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Establishment of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts

Science developed during the period of the first Slovak Republic. New opportunities arose that allowed its expanded organisational framework and increased professionalism. To replace the defunct Šafárik Scholastic Society, the Slovak Scholastic Society was established in Bratislava in 1939, which took over the former's property and continued its activities. Professor of medicinal chemistry Františk Valentín became its chairman and philologist Ľudovít Novák its general secretary. Ordinary and extraordinary professors of all universities became members of the society. The society issued the *Linguistica Slovaca*, *Historica Slovaca*, *Theologica Slovaca* and *Physiographica Slovaca* journals. The Slovak Scholastic Society's activities were targeted towards establishing the academy of sciences as the top national scientific institution. The Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts (*Academia Scientiarum et Artium Slovaca*) was founded after the special law of 2 July 1942 was passed. Its objective was 'to broadly improve the development of sciences and arts, and to complete and concentrate the organization of Slovak scientific and artistic work.' The society comprised of philosophical, scientific and artistic departments. The philosophical department was the most active, on the basis of which the first scientific institutions were established in 1943: Linguistics, Literary Science, History, Geography, and Musical Science. Editions of the monumental six-volume scientific work *Slovak Homeland Study* were prepared by the philosophy department from 1943, of which two volumes (on geography, fauna, flora and ethnology) were issued during the first Slovak Republic and the next two volumes (on sociography by Anton Štefánek and history by Františk Bokes) were issued shortly after the war, although they had been prepared in the previous period.



Even after the establishment of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts, scientific activities were also carried out at *Matica Slovenská* in Martin by scientific departments. Proceedings were separated from the *Sborník Matice slovenskej* journal, which were issued by individual departments. In this way specialised scientific journals for philosophy, ethnology, history, literary science and linguistics were established. At *Matica Slovenská*, a generation represented by writer Jozef Cíger Hronský, illustrator Jozef Cincík, literary critic Stanislav Mečiar and historian František Hrušovský reached the peak of their endeavours in this period. František Hrušovský, the *Matica* scientific department secretary, issued *Slovak history* at *Matica slovenská* in 1939, which was the first popularly-written Slovak history. *Matica* released the two-volume *History of the church* by Catholic theologian Jozef Špirko, the first work of this type in Slovakia. It was criticised by some



members of the public for its inclination towards Evangelicals. A new edition of
the Rules of Slovak Orthography was prepared under the editorship of Anton
Baník and issued in 1940.



It can be asserted that during the first Slovak Republic universities flourished despite the war and moves towards the politicisation of universities. Parliament passed a law establishing Slovak University on 3 July 1940, officially changing the name from the original Comenius University. In addition to Slovak University, the Latin Universitas Slovaca Istropolitana was also used. The newly established faculty of science and two theological faculties - Roman Catholic and Evangelic - were incorporated into this university. The only university in Slovakia had six faculties: Philosophy, Law, Medicine, Science and two Theological faculties. Commercial University was a completely new university established on a private basis in Bratislava in 1940. Military University was established in Bratislava in the same year. In 1939 the Slovak Technical University opened after brief residences in Košice, Prešov and Turčiansky Sv. Martin, and it quickly completed its specialisations. Up to 17 percent of all students were not of Slovak nationality - these were mainly Bulgarian students whose deportation to Germany was threatened after the closure of Czech universities in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. However, Emanuel Filo, the Chancellor of Slovak University, went against the instructions of Prime Minister Tuka, and instead admitted approximately 700 Bulgarian students for enrolment. Other Bulgarian students had the opportunity to enrol at the Slovak Technical University thanks to its chancellor Juraj Hronec. The increased numbers of undergraduates at Slovak universities was also the result of Slovak students leaving the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, following the closure of Czech universities by the German occupying forces.

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References: