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## The Moscow Ethnographic Exhibition of 1867

Seeing the Crystal Palace exhibition at Sydenham, in 1859, the zoologist and anthropologist Anatoly Petrovich Bogdanov was especially attracted by its ethnological sector, representing indigenous peoples from the entire world depicted amidst the native flora and fauna and surrounded by the characteristic accoutrements of their everyday life (Komitet vystavki 1867: 5). Bogdanov seems to have been of opinion that neither public lectures nor popular compositions can inform the public as well as collection on display (see Bradley 2008: 942-43), but two points in particular motivated him to action. At the Sydenham exhibition, he noticed the total absence of the peoples of the Russian Empire; including representation of these peoples could only enhance the value of the exhibition from the point of view of science. On the other hand, he was aware of the fact that nothing like the Sydenham exhibition had ever been produced in the Russian Empire, and that a similar exhibit, displaying the numerous peoples of the Empire, would almost certainly elicit great interest and would serve as a powerful tool for the popularisation of science (Knight 2001: 5-6). Consequently, at the end of 1864, Bogdanov submitted his proposal for an exhibition to the Society of Friends of Natural History (*Obshchestvo Lyubiteley Estestvoznaniya*) of Moscow University.

Bogdanov's vision of displaying the full range of the global diversity of the human races, however, was not realised. Instead, the organisers decided to exhibit the peoples living in the Russian Empire. Thus, although the peoples

portrayed in the displays might be wild and exotic “others,” they remained Russia’s others, internal aliens whose character and lifestyles constituted part of the overall might and diversity of the Empire. In one respect, however, the exhibition followed Bogdanov’s original anthropological focus; namely, the basic assumption that the groups on display could be identified as distinctive through their physical features. So, figures of different peoples and nationalities of the Russian Empire, dressed in their characteristic costumes, were made by professional sculptors who were instructed to present accurate portraits of faces, so as to look like living people. In order to realise this condition, they had to model the heads in papier-mâché using the masks taken from the living representatives of the exhibited peoples and nationalities, or photographs of characteristic individuals taken for the purpose (Bogdanov 1878: 4).

Realistic details should have helped to ensure the “authenticity” of the images displayed. The peoples on display were represented by life-size mannequins dressed in typical costumes as if living persons would have been displayed. The heads of the mannequins authentically represented the peoples highlighted, and the organiser paid full attention to the details regarding their complexion and natural type. In addition, alongside every group of people on display there were characteristic flora and fauna of their native surroundings (Matković 1867: 210; Subotić 2009: 21). Vasily Andreyevich Dashkov, the president of the organising committee, in his speech at the ceremonial opening of the exhibition explained that the organisers in their endeavour followed strictly scientific goals, their wish being to familiarise the public with a variety of peoples in Russia and its neighbourig countries, and to encourage interest for study of them and their way of life (cited in Karpova 2005: 14).

## **The Slavic Section**

It was not until late 1865 that any Panslavic theme was introduced into the plans. Nil Aleksandrovich Popov had made an extensive tour of the Slavic lands of Eastern Europe in 1863 and 1864. He had come to the conclusion that it would be desirable to see objects having to do with Slavic ethnography in general at the exhibition; first, because the Slavs should serve as a term of comparison in the study of Russian nationality, and, second, because among the West Slavs the Poles lived within Russia itself, and among the South Slavs there were the Serbs and the Bulgarians. In late 1865, he proposed that in addition to the Russian section an additional Slavic section be included comprising the Slavic peoples living in the Austrian and Otto-

man Empires (N. Z. 1867: 177; Komitet vystavki 1867: 21–4). The organising committee also decided to add the Slavic section to the exhibition in order to represent an image of “all Slavic tribes as an ethnographic whole” (Matković 1867: 192).

The organisers of the exhibition emphasised its “scientific character” (Bogdanov 1878: 9), yet the change of the original plan for the exhibition was nonetheless motivated more by political reasons than scholarly ones. According to Bogdanov, its main and leading thought was to show the world that 50.000.000 inhabitants of the Russian Empire, together with 30.000.000 Slavs, living in the Ottoman, Prussian and Austrian Empires, constitute “not one tribe, but a common Slavic nation” with Moscow as the centre and focus of Slavic national unity (cit. Bogdanov 1878: 34). Or, as Mikhail Nikiforovich Katkov wrote in *Moskovskiya*, on 7 April 1867, “If France supports the unification of Italy, and Prussia the unification of Germany, Russia has the same obligation towards the Slavs and it is obliged to fulfill it” (cited in Klaczko 1867: 14).

