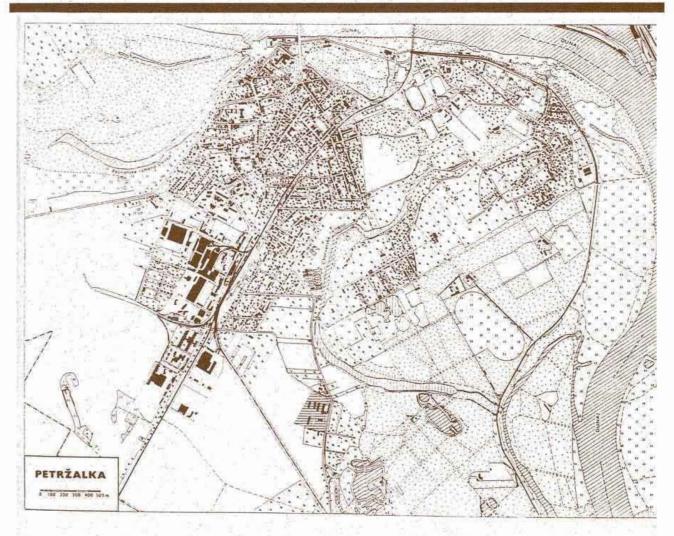
SLOVENSKÝ NÁRODOPIS



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L. FALŤANOVÁ: Profesná dráha živnostníkov a znárodňovacie procesy.

I. BOGOCZOVÁ: K typologii pohádkových názvů.

A. KADLECOVÁ: The Ethnic Pluralism of a Small Farming Town in the First

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D. ŠIMKO – J. MLÁDEK: Petržalka – životné prostredie a jeho humanizácia.

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THE ETHNIC PLURALISM OF A SMALL FARMING TOWN IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY AND TODAY (Case study of the Slovak minority in Southern Hungary)

ANDREA KADLECOVÁ

Institute of Ethnology, Bratislava

The presence of different ethnic groups in one whole can create differently modelled situations of mutual communication between the individual groups. These influence the ethnic development of communities and are able to contribute towards different modifications of ethnic processes. We have therefore decided to speak about the phenomenon of ethnic pluralism under which we understand the presence of different ethnic groups living and modified outwardedly by being one of the integrated whole. These groups are signified by ethnic characteristics which serve in differentiating one group from another.

Individual ethnic pluralism includes in itself further forms or sub-categories, like linguistic, religious, social or societal pluralism. It is not clear, however, when, where, and how some of the mentioned pluralism of the ethnic phenomena will be made manifest and if one of these pluralisms will carry ethnic characteristics (or "emotional ethnic baggage").

The mutual presence of different ethnic groups probably, even in the effort to preserve their independent internal development, are not avoiding the mutual meeting and the possible formulating the social communication space of the entire participating whole "of a certain integrated system above the level of ethnicity".

In such a limited space, we can consider the ethnic processes which appear in various transformations and modifications, as for example, acculturation, integration or assimilation. Which of these modifications wins out? It may be that of language, cultural or ethnic adaptability by one ethnic group to another, or of all groups mutually, or of more ethnic groups to the one dominant group, for example, in being possibly the most developed, or perhaps the most agressive. It depends upon interior factors of given ethnic communities, and also outwardly on factors of the integrated whole on the local level, as well as on the whole societal-political system.

Ethnic pluralism as a phenomenon therefore grants wide possibilities for the study of relationships of tolerance and intolerance in a given environment, or in relationships of separation. Oppositely, it can be seen in the cultural or ethnic relationships being adapted, creating an integrated functional model for all the participating whole. Ethnic pluralism grants the possibilities to follow the interior principle of the functioning of the independent, ethnic whole. The process of ethno-identification of its individual members is also made possible, narrowly connected with ethnocentrism as are also individual modifications on the level of ethnic processes. Consequently, this interupts the area of

ethnic consciousness of the national members of such ethnically pluralistic communities. Of course, it is necessary to see all of these in the concrete time-space relationship.

I will try to demonstrate this variety of indicated problems using an ethnically pluralistic communities – an agrarian town in Southern Hungary, Mezőberény/Poľný Berinčok with Slovak, Hungarian and German inhabitants.

*

The village Mezőberény as it is known in Magyar or Poľný Berinčok, as it is known in Slovak, is farming town in Hungary located in the Dolná zem region in the southern part of the Greater Hungarian Lower Plain. It has only been recognized as a town with full legal rights since 1989, but, through the first half of the century, the inhabitants of Poľný Berinčok had referred to their village as a "varos", that is a "town". This fact is confirmed by many urban features recognizable in the way of life of the town, features discovered during my field research. Among these were:

- the fact that fairs were held four times a year, (the right to hold fair had been granted to Poľný Berinčok in 1872);
 - the local dress had some urban features;
- a flourishing social life, with many clubs formed according to ethnic, professional and social background of their members;
- a very rich cultural life with many balls, performances of amateur theatricals and the promenade tradition (Sunday walks in the centre of the town);
- the people's habit of spending leisure time in a nearby spa (particularly women with children) which was quite unusual for folk people at that time;
- the fact that spinning houses, typical for an average farming village, disappeared as early as 1930. In 1926 there had been 14 spinning houses in Poľný Berinčok in the season, whereas by 1927 there was but one.

The agrarian towns in the Dolná zem area were characterized by economic independence with intensive market and trade contacts with other towns. Another characteristic was their social-administrative autonomy as well as the highly developed social structure of the inhabitants (farmers, small-scale peasants, craftsmen, physicians, teachers, priests and clerks). Despite the fact that these towns were influenced by the new complex of the urban features we have mentioned above, they still preserved the residential character of the village with broad tracts of farmland around villages and within them called "sálaš"-farms. (Divičanová, 1987).

