

Dept. of Mathematics, Faculty of Education, Masaryk University in Brno

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*Department of Mathematics and Descriptive Geometry of the
VSB-Technical University of Ostrava,*

*in co-operation with the Union of Czech Mathematicians and Physicists and
the Czech Society for History of Science and Technology (Brno branches)*

cordially invite you to an interdisciplinary workshop

Mathematicians and scientists as public figures:

Living in Ivory Towers?

Preliminary Programme

When: 4 – 7 January 2017

Where: University Centre Telč, <http://www.uct.muni.cz/> (web in Czech only)

Náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 2, TELČ, Czechia

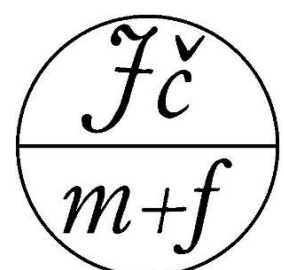
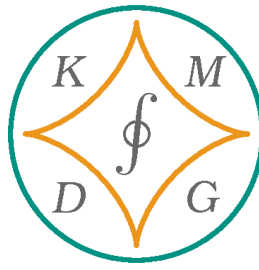
Web: <http://math-and-society.webnode.com/>

In the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008, *The Financial Times* demanded that “mathematicians must get out of their ivory towers”.¹ However, have they ever really been there? Is the profession of a mathematician incompatible with that of a politician, as Timothy Gowers suggests?² Does interest in mathematics or science need to exclude involvement in the public sphere, including politics?

¹ Gillian Tett, *Financial Times*, April 15, 2010.

² Timothy Gowers, „If politicians were mathematicians“

<https://gowers.wordpress.com/2010/05/09/if-politicians-were-mathematicians/>



In the history of science, there are several prominent examples of scientists who got heavily involved in politics. This was the case of Anton Pannekoek, a prominent astronomer and a socialist theorist. Albert Einstein's involvement in the Frauenglass affair in the McCarthy era is also quite well known. An example par excellence is Dirk Jan Struik (1894-2000), who was not only involved in politics, but also sought to challenge the view of mathematics as something that gets created in an ivory tower.

Invited speakers:

Henrik Kragh Sørensen, University of Copenhagen, DK

Boris Cvek, Palacký University, Olomouc, CZ

List of all participants

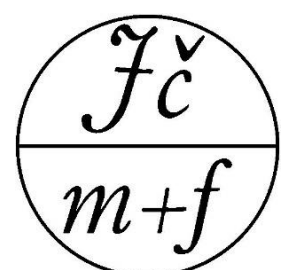
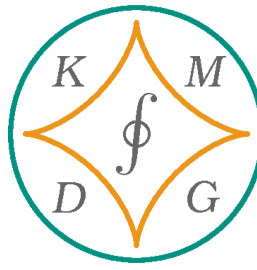
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Looking forward to seeing you!

Helena Durnová, Ph.D., MU v Brně

Jan Kotůlek, Ph.D., VŠB-TU Ostrava



Final Programme

8th Winter Workshop on History of Mathematics

Mathematicians and scientists as public figures:

Living in Ivory Towers?

Thursday, 4 January 2018

- 18:00-19:30 welcome;
18:15-18:45 **Boris Cvek (Olomouc):**
 The meaning of “exactness” in “exact sciences”: a lesson from late Middle Ages
19:45-... dinner

Friday, 5 January 2018

- 9:00-10:00 **Jan Kotůlek (Ostrava): TBA**
10:00-10:30 coffee break
10:30-12:00 **Henrik Kragh Sørensen (Copenhagen)**
 Mathematics as culture: How history can help bridge the divide that ought not exist
12:00-16:30 lunch, free time / walk / ...
16:30-17:00 coffee
17:00-18:00 **Michal Plavec (Praha):**
 Alexander Van-der-Vliet. Russian Mathematician who sought refuge in Czechoslovakia
18:30-19:30 dinner
19:30-20:30 **Helena Durnová (Brno): An apolitical politics of Václav Hlavatý**

Saturday, 6 January 2018

- 9:00-10:00 **Jan Novotný – Jinřiška Svobodová (Brno): TBA**
10:00-10:30 coffee break
10:30-12:00 **Daniel Špelda (Brno): Christiaan Huygens on the Utility of Science**
12:00-16:30 lunch, free time / walk / ...
16:30-17:00 coffee
17:00-18:00 **Karel Lepka (Brno): Mathematics inspired by the French revolution**
18:30-19:30 dinner
19:30-20:30 **Pavel Ludvík (Ostrava): TBA**

Sunday, 7 January 2018

Breakfast and departure