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CULTURAL PLURALISM IN THE ETHNICALLY MIXED SOCIALIST AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE OF VOJVODINA*

One of the important characteristics of the development of culture in SAP Vojvodina is the creation of political equality and equal rights in publishing activities in the languages of the nations and nationalities. This subfield of culture had consistent priority in the period from 1981 to 1985. As many as ten publishing organisations have publishing as their basic activity. They issue publications in Serbo-Croatian, Hungarian, Slovak, Rumanian and Ruthenian. Meanwhile, a spread of publishing activity has been evident. A further 120 work organisations have registered for publishing as a parallel activity. The Matica Srpska (founded for the creation, affirmation and development of Serbian culture, it traditionally propagates the culture of the Serbian nationality, but in cooperation with the cultures of the nationalities of SAP Vojvodina, SR Serbia and SFR Yugoslavia) has realised numerous collective Yugoslav projects. It regularly publishes the almanac *Letopis Matice Srpske*, one of the oldest newspapers in Europe.

The publishing houses and other publishers in SAP Vojvodina annually publish more than 1,000 works (titles) in the languages of the nations and nationalities to a total of approximately 3.5 million copies, as well as 48 works (titles) in the other languages. Publishers often bring out collected poems of young poets of all the nations and nationalities.

Dictionaries of self-management and socio-political terms and expressions (Serbo-Croatian/Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian/Slovak, Serbo-Croatian/Rumanian) have been published as well as 16 terminological five-language dictionaries for professional and other interests in secondary vocationally oriented education.

One of the basic characteristics of publishing in the Province is the collective translation and publication of the spiritual creativity of the nations and nationalities, which makes possible the closeness of these cultures and their mutual permeation. Two hundred original works of literature (over 140 authors) have been translated from the Liberation to 1985, published in approximately two hundred and fifty volumes. The majority are translations from Serbo-Croatian into Hungarian and Slovak, with thirteen books translated into the Rumanian language and five into Ruthenian.

Thirty-eight works of literature have been translated from Hungarian into Serbo-Croatian, ten books each from Slovak and

* Original: Serbo-Croatian

Rumanian into Serbo-Croatian and six works of literature from Ruthenian into Serbo-Croatian. However, the overall translation of the literature of the nationalities of Vojvodina is still unsatisfactory.

Important results have also been achieved in the publication of newspapers, with an annual output of approximately 8.5 million copies. Of 72 newspapers that are published in the languages of the nations and nationalities, 47 appear in Serbo-Croatian, 9 in Hungarian, 3 in Slovak, 4 in Rumanian and 4 in Ruthenian, one is multilingual and the remaining four are in other languages. The numerous newspapers make it possible for young authors-members of all the nations and nationalities to publish their literary and other works.

The number of published original works of writers of literature of the nations and nationalities is constantly growing. Noticeable results have also been achieved in the publication of Marxist literature and of important works on the culture of the nations and nationalities of Vojvodina.

With the aim of promoting translation and publishing activities, the SIZ (self-managing community of interest) for culture of Vojvodina buys half or part of all the literature translated from one of our languages into another (language of a nation or nationality) and distributes them among libraries.

There are 43 national libraries in SAP Vojvodina with over 320 branches in the organisations of associated labour and town communities, whose stock of approximately 3,000,000 books in the languages of the nations and nationalities is used by over 220,000 readers. Of the total number of books, 73% are in Serbo-Croatian, 20% are in the languages of the nationalities of Vojvodina, 2% in other languages, while 5% are not classified by language.

Although the composition of the library stock is being constantly improved with regard to the languages, it is not yet in accord with the national structure of the population. It has been found wanting especially in Ruthenian language-books.

There is an exchange of library material with the respective institutions in the Socialist Republics and SAP Kosovo and with 211 institutions in 36 countries throughout the world.

There are 7 active professional theatres for adults in SAP Vojvodina, of which 5 are in Serbo-Croatian and two in Hungarian; 4 theatres for children in Serbo-Croatian and Hungarian; one theatre for children in Slovak and one puppet theatre in Rumanian. Provincial cultural festivals and academies of collective interests for the nations and nationalities of Vojvodina are held regularly, such as meetings of amateur theatres in Vojvodina, the Festival of Little Scenes of Vojvodina, "May Games," Brankovo kolo, a review of reciters of Vojvodina, a review of amateur Slovak theatre in Vojvodina, Theatre Days of the Rumanians in Vojvodina, the Drama Memorial of Peter Riznić Djade (in Ruthenian). These cultural-artistic events contribute to the further development of amateur theatre societies and the

affirmation of the creative potential of the nations and nationalities of Vojvodina throughout our country.

