

THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF HISTORIC GEOGRAPHICAL RESEARCH

K otázkám mezinárodní spolupráce na poli historicko-geografického výzkumu. — V národních atlasech se postupně realizuje myšlenka edice jednotného a srovnatelného geografického obrazu současného světa. Takový obraz historicko-geografického vývoje zemského povrchu ovšem také nemáme. Nepodávají jej ani historické atlasy, pokud jsou zaměřeny všeobecně na vývoj lidské společnosti, na rozdíl od geografického pojetí, kde předmětem historické geografie je utváření zemského povrchu v jeho minulých formacích a vývoji.

Písemná historická líčení dějin států a oblastí zvládají látku jejím utříděním do epoch a používají k tomu periodizačních mezníků. V důsledku nerovnoměrného hospodářsko-spoločenského vývoje v jednotlivých částech světa není snadné stanovit takové mezníky v světovém měřítku. Jen formování světového trhu a vznik světové imperialistické soustavy na rozhraní 19. a 20. století dosáhl obecného přijetí. Jinak se počítá s přechodnými obdobími v trvání i několika set let.

Pro další rozvoj výzkumu v oboru historické geografie by bylo účelné získat především kartografický obraz nejdůležitějších geograficky relevantních elementů vývoje zemského povrchu ve vztahu k činnosti člověka, jako jsou říční síť, lesy a využití půdy, rozložení obyvatelstva, jeho sídla a národnost, průmysl, komunikace, hranice států a jejich správní členění. Mezinárodní spolupráce by se měla zaměřit k výzkumu a zakreslení takových jevů do moderních podkladových map. Pro srovnatelnost, tak důležitou v geografii, mělo by význam především synchronní vyjádření. Za účelem srovnatelnosti pokládal bych proto za účelné obrátit pozornost k roku 1900 a dále uvažovat o letech 1850 a 1800 jako o datech, k nimž by měla být zaměřena mezinárodní spolupráce. Pro země s nevelkou vědeckou tradicí bylo by ziskem soustředit se na datum zcela nedávné, např. 1950. Dohodnuté časové termíny pokládal bych pro začátek práce spíše za směrnici, jejíž plnění a zpřesňování by bylo odvislé od podkladového materiálu a vůbec stavu a stupně výzkumných prací v jednotlivých zemích.

Atlases having a historical aspect represent an outstandingly valuable aid for historical geography as they show the progress made in the research and the scientific methods.

As far as atlases, of historical conception, are published by historical institutes, naturally the attention is focused on the solution of problems historically most outstanding. In these the function of the historical maps is mainly to illustrate cartographically the historical events, to give a picture of their situation or evolution in the past of the world. Many of these maps are of great importance to historical geography whereas others are of no significance geographically. It is worth mentioning that in Czechoslovakia it was V. K. Yatsunski (10, 11) who, after the Second World War, contributed greatly to

the determination of the concept of historical geography, later the Polish discussion on this subject (4, 6) and the work of A. H. Clark (2). Recently Anuchin's work (1) awoke much interest. Yatsunski stressed the great importance and the possibility of future application of geographical findings in history. He, as a historian, assigns to historical geography the place of historical science in which the work of geographers may also be necessary. He seems to base his opinion on the fact that in historical geography written material is mainly processed and that it is being done by a historical method. It should be mentioned that the point of view of the Czechoslovak geographers was expressed by J. Martinka (8) at the Conference on theoretical problems of geography, held in Bratislava in 1962. He stressed particularly the point that historical geography on account of the subject of its research differs in no way from geography of course but it studies the surface of the earth and the relation of man to it in its historical past forms. Martinka advocates the term geographical history for historical science with a geographical aspect and he points out the incorrect tendencies in the past when the history of geography was included under this heading as well as the history of discovery and navigation, sometimes even the history of cartography and of other branches. In historical geography the written material does not constitute the main source of information but the field research and new methods based on natural science are becoming more and more important (cf. 9 : 9). One may say that historical geography is in reality an outstanding component of geography and that it is the evolutionary historical principle in geography that makes geography a branch of science. I feel that the basic difference between history and geography must be emphatically stressed: history is a science dealing with the evolution of society whereas the subject of geography is the formation of the earth's surface.

The publication of national atlases is the realization of the aim of gradually achieving a uniform and comparable geographical picture of the whole world. Contrary to the cartographical representation, the written record of the history of the world cannot be elaborated in a synchronical form. Attempts to achieve this, presented mostly in the form of tables, were always rather a type of surveys in their character. Apart from the geographical point of view, in historical account of the events it is necessary to take into consideration chronology as another factor. While it is possible to interpret the geographical element by placing the countries into certain areas, the chronological factor necessarily requires history to be divided into time periods. Such a division of the history of the world has always been the cause of serious difficulties, the roots of which lie in the difference of viewpoints. The unbalanced historical social development in the different parts of the world presents the greatest obstacle (5). A general opinion may be said to be that the dates cannot be used to mark the milestones in the evolution of the world but rather it should be

the transitional periods, sometimes lasting even several centuries, which naturally become shorter towards the present time in keeping with the more rapid course of historical process. Only those dates marking development of world markets and the origin of imperialist system at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century are generally accepted as the turning-point in the evolution of the world.

