DOI 10.31168/0440-4.51

LYUDEVIT GUY: THE CROATIAN EDUCATOR, "ILLYRIAN" LEADER[1]

Abstract:

The article discusses the life and work of the outstanding Croatian educator L. Guy (1809–72), notes the key stages of his emergence as a public figure and leader of the Illyrian movement. Significant attention is paid to covering Guy's contacts with Russia and the circumstances of his stay in Moscow.

Keywords:

L. Guy, J. Collar, "Great Illyria", I.I. Sreznevsky, M.P. Pogodin.

Аннотация: **М.М. Фролова.** «Хорватский просветитель и вождь «иллирийцев» Людевит Гай».

В статье рассматриваются жизненный путь и деятельность выдающегося просветителя Хорватии Л. Гая (1809–72), отмечаются основные этапы его становления как общественного деятеля и лидера иллирийского движения. Много внимания уделено освещению контактов Гая с Россией и обстоятельствам его пребывания в Москве.

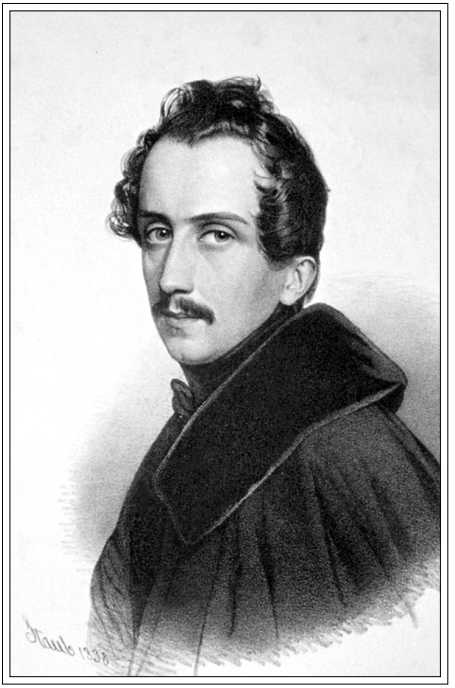
Ключевые слова:

Л. Гай, Я. Коллар, «Великая Иллирия», И.И. Срезневский, М.П. Погодин.

Lyudevit Guy (1809–72) was an outstanding Croatian educator, linguist, creator of the national alphabet, poet, journalist. He was born into the family of a wealthy pharmacist in the town of Krapina. When he was still a child, Guy became convinced that his homeland was the cradle of the Slavs. He had repeatedly heard the folk legend that in ancient times three brothers had lived in castles on the hills near the town of Krapina: Czech, Lech and Mech. Unwilling to submit to the Romans, they rebelled, but the forces were not equal. Fleeing enslavement, the brothers led their people away from these places, and their new settlements laid the foundation for Bohemia, Poland and Moscovia. Guy also remembered the words of his mother, who did not skimp on alms to the poor during lean years. She had repeatedly told him that poverty would go away and people would get rich after gaining knowledge from books printed in a language they understood. In Croatia, as is known, the language of the Catholic Church, clerical work, court and education for a long time was Latin, and in the Austrian Empire, which included Croatia, the official language in the 19th cen-

[1] The work was carried out with the financial support of the RFBR (grant № 18–512–76004).

tury. was German. The Croatian language itself had several main dialects (Kaikavian, Chakavian and Shtokavian), which derived their names from the pronunciation of the words for "what": "kai," "cha" and "shto." The authors who wrote in these dialects adapted the Latin alphabet to their native speech at their own discretion. Thoughts about the kinship of the Slavs and the urgent need to have books in their native language determined Guy's subsequent activities and, ultimately, his fate.



A portrait of Lyudevit Guy

He first studied at the school at a Franciscan monastery (Varazhdin), at a gymnasium (Karlovats), at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Vienna (1826), and then in Graz. Starting in 1829 he attended courses at Pest University in Hungarian Law, Literature and History. In Leipzig he received the title of "Doctor of Philosophy." Young Guy diligently searched in libraries for information about his hometown, which he placed in his first book, *Brevis description loci Krapinae* ("Brief Description of the Place of Krapina"). The author was then in his 15th year. Two years later, in 1826, he managed to publish it, when it was translated from Latin into German ("Die Schlösser bei Krapina"). Guy's first poetic works, written in his native Kaikavian dialect, were also dedicated to the beauty of the Zagorye region. As a student, he studied the history of his people, collected songs and proverbs, became an active member of the circle in Graz called the Illyrian Club. This circle was multiethnic: in addition to Croats, it included Serbs and Slovenes. In it, Guy first became acquainted with the Cyrillic alphabet, learned the Shtokavian dialect and read Serbian folk songs published by Serbian linguist and folklorist Vuk Karadzhich (1787–1864). Young people dreamed of educating their people through the establishment of schools, libraries, learned societies and museums.