Slovaks were most likely settled in the northern part of Poľný Berinčok as early as 1723.² They came there predominantly from various regions (such as – Pest, Novohrad, Orava, Zvolen, Gemer, Turiec) of Upper Hungary (Felvidék) and from other areas as well. Coming from Baden and Würtemberg the Germans came in 1725 and settled in the middle of the village, the part of the village even today still called "Švábi" from "Schwabian". In 1731 the Magyars came and occupied the southern part of Poľný Berinčok.³ (Jeszenszky, 1861).

For the purpose of peaceful relations the people were settled in individual areas of the town according to ethnic citizenship as well as to the property that was alloted to them in the different parts of the village lands (Borgula – Švihran, 1979).

The three above mentioned residential zones, the town division into a Slovak, a German and a Hungarian sectionparts are still perceived at present by the inhabitants, despite the fact that, after the Second World War, many dramatic changes in the ethnic and residential homogeneity of each zone have arisen. It has been caused by the enormous in-

crease in number of ethnically mixed marriages. This, in turn, had led to the mixing of the inhabitants living in the formerly strictly homogeneous ethnic zones. Another cause of the situation has been the purchase of houses in residential areas regardless of ethnic division. In many cases, these houses were situated in part of German zone. This was because the majority of the younger generation of Germans was deported as forced labour to the USSR after the Second World War. Meanwhile, other members of their families were deported to Germany. Only a few of them have remained in the village.

Each ethnic community had its own church. The Slovaks built the present Lutheran church for themselves in 1797, but the first church they shared with Lutheran Germans. The Germans built their own church as early as 1789. The majority of the Magyar population have been of the Calvinist persuasion having their own church. The Catholic church in Mezőberény is attended mainly by the Magyar repatriants who came from Slovakia after 1945.⁴

Generally speaking, the wealthiest ethnic group had been Germans, then came Slovaks, whereas Magyars were usually the poorest. This categorization is still present in the mind of the inhabitants. This economic division was considered to be one of the main differentiating factors of the town's ethnic groups.⁵

In 1930, statistics had shown there were 14410 inhabitants in Mezőberény/ Poľný Berinčok of which 3,809 were Slovaks, while in 1991 there were 12,000 inhabitants, includ-

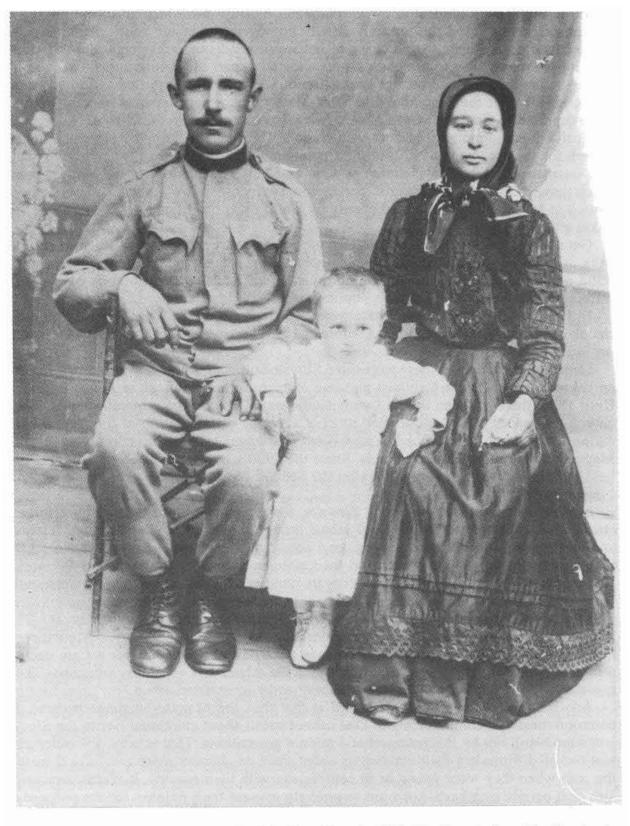
ing 1,500 Slovaks.

Concerning education, there were three Slovak Lutheran schools, two German Lutheran schools, two Magyar Calvinist and one Roman Catholic school in Poľný Berinčok. Until 1836, there had also been a Latin "Gymnasium" (secondary general school). These church influenced schools continued to exist after the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the Second World War. The languages of instruction were Slovak, Magyar and German at these schools. Since the 1930's lessons have been predominantly held in the Magyar language, while after the Second World War they were exclusively in Magyar.

During my field research among Slovaks, I was continually being met by efforts to stress the equality of each of the three ethnic groups as well as the good mutual relations among the town inhabitants in the past and nowadays. However, I could feel some hesitation when the inhabitants expressed their opinion about their relationship to another ethnic group (particularly as far as Magyars concerned). The Slovak inhabitants spoke more frequently about the Germans than about the Magyars. This was because Slovak farmers were in close contact more often with German farmers than with Magyar. This hesitation mentioned above may be explained by the fact that the Magyar population is now in the majority and that most marriages are ethnically mixed. Thus we are dealing with a situation in which we can speak about the ethnic mix of family relations. There is virtually no family without at least one Magyar being married into it.

Another important fact to be stressed is that thus the Magyar language became the common means of communication. One cannot speak about emotional ties to the Slovak language being felt by the youngest and middle generations. That is why, the older generations also formulate their statements about their neighbours more carefully than was the case when they were young or in comparison with their parents. It seems very probable that people simply do not want to publicly express their opinion for the purpose of preserving peaceful relations with their village neighbours.

