

ARCHIVE

Beginning with the previous issue, the Acta Poloniae Historica has launched a new column called 'The Archive'. Our goal is to bring back selected articles or essays authored by Polish historians of the last, more-or-less, hundred years. The criteria for our selection are both positive and negative. On the one hand, there are outstanding studies, ones that at one time opened new research prospects and have until today been exerting an influence on Polish, and not only Polish historiography. On the other hand, on selecting a particular text, we primarily take a look at its accessibility to English-speaking readers. The less it is known outside Poland, the more willingly we publish it in the column – thus catching up, with smaller or bigger delay, for editorial neglect.

Józef Chlebowczyk, whose classical 1972 article is published in this issue, should no doubt be regarded as an outstanding, though somewhat forgotten, historian. Born in 1924 in Karviná, Czechoslovakia, he dealt with history of his native region of Cieszyn (Czech: Těšín) Silesia throughout his career.¹ The last two decades of his life saw him employed with the Silesian Institute of Katowice and at the Silesian University. He died a tragic death in 1985. Although closely associated with the region he dealt with in his first important studies, Chlebowczyk was not just a regional historian. In a dozen-or-so publications to his credit, three voluminous books among them,² he had an original theory of nation-forming processes in Eastern-Central Europe – as he used to name this region. Close in several points to Miroslav Hroch, who dealt with similar issues, Chlebowczyk excelled compared to his Czech colleague and other theoreticians of nationalism in his intuition of the national issue in the ethnic and linguistic borderland areas.

¹ Resulting from these interests are several larger studies on the region's history – e.g., primarily, *Nad Olzą. Śląsk Cieszyński w wiekach XVIII, XIX i XX* (Katowice, 1971).

² *Procesy narodotwórcze we wschodniej Europie Środkowej w dobie kapitalizmu, od schyłku XVIII do początków XX w.* (Cracow, 1975); abridged version published as: *On Small and Young Nations in Europe: Nation-Forming Processes in Ethnic Borderlands in East-Central Europe*, trans. Janina Dorosz (Wrocław, 1980); *O prawie do bytu małych i młodych narodów. Kwestia narodowa i procesy narodotwórcze we wschodniej Europie środkowej w dobie kapitalizmu (od schyłku XVIII do początków XX w.)* (Katowice, 1983); and, *Między dyktatem, realiami a prawem do samostanowienia. Prawo do samookreślenia i problem granic we wschodniej Europie Środkowej w pierwszej wojnie światowej oraz po jej zakończeniu* (Warsaw, 1988), edited posthumously.

Original about the Silesian historian was a skilful combination of two apparently opposing points of view on nation-forming processes and their two related descriptions. In keeping with the spirit of the time, dominant paradigm or intellectual fashion, Chlebowczyk strove to objectivise the phenomenon (also in formal terms). In the article printed below, precise terms (at times assuming the form of quasi-mathematical formulae) used to describe the process of assimilation serve this purpose. In search, however, of repeatable sequences of occurrences and general mechanisms, the Silesian historian did not lose sight of the individual dimension of national identity. Hence, for instance, the observation – untypical in the context of nationalism research in the 1960s and 1970s – whereby language is not an objective criterion of national identification, assimilation being a complex and not one-way process. Also, notable is the remark that any attempts at reversing the assimilation, regardless of arguments speaking in favour of a given nationality in a given territory, are tantamount to aggressive nationalism. In the context of attempts to ‘reclaim’ long-lost lands, possibly with their inhabitants – rather frequent to Central-Eastern Europe and in the Balkans – as well as given the ideology of autochtonism, which grew common after 1945, such a stance was courageous. The way Chlebowczyk understood identity processes in the borderland area ranked him among a rather scant group of researchers, among whom Ernest Gellner or Eugen Lemberg were the important names.³

It might be true that Józef Chlebowczyk’s personal association with the region of (following his typology) ‘transitory borderland’ in Cieszyn Silesia had made him sensitive to the problem dealt with in this article. After he willingly evoked this region in exemplary terms, when writing on how assimilation processes are associated with modernisation – the latter being often, in eighteenth to twentieth century, connected with the reign of the Habsburgs and with Prussia/Germany. It is possible that this last aspect of his analysis deserves deep appreciation. In spite of dominance of a nationalist vision of history, dressed in Marxist-Leninist terminology, Chlebowczyk proposed quite a sober-minded evaluation with respect to real influence of both modernisation processes in Central-Eastern Europe and in the Balkans, not hesitating to write (without quotation marks), for instance, about the Habsburgs’ civilisation mission in the Balkans. Along with originality, intellectual honesty is one of the strong points in Chlebowczyk’s output.

³ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, 1983); Eugen Lemberg, *Nationalismus*, 2 vols. (Hamburg, 1964).



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Józef Chlebowczyk

**SOME ISSUES OF NATIONAL ASSIMILATION
AND LINGUISTIC-ETHNIC BORDERLAND
(IN THE AREA OF FORMER AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN MONARCHY)**

I

The areas where various ethnic-linguistic groups, nationalities and national communities contact one another and coexist have a developmental specificity to them. To describe such regions, the present deliberations¹ will use the term *linguistic-ethnic borderland*, to distinguish these areas from those homogeneous (or, rather homogeneous) in this respect. Concerned are both areas or localities historically shaped resulting from settlement waves building up over long centuries, with diverse reach, character and intensity, and those emerging in consequence of rapid demographic transition initiated by industrial and urbanisation-related processes of capitalism.

The brisk current of economic and social transformations of the last two centuries has thoroughly changed the configuration of borderland territories, and significantly narrowed the borderland's spatial range. As the processes of national awareness and integration progressed, the language and ethnic patchwork, so characteristic to the Central and Eastern Europe, becomes gradually suppressed – beginning with, roughly, the middle of the nineteenth century. Initially in Czech lands, then in Alföld counties and, partly, in Krajina, vast stretches, homogeneous as to language and ethnicities, emerged as the enclaves and foreign diasporas declined. The phenomenon of linguistic-ethnic borderland (hereafter: 'borderland') originally appeared in a broad spatial

¹ For the present purpose, the coverage will basically be limited to the areas to which nation-forming processes extended, taking place between the 18th and 20th century – the period of emergence and development of a modern social awareness in Central-Eastern Europe. The special focus, as the title suggests, is on the specificity of the relations and processes within the Habsburg monarchy.

scale and afterwards increasingly assumed the character of territorial borderland of homogeneous linguistic-ethnic complexes (or such which manifested a clear developmental tendency in such a way). This trend would also be encountered in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including in the other areas of the continent's part in question.

The general development trend is not upset by the consequences of industrialisation and urbanisation. The example of Vienna and other towns proves that main urban hubs, homogeneous before then, have proved able to absorb tremendous waves of alien inflows, without further-reaching long-term consequences as far as the shaping of these hubs' linguistic-ethnic structure. On the other hand, new industrial and mining districts developing within the Habsburg monarchy, the destination areas of appreciable immigration waves have prevalently located themselves in a borderland of languages and territories (as e.g. Bohemia's northern and north-western industrial centre – the Ostrava-Karviná hub).

Essential to any borderland area is the fact that, depending on the degree of development, it always forms – to a lesser or larger degree – a site of confrontation between the various social values and life attitudes represented therewithin. Consequently, there occur processes of radiance and interpenetration of multifarious cultural and civilisational, economic, and demographic influences. The strength impact zone of these processes – unknown as they are to homogenous areas² – is dependent upon various circumstances at a given developmental stage.

Among the conditions for such coexistence, we shall distinguish between the more influential group or community, one that is, as a general rule, better developed and at times excels in terms of numerical force. Let us introduce here the notion of *majority group*, in contrast to *minority group(s)*. These descriptions will not be identified with quantitative categories; this is true, in particular, for the period prior to the occurrence of mass national movements (that is, until the third quarter of the nineteenth century). Not only the fact that the historically-sanctioned division into Crown lands did not coincide with the linguistic-ethnic structure (save for certain Alpine provinces) came into play. The tangle of a variety of circumstances

² Such processes have occurred, to a certain extent, in homogenous or rather homogenous areas (such as Western Galicia or Lombardy, until 1859), situated within an alien state entity.

moreover caused that among the populace speaking one language but inhabiting various Crown lands the intensities of the national bond occurring proved much diverse. The situation in Moravia developed in mid-nineteenth century (at the threshold of mass national movements) differently compared to the ethnic relations in Bohemia. The national bond among the Italians of the time can be referred to (in the true sense of the word) with respect of Southern Tyrol; the national self-determination of the Italians of Trieste, Dalmatia, Gorizia and Gradisca – quite similarly to the Czech people of Moravia – stayed within the sense of distinctiveness of their language and provincial ties strongly gravitating toward the monarchy's German countries.

The issue of the Italians of the Austrian Littoral or Tyrol, the Czech population of Bohemia, Moravia and Austrian Silesia is, however, a segment of the extensive complex of the monarchy's minority-related issues. The problem of minority ethnic-linguistic groups or national minorities has hitherto primarily been approached in quantitative terms.³ Such take on the problem seems not to be correct, particularly if the origins of the formation of the national question are to be concerned (as already stated). The numerical sizes of individual ethnic-linguistic/national groups are just one of the aspects of the nationality question in the territories they inhabited at the time. The other element of essence is the degree of developmental advancement of the communities and regions being considered. This latter

³ Relative to the middle of the 19th century, it is hard e.g. to talk, in general, about a Slavic majority in Austrian Silesia, in that it would be juxtaposed against the language-wise homogenous German group. The linguistic affinity of the dialects of Polish and Czech existing there could not, in itself, be a sufficient binding factor (nation-forming agent) – even though a sense of language separateness was getting crystallised then – that would justify analysing the Austrian-Silesia population's diversity as German and non-German (Slavic) population, appearing there in the Spring-of-the-Nations period, in terms of a national split. The gravity of Germans was completely different in Moravia (where they accounted for a third of the total population) than the position of the German populace in Tyrol, where it formed an inconsiderable majority (56% of the local population). There is no point identifying the situation of Tyrolean Italians with the role of Ruthenians in Galicia or Bukovina. In both these cases, Ruthenian peasants constituted at least a half of the province's dwellers (all the data after: Joseph Hain, *Handbuch der Statistik des oesterreichischen Kaiserstaates*, vol. 1 [Vienna, 1852]). The degree of their social activation, which was crucial at that time in respect of intensity and direction of national self-determination, was in no relation whatsoever to the aforementioned quantitative ratios. Multiple similar examples could be given, taking into account the state of affairs in the Littoral.

aspect was, in turn, related to yet another basic factor – that is, the political-and-legal status of a given community, mainly of its moneyed class. The following moments came into play:

- membership in the state's community (German enclaves till 1867 – in the entire monarchy's territory and subsequently, within the limits of Cisleithania;
- membership in the ruling community (Polish enclaves in Eastern Galicia; Italian community in Gorizia-Gradisca, Istria, *etc.*);
- holding certain defined privileges under public law (e.g. Transylvanian Saxons), separate denominational status.

All these elements, as combined with certain other, even more specific, factors, rectified – not infrequently in a thorough fashion – the reciprocal balance of forces stemming from the current linguistic composition of those inhabiting the given territorial unit.

In the period of our interest, the language of a majority group fulfilled two functions: colloquial speech in everyday use (often, a dialect) and the cultural language, with use of which the group of its speakers joined the universal cultural heritage, as a broadest concept. The speech of a minority community is promoted to the rank of the cultural language gradually, as the nation-forming process progresses; nevertheless, the basic content of its first phase is the advancement of the native language, which initially would not go beyond the limit of a primitive local dialect. This advance diminishes, sometimes quite essentially, the original bandstand between the languages of the minority and majority group. It would not, however, be capable of bringing about a full equality, getting brought up to the same level and, thereby, rendering both languages equally attractive. Under the unchanged constitutional and legal-and-political conditions, the language of a majority community would always be characterised by a greater social prestige, which ensues from the political influence, economic superiority, and cultural achievements. There is still another moment that comes into play. The integrating economic-social and political processes that appeared and intensified with the development of capitalistic relations have considerably narrowed down the development prospects even of highly-developed national languages – to the benefit of universal languages which exceed the limits of politically-defined state units.