It may be rightly said that the determination of a uniform time delimitation of the periods is the key-problem in making uniform and comparable historical geographical maps. That does not mean, however, that cartographical representation based on the historically given periods is incorrect. It is indeed only a means of overcoming the difficult obstacle in the uniform cartographical representation on the bases of international cooperation.

What are the reasons leading to such contemplations and what are the issues ? Above all, the need of using in practice the results of historical geographical research will become more and more urgent. The scope of research and the developing of scientific methods exceeds far beyond the state boundaries of any one country. The study of evolution of the earth surface, particularly in the recent period, in relation to the changes created by man, will become a necessity for all the cultural countries. This will prove to be an absolute requirement in order to improve the scheme of formation of the landscape. The fact that in many countries, especially in those highly industrialised, the present state in this respect is not an ideal one must be taken into consideration. All transformations affecting the natural development must be made in the future on the bases of studies of the existing laws. This point of view was the reason which led, for instance, to the foundation of a separate Institute for Shaping and Protection of Landscape at the Czechoslovak Academy of Science in 1962. In the regions, for example, where coal is being mined such changes in the surface of the earth have taken place that the landscape there has taken on a completely different shape. Another evidence of the significance and the urgency of historical geographical research is the development of agriculture in our country in connection with the transformations in the structure of rural settlements.

I believe that keeping in mind the social needs and the tasks of historical geography it is impossible to wait any longer for further changes without taking any suitable steps as they are bound to occur in the nearest future due to, for example, making use of nuclear energy. Not only in our country but all over the world the whole structure of the basic productive power will be shifted. And even up till today there has been no reliable and over-all picture presented of the historical geographical changes that took place in the transformation of our country in the period of the first industrial revolution. Scientific evaluation of this phenomenon from the geographical aspect ought to be the foremost task of historical geography in all the branches. The changes

in the course of the rivers and water management in general, phytogeographical changes, building new transport networks, etc, are only a few to illustrate the point.

We are aware of the fact that the aim of geographers usually is to elaborate synthetical maps. Such a map would not be of great importance in the first stages for international cooperation in the field of historical geographical research, its purpose would be much simpler — only to a cartographical picture of the most outstanding elements necessary for the compilation of synthetic maps that means, therefore, a picture of the geographical distribution of the geographically significant phenomena. I have in mind mainly the network of rivers, woodlands and the use of land, distribution of the inhabitants, their settlements and nationality, industry, transport routes, the state frontiers and administrative division, etc. These would represent more or less a preliminary elaboration but which is extremely important for all geographical work. It would however be necessary to come to an agreement as to the content, as well as the cartographic symbols. In this respect a great step forward has already been taken in the conception of international cartographic works which are in hand. Nearly a hundred years ago E. Desjardins (3) used such methods in order to represent historical geographical situations. Here different scales of the maps serving as bases might be mentioned, their maintenance, completion and additional up-to date changes in accordance with the progress in research, establishing respective documentation and finally the publication of historical geographical maps.

In the past K. Malík (7 : 6), in our country, pointed out that the comparison of economic maps covering the different time periods might be a very important source of information in order to establish the character and consequences of the far-reaching changes in economy, their regional reflection and their geographical correlation.

The conception of comparable historical geographical maps, uniformly elaborating the same given time period of the past, may also be defined thus: the influence of man on nature and their interrelations are the causes which bring about a constant change of the landscape at any given moment which greatly differs from the picture of the same landscape at another period. It is beyond the human power to depict the evolution all over the world in its unceasing changes but it is possible to concentrate it on limited time periods. In order to determine the time limitation of historical periods it is necessary to keep in mind the fact that the evolution of the human society is progressing at a quicker and quicker rate in the more recent periods. In studying the past it is necessary to draw conclusions from our knowledge of the contemporary time. For the purpose of historical geography it would be worth while, in my opinion, focusing attention on the year 1900 and later to the years 1850 and 1800. I am fully aware of the objection that these dates would introduce

a principle of equidistance into the time aspect and also that they are without a historical significance. According to the experience in practise as well as in the compilation of atlases I consider them to be reasonable for geographical research if keeping in view the international needs. A synchronical determination of period-marking limits, others than proposed above is unattainable (5 : 112) due to the lack of uniformity in the economical and social development in the different parts of the world. If periods covering 50 years were accepted as satisfactory for the epoch most closely preceeding the present one then hundred-year periods might be considered for the study of the more distant past or any other number of years according to the experience gained. Countries without a long-standing scientific tradition might benefit if they concentrated on dates quite recent such as, for instance, the year 1950. No doubt it might be advantageous if the attention were focused in the initial stages on any one of the three- four periods for which the conditions would be the most favourable in the country in question. The chosen time periods, in my opinion, would offer the general line which should be followed in the initial stages of the work and the realization and completion would depend on the source of materials, the extent of its study and the existing conditions of research in general. Experience has shown that in order to determine the existence and quality of many geographically important phenomena for certain periods there is no urgent need of actual written evidence.

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