As his proposal was accepted, Popov began to issue invitations to various Slavic organisations and scholars abroad. Popov’s most active assistant proved to be Protoiereus Mikhail Raevsky, dean of the Russian Embassy church in Vienna and an ardent Slavophile, who had cultivated the friendship of many prominent Austrian Slavs during his many years of service in the Habsburg capital. Raevsky had published an informative handbook in German entitled *Die Russische Ethnographische Ausstellung in Moskau* (*The Russian Ethnographic Exhibition in Moscow*) (Raevskij 1866) for distribution among the Austrian Slavs. It contained guidelines for participants with instructions about the collection of ethnographic objects. Primarily it referred to some anthropological data, for instance, the height of men and women whose costumes were gathered, and their “physiognomy,” i.e. photographs necessary for creation of mannequins representing the costume (Karpova 2005: 17). Call for participation in the exhibition and instructions for collectors of ethnographic objects were inserted in European newspapers published in Slavic languages (Karpova 2005: 14–5).

In his letters to Popov, in May and June 1866, Raevsky reported that he had contacted the Slovenska Matica, lamenting that he could not get anything from the Slovenes. However, in October 1866 he happily reported to Moscow: “The Slovenes are sending us a Carniolan wedding<sup>1</sup> with all that goes with it, only without a horse and a cart” (Čurkina 1974: 61). As stated

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<sup>1</sup> Raevsky was incorrect: this was a Carinthian wedding.

by Jurij Fikfak, whereas other contributors presented individual costumes, Majar strove to show their function and reconstructed the image of a ritual practice, in which the costumes were “an important and active factor demarcating national identity” (Fikfak 2008: 41).

## The Pilgrimage

The Ethnographic Exhibition in Moscow coincided with the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, which was in actual fact an arrangement enabling the two leading nations to divide the proceeds of oppression in the monarchy between them. What lay in store for the Austrian Slavs was made graphically clear in the dictum attributed to Chancellor Friedrich Ferdinand Beust: “Man muss die Slawen an die Mauer drücken” (“The Slavs must be pressed against the wall”) (Komitet vystavki 1867: 370; Clementis 1943: 47–8; Petrovich 1956: 203–4). The establishment of the Dual Monarchy provoked a strong protest from the Slavic citizens of the monarchy. As a result, sending ethnographic objects to the Moscow exhibition acquired the character of a political demonstration. František Palacký, the famed Czech historian and politician, warned: “The day Dualism is proclaimed will, by an invincible necessity, likewise be the day when Panslavism will be born in its least desirable form” (cited in Prelog 1931: 35; see also Klaczko 1867: 31; Kazbunda 1924: 37).

Within this context, representatives of all Slavic peoples from the Austrian and Ottoman Empires were invited to Moscow. The majority of the delegates from South and West Slavic countries gathered first in Vienna (Slovenec cestujuči 1867: 171) where, on 3 May 1867, they boarded the train to the “Panslavic Mecca,” as the German press phrased it (see, e.g., Anon. 1867a: 1; 1867b: 2.). Altogether, eighty-one Slavic representatives from abroad attended the exhibition and congress. Among them were twenty-six Czechs, sixteen Serbs, ten Croats, four Ukrainians, three Slovaks, and three Slovenes (Polit-Desančić 1883: 69; Prijatelj 1939: IV, 105; Nikitin 1960: 175; Karasev et al. 1975: 45).

All the way from the Russian border to Moscow was “a real fete,” marked by an unending series of banquets, both public and private, attended by passionate oratory in which the Russians and their guests declaimed on their love for one another (Petrovich 1956: 208). Masses of people greeted “the pilgrims” with music and flags, offering Slavic guests bread and salt (see, e.g., Sk. Kh. 1867: 186–187; Anon. 1867e: 4; Majciger, Pleteršnik, and Raić 1873: 1367; –ž–. 1893: 202). During their journey and their stay in Russia, the delegates were

welcomed by prominent public officials. They enjoyed lavish hospitality from the wealthy noblemen and merchants, as well as from many different segments of Russian society. Emperor Alexander II, known as “the Liberator,” welcomed them at the festive reception in his residence at Tsarskoe Selo, greeting “Slavic brethren on native Slavic soil” (Komitet vystavki 1867: 232; Sk. Kh. 1867: 186–87; V. V. 1867: vii; Vošnjak 1905: 247; Prelog 1931: 80; Petrovich 1956: 209, 220; Fadner 1962: 261, 266; Milojković-Djurić 1994: 80).

In Saint Petersburg several thousand well-wishers greeted them, and in Moscow even more of them (Polit-Desančić 1883: 71–4; Mijatovich 1885: 23). However, during their journey the Slavic visitors to the exhibition did not have many opportunities to make contacts with the Poles. According to some reports, the Poles in Warsaw were angry with them (Mijatovich 1885: 24; Prelog 1931: 72). According to Polish Publicist Julian Klaczko (Jehuda Lejb), it was only after Vilnius and the Grand Principality of Lithuania that the receptions and ovations began to obtain a spontaneous and universal character (Klaczko 1867: 45).

