SPIG from beginning to today

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1. How it all begins

It may be of interest to find out how the research in the field of physics of ionized gases (PIG) started and what was the reason that so many scientists in the fifties become interested in the relevant fields. Research in nuclear physics that was in its heights and was heavily supported by the governments in the fifties, and generous funds have been provided. Our country was not an exception since even a relatively small countries as ours, expected various benefits, not only a new source of energy, application of radio isotopes in medicine and agriculture but also, to be honest, some kind of nuclear weapon. The Federal Nuclear Energy Commission was formed and three centers were founded: in Ljubljana (Slovenia), in Zagreb (Croatia) and in Belgrade (Serbia). First two were named after world known physicists (J.Stefan an R.Bošković) while the Belgrade institute was named after active politician and minister in the Yugoslav government Boris Kidrič. A large number of the first class scientists were engaged in the research. It was a dream of physics, physical chemistry and biology students, such as myself, to work after graduation in some of the nuclear institutes. Even the curricula in Science University departments have been altered and adopted to the nuclear physics research requirements. Gradually, research in nuclear physics entered a more advanced phase. At the Belgrade Institute, a very successful group led by prof.Branislava-Brana Perović was developing methods of electromagnetic separation of isotopes, mass spectrometer was introduced by K. Zmbov, interaction of ions with surfaces was studied by B.Navišek (Ljubljana) and T. Nenadović (Belgrade), gas filled radiation detectors were developed (prof. A.Milojević, M. Petrović, D.Bek-Uzarov, V.Urošević, V.Ajdacic and M.Kurepa ,all in Belgrade, M.Srdić in Zagreb and D.Bošan in Niš) All this, and many other fields of research required substantial knowledge on various aspects that take place in ionized gases (to mention Z.Šternberg and V.Vujnović in Zagreb, M.Popović and D.Tošić in Belgrade) .Research and applications of the arc discharges in gases for analytical purposes ( V.Vukanović , D.Vukanović, M.Todorović, D.Pešić and M.Marinković in Belgrade) was also successfully progressing. Construction of ion accelerators mastered ( A.Strojnik and J.Dekleva in Ljubljana, B.Maršičanin and B.Anićin in Belgrade nad K.Prelec in Zagreb) , but majority of scientists were not trained and not skilled in the field. Some of them already returned after training ( Z.Šternberg and V.Vujnović from Zagreb and B.Čobić from Belgrade) while others were still abroad as postgraduate and research students in the field related to the physics of ionized gases ( J.Labat and M.Kurepa from Belgrade) in the leading Universities. It is a fact that study of conduction of electricity through gases has been a matter of mainly academic interest during nineteenth and beginning of twentieth century. It undoubtedly leads to several new fields, such as discovery of electrons and X-rays that lay down basics of modern physics. However, methods of experimental and theoretical physics that may be applied to the field of ionized gases, have not been developed. Furthermore, scanty sources of atomic data, particularly on excitation and ionization collisions of electrons with atoms and molecules, has limited the extension of the research .It was therefore decided, on the federal scale, to tackle this problem in various ways.
Firstly: to organize meetings of people working in the field in order to exchange experience, ideas and suggest the other ways to overcome these problems. Secondly: to send certain number of younger students to renowned centers abroad, to provide highly trained personnel capable of quality research in the field. In the meantime, several new ideas appeared, that have partly bearing in the nuclear research. After successful explosion of the hydrogen bomb in 1952, the quest for controlled thermonuclear reaction began, in order to provide practically unlimited supply of energy. Under heading in print “Sun in the Laboratory” results have been announced on the toroidal machine named ZETA build in Harvel (UK). Apparently, high electric currents induced in ionized deuterium gas, has heated it to temperature sufficient to fuse the atoms. Similar research has been done also in other countries, particularly in USA and Soviet Union. Based on extension and results of these studies the commercial fusion reactor seemed to be just round the corner. Also, an evidence has been provided that, so called MHD power generation could be easily attainable by use of highly ionized gas as a conducting fluid. Initial results have been very promising so that practically any physical laboratory in the world has started some kind of related research. Everybody expected to find a way to heat and confine the plasma in order to reach the goal - the controlled fusion reaction. A tremendous amount of money has been invested, especially in highly developed countries. The results varied, from highly promising to disappointing. And as the situation today, there are just a few centers in the world left with large scale controlled fusion research: USA, Great Britain, Germany, Japan. It seems that just some international joint project could lead to some kind of commercial fusion reactor. It already exists, as you may know, it is under construction in South France, under the name of ITER. Joint effort of China, EU, India, Japan, Korea, Russia and USA hopefully guarantee that it will follow the original plan: 10 years of construction and 20 years of operation. For certain, it is not the task of small countries, since it definitely requires very large scale devices and highly sophisticated technology. Small countries, as in the case of LHC project, may participate via some of their scientists involved in the project. Scientists from our country contribute also by direct participation the international large projects, or, as majority did, undertake smaller scale experiments or theoretical projects.