In a borderland's conditions, confrontation between the communities inhabiting it yields far-reaching consequences. In the long run

– although not in a resolving and ultimate manner (which is a further specific trait of any borderland) – the civilisation-and-cultural circle represented by the majority group prevails. For a variety of reasons, it turns out more attractive and real for local minority groups – with all the consequences for further development of linguistic-and-ethnic relations of the region.

The foundation of the latter process is the objective developmental propriety commonly known as assimilation, dictated by the realities of life. It is essentially about the fact that in any area whose structure is multilingual the requirements of social distribution of labour, progress in commodity trading and the needs of the developing public life – within the limits exceeding the framework (sometimes a very narrow one) of individual linguistic-ethnic communities – tend to impose upon the minority group the necessity to absorb, in addition, the majority community's speech and thereby to quit the theretofore-existing linguistic particularism. Everywhere in the conditions of bi-, tri-, or even quadri-lingualism thus emerging and developing,⁴ there appear and augment the premises for alienation of members of the minority group from the sphere of influence of the original linguistic-ethnic and ethical bond, the prospect being a switch (assimilation) to the civilisation-cultural circle of the majority group.

The starting point for further considerations will be to render precise the following basic notions. Let us describe the speech a child encounters and acquires at home as the *first language*. To simplify the argument, let us ignore any situation where determining such first (or 'mother') language is impossible or at least much difficult (as e.g. with some mixed marriages in borderlands, or cosmopolitan circles of bourgeoisie and, specifically, aristocracy⁵). As for the sphere of public relations wherein the child grows up, gains qualifications

⁴ The process of acquisition and use of two or more languages can be considered: (i) in terms of individual facts, as a psychological process; (ii) in the sphere of mass-scale facts, as a social process. In the former case, the phenomenon of multilingualism or poliglottism is the case. For the present purpose, the latter option – i.e. bilingualism or multilingualism in the specified borderland areas – will be dealt with.

⁵ "I first learned my English ..., I had no command of the Hungarian language then yet", wrote Katinka Károly, wife of the 'Red Count' Mihály Károly, granddaughter of Count Gyula Andrassy sr. and fraternal niece of Count Gyula Andrassy jr., recollecting her childhood years in her memoirs: *eadem, Červená grófka spomina* (Bratislava, 1967), 14.

and, when already a mature human, joins the current of collective life (e.g. military service, journeyman's peregrinations), starts and pursues his professional and gainful activity, satisfies his various needs – the *colloquial language* prevails. The colloquial language may be identical with the first speech, otherwise it is acquirable on equal footing with any other foreign language. There is a third option too: different from the first language, the colloquial language encroaches on the sphere of private, essentially intimate, life.

The intensity and scope of this penetration appears significantly diverse, with a variety of factors coming into play; they will be covered to an extent later on. At its extreme, this penetration leads to situations where the colloquial language pushes the first speech into the background and replaces it in the personal, family and social life of the maturing individual and when already mature, which is rarely the case with his parents' home. There, the rule of inertia occurred incomparably more intensively, conserving the original condition and barring any external influence. The process being referred to could be more vividly described thus: In place of the first speech, which the child owes to his mother, and through/with which he cognised the first contours of the surrounding world, and – in the sphere of inner experience – learned his first prayers, comes a colloquial language: originally an alien one, it proves indispensable for the maturing and mature man. With time, it is this colloquial language that the man begins to think and get moved. The *lingua del pane* – to refer to the well-known Italian descriptions – gets promoted to a *lingua del cuore*. Under certain conditions, the acquisition of an alien speech as the colloquial language exceeds the use of its purely technical or instrumental functions as a means of communication and intercourse (*lingua del pane*). This course of things has a bearing on the shaping of a sense and character of the *social bond* that associates a given collectivity into a more or less consistent community.

II

For the purpose of further considerations, let us introduce the following conventional symbols:⁶ X – the first language, the original

⁶ These considerations quit the not-too-precise notion of 'mother tongue/native language', as it does not unambiguously characterise, to our mind, the developmental

speech (dialect), as acquired at home; *Y* – the colloquial language; *Z* – the sense of social bond, stemming from the awareness of being a member of a specified ethnic-and-linguistic community determined by *X*, or *civilisation-and-cultural one (related to Y)*; *a* – the language of the majority community; *b*, *c*, *d* – languages (dialects) of minority groups; (*a*) – sense of membership in the specific majority group; (*b*), (*c*), (*d*) – sense of membership in minority groups.

The developmental dynamism of the linguistic-ethnic relations within a borderland's majority community is pictured by the following schematic alternative:

SCHEME 1. *Majority community*

Option:	<i>X</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Z</i>
1	<i>a</i>	<i>a</i>	(<i>a</i>)
2	<i>a</i>	<i>ab</i>	(<i>a</i>)

The first option exhausts a lion's share of situations encountered within a majority community; they fully correspond with the state of affairs in homogeneous areas. The second option appears wherever professional and property-related interests, and certain social aspirations, imply the need to enter into and maintain permanent contact with a foreign-language environment. The tertiary sector (to use the contemporary term) and members of lower circles of the enlightened stratum – later on, intelligentsia, especially rural one – are primarily represented there. As a general rule, the acquired language remains a *lingua del pane*; the mastering and use of it does not have a heavy bearing on the shaping of the individual's social awareness. Although in certain sporadic cases, the second option may lead to the situation:

a *ab*,⁷ *ba* (*ab*, *ba*)

dynamism in the shaping of linguistic-ethnic and nationality-related relations in borderland areas.

⁷ The altered sequence of the symbols is meant to reflect the developmental dynamism of the phenomenon under analysis. Since in *Y – ab*, a member of the majority community is represented who has mastered the minority's language as his *lingua del pane*, the *Y – ba* mark indicates, in the above context, the situation where the acquired (current) language has pushed the first speech into the background and replaced it as a *lingua del cuore*. The symbols *Z – (ab, ba)* represent the consequences of such course of events in the sphere of social awareness.

or even

a $ab,$ ba (b)

Such instances are marginal and untypical, though.

SCHEME 2. *Minority community*

Option:	X	Y	Z
1	b	b	(b)
2	b	ba	(b)
3	b	$ba \rightarrow ab$	(ba, ab)
4	b	ab	(a)

The first and second option have been described above. A specific trait of any minority group is that these variants are not exhaustive as regards the possible life situations of their members. Other, alternative development opportunities may namely be open for them, as per the third and fourth option. These variants offer a completely new-quality content that contributes to the essence of phenomenon of assimilation.

Taken conventionally, the assimilation process consists – in the scope of our interest – of two phases: assimilation as to language and assimilation with respect to culture and customs. The point of departure in the first phase is acquisition, be it passive, of the majority group’s language; the phenomenon is marked as ba . In the assimilation process, in its entirety, there is a moment of special importance – which is not yet a turning point, though. It namely requires conscious will and specific individual effort of the person. The importance of this fact can be fully appreciated if the role of the rule of inertia is taken into consideration – as a factor of essence for social behaviour in all not-quite-developed communities, of which minority groups were primarily formed. As regards the very technical aspect, mastering the language of the majority community did not basically offer a greater difficulty compared to the acquisition of the minority group’s speech (dialect) (cf. ab in Scheme no. 1).

The crux lay somewhere else. Based on what has already been said on the range of influence of the second option in the first scheme, it is apparent that the sphere bilingualism was attained, in the first place, by the people that were intrinsically socially mobile, enterprising, and

intellectually developed. These people were represented to a lower degree in the minority group, due to its normally lower developmental advancement. What is more, the development of these people was considerably conditioned and – after a certain limit, encircled by the framework of the native ethnic-linguistic backwater, was exceeded – completely dependent on the mastering of the majority community's language. At this point, we encounter a manifestation of language barrier at work, as specific to any borderland situation. The existence of such barrier hampered any chance for a point of departure in life for those individuals whose background was minority-group milieu – even if such collectivities were rather well-developed. To overcome this barrier, greater energy and initiative had to be demonstrated than the analogous people of majority community were supposed to afford in similar conditions. For the latter group, bilingualism was nothing of existential coercion: it was just an additional asset, of diverse importance, in satisfying the life needs, in public activities and/or personal life.

The turning moment in the formation of assimilation process appears when the border set by the action of purely technical functions of the gradually acquired foreign language is crossed. Such a situation is marked in Scheme no. 2 as *ba* → *ab*. What it represents is evolution of the mastered alien speech from a *lingua del pane*, in the individual's awareness, into a *lingua del cuore*. The phenomenon – let us describe it as linguistic assimilation – is a phase in a long-lasting process that passes, little by little, from a purely linguistic sphere into cultural-related one (*cultural assimilation*). As opposed to the difficulty related to acquisition of a foreign speech, cultural adaptation took an almost automatic and inconspicuous course. Its progress had a bearing, in turn, on the social bond appearing within the minority group.⁸ This progress and its consequences were reflected in the transformed character and type of the bond, not infrequently paving a way for it to a completely different, indeed alien before, cultural and civilisational circle, with a prospect for a complete *national assimilation*, in the conditions fostering the development of a modern social awareness.

⁸ Instances of assimilation are found appearing also among individuals being members of the majority community; yet, as already mentioned, such cases were sporadic and individual, never massive (society-wide).

The generation profiles often feature a system of relations where cultural assimilation, or at least its essential elements, came ahead of, and yielded the space for, linguistic assimilation. An important stimulus for the latter was the development of school system and progressing education under the conditions of overall democratisation of social relations. Until that moment, intensity and scope of assimilation processes occurring were incomparably more modest, as far as the plebeian masses are concerned. Apart from professional and gainful contacts (some categories of artisans, innkeepers, carters, *etc.*), the main drivers behind these processes included service with the military, membership of lower-rank management staff, and so forth. In such situations of life, the foreign language was acquired with more difficulty and lesser effect than the efficient penetration of new (alien) attitudes and cultural models. Long years' service in the army, susceptibility of the peasant milieu to the influence of regalism (the stereotypes of 'Joseph the ploughman', 'benevolent monarch') and of the confessional bond (loyalism of the clergy) formed the premises not only for development of cultural assimilation but even for the shaping of certain elements of *state assimilation*,⁹ mainly in the form of promoting the sense of dynastic affiliation ('we, the emperor's men') and, more specifically, in the particular Habsburg-monarchy conditions, the Habsburg orientation.

On the basis of what has been said so far about the essence and mechanism of assimilation processes, it already ensues that they must have demonstrated much more considerable progress in mutual contacts between reciprocally-akin linguistic-ethnic communities (e.g. Slavic) than in the conditions of coexistence of groups whose identity was as significant as in the case of e.g. Slovaks and Hungarians, Poles and Germans, or Ruthenians and Romanians. A specific trait of the borderland of the first type (the notion 'genetic bilingualism' will

⁹ 'State assimilation' is to be comprehended as a process leading to a conscious and persistent, rather than tactical and temporary, acceptance by a national minority (i.e. a community with a clarified sense of national bond) of an original adherence to an alien state entity. Resultant from the process is the formation of political activism of a specified minority group opting for loyal collaboration with the majority community (state nation) based upon fully respected integral unity and interests of the multinational state concerned. Cf. Józef Chlebowczyk, 'Niektóre problemy mniejszości polskiej w Czechosłowacji w okresie międzywojennym', *Zaranie Śląskie: kwartalnik literacki*, xxx, 4 (1967), 651–2.

now be introduced¹⁰) is its transitory nature. A linguistic and ethnic kinship causes, as a general rule, that there appears no clearly defined demarcation borderline.¹¹ The latter is an open-ended, transitive entity – to the extent that, instead of a clear borderline, what we deal with is a transit zone, as a general rule. Within it, one can only identify (not always unambiguously) gradually incrementing or shrinking prevalence of some linguistic-ethnic traits, depending on the case.

