

EMBARK ON A SIGHTSEEING TOUR OF THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA



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BANSKÁ BYSTRICA  
IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

1951–1989

The first ground plan was completed in 1944 (by architect Kraus, in 1945 by architect Karas) and reworked in 1948. The design was also based on the town regulation scheme competition winner – Emil Beluš’ proposal in 1938. Additional ground plans were created in 1956, 1965 to 1967 and the present one is from 1977. The new ground plan concept preparations for Banská Bystrica have started in summer 2003.

Considering the importance of architectonic heritage prevention, the town was among the first in Slovakia to be declared a Civic Monumental Reservation in 1955.

Together with the national administrative structures, socialist project organisations (such as Urbion, Stavoprojekt, Project Institution of Culture et al.) were active, coming up with urbanistic conceptions, typified buildings proposals, reconstruction projects for the monuments and also modern architecture.

The centrally-planned economy also managed to fund and carry out generous notions that had been executed with no relative problems as the state ownership (including lands and yards) had no constraints to overcome. Many objects are now affected by the result of a practice when materially and technically limited bases, together with a hectic effort to keep up to the schedule, resulted in the drop of the craftwork quality. Clearance of some of the authentic houses or whole blocks even, along with disobeying the historical urbanistic structures, remain as infamous evidence of this implementation.

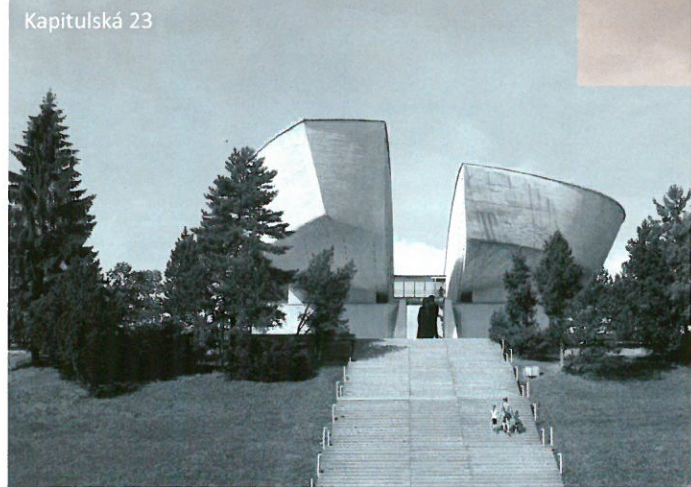
The Velvet Revolution in November 1989 brought democracy, social transformation, municipal autonomy with according competences and an open market. A brand new chapter of the society build up was about to start.

We can say, within a hindsight, that many of the creative architects of the socialistic period (despite the fact that everything behind the Iron Curtain served the communist ideology) managed to keep up with the international trends. The architectonic facture’s ambition was to apply principles of content and shape synergism while respecting both the natural and complex urbanistic environment. According to this, the most notable architectonic masterpieces (most of them still serving their original purpose) we have in the town today come from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Slovak National Uprising Museum is one of the most notable monuments of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and an essential town symbol. The project realisation, as a result of multiple competitions as well as authors’ refining, was carried out according to the suggestions of professor Dušan Kuzma and sculptor Jozef Jankovič. The substantiation of the scenic and ideal composition of the work is based on diverging parts’ synergism in the architecture and on the statuary itself, named “Victims alert”. Dynamical spherical shapes of the museum exposition are superior to the horizontal line of the administrative and the public part of the object. Deposits, as well as the restorers’ work rooms, can be found in the basement area. The monument is located on a distinct terrain point and is reachable from the town centre and the lower-altitude Hron river bank by a monumental staircase. The internationally recognised masterpiece has been declared a National Cultural Monument.