A number of scientists in the field gradually increased and good part of projects financed by the state were from the field of physics of ionized gases and plasmas. Therefore, the initial idea to train students and research workers by acquisition and exchanging of knowledge and experience in an organized manner has been justified.

2. How the SPIG was born

2.1. First three meetings

Who, where and when exactly the idea to organize meetings in the field started is not easy to establish. However, one can say that mainly thanks to effort and persistency of Prof. Branimila-Brana Perović from the Nuclear Institute in Belgrade, supported, stimulated and backed enthusiastically by prof. A.Milojević (Belgrade ), Z.Šternberg (Zagreb), Đ. Bošan (Niš) and A.Moljk (Ljubljana), the first meeting was organized in Belgrade in 1962, under the title: "1st Yugoslav Symposium on the Physics of Ionized Gases"(SPIG). At this first meeting eight invited lectures were presented by the most experienced local scientists from institutions where experimental and theoretical work has already started. In addition to invited lectures, twenty six original contributions were also presented. It was surprisingly a large number of contributions, since the preference in scientific research was given to nuclear physics. These contributions pointed to the fields of future meetings: Atomic collision physics, Interaction of particles with solids and Physics of ionized gases.

Two years later, in 1964. Zagreb was chosen for the second meeting. In Zagreb, majority of the research in the field of ionized gases was done in “Rudjer Bošković” Institute and just begins in the Department of Physics, Faculty of Sciences and Mathematics. The general pattern of the meeting was similar to the first one. This time only four invited lectures were presented, while the number of original contributions was twenty seven.

The town of Niš was in 1966. place for the next gathering of the third, and the last meeting of this kind. Apart from the Department of Physics at the Faculty of Philosophy and
Faculty of Electronics University of Niš, the main interest in the physics of ionized gases existed in the Niš Electronic Industry, a factory where electronic tubes, X-ray sources and proportional Geiger counters were manufactured. At this meeting five invited lectures were presented, but the number of contributions increased sharply to forty eight! This was indeed an encouraging sign that the effort to organize SPIG meetings was justified. It should be noted that participants were exclusively from Yugoslavia, and that the official language of the conference was Serbo-Croatian.

2.1.1. Intermission: Summer School on Physics of Ionized Gases

Unexpectedly, large number of participants and contributions on the first two SPIG meetings was an encouraging sign that the effort to organize PIG related meetings starts to give positive results. During the first meeting the general conclusion was that learning of different fields related to PIG should be done in a more organized manner. It meant that, in order to do it more efficiently, we should invite some foreign experts in the field and engage them as lecturers and teachers. In 1964, six leading scientists have been invited to deliver lectures to Yugoslav participants, scientists and postgraduate students. On the Adriatic coast, in the town of Herceg Novi the “Summer School on the Physics of Ionized Gases” was held. Organizers of this summer school succeeded to bring six world-wide known scientists and University professors to come and teach our, mainly young, research workers. Names of these people are built into the basis of all our further research and should be praised, with dignity and pride. These were:

- Prof. J.D. Craggs, University of Liverpool, G. Britain, three lectures,
- Prof. A.L. Cullen, University of Sheffield, G. Britain, three lectures,
- Prof. Yu. H. Demkov, University of Leningrad, Soviet Union, three lectures,
- Prof. A. von Engel, University of Oxford, G. Britain, eight lectures,
- Prof. R. Herman, Obs. de Paris France, two lectures,
- Prof. J.B. Hasted, University College London, G. Britain, six lectures.

