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Studie | Studies

How much? The Evolution of Romanian Grain Prices in the Lower Danube Ports (1829–1853)

CRISTIAN CONSTANTIN

Abstrakt | Abstract

Za kolik? Vývoj cen rumunského obilí v přístavech na dolním Dunaji (1829–1853)

Jeden z podborů ekonomické historie se zabývá vývojem cen. Tento článek představuje zevrubné údaje pro rekonstrukci statistických řad potřebných pro studium vývoje cen obilí v přístavech na dolním Dunaji ve druhé čtvrtině 19. století. Nedávný výzkum umožnil identifikaci několika pramenů, které umožňují analýzu cenových křivek rumunské pšenice a kukuřice obchodované v Moldávii a Valašsku.

One of the subfields of economic history refers to prices. This article presents the toilsome means of reconstructing the statistical series required for studying the evolution of grain prices in the Lower Danube ports in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Recent research has allowed the identification of several sources which support the analysis of the sinusoidal curves of the price of Romanian wheat and corn traded in Moldavia and Wallachia.

Klíčová slova | Keywords

Brăila; Galați; ekonomika; noviny; statistika

Brăila; Galați; economy; newspapers; statistics

Introduction

Customarily, in the second quarter half of the nineteenth century, in order to reach Constantinople from Vienna, travellers disembark from fluvial ships in Galați, and reembark on maritime ones. In just a few years, owing to the steamboats of the Austrian Navigation Company (*Erste österreichische Donau Dampfschiffahrts Gesellschaft / First Danube Steamboat Shipping Company – D.D.S.G.*), Galați becomes the main communication junction for both terrestrial and water transport in the extended Black Sea area.

The most courageous stock jobber merchants from all ports of the Mediterranean Sea gather in Brăila and Galați.¹ They only care about one thing, and place their great expectations on the price of Danubian grain.

One of the subfields of economic history refers to prices² and, in this particular case, to the evolution of grain prices on the Lower Danube market. This is why my undertaking also has a pragmatic aim: that of drawing attention to this subfield, which was illustrated for many goods by several significant figures of Romanian historiography, only to fall in abeyance, unfortunately, before having fulfilled its role, i.e. that of producing at least one repertoire of the prices of the most important Romanian goods. Historians do next to nothing in the demarche of recovering/drafting statistical series dedicated to the evolution of prices in the Romanian area in the first half of the nineteenth century. Beyond its recording the costs of goods, history of prices provides information on the production system or exchange structure. The absence of serial data of grain prices inside the Danube hinterland hinders such analyses.

The present study attempts to fill an existing historiographical gap and introduces into the international circuit new statistical data on the evolution of grain prices in the hinterland of the Lower Danube between the Treaty of Adrianople (2/14 September 1829) and the outbreak of the Crimean War (1853). At the same time, the statistical table and graph at the end of this study illustrate in concrete figures how cereals from the hinterland of the Moldavia and Wallachia became attractive, due to their relatively low price, and were integrated into the European *entrepôts* (warehouses/deposit-ports) market.

Historiography of the problem and the 'old methodology'

What is the reason for this gap? Can it be the sources available or the lack thereof? Information regarding the prices of Moldo-Wallachian grains is generally unsystematic or downright unavailable, which is why the archives should be consulted. This, in turn, creates a need for palaeographers trained in the international languages spoken in the extended Black Sea basin. The documents of the foreign companies which operated in the ports of Brăila and Galați are missing from the Romanian archives, and there are not too many documents that indicate the prices of goods in their countries of origin either. Romanian archives preserve isolated references to the written corre-

1 Constantin ARDELEANU, *From Vienna to Constantinople on Board the Vessels of the Austrian Danube Steam-Navigation Company (1834–1842)*, *Historical Yearbook* 6, 2009, pp. 187–202; Idem, *O croazieră de la Viena la Constantinopol: călătorii, spații, imagini, 1830–1860*, Bucharest 2021, pp. 21–28, 51–60.

2 Elias H. TUMA, *Economic History and the Social Sciences: Problems of Methodology*, Los Angeles 1971, pp. 47–53.

spondence of some important merchants, many related to the period before the Crimean War (1853–1856).³

Mentions of prices are made in several works on economic history, starting with Ion Nistor's volume on Moldavian trade.⁴ The volume features a chapter on prices, but it is dedicated to the Middle Ages. The same historical period is highlighted by Alexandru Gonța,⁵ in a 1989 volume which records a number of prices of goods traded between Moldavia and Transylvania, based on sources from Transylvanian towns. Some general considerations on prices and monetary circulation inside the Romanian area are also present in the book *Romania's Economic History*.⁶ An extremely significant approach for the discussion on prices is that to monetary circulation inside the Romanian area. This aspect, alongside an analysis of the commercial flows, was tackled by Bogdan Murgescu⁷ in a seminal work on the Romanian economy during the Middle Ages.

Mircea N. Popa⁸ was the first (and the only, to date) Romanian historian to have conducted an analysis of the price phenomenon for the modern period. He analysed the evolution of prices in Wallachia from 1774 to 1831, in a thorough study based on the investigation of internal and external documents, on the narratives of various foreign travellers, and on archival materials. The value of the observation and analysis in this work is impressive. Other than that, information on prices in the first half of the nineteenth century can be found scattered in a number of papers on economic history written by a group of researchers from the 'Nicolae Iorga' History Institute of the Romanian Academy during the communist era. In many instances, these studies are not primarily concerned with discussing the evolution of prices, as is the case with Paul Cernovodeanu, Beatrice Marinescu, and Irina Gavrilă's scientific contributions.⁹

3 Serviciul Arhivelor Naționale Istorice Centrale ale României (The Service of the Central National Historical Archives of Romania), Fund *Evloghie și Hristo Gheorghiev*; Eugen STĂNESCU et al. (eds.), *Relații româno-bulgare de-a lungul veacurilor (sec. XII–XIX). Studii, I*, Bucharest 1971; Anca DOBRE – Felicia LEBĂDĂ, *Rolul fraților Gheorghiev în comerțul franco-englez al țării române*, Hrisovul, New series 2, 1996, pp. 211–224.

4 Ion NISTOR, *Handel und Wandel in der Moldau bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Czernowitz 1912.

5 Alexandru GONȚA, *Legăturile economice dintre Moldova și Transilvania în secolele XIII–XVII*, Bucharest 1989.

6 Nicolae N. CONSTANTINESCU (ed.), *Romania's Economic History. From the Beginnings to World War II*, Bucharest 1994. In the third chapter, the author notices the difficulty of tracing the evolution of prices, as well as that of calculating average prices.

7 Bogdan MURGESCU, *Circulația monetară în Țările Române în secolul al XVI-lea*, Bucharest 1996.

8 Mircea N. POPA, *Revoluția prețurilor în Europa*, Studii și articole de istorie 12, 1968, pp. 151–167; Idem, *La circulation monétaire et l'évolution des prix en Valachie (1774–1831)*, Bucharest 1978.

9 Paul CERNOVODEANU – Beatrice MARINESCU – Irina GAVRILĂ, *Comerțul britanic prin Galați și Brăila între 1837–1852*, Revista de Istorie 31 (1), 1978, pp. 629–650; Paul CERNOVODEANU – Beatrice MARINESCU, *British Trade in the Danubian Ports of Galatz and Brăila between 1837 and 1853*, Journal of European Economic History 8 (3), 1979, pp. 707–741; Paul CERNOVODEANU, *Implicațiile de ordin politic ale activității și falimentul casei de comerț Bell & Anderson din București*,

It is also necessary to mention the fact that, methodologically, Romanian contributions to this topic are far from similar studies of world history. The researchers into these matters are confronted with serious difficulties because of the lack of a conversion of the prices into a real, non-inflationary unit, such as the silver or gold standard, or of the absence of any reference to the evolution of prices in the neighbouring areas. More often than not, these studies compile references to more currencies that circulated in the Romanian Principalities.¹⁰ The few contributions to the history of grain prices in the two extra-Carpathian Romanian Principalities are geographically restricted to some areas or, more precisely, to the amounts paid by foreign merchants in exchange for goods purchased in the ports of Brăila and Galați. Neither do more recent studies manage to fully shed light on the difficult path from producers, going through intermediaries and carriers, to the representatives of the European trading houses. And since I have mentioned the diversity of currency used in the Romanian area, it is equally worth mentioning the multitude of historiographical controversies arising from the units of measurement used by producers and merchants in Moldo-Wallachian space.¹¹

Historical background

The story of the radical changes in Moldo-Wallachian society had begun half a century before and a few hundred kilometres eastwards. The Turks had controlled the navigation at the mouths of the Danube for three centuries. It took Tsarina's expansionist ambitions to break the Ottoman monopoly in the Black Sea basin. In July 1774, after a six-year war with the Ottoman Empire, Russia signed the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, obtaining the fortresses on the shores of Azov, the protectorate over the Crimean Khanate, Kabardia and the steppe between the Bug and Dnieper, and direct access to the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea. Only nine years had to pass until Empress Catherine II announced the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. Russia became

Studii și Materiale de Istorie Modernă 12, 1998, pp. 3–20.

- 10 Before 1867, when the new leu was introduced in Romania, the quotation of coins was at different and variable levels. A gold coin was worth 32 lei, the napoleon 20 French francs or 54 lei, the pound sterling was worth 25.20 French francs or 68 lei. The adoption of the new national monetary system, with the leu-bimetal (gold and silver) standard, was fixed at 0.3226 g gold or 5 g silver, identical to the French and Swiss francs. The equivalence with the previous coin, based on the metallic standard, was: 100 new lei = 270 old lei; 1 gold coin = 11.75 new lei; 1 French franc = 1 new Romanian leu. After 1867, the Romanian coinage was related to the other imported coins of that time as follows: £1 = 25.25 lei; \$1 = 5.18 lei; 1 German mark = 1.24 lei; 1 French/Swiss franc = 1 leu (see: Costin C. KIRIȚESCU, *Sistemul bănesc al leului și precursorii lui*, vol. 1 și 2, Bucharest 1964; Victor AXENCIUC, *Avuția națională a României. Cercetări istorice comparate 1860–1939*, Bucharest 2000, p. 19).
- 11 See studies on the units of measurement utilised in the Romanian area in Nicolae STOICESCU, *Cum măsurau strămoșii: Metrologia medievală pe teritoriul României*, Bucharest 1971; Petre DO-DOC, *Metrologie generală*, Bucharest 1979; Nicolae LEONĂCHESCU, *Bătălia pentru sistemul metric*, Bucharest 1986.

a force in the Black Sea basin. In the summer of 1793, José de Ribas was appointed to build the city of Hadjibei and a new port nearby, thus setting the foundation stone of Odessa. The ruling circles in Saint Petersburg, encouraged by the prospects of reconnecting the Black Sea basin to the international trade, paid great attention to the export by sea of food from Novorussia and Ukraine and ordered massive investment in the harbour infrastructure of Odessa. The empress's grandiose plans were pursued further by her heirs.¹²

The years went by, and another Russo-Turkish War burst out in 1828. More and more often, disputes would appear between the tsar and the sultan. Russia recorded another victory and seemed to have an open path to the Balkans. The Treaty of Adrianople (2/14 September 1829) also marked a new beginning for the two extra-Carpathian Romanian Principalities. Moldavia and Wallachia had large plains watered by a rich hydrographical basin, and were underpopulated. Owing to the international context, they became part and parcel of a competitive international trading system in the steppe north of the Black Sea and in the ports of Novorussia.¹³

12 See studies on the commercial impact of the opening of the ports north of the Black Sea for international navigation in Patricia HERLIHY, *Russian Grain and Mediterranean Markets, 1774–1861*, Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1963; Jean Louis van REGEMORTER, *Commerce et politique: préparation et négociation du traité franco-russe de 1787*, Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique 4 (3), 1963, pp. 230–257; Jan REYCHMAN, *Le commerce polonais en mer Noire au XVIIIe siècle par le port de Kherson*, Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique 7 (2), 1966, pp. 234–248; Trevor J. HOPE, *Britain and the Black Sea Trade in the Late Eighteenth Century*, Revue roumaine d'études internationales 8 (2), 1974, pp. 159–174; Jean Louis van REGEMORTER, *La Russie Méridionale, la Mer Noire et le commerce international de 1774 à 1861*, Ph.D. diss., Université de Paris 1, Panthéon – Sorbonne, Paris 1984; Patricia HERLIHY, *Odessa: A History, 1794–1914*, Cambridge Mass. 1986; B. N. Mironov, *Le mouvement des prix des céréales en Russie du XVIIIe siècle au début du XXe siècle*, Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations 41 (1), 1986, pp. 217–251; Robert E. JONES, *The Dnieper Trade Route in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries: a Note*, The International History Review 11 (2), 1989, pp. 303–312; Faruk BILICI, *La politique française en mer Noire, Vicissitudes d'une implantation, 1747–1789*, Istanbul 1992; Eyup OZVEREN, *A Framework for the Study of the Black Sea World, 1789–1915*, Review (Fernand Braudel Center) 20 (1), 1997, pp. 77–113; Vassilis KARDASSIS, *Diaspora Merchants in the Black Sea. The Greeks in Southern Russia, 1775–1861*, New York – Oxford 2001; Charles KING, *The Black Sea. A History*, Oxford 2004; T. C. PROUSIS, *Risky Business: Russian Trade in the Ottoman Empire in the Early Nineteenth Century*, Mediterranean Historical Review 20 (2), 2005, pp. 201–226; John P. LEDONNE, *Geopolitics, Logistics, and Grain: Russia's Ambitions in the Black Sea Basin, 1737–1834*, International History Review 28 (1), 2006, pp. 1–41; Nilghiu ISMAIL, *Relații economice anglo-otomane în Marea Neagră între 1774–1840*, Cluj-Napoca 2011; Constantin ARDELEANU, *The Discovery of the Black Sea by the Western World. The Opening of the Euxine to International Trade and Shipping (1774–1792)*, New Europe College. Ștefan Odobleja Program: Yearbook 2012–2013, 2014, pp. 21–46.

13 Venera ACHIM – Viorel ACHIM (eds.), *Modernizare socială și instituțională în Principatele Române, 1831–1859*, Bucharest 2016.

The 'Organic Statutes' and the development of the Moldo-Wallachian grain trade

The establishment of the Russian Protectorate and of constitutions of liberal inspiration (i.e., the 'Organic Statutes'/'Organic Regulations') suggested that the two extra-Carpathian Romanian Principalities were on the path to becoming modern states. However, Romanians' emancipation and modernisation proved to be a decades-long phenomena, made sooner by the intense, unmediated contact with capitalist western elements.¹⁴ The role in the Moldo-Wallachian economy of the large Ottoman *entrepôt* on the shores of the Bosphorus was gradually decreasing, replaced by beneficial exchange relations with the Greek, Italian and French ports of the Mediterranean Sea.¹⁵

The 'Organic Statutes', with a similar structure in the two provinces, established modern political and administrative principles, such as the division of power, a public budget, a state educational system, a national militia, judicial stability, etc.¹⁶ With such written provisions, the new regulations were among the most advanced constitutions in South-Eastern Europe at that time.¹⁷ The application of the 'Organic Statutes' stepped up the modernisation of the feudal institutions and set up new ones likely to entail the development of capitalism, initiating changes that represented an impulse to a new economic, social, and political stage. The way to the market economy and capitalist investments was widely opened in the Danubian Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. With the end of the Ottoman right of pre-emption over the Romanian exports and the growing demands from the West, Moldo-Wallachian landowners sensed the excellent opportunity to maximise the profitability of their estates, on which they were designated, for the first time, as actual owners of the land. Among the relevant provisions for the modernisation of the economic and

14 Ioan C. FILITTI, *Principatele române de la 1828 la 1834*, Bucharest 1934; Constantin BUȘE, *Comerțul exterior prin Galați sub regimul de port franc (1837–1883)*, Bucharest 1976; Paul CERNOVODEANU, *L'Activité des Maisons de Commerce et des Négociants Ioniens du Bas-Danube durant l'Intervalle 1829–1853*, in *Economies Méditerranéennes. Equilibres et Intercommunications, Xlle–XIXe Siècles*, Athens 1985, pp. 91–106; Idem, *Relații comerciale româno–engleze în contextul politicii orientale a Marii Britanii (1803–1878)*, Cluj-Napoca 1986; Constantin ARDELEANU, *Evoluția intereselor economice și politice britanice la Gurile Dunării (1829–1914)*, Brăila 2008.

15 P. CERNOVODEANU, *British Trade in the Danubian Ports*, pp. 707–741; Constantin ARDELEANU, *Câteva informații cu privire la navigația și comerțul statelor italiene prin gurile Dunării (1829–1856)*, *Analele Universității "Dunărea de Jos" din Galați* 5, 2006, pp. 121–131; Cristian CONSTANTIN, *Grain market integration in the Lower Danube region (1829–1853)*, *Epohi* 27 (1), 2019, pp. 89–101.

16 The Moldavian Statute is printed, in French, in *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. XXXII, London 1859, pp. 586–789.

17 Constantin ARDELEANU, *International Trade and Diplomacy at the Lower Danube: The Sulina Question and the Economic Premises of the Crimean War (1829–1853)*, Brăila 2014, pp. 53–56.

commercial milieu, reference should be made to Chapter V, *Commerce Regulation*, which developed the stipulations of the 1829 treaty; thus, article 148 defined the freedom of trade as the true source of prosperity.¹⁸

Brăila for Wallachia and Galați for the Moldavian Principality were termini of the internal itinerary of the agricultural goods from the plains in the meadow areas of the Danube, Siret, and Prut Rivers. As a consequence, this study refers to the exchanges carried out through these two ports. The Moldo-Wallachian bounty could reach the maritime Danube ports with great difficulty, which had turned into genuine merchant hives. The goods would be transported preponderantly by water, on various rudimentary vessels, or heaped in genuine ox-carts caravans.¹⁹ Railroads were still lacking in Eastern Europe at the time. The tumult of the Levantine bazars had relocated to the Lower Danube, and the Danube ports soon turned into a Tower of Babel. The 'entrepreneurial bug' that had spread north of the Black Sea after 1774 also contaminated the mouths of the Danube area after 1829. Daily life in the Principalities on the Danube would hum with activity, as the Romanians would gradually give up their Oriental idleness for the dynamism of the Western capital. Merchants from the entire world would enquire about the cost and quality of Romanian goods.²⁰ But, more than anything, the price of grain was everybody's concern.

For a foreign observer not involved in such financial speculations, the ports of the maritime Danube may evoke the adventures portrayed in Charles Dickens's novels. As a matter of fact, the renowned English novelist himself visited these ports in 1855, in the end of the 'Organic Statutes' era:

18 John R. LAMPE, Marvin R. JACKSON, *Balkan Economic History (1550–1950): From Imperial Borderlands to Developing Nations*, Bloomington 1982, passim; Keith HITCHINS, *The Romanians*, Oxford, 1996, pp. 58–189; Radu R. FLORESCU, *The Struggle against Russia in the Romanian Principalities: a Problem in Anglo-Turkish Diplomacy 1821–1854*, 2nd edition, Iași 1997, pp. 31–36.

19 Thomas THORNTON, *The Present State of Turkey... Together with the Geographical, Political and Civil State of the Principalities Moldavia and Wallachia*, London 1807, p. 398; *Commercial Resources of Wallachia and Moldavia*, Portfolio 5, 1837, p. 302; Jean Henry Abdolomyne UBICINI, *Provinces d'origine Roumaines. Valachie, Moldavie, Bukovina, Transylvanie, Bassarabie*, Paris 1856; Thibault LEFEBVRE, *Études diplomatique et économiques sur la Valachie*, Paris 1858, p. 323; Iilie CORFUS, *Agricultura Țării Românești în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea*, Bucharest 1969, pp. 195–251.

20 See the news series of the edition *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, I–IX, Bucharest 2004–2015; C. ARDELEANU, *International Trade and Diplomacy*, pp. 95–132.

*"We go stumbling along the unpaved streets of Galatz by the dim light of a lantern carried before us by a servant. The town, although the chief commercial city of the Danubian Principalities, and numbering its inhabitants by tens of thousands, is of course unlighted. The outward civilisation of these countries showy as it appears, has unhappily gone no further, up to the present time, than jewellery and patent-leather boots. Light, air, and cleanliness are at least two generations a-head of it. [...] The silver spell succeeds. A sooty little fellow, like a chimney-sweep, agrees to accompany me, and we go scuffling among rat-holes, open sewers, sleeping vagabonds, and scampering cats down to the quagmire by the waters-side; and scrambling over bales of goods, and a confused labyrinth of chains and cordage, gain the deck of the good ship Ferdinand. A cigar, a joke, and a dollar, overcomes the steward's scruples about a berth, and I wake next morning to the rattling sound of the paddle-wheels. The boat is very full. It is as difficult to get at the wash hand-basins as to fight one's way to the belle of a ball-room."*²¹

New perspectives and analyses

In order to be able to utilise a price indicated by a certain source in the construction of various retrospective series, the respective product's quality (and a short description), weight or volume and exact price should be mentioned.²² Unfortunately, in the Romanian area, documents do not always reflect the diversity of types and qualities of the grains on the market. Their imprecision and the many lacunae for certain years make the attempt of establishing the evolution of these prices per one product extremely difficult. Consequently, more scientific accuracy is required in using these sources in order to avoid slipping into methodological and interpretive errors.

Recently, there have been published two volumes which seem to bring the history of the Moldo-Wallachian grain prices into a favourable light. On the one hand, Constantin Ardeleanu²³ brings to the fore data collected by the research team coordinated by Paul Cernovodeanu, while also emphasising the interest of the contemporary international media²⁴ in the Danubian grain market; on the other hand, the second

21 Charles DICKENS, *The Roving Englishman*, in: *Household words*. A weekly journal conducted by Charles Dickens, 33 (19 January 1856 to 12 July 1856), New York 1856, pp. 22–23.

22 David Hackett FISCHER, *The Great Wave. Prices Revolutions and the Rhythm of History*, Oxford – New York 1996, pp. 117–178.

23 See details in C. ARDELEANU, *International Trade and Diplomacy*.

24 See Hunt's Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review from New York; and Portfolio from London.

volume²⁵ provides an overview of the entire phenomenon of the grains exported through the mouths of the Danube (1829–1940). Ardeleanu pursues a comparative analysis of the exports traded through the ports of the maritime Danube and through Odessa, and manages to order the statistical series that his Romanian predecessors elaborated based on their searches in British archives. The second book features an effortful, thorough study aimed at presenting, as accurately as possible, the evolution of prices from the producer to the storage of goods in the warehouses of European ports. Also, in this latter case, it is worth mentioning the efforts made towards facilitating the access to information. The quantities found in archival or media sources in various units of measurement have been transposed in the metric system, and the many currencies used on the grain market in the area at the mouths of the Danube have been converted into the hard currency of the time, the pound sterling. All these efforts pave the way towards the ensuing analysis, which is also complemented by the introduction of the information found in several Romanian newspapers from the first half of the nineteenth century in the historiographic circuit.²⁶

Economists define ‘price’ as the monetary reflection of the value of goods or services, compared and correlated on the basis of quantity, quality and other criteria. Two broad categories of prices are encountered in economic practice: supply prices (purchase price, negotiated price, wholesale price, import price, importer’s delivery price, trading company wholesale price, stock price, etc.) and selling prices (producer price, importer price, trading company wholesale and retail price, etc.). All traders know that prices depend on supply and demand, as well as on usefulness, quality and availability or scarcity of the product. The analysis of the evolution of prices for a product must also take into consideration the main functions of prices: supply/demand correlation, calculation or measurement of expenses and outcomes, cost recovery and revenue reimbursement, and stimulating the economic agents. Moreover, the price influences the profit directly.²⁷

25 See details in Cristian CONSTANTIN, *Comerțul cu cereale la Gurile Dunării: integrarea pe piață, structuri productive și infrastructura de transport (1829–1940)*, Brăila 2018.

26 Reference will be made to the periodical *Mercur. Jurnal comerțial al portului Brăilei*, edited by Ioan Penescu, in Brăila, between 1839 and 1842.

27 See an evolution of the perception on prices in Adam SMITH, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations*, Petersfield Hampshire 2007; David RICARDO, *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, London 1891; Maurice J. ROCHE – Kieran MCQUINN, *Grain price volatility in a small open economy*, *European Review of Agricultural Economics* 30 (1), 2003, pp. 77–98; Karl Gunnar PERSSON, *Mind the Gap! Transport Costs and Price Convergence in the Nineteenth Century Atlantic Economy*, *European Review of Economic History* 8 (2), 2004, pp. 125–147; Tălis J. PUTNIŢȘ, *What do price discovery metrics really measure?*, *Journal of Empirical Finance* 23, 2013, pp. 68–83.

Undoubtedly, the capitalist spirits of the first half of the nineteenth century would consider, to a great extent, the modern theoretical explanations of the components and functions of prices. Furthermore, they would be aware of the fact that grain businesses pay off and become lucrative if carried out for a long period of time. The Danube market was still lacking many defining elements of modern trade. For the traveller coming from the Ottoman Empire there will follow quarantine, in one of the lazarettos established by the authorities in Iasi or Bucharest, which may last up to two weeks, enough for him to get acquainted to and record the Romanian realities. Whether they have a direct interest in the evolution of the local market or not, these 'pilgrims' soon come into contact with the prices of local goods. Their stay, even if short-termed, requires food consumption and the use of a currency acceptable for local merchants. Currency exchangers are everywhere, ready to speculate the needs of a rudimentary financial and banking market.²⁸ The first stock market in the area was to appear as late as in 1883, in Brăila.²⁹ For the Levantine merchants that had ventured in the ports at the Lower Danube, the costs of the terrestrial, fluvial and maritime transport of grain would substantially increase their final price on the Mediterranean markets.³⁰ A low purchase price of wheat in Brăila or Galați could compete against the price in Odessa. But, from Sulina to Brăila, nature would often play tricks on the navigators, increasing freight price, which, in turn, affected the costs of the Danube grains compared to the prices in Novorussia.³¹ The merchant had to take all these into account and speculate the well-timed moment of the market.

