

## HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF THE RELOCATION OF INHABITANTS FROM KYSUCE REGION INTO RADOŠINSKÁ VALLEY (AFTER 1945)

After the year 1945, there was a rapid flow of inner migration in rebuilt Czechoslovakia. On one hand it was caused by the move of the village people into towns, which offered them opportunities for the employment in the industry, on the other, this movement was closely connected with the changed political and social situation. Next to the willing migration we are more often coming across forced migration, although the reason of force did not have to be so obvious like in case of forced removal of German out of Czechoslovakia, activities concentrated on “cleaning-out of the cities from the reaction” and so on. Even the prohibition to build houses on remote isolated settlements, the increase of the compulsory duties of agricultural rations for private farmers, or the construction of the big water reservoirs directly or indirectly forced people to leave their home.

The aim of paper is to introduce the factors, which, after 1945, affected the migration of the population from the mountainous region of Kysuce (North-West Slovakia) into the lowland area of Radošinská Valley (South-West Slovakia).<sup>1</sup> We deal with the situation in the villages of Riečnica and Harvelka more in details, where after the end of the World War 2 we could record several waves of migration into industrially and agriculturally more developed parts of Slovakia, actually the whole Czechoslovakia. We define particular phases of the relocations, we outline its causes, background and behaviour, we mention those target locations with the accent on Nové Sady, which is a village situated in Radošinská Valley. The information we are bringing is based on a study of specific literature, archive's sources, village's chronicles, and fieldwork.

Before we will look more closely at the already mentioned facts, it is important to know that Kysuce have traditionally belonged to regions with the high geographical move of the population. Unpleasant climatic conditions, lean land, and other things which, determinate the establishment of the supplementary occupations connected with the season's or short-range migration (e.g. wood-cuttery, shingle-making, tinkery, house to house trading, departure for season's agricultural works, etc.). In the region, we can also meet with the permanent migration, which since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was heading towards the Down Land, later into the USA, South America and West Europe. The situation was nearly the same in Riečnica and Harvelka, where still in the 1930's, we can record the migration of a part of the population into Croatian Slavonia.<sup>2</sup> Even after 1945, these villages were showing a big percentage of this movement, but next to the economical factors we could find the political ones, too.

The immigration of the people from Kysuce into Radošinská Valley took place in three basic phases: the end of the 1940's, then the 1950's and 1960's, and the 1970's and 1980's. The first wave was the direct reaction on the end of the World War 2, which caused bad social conditions connected with the war damages. There was food for people and animals missing in the villages and also road and railway connections were broken. People went away to the West Slovakia (Trnava, Myjava, Hlohovec) on foot, where they were getting at least a little bit of food. The supply was also done by the horse carriages, which were bringing flour and grain. Even the UNRRA<sup>3</sup> was supplying food in

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<sup>1</sup> The micro region of Radošinská Valley consists of 12 villages – Lužianky, Zbehy, Čab, Sila, Nové Sady with these settlements – Ceroviny, Kotrbál, Malé Zálužie, Kapince, Biskupová, Malé a Veľké Ripňany, Behynce and Radošina, and they are located in North-West from Nitra. They are situated in the valley of the creek Radošinka, which springs in the mountains of Považský Inovec and next to Lužianky it disembogues into the river Nitra. It is a good fertile valley area (with the rest of the oak, cedar, hornbeam and acacia woods). There are good conditions for such demanding agricultural crops as corn, sugar beet, tobacco and grapevine in this area. Thank to good climatic and land conditions the beginning of the agricultural large-scale production started to develop first on private manors and after the collectivisation of agriculture in United Farmers' Companies (JRD). Jaroslav Čukan, *Metodologické východiská k etnologickému výskumu Radošinskej doliny*, in *Slovenský národopis*, 48, 2002, no. 2, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Maráky, *Migrácia obyvateľov Kysúc. Kysučania vo svete*, in *Múzejník, Občasník Kysuckého múzea v Čadci*, 2, May 1992, no. 1, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration were established on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 1943 in Washington, from the initiative of the USA, Great Britain, the USSR and China. Their aim was voluntary repatriation and emergency help for war immigrants and resettles, but also reparation of damaged areas. United Countries, which were mostly damaged by the World War 2 were getting material help (medicines, food, but also machines and other material needed for industrial and

tins and second-hand clothes; the living conditions in villages of Riečnica, Harvelka, Stará and Nová Bystrica were so unpleasant that several families had to move out. Most of them went to the Czech borderland, where the houses, land and even the working posts in the industry were empty due to the removal of Germans from Czechoslovakia. Others were trying to solve their situation by leaving to the Southwestern part of Slovakia, because their fertile land and the existence of bigger cities was the mark of the better life.

