general assembly held on 12 Dec 1937. A great deal of criticism was directed at the current government of Savska Banovina (appointed by Belgrade); it was stated that schools and municipalities in Croatia had stopped buying books published by The Matrix on its behest, that Ban Ivo Perović had refused to disburse the usual amount of 50,000dinars allocated to the Matrix out of Savska Banovina’s budget, and that he had ordered numerous confiscations of books and articles. In his speech, Lukas pointed out a few other instances of pressure

⁷³ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, str. 189

from the government directed at Matrix Croatica during those years:

In addition, the Matrix has suffered enormous damages due to numerous confiscations, which, in most cases, caused unjustified and malicious damages. Please allow me to provide an illustration of what was confiscated. Some literary publications were confiscated simply because of the use of the name Hrvatsko Zagorje, claiming the word 'Hrvatsko' [Croatian] in the name implies separatism, even though it is simply a geographical term. On the other hand, the name Southern Serbia appears simultaneously in our schoolbooks.⁷⁴

In 1938, there was a definite split between Vladko Maček and the Matrix's leadership. Writing about Krišković's book in the New Year's issue of *Hrvatski dnevnik*, Maček also wrote: "I believe the moment is near when our history will mention these members of the intelligentsia as sad exceptions who behave as though it were their task to prevent the intelligentsia from joining their own nation. Unfortunately, the current leaders of Matrix Croatica, who published Krišković's book, are among this group." It is interesting to note who these "leaders of the Matrix," as Maček calls them, were at the time: Filip Lukas (president), Franjo Jelašić (secretary), vice-presidents Stjepan Ivšić and David Karlović, members of the board: Franjo Fancev, Milovan Gavazzi, Branimir Livadić, Slavko Batušić, Ljubomir Maraković, Rudolf Horvat, Blaž Jurišić, and others. In addition to President Franjo Fancev, Mile Starčević (editor of *Omladina*) and Ljubo Maraković (editor of *Narodna prosvjeta*) often found themselves "in the crosshairs".

⁷⁴ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1937*, Zagreb, 1938, pp. 5-6



koliko je uopće moguće, bili smo otvoreni i iskreni, pa ne moramo svoditi riječima nita sugovornici ili podiznati, nisi se od nečega ograničiti. Ne pridržavamo se sebe monopol ispravnosti, nježnoju drugima naslage i tu ispravnosti. Želimo samo našoj javnosti dati dokument o tome, kako misli i na kojim načelima radi hrvatska sveučilišna omladina. Hoćemo pratiti, pa makar i fragmentarni priloge upoznavanja mentaliteta hrvatske sveučilišne omladine, formiranog u teškim vremenima neprikrivene kustosječanjske diktature.

Naš Almanah donosi priloge starijih drugova, koji su sudjelovali u teškom pionirskom radu stvaranja i izgrađivanja novoga mentaliteta, a donosi priloge i mladih i najmlađih, koji uspješno nastavljaju djelo starijih i poirtvomo ostvaruju i razgrađuju prve zamisli, želje i programe. Jedni i drugi priloge našinjajuju skladna cjelina, kao i to je cjelovito i djelo hrvatske sveučilišne omladine od prvih godina diktature do danas.

Osnova je značajka ove generacije i njenina rada jako naglašeno opće narodno hrvatsko shvaćanje, oslobodeno preživjelih strančarskih strasti i nakana: ona opća integracija svih narodnih snaga i komponenta u oslobodilačku borbu hrvatskog naroda i u radu na stvaranju naših ideala. A cilj oslobodilačke borbe i nateza rada je postignuće slobode i državnosti na čistuome našim etničkom i historičkom teritoriju, tako da se u slobodnoj domovini našu združeni svi Hrvati, katolici i muslimani, te da plodove slobode zajedno s braćom iz Trojandice i Bona i Hercegovine udijelu i istarski, međunarčki, lobački i banjevački Hrvati.

Za tim sada teži naš hrvatski nacionalizam. Mi smo hrvatski nacionalisti, a ne nešto drugo. Zato, po riječima Preoboraca, pobijamo sneprijateljski protivnički manevar, kojim oslobodilačku borbu i borcu nastoje okrivavati frankovstvom, fašizmom i drugim imenima, želeći tako kod nespućenih kompromitirati ljude i djelat.

7

Almanah hrvatskih sveučilištaraca, 1938

The 1938 publication of the anthology of Matrix Croatica's University Subcommittee, *Almanah hrvatskih sveučilištaraca* (*Croatian University Students' Almanac*) played a key role in the Matrix's position within the social circumstances of the time. The *Almanac* was comprised of texts written by twenty-two students of the University of Zagreb who clearly and publicly subscribed to the idea of unquestionable Croatian state independence. This idea was most clearly expressed in the *Almanac*'s introduction:

The primary characteristic of this generation and its activities is the pronounced general understanding of Croatian

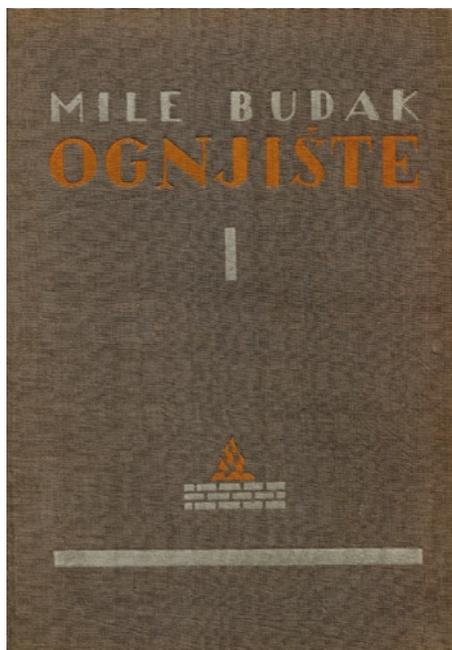
nationhood, unfettered by the surviving partisan disagreements and divergences and free of unhealthy partisan passions and intentions; that general concentration of all national forces and components in the Croatian people's struggle for freedom and the efforts to realize our ideals. The goals of our struggle for freedom and our work is to attain freedom and statehood across our entire ethnic and historical territory, and for all Croatians, both Catholic and Muslim, to find themselves in one free homeland, so that, together with our brothers from the Triune Kingdom and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Šokci, Bunjevci, and Croats from Istria and Međimurje, might also harvest the fruits of freedom.

This is the aim of Croatian nationalism in the present moment. We are Croatian nationalists, and not something else.⁷⁵

All of the 2,000 printed copies of the *Almanac* were confiscated by the police, however, a smaller portion of the edition was salvaged.

Maček achieved considerable success in state elections in December of 1938, leading him to believe that the factions that opposed him in Croatia were marginal. He counted the leadership of the Matrix among those factions. The tone of the Croatian Peasant Party's daily, *Hrvatski dnevnik*, was more than accommodating to the Matrix. However, a weekly entitled *Hrvatski narod (The Croatian Nation)*, launched by Mile Budak, appeared on the scene in February 1939; it featured contributions from renowned members of the Matrix, and its tone was in no way conciliatory towards Maček. The addition of Mile Budak to the Matrix brought it considerable financial gain, as his novel *Ognjište* sold 16,000 copies in

⁷⁵ *Enciklopedija Matice hrvatske*, pp. 59, 61



Mile Budak, *Ognjište*, 1938

three runs between 1938 and 1941. In addition to *Ognjište*, between 1938 and 1945, the Matrix published the following works by Budak: *Direktor Križanić*, *Na veliki petak*, *Rascvjetana trešnja*, *San o sreći*, *Musinka*, *Ratno roblje*, *Na vulkanima*, *Izabrane pripovijesti*, *Kresina*, *Gospodin Tome* and *Hajduk*. Maček's tactic was to avoid anti-intellectual rhetoric and gradually push individuals with nationalistic tendencies out of the Matrix, however, this very sort of individual began to write more frequently and fervently in the Matrix's periodicals (Vilko Rieger, Ernest Bauer, Dušan Žanko, Marko Čović, Tijas Mortigija, etc.). One of

them, Mladen Lorković, wrote a book entitled *Narod i zemlja Hrvata* (The Nation and Land of the Croats), which the Matrix published in 1939 (comprised of texts previously published in *Hrvatska revija*), which was in fact a critique of Maček's agreement with Prince Paul. Most of all, Lorković wanted to demonstrate that this agreement left considerable swathes of Croatian territory outside of Croatia's borders, emphasizing that the borders achieved under the Cvetković-Maček agreement were not final:

Thus, it is important that the borders of the Banovina of Croatia have always been labeled as provisional on the Croatian side, and that all the territories of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Syrmia, Dalmatia, Bačka and Baranya, which remain outside Croatia for the moment, seek a free decision regarding their fate. Attempts to present the current boundaries of the Banovina of Croatia as the fulfilment of those old Croatian aspirations are completely unfounded and rest either on gross ignorance or obvious malevolence.

He also warned of the fact that a great number of Croats (including the Muslim population) remained outside the borders of Banovina: "A total of 1,224,388 Croats, of whom 827,934 are Muslim and 416,454 are Catholic, therefore, live in Yugoslavia outside the borders of the Banovina. Only 70.4% of Croats who live in this country live in the Banovina of Croatia, while 29.6% remain outside of its territory."⁷⁶ On the other hand, the book strongly promoted the idea of the non-Slavic origin of the Croats – also a favourite hypothesis among Croatian nationalists. However, the Matrix's publishing activities also

⁷⁶ Mladen Lorković, *Narod i zemlja Hrvata*, Zagreb, 1939, pp. 222, 227

lacked a unified viewpoint. In addition to texts stressing the importance of national interests, the Matrix also published texts that praised liberalism and democratic thought. Julije Makanec's *O podrijetlu i smislu države* (*On the Origins and Sense of the State*), which was published by the Matrix in 1939, expresses strong praise of democracy:

Democracy is aimed against class privileges of any kind: based on their influence on state affairs, there should be no distinction between members of higher and lower social strata. The opponents of democracy strongly object to the principle of equality, saying that would give a university law professor and a street sweeper equal say. It is said that higher education is needed in order to grasp the political situation and the problems of a country, and that it is unjust to allow a street sweeper and a university professor to have the same political rights, because that would lead to a balance according to the lowest common denominator. At first glance, this is correct, especially if we forget that intellectual ability offers no guarantee of moral superiority, which is what should be primary when it comes to political decision-making. (...) Democracy does not see a street sweeper as a street sweeper, but as a human who suffers, who has a soul just as the professor does, and who has the right to have his say and make his own decisions where it matters most – on matters that concern him as well. A street sweeper is also a man, and, as such, is entitled to human dignity: this is the value that any noble form of democracy holds dearest. The highest and most spiritual representatives of democratic thought believed in man and his worth, which is why they fought for his freedom. This belief has suffered great trials in recent times, but it will undoubtedly survive in the spirit of the people. It will outlive many political forms, which in our time

seem so strong and successful, and which have challenged the values of democratic ideals both in theory and in practice.⁷⁷

On Dec 5, 1939, influential Croatian Peasant Party leadership member Juraj Krnjević addressed the party's university organization, speaking very critically about Matrix Croatica's activity and accusing certain individuals in its committee of straying from its fundamental programme: "Now there are people who think they can use this great cultural and national institution to act against what the founders of the Matrix established. Anything anyone tries to do in a way that differs from that outlined by the Croatian nation (...) will remain outside the nation like a dead branch and fall from the millennial tree of our nation."⁷⁸

Filip Lukas decided to respond to Krnjević, speaking from the highest position in the Matrix, at the general assembly on 31 December 1939:

Over the past twenty years, there has been plenty of criticism aimed at the Matrix. We knew why and from whence it came. We bore it all calmly because we knew that the aim was to destroy one of the most important sources of Croatian culture. So, standing together with the entire nation, we were convinced that the people would triumph in the end – as is the case at last. Now these reproaches seem incomprehensible, especially when they imply that the Matrix has strayed from its earlier ideology, thus becoming some sort of withered branch with no sap. (...)

⁷⁷ Julije Makanec, *O podrijetlu i smislu države*, Zagreb, 1939, pp. 32, 33

⁷⁸ Višeslav Aralica, *Matica hrvatska u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj*, p. 102

The Matrix was created at the time when the national principle prevailed in Europe, so it had to reflect all those ideas, both national and cultural, which galvanized the entire world at the time and which are still relevant today in the development of nations. Nationality is in reality a socio-cultural idea, and, as a social idea, it is an expression of social needs, which is why it must remain in the service of social life, not of one class only, but rather social life that reflects all the strata of the nation. (...) By bringing to light old literary works from Dubrovnik and Dalmatia, the Matrix's task in the beginning was to draw a connection between old and contemporary Croatian literature, thus establishing the context of our cultural development through the ages. (...)

What is most conspicuous, in regard to both old and contemporary Croatian literature, is the fact that, when we compare our modern works of culture with older ones – especially literature – and we examine the inner ideas at their core, it is clear that, despite the different conditions of life and phases of development, they all share one transcendental thread – there is an apparent spiritual repetition. Therefore, a certain idealism, the principle of justice, selflessness, humanity, the love of freedom, and the struggle for independence fill the works of both our old and contemporary writers, such as Marulić, Gundulić, Kačić, Mažuranić, and others. Thus, by emphasizing these principles, they reveal the Croatian ideology and the Croatian national spirit, or rather our spiritual characteristics. (...)

On the other hand, the contributions of our writers through Matrix Croatica are infused with this same spirit. Therefore, the original ideology has not changed, because the Croatian national principle is now more strongly pronounced than before. (...)

As mentioned earlier, the Matrix was created because of the national dynamism of the day, which also affected other European and non-European peoples. In its own way, even then, the Matrix operated in the spirit of the Croatian national identity, though under a different, broader, and non-national name. The Matrix hand-picked and highlighted those old works whose aim was to strengthen Croatian nationhood. (...) Thus, our national culture gradually developed, with each generation and each individual providing their own contributions. Throughout the history of both Matrix Illyrica and Matrix Croatica, there is one guiding principle – the creation of our own cultural forms in the spirit of Croatian authenticity. Even when our nation came into contact with stronger cultures and incorporated something of theirs, it did so in a way that that tried to preserve its national spirit, despite this intermingling of cultures. (...)

