

SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS AND SUMMARIZATION BEFORE WORLD WAR I

In the historical and sociological analysis of volumes of the National Information Library, edited by Oreszt Szabo and published in 1913, certain characteristics of nation-state paradigm, transformation in culture-centred perspective and various elements of terminology of social sciences are explored. Volumes of the series discuss issues concerning national minorities in Hungary, such as the Rumanians, the Serbs, the Slovaks, the Germans, the Saxons, the Bulgarians and the Krashovans..

Keywords: Hungary, National Information Library, publications, minorities

ISKANJE REŠITEV NA TEMELJU DOGAJANJA PRED PRVO SVETOVNO VOJNO

Zgodovinska in sociološka analiza izdaj Narodne informacijske knjižnice, ki jih je uredil Oreszt Szabo in so izšle l. 1913, obravnava nekatere značilnosti paradigme nacionalne države, spremembe kulturološke perspektive in določene značilnosti terminologije družbenih ved. Obravnavane so tudi narodne manjšine na Madžarskem, npr. Romuni, Srbi, Slovaki, Nemci, Bolgari in Krašovani.

Ključne besede: Madžarska, Narodna informacijska knjižnica, publikacije, manjšine

In 1913, one year before the outbreak of World War I, a series of published books appeared with the title „Ethnic Guide Library», which contained the description of the main ethnicities living in historical Hungary. The series containing seven volumes are almost forgotten nowadays, its authors are not known anymore and the volumes are considered to be book rarities in auctions. Only one of them, which introduces the Slovaks living in Hungary, got to be republished three years ago within the „Upper Hungarian Minerva« series.¹ The Hóman-Szekfű type of historical synthesis² does not mention it at all, while the 10-volume-long *The History of Hungary*,³ which ended up to be a torso, only mentions the series by stating that its volumes »give rich information about the given ethnicities' relations concerning their economy, society, ethnography, policy and culture ...«. (*The History of Hungary* 1978. 7/2. : 1351. The 6th volume, which appeared a year later, only had some word order changes concerning the series. See: *The History of Hungary* 1979. 6/2. : 1680).

But what kind of bibliographical information do we get to know from the volumes mentioned? First of all, we can read that the editor of the series was Oreszt Szabó, who himself wrote a volume on the Ruthenians, and later got to be the minister of Károlyi's and Berinkey's government in Ruszka-Krajna. The examined ethnicities were the following: Ruthenians, Germans and Saxons, Slovaks, or as the era's terminology referred to them, 'Tót' people, Romanians, Bulgarians, and a specific ethnicity considered to be independent, people living in Krassó-Szörény county, known as the 'Krassovans'.

Even at first sight it is obvious that the ethnic cross-section of historical Hungary was far from being complete, thus, for example, it totally lacked the



1 The situation mentioned is well described by the words of Csaba Kiss Gy., who has written that book's epilogue, which has been referred to: »When someone holds this book in his hand, at first he might ask: why they have republished it eighty-seven years after its first publication. Its author is hardly known nowadays...'. / Kiss Gy.: 2000. : 255

2 The work, being referred to, had been written between the two World Wars, lived through several publishings, it is the product of history writing. The authors – Bálint Hóman and Gyula Szekfű – were outstanding historians of the era as well. The exact title of the piece they had written together is »Magyar történet (Hungarian Story)«, the fullest edition of which was its second one, which appeared in 1935-36, in five volumes. This edition was the basis for the publication of the copy of 1990, the epilogue of which was written by Ferenc Glatz (Dénes: 2001. : 266). Their other shared feature, apart from history writing, is that they both had serious influence in public life. Bálint Hóman, for example, had been the Minister of Religion and that of Education for ten years from 1935 (Bölöny: 1975. : 188). About Szekfű his great opponent, the well-known belletrist and publicist, namely László Németh has the following observation: »He did not form any parties – or undertake ministerial office, we can still firmly state, however, that he was the most outstanding politician of the last twenty years« (Németh: 1992. : 987).