There is, finally, a further moment that calls for being taken into account: it further complicates the state of affairs occurring in the *transitional borderland* – so to name it, as opposed to the *contact borderland* (areas where bilingualism proves non-genetic). A low degree of developmental advancement (as characteristic to a lion's share of minority groups in the Central-Eastern Europe in the period they were caught into the orbit of a modern social awareness then taking shape), caused that they used an underdeveloped language at the time. Such language would initially not exceed the limits of a local dialect or even local patois, whose stock of basic vocabulary was rather modest and grammatical structure uncoded and habitually acquired by users. Coexistence of akin ethnic-linguistic groups leads in such circumstances not as much to a bilingualism emerging in a transitional borderland as it fosters the occurrence and reinforcement of a peculiar dialect which in fact is a conglomerate of various dialects and patois or jargons being adapted to meet the communication needs.

Let us now use a concrete example, drawn from the specificity of the Polish-Czech borderland in Cieszyn (Czech: Těšín; German: Teschen) Silesia (cf. Scheme no. 3), while neglecting the issue of local contact borderland (Polish–Czech–German).

¹⁰ Cf. Tat'yana P. Il'yashenko, *Yazykovye kontakty (na materiale slavyano-moldavskikh otnoshenii)* (Moscow, 1970), 25.

¹¹ In the real life, some exceptions appeared there as well. Bronisław Koraszewski, the known Upper-Silesian national activist, described in 1900 the borderline between the Silesian-Polish dialect and the Moravian dialect south of Racibórz: "The rivulet Cyna [Polish: Psina] set the border between the Dioceses of Wrocław and Olomouc, whilst also being an exact ethnographic frontier between the Moravians and the Poles, to the extent that also the small village of Pietrowice [Petrovice], halved by the Cyna, was Polish on the rivulet's northern side and Moravian on the southern, albeit it had formed a single administrative commune for centuries"; quoted after Józef Gruszka, *Polski ósrodek narodowy w Raciborzu (do roku 1918)* (Wrocław *et al.*, 1970), 14.

SCHEME 3. *The linguistic-ethnic profile of Cieszyn Silesia in the nineteenth century*¹²

Political county of Bielsko	b
Political county of Cieszyn-Těšín	$b, \frac{b}{c}, \frac{c}{b}$
Political county of Fryštát	$b, \frac{b}{c}, \frac{c}{b}$
Political county of Frýdek	$\frac{c}{b}, c$

b – Polish language, Cieszyn-Polish dialect

c – Czech language, Těšín-Czech (Moravian) dialect

The specific trait of the transitional borderland identified above is shown in Scheme no. 3 as a fraction where the numerator indicates the linguistic-ethnic characteristic dominant in the local dialect. The situation in the Bielsko county, as well as in its adjacent areas of the neighbouring counties of Cieszyn (Těšín) and Fryštát, was unambiguous. The transit zone¹³ factually extended to: (i) the western part of Cieszyn-Těšín county and the western and north-western area of Fryštát county; (ii) a prevalent part of Frýdek county. In the first case, local dialects featured a definite prevalence of elements of Polish ($\frac{b}{c}$), giving way to Czech ($\frac{c}{b}$) in an increasingly clear manner, as one moved westwards and north-westwards. The areas adjacently located along the Ostravice river which separated the Cieszyn-Těšín Silesia from Moravia had a Czech visage.

¹² Meant is the administrative arrangement of 1904–18. The political county of Bielsko extended to jurisdictional counties of: Bielsko, Strumień, Skoczów; the political county of Cieszyn (Těšín) covered jurisdictional counties of Cieszyn and Jablunków; the political county of Fryštát extended to jurisdictional counties of Fryštát and Bohumin; the political county of Frýdek covered jurisdictional counties Frýdek and Polska Ostrava (after 1919, Slezská Ostrava).

¹³ An author well-versed in the local relations so portrayed this zone in the middle of the past century: “And indeed, here the Bohemian tribe melts into the Polish one, and if we assume, following Czörnig, that the linguistic border between the Czech-Moravian and Polish dialect be the villages of Pudlan, Reichwaldau, Peterswald, Schumbarg, Bludovic, Bukovec and Rzeka in the area of Teschen [Cieszyn], it then ought not to be understood in the way that the habitancy west and east of that line speaks, respectively, Bohemian and Polish, but what it means is that east of the line, the Slavic dialect gains so resolutely a Polish character that it can be recognized as a dialect of the Polish, rather than Bohemian, language, and conversely”. See Carl Kořistka, *Die Markgrafschaft Mähren und das Herzogtum Schlesien in ihren geographischen Verhältnissen* (Vienna and Olomouc, 1861), 257.

This example proves, among other things, how illusory are any attempts at using, in reference to the transitional borderland area, the language of local people as, allegedly, an unbiased criterion of the national affiliation.¹⁴ To restrict the argument to the issues of our present interest, one consequently finds that, given no clarified language frontier, it is basically illegitimate to refer to bilingualism and, consequently, assimilation occurring as a social phenomenon (at least, until some point of time).

III

The assimilation mechanism had its limits. Let us confine ourselves, for the time being, to formulating the term *lower assimilation threshold*. Even in the conditions of traditional pre-capitalistic rural population or town plebs, vegetating on the edge of the most basic biological demands, certain individuals or whole social groups remained beyond the pale of collective life. There came into play an element so alien culturally and ethnically/racially that there existed an insurmountable abyss, as it was then perceived (given the conditions of the time and the prospective period), between it and the core of the local populace, regardless of the linguistic-ethnic and other divisions appearing within the latter: the reason was namely the civilisation distance and cultural distinctiveness (Gypsies; eastern Jews). The example of the latter group proves that the differentiating moment nowise had to be the very developmental primitivism of those social groups, which were outside of reach of any assimilation process (nomadic lifestyle of Gypsies; a similar nature of certain mountaineer peoples' groups – as e.g. the Hutsuls in Eastern Carpathians in the 18th and early 19th c.). It could also be about civilisation-related and cultural exclusivity of more developed communities such as orthodox Jews, a part of Armenians, etc. Civilisational primitivism as the *lower threshold* of assimilation processes is, besides, the case not only with pre-capitalist and early-capitalist society. Analysis of internal stratification of proletariat milieus from much later a period discloses the existence among the so-called 'lumpenproletariat' of groups whose

¹⁴ Józef Chlebowczyk, *Wybory i świadomość społeczna na Śląsku Cieszyńskim w drugiej połowie XIX wieku. Przyczynek do badań nad kształtowaniem się świadomości i aktywności społecznej w okresie kapitalizmu* (Katowice and Cracow, 1966), 263–4.

existence oscillated exclusively around the edge of the most elementary biological needs.¹⁵ On a larger scale, though not as drastic as described in the footnote, the aforesaid category of individuals appeared among the agrarian proletariat; that the groups were marginal, underclass, does not alter the case.

Let us now make more precise the conclusion stemming from the notion *lower assimilation threshold*. The premise for unfolding of assimilation process is a certain civilisational and cultural unity of social milieus which encircled the placenta for the process, one in which it could take its course regardless of the cultural circles splitting these milieus, ethnic-linguistic, confessional and other partitions.

The phenomena of civilisation distance as the threshold of assimilation process is not to be captured only in terms of extreme relations, an absolute form. A part of import is played there also by differentiated degree of developmental advancement, that is, the phenomenon of relative developmental distance that exists inside the social collectivity which is homogenous with respect to civilisation and culture, and coexists in a given (borderland) area. However, whereas the developmental distance in its absolute (extreme) form crossed out the possibility of assimilation (only allowing for bi- or multilingualism), differentiated level of development did not create an unambiguous situation of this sort. It was merely one of the factors of the further developmental direction of the existing linguistic-ethnic structure. Factors such as: (i) affiliation with a specified state entity, and (ii) the requirements and consequences of economic life (social development, allocation of labour and commodity trading), proved to be of incomparably higher importance.

¹⁵ The very bottom of the social hierarchy of the Ostrava-Karviná coal-mining proletariat was occupied on the verge of 20th century by a category of workers (called *baraby* in this industrial hub) who were hired by private entrepreneurs – in most cases, local innkeepers and merchants – for use of the boards of local mines and coke plants. Employers used this agency system to engage the workforce on the conditions most beneficial to them, thus omitting any tariff-related or legal restrictions. The intermediaries, for their part, gained maximum opportunity to exploit those workers through practically unlimited application of truck system. On the living conditions of those veritable white slaves, the socialist magazine *Górník* wrote: “The barracks [they populate] are completely fit as pigsties ..., there are such amongst those workers who, in their lives full of poverty, hunger and drunkenness, have become more akin to animals than humans”; *Górník*, 25 (12 Sept. 1907). On the truck system at work, cf. *Robotnik Śląski* (24 Feb. 1905).

To continue these considerations, more terms require being introduced: 'assimilative capacity', '(passive/active) assimilative tendency'. Based on these notions, the category of *upper assimilation threshold* can be specified. These terms cannot however be defined separately from economic social determinant (as a broadest concept) of assimilation processes and its developmental dynamism. Two periods are discernible: the first is the stage preceding the occurrence of modern nation-forming processes; the second extends to the phase of national movements. Due to a limited framework of this article, the issue of assimilation processes under the socialist political system will not be covered.

IV

In the stationary and atomised late-feudal society, living, in its primary mass, a life isolated from the outside, the scope and intensity of occurrence of any integration processes were heavily restricted; this is true with regards to both aforementioned factors.

The nation-forming process taking shape at that time was restricted, on an exclusive basis, to the ruling class and the related enlightened stratum. The class-related interests of the privileged part of the society, forming a nation of the time (let it be called 'political nation'), occurred externally in the sphere of public relations, in the form of sense of bond: (Habsburg/imperial) dynastic and territorial/country affiliation (the Crown of St Wenceslas and of St Stephen, Tyrolean counties, etc.). The former was the superior category – a state-wide one; the second featured, with varying intensity, a territorial particularism ('country patriotism'), so characteristic for the pre-capitalist relations. Both types of bond constituted the basic content of elements of state and national awareness getting formed at that time. Their confrontation gave the assimilation processes varying intensities and character. In the multinational Habsburg monarchy, territorial particularism created the conditions for maintaining the original linguistic-ethnic distinctiveness of 'political nations' of respective provinces; this is pointedly attested by the Croatian example.

The centralising-unifying policy of the Habsburgs set in motion a completely novel phenomenon, in the area of our present interest: let us describe it, in highly general terms, as a conscious interference in the shaping of the linguistic-ethnic relations. In the rule of Joseph II

taken as whole, the moment it came to its first climax, this interference appears as a purposeful, top-down controlled and systematically pursued *assimilation policy*. Its ad-hoc effects turned out to be very modest, producing in many cases a result downright contrary to what was intended. The importance of Josephine nationality policy lies in a long-term horizon. The emperor's work is continued by the bureaucracy which was initiated by him and got ever since promoted to the role of one of the central pillars of the Danubian monarchy. This work became the programmatic guideline for the rule in the neo-absolutist 1850s decade, the era of Schmerling and his ideological-political successors attached to the liberal-centralistic orientation. Joseph II was referred to by the entire later national-radical and nationalistic camp, quite clearly interpreting the policy of the leading exponent of Austrian enlightened absolutism in their own way.

Regardless of any attempts at conscious shaping of a linguistic-ethnic balance of forces (an issue that calls for being handled separately), the life realities in themselves benefitted the assimilation processes. The decisive moment was affiliation with a specified state unit. The result is a confrontation between the state-wide affiliation, which is gradually getting formed, and the chronologically earlier-shaped sense of territorial community which organically emerged within a homogeneous (as a general rule) linguistic-ethnic community, on the foundation of local conditions and existing social structures. In the event that the above confrontation took place between the collectivities of diverse ethnic-linguistic facets, it automatically set in motion the action of assimilation processes. Their developmental process and their progress were subject to diverse changes over the centuries, some of them being farfetched. Staying within the limits of the Habsburg monarchy, three basic development variants for the social processes of the present interest appear discernible.

