



PEOPLE, MONEY, BANKS

The conference with the above name was held on November 6 - 8, 2002 under the auspices of the Archives of the National Bank of Slovakia. It was the first event of such a kind and scope. Economists, archivists, banking historians, archaeologists, numismatists and linguists assembled in the congress hall of the new building of the NBS Head Office. The event may also be conceived as preparation for an international conference People's Banking in the Financial System to be organized by the NBS in May of the next year. At the same time, it was a notable event on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the formation of the National Bank of Slovakia.

The National Bank of Slovakia is a member of the European Association for Banking History headquartered in Frankfurt. The central bank has also work sites concentrating documents and information concerning the past and present of banks and money, as well as the fate of public figures associated with economic and banking activities within our territory. The archive documents even date back to a period when our central bank did not yet exist. Since the conference did not only cover a distant past, the presentations also touched upon the present times, namely those made in the thematic section Foreign Capital and Privatisation of Banks Following 1990. As was reminded by Vice-Governor I. Šramko in his opening address, the new experience – the history – is a mirror which helps to get better bearings in the present, and which helps to prevent mistakes, and wrong or unsound steps taken in the past.

30 papers were delivered on topics relating to money and banks starting from the past through to the present. The first day of the conference was devoted to the topic Money and Forerunners of Banks. The participants received information on the finds of gold within our territory three and a half thousand years ago, on the development of Celtic mintage, which also “gave” logo to the NBS, Roman and Byzantine instruments of payment in circulation in Slovakia. To mention just some of the papers:

Gold in Archaeological Finds from Pre-Historic and Early Historic Times in Slovakia, Celtic Mintage in Slovakia, Roman and Byzantine Coins in Money Circulation in Slovakia, Denier Mintage in the 11th- 15th Centuries, From the History of Bratislava Mints, Metal and Paper Tenders in Slovakia in the Years 1750-2001, and others.

The second day of the conference focused on the topic of Financial Institutions and Banks. Presentations by professional historians and archivists confirmed that forerunners of banks in our country were represented by “church cash-boxes”, which in the 18th to 19th centuries made petty loans within the community of Roman Catholic parsonages. Likewise, financial institutions, companies limited by shares, that is banks regardless of whether called a savings bank or a society, were preceded by institutions of people's banking from the 19th and 20th centuries. For example, the oldest European banking co-operative was “invented” by Samuel Jurkovič in Sobotište on February 9, 1845. Papers delivered in this part

of the conference were for example entitled Formation and Development of the Slovak People's Banking up to the Year 1918, First Slovak Banks in the 19th Century, Development of Slovak Banking in 1918 – 1968, The Slovak National Bank in Service of the Slovak National Uprising – Contribution of the Vice-Governor Imrich Karvaš to Its Preparation.



Picture from the left: The Conference People, Money, Banks was opened by Vice-Governor of the NBS Ivan Šramko; present were also Pavol Hronec, Chief Director of the Premises Division, Marián Tkáč, Head of the NBS Archives and Viliam Polakovič, Director of Technical Services Department.

A shot from the congress hall during the conference proceedings – speakers sitting in the first row from the left: Anton Fiala, Elena Minarovičová, Jan Hunka, Zbyšek Šustek, Eva Kolníková and Titus Kolník.





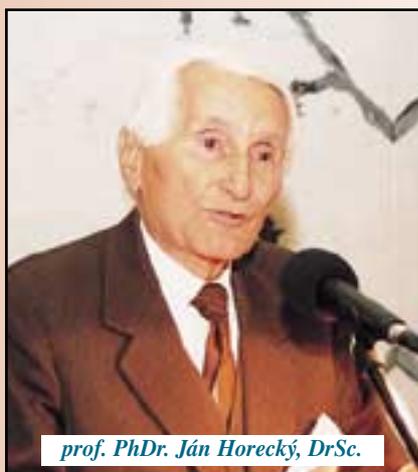
PhDr. Jiří Novotný, CSc. (ČNB)



Ing. Egon Hlavatý, DrSc.



PhDr. Eva Kolníková, DrSc.



prof. PhDr. Ján Horecký, DrSc.



prof. PhDr. Pavol Martuliak, CSc.



prof. PhDr. Roman Holec, CSc.

A view of selected participants to the conference during their presentations

The third day of the proceedings, consisting of a thematic unit called Banks and Public Figures, was to commemorate figures of our public life, who frequently were unknown to be involved in the foundation of banks and financial institutions, for example Štefan Burián, the joint finance minister of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Tadeáš Príleský, a financial expert and political economist. The highly topical presentations included Development of Slovak Commercial Banking After 1990, Public Figures Involved in Banks and Community Life, Professor Imrich Karvaš – A Scientist, Political Economist, Political Scientist and Educator.

The development of Slovak banks, regardless of the “nationality” of capital used for their founding, was expounded by several experts. Also discussed was the very substance of the notion of a “Slovak bank”. As it followed from the discussion, notably professional historians are inclined to believe that “Slovak” banks are banks with solely Slovak capital. Some participants held the view that in addition to “ethnically Slovak banks”, also all the other banks with their offices in our territory are Slovak banks, since they handle deposits and loans of Slovak entities.

Besides Slovak participants, the conference was also attended by the Kolník couple, Prof. Martuliak, Ing. Hlavatý, Prof. Cambel, Prof. Holec, Prof. Horecký, NBS staff, and others. Presentations were also made by the staff of the Archives of the Czech National Bank. In his paper, Jiří Novotný outlined the activities of the Banking Office of the Ministry

of Finance, which surrogated for the central bank in the years 1919 to 1926. He also informed about the activities of this office vis-à-vis Slovakia.

Equally stimulating and interesting were the presentations made by Ivan Karvaš, the son of Imrich Karvaš, Governor of the Slovak National Bank in 1939 – 1944, and by Katarína Fundárková, the daughter of Jozef Fundárek, Vice-Governor of the SNB.

In conclusion, the conference participants expressed their appreciation of the initiative taken by the Archives of the NBS in arranging such an event of a nation-wide importance, and with the participation of foreign guests. It presented an opportunity for discussions on topics which still form white spots in our history, such as the role of apostolic trustees – a kind of treasurers in Franciscan monasteries in our territory, or the economy of Slovakia during the course of the first Czechoslovak Republic. For three days, the organizers managed to get together in the central bank experts dealing with banking and finances in Slovakia from its historical perspective. All the papers, both those delivered and not delivered, will be published in the conference proceedings, which will make a significant contribution towards the compilation of the Slovak banking history.

Ing. Marián Tkáč, PhD.
Photos: I. Paška, P. Kochan