3 The first volume of this synthesis-attempt appeared in 1978, but it basically never got finished.

mentioning of the Croatians living in Hungary – contradicting the approach of the era. The reason of this absence is not easy to understand, since none of the published volumes contain any reference to it. Our surprise concerning this can only grow further when we establish that even those ethnic minorities got to have a whole volume devoted to them like the Bulgarians and Krassovans, who didn't even reach a population of 25 000 (!) altogether. (According to Géza Czirbusz the latter ones were neither Croatians, nor Serbians, »but rather a separately developed Romanian-Bulgarian mixture, which speaks the Serbian dialect«. See Czirbusz G.: 1913. VII/2. : 114). The deficiency discussed is not even referred to by Gyula Miskolczy, who had publication about the »Croatian-issue« not more than one and a half decades after the series' appearance, even though in the epilogue of his work he expressis verbis states that for a long time he had not seen any resemblance between the »attitude« of the Serbians and that of the Croatians.⁴

In spite of all its insufficiencies this was the first expedient attempt, which even though not in a comprehensive way, but still gave a lot more detailed description of some ethnic minorities than the attempts of earlier times. Most of the volumes' authors could rely on their previously published researches concerning their topics. Adolf Pechány, dealing with Slovaks, had already had a publication in a similar subject, for example, in the volume dealing with Upper Hungary in the monumental series entitled »The Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy in Writings and Pictures« edited by archduke Joseph, and Géza Czirbusz, the author examining the German and Bulgarian ethnicities in Hungary, also had had his concept of the Krassovans having an independent ethnic feature published before. The name that had the most publications and thus, the one which is the most known is, no doubt, that of Gergely Moldován, studying the Romanians in living in Hungary and in the region between the Carpathians and the river Danube, who already had had a two-volume book on Romanians published in 1895.

It is worth paying separate attention to the editorial intentions aiming the series' publication. In the epilogue, dedicated to the »Merciful Lord«, that is to count István Tisza, Oreszt Szabó tells that still »a lot of issues did not find a stable point«, which would result in the »mutual understanding and peace« of the country's ethnically multicoloured population. According to him, one of these issues would be the introduction of »every« ethnicity's' »all things« with the cooperation of all



4 »It seemed to be a quite tempting aim, to – the South Slavic state, as being influenced by actuality – see my task as to unanimously reveal the South Slavic ambitions. In this case, the Croatian and the Serb problem would have won illumination as a unified issue. However pleasing this solution seemed like, I had to reject it. I had to, first of all, because for long decades, there has not been, so to say, any relation between the Serbian and the Croatian attitude, when, by the way, the omens of the ethnic war were dangerously appearing«. See: Miskolczy: 1927. : 1

who are concerned. He, however, wishes to perform this task from a point of view concerning the »Hungarian national interests«.⁵

Although one single person edited the series discussed, we cannot really state that there are consistently unified constructional principles governing its volumes. Even though issues such as to estimate the population of each and every ethnicity, with the help of data provided by the national census in 1910, or the examination of the specific ethnic identities based on historical, ethnographic and the cultural elements are very important, the system of criteria aiming a complex introduction and comparison of the ethnicities is fragmented. This explains how it is possible that while one volume contains 10–11 chapters, another one, with more or less the same length, can even have more than twice as many. The lack of a unified system of guidelines is most sensible in the volume of Gergely Moldován. Since Moldován presents the Romanians living in Hungary mainly from an ethnographical aspect – more than half of all the 24 chapters are this sort – and the ethnographical theme is rather aiming to convey superstitions of different natures. (The thematic disproportion, or one-sidedness in some parts is quite visible since Moldován's book is the lengthiest in the series, being about twice as long as most of the other volumes. In addition, as it has already been mentioned, due to his literary work he was the most well known researcher among the authors of the series, and based on his former, mainly politically inspired works being published, his reading audience had all the rights to expect a synthesis about the Romanians having a much wider spectrum.)

Nonetheless, even if uniformity cannot, similarity can be sensed among several fields of the authors' attitudes.