Characteristic of the first variant – let us describe it as a *Czech model* – was an extremely impetuous, if not dramatic, course of things. The defeat of White Mountain resulted not only in the altered state-law status of the Crown-of-St-Wenceslas countries, the loss of their previous political independence: it also initiated the transition resulting in thorough transformation of feudal nation-forming processes taking place in the Czech lands. The acute repressions of the period post the White Mountain battle completely eliminated, like a cataclysm, all the social strata – mainly, the landowning gentry – that

were carriers and exponents of the previous state-national awareness and distinctiveness of the Crown-of-St-Wenceslas countries. Resulting from the clash of diverse civilisational and cultural circles, a similar phenomenon occurred even more drastically in the south-eastern European territory subdued by the Turks. Yet, the exemplary case of Bosnia is evidence that assimilation processes are identifiable even under such conditions (the *begs*). In Czech lands, the afore-said repressive measures hit just a part of the local ruling class, the group most thoroughly involved in the struggle with the Habsburg/Counterreformation camp, whose, n.b., characteristic was, due to this, a particularly intensive sense of state-and-national distinctiveness. Resulting from such course of the matter, the remainder of the landowning gentry and enlightened stratum was drawn, in the new social-and-political situation, into the orbit of assimilation processes.

In Silesia, which also belonged to the Crown of St Wenceslas, the above-described transition took a rather commotionless course – by way of gradually incrementing changes. They began much earlier, after all, being a consequence of feudal homages tied up with the Luxembourg dynasty. In this second variant – let us call it a *Silesian model* – manifested are, in the most developed shape, all the characteristic traits and contents of evolutionary assimilation process. Descendants of the Piast dynasty and the local gentry, together with the patriciate of large towns, high-rank ecclesial hierarchy and the enlightened layer get into the circle of influence of the integrating force of the Bohemian Crown and, later on, the Habsburg monarchy, which extends not just to public – state-political and dynastic relations but also cultural and moral relations. Progressing in the milieu of Silesian ruling class, the process of overcoming, in various areas of life, the previous localism and peripheral status, contacts established on a wider, international scale, was inclined – given the circumstances – not toward the reality determined by common ethnic-linguistic ties but rather, towards gradual joining the centres of social-political, cultural and social life – ones that before then belonged to completely alien cultural and ethnic circles.¹⁶

¹⁶ Similar processes taking place in the Jagiellonian monarchy and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth led to assimilation of the local Ruthenian and Lithuanian-Byelorussian nobilities and to the emergence of a state-and-national bond that has been described as *gente Ruthenus, natione Polonus*.

In the Silesian conditions, a direct outcome of the transition became a significant debilitation and, finally, erasure of all the existing and potential bonds which still echoed the tradition of former affiliation to the Polish state and connected the dwellers of Silesia, which subsequently became part of the Crown of St Wenceslas, with the nobility-based Polish nation of the time. Coming in place of these bonds is the since-then-emerging and increasingly strengthening, in the ruling class milieu and Silesia's enlightened strata, sense of Bohemian-Moravian (territorially) and Habsburg/imperial state and dynastic affiliation. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the degree of advancement of assimilation processes turned out so well-along that yet-another alteration in the state membership of Silesia (of its vast-majority portion, to be sure) did not consequently result in any other linguistic-ethnic transformation of the local privileged strata and classes.

The relations prevailing in the lands of the Crown of St Stephen demonstrated until the end of the eighteenth century a clear developmental specificity, in the sphere of our interest. The dominant role of Latin in public life alleviated the language barrier posed by the hard-to-master Magyar speech. It thereby pretty largely facilitated the formation of a nobility-founded multilingual *natio hungarica*. On the other hand, however, such state of affairs conserved within the non-Magyar privileged classes, to an extent (for instance, in the Slovak or Croatian conditions), the position of their native speech – true, as a relic local dialect. The specificity in question boiled down to a reversal of the above-stated sequence of both phases of assimilation process, to the benefit of, initially, cultural and afterwards linguistic assimilation. It was only the impetuous advancement of the Magyar speech, which took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, that altered the sequence in the Crown-of-St-Stephen lands in favour of linguistic assimilation.

There is still the third variant to be discussed, which we would call a *South Slavic model*. What it refers to is a unique situation that became prevalent in the territory that was gradually liberated, from seventeenth century onwards, from the Turkish rule. The Ottoman Empire's regime had brought these lands to quite a primitive condition civilisation- and culture-wise, so that their inclusion in the Habsburg monarchy clearly posed a turning point in their development. Even the severest critique of the Austrian rule and Vienna's policy in this

respect could not gloss over the lasting achievements of that new period, across all the domains of life. This evaluation would notice the civilisation mission that was implemented by the new rulers in an objective manner, in spite of their conservative political line, short-sightedness, and narrow, class-oriented and egoistic inducements of action. There is no surprise, then, in the fact that it was in the so-called military borderland territory assimilation processes turned, beginning with the eighteenth century, intensive to an elsewhere unheard-of degree and area. The new social and political order ensured, within the novel system, a stabilised property-related and personal position, opened access to the army and the administration which was expanded in the field. It provided, in any case, the premises for mobilisation of economic and public life of these areas, attracted with the new cultural and moral patterns that radiated out of the Danubian monarchy's capital city and the residence of the Austrian house.

V

The low degree of mobilisation of economic life in a broader spatial scale resulted in a faint role of economic drivers in the formation of assimilation process in the period in question. Albeit the existing economic connections, along with international trade routes, paved the way for alien influence running in from the outside, including in the area of linguistic-ethnic relations. However, the point of gravity of the transformations occurring in this context resided not so much in the assimilation of the more well-to-do and socially agile strata of minority-group urban populace as – primarily in the Crown-of-St-Stephen lands – in the changes ensuing from the consequences of inflow of the alien elements from the outside.

A detailed analysis of the origin and the entirety of the characteristic traits or specific attributes that contributed to the phenomenon of linguistic-ethnic enclaves emerging resulting from diverse colonisation waves across the centuries, is not the actual focus of this essay. We will instead be preoccupied with one aspect of the issue in question: the astonishing liveliness of the constitutive characteristics of a considerable part of these enclaves, and their immunity against the surrounding environment, confronted with which their situation was one of a microscopic isle in the sea. Genetically speaking, it was about the elements that initiated, or considerably reinforced, the

urban milieus and clusters of non-agricultural population existing in the Central-Eastern Europe.

The communities of those linguistic-ethnic islands (let us name them 'insular communities') had two main properties to them. First, they were distant – in some cases, quite severely – from the aboriginal, or rather, 'legacy' people, in terms of civilisation; the reason being a usually remarkable diversity in the degree of developmental advancement. The splits getting outlined relative to this situation were often growing even severer by the distinctive confessional bond which played the central part in the social awareness of the pre-capitalistic period, taken on the whole. The other moment calling for attention here was a privileged, compared to the local people, public-legal and social status of the immigrants. Resulting from both these circumstances, the said immigrants gained, under the new existential conditions, economic and social position that not only strengthened their advantage over the environment but many a time provided these people with life opportunities otherwise unattainable in their former home country. All that provided potential premises for a lasting adaptation in the new milieu. It was expressed through the shaping of the sense of a peculiar regional patriotism. With time, it was this particular sense that, even if it did not completely eliminate the previous connections with the original parent stem, then, at least, those contacts were eventually deprived of specific real contents, in favour of an increasingly cloudy and sublime tie with the ancestors' country and the mother tongue.

The above-stated sense of regional patriotism was identified by the enclave's residents with the economic position they achieved in the new conditions and the social prestige attained within the entire territorial organism the given island was part of. In the enclave residents' awareness, the premise for stability of the social structure formed there became the solidification of an exclusive nature of their own community, through maintenance of its linguistic-ethnic distinctiveness, among other factors.¹⁷ This is how the desideratum in

¹⁷ As has already been stated, the present considerations concern mass phenomena; thus, they refer to individual instances of assimilation, caused through social advancement (e.g. the practice of ennoblement of burghers of foreign descent) or social declassing, drawing individuals out of the womb of their insular community.

question was promoted to a categorical imperative of the enclave as a defined social community, dictated by its basic class-related interests, regardless of the insular community's internal stratification. What is more, the community, jealously guarding its privileged economic-social position, was not at all interested in a quantitative growth of its collectivity – given the stationary nature of pre-capitalistic relations. Hence, the social behaviours of such enclaves were characterised, with respect to the present focus, by attitudes describable as lack of *assimilative tendency*, in its *passive* as well as *active* form.

In the former case, conscious maintaining of one's own linguistic-ethnic distinctiveness is the case, along with opposing any manifestation of blending into the alien surroundings. The latter case is about conscious renouncement of the local elements. In either case, coexistence of various ethnic communities (the enclave and its environment) would not exceed the limit of bi- or multilingualism. This was the case also because the local community, due to its lower-grade developmental advancement, was not capable of absorbing incomers into its linguistic-cultural and moral circle; it was deprived of a property which will be referred to hereafter as *assimilative capacity*. This category sets the upper ceiling of assimilation processes. It was the function of degree of developmental advancement and of the existing social structure determined by the current class-related balance of forces. Speaking otherwise, assimilation processes took their course in the placenta delineated by the civilisation distance, being the lower threshold of assimilation processes – on the one hand, and their upper ceiling, determined by the assimilative capacity of a given collectivity – on the other. Relative to pre-capitalist communities, it is the assimilative capacity that is the constitutive feature of majority group.

The demographic phenomenon of 'population pressure', which manifested itself more and more distinctly with time, in spite of any and all restrictions and inhibitions superimposed by economic-social conditions of the pre-capitalist period, introduced, step by step, novel moments to the existing state of affairs. Beginning with the fifteenth century, identifiable is an increased role of Slovaks in north-Hungarian towns; the following century marked a revival of the Romanian elements in Transylvanian urban hubs.¹⁸ Consequences of political

¹⁸ Fritz Valjavec, *Geschichte der deutschen Kulturbeziehungen zu Südosteuropa*, i: *Mittelalter* (Munich, 1953), 75, 91.

transformations and military occurrences acted in the same direction, at least in certain areas. Resulting from the Turkish period and the efforts that eventually led, in the late years of the seventeenth century, to elimination of the threat posed by the Ottoman state, Slovak towns and trade in the north of Hungary saw considerable weakening of the by-then-all-powerful positions of Germans. In Transylvania, in turn, they maintained their significance at that time, and even partly strengthened it.¹⁹ The course of things that was observable, in turn, in the nineteenth-century Spiš,²⁰ was the most telling example of how the structural transformations of capitalism influenced the existing arrangement of ethnic relations. All these moments threatened and disturbed, whether indirectly or directly, the existing holdings of insular communities (the German enclaves being the case, this time). By evoking in their bosom a sense of threat to the basic class-related interests, they consequently intensified the awareness of linguistic-ethnic distinction up to the limits of its exclusivity, and caused the enclaves to transform into ghettos of a peculiar sort – thus erasing any assimilation phenomena.

The settlement waves were not only flowing toward urban areas, industrial and mining hubs, for they were nowise limited to non-agricultural professions. However, peasant enclaves were characterised by lower resistance to absorptive action of the surrounding environment. Part of the picture was, in the first place, an incomparably greater linguistic-ethnic diversity of the immigration wave and, consequently, of the scale of the developmental advancement level manifested by the incomers, on the one hand, and by the local populace, on the other. Of quite an importance was, finally, the degree of coherence of peasant settlement. Wherever more dispersed, the chance to maintain the original linguistic-ethnic distinctiveness were significantly lower compared to the situation of the immigrants who represented non-agricultural professions. The absorption of the scarce migrant groups into their new environment was not obstructed, given the circumstances, by the original, not infrequently considerable, civilisational and cultural distance between such communities.