We cannot forget to take into account the fact that the more than 260 years-long-coexistence of three ethnic groups in Polný Berinčok obviously had a great impact on the



Holiday dress of married woman and soldier's uniform in 1914. The Slovaks from Mezőberény/ Poľný Berinčok in Hungary. All the photographs reproduced by Helena Bakaljarová.



Holiday dress of a Slovak woman with child. Beginning of the 20th century, Mezőberény.



Slovak farmers' couple in 1915. Mezőberény.



Holiday girls' dress in Mezőberény, 1920. Slovak girl (in centre) with two Šváb girls.

culture as well as on mutual relations. We must stress that those relations were extremely tolerant. Slovak inhabitants did not remember any ethnic squirmishes which left traces in their memories.

On the one hand, we can speak about mutually tolerant relations, but on the other we should not forget the mutual antipathy as well as negative stereotypes which were created within the contacts between different groups. The same applies for religious, ethnic and social differentiation which is closely connected with ethnocentrism. That mixture of both negative and affirmative phenomena mentioned above was very strongly present during the whole first half of the 20th century. Each inhabitant of the community had developed awareness of the certain kind of ethnic citizenship of each group: 'everybody simply knew where and to whom a person belongs'.

Every ethnic group undoubtedly had its own cultural system which was preserved and protected against the influence of the culture, manners and patterns of behaviour of another group. It was simply the protection of ones own ethnic and cultural identity. For example, local clubs functioned on the basis of ethnic differentiation in the sphere of cultural and social life.

Therefore, in the realm of ethnic pluralism we can generally speak of trends both towards the protection against the disintegration of their own culture as well as towards the cultural integration within the pluralistic community. It is difficult to evaluate this dynamic system of culture and the way of life in both complex terms and in mutual relations because of my insufficient knowledge as far as the other two complexes (i.e., German and Magyar) are concerned. Despite this fact, I intend to briefly mention some remarks about this topic. These two trends can be demostrated by some examples of the societal culture of the inhabitants of Poľný Berinčok, because of their expressiveness just in this sphere of local culture. I will do it on the basis of material from field research in Poľný Berinčok.⁸

We can see an example of the integration of all three ethnic groups in the field of religious life. It was the effort of the adherents of the Calvinist church to be dominant in the locality. In one marriage there was, for instance, an effort to convert one of the matrimonial partners to the Calvinist religion. Consequently, there were conflicts connected with the determination of the religion of the children. This fact was very relevant for the education of the children and was connected with language assimilation and Magyarisation. Generally the rule was to grant the same religion of the father to his sons and the same religion of the mother to her daughters. We can explain the situation we have mentioned above (speaking about the effort of the Calvinist religion to dominate) through the natural ambitions of Magyar priests as well as the original inhabitants of this country to be in a dominating position in the town in relation to the Lutheran minority of Slovak and German inhabitants.

The small attendance at Slovak religious services⁹ (held once a week as well as the fact that although the local clergyman is from Slovakia, he is Magyar and does not speak Slovak fluently) shows that, in comparison with other Slovak villages in Hungary, for the inhabitants of Poľný Berinčok, who are of Slovak origin, the emotional relationship to their mother tongue manifesting itself through religion is not so strong. The absence of teaching in the Slovak language in kindergartens and in schools from the 1930's up to today as well as the irregularity and small number of Slovak religious services resulted in the weakening relationship to the Slovak language in the middle and the younger generations among the descendants of Slovak repatriants. Thus the Slovak language ceased to be a common means of communication in the family as well as in the local community,

even among the peers in the oldest generation. For this reason, language, as a sign of ethnoidentification, has a weakened function as far as the ethnic awareness of the Poľný Berinčok population is concerned. It is necessary to see the language situation which I had already mentioned both in historical context and the general social-political conditions of the country as well as the town Mezőberény/Poľný Berinčok.

First, there was strict differentiation between the usage of the intimate, which meant the Slovak language in the family, and the usage of the public, which meant the Magyar language in all broader societal occasions. We can suppose that approximately from the turn of the century the acceleration of the assimilation of trends arose. All societal opportunities in the broader frame were held in Magyar language. 10

Another turning period were the 1930's, which were characterized by very strong Magyarisation. One of its forms was strongly present in the school politics. Since the middle of the 1920's teaching in Slovak language began to be eliminated, even from the schools influenced by church. Another significant fact was the official closure of the spinning houses in the town in 1930.¹¹ In reference to the 1930's, I cannot forget to comment on the language situation at sálaš-farms as well. In 1930's all three ethnic groups were already living close to each other. The fact of this territorial proximity brought it about (differently from the town) that at sálaš-farms the distinguishing feature of the intimate-Slovak language and the public-Magyar language in the frame of the neighbour's and family relations was not kept. The communication and singing was realized according to the ethnic participation of the neighbours. In the case of the domination of Magyar or German neighbours, the Magyar language was the means of the communication most often used.

As far as the usage of the Slovak language is concerned, the Second World War was a very important breaking point. The deportation of the German inhabitants caused a weakness of in the non-Magyar population in Mezőberény/Poľný Berinčok and led to a disturbance in the national equilibrium of the town. The total absence of teaching in Slovak language in the kindergartens and schools as well as the decline of the influence of the religion were other very unfavourable factors for the language situation nowadays. 12

Though the main cause of the present unfavourable language situation is connected with the intensive school politics of the Magyar government, we cannot underestimate the objective social causes and circumstances such as ethnically, religiously and professionally heterogeneous structures of the town of Mezőberény/ Polný Berinčok.