1) Most importantly, we can establish that they truly wrote about every single ethnic group by maximally considering the Hungarian national interests as their priorities, as the editor had also promised. None of the cases contain even the slightest hint about even timid forms of autonomy. The Romanians and Serbians living in Hungary at that time, even though their mother country is Hungary's neighbour, do not want political autonomy – at least according to



5 » Even in the fifth year of the reconstruction of our county's constitution, a lot of issues did not find a stable point, which would result in the county's different raced population's mutual understanding and peace. Thus, apart from all the others, under the title of ethnic issue, in almost all the branches of our public life, a problem is constantly on the agenda, which, according to the public opinion, is still waiting to be solved, and needs the work of all common aspects concerned. It is the Ethnic Guide Library's aim and duty to cooperate in solving the ethnic issue by setting forth every ethnicity, with all its things, living in the country, such as loyal and cherished brotherhood, or even those feelings, which might lack friendly feelings, distrust, and in all cases, keeping in mind the shared aim: introducing all from the point of view of Hungarian national interests«. (See: Szabó: 1913. : 5)

the authors of the books dealing with them.⁶ Based on his former publications of political nature, no one thought Gergely Moldován would write about militant separatist ambitions, since in his two-volume work dealing with the Romanians – that has already been referred to – published in 1895, the author says the following about activities of the »mother country's« politicians at that time: »To puzzle and to deceive the public opinion by all means, that was the aim. In Europe's media they artificially sustained the views about our conditions with wiles, the intolerance of which was easy to reveal. And on top of all, with the bribing of Romanian fighters the adventurous politicians of the Romanian state intermingled with our home affairs« (Moldován: 1895. II. : 391). Later in his work, which has already been referred to, with general scope he states the following about the ethnic groups living in Hungary: »Some of the ethnicities in our country from the time of the founding of the state, some from later times onwards, have benefited from the protection and the good deeds of the Hungarian national state, and could also maintain their own religion, languages and morals as well as improve subcultures. What would happen to them in case of a disintegration?« (Moldován: 1895. II. : 439). Published as being a part of the series, Moldován hits a lot more restrained tone in his volume, still the ambitions referring to autonomy do not even emerge in his work. He makes it clear in the epilogue of his book that with his work his aim is to strengthen mutual understanding and appreciation, »... and to have the good brotherly relation, that touches the common love for the country so deeply, become permanent« (Moldován: 1913. : 4). He totally rejects the concept of the Daco-Romanian continuity, which also bares a strong political importance, and going further, he even charges some of its followers with the falsification of history. Instead, he is looking for the ancient traces of the Romanian nation in the Balkan. He puts it forward as a fact that the »... majority of the Romanian nation ... has accepted the constitution of 1867, and knows no means of negotiations about it« (Moldován: 1913. : 76). And while writing about the »the brotherhood between the Czechs and the Slovaks« in one of the chapters of his book (Pechány: 2000. : 185), Adolf Pechány concludes his work with the idea that the Slovakian people should »... be made as useful members of the Hungarian nation as possible. It is our interest as well as our patriotic obligation to keep the Slovaks in and for the Hungarian homeland« (Pechány: 2000. : 251).⁷ By knowing the consequences, it even seems



6 As a conclusion, Jüga Velimir wrote the following about the Serbian political ambitions: »The separate events that took place in the Balkan changed nothing on the loyalty towards the Hungarian state, and all have given up on those, who have wandered off from separate political areas, instead, some parties use their strength to flourish the economic and cultural life, in order to make the affection and love for the country grow.« (Jüga. 1913. : 288)

7 The full text is the following: » I wish that my work will strengthen the thought in all readers, that these people living under such poor conditions are worthy of the Hungarian intelligentsia's firm support, worthy of raising their intelligentsia by dealing with their moral and material shares much more, they are worthy of

comic that Géza Czirbusz finds it important to highlight the loyalty towards the Hungarian state in the case of the ethnic Germans living in Southern-Hungary. So, according to him, the ethnic Germans are not people »who are aiming outwards«. He even supports his statement with a remark having the tone of ethnic characterology. »He, who thinks of the ethnic Germans as having a sort of rebellious Sicilian blood, or thinks of them that: it is easy to make them do all sorts of follies, does not know their real character.« (Czirbusz: 1913. II/1. : 3).⁸