The Polish representatives declined the invitation to participate in the Ethnographic Exhibition and Slavic Congress in Moscow and, with the aid of the pro-Polish and progressive Czechs, tried to induce the Czechs to follow their example. The Polish press in the Austrian and the German Empires also took the opportunity to engage in a virulent campaign against “the Slavic Peril” and Russia’s imperialistic designs (Komitet vystavki 1867: 99–101; Bogdanov 1878: 33; Mijatovich 1885: 23; Prelog 1931: 38; Tobolka 1933: 153; Clementis 1943: 47; Petrovich 1956: 20; Tanty 1970: 134). Palacký and Rieger went to Russia by way of Paris, where they called on two prominent Poles, Prince Władisław Czartoryski and Count Andrzej Zamoyski, for the purpose of discussing with them the possibilities of mediation between the Russians and Poles. They had no success with the Poles, and in Moscow they had no success with the Russians either (Komitet vystavki 1867: 103–104; Klaczko 1867: 17; Clementis 1943: 48; Subotić 2009: 18). Russian Panslavists spoke about the Poles as a foreign body within Slavdom, mainly due to Polish Catholicism (see, e.g., Tanty 1970: 135, 140).

The German press in Austria shared the opinion that the Moscow exhibition was not just an exhibition, but a political declaration. As the *Laibacher Zeitung* wrote on 10 May 1867, quoting the Polish *Gazeta Narodowa* from Lviv: “The Ethnographic Exhibition in Moscow is the first beginning of Muscovite annexation in the name of the Slavic idea” (Anon. 1867d: 1). The

Viennese *Die Debatte* deemed the participation of the Austrian Slavs at the ethnographic exhibition in Moscow to be an “anti-Austrian demonstration” (Anon. 1867f: 1). The Hungarian press was even more agitated, introducing military rhetoric into the discourse about an ethnographic exhibition. Thus, *Pesti Napló*, reporting that there were some people in Hungary that wished to visit Saint Petersburg and Moscow in order to meet Alexander Hilferding, Ivan Aksakov, Ivan Turgenev, and Vladimir Lamansky, promised that the Hungarians would be the bulwark of Europe against assaults of Slavic “barbarism” (Komitet vystavki 1867: 101).

Within the context of a political crisis, the suggestion of impending Slavic unification led by Russia appeared, from the Austro-Hungarian perspective, to be a threatening provocation. Newspapers in Austria-Hungary voiced demands for prosecution of the “pilgrims”. Chancellor Beust did not support their penalisation, but he registered the “pilgrimage” of the Czechs in the book of sins, which he leafed through when he deemed necessary to reproach Czech politicians (Komitet vystavki 1867: 100; Kazbunda 1924: 77–9; Prelog 1931: 121). The same language as in the German newspapers was chosen by the Polish press in the Austrian and the German Empires condemning “pious pilgrims, who beneath the Carpathian and the Balkan Mountains in mid-May journeyed to pay homage to the ‘Slavic Mecca’” (Klaczko 1867: 30).

Not only the leading newspapers in Vienna and Pest, but also provincial ones joined the choir disclaiming the wishes of Slavic representatives to attend the Ethnographic Exhibition in Moscow (see e.g. Anon. 1867c: 149–50).

As suggested by Michael Boro Petrovich, “the hostile press campaign did much to transform the rather nebulous Panslavic movement into one of the most discussed and least understood bogeys of European politics” (Petrovich 1956: 238). Kollár’s nebulous idea about Slavic mutuality in the journey to Russia, in 1867, “changed from a chimera into a political reality or a real political argument” (Hlavačka 2006: 53).

### **The All-Russian Ethnographic Exhibition**

The Ethnographic Exhibition was ceremonially opened on 23 April 1867 by His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Vladimir Aleksandrovich, the honorary chairman of the exhibition. The grand duke was present at the *Te Deum*, which was sung in honour of the occasion, and listened to the stirring speech by Protoiereus Sergievski, who reminded the audience of the solemnity of the event and the significance of the presence of so



many non-Russian Slavs whose arrival at Moscow would certainly make the Russians more keenly aware of the reality of Slavic racial brotherhood. He reminded his listeners of the non-political character of the forthcoming congress, which on the next day was visited by the tsar and tsarina (Komitet vystavki 1867: 30; Prelog 1931: 68; Fadner 1962: 259).

The exhibition comprised three sections: the first section consisted of groups representing diverse tribes living in Russia and other Slavic lands: 1. Non-Slavic tribes, and 2. Slavic tribes, divided into two groups: a) the East Slavs and b) the West and South Slavs; the second section was dedicated to general ethnography, and the third to anthropology; all figures on display were of full human size (Matković 1867: 194; N. Z. 1867: 177). The artists and learned men who created the exhibition constructed all the scenes on display faithfully after details from life, and nowhere could a visitor notice a face or image that was invented (N. Z. 1867: 186).

