

ĽUBOMÍR ĎUROVIČ 65 YEARS

Sixty-five years of life in 20th century Europe is a very long time in terms of participation in modern history. This is especially true for a Central European like Ľubomír Ďurovič. His life has indeed been influenced by history.

Ľubomír Ďurovič was born on February 9th, 1925, in the village of Važec in Slovakia. His father was a Lutheran clergyman, which in the Slovak context meant belonging to a minority, although an influential one. In 1925 Slovakia was part of the first Czechoslovak republic and still an agrarian country with much folkloristic picturesqueness and ethnic diversity. In the preludes to WWII Slovakia became a semi-independent state under German protection. Ľubomír Ďurovič was then twelve, old enough to understand but young enough to be saved from taking active part in the war. After the revolts in 1944 he worked for the resistance. Having matriculated in 1944 the now 19-year old student started his studies of Russian, Slovak and general linguistics at the Bratislava University. At the university he met the great slavist Aleksandr Isačenko, who had had a position in Bratislava since 1941. Immediately after the war Isačenko became full professor and one of the initiators of the Bratislava Structuralist Linguistic Circle. So the Bratislava University offered a good milieu for a young gifted student of Slavic languages and general linguistics. The contacts with Isačenko influenced Ľubomír Ďurovič in very many respects and resulted in a lifelong friendship and cooperation. But Ľubomír Ďurovič had other famous teachers as well. During the academic year 1947-48 he studied at the Charles University in Prague under Mukařovský, among others.

The political changes in 1948 made Czechoslovakia an integral part of the Socialist block. This of course affected the life of Ľubomír Ďurovič immensely. The possibilities of choice became more limited. In this context the choice of slavistics as his main field of studies was to a certain extent a lucky one. The demand for good russianists became enormous. Under the guidance of Aleksandr Isačenko and together with other pupils of his, Ľubomír Ďurovič vigorously took part in the building up of Russian studies both in the schools and at the universities and teaching colleges. Owing to this effort Czechoslovakia had, by the 1950s, the strongest russianists outside the Soviet Union.

As early as 1948, Ľubomír Ďurovič published his first scholarly contribution, a review of a Czech-Russian dictionary, in the journal *Ruština v škole*, founded by A. Isačenko. His bibliography for the following years shows his interest in the study of Russian and Slovak, including contrastive studies between these two languages. In 1952 the dictionary *Príručný slovník rusko-slovenský* was published, of which Ľubomír Ďurovič is one of the co-authors. He has stated many times afterwards that to work on a dictionary is a form of slavery, but a necessary step in the education of every slaviciest. In 1955 Ľubomír Ďurovič defended his first *magnum opus*, his candidate thesis, which was published in Bratislava in 1956 under the title *Modálnosť, Lexikálno-syntaktické vyjadrovanie modálnych a hodnotiacich vzťahov v slovenčine a ruštine*. In 1956 Ľubomír Ďurovič was also appointed docent of Russian at the university. In the early sixties he wrote his second *magnum opus*, *Paradigmatika spisovnej ruštiny*. Both works are written in Slovak which makes them less widely known than they ought to be. Both books have a theoretical depth which preserves their relevance.

Ľubomír Ďurovič made his first contacts with Scandinavia back in the early fifties. After some complications he was granted a Norwegian scholarship for the academic year 1949-50. In Norway he learnt Norwegian and studied linguistics. After returning to Slovakia he married Ľudmila in 1951. In 1957 he also spent two months in Moscow working in archives and libraries. The Norwegian experience probably prompted him to apply for the lectureship in Czech in Uppsala and Stockholm in 1966. During his period as a lecturer we got to know Ľubomír Ďurovič as an enthusiastic teacher and a very stimulating partner in discussions. He had then already been appointed Secretary-General for the Sixth International Congress of Slavists, which was to take place in Prague in August 1968. In 1967 he had been appointed full professor of Russian in Bratislava, but the firm position he, in his capacity as Secretary-General for the Congress of Slavists, took against the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 prevented him from taking up the duties of this appointment. And when in 1970 the Minister of Education in Slovakia gave no answer to his enquiry as to the possibility and desirability of his continued appointment at the University of Bratislava under the new circumstances - at that point Ľubomír Ďurovič and his family made the decision to stay in Sweden. In 1972 Ľubomír Ďurovič was appointed full professor of Slavic languages, especially Russian, at the University of Lund.

The decision to stay in Sweden also meant a partial scientific reorientation for Ľubomír Ďurovič. From his bibliography it is easy to see that

this reorientation involved a more slavistic profile. One can mention articles such as "Otnositel'noe prilagatel'noe v slavjanskich jazykach" (1972), "Tipologija flektivnoj osnovy v slavjanskich jazykach" (1973), "Polish pięciu vs Slovak päť" (1977), "The Numerals in Serbo-Croatian" (1985), etc. A special field of interest which emanates directly from the Swedish context is the study of the language of Yugoslav children in Sweden, the so-called JUBA-project. This project has resulted in a series of publications.

Very near to Ľubomír Ďurovič's heart is the study of the rich history of Swedish slavistics. As early as the sixties he became acquainted with the rich collections of Slavic manuscripts, books and other materials in the libraries and archives of Uppsala and Stockholm, and this prompted him to organize a first conference on this topic in Lund in 1975. The conference is documented both in Swedish and in Russian: *Kring den svenska slavistikens äldsta historia* and *Očerki po rannemu periodu slavjanovedenija v Švecii* (= *Slavica Lundensia* 3 and 3p). The next conference on this topic was held in Uppsala in 1983. Ľubomír Ďurovič's contribution to this conference "Källorna till Groenings Rossijskaja Grammatika" (1984) and his ardent interest in the Swedish contributions to the description and codification of the early Modern Russian literary language led in fact to a third conference in Fagerudd, Uppsala and Stockholm in May 1989, where specialists from eight countries discussed "Dolomonosovskij period russkogo literaturnogo jazyka". The contributions to this conference will be published in a new series by the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities called *Slavica Suecana*, of which Ľubomír Ďurovič will be one of the two editors.

But nearest to Ľubomír Ďurovič's heart is probably the study of Slovak and Slovak culture. A series of articles from this period are devoted to problems of the Slovak language and culture. He has thus never given up his position as a Slovak scholar.

During his years in Sweden Ľubomír Ďurovič has taken a very active part in Swedish, Nordic, and international slavistic life by organizing and participating in various conferences and symposia, by giving guest lectures, by being opponent of doctoral theses etc. He will also lead the next Nordic meeting of slavists in 1990. As one of three editors of the international journal *Russian Linguistics* since Isačenko's death in 1978 he has helped to create deeper contacts between the russianists of the world, a task which in the last few years has been made easier by the policy of *perestrojka* and *glasnost* in the Soviet Union.

The history of Central Europe in the 20th century has changed the life of many people drastically, including the life of Ľubomír Ľurovič and his family. As a matter of fact he and his family have led two different lives. But at the same time Ľubomír Ľurovič's deep devotion to the study of the Slavic languages and cultures has kept his two lives together. His life in Sweden has not been the life of an exile. He has been far too active for that. Now, when his third life is coming nearer, the free life of the retired scholar, we, his friends and contributors to this Festschrift, wish only to express our sincere hope that Ľubomír Ľurovič will have many more years of unbroken scholarly activity in both his home countries.

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