Dušan Kuzma in cooperation with Jozef Jankovič  
competition 1959 | projected 1963 | realisation 1969

THE SLOVAK NATIONAL UPRISING MUSEUM



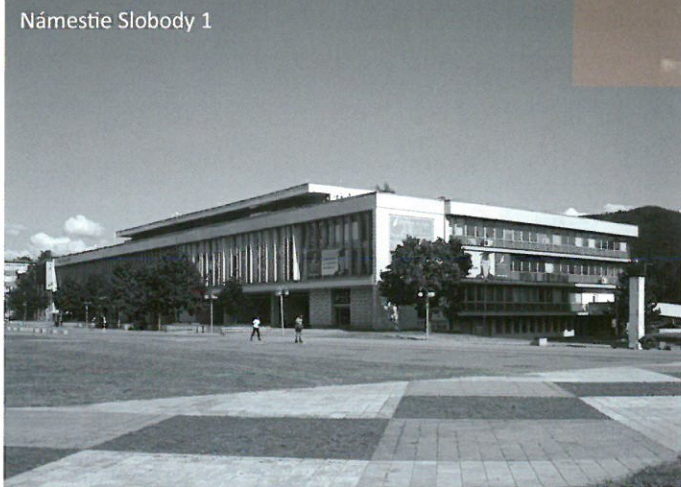
HOTEL LUX  
realisation 1969  
Dušan Boháč in cooperation with  
Ján Druga | Stavoprojekt Banská Bystrica

The hotel complex, located nearby to a spacious park, belongs to a newly-built town area, along with the Slovak National Uprising Museum. The first modern hotel in the town consists of a 16 residence-floors perpendicular (made of a reinforced-concrete skeleton) “balanced off” by a double-floored formal and restaurant area. Its interior comprises an entrance hall, a café, restaurants, lounges, a lecture hall and a bar. The external cladding for both floors was originally a glass-in curtain wall made to achieve mutual diffusion of the external and the internal areas (the terrace, open atriums on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor). Serving as evidence of the short-term expansion of quality architecture in the ‘60s and ‘70s are artworks set directly into the object (large ceramic relief decorations by Jaroslav Kubička and Imrich Vanek, as well as the glass compositions by Lubomír Blecha).

The mass composition concept comes from the urbanistic architectural plan of a new town ensemble (based on Arch. E. Hruška’s proposal). The vivid horizontal line accompanies the SNP Monument’s sculptural form and the adjacent Hotel Lux’s “vertical”. The facade is resolved by balancing the main horizontal lines with the vertical segmentation of a large-surface glass wall, and by interconnecting it to an open atrium. Along providing space for cultural activities in the variety hall, the private theatre, the lecture hall, the cinema, the studios and the library, the object offers room for a restaurant and administrative services. The broad-minded interior design is assembled with scenic decorations created by V. Kompánek, M. Laľuha, M. Ksandr, M. Palko, E. Šimerová–Martinčeková and many other prominent artists.