The Matrix does not deal in politics, but rather stands in the service of the people, serving Croatian national thought exclusively. While political and economic circles fight for the state-political and economic identity, the Matrix's only task is aimed precisely towards the goal of building the cultural foundation of its nation and winning the Croatian nation its inalienable rights on the basis of all the constructive components of national life, which, under the principle of self-determination, no one can deny.⁷⁹

Towards the end of the Assembly, Matrix Croatica member Nikola Andrić suggested the assembly send their greetings to Vladko Maček and Ban Ivan Šubašić, but after a discussion, it was concluded that this proposition would

⁷⁹ Filip Lukas, *Ličnosti – stvaranja – pokreti*, pp. 170-176

be carried out by the board rather than the assembly. At the board meeting on Jan 10, 1940, it was concluded that regards would be sent to the two top figures in Croatian politics, “not as politicians, but as important Croatian public figures.”⁸⁰

On March 12, 1940, President Lukas presented the board with the “Budak case” –this member of the Matrix’s managing board had been in prison for some time, even though no one stated the reasons for his incarceration. After a violent confrontation involving about a dozen university students in Zagreb, in which several public phone booths were damaged, Mile Budak was arrested by the government of the Banovina on February 25 or 27, 1940. During his detention, Budak went on a hunger strike, and he was transferred to a sanatorium two weeks later. At the behest of Filip Lukas and Mile Starčević, Archbishop Aloysius Stepinac requested Ban Ivan Šubašić to release Budak, but the Ban denied the request. Budak was eventually released on April 12, 1940, only after his wife had been found dead.⁸¹ In addition, Lukas reported that the police had conducted a search of all of the Matrix’s premises on 8 March 1940, even though the Matrix had not given them any cause to do so. Its publishing activity was, as it had always been, divided between periodicals and books. Later analysts would claim that *Hrvatsko kolo* featured no texts that could be linked to Nazi views, while *Hrvatska revija*, and especially the publications of the university subcommittee, did indeed contain such texts.

⁸⁰ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, p. 191

⁸¹ Tomislav Jonjić, Stjepan Matković, *Iz korespondencije dr. Mile Budaka (1907.-1944.)*, Zagreb, 2012, pp. 98, 100, 101

1941 was a turbulent year for Matrix Croatica as well. On January 11, the Banovina government's department of internal affairs dissolved the Matrix's governing bodies (the managing and supervisory boards) and entrusted the institution's management to commissioner Ante Martinović, an educational adviser from Zagreb. The decision asserts that the commissioner would manage the institution until he established the conditions under which a general assembly could be held in order to elect new leadership. The reasons for the dissolution stated in the decision state that the leadership of the institution had not ensured work was carried out according to social principles, and that it often crossed the boundaries set by these principles. Croatian historiography postulates that Filip Lukas's speech at the assembly held on 29 December 1940 may have been the reason for this radical act by the Ban's Peasant Party government towards Matrix Croatica. In his speech, Lukas said:

The works created by a single national class cannot and should not be regarded as the only expression of the national spirit or the original national culture, though it cannot be denied that certain social groups, such as our peasants, are more firmly rooted in the land and remain closer to the spiritual source of their kind, and as a conservative element, that they are also the most tenacious guardians of our historical heritage. (...) However, based on the fundamental characteristics of the nation, its particular spirit, and its ethnology, the classes do not originate from each other, because a single class does not hold a monopoly on the national spirit; rather, it permeates all the members of a nation, regardless of their class. The racial characteristics of the members of a nation are also not limited to a single class; rather, blood ties stretch equally across all classes according to ethno-biological heritage. Consequently,

the classes do not originate from each other, but rather directly from the whole, which is the source of spiritual and biological strength. The classes simply perform different functions to aid in fulfilling the goals of the whole, and since their activities are complementary, they are the very best proof of spiritual national unity. (...) The classes can rightly be likened to the branches of a tree, all of which together create a single organism, feed on the same juices, and reflect the collective life of the whole. The popular slogan that one class represents the whole nation need not be refuted, as it already stands in opposition to the fundamental laws of the collective national spirit that permeates all members of the nation, as well as to the blood ties that exist among its members through heritage. Finally, this claim goes against the principle of unadulterated democracy, which rests on the equality of all the members of a nation; the accountability of the leaders before the nation would be the very demonstration of an ideal democracy. I deemed it important to stress this specifically because there is no absolute truth in political matters, just as there are no absolute values, and these change and transform according to circumstance; therefore, one party, though it might have the support of the majority, cannot claim that it alone represents the absolute truth and that its points of view are the truest and most correct. The idea of the relativity of truth, as well as the relativity of values in political and social matters, is perfectly clear to every human mind. So, if the absolute truth and absolute values are impossible for human consciousness to grasp, then every political party should be allowed to represent their own opinions and to argue for their own convictions, even if it does not have the support of the majority. Therefore, democracy must value the political will and opinion of every one of them and should not hinder free expression, because it then ceases to be a democracy and

becomes absolutism or autocracy. Since only relative truth exists, then a minority can also express their opinion, which might sometimes be even truer and more real than that of the majority. This led the great writer Ibsen to the bitter conclusion that the majority is always wrong, because the opportunism and greed of its members and the interests of its leaders often prevent it from fulfilling the wants and needs of the people.⁸²

President Lukas protested to Ban Šubašić against the introduction of the role of the commissioner on 13 Jan 1941, listing the reasons for which this decision was illegal, adding:

The reason stated in your decision is that the members of the dissolved committees do not provide sufficient guarantees to operate in accordance with regulations, and that their operations exceed the boundaries set by the regulations. It does not state at all which actions specifically have caused this. On the other hand, I want to underline the fact that this board was unanimously elected at the assembly held on 29 Dec 1940 and given unanimous support by the assembly. However, the board has not yet been reconstituted, so its work could not have been in conflict with social rules.⁸³

On 28 January, Lukas also filed a suit on behalf of Matrix Croatica with the Administrative Court, which was written by attorney Jerko Iljadica. The suit refuted the decision to dissolve the governing bodies of Matrix Croatica based on the fact that: the decision was legally unfounded, even illegal, because it had been taken by a government body

⁸² *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1940. i 1941.*, Zagreb, 1942, pp. 18-20

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 77

without jurisdiction in such matters; because it violated the principle of legality as it violated the Ordinance on the Implementation of the Budget of the Banovina of Croatia; because “the reasons for the decision contradict the actual state of affairs, and because they are in contradiction with themselves, as the evidence they provide proves nothing and is not based in fact” and, finally, because it was unjustified.⁸⁴

In late January of 1941, Lukas published a letter entitled “To the members and friends of Matrix Croatica” concerning the introduction of the office of the commissioner to Matrix Croatica, which was distributed to the public as a flyer:

...First of all, our public must understand what is at hand; the Banovina government must present an official act, which must be then commented on in the regime’s press, which must justify the dissolution of the committees and the institution of the commissary before the public.

The official act states the following: “The dissolution of the committees and the institution of the office of the commissioner took place because the members of these dissolved committees do not provide the sufficient guarantees required to operate in accordance with social regulations, or more specifically, because their operations exceed the jurisdiction set by these regulations.” As this demonstrates, no facts have been presented showing that the members do not provide sufficient guarantees for proper conduct under social regulations, which would justify such a drastic government intervention into one of our oldest cultural institutions. Under the law, any accusation must be corroborated with concrete facts so that the accused can present counter-evidence; otherwise their constitutional right to a defence is violated.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 81

The introduction of the commissioner on 11 Jan 1941 is all the more strange, given that, 13 days before the dissolution, on 29 Nov 1940, the general assembly – the Matrix’s supreme forum – unanimously accepted the reports of both the literary and financial secretaries, and subsequently unanimously elected the president and a third of its committee members to a term of three years, as well as issuing the board a statement of release regarding its proper financial operations.

After this assembly, the board was never constituted as it still had to elect both secretaries; therefore, the new committee never even had the chance not to provide guarantees of its functioning in accordance with the regulations.

Lukas further addressed the offensive attack on the Matrix published in *Hrvatski dnevnik*, which compared it to a private publisher from Belgrade:

This comparison is a great insult to the Matrix, all the greater if we analyse the wording of the sentence itself, which is why it shall be reproduced here verbatim: “The large volume of its published material serves as no justification for the existence of the Matrix; for example, Geca Kon is the largest publisher of books in Serbia, however, his publishing company could not be described as the largest cultural and literary institution of the Serbian people.” (...)

This sort of insult to Matrix Croatica was not cast by some foreigner, but by a native son of the Croatian people (I. J.), and in *Hrvatski dnevnik*, no less, the main publication of the leading political party in the country. We do not mean to say that the Peasant Party would approve of this insult, but I express my surprise that something like this could have been published in the party gazette. (...)

The writer of the editorial, however, also insults the Radić brothers; Stjepan, the founder of the Peasant Party, who also divulged his ideas through the Matrix, and most of all Antun Radić, who was the Matrix's secretary and, as such, worked in the same vein and direction as those secretaries who preceded and followed him.

In the pamphlet, Lukas dedicated a great deal of space to evidence for the Matrix's policy orientation, which was non-partisan and supra-partisan:

All political parties were represented at the Matrix, however, their activity was harmonious and homogenous, which attests to the fact that the institution was above politics. The Matrix never conceived or performed any activities out of political motivations (...). This sort of supra-partisan activity allowed it to become a universal national institution, and not an instrument of one party. Therefore, it always rejected, and – in the interest of our culture – had to reject any attempts to make it a tool of any political party, because if it did, it would immediately cease to be a universal national institution. As I have pointed out, representatives of all of our parties sit on the Matrix's board, yet the Matrix cannot be held accountable for what they do personally outside it; it also has no right to interfere in this, unless such individuals were to work against the survival of the Croatian people and the institution itself.

The people at the Matrix stood above parties, which, on their own, represent only a portion of the truth and espouse only a portion of the national values. This is the best proof that there has been no partisan politics at the Matrix, because politics manifests in the parties' desires to fulfil their own particular interests, which they then strive to impose on the entire nation.

In the final segment of the pamphlet, Lukas elaborated on his views on the relationship between the Matrix and the current political stance in Croatia:

The claim that I debated with the parties at the Matrix's Assemblies is simply not true. In the spirit of the general national principle, I simply pointed out that parties are no more than different branches of the same tree and part of one organism, fed by the same juices, and that they are an expression of collective life. The right to nationhood is an indisputable "a priori" right of the entire nation as a single organism, and not an "a posteriori" result related to the social structure of a nation and granted only to the most numerous class within it.

This emphasis on the national principle in my speeches is precisely the soundest proof that my speeches were not partisan, but rather based on ethical and cultural principles. (...)

When I spoke about the national principle and underlined it as the supreme principle of our development, I wanted to strengthen the awareness of all parties as to the necessity of Croatian national unity. Here, one must also bear in mind the following: nations are truly spiritual communities, but nation sare also whatever they want to be, and neither language, nor geography, nor joint participation, nor the original culture, nor common origins can affect this, because the national sentiment is created through collective awareness combined with collective will.⁸⁵

After this, the Matrix and the government exchanged several official letters; harsh words were also exchanged unofficially. However, April of 1941 soon came, bringing with it a change in the Croatian government. The decision

⁸⁵ Filip Lukas, *Ličnosti – stvaranja – pokreti*, pp. 185-191

to introduce the office of the commissioner had not caused major repercussions on the Matrix's publishing plans, which published over twenty titles in 1941 as planned. During the three months the office of the commissioner was in place, three issues of *Hrvatska revija* and Antun Barac's *Književnost i narod (Literature and the Nation)* were published, and work also continued on all other scheduled publications. However, the influx of new works dropped significantly, and all of the subcommittees refused to cooperate with the commissioner.⁸⁶ The day after the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia, deputy head of state Slavko Kvaternik abolished the decision introducing the commissioner, and the administrative court even asked the Matrix if it was happy with the decision. On 15 April 1941, Commissioner Martinović turned over his duties to the Matrix's board. The first meeting of the board was held on April 23. At this meeting, President Lukas saluted the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia – an act for which many would never forgive him. One of his future successors, Professor Jakša Ravlić, later wrote that in doing so Lukas had “dragged the Matrix's honest and pure flag through the mud,” and he spoke even more harshly of the Matrix's delegation to the Poglavnik⁸⁷ on 3 May 1941. Of course, Ravlić saw no issue in the fact that he himself never expressed any form of opposition to another dictator. Lucas's speech noticeably expressed great joy at the foundation of the Independent State of Croatia, without mentioning the Ustaša movement or the alliance of Ustaša with

⁸⁶ Višeslav Aralica, *Matica hrvatska u Nezavisnoj državi Hrvatskoj*, Zagreb, 2009, p. 13

⁸⁷ The title used by Ante Pavelić, the head of state of the Independent State of Croatia.