Results of this summer school proved to be excellent. Participants agreed that this venture was highly successful and that they have learned a substantial amount of new knowledge. It was therefore decided that summer school of this kind should be organized on a regular basis, possibly combined with the symposia.

The place chosen for the summer school was ideal for the purpose. The Yugoslav Atomic Energy Commission had at the time in Herceg Novi, a small town on the Adriatic coast, an object assigned for scientific meetings. The building consists of cozy lecture theater, restaurant and accommodations. Most valuable was the beautiful garden with Mediterranean vegetation, where attendees could rest between lectures in a shadow of the trees. And the beach was less than 100 meters from the place! During the summer school participants were all the time together (except for those at the beach), discussing with lecturers and among themselves, exactly as organizers wished. Maybe it was also due to a highly stimulating atmosphere of the surrounding that this summer school was so successful!

3. Finally: Summer School and International Symposium on Physics of Ionized Gases

After the success of the two symposia and the summer school, the idea was born that these two should be combined and held biannually on a regular basis. As a result of this proposal, the first meeting in a long series, was held in 1968 under the title: “Yugoslav Symposium and International Summer School on the Physics of Ionized Gases”, now known world wide (without any modesty) as SPIG. It was rather ambitious title, because at that time no one was sure how much interest such a meeting could attract. It turns out that the meeting and its location was a hit! Mainly, young scientists and postgraduate students from number of European countries started to take part, attracted mainly by first class lecturers, an to be honest, also by the site. Their number was increasing, so that later they represented approximately 1/3 of all participants, no counting the invited lecturers. Except for 16th and 17th SPIG when turmoil in our country was at it highest, this ratio remains the same.

The 1968 meeting held also in Herceg-Novni, was distinct by introduction of the three sections: Atomic collision processes, Particle interaction with solids and Phenomena in plasmas. Number of the invited lectures was very large, and were given, mainly by foreign participants,
there were as much as 23 lectures given by 13 lecturers. It is of particular importance that official language becomes English. The organizers were aware that this may cause difficulties to younger participants when orally presenting their contributions what was a regular way at the time. But it turns out to be a very good stimulation to them to improve heir knowledge of English that was gradually becoming a kind of official language in science.

The following, 5th SPIG meeting was held in 1970 again in Herceg Novi. The lecture theatre was still large enough to accommodate all the participants. However, the tourist industry started sudden rise at the Adriatic coast. It was followed by erection of new large hotels, so that the conference site was surrounded by many new objects and crowd of tourists. The quietness and exclusiveness of the conference site garden has been lost. As a consequence, it was decided that the next meeting should be held somewhere else on the Adriatic coast. However, the Herceg-Nov! meetings will be remembered as special place where numerous friendships have been founded and collaborations started. The lectures as well as lecturers greatly influenced the further development of research in the field of physics of ionized gases in Yugoslavia. We quote their names always with great respect. Their names with affiliations for first 20 meetings are given in Appendix A.1. in ref.1.

The next, 6th SPIG meeting was held in 1972. in Split, a town on the middle of Adriatic, actually in a brand new hotel few miles out of the city center. This meeting will be remembered by an appreciably large number of participants, and because of an oral presentation of contributions, three parallel sessions were held. One of the conference rooms was in fact the hotel night club! Due to the large distance to the city center the participants were bound to the meeting site, which seems to improve discussions, conversations and friendships. As during the previous meetings, excursions were organized to some places of natural and historical interest. These excursions by bus or by boat were welcomed by the participants, particularly to Split that was erected around AD 300 by Diocletian as his seat in this part of the Roman empire. His palace is a place of interest to be visited and seen even now. And of course, there was a beach close to the hotel, what was very much appreciated by the participants as in the case of Herceg –Novi.

The 7th SPIG was held in the town of Rovinj, the lovely place at the northern Adriatic. The meeting cite was a small island called St.Catherina. The see was not 100 meters from the meeting place but 100 meters all around it! The favorite excursion destinations were two islands at the entrance of the Rovinj bay.