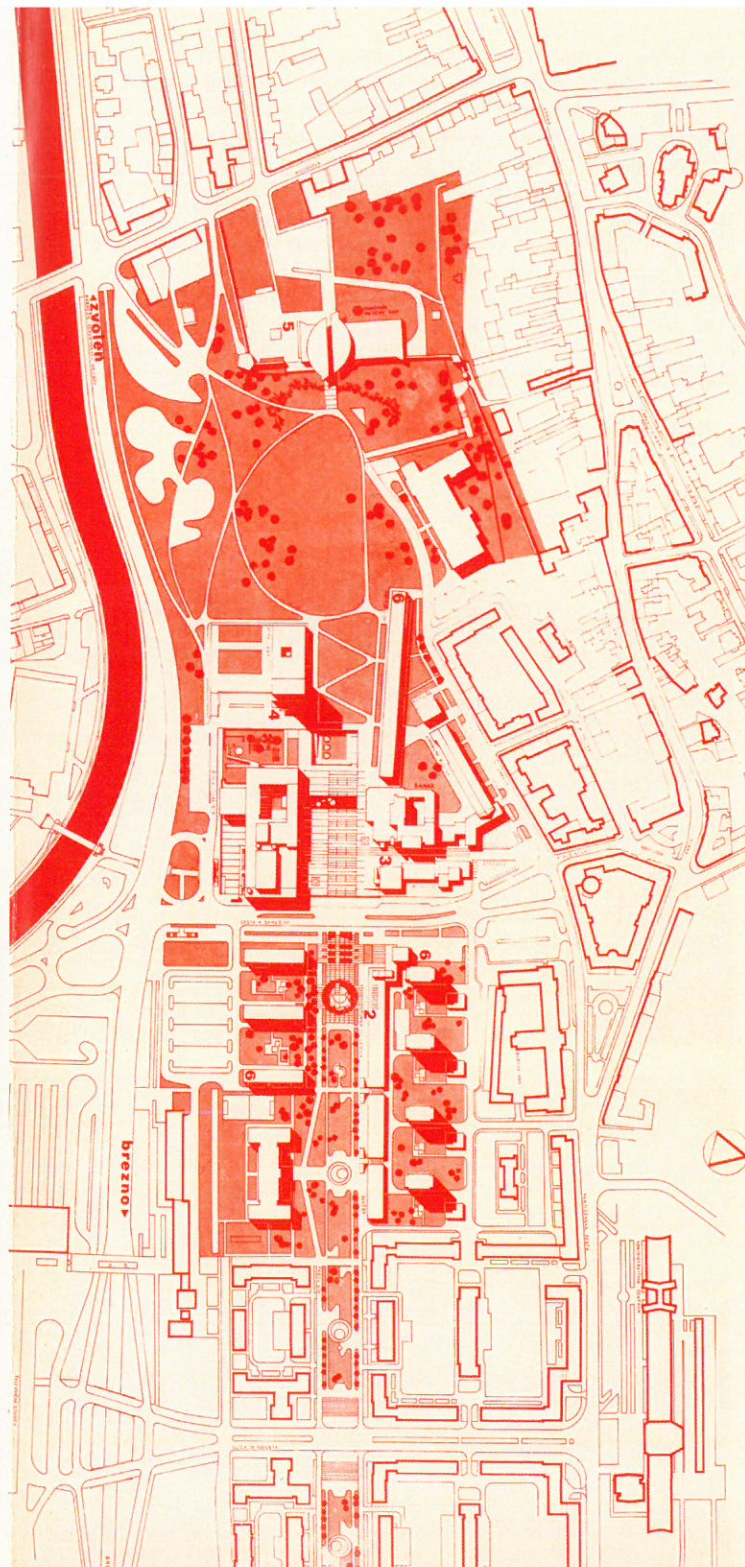
Jozef Chrobák in cooperation with Karol Tisončík |  
Stavoprojekt Banská Bystrica; competition 1961 | projected 1973 | realisation 1979 | completion 1981

originally Revolutionary Union Movement Community centre  
COMMUNITY CENTRE



THE GENERAL CREDIT BANK  
originally The National Bank of Czechoslovakia  
projected 1980 | realisation 1985  
Jozef Chrobák | Stavoprojekt Banská Bystrica

The original plan to build a theatre was later changed to build The National Bank of Czechoslovakia. The architect’s proposal was to create a richly shaped five-floor cube with a central hall on the ground floor as a weigh against to the Revolutionary Union Movement Community centre situated nearby. The facework parterre made of travertine along with the small windows and the bond shackles made of aluminium alloy in the front of the band windows, create a balanced horizontal and vertical structure of the facade. The accident and the quality of the material are to evoke firmness and safety of a bank institution. The author’s intention to create a square with low-rise buildings and a park inductions has not been launched.



Jozef Chrobák  
New cultural & social centre in Banská Bystrica  
urban study, alternative, 1975

Photographs

Archive snapshots

marked at a left border by a thin green strip

Archive of Central Slovakia Museum | 7  
Klára Kubičková | 5  
Pavel Rek | 13

Igor Teplan sr. | introduction | 9 | 10 | 11 | 15 | 16

Present snapshots

Tomáš Sobotka | title page | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 12 | 14



The residential block realisation objective was already adumbrated in the competition for a town regulation plan in 1939 that set its center line – starting at the railway station, perpendicular aimed to the town powerplant's water canal's ax. The post-war architects followed up with these ideas. The brick construction technology enabled them miscellaneous space variations. The space was used as a continuation of the town centre's redevelopment with a poly-functional parterre. Even at the present, this ward – based on a clear urbanistic plan – preserves as a popular place to live, with protected inner cortis, lots of greenery, playgrounds, facilities for children and young people, with a continual intrusion to the western municipal area. Later after the realisation, a city park and various playgrounds were formed on the original water canal ax.

