

figure and work, which was very important for all of us to be able to live in our own country and be educated in our own language. In this way we wish to pay our respects to the memory of Dr Janez Bleiweis and bring him and his significance for the Slovene nation a little closer to all those who may not be familiar with his work.

## JANEZ BLEIWEIS - ON THE 200<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

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Much has been written about the political, professional, cultural and editorial work of Dr Janez Bleiweis in the last decades and authors of different disciplines have convincingly refuted a dark and negative image that literary and political historians had, since the beginning of the 20th century, created and spread concerning Bleiweis, his political, cultural and historical role and his spiritual horizon. Researchers who re-examined and reconsidered Bleiweis' activities in national politics today agree that until his death Bleiweis remained a central figure and an undisputed leader of the Slovene national movement. He was – in Vasilij Melik's words – the first Slovene politician, for he was a politician when there was no Slovene politics and enjoyed a good reputation as a politician after Slovene politics had acquired a more definite direction and characteristics. He was among the first to accept the name 'Slovenia' for the territory inhabited by the Slovene population and with his News decisively influenced the adoption of a uniform Slovene alphabet and, cautiously yet persistently, strove to bring about the equality of the Slovene language and Slovene national demands. His critics liked to mock the title of "the father of the Slovene nation", yet for most of his contemporaries who used it, it was an expression of genuine acknowledgement and respect. This fact was well known even to Bleiweis' opponents, who – despite criticism – acknowledged his merits in the development of Slovene national consciousness, his efforts to raise the educational level of the population and modernise the countryside as well as his endeavours for unified national political action. Those who know his work well have long maintained that he was a good and knowledgeable expert, who with his professional articles, organisational and educational activities and a number of practical proposals and initiatives was an untiring advocate of the modernisation of the Slovene society and economy and informed his compatriots of the latest achievements in agriculture, especially stockbreeding, veterinary medicine and medicine, i.e. in the areas he was engaged in.

According to Professor Srdjan Bavdek, two hundred years after Bleiweis' birth these opinions and findings are, like in the present volume of Research, more or less known and accepted only in narrow scholarly circles, while in the memory and consciousness of a broader public a negative image of Bleiweis remains, an image of a frightened, conservative, even clerical politician, who in his loyalty to

the emperor and monarchy opposed any more decisive national political initiatives and far-reaching cultural and economic ideas. This image was mostly instilled by political and literary historians, who besides his conservatism resented Bleiweis' allegedly unfavourable attitude towards Prešeren, his – also alleged – ties with clericalism and ultramontanism and his disputes with the Young Slovenes, and it was politically generalised and aggravated by Edvard Kardelj in the 1930s in his work *Razvoj slovenskega narodnega vprašanja* (The Development of the Slovene National Question). Such decidedly negative and historically distorted image entered history books and textbooks after the Second World War.

The papers published in this commemorative volume of Research refute the negative assessments of Bleiweis' personality and work, which persisted for so many years. Unkind and adverse views of Bleiweis have, according to Srdjan Bavdek's extensive examination of judgments of "the father of the Slovene nation" from different periods, their roots in severe political polarisation between the Young Slovenes and Old Slovenes in the 1860s and 1870s, and it was critics' political, literary and historical views rather than an objective analysis and reflection that influenced the creation of a one-sided and dark image of Bleiweis in the previous century. Certainly Bleiweis did not only attract negative criticism during his life and later on in the twentieth century; there were positive opinions as well, although the former, under the influence of political circumstances and development, gradually overshadowed the latter. The articles collected in this volume illuminate Bleiweis' political, editorial, educational, professional and cultural work from different angles, convincingly argue against negative views of his historical role and importance and objectively place his person, points of view and work into the historical concept of the time in which he lived and worked. In this light they present him as a doctor, veterinary surgeon, agricultural expert, writer, organiser of vocational education, and secretary of the agricultural society, and examine his efforts in stockbreeding, forensic medicine, eradication of livestock infectious diseases, organisation of veterinary service and development of scientific terminology. Srdjan Bavdek also discusses Bleiweis' political involvement and his views of the language, Prešeren and literature and points out that the theses of Bleiweis' clericalism and his unfavourable attitude to Prešeren have long been disproved in modern historiography and literary history.

