

## THE THEORY OF ETHNOS: OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

This was the theme of the eight scientific encounter between Croatian and Slovenian ethnologists (Croatian-Slovenian parallels) which was held in Kumrovec on the 16th and 17th of February 1989.

The discipline of ethnology includes the concept of *ethnos* in its very name. Hence, ethnology should be the science of *ethnos*. Yet modern ethnology is not centred on the study of ethnicity as its only subject. In the modern ethnological approach *ethnos* is just one of the possible fields of research. Ethnology in Yugoslavia in fact started out as the science of "the people". In this, "the people" were seen in a romantic vision, with an emphasis on examining those phenomena that would confirm their autonomy and mythical primordiality. "The people" were studied as if they constituted a compact social community, without social layers. A critical review of this notion, i. e. of "the people" as the exclusive subject of ethnological study, enriched modern ethnological theory in Yugoslavia and abroad, and directed research towards the social context of cultural phenomena, towards the interpretation of cultures and cultural symbols. In lieu of the mythical "people", everyday popular cultures in the past and present became the focus of attention.

This somewhat overshadowed interest in the phenomenon of *ethnos* and ethnic processes. In Yugoslav ethnology, excepting certain individual research on *ethnos* and ethnogenesis, practically no systematic effort was made in studying this material.

The meeting in Kumrovec had as its objective that ethnologists, with the aid of other scientists — sociologists, historians and students of philosophy — would approach the theory of *ethnos*. The encounter was organised in such a way as to encourage a fruitful exchange of ideas. Therefore, not many papers were presented, although those that were had commentaries prepared for them in advance, which led to useful discussion.

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In view of the fact that the papers presented at Kumrovec have a direct bearing on the field of research of the Institute for Migration and Nationalities (University of Zagreb), the editorial board of *Migration Themes* has decided to publish them in this issue together with some other contributions on the general subjects of *ethnos* and ethnicity. However, it should be noted that most of the papers have been reformulated, on the request of the editorial board, in conformity with the requirements of regular scientific articles.

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