In Pest Guy became acquainted with the Slovak pastor and preacher of Slavic cultural rapprochement, Yan Kollar (1793–1852). His idea of Slavic reciprocity, loudly voiced in the poem "Daughter of Glory," received great recognition among Slavic youth. Kollar taught Guy the Czech language and shared his views on common Slavic spelling. In 1830 Guy published a grammar of the Croatian language *Kratka osnova hrvatsko-slavenskoga pravopisanja* ("Concise Basis for a Croatian-Slavonic Orthography"), in which he emphasized the need to create a unified orthography for all Croats. Following the example of Czech writing,

he used the Latin alphabet and introduced superscripts to convey the sounds of Croatian speech. The Latin-based spelling subsequently began to be called "gaitsa" or "gaevitsa."

Guy possessed not only the oratorical skills and the ability to convince others, but also the charisma of a leader. Having a fairly extensive circle of acquaintances, he began to promote actively the idea of switching to a new script. This could be done most effectively if there were a newspaper, an organ around which the patriotic forces of the country could unite. Guy began to implement this idea after graduating from university, having settled in Zagreb in early 1832. However, the Hungarian authorities did not give him permission to publish a literary magazine. Guy then went to Vienna, where he was favorably received by Chancellor Prince Metternich (1821–48), and then by the Austrian emperor, Franz II (1768–1835) himself, who also agreed to the publication of a political newspaper. Starting in 1835, the first national newspaper, *Novine Horvatske* ("The News of Croatia"), with the literary supplement *Danicza horvatzka, slavonzka i dalmatinzka* ("The Daily Newspaper of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia"), began to be published in Zagreb. Nevertheless, Guy introduced the new spelling in it gradually. All materials printed in *Danicza* began to be published using the new pan-Croatian spelling, and in the Shtokavian dialect prevailing among Croats and most Serbs only from the 28th issue. This dialect stood out from the others for its great lexical wealth, and considerable literature had already been created in it.

The idea of "Great Illyria" was preached in the pages of this publication, in which on the basis of national and cultural rapprochement through literary and linguistic unification, all southern Slavs were to unite in the future in one state. The people ought to develop the need for reading, for the use of the Illyrian language to create their own theater, literature, music, establish libraries, scientific and other societies. In 1836 Guy changed the name of his newspaper to *Ilirske narodne novine* ("The Illyrian People's News") and the magazine to *Danica ilirska* ("The Illyrian Morning Star").

Guy's ideas won over the minds of the Croats. The success of his work was evident in the fact that in the early 1840s the signs on most Zagreb shops, hotels and pastry shops were made "in the Illyrian language." Traveling through the Slavic lands of the Austrian monarchy, the Russian scholar I.I. Sreznevsky, when he visited Zagreb on 20–30 March of 1841, testified to the fact that "the Croatian-Illyrian dialect" was heard everywhere in the city. He stated that in six years a significant literature had been created in it with a very impressive list of authors and their works. Among them, Sreznevsky believed that the first place, "if not according to the syllable and number of works, then in the spirit of excitement, and through his influence on all others, undoubtedly belongs to the unforgettable Guy." His poem "Croatia Has Not Yet Perished" was especially popular: it was put to music and could be heard at soirees, meetings, concerts and in the streets.

The Hungarian authorities did not allow Guy to open a printing house, and he was again forced to ask for support from emperor Ferdinand I (1835–48), who did not refuse it: in 1838 the printing house finally started operating. Professor of Moscow University N.I. Nadezhdin (1804–56) compared Guy with the famous Russian educator and publisher N.I. Novikov (1744–1818). He, according to him, also founded a printing house and "pours books into the people in their native language..."

At social gatherings and public concerts in Croatia, music was usually performed with singing in German or French. Guy was not a musician, but he began to listen to folk motifs, transpose patriotic verses to their tunes and tried to introduce folk songs into concert programs. In March 1835, at Guy's insistence, countess Sidonia Erdedi (1819–84), who possessed a beautiful soprano voice, for the first time sang one Croatian song and Guy's song, "Croatia Has Not Yet Perished." This caused a real sensation in the society. After that, public evenings and balls began to be held, at which the Croatian language was heard exclusively.