**Martin Kusý and Karol Růžek** | Stavoprojekt Bratislava  
realisation 1954–1955

**| HOUSING ESTATE NEAR THE RAILWAY STATION**

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**| CITY COUNCIL OF BANSKÁ BYSTRICA**  
originally National Regional Committee  
of Central Slovakia  
realisation 1955

**Štefan Zhorella** | Stavoprojekt Nitra

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This object was built on the site of the old railway station. The 1st Czechoslovak Republic era buildings meet the 1950's residential blocks on this very spot. Due to its historical composition, the building is one of the last official realisations of architectural socialistic realism in Banská Bystrica. The four-floor object has a central neoclassical buttress entrance. The representative main hall with two lateral staircases lead to central corridors with offices on both wings of the building. These side wings define the area of the technical yard at the building's rear. The county council meeting room's new interior was created in 1999 by architects A. Mikoviny and M. Somora.

This health care centre was the third medical building which had been built in the town's centre. The object's western part was built in the inter-war period (1930–1937), while the construction of the polyclinic was completed in 1953. The object's form follows the Czechoslovak functionalistic architecture. While covering the five-floor building's eastern side, the monumental convex facade also acts as a central element of a small square with a park. In the interior, opposite to the entrance, there is a half-round glass-walled staircase, which enables access to all the floors' corridors. Medical departments are situated in respect to the building's outer walls. While the right wing serves medical purposes, the left part is residential.

*In literature, architects Kramár and Lukačovič have often been mistakenly labelled as the authors of this object.*

**Author unknown** | realisation 1953  
originally District Medical Institution  
**| POLYCLINIC**

Horná 60



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The complex of buildings, originally designed for the state-owned project organisation Stavoprojekt, is the work of two experienced local architects. The object is located by the road connecting the town centre with the Sásová housing estate and is easily visible from the northern bypass highway. The constituent blocks are set in accordance with the space's functional aim: administrative and company management sections, large workrooms, meeting room, auxiliary facilities, garages, service yard. The whole consists of a well balanced composition of balconies and horizontal masses of the front wings' with a dominant impact of the back masses of the upper blocks. This structure is lightened by a retrograde parterre and pillars supporting the floors. Nowadays, the building is a place of business for several companies and institutions.

**Ján Hanzel and Igor Teplan sr.** | Stavoprojekt Banská Bystrica  
projected 1978 | realisation 1987  
originally Stavoprojekt  
**| AURIS**

Rudlovská cesta 53



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**| CREMATORY**  
projected 1967–1970 | realisation 1980  
**Igor Teplan sr.** | Stavoprojekt Banská Bystrica

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The Crematory building lies on a forested mountainside, nearby a cemetery on Banská Bystrica's southern side, close to the Kremnička village. The composition of the dominant horizontals in contrast with the vertical, along with the simplicity and whiteness of the architectural shapes in the natural surroundings, evokes eternal peace, a place of departure from this world. The functionality and the space of the small building is obvious and clear. The nonpublic areas of the crematory are located at the object's back, separated by a staircase with a stair landing to avert any access of the public. A crevice-like entrance opens through a high gate into the entrance hall that is decorated by the reliefs created by artist Miroslav Ksandr. The core of the ceremonial hall is a roll with a movable construction around the hearse, which is upgraded by a nonfigurative scenic composition created by Elena Bellušová.