It is quite impossible for us to doubt, of course, that works containing occasional needs for autonomy, at least as being volumes of the series, could never have been published. We can establish that the volumes discussed have never crossed the borders of the national state's paradigm. This approach, however, did not originate from some sort of obliged self-restriction, but rather from inner conviction. As 'pars pro toto' we can consider Csaba Kiss Gy.'s findings about Adolf Pechány as being valid for all the other authors as well. »Of course he well knew the fact that the members of this nation speak different languages, but his prime focus was the loyalty towards the country and the common history. (Kiss Gy.: 2000. : 258). The feature of referring back to the shared historical past is truly the building block of the all the volumes, of which, perhaps, the most interesting piece is the subchapter entitled »Lajos Kossuth in the Hungarian-Russian folk-poetry«. (Consult concerning this topic: Szabó: 1913. : 101-109.) Our authors had therefore positioned themselves, in the spirit of 'aurea mediocritas', in a well-balanced place in-between home ambitions, wanting total assimilation, and the other side: the pan Slavic–pan German–Great Romanian orientated ones. That is the reason why they thought, that with the help of demonstrating the data gathered about the ethnicities they can at least reduce the number of preconceptions, or using the term of the times, the »delusions«, »misconceptions« (See: Czirbusz: 1913. II/1. : 3) about them.

2) Even though the authors, referred to, do not bring up needs for autonomy, they do mention the ones who had left Hungary. This is the phenomenon known as emigration, which is not pointed out in each ethnic minority's case. But even the cases of those ethnicities, whose members had emigrated, the authors jud-

having their material strength enhanced, and be made as useful members of the Hungarian nation as possible.« (From the same source.)

8 The full text is the following: »Thus, everyone clearly understands the fact, that the great taxing and producing strength of the Southern states are due to the German diligence, stamina and moderateness, still it is quite insulting when these phlegmatic people, steadfast in their loyalty and worthy of trust beyond doubt, are portrayed as if being totally discontented with home affairs, who are aiming outwards and even as being suitable for achieving foreign political ambitions. He, who thinks of the ethnic Germans as having a sort of rebellious Sicilian blood, or thinks of them that: it is easy to make them do all sorts of follies, does not know their real character.« (See, the work : 3)

ged in quite different ways. Thus, for example, Emil Neugeboren, who provided information about Saxons living in Transylvania, on one hand, does not have one separate chapter, or not even a subheading concerning this issue, and on the other, does not consider emigration being unambiguously positive, or negative. Although he does label the phenomenon discussed as being a problem in the »metabolism of the Saxon minority's body« (Neugeboren: 1913. : 37), and the reason why he considers the decrease of their population caused by emigration as being large-scale and thus being a »serious trouble« is because the estimated number of those Saxons who emigrated, mainly to America, is around 20 000, and this number is way too high if we compare it with the total number of Saxons living in Transylvania (being 228 000). According to Neugeboren, more than half of those who left are actually permanent emigrants and not temporary ones. (During the course of three years – from 1906 until 1908 – 10 364 people had emigrated, while only 4677 of them returned. See Neugeboren: 1913. : 39.) Still, he enumerates the positive effects emigration as well. With the money they saved, those who do come back, bring »new life« to economy. But saving money is not the only deed that brings »new life« to economy, since those who return, »often have fresh entrepreneurial spirit and new willpower« in them. He also states it as an unquestionable fact, that »American money has raised whole villages on a higher economic level« (e.g. building of houses) (Neugeboren: 1913. : 38). Three types and directions of emigration are mentioned. Regarding the first type, he states that it is mainly directed towards America (6063 people), in a smaller proportion towards Germany (1472 people), but emigration towards Romania has a similar proportion too (1330 people), a phenomenon – which may seem surprising today – he does not provide an explanation to. As for the types of emigration, it is mainly Saxon husbandmen who leave their homes, and just secondarily merchants and strata of industry, even though the number of the latter has been increasing. As a third type, Neugeboren mentions those members of the youth, who attend universities in Germany or Austria, and after they have finished their studies »... instead of dedicating their mental gifts to their people and their country, they stay abroad, where, with the help of their suitability and inherited conscientiousness as well as their precision, they become doctors, lawyers, teachers of grammar schools and universities, architects, engineers and generally attain other highly respectable professions, which require academic qualification« (Neugeboren: 1913. : 40). Thus, this permanent effluence of the Saxon intelligentsia makes the author feel sorry, and according to him, the rate of this emigration is so significant that similar professions in Transylvania have to be attained by foreigners. Changes in this issue could only be made, says Neugeboren, if the talented youth of the country could be convinced to choose industrial or commercial fields of professions instead of »academic carriers«.

