



GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION AT THE COMENIUS UNIVERSITY IN BRATISLAVA IN THE YEARS OF 1922-1938: INSTITUTIONALIZATION, ACTORS AND STUDY COURSES

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Abstract:

The paper deals with the institutionalization of geography at the Comenius University, the main persons involved in its initial development and the offer of study subjects and courses at this first stage that is the period of years 1922-1938. It is a time period during which the development of geography was conditioned by the assistance of Czech professors from the Charles University in Prague. This period terminated by the end of 1938, when the vast majority of Prague professors had to leave Slovakia.

Key Words:

Bratislava, Comenius University, Geographical Seminar, geography education, Seminar for Anthropogeography, Seminar for Physical Geography

INTRODUCTION

The centenary of the existence of the Comenius University in Bratislava that we commemorate in 2019 is an opportunity to look into the birth of geography education at this biggest Slovak university. Initially, it was expected that four faculties were to be established – faculty of medicine, law, arts and science. Eventually, they succeeded to establish only three faculties at the first stage – and the Faculty of Science, at which geography has now been developing, was founded not earlier than in 1940. However, certain circumstances caused that the development of geography got ahead of the development of the Faculty of Science itself; its first decades are connected with the Faculty of Arts that was established back in 1921. Geography was brought on one year later (Matlovič, Matlovičová 2018).

The paper focuses on the institutionalization of geography at the Comenius University, the main persons involved in its initial development and the offer of study subjects and courses at this first stage which is deemed to be the period of 1922-1938. It is a period in which the development of geography was conditioned

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by the assistance of Czech professors from the Charles University in Prague. This stage terminated by the end of 1938, when the vast majority of the Czech professors had to leave Slovakia.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the recent years, the interest in the study of geographical thought has come back to life, because its heuristic relevancy (Matlovič, Matlovičová 2012). From the methodological point of view, mainly the social-constructivist and contextual approach have been applied within these efforts. In the first case, the explorational attention is focused on microsocial conditions of scientific research and education (Matlovič, Matlovičová 2015, s. 16). In the second case, the focus is on the study of the joint-influence of social, political, economic, cultural and other contexts in which the processes of establishment and development of geography were going on, accompanied by continuities and discontinuities of geographical thought. Our research combines both said approaches.

A detailed archival research realized in 2018-2019 found out some empirical data. It was the Literary Archive in Martin, the Comenius University Archive in Bratislava, the Czech Academy of Sciences Archive in Prague, Czechia and the Masaryk University Archive in Brno, Czechia.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

The institutional fundamentals of university geography in Bratislava were laid before the foundation of the Comenius University. In 1912, the Elizabethan University was established in the city¹ (official name: *A Pozsonyi Magyar Királyi Erzsébet-tudomány egyetem*) with Hungarian as the language of instruction. Individual disciplines started to progressively develop. Geography was integrated into the Faculty of Arts at which the study started not earlier than in the summer semester of 1917-1918. Mr Gyula Prinz was appointed as professor on 24th March 1918. The geography workplace at the Elizabethan University was based in the building of Academia Istropolitana on Ventúrska Street, but its life was very short. Actually, its activities ended on 30th June 1919. Legally, the Elizabethan University was cancelled by Government Decree No. 276/z of 1921 and moved to the Hungarian town Pécs. A part of its inventory, the literary fund and other aids were taken over in 1919-1921 by the workplaces of the newly founded Comenius University (Csáder 2000, Martínek 2010, s. 23, Szederkényi 1984, Varsík 1969).

After the break-up of Austria-Hungary and the foundation of Czechoslovakia in October 1918 the establishment processes of a new university in Bratislava were

1 till beginning of 1919 was city named Prešporok (in Slovak language), Pressburg (in German), Pozsony (in Hungarian).



initiated. Act No. 375/1919 was adopted, according to which the Czechoslovak National University in Bratislava was founded on 27.06.1919, effective as from 11.07.1919. It got the official name *the Comenius University* after the Government Decree No. 595/1919 of 11. November 1919 was adopted. Initially, it had been presumed that there would be four faculties, but in the end only three faculties were successfully established at this stage - the Faculty of Medicine, Law and Arts. As the Faculty of Science was not founded, geography started to develop at the Faculty of Arts at which the study started on 24th October 1921. With regard had to the acute lack of qualified professionals in Slovakia, the activities of the Faculty were initially almost completely dependent on Czech professors from Charles University in Prague (Csáder 2000, Grófová et al. 2012).