The Slavic peoples were presented in groups; the greatest one being the group of the Great Russians. Here, the inhabitants of Great Russia were seen at a fair (*yarmarka*). There was a man selling icons, on his right side there stood an unharnessed horse, eating hay from a peasant cart. In front there was a small shop selling mead, and around which everything was swarming with vendors and buyers, and nearby there was also a bear-tamer with two bears. Behind the group there was a man selling *kvas* and baked plums, beside this travelling salesmen were offering goods on sale, and fur caps embroidered with gold and cloth. Between the tsar's lodge and the fair square there stood the Great Russian buildings with all conveniences. Beside one house was a vegetable garden, in the court a heap of hay, a wheelwright's workshop woven from reeds, two house guardians (a dog and a cock), and a mother cradling her child in a sieve. In the house a big stove could be seen, along the walls robust benches, and on the four-cornered table there was a large wooden salt-cellar, deep circular bowls, and in the corner opposite the doors a small wardrobe with images of the saints in front of which a light is usually burning (N. Z. 1867: 185; Klitarova 2000: 10). The group of wax figures representing the Russians numbered 73 mannequins from sixteen different governorates meticulously rendered "with greatest care" (Matković 1867: 202; Klitarova 2000: 10). They seemed "so alive and typical" that some visitors felt ready to give them alms (Klaczko 1867: 21).

The groups on display were exhibited in such a way that the visitors could observe "a vivid ethnographic map of Russia and the whole of Slavdom"

(Matković 1867: 194). Each wax figure was described in detail, and every piece of clothing and every ethnographic object precisely labelled. Brief information on every tribe at the exhibition represented in pictures was given, describing the geographical area these people occupied, its physical characteristics, the state of culture, and the size of the population and its conditions. These explanations, however, did not have any scholarly value because for the Russian peoples they were taken from Pauli's Russian ethnography, to which Colonel Roderich von Erckert added his descriptions. Regarding the other Slavs, information was extracted from well-known ethnographic works by Pavel Jozef Šafárik, Karl von Czoernig-Czernhausen, Guillaume Lejean, and so on (Matković 1867: 193).

As noticed by a Polish critic of the exhibition, political symbolism played an important role in mapping the topography of the exhibited universe: in the midst of a huge exhibition hall, the imperial lodge was raised as "a symbolic central point of Slavdom spreading up around it" (Klaczko 1867: 20).

Representing the peoples and their way of living is an expression and a source of power (Bond and Gilliam 1994: 1), hence it is always closely connected with political processes and, above all, with the question of who makes decisions as to who can represent whom, how, where, and with what. Thus, the Serbs were represented in the scene "A blind Serbian singer," consisting of children, women, men (total of 14 figures) –inhabitants of various parts of the Principality of Serbia, gathered around a blind singer in front of the monastery wall. The subject was proposed by N. A. Popov and was considered a symbol of the heroic history of the Slovene peoples and their struggle for independence (Klitarova 2000: 15; Karpova 2005: 19). On the other hand, the organisers decided to avoid the use of the Polish name when representing West Slavs, replacing it with less "pretentious" ones that gave a better pretext for the regime of divide and rule, into a mosaic of ethnic minorities such as the Masurians, the Krakowiaks, the Podlesians, the Lithuanians, the Samogitians, and so on (Klaczko 1867: 22; see also Bogdanov 1878: 50–2). On the other hand, when representing the "primitive" peoples, such as the Yakuts or the Samoyeds (Nenets), they chose to represent them in their natural surroundings, providing a "scientific" basis for the image of the non-European world as barbaric. The group of Yakuts, for instance, was presented at the shamanic rite, in which a shaman "of horrible sight," with drums in his hands, during the worship surrounded with the signs of his role, was uttering "a terrible conjuration" (Klaczko 1867: 23; Matković 1867: 195; Bogdanov 1878: 40). The Nenets, however, were represented making a sacrifice: the priest proclaims



augury with the help of drums, and, in the meantime, one of his helpers is putting the rope around the neck of his sacrificial victim, and the other, with a knife in his hand, is getting ready to cut the victim's throat (Klaczko 1867: 24; Matković 1867: 196).

For the organisers, displaying the peoples of the Russian Empire with all their characteristic features created an ideological imperative to stress what was, for the ethnic Russians, the most characteristic feature of all: their superiority with regard to the Empire as a whole. The introduction of Slavic peoples created another imperative to show the position of the Russians as the most powerful, most viable members of the Slavic family, and hence the nucleus around which Slavic unification would take place. However, as Knight ascertained, it was precisely the theme of Russian ethnic superiority that the ethnographic display as a medium of representation was least able to convey (Knight 2001: 28).

For the Moscow intellectuals that were the driving force behind the event, a view of the exhibition solely as a display of the population of the Russian Empire was not entirely satisfying. Merely presenting the Empire as a conglomeration of diverse peoples ruled over by the tsar left unresolved the role and status of the Russian people itself. Was the Russian nation really just one individual piece in the vast ethnic mosaic of the Empire? Sergey Maksimov, for instance, couldn't subscribe to such a view. The Russian people, he argued, were the "single force" that was able to "organize a state and rule over such a multitude of ethnically diverse peoples" (cited in Knight 2001: 15).