¹⁹ Raimund F. Kaindl, *Geschichte der Deutschen in den Karpatenländern*, ii: *Geschichte der Deutschen in Ungarn und Siebenbürgen bis 1763, in der Walachei und Moldau bis 1774* (Gotha, 1907), 95 f., 359–63.

²⁰ Of the numerous publications on the topic, cf. e.g.: ‘Spišska stolica’, *Naše Slovensko*, ii, 11–12 (Aug.–Sept. 1909), 499–503.

Nonetheless, an essential role was played in this respect by the social structure and the social and profession-related affiliation of the immigrant collectivity. The Polish people, appearing in the area of Bukovina from the late eighteenth century onwards and belonging to artisan and intelligentsia classes (which resulted from administrative relations with Galicia and the Lvov Diocese), have in the long run maintained their ethnic individuality, although they never formed consistent Polish communes. The situation was different with the wave of Slovak peasant settlers, who proved able to assimilate within a rather short time to their new environment. The shared confessional bond and affinity of the linguistic-and-cultural circles caused that a considerable share of Slovak immigrants eventually got Polonised at their Bukovina settlements.²¹

VI

People's masses remained out of the reach of assimilation processes taking place in the pre-capitalist society conditions. A horizontal social arrangement, with its estate-based divisions, as specific to feudalism, did not favour contacts struck up vertically, that is, between the ruling class getting assimilated and the enlightened strata, on the one hand, and the peasantry and a majority of urban populace among minority communities. Still, there occurred some exceptions: court personnel or military service are exemplary. In this context, the issue of janisaries (so to name it) would call for being discussed separately.

However, such exceptions did not have a remarkable bearing on the formation of the linguistic-ethnic structure of the core part of the local population. Conservative and traditionalist stance of the peasant milieu resulted in preserving its original ethnic-linguistic nature in the conditions of economic stagnation and feudal fragmentation.²² This did not have to do, clearly enough, with any respects related, be it indirectly, with a conscious sense of linguistic-national affiliation, as the literature would often explicitly put it or, even more

²¹ Raimund F. Kaindl, *Das Ansiedlungswesen in der Bukowina seit der Besitzergreifung durch Österreich. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ansiedlung der Deutschen* (Innsbruck, 1902), 149, 155–7, 279–307.

²² In this context, the notion of 'aboriginal people' will be quit: in reference to considerable areas of Central-Eastern Europe (e.g. the Carpathian zone), it would be completely illegitimate to use it, in scholarly terms.

frequently, assume. The peasantry's attitude, determined by the seclusion of their rural environment, was shaped by the predominant omnipotent conservatism in the morals and customs, prejudice and distrust towards anything that was foreign and new. The same was true, *mutatis mutandis*, for the inhabitants – especially, the not-quite-well-off strata – of the network of urban hubs, which was anyway sparse in that part of the continent.

In the peasantry's awareness and social behaviour, there prevailed moments – in terms of the focus here – describable as non-meditative, spontaneous. Among them, a sense of separateness and alienation with respect to any incomers and anything coming from the outside came to the forefront. This sense was founded on the homeliness tie kneading together the individual communities whose spatial reach was rather small, as a rule. The essence and content of this tie was formed of relations of kinship, neighbourhood, and ties imposed by daily coexistence and conditions of the shared life. Language partitions heavily intensified the sense of peculiarity on the exterior and, consequently, homeliness and familiarity within the community. A peculiar local patriotism getting formed in such circumstances was negation-based, with its characteristic attitude of mistrust, if not hostility, toward anyone other than the 'countrymen'. This patriotism did not comprise any positive elements, though – such as a sense of communion on a broader spatial scale, with the broader population growing aware of their linguistic-ethnic community. The influence of such community was brought into prominence as a moment that maintained a state of social disintegration in two- and multi-language areas, as a barrier preventing, in the awareness sphere, for blending the local patriotism of the legacy population with the regional patriotism of the immigrant element, emerging as these people were striking roots in their new environment. This state of affairs could not be changed by any transitory situation where, under the pressure of extraordinary circumstances (e.g. a foreign military invasion), a homogenous defensive stance was getting formed among all the region's dwellers.

VII

In the whole range of social awareness of feudal classes and strata remaining out of the reach of nation-forming processes (i.e., people's masses), a specially important place was occupied by the religious

bond. The unique character of this link was owed not only to the intensity of its appearance (which is characteristic to any community whose developmental advancement degree is rather low) but also to its more extensive territorial scope of influence. Among all the elements of the social awareness of the period's people's masses, it was just – and exclusively so – the religious bond that was overcoming the atomisation of pre-capitalist relations and was the main engine for the integration tendencies appearing on a broader spatial scale, which all the same paved a way for themselves at that time. Hence, the present considerations ought to draw more attention, as regards the pre-capitalist period, to the diverse aspects stemming, exactly, from the tangle of religious and linguistic-ethnic relations.

The other symptomatic trait of religious bond was its reflective character. Confessional affiliation was normally inherited.²³ Its emotional and ideological charge was, however, so potent that the social attitudes and behaviours dictated by it were acts of conscious choice, and of demonstration of a will. Where religious splits coincided with other borderlines, namely those outlined by the ties stemming from diverse manifestations of coexistence, professional and gainful activities, class interests, language-related and ethnic communion, in all these cases did the religious bond conspicuously deepen and solidify the sense of distinctiveness of a given social collectivity.

The maintenance – as found above to be appearing – and even reinforcement, to a certain extent, of the position of the German populace in the seventeenth-century Transylvania (as opposed to the course of things in the north of Hungary) is primarily ascribable to the solidification of Protestantism in that territory. The fate of the Slovak settlement wave which in the eighteenth century took the direction of Alföld (the Great Hungarian Plain) was strictly related to the confessional affinity of the immigrants. Protestant peasants kept up their ethnic individuality in the Magyar sea surrounding them, whilst their Catholic peers yielded to assimilation in as early as the second or third generation.²⁴ Among the Armenians, who were settling at the same and at a later time in Eastern Galicia and in Bukovina, those were assimilated (that is, Polonised) in the new environment

²³ The issues related to Reformation, Counterreformation, re-Catholicisation action, have been neglected herein.

²⁴ U. B., 'O dolnozemsých Slovákoch', *Naše Slovensko*, ii, 5 (Feb. 1909), 201–5.

who converted to Catholicism. The others, who had not rejected their Orthodox faith, would normally keep their linguistic-ethnic autonomy. There is a wealth of similar facts that can be quoted.

The intensity of appearance of religious bond manifested itself the most vividly within a variety of sects, most of which consisting of a small number of members. Parallel to religious fanaticism characteristic to those tiny sects was their confessors' linguistic-ethnic hermeticism, in its extreme form. A good example of linguistic-ethnic distinction being galvanised in such circumstances is the fate of the microscopic settlements of Philippians, scattered across Central-Eastern Europe. The social behaviour of these groups was marked by complete lack of assimilative tendency, passive or active. It is worth remarking that the people concerned were characterised by high values in their coexistence with their environment, and by a considerable degree of civilisational-cultural developmental advancement, given the context of time and environment the Philippians happened to live within.

The religious bond's emotional and irrational character resulted in the sense of community and religious distinctiveness occurring with particular intensity in the pre-capitalist period. But even in this arrangement of relations, the requirements of daily coexistence cleared the way for various manifestations of integrative tendencies – under the circumstances of time and place. In Bukovina and, partly, Moldavia, an interesting phenomenon of religious assimilation is found identifiable for the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.²⁵ The Uniate peasants coming from Eastern Galicia and Transylvania rarely set up separate communes. While melting into their new environment, they gradually quit their denomination, switching to Orthodoxy. Given the identity of ritual and ecclesiastical language (Old-Church-Slavonic) and close cognation of the dialects, there was no barrier of speech between the two religions, whilst the canonical differences did not get through to the awareness of broader commonalty. An Uniate participated in services and religious life of the Orthodox commune and was getting even stronger attached to it as the clergy and episcopate of the Orthodox Church, with its important role of the Serbs, manifested a far-reaching understanding for the

²⁵ Ion I. Nistor, *Der nationale Kampf in der Bukowina, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Rumänen und Ruthenen* (Bucharest, 1918), 125–6.

incomers' linguistic autonomy. The long-term consequences of the process, whose course was hardly perceptible, and which considerably reinforced the Orthodoxy's (the 'Ruthenian faith's') position, were evident. Let us emphasise that the assimilation under discussion did not extend to the local petit-bourgeois or intelligentsia milieus which remained within the influence of the Uniate denominational circle and its related cultural, later on also political, orientation.

The religious assimilation as discussed above did not appear on a larger scale in Central-Eastern Europe, though. Incomparably frequent were the instances, for a change, of religious divisions corresponding with the class stratification, that is, with situations that reinforced the existing social disintegration. In north-eastern Hungarian *comitati* (counties), the Magyar and growing-Magyar landed-gentry professed Calvinism,²⁶ the local German bourgeoisie being Lutheran, the serf peasantry being Orthodox or Uniate.

Among the peasantry, the assimilative processes proper were going on within the milieus of individual confessional communities, diversified linguistically-ethnically as they were. A particular complexity in this respect, taking into account Central-Eastern Europe as a whole, was the case with the Slovak/Carpathian-Ruthenian borderland (the area of what is the east of Slovakia today). Coming into play there was a close linguistic affinity between the local dialects and – the aspect of special importance – a low degree of development, not only in terms of the local dialects themselves. The language groups which covered the latter saw a development of their literary varieties (Ukrainian, Slovak) occurred only in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This being the case – as augmented by the consequences of a considerable economic-social retardation in the development of those territories (which were among the most backward areas of Transleithania), an overall stagnation of manifestations of public life and faint social mobility being added to it – the composition of linguistic-ethnic relations and degree of advancement of social awareness among the rural populace, as shown below, did not manifest any major change until the interwar period inclusive.²⁷ It has preserved its evident specific traits till this day [the 1970s – editor's note], after all.

²⁶ "A calvinista hit a magyar hit" – i.e. Calvinism is a Magyar religion.

²⁷ Ján Húsek, *Národopisná hranice mezi Slováky a Karpatorusy* (Bratislava, 1925), 362.

Let us separate at this point two basic collectivities of inhabitants. The constitutive characteristics of the first (as one moves east to west) allow us to unquestionably include it – let it be marked *b* – in the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) language group. Members of this collectivity identified themselves – let us use the (*b*) symbol – as ‘Ruthenians’ (the *Rus*’s, *Rusnaks*, *Ruske* [the *Ruskis*]). The second group – the *a* symbol – consisted of a populace that clearly belonged to the Slovak language group; its members would describe themselves – the (*a*) symbol – as ‘Sloviaks’, clearly distancing themselves, anyhow, from a sense of all-Slovak affiliation (i.e. from ‘Slovaks’ [*Slováci*]). The mutual neighbourly contacts and coexistence of these two communities eventually led to the emergence of a category described as ‘Ruthenian Slovaks’. Within this community, appearance of clear manifestations of linguistic assimilation processes in favour of the Slovaks, as those more advanced in development, is detectable.²⁸ A ‘Ruthenian Sloviak’ (or, ‘Rusnak-Sloviak’) would be an Uniate using a dialect with clear Slavic traits, whilst identifying himself in the sphere of mores and morals, and as to the awareness in general, as a ‘Rusnak’. This process could be schematically illustrated as follows:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & Y & Z \\ b & b \rightarrow \frac{b}{a} \rightarrow \frac{a}{b} & (b) \end{array}$$

Resulting from an adequately long action of the Slovak and growing-Slovak environment, the assimilation process in question made further progress across the following generations: the ‘Rusnak-Sloviak’ would progressively have turned into a ‘Sloviak-Rusnak’.

