

Belaj - Bockhorn - Bromlej - Kašuba - Katičić - Knežević
ETHNOLOGICAL DISCOURSES

Summary

The editors of *Studia ethnologica* wish to initiate discussion about a theoretical basis of ethnological science. The editor's (Vitomir BELAJ) *Plaidoyer* stressed the fact that ethnology developed on the basis of two different definitions of its subject matter: in one it is defined as *gens*, kin, tribe - a group of people more or less conscious of belonging to the *ethnos* (A. F. Kollár 1783), and in the other as *populus*, the "lower" social status (West European ethnology based on works of the French illuminators). Ethnology as a historical science concerned with the ethnic (if it wishes to retain its name) must not, according to the editor, neglect the idea of Kollár's definition.

In this issue we publish four articles as a reaction to the "Plaidoyer". As expected, the answers that emerge reflect the point of view of each author, his historical and cultural environment, and express differences of choice.

Olaf BOCKHORN's contribution comes from a territory in which the division of ethnology into "Volkskunde" and "Völkerkunde" is carried out consistently, institutionally and to the uttermost but where the notion of "folk" ("volk") and "tradition" were heavily misused until the recent past. Therefore Bockhorn accepts the word "ethnos" ("Volk") only in the sense of "common people"; and sets ethnology the task of dealing with "national" culture as the culture of the "many", the "mass", the "little man", finding justification in this as an attempt to offer cultural identity to "those down there".

Julian V. BROMLEJ and Margarita S. KAŠUBA briefly summarize the well known Soviet opinion concerning ethnology (ethnography) as the science of *ethnos* (see Bromlej on ethnos and ethnography, Moskva 1973). As opposed to Bockhorn's approach the object of ethnology, *ethnos*, is here not the "common people" or "working mass", but those groups of people who by their ethnic characteristics differ from other groups of the same category. Thus it is those qualities of the subject, which integrate it, yet at the same time distinguish it from others according to ethnic function, that become the subject matter of ethnology. The subject thus defined faces ethnology with new problems which will not disappear together with archaic cultural phenomena. Ethnology in future will have to meet the challenge of "(...) a certain expansion of the field of research, necessary for the more complete discovery of the characteristic features of the life of ethnos, primarily those components which play a fundamental role in the functioning of contemporary ethnic communities".

Philologist Radoslav KATIČIĆ offers ethnologists a compromise solution for their theoretical uncertainty. If "(...) ethnology is any systematization of data within its own field, and only occasionally takes help and data from other sources, satisfying the basic needs of scientific cognition", then there may be many "(...) possible ethnologies, and how many and what kind there might be, we cannot even dream".

Finally, philosopher and linguist Anto KNEŽEVIĆ, draws attention to the fact that theoretical crisis in science as science is inevitable, and "Running away from theory or attempting to evade the "ultimate" questions has not to date forwarded scientific research". Ethnology itself will justify "(...) the sense of its own being if it really becomes what its Slavic name means :*narodoslavlje*, i. e. (mind, science, logos") of kin (gens) folk ("ethnos").

The editors intend to continue and extend this exchange of opinion concerning the basic designations of ethnological science and invites cooperation from anyone who has anything to say about the matter.

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