The first migrants from the Eastern part of Kysuce came to Radošínská Valley, during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1940's. They were settling down especially in Nové Sady, but also in Malé and Veľké Ripňany, Lukáčovce, Kapince, the younger ones married and stayed in Lužianky, Zbehy and Andač. The roots of the colonization of Radošínská Valley, which caused the demographical, denominational and cultural changes in the following decades, can be found in the arrivals of the seasonal agricultural workers to local manors, but also in the individual arrivals of the male servants into wealthier farming families during the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> The situation in the village of Nové Sady where the first families from Harvelka (17 people together) arrived in May 1947 was the proof of this. Already before the war, their cousin married there and he worked as an agricultural servant for the local farmer. He found them work at his employee, helped them to rent and later to purchase an old clay house and also some agricultural land. Altogether we can say that for the 1<sup>st</sup> and the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the migration from the Kysuce into Radošínská Valley purchases of an agricultural land and the orientation towards peasantry were typical.

The migratory wave in the 1950's and the 1960's was a direct reaction on new social-political proportions in Czechoslovakia, after the communistic coup in February 1948. This situation was characterized by the socialization, collectivisation of an agricultural manufacture and liquidation of an individual land ownership, which was happening under the direction of the communistic parties.<sup>5</sup> In economical and cultural and social sphere, these political changes caused processes, which forced people of the solitary settlements to revalue, rethink their own economical behaviour, strategies of living, value orientations and they disordered the quality of the social binding and resulted in the migration into other areas.<sup>6</sup> The main share on this had the law number 69/1949 about United Farmers' Companies, which proceeded to the joining of the land and the liquidation of privately farming peasants.<sup>7</sup> For this to happen, they introduced compulsory taxes of agricultural products, so called contingents, which the farmers had to give to the state. Mostly it were eggs, milk, meat, feed, agricultural and technical crops. If the taxes were not paid, the farmers could be punished.

Although this socialization of a village and collectivisation of a land did not happened in Riečnica and Harvelka, these contingents caused that a lot of families gave up their natural way of life and left to the Czech borderland, or into more fertile or industrially more developed parts of Slovakia. The situation was complicated by the fact that majority of men able to work found the employment in the industrial parts of Silesia, Czech and Moravia, where they found an out of town work. The women had to look after the farms and their children and elderly people helped them. It's natural that the land, which was looked after in a hoe way wasn't able to sustain the families and also to product for a state. This fulfilment of a state delivery became the primary aim of the majority of people and it was even more important than the preparation for the winter period.

The way out from this situation was to leave the native villages and to look for other sources of living. Especially the families with more children were leaving and the number of the family members shows to be useful in a new place. A part of the members could be employed in United Farmers' Companies or in the state properties and a part could work in the production fields. The situation was similar in Nové Sady where many immigrants found work in these United Farmers'

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agricultural reconstruction) in the amount of 1.7 mld. USD) (*Post-war Years UNRRA*. 2003. <http://www.unhcr.cz/01.pdf/2003-03-20/>).

<sup>4</sup> Jaroslav Čukan, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>5</sup> *Dejiny poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku*, Nitra; Bratislava, 2001, p. 214.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Priečko, *Dynamika spoločensko-politických zmien v druhej polovici 20. storočia a ich kultúrne, sociálne a ekonomické dôsledky (na príklade lokalít s rozptýleným osídlením na Kysuciach)*, in *Slovensko: politika a spoločnosť*, Trnava, 2003, p. 112.

<sup>7</sup> *Dejiny poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku*, Nitra; Bratislava 2001, p. 208.

Companies but also in a company for producing technical porcelain and in a factory producing concrete prefabricated parts. Also the nearby Nitra offered the opportunity to get work.