Germany and Italy; it only once mentioned Poglavnik Ante Pavelić personally: “[the Croatian people] must give thanks for today’s final success to its countless fallen and the heroism of the Croatian soul, as well as new entities and circumstances; however, the greatest thanks goes to our Poglavnik, Dr. Ante Pavelić, for this final, greatest success. Today, we are free and standing on our own territory, and for this, we owe him our gratitude.”⁸⁸ Lukas also brought up the uncertainty regarding the borders of Croatia, sensing it might lose Dalmatia: “Our only remaining concern is where our borders will lie. Dalmatia is the cradle of our people and the source of the Croatian state... The Croatian state was created by the sea, but when it began to lose its dominance at sea in the 11th century, the Croatian state waned and faded. To begin today’s new independent state without the sea for our lungs would be the beginning of our collapse and downfall.”⁸⁹ In his address at an audience with Pavelić on 3 May 1941, Lukas said “There are areas in a country the loss of which would not have a strong effect on the life of the country, but there are also those areas that are so organically linked to the country and its people that their loss would jeopardize the survival of the country itself.” He went on to wish the Poglavnik “success during these troubled times in saving the national, racial, and cultural core of the Croatian people, our dear Dalmatia.”⁹⁰

⁸⁸ *Izvještaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1940. i 1941.*, Zagreb, 1942, p. 4

⁸⁹ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, p. 195

⁹⁰ Višeslav Aralica, *Matica hrvatska u Nezavisnoj državi Hrvatskoj*, p. 121



Mirko Jurkić, painted by Gabrijel Jurkić

Who were the members of the board? In addition to Lukas, Mile Budak, Milovan Gavazzi, Rudolf Horvat, Ivo Hühn, Blaž Jurišić, Branimir Livadić, Blaž Lorković, Stjepan Majsec, Nikola Modrić, Ivan Reiter, Mile Starčević, Ivan Tomašić, Vladimir Vrkljan, and Secretary Mirko Jurkić were also present at the first board meeting. The main weekly published by the Ustaše government, *Hrvatski narod*, regularly published reviews of books published by the Matrix, while numerous members of the Matrix contributed to its

cultural section, such as Lukas, Jurišić, Fancev, Krstić, Bauer, Delorko, and others. Mile Budak, a member of the board, became the Minister of Religious Affairs and Education, while Marko Čović, a young and highly active nationalist writer and one of the best-known members of the Matrix, became Budak's secretary. Another Matrix board member, Mile Starčević, was appointed to the very important position of head of the Department for the Promotion of Education within the same ministry, while Blaž Lorković became an adjutant at the Main Ustaša Headquarters. Tijas Mortigija was appointed commissioner of the Croatian Publishing Institute (*Hrvatski Tiskarski Zavod*) and *Hrvatski dnevnik*. Furthermore, linguists and Matrix contributors Blaž Jurišić, Kruno Krstić, Marijan Stojković, and Petar Guberina participated in the work of the Croatian State Office for Language, established on April 28, 1941. The first literary prizes to be awarded in 1941 during NDH all went to books published by Matrix Croatica; Mladen Lorković, Sida Košutić, Olinko Delorko, Jure Pavičić, Ivan Softa, Jakov Sekulić, Kruno Krstić, and Petar Guberina were the award-winning authors.⁹¹ The Matrix did not suffer financial hardship, however, new issues arose around how to prevent it from becoming yet another branch of the government. Even more so, as other Matrix members had been chosen for prominent positions in other institutions; Mladen Lorković was appointed Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was clear that the new government wanted to keep the Matrix close to its chest. This was also apparent in the state decision that required any publisher who wanted to publish a translation of a foreign work of fiction into Croatian to ask Matrix

⁹¹ Ibid, pp. 110, 112

Croatia to grant them permission to publish this translation, as well as to pay the Matrix a fee for it. In addition, the new government supported the Matrix through the decision by which all gymnasium, economics, and pedagogical secondary schools were required to purchase all of the Matrix's regular publications for the school libraries.

The government also provided major support to the Matrix by assisting it in the acquisition of major Croatian printing company Tipografija in early 1942. Tipografija, the majority owner of which was the Jewish Schulhof family, was confiscated, and control over its management was transferred first to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and then to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and education, where Minister Mile Budak and another ministry official, Mile Starčević, did everything that was necessary for the Matrix to acquire the company. Under the agreement reached with the family who were the previous majority owners, the Schulhofs, Dragutin Stjepan, the father, and Milan, the son, were granted "honorary Aryan" status and were allowed to remain working at the printing plant until the end of the war. After the war, the father and son then became victims of the new communist government, which sentenced the father to two years of forced labor and the son to five; both were also stripped of their "national honor" for a period of ten years, and their property was again confiscated.⁹²

At the general assembly on 8 March 1942, Lukas once again demonstrated his loyalty to the new government and praised Pavelić:

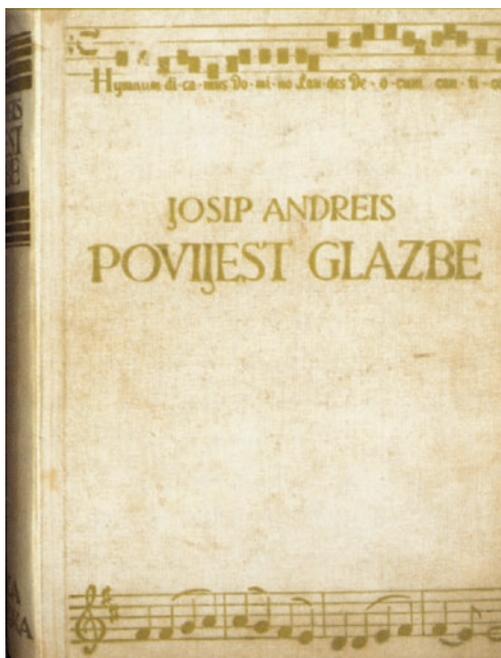
⁹² Ibid., pp. 125-130

The Croatian people owe a great debt of gratitude to all those, present and past, who have fought for the Croatian state; it bows to the countless fallen victims and martyrs, and it expresses its highest respect and gratefulness to the living. Ante Pavelić, who in the last phases of this struggle managed to tie together all the strings of these national desires, and stood as a fighter at the head of all national aspirations, finally managed to transform these national aspirations into reality and realised the Independent State of Croatia by obtaining the support of our stronger neighbours and convincing them that the restoration of a Croatian state on this territory was a European necessity at this time of grave world crisis. Therefore, the board of Matrix Croatica has decided to bestow the greatest honour on him at the General Assembly of Matrix Croatica, the first since the constitution of the state, and to ask the assembly to express its loyalty and gratitude as a sign of recognition, and for the board to present this to him in writing. I am convinced that the general assembly will unanimously and joyously accept this. (Members of the assembly rise and accept the president's proposal energetically).

The Matrix has always supported the idea of national independence, pointing it out in its publications, as well as publishing several entire works on the history of the Croatian people that showed the nation its own history and instructed it to build their own state in the present.⁹³

Board meetings were held regularly; the most common topics of discussion were books and manuscripts. Twenty-six books were published in 1941 and thirty in 1942. The Ustaša government intended to portray this old cultural

⁹³ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1942*, Zagreb, 1943, pp. 9-10



Josip Andreis, *Povijest glazbe*, 1942

institution as a friend of the government in the eyes of the people.

The Matrix's centennial celebration was delayed, and while this was justified by the turbulent events of 1941, unrealistic planning was another reason. Antun Dabinović's comprehensive *Hrvatska državna i pravna povijest* (A State and Legal History of Croatia, volume 1) was praised as a special contribution to the celebration. Other monumental titles were also emphasised as contributions to the celebration, but a comparison between what had been planned and what was achieved reveals that very little was done. The celebration



Ivo Pilar, *Južnoslavensko pitanje*, 1943

was held on 18 July 1943. The guests present were of different standing. Some ministers, the president of parliament, the president of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, etc. were all in attendance. It was noted that the Poglavnik was not present, nor did he send a salutatory telegram. Croatian periodicals wrote diligently about the Matrix and its historic role. In his ceremonial speech, Lukas emphasized the importance of the state, even when it does not function satisfactorily; however, some of his stances and the Poglavnik's distancing from the organization showed that the period of harmony was over. Among other things, Lukas said:

These are the supporters and integral parts of nationhood: language, historical memory, civilisation, geographical space, and finally, blood heritage, the latter of which has especially been emphasised recently, perhaps even too much. It is a known fact that there are hardly any pure races, therefore, a single race can hardly be taken as the basis of nationhood. Nonetheless, every nation has a certain racial core, such as the one from Dinara mountain for the Croats, which gives the people its main blood characteristic. However, there are other related and intermingled national groups that have become an integral part of our nation, who provide it further with positive contributions to our national culture and have become valuable factors in the development of our history, which is why their arrival to our community was beneficial. It would undoubtedly be harmful to place this racial factor above history (...).

We must be aware that nationalism always has positive and negative sides; the positive aspect is for a nation to strive to achieve its freedom and independence on its own territory by removing foreign governments and their ruling elite and building up its spiritual traits to the highest possible degree (...), while the negative aspect of nationalism occurs if, in its conceitedness, a nation fails to see that it has negative traits in addition to its positive ones, and begins to use force to impose them on others, turning nationality into bestiality, as the German poet Grillparzer foretold. Love for one's own motherland cannot be turned into hatred towards other nations and their motherlands. (...) We must always bear in mind Herder's beautiful thought that all nations are equally God's thoughts, and we must also keep in mind the truth spoken by Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset, that every nation fulfils a portion of an eternal truth through its cultural contributions. Let us also bear in mind the words of German writer Burdach, that every

nation must be the mirror of God, that every national culture should be a special image of the power of divine creation.⁹⁴

These completely true statements were particularly at odds with many of the things Lukas said elsewhere, and these contradictions demonstrate the complexities of the times in which he and others like him found themselves. Lukas belonged to the fraction of Croatian intellectuals who, in the eyes of the Allies, wanted to distance themselves from Pavelić's politics in order to ensure that, after the war and its approaching end, the Croats would still get an independent state. He did not accept the honour of knighthood that Pavelić offered him, and the Poglavnik refused to give him a passport to travel to Switzerland. Tensions were high, however, the Matrix's publishing activity was richer than ever. In 1944, it published 33 titles in a run of 113,000 copies. At the General Assembly held on New Year's Eve of 1944, there were very few changes in the leadership. In the speech that Lukas gave on the occasion, in addition to reiterating the arguments in favour of an independent Croatian state, he also expressed a somewhat veiled yet understandable criticism towards the Ustaša government:

We, the Croats, did not cause this war. It came to our doorstep, and we were dragged into it indirectly, in order to avoid even greater harm. Our former state, in which Croats were held by force for over two decades, fell apart under a military blow from outside. But when not even the Serbs, who were the only ones to enjoy all of its rights and privileges, fought for it, it justified the Croats' use of this opportunity to rid ourselves of the evil fate that was destroying us and establish our own independent

⁹⁴ Filip Lukas, *Ličnosti – stvaranja – pokreti*, pp. 214-215, 251

state, which generations of our people had longed for, and without which there can be no true freedom. (...) On the other hand, wanting to incorporate Croats into a new Yugoslavia would have been an even greater injustice than the one caused to us in 1918, when it was possible to mischaracterise the Croatian people's opinions and sentiments. However, after the last twenty years in former Yugoslavia, there can be no doubt as to what the Croats want and what they are fighting for. Croats and Serbs are two developed and distinct nations, and should both create their own destiny and produce works of culture in their own vein on their own historical territory. (...) I am not saying that there were no shortcomings or errors in this latest iteration of ours, and that there were no flaws in our political and economic regulations, or that our conscience was not burdened by these events, and that our perennial values – humanity and constitutional rights, which the Croats have watchfully guarded and ruled in accordance with, as well as pacifism and ethical principles – have not been put to the test. However, the soul of the Croatian people has weathered these temptations as well, and the majority of our people have preserved these fundamental characteristics. These will undoubtedly once again come to the fore and will prevail, and, guided by these fundamental traits, the people will look on those shortcomings and mistakes as an error of the times and the result of irresponsible individuals being led astray.

The ideas for which we fight are: freedom and independence in our own state, humanity and justice. This is what we strive for and what we want to achieve. These ideas, however, are in line with the aspirations of any other nation, because every nation has the right to be free and independent and to govern its own fate according to its own principles and national traits.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ *Izveštaj Matice hrvatske za godinu 1944*, Zagreb, 1945, pp. 8-10

In February of 1945, the Main Directorate for Promotion warned the Matrix that it had not asked permission for the publication of some of its works, and threatened that it would halt all further publishing of its books. The commissioner in charge reported that some of the Matrix's editions had been confiscated, such as a collection of French essays (by Paul Valery, André Gide, Georges Duhamel, Julien Benda, Albert Thibaudet...) entitled *Razgovor o Europi* (A Conversation about Europe), translated and edited by Ivo Hergešić, as well as a selected works of John Maynard Keynes' entitled *Problemi novca između dva rata* (Money Problems between the Two Wars). These books apparently contained much that did not suit the Ustaša government, while on the other hand, Slavko Kolar's *Ili jesmo ili nismo* (Either We Are or We Aren't) and *Mi smo za pravicu* (We Want Our Rights) were also withdrawn, in this case because the author was a member of the Partisans.

The Matrix's final board meeting before the end of the war took place on 4 May 1945, two days before some of its members went into exile. No one signed the minutes of the meeting and they only bear the Matrix's stamp; on May 13, these minutes were signed by the representatives of the new government – professor Petar Lasta, representing the Ministry of Education of the People's Government of Croatia, and professor Jelka Mišić. This meant the Matrix had been taken over by the new government. Some of the Matrix's officials fled abroad (Marko Čović, Vinko Nikolić, Ivan Oršanić, Antun Bonifačić, Mile Starčević, Tijas Mortigija, and others), while others remained in Zagreb (Blaž Jurišić, Mirko Jurkić, Slavko Ježić, Ljubomir Maraković, Branimir Livadić, etc.). Mile Budak tried to flee into exile together with the government of the Independent State of Croatia, but he was

unsuccessful, as was Julije Makanec. Both of them were caught and, together with a few other members of the NDH government, they were sentenced to death and executed in the Maksimir forest in June of 1945. President Filip Lukas went into exile on May 6, 1945, fleeing to Austria and, in 1949, to Rome, where he continued to be politically active.

THE FOURTH PERIOD (1945 – 1972/1990)

During this period, Matrix Croatica had the following presidents: Mihovil Nikolić (1945–1950), Gustav Krklec (1950–1953), Jakša Ravlić (1953–1968), Hrvoje Iveković (1968–1970), and Ljudevit Jonke (1970–1972).