Of the 40 amateur theatres, 10 hold their shows in Hungarian, 5 each in Slovak and Rumanian and 4 in Ruthenian. More than 2,200 theatrical shows with a total attendance of more than half a million spectators are given annually. The professional theatres give about 1,400 shows per year.

The annual Yugoslav theatrical games, *Sterijino pozorje*, are held in Novi Sad, Vojvodina, in which 7 to 9 of the most important creations of the Yugoslav theatre in all the languages of the nations and nationalities of Yugoslavia are shown each year.

Cinema production upholds the continuity of the themes which affirm and care for our unity and togetherness (Vojvodinan movies are filmed using the languages of the nations and nationalities living in the province), our revolutionary past and self-management development and our present based on our equal-rights national community of the nationalities and nations, are realised in film. More than 8,500 films are shown every year in 220 cinemas.

The art of the nations and nationalities is characterised by their collective development, mutual permeation and openness towards all types of creative expressiveness. The artists of all the nations and nationalities are organised within the framework of their professional associations. Between 1981 and 1984, the association of artists of SAP Vojvodina organised 66 individual exhibitions of Vojvodinan and other authors from SFR Yugoslavia and five exhibitions each year of its members to which 438 authors contributed 757 artistic works. The association of practical artists and designers has organised 50 individual and collective exhibitions of its members in which 209 authors have participated with 542 works of art. Eight Yugoslav art events have been held in Vojvodina in which 22 manifestations of art in Yugoslavia are organised with 1,475 contributors.

Artists from all over the country and also from abroad come to 8 permanent art colonies. The Centre for the Art Education of Children and Young People of Vojvodina has organised over 40 exhibitions of children's work, travelling exhibitions in SAP Vojvodina and SFR Yugoslavia. The labour association of tapestry workers, *Atelje 61*, has made over 40 tapestries of Vojvodinan authors. The Cinema Photographic Association has organised 48 exhibitions of various forms of artistic activity, in which 232 Vojvodinan authors have shown 1,100 works. In the past five years, 461 works of art have been bought for Vojvodinan galleries. In this way, these art works, through their acquisition for society, have become part of the general cultural inheritance of the nations and nationalities of Vojvodina.

In the field of music, various forms of music are realised in professional and amateur programmes which contribute to the development of the cultural heritage and affirmation of the traditional and contemporary musical culture of the nations and nationalities of Vojvodina, SR Serbia and SFR Yugoslavia. The programme includes the Music Centre Vojvodina, The Musical Youth of Vojvodina, the Vojvodina Philharmonic Youth Opera with Ballet

(The Serbian National Theatre), the Vojvodina Philharmonic (The Serbian National Theatre), as well as amateur ensembles which present their work in provincial revues, festivals and events (the Festival of Musical Societies of Vojvodina, the Musical Festival of Children of Vojvodina, the Festival of Youth Choirs of Vojvodina, Brankovo kolo, the Festival of Folklore Traditions of Vojvodina, the Competition of Slovak Creativity, the Festival of Rumanian Musical and Folklore Creativity, the Festival of the Culture of Ruthenians and Ukrainians, etc.).

More than 100 amateur and professional cultural events in all fields of creativity - drama, folklore, music, art, film, etc. - are organised annually to present the manifold aspects of the cultural-artistic activity and the achievements in the development of all the nations and nationalities in Vojvodina. An expansion of all the forms of amateur cultural art is currently underway.

Of the 186 cultural-artistic societies, 139 work in the Serbo-Croatian language, 56 in Hungarian, 24 in Rumanian, 17 in Slovak, 5 in Ruthenian, 2 in Macedonian, 3 in Ukrainian and 2 in the other languages.

There is equality of all the cultures of all the nations and nationalities which live in Vojvodina in the organisation of cultural-artistic societies as well as in cultural-artistic creativity. The programmes of the cultural-artistic societies stress the achievements of the National Liberation War and the socialist revolution and the positive cultural heritage of all the nations and nationalities..