Sinusoidal curves of prices

On 18 December 1839 (Julian calendar), a publication useful for the commercial environment of its age was launched in Brăila: 'Mercur, jurnal comerțial al portului Brăilei' ['Mercur – A Commercial Journal of the Port of Brăila']. Three months had to pass from that Monday to the release date of the next issue, 16 March 1840 (Julian calendar).³² Contemporaries considered the commercial journal necessary, as 'the

28 See ample descriptions of foreign travellers who visited the maritime Danube ports in C. ARDELEANU, *International Trade and Diplomacy...*

29 Gheorghe IAVORSCHI, *Istoricul Bursei de cereale Brăila (1883–1948)*, *Analele Brăilei*, New series, 1, 1993, pp. 41–53.

30 C. KNICK HARLEY, *Coal Exports and British Shipping, 1850–1913*, *Explorations in Economic History* 26, 1989, pp. 311–338; Andrei EMILCIUC, *The Trade of Galați and Brăila in the Reports of Russian Officials from Sulina Quarantine Station (1836–1853)*, in Constantin Ardeleanu and Andreas Lyberatos (eds.), *Port Cities of Western Black Sea Coast and the Danube: Economic and Social Development in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Corfu 2016, pp. 63–93.

31 C. CONSTANTIN, *Comerțul cu cereale la Gurile Dunării...*, pp. 117–122.

32 Viorel BRATOSIN, *O publicație de succes [Mercur. Jurnal comerțial al portului Brăilei] falimentată de abonați*, *Magazin Istoric* 39 (3), 2005, pp. 31–32.

merchant class [had] to have their own publication, like all the other political, liberal, and religious classes.³³ The editor Ion Penescu outlined the general lines of the commercial publication: ‘local and foreign news, product prices, import and export information, state of harvest, product quality, names of all ships that come and go through Brăila port, and the products that they import or export’. With the issuance of the newspaper *Mercur*, another stringent problem of the age was partly solved, as the editorial board would keep the traders and the general audience interested in ‘matching various European currencies with the exchange rates in our country’. The currency exchangers had ‘infested’ the Lower Danube ports and were taking advantage of the exchange rates at their will, which quickly turned them into merchants well-connected in the Western *entrepôts*.

It is almost impossible to reconstruct any statistical series based on data provided by the newspaper from Brăila, but the two-centuries-after reader may notice the trends of the grain market in the Black Sea area. The news included in the pages of the gazette goes towards horizons way beyond the natural border created by the alluviation in Sulina.

March 1840 was a month characterised by stagnation. The movement in the port of Brăila proves the important traders’ lack of interest in the Danubian grain throughout that year. The total grain export (wheat and maize) in the ports of Brăila and Galați amounted only to 1,353,325 quintals all year long,³⁴ with substantial balance in favour of the Moldavian port. The unsatisfactory harvests of 1839 and 1840 seem to be the reason for the low activity of the grain market at the Lower Danube. Experts consider the two harvests low, respectively bad. Nonetheless, Brăila port was animated during those early days of March 1840 by the presence of more ships under the Ottoman flag. These ships had arrived unloaded, in the hope of returning to Istanbul loaded with various Romanian goods. Wheat was sold for 135 lei/ Brăila kilo, the price of high-quality maize went above 80 lei/ Brăila kilo³⁵, and that of second-rate maize above 75 lei/ Brăila kilo. Barley was sold for more than 64 lei/ Brăila kilo, and millet for 34 lei/ Brăila kilo. The goods were purchased from rural merchants directly; no purchases were made in the *entrepôts* set up for the use of ships. One Brăila kilo equals 6.8 hectolitres and 510 kilograms of wheat or maize.³⁶ Judging by the conversion made a few deca-

33 *Mercur*. Jurnal comerțial al portului Brăilei, 18 December 1839 [Julian calendar], p. 1.

34 C. CONSTANTIN, *Comerțul cu cereale la Gurile Dunării*, pp. 107–108.

35 Old capacity measure for cereals, equal to about 680 litres in Wallachia (Brăila) and about 430 litres in Moldavia (Galați); see: <https://www.dex.ro/chil%C4%83> (07.09.2022) and C. CONSTANTIN, *Comerțul cu cereale la Gurile Dunării...*, pp. 712–713.

36 *Ibidem*, p. 712.

des later, one pound sterling was worth 67.20 lei at the time.³⁷

The newspapers do not describe 1840 as a year of outstanding trades. The ship 'Ferdinand' would bring from the capital of the Ottoman sultans as few as five passengers and three parcels of manufactured goods, while only six persons would embark in Brăila. 'Argos' had come to anchor in Brăila around 15 March, coming from Schela Cladovei with just three passengers on board and a load of iron and seeds, headed for Galați. In the Moldavian port, it loaded five parcels of iron and groceries to be delivered in Rușciuc, Pest and Vienna, and boarded four passengers heading to Turnu Severin.³⁸

The grain price on the Brăila market significantly increased towards the end of April 1840. The improper and rudimentary conditions in which the stocks had been kept led to splitting the two cereals mostly traded on the Danubian market into three categories. According to these categories, wheat was sold in Brăila for 170, 150 and respectively 140 lei/ Brăila kilo. The price of maize would go as high as 100 lei/ Brăila kilo for the first category, and 95 and 85 lei/ Brăila kilo for the other two. The prices of barley and millet were 60, respectively 42 lei/ Brăila kilo. The port was animated by loads made on ships under Ottoman, Russian, Sardinian, and Greek flags.³⁹

On 1 August 1840 (Julian calendar), 'Ferdinand' laid anchor in Brăila, bringing a handful of passengers and 'money groups' (cash). The exports from the Romanian ports on the Danube at the end of July 1840 consisted of very few cereal goods, a sign of their inexistence. Rarely are sales conducted in Turnu Severin mentioned at all.⁴⁰

In the second half of August 1840 (Julian calendar), the Brăila grain market was marked by the same quietude as in the last few weeks because of the lack of goods. Not even one sale had been concluded around the date of 20 August 1840 (Julian calendar). Ships were still present in the port, but no freight was paid, although it was more than reasonable. Maize, yet to be cropped, was missing from the market, while new wheat was selling for about 140–145 lei/ Brăila kilo.⁴¹

There are various reasons for the relatively low export of Moldo-Wallachian grains. The Russian Protectorate over the two Romanian provinces on the Danube, the Russian vexation of the navigation on the Sulina Channel, and the frequent occupations of the Principalities by the armies of the three neighbouring great powers are just a few factors determining the stagnation of the Romanian grain market, which resulted in a trade at the mouths of the Danube which was far from its true potential.

37 *Mercur. Jurnal comerțial al portului Brăilei*, 16 March 1840 [Julian calendar], p. 3.

38 *Ibidem*, 20 March 1840 [Julian calendar], p. 1.

39 *Ibidem*, 24 April 1840 [Julian calendar], p. 1.

40 *Ibidem*, 5 August 1840 [Julian calendar], 2.

41 *Ibidem*, 25 August 1840 [Julian calendar], 1.

From the analysis of the total amount of exports in the two ports results that Galați's best year was 1847 – £775,528 – whilst the worst was recorded in the first year of its having received the *free port* status – exports amounting to just £120,213. By comparison, for Brăila, the Wallachian gate to the West, the most productive year was also 1847 (£1,592,944). At the opposite end is the year 1837. The total amount of exports in both ports ranges from £233,694 (1837) to a highest level in 1847 (£2,368,472). During the first years, Galați export was superior to that in Brăila, whilst the Wallachian port gained precedence after 1840. In the most profitable year (1847), exports from Brăila amounted to more than double of the numbers recorded for Galați. An equally spectacular situation was to be recorded in 1852, when goods amounting to £567,110 were exported through the Moldavian port, while foreign trade in Brăila totaled £916,933, 80% more than Galați.⁴²

Important grain exporters (but not only), Moldavia and Wallachia traded together in 1845, through the two maritime ports, goods amounting to c. 1-million pounds sterling, in conditions of a 'disastrous' harvest. Over the next two years, improvements in the grain production in the Danubian Principalities were recorded, but 1846 and 1847 are not the peak of the harvest recorded during the 1829–1853 interval. Ilie Corfus ranks these years' harvests as 'good', unlike the maximum of the period, 1842, when a 'mediocre' export was recorded (£556,989), twice the amount recorded in 1837 (£233,694), a year with a 'low' harvest. The phenomenon of an almost continuous increase of the value of exports traded through Brăila and Galați is noticeable in the years of 'disastrous' harvests (1841, 1845 and 1849), when it reached higher levels than the ones recorded during the early years of the implementation of the 'Organic Statutes', and even than the years with a clearly superior quantitative and qualitative grain production.⁴³ Consequently, the trends of international trade of the two Romanian ports were significantly influenced by the international policies concerning cereals in the large deposit-ports.

In 1850, the freight of a quintal of grain transported from the Black Sea ports (e.g., Odessa) to Great Britain was of approx. 4 shillings.⁴⁴ For Moldo-Wallachian grains, additional costs had to be added for the Brăila/Galați – Sulina sector, reaching as much as one third of the value of maritime freight. Before the Crimean War, the freight from the ports of the maritime Danube to Great Britain amounted to 5–6 shillings/quintal, and represented half the cost per quintal traded in the Romanian ports.

What is essential for studying grain trade is the price comparison for various con-

42 *Commerce of the Danube*, Hunt's Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review, New-York 27 (3), 1852, p. 293.

43 I. CORFUS, *Agricultura Țării Românești*, pp. 252–253.

44 KNICK HARLEY, *Coal Exports*, pp. 311–338.

temporary markets. The price of grains on the British market amounted to an average of £2, in the 1826–1830 interval, and in the range of £1 and 6 shillings – £1 and 8 shillings/q⁴⁵, in the years 1830–70. Until 1846, Great Britain preserved the grain import tax system according to their internal production.⁴⁶ By comparison, on the European markets, grain prices ranged from 15 and 18 shillings/q in Italy in the 1826–1845 interval, to £1 – £1 and 4 shillings/q in France (1825–1850).⁴⁷ In Brăila and Galați (see Table 1), the wheat price recorded fluctuations between 7 and 8 shillings/q (1836–1838), went above 10 shillings/q (1839) and set at a value of approx. 8–17 shillings/q (in the 1840s).⁴⁸ In the first years of *free ports* (*porto-franco*) status, in Brăila (1836) and Galați (1837), wheat price was approximately a quarter of the British average price and half of the Italian one. After 1840, the grain export through the ports at the maritime Danube continued to amount to values two or three times lower than the British and 1.5–1.8 lower than the Italian ones.⁴⁹ In the fourth decade, the prices in Brăila and Galați were below the prices in the Russian hinterland north of the Black Sea, which was, at that time, the main grain exporter at the European level. The Romanian Principalities must have massively exported grains ever since the 1830s, and this aspect should be correlated with the customs tax system of Great Britain.⁵⁰

For example, the year 1848 should have represented a new starting point for Danubian trade. The abolishment of the Corn Laws in Great Britain in 1847 and the famine in Ireland during those years did not trigger an ample and immediate process of increasing the grain production in the Romanian Principalities. On the basis of some rudimentary sources of the 'Organic Statutes' era, Ilie Corfus described the Wallachian harvests of 1848 and 1850 as 'mediocre', and the one of 1849 as 'disastrous'.⁵¹ Cropping

45 1 q = 1 quintal = 100 kilograms.

46 The British system of import taxes was based on a mobile scale (valid from 1828 through 1846), which made the grain traders' profit vary depending on the price on this state's market. When the price of British wheat went above 73 shilling/quarter, the customs tax was of 1 shilling. If the price was between 70 and 71 shilling/quarter, the tax went up to 10 shilling and 8 pennies; when the price of British grain was of 52–53 shillings/quarter, the tax reached 34 shillings and 8 pennies. The need for grain forced Great Britain to import quantities that were no less than 1.5 million quintals/year. See detailed interpretations in Ulrich MENZEL, *Auswege aus der Abhängigkeit. Die entwicklungspolitische Aktualität Europas*, Frankfurt am Main 1988, p. 442; Paul BAIROCH, *Commerce extérieur et développement économique de l'Europe au XIX^e siècle*, Paris 1976, pp. 40–43, 190–193; Brian R. MITCHELL, *International Historical Statistics. Europe 1750–2000*, 5th edition, Houndmills 2003, p. 403.

47 Bogdan MURGESCU, *România și Europa. Acumularea decalajelor economice (1500–2010)*, Iași 2010, p. 118.

48 Paul CERNOVODEANU, *Relații comerciale româno–engleze în contextul politicii orientale a Marii Britanii (1803–1878)*, Cluj-Napoca 1986, pp. 92, 123–124, 149.

49 Michael G. MULHALL, *The Dictionary of Statistics*, 4th edition, London 1903, p. 149.

50 Ibidem.

51 I. CORFUS, *Agricultura Țării Românești*, pp. 252–253.

in Wallachia was carried out in 1849 and 1849 under revolutionary auspices and under the intervention of foreign armies. Quantitatively speaking, the grain export in Brăila in 1848 amounted to only c. 45% of the one recorded a year earlier. The price was only 31% of the one obtained for trading grains in 1847. Taking 1847 as a reference year, in 1849 a regression of more than two thirds was recorded in grain quantity, and of 80% in amounts collected from its trade.⁵² Considerable decline is recorded in the mean grain selling price, which decreased by more than 30% in 1848–1852 as compared to 1847, when the maximum value on the Danubian market was set at 15 shillings/q. The statistical data identified up to this moment do not allow a more detailed analysis.

Conclusion

Broadly speaking, foreign trade through the mouths of the Danube between 1829 and 1853 represents the transition, which began timidly at the end of the 18th century, from the habits of the Eastern world, embodied by the sovereign power (the Ottoman Empire), to the mechanisms of the capitalist market, visible in the ports of the Maritime Danube through the substantial increase in the number of merchants, connected to the movement of the market from Western *entrepôts*, and foreign-flagged vessels, travelling from the Levant to purchase grain at reduced prices from the ports of Brăila and Galați.

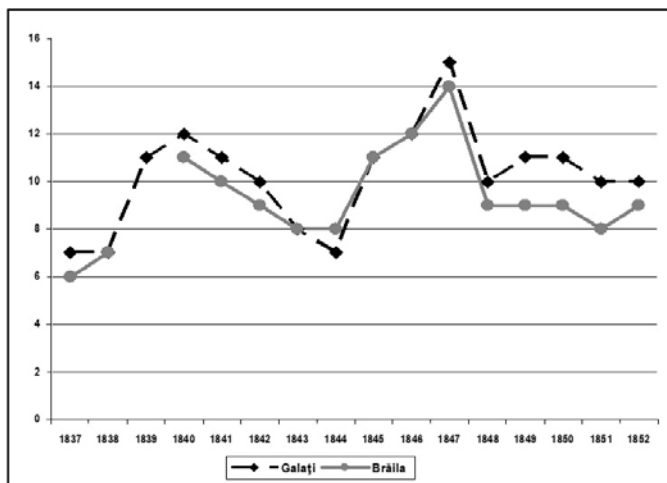
Concretely, as can be observed in *Figure 1*, the wheat price in the Danubian Maritime ports, the most traded cereals in the European *entrepôts*, recorded fluctuations between 7 and 8 shillings/q (1836–1838), went above 10 shillings/q (1839) and set at the medium value of 11–12 shillings/q (after 1840), with a maximum of 17 shillings/q (1847/1848). The grains from the Moldo-Wallachian hinterland became attractive due to their relatively low price, and were quickly integrated into the Mediterranean *entrepôt* market, to be subsequently sent to the ports of the UK and Northern Europe.

The identification of contemporary sources which helped in creating a first tentative statistic of the evolution of the prices of wheat and maize traded in the ports of Brăila and Galați represents a genuine accomplishment for Romanian historiography and is, at the same time, a marketable tool for future research. There are grounds to consider that a work on grain prices on the Danubian market, without claims to statistically record their annual or monthly evolution, might be possible on condition that more researchers join forces and pursue the research collectively. I consider that such a project might be significant for Romanian historiography, even at more than one century from the debut of the scientific approaches to prices in European historiography.

⁵² P. CERNOVODEANU, *Comerțul britanic*, pp. 635–639; P. CERNOVODEANU, *British Trade in the Danubian Ports*, pp. 716–717.

Table 1. Price of grains exported through the Danubian ports (1837–1852). Values (in shillings/quintal)⁵³

Product	Wheat		Maize	
	Galați	Brăila	Galați	Brăila
1837	7	6	4	4
1838	7	7	4	4
1839	11	---	6	---
1840	12	11	8	7
1841	11	10	7	7
1842	10	9	6	5
1843	8	8	5	5
1844	7	8	5	5
1845	11	11	6	5
1846	12	12	9	9
1847	15	14	12	12
1848	10	9	9	8
1849	11	9	8	7
1850	11	9	8	7
1851	10	8	7	6
1852	10	9	8	6

Figure 1. Evolution of the price of wheat exported from the Galați and Brăila ports (1837–1852). Values in shillings/quintal⁵⁴

53 Paul CERNOVODEANU – Beatrice MARINESCU – Irina GAVRILĂ, *Comerțul britanic prin Galați și Brăila între 1837–1852*, *Revista de Istorie* 31 (1), 1978, pp. 635–639; Paul CERNOVODEANU – Beatrice MARINESCU, *British Trade in the Danubian Ports of Galați and Brăila between 1837 and 1853*, *Journal of European Economic History* 8 (3), 1979, pp. 716–717.

54 Ibidem.

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Summary

This paper presents the toilsome means of reconstructing the statistical series required for studying the evolution of grain prices in the Lower Danube ports in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The provisions of the Russo-Turkish Peace Treaty of Adrianople (2/14 September 1829) and the implementation of some apparently liberal constitutional projects (the 'Organic Statutes', 1831/1832) in Wallachia and Moldavia by the suzerain power, Russia, created a favourable framework for the development of the open international trade in the Romanian ports on the Lower Danube. Brăila (for Wallachia) and Galați (for Moldavia) became two centres integrated into the international grain market, whilst the rates for maize and wheat in the meadows of the Danube, Siret and Prut Rivers represented a constant concern for foreign traders. Recent research has allowed the identification of several sources which support the analysis of the sinusoidal curves of the price of Romanian wheat and maize traded in the ports of Brăila and Galați.

Re-contextualizing the Identity Marks and re-shaping the Landscape and its Elements: Notes and Witnesses from rural Slovakia*

DORINA DRAGNEA

Abstrakt | Abstract

Rekontextualizace identifikačních znaků a přetvoření krajiny s jejími prvky. Poznámky a svědectví ze slovenského venkova

Článek, zaměřený na slovenský venkov, poskytuje etnografický vhled do rekontextualizace forem identifikačních znaků a způsobů přetváření krajinných prvků v emickém a etickém pojetí. Výzkum přibližuje pohled zahraniční badatelky na vybraný kulturní terén a skupinu. Pozornost je zaměřena na současné aspekty krajiny a její etnografické prvky, jak byly zaznamenány *in situ*. Tyto prvky jsou zkoumány ze synchronního a chronologického hlediska.

*The article, focused on the rural area in Slovakia, provides ethnographic insight into the re-contextualizing forms of the identity marks and the ways of re-shaping the landscape's elements, having emic and etic approaches. The research introduces the perspective of the non-native researcher with the selected cultural terrain and group. Attention is directed to the contemporary aspects of the landscape and its ethnographic elements, as they were noticed *in situ*; the synchronic and chronologic views of them are considered as well.*

Klíčová slova | Keywords

Slovensko; nepůvodní vzhled; krajinné prvky; identita; emický a etický přístup

Slovakia; non-native outlook; landscape elements; identity; emic and etic approach

* This study was written within the research project "The Slovak ethnographic landscapes as cultural identity marks visualised through the village and traditional house", conducted in the frame of the National Scholarship Programme of the Slovak Republic (2020–2021).

Introduction

The key goal of the research is synchronically and diachronically revealing and interpreting the continuities and discontinuities of the tangible and intangible ethnographic elements, with symbolic and real identity value, expressed on/in cultural landscapes, providing examples from the rural areas in Slovakia. The investigation is of a non-native researcher, who has encountered these sites for the first time. It portrays the interpretation of how the ethnographic patterns build and shape the cultural landscapes on the one hand and how the scenery and its elements are perceived by the community on the other. Hence, I incline towards an analysis of the *“specific objects or features in a place or landscape to which people are attached”*.¹

Before I start my inter- and trans-disciplinary research, I will consider the historical retrospective on the subject. In most studies of social and cultural anthropology, older or newer, the various shaping factors on identity² and the rural character of Slovakia³ are presented, debated, emphasized, and recalled. For example, David Václavík asserts *“the countryside is the place preserving the origins of the Slovak identity, including for instance a strong bond with traditions and religion”*.⁴ While ethnographer Peter Slavkovský states that *“the traditional culture of communities living in the countryside and in smaller towns forms the original basis of Slovakia’s cultural heritage and by its nature belongs to the European peasant civilization”*.⁵ As follows, the village (*dědina*) was analysed from different points of view, like a social space, as a lifestyle and unit of the administrative organization,⁶ through the lenses of the experiments and transformations by which it has been overpowered in the successive political regimes of varying stripes.

Historically, the Slovak ethnologist Olga Danglová, in one of her studies, remarks on the contexts that determined the unity and the unaltered preservation of the features of the rural community in Slovakia until the first half of the 20th century. She affirms this situation was possible due to the harmony of housing and work (farming and pastoralism) in the local village milieu, and to an enclosed social life and endogamy.⁷ According to other sources, in the second half of the 20th century, when the country

1 Maria Carmen HIDALGO – Bernardo HERNÁNDEZ, *Place attachment: conceptual and empirical questions*, Journal of Environmental Psychology 21 (3), 2001, pp. 273–281.

2 Vladimír KRIVÝ – Oľga DANGLOVÁ (eds.), *Svet mnohých ‘MY a ONI’: Kolektívne identity na súčasnom Slovensku*, Bratislava 2006; Gabriela KILIÁNOVÁ – Eva KREKOVIČOVÁ – Eva KOWALSKÁ E (eds.), *My a tí druhí v modernej spoločnosti. Konštrukcie a transformácie kolektívnych identity*, Bratislava 2009.

3 Zuzana BEŇUŠKOVÁ et al., *Tradičná kultúra regiónov Slovenska*, Bratislava 1998.

4 David VÁCLAVÍK, *Shaping the Slovak Identity and the Manifestation Thereof in the Social Iconosphere*, Historická Sociologie 2, 2019, p. 39.

5 Peter SLAVKOVSKÝ, *Agrárna kultúra Slovenska. Premeny v čase*, Bratislava 2002, p. 160.

6 Lubomír FALŤAN (ed.), *Malé vidiecke sídla na Slovensku začiatkom 21. storočia*, Bratislava 2011.

7 Olga DANGLOVÁ, *Vidiecke sídlo ako priestor identity. výber z prípadových štúdií štyroch slovenských obcí*, Národopisná Revue 21 (2), 2011, p. 95.

was under the socialist regime, in remote places it was still possible to capture the “*dying pre-capitalist world of small towns and villages*”⁸, the last ones, Ľubomír Lipták defined as the basis of the Slovak “microcosmos”.

After 1940, the village opened its gates, even forced into new economic entities, forms of landownership, and management. All these intruded “*communism in the landscape*”⁹ and urbanization of the rural settlement began to be implemented. As well the new possibilities attract the peasants (farmers) to seasonally leave their farms and go for work in urban areas. Thus, changes took place regarding the use and management of the agricultural landscapes of the villages,¹⁰ the image of the rural architecture,¹¹ and the social life of the community.

The continuous line of the rurality index until the current time is confirmed by the data provided by the United Nations that inform – 46.27 % population of Slovakia lives in the rural area and there are about 2,749 rural municipalities.¹² Nowadays, the elements of their scenery and it itself (based on the selected villages) are recontextualized in the conditions of neoliberalism. The village and its landscapes are perceived as a resource for sustainable development and mixed economic functions, as heritage resources and alternative lifestyles, etc. The rural community, consisting of natives, newcomers, or seasonal residents is in the process of passing towards the “post-productivist transition”,¹³ re-evaluating the functions of the village and what it means in the era of globalization. As well, during the first quarter of the 21st century, many rural communities are trying to regain and reshape their unique identity by passing on and promoting their cultural heritage elements, especially through economic and tourist mechanisms. For example, recently, the authors’ group¹⁴ analysing four villages, winners of the Village of the Year Competition up to 2017, focuses on the following suggestive thematic dimensions: village as a manager, village as a host, painted village, village as a garden, and village as a community.

Positioning at the edge of the emic and etic insight

The ethnographic contacts with the identity value brought and made by the human

8 Ľubomír LIPTÁK, *Protirečivé stránky modernizácie. O slovenskej otázke na prelome storočia*, Historická Revue 7, 1996, p. 28.

9 Jiří LÖW – Igor MÍČHAL, *Krajinný ráz*, Kostelec nad Černými lesy 2003.

10 Katarína KRISTIÁNOVÁ – Jana ADAMKOVÁ, *Slovak agricultural landscape – transition responses*, A|Z ITU Journal of Faculty of Architecture 7 (2), 2010, pp. 121–132.

