

SLOVENSKÝ NÁRODOPIS



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Na obálke:

1. strana: Pamätný obrázok z púte do Rajeckej Lesnej (pôvodne Frivald), pútneho miesta regionálneho charakteru, ktoré po r. 1990 zaznamenáva silný príliv pútnikov.
4. strana: Pamätný obrázok z púte do Rajeckej Lesnej. K článku K. Zajicovej: Slovesné a hudobné prejavy spojené s púťami.

Preklady Martin Styán

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European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH): www.esf.org

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AGENDA OF RESEARCH ON NATIONALISM (EASTERN CENTRAL EUROPE)*

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The contribution is concerned with the overview about the research on nations and nationalism among the Eastern Central European authors mostly after 1945. The study offers special attention to the works of Miroslav Hroch, Józef Chlebowczyk and Jenő Szűcs from the 1960's, 70's and 80's. It discusses also the recent development in the research of nationalism after 1989 in Eastern Central Europe.

This contribution is an attempt to provide an overview about research on the nation and nationalism in the works of Eastern Central European authors. It is understood that the main emphasis shall be given to the period following the Second World War. As in other countries of Europe and abroad, nations and nationalism became the focused theme in the social sciences and humanities, mostly after 1945.

To avoid any misunderstanding associated with the term nationalism (as there are different interpretations of this term in English, French, German and in Slavic languages), I would like, in this paper, to understand nationalism as the national idea – a common feeling (sentiment) which binds people together. That is, people who understand themselves as one social group – a nation. This idea leads towards a political principle which declares political and national unity. Nationalism is an awareness which integrates large social groups. We also understand the phenomenon of nationalism in terms of nation-building and national movements. Whilst I prefer to concentrate on the first definition of the meaning of nationalism, I also understand the term nationalism as a neutral concept.

Central Europe has a long tradition in the research of nationalism. Several works, which today are standard references on the subject, originated in this region, and there is good reason for this. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century the countries of Central Europe were faced with the flagrant issues of national movements, nation-building, and their cultural and political emancipation.

Contrary to the understanding of the nation in Western Europe — the nation as a group of citizens — in the works of Central European authors the nation was mainly understood as a cultural community. Friedrich Meinecke (1907) used two terms — „Staatsnation“ (nation state) and „Kulturnation“ (cultural nation) which in making this distinction he perfectly expressed the polarity of the term. „Staatsnation“ reflects the formulation of Ernest Renan: „L' exis-

tence d'une nation est... un plébiscite de tous les jours" (The existence of a nation is a daily plebiscite. Renan, 1882). „Kulturnation“ is defined as cultural unity, which is signified by common characteristics — common ancestry, language, territory, common habits, traditions, religion etc. Solidarity was developed independently of the existence of a state. „Kulturnation“ is mostly devoid of state. Parallel to this concept was the distinction made between West European and East European nationalism.

The future development of research, on the nation and nationalism in Central Europe, were the very important ideas formulated by socialists, social democrats and Marxists at the turn of the century. Socialists and social democrats paid significant attention to the problems of the nation and national movements. One can refer to the works of Karl Renner, Karl Kautsky, or Otto Bauer (all of whom were from the Habsburg Monarchy). However, to follow the development in research of Eastern and Central European nationalism, after the Second World War, one should look to Marxist works.

In the 1920s, Lenin was concerned with the problem of the nation. He began with the ideas of Marx and Engels, that the nation is a class system and the historical determining phenomenon of the capitalist period. Lenin wrote about two periods in the development of the modern nation as „the collapse of feudalism and absolutism“ and „the creation of a bourgeois democratic society and state, where national movements uniquely become mass movements involving all classes of inhabitants in politics in one way or another.“ The national movements in this period are progressive, because they fought against feudalism and for bourgeois democratic rights. (Lenin 1964)

As a precondition for the development of national movements Lenin understood the common language, and the development of trade and the market.