The modern University complex with classrooms for 400 students and a dormitory with 208 beds was built for ideological and educational activities of the Slovak communist party. The mass composition of the building – as a dominant of the northern skyline of the town – has been managed brilliantly. Its monumentality is supported by the gradual horizontal wings along with the entrance staircases on the ax of the main entrance. The interior functions are indicated by the different window grids. The interior of numerous public places is enriched by paintings (by Jaroslav Kubička or Pavol Uhrík). The supertemporal details of the balconies and sunblinds, along with the best-quality materials used at that time, made this building one of the best recognized structures in the town during the socialistic regime. Later, the building was partly reconstructed to meet the Law Faculty's needs.

**Rudolf Bizoň** | Stavoprojekt Banská Bystrica  
projected 1978 | realisation 1980  
originally Regional Political School  
**| MATEJ BEL UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF LAW**

Komenského 20



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**| THE STATE ARCHIVE IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA**  
projected 1987 | realisation 1993  
**Ján Hanzel** | Stavoprojekt Banská Bystrica

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From the technical point of view, the object was originally meant to be the most progressive archive construction in Slovakia. Unfortunately, due to multiple changes of its disposition and volume during the realisation of the project, the original grandiose plan was never fully realised. The object is located on the hill-top in the marginal part of the town and significantly contributes to the town's skyline. The primal utility is guaranteed by a heavy skeleton with the load up to 2000 kilograms per square meter. The whole cube, in order to be lightened, is wrapped-up by white alluminium compact plates ALUCOBOND along with the glassed-in round shapes in a strict postmodern style. The simple composition is well balanced with a double floored service space with a dominant sunblind above the entrance.

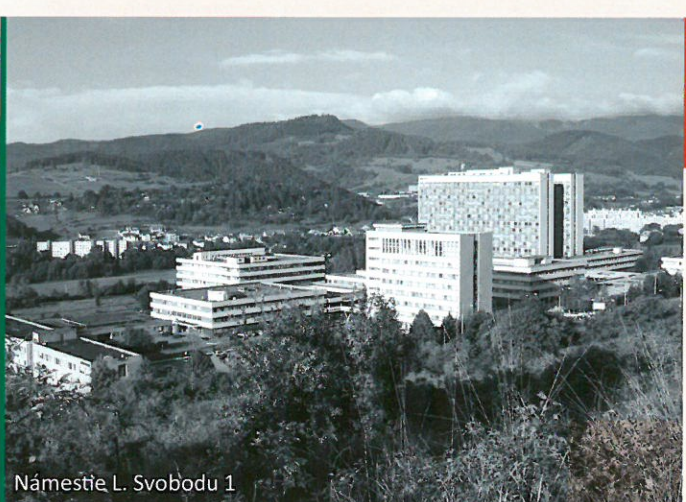
The complex of two important high schools is noteworthy due to its unusual layout in the declining terrain, and because of the perfect architectonic and scenic synergy, especially in the exterior. Its design derives from the Czechoslovak functionalism. Courts for free-time activities are situated in the areas between the double and triple-floored classroom wings. At the time of realisation, the frontal facades made of natural grey-green stone, along with glassed-in passage ways, shaped staircases and courtyards made of raw concrete and the ponds and greenery, created an unique, contemporary and author architecture.

**Pavel Rek** | Stavoprojekt Banská Bystrica  
projected 1967–1971 | realisation 1968–1989  
originally Generally-Educational  
and Economic school  
**| J. G. TAJOVSKÝ HIGH SCHOOL  
AND BUSINESS COLLEGE**

Tajovského 25



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**| F. D. ROOSEVELT TEACHING HOSPITAL  
WITH POLYCLINIC**  
projected 1973 | realisation 1981  
**Štefan Imrich** | Zdravoprojekt Bratislava

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The grandiose complex, built on the town periphery, has been erected to provide a multitude healthcare services to the Banská Bystrica district inhabitants. The bed section is situated in the block of two tall buildings, which are linked by a bridge. The horizontal three-floored part of the object serves the Healthcare centre needs (consulting rooms, X-ray rooms and laboratories) and also for other medical and technical facilities. The Children hospital pavilion lies in the southern part of the area, while the office building and the transfusive facility are on the northern side. With the breadth of 470 thousand cubic metres, the hospital is one of the biggest medical healthcare facilities in Slovakia. The whole concept, with its monumental dimensions and the composition with the character of postmodern architecture, manifests a level of architecture from the beginning of the last third of the 20th century and its realisation presents the technical and the crafting level of Slovak building industry at that time.