Although only in a tangential way, still Győző Bruckner does discuss the issue of emigration in his work dealing with Saxons living in Szepes. He concludes, that the decline of mining paralleled with the increase of the number of those immigrating to America. According to him, the economic reason for this was that the mines of Szepes could not keep up with the »extremely rich« copper, iron and silver mines of America. Bruckner says that the rate of emigration was so high, that the Saxon population living in the valley of the river Gölnic had reduced around to its half (Bruckner: 1913. : 78). However, he did not mention other directions of emigration.

The series gave differently judged images on the emigrating tendencies of the Slovaks and the Ruthenians, two ethnicities being economically underdeveloped, but rich in natural beauties. Pechány devotes a whole chapter on the Slovaks immigrating to America. The main attractive force was the hope of making an easier living, and perhaps the wish to get rid of accumulated debts. The will to leave could not even get reduced by the possible problems being experienced abroad, thus some turned three times and got 'across the ocean' again. Men were mainly employed in mines while women worked in textile factories or as servants. Luckier Slovakian men got to do easier work in the industry, while only few could achieve retailer existence (shambles, restaurant, grocery). Pechány is on the opinion that those Slovaks who emigrated retained their religiousness, have churches built and they choose their own priests, even if to them, these priests are speakers of a foreign language.

The author enumerates all the Slovak cultural associations founded in America, as well as all the calendars and newspapers being published there, with great accuracy. From the image provided we can infer a virulent communal life, in which, courses of different targets, thus, of course, English language courses get to have very important roles. Accordingly Pechány knows about 148 (!) existing Slovakian associations only in Pennsylvania, while the »Slovak Catholics« have 120 churches and 100 »priests« of their own. Most of the kids attend English-speaking schools and a lot of them have already forgot their own mother tongue.

It was in 1893 that the »Slovak associations« in America brought themselves to make steps towards establishing larger systematic integration. Namely, at the meeting held in Chicago, the plan of founding the »Slovak League« was brought up. The basic aim was to set up a board that would support all national movements in Hungary, and »... would reward those Slovak students with scholarships, who provide the hope of having leading roles in the policy of the ethnic minorities in the future« (Pechány: 2000. : 168). Pechány, on the other hand, cannot write about the consequences in a positive tone. Right after the founding of the League »... exploitation started«. With all sorts of tricks some of the leaders tried to cheat their devotees out of their moneys, by not really having national ambitions with them,

but this effort of the leaders only succeeded partly. A similar situation emerged in the case of the association of the Slovaks as well. Since the association had also dealt with insurance, insurance premiums thus gathered had become the basis of »financial transactions« for the association's president as well as for his fellow-president, which means, »... they were profiteering with the Slovak emigrants' money« (Pechány: 2000. : 169). The graspable result of the 'profiteering' had been classified by law as embezzlement »... which fairly destroyed all the Slovak leaders in America« (From the same source). But it was not less worse for the Rovnianek-type of bank, also founded in America, which went bankrupt. (The Rovnianek mentioned here, was actually one of the »subjects« of the embezzlement that has been referred to, about whom Pechány further adds, »... after the all his successful profiteering, he is now living somewhere, away from the world, conveniently«). (From the same source.) Mentioning others in this 'economic panorama', he sets it forward that »they often quarrelled over the fine spoils« (Pechány: 2000. : 170).