As argued by Knight, the difficulties in visually expressing the idea of Russian pre-eminence stemmed from the scholarly framework in which the exhibition was presented. The organisers wanted to show Russian superiority but were constrained by limited means of expression and the imperative of authenticity. The execution of the mannequins of the group of Great Russians were entrusted to the most experienced artist involved in the project under the supervision of the historian of Russian peasantry Ivan Belyaev; they were provided with detailed colour samples of skin, hair and eyes and took anthropological measurements of the heads (Manikowska 2019: 23). In the case of the Russians, it was "natural" that the organisers turned to the groups that had most completely preserved the essential features of ethnic distinctiveness: the peasantry and the urban lower classes. "But these were precisely the groups" stated "that manifested least of all any kind of innate superiority over their Slavic and 'alien' neighbors" (Knight 2001: 21).

Critics were not content with the Great Russian part of the exhibition at all, and it became an object of scathing criticism in the Russian press (Bogdanov 1878: 30). Mikhail Katkov, for instance, writing in *Moskovskiya vedomosti* on 12 May 1867, recognised that in a collection with a scholarly aim there was “no place for peasants from the opera and peasant women from the ballet,” and that it was a matter of course that the Bashkirs left their dirty linen at home to be washed, and showed up at the exhibition in clean shirts and in their Sunday best; the Czech, Croat, Montenegrin mannequins did just the same and dressed in their “Sunday best costumes, splendid and picturesque.” But the Russians, Katov wrote, beat themselves on their heads to show themselves “in rags and tatters, and as repulsive as possible” (cited in Klaczko 1867: 22, 27). Katkov went on venting his frustration:

In the Great Russian group, which has to represent the very quintessence of the Empire, we would look in vain for such signs of mysterious and moral strength that draws in and usurps neighbouring tribes; we are filled with astonishment at the sight of these masses without a physiognomy, without an air, without sense. Why is there none—not a single beautiful and attractive face out of thirty specimens of women in the group! Nothing but big and stupid eyes put on the top; nothing but noses like potatoes, nothing but rudeness and ridiculousness! (cited in Klaczko 1867: 28)

The example of the ethnographic exhibition of 1867 highlights the complex dialogue inherent in the relationship between scholarship, society, and state. The apparent hijacking of the exhibition to serve as a vehicle for expressing Russian nationalism and Panslavism illustrates the difficulty of maintaining a position of scholarly isolation above the fray of contemporary political and ideological concerns. However, in adopting the vocabulary of scholarship as a tool of legitimisation, purveyors of ideological agendas also assent to a range of constraints limiting the manner and extent to which these agendas can be articulated. Thus, scholarship in the hands of power, as Knight phrased it, “proved to be a two-edged sword” (Knight 2001: 28).

### **Slovene Wedding**

Matija Majar donated Slovene folk costumes from the Zilja-Gail Valley for the Ethnographic Exhibition. He also procured complete furniture for one room: a bed, a chest, a table and chairs, all painted with flowers, a blanket, and the cover for the bed all knitted with gay colours as used by Slovenes

in the Zilja-Gail Valley. For folk costumes, he arranged wedding attire customary for the Zilja-Gail Valley: the groom, the bride, a bridesmaid, and the “standard-bearer” (see e.g. Matković 1867: 207; –ž–. 1893: 193)<sup>2</sup>.

The rich collection of wedding costumes and trousseaus impressed the organisers of the Exhibition, and they decided to put on display a scene of a Slovene wedding ritual with wax figures. In order to do this as authentically as possible, they needed photographs and drawings of typical representatives from the Zilja-Gail Valley. At Raevsky’s behest, Majar fulfilled this task as well. He sent twelve photographs and a few drawings, representing six Slovenes (four men and two women), which served as models for the wax figures. In addition to costumes and photographs, Majar contributed an explanation to the group, a description which—according to Mikhail N. Speranski—is a comprehensive treatise about Slovene manners and customs and the past, and partly also of other Slavic tribes (Čurkina 1974: 61; Kerimova 1998: 69)<sup>3</sup>.

The Russian press dedicated much attention to Majar (Shchebalsky Karlovich 1867: 25; Čurkina 1974: 61). The book *The All-Russian Ethnographic Exhibition and the Slavic Congress in May 1867*, published in 1867 in Moscow, portraying Slavic guests and their stay in Russia, assigned more space to Majar’s biography than to the biographies of Palacký and Rieger combined. In the biography, contributed by Popov (Komitet vystavki 1867: 135–139), Majar is portrayed as one of the most active harbingers of Slavic mutuality and brotherhood of the South Slavs. The author also commended Majar’s literary works, which “allots him a place of honor in the ranks of the South Slavic writers.” The book further emphasised that in 1848 Majar produced the famous petition submitted to the emperor of Austria with the request for a United Slovenia, and it also highly valued Majar’s work in compiling a Slavic grammar and facilitating the mutual literary rapprochement of the Slavic peoples (Komitet vystavki 1867: 139)

<sup>2</sup> “These images are still circulating in the ethnographic books” (–ž–. 1893: 193).