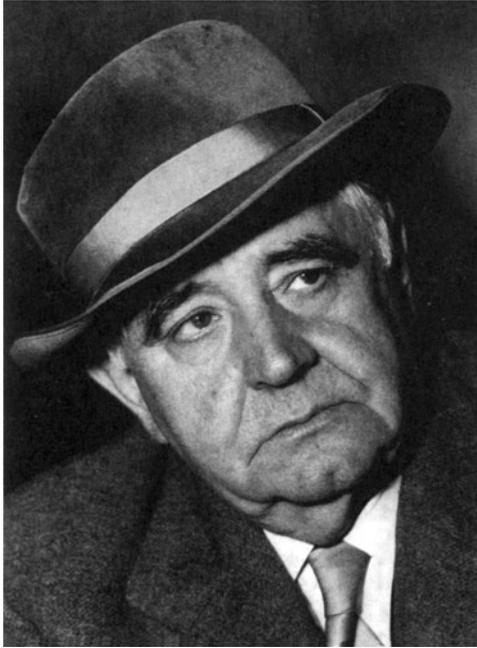
A commission comprised of Ivan Dončević, Stjepan Kranjčević, and Luka Perković called an special session of the general assembly on 15 July 1945, with 89 members present. It is visible from the attendance list that, based on their personal history, this was an ideologically diverse group, with members who had always opposed the attitudes which the Matrix had promoted in recent years, as well as those who diligently collaborated with the Matrix even during the Independent State. Poet Mihovil Nikolić (1879–1951) was elected president, while the two vice-presidents elected were entrusted with the literary-artistic committee (Josip Badalić) and the financial committee (Svetozar Rittig). The secretary-in-chief was Ivan Dončević, Stjepan Kranjčević became the secretary of finance, while Vladimir Vuković became the treasurer. It is interesting to note the names of the committee members: Ivo Hergešić, Antun Barac, Slavko Šimić, Miroslav Krleža, Đuro Tiljak, Vjekoslav Kaleb, Joža Horvat (as members of the literary-artistic committee), and Stanko

Škare, Jaroslav Šidak, Vladimir Popović, Zdenko Štanbuk, Ljerka Premužić (in the financial committee). The traditional managing structure was preserved and work continued according to its traditional models. Stjepan Kranjčević gave an interesting speech in which, among other things, he said:

The principal idea on which the Illyrian Movement was founded need not be stressed much on this occasion –the idea of brotherly ties between the Slavic nations here in the south, an idea that underwent several incarnations after the Illyrian phase and was given many names, but which has always remained essentially unchanged, whether the famous Illyrians were concerned or Yugoslavs the likes of Strossmayer and Rački, to the Radić brothers, and even those Party of Rights members who sing odes to a nation that stretches from Triglav (Slovenia) to the Balkans. (...) It is hard to explain to today's younger generations what the Matrix's publishings meant for all of us older book lovers, but they were our yearly literary gift. It was a literary gift of the highest order. Only we and the generations before us can appreciate it, because we have had these experiences, of impatiently awaiting a series of 7 to 9 volumes of different sizes, lengths, and content, the thrill of cutting them open, skimming them back and forth, and then reading them avidly and ecstatically.⁹⁶

This was followed by a speech by Ivan Dončević, who attacked Lukas with great force, concluding that he had always wanted a state similar to that of the Ustaša, representing him as a part of the "chain": Lukas – M. Starčević – M. Budak – A. Pavelić – Mussolini – Hitler:

⁹⁶ Jakša Ravlić, Marin Somborac, *Povijest Matice hrvatske 1842-1962*, pp. 198-199



Miroslav Krleža

You could say that the Matrix began sinking and deteriorating very soon after WWI. At first slowly, then more rapidly. What were the reasons for this? Firstly, the main reason was that progressive cultural and social movements started taking over around the world, culminating in Russia with the victory of workers and peasants. Certain circles in Croatia, just like everywhere else in the world, sided against these movements. This attitude was rather pronounced within Matrix Croatica. (...) Therefore, when conditions were right at the Matrix, that is, when the so-called current topics of freedom and justice, of independent statehood, national unity, and cultural originality,



Mihovil Nikolić

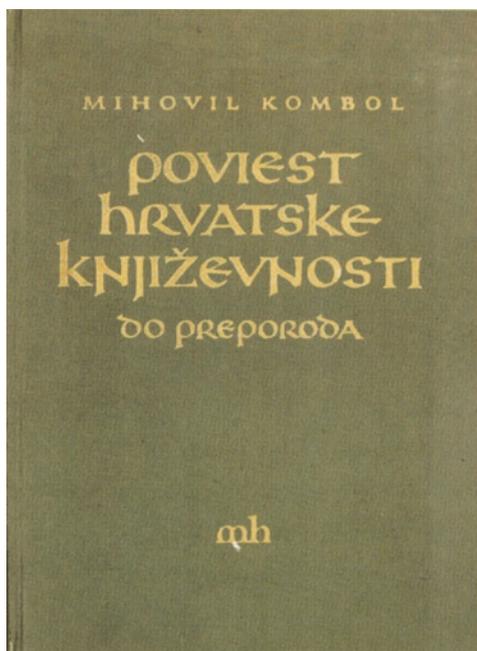
etc. became no more than hollow phrases, and once their programmes and tasks turned upside-down, the time was ripe for Filip Lukas and the like to enter the stage at the Matrix. It would be foolish to doubt that Filip Lukas already knew exactly what he wanted. He was hoping for the Ustaša or someone like them. However, it would not be fair to say he acted on his own, simply doing what he felt like... He was tightly bound to Mile Starčević, who was in turn bound to Mile Budak, and he to Ante Pavelić, and the end of the strings were held by Mussolini and Hitler. As everyone jerked and pulled, the puppets moved and grimaced, changing their masks and positions, but the

puppet masters' intentions were always crystal clear. And all of this occurred behind the façade of the innocence of our oldest and most prestigious cultural institution. (...) The second phase of Lukas and his gendarmes' tyranny at the Matrix was characterized by brazenly and transparently favouring fascism. That is understandable. At the time, Hitler had established his position of power in his own country as well as strengthening his branches abroad. On the pages of the Matrix's editions of the time, openly fascist and national-socialist agents began spreading hate towards anything progressive and Slavic. (...) The third phase of Lukas' scheming started with the rise of the Ustaša to power in Croatia... This fascist organisation truly succeeded in dragging the Matrix through the most despicable mud of filth and crime.⁹⁷

The high ideological charge of the speeches of the current Secretary-in-Chief and Secretary for Finance was a clear sign that the newly-appointed leadership, genuinely or not, had decided to accept the new circumstances of the Yugoslav communist state system, in which there was no room for alternative views and politics. This is also visible from the fact that two Croatian politicians of the period, Vladimir Bakarić and Vladimir Nazor, were accepted as members at this assembly.

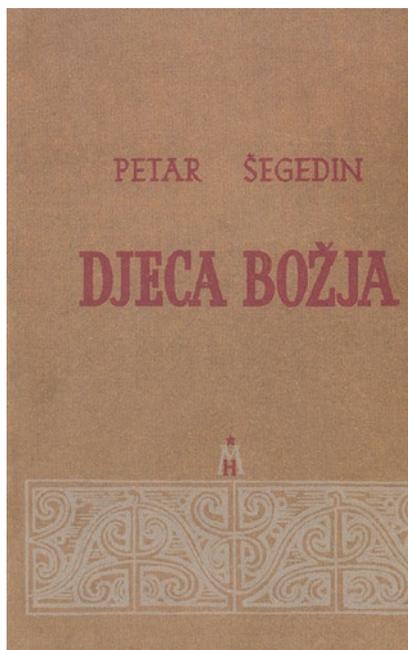
The books published in 1945 can be divided into two groups: those published by the old management and those published by the new management. Among the former were Mihovil Kombat's *Poviest hrvatske književnosti do narodnog preporoda* (*A History of Croatian Literature*

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 199-200



Mihovil Kombol, *Poviest hrvatske književnosti do preporoda*, 1945

up to the National Revival), two novels by Mile Budak (*Kresina*, *Hajduk*) and a translation of the Turkish novel *Nudists* (*Çıplaklar*, R. A. Sevengil), as well as the usual *Report* (for 1944) and a double issue of *Hrvatska revija*, edited by Branimir Livadić and Olinko Delorko. The latter group also boasted a book by a renowned literary historian (Antun Barac, *Vidrić*), followed by books by Imbro Tkalac (*Uspomene iz Hrvatske* [Memories from Croatia]) and Marin Franičević (*Govorenje Mikule Trudnega*). A special issue of *Hrvatsko kolo* bore the caption “A collection dedicated to the struggle for the people’s liberation”, and featured texts



Petar Šegedin, *Djeca božja*, 1946

by Croatian writers and a few others (e.g. Branko Ćopić, Radovan Zogović).

In 1947, the Matrix's management decided to attempt to improve its operations by establishing five sections: 1) literature and language, 2) the arts, 3) history, 4) philosophy, social sciences, and economics, 5) natural sciences and geography. The working members were invited to choose which section they wanted to work in. In February of 1948, the annual General Assembly was held, presided over by President Mihovil Nikolić, who was ill at the time. After his speech, the Assembly was greeted on behalf of the Serbian

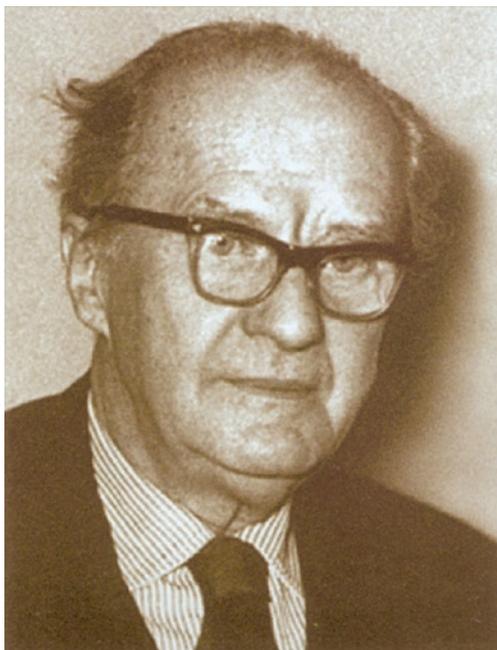
Matrix by Živan Milisavac, who strongly stressed the importance of the fact that obstacles have been removed for the collaboration between the two organizations and that the conditions have been met for both to flourish like never before. Energetic greetings arrived from other such organisations, and this created an elated atmosphere at the assembly. Secretary Petar Šegedin pointed out in his speech:

*The great people's liberation struggle, which saw the participation of the best of our nation, has enabled our Croatian people to acquire its framework – its republic of the people, and to sort out its relations with the neighbouring Slavic peoples by entering into the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, such as were the aspirations of our people, and the aim of the long-standing labour of Matrix Croatica (...) This situation and these relations will allow the Matrix to assume an exceptional position.*⁹⁸

At the general assembly on 30 Jan 1949, a report by Secretary-in-Chief Petar Lasta stressed the following:

In order to better understand the Matrix's current situation, it will be useful to take a brief look at its cultural activity before our time. If we were to draw a curve of the cultural and political movements of the Matrix in the nineteenth century, its starting point was far ahead of Croatian society at the time, especially during the 1870s. Matrix Croatica spanned the breadth of all the Croatian regions and its publications voiced the finest Croatian writers, featured the most important popular science, developed a reading culture among the ordinary speakers of a language, and covered the most important issues of the times. In the twentieth century, the Matrix began sharing its cultural activities with other new institutions... However, because of

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 208



Gustav Krklec

its breadth and its close ties to the nation, it still holds primacy over other organizations.⁹⁹

The new management was chosen in 1950. Writer and translator Gustav Krklec (1899 – 1977) was chosen as the new president. Jakša Ravlić and Vjekoslav Kaleb were appointed vice-presidents. Far from the homeland, in the Argentinian capital of Buenos Aires, Vinko Nikolić resuscitated the publication *Hrvatska revija*, which would continue to be published abroad until 1990.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 214-215

Linguist Mate Hraste was invited to a meeting of the managing board on 14 May 1954, as the agenda included a discussion on the proposition of the Serbian Matrix to create a Serbo-Croatian dictionary, *Rječnik hrvatskoga ili srpskoga jezika*, which would be published by both Matrix Croatica and the Serbian Matrix. Ljudevit Jonke explained that the corpus for the dictionary would be comprised of works by Croatian and Serbian writers from the last 50 to 70 years, that two teams – one in Zagreb and one in Belgrade – would each compile their own corpora from the works of their respective authors, that the dictionary would also include basic technical vocabulary, and that it would be published in both languages and alphabets (in an Ijekavian Latin script version and an Ekavian Cyrillic script version). The committee decided that the proposal was generally satisfactory, and President Krklec informed the delegation of the Serbian Matrix of this when they entered the hall after the meeting. In his opening speech, secretary of the Serbian Matrix Miloš Hodžić said that this cooperation would be of great psychological and political significance, and that he envisioned it as a mutual understanding without the need for dominance. At the assembly of 19 December 1954, literary historian Jakša Ravlić (1896–1975) was elected the new president, remaining in this position for fourteen years. He also wrote a book on the history and activity of the institution, which was published to commemorate the 120th anniversary of its existence and proved quite useful to many people. Petar Šegedin and Oleg Mandić were appointed first and second vice-president, respectively. Secretary-in-Chief Nikola Pavić briefed the assembly on the introduction of sub-committees in Rijeka, Zadar, Split, and Dubrovnik. Board member Ljudevit Jonke

spoke about the proposed dictionary, *Rječnik hrvatskog ili srpskog književnog jezika*:

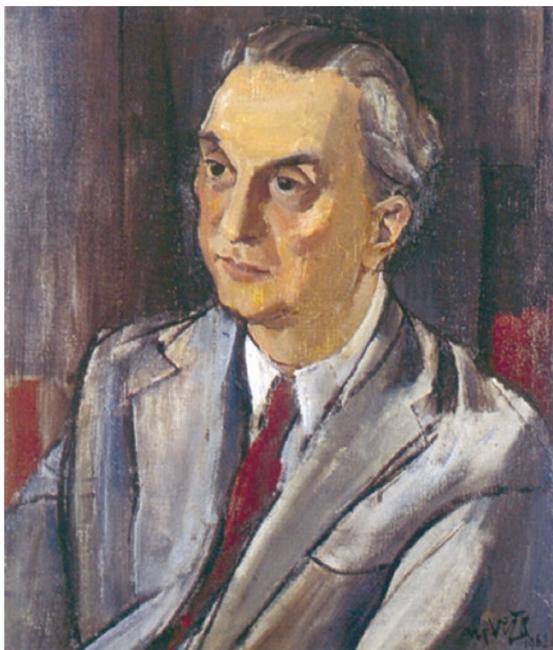
If we observe the dictionary made by Broz and Iveković, we will see that it does not contain some of the most commonly used words today, because it only contains vocabulary taken from folk songs, stories, etc. Though it comprises 40,000, we will not find words such as shipwreck, telegram, benevolent, name-day, truthfulness, expenditure, excursion, expression... let alone terms for particular types of literature, science, or journalism. There is truly a great need for this sort of dictionary in this day and age. If we consider that our language has 150,000, this dictionary is more than necessary.¹⁰⁰

Thus, Matrix Croatica accepted the proposal to compile a dictionary the title of which would indicate that Serbian and Croatian were one language; however, under the agreement, the Zagreb edition of the dictionary would be edited by a separate team in Zagreb and would be printed separately in the Ijekavian dialect and in the Latin script. Under the political climate of the time, this was guarantee enough for the Matrix's leadership to agree to the proposal.