The meeting cite of the next 8th SPIG in 1976 has been moved to the most beautiful place of Adriatic coast, the ancient Dubrovnik. The town has completely takenhearths of participants, so that the also following three meetings (9th SPIG 1978, 10thSPIG 1980, and 11th SPIG 1982) were also held there. The quality of the invited lectures was on a very high level although the number of lecturers and lectures was reduced to about thirty. The meeting halls and accommodation for the participants was provided by one of the nicest hotels called Libertas. The traditional conference excursions were improved in number and quality and the hotel beach was again very close!

Strangely enough, in 1990. the 15th SPIG meeting was also held in Dubrovnik. At that time it was almost certain that Yugoslavia is approaching an extremely dangerous period. Some think that this was the last SPIG meeting, and it was felt that the occurrences expected in near future announces that this was the last occasion for meeting our friends and colleagues from all parts of Yugoslavia.

Successive Dubrovnik SPIG meetings in 1978, 1980. and 1982. are remembered by further improvement of the quality of organization. It was felt that this meeting has got its own face, being always different from other similar meetings. And, as pointed out by most of the participants, the Dubrovnik has completely taken their hearts. Dubrovnik has long and exciting history and was an independent state during many centuries. It is surrounded by walls and has some special unforgettable atmosphere. The participants could attend evening concerts at “Dubrovnik Summer Festival”, or just drink coffee in one of many typical local restaurants. The meetings were an exceptional mixture of high level physics, relaxation on the beach and highest cultural performances. Conference excursions were organized mainly by boats, to visit near-by islands of Lokrum and Lopud and nicest and biggest nearby island of Mljet.
The 1984.(XII) and 1986.(XIII) SPIG meetings were held in the town of Šibenik, a lovely middle Adriatic town, with plenty remains from middle ages. Among them the most representative is Gothic-Renaissance cathedral. Meetings were held again in a nearby hotel on the seaside. The number of invited lectures was rather large, between 40 and 50, more than usual at the previous meetings. Both of the meetings were noted by the large number of participants as well as large number of original contributions. It was therefore decided that the contributions will be presented on the panels, that was already a praxis in the other international conferences, so that this way of presentation was easily accepted by participants on these and all the other successive SPIG meetings.

Organizers of the XIV SPIG meeting from the University of Sarajevo, feel that the meeting should be moved from the seaside to mountains. They have chosen mountain Igman, that become famous during the Sarajevo winter Olympic games in 1984. The number of participants and also lecturers was again reasonably high, proving that not much the site but the quality of meeting was attractive factor for attendees.

As already mentioned, the XV SPIG was again held in Dubrovnik, shortly before the former Yugoslavia disintegrates. It was the end of gathering of people from all Yugoslav centers and a fruitful mutual collaboration.

3.1. Intermission 2. Related international conferences
The oldest international conference on physics of ionized gases was started in 1953, in Oxford by professor A. von Engel. Initially, until 1963 conference in Paris it was called “International Conference on Ionization Phenomena in Gases”. However, several new fields have been encompassed gradually, so that after recommendation of the International Scientific Committee, already the next conference held in 1965 in Belgrade becomes “International Conference on Physics of Ionized Gases” (ICPIG). It exists until today, the last, 29th was held in Cancun, Mexico 2009. In recognition for our activity in the field, this conference has been organized twice in Belgrade (Yugoslavia), 7th ICPIG in 1965 organized by B.Perović and 19th ICPIG, organized in 1989 by J.Labat and J.Purić. Also, three of us were members of the twelve-member Conference International Scientific Committee, each with 6 years election period. These included J.Labat, J.Purić and B.Milić (all from Belgrade) of which J. Puric chaired this scientific committee form 1989. to 1991. (20th ICPIG).

Purely European Conference of slightly narrower scope started in 1973. It is the “European Conference on the Atomic and Molecular Physics of Ionised Gases” (ESCAMPIG). Our scientists have organized this conference also twice: 4th in Dubrovnik in 1980 organized by R.Janev and 20th in Novi Sad organized in 2010. by Z.Petrović, both from Belgrade.

Finally, “International Conference on Photonic, Electronic and Atomic Collisions” (ICPEAC) that started in 1953 in New York, its last, 26th was held 2009. in Kalamazoo, Michigan (USA).

It was a great honor given to some of us receiving invitations by the International Scientific Committees of these conferences to present general invited lectures from the particular field of interest on the results that were partially published and recognized by the scientific community.