The decision of regional political representatives to forbid building the houses in distant areas determined the migratory wave from East Kysuce in the 1950's and the 1960's.<sup>8</sup> The leadership of the villages persuaded the people to build their houses in the centre of the village.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the usage of wood as main building material was forbidden.<sup>10</sup> To get bricks, sand and lime was too expensive and due to their deficiency even complicated. So people tried to solve their housing problems by hand-made production of bricks and also by building houses on solitary mountain areas illegally. Others moved into the lowland regions of Slovakia, where they rented or bought old clay houses, whose owners moved out into other cities or built modern houses from burned brick. In Nové Sady, the migrants from Kysuce were buying emptied houses in settlements Ceroviny and Kotrbál, where similarly (like in the later period next to the road to Piešťany) they created "cultural enclave" different from the autochthonous people or the migrants from other parts of Slovakia.

The people from Riečnica and Harvelka were visiting their already moved relatives and friends and they found out that the living standard is higher than the one in their domiciliary villages. That even maximized the migration during the 1960's. The officials claimed that it was due to the necessity to build the houses and farming buildings and to search for new earnings. Leaving people very often left behind their old houses and agricultural land for free, since no one was interested in buying it, because of the high contingents to be paid. Their earlier moved relatives or former neighbours helped them to find new houses and work in Radošínská Valley and so tried to make their life easier in a different natural, social and cultural environment. If there weren't any empty houses in villages, where the part of immigrants already lived, they were buying the houses in the neighbourhood.<sup>11</sup> We can still find families in Nové Sady, which have their relatives in nearby Malé and Veľké Ripňany, and they are still visiting each other.

This decrease of people from Riečnica and Harvelka<sup>12</sup> caused that regional representatives of the communistic party marked both villages as old-people villages and later on, they re-classified them as villages with no development in their prospective plans of development. This opened a way for their total liquidation and for the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the migration into Radošínská Valley and other parts of Slovakia. This happened due to the decision of the Ministry of the Forests and Water Industry of the Slovak Socialistic Republic from the 12 February 1970 about the construction of the water-reservoir in the dam profile above Nová Bystrica (above the confluence of the creeks Riečnica and Harvelka). Because there was not enough drinking water in Kysuce and in the town of Žilina, the beginning of the construction was determined for years 1974-1975 and its completion was planned during 1976-1977.<sup>13</sup> None of these dates had been kept.

In association with the planned construction of the water-reservoir, it was also decided to prohibit building anything new (1972) in both villages land-register in which the reservoir was supposed to be found. Through the public meetings with the people, they were informed about already

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<sup>8</sup> In 1961, Harvelka consisted of 30 settlements and hermitages and 919 people lived there. In 1963, Riečnica had 1,488 citizens who lived in 55 settlements and hermitages, and these were the result of so called "kopaničiarska" colonization of this region during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>9</sup> People did not agree with this initiative, since they owned the land that was several kilometres away from the centre of the village.

<sup>10</sup> Most of the houses in Riečnica and Harvelka were built from wood, some of them even before the year 1870. In 1974, 238 houses in Riečnica were mentioned in connection with the planned reconstruction of a water reservoir, and out of these only 50 houses were stated as built-in-brick houses (State Archive in Žilina, the Branch Office in Čadca, Finding of Owners of Houses, the Concern for Sanitation for Purpose of Drink-water-reservoir, Individual Housing, inv. no. 583, no. 327, 1974, s. MNV Riečnica).

<sup>11</sup> In some cases, the community of Kysuce people in local partnership were getting stronger, due to the secondary migration, which appeared when few families had left their places, where they originally settled down. We are talking about those owners, who bought or rented a house, where there were not any of their friends or family nearby, or they simply found themselves in the environment where only few people from Kysuce lived.

<sup>12</sup> At the beginning of the 1960's, both villages were damaged by the natural catastrophes. Except the frequent fires, we should also mention the floods and due to this land slide. Two settlements in Riečnica were damaged during the spring in 1962 by land slide and ten families had to move out. They moved especially to the region of Martin, and to the South and Southwest Slovakia.