11 Juraj PODOBA, *Vývoj staviteľstva a spôsobu bývania v dedinskom prostredí v 20. storočí*, Bratislava 2011.

12 Slovak Republic, Summary Data: http://www.sodbtn.sk/obce/index_kraje.php [14.03.2023].

13 Brian W. ILBERY, *The geography of rural change*, London 1998.

14 Jolana DARULOVÁ – Katarína KOŠTIALOVÁ – Zdena KRIŠKOVÁ, *Vidiel tradičný, moderný a inšpiratívny. Dedina roka. Hrušov, Dobrá Niva, Oravská Lesná, Spišský Hrhov, Banská Bystrica 2020.*

behaviour in the landscape require to be considered through the lenses of both epistemological insights – the emic¹⁵ and the etic.¹⁶

The etic vision unfolds on several theoretical interdisciplinary contributions. Building upon my field research in rural Slovakia, I consider that this human creation, shaped over the course of history, is carried out in close relationship with the possibilities or lack thereof provided by the local natural milieu, social and economic contexts, through a synergy of the folk and religious practices, as well as aesthetic and artistic expressions. These mixed cultural data build and archive the symbolic and real collective identity, its changes, and conversions. They reveal the value of the landscape's heritage created, preserved, and passed on by the related cultural group. Thus, as Daniels asserts the landscape "*gives shape to the imagined community of the nation*".¹⁷ As well, my focus on rural areas emerges from Susan Buggey's statement that the "*traditional knowledge relates contemporary cultures directly to traditional places. [...] Seeing places as markers of identity requires looking at them through the worldview and experience of the peoples associated with them*".¹⁸ In such a way, the cultural landscape and its elements placed under my analysis are complex phenomena with a tangible and an intangible identity. The tangible structure and components of the landscape, like resources and natural conditions, to which the materiality provided by man is added, as a result of capitalizing on these tangible structures, an identity is visually expressed. This identity reflects the culture of the group as well, which is palpable, sensory, and functionally active. The intangible components arise from ideas and interactions which have an impact on the perceptions and shaping of the landscape. These are pragmatic actions, experience, cultural practices, and even religious beliefs closely linked to the environment and the way it has been perceived over time. Therefore, for rural Slovakia as well, it is matching the assertion that the "*cultural landscapes mirror the cultures which created them*".¹⁹

The cultural landscape should not be seen only as a tangible construct but must also be decoded and seen beyond what the visible parts show us. Evocative for this statement, Tim Ingold's assertion is "*to perceive the landscape is, therefore, to carry out*

15 Kenneth L. PIKE, *On The Emics and Etics of Pike and Harris*, in: Thomas N. Headland – Kenneth L. Pike – Harris Marvin (eds.), *Emics and Etics. The Insider/Outsider Debate* (Frontiers of Anthropology), Thousand Oaks 1990, pp. 28–47.

16 *Ibidem*, pp. 48–61.

17 Stephen DANIELS, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States*, Princeton 1993, p. 5.

18 Susan BUGGEY, *An Approach to Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes in Canada*, in: Igor Krupnik – Rachel Mason – Tonia Horton (eds.), *Northern Ethnographic Landscapes: Perspectives from Circumpolar Nations*, Washington 2004, pp. 19–20.

19 Harald PLACHTER – Mechtild ROSSLER, *Cultural landscapes: reconnecting culture and nature*, in: Bernd von Droste – Harald Plachter – Mechtild Rossler (eds.), *Cultural Landscapes of Universal Value – Components of a Global Strategy*, Jena 1995, p. 15.

an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past".²⁰ In this course of ideas, it is necessary to appeal to the opinion of geographer Jan Hromádka, who established the first classification of landscapes in Slovakia in 1943. In his analysis of the cultural values of landscape, he points out that the landscape *"is reflected in work, culture, religion, and customs and man's life as the specific feature of the regional differences in sceneries' types to outline the image of the landscape while capturing its 'spirit'"*.²¹

As *"a process by which social and subjective identities are formed"*,²² the cultural landscapes are a dynamic construct; its constituents are always continuously changing, converting, and metamorphosing. The *"landscape is never passive. People engage with it, rework it, appropriate it, and contest it. It is part of the way in which identities are created and disputed, whether as an individual, group, or nation-state. Operating at the juncture of history and politics, social relations, and cultural perceptions, the landscape is a concept of high tension"*.²³ The cultural landscape on the whole, in rural Slovakia, reveals a rapid content mutation, conflicts, and uninterrupted trials that cause various clashes, similar to the transformations that the community faces. Insofar, Pierce Lewis affirms *"our human landscape is our unwitting biography, reflecting our tastes, our values, our aspirations, and even our fears in tangible visible form"*.²⁴ In such a way, the cultural landscape is a space with multivocality and multilocality value,²⁵ emerged from the political events, economical regimes, social changes, living experience, and even natural hazards. These demonstrate *"the landscapes reflect the complexity of people's lives. They are historically contingent and their mutability stems from the various ways in which people understand them and engage with the material world"*.²⁶

20 Tim INGOLD, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*, London – New York 2000, p. 189.

21 Jan HROMÁDKA, *Všeobecný zemepis Slovenska*, in: Dimitrij Andrusov – Ján Hromádka – Martin Novacký – Jozef Babor (eds.) *Slovenska vlastiveda I*, Bratislava 1943, pp. 83–332; Jan OTAHEL, *Landscape and Landscape Research in Slovakia*, Belgeo. Revue Belge de Géographie. Landscape Research in Europe 2–3, 2004, pp. 337–346.

22 William J. T. MITCHELL (ed.), *Landscape and Power*, Chicago 1994 [2002], p. 1.

23 Alan BARNARD – Jonathan SPENCER (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, London – New York 2005, p. 488.

24 Lewis PIERCE, *Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene*, in: Donald W. Meinig – John B. Jackson (eds.), *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, New York 1979, p. 12.

25 Margaret C. RODMAN, *Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality*, *American Anthropologist*. New Series 94 (3), 1992, pp. 640–656; Bradley S. JORGENSEN – Richard C. STEDMAN, *Measuring the Spatial Component of Sense of Place: A Methodology for Research on the Spatial Dynamics of Psychological Experiences of Places*, *Environment and Planning B. Planning and Design* 38 (5), 2011, pp. 795–813.

26 Christopher TILLEY – Kate CAMERON DAUM, *An Anthropology of Landscape: The Extraordinary in the Ordinary*, London 2017, p. 10.

The ethnographic individuality of the communities generates an emic approach to their cultural facts related to their space and natural environment. For example, in a volume focused on northern landscapes, the authors build their discourse around the term ethnographic landscape, which *"includes the physical landscapes that have a great value to indigenous people, reflected in their associated myths, stories, rituals, and spiritual practices"*.²⁷ The Ethnography Programme of the National Park Service in the USA emphasizes the ethnographic values of the landscape, formulating the term of ethnographic landscape as an emic concept. It is considered to be *"a relatively contiguous area of interrelated places that the members of contemporary social groups define as meaningful because it is inextricably and traditionally linked to their own local or regional histories, cultural identities, beliefs, and behaviours"*.²⁸ As well, these peculiarities are revealed by the ethnic landscapes, defined as *"areas perceived by one or several ethnic groups in a distinct way. This perception is frequently connected to the characteristics of the area, which are the result of activities and interactions of human and natural factors"*.²⁹

Starting from the assertions mentioned above, my analysis occupies a middle position between the etic and the emic approach. Kenneth L. Pike asserts *"an emic unit is a physical or mental item or system treated by insiders as relevant to their system of behaviour and as the same emic unit is spite of etic variability"*.³⁰ Within the article, it is operated with examples of empirical materials that reflect how ethnographic contents are included and related to the landscape from the perspective of the native people that have created and performed them. Complementarily, this relationship is analysed in an etic way by me, the researcher, who is also an outsider to the analysed sites and cultural group. Thus, my approach resonates as well with Marvin Harris' statement, that: *"to ignore the special interests and motivations of scientific outsiders is surely to misrepresent the emics of the scientific tradition. It is for this reason that the emics of the observer must be categorically distinct from the emics of the participants and that is precisely why we need the term etics as well as emics"*.³¹

27 Igor KRUPNIK – Rachel MASON – Susan BUGGEY, *Introduction: Landscapes, Perspectives, and Nations*, in: I. Krupnik – R. Mason – T. Horton (eds.), *Northern Ethnographic Landscapes*, p. 1.

28 Michael J. EVANS – Alexa ROBERTS – Peggy NELSON, *Ethnographic Landscapes*, CRM. People and Places. *The Ethnographic Connections* 24 (5), 2001, p. 54.

29 Johannes GNÄDINGER – Dora DREXLER et al., *Ethnische Landschaften – Ein neuer Ansatz zur Analyse, zum Schutz und zur Entwicklung traditioneller Kulturlandschaften*, in: *Landschaftsökologie: Grundlagen, Methoden, Anwendungen*. Laufener Spezialbeiträge, Laufen 2011, p. 137.

30 K. L. PIKE, *On The Emics and Etics*, p. 28.

31 *Ibidem*, p. 49.

Research methods and data used

The cultural diversity of Slovakia and the cultural pieces of the landscape demands an investigation by using them for recovering and rebuilding the cultural past of the community, to objectively read the character of the contemporary times on the field. As primary sources, empirical data (interviews, field diary notes, comments, photographs) registered during field research were used and interpreted through theoretical lenses.

As the main way of working, the multi-situated ethnography method was applied. It gave me fruitful results and advantages for comparing and describing the ethnographic elements of the cultural landscape and it as a whole, for establishing the cultural structure and ways, through which the regional and local identity is reflected. This method was useful in implementing, because "*some forms of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites*".³² Accordingly, ethnographic field research was conducted during of September, October 2020 – April, May and June 2021, in eight villages.

These are Veľké Leváre (Malacky District, Bratislava Region) situated in the eastern part of the country; Čičmany (Žilina District and Region) placed in northern part on Malá Fatra Mountain; Podbiel and Oravský Biely Potok (Tvrdošín District, Žilina Region), in the north, on Fatra Mountain; Vlkolínec (Ružomberok District, Žilina Region) is situated in the central part of the country between the mountains of Veľká Fatra and Nízka Fatra; the villages of Osturňa and Ždiar (Kežmarok District, Prešov Region) are in the northeast, on Spišská Magura Mountain; Špania Dolina (Banská Bystrica District and Region) in the central part of the country on Nízka Fatra; and Brhlovce (Levice District, Nitra Region) in the central-south part of Slovakia in the eastern extremity of the Slovak Ore Mountains (Slovenské rudohorie).

I have chosen these rural sites because here, the mechanism and modalities of how the people give and receive the multifunctionality of/to landscape, convert and adapt its value, elements and resources can be pursued. The selected sites answer as well at the questions: How is the 'rural idyll' perceived?³³ Is it a rebirth, as an ambivalent mechanism of returning to the roots and identity, of escaping from urban life, and of economic touristic benefits?

In-depth interviews with various informants were carried out. They were selected in order to be representatives of the various ages and education profiles. Therefore, the interviewees were women and men, around group ages of 20 and 75 years old. The

32 George E. MARCUS, *Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography*, Annual Review of Anthropology 24, 1995, p. 105.

33 Michael BUNCE, *Reproducing Rural Idylls*, in: Paul J. Cloke (ed.), *Country Visions*, Harlow 2003, pp. 14–30; David BELL, *Variations on the Rural Idyll*, in: Paul J. Cloke – Terry Marsden – Patrick H. Mooney (eds.), *Handbook of Rural Studies*, London 2006, pp. 149–160.

young group under 30 years old were in their last stages of finishing their university studies or were already engaged. The group of late middle age finished superior studies and were working in various educational, cultural, and tourist-leisure positions in their native villages. The interviewees of late adulthood were retired persons. The field data was interpreted considering the scientific contributions on the subjects as the tangible and intangible culture, ethnic and cultural identity, cultural landscape, rural area, etc., appeared in various local and broader academic publications. The method of working with administrative, geomorphologic, and ethnographic maps was implemented for establishing the sites and the local and regional visit routes, to extract data about the historical, natural, and cultural attributes of the communities and their habitat.

The critical and comparative ethnographic interpretation was applied to the identification, and understanding of the natural, historical, and social contexts in which the cultural practices emerged, evolved, and metamorphosed. I used the field diary for noting the field observations, data about informants, and villages researched. To catch the ethnographic features of the community, the methods of visual anthropology (photography and video recorder) were applied.

Examples, notes, and results from the *situ*

I will give more examples of ethnographic prints from four circles in the rural sites, and I will in such a way shape, or outline, their cultural landscapes. The traces will be synthetically analysed, emphasizing the identity value that they have retained or was offered to them over time. The prints are interconnected and associated with influential historical events, economic processes, reforms, and administrative plans, the conversion and adaptation of the social and cultural practices, mythologization or de-mythologization of the ideas, beliefs, and narratives. Through them, the community inherits its identity, imprints it, and passes it on.

The first examples consist of **buildings** with various functions. British sociologist Barbara Adam says, "*the landscape is a chronicle of life and dwelling*,"³⁴ and in this sense, reading the design arrangement of the village, analysing and correlating its elements, we discover and understand the cultural layers of its social structure; we observe and interpret the relationships established between the local community and its living environment and the attachments that link each other.

A chronologic retrospective of the built infrastructure arrangement leads me to several references. Looking historically at the pre-industrial period, I exemplify the house and household, the church, the inn, the school, and the shelters inside and

34 Barbara ADAM, *Timescapes of Modernity: The Environment and Invisible Hazards*, London 1998, p. 54.

outside of the built-up area of the village. The cultural-natural correspondences were highlighted by demographic and social processes (e. g. the settling of the colonists, Wallachian colonization), ethnic preferences, and the morphology of the terrains, as Rastislava Stoličná mentions.³⁵

In the 19th and 20th centuries, schools and administrative edifices, warehouses, sports grounds, etc. were included in the rural settlements. In the second half of the 20th century, collectivization led to the construction of the co-operative yards called "JRD". These entities changed the economic structure of the village and gave new forms of employment to its inhabitants. As I have seen, this built environment is not just *"the physical expression of the organization of space – a spatial organization made visible"*,³⁶ it is the result of political and economic ideologies.

Coming back to the present, based on eyewitness accounts during my stay in Oravský Biely Potok, Bardejovské Kúpele, Brhlovce, Veľké Leváre, I noticed the following. The main road of the village, the municipal building, the bus stations, the church, the markets, postal office are the key indicative and referential points, and they configure the tissue of the landscape. The local marketplace located in the centre of the village, stores, and bars, placed in the headquarters of the former shops or in new small buildings ensure the consumption needs of the residents. The remains of the former agricultural cooperatives, farms, schools can be seen; as well as other various unused buildings. In some localities, the manor house has been transformed into a local museum of history and ethnography, under state or private management. In other villages, for example in Veľké Leváre, the mansion was for a long time a psychiatric hospital, and today the building is abandoned. Other rural edifices have poor architectural conditions, which shape a dramatic and depressive image of the landscape.

Referring to the building culture in rural areas in Slovakia, Juraj Podoba asserts that *"in the process of overlaying several different building subcultures, the always younger, newer subculture in a way denied the architectural character of the historically older group and pushed it out of the settlement..."*³⁷ Appropriate evidence for this statement, as I noticed during my research, is the hybridized arrangement of the houses inside of the village. According to certain rules, their design is dictated by modern elements, utility, or by principles of proximity. The old buildings (the remains of the traditional houses) preserve the aesthetic image and have memorial and patrimonial value (Fig-

35 Rastislava STOLIČNÁ, *Lokálna a regionálna identita ako predpoklad uchovania kultúrneho dedičstva (Reflexia pred vstupom Slovenska do Európskej únie)*, Etnologické rozpravy 1, 2004, pp. 34–35.

36 Amos RAPOPORT, *Spatial Organization and the Built Environment*, in: Tim Ingold (ed.), *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, London – New York 1994, p. 470.

37 Juraj PODOBA, *Medzi tradíciou a nivelizáciou: zánik regionálneho domového typu*, Etnologické rozpravy 4 (1–2), 1997, p. 29.

ure 1). They are the last evidence of the past *genius loci* that binds the locals to their native family history. They diachronically and materially express the attachment of people to place contextualized in all three states of being inside something, formulated by Edward Relph “behavioural”, “empathetic”, and “existential”³⁸

•35



Figure 1. Haban dwellings in Vel'ké Leváre museographically preserving the Hutterite culture. Photo: © Dorina Dragnea 2022.

I noticed the concurrent presence of investments in the modernization of houses, but also the refurbishment and the repair of the old ones. It is observed the renovation and transformation of the old residences into holiday and tourist houses by the locals and by the new urban comers and cottagers (e.g., Čičmany, Podbiel, Osturňa and Ždiar, Špania Dolina– see Figure 2 and 3). The dwellings metamorphosed with visible architectural interventions inspired or not by traditional decor are in the core of the village, in the same row as the homesteads of the inhabitants. The attractiveness of such interventions in the habitat is almost always favoured by the scenery, which provides resources and mechanisms of returning to the roots through the prism of the new eco-lifestyle and business.

38 Edward RELPH, *Place and Placelessness*, London 1976, p. 50.



Figure 2. Guest Houses in Ždiar retaining the aesthetics patterns of the local architecture.
Photo: © Dorina Dragnea 2020.



Figure 3. Hybridized architectural elements of the cottage houses, Čičmany village.
Photo: © Dorina Dragnea 2020.

As well, new forms of construction like halls, small factories, workshops, etc. have entered the landscape of villages, especially on their outskirts. These are the effect of small entrepreneurs' initiatives, of state or foreign investments aimed at capitalizing on the local resources (e.g., platforms for wood processing (logging – e.g., Podbiel), food processing), and job creation for locals. In such a way the new rurality shapes and upgrades the new image of the village, which *“brings changes in the lifestyle of rural communities, as well as different patterns and deepening specialisations in the settlement system”*³⁹

The function of the villages is changing, the transition from agricultural to tourist one, which involves recent forms of resources, aimed at meeting the needs of locals, newcomers, and tourists. Thus, the locals perceive the rural landscape as a dynamic environment. It is involved in a continuous process of design and reconfiguration of its structure, and its building elements are adaptable to their new forms of use, like leisure, consumption, and economic capitalization of the heritage, developing cultural and food tourism, and ecotourism. These settings show ambivalent realities, such as the economic and social progress or stagnation within the community, and active or broken work relations that lead to the functional conversions of the landscape.

Other examples, which I will give, the buildings with spiritual functions are, like the chapel, the church and the church square, the bell tower, the road crosses, the column shrines, the statues of saints, the devotional pillars, and the space of the cemetery. The majority of them have an active spiritual functionality and confirm the religiousness of the locals. The sacred buildings communicate several tangible features of the village, like the planning network of the locality, the position of the oldest and the newest neighbourhoods that are arranged around them, and the specific church architectural styles. Among the intangible features, I noticed the denomination/s of the inhabitants, the local history, the civic pattern of inter- and intra-relational ties of the locals with the members of the same community or with the neighbouring village, social norms, and the character of kinship relations. For example, based on attending the Liturgy officiated in the Orthodox Church (Bardejovské Kúpele village) on the occasion of The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, on 27 September 2020, I noted temporary ritual and ceremonial practices, forms of devotion, religious folklore shared by the local community. Consequently, the sacred buildings are architectural and aesthetic testimonies of the religious identity and of the moral values of the inhabitants, and of witness as to how they relate symbolically and magically to the inhabited space.

39 Hana HORÁKOVÁ, *Modern rurality, neoliberalism, and utopias: the anthropologist's account*, in: Hana Horáková – Andrea Boscoboinik – Montserrat Soronellas (eds.), *Utopia and Neoliberalism. Ethnographies of Rural Spaces*, Berlin 2018, p. 16.

Both in the villages from the upland and lowland regions of the country these sacral buildings are intimately associated with local stories, legends, beliefs; they are part of the village's sacred space. In my fieldwork, I noticed in Brhlovce the community space is protected by various crosses carved in stone, having unique craft beauty. One of these crucifixes can be seen at the border with Žemberovce village (Figure 4). In the cemetery, stone crosses and tombstones with different carved, scribbled,



Figure 4. Stone cross on the villages' border. Photo: © Dorina Dragnea 2020.

and incised decorations and ornaments are arranged. A small sacral building, the stone chapel, built in 1907, is placed at the crossroads, near the Roman Catholic Church. In Čičmany village, stations of worship consisting of a statue of the Virgin Mary and a candle are placed at the side of the roads. Copper and wooden Crucifix-

ions, and devotional pillars with the image of Jesus and the Virgin Mary are present at crossroads, near roads in Špania Dolina.

Zuzana Benušková specifies the historical factors and conditions for spreading sacred buildings and mentions the role of crafts' guilds in the emergence or borrowing of the ecclesiastical architectural styles. Summing up, we quote the following: Catholicism, especially since the period of re-Catholicization in the 17th and 18th centuries, has conditioned the expansion of the cult of saints. In the upper Orava, in the vicinity of Trnava and Záhorie, but also in other areas of Slovakia, statues of saints, the Passion of Christ, and chapels are present.⁴⁰ The wooden sacral architecture, which includes churches, wooden bell towers also called Hussite (*husitské*), are widespread especially



Figure 5. The church from the village of Zboj, Snina district exhibited in the Šariš Museum in Bardejov. Photo: © Dorina Dragnea 2020.

in Liptov, Turiec, Gemer and Novohrad regions with a more pronounced representation of Protestant Christians.⁴¹ The wooden churches called *cerkva*, are one of the specific cultural manifestations of the churches of the Eastern Rite dating from the 16th to the 20th centuries. Their creators – carpenters and painters – were locals, but they

40 Zuzana BENUŠKOVÁ, *Religiozita a medzikonfesionálne vzťahy v lokálnom spoločenstve*, Bratislava 2004, p. 26.

41 *Ibidem*, p. 29.



Figure 6. A Detvian Cross in Zvolen. Photo: © Dorina Dragnea 2020.

also came from Galicia, Carpathian Ruthenia, and Moldova⁴² as Zuzana Benušková points out (see Figure 5).

It is necessary to remind the creative originality of the Detvian crosses within the surroundings of Podpoľanie Region, which I saw during fieldwork. These artifacts of folk art are the result of a local handicraft talent. They are carved in oak wood, with simpler or more compound ornaments, with geometric and vegetal motifs, with complex notches, and painted in several colours or monochromes. Being placed at crossroads, cemeteries, the crosses preserve the pre-Christian and Christian beliefs of the local community; they fit harmoniously with the environment, displaying an outstanding image of it (Figure 6).

The **economic activities** shape a certain type of seasonal dynamics, the rhythm of daily life, and aesthetic and qualitative changes in the scenery. The locals are the catalysts, the bearers, and the image of the occupations they carry out. They understand the landscape, as Tim Ingold asserts as *“the taskscape in its embodied form”*.⁴³

I specify the following notes for synchronically and chronologically analysing the elements. For example, until the 19th century, the villages in Stredné Považie and Kysuce Region (the northwest part of Slovakia) dealt with agriculture, cattle and sheep breeding, and wirework; the inhabitants of Liptov Region with the mining, masonry; the occupation marks of the Turiec Region’s villagers were oil-makers and herbal-healers, etc.⁴⁴ The inhabitants of Ždiar were engaged in agriculture, herding and logging. In the same region on the Spišská Magura, the inhabitants of Osturňa, *“in addition to agriculture and shepherding, animal husbandry, made wooden agricultural tools and 19th-century cloth. Embroidery, weaving linen, making carpets, and sewing moccasins – these were activities that the inhabitants carried out until the middle of the 20th century”*.⁴⁵ In the past, the vital occupations of the inhabitants largely revealed the identity of the locality, an identity established by the locals themselves, and conferred by the neighbours. Related activities prove the autarchic economic character of the small communities. Types of activities left their mark on the typology of the village, the architecture of the house and the household, in the design of the surrounding landscape. Their content faded in the landscape during the collectivization in the second half of the 20th century. While the post-war reality from rural Slovakia and the changes in scenery urges me to make a *“historical recovery of ideologies”*.⁴⁶

42 Ibidem, p. 33.

43 Tim INGOLD, *The Temporality of the Landscape*, World Archaeology 25 (2), 1993, p. 162.

44 Z. BEŇUŠKOVÁ et al., *Tradičná kultúra regiónov Slovenska*.

45 Mária UŠAKOVÁ, *Osturna – rezerwat zabytkowego budownictwa ludowego na Słowacji*, Ochrona Zabytków 40 (4), 159, 1987, p. 290.

46 Alan R. H. BAKER – Gideon BIGER, *Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective: Essays on the*

As is known, technological progress and the mechanization of the work process and intensification of agricultural production during the socialist regime altered the Slovak village and the surrounding natural environment. New elements have entered the arrangement of the rural landscape, which had to respond to the socialist economic progress, such as the animal farms (cattle, pigs) and birds, and vegetable gardens within the JRDs. The presence or the ruins of these infrastructures can be still seen in the settlements. After collectivization the structure of small-size plots of fields and meadows was replaced by large fields of arable land; the proportion of meadows and natural vegetation on the meadows and balks dropped,⁴⁷ the river banks were strengthened, drained, and irrigated to provide space for the construction of new urban areas, transportation corridors for collectivized intensive agriculture⁴⁸ for industrial and technical structures, and the surface mining of minerals.⁴⁹

After 1989, the de-collectivization of agricultural cooperatives began and as result, many family farms were created, or alternatively, the "*land was leased by large businesses, which have gradually taken over the failing cooperatives as well*".⁵⁰ As a consequence, the shifting from a planned economy to a market one, and the changing of the ownership status on the land gave new economic, social, and ecological meaning to the landscape. Concurrent globalist trends, sustainable use, and management of resources affect the rural community in Slovakia as well. The capitalization and use of alternative energy resources show its traces on the inner areas and outskirts of localities, where isolated or cluster solar panels are placed (e.g., Podbiel). As well, the appearance of this modern rurality, which is characterized "*by a diversity of local economies, identities, and lifestyles*",⁵¹ implies a current adaptation and re-enactment of the natural, economic, social, and cultural resources grounded on local practices and habits.

