



*Dept. of Mathematics, Faculty of Education, Masaryk University in Brno,  
Dept. of Mathematics and Descriptive Geometry, VSB-Technical Univ. 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 in the series Mathematics and Society

## **Mathematicians and scientists as public figures: Living in Ivory Towers?**

**4 – 7 January 2018, Telč, Czechia**

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

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.<sup>3</sup>

The meeting traditionally strives to support interdisciplinary debate and explore various approaches to history of mathematics. We would like to offer a view of mathematics as an indispensable part of our culture. We welcome contributed talks related to this year’s topic.

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<sup>1</sup> Gillian Tett, *Financial Times*, April 15, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Gowers, „If politicians were mathematicians“

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

<sup>3</sup> Henk J. M. Bos. 2002. "Out of the Ivory Tower: The Significance of Dirk Jan Struik as Historian of Mathematics", *Historia Mathematica* **29**: 363–368.

**When:** 4 – 7 January 2018

**Where:** University Centre Telč, <http://www.uct.muni.cz/> (web in Czech only)  
Náměstí Zachariáše z Hradce 2, TELČ, Czechia

**For:** historians and philosophers of mathematics,  
historians and philosophers of science,  
mathematicians, mathematics teachers and students,  
and also others interested in the topic

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

### **Invited speakers:**

**Henrik Kragh Sørensen** (University of Copenhagen, DK)

**Boris Cvek** (Palacký University, Olomouc, CZ)

### **General outline of the programme:**

- **Thursday:** arrival after lunch, invited talk by Boris Cvek  
informal introductory meeting in the evening
- **Friday and Saturday:** regular conference days, with prolonged lunch break to  
allow for hiking or cross-country skiing, followed by late afternoon regular  
programme and light evening sessions (after dinner)
- **Sunday:** departure after breakfast

Please, register by via e-mail by **7 December 2017**, indicating also whether you would like to give a talk, preferably including the **title** (and an **abstract**) of your talk. Abstracts received by **2 January 2018** will be included in book of abstracts.

Meals and lodgings are booked centrally. Please, let us know your arrival details and your dietary needs.

Conference fee: 25 EUR or 600 CZK payable during the workshop.

Contact e-mail: [hdurnova@ped.muni.cz](mailto:hdurnova@ped.muni.cz)

Looking forward to seeing you!

Helena Durnová, MU Brno  
[hdurnova@ped.muni.cz](mailto:hdurnova@ped.muni.cz)

Jan Kotůlek, VSB-TU Ostrava  
[jan.kotulek@vsb.cz](mailto:jan.kotulek@vsb.cz)