



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA  
MINISTRSTVO ZA ZUNANJE ZADEVE

*Ministrstvo za zunanje zadeve Republike Slovenije  
ima ob dnevu slovenske diplomacije čast predstaviti*

CIRILA  
KOTNIKA

*in*

FRANCETA  
PUNČUHA

¶ Slovenci v diplomatski službi ¶



## CIRIL KOTNIK

*"Kar pa zadeva mene, naj odloči Bog: če me čaka težak konec, mi je že usoda tako namenila. Ne bojim se smrti, in če bo treba, bom zmogel umreti brez vznemirjenja."  
Iz pisma, ki ga je Ciril Kotnik napisal v zaporu*

*"As for me, I let God decide. If I am to suffer such a dreadful end, then that is my fate. But it is not death that I fear, and if death comes, I will know how to meet it without trembling."*

*From a letter Ciril Kotnik wrote in prison*



\* *Vižmarje, 20 December 1895*

† *Rome, 29 June 1948*

*English*

Ciril Kotnik was born in Vižmarje into a large family originating from Carinthia. Having graduated from the commercial academy, he left for Serbia, where he joined the Serbian armed forces as a volunteer in 1912. He fought in both Balkan wars and World War I, which earned him a decoration.

In the summer of 1917, he started working at the Legation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Rome, where he eventually became an archivist. Some sources suggest that he was involved with the intelligence service. While

in Rome, he married Maria Tomassetti and fathered three daughters: Ivanka, Darinka (Dara) and Danica.

Upon the occupation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia by the Axis Forces, he was interned at his house in Rome. The London-based government in exile then reassigned him to the Legation at the Holy See, where he was able to continue his diplomatic endeavours thanks to the concordat between Italy and the Holy See. He was particularly active during the war: he helped officers of the royal army, refugees, prisoners, internees, anti-fascists and members

of the allied coalition hiding in Italy. He also collected information for the Italian resistance movement.

On 28 October 1943, following the capitulation of Italy, just as he was about to deliver a memorandum to the Pope concerning the persecution of Jews, he was arrested by the Gestapo

on charges of espionage and support for anti-German activities in Italy. He was tortured on eleven separate occasions in the Tasso Street prison and sentenced to death. However, the death sentence was not carried out, supposedly

because of the Pope's intervention.

Upon the liberation of Rome, Ciril Kotnik was invited to a ceremony at the Rome Synagogue marking his humanitarian activities during the war. After the war, ignored by his homeland for political reasons, he lived in Rome, where he died in 1948, succumbing to injuries sustained under torture. In 1955, he was posthumously awarded a gold medal by the Italian Jewish Communities Union.



*Foto*

*Ciril Kotnik s  
hčerko Daro v  
Rimu,  
l. 1939 ali 1940*

*Photo*

*Ciril Kotnik  
with daughter  
Dara in Rome in  
1939 or 1940*



*"Bil je izredno prijazen človek, ki ni nikoli čutil, da počne kaj izjemnega, temveč le tisto, kar je prav."*

*Iz pričevanj v arhivu Jad Vašema*

FRANCE  
PUNČUH

*"He was an exceptionally kind man who never felt he was doing anything special but only what was right."*

*From the testimonies in the Yad Vashem Archive*

## FRANCE (FRANJO) PUNČUH

\* Gornji Logatec, 26. september 1902

† Varšava, 9. september 1944

### Slovensko

France Punčuh se je rodil v številčni družini Leopolda Punčuha, nadučitelja in tudi župana Logatca, in Antonije Punčuh, roj. Žgur. Po Kraljevi državnosti višji realni v Ljubljani, ki jo je končal junija 1922, je opravil vojaško dolžnost v Inženirski podoficirski šoli v Mariboru, nato pa nadaljeval šolanje na Visoki trgovski šoli v Varšavi, kjer je novembra 1927 diplomiral.

Julija 1928 se je zaposlil na Poslaništvu Kraljevine Jugoslavije v Varšavi, kjer je bil pristojen za trgovinske in finančne posle, nekaj časa pa je opravljal tudi dolžnosti dopisnika Zavoda za pospeševanje zunanje trgovine. Medtem se je leta 1931 poročil z Janino Glocer, poljsko Judinjo, in maja 1933 se jima je rodil sin Andrej. Januarja 1935 je na Poslaništvu Kraljevine Jugoslavije dal odpoved in v Varšavi odprl trgovinsko zastopstvo za nemške pisalne stroje. Novembra tega leta ga je poljski predsednik za delo trgovskega atašeja na jugoslovanskem poslaništvu odlikoval s srebrnim križem za zasluge. Decembra 1937 je bil imenovan za častnega vicekonzula Kraljevine Jugoslavije v Varšavi.

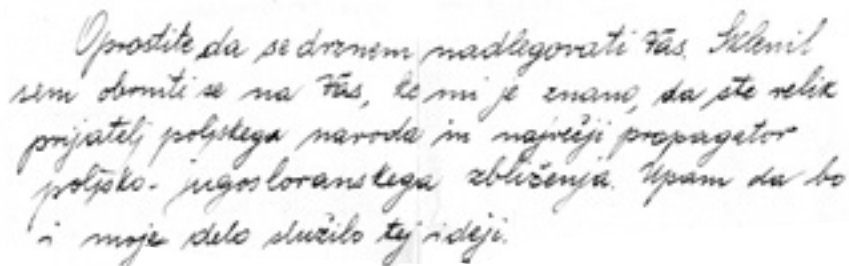
Po nacistični okupaciji Poljske septembra 1939 in uveljavitvi protijudovske rasne zakonodaje je začel pomagati svojim poslovnim znancom in prijateljem judovskega rodu. Številnim Judom je pomagal pobegniti iz varšavskega geta, jih skrival ter zagotavljal pomoč in podporo tistim, ki so jih pomagali skrivati.