For example, the local people in Sebechleby (Hont Region) dealt with agriculture and grapevine cultivation. So, as a result of this activity, the landscape was modelled with a complex of cellars carved in stone as well as wine cellars.⁵² In Zemplín Region

Meanings of Some Places in the Past, Cambridge 1993, p. 3.

47 Jan FERANEC – Gerard W. HAZEU – Susan CHRISTENSEN – Gabriel JAFFRAIN, *Corine land cover change detection in Europe (case studies of the Netherlands and Slovakia)*, Land Use Policy 24 (1), 2007, pp. 234–247.

48 Olah BRANISLAV – Martin BOLTÍŽIAR – Igor GALLAY, *Transformation of the Slovak Cultural Landscape Since the 18th Century and its Recent Trends*, Journal of Landscape Ecology 2 (2), 2009, p. 45.

49 J. OTAHEL, *Landscape and Landscape Research in Slovakia*, p. 341.

50 David KOSTLÁN, *Hospodářský vývoj v malých obcích*, in: Ľubomír Falťan (ed.), *Malé vidiecke sídla na Slovensku začiatkom 21. storočia*, Bratislava 2011, p. 172.

51 H. HORÁKOVA, *Modern rurality, neoliberalism, and utopias*, p. 11.

52 Maria MEDVEČKÁ, *Rezerwaty architektury ludowej na Słowacji*, Ochrona Zabytków 40 (4), 1987, p. 287.

the viticultural landscapes are materialized by underground corridors, wine cellars located on tuff slopes.⁵³ The tradition in viticulture is the heritage on the basis of which places with beautiful wine routes were formed over time, like the ones of the Carpathians, Záhoria, Nitra, Hontian, and Tokaj.⁵⁴ In my field research, this evidence of the wine culture was noticed in Brhlovce as well. Here, the underground spaces carved in the rock, of which some are still used for living and some are utilized for wine production and storage cellars (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Cellars for the storage of potatoes. Photo: © Dorina Dragnea 2020.

In fieldwork, carried out in Špania Dolina (Banská Bystrica District), situated in the south part of the Low Tatras, the surviving traces can still be observed indicating that the inhabitants had a long tradition of mining copper ore and copper factories, which was active until the end of the 19th century. This peculiarity has influenced the architecture of the dwelling, organization of the interior space, and shaping of the household structure, and as a result, 'the Miners' houses were created. Nowadays, these features were converted into decorative and aesthetic tools, giving the

53 Z. BEŇUŠKOVÁ et al., *Tradičná kultúra regiónov Slovenska*, pp. 227–228.

54 Eva ŠEVČÍKOVÁ, *Malokarpatský región – využitie tradícií v rozvoji regiónu a turizmu*, *Etnologické Rozpravy* 2, 2005, p. 131.

landscape a tourist and leisure aspect. The combination of the whitewashed walls of the houses with the black wooden architectural elements (small windows, doors) and the galleries with pillars gives an air of refinement and elegance to the dwellings. The proper placement and use of outdoor wooden "storage spaces" reflect the prudence and good handling of the topographic character of the place. The landscape of the village is intersected by small canals and pipelines for water supply, suggestive of its mining past.

Another example are the artificial water reservoirs called *tajchy*⁵⁵ in the Banská Štiavnica Region. They were built from the 16th to the 19th centuries and are connected by tunnels. They were needed for supplying the mining processes with water and energy. These anthropogenic reservoirs with technical and economic utility imposed the rethinking of the ways of using the features of the lands, like actions of deepening the valleys and digging. Starting with the end of the 19th century-beginning of the 20th century, with the decrease of the mining activity, the role of these basins decreased too. In time they become barriers against floods; a part of them are sources of potable water, fish farming, etc.,⁵⁶ and more recently they are perceived as places of technical heritage sites and used for recreational activities due to their beautiful fit within the landscape.

Additionally, in relation to a mining environment and activity, some beliefs and spirits have appeared like *permoník*, a long time ago. In the faith of the locals, they were considered to be small people, like elves, who appeared in the mines and the mountains showing the miners the veins and good places to dig. Also, according to folkloric sources, the *permoníki* have shown the treasure to the miners with a noble heart. In such a case the *permoníki* help them in their work. While wicked men are led by them into the abyss of the mines. These anthropomorphic figures also love young people who live a pure life. And at their wedding, the *permoníki* demand an empty seat, and the young people give them plenty of food and drink. For this, the *permoníki* give them tallow in their lamps.⁵⁷ Nowadays, this mythological being enriches the folklore related to the main occupation of the region.

The pastoral culture that was and still relatively characterizes the villages in the high part of Slovakia: Orava, Liptov, Spiš Regions (e. g. in my field research - Osturňa) has inspired the production and promotion of craft goods (Figure 8), that became not just markers of one village or region, but they are considered ethnographic national sym-

55 From the German word *der Teich* (a pond).

56 Marián LICHNER – Elena KAŠIAROVÁ – Ján NOVÁK, *Banskoštiavnické tajchy*, Banská Bystrica 2005, p. 32, 106.

57 Pavol DOBŠINSKÝ, *Prostonárodne obyčaje, poverý a hry slovenské. Tlačou kníhtlač. Účastinár Spolku*, Turčiansky Svätý Martin 1880, p. 114.

bols. For example, I mention the wooden vessel-cup called *črpák*, the shepherd axe *valaška*, the *fujara*, etc. In this sense, the 'revival of material production – as Zdena Krišková asserts – is a solid pillar of the identity. There are various festivals of traditional crafts, days dedicated to specific products, but also the presentation of traditional

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Figure 8. Craft products of the shepherd's axe *valaška* and wicker baskets. Photo: © Dorina Dragnea 2020.

jobs (the days of *bryndza*, the days of *gruľove*, the days of *drevorubačské*, the days of *furmanské*).⁵⁸ Thus, the material evidence of the past activities printed on the landscape is used for contributing to human well-being,⁵⁹ and to re-articulate the aesthetic landscape values.⁶⁰

The intangible elements consist in the ephemeral traces of the calendar feasts and customs, social community festivities, beliefs and knowledge about nature and the universe, ritual and ceremonial practices, folklore, etc., on the landscape. The examples, provided by me were selected to be interconnected with the tangible culture and natural environment. Assigning the preindustrial patterns, the people used the ritual props believing in their magical power and their actions performed in a chosen time and place. Adopting a ritualized behaviour and a familiar or community social framework, the individuals have included the resources of the landscape and it entirely as "*part of the ritual process*".⁶¹

In the socialist period, modifications of way of behaving in relation to calendar holidays have happened. For example, the celebration of cooperative harvest festivals was adopted, like the picking of grapes, the end of the gathering of sugar beet and corn, end of sheep pasture season, the feast of the fish. Many of them were celebrated at the headquarters of the JRDs, causing in such a way the transgression of the significance and place, for what and where the holiday is celebrated. Therefore, the social and professional identification with the local co-operative appeared in the feeling of belonging of the inhabitants. Also, during this period, dance parties were organized in the culture houses. These were not just buildings as foci of the socialist regime; they functioned as social adjusters for creating a collective identity and type of belonging to a social community.

In my outcomes, based on the field observation, and discussion with the residents, I chose several ethno-folkloric practices, whose functions have transgressed in recent decades to other forms like leisure, festivalization, commercialization, or some of them have lost many of their original features. They attach people to the place through

58 Zdena KRIŠKOVÁ, *Ekologicko-kultúrne aspekty tradičnej výroby a identita*, Etnologické Rozpravy 20 (1–2), 2013, p. 162.

59 Brenda Maria ZODERER – Erich TASSER – Steve CARVER – Ulrike TAPPEINER, *An Integrated Method for the Mapping of Landscape Preferences at the Regional Scale*, Ecological Indicators 106, 2019, Art. 105430.

60 Uta SCHIRPKE – Erich TASSER – Ulrike TAPPEINER, *Predicting Scenic Beauty of Mountain Regions*, Landscape Urban Planning 111, 2013, p. 1–12; Uta SCHIRPKE – Florian TIMMERMANN – Ulrike TAPPEINER – Erich TASSER, *Cultural Ecosystem Services of Mountain Regions: Modelling the Aesthetic Value*, Ecological Indicators 69, 2016, p. 78–90.

61 Howard MURPHY, *Landscape and the Reproduction of the Ancestral Past*, in: Eric Hirsch – Michael O' Hanlon (eds.), *The Anthropology of Landscape. Perspectives on Place and Space*, Oxford 1995, p. 197.

emotion and ritual behaviours, produce memories and develop intangible connections that preserve the sense of belonging.

For example, at the spring equinox ceremonies, groups of girls still execute the straw silhouette, called Mo(a)rena, Marmu(o)riena, Muriena, as well Smrt', Hejhana, Kyselica (the male version is called Dedko). According to tradition, this substitute of the human figure made from sheaves of straw, hemp, pieces of wood and dressed in women's clothes, mythologically has symbolized the female divinity associated with death, disease, night, and winter. One narrative in the ethnographic fieldwork tells that this figure "was carried by young girls (teenagers) out of the village, where it was burned and drowned in the stream. After this ritual death, the girls returned to the village and sang carols. In return, they have received eggs, flour, or money to prepare the funeral feast" – Eva narrates, a woman of fifty. Today this habit is more performed as an act of revitalization, being staged by pupils under the guidance of teachers within curricular activities.

On 1 May, the 'Maypole' tree decorated with colourful ribbons is erected at the house gate, in the middle of the village or the main square to protect the community from evil spirits, illnesses, and decorative purposes. According to the most spreader practice, in the past, this expression of vegetal hierophany was placed by the lad in front of the girl's home, near the window to show his interest in her. The beauty of the tree shows the prestige of the young man and was an honour for the girl.⁶² A young man from Oravský Biely Potok (Tvrdošín District, Žilina Region) told me, that in the spring of 2021, he and his friends brought decorated trees to the houses of girls from his settlement and the neighbouring village, in Podbiel. The girl, to whose house they were going to go, was chosen to take into account the fact that she was liked by or had a relationship with one of the boys in the group. The young man states that this custom is alive in the village and the young people practice it to have fun. When I visited these two villages for the second time, on 16-25 May, the numerous decorated trees could be seen erected at the gate or near the door of the girl's house (Figure 9). Also, on my train journey through the villages of the Liptov region, such trees could be seen as well. These arose above the heights of the houses, creating an iconographic image of the landscape. In some villages, this tree was erected in the kindergarten or school' yard, and community centre (e.g., Veľké Leváre), or as evidence of tradition preserving in the UNESCO protected settlements (e.g., Vlkolínec). The fact shows the shift from common practice and makes this ritual object into a subject of heritage education.

62 Ján BOTÍK – Peter SLAVKOVSKÝ (eds.), *Encyklopédia Ludovej Kultúry Slovenska*, Vol. 2, Bratislava 1995.



Figure 9. Maypole, erected at household's gate, Oravský Biely Potok, Orava Region.
Photo: © Dorina Dragnea 2021.

On the night of the feast of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist (23-24 June), the pre-Christian custom of celebrating the summer solstice and the sun has been preserved, by burning the so-called St John's Fires (Jánske Ohne – the Midsummer Bonfire). In the past, the people threw burning brooms and torches up into the air, as an imitation of the storm needed to develop vegetation and ensure a wealthy harvest. These midsummer fires were lit to protect against evil spirits. In the past, *“the fires were burned on elevated places, on hills, on slopes, or even on sticks and on hills by shepherds and on mountains by loggers”*.⁶³ Nowadays, the fires lit on this day are occasions for community members to meet in a symbolic space within or outside of the village. During the ritual, the locals and their relatives, the young people socialize, have fun, and renew and validate their social relationships. Saint John's Fires are organized by folkloric groups with the financial support of the public authorities. The feast is like a spectacle, consisting of recitals of songs sung by women, dances around the fire, and jumps over it made by men.

These folkloric traditions express a synergetic construct, that initially began their roots in mythological beliefs and deities which were subsequently integrated into part of the Christian customs. Their function has also shifted from utility and practice, still closely linked to faiths, to concerns and tools for returning to the identity and cultural affirmation of the contemporary rural communities.⁶⁴ Examples in this sense are the *Fujara Festival* in Čičmany (Žilina region), *The Folklore Festival Podroháčske folklórne* held in the village of Zuberec and in the Museum of the Orava Village. Another example is the *Hontian Parade Festival*, which is organized by the village of Hrušov (Banská Bystrica Region) since 1996.

The regional and local communities are trying to recover these cultural practices by promoting them as an economic, social, and cultural good. It is necessary to mention that the features of ritual and ceremonial facts have been filtered by globalization trends. This phenomenon is happening as well as a result of the aging of the rural population and depopulation, of the migration vectors towards the main cities or abroad, the adoption of the urban lifestyle in rural areas that ensure comfort and access to goods, the attempt of the young generation to get rid of the feeling of provincialism, etc. However, the identity built by them remains an instrument for adapting the individuals into the cultural global convergence and finding himself/herself in a culture familiar to them, and that can offer them a feeling of security.

63 Pavol SOCHÁN, *Svätojánske ohne na Slovensku*, Bratislava 2015.

64 See more at J. DARULOVÁ – K. KOŠTIALOVÁ – Z. KRIŠKOVÁ, *Vidiek tradičný, moderný a inšpiratívny*.

Conclusion

In the article, the continuities and discontinuities of the tangible and intangible ethnographic elements, with symbolic and real identity values, expressed on/in landscapes, synchronically and diachronically were revealed and interpreted. Examples were given from various regions in Slovakia, especially from eight rural sites, where I observed the manifestation of the modern rurality, in which the rural communities re-evaluate, diversify their roles, and re-brand their past, landscapes and heritage elements. The identity feelings of the countryside communities from the mountainous area, as well from the Danube Valley are symbolically, economically nurtured by nature and the local cultural heritage, safeguarded and capitalized using investments for the complex needs of the contemporary people.

The ethnographic examples related to the building infrastructure of the rural areas given in the article show that nowadays their image and identity value of them have been modelled and even shifted by the ideological, economical programmes, and rural design plans implemented during the second half of the 20th century. After the trends of the globalist era, rural development under the patterns of neoliberalism has been influenced in such a way that the living space of the locals has become accommodation rooms for tourists as well. In this way, the Goral farmsteads from Osturňa and Ždiar, the dwellings painted with folk ornaments in Čičmany, the preserved architecture and lime-pictured colourful houses in Vlkolínec, the rock underground dwellings in Brhlovce are all ethnographic markers and reveal the long functional and aesthetic relation between the local communities and their environment. In addition, their framing and arrangement in the built-up area of the village, re-conditioning interventions or poor conditions, their mixing with new economic buildings (factories and workshops, commercial buildings, agricultural farms), infrastructure system (national and locals roads, bridges), recreational facilities (swimming pools, ski slopes, eco-tourism itineraries, and hiking paths, terraces, and restaurants, private and state museums, etc.) show that the cultural landscape, which they create, is simultaneously a scene of the crises and a testimony of prosperity. It reveals the evolution of the society and its adaptation to current processes like rural urbanization, migration, capital investment, and social fractures.

The buildings with spiritual functions and their surrounding elements, and places reveal the denominations of the people and their materiality, daily practice, and particular processions imprinted on the landscape. The vibrant acts of devotion performed by the locals, observed in the field, show two aspects. The first reflects a high degree of religiosity, the popular and official ones, a feeling

that preserves social patterns, stimulates or inspires popular phenomena. The second shows the consistency of the practitioners in reconditioning and rehabilitating the good condition of the holy monuments to preserve and symbolically claim their identity.

In the researched localities, I found that the economic activities of the inhabitants, on the one hand, are in line with the previous models, using the local resources and production of the goods, for them to be consumed or for trade. On the other hand, their activities are more oriented towards services, like agro-tourism – e. g. wine production in Brhlovce (Levice District, Nitra Region), eco-tourism, accommodation services in Podbiel and Oravský Biely Potok (Tvrdošín District, Žilina Region), or Vlkolínec (Ružomberok District, Žilina Region), Osturňa and Ždiar (Kežmarok District, Prešov Region), and Špania Dolina (Banská Bystrica District and Region), handcrafts – e.g., in Čičmany (Žilina District and Region) and Veľké Leváre (Malacky District, Bratislava Region). Adapting occupations to market requirements and providing the original goods involve capitalizing on local conditions, such as transforming old economic shelters into workshops (e. g. for artistic wood processing) for visitors or building other edifices (e.g., houses, and cottages) inspired by vernacular architecture. The residents are aware of and recognize the value of nature, and the state of well-being ensured by the surrounding landscape, which interferes with local development and access to various economic possibilities. Thus, elderly persons are more nostalgic and attached to the place, while young people leave the villages or launch their tourist businesses, offer accommodation services for re-building that rural paradise for travellers. In such a way they convert the crisis, taking advantage of the natural landscape's benefits. The private farms mix the traditional and identity occupations (like in agriculture, pasture, vinification) with alternative activities, or transgress them towards agro-tourism. The sources of the cultural landscape and the landscape itself are perceived as a conglomerate construct used as an industrial, agricultural, touristic, and heritage product.

My personal findings referring to the level and form of how the intangible elements express and made the landscape are based on the following ideas. The significance of the selected ritual and ceremonial practices (Morena, Maypole, and St. John's Fires) associated with the seasonal religious and folk feasts are preserved by the collective memory, they are respected and consciously performed by the individuals (e.g., the Orava Region) from their own initiative. As well, in the majority of cases, the performance of customs and ceremonies are initiated and managed by individuals under the auspices of the schools,

local centres of culture, and NGOs. In addition, community members continue keeping certain customs due to the fact that they perceive them as nostalgic reminders of the past, mechanisms for leisure, and diversification of the entertainment types. These local cultural practices enrich and beautify the surrounding scenery and so together set up touristic resources, and ensure an inclusive life for all members of the community, being excerpts of and re-enactments from genuine performances.

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Summary

In the article, focused on the rural area in Slovakia, the author provides ethnographic insight into the re-contextualizing forms of the identity marks and the ways of re-shaping the landscape's elements, having an emic and etic approaches. The research introduces the perspective of the non-native researcher with the selected cultural terrain and group. Attention is directed to the contemporary aspects of the landscape and its ethnographic elements, as they were noticed in situ, the synchronic and chronologic views of them are considered as well. Various examples of the units (the building elements, the economic activities, and the intangible elements), with symbolic and real identity values, are given from eight rural sites, where ethnographic field research was carried out. The study analyses them in order to follow how these elements are

imprinted on the landscape, and how it itself is appreciated, and shaped by the community. In such a way, it is noticed that the elements of the cultural landscape in selected rural sites are ambivalent scenes of the crises and development; of economic, political ideologies and cultural patterns; of collective choices and actions; of the identity articulation, and of its pursuit.

International Women's Day as a platform of gender performativity in socialist Czechoslovakia

ŠTĚPÁNKA KONEČNÁ KOPŘIVA

Abstrakt | Abstract

Mezinárodní den žen jako platforma genderové performativity v socialistickém Československu

Pro studii genderových vztahů a roli žen v československé socialistické společnosti je velmi přínosné věnovat pozornost formám oslav Mezinárodního dne žen (MDŽ). Státní svátek věnovaný ženám jako sociální skupině byl nejlepší platformou pro artikulaci režimních strategií, týkajících se žen, a odhalení rozporů, v nichž československý státní socialismus ženy vnímal. U příležitosti MDŽ navíc nevyplouval na povrch pouze prototyp ženského ideálu stanovený komunistickou stranou. Přímé či neopatrné narážky, problémy obyčejných žen, nedostatky socialistické společnosti, pravá podstata deklarované "rovnosti", genderové stereotypy a celý komplex dobového diskurzu o ženách se odhalovaly uvnitř patriarchálního systému. Primárními zdroji pro tuto studii jsou periodika (zejména Rudé právo a časopis Vlasta), která jsou chápána jako prostředky "autoritativního diskurzu". Autoritativní diskurz zprostředkovaný mimo jiné prostřednictvím režimních médií je ústředním faktorem stabilizace a legalizace systému. Takový diskurz je zároveň souborem výroků a jevů udržujících konsensus mezi vládou a ovládanými. Další cennou položkou jsou archiválie uložené v Národním archivu, dobové sociologické průzkumy a stenografické záznamy z jednání Národního shromáždění.

For the study of gender relations and the role of women in the Czechoslovak socialist society, it is very beneficial to pay attention to the forms of celebrations of International Women's Day (IWD). The national holiday dedicated to women as a social group was the best platform for articulating the regime's strategies concerning women and revealing the contradictions in which Czechoslovak state socialism perceived women. Moreover, on the occasion of IWD, not only the prototype of the female ideal set by the Communist Party came to the surface. Direct or incautious hints, the problems of ordinary women, the

shortcomings of socialist society, the true nature of the declared “equality”, gender stereotypes and the whole complex of contemporary discourse about women were revealed inside the patriarchal system. The primary sources for this article are periodicals (especially the Rudé právo newspaper and Vlasta magazine), which are understood as means of “authoritative discourse”. This authoritative discourse mediated, among other things, through the regime media is a central factor in the stabilization and legalization of the system. Such a discourse is also a set of statements and phenomena maintaining a consensus between the rulers and the ruled. Other items of value for the study are the archival materials stored in the National Archive, period sociological surveys and stenographic records from the proceedings of the National Assembly.

Klíčová slova | Keywords

genderová performativita; Mezinárodní den žen; Národní shromáždění; autoritativní diskurz; socialismus

gender performativity; International Women's Day; National Assembly; authoritative discourse; socialism

International Women's Day as a platform of gender performativity

An analysis of the practical implementation of the celebrations and a comparison of the reception of the holiday in society during the long period between 1948 and 1989 can uniquely convey the tactics with which society approached the holiday. At the same time, it has the potential to partly reveal a contradictory relationship to women's emancipation in Czechoslovakia. From a woman as a mother— meaning as a producer of new workers—through a woman as a hitherto unexplored and now needed labour force, to a coping being with almost superhuman abilities who gives birth to children, works 8 hours a day, takes good care of her husband and household and raises her family politically consciously. She should also be able participate in public life as a member of the Women's Union and the National Committee. The models of socialist ideals, so often called “stagnant”, changed dynamically in the case of women (and demands for them) during the 40 years of communist dictatorship. How the regime constructed the female gender was most noticeable through IWD. The article aims to describe the ways which the authorities in socialist Czechoslovakia used to shape women's gender, especially with regard to the organization and course of IWD. The text deals with the complex significance of IWD for the evolution of the gender image of women in Czechoslovakia. The article describes the development of

the International Women's Day celebrations during this period. It seeks to analyse speeches, public media presentations of the holiday as well as the statements and attitudes of the actors to IWD. Its goal is to take a small part in the research on gender strategies of authoritative regimes. It aims to help create a holistic image of the Czechoslovak public relationship to women's emancipation as a phenomenon. Through the most comprehensive view of IWD, the article attempts to contribute to the research of the role of women in socialist society and to the research of the festivities in the communist regime.

Communist festivals and symbolic communication

A common feature of all major communist festivals was the explicit effort to celebrate and legitimize the communist establishment and ideology.¹ This happened not only in the case of holidays established for political purposes such as the celebration of anniversaries of significant events leading to the establishment of the communist regime (e.g., Victorious February, Liberation Day, the anniversary of the October Revolution) but also in a situation where the holiday had historically nothing to do with the political agenda (for example harvest holidays, Universal Children's Day, International Youth Day, International Women's Day, etc.). According to Schmitt's Concept of the Political (*Der Begriff des Politischen*)², which connects the very existence of the modern state with the existence of "the political", it can be stated that every celebration, regardless of the topic or content, becomes essentially political if the state or institutions or authorities associated with the state are involved in its implementation. In other words, International Women's Day and many other holidays were colonized by the communist regime and used to legitimize it. The totalitarian ceremonial events are also connected by the maximum degree of the organization of their course, which inevitably led to the absence of almost all manifestations of spontaneity. The ceremonial rituals also had an educational function.³ The communist festivities were to educate new socialist men and women who would pursue the imaginary historical end—a communist society.⁴ This created a system of festivities organized around the basic goals and values of communist ideology. In the case of IWD, we are talking about

1 Jana RATAJOVÁ, *Pražské májové oslavy 1948–1989. Příspěvek k dějinám komunistické propagandy*, *Kuděj: časopis pro kulturní dějiny* 2 (1), 2000, p. 52.

2 For more on the fundamental political work of the controversial legal and political thinker of the 20th century, see Carl SCHMITT, *Der Begriff des Politischen: Text von 1932 mit einem Vorwort und drei Corollarien*, Berlin 1996

3 Jiří VOSÁHLO, *Splněný závazek*, Prague 1954, p. 7.

4 Erik van REE, *Stalinist Ritual and Belief System: Reflections on 'Political Religion'*, *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 17 (2–3), 2016, p. 145, compare with: Stephen KOTKIN, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a civilization*, Berkeley 1997.

two fundamental ideological moments. On the one hand, it was a celebration of the role of women in a socialist society embodied in the socialist “superwomen”. This role combined all the functions assigned to women in socialism. On the other hand, during IWD, a list of qualities that socialism brought to women was presented, often in comparison with the Western world.⁵ IWD undoubtedly had its firm position in the hierarchy of communist holidays. Despite how essential women’s emancipation was supposed to be for socialism, IWD was not one of the biggest celebrations such as 1st May, the anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution or Liberation Day on 5th May.

