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Migrations and Cultural Interactions: Slovenians in Serbia

Migrations is a term that encompasses and encapsulates a whole range of social phenomena. As far as migrations are concerned, questions beginning with “who, where, how, why, when...” – i.e. questions concerning the causes and the consequences of migrations and migratory movements – inevitably arise. Another relevant issue is the duration of migrations. The reasons that make people migrate are numerous and they can be classified into several categories, based on multiple principles. Migrations may be an expression of the free will of an individual, but they may be caused by war events (persecutions, internment), the economic and political situation in a country or a region, or other similar reasons. Migrations can be analyzed from various standpoints (those of individuals, communities, societies, from the immigration/emigration perspective, etc.) and in different contexts (cultural, economic, political, in relationship between a society and individuals, etc.). The consequences of migrations are also very important and they inspire observation. In this regard, it is particularly important to draw attention to the cultural interactions caused by migrations, as well as those taking place after their termination. Cultural interactions may be observed not only as a consequence but also as a result of migrations. They can also be analyzed as a reaction correlated with migrations. This process may be observed in all spheres of culture – both at the individual and community levels.

The migrations from Slovenia to Serbia are an important and topical issue. This has, in its way, encouraged us to discuss the migrations

from Slovenia to Serbia in the third issue of *Slovenika*. The journal publishes papers and other contributions that specifically deal with issues related to the life and culture of the members of the Slovenian national minority in Serbia. This has been an additional motivation to publish articles discussing the migrations of the members of the Slovenian national community. We have also intended to trace the process of cultural interactions and show its consequences – both for the culture of the immigrants and the culture of the receiving society. The specified aims have not been easy to achieve primarily because only a negligible number of researchers have so far focused on the main topic of *Slovenika*'s current issue. This particularly applies to the scholarly discourse in Serbia.

The thematic section presents papers that, in terms of chronology, primarily cover the 20th-century migrations from Slovenia to Serbia. The exception in this regard is the paper by Marta Stojić Mitrović *Some Challenges Associated with the Field Research of Unauthorized Migrations in Ethnology and Anthropology: Ethnographic Multilocation Research*, which deals with current migrations, namely with the persons who do not have appropriate administrative permits (the so-called unauthorized migrations). The paper is included in this thematic section primarily because it presents to the readership one of the research methods (the so-called multilocation research), as well as the dynamics of migration research. The presentation of particular situations encountered by researchers at the spot and their explanations make this article all the more relevant for the study of migration-related issues.

The first immigration wave of Slovenians to the territory of today's Serbia is covered in the article "*There is almost no other choice but to Leave the Beloved Fatherland and Seek for another Homeland*": a brief overview of the influx of Slovenian immigrants in Vojvodina, by Dijana Lukić. The study relies on the empirical materials collected by the author as a result of field research in Vojvodina. It offers an important synthesis of information and helps get a general idea of the immigration of Slovenians in Vojvodina until the early 1980s. In this respect, the analysis of the relationship in the context of colonization, agrarian reform and migrations is particularly important.

The labour immigration of Slovenians, primarily the male population, in Serbia is of particular importance, as it can be analyzed as a distinct type among migration currents between Slovenia and Serbia. Slovenians settled primarily in those towns in Serbia where there was a demand for certain professional profiles, i.e. for professional skills. In terms of duration, some of those migrations were temporary in character. In this context, it is noteworthy that the situation changed, as the demand was not limited to specific vocations. The vocations of immigrants enable us to trace the economic and industrial development of the receiving society. The settlement of miners in Vojvodina seems to be particularly

interesting in this respect, as evidenced by the paper *Slovenian Polka on Fruška Gora: Slovenian miners in the coal mine in Vrtnik*, by Vojislav Martinov. The author introduces us to the causes of immigration and the life of miners in Vrtnik. The paper also reveals the paths of interaction between the culture practiced by the immigrants (e.g. music and dance) and the cultural practices of the majority population in this region.

As far as migrations are concerned, the period of World War II is marked by refugees and persecution. In a word, it is marked by migrations that can be described as forced. In her paper *Action to Save Serbian and Slovenian Children from the Sárvár Camp in World War II*, Gordana Petković discusses the persecution of Slovenians and their detention in the Sárvár Camp. The special contribution of this paper lies in the description of the action aimed at rescuing children from captivity. In order to highlight the importance of the action, the paper also describes the work of the Children's Hospital in Novi Sad, as well as the role of Serbian Orthodox communities the Eparchy of Bačka in these activities. Among other things, the topic covered in this paper offers an insight into various forms of humaneness and solidarity between Serbian and Slovenian ethnic groups on the territory of Bačka during World War II. The paper *The Echoes of War Trauma: along the long train tracks between Maribor and Kraljevo*, by Silvija Krejaković, is an introduction to the issue of war-caused migrations that occurred in this region during World War II – namely the exile of Slovenians to Kraljevo and the territory of today's Serbia. This paper is a special contribution to the study of the ways in which relations between the inhabitants of Maribor and Kraljevo have been established and maintained. In this respect, this is an anticipation of the so-called twinning of towns, which is primarily typical of the period of socialism and the former SFRY and the migrations associated with this phenomenon.

We have so far discussed the migrations that have to do with population movements. What about objects used by people before undertaking a journey, while travelling and settling in the reception environment? Do they also migrate with their owners? This is a very interesting topic and Vesna Bižić-Omčikus seeks to bring it closer to us in the paper *Serbia in the SEM, Slovenia in the EM*. The author presents us some tangible objects used by immigrants from Slovenia in their everyday life which later became part of the collection of the Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade. At the same time, we find out that the collections of the Slovenian Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana also include objects brought from the territory of Serbia in the early and mid-20th century. The ethnologist Niko Županič greatly contributed to the establishment of this collection.

The titles of the papers published in this issue of *Slovenika* suggest that migration waves of the Slovenian population towards Serbia are analyzed from diverse aspects and in various contexts. The papers reveal

that the migrations of Slovenians to Serbia were present throughout the 20th century, though their intensity and scope were not constant. This is understandable if we bear in mind that these movements, just like other migrations, depended on the circumstances, which means that cut they were simultaneously influenced by a number of factors. The topics discussed by the authors of the above-mentioned papers are observed and analyzed from historical and ethnological perspectives and they primarily focus on the migrations from Slovenia to Serbia in the 20th century.

All of the above-mentioned papers make a significant contribution to the study and understanding of the problems associated with the population migrations from Slovenia to the territory of Serbia. They offer an insight into migration currents and, at the same time, leave room for a more elaborate and more comprehensive study not only of the issues discussed in this context, but also of a number of other topics related to migrations within the specified spatial framework.

We find modern migrations of Slovenians to Serbia, i.e. the migrations we are witnessing today, very topical and inspiring. Nevertheless, they are still insufficiently explored. It remains to hope that one the next issues of *Slovenika* will offer us the opportunity to get acquainted with the results of the research into these migrations.

At this point, I would like to thank all of the authors for their cooperation and the effort to make the processes associated with the migrations of Slovenians to Serbia more visible and recognizable beyond a strictly scholarly discourse. I owe great gratitude to the Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Slovenika*, my colleague Biljana Milenković-Vuković, both for the invitation to be the editor of this thematic section and for her useful suggestions and support provided while preparing it. I would also like to express my gratitude to the reviewers, as well as to everyone who helped make this issue of *Slovenika* see the light of the day.