At the meeting of the managing board on 21 Jan 1955, Matrix secretary Joža Horvat, whose goal was obviously to redirect the Matrix's (publishing) programme and bring it in line with the aims of the communist state administration, presented a proposal to begin a "General Education Series" with the support of the labour unions, the socialist alliance, the army, and a group of cultural and educational organizations.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 229-230

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 230



Jakša Ravlić, painted by Mladen Veža

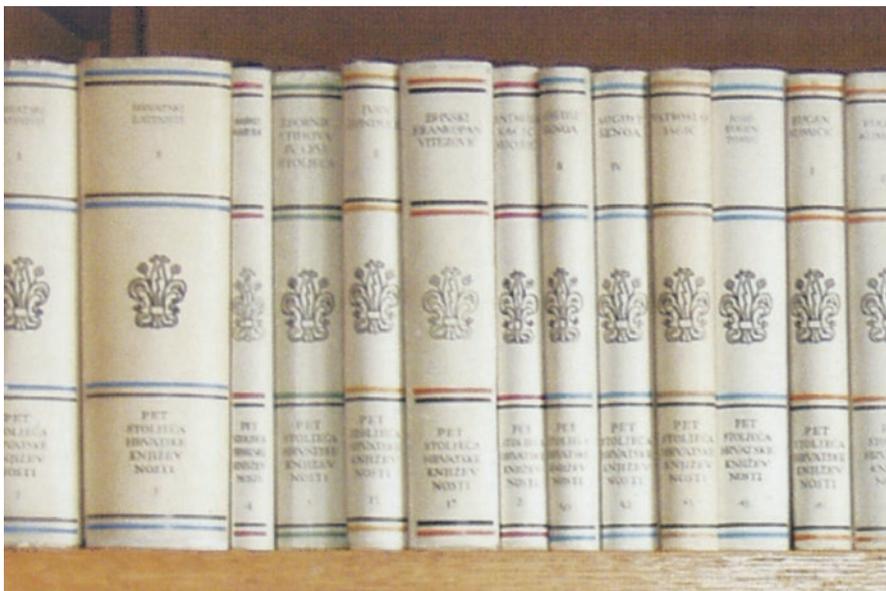
At the general assembly of 30 March 1958, President Jakša Ravčič mentioned the fact that the Matrix had published very few books in the previous year, citing a lack of disposable funds as the reason. Finance secretary Hrvoje Šarić proposed an initiative to sell the books in stock as an attempt to secure a larger fixed small enterprise loan, as well as to increase the number of publications that stood better odds on the market. He deemed the Matrix's sales activities unsatisfactory. In May of 1959, a special commission proposed the establishment of a special division that would be called the "Publishing Institute of Matrix Croatica"; it

would act within the Matrix, but on the principles of a self-financing institution. This would be the first step, while the second would be to organize the Publishing Institute as a commercial institution, the purpose of which would be to use the commercial activities of the Matrix to more easily secure the funds needed to realise its publishing plans. A document on the foundation would need to be drawn and preparations would need to be completed by 1 Jan 1960. At the annual assembly held on 23 April 1960, President Ravlić was highly optimistic in his speech, stating that “since the foundation of Matrix Croatica, no managing board has been able to present a more positive report,” and he foresaw a very fine future for the Matrix. He concluded by saying that the building where the Matrix was housed (built in 1886) served the cultural needs of the Croatian people and would be exempt from nationalization. The assembly precisely detailed which tasks would be undertaken by the Publishing Institute and which would involve the publishing and exchange of books, as well as products and services (which meant setting up its own printing press, book bindery, paper mill, and graphic editing and art departments). The corresponding state administrative body issued permission to establish the Publishing Institute of Matrix Croatica on 11 May 1960, and Josip Tomić was appointed as its first director. At the first meeting of the new managing board, Joža Horvat was elected secretary-in-chief, and Josip Tomić became the finance secretary. In the next meeting, it was concluded that the Matrix would lease an empty storefront at 62 Ilica Street and use it as its own new and used bookstore. The managing board met again on 27 May, and it received the pleasant news that the large spelling dictionary published jointly by Matrix Croatica and the Serbian Matrix had already sold 23,000



Matica hrvatska in the 1960s

advance copies, and that steps should be taken to publish both a smaller spelling dictionary for schools and a larger one by the beginning of the school year. At the managing board meeting held on 11 Nov 1960, the members received a report on Josip Broz Tito's reception, which had been organized for representatives of Matrix Croatica and the Serbian Matrix to honour both organizations for their work on the joint spelling dictionary. He was also delighted to hear about plans for more collaboration in the future. Subsequently,



several other high-ranking officials held receptions in honour of this collaboration, such as Petar Stambolić, Eduard Kardelj, Aleksandar Ranković, Rodoljub Čolaković, Krsto Crvenkovski, and Vladimir Bakarić. The Matrix's management decided to hold its 120th anniversary celebration in the fall of 1962, and to prepare a publication to commemorate the occasion in the spring of 1962; it was to have three sections: a history of the Matrix, a compendium of the most important documents from its 120 years of history, and a list of all the books published by the Matrix in its 120 years of activity. The first two sections were edited by Jakša Ravlić, while Marin Somborac prepared the third. In 1961, the Matrix published a record-breaking 61 books. Through its publishing company "Zora", it planned to publish a series entitled "Five Centuries of Croatian Literature," with 130 to 150 volumes



Famous Matica's book series *Pet stoljeća hrvatske književnosti*

to be released in cycles of 12 books. The first series was published by late 1962. A large exhibition to commemorate the 120th anniversary of the institution was held at the Yugoslav (today Croatian) Academy of Sciences and Arts' Institute for Literature at 18 Opatička Street. The turnout was exceptional, and exhibitions in other places soon followed. In honor of the Matrix, the Croatian National Theatre performed the opera Nikola Šubić Zrinski, and a great number of lectures were organized around Zagreb on the role of the Matrix's publishing activity in helping to foster the development of different fields of expertise (natural sciences, linguistics, literature, etc.); several poetry evenings were organized as well. On 20 Dec, in the presence of all the highest-ranking



Miroslav Brandt

officials of the Croatian government at the time, President of the Executive Council of the Socialist Republic of Croatia Zvonko Brkić conferred on representatives of the Matrix Croatica National Service Medal with a golden star awarded by Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito. The Matrix's delegation consisted of President Jakša Ravlić, Vice-President Miroslav Feldman, and Secretary-in-Chief Joža Horvat. The mayor of Zagreb, Većeslav Holjevac, held a large reception for members of the Matrix at the mayoral office at Dverce palace. A commemorative session of the Matrix's assembly was held a day later at the Old City Hall in Zagreb and it was attended by representatives of the government and cultural

and scientific organizations from Croatia and other Yugoslav republics. On 15 March 1964, a new managing board was elected, in which Jakša Ravlić was re-elected to the position of president, while Miroslav Brandt, who later played a key role the management of the organization, was named vice-president. Joža Horvat stepped down from the position of secretary in order to undertake preparations for his sailing trip around the world, and was replaced by Mirko Božić (27 March 1964). He remained in office for only three months, until Mladen Čaldarović, who had earlier been co-opted into the management board, took his place (30 Oct). Finance secretary Josip Tomić was removed from office (June 1964), citing problems at the Publishing Institute (“corruption, business and administrative autocracy”), and, pursuant to the Matrix’s regulations, he was subsequently stripped of his membership. Vladimir Blašković, a professor at the Faculty of Economics in Zagreb, was named the new secretary of finance, while Vlatko Pavletić was appointed the acting director of the Publishing Institute.

In reaction to increasing attempts to impose the Serbian language in Croatia, the “Declaration on the Status and Name of the Croatian Literary Language” was published in the weekly paper *Telegram* on 7 March 1967, drafted by Matrix Croatica in agreement with a decision of its governing bodies. The declaration was signed by eighteen renowned Croatian scientific and cultural institutions, its main message being that the Serbian literary language was being imposed by force as the shared language of both Serbs and Croats (“...the idea arose from the need for a ‘state language,’ which in practice meant that the Serbian literary language was intended for this role (...) this lack of clarity has allowed the Serbian literary language to be imposed

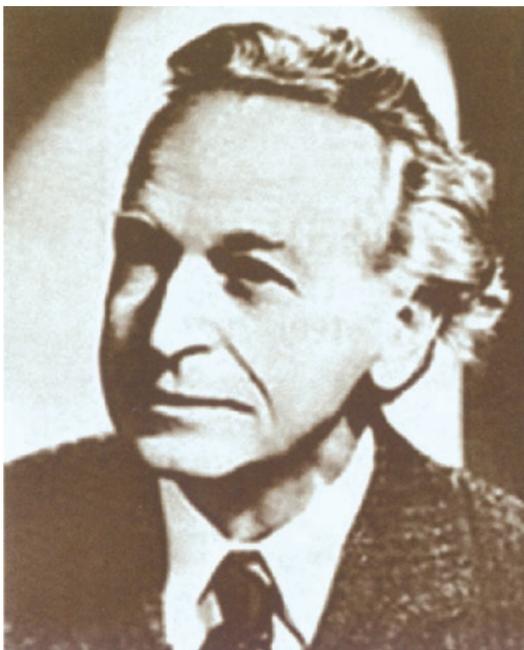
as the shared language of both Serbs and Croats”) and that this should be rectified through a constitutional amendment that would “determine the clear and unequivocal equality and equal status of the four literary languages: Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian, and Macedonian.” The Declaration also stated the need to “ensure the consistent usage of the Croatian language in schools and newspapers, in public and political life, on the radio and television, whenever Croatian people are involved, and that officials, teachers and public workers must speak the literary language of the location in which they work in official usage, regardless of their origins.”¹⁰²

Igor Zidić, the Matrix’s secretary at the time, justified the bold decision to take a stance of resistance against a superior political power by expressing the awareness that, after twenty-five years of Tito’s oppression, there had come a moment in which “we must offer resistance now, even if we do not stand a chance of success, because we cannot go on without resistance and protest; therefore the Matrix has decided to open a ‘language front’”. Zidić continues: “(...) constitutional debate and an appeal to propose an amendment have created a fantastic opportunity for us to declare before the Croatian and Yugoslavian public: this far, but no further!”¹⁰³ This was met with fierce attacks from the ruling political circles both within Croatia and without; the signatories were referred to as the “destroyers of brotherhood and unity” (Josip Broz Tito: *We, my comrades, do not live off*

¹⁰² *Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskog književnog jezika : Građa za povijest Deklaracije*, the third revised and supplemented edition, edited by Jelena Hekman, Zagreb, 1997, pp. 25-29

¹⁰³ Igor Zidić, *Upravna tijela Matice hrvatske, odnos snaga i društvena previranja u razdoblju 1966-1971.*, in: *Hrvatska i Hrvatsko proljeće 1971.*, anthology, editor: Igor Zidić, Zagreb, 2017, p. 36

of grammar; Vladimir Bakarić: *Enemy attitudes that pull us into the past*; Josip Manolić: *An energetic confrontation with everything that has already been politically buried*; Stipe Mesić: *The absolute fall of the Declaration*; Miko Tripalo: *The Declaration should be condemned as political sabotage*). Many of the Matrix's members lost their jobs, while some had to move away from their place of residence. Ljudevit Jonke, Vlatko Pavletić, Miroslav Brandt, Ivo Frangeš, Dalibor Brozović and others were expelled from the Party; Miroslav Krleža resigned his membership in the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia in April. Serbian writers responded to the Declaration with a text entitled "A proposition for contemplation", in which they accepted the Declaration's appeal for the independent position of all four languages ("The Croatian and Serbian languages will develop with full independence and equality. (...) The confirmation of the independence of the name and development of the Croatian and Serbian languages requires this right to be guaranteed by constitutional regulations"), which the Belgrade newspaper *Borba* referred to as a chauvinistic outburst. Despite strong political pressures, the Matrix's governing bodies did not withdraw the Declaration, nor did they express an apology or much regret; however, pressured by the government, the members of the managing and supervisory boards tendered their resignations on 11 April 1967. A provisional board was formed in order to convene an emergency assembly. At this assembly, held on 25 June 1967, it was decided that the governing bodies should continue operating and the existing officials should remain in their positions until the 1968 assembly, as they had not been issued a statement of release. In spite of repression, there was much optimism the Matrix and in Croatia in general; the



Hrvoje Iveković

Declaration also brought hope to Croats living abroad. After the Declaration, the compound neologism “Croato-Serbian” or “Serbo-Croatian”, which had been widely used, gradually disappeared from public usage. The term “Croatian or Serbian language” became more prevalent, while the term Croatian literary language became the most commonly used term; it was introduced into the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Croatia in 1974.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ *Telegram*, year VIII, no. 359, 17. III. 1967, p. 1; *Deklaracija o hrvatsko-me jeziku: s priložima i Deset teza*, 2nd edition, Zagreb, 1991; *Deklaracija o*