Another of the oft-mentioned characteristics common to all communist festivities was their gradual emptying of content.⁶ By the term “emptying” we mean the gradual alienation from the ideal behind the celebration, the stagnation of the external form of the ritual, which no longer meets the requirements of the public, the formalization and loss of authenticity of the celebration. The true inner essence of the celebration was overshadowed by its external propaganda.

To understand the wide range of ways of receiving communist festivities, it is necessary to realize that each ritual is a specific form of symbolic communication. Working with symbols is an integral part of all festivities.⁷ We can talk not only about specific tangible artifacts, such as banners, allegorical cars, flags, ceremonial clothing or carnations, but also the functions of symbols represented by various speech acts, speeches, declarations of friendship, manifestations of goals or social values.⁸ During the ritual, the meaning of these performative⁹ acts is anchored and redefined, and on the other hand, they are decoded.¹⁰ Although rituals in the period of state socialism were undoubtedly a one-sided formalized reproduction of the social order, they cannot be understood as socially homogeneously reciprocated. The symbols used in the broadest

5 Rudé právo journal (RP) 59 (57), 1979, pp. 1–2.

6 Compare: Lane CHRISTEL, *The Rites of Rulers. Ritual in Industrial Society – the Soviet Case*, Cambridge 1981; Christopher A. P. BINNS, *Ritual and conformity in Soviet society*, *Journal of Communist Studies* 5 (2), 1989, pp. 211–219; Petr MALČÍK – Dušan ŠLOSAR, *Totalitní jazyk v československé publicistice na konci roku 1989*, *Časopis Matice moravské* 133 (1), 2014, p. 140.

7 Adam KUPER, *Culture: The Anthropologists' Account*, Harvard 1999.

8 Compare with, e.g., John Langsaw AUSTIN, *Jak udělat něco slovy*, Prague 2000, p. 105.

9 In general, gender performativity is defined as an activity that produces what it seems to only describe. According to Judith Butler, this means that a seemingly neutral description of “what a woman is” is just what this description creates. Gender performativity is a way of creating gender prototypes and reproducing them. Gender is created in the reiteration of behaviour and norms of masculinity and femininity. It is a long-term process, not a one-time performance. People perceive their performative behaviour as natural, although performativity is only a reproduction of the norms that precede and shape man. (Judith BUTLER, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York 2007, pp. 184–192)

10 Judith BUTLER, *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory*, *Theatre Journal* 40 (4), 1988, pp. 520–524.

sense can evoke various associations in individual participants. Each of the participants in the festival can attach various meanings not only to the individual artifacts and speech acts used, but also to the whole ritual.

There are undoubtedly a lot of different motivations to participate in social events such as IWD. As in everyday life (not only) in the period of state socialism, everyone works with different interests and roles. The circumstances of the participation of the general public in the rituals of state socialism form a complex research question. John Austin's concept of speech acts can be used fruitfully to analyse motivations to participate in events of this type.¹¹ Austin attaches a performative character to each statement, arguing that the word has not only the function of describing reality but also the ability to create reality. From the point of view of the interpretation of Austin's follow-up American anthropologist Alexei Yurchak, speech acts conceived in this way can then be transferred by analogy to all human actions.¹² According to Emil Durkheim, a ritual is not made up only by the active performers of the ritual. The spectators also have an indispensable function and, especially, in the case of rituals of totalitarian regimes. The spectators of the ritual, with their simple and passive presence, legitimize the current regime. Such ritualized behaviour is primarily a repeated production of social roles and a manifestation of belonging to society.¹³ For the communist regime, mass participation in events was a public manifestation of a collective agreement with development, the establishment, and ideology in the broadest sense. In the case of IWD, by simply participating in the holiday, men and women clearly presented their affiliation to the society and gender order in which they lived.¹⁴ As mentioned above, communist holidays, especially in the period of normalization, were characterized by a considerable degree of content emptiness and the absence of ceremonial spontaneity. The behaviour was thus not entirely authentic. Crowds of people did not take to the streets out of their authentic motives, and men did not give flowers to their wives and co-workers each year on the 8th of March out of their deep convictions.¹⁵

11 J. L. AUSTIN, *Jak udělat něco slovy*.

12 Alexei YURCHAK, *Everything was forever, until it was no more: The last Soviet generation*, Princeton 2006, p. 22.

13 Émile DURKHEIM, *Elementární formy náboženského života. Systém totemismu v Austrálii*, Prague 2002, pp. 400–401.

14 J. BUTLER, *Performative Acts*, pp. 519–531.

15 This statement is evidenced, among other things, by many of the interviews held in the Digital Collection of the Center for Oral History at the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences; Institute of Contemporary History, Center of Oral History Interviews Collection. The interview with František Lukeš conducted by Jana Nosková, 22 February 2007. Institute of Contemporary History, Center of Oral History, Interviews Collection. The interview with Alena Růžičková conducted by Miroslav Vaněk, 25 August 2007; Jitka SOBOTKOVÁ, *Slavnosti a oslavy v komunistickém Československu*, in: Miroslav Vaněk (ed.), *Obyčejní lidé...?! Pohled do živo-*

However, the mass acceptance of such “theatrical” behaviour, in which the general public manifests its affiliation to something in which they do not see real content, seems difficult to understand. American sociologist Jeffrey Alexander presents a definition of several conditions, the fulfilment of which should lead to a wide social acceptance of a particular social performance—the ritual.¹⁶ Among the most relevant is a kind of power monopoly of the ruling elites, a wide audience and actor participation, and a legible symbolic base of the ritual.¹⁷ Translated into communist regime practices in the case of IWD, we talk about aspects such as mass media promotion of the holiday, the participation of important personalities, a stable symbolic and language system, the generality of its promotion at all levels of society and the unforgettable latent fears of possible repression.

Short history and the origin of International Women's Day (IWD)

To understand the meaning and nature of IWD in socialist Czechoslovakia, it is necessary to outline its history and origin. The demonstration of New York seamstresses in 1857 is often described as the beginning of the reflections on IWD. The protest was conducted against inappropriate working conditions, long working hours, and low wages.¹⁸ Thus, women did not protest against the domination of men, but against economic oppression, which can be interpreted (as communist ideology later did) as a class struggle. However, active offensive action led by women in the interests of women's needs without class distinction was not exceptional in the United States or the United Kingdom, even in the mid-19th century.¹⁹ In 1908, the US Socialist Party staged a demonstration in support of women's rights on the anniversary of the 1857 march. The American Socialists have consistently sought completely different women's rights than those that led to the seamstresses' demonstration. The protesters tried to recall the police brutality that the demonstrating workers allegedly encountered.²⁰

The first Women's Day with this name took place on 28 February 1909, and the central figure of the whole event was (often neglected in the Czech milieu) the Amer-

ta tzv. mlčící většiny. *Životopisná vyprávění příslušníků dělnických profesí a inteligence*, Prague 2009, pp. 398–429.

16 J. C. ALEXANDER, *Performance and Power*, Cambridge 2011.

17 Ibidem – Bernhard GIESEN – Jason L. MAST, *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics*, New York 2006, pp. 29–30.

18 Compare with, e.g., Temma KAPLAN, *On the Socialist Origin of International Women's Day*, in: *Feminist Studies* 11 (1), 1985, pp. 163–171.

19 Leila J. RUPP, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement*, Princeton 1997, pp. 13–40; Mary WOLLSTONECRAFT, *Obrana práv žen*, Prague 1904; Pavla HORSKÁ, *Naše prababičky feministky*, Prague 1999, pp. 90–100.

20 T. KAPLAN, *On the Socialist Origin*, p. 164.

ican feminist writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman.²¹ The idea of regular actions in support of women's suffrage has been discussed earlier in the environment of socialist-oriented women, at the latest since 1907. For this purpose, representatives of left-wing women's organizations (which were mostly formed as part of the Socialist Parties during the Second International) organized three International Conferences of Socialist Women. It should be noted that these women also understood women's suffrage as inseparable from the requirement of universal and equal suffrage. The discussion was most vividly led by socialist women's representatives, entirely with the intentions of socialist ideas and the Marxist ideology of the class struggle. Precisely because of the ideological differences between Western bourgeois feminists and representatives of socialist women's organizations, the participation of non-leftist feminists was not welcome in the following years.²² The socialist orientation prevailed at the International Conferences before the First World War, and after the Second World War, we can already understand the successors of this international women's solidarity organization as purely communist and centrally controlled by the communist party.²³

IWD was established on the 26th or the 27th of August 1910 at the second meeting of socialist women. The German journalist and later member of the Weimar Republic parliament, Clara Zetkin, is rightly considered to be the main initiator of the establishing of the annual demonstrations and the official day for women's suffrage support.²⁴ IWD formally became an international holiday on 8 March 1975, when the United Nations adopted it as its official holiday as a part of the International Year of Women.²⁵ IWD has also been a holiday in Czechoslovakia since the beginning with clear left-wing connotations. Its remembrance was not a mass affair during the First Republic, and women's organizations perceived it rather marginally. However, it was integrally linked to its original idea—the promotion of women's equality at home and abroad.²⁶ After the Second World War, the form of IWD changed radically through its transformation into a national holiday. From 1946, the Communist Party was the organizer of IWD, and already in 1947, these events acquired a mass character. When the communist regime

21 Charlotte GILMAN, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography*, Madison 1991.

22 *Second International Conference of Socialist Women*, in: International Socialist Congress 1910, Copenhagen 2009, p. 21, <https://archive.org/details/InternationalSocialistCongress1910SecondInternationalConferenceOf/page/n15/mode/2up> (29.05.2023); Kate WEIGAND, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation*, Baltimore 2001, p. 204.

23 Choi CHATTERJEE, *Celebrating Women: Gender, Festival Culture, and Bolshevik Ideology, 1910–1939*, Pittsburgh 2002.

24 Karen HONEYCUTT – Clara ZETKIN, *A Socialist Approach to the Problem of Woman's Oppression*, *Feminist Studies* 3 (3–4), 1976, pp. 131–144.

25 *International Women's Day History*, Chicago 2017, <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Activity/15586/The-history-of-IWD> (29.05.2023).

26 *Ženský list* 20 (11), 1911, p. 6.

colonized the celebrations and made it a national holiday, the holiday became associated with the struggle for peace and socialism. In the new discourse of IWD, women did not stand in the position of a neglected interest group, and in their unequal position, requirements, and needs were no longer the central ideas of the whole event.

At the same time, contrary to the original declarations, it was presented until the second half of the 1960s as a holiday exclusively for “working women” and not for women as a whole. The new character of this originally pro-female holiday was enshrined at the Women's Federation congress in Moscow in 1950.²⁷ The Women's Federation has clearly stated that “International Women's Day will become an educational event in favour of liberated labour.”²⁸ As I will show later, the role of women as mothers – producers of new workers and educators of “new socialist people” was equally discursively emphasized. In this context, the IWD has become a certain ideologically bent successor to the abolished Mother's Day, because since 1949, Mother's Day had been merged with IWD.²⁹

The original feminist approaches and the idea of women's rights thus literally disappeared from year to year and did not return until 1989. As already mentioned, IWD was at its beginning closely connected with the support of women's movements and the support of women's emancipation. Along with the redefinition of the content of the term “women's emancipation”, all feminist ideas disappeared from IWD celebrations in socialist Czechoslovakia. The emancipatory policy promoted and practiced by socialist Czechoslovakia cannot be confused with so-called (and often branded by the socialist ideology of that era) “western feminist politics”. Emancipation “from above” included involvement of Czechoslovak women in the work process. With the growth of women's employment, there was a need to “liberate” women from “unproductive” domestic work. This was to be done through state-designated services (kindergartens, nurseries, laundries, canteens, etc.). However, de facto equality between women and men, discrimination against women in employment, and addressing issues traditionally described by western feminist movements, remained completely outside the socialist emancipatory discourse.

International Women's Day (IWD) in socialist Czechoslovakia

IWD in Czechoslovakia, with its annual repetition, became a litmus test for the identification of changes in the social understanding of the term “emancipation” and changes in the reception of the role of women in society. The celebrations held on the 8th

27 Four big speeches of women in crowded halls – see RP 27 (30), 1947, pp. 2–3.

28 RP 30 (57), 1950, p. 4.

29 National Archives in Prague (NA), 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Consultation at A. Hodinová-Spurná on February 9, 1950, letter 3, p. 21.

of March included several rituals, which remained completely unchanged throughout the period under review, regardless of changes in political atmosphere. From the beginning of the observed period, mass women's organizations were the coordination centres of the whole event.³⁰ During the preparations, especially in the 1950s, very detailed instructions were given on how the day should go and how the space should be prepared for a possible cultural event or a hall for speeches to women.³¹ Slogans and banners were also an integral part of the IWD celebrations. According to the organizers' interpretations, a suitable slogan was a guarantee of the demolition of the masses. It is significant that throughout the period under review, the slogans remained unchanged or only minimally reformulated.³² In addition to attention and effort, a considerable amount of money was spent on preparations. For example, in 1950, CZK 60,000 was allocated for 13,000 notice boards about women working in production.³³ The newly acquired status of women was to be celebrated on all fronts. On the occasion of IWD, special issues of monthly magazines devoted to women were published. Stamps issued for IWD were no exception.³⁴

The celebrations of International Women's Day at the Czechoslovak state level

On the occasion of this holiday, delegations of women from the Eastern bloc and delegations of women representatives of socialist-minded Western organizations met every year.³⁵ During these meetings, the women "shared their experiences with the involvement of women at work" and eventually repeatedly manifested international cooperation in building socialism. In the "constructive" atmosphere of the late 1940s and the 1950s, the manifestation of national gratefulness to USSR for liberation and support was an integral part of the IWD celebrations.³⁶ The main contribution of the delegations should be political agitation among women. It should also present the Soviet woman as a model for further development in Czechoslovakia.³⁷ At the same

30 NA, f. 22, International Women's Day, inv. No.16.

31 NA, f. 21, International Women's Day in Brno, inv. No. 18; NA, fond 21, Meeting with comrade Boušová 24. 1. 1951, inv. No.18.

32 NA, f. 20, Slogans for International Women's Day 1949, inv. No.17.

33 NA, f. 21, International Women's Day in Brno, inv. No. 18; NA, f. 21, Meeting with comrade Boušová 24. 1. 1951, inv. No.18.

34 Various competitions to promote women's work were also popular. For this purpose, the Czech Women's Union announced a literary competition on the occasion of 8 March. The women were to send a movie theme, a play, a poem, or a song about a new role for a woman. The winner was then solemnly announced the following year.

35 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Report on the Delegation of Soviet women on IWD 1951.

36 RP 27 (30), 1947, p. 2.

37 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Report on the Delegation of the Soviet women on IWD 1951.

time, there should always be a transfer of practical experience from specific industries. In none of the numerous friendly statements issued on the occasion of international association do we encounter a commitment to improving the quality of life of women in Czechoslovakia or levelling out gender inequalities. Regarding the importance of the delegation of Soviet women from 1950, female deputy Anežka Hodinová-Spurná wrote: "The presence of Soviet women in the Czechoslovak Republic was mainly important in practice, which showed on living people what the motto "Soviet woman—our model" means.³⁸ Whenever a women's delegation arrived in Czechoslovakia, it was an event of international significance. The programme for each of the delegations has always been prepared over a long period. The women mostly spent two weeks in Czechoslovakia in March. Part of their work was concentrated in Prague at official events and meetings with the president and communist officials. In the following days, the women went to other cities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. They attended universities, state-owned enterprises, and ordinary collective farms. The members of the delegation gave lectures and talked about everyday problems at the prepared meetings with the workers. The organizers saw the successful course of the Soviet visit as a proof of loyalty to the Soviet Union. Ideally, the visit was to be warmly received everywhere and to be completely shielded from social misery. As evidenced by the report on the course of the international delegation, which arrived in the Czech Republic on the occasion of IWD in 1950, it was not always possible to ensure such a course. For example, the reception at the University of Bratislava was cold and hostile according to the participants. No one at the Brno Medical Faculty was interested in talking to the women, and they didn't even want to let them into the class because there was a regular lecture. A similarly embarrassing reception awaited them in the villages. There was no interest in a discussion with the women and the workers avoided the delegation.³⁹

An important ritual was also the annual meeting of the president, ministers, secretary-general, prime minister, and other important government party officials with a delegation of award-winning selected women and representatives of women's organizations. It was usually held on the 7th of March or possibly directly at the IWD celebrations where the president or prime minister always gave a ceremonial speech. We can talk about this tradition from 1949.⁴⁰ In March 1948, only a short article tending to summarize the history of the day appeared in *Rudé právo* to commemorate

38 Ibidem, p. 77.

39 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Program of the Soviet delegation 1951.

40 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Report to the Regional Secretariats of the Communist Party to International Women's Day 1949, sheet 20.

IWD.⁴¹ It was the only holiday during which important political figures spoke explicitly and out loud about the role of women. The nature of these statements was generally constant and always addressed exclusively to women. In the first years of the period under review, the speakers explicitly spoke to “working women”.⁴² In later speeches, the circle of addressees was extended to include mothers in the household.⁴³ During the terms of office of Presidents Gottwald, Zápotocký and Novotný, women’s contributions to the country’s development and increasing women’s employment were traditionally emphasized. Ludvík Svoboda’s speeches more often showed signs of some of the problems that women have in Czechoslovakia. It considered a universal solution to improve the quality and availability of services that were supposed to reduce women’s household work. Despite the declared equality between men and women, the care of children and the household was a purely female issue in contemporary discourse.⁴⁴ Although presidents always mentioned such shortcomings in their speeches since the mid-1960s, this motive occupied only a small part of the speech. Cliches, which assured the improvement of conditions, also repeated themselves quite monotonously. The recipe and set of solutions have always been the same, and with knowledge of historical facts, it can be said that they did not have real results.⁴⁵ Since the late 1960s, presidents also criticized the “removal of women from the household.” Ludvík Svoboda and Gustav Husák also focused on the role of women as mothers and educators. “We do not want to divert women from childcare. Neglecting the upbringing of children would boomerang against both the family and society as a whole. On the contrary, they should be able to pay more attention to children.”⁴⁶ In matters of women’s leisure time, a kind of connection between their leisure time and time for raising children emerged. The mother’s role was thus seemingly relegated to the position of “leisure activity”. On the other hand, from the point of view of the pronatalist policy of the 1970s, it has had an irreplaceable function since the mid-1960s. A happy woman was a woman who could take care of her children and family. The role of the mother was then referred to as the “sacred mission”, while the role of the father did not carry these “sacral” connotations. The time for self-development was not considered for women here, and the free time of the childless was completely outside their interest.

41 RP 28 (57), 1948, p. 3.

42 President’s speech, RP 29 (57), 1949, p. 1.

43 RP 55 (57), 1975, p. 1.

44 President’s speech, RP 49 (57), 1969, p. 1.

45 We point out the imperfect infrastructure and problems that make life uncomfortable for women in the speeches of the presidents every year, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, e.g., RP 52 (57), 1972, p. 2; RP 54 (57), 1974, p. 2; RP 55 (57), 1975, p. 1; RP 59 (57), 1979, p. 1.

46 President’s speech, RP 49 (57), 1969, p. 1; President’s speech, RP 52 (57), 1972, p. 1.

The common denominator of all national festivities during the period of state socialism was the effort to promote the regime. In the case of IWD, the ideological line was present constantly and strikingly. In addition, if there was a significant anniversary for the year in question, IWD was also affected. This was most often reflected in the content of presidential or prime ministerial speeches. In the speech to women, a special space was devoted to commemorating this or that famous anniversary. In 1975, Prime Minister Štrougal called on women to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the liberation of the Czechoslovak Republic by the Red Army of the Soviet Union, which brought "not only freedom, but also a real hope that the old order is over and the time is coming when the people will finally be the lord in their country."⁴⁷

The wives of presidents played a special role during IWD. The idea of natural inner belonging among women here has led to the creation of a unique space for women who stood by the head of state. Although it was not common for the first ladies to speak here (Marta Gottwald, on the other hand, always added at least a short speech to women)⁴⁸, they always attended the informal part of the ceremony. The first ladies talked to the women and eventually "gave valuable advice."⁴⁹

In addition to the speeches of politicians and the wives of the presidents, the speech of thanks held by the women's union representatives also became a part of the programme. The women's representatives always thanked the president first for the opportunity to meet at Prague Castle. Subsequently, they talked about the situation of women in Czechoslovakia.⁵⁰ As in other speeches held on the occasion of all the great communist holidays, even in the speech of the representatives of the Women's Union, there were entirely laudatory statements and words of thanks. It was also necessary to point out the need to fight for peace, socialism, and international women's solidarity.⁵¹ Especially in the years of tense global crises (e.g., 1949, 1950, 1985, etc.), much of the speech focused on the threats of imperialism. In all the above-mentioned speeches we find an element of gender equality evaluation. The speech has always been primarily a matter of pointing out the achievements. The position of women was compared to times long past. At the same time, the promise of a better tomorrow was an integral part of the texts. The path to the "common goal", to the communist or at least a perfectly functioning socialist society, was a ubiquitous narrative.⁵² After all, on the

47 RP 55 (57), 1975, p. 2.

48 Vlasta 2 (11), 1949, p. 2, Speech by Marta Gottwaldová.

49 RP 30 (57), 1950, p. 2.

50 It was an annual unchanging use. Vlasta 34 (12), 1954, pp. 2–3.

51 This is the case throughout the period under review. We will not find a speech that would lack this content line. To illustrate, see RP 30 (57), 1950, p. 1; RP 55 (57), 1975, p. 1.

52 Vlasta 3 (11), 1950, p. 2.

occasion of IWD, women were being called upon to work even harder for the state and socialism.⁵³ The award ceremony was also to have a motivating character. The women on display performed their task well, they were rewarded for it and were intended to motivate others of the same sex.⁵⁴

The central actor of the described celebration was therefore the delegation of selected women. The number of ambassadors to Prague Castle changed over time, mostly oscillating between 150 and 250 women.⁵⁵ Delegates were invited to Prague Castle to meet with the President and be rewarded as exemplary socialist women for their work. The appearance of the delegation also changed during the period under review and reflected the contemporary ideal of a socialist woman. The delegation did not always have to consist only of the honoured women. For example, foreign students joined the awarded women in 1967, and other times delegations of women from the USSR, or several World War II veterans or widows of war heroes visited the president with them.⁵⁶ The selection of award-winning women was the responsibility of the Czechoslovak Women's Union. The first nominations were to be provided by the district committees and subsequently the candidate was to be assessed by the local party authorities. The principle was that women from all regions of the republic should be represented in the delegation. Furthermore, they were to be members of the party as well as non-partisan women, who, however, always formed a minority.⁵⁷ Women had to meet clearly defined criteria. All proposed women had their file which included the bio-notes of the nominated woman.⁵⁸ Traditionally, it was a short paragraph highlighting her qualities. In addition to the name and date of birth, we read from the text whether the person was married, what her relationship with the state institution was, how many children she had and subsequently what she was to be rewarded for. When comparing the profiles of women who were selected, we come across several funda-

53 We encounter this motif mainly during the construction of the 1950s, both on the pages of women's magazines (e.g., *Vlasta* 3 (11), 1950, p. 2; *Vlasta* 4 (10), 1951, p. 2), as well as in the speeches of the presidents.

54 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Letter to the District Committees of the Communist Party, 30. 1. 1950, p. 1; NA, f. KSČ ÚV (Central Committee of the Communist Party) 02/4, Ideological focus and political-organizational security of the International Women's Day, 1982, inv. No. 25/82.

55 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Regional and District Commission of Women of the Communist Party, 26. 1. 1949, p. 6; NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Letter to all regional secretariats of the Communist Party 1950, sheet 20, p. 2.

56 RP 65 (106), 1985, p. 8.

57 NA, f. KSČ ÚV (Central Committee of the Communist Party) 02/4, Ideological focus and political-organizational security of IWD, 1982, inv. No. 525 / 82.

58 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Letter from Marie Tůmová to the clerks of the regional committees of the Communist Party 28. 1. 1950, sheet 19–20.

mental trends. The age composition of the awarded women was relatively stable throughout the period under review, although it is possible to note a tendency to appreciate younger women, especially from the mid-1960s. Women over the age of 40 were most often selected, but the proportion of younger people grew as time goes at the expense of women over the age of 60. It was no exception to appreciate a very young shock worker, sportswoman or member of the Youth Union.⁵⁹ The profile of the personality selected for the award reflected the ideas of the ideal woman of the time and perfectly represented the gender image of the socialist woman. The demands on the socialist superwoman, of course, changed during the period under review. In 1951, the Central Commission of Women reported on the selection of suitable women so that "not only work merit but also modesty, good attitude towards people, dedication, exemplary family life, proper upbringing of children, consistency in action, wisdom and willing passing on of experience to the younger were evaluated."⁶⁰ These traits are traditionally associated with the image of women and are part of the gender role of the "finer sex". Among other things, women were praised for having "female qualities" in terms of gender. Formulas such as "she is a common good woman" were related to these aspects of the image of the ideal delegate in the bio-notes.⁶¹ "Conscientiously cares for the household,"⁶² "Raises her children well,"⁶³ "Mother of three sons, all miners,"⁶⁴ "She, increases her performance of the tested and guaranteed standards to 231%. She transfers her experience to co-employees."⁶⁵

The range of merits for which the woman deserved to become an award-winning model has expanded over time. In the delegations coming to Prague Castle, we would at the beginning find mainly workers, improvers, workers from collective farms, and deserving mothers. We were meeting scientists and sportswomen much more often from the 1960s, even though women representing the working class still made up the vast majority of the delegation. An interesting and easy-to-observe aspect is the visual appearance of the celebration. This is mainly a visual presentation of the women in

59 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Consultation at A. Hodinová-Spurná on February 9, 1950, letter 3, p. 21.