Stalin formulated his ideas about the nation in his study *Marxism and the National Question* in 1913. (Actually, this study was written in the heart of Central Europe, in Krakow). According to Stalin: „The nation is historically... a community of people who are bound by a common language, territory, economic life and by a common basic psyche, which is reflected in a common culture.“ This definition was modified by Stalin in 1946. Instead of „bound by“ he used the expression „arose on the basis“. In this way Stalin turned attention towards the dynamics of the term „nation“. According to Stalin, the rise of a nation is dependent upon the national market. He explained the rise of a nation as a consequence of the bourgeois fight for control over the national market. Thus, he frequently used the term „bourgeois nation“. (Stalin 1954)

After the First World War the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was divided and new states emerged. In the period between the two world wars, state-building efforts, as well as research, led to some works which were devoted to the definition of the nation, and the rise and existence of the nation. For example, the works of T. G. Masaryk.

Other interesting studies are the work of Anton Štefánek, a Slovak sociologist from the inter-war period. He promulgated the theory of the scientific study of the nation, and defined the goals of the sociology of the nation. According to him, the studying of „the national question“ (nationalism) is not a static entity, but just the opposite. It is the study of the dynamic development of culture, and the social and psychological processes which are dependent on the inter ethnic forces of a certain bigger territory. (Štefánek 1995.)

The fact that someone may attempt to develop a discipline devoted to the study of the nation is nothing extraordinary for us today. But in the context of newly created states in Central Europe, where the nation was an entity which existed very highly in the value hierarchy, the suggestion of a prospective scientific study of the nation was not an everyday case.

After the Second World War research on the nation and nationalism, in Eastern Central Europe, was based entirely on Marxist works, beginning with Stalin's work „Marxism and the National Question“. One should remember that Stalin's conclusion was — that the nation could be distinguished by objective scientific criteria such as language, territory, economic life, a psychological base, reflected altogether in the culture of the nation. Stalin did not take into consideration the subjective factor — the will of an individual and his identification with the nation. Stalin's study was adopted in the scientific works of authors in the Soviet Union, as well as in Eastern Central European countries, as the obligatory and authoritative definition. Stalin's ideas were later simplified and vulgarised. Even though in 1956, during the 20th Assembly of Soviet Communist Party Stalin, his policy and scientific work were sharply criticised, his study „Marxism and the National Question“ was praised for its positive, theoretic contribution. It was not until the end of the fifties, and the early sixties, that new debate about the nation and the national question reopened. During this period, scientists returned to Lenin's works, which became the new model for research.

In the middle of the 1960's new discussions concerning the question „what is the nation“ took place in the Soviet Union amongst historians, sociologists, ethnologists and social scientists. At the same time, probably for the first time after the Second World War, several books were published on this theme by historians, sociologists etc., in Eastern Central Europe. (Kořalka 1968, Wiatr 1969, Chalasinski 1968, and many articles by Eastern Central European authors).

I would like turn my attention towards the period of the late sixties and early seventies, to those works which had an influence on the later development of research on the nation and nationalism, such as the works of Miroslav Hroch, Józef Chlebowczyk and Jenő Szücs.

M. Hroch, for example, developed new approaches to nationalism. Despite the fact that he published rather lengthy essays about the agenda of research on the nationalism of non-Marxist works, which was a new development in the context of this period, Hroch for the first time also focused attention towards the subjective factors in national revival. In his ideas, Hroch took a Marxist stand which is possibly more readable in the Czech version (Hroch 1971), rather than the English. (Hroch 1985) He postulates the notion that the nation „is a large social group characterised by a combination of several relations (economic, territorial, political, religious, cultural, linguistic and so on) which arise, on the one hand, out of the fundamental antagonism between man and nature, on a specific compact territory, and on the other hand, out of the reflection of these relations in the consciousness of the people. We can also apply this conception of the nation to the process by which it brings it into existence.“ (Hroch 1985: 5)