Most probably the above-mentioned negative factors also had a big impact on forming Pechány's opinions about emigration – to put in euphemistically – ambivalent. When listing the positive effects, he mentions the Slovak »villages getting neater«, the increasing number of public and private buildings, the acquisition of the assiduous work ethic and a more practical way of thinking. But, according to him, the number of drawbacks is not trifling either. It has a negative effect on the growth of Upper Hungary's population, and Pechány draws a connection between emigration and the increasing number of »illegitimate« children, which phenomenon, in his opinion, is harmful to morals. The returning emigrants bring in the social democratic conception as well as ethnic fanaticism – which Pechány often criticized in his other works, too – along with a kind of »false pride«. But in an overall, emigration does not have a positive effect on Upper Hungary's economy either, i. e. the draining effect succeeds in the case of paid work (field worker, house servant) so strongly, in his opinion, that the lack of labour force caused by it also has an impact on the decreasing number of medium-sized estates.

As a summary, we can conclude that the way Pechány sees it, the disadvantages of emigration are much heavier than its advantages. It is quite interesting, however, that the information provided on the topic dedicates a whole chapter on the issue, and through its data the author wishes to give an exact picture about the Slovaks who emigrated, he still does not dare to estimate the number of those who are living 'across the ocean'.

Through the work of Oreszt Szabó we get to have a quite different image of the Ruthenians who have immigrated to America. Although not in a separate chapter, still Szabó deals with the issue of the emigration of the Ruthenians in an independent subheading. He estimates that its direction is primarily the USA but some Ruthenians can even be found in Argentina. In this case as well, the main

cause of immigration is poverty. There is a lack of »sources of income«, and there is not much land and pasture. But the author also mentions another cause, in which, unfortunately, he does not go to details: i.e., that those in need »... have not received economic social education from their leaders who are authorized to it« (Szabó: 1913. : 247). In an overall, the author considers the effects of emigration as being obviously positive. He mentions the material growth on the first place. On the money they have saved, the emigrated buy lands at home, but according to Szabó – due to the system of dividing into lots – they 'overpay' the value of the agricultural land. The other important factor of the growth is to do with the improvement of living conditions: building a new house, 'decent' clothing. The worldview of those who are affected changes under the influence of emigration, and these people also get to break away from their 'isolated situation'. First of all, they learn to read, and they become self-conscious people. (Szabó mentions that the Ruthenians learn to read quicker than the Hungarian workers). A special factor also helps to raise the emigrated people's level of education, namely the »pub prohibition on Sundays«, since many of them learn to write during this period. As an advantage, the author also mentions the effervescent communal (associative) life, the trace of which – unfortunately – cannot be seen at home. But this »socially valuable feature« should be espoused at home as well, since the sense of belonging together should not only be present abroad! The other important side effect of the new worldview's development is experiencing the American »grand freedom«. Since the emigrated »enjoy« that in America »... everybody is equal even in communication, they have to pay less tax and they don't have to do their military service« (Szabó: 1913. : 249).

The emigration of the Ruthenians had disadvantages as well, but Szabó only picks one of them, namely the »loosening of the firm moral approach« (From the same source), as a typical example of which, he refers to the decline of »martial fidelity«. It is important to emphasize, that unlike for example Pechány, Szabó does not know about any financial scandals that would have concerned the ones who emigrated, and he is not anxious about what influence the overseas capitalism might have on the »firm« Ruthenian morals either.

He does, on the other hand, discuss a few phenomena – which can at least be judged ambivalently – in detail, that are related to the Ruthenian existence and identity. One is of religious history. A significant portion of the Ruthenians had converted from the orthodox faith to Greek Catholicism, but most of them got under the influence of »the schismatic temptation of the Russian orthodox propaganda« in America. Szabó considers these outcomes as being definitely harmful, and connects them with the pan Slavic propaganda (Szabó: 1913. pp 233–235). He condemns the American pan Slavism, because it has a »thrilling« effect on the emigrated Ruthenians. The so-called ukrainism had a similar effect as well; the aim of the tendency was the founding of an independent Ukrainian state. He strongly