60 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Letter to the Central Secretariat of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, that, 27 February 1951, sheet 128, p. 22.

61 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Letter to the Central Secretariat of the Communist Party to the hands of Holečková, 26 February 1951, sheet 183, p. 22.

62 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Characteristics of a Merited Worker in the Czech Women's Union in the Dačice District, sheet 96, p. 22.

63 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Letter to the Central Secretariat of the Communist Party to the hands of Holečková, 26. 2. 1951, sheet 155, p. 22.

64 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Letter to the Central Secretariat of the Communist Party, Gottwald Region, sheet 169, p. 22.

65 Ibidem, sheet 179, p. 22.

the delegation. Despite the trends in advertising and design, the decoration of the environment did not change significantly and remained basically the same throughout the period. Apart from the carpet and flowers, the hall of Prague Castle did not adapt to the event in any way. The flower, specifically the carnation, as a symbol accompanied the whole celebration on several levels. It was different in the case of women. At first glance, when comparing individual delegations, we can notice differences in their order. In the first years of the period under review, the festive nature of the event did not manifest itself in the hairstyles or clothing of women. With their visuals, the women in the delegation represented the ideal of a worker rather than a woman as an erotic object. Especially in the second half of the 1960s and subsequently (with a break after 1970) from the beginning of the 1980s, women adapted to this opportunity in a completely different way. Contemporary fashion was reflected in the visual presentation of women. There was already an effort to “look good” and be festively groomed. This trend can be interpreted as a shift from representing what a woman is valued for, to the position of representing the personalities of the women and their ideas of what the woman should look like. Such a change included an effort to “look attractive” or “feminine” in the period’s perception of the term’s content with a clearly gendered undertone.

The whole event always required considerable media attention. Television, radio, and printed periodicals have always reported in great detail about the course of the event and its circumstances. The specific names of the awarded women appeared in the reports along with the specification of their employment or the reason for the award.⁶⁶ Conversations with women generally referred to the emotions that women are filled with on a fateful day. During the 1950s, the narrative was always almost identical. An ordinary woman who knew only misery until February 1948 was now invited to Prague Castle to see the President.⁶⁷ “When the postman brought me an envelope inviting me to President Gottwald, I was stunned. I’m a countrywoman and suddenly I have to go to the head of state.”⁶⁸

In addition to the Prague Castle ceremony itself, we also learn from the media about another programme that was prepared for the delegates. It was usually a cultural experience. It took place the day before the ritual at Prague Castle. It was mostly a concert or theatre performance organized by the Women’s Union.⁶⁹ During the more informal part of the event at Prague Castle, women were not only able to refresh

66 Vlasta 3 (11), 1950, p. 2.

67 RP 30 (30), 1950, p. 1.

68 RP 29 (30), 1949, p. 1.

69 Vlasta 34 (12), 1981, p. 2–3.

themselves but also had the opportunity to talk to politicians about their problems.⁷⁰ Television reports explicitly highlighted the numerous greetings from state-owned enterprises and workplaces that delegates handled for the president.⁷¹

The preserved records of interviews with the awarded women document happiness, a sense of satisfaction, enthusiasm for an unexpectedly proven honour and a good mood dominating the atmosphere of the whole ritual. The women talked about the experiences they had with the socialist regime. In *Vlasta* and *Rudé právo*, we also find references to the element of belonging that this celebration brings to women at Prague Castle.⁷² Women were then to be united not only by a common goal, which was socialist society and world peace. They were united by a certain "femininity," which was the same for the hog slopper and the nuclear engineer.⁷³ The use of the traditional unchanging phrases of the socialist dictionary was not abandoned even in the case of the last type of speech, which was the speech of one of the delegates. Older women and women from manual occupations have traditionally been selected. By their nature, these, mostly shorter speeches, differed even less than the speeches mentioned above. The content was limited to a set of greetings and words of thanks.⁷⁴

The first 150 women awarded arrived at Prague Castle on 8 March 1949. The deputy, Anežka Hodinová-Spurná, describes the whole event in *Vlasta* magazine in great detail. She especially highlighted some of the symbolic moments of the ritual. "They experienced the first joyful surprise on the front stairs. The members of the National Security Corps formed an honour guard here as a living testimony that in today's republic there is no profession where a woman cannot serve her homeland."⁷⁵ Women were to be rewarded for their daily work, especially in working-class positions. Among the women were shock workers, improvers, multiple mothers, rural women, active party members and young officials. IWD was used as a large-scale manifestation of the changing situation in the republic. Prague Castle, which was associated with a certain elitist morality, was to continue to be accessible to all, even the simplest of rural women. "In the past, it was not customary for the working people to enter Prague Castle's halls through the ceremonial Matthias Gate. Only during the people's demo-

70 *Vlasta* 25 (12), 1972, pp. 2–3.

71 The oldest, preserved in the archives of Czech radio, a record from the reception of women at Prague Castle, 7 March 1962, Interview with a delegate from Nová ves nad Popelkou, available from: International Women's Day under Socialism: Builders, Mothers and Housewives | Plus. Czech Radio Plus 1997, <https://plus.rozhlas.cz/mezinarodni-den-zen-za-socialismu-budovatelky-matky-i-hospodynky-7781058> (29.05.2023).

72 *Vlasta* 9 (12), 1956, p.3, Impressions from the Prague Castle.

73 RP 30 (30), 1950, p. 1; RP 52 (57), 1972, p. 1; RP 55 (57), 1975, p. 1.

74 *Vlasta* 9 (12), 1956, pp. 2–3.

75 RP 29 (30), 1949, p. 1, Speech by MP Hodinová-Spurná.

cratic republic, only the president, who himself was member of working class, welcomes to his desk the representatives of working women, who have earned this honour by performing their task well.⁷⁶ The motif of the removed barriers was still alive, at least in the mid-1970s when this symbolic moment was emphasized in their statements by the women at Prague Castle during IWD.⁷⁷ The complete removal of social barriers should have been reflected in the composition of the women's delegation, where workers and scientists stood side by side as equals. "The fact that the composition of your delegation, in which the best representatives of all the working class of our people stand side by side, testifies to the different conditions under which you celebrate your holiday today than how the women in the pre-Munich Republic did (...). Today, our constitution and the entire people's democratic order give you unlimited opportunities to exercise all your abilities in any area of public affairs." (...)⁷⁸

Not only the Prague Castle event but also the entire IWD was given considerable space in the media and press every year. Promotions and invitations to participate in IWD were centrally managed and organized by the women's union management through the media. The radio in Brno was to dedicate its programme every morning at 10am to IWD. From 5 March, it was to invite its listeners to participate in the celebration several times a day.⁷⁹ Based on an analysis of the women's press, *Rudé právo* and *Lidové noviny*, it is possible to summarize the topics and trends with which the media worked on this day from 1948 to March 1989. As the best-selling women's magazine, *Vlasta* devoted the largest amount of time to IWD.

One of the traditional leitmotifs of the role of women, mentioned mainly during IWD, was the fight for peace.⁸⁰ Peace accents and a kind of intuitive labelling of women as patrons of peace gradually disappeared during the 1960s only to begin to return in the first half of the 1970s.⁸¹ The coveted peace has been associated on all fronts with the struggle against "Anglo-American imperialism." "Anglo-American imperialism intimidates nations and blackmails politics with its military-strategic, economic and ideological fronts (...). But democratic nations see that even the strongest American imperialism is unable to hold back the steady growth of democratic forces and peace."⁸² The women's solidarity movement was most strongly

76 Ibidem, p. 2, Speech by MP Hodinová-Spurná.

77 RP 55 (57), 1975, p. 1.

78 RP 30 (33), 1950, p. 1.

79 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Consultation at A. Hodinová-Spurná on 9 February 1950, letter 2, p. 21; NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, IWD Organization 1951, sheet 30, p. 21.

80 Denisa NEČASOVÁ, *Buduj vlast – posílíš mír! ženské hnutí v českých zemích 1945–1955*, Brno 2011.

81 RP 67 (57), 1987, pp. 1–2.

82 RP 29 (30), 1949, p. 2, Speech by MP Hodinová-Spurná.

emphasized in the 1950s and later in the second half of the 1980s. In 1951, on the occasion of IWD, female minister Macháčová- Dostálová called the issue of the struggle for peace “the most pressing issue that affects the hearts of our wives and mothers,” because “(...) their motherly hearts cannot remain cold when they hear about atrocities committed by American soldiers on innocent children and women.”⁸³ Petitions against war or to support the children in Spain were the ones most frequently written on IWD.⁸⁴ To manifest the international pacifist connection of women, the Council of Women and later the Union of Czechoslovak Women organized massive demonstrations and marches. Considerable attention has been paid to their planning. Attention was also paid to the suitability of mottos and banners, which were produced under the control of local women's organizations. Even in this case, the spontaneity of the action was kept to a minimum and was to be replaced by strict central management. Even after such crucial preparations, the events did not avoid the confusion of organizational failure. During the demonstration procession held on 8 March 1951 in Prague, some branches of the procession failed to “find” the rest of the marching women. Subsequently, the women were not allowed into Industrial Palace, where the whole event was to culminate. The complaint letter of the chairwoman of the local women's organization notes that many “muddy” and disgusted women left the event prematurely because they heard nothing of the speech. At the same time, she notes that especially older women, mothers and employed women were completely discouraged by this excess and they will not participate in other IWD.⁸⁵

In the days of March, the press also regularly focused on listing the results of women's emancipation that had already been achieved by the socialist regime. Each IWD had a clearly and in advance defined central theme, which all promotional and educational activities were to adhere to. In 1957, the female deputy Černá said, “This day of the struggle for peace and equality of women, commemorated by all women in the world, is an annual show of Czechoslovak achievements and a platform for new challenges. This year's IWD will be the mobilization of women to fulfil the tasks of the economic plan at plants and in agriculture in connection with the preparation of the IIIrd Congress of United Agricultural Cooperatives. For all women, it will be the start of elections to national committees.”⁸⁶

83 RP 31 (56), 1951, p.1, International Women's Day – Day of Struggle for Peace.

84 Vlasta 6 (12), 1952, p.11.

85 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Complaint letter of the chairwoman of the local branch of the Czech Women's Union Prague – Strasnice M. Podlipská and executive V. Jindrová to the course and organization of the IWD 1951, 14. 3. 1951, sheet 34, p. 22.

86 <https://www.psp.cz/eknih/1954ns/stenprot/016schuz/s016005.htm> (29.05.2023).

As President Gottwald's speech said, "I would especially like to emphasize the figure that the number of working women has recently risen to 32.7% of the total number of workers. This figure proves better than most statements that women's equality is the most real thing in our country."⁸⁷ Emancipation was considered equal to the involvement of a woman in the employment.⁸⁸ It had nothing to do with gender equality, independence, and the freedom to decide one's destiny, as emancipation is interpreted by the original humanistic philosophy. On IWD, we can learn from the press mainly about the number of women who have been actively involved in work: "International Women's Day will be a show of how Czechoslovak women became involved in socialist construction. Reports coming from factories and villages every day show that Czechoslovak women do not want to stay back. The shock-worker movement is developing in factories and companies. Women in textile factories are moving to an increasing number of weaving looms and setting themselves more and more tasks (...). Rural women are also participating in the socialist competition. Recently, women's conferences were held in almost all regions, at which rural women pledged to compete to increase the production of products farmed by women in rural areas."⁸⁹

The image of a socialist woman underwent certain changes during the period under review. However, the emphasis on women's employment was a completely constant motive. The definition of a woman was derived from her contribution to society, with only economically productive work and work on population development being considered valuable. The regime, therefore, constructed two clearly defined and accepted types of women: working women, mothers, or a combination of both. Both of these positions included the role of women in the development and the spread of socialism. However, the female role has always been interpreted as "helpful" and, under the guidance of men, secondary to the men leading and directing the process. Unemployed, childless housewives thus completely disappeared from the IWD discourse. The role of the wife, which was still perceived as socially important in the pre-war republic, also lost its importance, and was not discussed in the women's press. In the 1950s, the female worker was the dominant narrative—a shock worker's fight for peace with a socialist commitment.⁹⁰ An example is a rhetorical question from the speech in 1952: "Which mother loves her children and her family more than the one

87 RP 31 (56), 1951, p. 1, Speech by President Gottwald.

88 For more on the concept of female emancipation in the Eastern bloc, see Shana PENN – Jill MASSINO (eds.), *Gender politics and everyday life in the socialist state East and Central Europe*, New York 2009.

89 RP 29 (30), 1949, p. 2.

90 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Božena Hladíková, *Why I Became a Striker*, sheet 188, p. 22.

who goes to make tractors, weave linen, grow grain to multiply the power of the peace camp against the enemies of human happiness?"⁹¹

International Women's Day in the late 1960s

From 1948 until the second half of the 1960s, texts and speeches that respond to the actual problems of women and their unequal social status were not encountered in the press. Due to the ceremonial nature of the event, the emphasis on objectively existing problems and controversies of socialist society did not appear in the speeches at IWD. Although the gender profile of women was influenced by phenomena such as the change in abortion policy and the ever-increasing divorce rate, they were not a topic discussed on IWD. The importance of socialism for women was recalled on all fronts. Between 1967 and 1969, however, IWD became a day when certain critical evaluations of the position of Czechoslovak women appeared on the pages of magazines.⁹² The strongest was then the expression of the reform wing between female officials.⁹³ The disproportionate burden on women at work and at home and the lack of time for children and personal development were emphasized. The image of the woman thus took on "more traditional" contours, while the role of the mother was emphasized not in the context of struggle, but in the context of upbringing. A woman is a mother and should have time for her natural role. In 1968, the relevant issue of *Vlasta* addressed the issue of unequal pay, high female occupancy and low representation of women in management and high positions.⁹⁴ For the first and last time, IWD was used to openly criticize the Women's Union. According to the authors of the articles, the Women's Union was to help women in various positions to effectively solve their problems and to take care of women as an interest group. During the Prague Spring, women in politics were generally loudly criticized for neglecting women's issues and how little they cared for women. Even the *Vlasta* editorial office opposed the approach of Božena Macháčová-Dostálová, the only woman in government. She allegedly made insufficient efforts from the position of minister to solve the problems of women in the consumer industry and rejected legitimate criticism. According to the editors, *Vlasta* was also significantly limited by the censorship of the Women's Union, through which articles pointing to the shortcomings of a socialist society

91 RP 31 (30), 1951, p. 1.

92 *Vlasta* 21 (13), 1968, pp. 2–3.

93 A major revision of the CSSA's position was made possible only after personnel changes in 1968 when the current chairwoman Helena Leflerová resigned at a meeting of the CSSA OV in response to criticism of the CSSA's conservative approach. NA ČR, f. ÚV ČSSZ, box 75, Meeting of Chairpersons and Secretaries of OV ČSSZ and Czech Regions on 25 April 1968.

94 *Vlasta* 21 (6), 1968, p. 2.

concerning women were not to go through.⁹⁵ We cannot read in any of the numerous interviews provided by the female deputies to *Vlasta* magazine that they are taking the position of deputies to focus more on the problems and interests of neglected Czechoslovak women. In the dynamic atmosphere of 1968, the women in the National Assembly split into two very different wings, labelled “feminist reform” and “conservative.” Criticism of discrimination and the living conditions of women in Czechoslovakia, especially among the more educated and younger deputies, appeared. In a speech led by deputy Šťastná, we read: “Today we are not and cannot be satisfied with any slogans about socialism (...). We want to hear a real answer to the questions that real life in a socialist society poses for us. We want to hear the answer to our worries and our own experiences.”⁹⁶ In matter of changes in the content of the term “emancipation,” the easing and loosening of the censorship during the Prague Spring was absolutely crucial. “Until a few years ago, we all thought that there was no so-called ‘women’s question’ that socialism had not solved. We had to correct the ideas we had in 1948–1949 and later to some extent. It is not enough that the employment of women has increased in our country to an unprecedented level. With the growing employment of women, without which our society cannot be, many new tasks have been added to the woman, but the burden of old responsibilities has not been lost.”⁹⁷ There is a question to what extent are the revisions of reduction of female emancipation to women’s employment associated with the new ideas of the 1960s, and to what extent they were constantly present in society. According to the way women evaluated their motivations for work in the 1950s during questionnaire surveys⁹⁸, one can also consider the possibility that the late 1960s did not bring new ideas, but only gave space to those which were already present in society, but were silenced by discourse.⁹⁹ The tradition of the non-communist bourgeois women’s movement, which was completely prevalent in Czechoslovakia before the war, was profound. It seems quite probable

95 *Vlasta* 21 (40), 1968, p. 2.

96 RP 48 (57), 1968, p.1, Speech by V. Šťastná Chairwoman of the ONV School and Cultural Commission in Hradec Králové.

97 *Ibidem*.

98 Alena WAGNEROVA, *Žena za socialismu: Československo 1945–1974 a reflexe vývoje před rokem 1989 a po něm*, Prague 2017, p. 90.

99 According to period questionnaire surveys, the work of women by their husbands was tolerated if it was necessary for the financial security of the household. Conversely, if a man could manage to support his family on his own, most men would prefer a traditional arrangement in which the woman does not go to work and takes full care of the household and family. Women themselves also found the motivation to come to work in the need to contribute to the domestic budget, but more often than men they emphasized a positive attitude towards the work team. (This model is evaluated by the interviewed men as preferred, for example, in the sociological survey of A. WAGNEROVÁ, *Žena za socialismu*, pp. 95–97).

that the ideas and the models of the emancipated woman constructed by the democratic women's movement could not be completely pushed out of society. First Republic feminism did not work with the "employment" reduction in the issue of women's emancipation. Their broader understanding of the emancipation phenomenon better responded to complex women's needs.¹⁰⁰ The perceived inadequacy of the communist version of emancipation could then enter an open debate in times without harsh censorship.

International Women's Day and the perception of women emancipation during normalization

During the normalization of the 1970s and 1980s, articles in the press and speeches on IWD were again in the spirit of celebrating socialism as the only regime that can bring emancipation to women.¹⁰¹ At the same time, the commitment to further involve women in its construction was an integral part of all speeches. We encounter similar rhetoric throughout the period under review until 1989. In Miroslava Němcová's speech of March 1989, we read: "Therefore, women—mothers, educators, teachers, masters—will do their best to influence the working attitudes of young people to cultivate in them a relation to values and to the socialist homeland."¹⁰²

While the elites were silent about the unequal position of Czechoslovak women, it is possible to trace a subversive interpretation of emancipation as a burden (namely self-sacrifice) in the statements of ordinary Czechoslovaks (and in the 1960s even in regime women's magazines). On IWD, various wishes and greetings aimed at women were regularly broadcast on television and radio. Very often their difficult fate is mentioned here.¹⁰³ However, it was not perceived as something worthy of criticism. Due to the economic conditions of households, the participation of women in the financial security of the family was necessary. The propaganda sought to ensure that a woman forced out of the domestic sphere did not appear in the eyes of the public to be pressured by circumstances. The woman chose her extremely difficult role at the time and did so completely freely. The objective need to bring money into the family did not appear at all in the range of arguments presented by the regime. In the questionnaires, on the other hand, this motivation was mentioned most often.¹⁰⁴ Employment was to be presented not only at IWD as the self-realization of the woman, which was made

100 Štěpánka KOPŘIVOVÁ, *Od ženy v politice k političce. Společné aktivity československých poslankyň mezi lety 1918–1948*, Diploma thesis, Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, Prague 2020.

101 RP 69 (56), 1988, p. 2.

102 RP 69 (57), 1989, p. 1.

103 *Vlasta* 20 (10), 1967, p. 3.

104 A. WAGNEROVA, *Žena za socialismu*, p. 91.

possible only by socialism, for which she must work alongside men.¹⁰⁵ However, this presentation of the situation presented in official politics and the press was in sharp contradiction with the results of the survey of the statistical office and the statements of witnesses.¹⁰⁶ The double shift at work and at home was not considered a fightable phenomenon. This is not something that could be changed. The men wished the women “to forget that they were emancipated for at least one day.”¹⁰⁷ The motive of emancipation as something harmful to women persisted at least until 1989. It seems that this is where we can look for the roots of Czech women’s reserved and even negative approach to feminism and contemporary women’s movements.¹⁰⁸ Emancipation carried out from above, without the support of the subjects of this social change, completely degraded it in the eyes of Czech women as a phenomenon and was not perceived as a “success” of social development.

International Women’s Day at the workplace

In addition to the already described state dimension of Women’s Day, IWD celebrations took place mainly at the level of state-owned enterprise. On this day, the workplace was to be properly cleaned and, if necessary, decorated with flowers. It was customary in companies to post photos of the best employees.¹⁰⁹ However, even in the 1950s, IWD celebrations at the workplace, when the greatest emphasis was placed on the proper performance of the celebration, were mostly limited to “handing over a bouquet without context.”¹¹⁰ Despite this, according to the Women’s Union’s instructions, the companies were to be the main celebrating entity right after the state officialities. Such an approach was fully in line with the idea of women as a workforce. It is clear from the respondents’ remembrance that there were probably companies in which IWD was celebrated “in style,” and such companies were also repor-

105 Vlasta 31 (10), 1978, p. 3; Vlasta 4 (12), 1952, p. 2, Promise of women to the president of the republic.

106 A. WAGNEROVA, *Žena za socialismu*, p. 94.

107 Recording of the wishes of actor Petr Kostka in the programme Kolotoč. Available from: International Women’s Day under Socialism: Builders, Mothers and Housewives Plus. Czech Radio Plus, 1997, <https://plus.rozhlas.cz/mezinarodni-den-zen-za-socialismu-budovatelky-matky-i-hospodynky-7781058> (29.05.2023).

108 Bohuslav BLATEK, *Bariéry feminismu v Čechách na konci 20. století*, in: Marie Chřibková (ed.), *Feminismus devadesátých let českýma očima*, Prague 1999, pp. 193–203; Kirstie RATZER-FARLEY, *Feminism Movement in Czech Republic*, in: Running head: Feminism in Czech Republic, Ohio 2017, <http://kentnprague.com/wpcontent/uploads/2013/09/The-Czech-Feminist-Movement.pdf> (29.05.2023); Jiřina ŠIKLOVÁ, *Feminism and the Roots of Apathy in the Czech Republic*, *Social Research* 64 (2), 1997, pp. 258–280; Eadem, *Má feminismus v Čechách šanci?*, *Nová Přítomnost* 3 (1), 1998, pp. 8–10; Eadem, *Why Western Feminism Isn’t Working in the Czech Republic. Feminism in Czech Republic*, <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/cz4.html> (29.05.2023).

109 NA, f. 21, Letter to all regional secretariats of the Communist Party, 30. 1. 1950, inv. No. 18.

110 Vlasta 22 (15), 1968, p. 15.

ted by the press.¹¹¹ So we meet with concerts, social evenings, trips, balls, educational discussions, etc.¹¹² In some cases, the range of events related to IWD could take several days. For example, lantern parades, usually organized on 7 March, became popular.¹¹³

As for the participation of women in the organization of their International Day, there was an interesting transfer of the initiative during the period. While in the 1950s, IWD was organized mainly by women for women in municipalities and companies. Over time, men took over this position, and in the normalization period, women were most often in the position of spectators. This change was probably the result of many factors. Generational change played an indispensable role in this process. The female IWD initiators in the early 1950s had a demonstrably deep interest in the organization of IWD. Their interest in the holiday is evident from the amount of documentation, surveys, and detailed instructions that these women created in the early 1950s. The surviving correspondence also shows a very intense interest and shows that IWD was indeed without exaggeration the most important day of the year for these women. In the second half of the 1960s at the latest, this first generation was not replaced by women with a similar passion for organizing the day. The post-war initiators with a really deep interest in the organization of IWD were mainly women with pre-war political experience, widows of important communists and women who were part of the party during the First Republic. There were personalities like Anežka Hodiňová-Spurná, Gusta Fučíková, or Marie Švermová who enjoyed general respect from their male colleagues and companions. This was also reflected in their presence on the highest levels of the political management of the republic in the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia. That mentioned interest manifested itself in long discussions and meetings. The women around Marie Švermová and other pre-war connoisseurs worked out extensive sets of proposals for the course of IWD, proposed suitable slogans, sought financial and human resources, advocated the spread of IWD to all corners of Czechoslovakia, and generally devoted an immense amount of time and effort to the whole event. With the retirement of these women, the above activities also disappeared. The proposed ideas remained the same from year to year and the nature of IWD stabilized, the slogans, visuals and programs of the event did not change, and the implementation of the event was generally taken over by managers of individual companies and institutions. At the same time, the composition of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia changed fundamentally. Only two women ever reached the highest levels of the Central Com-

111 RP 51 (56), 1971, p. 2.

112 Ibidem.

113 NA, 1564 1261/1/17, poster Where after work in the week from 5 to 11 March 1951, Banská Bystrica, p. 22.

mittee. At the VIIIth Congress, only Marie Švermová was elected to the presidency of the Central Committee at the communist congress, and from 27 June 1948, after the merger of the communist party with the social democracy, Ludmila Jankovcová was co-opted to the presidency.¹¹⁴

At the IXth Congress in 1949, Švermová and Jankovcová were re-elected, while Švermová was removed from her post as a result of political trials on 21 January 1951.¹¹⁵ After the Congress of 1954, Ludmila Jankovcová appeared only in the position of a candidate of the political bureau of the Communist Party. She remained in this position even after the congresses of 1958 and 1962.¹¹⁶ At the 1966 convention, no woman was elected to the presidency.¹¹⁷ After the extraordinary congress of the party, held on 22 August 1968 in Vysočany, Libuše Hrdinová appeared in the presidency and held her position until April 1969.¹¹⁸ Until after the XVth Congress of April 1976, a woman, even “only” as a member of the secretariat, Marie Kabrhelová, reappears on the highest levels of the Central Committee. If we are dealing with the period between 1948 and 1989, we cannot talk about the real share of women in the government, and this was the case especially after the 1960s.