Furthermore, he analysed economic relations in detail, as being the most important factor in the nation-forming process. In the original Czech version, Hroch also pays considerable attention to language relations, territory, the political relations of a cultural community and the national character. He reacted against the characteristics of the nation, which were defined by Stalin. In this case, Hroch attempted to extend or to emphasise some elements, which were eliminated by Stalin and dogmatically repeated by his followers. For example, although state sovereignty is not considered to be one of the basic elements of the nation, it does, nonetheless, not suggest that political relations should be excluded in the study of nations. The biggest contribution of Hroch's research work in the field of nationalism were:

1. the development of research on special features concerning the evolutionary process of small nations
2. the detailed analysis of the subjective and objective components of national consciousness
3. the particular interest in the significance of national agitation and its proponents (the subjective component)

4. the periodisation of the development of the small nation (3 phases of national movement – A. the period of scholarly interest, B. the period of patriotic agitation, C. the rise of a mass national movement)
5. the typology of a national movement (he used this typology as a model by which the particular national movements could be characterised).

The great contribution of Hroch's work, however, is based on the fact that his theoretical reflections emerged from the study of large material data, from the comparative study of the national movements of small nation in Eastern, Eastern Central and Northern Europe.

Hroch's theoretical conclusions provoked much debate and controversy. He formulated, very clearly and comprehensively, the ideas about nations and nationalism, and showed the particular formation processes of small nations. In any case, whether Hroch's ideas were adopted or rejected by authors, he arrived at a point which brought research on nationalism out of the dogmatic interpretations of the 1950's. The comparison between several national movements, among small nations, showed different possibilities in this process. Hroch showed, in a very systematic way, the representation of social strata and classes in national movements, in the national revival in Europe.

J. Chlebowczyk published his book „Procesy narodotwórcze ...“ (The nation-forming processes in Eastern Central Europe in the capitalistic period, 1975) shortly after Hroch. The revised version of this book was published in 1983 under the title „O prawie do bytu małych a młodych narodów“ (On the Right of Small, Young Nations to Exist). The shorter English version of the book (1980) has a different title „On Small and Young Nations in Europe“ which is not such a harsh title as the Polish one.

Chlebowczyk devoted his interest to the nation-building process of small nations in Eastern Central Europe, especially during the Habsburg Monarchy. He defines the nation as „until now the highest historically developed form of cultural unity“.

Chlebowczyk analysed the influence, as he states, of „objective and subjective determinants, elements and factors“ which give the basis for the formation of the nation. He pays special attention to two factors – the state and language. State is the highest structure in the organisation of a society. Language, on the other hand, is a tool of social communication, as well as the bearer of cultural progress and civilisation, and the important, sometimes even basic, element of national identity. The development in Eastern Central Europe, he sees, as the opposite of „Eastern European“ and „Western European“ development. So, he reduced the whole complexity of problems on the antithesis or contrast of „Staatsnation“ and „Kulturnation“.

Among the „Kulturnations“ he categorised historical and ahistorical nations — in Chlebowczyk's terminology: historical and plebeian nations. As well as the two factors of state and language, and their role in nation-building — which Chlebowczyk based on the material from the Habsburg Monarchy — he also pays much attention to the creation of nations in the border regions and in ethnically mixed areas. He devotes his interest to bilingualism, trilingualism and polyglottalism, the forming of dominant and non-dominant ethnic groups and their relations to local groups. This is probably the most interesting aspect of his book.

Chlebowczyk devoted much attention to the critics of the ideology of Marx and Engels, the ideas of the right of small nations to exist, especially Slavic nationalities in Eastern Central Europe at the end of the 19th century. (Marx and Engels were persuaded that the Slavic nations, or ethnic groups in the Habsburg Monarchy, would succumb to assimilation. They saw the nation-building ambitions of the Czechs, for example, as non-realistic and inappropriate for the

proletarian movement). In contrast to classical ideology, Chlebowczyk shows the ideas of Lenin about the right of a nation's self-determination.

This was the ideological mission of his book, which played an important role in the context of that period.