Med varšavsko vstajo ga je 9. septembra 1944 ubila nemška okupacijska vojska. Pokopan je bil v Varšavi, maja 1971 pa na željo soproge prekopan na pokopališče v Gornjem Logatcu.

France Punčuh je za zasluge pri reševanju Judov 15. avgusta 2004 prejel častni naziv Jad Vašema pravičnik med narodi.

*Faksimile Punčuhovega pisma prof. Franu Ilesiču iz Varšave z dne 25.IX.1925*

*Facsimile of Punčuh's letter to Prof. Fran Ilesič from Warsaw dated 25 September 1925*



*Oprostite da se dovolim nadlegovati vas. Iskreno sem obniti se na vas, ko mi je znano, da ste veliki prijatelj poljskega naroda in najvišji propagator poljsko-jugoslovanskega zблиženja. Upam da bo in moje delo služilo tej ideji.*

\* *Gornji Logatec, 26 September 1902*

† *Warsaw, 9 September 1944*

*English*

France Punčuh was born into a large family to Leopold Punčuh, a headmaster and mayor of Logatec, and Antonija Punčuh (née Žgur). In June 1922, having graduated from the royal state secondary school in Ljubljana, he saw military service at the Maribor Non-Commissioned Officers Academy and enrolled at a commercial school in Warsaw, graduating in November 1927.

In July 1928, he began working for the Legation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Warsaw, where he was tasked with

commercial and financial affairs and was a correspondent for the Institute for the Promotion of Foreign Trade. In the meantime, notably in 1931, he married Janina Glocer, a Polish Jew, who gave birth to their son Andrej in May 1933. In January 1935, he opened a German typewriter dealership in Warsaw and left the Legation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Polish President awarded him the Silver Cross of Merit for his work as commercial attaché at the Yugoslav Legation in November of that same year.

In December 1937, he was appointed honorary vice-consul of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Warsaw.

Following the Nazi occupation of Poland in September 1939 and the introduction of anti-Jewish laws, he began helping his business associates and friends of Jewish descent. He



*Foto*

*France Punčuh  
z ženo in sinom  
pred vojno*

*Photo*

*France Punčuh  
with wife and  
son before the  
war*

helped many Jews escape from the Warsaw ghetto, hiding them or supporting those who hid them.

He was killed by the German occupying forces during the Warsaw uprising on 9 September 1944. He was interred in Warsaw, but his remains were moved to Gornji Logatec in May 1971 at the request of his wife.

On 15 August 2004, France Punčuh was awarded the title 'Righteous Among the Nations' by Yad Vashem.

## { Slovenci v diplomatski službi }

Dan slovenske diplomacije, 22. maj, simbolično praznujemo na dan, ko je Slovenija leta 1992 postala članica Organizacije združenih narodov. Zgodovina slovenske diplomacije pa ni začela teči z dnevom samostojnosti in neodvisnosti Republike Slovenije, saj smo Slovenci tudi v večnacionalnih državah, ki smo jim pripadali v preteklosti, dokazali, da se dobro znajdemo na diplomatskem parketu.

V posebno čast nam je ob letošnjem dnevu slovenske diplomacije obuditi spomin na dva Slovence v diplomatski službi, ki sta v usodnih dneh druge svetovne vojne zmogla ohraniti humanizem, pokončnost in osebni pogum ter sta za ceno svojega življenja reševala življenja drugih.

*Ministrstvo za zunanje zadeve se želi za sodelovanje pri projektu posebej zahvaliti Borisu Hajdinjaku, Ivo Jevnikarju, Ivanu Martelancu, Tanyi Puncub in Petru Winklerju.*

*Viri: Arhiv Jad Vašema, Arhiv Jugoslavije v Beogradu, Nacionalni digitalni arhiv v Varšavi, Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica - Rokopisna zbirka, Visoka trgovska šola v Varšavi, družinski arhivi Dare (Darinke) Kotnik, Tanye Puncub in Petra Winklerja.*

22 May was designated Slovenian Diplomacy Day to mark the day when Slovenia became a member of the United Nations in 1992. However, the history of Slovenian diplomacy did not begin with Slovenia's independence, as we Slovenes also proved our flair for diplomacy within the multinational states in which we once lived.

This year, it is our particular honour to remember two Slovenian diplomats who were able to preserve humanism, integrity and courage during the fateful days of World War II and save the lives of others at the cost of their own.

*The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like to express special thanks to Mr Boris Hajdinjak, Mr Ivo Jevnikar, Mr Ivan Martelanc, Ms Tanya Puncub and Mr Peter Winkler for their co-operation in the project.*

*Sources: Jad Vashem Archive, the Archives of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, National Digital Archive in Warsaw, National and University Library - Manuscript Collection, Warsaw School of Economics, family archives of Ms Dara (Darinka) Kotnik, Ms Tanya Puncub and Mr Peter Winkler.*