I have deliberately excluded from this review conferences devoted to various aspects of fusion, although they stem from the research in the field of physics of ionized gases, and may be regarded as highly specialized. The same applies also to the “International Conference on Spectral Line Shapes” and also to “Serbian Conference on Spectral Line Shapes”.

3.2. Meetings after disintegration of Yugoslavia
Beginning of nineties Yugoslavia fell apart. Serbia and Montenegro formed new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Distressed, and depressed physicists though that the SPIG meetings should be discontinued. Fortunately the strong tradition of the meetings prevailed and the renewed 16th meeting was organized in Belgrade in 1993. Many of scientists were a little surprised by this decision owing to the international insulation of the country, including air traffic, closed borders and high inflation. The number of contributed papers was below the
average, however, several invited speakers have sufficient courage to come to Belgrade and were cordially welcomed.

In order to hold the further meetings during the even years, the next 17th SPIG meeting was held also in Belgrade already in 1994. Due to surrounding war and largely unsettled situation in the country the number of invited speakers dropped to 15, although the number of local participants was reasonably large.

The general situation in the country gradually improved, so that the next 18th SPIG meeting was held in a town of Kotor in 1996. Medieval town on the south Adriatic provided very convenient site, and the number of participants was again very large, and so was with the invited lecturers (35). The town itself lies in the well preserved fortress in the bay of Kotor, famous for brave marine captains and sailors and as a tourist resource. The participants enjoy very much this site and it was felt that the places on the Adriatic coast will prevail for further meetings.

This experience seemed not to be sufficient argument for the next 19th SPIG meeting organizers, since they have decided to move to the mountains. The mountain of Zlatibor was chosen for the reason of convenience, in terms of its position, transport, possibilities of accommodation and beautiful surroundings. However, this time, probably due to the lack of financial support, the number of invited lecturers dropped to 27. Regardless of this, the meeting was highly successful and has given a strong support to the idea where to hold the SPIG meetings in the future.

As much as three future meetings were held on the mountains and one in a spa resort. The mountain Zlatibor was the place of jubilar 20th SPIG meeting in 2000. Following success of previous meeting it was rich with the invited lectures (27) and number of participants. The next 21st meting was held in Soko Banja in 2002, the spa resort, with 25 invited lectures and 14 progress report presented. The 22nd SPIG was held at mountain Tara, Bajina Bašta in 2004, another mountain tourist resort in Serbia. The Montenegro has become in 2006 an independent country and so did Serbia. This greatly limits the choice of places, since the Serbia has no exit to the sea. Therefore the tourist resort- mountain Koponik, was chosen for the site of 23rd SPIG in 2006. It was rich with the invited lectures and 25 progress reports, but possibly due to transport problems, the number of participants was smaller than usual. However, the next 23rd SPIG was held in town of Novi Sad in 2008. The meeting was noted for high number of participants (160 local and 71 from abroad), 26 invited lectures and 14 progress reports. The reason was most probably more convenient transport, and possibility to reach the place easily by the car. Undoubtedly this meeting was very successful, the SPIG has again reached its full form. The people from Belgrade institutes have proven to be not only first class scientists, but also excellent organizers. This, 25th meeting will surely be remembered not only as 25th in a row, but also by the quality of lectures and number of participants. Hopefully, the SPIG meetings will continue to be successfully organized by highly skilled people for the benefit of Serbian science.

Chronology of SPIG meetings with the names of places and organizers is given in Appendix.

4. Scientific interests and publications

4.1 Sections
First few meetings have only three sections. It was felt that is sufficient knowing the extend of the scientific activity in the early sixties, that was just gaining its initial momentum. Following the evidence in the fields of interests it was decided that only three sections withouth subsections should be sufficient. As an example, for the 4th SPIG in 1968 the sections were:

1. Atomic collision processes,
2. Particle interactions with solids,
3. Processes in plasmas.

Very soon, activities in the field have greatly evolved, number of contributions sharply increased, and it was of necessity to elaborate their classification.
At the 10th SPIG in 1980 three sections were of slightly different titles and each of them has few subsections:

1. Atomic collision processes
   1.1. Scattering of electrons
   1.2. Heavy particle collisions

2. Particle interactions with solids
   2.1. Scattering and emission processes
   2.2. Penetration and sputtering
   2.3. Surface changes
   2.4. Experimental techniques

3. Phenomena in ionized gases
   3.1. Interaction of laser radiation with plasma
   3.2. Non-ideal plasmas
   3.3. Plasma spectroscopy
   3.4. Waves and instabilities in plasmas
   3.5. Electric gas discharges

The subsections indicate much broader interest in the fields related to the physics of ionized gases and also the general trends in the physics. Possibly that also influenced by the sections and subsections at the international ICPIG conferences, already 14th SPIG meeting in 1988 has four sections with different subsections indicating even newest directions of research:

1. Atomic collision processes
   1.1. Electron and photon interactions with atomic particles
   1.2. Heavy particles and photon interactions
   1.3. Swarm and transport processes

2. Particle and laser beam interaction with solids
   2.1. Atomic collision processes in solids
   2.2. Sputtering and deposition
   2.3. Laser and plasma interaction with surfaces

3. Low temperature plasmas
   3.1. Plasma spectroscopy and other diagnostic methods
   3.2. Gas discharges
   3.3. Plasma applications and devices

4. General plasma theory

Since then the situation seems to stabilize, so that only the fourth section has been further elaborated. Also, the non-ideal plasmas do not seemed to be of further interest. Already, from 19th SPIG in 1998 until today, the sections and subsections are:

1. Atomic collision processes
   1.1. Electron and atom interactions with atomic particles
   1.2. Heavy particle collisions
   1.3. Swarm and transport phenomena

2. Particle and laser beam interactions with solids
   2.1. Atomic collisions with solids
   2.2. Sputtering and deposition
   2.3. Laser and plasma interaction with surfaces
3. Low temperature plasmas
   3.1. Plasma spectroscopy and other diagnostic methods
   3.2. Gas discharges
   3.3. Plasma applications and devices

4. General plasmas
   4.1. Fusion plasmas
   4.2. Astrophysical plasmas
   4.3. Collective phenomena

4.2. SPIG related publications
Every SPIG meeting including the Summer school was followed by one or two publications. Except for summer school, the SPIG activities comprise of two separate books: invited lectures and original contribution. Initially, the books were printed as internal reports of the Belgrade Nuclear Institute in Serbo-Croatian language.

The summer school lectures were recorded and printed as transcripts after approval by the lecturers. Up to now, each meeting has its book of invited lectures printed by the local organizers, and, with certain difficulties distributed around the world. Some of them were published by international publishing houses, so they reached the scientific centers much easier.

All the SPIG invited lectures were printed on over twelve thousand pages. For research and postgraduate students in Yugoslavia and we believe also in other countries, these book were valuable textbook as well as sources of information. As a support of this statement is the fact that one can find these books in large number in laboratories around the world. Wherever an experimental and theoretical work in areas included in topics of SPIG meetings, book of invited lectures, as well as books of contributed papers can be found on the bookshelves. Number of pages of the books of contributed papers summed up to 10000.

The complete list of publication related to SPIG activities for first eleven meetings is given in Appendix A.2. in ref [1].

5. Influence of SPIG on international collaboration

As a result of SPIG meetings, in particular the initial ones, several kinds of cooperation have been started. Direct contacts with invited lecturers and later also with foreign participants were extremely fruitful and strongly influenced further development of related fields in science in our country. The atmosphere at the meetings was always relaxed, invited lecturers were extremely friendly and helpful in many ways. In particular, I would like to mention professor John D. Craggs from Department of Electrical Engineering and Electronics University of Liverpool, who was willing to participate a couple of times as a lecturer. He was willing to provide financial support to number of Yugoslavs, mainly younger scientists, to work in his Department as research students. Shorter period of time in some of the Departmental laboratories worked Z.Šternberg from Zagreb, B.Čobić and M.Kurepa from Belgrade. PhD degree have obtained V.Vujnović from Zagreb, J.Labat, N.Konjević, M.Platiša and S.Božin from Belgrade and M.Pavlov from Novi Sad. His warm reception to all of us will never be forgotten. Friendly contacts were established also with other professors and scientists from the Department. Although Prof. Craggs’s relations with us was unique and deserves highest appreciation, there were also other numerous scientists all over the world, that contributed in building up highly trained scientific personnel for our institutes.