Concerning the scientific results of his book, Chlebowczyk's summation of his analyses was, that the prior element which influences the process of the formation of a modern nation is the subjective factor — the ability and success of stimulating the national sentiment in the masses and stirring national consciousness.

According to Chlebowczyk, the difference between Eastern Central Europe and the West European model, where the building of a strong centralised state and nation ran parallel, was that in Eastern Central Europe the forming of nations began with the language-cultural phase, which then passed into the phase of national historical consciousness and the spontaneous (not institutional) creation of the nation.

In Chlebowczyk words: „The categorical imperative for nationality, in the phase of its development into a nation, had become the postulation of the right of the nation's self-determination.“ (Chlebowczyk 1983: 12-13) The main nerve, which steered the formation of small, young nations in Eastern Central Europe, was the common sentiment based on linguistic and cultural harmony, on common fate and historical heritage. It is from this perspective that Chlebowczyk sees the particularity of nation-building in Eastern Central Europe.

The author's theoretical reflection of the material is not very convincing, and sometimes confusing. Chlebowczyk adopted many of Hroch's ideas but often in a more simplified form. In my opinion, the main contribution of Chlebowczyk's book is in the interesting chapters about the creation of nations in border regions and ethnically mixed areas, and the development of ideas about the different roles of dominant and non-dominant ethnic groups in local circumstances.

The studies in J. Szücs's collection „Nation und Geschichte“ (Nation and History, published in Hungarian in 1974) contributed to the discussions about nation and nationalism from the end of the 1960's. Szücs directed attention to the fact that a strong historicism is typical throughout Eastern Central Europe. The concept of the nation always contains a very strong historical consciousness.

The first part of the collection contains a historical overview on the development of modern nationalism, especially Hungarian nationalism, and the role of history in this process. In the second part of the collection, the author analyses the terms nationality, national consciousness, national sovereignty and patriotism, from the point of view of a medievalist. The leitmotif of all his deliberations is the relation between national consciousness, nation-building and history. The collection is also a critical reflection of the theoretical basis of Hungarian and Central European historiography. He discusses, very profoundly, the advantages and disadvantages of Marxist orientation in historiography.

The discussions surrounding nations and nationalism lost their intensity by the end of the 1970's, in Central Europe. It is a fact which many European readers are possibly unaware of, as translations of Eastern Central European books did not appear in the West until the eighties.

During the 1980's attention was turned more towards the concept of ethnic groups and ethnic consciousness in the social sciences (ethnology, sociology). Research activities in Central European used mostly the theoretical concept of Julian V. Bromley (Ethnos and Ethnography, 1973).

A new period in research, on nation and nationalism, did not take place in Eastern Central Europe until after 1989. This period is significant for several reasons:

1. The nation and nationalism became very important social themes. During the break-up of the former communist regimes, nationalism, as a social phenomenon, increased in its intensity.

In Eastern Central Europe new nation states were established, creating a dynamic state-building and nation-building process, which the social sciences reacted to.

2. The nation and nationalism also became fashionable themes which were previously neglected by many authors because there were „dangerous“ issues from the political point of view.

3. Some authors discussed this theme under the influence of many „discovered“ works of Western European and foreign authors. Inspired by works from Western Europe about nationalism, led to new studies in Central Europe. Six years after 1989 one sees many publications in this region, and one can refer to a boom in research on nationalism. I shall try to discuss some of them.

After 1989 there were many contributions which analysed, from new perspectives, and partly with the help of new material (which was previously unavailable), the nation-forming process, and their own national emancipation. For example, one can mention the collection „Language, Values and the Slovak Nation“ (1994). In this book, the authors of particular papers discuss (mostly for non-Slovak readers) the nation-building process of Slovaks, the relation between the nation and the state, in the historical context of Slovakia, the question of self-determination of a nation, and the persistence and change of values in Slovak culture.