The character of a farming town, active economic-trade contacts, the existence of a textile factory, the running of the Solnohrad railway through the town since 1850, simply, the economic openness of Polný Berinčok and more than 260 years of tolerant coexistence of the three ethnic groups, brought about the necessity for a common communicating language. This turned out to be Magyar in official, social and merchant relationships and in contacts in the social, cultural, economic and political fields between the inhabitants of all three ethnic groups. While Magyar became the main means of communication in the local community, in the family and in particular residential parts of the town, the language of one's ethnic background was the most used during the first half of the 20th century. The same applies to the farms.

The mutual relationship and contacts among the inhabitants of all three ethnic groups were manifest in many fields of social, cultural, economic and political life. They were also the cause of the quicker integration of the cultures of all three ethnic groups living in the town. The economic-mercantile relations were expressed in the mutual trade contacts at the fairs, markets, or with the servants were hired for work on the farm. The mutual



Slovak wedding party in Mezőberény, 1935.



The Slovak amateur theatricals in Mezőberény, 1935.

meetings of young people (of each of the three ethnic groups) at the farms, or in the textile factory had an impact on the increasing knowledge of the other groups. Other opportunities for meetings of the young generation were Sunday walks/promenades in the centre of the town, or in the local park as well as some of the common balls¹³ and dances. These occasions were visited by girls and boys living in the town as well as at the sálaš-farms — who came to the town only on Saturdays and Sundays. But these groups of people (sálašania) had their own entertainment evenings at the farms, which, since the 1930-40's were common to members of all three ethnic groups. 15

The boys aged 12-18 met each other during these years as recruits, when on Sundays

at 8 a.m. Slovaks, Germans and Magyars promenaded along the square. 16

However, because of residential homogeneity and ethnic school division, children until the age of their maturity did not have the possibility to get into contact with children from another ethnic group. This was the reason, why they spoke their mother

tongue usually.

It shows us that the relative unpermeability of the ethnic surroundings (the protection of the own culture as it were) lasted until the 1930's. Outwardly, it was demonstrated by a small number of ethnically mixed marriages, by residential law regarding the prohibition to enter into pubs or into clubs functioning according to ethnic principles. There was a Slovak club for farmers called "Nemzeti kőr" (slovenský velký kasinov), a Slovak club for lesser land-holding peasants called "Tőrpebirtokos" (Kis kőr – slovenský malý kasinov), a German club for farmers called "Gazda kőr", a German club for lesser land-hold-



Choir from Mezőberény, 1942.

ing peasants called "Ólvasó kőr" (a reading club), a Magyar club for farmers, a Magyar ólvasó kőr for simple peasants. The craftsmen had their own club called "Ipartestület" and local intelligentsia had a club Értelmisegi Társadálmi' called also "Othon kőr".¹⁷

Entering these clubs was very often accompanied by boy's fights. Also, the entering of a club or pub was allowed only for friends from a different ethnic group or for people married into a family. However, until the 1930's the rule was "everyone goes where they belong and everyone knows where they belong" and the rule was strictly abided by.

A characteristic feature of the culture and the way of life of the Slovaks in Poľný Berinčok was a relatively small number of habits and customs kept within the family. ¹⁸ It seems that the habits were manifest and practiced outwardly – directed towards the local community. Probably this is connected to patterns which were usually more open in the case of Protestants as compared to Catholics.

Furthermore, we can consider this fact as one of the reasons for the more rapid integration with other ethnic groups. Another outcome was the quicker penetration of the Magyar language into social singing (the evidence of this is the rich Magyar singing repertory of the Slovak inhabitants) as well as into common habits at some festival celebration (for example: harvest festivals, vintage celebrations, etc.). The same goes for theatre performances, played in the Hungarian language.

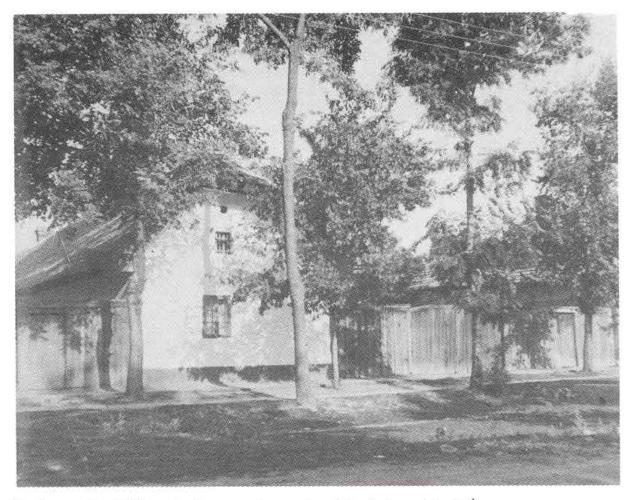
We may conclude by saying that we see the main benefit of ethnic pluralism manifesting itself in diversity of culture and language in creating a necessary space for mutual competition and rivalry, negotiation and relations between particular units, guaranteeing, therefore, the dynamism of both the whole complex and its parts.

Ethnic pluralism itself depends upon the existence of two opposite trends without excluding their mutual coexistence.

The first trend is directed by one's own culture, most frequently being accompanied by the phenomenon of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is formed on the basis of components of ethnic consciousness, components which originate in the confrontation of at least two ethnic groups, and when the appurtenance to one of them, and differences from the other one (or ones) become obvious. The confrontation of differences or similarities between ethnic groups is also based on cultural phenomena. The act of mutual evaluation is based on the antithesis "us – them" and on the perceived difference of one's own culture from the other's culture.