At the Faculty, seminars, that were its fundamental organisational units, were formed. Some seminars were divided into departments. Just at the beginning, the Seminar for Slavic Philology, History Seminar, Seminar for General Ethnography and Seminar for Musical Science were formed (Csáder 2000, s. 34). The institutionalization of the Geographical Seminar was a several months' long process. It started at the session of the Professors' Board of the Faculty of Arts on 20th January 1922 comprised of professor Hanuš, Heidler, Orel, Chotek, Pražák, Škultéty and Weingart. Their discussion resulted in the need to ensure political geography lectures for the state exams candidates in Czechoslovak language, history and geography. Ethnography professor K. Chotek showed his willingness to temporarily substitute it. The Professors' Board welcomed this solution and unanimously approved this proposal in order to be further approved by the Ministry of Education and National Awareness. In this context, dean Hanuš suggested that all the geographical collections (maps, plans, books) inherited from the Elizabethan University that were deposited in the university library, be assigned to the Faculty of Arts². At the Professors' Board session held on 23rd and 24th March 1922, Chotek stated that the former Hungarian geography institute inventory was not of a high value because there were only a few books and the maps were Hungarian. He suggested that the collection remain in the deposition of the university library. For given reasons he requested that extraordinary subventions be assigned in order to found a map section, to buy books and geography teaching aids; it was approved by the Professors' Board at its session held on 7th December 1922. The Ministry of Education and National Awareness reacted promptly to this request. Upon a letter dated 28th December 1922 it informed the Comenius University in Bratislava of an extraordinary donation for the year of 1922 in the amount of KčS 15,000 for the purchase of books and aids for the Geographical Seminar while it requested to proceed economically and ordered that the purchased goods be registered in the inventory separately from the other

2 Comenius University Archive, Faculty of Arts - Comenius University Fund, Professors' Board records A1 1921-1931, a.k. 5.



seminars' inventories of the Faculty and, at the same time it requested that the accounting of the assigned donation be produced by the end of January 1923. The facts above make it evident that the institutionalization process of the Geographical Seminar was completed by the end of 1922 and its founder was Karel Chotek (Matlovič, Matlovičová 2018, s. 277).

After founder K. Chotek, the Geographical Seminar was taken over by geographer Jiří Viktor Daneš in 1923. Another director was František Štůla, who functioned from 1925 to 1929. During this period – in June 1926 – the Geographical Proseminar was approved as another institutional unit. Since 1929 both said institutions were taken over by Jiří Král. In 1938 the Geographical Seminar was divided into the Seminar for Physical Geography led by J. Hromádka and the Seminar for Anthropogeography that, together with the Geographical Proseminar, was led by J. Král until the end of 1938 (Matlovič, Matlovičová 2018). The first seat of the Geographical Seminar was the building on the Rudnay Square (in that time) on the corner of Kapitulská Street. In 1923-1931 it had its seat in the building of current Hungarian Grammar School on the corner of Rajska and Dunajská Street. In 1932-1937 the geography workplace was located in the yard tract of the building on current Slovak National Uprising Square No. 22. In 1937 it was moved to the building on Rajska Street No. 12 (Martínek 2010, Matlovič 2018).

Table 1 Institutional development of geography in Slovakia in the first half of 20th century

Period	Institution	Head
1918-1919	Department of Geography, Elizabethan University	Prinz Gyula
1922-1923	Geographical Seminar, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University	Karel Chotek
1923-1925		Jiří Viktor Daneš
1925-1929		František Štůla
1929-1938		Jiří Král
1927-1929	Geographical Proseminar, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University	František Štůla
1929-1938		Jiří Král
1938-1939	Seminar for Physical Geography	Jan Hromádka
1938-1938	Seminar for Anthropogeography	Jiří Král

Source: Dolan 1968, Martínek 2010.