Guy was received enthusiastically everywhere. His intention was to attract to his movement Orthodox Serbs and Bosnians who already had a diverse literature in Cyrillic. His printing house was in need of an appropriate font that could convey the ideas of Illyrism to a wider circle of Slavs with the help of the written word that they understood. Guy decided to turn for money and the Russian script to Russia, from which a number of Austrian Slavic scholars had received significant funds.

In 1840 he arrived in St. Petersburg. The Imperial Russian Academy granted the leader of "Illyria" a grant of 5,000 rubles in bank-notes. In Moscow the Croatian educator was greeted very cordially. Despite the unfavorable circumstances (there had been an unprecedented crop failure in Russia for two consecutive years, and the nobility had become impoverished), Muscovites raised the very significant sum of 17,500 rubles for Guy.

The Illyrian movement, which was gaining strength, met with serious opposition from the Hungarians, who did not abandon their intention to Magyarize the Croats. A segment of Croatian aristocrats and large landowners of the "Magyarons", i.e., "Magyarophiles" also opposed him. They sought the political merger of Croatia and Slavonia with Hungary. The maelstrom of political struggle also took hold of Guy. He formulated the slogan "God bless the Hungarian constitution, the Kingdom of Croatia and the Illyrian people!" Consequently, he advocated autonomy within the Kingdom of Hungary, Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, as well as the cultural unification of the southern Slavs, primarily Croats, Serbs and Slovenes.

The intensity of the political passions in Croatia alarmed the Viennese government. Emperor Ferdinand I at first favored Guy, and even as a sign of the highest mercy and appreciation for his literary works, awarded him a diamond ring in 1839. However, then the monarch's favor turned to anger. In accordance

with an imperial decree of 1843, the use of the concepts "Illyria" and "Illyrians" in the press was prohibited, and censorship was tightened. Guy had to change the name of his publications. However, two years later, due to increased Hungarian challenges, the Viennese court lifted its ban, relaxed censorship, and allowed the establishment of a department of Croatian language and literature at the Zagreb Academy. In 1847 the Croatian language was recognized as official in Croatia and Slavonia.

During the vicissitudes of the revolution of 1848, Guy was unable to maintain himself at the same level. He didn't have enough political sense and foresight, and his opponents were more skilled. In addition, he was very impractical in money matters. In the 1840s, at the height of his fame, Guy led a luxurious lifestyle: he arranged endless receptions, and the doors of his house were always hospitably open to the mass of patriots who came to Zagreb. In 1850, due to financial difficulties, Guy had to hand over his publications together with the printing press to the Viennese government and withdraw into the shadows. His periodic attempts to return to the sociopolitical life of the country were unsuccessful. The last 15 years of his life he was very badly off. Incidentally, in 1867, Guy managed to come to Russia to the Slavic Congress, but here he was lost among the crowd of guests.

In 1909, during the festivities in Croatia on the 100th anniversary of the birth of Lyudevit Guy, the famous Croatian scholar V. Jagich (1838–1923) praised the contribution of the national educator to the written culture of the country and compared his merits with those of the famous Serb Vuk Karadzhich.

Guy was neither a gifted writer nor a venerable scholar nor a major politician, but he was able to awaken the dormant forces of the Croatian people. He became one of the most brilliant and active representatives of Illyrianism, that "axis" around which, according to Yan Kollar, the "spiritual and popular life in Zagreb and even the whole of Croatia" revolved.

Translated by Igor Kaliganov

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Kulakovskij P.A. Illirizm. Issledovanie po istorii horvatskoj literatury perioda Vozrozhdeniya. Varshava, 1894. 516 s.

Leshchilovskaya I.I. "Gaj Lyudevit". Istoricheskie portrety. Narody Yugo-Vostochnoj Evropy. Konec XVIII — seredina XIX v. Saint-Petersburg: Aletejya, 2012. S. 87–109.

Leshchilovskaya I.I. Illirizm. K istorii horvatskogo nacional'nogo Vozrozhdeniya. Moscow: Nauka, 1968. 337 s.

Leshchilovskaya I.I. Horvatiya v XVII–XIX vekah: kul'turnye aspekty istoricheskogo razvitiya. Moscow, 2013. 460 s.

ILLUSTRATIONS