Among the subjective and objective differences in culture between the basic ethnoidentification signs of Slovaks in Poľný Berinčok in the past were language and lifestyles (clothing, living, food, some habits of celebrating feasts, songs etc.). On the basis of this we can conclude that, in the first half of the 20th century, strong feelings of differentiation were still present. The same goes for the ethnic awareness of all three ethnic groups. However, the relatively quick unification of phenomena of folk culture and ways of life – during the last 40 years in particular – has contributed to the fact that nowadays only the oldest generation of Slovaks in Poľný Berinčok have continued differentiating cultural aspects like food preparation, celebrating feasts – Christmas, Easter, songs. The oldest generation still identifies ethnically according to these aspects in contrast to the middle and young generations. Those aspects of cultural pluralism that are seemingly invisible from outside and are not manifest expressively enough have shifted to the intimate sphere of life. Contemporary stereotypes, whether positive or negative, play an important role in judging inhabitants belonging to another ethnic group as well as differentiating "them from us".





The house of a middle-scale farmer under reed roof. Beginning of the 19th century. Photographed M. Borgula, 1964.

The second trend of ethnic pluralism creates the possibilities in which common culture is being formed and the patterns of the mutual communication between various ethnic groups. This results in very tolerant ethnic and cultural relations as well as the mutual integration of the culture of all three ethnic groups.

The diversity of cultural aspects, different ways of life and the possibilities of comparison of the own culture to the next have led to mutual enrichment, as exemplified by the multi-lingualism of the inhabitants in Poľný Berinčok in the first half of the 20th century. The usefulness and effective functioning of ethnic pluralism is nevertheless dependent upon the possibility of free expression of one's own ethnic and cultural identification. The ethnic pluralism of Poľný Berinčok has never found common grounds with the implementation of the so-called political principle of multi-culturalism. ¹⁹ To make matters worse this has remained the case throughout all of recent history. In place of multiculturalism there was only a special effort towards Magyarisation implemented on the political and cultural level. The latter seems to be very important. The lack of Slovak language as a language of instruction in schools and kindergartens led to the loss of the communicative and mediative role of the language not only in the local community but also in the family. More creation of the impression of the uselessness of the Slovak language led to the situation where language itself lost the differentiating role as an ethnoidentificating



The Sálaš-farmhouse of Pavol Visnay built in 1935, Mezőberény. Photographed M. Borgula, 1964.

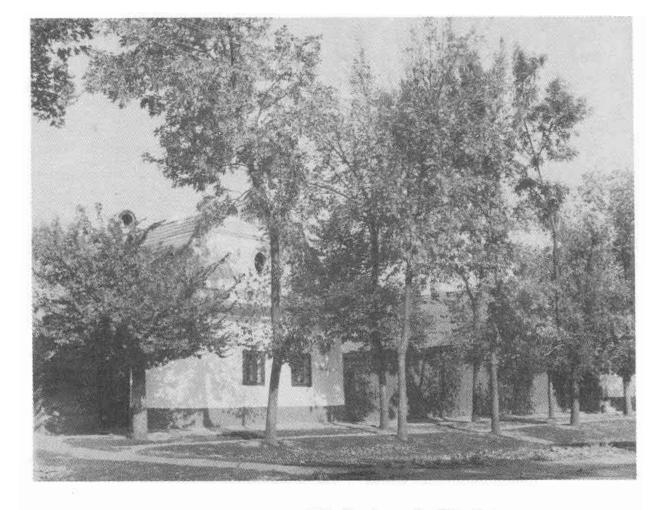
factor as well as functioning as a transmitter of cultural heritage. In relation to the facts mentioned above, the assimilation of language and culture culminated in ethnic awareness move towards Magyar even in the oldest generation of Slovaks in Mezőberény/ Poľný Berinčok.

We can state that Slovaks and their descendants are disengaged and remain passively disinterested as far as their cultural and linguistic rights are concerned.

Can we, at all, talk about ethnic and cultural pluralism of Mezőberény/ Poľný Berinčok nowadays? The results of our research indicate the direction towards linguistic and ethnic homogeneity of this town. Will this homogeneity be cultural as well? Only time and further research will tell.

NOTES

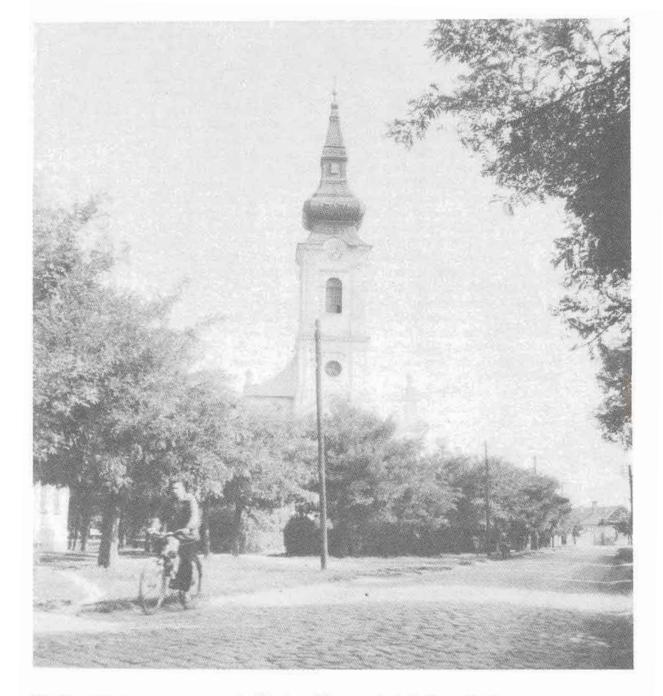
Sálaš-farms emerged in the second half of the 18th century at a 5-20 km distance around the town. They were functioning until 1964 when the last of them were disbanded. In 1934 1004 sálaš were still around Poľný Berinčok. In the beginning they functioned as transient (seasonal) farming settlement in the territory around the village. Later they became permanently inhabited agricultural centers. The young families of peasants and farmers came here to live after marriage. Aged about 50-60 years they returned to live in the town to the house that had inhabited their parents. However, it was very usual