The second and further generations:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} X & Y & Z \\ \frac{b}{a}, \frac{a}{b} & \frac{a}{b} & (b) \rightarrow \left(\frac{b}{a}\right) \rightarrow \left(\frac{c}{b}\right) \end{array}$$

²⁸ This process burgeoned especially in 2nd half of 19th century. Within the last three decades of 19th century, the linguistic-ethnic possessions of Slovaks increased, on the whole, by 147 communes; the Subcarpathian Ruthenians ‘lost’ 213 communes, in total, whereof 176 came to the Slovak hands; see Scotus Viator [Robert W. Seton-Watson], *Národnostní otázka v Uhrách* (Brno, 1913), 381.

The process of assimilation ended at the stage marked $Z - \left(\frac{a}{b}\right)$. In the awareness of a 'Sloviak-Rusnak', amalgamated, practically, with the Slovaks, not only language-wise but also in terms of morals, there remained certain traits of specific autonomy stemming from the adhesion to the Uniate Church. An Uniate, a 'Sloviak-Rusnak' would not get fully integrated with the Slovak community which was formed, as a mass, in the cultural circle of the Roman Catholic Church and, partly a Protestant circle.

The possible affinity of a given community with the Orthodox religion, in practice, built an efficient barrier to a progress of Slovaki-sation. As regards the viewpoint of our interest, the primary difference between the Orthodox and Uniate denomination boiled down to the following moment: as opposed to the Orthodoxy as a 'Ruthenian faith', affiliated to the east-Byzantine cultural circle and with various manifestations of Great-Russian orientation, the Uniate Church opened the road for cultural and civilisational Western influence.

VIII

The latter half of the eighteenth century contributed a new moment to the shaping of social awareness among people's masses. It was directly related to the economic-and-social consequences of the enlightened-absolutist policy, particularly, the agrarian reforms. It is this thrust that made the separate universe of servile dependence of villeins, thitherto hermetically isolated from the outside, fracture; completely new development prospects were cleared open. The new system of relations provided the premises for the appearance of regalism as a social phenomenon. Thus, the potential has been opened for more extensive penetration, including into people's masses, of the sense of dynastic and state affiliation. The motif of monarch and his court as the defender of the subjects' and any poor individuals' interests against the lawlessness of the head authority and the moneyed became the core of the new awareness-related processes which were getting formed ever since in the peasant and plebeian environments. In the Habsburg monarchy, these processes were successfully discounted by the administration of the Metternich era and of the later period, in its daily policies. It was in the same direction that also the consequences of long-term military service had their repercussions in the attitudes and social behaviours of the veteran military-men returning to their native places.

The reforms, undertaken in connection with the building of a modern centralised administrative division of the state, themselves became a major stimulus for the formation of awareness of territorial autonomy, to an extent exceeding the homeland lanes.

As [Austrian – JC's note] Silesia was annexed to Moravia in 1782, a sense of provincial Moravian awareness began pervading amongst the commons, one that had not ever been there, save for the villages situated on the Ostravice in Těšín Silesia,

states a Czech historian, well-versed in the local relations.²⁹ In the southern part of the Racibórz (Ratibor) region, situated on the Prussian side, south-west of Cieszyn, the strong sense of Moravian distinctiveness was only based on the ethnic premise. After the Moravian-Silesian Gubernium was established in 1782, it also penetrated the Polish-language terrain of the Cieszyn land, determining there the sense of territorial affiliation, consequently strengthening the position of the Bohemian populace and influence.

The changes in the awareness sphere occurring amidst people's masses of the linguistic-ethnic borderland as feudalism was getting decomposed there did not set assimilative processes in motion and thus did not violate the existing constellation in respect of our focus. The situation proved diametrically different with respect to landed gentry, urban patriciate, and the enlightened strata of minority communities, associated with the governing class: in a word, all the social forces that in the pre-capitalist period were affected by the action

²⁹ Alois Adamus, *Dějiny školy 'U kostela' [v Německé Lutyni]* (s.l., 1927), 33. Paweł Stalmach drew attention to this same aspect of merger of Cieszyn land and Moravia in his memoirs: "They [i.e. the Cieszyn people – J.C.'s note] were already being made believe that Śląsko [i.e. Śląsk = Silesia; in Czech, *Slezsko*] belonged to the German Reich or the Bohemian Kingdom or to Morava (the Moravian Gubernium). This is why, to the question: 'What's your speech?', he would often reply 'Moravian', instead of 'Polish'"; quoted after Emanuel Grim, *Paweł Stalmach. Jego życie i działalność w świetle prawdy* (Cieszyn, 1910), 146. In his observations concerning the ethnic-linguistic relations in the parish of Baworów, Racibórz region (Silesian-Polish-Moravian borderland), Lucjan Malinowski gives, for the 1860s decade, the example of sense of territorial-ethnic distinctiveness in dependence of how the borderline was set between the dioceses of Wrocław and Olomouc; see *idem*, "Zarysy życia ludowego na Szląsku", *Ateneum*, ii, 2 (1877), 369. Further observations of this sort are quoted in Ladislav Pallas, *Jazyková otázka a podmínky vytváření národního vědomí ve Slezsku* (Ostrava, 1970), 103.

of nation-forming processes. These forces' degree of assimilation to majority communities attained – save for certain exceptions – a progress so significant that it transformed minority groups, regarding their social-class structure, into purely plebeian collectivities. These transfigurations seemed to have finally foredoomed their lot, as they erased any chance for maintaining a linguistic-ethnic distinctiveness as a constitutive nation-forming factor. The latter aspect seemed merely to remain the question of time. Still in the early 1830s, František Palacký assumed, as did Josef Jungman, that the Czech language and, together with it, the Czech nation might completely fade away, as a completely realistic option.³⁰

Nevertheless, the events astonishingly took a completely different turn.

IX

The reforms of the Theresian-Josephine period (which is applicable, *mutatis mutandis*, to the lasting achievements of the other enlightened-absolutist rulers) formed an important link in the development of capitalist relations that was gradually preparing the way for itself – in an increasingly clear manner indeed, beginning with the late years of the eighteenth century – and of the related beginnings of a modern social awareness. Of the wide array of the metamorphoses that call for one's attention in this context, the changes come to the fore, in the period of our interest, that were bursting the private-legal nature of public relationships, preparing the ground for their final erasure (in mid-19th c.). The above course of the affair opened, in the sphere of assimilation processes, a completely different, quality-wise novel situation.

The argument spun hitherto implies that characteristic about the assimilative processes taking place in the pre-capitalist society was their essentially just horizontal (contour-line) direction. The abolishment of various forms of serfdom, establishment of formal social equality of citizens-at-large, provided objective premises for democratisation of public life. It created the conditions for the shaping of attitudes and social activity of small territorial units and diverse

³⁰ Alfred Fischel, *Der Panlawismus bis zum Weltkrieg. Ein geschichtlicher Überblick* (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1919), 58; Jan Havránek, 'František Palacký – politik a jeho doba', in Milan Myška (ed.), *Památník Palackého 1798–1968. Sborník* (Ostrava, 1968), 12.

traditional communities. Living thus far a self-contained life, isolated from the outside world, they were reaching further and further beyond the previously narrow horizon of affairs and interests. The ever-since-intensifying process of integration of individual elements and aspects of economic and social life puts an end to the fragmentation under the feudal arrangement, leading to distinction of modern classes and new superior values and social relationships. These processes, which have resulted in the formation of modern society, proceeded on two levels: (i) horizontal integration, determined by class bonds; and, (ii) vertical (national) integration, encircled by the inter- and supra-class ties which developed in parallel.

The progress of these integration processes was inseparably connected, on the feedback rule, with advancement of the language as the basic technical means of intercourse and communication. However, their consequences were multidirectional, from the standpoint of our interest.

Elimination of legal and system-wide barriers that had previously prevented the development of free labour market and commodity trading, as well as the very mechanism of this market's subsequent development, with its accompanying industrialisation and urbanisation processes, thoroughly altered the balance of forces which had previously prevailed in the ethnic-linguistic patchwork area. The cutting edge of anti-feudal struggle stroke was also, and quite successfully, aimed at the old privileges of the insular communities. An objective researcher cannot pass lightly over the undeniably nationalistic and chauvinistic elements in the policy pursued by the Hungarian national-liberation movement in respect of nationality. At the same time, it is impossible to fully sympathise with the stance of Transylvanian Saxons pleading for their cause, especially if it is taken into account how far the latter ethnic group, complaining, for one thing, about the ruthless oppression from the Magyars, nonetheless made use of their positions in deliberately discriminating the local Romanian people who were oppressed both by the Magyars and the Saxons.

Of more vital significance for the further fate of the insular communities were certain other considerations, however. As the capitalist system progressed, the initiative in the economic-and-social relations and in democratisation of public life went over, under the existing balance of forces, more and more clearly toward communities that were capable of demonstrating a greater numerical strength and

biological resiliency.³¹ In parallel, the span between developmental advancement of individual linguistic-ethnic collectivities was decreasing. Within the insular communities, it debilitated the will to maintain their linguistic-ethnic individuality whilst increasing the assimilative capacity of their surrounding environment. Here lies the key to understanding the phenomenon, mentioned in the beginning, of emergence in the latter half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century of extensive linguistically homogeneous areas in Central-Eastern Europe. The pace and scope of fading-out of a part of foreign diasporas and enclaves, and of the factual transformation of those insular communities in linguistic-cultural ghettos, were finally directly interrelated with the intensity and size of permanent contacts of the diaspora and enclave dwellers with their mother country.

The bourgeois revolution opened before the individuals the prospects of all-embracing development of their personalities, individually and as social beings. The class-based character of capitalist relations caused, however, that these opportunities could be fully used only by a part of the society (however growing size-wise with time). The changes paving the way for themselves hit and started bursting the micro-universe of pre-capitalist communities, which so had hitherto so efficiently preserved their linguistic-ethnic character. The developmental mechanism gaining momentum in the new circumstances operated automatically to the benefit of the more advanced and influential collectivities.

The romanticism of freedom ideas, the pathos of liberation act united into one rank individuals of varied linguistic-ethnic backgrounds. Successful fulfilment of the shared goals assumed that the barriers inhibiting the unfolding of maximum activity and acting efficiency, including language barriers, would be eliminated. What it meant in the long run was conscious or unconscious entry into the circle of the language of the community that was the most involved in the struggle going on. This occurred particularly when the first dialect milieu increasingly was identified in the minds of the excelling individualities in the minority group with the mentality of out-of-the-way place – with its moral conservatism, social indifferentism and, overall,

³¹ Hungarians, of whom characteristic was an extremely low population rise, which was in turn compensated by a stopping-at-nothing vigorous Magyarisation policy, were a somewhat exceptional case in point.

developmental primitivism. It is at this point that an explanation ought to be sought for the sometimes astonishing metamorphoses of ways in the lives of a wealth of historic figures with a minority community background behind them.

The consequences of a systematic increase in the general intellectual standard and development of education, stimulated by the economic-and-social changes taking place, had a by-far socially broader reach. The nineteenth century brought an ever-before-unparalleled impetus of various degrees and forms of education and school system. With the considerable developmental diversity of individual linguistic-ethnic groups, its progress became a mighty stimulus that strengthened and accelerated the action of assimilation processes. It was the education system that in a particularly efficient manner, through influencing the young generation, promulgated and reinforced the sense of superiority of the language and culture of the majority community. The absorption of these was becoming, in the subjective feeling of students and graduates, and their parents, all coming from a minority group, a premise for social advancement of all sorts. Acquired education as if automatically introduced the graduate, in these conditions, in the cultural circle of the majority community.

The same direction was taken by the consequences of gradual liberalisation and democratisation of public life. The development of the press, organisational life, various forms of local and trade self-government were made use of, in the first place, by all those for whom the language barrier was of no issue. The various benefits ensuing turned into further stimuli intensifying assimilative tendencies.