Some specific women’s activities on the occasion of 8 March were women’s socialist work commitments in the 1950s.¹¹⁹ Corporate initiatives were frequent, with a group of women pledging to increase their performance in the interests of peace and socialism in the coming year. Another specific feature of the 1950s was the evaluation of the best employees at the corporate level. Appreciation of female employees in socialist Czechoslovakia was generally understood as an effective form of motivating women to work. Especially in the first years of the observed period, we came across countless different diplomas, awards, recognitions, etc., which employees could receive for their exemplary work.¹²⁰

The management of the companies, as we have already mentioned, was instructed directly from the centre of the Women’s Union about the required form of the reminder of IWD. The chairman of the state-owned enterprise or another represen-

114 <https://www.upn.gov.sk/projekty/funkcionari-ksc-kss/> (29.05.2023).

115 <https://www.psp.cz/eknih/1948ns/rejstrik/jmenny/sb.htm> (29.05.2023); For more on the trial, see e.g.: Marián LÓŽI, *Hledání nepřátel uvnitř KSČ Fóra, aktéři a konfliktní témata vnitrostranické komunikace v regionální perspektivě (podzim 1950–jaro 1951)*, *Securitas imperii* 32 (1), 2018, pp. 222–249.

116 <https://www.upn.gov.sk/projekty/funkcionari-ksc-kss/vysledky-vyhľadavania/?priezvisko=Jankovcov%C3%A1&meno=Ludmila> (29.05.2023).

117 <https://www.upn.gov.sk/projekty/funkcionari-ksc-kss/zobraz/zjazd?id=6> (29.05.2023).

118 For more on the congress, see Lukáš CVRČEK, *Vysočany 1968: mimořádný XIV. sjezd KSČ*, *Securitas imperii* 15 (1), 2009, pp. 138–183.

119 *Vlasta* 7 (11), 1953, p. 14; *Vlasta* 9 (7), 1955, p. 10; *Vlasta* 10 (4), 1956, p.10.

120 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Proposal for the wording of the diploma, sheet 10.

tative of the company was to give a speech at the beginning, which had been prepared for him in advance by the members of the local women's organization. Most often, however, the company did only the requisite minimum. There was a simple handover of a flower from one of the managers. Due to the low representation of women in management positions, the handler was almost always a man. A priori assumptions that there will always be a man in the leading position in the company can also be found in the instructions. The one who had to appreciate a woman was always a man, and by this assumption, he was always placed in a superior position. The woman's work was praised as helpful, and the man, as a superior, symbolically handed her a flower.¹²¹ It is the act of handing over a flower that can be associated with the relatively traditional concept of a woman as the fairer sex, and it was thus presented in the period media. According to the official statement of the chairwoman of the Women's Union, the flower handed over to women at IWD was "an expression of gratitude for the values that women create for our society."¹²² But for the most part, women saw the act as "a necessity."¹²³ IWD was not an internalized need for participants to present personal beliefs about the need to celebrate women's merits in society. They were motivated to participate in the celebrations by the state and the regime embodied in the management of the company. This corresponds to the complaint published in *Vlasta* in 1968. "Mostly, we know this from our own experience: on 8 March, we get a bouquet or a treat, they tell us how great and important we and our colleagues are and also state enterprises have their duty over. Ninety-nine percent of them don't even think about remembering us another time."¹²⁴ In the case of celebrations in a larger company, especially in the 1950s, the ceremonial handing over of so-called shock-working books, or the public "promotion" of successful women to formerly purely male positions was to follow. Particularly successful women, improvers and women who passed on their experience to other employees were also to be awarded. The number of newly employed and retrained women was to be evaluated. An integral part was also the declaration of commitments made by women. One of the main points of the programme was either the ceremonial opening of one of the infrastructure sites helping women (e.g., company laundries, nursery, canteens), or there was a commitment to build such a facility. The situation was similar in the case of the construction of a new part of a collective farm, a park, or a playground.¹²⁵

121 NA, f. 21, Instructions for the organization of IWD. International Women's Day in Brno, inv. No.18.

122 RP 69 (57), 1989, p. 1.

123 *Vlasta* 33 (6), 1979, p. 18.

124 *Vlasta* 22 (15), 1968, p. 15.

125 *Vlasta* 14 (9), 1960, p. 12.

Another possible women's initiative was a temporary takeover of leadership. In the week around 8 March, women took over the leading positions in the Kablo company in Kladno. The way in which events of this type have been reported clearly shows how exotic the women in the management of the company were and how the change of roles was understood. Such a temporary exchange of positions has a carnival effect. Although women were apparently given the opportunity to prove their abilities, at the same time they were not expected to be led into the leadership other than as an attraction.¹²⁶ These events were criticized from above as early as 1952, precisely because of their ambivalent sound and zero impact, and their organization was abandoned in the future. In the words of deputy Anežka Hodinová-Spurná, "We want us to have women leaders year-round."¹²⁷ Another analogous exchange of roles, held on Women's Day in the 1950s, was the handing over of the leadership of local National Committees to women.¹²⁸ These were most often the wives of officials or women active in the Czechoslovak Women's Union. Although the official discourse sought to involve women more in politics, the psychological effect of women's National Committees was quite the opposite. The exchange was always conceived as temporary. It was organized by men as a "public game" for women. The women themselves always presented it as an interesting experience, after which they most valued all the work that the National Committee did. The women themselves constructed their position during this exchange as being "just for help" and short-term. Their work had the character of an exceptional and unusual ecstasy from the everyday norm of social order. In terms of understanding the position of women in socialist society, these events were a demonstration of the patriarchal concept of gender order. An example of such an action could be the takeover of the local National Committee in Sovinky. The women ran the village here for 14 days. It is no surprise that they did not try any changes, interventions in established orders or statements. During their tenure, they "examined" what their men were doing at meetings, and as they reported in *Vlasta* magazine, "thoroughly scrubbed and cleaned their offices."¹²⁹ Although initiating similar events was intended to motivate women to become more involved in public life, the desired effect was not achieved. As late as 1989, an extensive article related to women in public office or business management as anomalies appeared in *Vlasta* magazine.¹³⁰

126 *Vlasta* 4 (14), 1950, p. 16.

127 NA, 1564 1261/1/17, Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Consultation at A. Hodinová-Spurná on February 7, 1952, letter 3, p. 22.

128 *Vlasta* 3 (16), 1950, p. 7.

129 *Ibidem*, p. 8.

130 *Vlasta* 44 (25), 1989, p. 22.

According to the respondents and the analysis of the relevant period texts, the motivations for participation in IWD were different. Despite the fact that the respondents equally rated IWD as embarrassing and meaningless¹³¹, participation in the group “celebration” was mass. This is also evidenced by period reports on the course of IWD. For example, in 1951, in Slovakia, IWD celebrations took place in 3,318 municipalities and 1,093 state enterprises. A total of 971,891 citizens took part in the celebrations. That the participation was really general is also evidenced by the organizers’ claim that a certain priest in Moravia also preached about peace and women on Sunday, 8 March.¹³² The pressure to participate was a common feature of all communist holidays. Participation was voluntary, but unofficially mandatory. It is paradoxical that it was women rather than men who expressed opposition to their own holiday. “Years ago, I preferred to take a vacation on this day, but my manager accused me of having bourgeois behaviour when I sided with the team.”¹³³ Respondents often rated the official nationwide dimension of IWD, associated with the appreciation of women, as completely inauthentic and uninteresting, and did not consider women to be performing as role models or inspiration. Contrary to the speeches made on IWD every year by prominent political figures, women in Czechoslovakia did not get the impression that the state would pay them any special honour on this day.

IWD celebrations did not rouse any internal affiliation among all women as a social group associated with common interests and difficulties. It seems, that mainly due to zero reflection of social trends in the development of society and blindness to problems and discrimination of socialist women, the holiday gradually lost its significance and potential in the eyes of Czechoslovak women and influenced gender representations and the transmission of coded gender content. Although it is difficult to substantiate this thesis scientifically, this claim is supported by a number of analysed egodocuments and recorded evidence of women in the late 1970s and 1980s.¹³⁴ In the period of late socialism, the emptiness of the IWD celebrations was obvious and corresponds to previous research related to other socialist rituals. As a rule, the organizers of IWD did not come up with anything new, nor did they use this day for social criticism. As with other holidays, IWD was a necessary annual routine, both for the organizers (usually men since the early 1970s) and for the “spectators” (usually women). However, among the witnesses, we encounter a relatively wide range of approaches to the celebration of the international women’s holiday. Most of the time,

131 E.g. Klára DAŇKOVÁ, Diploma thesis, Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, Prague 2019.

132 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954, Report on the course of IWD 1951, 14. 3. 1951, sheet 113, p. 22.

133 Vlasta 32 (6), 1979, p. 18.

134 E.g. K. DAŇKOVÁ, *Mezinárodní den žen*, pp. 47–76.

however, they are united by explicit opposition to the official form of the holiday.¹³⁵ According to a well-known thesis by Michel de Certeau, the relations between the state apparatus and the management of companies can be interpreted as relations between “strategy and tactics.”¹³⁶ The author uses the terms “strategy,” which refers to the practices of the strong and superior; and “tactics,” as a term referring to the daily and often unconscious activities of the weak. Thus, while strategies are determined by their own space, tactics favour the dimension of time and rely on its skilful use to overwhelm the system. Strategy is the formal directive structure of action that is sent from the central authority to individuals. On the contrary, tactics are the real experience of subordinates. The company’s management and ordinary individuals were looking for ways to cope with the situation in a directive-controlled area—controlled by the party and the government.

Many corporate celebrations were then perceived more as an opportunity to have fun or get drunk without a clear connection to the celebration of women and their merits. However, since the 1970s, we have also seen a clear departure in the official women’s press from the will to celebrate and participate in its celebrations. The women were bothered by the already mentioned inauthenticity of state celebrations and the form of the holiday in companies. In their statements, the women mentioned the “boredom” and “leatheriness” of the Prague Castle celebrations. In the case of corporate celebrations, they reacted explicitly to some negative phenomena such as drunkenness of participants, or to the fact that IWD is no longer a holiday of women and women’s rights or merit, but rather an opportunity to organize a party for men. The evaluation of the nature of IWD is illustrated by comments such as: “This holiday has become a day of drinking” or “Drinking with colleagues probably tastes better for men. This results in infidelity.”¹³⁷ Women often complained that they could not attend the evening part of the celebrations due to worries about the household, while their husbands did not take care of the household even on this day. “Of course, a man will not enter the kitchen and will not take care of the children. The women cannot celebrate their women’s holiday differently than at the stove. Of course, the evening part of the celebrations can be attended mainly by childless and single women, who do not yet know much about family worries. They enchant a married man without restraint.”¹³⁸ The lived practice of IWD corporate celebrations in many cases confirmed the traditional gender order not only by an act of congratulation but also by subsequent

135 In addition to the direct testimonies of witnesses, some feuilletons in the periodical press also refer to this phenomenon. E.g., NEPIL, František, *K mezinárodnímu dni žen*, *Vlasta* 37 (11), 1984, p. 23.

136 Michel de CERTEAU, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley 1984.

137 *Vlasta* 32 (4), 1979, p. 18.

138 *Vlasta* 32 (6), 1979, p. 18.

merriment. "As a thanks for congratulations, women must give money and prepare meals for men. And again, we are cooks also at work, and men can rejoice."¹³⁹

Celebrating International Women's Day in households

When it came to celebrating IWD in the family, it is definitely not possible to work with the mass reception of this holiday in the private/domestic sphere. On the contrary, IWD celebrations have been associated with some negative effects on family life since the 1970s at the latest. Occasional infidelities as well as divorces caused by unbridled entertainment on IWD were often mentioned. The men then defended themselves on the pages of the women's press in the section "Dialogue" of the IWD celebration, claiming that "Defending the admiration of co-workers is not typical for men, and no man wants to be under the slipper of his own wife."¹⁴⁰ IWD celebrations, probably also for the reasons mentioned above, did not become a part of the holidays held in the family circle to a greater extent. Also, the internalization that achieved Mother's Day during the First Republic never occurred.¹⁴¹ The tradition of children's greeting cards for mothers, already remembered in pre-war Czechoslovakia, was thus integrated into the "family" celebrations of Women's Day. The school also became involved in celebration of the 8th of March. The children made greeting cards for their mothers and teachers. In the first half of the 1950s, greeting letters were written in schools under the supervision of teachers to shock workers and exemplary peasants.¹⁴²

Conclusion

IWD celebrations in socialist Czechoslovakia had clearly defined rules and procedures at all levels. By participating in an event celebrating a socialist woman, each of the participants confirmed the ideological anchoring of the current gender regime and became a co-creator of images of ideal men and women. A clear definition of gender roles was an integral and indispensable part of socialist ideology. Its clearly defined criteria were then closely linked to the functioning of the regime as a whole and were absolutely necessary for it. Through the presentation of good examples of the women suitable for the regime, the communist party consistently sought to shape Czechoslovak women. IWD was not a women's holiday in socialist Czechoslovakia, but a celebration of the gender image of a woman shaped by authoritative discourse. As the regime's demands of the ideal woman changed, so did the image presented during IWD. Like other communist festivities, the course of the day maintained its standardized

139 Vlasta 32 (4), 1979, p. 18.

140 Vlasta 32 (6), 1979, p. 18.

141 Národní listy 65 (121), 1925, p. 4; Národní listy 67 (126), 1927, p. 3; Národní listy 68 (102), 1928, p. 2.

142 NA, 1564 1261/1/17 Central Commission of Women 1945–1954.

form and was organized centrally at all levels. The IWD celebration took the form of something mandatory and demanded by the regime's authority, or directly by a company's management. IWD, as it was presented and as it took place in Czechoslovakia, was fundamentally different from its original purpose and from the ideological corpus that initially constructed it. It lacked spontaneity and did not respond to the current needs and difficulties of women, even in the line of ceremonial speeches. At the same time, it did not develop symbolically and visually. The explicative potential of this festivity in relation to the successful shaping of Czechoslovak women has lost its strength over time. It was not a holiday for women, but a holiday for the regime. It was much more a tool for shaping society than a day of festivity. At the national level, the IWD was also day of the presentation of benefits of socialism for women as a social group. With the exception of the late 1960s, it always presented the so-called women's issue as a solved problem. The regime during the IWD sidelined long-term problems of women in Czechoslovakia, their gender discrimination and often unequal position towards men. The Czechoslovak form of emancipation was understood as a clearly positive achievement in the IWD discourse. In the eyes of the general public, the emancipation (about which was talked about, especially during the IWD) on the other hand, was presented more as a burden. At the national level, emancipation was seen as a benefit and the merit of socialism. There was a very close connection between the socialist regime and how the public understood the term "emancipation". This connection and the connection of the IWD with the communist regime is also evidenced by the fact that the whole mass holiday, so massive until the coup, disappeared with no regret in November 1989.

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Summary

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The article aims to describe and analyse the ways in which the authorities in socialist Czechoslovakia shaped the female gender, especially with regard to the organization and course of International Women's Day. The text deals with the complex significance of International Women's Day for the development of the gender image of women in Czechoslovakia. The article describes the development of the celebration of this festivity. International Day in Czechoslovakia is considered as a day with significant gender performative potential. It works with the speeches, speech acts, public media presentation of the holiday and the actors' attitudes towards the IWD. With this article, the author aims to contribute to the research of gender strategies of authoritarian regimes. The national holiday dedicated to women as a social group was the best platform for articulating the regime's strategies in relation to women. It has the potential to reveal how Czechoslovak state socialism perceived women. The text aims to contribute to the creation of a comprehensive picture of the Czechoslovak public's relationship to women's emancipation as a phenomenon. By examining the IWD, the article attempts to help the research on the role of women in socialist society and research on communist celebrations.

Recenze | Reviews

Je osvědčenou pravdou, že souborné a ve svém oboru převratné dílo může snáze napsat erudovaný jedinec, a to i v dnešní době, kdy se – mnohdy k neprospěchu věci – prosazuje spíše trend početných autorských kolektivů. Výhodou práce jednotlivce je mimo jiné konzistentní a vyvážený obsah, ucelená formulace myšlenek, ale paradoxně často i kvantita a obsažnost sdělení. A pokud se ohlédneme nazpět do dějin historického výzkumu, jsou to právě díla jednotlivých autorů, nikoli kolektivní monografie, co dodává vědě nové impulsy a názorové směry. Rovněž tolik žádoucí a prospěšný multidisciplinární přístup se při psaní syntézy může stát účinnějším nástrojem v rukou jednoho fundovaného autora.

Úvodní slova, myslím, platí pro čtyřsvazkové kompendium Vladislava Razíma věnované středověkým městským fortifikacím v českých zemích. Vydání se ujal Národní památkový ústav, autorovo „domovské“ pracoviště, jehož vydavatelská činnost je v poslední době zcela mimořádná a nepochybně bude příznivě hodnocena ještě příštími generacemi odborné i laické veřejnosti. Publikace o městských hradbách není lehkým čtením, a to v doslovném i přeneseném slova smyslu. Hutný text vyžaduje neustálou čtenářskou pozornost, neboť pojednává dané téma v mnoha různých kontextech: od politických dějin přes urbanismus a historii vojenského řemesla až po velice konkrétní detaily stavebního řešení.

Knihy má tradiční, přehlednou strukturu. První část je věnována jednak definici městských opevnění, ale i města jako takového, jednak stavu a zhodnocení dosavadního výzkumu, který je nerovnoměrný a má v různých lokalitách kolísavou úroveň. Překvapivé může být i to, jak nesnadno se vymezuje vlastní předmět studia, respektive jak otevřený zůstává seznam opevněných lokalit městského typu – nejenže na mnoha místech mohla fortifikace vzniknout a opět zaniknout, aniž by zanechala stopu v pramenech, ale existují naopak místa, kde je výslovně dokladováno povolení ke stavbě hradeb, která nakonec nebyla realizována vůbec, nebo jen zčásti. Do úvodní kapitoly bylo zahrnuto i krátké zamyšlení nad problematikou tzv. opevněných vesnic. Škoda, že jí není v knize věnováno přece jen víc pozornosti, i když je jasné, že jde o svébytné téma. V. Razím přímo volá po dalším výzkumu a evidenci tohoto jevu, který byl četností svého výskytu vlastně vzácnějším než fortifikace měst. Bez řádného poznání jednotlivých opevněných vesnic nebude možné formulovat smysluplné závěry a nalézt například styčné body mezi nimi a městskými pevnostními systémy.¹

1 Nad problematikou se zamýšlí např. Jan PEŠTA, *Fortifikační prvky v prostředí vesnic?*, Svorník 11, 2013, s. 60–70.

Další oddíl knihy zasazuje města a jejich fortifikace do širokého kontextu středoevropského vývoje. Autor sleduje genezi sídel městského typu od raného středověku až hluboko do 16. století, upozorňuje na funkci měst v ekonomické, správní a politické sféře, všímá si komplikovaných vztahů mezi jednotlivými lokalitami navzájem i postojů městských komunit vůči panovníkovi. Tento souhrn není nikterak samoučelný, neboť konkrétní pozice města v bezpečnostní struktuře země pomůže pochopit smysl budování náročných opevnění a přispět k jejich dataci.

Následují už kapitoly více „hradební“. Autor se v nich nejprve věnuje urbanistickému a funkčnímu provázání fortifikací s městským organismem jako takovým, sleduje zákonitosti ve vztazích mezi hradebním prstencem a dispozicí města. Spíše v náznacích si všímá kontextu s okolní krajinou (relikt staré přístupové komunikace u Kouřimi, s. 223). Zvláštní pozornost věnuje městským hradům, opevněným sakrálním stavbám, ale také jiným objektům s obranným potenciálem. V posledně zmíněném ohledu přináší V. Razím inspirativní úvahy, podložené ovšem hmotnými či písemnými prameny, o defenzivních možnostech uvnitř městského prostoru. Na příkladech ukazuje, že obrana města nemusela být ztracena ani po překonání hlavní hradby nepřítelem: při uličních bojích bylo možno využít připravené překážky (řetězy), úkryty v domech nebo sklepech, ale výhodu obráncům poskytovala i orientace a důvěrná znalost městské topografie, která jim umožňovala lépe improvizovat.

Teprve nyní přicházejí na řadu jednotlivé fortifikační prvky, jejich obranný význam, geneze a konstrukční řešení: hlavní hradba, věže, bašty, brány, parkánová linie, příkop a násep, vysunuté a předsunuté součásti opevnění. Více prostoru – a třeba i samostatnou kapitolu – by si zasloužila otázka fortifikací předměstí (souhrnně zde na s. 217–218, 311 a pak v příslušných heslech katalogu). Po zásluze věnuje autor několik stran těm pevnostním objektům, zejména branám, u nichž byl využit potenciál k reprezentaci a demonstraci ekonomických možností a uměleckých ambicí stavebníka; vedle extrémních případů, jimiž jsou náročně provedené fasády věží pražského Karlova mostu či Prašné brány, uvádí i některé realizace provinčního charakteru.

Dalšími kapitolami se V. Razím dotýká problematiky výstavby městského opevnění, a sice otázek jejího financování a organizačního zajištění, včetně například původu použitého stavebního materiálu. Zde bylo nutno proniknout do oblasti městské ekonomiky a v širším smyslu městské správy, ale zároveň do otázek týkajících se dostupnosti stavebních řemesel, rozvržení kompetencí v rámci náročného stavebního podniku, ale například také možnosti využít robotních povinností poddaných na městském velkostatku. Autor zde dochází k závěrům, že výstavba fortifikačních systémů obvykle neprobíhala nikterak plynule a obtíže finančního či technického rázu bývaly spíše pravidlem než výjimkou. Zahájením výstavby či rozsáhlejší přestavby hradeb, bran

a věží mohly své reálné možnosti přecenit i jinak ekonomicky silné městské komunity.

Převážně na archivních pramenech, respektive na odborné literatuře spočívá další oddíl knihy věnovaný obraně středověkého města, její organizaci, rozsahu městských arzenálů a možnostem využití zbraní v boji o město. Přestože by se mohlo zdát, že středověké válečnictví (a v tom zejména vojenství husitské éry) je námětem už skrz naskrz prozkoumaným generacemi historiků, nové Razímovo shrnutí poukazuje i zde na dosud mnohé otevřené otázky.

Jedna ze závěrečných kapitol pod názvem „Vývoj městských opevnění ve středověku a otázky provenience“ zdůrazňuje klíčovou věc, že totiž městské fortifikace českých zemích se nevyvíjely izolovaně, ale naopak mají řadu vzorů a analogií především v sousedním Rakousku, Bavorsku, Sasku a Slezsku. Razímova důvěrná znalost opevnění v ostatních střeoevropských zemích dovolila odhalit vzájemné genetické vztahy v celkovém pojetí pevnostních systémů i v mnohých detailech. Naznačeny jsou rovněž některé souvislosti s hradní architekturou.

Poslední tři kapitoly byly do knihy zařazeny spíše *pro forma* a nemají ambici dané téma vyčerpat. Stať pojednávající o procesu zániku městských opevnění během novověku využívá metodu několika případových sond, z nichž nejobsáhlejší je kauza Pražské brány ve Slaném, která byla podrobně zpracována ve starší literatuře.² České archivy nabízejí podobných případů bezpočet, jejich soustavné vytěžení a zhodnocení by si však vyžádalo široce rozkročený pramenný výzkum na dlouhá léta. Kapitoly „Památková ochrana od poloviny 19. století – základní teze z pohledu SHP“ a „Potřeby a výhledy dalšího výzkumu“ jsou vzhledem k profesnímu ukotvení autora v památkové péči až překvapivě krátké (v prvním případě tři tiskové strany, v druhém případě vlastně jediná strana). To nejdůležitější je však i tady řečeno.

Referovaná kniha je logickým vyústěním celoživotního odborného zájmu svého autora. Navíc jde o dílo, které svým zaměřením, rozsahem a kvalitou zpracování sotva snese srovnání v evropském, tím méně pak v domácím měřítku. Recenze proto nemůže vyznít jinak než veskrze kladně. Přes svůj obrovský záběr – anebo právě proto – však publikace zároveň nese znaky příznačné pro kompendia souborného či encyklopedického rázu. Máme tu především na mysli, že celá řada zajímavých a důležitých otázek musela být pojednána jen v nutné zkratce či náznaku, a kniha se tak stává v mnoha směrech inspirativní pro další bádání.