The "Velkov" house built in 1860 is a typical Mezőberény well-off family house. Photographed M. Borgula, 1964.

for all peasants and the farmers to have a house in the town as well as a sálaš. Despite some differences and particularities in the culture and way of life of the people living at a sálaš we can speak about close and farms mutual close contacts between the inhabitants living in the town and at a salas. This coherence was manifest at many levels of economic, societal and cultural life. From the point of view of ethnic relations we cannot forget that the territorial proximity of all three ethnic groups (Slovaks, Germans and Magyars) living in the sálaš provided the possibility of quicker mutual integration of the ethnically heterogeneous community in several spheres of life. We can guess that the fact we mentioned above could have had a feed-back in the relationship and coexistence of the inhabitants living in the town.

The moving of the Slovaks to Dolná zem lasted almost two hundred years (the 18th – 19th centuries). This process covered very broad geographical areas which economical and political development was later not identical. These mass migrations of Slovaks to Dolná zem were first part of the moving of the Hungarian Empire's subjects and second part of a big settlement process of the areas left by the Turks in the 18th century. In the latter case we can speak about the systematic colonisation of these regions not only by Slovaks, but by Germans, Croats, Serbs and Rumanians as well. The most relevant reason for the departure of the Slovaks from Upper Hungary (Felvidék) was the very bad economic-social situation of this part of Hungary after the anti-Habsburg Uprisings (the last of them Rákóczy Uprising in 1703-1711). The strong counter-Reformation, the epidemics, the bondage relations, the overpopulation of Upper Hungary were other accompanying phenomena making worse the situation we mentioned above. The departure of the "villein" was strengthened by the expelling of the Turks from Dolná zem whereby the big complexes of agricultural lands had been left free. The state, the regions as well as the



The Slovak Lutheran church in Mezőberény. Photographed M. Borgula, 1964.

landholders immediately undertook a concerted effort to populate these lands especially by offering agricultural inhabitants some privileges delivered to newcomers. (Sirácky, 1966)

3 The first reference concerning the village of Berény (possesio Bereny) dates from 1561. The village was probably later destroyed by the Turks, because no mention of any such name could be found in the 1716 regional registration.

The signs of a new village (a second Berény) emerged in 1702, when 26 matrimonial couples of Lutheran religion settled there. The inhabitants left this village (the second Berény) after the Rákóczy Uprising (1703-1711). The first inhabitants of the third (today's) Bereny came around 1716. They were invited by J. Harruckern to resettle the territory of Dolná zem destroyed by the Turks. The people came

- from Upper Hungary (Slovakia) and Germany and received some concessions. The most important of these were religion freedom; the release from paying serfdom taxes for a certain period of time; the renting of the lands; the free usage of wood to build a church and their own homes; (Jeszenszky, 1861)
- Repatriation (repatriácia) of Slovak inhabitants from Hungary (after 1945) was an act implementing a Stalinistic conception of a big shifting of inhabitants. This process aptly fell into the post-war Agreement of the Great Powers about the shifting of the inhabitants. The main goal had been to solve the problem of German inhabitants living in countries like Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland. The assertion of the collective guilt principle was directed towards these inhabitants. The situation aggravated by the constantly present fear of German aggression was solved in a way by their displacement out of Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak government would like to do the same with Magyars living in this country. Finally the government decided to accept the Agreement of Great Powers' decision concerning the exchange of the inhabitants between Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Slovaks living in Hungary who felt like coming back to the "Old Homeland" had the opportunity to use this chance. In this way the situation was partially resolved with Magyar inhabitants, whose numbers approximately equalled those "home feeling" Slovaks in Hungary (there were aproximately 71 787 Slovaks from Hungary). Newly arriving Slovaks inhabited especially the empty places left by the Germans in Bohemia. This fact, as well as the settlement of others among the Magyars in Slovakia, caused a great disappointment for the Slovaks. So, the national moment of the moving action (very much stressed by the newlycoming Slovaks) was completely messed up. (Čierna-Lantayová, 1991)
- 5 It was usual during the resettlement of Dolná zem that the first "pioneering" colonists got the best soil of highest quality. Gradual overcrowding of the villages meant that the last settlers got the smallest portions of the land. In the case of Poľný Berinčok, these late-comers were the Magyars. Another fact that we must take into account, is that the Germans were buying the lands from the Magyars as well as from the Slovaks during the 19th century. This is why they became the wealthiest group in the town. (Borgula-Švihran, 1979).

The occupational structure in Poľný Berinčok was balanced. Each of the local ethnic groups was comprised of small-scale peasants, farmers, craftsmen, intelligentsia and farm workers as well. The last group mentioned found wider representation in the Slovak and Magyar ethnic groups.

The ethnic stereotypes (still existing up to the present now) were closely connected with their economic and social situations.