This objective development trend was succoured by further long-term consequences of the capitalist system. They created a space for development and stimulated the radiation of new, more progressive methods of husbandry and production, forms of collective life, morals patterns, manifestations of modern material and spiritual culture. Let us confine ourselves at this point to outlining the situation that was created, in the scope of our present interest, by the unfolding industrialisation and urbanisation processes.

The turning point in the formation of social behaviour of the emerging and mushrooming proletariat became the transition of its elemental into reflective forms. The requirements of the production process, actuated as it was by the development of capitalist relations, created intensifying demand for qualified and managerial labour. These

needs opened to some employees career advancement opportunities unheard-of before, which naturally translated into life opportunities. The main premise was attainment of adequate degree of advancement in the mental and cultural development, indispensable for undertaking any function or action exceeding the scope of works performed exclusively, and in a traditionally conventional manner, with use of the strength of muscles. The second aspect of the issue in question was incomparably more important. The main premise for development of class awareness, related to the social consequences of capitalism, was the realisation of a determined place in the human awareness and the development of the will to struggle for occupying such place in the capitalist society. The initial moment, crucial in this respect, was the attainment of a certain level of mental development and civic sophistication, which in itself was conditioned by overcoming the original cultural primitivism characteristic to the proletariat under formation.

Language was key in both cases (each of which exhausts the basic prospects of the road of life for wage workers at large), not just as a means of intercourse and communication but as the basic element of intellectual development. As a rule, the majority community's language was this element. Its adoption, even if passive at first, was an indispensable premise for any advancement in life. Failure to meet this condition was synonymous to accepting a situation that cancelled any life opportunities above those extremely modest ones offered by the native parochial hub. In this way, the emerging and intensively developing urban centres and industrial districts saw the appearance – or, significant burgeoning, as a developmental regularity that objectively paved the way for itself – of bilingualism or even trilingualism (as e.g. in Ostrava-Karviná hub, Trieste, Bratislava, Chernivtsi [Czerniowce]). Its nature was clearly one-sided, though: the phenomenon appeared almost only in minority-group, save for the sphere of material services (merchants, tradesmen, innkeepers, *etc.*) and spiritual services (lower clergy, teachers, local-administration workers).

Summing up the argument proposed so far, one comes to the following conclusion. The decomposition of feudal social structures and the requirements and consequences of development of the new economic-and-social relations blasted the previously existing linguistic particularism of minority groups. Yet, this process was not reduced at that developmental stage merely to adoption of a foreign language as a *lingua del pane* [i.e.: $b - ba - (b)$; or, $b - bac - (b)$]. In the conditions

of significant developmental distance between the majority community and the minority communities, the phenomenon of bilingualism (multilingualism) opened within the latter the way for a cultural circle that had been alien for them before [i.e.: $b - ba, ab - (ab)$]. The foreign language thus adopted was promoted to the role of a *lingua del cuore*. Consequently, the development of capitalism significantly accelerated and expanded the reach of assimilation processes, particularly in the initial phase.

This road was opened at first by individuals, driven by their individual material and professional interests as well as social-cultural aspirations and ambitions. Such persons saw no chance for fulfilment in the conditions and possibilities offered by their existing home backwater milieu, and hence broke the ties with it, in a more or less conscious and/or consistent manner. Under certain specific circumstances (e.g. in a transitory borderland), which are not meant to be analysed any closer here, the aforesaid assimilation process assumed an increasingly mass character. From the standpoint of minority groups, its significance lay initially not quite in the quantitative size but primarily in quality aspects. As has been found, the most active and socially mobile people were getting drawn into the orbit of assimilation. Consequently, observable was continued weakening of the position and potential of the minority community – to a degree larger than as suggested by the volume of assimilation process.

X

Given the conditions of Central-Eastern European linguistic-ethnic patchwork, the possibilities of spatial expansion of majority communities' languages turned out soon after to be insufficient from the standpoint of economic-social requirements of integration processes the capitalist system brought about. This being the case, objective premises for the advancement of the mother tongue of minority groups occurred. Only this language could ensure in the borderland areas a maximum intensity and geographic reach of influence of social progress and the potential for a possibly extensive participation of the inhabitant community in this trend.

It was the advancement of the minorities' native tongue that became the primary content of the first phase of nation-forming process: emancipation, integration, and unification of single ethnic

groups residing in Central-Eastern Europe. The process resulted in the emergence of a novel type of social collectivity – that is, nationality.³² The premise for its formation was the development of the speech itself: from a primitive local dialect up to the level of a codified and developed modern literary language; in the case of collectivities isolated before then from their linguistic-ethnic native stem, it was about establishing and developing communication with the latter.

The linguistic-and-cultural nature of the said first phase of national emancipation process (national movement) caused that it could count on support from the fairly enlightened and progressive forces of fully developed nations. Observance of linguistic-ethnic individuality of dwellers of a multi-nationalities state in various manifestations of its public life in the field, and even a concern for cultivation and development of all the languages used by the state's residents, were in those circles a commonly recognised premise of democratisation of social relations and increase of civic awareness of the populace as a whole. The postulate of equal rights for languages, as ideologically legitimised in the otherwise rather cloudy universal ideas of humanitarianism, fell, by all means, into the 'decatalogue' of individual's civil and political rights – all the more that it nowise conflicted, as was commonly believed, with the reasons of the then-current state-and-national bond and its further developmental direction. What is more, according to the belief frequently prevalent at the time, development of a minority's native dialect (language) proved to be a necessary step on the way for the mass's members to absorb the more-advanced culture of the developed nations and, consequently, for the minority groups to undergo complete assimilation.

The didactic and pedagogical considerations induced the generally progressively-inclined and innovative individuals from the majority community to undertake, sometimes quite vigorously, actions to the benefit of elementary education in the minority's native language. This point-of-view unfolded and was officially sanctioned in a system of utraquisation of the elementary education system which was later on developed in Cisleithania. Minority groups enjoyed a broad

³² Józef Chlebowczyk, 'Marks i Engels a problem małych narodów w Europie środkowo-wschodniej. (W kwestii genezy i rozwoju tzw. narodów niehistorycznych)', *Z Pola Walki*, xiii, 2 (1970), 25–41.

understanding of language-related needs in religious communities and on the part of clergymen, especially of the lower clergy, a considerable share of whose members being originally members of such groups. This state of affairs was particularly distinct within Protestant communities; the contributing moments included far-reaching autonomy, characteristic of the Protestant organisational structure, in combination with a wide democratic self-government which ensured an essential influence of the faithful on the cast of their parishes and the in-community relationships.

The very character of the Austrian nationalities policy over the nineteenth and in the beginning of the twentieth century, proving entirely different from the Magyar and Prussian denationalisation policies, was an extremely important factor that intensified and solidified the effect of assimilative processes.³³ Specific to Austrian relations was, primarily, propagation and absolutisation of the sense of superiority of the German language and culture, with any social advancement being conditioned by transfer to the German cultural circle. The 'Austrian patriotism', which referred to the bonds of dynastic and territorial-related appurtenance nowise identified itself with German as the only official national and state language. Whilst not excluding the use of non-German languages, only the limits of their sphere of action and influence were outlined. This state of affairs combined a long-term developmental dynamism of the Habsburg monarchy's linguistic-ethnic structure with the further prospects of general social and civilisational progress. The latter reinforced, as it was commonly believed (following the Polish lands-related concepts of the Prussian minister Altenstein in the early 19th c., just to quote this example), the already-existing supremacy of the language of the then-current majority community (which means German, in this particular case). The practical consequences of Austrian nationalities policy were ponderable. Toleration, or rather, the policy of disinterest on the

³³ The issue of deliberate policies pursued in the attempt to shape the linguistic and nationality relationships (denationalisation) remains beyond the scope of these considerations of the various aspects of assimilative processes as objective development tendencies. Let us confine ourselves to quoting Otto Bauer's finding: "National bondage can expedite national assimilation where there are conditions existing for such assimilation; national bondage remains ineffective where there are no conditions for such assimilation". See *idem*, 'Die Bedingungen der nationalen Assimilation', *Der Kampf*, v, 6 (1 March 1912), 260.

part of Austrian monarchy's – and, later, Cisleithania's – authorities and state administration with respect to any non-German forms and manifestations of cultural life significantly weakened and, to an extent, even dampened contretemps and concussions experienced in the late nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth from the development of national emancipation processes whose effect on the Habsburg state was disintegrating.

XI

Resulting from the second phase of national emancipation, those nationalities which had no separate social-political structure of their own were turning into internally coherent national group, clearly individuating itself outside. Essential about the developmental mechanism occurring between the first and the second phase of the national movement was the attainment of an intensification of the progress of most diverse manifestations of the minority group's own native spiritual culture so as to inhibit the spontaneous assimilative processes that gained in strength as the overall civilisation standard commonly increased. A premise to overcome them was the attainment by the minority community's core of a level of developmental advancement which ensured the national groups under formation a potential for creatively adopting the alien civilisational and cultural output, in a broadest sense of the term, and for having such achievements transformed on their own, in their specific native conditions. Putting it otherwise, it was about exiting the previous environment of cultural backwater, but not at the expense of loss of their own ethnic-cultural individuality: the point was to get involved in the common developmental current by way of creating a superstructure on the community's own, one that would be autonomously developing based upon its native ethnic-linguistic substratum and its powers.

Whilst not losing the sight of objective premises for development of the second phase of the national movement (the international determinants, geopolitical constellation, *etc.*), it needs being clearly emphasised that the conclusive moment which finally decided that a given national group was constituted was the scope in which its members were consciously involved, regardless of any other territorial, and also social, partitions existing between them. It can therefore

be stated that the individual nationalities were taking, as it were, an examination testing their nation-forming powers. The most recent history of Central-Eastern Europe discloses astonishingly many instances of liveliness and developmental dynamism of minority communities inhabiting this part of the continent, unexpected to their contemporaries. And this was true with groups that were – as it still seemed in the middle of the nineteenth century, and even later on – irrecoverably doomed to extinction, having no chance to preserve their linguistic-ethnic individualities. The occurrences took a course different than the one foreseen by even the cleverest minds of the period.

The binder that cemented the national group in its entirety was the reasons of its (national) point of view, with categories such as ‘national substance’, ‘national interest’, ‘national possessions’. These categories stemmed from the basic rationale behind the national group under formation; let us call it the right to national self-determination. This is nothing else than the right to live and create within one’s own emancipating or emancipated community, with its separate, exclusive hierarchy of the highest cultural values. Fulfilment of this desideratum, along with realisation of the right to self-determine certain institutionalised public-law forms of national existence (being the climax and final objective of the entire nation-forming process), was the indispensable premise providing the equal start conditions for all national groups getting formed and coexisting in a given borderland area. Yet, these rights played the so-described role when their instantiation took into account the possibilities which enabled compensation for the existing disproportions in ownership conditions and scope of actual influence of individual contesting national camps. This latter moment automatically created tendencies identifying the life rationales of national communities getting constituted not only with the democratic demands of struggle against any manifestation of inequality in public life and conscious linguistic and national discrimination. They were also identified with the demands and efforts made in view of inhibiting and withdrawing the assimilative processes going on.

It is enormously characteristic that in the confrontation between the national camps fiercely rivalling against one another in the borderland, the main force of minority groups set itself in the first place against diverse symptoms of, precisely, national assimilation,

ultraquisation of education, and cultivation of territorial particularism. Those caring about purity and development of the mother tongue not infrequently came into purism attaining absurd levels. Efforts were made to overpower cultural and moral (ethnic) assimilation through cultivating archaic but native patterns of social habits. The main attack from the national camps within minority groups was primarily aimed at all those who, driven by one reason or another, broke their previous ties with their native community with which they had been linked through the values deemed the dearest in the community's hierarchy: their forefathers' faith and speech; and, aimed at those who were losing the until-then-maintained spiritual contacts, thus, in a word, alienating themselves and becoming, in this sense, 'renegades'. The enormity of 'crime' thus committed, in perception of the minority community's nationalists was so severe that the incentives to act were exclusively assessed in moral (the lowest moral, to be sure) categories.