Podrobnější rozpracování by si zasloužila například již zmíněná problematika opevněných vesnic, sakrálních staveb uzpůsobených k obraně (které mohly mnohde suplovat chybějící fortifikaci města jako celku), stejně jako opevněných předměstí. Příliš

2 Zdeněk WIRTH, *Slaný v době empiru I.*, Slánský obzor 28, 1920, s. 3–23; Pavel ZAHRADNÍK, *Slaný, městské opevnění*, Archivní rešerše 1999–2000.

velkým soustem by v tuto chvíli asi byla možnost chronologického pokračování směrem do novověku, kde už byl ovšem dosavadní kompaktní a víceméně kontinuální vývoj městských fortifikací značně rozrůzněn a rozpadl se přinejmenším do dvou hlavních směrů – jedním byla tendence ke vzniku bastionových pevností, ovšem jen ve vybraných lokalitách, druhým pak přežívání a beznadějně zastarávání středověkých opevnění (přesto nelze opomíjet, že podstatná část z nich byla schopna účinné obrany nejen během třicetileté války, nýbrž ještě v konfliktech 18. století).³

Mnohá speciální témata zůstávají spíše úkolem pro historiky a archiváře. V mnoha směrech je možno prohloubit studium organizace obrany města nebo kupříkladu u poddanských lokalit sledovat spolupůsobení městských samospráv s příslušnou vrchností. Postihnout by bylo možno význam hradebního systému pro vnitřní topografii města a praktickou orientaci v jeho prostoru.⁴ Samotná linie hlavní hradby měla v myšlenkovém světě středověku a raného novověku rovněž nepominutelný právní význam, doslova oddělovala svět měšťanského bezpečí uvnitř od potenciálně nebezpečného venkovního prostředí, tvořila administrativní hranici a zcela zřetelné rozmezí, kdy na každé straně platily jiné normy pro posuzování lidských skutků. Zvláště by bylo možno studovat funkce městských bran, jejich provoz a zajištění ostrahy. Brány měly i v mírových dobách funkci regulační – kontrolovaly provoz mezi vnějším a vnitřním světem, mohly vylučovat vstup nežádoucích osob (zločinců, jinověrců, nakažených), jakožto komunikační uzel sloužily i potřebám šíření informací. Jiným rozsáhlým námětem, a dosud z velké části otevřeným, je jakýsi „druhý život“ hradebního systému, tedy sekundární využití věží, bran, parkánů a dalších prvků.⁵ V mnoha lokalitách pak lze z archivních pramenů dobře popsat proces postupné degradace a zániku historických pevnostních systémů, který ve své pokročilé fázi vyvolal reakci v podobě snah kulturní veřejnosti o záchranu zbývajících součástí hradeb. Právě boj za zachování ohrožených středověkých věží či bran okolo přelomu 19. a 20. století patří k nejstarším kapitolám dějin památkové péče a je dokumentován v písemné agendě tehdejších centrálních památkových úřadů ve Vídni a Praze.

První, výkladový svazek referované publikace – v chronologickém pořadí však vydaný až jako poslední – je logickou součástí obsáhlého díla o čtyřech svazcích. Shrnuje dosavadní stav poznání městských fortifikací a vymezuje jejich pozici ve vývoji středo-

3 Martin EBEL – Eliška NOVÁ, *Soumrak městských fortifikací po třicetileté válce*, Svorník 11, 2013, s. 166–176.

4 Náznakem např. Daniel KOVÁŘ, *Orientace v prostoru středověkého a raně novověkého města a jeho předměstí. Příklad královských Českých Budějovic*, in: *Od Velkého tržiště k náměstí Jana Palacha. Názvosloví veřejných prostranství ve městech střední Evropy*, Praha 2022 (= *Documenta Pragensia*. Supplementa 10), s. 157–175.

5 Např. Miroslav NOVÝ, *Druhý život jedné městské hradební věže*, Svorník 13, 2015, s. 20–28.

věké společnosti českých zemí a obecněji střední Evropy. V mnoha aspektech jde o dílo průkopnické, které jako celek sotva najde v brzké době pokračovatele, ale v dílčích otázkách přímo či nepřímo vyzývá k navazujícímu bádání. V běžné čtenářské a památkářské praxi se většího využití pravděpodobně dočká především samotný katalog jednotlivých lokalit obsažený ve 2. a 3. dílu. Katalog není bezprostředním předmětem této recenze, a tak lze jen obecně poznamenat, že i v něm se nabízí široké pole pro pokračující regionální výzkum. Hlavním autorským přínosem je zde dokumentace stávajícího stavu městských opevnění, jejich popis a zhodnocení jednotlivých fortifikačních systémů. Pokud jde o historické pasáže hesel, autor zde nutně musel vycházet z existující literatury, z níž mohly být v některých případech převzaty i nepřesné nebo neúplné údaje. Ty ovšem nikterak nesnižují hodnotu celého díla, naopak mohou být opět výzvou k doplňujícímu výzkumu v archivních pramenech.

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Jiří HOFMAN, *Vlasti k obraně, matce ke cti. Stavba pevnosti Terezín 1780–1790, České Budějovice, Bohumír Němec – Veduta 2022. 352 stran. ISBN 978-80-88030-69-0.*

Je smutnou realitou stavu české historiografie vojenství, že nová monografie tematizující pevnostní stavby či pevnosti coby instituce téměř automaticky vyvolává ve čtenáři obavy. Drtivá většina produkce k tématu se totiž málokdy dostane za popis samotné fyzické stavby, a ne vždy je tento založen na poctivém výzkumu často masivní pramenné základny, skryté v temných útrobách vídeňského Válečného archivu. O to větší potěšení lze zažít nad textem, který se z tohoto železného – nebo snad kamenného? – pravidla vymyká. Jiří Hofman si je plně vědom skutečnosti, že „*vojenští historici mají často po obsahové, metodologické i pramenně-kritické stránce co dohánět*“ (s. 18), a důkladný přehled po české i zahraniční produkci mu umožňuje se vůči současnému stavu výzkumu efektivně vymezit.¹ Svůj text cíleně směřuje mimo tradiční, úzce zaměřený technologistní pohled na dějiny fortifikací a hlásí k sice letité, avšak v české historiografii vojenství stále nepříliš rozvinuté tradici *new military history*, jejímž konečným cílem je začlenit historii války a vojenství do širšího proudu historiografie na základě oprávněného přesvědčení, že válka a organizované násilí (a vše, co s nimi souvisí) jsou integrální součástí poznání minulosti.

Předmětem autorova zájmu je pevnost Terezín, tj. jedna z nejmodernějších pevnostních staveb bastionového typu na území habsburské monarchie a zároveň prostor paměti, kde pozdější události v 19. a především 20. století do značné míry překryly původní stavbu novými významy. Autor chvályhodně ignoruje stavebně-historický vývoj terezínské pevnosti, tj. jediné téma, jež je ve vztahu k Terezínu v literatuře relativně zpracováno, a zároveň se odmítá zabývat v „pevnostní“ literatuře tak oblíbenými a v zásadě ahistorickými debatami o pevnostních školách. Z hlediska metodologie se přinejmenším deklaratorně hlásí k tezí Christophera Storrs a především Michaela Hochedlingera o „fiskálně-militárním státu“ a militarizaci společnosti skrze rodící se státní moc 18. století, tj. k jedné ze specifických variant široké teorie o „vojenské revoluci“.² Za zásadní přínos Hofmanova textu je přitom

1 Pro příklad tradičního přístupu české historiografie k pevnostním dějinám viz např. Andrej ROMAŇÁK, *Pevnost Terezín*, Dvůr Králové nad Labem 1994; Vladimír KUPKA, *Pevnosti a opevnění v Čechách, na Moravě a ve Slezsku*, Praha 2002; Idem, *Stavitelé, obránci a dobyvatelé pevností*, Praha 2005; resp. Jiří SLAVÍK a kol., *Bastionové pevnosti*, Ústí nad Labem 2014.

2 Christopher STORRS, *The Fiscal-Military State in the “Long” Eighteenth Century*, in: Christopher Storrs (ed.), *The Fiscal-Military State in the Eighteenth Century Europe*, New York 2016, s. 1–22; resp. Michael HOCHEDLINGER, *The Habsburg Monarchy: From “Military Fiscal State” to “Militarization”*, in: ibidem, s. 55–94. Česky k tématu viz úvodní kapitoly in Vítězslav PRCHAL, *Společensko hrdinů – válka a reprezentační strategie českomoravské aristokracie 1550–1750*, Praha 2015.

třeba považovat skutečnost, že otázky, které si práce klade, a především odpovědi na ně, jsou pevně ukotveny v důkladném studiu veškerého dostupného pramenného materiálu. Na jeho základě autor předestírá vlastně mikrohistorickou sondu do jednoho z nejmasivnějších organizačních podniků raně novověkého státu, tedy stavby nové pevnosti. V jedné rovině se tak dozvídáme „*kdy bylo co postaveno, jaké byly stavební fáze, kdo byl jejich iniciátorem, kdo vedoucím stavby, kdo stavbu prováděl, jaké faktory brzdily změny plánů*“ (s. 18), kde se bralo ohromné množství materiálu, odkud pocházel, či jaké stopy zanechalo dílo v krajině, zároveň však text velmi poutavě osvětluje řadu procesů se stavbou spojených. Ve výsledku pak autor umně spojuje vojensko-historickou a stavebně-historickou analýzu s optikou ekonomickou, historicko-geografickou, sociální i politickou.

Výsledek je velkým přínosem k poznání již prostým popisem vzniku tereziánské pevnosti, textu se však zároveň v průběhu popisu vzniku jedné pevnosti na severu Čech daří odkrývat téměř nepřeborné množství vysoce nosných témat, pro něž je Tereziín „pouhou“ dějinnou matérií či řekněme ideální případovou studií. V základní rovině tak Hofmanův text nabízí na důkladné práci s prameny pečlivě vystavěný obraz vzniku masivní stavby, a to od zadání až po finální realizaci o deset let později. I relativně nekompletní, skartacemi a delimitacemi těžce postižená pramenná základna umožňuje autorovi postihnout jak mechanismus interakce rodící se státní byrokracie s lokálním prostředím vrchnosti, měst i poddaných, ale i s dobovým stavebním trhem, jehož plastické přiblížení je jedním z vrcholů celého textu. V rovině obecné pak můžeme sledovat roli státu coby klíčového aktéra, jehož primárně mocensko-politické zájmy sekundárně produkují množství zásadních ekonomických a sociálních impulsů s důsledky pro jednotlivé regiony, lokality, jedince i krajinu. Výsledná podoba pevnosti je pak pro autora průsečíkem celé série vlivů – strategických cílů, jichž má být dosaženo a jež odrážejí dobové vojenské myšlení i válečnou praxi; ideálních geometricko-matematických modelů, tj. pevnostních škol, jež ovšem autor trefně definuje coby spíše „skladiště inspirací“ než fixní formy; osobnosti samotných tvůrců, tj. vojenských inženýrů zde reprezentovaných velitelem Ženijního sboru hrabětem Pellegrinim a jeho týmem; terénu, do něhož je takto „umyšlená“ pevnost nakonec umístěna; času, v němž vzniká; a v neposlední řadě ekonomické reality výstavby.

Je to právě analýza proměny krajiny v důsledku procesu výstavby pevnosti, jež čtenáři přivádí na mysl potenciální širší kontextualizaci Hofmanova textu. Jde nejen o samotný proces, který autorovými očima nabízí obrazy rozsáhlé, „*v podstatě průmyslové měsíční krajiny*“ (s. 143), s jasnými odkazy na jeho veskrze „moderní“ charakter. Mám na mysli i celkovou proměnu jižního břehu Labe v uměle vytvořený prostor, jenž sice možná lze označit za svého duhu „barokní krajinu“, mnohem více však odpovídá

čistě utilitárnímu, mentálně již spíše modernímu racionalistickému industrialismu. Autor zároveň ukazuje, jak zásadní vliv měla stavba nejen na bezprostřední okolí, ale i na celý region severozápadních Čech, kdy na řadě příkladů často velmi vzdálených míst ukazuje, jak masivní spotřeba materiálu (především kamene a dřeva) v protoindustriálním měřítku dokázala proměňovat i velmi vzdálenou krajinu.

Výše uvedené souvisí s červenou linkou, jež se táhne celou prací a jež nám skrze proces realizace ve své době pravděpodobně nejnákladnější možné stavby umožňuje nahlédnout samotnou povahu společnosti a státu na prahu modernity. Ve výsledku tak text skutečně potvrzuje platnost teze o „fiskálně-militárním státu“, jenž skrze svůj „vojensko-protoindustriální komplex“ (ekonomickou a fiskální politiku, expertní vědění a byrokratizovanou moc) posouvá celou společnost směrem k vrcholné modernitě. Autorovi se na pozadí překvapivě čtivého, místy až fascinujícího popisu vzniku pevnosti v pozdním 18. století daří ukázat, jak se samotná stavba stává nejen objektem v krajině, resp. fyzickým či architektonickým výkonem, ale především byrokraticko-disciplinárním projektem sociální etatizace. Nejvíce je to zřejmé na autorově analyticky pronikavém popisu disciplinace, resp. militarizace práce, pracovní síly, geografického i sociálního prostoru, jež jsou všechny postupně přímo podřizovány josefinistické byrokracii. Míra mobilizace pracovních sil i fiskálních zdrojů, vyžadující hluboké státní zásahy do tradičních sociálně-mocenských struktur, je zde opakovaně dokládána na řadě velmi konkrétních příkladů. Ne zcela úspěšné nucené nasazení dělníků-zedníků, resp. jejich disciplinace, zároveň ukazuje na zřetelné limity moci stále ještě raně novověkého státu na prahu modernity, zatímco selhání „sociálního inženýrství osvětského státu“ (s. 165–168) v podobě marné snahy město uměle osídlit jako by bylo předzvěstí selhání řady pozdějších modernistických sociálních projektů. Podobně i autorova analýza stavby coby živoucího organismu podléhajícího na jedné straně přísné disciplíně a organizaci (organizace práce, táborově-baráková forma ubytování), na druhé straně neustále narážejícího na tradiční bariéry stavovskey-korporativní sociální hierarchie, opakovaně odkrývá pnutí mezi modernizačním étosem josefinismu a existujícími sociálními strukturami.

Knihu Jiřího Hofmana lze v zásadě považovat za definitivní popis procesu vzniku tereziánské pevnosti, a již při tomto „pozitivistickém čtení“ jasně vynikne její přínos k poznání jejích dějin. Stejně jako v případě nedávných textů Petra Wohlmuta o praxi a realitě obléhání v evropských válkách 18. a 19. století však její význam výrazně přesahuje takto úzce vymezený obraz.³ Čtena výše uvedeným způsobem, tedy coby

3 Viz Petr WOHLMUTH, *Krev, čest a hrůza: historická antropologie pevnostní války na příkladu britských deníků z obléhání pevnosti Bergen op Zoom z roku 1747*, Praha 2017; resp. Idem, *Východ proti Západu? Krymská válka (1853–1856) pohledem historické antropologie*, Praha 2020.

téměř antropologicky konceptualizovaný „zhuštěný popis“ celospolečenských změn charakterizujících nejen proměny ve vedení války, ale celou společnost druhé poloviny 18. století, představuje důležitý příspěvek k poznání vztahu mezi válkou a společností na prahu modernity. Jako byl kdysi Terezín koncipován Josefem II. coby stavba „matce ke cti“, je studie Jiřího Hofmana nepochybně příspěvkem „ke cti“ historiografie vojenství, neboť ukazuje její potenciál pro poznání velkých dějinných celků. Můžeme jen doufat, že se v rámci české historiografie vojenství nejedná o ojedinělý počín, nýbrž o pokračování v pomalu se rozvíjejícím trendu.

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Martin Hlaváč, Karel Engliš: Ekonom, který pomohl vybudovat Československo, Praha, Euromedia Group, a. s., v edici Universum 2021, 400 stran. ISBN 978-80-242-8008-0.

Karel Engliš je bezesporu jednou z osobností, která svou veřejnou činností ovlivnila politickou scénu a správu věcí veřejných v meziválečném Československu. Právě jemu je věnována první kniha Martina Hlaváče, jejímž vydáním autor zakončil dlouholetý výzkum. Autor se osobnosti Karla Engliše věnoval již během svého studia a kniha má, jak sám píše, základ v jeho dizertační práci. Hlaváč předkládá publikaci, jejímž cílem je „znovuobjevení“ ekonoma, který se výraznou měrou zasloužil o stabilitu československé měny. Cíl je to nemalý a nutno podotknout, že kniha opravdu podává ucelený pohled na celý Englišův život.

V předmluvě autor poukazuje na okrajový zájem historiků o osobnost Karle Engliše, často zastíněnou Aloisem Rašínem. Vzhledem k Englišově kariéře a vědecké činnosti v ekonomice nepřekvapí fakt, že kniha je opatřena předmluvou bývalého guvernéra České národní banky Jiřího Rusnoka. Ten v několika odstavcích zhodnotil vliv Karla Engliše, mimo jiné rovněž guvernéra Československé národní banky, na české ekonomické myšlení. Bohužel Rusnokova předmluva je obsáhlejší než úvod autora samotného. Ač by se to dalo očekávat, autor neprovedl ve vlastní předmluvě zhodnocení literatury a pramenů, nastínil metody ani koncept své práce. Věnuje se naopak podrobně motivaci a objasňuje výběr tématu. To je značný rozdíl oproti disertační práci *Karel Engliš mezi prvorepublikovou elitou*,¹ v jejímž úvodu autor pečlivě hodnotí prameny a literaturu a popisuje metodologii. Čtenář se tak až postupem dozvídá, s jakými dokumenty autor vlastně pracoval. Doslov uvedené mezery též nevykryvá a obsahuje pouze zhodnocení Englišova přínosu české ekonomice.

Pro poznání pramenné základny je tak třeba hledat v seznamu pramenů. Martin Hlaváč pracoval s rozsáhlým osobním fondem uloženým v Literárním archivu Památníku národního písemnictví.² Značnou část však tvoří i tištěné prameny. Těmi jsou zpravidla Englišovy publikace a články, kterých je nemálo a již jejich množství tvoří rozsáhlou pramennou základnu. Autor však dokázal využít i běžně nedostupné materiály, konkrétně soukromé archivy nacházející se ve vlastnictví potomků Karla Engliše. Kromě písemných pramenů staví Hlaváč rovněž na informacích, které získal formou dialogu s žijícími potomky. Ty využil především v kapitolách o rodinném a majetkovém zázemí. Přestože na ně odkazuje, nejsou uvedeny v seznamu pramenů.

1 Martin Hlaváč, *Karel Engliš mezi prvorepublikovou elitou*, disertační práce, Filozofická fakulta, Univerzita Karlova, Praha 2015.

2 Archiv Památníku národního písemnictví, f. Karel Engliš, inv. č. 335.

Autorovi se nedá upřít diplomatický um, díky kterému získal možnost pracovat s jedinečnými materiály, k nimž předchozí autoři neměli přístup. Díky jejich kombinaci s rozsáhlým archivním fondem získal širokou pramennou základnu. Na heuristiku navázala pečlivá práce s prameny. Díky množství pramenů osobní povahy má biografie nádech vyprávění, jež je výrazně protkáno Englišovými vzpomínkami a pamětí jeho rodiny. Součástí pramenné základy jsou rovněž tištěné memoáry Englišových spolupracovníků, přátel, ale i odpůrců. Pramenná základna obsahuje vskutku velké množství zdrojů různé povahy a jen těžko bychom hledali další, které by seznam obohatily a rozšířily.

Předkládaná biografie se nezabývá pouze Englišovou meziválečnou činností, ale celým jeho životem. Jelikož je kniha biografí, má logicky chronologickou strukturu. V deseti kapitolách je postupně představeno Englišovo dětství a dospívání, vysokoškolská léta, nástup na univerzitu a první kontakty s politikou. Největší část se však týká Englišových vládních angažmá a guvernérského období v Československé národní bance za první a druhé Československé republiky. Chronologický popis končí líčením změn v Englišově životě po roce 1948. Práce taktéž obsahuje kapitolu věnovanou rodině a vztahu k rodnému Slezsku.

V prvních dvou kapitolách se autor věnuje Englišovu původu, dětství a gymnaziálním studiím. Hlaváč prostřednictvím osobních dokumentů Karla Engliše a rodinné kroniky vypráví příběh jeho rodiny od 17. století až do narození Karla v roce 1880. Pokračuje prvními školskými kroky, které nejmladšího syna dovedly na gymnázium v Opavě. Autor nevypráví pouze příběh jedince, ale značnou část věnuje sociální situaci studentů z chudších rodin. Tímto postupem vznikl text, který není pouhým popisem života jedné osobnosti, ale rovněž obrazem dobového života a myšlení. Engliš je popsán jako pracovitý jedinec, který s podporou své rodiny a okolí získal potřebné vzdělání, a nakonec díky své pílí zamířil na studia do Prahy.

Kapitoly k pražským a vysokoškolským létům Karla Engliše se nesou v podobném duchu. Prostor je věnován řešení problémů, jimž studenti z chudších rodin v Praze čelili. Engliš studoval od roku 1899 právnickou fakultu, kde se setkal s profesorem Albínem Bráfem. Právě on ovlivnil jeho budoucí směřování a zájem o národní hospodářství. Prostřednictvím analýzy a interpretaci pramenů osobní povahy Hlaváč podává vhled do myšlení studenta Engliše.

Popis života Karla Engliše pokračuje završením studia a prací na úřednických místech ve Vídni a zakotvením na České vysoké škole technické v Brně. Autor i v této části práce kladl důraz na sociální podmínky života tehdejších mladých elit, ale zároveň věnoval značný prostor Englišově vědecké činnosti. Část života před první světovou válkou zakončil popisem prvního kontaktu Engliše s politikou. Ten se stal

v roce 1913 zemským poslancem za lidově pokrokovou stranu na Moravě. Hlaváč při líčení volební kampaně využil opět prameny osobní povahy, díky nimž nastínil přístup Engliše k politice a naznačil motivaci k zapojení se do politického života. Nebyla dána Englišovou ambicí, tento krok chápal jako logické navázání na svou vědeckou činnost.

Vznik Československa je vylíčen z Englišovy perspektivy; chtěl se zapojit do tvorby ekonomické politiky nového státu. Jeho strana se však sloučila v Československou národní demokracii, čímž se Engliš ocitl na jedné palubě s populárnějším a veřejnosti známějším Aloisem Rašínem. Jejich názory na měnovou politiku se natolik lišily, že se dostávali do vzájemných střetů vrcholících permanentním napětím. Englišovo první působení na ministerstvu financí v letech 1920–1921 napětí znásobilo. Kapitola věnuje značný prostor komparaci myšlení a přístupu obou osobností. Ani po Rašínově smrti se Engliš nestal jasným lídrem své strany ve finančních otázkách. Byl stále více vnímán jako člověk Hradu a prezidenta Masaryka. Napjaté vztahy kulminovaly v roce 1925; Engliš stranu opustil. To však neznamenalo, že z politiky definitivně odešel. Naopak: stal se, jak píše autor, nepostradatelným finančním expertem, který zasedal ve vládě pro své znalosti, nikoliv stranickou příslušnost. Engliš byl za První republiky jmenován opakovaně ministrem financí. Hlaváč jej vykresluje v této roli jako osobnost pracovitou, nesmlouvavou a věčně hrozící demisí, pokud nebude po jeho. Prostor věnoval rovněž další Englišově významné pozici guvernéra Československé národní banky, která skončila až za Druhé republiky. Rezignací na tento post končí Englišova veřejná meziválečná činnost. Autor neopomněl zdůraznit ani Englišův přínos vědě a založení Masarykovy univerzity v roce 1920, jejímž se stal prvním rektorem, a následně tam působil na různých pozicích akademické samosprávy.

V kapitole o rodině věnoval Hlaváč značný prostor popisu peripetií, jimiž Engliš prošel během obou svých manželství. Autor se nezaměřil jen na vylíčení rodinného života, ale přidává rovněž vhled do problematiky manželství a rozluky před první světovou válkou. Věrný svému přístupu dává i v tomto případě značný prostor pro sociální otázky spojené s životem mladé rodiny. Součástí je i vyprávění o dětech Karla Engliše a rodinném majetku.

Krátká kapitola popisující Englišův vztah k rodnému Slezsku a obci se týká pouze jeho korespondence s Petrem Bezručem a roli tehdejšího guvernéra v přenesení ostatků Karla Hynka Máchy z Litoměřic do Prahy. Objasňuje, že šlo o Englišovu iniciativu, a naznačuje obdobný záměr u ostatků Jana Lucemburského. Kapitola je velmi stručná a spíše než o stěžejní část práce jde o jiný pohled na osobnost Karla Engliše. Vzhledem k široké pramenné základně je otázkou, zda nebyl prostor pro nastínění jeho postojů a názorů na další problematiky.

Englišově životu po druhé světové válce se Hlaváč věnuje zejména s ohledem na

únor 1948, kdy byl zvolen rektorem Univerzity Karlovy. Volba byla jeho jediným výrazným vstupem do politiky Třetí republiky, přestože se o něj již dříve snažil. Komunistický režim Engliše donutil k rezignaci na rektorský post a v roce 1953 dostal příkaz opustit Prahu a odejít do ústraní rodné Hrabyně. Byl stále sledován příslušníky StB a vládnoucí režim mu ztěžoval život tak jako mnoha jiným příslušníkům prvorepublikové elity.

Autor vychází z obsáhlé pramenné základny a dokumentů různé povahy. To mu umožnilo podat detailní vhled do života Karla Engliše. Práce nezapomíná na rozbor jeho ekonomických teorií a názorů na národní hospodářství. Není tedy pouhým vyprávěním o jednom příslušníku prvorepublikové elity. Publikace je přínosná pro poznání ekonomického myšlení a života První republiky. Místy je patrný úkrok od odborné literatury k popularizačnímu žánru. Zjevné je to především u kontextu sociálního zázemí studujících a rozluky. V těchto místech autor zbytečně široce utíká od původního tématu práce a bere si za úkol popsat legislativní systém Rakouska-Uherska ve věci zániku manželství. Vzhledem k cíli práce, kterým je podat ucelený vhled do života Karla Engliše, a předložit knihu pro širší společenské využití, jsou však takové úkroky pochopitelné. Autor využil prvků popularizační literatury, které však nesnižují kvalitu výzkumu života Karla Engliše. Předkládaná publikace je přínosem ke komplexnímu poznání osobnosti významného vědce a politika a díky čtivosti a jisté míře popularizace rovněž pro zájemce o historii.

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