In the context of the increase in nationalism as an old – new social phenomenon in Eastern Central Europe, many works in the social sciences have addressed, once again, and with greater knowledge, the problem of national identity. In this research much attention is devoted to the creation of national symbols and national myths. Researchers have returned to the question of national culture and folk, or popular culture, in Eastern Central Europe. In the fields of ethnology and history, several works on this theme have recently appeared. (Hoffer – Kisban – Sinko 1994, Kiliánová – Krekovičová 1993, 1994).

The other question, which is occupying researchers, is the serious problems of national stereotypes and prejudices, which they analyse from historical and contemporary material. One such example is the collection of papers from the conference in Krakow „Stereotypes and Nations“ (Walas 1995).

Researchers in Central Europe have to reflect not only on national movements, which have occurred more or less in a peaceful way, but also with phenomena beyond our understanding and reasoning, such as the ethnic purges in Bosnia, ethnic and racist attacks in Germany against „Gastarbeiter“, against Gypsies in the Czech and Slovak Republics, against Jews, and so on. In his book „Tarrying with the Negative“ (1993), the Slovene philosopher and psychologist, Slavoj Žižek, propounds a theory which he refers to as „pathological fantasies“. Basically, he compares the „Western European“ and „Eastern European“ viewpoints on these contemporary events, using a psychoanalytical approach to argue that the roots of nationalistic and ethnic tensions and conflicts are based in the denial of our own enjoyments.

The watershed year of 1989 brought significant changes in the theoretical orientation in the social sciences, with the declared deviation from the Marxist standpoint (however, the real move away from the Marxist viewpoint began, covertly, in certain works some years before) inspired by the works of Western European and American author's followed (works by Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, A. D. Smith, K. Deutsch, H. Kohn etc.).

In this way Eastern Central European authors attempted to adopt the Western European theories in the new social climate. A good summary of these new ideas can be found in the collection of papers „Formen des nationalen Bewusstseins im Lichte zeitgenössischer Nationalismustheorien“ (Schmidt – Hartmann 1994).

One should devote attention to Hroch's study in this collection, in which he reacts critically to the very wide understanding of the term nationalism. Nationalism can be understood as nation-building, in other words the beginning of national consciousness and national solidarity,

and in the narrower sense, as doctrine. Hroch suggests that to understand the term nationalism as „a psychological and political attitude, which considers foreign nations and ethnic groups as inferior, and grant less rights for them.“ (Hroch 1994) He considers the terms national movement and national consciousness more useful in this context, and reacts critically to some of the ideas of Gellner, Breuilly and Hobsbawm for whom nationalism is the combination of political independence in modern theories. According to Hroch, this thesis is not supported by empirical data, because the main group of national movements was typical in its efforts towards a measure of political independence, but not for complete political independence.

Authors of several other studies attempt to apply theoretical models or conceptions on empirical material from Central Europe, for example the thesis of Benedict Anderson (Střítecký 1994), the work of Ernest Gellner and Hans Kohn.

Conclusion:

After the Second World War, research on nations and nationalism in Eastern Central Europe developed Marxist approaches. In the 1950's, these approaches were very often only dogmatically applied. New discussions opened up in the 1960's, when the first extensive publications appeared on this theme. Up to 1989 social scientists proclaimed themselves from a Marxist standpoint. Even though after 1989 Central European researchers were inspired by the works of Western European and American authors they still have only partially adopted Western European theoretical concepts. In the same way there is no standard reference which critically reflects Marxist research on nationalism after the Second World War.

Central European authors, regardless of some exceptions, devoted their interest almost entirely to the research of their own nations or nations in Central Europe, and they also reflected this material theoretically. Even if they took the Marxist view, they frequently developed, more or less, the concept of „Kulturnation“ of Friedrich Meinecke, as one can follow in the works of Chlebowczyk or Jenő Szűcs.

The exception is Miroslav Hroch, who has developed the most interesting and comprehensive theoretical models for research on national movements of small nations, by using a big corpus of data about small nations in Central, Eastern, Northern and Western Europe and comparing this data. It was also Hroch, who mostly developed the non-dogmatic Marxist approaches towards research on nationalism.