criticizes both ambitions and emphasizes that the Ruthenians' »...racial feature and their ecclesiastical relations should be protected, and, if possible, isolated from foreign influences...«, since the Ruthenian people's »... prosperousness aimed at all directions ...« can only »... be found within ancient home bounds ...« (Szabó: 1913. : 260). However strongly may the author criticize the effects mentioned, he does not try to hide the fact that the emigrated got to develop their ethnic identity in America, and in this process the »Russian orthodox propaganda« as well as pan Slavism, or ukrainism had their own decisive roles. »The Russian people coming from Hungary, as a matter of fact, only got to realize their specific national feature ... when being in America, since at home they do not consider themselves more than Russian or Ruthenian speaking Hungarian citizens, who never thought of the need to be recognised as a separate ethnicity within the borders of the country. Those Russians who immigrated to America return to Hungary with a distinct ethnic self-conscience« (Szabó: 1913. : 251). Knowing this, we cannot be surprised at Szabó's conclusion: »the solution of most of the 'Ruthenian issues' will start in America and finish here, at home« (Szabó: 1913. : 250).

3) Another important common feature is *the alternation of the culture-centric approach*. Since the descriptive lines of the 19th century were mainly concerned with the cultural aspects when examining the ethnicities living in the country. The series broke with this approach, and to the cultural elements, it also added some »tough themes« such as demographic features, economic and social issues as well as political institutional ambitions. The other point that we can consider as belonging to the above mentioned set is the application of »anthropological« descriptions, which were highly fashionable those days. These descriptions provide information on the main features of the »given race« with their own biology-natured argumentation (shape of the skull, features of the face, stature etc.). The approach discussed should not be considered as being anthropological in the word's present sense, since after enumerating the biological features mentioned, our authors immediately switch to discuss those cultural elements that are characteristic of the »race«, and thus to characterizing a sort of »culture race«. (A very typical piece of this approach is, for example, one of the books of Ottó Herman, entitled »The Face and the Character of the Hungarian People«. It expresses the features of this approach with aphoristic conciseness).

Nonetheless, the respect of facts is a strong feature of the series' volumes. Even the emphasis on the data during the course of the historical narrative allows us to conclude this, and statistics of different foci - such as educational, economic, ecclesiastical etc. - further stress the importance of an empirical approach. The social-statistic view is not the only one, which is present in the volumes, since some contain a kind of - so to say - 'sociologistic' approach and concept-usage. Even though it would be an exaggeration to talk about a kind of conceptional frame relating the depiction of ethnic conditions, still, in some writings we can

find expressions like »social sense« (Czirbusz: 1913. II/1. : 14), »community structure« (See: Czirbusz: 1913. II/1. : 93), »homestead farming« (See: Czirbusz: 1913. II/1. : 82), »social class« (See: Neugeboren: 1913. : 36), »middle-class« (Neugeboren: 1913. : 36), »social interaction« (See: Bruckner: 1913. : 62), »social life« (See: Bruckner: 1913. : 65), »corporational spirit« (See: Bruckner: 1913. : 65) and »enterprising spirit« (See: Bruckner: 1913. : 70). Through the usage of the above mentioned notions it is striking that they only accrue in contexts dealing with the Germans and the Saxons living in Hungary, even though the same author – Géza Czirbusz – writes about the Bulgarians and the 'Krassovans' as well. The absence of the 'sociologistic' approach is the most upsetting in the case of that author whose volume is the lengthiest, namely Gergely Moldován, dealing with the description of the Romanians living in Hungary. The factual approach of Adolf Pechány, writing about Slovaks, cannot be doubted; still it does not lead to the notion usage of social science of the era. From this aspect, Velimir Juga's book, dealing with Serbians, is quite close to that of Adolf Pechány, while the book of Oreszt Szabó, who – as even he himself admitted – just gathered all literature concerning the Ruthenians living in Hungary, and has not done any further research of his own, is rather closer to the Moldován type of approach.

4.) Even by using the notion of 'culture race', and not less because of the captions quoted above, the issue of '*ethnic characteristicology*' can be brought up for discussion, since, as a matter of fact, such collective spiritual attitudes and features will be dealt with, which characterize – at least according to their authors – the given ethnicity. It is not hard to admit, that however tempting it would be to consider either the 'partial' or the 'full' description of any given ethnicity's mentality as having an ethnic characteristicologic nature, that would still not be acceptable, even though the statements concerning these collective spiritual attitudes cannot simply be put into the category of common stereotypes or that of prejudices either. This everyday level is, by all means, surpassed by a complex, ideal-typical characterization of an ethnicity's 'trait'. A further important addition can be, for the scientific approach of that era to succeed, that the 'mental features' never stood alone within these analyses, but rather *in addition to* the anthropological ones. This motif also separates the already mentioned approach of our series from the sphere of 'common stereotypes' as well as from those ethnic characteristicologic concepts, which consider the 'spirit of ethnic togetherness' as a separate category. Thus, from this aspect, the volumes of our series must be somewhere 'in-between' the previously mentioned two stages.