<sup>3</sup> Speranski emphasised that “Majar’s treatise on the life and customs of the Slovenes from the Zilja-Gail Valley deserves recognition even today: we can fully rely on his conscientiously drawn and accurate observations; detailed findings on the spot, gathered by a man that carefully studied the life of his parishioners and was, moreover, close to the everyday life of simple people, can give us the right notion about the way of life of part of the Slovenes, although only within the framework of the objects collected for the exhibition.” For Speranski, Majar as ethnographer was one of those “that deeply and sincerely respected their nation, but still had not emancipated themselves from romantic archaeological aspirations and had not yet mastered the strict scholarly methods of linguistics and comparative study of life and literature.” According to Speranski, “Majar could be classified as a significant worker, a collector, if not a researcher” (cited in Čurkina 1974: 61).

For his valuable contribution Majar received one of the greatest awards at the exhibition: the bestowal of a second degree<sup>4</sup>. He was also elected a collaborator of the Society of Friends of Natural History, Anthropology, and Ethnography (in Moscow), a member of the Society of Friends of Russian Literature (in Moscow), and a corresponding member of New Russia University (in Odessa) (Čurkina 1995: 88).

### **The Politics of a Scholarly Exhibition**

The ethnographic exhibition conceived as a scholarly event took on a completely different connotation with the change of plan in accordance with Popov's proposal. Then, the concept of the exhibition as a purely academic project of a learned society swelled into a public cause supported by the Panslavists; that is to say, a political project.

The fact that the tsar opened the exhibition in person, even after the obviously nonscholarly interest that it had evoked at home and abroad, also indicates the government's interest in the affair (Petrovich 1956: 202). When the decision came to arrange the Slavic section, Bogdanov's original narrative centering around the anthropological diversity of the human race was eliminated as well. However, the new narrative implicit in the idea of a Slavic sector was fraught with symbolic implications. In the mid-nineteenth century, the inclusion of the Slavic peoples of eastern Europe into an all-Russian exhibition inevitably created the impression that the Slavs should ultimately be integrated, at the very least culturally and perhaps even politically, into the Russian Empire (Knight 2001: 17). Although the organisers attempted to sidestep the political implications of the Slavic participation by emphasising the strictly scholarly principles and goals behind the exhibition, their plans raised serious doubts, especially in the Habsburg Empire. The decision to invite a large delegation of prominent Slavic scholars and politicians to Moscow to view the exhibition accentuated even more the political resonance of the event (Knight 2001: 18).

The Moscow Ethnographic Exhibition coincided with a political crisis in Austria. In the context of this political crisis in the Austrian Empire, the contribution of ethnographic objects for the Moscow exhibition gained the character of a political demonstration, when, in April 1867, the Austrian government sought to undergo a radical administrative change towards a new

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<sup>4</sup> Awards of the first degree were awarded exclusively to persons of princely classes, with the exception of Raevsky (Čurkina 1974: 61).

understanding with the Hungarians. The ensuing proclamation of dualism divided the empire into two sections: Franz Joseph I ruled in both, holding the title of emperor in the western Austrian lands, and king in the Kingdom of Hungary. The implication of this new empowerment of Hungary was perceived as detrimental for the Slavic plurality under Austrian rule. Within this context, the Ethnographic Exhibit and the Slavic Congress acquired a special meaning for the West and South Slavs. In Prague, the organ of the Young Czech Party, *Narodni Listy*, openly recognised the newly acquired political character of the planned participation at the Moscow exhibition and congress, stating that the Moscow Exhibition bore a truly profound political significance for those of us that were not interested merely in philology or ethnography, but were going to Moscow “to greet a people close to them by blood and kinship, and to establish a foundation for the reciprocity of all the Slavic stock, which will procure protection especially for the Austrian Slavs against all kind of future storms that threaten that national development they so vainly seek here at home” (cited in *Komitet vystavki 1867*: 102)

Such were the sentiments not only of the Young Czechs but also of the Slovaks, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, and Ruthenians of the Austrian Empire. It was no accident that, less than two weeks after Emperor Franz Josef I had been crowned king of Hungary under the terms of the compromise (*Ausgleich*), sixty-three of his Slavic subjects set off to Moscow to seek solace. They went, as Rieger made clear, “to demonstrate, not to conspire” (Prelog 1931: 37; Tolboka 1933: 154; Petrovich 1956: 205).

That public interest in the Ethnographic Exhibition in Moscow had been greatly stimulated by the visit of the Slavic guests and of the 83,048 visitors. And large number of visitors increased its political importance. When the Slavic visitors departed from Russia, historian Vladimir Lamansky stated that “the Slavic question has left the books and cabinet chambers and has gone out into the streets, the squares, the churches, and the theatres; this question has now become all-Russian, all-European” (*Komitet vystavki 1867*: 459).