At the general assembly, held on 31 Mar 1968, Hrvoje Iveković (1901–1991), a professor at the Faculty of Pharmacology in Zagreb, was elected the new president of the Matrix. The remainder of the managing board consisted of astronomer Leo Randić and philosopher Danilo Pejović, while the position of Secretary-in-Chief was first held by Mladen Čaldarović (until the summer of 1968, when he was succeeded by Miroslav Šicel, who was succeeded in the summer of 1969 by Radoslav Katičić). Business secretary Igor Zidić, who devoted himself full-time to the Matrix’s periodicals, was succeeded by Tvrtko Šercar, while Šime Đodan became the finance secretary. In November of 1969 (17-21), Miloš Žanko wrote an essay published in *Borba* entitled “There is a method to this (nationalist) madness”, in which he attacked those cultural workers and writers in Croatia who had expressed their dissatisfaction with certain occurrences in society, while also criticizing the activities of Matrix Croatica as an institution. The Matrix’s managing board did not ignore these attacks, and responded with a “Statement” that read:

Matrix Croatica cannot grasp this sort of words, nor can it accept a conversation of this sort and on this level. Instead of arguments, Miloš Žanko’s texts provide only bare statements; instead of analyzing occurrences and their causes, Žanko only lists quotes that bear no connection to these occurrences; instead of the fullness of occurrences, there are only small

nazivu i položaju hrvatskog književnog jezika : Građa za povijest Deklaracije, third revised and supplemented edition, edited by Jelena Hekman, Zagreb, 1997, pp. 25-29; *Kolo*, Year. 2009, no. 1-2, pp. 69-221; *Enciklopedija Matice hrvatske*, vol. 1, Zagreb, 2015, pp. 303, 492-496; Marko Samardžija (editor), *Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskog književnog jezika*, Zagreb, 2017; *Vijenac*, no. 601, 16. III. 2017, pp. 8-12



Dalibor Brozović, *Rječnik jezika ili jezik rječnika?*, 1969

fragments and excerpts of thoughts, which he interprets arbitrarily. This method can attain any number of things, but it cannot find the truth, discover causal ties between occurrences, and, least of all, find potential resolutions to the contradictions within our society or mobilise our people and nations to work in harmony in the community.

The Matrix's governing bodies protected both the long-standing Croatian cultural institution itself and numerous individual writers and cultural workers as well, not only through the December "Statement," but on other occasions



Ljudevit Jonke

as well. For example, when Tanjug news agency and some dailies attacked the Matrix's periodicals, labelling the institution "the centre of the front opposing the policies of the League of Communists," the Matrix responded that its magazines are determined by "the principle of creative freedom and the need for scientific truth." This kind of statement was a clear indicator of what the focus of these debates truly was, and they foreshadowed the coming "hot years." Before its activity was disabled in early 1972, the Matrix's final managing board was elected at the general assembly on

29 Nov 1970. Renowned Croatian linguist Ljudevit Jonke (1907–1979) was elected president, Hrvoje Iveković, Miroslav Brandt, and Danilo Pejović became vice-presidents, Jozo Ivičević was appointed secretary-in-chief, Tvrtko Šercar became business secretary, and Šime Đodan was chosen as the secretary of finance. On 16 April 1971, the Matrix terminated the Novi Sad Agreement. During 1971, the Matrix founded a great number of branches around Croatia, and the founding assemblies were often attended by upwards of five thousand people. By the end of the year, according to some key figures from its ranks (Jozo Ivičević), the Matrix had over fifty thousand members, while a 1972 report by the Republican Secretariat of Internal Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Croatia asserted the number to be 42,023 members.¹⁰⁵ In 1971, the Matrix experienced unprecedented development of its publishing programs, to a large degree marked by national topics, which put the Yugoslav communist government on edge. Almost a hundred books were published. The central office published *Kolo* and *Život umjetnosti* magazines, while numerous magazines were also published in its other branches: *Svjetlo* in Karlovac, *Istarski mozaik* in Pula, *Dometi* in Rijeka, *Zadarska revija* in Zadar, *Mogućnosti*, *Pogledi*, and *Čakavska rič* in Split, *Dubrovnik* in Dubrovnik, *Ogledi* in Vukovar, *Revija* in Osijek, *Hrvatska pokrajina* in Požega, *Pakrac danas* in Pakrac, and *Riječi* in Sisak.¹⁰⁶ This was also the year the Matrix launched its weekly, *Hrvatski tjednik*. The newspaper represented an entirely new form of communication with the Croatian public. In the

¹⁰⁵ *Izveštaj o kontroli zakonitosti rada Matice hrvatske*, Zagreb, 2002, p. 46

¹⁰⁶ Jozo Ivičević, *Iz novije hrvatske povijesti*, Zagreb, 2007, p. 310

editorial of the very first issue, the editorial board expressed a clear editorial stance that quickly helped the paper become the main organ not only of Matrix Croatica, but of Croatian society as a whole during the Croatian Spring: “In today’s historical moment, the Croatian people undoubtedly find themselves before the most vital task – that of completing the spiritual and territorial integration of its national being. Constituting statehood is vital not only because of the need to realise its true equality and sovereignty within Yugoslavia; it is also the prerequisite for a future in this community...”¹⁰⁷ Emphasizing the statehood of the Croatian people as a precondition for the future of Yugoslavia was, in fact, a reflection of a confederate political programme that culminated in the proposal of an amendment to the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, published in *Hrvatski tjednik* in September of 1971, which demanded that Croatia be defined as a “national state of the Croatian people,” thus granting “single, indivisible, and inalienable national sovereignty to the Croatian people in the Socialist Republic of Croatia.”¹⁰⁸ Šime Đodan’s texts in *Hrvatski tjednik* emphasized the need for Croatian state sovereignty from the point of view of the economics and high emigration of the time:

Emigration from Croatia can be stopped only if Croatia can keep what it accumulates and receives back the capital that has been stolen from it. This will be possible only once Croatia becomes a truly sovereign state, one that will be able to decide on how its national product is used, both in dinars and foreign currencies. If we do not achieve this, despite a minimal population increase, the outflow of workers to the West will continue,

¹⁰⁷ *Hrvatski tjednik*, no. 1, 16. IV. 1971, p. 1

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 23, 24. IX. 1971, p. 1

HRVATSKI TJEDNIK

novine za kulturna i društvena pitanja

NAKLADA MATICE HRVATSKE

Zagreb,
16. travnja 1971.
godina I
broj 1.
cijena 2 dinara

Protiv zločina i zloporabe hrvatskog imena

Prosvjed
Matice
hrvatske

Da politički smjeralci ne utraju u svojoj podvaljanoj borbi protiv političkih promjena u socijalističkoj i samooprednoj Hrvatskoj i Jugoslaviji, dokazuje i najnovije terorističko zločinstvo u Štokholmu. Smutnom stoga svojim dužnostu da izrazimo ogorčenje širokog čitavca Matice hrvatske i da osuđimo terorizam i zločin kao metode političke borbe. Ujedno oštro osuđujemo ne samo ovaj-mjese izvještaje atentata, nego i sve one snage što iz njegova staja, okupljene oko zajedničke platforme antihrvatske i antisocijalističke politike, kao i one zločinjenike u našem društvu koji taj morak što žele iskorištiti u svojstvu izvršitelja odnosa i atmosfere na ustoličanjem plana, umišljajući time borbu progresivnih snaga za reformu SFR Jugoslavije i za punu samooprednost svih naroda i narodnosti, za potpunu afirmaciju republičke državnosti i suvereniteta. S tim u vezi također zaključujemo da je jedna i potpuno neizbježna događanja na koje se ukazuje u izvještaju sa 18. sjednice CK SKH.

Predujedinivo
MATICE HRVATSKE

PROSLOV

Svrhu HRVATSKOG TJEDNIKA predodređuje povijesni trenutak u kojem se pojavljuje. Odatle, sve se povijesno razdoblje imalo svoje spovijesne trenutke, ali baš zato što su, stjecajem mnogih okolnosti, hrvatski narod i danas mora boriti za osiguranje pretpostavki svoje egzistencije u suvremenoj i budućnosti - čini nam se da nije pretjerano iskazano E nuda pokretanje i ovoga tjednika.

U doba kojim povijesnom razdoblju pred hrvatski se narod - kao glavna zadaća - nadvojno ističe dovršenje duhovne i težišne integracije njegova nacionalnog bića. Konstituiranje njegove državnosti nije samo potreba oživotvorenja njegovog stvarnog suvereniteta i suverenosti u zajednici SFRJ, nego i pretpostavka budućnosti te zajednice, a ovisno time i prilag mnu na ovom tradicionalno nemiranom području a koje se uvijek otmahu dva svijeta...

U životu svakog naroda nastupa doba kad valja odbaciti sve jedinstvenosti i sve isključivosti, da bi se obrativali i prijemili i sa-kladnima pacifikci, sadržajnoj i budućnosti mogla prošli na svemu otmu pacifikom što je bilo nego narodu stvarila na svim područjima ljudskoga reda.

HRVATSKI TJEDNIK daje svoj prilag rješavanja spominjanih zadaća, polazeći od svih povijesnih iskustava svoga naroda i temeljnih položajnih velikih ideja socijalizma: socijalističko društvo mora unaprijediti, a ne spriječiti sve ono što je u životu naroda odnoseno na kulturnu, znanstvenu, gospodarsku i svatku inam polju.

HRVATSKI TJEDNIK nastojat će da dade svoj prilag pobijedi samooprednog socijalizma kao jedinom putu oživotvorenja hrvatske državnosti i očvršćenja politike nezavisna SFRJ. HRVATSKI TJEDNIK pridonosit će, prema svojim mogućnostima, sposobizavanju svih slojeva hrvatskoga naroda za punu korištenje svatkih prava u svim sfarama kulturnog, društvenog i državnog života; da svakome svoje slobodu pružati u svoje ruke.

Hrvatska je jedna - Hrvatsa su milijuni Kol-tuvna je integracija hrvatske kulture, svih njezinih slojeva, na čistom narodnom pravstovu. pritomna zadaća njezinih djelatnika; ali integracija koje će afirmirati svo obilje značajki što ih, po tradiciji, iskazuje svatko hrvatske pokrajine. I isto tako, sve ono bogatstvo misli i jezika tako karakteristično za život civilizacije i kultura na drevnom europskom tlu.

Kulturna integracija Hrvatske, takva kakvoj smjeramo, ne prednostuje stvaralačku unatostaciju jezika. Hrvatska je jedna ali je mnogolika hrvatska. I velikoj je zadaći integracija cilj da te bogatstvo brani i obrani. Hrvatska ne smije, vjerno na svoju istu, bivati između dva zrna lina, između dva glada i nije koje još, u cijelosti, pripada. Ite vjekove nemogućnosti da svoje stvaralačke snage, prirodna bogatstva i prednosti stvaralačiju jezika. Hrvatska je jedna ali je mnogolika hrvatska. I velikoj je zadaći integracija cilj da te bogatstvo brani i obrani. Hrvatska ne smije, vjerno na svoju istu, bivati između dva zrna lina, između dva glada i nije koje još, u cijelosti, pripada.

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Jednako i pametna orijentacija Hrvatske, polazeći od potreba i prednosti njezina konstituiranog dijela, temeljem je same preporade i integraciji hrvatskoga gospodarstva. Jednako i more otvaraju same putove u svijet i razvijaju brama hrvatske izostaje i ekonomstva.

Stvarajući temelje ne samo za biološko odnosenje hrvatskoga naroda na nolem tlu, već i za vraćanje onih 500.000 Hrvata kojima njihova bogata domovina nije stvorila vjete za život i izglede za budućnost, namodna da prihvatiti i voprijeti njihove stvaralačke snage i sposobnosti.

Vezu se svijetom i otvaranje prema svijetu stvorit će trajno povoljne uvjete za život, rad i budućnost svatko hrvatske i svatku istu hrvatske.