We can also give examples to illustrate this statement of ours. Pechány writes the following about the Slovak people: »Their poor material conditions and the hard life struggle filled their souls with a kind of melancholy, this melancholic feature is more sensible in the case of men, than in that of the women« (Pechány: 2000. : 29). »Most probably no other race has such developed sense of *together-*

ness like the Romanian« – states Moldován (Moldován: 1913. p22). The Serbians »are truly found of personal freedom, their battles with the Turkish, which went on for centuries proves it the best« – says Velimir Juga (Juga: 1913. : 43). As for the Ruthenians »since they did not have any connection with the outside world, they had no desires or wishes at all, and thus had no feeling of longing for development up to the present« (Szabó: 1913. : 21). We were already informed that the South Hungarian Germans are not people who have a Sicilian temperament, or who are 'day-dreamers', Czirbusz concludes his sequence of ideas with the following proverb-like statement: »They are assiduous when it comes to ploughshare, unfaltering and brave when it comes to armament« (Czirbusz: 1913. II/1. : 3). Even in the case of the not more than 15 000 Bulgarians living Temes and Torontál counties, there is an entry referring to a collective mental feature: »The Bulgarian is not upset if he fails in his business, he starts an other one« (Czirbusz: 1913. VII/1. : 51).

Thus, we can easily observe, that the statements above are usually formulated within a given historical context; they are interpreted in a causal relation. As such, they surpass the approach of all the concrete as well as individual kinds of 'everyday stereotypes' and sayings by far, when considering the stiffness of their argumentation and the level of their abstraction. We can consider this statement as being valid, even if there are much less dark toned accounts – which observable fact is quite understandable – in the descriptions of their 'own' ethnicities. The admitted aim of the publication, as we have read, was to have the ethnicities » become acquainted with each other« as well as to invoke »friendly feelings«, which all, instead of a critical attitude, rather needed a sequence of ideas, which makes it possible to envisage the life of ethnicities in a familiar and intimate way. Knowing this, we probably cannot be surprised if, when dealing with those ethnicities, in the case of which the characteristic ethnic features such as »men creating with great care« or the »creative development« are less graspable – these were the Ruthenians and the Slovaks –, they wish to substitute these motifs with the »beauty of the landscape«, as if, with the help of this, we get to envisage a sort of »culture-landscape«. At this point it is also added, that the aspect of self-definition only gets to be formulated in quite specific contexts. When, for example, Czirbusz can no longer give further scientific points to the individual ethnicity of the Krassovans, he says, that »... the other reason why I state that they are a separate ethnicity is, because they say the following about themselves: »We are Krassovans ...« (Czirbusz: VIII/2. 1913. : 121).

Numerous other questions could be examined, which would be interesting from a sociological side as well, such as the aspects of social stratification. From these themes it can also be concluded, that these works truly got written with a kind of need to summarize. Nonetheless, it is well known that the *summarization*, which answers the question »what ethnicity do you consider yourself to belong

to?» and can nowadays be regarded evident, was also the last summing-up as well, since World War I and its consequences have swept away the world these books have shown us. The hopes of winding up prejudices, invoking better understanding and mutual confidence all got destroyed on the battlefields and on the tables of negotiations. The forced peaces that replaced the negotiated peaces – just to quote Bibó (Bibó: 1986. I. : 440) – have created a Europe *of such kind*, that could not have been imagined by the *common sense* of these authors or of any other mortal. These dictates were, as Bibó says, the dragon-bites of the peace-system of Versailles. And as mementos, they warn us, that we cannot expect any good from the cooperation of political climbers and nightmarish world-saviours!

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