There are two reasons that jointly caused the minority groups' nationalists to aim their main impact at assimilating individuals who were breaking the bonds thitherto linking them with the existing system and traditional values of their native community, which was in most cases rural. On the one hand, there came into play the basic causes of the defined social collectivity which stood in defence of their national possession, which in this case was linguistic-ethnic. The other factor, however, was indisputably moral and milieu-related conservatism of the fundamental social base of minority communities' national camps, which was formed and could be formed mainly of peasantry, due to the plebeian character of their social structure.

The mechanism of formation of sense of national membership and autonomy was in itself much more complex in its specific manifestations and borderland conditions, as a matter of fact. This mechanism is not reducible to a dichotomous concept, which would on the one hand heroise the attitude of loyalty toward the faith and speech of the forefathers whilst on the other featuring instances of opportunistic behaviours, weak individual resistance to pressures coming from the alien environment – and other such, normally pejorative, evaluations.

The abundant memoirist literature tells us about the fates and fortunes in the lives of a multitude of national and public activists more or less involved in the social life. Their history boiled down to

a commonplace pattern: the childhood and youth years spent in the environment of family home, village and church; the school years marked with attending a foreign (if not in purely linguistic terms, then always with regards to the contents taught) elementary and, not infrequently, secondary school. The influence of the latter normally seemed to have been decisive as to the student's and graduate's further way of life. There were various specific circumstances that finally appeared crucial, in the individual cases, for breaking away with the action of assimilative processes and the development of the sense of national affiliation which corresponded with the linguistic-ethnic character of the individual's background.

The factors of importance were, in such cases, relations with companions at school, books read and organisational activities embarked on together, studies and contacts established in university hubs, and the influence of the pedagogue, employer, and priest. The breakthrough sometimes took a smooth and rather fast course, whilst in other cases it would last many years, with a variety of accompanying reluctances and obstacles. The same memoirist literature brings us, however, a multitude of examples demonstrating that the language and the climate of family home and adolescent age were nowise crucial about the direction in which the national awareness developed. Their role was merely one of one of the many determinants of varied gravity, depending on the circumstances. It was so frequent that the service with the military, university-level studies, work, property interests, professional or social contacts, participation in public life opened the way to a previously alien linguistic-and-cultural circle. These examples make it apparent how complex were individual paths of development of national awareness in linguistic, ethnic borderlands.

The essence of the matter lies, however, in a different plane. Considered not as an individual fact but in terms of a mass and one-way phenomenon, assimilation is not to be identified with an effect of a defined, consciously pursued policy of shaping linguistic-ethnic relations (denationalisation policy). All the less it would be about a result of voluntaristic decisions of individuals who reputedly were only driven by individual, particular reasons: individuals being, as it was argued, the least socially valuable or the least-developed element of a given collectivity.

XII

Essential about assimilation processes has been their objective nature.³⁴ It has to do with appearance of adequately large span between the developmental advancement of individual coexisting communities and miscellaneous consequences, stemming from a defined state affiliation. As the modern social activity and awareness progressed, the primary premise for inhibiting the heightening assimilation processes was the attainment by minority groups a developmental dynamism which opened a real opportunity for achieving by them a developmental advancement ceiling defined above as *assimilative capacity*. It was only in such circumstances that the phenomenon of our interest was reduced to the order of ordinary two-directional phenomenon dictated by ordinary daily contact and the requirements of life in a borderland inhabited by people of diverse nationalities and languages.

A different possibility of detaching oneself from the assimilative processes taking place was for the minority community to assume a position of a *sui generis* ghetto – with all the ensuing consequences, in any case.

XIII

Amidst the national antagonisms and wrestles fiercely exacerbating in Central-Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, political aspects of the assimilation processes took a special place.

A characteristic trait of any linguistic-ethnic borderland in the period a modern social awareness was emerging was that the process of formation of national distinctness did not extend to the entire local population. As a result, alongside the collectivity with a clear and refined national nature, the national stance of a considerable part of residents, regardless of the divisions occurring between them with regards to class, profession, religion, and other, remained non-crystallised. The national bond, getting formed on the soil of a historically shaped linguistic-ethnic community, did not play any significant part in the subjective perception of those people.

³⁴ See Bauer, 'Die Bedingungen', 259: "Any circumstances favouring strengthened trading relations between a minority and a majority support the process of assimilation; any circumstances hindering such exchange are factors that hamper the process."

As opposed to what is rather commonly encountered in the literature, the occurrence of the above phenomenon cannot be solely identified with the state of original developmental primitivism – or ‘underdevelopment’, a label typically attached to communities whose national aspect remains non-clarified.

Whilst not denying that the moment being referred to – one which appeared in a mass form at the initial stage of formation of modern social awareness – did exist,³⁵ it has to be found that a new situation occurred as the said awareness developed. Conditional upon diverse circumstances, which are not analysable at length herein, it yielded some thoroughly different orientations and ties, in certain situations and social milieus, along with violent increase in the influential power of a national bond on the subsoil of original linguistic-ethnic community. These orientations and ties were composed of an amalgamate of stances and social behaviours, imposed by the borderland specificity, as identified in the opening passages hereof, with a confrontation, penetration and radiation of various cultural, economic and demographic influences never coming to a stop, as typical to borderland area.

These being the circumstances, the development of a borderland’s ethnic structure is not confined to a direction along which individual national communities that clearly individuated themselves were getting crystallised (particularly in contact-borderland areas). In the conditions of long-lasting symbiosis of two or more linguistic-ethnic groups and nationalities, such development leads, in parallel – as e.g. in the Bukovinian relations – to solidification, as a mass phenomenon, of a stance without a nationally-determined (‘abnational’, so to put it) character. In an adequately favourable situation (no quite serious national antagonisms appearing), such a stance shows a remarkable developmental dynamism and constitutes a potential bond of a new, separate national community. Outbreak of fierce nationality conflicts significantly narrows down the scope of influence of such neutral stance,³⁶ which in itself would have ensued from advancement

³⁵ The phenomenon in question appeared in the most vivid form in as late as the interwar period, for instance – to go beyond the geographic brackets of these considerations – among the ethnically Byelorussian populace of Polesia, particularly in the local Byelorussian-Ukrainian borderland; cf. Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Z dziejów Polesia 1921–1939. Zarys stosunków społeczno-ekonomicznych* (Warsaw, 1963), 20–36.

³⁶ One case in point is e.g. the situation in Cieszyn Silesia and in Ostrava-Karviná hub in 1918–20; see Józef Chlebowczyk, ‘Kwestia cieszyńska na początku

of assimilation processes. The entire collectivity of which this neutral, consciously nationally indifferent attitude is characteristic, becomes subject to bitter contention of national camps fighting against one another as each of them pursues a maximum expansion of its national possessions.

The essence and developmental mechanism of the national emancipation process, which formed the foundation for constituting of specified crystallised national communities in borderland area, did not boil down only to opposing any and all deliberate attempts at linguistic discrimination. A necessary premise for ensuring the equal start conditions for all the national groups getting formed was not just a full protection of their formal equality in linguistic rights. The other one was their granted right to self-determination of institutionalised public-law forms of national existence, and this in the circumstances that would have equalised the existing significant disproportions in the ownership status and scope of influence of individual mutually contesting national camps. This last moment gave rise to the already-mentioned tendencies of identifying the vital interests of national communities getting constituted with the postulates of combating any manifestations of deliberate linguistic and national discrimination (as far as denationalising policy is concerned) as well as with demands and efforts taken in view of inhabiting and withholding the effect of objective assimilative processes.

What is more, under the banner of reinstatement of the assets (no matter whether factual or phantasmal) lost once in the past, national camps representing minority communities put forth desiderata concerning re-assimilation, or claim-based, policies. This, logically enough, leads to a nationalistic expansionism also on the part of those national camps which in the period of their formation initially assumed a purely defensive position. It is unquestionable that any efforts of the minority group, aiming at inhibiting the assimilative processes (through expansion of an education system of the group's own), appeared as a consequence, in the given circumstances, of the

XX wieku', *Dzieje Najnowsze*, ii, 1 (1970), 139–73. For more on the relations appearing at the time, in this respect, in certain workers' circles of Czech lands, cf. *idem*, 'Die tschechischen Zentralisten und der Zerfall der Monarchie', in Richard Georg Plaschka and Karlheinz Mack (eds.), *Die Auflösung des Habsburgerreiches. Zusammenbruch und Neuorientierung im Donauraum* (Schriftenreihe des Österreichischen Ost- und Südosteuropa-Instituts, iii, Vienna, 1970), 156–62.

objective course of national emancipation processes in individual ethnic-linguistic groups and nationalities. As such, they fully corresponded with the general development line of public relations in the period of formation of modern social awareness. There is no doubt, in turn, that any actions and proceedings attempting to reverse the transformations having meanwhile occurred in the linguistic-ethnic structure and national awareness of the inhabitants came as a symptom, already then, of a clear nationalistic expansionism – regardless of the motivation having been taken advantage of.

The drift of any national movement in minority group to restrain assimilative processes, a trend that is crucial and fully understandable from the standpoint of preservation of the national substance, tends to transform – under certain identifiable circumstances, resulting from the action of definable class forces – into a nationalistic policy of re-assimilation and historical claims.³⁷ Stemming from such course of events becomes, among other things, the transformation of a given community's combat for the right to institutionalise its

³⁷ The matter under discussion forms, however, quite a complex and multidimensional problem, when it comes to considering and evaluating concrete Central-Eastern European situations of the late 19th and early 20th century. There is no doubt, namely, that the background behind the flare-up of Polish-Czech relations in the Cieszyn-Moravia borderland at the turn of 20th century consisted of the accretive expansionism and nationalism of both Slavic national camps, derived from purely defensive and progressive national-liberation grapples. The re-Czechisation action of the 'Polonised Moravians' [Czech: *popolšteni Moravci*] occurring in the interwar period in Zaolzie (Czech: Zaošlí, Těšínsko) area bore all the traits of denationalisation policy, for a change. Cf. Józef Chlebowczyk, *Nad Olzą. Śląsk Cieszyński w wiekach XVIII, XIX i XX* (Katowice, 1971), 254. A different character was the case with the nationality policy, un auspicious as it otherwise was, pursued by the Czech authorities in the Hlučinsko [Polish, (*kraj*) *hulczyński*] region; cf. Rudolf Malohlava, Otakar Káňa, and Vladimír Mariánek, *Stručný přehled vývoje Hlučinska* (Ostrava, 1960), 30–43. A similar evaluation has been earned by the re-Polonisation policy pursued by Voivode Michał Grażyński in Silesian Voivodeship, albeit there is no doubt that the existing studies on the topic have clearly been one-dimensional. Exceeding the spatial framework of this essay, one could mention, by way of an example, the way the Lithuanian authorities dealt with the local Poles as Polonised Lithuanians, with all the ensuing consequences. Another example is the occurrence in Latvia, though on much a smaller scale, of the trend of approaching the national minorities as re-Slavicised Latvians; cf. Piotr Łossowski, 'Problem mniejszości narodowych w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej na przykładzie państw bałtyckich 1919–1940', in Janusz Żarnowski (ed.), *Ład wersalski' w Europie Środkowej* (Wrocław *et al.*, 1971), 131 ff.

national existence into a struggle for the 'soul' of every 'compatriot', regardless of his subjective attitude that has been formed resulting from the impact of a historically shaped tangle of, also, the other social bonds (apart from linguistic-ethnic): economic-demographic, civilisation-related and cultural, political, and other.

Thus, the political consequences of assimilative processes have expanded to become one of the main elements of the substance and mechanism of contradictions and national strifes that were rending Central-Eastern Europe beginning with the second half of the nineteenth century.

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