After the ethnographic exhibition closed on 18 June 1867, the exhibits were put into a special department of the Rumyantsev Museum, named the Dashkov Ethnographic Museum (Matković 1867: 214; N. Z. 1867: 177; Knight 2001: 25; see also Urban 1977: 239)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> The Dashkov Ethnographic Museum apparently continued to function up until the 1930s, when its contents were transferred to the Museum of the Peoples of the USSR. Eventually the collection was moved to the State Museum of Ethnography of the Peoples of the USSR in Leningrad (Knight 2001: 12-3).

Slovene ethnographic objects on display in a Moscow public museum were a powerful attraction for Slovene travelers visiting the capital of the powerful Slavic empire in the early twentieth century (Aškerc 1903: 532; Vošnjak 1906: 223; Marn 1911: 1; Knific 1914: 393–94). Anton Aškerc, who made his journey to Russia “as a conscious Slav” (1903: 474), was thrilled when he saw the Slovene ethnographic objects displayed in the museum when he visited Moscow in 1903: “We Slovenes are represented, too!” (Aškerc 1903: 532).

### The Slavic Congress

The Slavic Congress in Moscow was in fact no congress in any formal sense of the term. Indeed, the designation *s'ezd* ‘congress’ was employed throughout by its participants in its simple generic meaning of ‘get-together’ (Petrovich 1956: 207), under František Palacký’s motto *svůj k svému* ‘each to his own’ (Komitet vystavki 1867: 106, 335). However, it was not just an “ethnographic episode,” as Russian officials were describing it, either (Tanty 1970: 190); it had become a European affair long before its actual convocation.

The German press in Austria saw the meeting as a poorly concealed political demonstration and propaganda effort to consummate a union between the West and South Slavs and Russia; it advocated stiff prosecution of the Slavic guests after their return home (Mijatovich 1885: 3).

Not so the Russian press, which, on the contrary, endeavored to prove its apolitical character (Nikitin 1960: 202). Mikhail Pogodin, for instance, wrote in *Moskovskiya vedomosti* on 13 and 22 May 1868: “Russia does not need any expansion of its territory, which is already boundlessly vast, and also not any increase of its population, which is by now growing more rapidly than anywhere else” (cited in Nikitin 1960: 203). The Russian hosts, too, avoided talking about politics. The result was an anomalous situation:

The Russians, who were suspected by all of Europe for their imperialistic designs on the Slavic peoples, were carefully sidestepping political issues. The visiting Slavs, however, were bitterly disappointed. Most of them had come to Russia precisely with the aim of scaring Vienna into compromise by consorting with bogeys. Their strategy was doomed to failure if Russia was going to insist on being such a cautious and prim bogey! (Petrovich 1956: 217–218)

At the Slavic Congress, the delegates heard lectures by members of the Academy of Sciences, and by spokesmen of eighteen learned societies. Among the various topics discussed, the proposition of Slavic reciprocity and cultural collaboration held special interest. When Ivan Aksakov sum-



marised the achievements of the Slavic Congress of 1867 in early 1868, he could enumerate much:

There was no political program established, no course of action agreed upon, no political advice or instructions given. No Russian said anything or thought to incite the Slavic guests to insubordination against their governments. There was never expressed any intention or even suggestion of Russia's absorbing the Slavs, nor even of the political unification of the Slavic peoples under Russia's leadership. There was expressed only this: our joy on meeting, the happiness of becoming acquainted with our brethren... and a sincere warm desire that all the Slavic peoples might secure life, liberty, and an independent development. (cited in Petrovich 1956: 234–235)

A topic that was in fact talked about at the Moscow Congress was the role that the Russian language should play a role in Slavic mutuality. In Saint Petersburg the tsar himself encouraged his guests to learn Russian. Minister of Education Dmitry Andreyevich Tolstoy stated that the “Russian language and Slavic languages are one language” (Klaczko 1867: 65–6).

The suggestion did not find approval among the majority of delegates from other Slavic countries. Vladan Djordjević, a Serbian delegate at the Moscow Congress, opposed the introduction of Russian as the standard language of all Slavs, as well as the elimination of any other national languages. He emphasised his peoples' desire to partake equally in the benefits of European civilisation (Milojković-Djurić 1994: 82). A similar view concerning national languages was declared by the Czech delegate František Rieger. The Slavic languages were once so close to one another that the various Slavic peoples might have developed a single tongue and a single nationhood, but historical development had willed it otherwise. Rieger also spoke about the importance of independent cultural development and stressed the need for Slavic cultural collaboration and reciprocity (Petrovich 1956: 225; Milojković-Djurić 1994: 82–3).