Hrvatska
bez
krila

Magnum
crimen

Lica
Oskara
Hermana

as will the outflow of funds (capital) to the East. It is impossible to stop this double outflow and twofold impoverishment without national sovereignty, which means that the matter of achieving our full statehood is a fundamental one for the very survival of the Croatian nation.¹⁰⁹

Igor Zidić was editor-in-chief of the publication and Jozo Ivičević was its managing director until the 13th issue. The magazine collaborated with renowned journalists and intellectuals, including Franjo Tuđman. Starting with the 13th issue, the editorial board was reduced to six editors, with Vlado Gotovac as editor-in-chief and Zvonimir Berković, Jozo Ivičević, Zvonimir Lisinski, Ivo Škrabalo, and Hrvoje Šošić as the other five editors. The newspaper sold up to 130,000 copies per issue. It published 33 issues in total, the last of which was on 3 Dec 1971. The 34th issue was ready for print, but the government banned its publication. However, the four sheets of this special issue that were printed and secretly saved were then used to release a statement by the executive committee of Matrix Croatica, still firmly abiding by its fundamental national attitudes: "...it is true that Matrix Croatica was the one to explicitly stress, perhaps earlier than many others, the need for the real equality of all our unified nations (...) Matrix Croatica advocated this sort of unification on the principles of national and social equality in many of its documents, statements, and programmes..." Four days later, the editorial board tendered their resignations, while collective resignations of the Matrix's governing bodies began on 20 Dec. The managing board refused the request to exclude certain individuals from the Matrix's leadership, which it

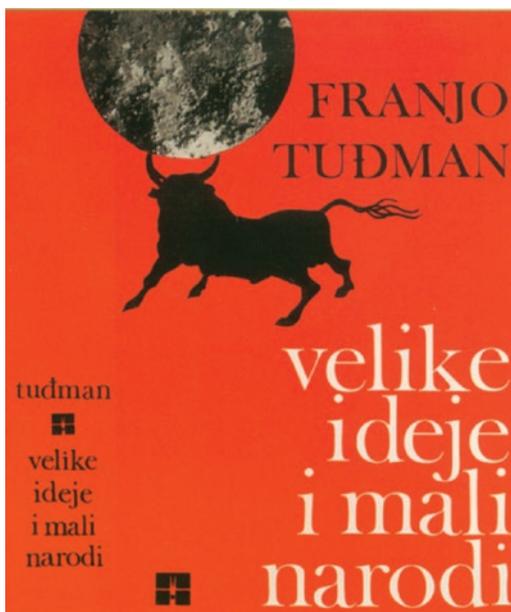
¹⁰⁹ Ibid, no. 2, 23. IV. 1971. p. 7



Literary magazine *Kritika*, editor Vlatko Pavletić

received after a meeting of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia presided over by Tito and held on 1 Dec 1971 in Karađorđevo. At this meeting, the League began to confront Matrix Croatica using vocabulary that was clearly indicative of a plan to destroy the Matrix. In this vein, Josip Vrhovec said that “this Matrix has not been immune to becoming the centre of enemy activity against this country and socialism.”¹¹⁰ Vladimir Bakarić stressed that a large segment of the opposition had gathered around the

¹¹⁰ *Sječa Hrvatske u Karađorđevu 1971. : autorizirani zapisnik*, editor-in-chief Milan Pišković, Zagreb, 1994, p. 25



Franjo Tuđman, *Velike ideje i mali narodi*, design by Boris Dogan, 1969

Matrix: “For example, Tuđman, whom I have already mentioned, was expelled from the Worker’s Movement Institute and labelled as politically undesirable. We have forced such people out of the Institute for Migration and Ethnicity and a whole host of other organisations, and they all joined the institutions of Matrix Croatica.”¹¹¹ Not even one of the ‘reformed’ forerunners of Croatian communism, Miko Tripalo, had anything different to say: “As far as the Matrix is concerned, we have to reach an agreement here. If we are able to conquer and eliminate the enemy cores that exist within

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 142

it, that would be the way to go about it.”¹¹² Savka Dabčević Kučar, the President of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia, expressed the same view toward the Matrix: “We first sanctioned, *de facto* through the force of the Party, those actions of the Matrix put into place on the ground that we believed either posed a threat of infiltration by the enemy or were directly organized by certain forces that wish to turn the Matrix into another political party.”¹¹³ Josip Broz Tito was the one to deliver the final “verdict” on the Matrix, in his address to the Croatian communist leadership:

It is a matter of fact that Matrix Croatica has a very large membership. But, what are the elements within it? I would not describe them as unconscious anti-socialist elements. They are conscious anti-socialist elements. (...) You thought that you would rehabilitate it by putting a few communists in the right positions. But the Matrix has not been rehabilitated; on the contrary, these communists have merged with the elements within it. (...) I have heard here that you even fund its newspapers and printing, and this is truly beyond understanding. (...) Why don't you collect all of their scribbling and statements instead, put them neatly in a folder, give it to the prosecutor, and let him do his job.¹¹⁴ (...) We know of the existence of the so-called revolutionary committee of fifty – which I call counter-revolutionary – and we know that it is in charge of these actions. Four or five of them are in charge, but we know there are many more. This is an organization that operates both legally and illegally, and its centre is Matrix Croatica. These things have

¹¹² Ibid., p. 151

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 169

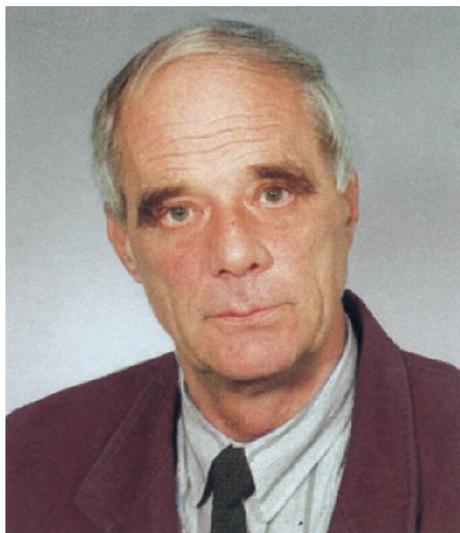
¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 182

gone too far for us to simply wait and treat them so lightly. We cannot allow such individuals or counter-revolutionary groups to operate in our socialist country.¹¹⁵

On Dec 20, 1971, following the group resignation, the managing board appointed a provisional board to carry out current tasks, comprised of Ljudevit Jonke, Miroslav Brandt, Hrvoje Iveković, Danilo Pejović, Vlatko Pavletić, and Tvrtko Šercar. It is interesting to note that the Supervisory Board (Blašković, Bogišić, Bujas, Šljivarić, Tijardović) did not resign, and over the next two years, it occasionally attempted to organize an emergency general assembly; however, the state bodies did not allow it. The police seized the Matrix's offices and archives, a portion of its assets was handed over to the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, and a portion was stolen. The Matrix's palace was repurposed and given to someone else. Matrix Croatica ceased to operate, though there was never any court ruling on the termination of its activities. The Publishing Institute remained operational and continued its publishing activity until the Matrix resumed its active role (1989); this activity would be irregular depending on the year, however, this was the only form of business that took place.

In 1972, the political leadership of Croatia attempted to encourage internal divisions and accusations, which it referred to as "internal differentiation", with in Matrix Croatica, however, this did not succeed. In January, arrests began of politicians, intellectuals, students, members of the Croatian Spring movement, and members of Matrix Croatica. The total number of people arrested in Croatia was

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 212



Jozo Ivičević

about two thousand. Many individuals lost their jobs, and the population was terrorized through unannounced police searches and wiretapping.

On January 11, 1972, numerous members of the Matrix's managing board were arrested and sentenced to many years of imprisonment for their activity within Matrix Croatica soon thereafter at typical fabricated communist political trials. On 24 November 1972, Marko Veselica, Jozo Ivičević, and Zvonimir Komarica were found guilty of, among other things, wanting to "topple the constitutionally-based autonomous socialist and democratic government of the Socialist Republic of Croatia violently and in other unconstitutional ways, and to overthrow the representative bodies and bodies of government legally elected by the working people in

the Socialist Republic of Croatia; to rouse mistrust, hatred, and disunity among the peoples of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; to bring about the violent and unconstitutional separation of the Socialist Republic of Croatia from the Yugoslav Federation.” Vlado Gotovac and Hrvoje Šošić were found guilty of “abusing the democratic freedom of the press, the freedom of association, the freedom of speech, and the freedom of assembly in their speeches, lectures, and other public appearances, as well as in their own writings and articles (...) they expressed mistrust and doubt in the legally elected representative bodies of the Socialist Republic of Croatia and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.” Furthermore, “in order to coordinate and unify counter-revolutionary activity in the country based on a nationalist ‘mass movement’ involving the anti-socialist and anti-Yugoslav operations of political refugees abroad, they founded branches abroad called ‘Associations of Friends of Matrix Croatica’. In addition, at Matrix Croatica headquarters in Zagreb, in order to coordinate the activities, they established a Commission for Cultural Ties With Croats Abroad, maintained contact with their representatives, provided them with instructions and plans, received work reports, membership fees, and financial contributions in order to unify all Croats abroad on a platform of extreme nationalism.¹¹⁶ Šime Đodan was convicted because, among other things “he made false allegations that Croatia had been subjugated within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, oppressed, and put in an unequal position; that Croatian na-

¹¹⁶ Mato Artuković, *Presude hrvatskim intelektualcima 1972*, in: *Hrvatska i Hrvatsko proljeće 1971.*, collected papers, edited by Igor Zidić, Zagreb, 2017, pp. 227-229

tional awareness was being suppressed; that Croatia was being economically exploited by other Yugoslav republics, and was under Greater Serbian hegemony” at preparatory meetings for the establishment of a branch of Matrix Croatica in Sinj, and that “he made false allegations about the colonial position of the Socialist Republic of Croatia in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and about the threat that the Croatian national identity was allegedly facing at Matrix Croatica managing board meetings.” Đodan’s pronounced view that Croatia should have its own army made a significant impact on the court’s ruling: “National defence is an inalienable right of every country; in socialism, the army consists of the nation’s armed people, so Croatia should have its own armed people, just as every other republic should.”¹¹⁷ Vlado Gotovac was convicted because, among other things, “within his role in the programme and concept of the counter-revolutionary group in Matrix Croatica (...), he tried to cause public dissatisfaction, disunity, and hatred among the nations of Yugoslavia, especially between the Croatian and Serbian people, as well as mistrust of representative bodies. Furthermore, he propagated the nationalist mass movement ideology.” His most grievous crime was allegedly trying to amass the membership of Matrix Croatica and “work to politicise and transform it into an opposing political party based on nationalism.” In his verdict, Gotovac’s role as editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Hrvatski tjednik* was of special importance:

If we analyse the incriminating articles, both those written by Gotovac and those by other authors, all of which have been mentioned in the verdict, then we can see that the purpose of

¹¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 234, 235

all these articles was to convince readers that Croatia had been subjugated, oppressed, and put in an unequal position within Yugoslavia; that Croatian national awareness and the Croatian language were being suppressed; that Croatia was being economically exploited by the other republics; that the national and biological existence of the Croats had been endangered; that Croatian culture was deteriorating, that the present political system was unsustainable, and that the representative bodies of Croatia were not capable of caring for the interests of the working people. The main aim of these articles was obviously to cause dissatisfaction and disunity between Croats and Serbs in particular, to engender mistrust towards representative bodies, and finally to convince the public that their only chance lay in the ideology and goals of a nationalist mass movement.¹¹⁸

All the aforementioned verdicts were in full agreement with the views of the Croatian political leadership, which were finally formalized in a Report on the State of the League of Communists of Croatia in relation to the penetration of nationalism into its ranks, adopted on 8 May 1972:

The nationalist forces that organized and created their leading core at Matrix Croatica headquarters had to focus on creating a political organization that would serve as the backbone of the so-called ‘mass movement’ in order to impose the ideology of the movement and implement it as policy. In this sense, they began to transform Matrix Croatica into a political organization and recruit the student organisation as their infantry.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 244, 245, 247-248

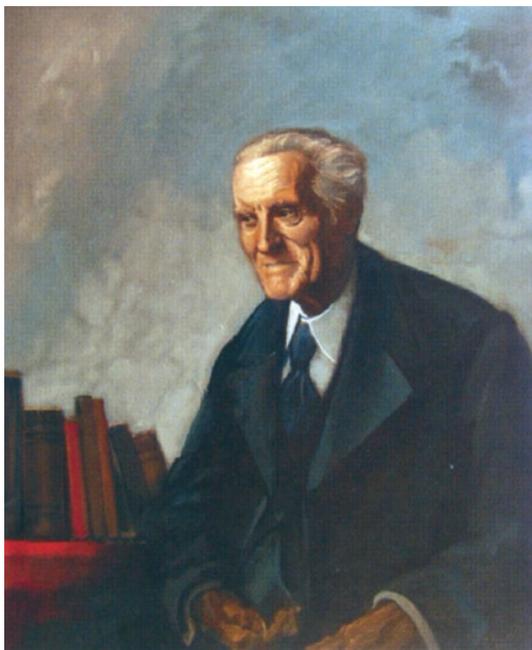
¹¹⁹ *Izveštaj o stanju u Savezu komunista Hrvatske u odnosu na prodor nacionalizma u njegove redove* (The Report was adopted at the 28th meeting of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia on May 8, 1972), Zagreb, 2003, p. 54

THE FIFTH PERIOD (1990-2017)

During this period, the presidents were: Petar Šegedin (1990–1991), Vlado Gotovac (1991 – 1997), Josip Bratulić (1997 – 2002) , Igor Zidić (2002 – 2014), and Stjepan Damjanović (2014–2018). In 1989, the first political parties were founded in Croatia, and members of Matrix Croatica began the process of rebuilding the institution. In November, representatives of Matrix Croatica’s managing board that had been elected at the Assembly in 1970, representatives of the Croatian Writers’s Association and the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, along with the representatives of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Croatia, discussed the best way to renew Matrix Croatica, and they concluded that all the necessary steps should be taken exclusively by the managing board of the 1970 Matrix Croatica. The Matrix’s main representative in this discussion was Miroslav Brandt. The last president of Matrix Croatica, Ljudevit Jonke, had died some time earlier; Vice -President Miroslav Brandt thus invested a great deal of effort in restoring the work of Matrix Croatica legally and without political conflict, as well as ensuring that those who had been elected to Martix Croatica’s management board at the last Assembly on November 22, 1970 decided on the renewal process. On

12 December 1989, a meeting of Matrix Croatica's managing board held at the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts' grand hall took the decision regarding its renewal. Vice-presidents Miroslav Brandt and Hrvoje Iveković presided over the meeting, and Brandt outlined these principles of the renewal of Matrix Croatica: "1) Matrix Croatica has never been, nor could it ever have been abolished. Its rules allow only its activities to be terminated, but based exclusively on the decision of its general assembly with a two-thirds majority of valid votes. Such a decision has never been taken, nor has such a proposal ever even been discussed at any general assembly. For this reason, Matrix Croatica has not been abolished, nor could it have been abolished. Its activity was terminated by police repression; its rooms and archives were sealed, and some members of its managing board were arrested. Under such circumstances, Matrix Croatica was unable to hold meetings or annual assemblies, or perform legally required registrations. 2) Because of these same conditions, in 1972, the members of Matrix Croatica's management board were forced to announce their resignation in protest against the ultimatum given by the political authorities at the time. However, as Matrix Croatica's assembly was the only body that could either accept or reject this mandatory statement, and as the assembly could no longer meet, the board's resignation never entered into force. As a result, even though its work was prevented, Matrix Croatica still exists today, in the same legality of its statutory structure and in its total and unaltered form as it existed at the last assembly meeting on 22 November 1970 ..."¹²⁰ By

