

Second Slovak History Competition

“20th Century Slovak History in Destiny of One Family”

2004/2005

Report

The Eustory program in Slovakia is coordinated by **Jan Hus Educational Foundation from Bratislava**, namely by **coordinator PhDr. Olga Pestukova** and financially supported by the **Körber Foundation from Hamburg**.

The second round of history competition was announced in October 2004 under the topic

“20th Century Slovak History in Destiny of One Family”.

The announcement has been made through our Eustory website, it was moreover published in the *Pedagogické spektrum* (Pedagogical Spektrum), a magazine for schools and teachers and was further sent out to schools and local partners by e-mail and Eustory postcards.

113 students (22 boys and 91 girls) from all over Slovakia have participated in the competition with 87 entries – 68 individual and 19 group researches.

The main objective of the competition was to describe the life and pursuance of „common“ people in the period of the dramatic 20th Century through different destinies of a member/members of one (own, well-known or other) family and to show the way how this family faced and survived important social, political and historical events and periods.

In their entries the students mainly focused on their own families, especially their grandparents and followed the family line along important events like birth, wedding, marriage, children, death. Some students have described other families (e.g. miners' families, Jewish families) from their locality, a few competitors concentrated on a family of a historically well known person (e.g. general and minister of war in former Czech-Slovak Republic in 1918, Milan Rastislav Štefánik).

The students chose two different approaches:

1. they investigated the family life in its genesis during the whole 20th century and described the changes in family relations and atmosphere caused by several different historical/political events;
2. they chose only one historical period (WW I, WW II, Slovak National Uprising, the 1950s, year 1968, Velvet revolution, etc) and showed its impact on the destiny of one or more members of the family and the family as a whole. „Heroes“ of their researches were e.g. men fighting in World Wars, victims of death camps, persons participating in the Slovak National Uprising against fascism, people persecuted for their race, nationality, religious or political beliefs (nuns, intellectuals, state enemies“, people who disagreed with the turn of historical events and expressed their own way of protest or personal fight).

The students used various family documents (old photos, diaries, pictures, letters, papers, evidences, reports) and factual/historical documents (files from archives, press, chronicles, books, memoirs etc.). They used several research methods: Interviews, surveys, confrontation, sometimes they have made their own photos, drawings or family trees.

The jury pointed out two main shortcomings of the entries:

- firstly, in some researches the family life has been isolated and lifted out of the wider historical context,
- secondly, due to the topic the attitude of many students was too emotional and this has weakened the impartial value of their conclusions and judgments.

Nevertheless, the level of this year's researches was significantly higher comparing to the first round, it is evident that the cooperation between students and their tutors/consultants improved.

The majority of the students met the target – to show how life in different families has changed under the pressure of historical/political events which in many cases have caused personal and family tragedies, injustice and harms. In the researches we can see, on the one hand, how fragile a family is, but how strong - on the other hand - when trying to fulfill its main mission – to stay together in good and bad times and to support each other in all possible ways of their lives.

The winners in the category of **individual entries** are:

1. Tímea Máteová, Gymnasium Revúca:
20th Century Slovak History in the Destiny of My Family
2. Veronika Kalovská, Gymnasium Nová Dubnica:
Reflection of Events from 1914 to 1945 in the Destiny of a Family
3. Lenka Bartošová, Gymnasium Turčianske Teplice:
The Kubíks Family from Borcova
and
Braňo Mráz, Gymnasium Bratislava:
The Saga of My Family

The winners in the category of **group entries** are:

1. Veronika Kačírová and Jana Popovičová, Gymnasium Spišská Nová Ves:
Changes of the Mining Profession in the Destiny of our Family
2. Katarína Procházková and Zuzana Nováková, Ev.gymnasium Bratislava:
20th Century Slovak History in the destiny of the Bádals Family
3. Zuzana Bendíková, Radka Fabínyová, Ivana Kornetová, Katarína Ludányiová and Monika Neubauerová, Gymnasium Spišská Nová Ves:
Following the tracks of Milan Rastislav Štefánik´s Family

All together 38 students with 13 individual and 10 group entries were awarded. One special price was given for the best research among the youngest competitors. We have got different prizes for winners from sponsors: bicycles, PC software and games, language learning CDs, books, historical magazines and pens. Each not awarded competition participant got a certificate and a small present to reward them for their effort.

The competition is running under the patronage of the Slovak President – Mr. Ivan Gašparovič, the award ceremony was held in the Music Hall of the Bratislava castle on June 14 at 1 p.m. The Head of the Cabinet of the President, prof. Dr. Milan Čič, DrSc., Dr.h.c., was present at the ceremony. The award ceremony was opened and closed by a cultural program presented by three young musical singers and was moderated by one of the best Slovak professional moderators. All

participants were invited for a reception in the castle's Libresso and could visit all expositions in the castle for free.