Therefore this commemorative volume is an account of Dr Bleiweis' figure and work based on findings of the most recent research, which reveals in no ambiguous terms that Bleiweis and his adherents had a rather clear and recognisable programme. It was based on one hand in the enlightenment, reform and physiocratic movement of the Pre-March Period and on the other hand in conservative yet realistic and gradual modernisation-oriented view of Slovene cultural, social and economic conditions. Bleiweis' focus was farmers and small craftsmen, whom he saw as the most important agents of Slovene national consciousness. He was against more radical social changes, which could increase social tensions, cause pressure on towns and pave the way for Germanisation. He believed that a hurried transformation of what was then still predominantly rural society could

seriously threaten the future of the Slovene nation. In accordance with these views of Slovene opportunities and needs he tried to direct Slovene politics and avoid divisions and extremes in political life.

The authors of this volume of the Slovenian Veterinary Research summarise and comment on what was written and said about Bleiweis during his life, in the periods that followed and in last decades. In this light they convincingly portray him as one of the central characters of the Slovene history of the 19th century, who must not sink into oblivion.

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### **SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE FIGURE AND WORK OF THE FATHER OF THE SLOVENE NATION**

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While Dr Janez Bleiweis (1808-1881), a doctor and veterinary surgeon, enjoyed the reputation of “the father of the Slovene nation” among his contemporaries, he was also a target of quite some criticism, which in the 20th century intensified and consequently diminished, belittled and pushed into oblivion the former leader’s reputation. We managed to refute a number of these criticisms. We have found that Bleiweis was determined in his efforts for the Slovene language and the nation’s rights as well as in defending the autonomy of knowledge (reason) and in disagreeing with dogmatisms (such as clericalism). He was correct and measured in his attitude to religion and politically cautious (pragmatic) towards both secular and church authority. Such structuring of personal characteristics suited his programme orientation and desires.

Bleiweis was the first to comprehensively connect national revival with national movement. He gave the national revival program of the enlightenment circle of the late 18th century concrete substance in cultural, economic and political areas. The physiocratic-utilitarian national programme of the enlightenment was given fresh impetus and was largely realized between 1843 and 1881, thanks to Bleiweis. He can be counted among the most active, committed and consistent agents of social development in the history of the Slovene language.

In our recent historiography Bleiweis has been called our first and only politician (already) at the time when the absolutist regime would not allow any. The second part of this claim gives the circumstances, while the first one is substantive. In it one can see national emphasis and pioneer significance. Bleiweis is therefore the leader of our political and social life on the national basis. This is consistent with the title of “the father of the nation”.

In our discussion we devoted special attention to the relationship between Bleiweis and the poet France Prešeren (1800-1849), who is seen as the central figure of the Slovene culture. In the context of our discussion it is only reasonable to join the historic messages of Prešeren and Bleiweis, into a solid notion of the national being of the Slovenes and their common house, which was built on the founda-

tions of the nation’s self-assertion and a strong desire for coexistence in a common state.

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### **FORENSIC MEDICINE – AN UNKNOWN SIDE OF DR JANEZ BLEIWEIS**

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Most Slovenes see Dr Janez Bleiweis as a conservative politician and representative of the Old Slovene movement, which resisted the development of the Slovene language and remained loyal to the Emperor’s / King’s court law. His enlightenment work as editor of *Kmetijske in rokodelske novice* (Farmers’ and Craftsmen’s News) is also well known among Slovenes. What is not widely known is that he was a reputable doctor and professor of veterinary medicine and forensic medicine at the Ljubljana Medico-surgical Institute. There are no written sources about his forensic work and we can only surmise that he may have participated in court proceedings as an expert. He preserved for us the language of forensic medicine of that era, as from mid-September to early December of 1852 the News published the Slovene text of the penal code used at the time. The translation of the penal code was not his work. Slovene forensic medicine started developing about fifty years later, when forensic expert opinions of F. Zupanc, P. De Franceschi and A. Homan were published. For his great contribution to the development of veterinary medicine and education, Bleiweis definitely did not deserve the disregard and neglect that he seems to receive. His work at the Medico-surgical Institute and later his establishment of a veterinary and farrier school should ensure that this proud, if unrebelling, Slovene is remembered.

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### **MEDICAL AND VETERINARY EDUCATION IN THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN MONARCHY UP TO THE 19TH CENTURY**

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We usually judge the figure and work of Dr Janez Bleiweis by his endeavours for the rise of our literature, his role in the politics of the time and his merits in veterinary medicine and agriculture in Carniola. It should not be overlooked, however, that Dr Bleiweis was primarily a doctor by profession, which was at that time and up until the end of the 19th century the basic precondition for entering a two-year course in veterinary medicine. Those who successfully completed the course were awarded Bachelor’s degrees in veterinary medicine and, after 1841, Master’s degrees in veterinary medicine. Surgeons as well could enrol in the course and were upon its completion awarded the same degree, which in Bleiweis’ time allowed Masters of veterinary medicine to practice on all animal species all over the monarchy. The