Finally I would like to mention just a few scientists from Belgrade that grow up together with SPIG and become very successful leading scientists in various fields of PIG. Eventually they led large groups of younger people introducing them to new problems and organizing research mostly by themselves and sometimes with the help of some leading scientists abroad. SPIG meetings in this way give very fruitful results.

Let it be allowed to me to mention some names that, according to my opinion, contributed most to the prestige of our science in Serbia. Their international collaboration with
the dignified institutions gave numerous results recognized by the world scientific community. These are: Milan Kurepa, Marko Popović, Nikola Konjević, Jagoš Purić, Zoran Petrović and many others.

This is not the end of the SPIG story. It is a continuing story of the efforts and skill of many people, my colleagues and friends that have organized, lectured or at least participated the meetings. I am very happy to know that there are so many youngsters able to continue their efforts and I wish them a lot of energy in successful organization of the next SPIG-s.

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References

[1] M Kurepa and J Labat: “History of SPIG Meetings” in : The Physics of Ionized Gases: Invited Lectures and Progress Reports: Dedicated to the memory of Prof. Milan Kurepa / 20th SPIG, September 4.- September 8. 2000, Zlatibor, Yugoslavia, page 483
Also:
SFIN Year XIV No. A1 (2001)
Editors: N.Konjević, Z.Lj.Petrović and G.Malović

Appendix: Chronology of SPIG meetings

Symposium on Physics of Ionized Gases

I 1962 Beograd B.Perović (B)  
II 1964 Zagreb Z.Šternberg (Z)  

Summer School on Physics of Ionized Gases

1964 Herceg Novi B.Perović(B)  

Summer School and International Symposium on Physics of Ionized Gases

IV 1968 Herceg Novi B.Perović(B) B.PerovićB)  
V 1970 Herceg Novi B.Navinšek(Lj) B.Čobić(B)  
VI 1972 Split M.Kurepa(B) --  
VII 1974 Rovinj V.Vujnović(Z) --  
VIII 1976 Dubrovnik B.Navinšek(Lj) --  
IX 1978 Dubrovnik R.Janev (B) B.Perović(B)  
X 1980 Dubrovnik B.Čobić(B) H.Drawin(France)  
XI 1982 Dubrovnik G.Pichler (Z) B.Aničin(B)  
XII 1986 Šibenik M.M.Popović (B M.M.Popović(B)  
XIII 1986 Šibenik J.Purić(B) M.Kurepa (B  
XIV 1988 Sarajevo L.Tanović(S) N.Konjević(B)  
XV 1990 Dubrovnik D.Veža(Z) I.Terzić(B)  
XVI 1993 Beograd M.Milosavljević(B) Z.Petrović(B)
| Year | Place         | Chairman of the Organizing Committee | Chairman of the Scientific Committee |
|------|---------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| XVII | 1994 Beograd  | B. Marinković (B)                    | Z. Petrović (B)                      |
| XVIII| 1996 Kotor    | B. Vujičić, S. Djurović (NS)         | J. Purić (B)                         |
| XIX  | 1998 Zlatibor | N. Konjević (B)                      | S. Djurović (NS)                     |
| XX   | 2000 Zlatibor | Z. Petrović, N. Bibić (B)           | M. Kuraica (B)                       |
| XXI  | 2002 Soko Banja | M. Radović (N)                     | N. Bibić (B)                         |
| XXII | 2004 Bajina Bašta | Lj. Hadžjevski (B)                     | T. Grozdanov (B)                      |
| XXIII| 2006 Kopaonik | N. Simonović, P. Marinković, T. Grozdanov (B) |
| XXIV | 2008 Novi Sad  | L. Popović, M. Dimitrijević, G. Malović (B) |
| XXV  | 2010 Donji Milanovac | M. Kuraica (B)                     | L. Popović (B)                       |

(B)-Belgrade, (Z)-Zagreb, (N)-Niš, (Lj)-Ljubljana, (S)-Sarajevo, (NS)-Novi Sad. Second column: place of the conference, third column: chairman of the Organizing committee, fourth column: chairman of the Scientific committee.