The Germans and Slovaks, being the better-off groups, were considered harder-working and more diligent than the Magyars. The poverty of the Magyars was considered to be due to their laziness and their unwillingness to work. Slovak girls would very often joke 'I'd rather be married to a Magyar because I will not work as hard as I would for a Slovak or a German'.

- The most dominant heterostereotype of the Germans was their farming prudence. This quality was the cause of their wealth according to people. The Slovaks evaluated themselves (autostereotype) as very clean and hard-working people. According to them, this stereotype is confirmed by the fact that the farmers would rather hire young Slovak boys and girls than Magyar for farm work.
- The mutually friendly contacts and sympathy between Slovaks and Germans is possible to explain, especially, by the fact of the socio-economic proximity of both groups (i.e. both groups had been approximately equal in wealth). Another relevant fact was that Slovaks and Germans were of the same religion (they were both Lutherans). It is relevant because this religion was in the first half of the 20th century still a very expressive part of the cultural and intimate life as well as serving as a normative system for each individual. The third possible factor leading to these close contacts would be their position as minorities after 1918 in Hungary. The feeling of being outsiders was caused by the implementation of the strongly chauvinistic national policies of the Hungarian government in the interwar period. Even the local majority position of both ethnic groups had no impact on the feelings we mentioned above (44,6% of the population according to official numbers of the 1932 population census in Polný Berinčok was still Slovak).
- 7 The factors mentioned above (the socio-economic proximity of Slovaks and Germans, as well as the sharing the same religion) amounted to a bigger proportion of ethnically mixed German-Slovak marriages in comparison with German-Magyar and Slovak-Magyar ones. Consequently we can state that ethnically-mixed marriages helped engender a better knowledge of the cultural phenomena and differences of the German ethnic group. This was especially expressed by Slovaks in their responces.
 - Generally, we can say that the social principle that a wealthy young boy prefers to get married to a wealthy young girl (usually it was valid in the framework of the same ethnic group as well as between different ethnic groups) was most important in the choice of matrimonial partner. The ethnic principle



Holiday dress of young Slovak girl. Beginning of the 20th century, Mezőberény.



Holiday dress of a young Slovak woman in 1926, Mezőberény.

was used as secondarily. The ethnic endogamy was very strongly present however until the 1930's. Since then, the situation has changed a little bit under the influence of the political-social situation in the country. The reaction to these changes was expressed by the increase in ethnically-mixed Slovak-Magyar as well German-Magyar marriages.

- 8 I did this field research in June 1991. The material is available in the Text Archive of the Institute of Ethnography of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava.
- 9 Nowadays, the Sunday mass (held at 8 a.m.) in Slovak Lutheran church is attended only by 20-30 people. There is singing and praying in Slovak language, but the sermon is delivered in Magyar. Magyar Lutheran mass is at 10 a.m. on Sunday in this church and includes singing, praying as well as preaching in the Magyar language. The attendance of this religious service is higher, especially by the middle and younger generations.
- 10 E. Krekovičová (1991) points out that this situation consequently had a great impact on their song repertoires, changing from bilingual to monolingual. The ethnic significance is expressed by particular genres (not by particular songs) like the following: Magyar soldier and conscript songs (Katona nóta); Magyar pillage songs (betår nóta); dancing chardache songs of Hungarian synkopated rhythm (madar nóta).
- 11 There were attended on the basis of ethnicity. Since that time the function of the institution of the spinner (i.e. function of the societal life of the youth) was restored by the dancing schools. These schools were attended by representatives of all three ethnic groups. The same concerned dancing afternoons, or dancing evenings. These were organized in the town's clubs. The Magyar language was dominant in these occasions and through the language itself the possibility of mutual acquaintance between all three ethnic groups was created.
- 12 Magyar language gradually became the dominant language not only in the public sphere, but also within families. It was for the sake of language tolerance between family members of different ethnic appurtenance not speaking the Slovak language.

In many cases the Slovak inhabitants didn't use of Slovak language because they were afraid of violent expulsion from the country. They had had a very bad experience connected with the exchange of inhabitants between Czechoslovakia and Hungary after the Second World War. Propaganda spread the idea that all Slovaks left Hungary in this exchange, meaning that people



Portrait of a Slovak girl from Mezőberény in holiday dress, 1914.

who had decided to stay in Hungary automatically must consider themselves Magyars.

Nowadays, we can state that even the oldest generation in Poľný Berinčok (the generation which actively used Slovak in their families during their youth) prefer to communicate in Magyar language. Both the middle and the younger generation obviously consider Magyar as their mother tongue.

- 13 The balls were organized in the town's clubs especially at the big feasts during the year. The balls had mostly a broader character and despite the fact that they were organized in particular clubs they were common for the members of all social and ethnic groups in the town. The balls with such character are following: The Carnival Ball (Maska bál), at Whitsuntide it was Firemen's Ball (Tűzitó bál), the Harvest Ball (Áratáši bál), the Vintage Ball (Sűreti bál).
- 14 The Sunday afternoon dances were also organized in particular clubs. Up to the 1930's these afternoon youth dances were held in pubs. This was in keeping with the principle of social and ethnic attendance.
- 15 Flourishing social life connected with working and with entertainment was characteristic for the people living at the sálaš-farms. Above all, these forms of social life were common for all three ethnic groups. We are presuming, that exactly these close mutual youth contacts at the sálaš were one of the most important factors of the more rapid integration of the cultures of all three ethnic groups. The societal opportunities were as follows: During August the young people met each other at the activity called "mniačke" (work with hemp). During October they were organizing "bieľačke" (the husking of the maize). The work was always accompanied by singing and at the end, by dancing. During November and December it was the practice to paint the houses at sálas-farms (kalif a mazaf sálas) and inside the house prepare a fresh new floor. This opportunity was called 'cuhári, or chyžu udľangať'. The dirt floor was watered and then strewn with chaff-husks. Then the youth came and started to dance on such earth. The dancing helped to stamp down the floor, which was used during the next year. The members of the middle and older generations met each other once, twice a week at the occasions called 'večjerke, or házi mulatšág' - evening sitting. It was an occasion convenient for gossip, the exchange of information, or for singing. The younger generation organized 'večierke' for the purpose of dancing as well as for the rehearsal of amatheur theatrical performances (called serep). Theatrical performances were played in Magyar language with regard to the ethnically-mixed community living at the sálaš-farms. The inhabitants of the sálaš-farms regularly visited the town during the weekend and during the feasts. They took part in the fairs and the markets, where they usually sold products like milk, eggs, poultry. They visited their relatives in town and on Sundays they usually attended holy-mass. The farmers met each other in particular clubs, where they spoke about the work at their farms, or about the political and societal events and they played cards, billiards, or read the newspapers.