<sup>13</sup> State Archive in Žilina, the Branch Office in Čadca, Development of Drink-Water-Reservoir, inv. no. 427, no. 403, 1970, K 19, s. MNV Riečnica.

prepared work and the necessity to leave the later flooded area. The party representatives offered them, as a compensation of the lost houses, building sites in nearby Kysucké Nové Mesto, Krásne nad Kysucou, Čadca or Žilina, where they could ask even for co-operative or council flats. Most of them asked for houses in a countryside, where the whole village could be moved so the old families and neighbourhoods connections would not be interrupted. It is obvious that something like that was not possible to fulfil. So, the people themselves had to search for their new home. During the weekends, men used to travel through South and South-West Slovakia, searching for old or empty houses in localities, which would suit them best and they tried to agree with their owners on the lowest price possible, since they did not get money for their properties in Kysuce yet. Others asked their relatives from the previous migratory waves to find them a place in their new residence.

Because the work on the water-reservoir was constantly put aside, some people hoped that they would not have to move out. We are talking mostly about the old, ill and socially weak members and families. The situation was even complicated by the long time needed for paying the compensations for properties and fruit trees, and the fact people were not happy with the amount of these compensations.<sup>14</sup> A certain compensation for them should have been the possibility to use lorries for moving out their furniture, farming equipment and animals into the places of movement. At the same time, they could ask for wood, which was needed to build new houses or to repair bought ones even if they did not own any forests. Paying after, they could take some building material from demolished houses.

During the 1970's both Riečnica and Harvelka almost became extinct due to continual emigration of people.<sup>15</sup> Many of them went to nearby Kysucké Nové Mesto, some settled down in Čadca and other parts of Kysuce. From other parts of Slovakia Turiec, Upper Ponitrie, and South Slovakia (especially the area of Bratislava, Trnava, Hlohovec, Topoľčany) are important to mention, where older people could get a job in agriculture and the younger ones were searching for work in the industry. They were also moving into different ethnic group environment of the Silesian Ostrava region.<sup>16</sup> Fathers were usually the first ones to leave, so they could have done necessary building work on bought houses. The wives with children were meanwhile in Riečnica and Harvelka, looking after the farm, preparing the stuff for moving out, selling the farm animals, and trying to speed up the financial compensation, etc.

In the 1980's, the evacuation of both already mentioned villages was over. In 1980, they were united with the nearby Nová Bystrica and after 5 years, they officially became extinct, despite the fact that, few people were still living there. The water work itself began only in 1983, filling the dam with water started from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1989. The water-reservoir was officially completed and commissioned in October of the same year, but still 9 families (25 people) were living in Riečnica and two of them were forced to leave.<sup>17</sup>

Exactly in this period the mass move of the people from Kysuce into Radošinská Valley finished. We are talking about people who were in a close relationship with people who had already settled down. They were visiting each other and because of this they already had a certain idea about where they would go. The relocation of the last of immigrants was very often connected with the feeling of injury and sadness those people had. Especially the members of an older generation realized, that their whole fixed world was destroyed, also the system of their values, and value orientation. It was very difficult for them to deal with the damage of their social, neighbourhood and relationship connections and so when choosing Nové Sady or other surrounding villages like the compensation for lost home, not only the fertile land, working opportunities, the possibility to work in the agriculture was important, but also the presence of a part of a family or friends.

<sup>14</sup> Originally it was stated that only those houses, which were built according to the building approval, would be paid off. Most of the houses built in solitary areas were built illegally.

<sup>15</sup> Many of the citizens, when found out about the building prohibition, started to move out without checking out from their previous place of living. They were afraid that they would not get their financial compensation for their properties. In official documents they were still featuring as citizens of their birthplace villages, despite the fact that they lived already somewhere else. That is why it is so difficult to get the exact number of people who moved somewhere else during the certain period of time.

<sup>16</sup> Adam Pranda, *Na záver prvej etapy výskumu v zátopovej oblasti na Kysuciach*, in *Národopisné informácie*, 1, 1984, p. 250.

<sup>17</sup> Ivan Turanec, *Stáčanie kysuckých prameňov.. Roľnícke noviny*, 21 April 1989.

In our paper we have tried to show the influence of social and political changes in Czechoslovakia after 1945 on the lives of ordinary people. We were marking the interventions, which lead towards the liquidation of the private farming and solitary settlements of Kysuce. We indicated those mechanisms and the course of the evacuation of the villages, which were due to the official interventions chosen for liquidation. We realize that considering the limited extent of our contribution we cannot deal with all the facts, which were accompanying resettlement of the people from Kysuce into Radošínská Valley, but we believe that we are bringing valuable materials, which would at least make this topic more understandable.

IVANA ŠUSTEKOVÁ