¹²⁰ Miroslav Brandt, *Život sa suvremenicima: Političke uspomene i svjetonazor*, Zagreb, 1996, pp. 82-83; *Vjesnik*, 13. XII. 1989, p. 9



Petar Šegedin, painted by Rudolf Labaš

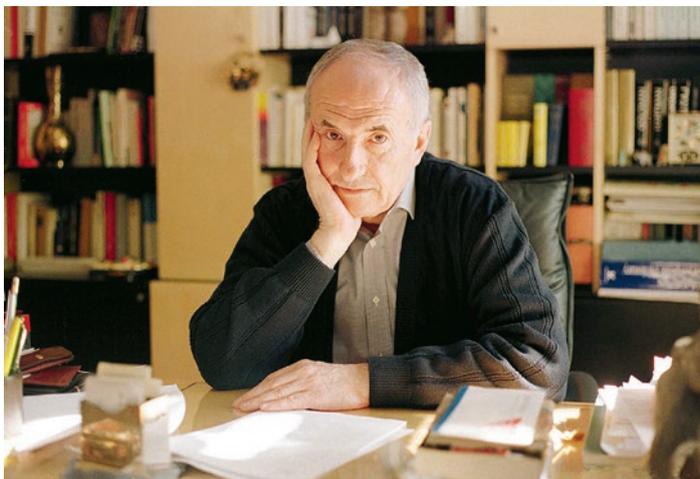
firmly stating his opinions, Brandt halted the efforts of other institutions to take credit for the renewal of Matrix Croatica, or even occupy some positions within it. It was decided that until the general assembly met, Miroslav Brandt would lead Matrix Croatica as vice-president, and he did so strenuously for a few months. However, due to difficulties in the process of renewing Matrix Croatica, he tendered an irrevocable resignation from all functions in February of 1990. Until the assembly convened on May 10, 1990, the management board appointed Petar Šegedin (1909-1998) as president and Vlatko Pavletić and Tomislav Ladan as vice-presidents,

while Jozo Ivičević retained his position as secretary. The relationship between Matrix Croatica and the Publishing Institute (which had 230 employees at the end of the year) was discussed. After much preparation, on 8 December 1990, the general assembly of Matrix Croatica met, led by President Petar Šegedin. In his speech, he said the following:

One of these obligations, perhaps the most significant, is to modernise our old institution. We are not planning on making significant changes or removing anything that has already been proven in our tradition, but rather to accept practical needs forced on us by the new times (...) The Bible tells us that man does not live by bread alone... This is a warning to us of the duality of values – those values that are reflected in biological, animal life, and those that answer specifically human needs. These special, exclusively human values are most often referred to as cultural needs. These values are created by humans for humans! (...) Ladies and gentlemen, if we reveal to ourselves that national awareness is also a cultural value, then we must accept that this feeling of national identity is also imbued with the qualities of comprehension, compassion, recognition, which means that it is inspired by good, beauty, and justice. If we forget that national feeling is what we have said it is, if we free it of the important qualities of culture and the spirit (...) it will appear to us as a contorted mask that will deny its nature as an authentic value of culture and the spirit.¹²¹

A new management board was selected at the assembly. It was headed by esteemed intellectual, political prisoner and writer **Vlado Gotovac** (1930-2000); the vice-presidents

¹²¹ Ive Mažuran, Josip Bratulić, *Spomenica Matice hrvatske 1842-2002*, pp. 71-72



Vlado Gotovac

were Stjepan Babić, Šime Đodan, and Dubravko Jelčić, the secretary-in-chief was Jozo Ivičević, and the business secretary was Zvonko Festini. They comprised the presidency of Matrix Croatica, while 30 esteemed cultural workers were elected to the managing board.¹²²

In 1991, Matrix Croatica collected aid for needs in the Croatian War of Independence, using its branches to inform the international public of the aggression being perpetrated on Croatia. On 30 July 1991, President Gotovac held a now famous speech before the building of the Fifth Yugoslav Military District in Zagreb, and stated:

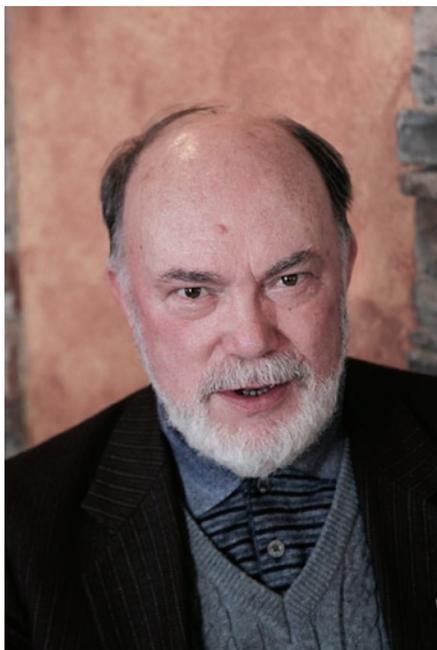
Do you know, dear citizens of Zagreb, what building we stand before? Before a building built by hard-working Croats so

¹²² Mate Maras, *Kronologija obnove rada Matice hrvatske*, Kolo, 1991, no. 1-2, pp. 217

that poor Croatian children might receive an education, so that Croatia might then advance and become a modern nation. This building was built by the bravest and the poorest Croats together so that Croatia might be worthy of Europe. But who occupies it now? The last guardians of communism! The murderers of the Croatian people! And they have the nerve, after having occupied our sacred building, our endowment, to speak of their property in Croatia! They threaten to take everything with them when they leave. They say they will leave nothing but destruction behind them. (...) Mark my words: all they want is to drag us down to their level. They want us to be wild like them, to be murderers like them...¹²³

A certain portion of the public expected a great deal from the Matrix, while others expressed doubt as to whether it was necessary in an independent Croatia. On 12 February 1993, a Matrix Croatica delegation received Croatian President Franjo Tuđman. They spoke about the Matrix's future, the goals of its work, and the difficulties it faced. The year was a turbulent one. President Vlado Gotovac signed a statement by a group of intellectuals requesting that President Franjo Tuđman resign from his position. This engendered powerful reactions both within and without the Matrix (even including calls from some branches for Vlado Gotovac to step down from his position as president). In 1995, he was elected president of the Croatian Socio-Liberal Party, and the Matrix's rules required him to step down as president. The board elected philologist and literary historian **Josip Bratulić** (1939) president at a general assembly on 13 March 1995,

¹²³ *Matica hrvatska 1842 – 1997* (edited by Josip Bratulić), pp. 79-80



Josip Bratulić

and the general assembly re-elected him in June of 1996. The vice-presidents were Vlaho Bogišić, Nedjeljko Fabio, and Stjepan Sučić, the secretary-in-chief and business secretary was Krešimir Mikolčić, and the business secretary was Niko Vidović. This same year, long-time Matica vice-president Miroslav Brandt's book *Life with my Contemporaries* (*Život sa suvremenicima*) engendered a great deal of debate. Among others, the Matrix's long-time secretary-in-chief Jozo Ivičević reacted strongly to the book, especially those parts relating to the Matrix's more recent history and the writing of the "Declaration on the Croatian Language".

In 1997, the news arrived from Switzerland that Croatian political emigrant and university professor Jure Petričević had bequeathed 905,563.45 Swiss Francs (net) to Matrix Croatica, and discussions began as to how best to use this money. The decision was taken to build a new large hall for the Matrix, which would enable the implementation of numerous Matrix programmes. The building with a large and small hall was completed in 2002. Discussions on the relationship between Matrix headquarters and its branches led to a crisis in relations between the headquarters in Zagreb and the branch in Split, which argued that Matrix Croatica should reorganise into a union of Matrix Croatica associations. The Split branch decided to operate independently at the time; it returned to Matrix Croatica in 2003. In 1997, it was established that the Matrix's Publishing Institute was not operating nearly as well as indicated by the reports received by the Matrix's managing board. The director of the Publishing Institute, Hrvoje Božićević, was dismissed, and businessman Niko Vidović was put in his place.

At the general assembly on 29 June 2002, art historian, poet, and long-time Matrix member **Igor Zidić** (1939) was elected president. The vice-presidents were Vlaho Bogišić, Tonko Maroević, and Stjepan Sučić, the secretary-in-chief was Zorislav Lukić, and the business secretary was Vedran Šošić (from 2006 Damir Zorić). President Zidić and a few other members began discussing the idea of a daily newspaper to be published by Matrix Croatica entitled *Hrvatski dnevnik* (*Croatian Daily*). The idea was an apparent reaction to the status of the press and other media in Croatia, however the initiative never came to fruition as appropriate financing was never ensured. In 2003, the managing board selected a committee to create the Matrix Croatica *Croatian*



Igor Zidić

Orthography Manual; the committed consisted of Igor Zidić, Tonko Maroević, Vlaho Bogišić, Mirko Peti, Ivo Pranjković, Stjepan Damjanović, and Marko Samardžija, who entrusted the creation of the handbook to a young team of authors – Lada Badurina, Krešimir Mićanović, and Branko Kuna. Both the members of the commission and the team of authors later changed; Branko Kuna was replaced by Ivan Marković, while Marko Samardžija resigned from the commission in 2006. *The Matrix's Croatian Orthography Handbook* was published in 2007, and 15,000 copies had been sold by 2017.

In 2014, the acting managing board presented its draft of an “Act on the Public Usage of the Croatian Language” to the public. Aside from the elite series “A Century of Croatian Literature” (a sort of continuation of the series “Five Centuries of Croatian Literature”, it began in 1993

U POTRAZI ZA MIROM I BLAGOSTANJEM

HRVATSKE ZEMLJE U 18. STOLJEĆU



First book of Edition *Povijest Hrvata*

under the editorship of Vlatko Pavletić; by 2017, 143 of the foreseen 300 most important works of Croatian literature from its earliest beginnings to modern times have been published), two other series especially stand out: the seven-volume *History of the Croats (Povijest Hrvata*, three volumes of which were released by 2017) composed by the younger generation of Croatian historians (ca. 140 scientists), and the *Matrix Croatica Encyclopedia (Enciklopedija Matice hrvatske*, four volumes planned; the first has already been released). *The Encyclopedia* drew a great deal of attention, as the systematisation of the Matrix's history offered important

information and knowledge about general Croatian history and Croatian culture.

Since 1995, the Matrix Croatica Palace has housed the Matrix Croatica Gallery, where around ten mostly young fine artists exhibit their work every year. In 2005, the “Young Musicians at Matrix Croatica” cycle began, within which a selection of twelve of the best pupils and students of music hold their first concert performances each year. Matrix Croatica also offers students the School of Communicology and School of Philosophy projects.

In 2017, Matrix Croatica included roughly 120 branches, including roughly 90 in Croatia, while the remainder are located in Austria, Belgium, Hungary, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Serbia, and Montenegro. Between 1990 and 2017, the branches published around 6,000 books and periodicals.

In June of 2014, a general assembly was held, at which philologist **Stjepan Damjanović** (1946) was elected the new president. The vice-presidents were Damir Barbarić, Stipe Botica, and Stjepan Sučić, the secretary-in-chief was Zorislav Lukić, the literary secretary was Luka Šeput, and the business secretary was Damir Zorić.

On 14 January 2015, the Municipal Civil Court in Zagreb ruled that the Matrix Croatica Palace be transferred into public ownership. This decision was reacted to with bitterness amongst Matrix members, leadership, and all who learned of the decision, as it had relied on a 1959 decision by a government body in the former Yugoslavia. Later, a decision by the Secretariat of Finance of the National Committee of the Donji Grad Municipality was discovered, dated 20 February 1960, which stated that the Matrix Croatica palace was exempt from nationalisation. However, neither this, nor the



President of Croatia Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović and president of Matica hrvatska Stjepan Damjanović, 2017

fact that Matrix Croatica had been listed as the owner of the until the decision of the Municipal Court, nor the fact that it had built the palace exclusively using donations from its members aided in returning the ownership of the Matrix Palace within a reasonable time period. The Matrix's leadership invested great efforts in the period that followed to win back its just ownership of the building. It was decided to continue with business as if the aforementioned decision had never been received; regular business would continue unhindered, however all legal recourse would be taken to seek justice. The Matrix regained ownership of the Palace only in November of 2017 after nearly three years of exhausting legal proceedings to prove that it truly owned what belonged to it. The process resulted in the Matrix's leadership

expending immeasurable energy and time, and the financial losses amounted to millions.

Work on large projects continued (*Stoljeća hrvatske književnosti*, *Povijest Hrvata*, *Enciklopedija Matice Hrvatske*, etc.); the current Matrix leadership is investing great efforts into reviewing the status of 120 Matrix branches and 20 departments in Zagreb.

In 2017, Matrix Croatica celebrated its 175th anniversary under the patronage of Croatian President Kolinda Grabar Kitarović. Upon this occasion, the President decorated Matrix Croatica and 40 deserving Matrix members with a Charter of Thanks. As a part of the celebration, the Matrix republished its first book – Ivan Gundulić’s 1844 *Osman*, with a foreword by Lahorka Plejić Poje. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the “Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language”, the Matrix published a book entitled *Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskog književnog jezika 1967.–2017.*, edited by Marko Samardžija; it also placed a plaque on the Palace to honour those who had inspired and composed the Declaration and all who supported it.



REPUBLIKA
HRVATSKA



Temeljem članka 98. Ustava Republike Hrvatske,
a na prijedlog Državnog povjereništva za
odlikovanja i priznanja Republike Hrvatske,
dodjeljuje se

P O V E L J A ZAHVALNOSTI

MATICI HRVATSKOJ

za osobitu ulogu i zasluge u očuvanju, obrani i
promicanju kulturnog identiteta, moralnih vrednota
i političkih prava hrvatskoga naroda, a u prigodi
175. obljetnice utemeljenja i 50. obljetnice objave
Deklaracije o nazivu i položaju hrvatskog
književnog jezika

PREDŠJEDNICA
REPUBLIKE HRVATSKE

Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović

Zagreb, 6. lipnja 2017.

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Stjepan Damjanović and Zorislav Lukić

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