Matija Majar was one of the few that supported the idea (Tanty 1970: 128). As Majar explained in his *Slavjan*, quoting the historian Pogodin and using a “mutual Slavic language”, the Slavs of “all tribes” have seen each other for the first time in Moscow, 1867. According to Majar Serbs, Bulgarians, Czechs, Moravians, Galicians, Slovaks, Slovenes, Kashubians, Croats, Bosniaks, Montenegrins, Lusatian Sorbs, and Russians “felt like brothers, of one root, they felt like one nation divided into different tribes—with one language divided into different dialects (Majar 1873a: 102–3).

Although Matija Majar supported equal status for the Slavs in Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, he did not apply this opinion to non-Slavic peoples. Because he saw Russia as the main instrument for realizing his ideas and because he formed his opinion about it merely based on the Ethnographic Exhibition and the Slavic Congress, he excused Russian imperialistic policy and defended its role in Asia as a *mission civilisatrice* (Majar 1873b: 113).

The Ethnographic Exhibition and the Slavic Congress stand out as a definite phase in the history of Pan-Slavic thought. In itself the idea of the exhibition and the congress was an attempt to rationalise Pan-Slavism on a scholarly basis, as unity based on race and blood rather than on religious sentiments. The whole event was just “Words, words, words instead of swords, swords, swords,” as the Serbian participant Laza Kostić declared in English (Komitet vystavki 1867: 227; Fadner 1962: 276–77). Nevertheless, it represented a significant manifestation of Slavic solidarity, of importance in later endeavors of West and South Slavs for their national emancipation.

The All-Russian Ethnographic Exhibition, the first of its kind, set an important milestone in the history of Russian anthropology and ethnology, and made an impact on the development of the discipline elsewhere (Matković 1867: 191, 214; see also Urban 1977: 239). It exerted an impact on the consciousness of importance of cultural heritage for identity with all Slavic peoples. The exhibition in Moscow in 1867 was a timely occasion to show the world not only that the Slovenes are not a tiny nation, but a member of a huge Slavic family. This notion was of no lesser importance in the decades to come, in which the Slovenes’ national identity was frequently put under pressure by their mightier neighbours. As Bogumil Vošnjak put it in his Russian studies in the early twentieth century: “Invaluable and indescribably joyful is the knowledge that the Russian nation is akin to us by blood, spirit, and language” (Vošnjak 1906: 21). On the other hand, however, the all-Slavic Ethnographic Exhibition in Moscow served as an opportunity to “scientifically” prove the existence of the Slovene nation and its particular culture, which was, as yet, not so self-evident. This was confirmed by the very fact that the exhibits donated by Matija Majar and others were designated by their ethnonym, and not by their provenance (Carinthia, Carniola, etc.), which was, back then, still a standard practice in their homeland. The importance of being represented by ethnonym reveals the true nature of the discipline of ethnography: the act of naming

a nation is a political act *par excellence*. This is why the Russian organisers “forgot” the Polish name and replaced it with less “pretentious” geographic names. As a consequence, by taking part in the exhibition in Moscow under their national name, the Slovenes showed the world that they had a culture that was not only worth displaying at the exhibition where all the Slavic nations competed, but also that their culture differed from other Slavic cultures. Within this context, the Slovene exhibits on display in the Ethnographic Exhibition played a part in the process of creating Slovene national identity, and Slovene national awakeners loved to make their pilgrimage to Moscow to see the exhibits even in the early twentieth century.

The contemporary Slovene press was well aware of the importance of the name, and it vigorously defended the decision to take part in the event against the attacks from the German politicians and press (see *e.g.* Anon. 1867g: 358). The *world-as-exhibition* showing different peoples and their culture was a manifestation of the superiority and imperialism of host nations. The imperial powers used exhibitions to send the message that progress and civilisation could only occur within the colonial enterprise (see *e.g.* Yen-goyan 1994: 75). For them, the motto of exhibitions was: science is a proof of our superiority. For smaller nations, especially for “awakening” ones, taking part in an international exhibition was a convenient opportunity to establish themselves as nations. In their interpretation, the meaning of such exhibitions was not the same: they were expressions of nationalism, and their motto was: science is proof of our ethnic individuality. However, the main aim for all was political, not scholarly.

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**Božidar Jezernik****The Moscow Ethnographic Exhibition of 1867**

The article is devoted to the Ethnographic Exhibition and the Slavic Congress of 1867 that took place in specific circumstances, political and scientific situation. It contains information about the objects put on the Exhibition and the way they are presented, shows the role the Exhibition played in the development of ethnographic studies and popularizing the knowledge of ethnography. However, the Author is primarily interested in the political impact of the Exhibition and the Congress important to formulate and popularize the idea of Panslavism, strengthen Russian nationalism and create national movements among southern Slavs. The text does not represent Polish viewpoint, but Polish issue is addressed a few times in it.

**Keywords:** Moscow Ethnographic Exhibition of 1867, Slavic Congress of 1867, Panslavism, nationalism