The network of cultural centres in SAP Vojvodina is the most developed in the country (of the total number of cultural centres in the country, 33% are found in Vojvodina). The cultural centres have a considerable role in the organisation of cultural life. Individual centres concern themselves not only with the organisation of amateur cultural art activities and the creative work of the working people and citizens (musical plays, folklore, art, literature, etc.) but also with the libraries, educational and informational activities, as well as with the organisation of various top cultural-artistic events, concerts, celebrations, exhibitions, the showing of films and other forms of social life and entertainment. They have two organisations for folk heritage and 17 sports sections. We are not, however, satisfied with the standard of the locations and equipment of these organisations. The cultural centres pay special attention in their programme activity to an equal performance of individual forms of activity, depending on the national population makeup in the region in which they are active. Thus, for example, in the 1983/84 season, 709 theatrical shows were presented. Of the remaining amateur activities, there were 983 art exhibitions. All together, 2,660 performances were organised, which were attended by 820,985 people. 446 exhibitions were organised, with 378,678 visitors. There were 16,288 cinema performances with 1,850,283 visitors. Of the 135 cultural centres, 131 operate in Serbo-Croatian, 2 in Macedonian, 31 in Hungarian, 7 in Slovak, 10 in Rumanian, 3 in Ruthenian and one in Ukrainian. Ninety-two centres work in only one language, 37 in two languages and 8 centres in three and more languages.

There is a varied and rich museum activity in SAP Vojvodina; 13 museums, 14 galleries, 2 museum units and 12 museum collections. The museums have collected and now preserve an important collection of ethnographic material of the nations and nationalities of Vojvodina, which is studied and exhibited. The museums and galleries also collect contemporary works of creators of the nations and nationalities, all of whom have an equal opportunity to affirm themselves through art colonies throughout the Province and to exhibit their works at numerous art exhibitions.

There are ten archives in existence on the territory of SAP Vojvodina. Valuable archival cultural material, encompassing the period from the 17th century to the present is kept, analyzed and cared for in the Vojvodinan archives. The publication and study of work based on this archival material of cultural heritage contribute to the knowledge of the characteristics and the mutual influence of the national cultures in Vojvodina, SR Serbia and of all our country.

In the field of conservation of cultural monuments, competent organisations take care of those cultural monuments which are of importance for an understanding of the culture of the nations and nationalities of SAP Vojvodina. Similarly, various memorial tablets, busts, etc. mark events and personalities which have been of importance for the cultural history of the nations and nationalities of Vojvodina. The thorough reconstruction of the monastery at Fruska gora now underway is very important for the Serbian culture. Experts from SAP Vojvodina are taking part in work on four important cultural monuments in SAP Kosovo, and the province is contributing to this work with financial help. There are more than 600,000 museum exhibits registered in SAP Vojvodina, of which more than 260,000 are archeological.

In accordance with the Statute which defines community relations, information bulletins, delegate heralds, newsletters, etc. are issued in several languages in 23 communes, while in 16 communes information for delegates and delegations and the working people and citizens is translated and issued on the basis of equal language rights of the nations and nationalities.

The democratisation of cultural life is continuously spread and its content enriched. The newspaper *Magyar szo* has a cultural-artistic, socio-scientific supplement under the title *Hilato* in which, in the spirit of brotherhood, texts by authors in the field of culture from among all the nations and nationalities of all the socialist republics and SAP Kosovo are published.

In addition to its 750 employees, every year television Novi Sad engages several thousand cultural workers - from film and theatre workers, writers, composers and singers - in the creation of programmes in the five languages of the nations and nationalities of Vojvodina.

Despite these notable achievements and tendencies in the field of information, it is a fact that the information bulletins do not yet completely describe the multinational characteristics of the overall development of SAP Vojvodina, SR Serbia and SFR Yugoslavia. Individual editorial departments still close

themselves within regional and national confines with regard to their programme and content orientation. On the radio and especially on television Novi Sad very rough organisational schemes still exist with unsatisfactory interlinkages between the five editorial departments, which has a negative impact on the cultural values of the nations and nationalities of Vojvodina. The staff base is still limited, in spite of constant strengthening, especially in the languages of the nationalities since too little has been done in the planning, preparations and the provision of staff for work in this area.