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- This work was supported, in Part, by the Grant Agency for Sciences (Grant No 95/5305/023).*

Resumé

Príspevok sa zaoberá prácami autorov zo stredovýchodnej Európy, ktoré sa venujú otázkam nacionalizmu. Pod týmto strešným termínom autorka chápe bádanie o národnej ideji, národe, budovaní národa, národnom vedomí atď.

Stredná Európa má dlhú tradíciu vo výskume národných otázok. Viaceré práce, ktoré dnes tvoria základné diela o nacionalizme, vznikli v tomto regióne. Tento záujem o otázky národné mal okrem iného i celkom pragmatický dôvod: stredná Európa na prelome 19. a 20. storočia a v nasledujúcich obdobiach zápasila s páľčivou otázkou národných hnutí, vytvárania národov a ich kultúrnej i politickej emancipácie.

Na rozdiel od chápania národa v západnej Európe (prevažne jednotné chápania národa a štátu) v prácach autorov zo strednej Európy prevládalo úsilie charakterizovať národ ako kultúrne spoločenstvo.

Pre vývoj bádania o národe a nacionalizme boli veľmi dôležité názory, ktoré na prelome storočia sformulovali socialisti, sociálni demokrati a marxisti. Autorka sa podrobnejšie venuje prácam Lenina a Stalina o národnostnej otázke. Z medzivojnového obdobia pripomína tiež úvahy slovenského sociológa Antona Štefánka na túto tému.

V období po druhej svetovej vojne sa v stredovýchodnej Európe bádanie o národe a nacionalizme pod politickým tlakom oprelo len o práce marxistické a z nich najmä o Stalinove. Až na prelome päťdesiatych a šesťdesiatych rokov 20. storočia začali medzi spoločenskými vedcami vtedajších socialistických krajín otvorenejšie diskusie na tému národ a národnostná otázka. V druhej polovici šesťdesiatych rokov sa objavili prvé väčšie knižné práce v Československu, Poľsku, Maďarsku, ZSSR atď.

Autorka sa ďalej venuje podrobnejšie prácam troch historikov, ktorí najviac ovplyvnili bádanie v tejto téme. Ide o dielo Miroslava Hrocha, Józefa Chlebowczyka a Jenő Szücsa. Všetci traja publikovali zásadné práce najmä v druhej polovici šesťdesiatych a v sedemdesiatych rokoch nášho storočia, avšak s ich prácami sa západoeurópski kolegovia prevažne zoznámili až v osemdesiatych rokoch v prekladoch.

Autorka stručne charakterizuje osemdesiate roky 20. storočia, kedy témy o národe a nacionalizme neboli už natoľko časté a pozornosť vedcov sa skôr sústredila na etnické skupiny a etnické vedomie.

V závere článku sa autorka venuje silnému záujmu o otázky nacionalizmu po roku 1989. Konštatuje najmä úsilie prijímať impulzy sociálnych vied zo západnej Európy a zámoria, avšak zatiaľ nevybadala snahu o hlbšie zhodnotenie predchádzajúceho metodologického a teoretického zamera-
nia od druhej svetovej vojny.

Vydáva Ústav etnológie Slovenskej akadémie vied v Slovak Academic Press, spol. s r. o.

Ročník 44, 1996, číslo 4
Vychádza štvrťročne

Hlavný redaktor:
Doc. PhDr. Milan Leščák, CSc.

Výkonná redaktorka:
PhDr. Zora Vanovičová

Redakčná rada: PhDr. Stanislav Brouček, CSc., Doc. Lubica Droppová, CSc., PhDr. Božena Filová, CSc., PhDr. Milan Kiripolský, PhDr. Soňa Kovačevičová, DrSc., PhDr. Eva Krekovičová, CSc., PhDr. Jan Krist, PhDr. Martin Mešša, **PhDr. Ján Mjartan**, DrSc., PhDr. Magdaléna Paríková, CSc., Prof. Ján Podolák, DrSc., PhDr. Zora Rusnáková, CSc., PhDr. Peter Salner, CSc., PhDr. Miroslav Válka.