Based on the layout plan, several sport objects had been built in the 1960's in the Štiavničky area. This multipurpose sport hall was build right after the football stadium with an athletic track next to it. Modernly designed building, composed as a simple horizontal cube, is enhanced by a striking ledge and large-glassed surface along the whole facade. The symmetrical composition is augmented by the centrally situated main entrance. The main hall is accessible through the entrance vestibule by a staircase. Changing rooms, administrative and technical rooms are located on the ground floor. The originally projected roof was never realised. The author of the plastic sculpture in front of the building is Jozef Brezáni.

**Karol Páříčka** | Stavoprojekt Banská Bystrica  
realisation 1964–1965

**| ŠTIAVNIČKY SPORT CENTRE**

Cesta na štadión 36



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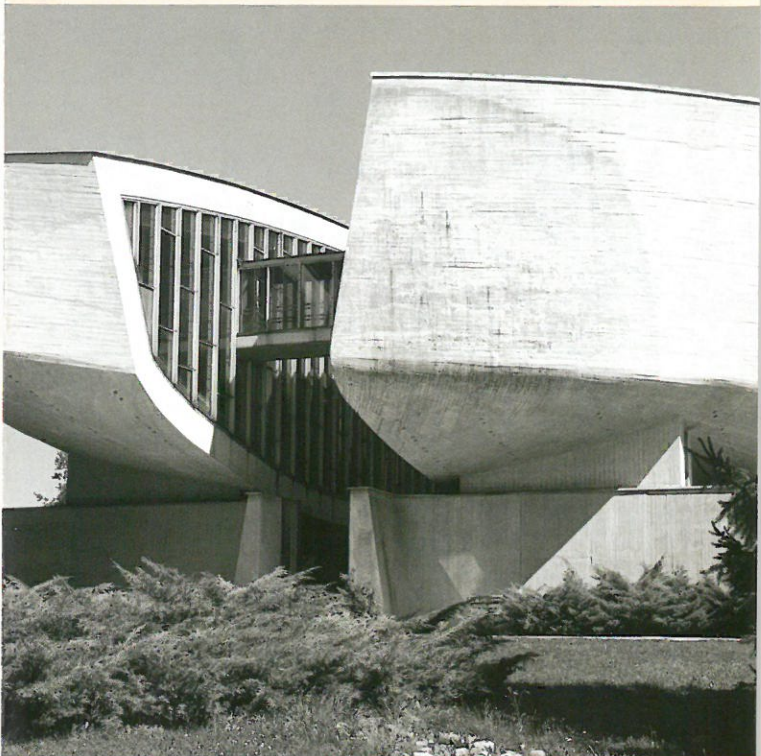
**| INDOOR SWIMMING POOL ŠTIAVNIČKY**  
realisation 1966  
**Ladislav Striež** | Stavoprojekt Banská Bystrica

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The original civil indoor swimming pool, was the last of the sport and recreation-based buildings to be built in the Štiavničky area. The swimming pool served both top athletes for training and the town inhabitants for recreation. Simple form and modern materials correspond with the nearby sport hall. The outdoor terrace was originally accessible by the central situated doors mounted in the whole-glassed facade on the south-eastern side of the 50 metres long swimming pool. The swimming pool is complemented by a sauna and other auxiliary facilities. New extensions, including relax and children's pool, were realised on the south side of the object, along with the internal disposition changes within the complex reconstruction, modernisation and rebuilding in 2010 (by architect Ján Barič).



**ARCHITECTURE  
OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE  
20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY | 1951–1989  
IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA**



**SIGHTSEEING TOUR**



**BANSKÁ BYSTRICA**

*Whose bread you eat,  
his song shall you sing,  
preached us an experience from  
the other side of beauty.  
It was more strict than a law.*

*a passage from Mikuláš Kováč's poem*

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