The use of two languages is regulated in 21 communes; three languages are officially used in 12 communes and four languages in 7. Only 4 communes have enacted the use of Serbo-Croatian only, but in practice more languages are also used in them. The communes of Pancevo and Bela Crkva do regulate by statute and observe in practice the equal right to the use of Macedonian or Czech, which are not so sanctioned by the constitution of SAP Vojvodina. In 4 communes the assembly is provided with simultaneous translation service and in 21 communes this is done through a translator. There is no simultaneous translation service available in 15 communal assemblies.

In the communal statutes, in the enactments of the organisations of associated labour and of local and self-managing communities of interest, as well as in other self-management communal acts, the equality of the nations and nationalities - and especially the equality of language and writing - increasingly figures as an integral part of social relations, and in the organised activity of all the subjective forces, this is ever more reinforced in the process of self-management decision-making, in the exercise of power and in cultural and public life.

The use of national symbols, together with the flying of the flags of the nations and nationalities on the occasions of national holidays and other events and ceremonies, in addition to the country's flag and symbols and the flag and symbols of SR Serbia, has become a natural practice in the province and its communes.

However, the achievements in the field of culture in SAP Vojvodina are flanked by the following negative aspects:

- there are too many superficial events in culture and too little creative spirit of the workers;
- there is still not enough attention paid to the creative youth;
- limitation of staff (this relatively most complex network of cultural centres has at its disposal too few workers with university education; the province has only one Doctor of Ethnology, a total of two Masters degrees in the field of musicology, not a single Ph.D.-holder in the fields of art history and aesthetics, nor a sociologist of culture, etc.);
- we have not yet met all of the collective cultural needs of the working people and citizens, members of all the nations and nationalities in the local communities and in the organisations of associated labour;

- the financial means allocated for the development of culture are rather limited for objective reasons; furthermore, linear restrictions are being introduced;

- there are still not enough jobs for cultural activities.

In the field of cultural life and the creativity of the nations and nationalities of SAP Vojvodina, organised socialist forces fight for their humanist and socialist character within the framework of openness to the cultural values of the nations and nationalities in SR Serbia and SFR Yugoslavia. This is also the general direction of movement of the culture of the whole country, of which the basic starting point is that the national culture will only be developed in full measure when it creatively coincides with the general cultural creativity of mankind.

Since we are aware that getting to know the cultural heritage of other nationalities is the prerequisite for our own openness, our orientation is towards a cultural opening up for the sake of an easier recognition of that which is collective in culture and that which is both collective to and of general interest for the culture of multinational regions.

In view of all of this, further strengthening of the influence of the working people and their delegations and delegates upon the socialisation of culture, upon the Marxist view of the cultural heritage of every nationality and their interpenetration, as well as upon the provision of personnel from among all our nations and nationalities, remains a very topical question. It must be made possible for the proven young cultural creators to participate more actively in the process of building the cultural image of our province and of the commune in which they live.

The foregoing achievements show that in SAP Vojvodina, the idea of cultural integration or collective cultural influence is realised in practice. We could say that the territory of the province is the best possible place for such an idea, since our numerous nations and nationalities have developed a profound awareness of a collective historical destiny.

This, then, is also toward the good of all, in that some people cannot close themselves within their ethnic barrier, nor can they shut themselves within their provinces or republics, although such tendencies are still present.

The right to the equality of all the nations and nationalities and to a free and autonomous development and enrichment of their cultural life, with a maximal development of the individual creative potential of their cultural creators, is observed in SAP Vojvodina, thanks to the efforts of the organised socialist self-management forces of the province. The conditions for cultural closeness and the interrelation of the nations and nationalities in the Province represent the freedom of everyone, especially in the development of his own cultural life, his ethnic self, on the basis of economic equality. Because of this, there will be still further efforts on the part of the organised socialist forces in the Province to ensure the conditions for the socialisation of culture on the basis of the self-management pooling of labour and

for the socialist and humanist content and character of culture and the cultural life of all our nations and nationalities. This activity will enrich the cultural pluralism of the ethnically composite SAP Vojvodina and effectively fight any attempts to impose nationalist and unitarianist schemes as well as the spurious questions of "ethnic" cultural criteria.