Adresa redakcie: Jakubovo nám. 12, 813 64 Bratislava
Registr. č. 7091

Rozširuje, objednávky a predplatné (aj do zahraničia) prijíma Slovak Academic Press, spol. s r. o. P. O. Box 57, Nám. Slobody 6, 810 05 Bratislava

SLOVAK ETHNOLOGY

Quarterly Review of the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences

Vol. 44, 1996, Number 4

Editors: Milan Leščák, Zora Vanovičová

Address of Editor: Jakubovo nám. 12, 813 64 Bratislava, Slovakia

Distributed by Slovak Academic Press, Ltd., P. O. Box 57, Nám. Slobody 6, 810 05 Bratislava, Slovakia and Slovart, A.C., odd. časopisov, Jakubovo nám. 12, 813 64 Bratislava

L'ETHNOLOGIE SLOVAQUE

Revue de l'Institut d'ethnologie de l'Académie slovaque des sciences

Année 44, 1996, No 4

Rédacteurs: Milan Leščák, Zora Vanovičová

Adresse de la rédaction: Jakubovo nám. 12, 813 64 Bratislava, Slovaque

SLOWAKISCHE ETHNOLOGIE

Zeitschrift des Ethnologischen Institutes der Slowakischen Akademie der Wissenschaften

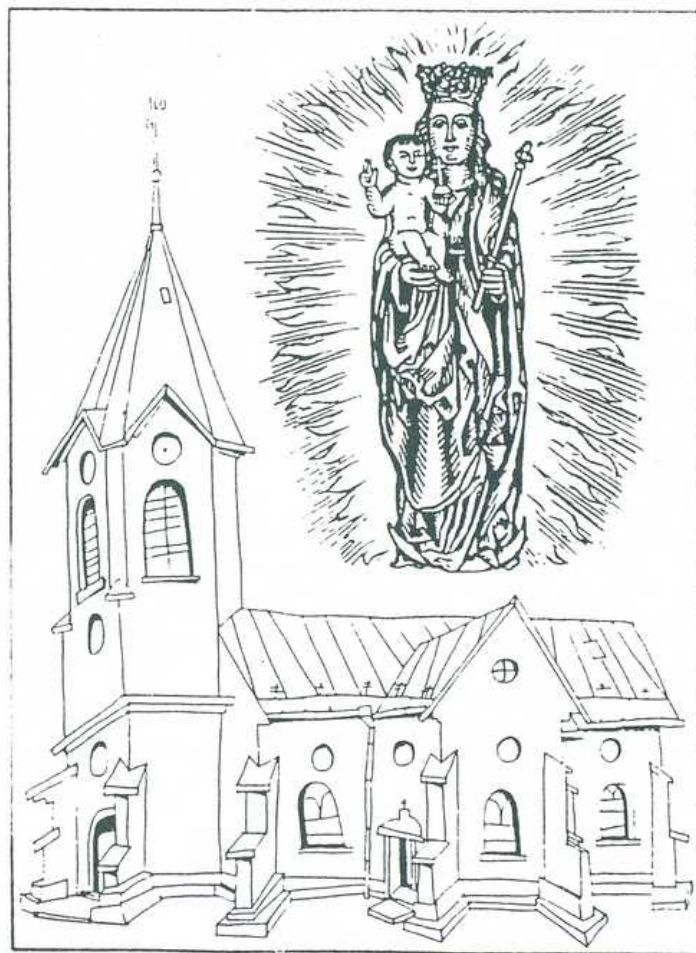
Jahrgang 44, 1996, Nr. 4

Redakteure: Milan Leščák, Zora Vanovičová

Redaktion: Jakubovo nám. 12, 813 64 Bratislava, Slowakei

Podávanie novinových zásielok povolené RPP Bratislava, Pošta 12, 8. 8. 1994, č. j. 346-RPP/94

SLOVENSKÝ NÁRODOPIŠ



ISSN 1335-1303

MIČ 49 61

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