The youth also came for the weekend to take part in Sunday mass, as well as in the balls, or Sunday afternoons in the clubs.

- 16 All the boys, having finished compulsory school-attendance (to the age of 12 years), had to spend two hours (from 8 a.m. 10 a.m.) training every Sunday until their recruitment into the army (at the age of 20 years). The recruit organization was called 'Országos Levente Egyesület' and was directed by the state. These march trainings were organized in groups dividing boys in the towns, or villages under the particular year of their birth, but without regard to their ethnicity.
- 17 A very expressive social, societal and ethnic differentiation of the inhabitants of Poľný Berinčok was manifest just in the field of societal culture. A very good example of this is the existence of the several clubs in the town. These clubs were functioning on the basis of the principles we have mentioned above until the 1930-1940s. The ethnic principle had no importance in the case of the club of the craftsmen and the club for intelligentsia.

The clubs were the everyday meeting place of men predominantly. They spent their leisure time here playing cards, billiards, ninepins, and reading newspapers. The clubs were open from noon until midnight during the whole week. The attendance was sparse during the week. The clubs filled up during the weekend.

The young people of the town met each other in the clubs as well. It was on Sunday dancing afternoons or by the trainings of theathrical performances during the winter. The performances were 5 or 6 times a year. The youth of every ethnic group and even every social group trained in theathre performances separately. The division of the youth in the town according to social and ethnic principle concerning the attendance of the clubs, pubs and Sunday dancing afternoons was present until the 1930's.

18 E. Krekovičová (1991) stresses that this phenomenon was probably connected with the role of the written word. The written word has a strong importance in the Lutheran confession, dominant in this Slovak community. For example, singing is tied to 'Tranoscius' (the spiritual songbook) not only in the church, but in ritual situations like weddings, funerals (and uses the funeral songbook for this oppor-

tunity), Christmas, or the New Year. Functionally-tied manifestations occur primarly in the annual customs comparative to the family ones because of the main position of religion and the religious songbook in the customs mentioned in the latter.

19 The usage and the connection of the terms "ethnic pluralism" and "multiculturalism" can be considered as an oversimplification, especially in this case about which we are considering (i.e. the locally ethnically plural community of the town PoIný Berinčok). Even worse, this usage can be perceived in the light of the awareness of an ethnically plural society like for instance, Canada. However, we used these two terms intentionally, just to show (or a little bit to exaggerate in this case) their contradictory position instead of possible position of their mutual supplementation. Of course we realize, that ethnic and cultural diversity (or pluralism) is not automatically followed by a multicultural society. We understand the term 'multiculturalism' in the sense of a feasible social and political concept. Consequently, the implementation of multiculturalism as a political principle should create a multicultural society based on the following principle: It is the involvement of voluntarism for the people. Those who would wish to assimilate should be allowed to do so, those who prefer to retain their separate culture should also be allowed to do so. Neither a forced process of multi-culturalism, nor a forced process of assimilation is acceptable. The most important point is to create the kind of society in which all people may choose their cultural affiliations. (J.Rex, 1989)

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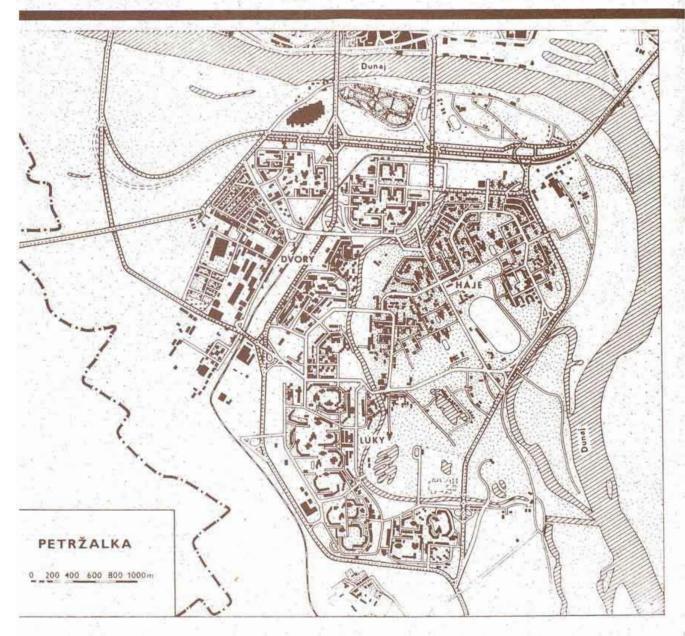
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