

REVIEWS - LETTERS - REPORTS

Štefan Luby
MY INTELLECTUALS
— book review —

This year the publishing house of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Veda, which generally covers scientific and specialist literature, has published a book of a bit memoir nature, one can say a treat to the reader written by Štefan Luby.

The author is a well-known specialist who has been working for the Slovak Academy of Sciences as a scientist, organiser and manager for more than four decades. (since 1994 as President of the Slovak Academy of Sciences) At the same time he has been sharing his knowledge and experience with his students as a teacher. As a worker of a top-level scientific institution, he has had unique opportunities to meet with the most outstanding personalities from different scientific areas. In discussions with them he has not only concentrated on solving current working problems, but also taken in their life philosophy. He has also compared and sorted out their views and experience. As years were passing by, he has collected a vast amount of information and remembered a large number of remarks and memories. Therefore the idea of sharing them with general public can be understood as a natural conclusion to this process.

Štefan Luby graduated from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at the Slovak Technical University (1963). As a chief investigator, he was engaged in projects on superconductivity in multilayers, multilayers for soft X-ray optics, laser technologies for synthesis, patterning and deposition films. He performed his research in many countries *eg* Italy, Germany and Japan. Being an intellectual himself, characterises an intellectual as a man having outstanding knowledge of his area, a good memory and communication skills. From this point of view he values "his" Slovak and international intellectuals, who have enriched the world of science and culture. In his retrospection he remembers significant personalities dealing with a wide scope of problems: from those who literally "moved" history (*eg* they greatly contributed to sustaining peace in the world or endeavoured discoveries that were used against mankind as mass destruction weapons), to those who cared about basic needs of man "so that people always have something to eat". Due to the extent of the book, it was necessary to select personalities out of the set of those whom the author knows privately and is competent to make an authentic report about. We as readers hope that these memoirs are not the last ones. We are convinced that it is necessary to cultivate this type of literary genre and present Slovak intellectuals to the world public in this way.



In our opinion the author depicts well-known scientists, he had an opportunity to meet with in his scientific and managerial work and got to know them privately, in a very interesting and vivid manner. The only exception is Matej Bel, a polyhistor and great personality of Slovak nation. The author has put him in the first place as a "prototype of an authentic scientist". Štefan Luby does not bother the reader with mere enumeration of scientific results, awards and publications of individual personalities. He only indicates the areas that were the field of their professional activities in a subtle and cultivated way. He rather attempts to highlight their private characters that are underlined by humorous stories taken from their lives. The stories about the celebrities of science and culture are authentic and vivid, and the reader is eager to open the next ones.

The book can be interesting and instructive reading not only for older but mainly for younger generation that had no opportunity to get to know the above personalities and did not experience the troublesome process of building our top scientific institution-The Slovak Academy of Sciences- and its transformation after 1989. Moreover, in the time when the orientation of our society becomes more and more materialistic, this publication spells light on the road to spiritual values, to uplifting educatedness and culture.

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