



Pilgrims in Šaštín during the Marian Year of 1987/1988

“Despite various measures against the pilgrimage to Levoča, the number of pilgrims increased every year and at the beginning of 1980s the young people started to prevail. In this respect, the authorities got increasingly nervous and constantly came up with new measures against pilgrimages and pilgrims.”

Ivan Chalupecký

“The national pilgrimage to Velehrad in 1985 can be considered the first public appearance of the persecuted church. From the beginning, the pilgrimage was supported by activists of the secret church who invited young people. Masses of pilgrims at Velehrad publicly expressed their disagreement with the politicians and asked for their rights – freedom of thinking, conscience and religion.”

Ján Šimulčík



Plán púťí na rok 1987 v SSR

Miesto konania púte	Dátum	Okres	Diecéza
<u>Rím. kat. cirkev</u>			
1. Šaštín - Stráže	7.6.	Senica	trnavská
2. Mariánka	7.6.	Bratislava-v.	trnavská
3. Staré Hory	7.6.	B.Bystrica	banskobystrická
4. Rajecká Lesná	7.6.	Žilina	nitrianska
5. Levoča	4.-5.7.	Sp.Nová Ves	spišská
6. Topoľčianky	19.7.	Nitra	trnavská
7. Gaboltov	18.-19.7.	Bardejov	košická
8. DiVin	26.7.	Lučenec	rožňavská
9. Kľuknava	26.7.	Sp. Nová Ves	spišská
10. Rudník	26.7.	Košice-v.	rožňavská
11. Nitra-Kalvária	9.8.	Nitra	nitrianska
12. Bôš	13.9.	Dunajská Streda	trnavská
13. Mariánka	13.9.	Bratislava-v.	trnavská
14. Šaštín - Stráže	20.9.	Senica	trnavská
15. Banská Štiavnica	13.9.	Žiar n/Hronom	trnavská
16. Košice-Kalvária	20.9.	Košice-mesto	košická
<u>gr. kat. cirkev</u>			
1. Stropkov	12.7.	Svidník	prešovská
2. Ľutina	zatiaľ neurčený	Prešov	prešovská
3. Klokočov	30.8.	Michalovce	prešovská
4. Čiré	30.8.	Stará Ľubovňa	prešovská
<u>pravoslávna cirkev</u>			
1. Stropkov	zatiaľ neurčený	Svidník	ep.prešovská
2. Ľutina	30.8.	Prešov	ep.prešovská
3. Ladomirová	13.9.	Svidník	ep.prešovská

MEASURES OF STATE AUTHORITIES AGAINST PILGRIMAGES

- limitation of transport services, ban on the use of public buses
- intimidation of priests working at sites of pilgrimage churches
- distracting sporting or social events for the young
- inspections and recording of car registration numbers
- photographing and filming of pilgrims.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE?

Recommended websites:

www.upn.gov.sk; www.enrs.eu



EUROPEAN NETWORK
REMEMBRANCE AND SOLIDARITY

Sources of Photographs: Archív Ústavu pamäti národa, Archív Spoločenosti Ježišovej na Slovensku, Rímskokatolícka farnosť Velehrad, Peter Borza, František Rábek, Alexander Urban

RELIGIOUS PILGRIMAGES IN SLOVAKIA IN THE 1980S

Religious pilgrimages have had a long tradition in Slovakia. Even if pilgrimages were not officially forbidden after the communist takeover in February 1948, the state authorities tried to limit the numbers of pilgrims by various means. They created many artificial obstacles and administrative limitations in order to discourage as many people as possible from visiting pilgrimage sites in Slovakia. Nevertheless, pilgrimages became a manifestation of revived religious life during the period of normalisation, especially among the young. At the same time, they gradually became a certain unofficial manifestation of the faith when, after decades of atheistic propaganda, religious people demanded their (not only) religious freedom more and more.

1980s



Large number of people were joining religious pilgrimages

1980s



In 1980s the majority of pilgrims were young people



Pilgrimage in Nitra-Calvary, August 13 to 14, 1988 at the completion of the Marian Year

July 7, 1985



Pope's official emissary, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli greets the pilgrims. Velehrad

late 1980s



Pilgrimage in Ľutina

CAUSES

Pilgrimages with a mass participation of worshippers started to be organised in Slovakia approximately at the beginning of the 1980s. The phenomenon was undoubtedly related to the extended activities of lay religious activists from the underground church, from around the middle of the 1970s. It was these activities that helped establish small communities of young people which spread throughout Slovakia. The communities belonged to a network of larger religious groupings which were mutually connected by information spread in the form of samizdat and the personal contacts of their members. **For fear of repression by the communist state, the majority of the meetings of these small communities took place outside the public domain, in private houses and apartments. The only opportunity where the communities could meet publicly was at the pilgrimages.** It was where religious people, in particular the young, started to realise the power of a joint manifestation of their religion. The higher the number of pilgrims, the more difficult and complicated it was for security agencies of the state to intimidate them or use repressive measures against them. At the same time, the growing number of pilgrims mir-

rored also the religious revival of the society in the course of the 1980s. The most frequented was the pilgrimage to the Marián-ska Hora Hill in Levoča. While at the beginning of 1980s around 100,000 pilgrims came, more than 250,000 pilgrims met in Levoča in 1988. Other bigger pilgrimages took place in Šaštín, at Calvary Hill in Nitra, Staré Hory and elsewhere. The pilgrimage in Velehrad in Moravia, which took place on July 6, 1985 on the 1,100th anniversary of St. Methodius' death was also special. Even if state authorities tried to imprint the mark of a "peace festivity" onto the pilgrimage, around one quarter of a million of pilgrims chanted: "We want religious freedom", "We want the Holy Father" etc. Slovak pilgrimages were supported also by the declaration of a Marian Year. Pope John Paul II declared it for the period from June 7, 1987 to August 15, 1988. On this occasion, catholic activists prepared a brochure named the Short guide of a Slovak pilgrim in the Marian year of 1987/1988. It included 30 pilgrimages which already had their tradition.

PROGRAMME FOR THE YOUNG

Since 1984, at the initiative of the Catholic activist Vladimír Jukl from the Fatima Community various overnight programmes for

the young started to be organised before the pilgrimage itself, prepared usually in the open air in the surroundings of the pilgrimage church. For the first time such accompanying night programme took place in Šaštín on the eve of the pilgrimage on September 15, 1984. The programme, prepared almost always by young people, started to include pleas for the liberation of imprisoned religious and political activists, the arrival of the Pope, information on bishops imprisoned in the 1950s. Thus, a slight shift from purely religious topics towards a criticism of the existing situation in the state occurred. The most important thing, nevertheless, was that the information could be presented and declared publicly. Pilgrims thus experienced a few hours of public freedom in the police state, unknown before.

MORE SIGNIFICANT PILGRIMAGE PLACES IN SLOVAKIA

Šaštín-Stráže, Mariánka, Staré Hory, Rajecká Lesná, Levoča, Višňové, Gaboltov, Skalka pri Trenčíne, Topoľčianky, Kľuknava, Divín, Oščadnica, Nitra-Kalvária, Turzovka, Báč, Banská Štiavnica, Košice-Kalvária, Stropkov, Klokočov, Ľutina, Ladomirová