ACTORS

Prinz Gyula

Although Prinz Gyula (1882-1973) was not a direct person involved in the development of geography education at the Comenius University, his short involvement was meaningful due to the fact that at his workplace there remained many book and map collections that were partially used for its institutionalization. Prinz was



a professor at the Elizabethan University in 1918-1919. He had studied at universities in Budapest (1900-1902) under the direction of professors Lajos Lóczy and Antal Koch and later in Wrocław /*Königliche Universität zu Breslau*/ (1902-1904), where he was awarded with doctorate in 1904. He completed his research fellowship with Ferdinand von Richthofen at the university in Berlin. His main focus was on geomorphology. Having left Bratislava, he worked at universities in Budapest (1919-1923), Pécs (1923-1940), Cluj-Napoca (1940-1944) and Szeged (1945-1957) (Szederkényi 1984, Matlovič 2018).

Karel Chotek

The first person involved in geography education at the Comenius University was Karel Chotek (1881-1967), who was appointed as professor of general ethnography³ by the president of the Republic on 14th September 1921. Chotek showed his interest in substituting the lectures in political geography at the Professors' Board session of the Faculty of Arts held on 20th January 1922. The Professors' Board approved his suggestion reasoning it by his sufficient qualification and agreed to refer it to the Ministry⁴.

At this point, it is reasonable to point out to possible facts that predetermined Chotek to stand for the role of the founder of geography at the Comenius University. Along with ethnography, anthropology and history, Chotek also studied geography. As early as during his study in 1904 and 1905, he completed his detailed field research in Slovak municipality Cerovo. He was habilitated in 1912 on the grounds of his field and statistical research in the Caucasus. The important factor was close relations between ethnography and geography in the first decades of the 20th Century. Joint gatherings of Slavic geographers and ethnographers were organized. Geographical-multidisciplinary cooperation was implemented also at a common summer expedition of Czech experts in Slovakia which also involved the presence of Chotek and geographers V. Dvorský and J.V. Daneš and botanist K. Domin. As an expert, Chotek participated in the peace conference in Paris. (Martínek 2008). At that time, ethnography was deemed a natural-scientific discipline especially in the context of Berlin school of A. Bastian. The study of cultural particularities in the context of natural environment was promoted. Probably because of that, as a private assistant professor, Chotek was organizationally joined in the Geographical Institute at the Charles University in Prague (Ducháček 2016, s. 49-50, Ducháček 2018, s. 122).

Chotek's concept of ethnography was grounded in thorough field research and took into account geographical and physical-anthropological aspects (Petráňová

3 CU Archive, Karel Chotek's personal collection, it was the first professorship in this field in Czechoslovakia.

4 CU Archive, FA CU Fund, Professor's Board records A1 1921-1931, a.k. 5.



2016). Chotek worked for Bratislava Faculty of Arts until June 1931 when he left to cooperate with the Charles University in Prague. While working there, he was always interested in geography issues and he often promoted its interests at the Professors' Board sessions. He taught geography-related subjects during 17 semesters in 1922-1930. The subjects were anthropogeography, political geography and regional geography of Asia, Africa and Americas (Matlovič 2018, Archív UK ...).

Jiří Viktor Daneš

The second person involved and an authentic geographer at the Comenius University was Jiří Viktor Daneš (1880-1928) who studied geography and history at the Czech Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague where he was influenced by his professors Jan Palacký, Jan Nepomuk Woldřich and Lubor Niederle. Afterwards, he studied in Berlin under the leadership of Ferdinand von Richthofen and also visited other German universities. In 1902, he completed his doctorate and in 1906 he habilitated. In 1912 he was appointed as extraordinary professor and in 1919 as full professor at the university in Prague. In 1920-1923 he was a consul at the Czechoslovak Consulate in Sydney.

His main scientific focus was on geomorphology. His geographical thought was influenced by the theory of geographical cycle by American Geographer W. M. Davis, karst geomorphology by Serbian geographer J. Cvijić, scientific precision of German geographer A. Penck and geomorphologic concepts by French geographer E. de Martonne. He was also devoted to anthropogeography that was further developed in Prague by his student J. Pohl-Doberský.

Daneš worked in Bratislava in 1923-1925 while commuting from Prague for two days in a week. His short cooperation ended in 1925, because he had been elected a dean of the Faculty of Science in Prague. (Martínek 2017). He was teaching during three semesters, namely geomorphology, political geography and ran seminars and excursions.

František Štůla

The third actor was František Štůla (1883-1943) who completed his geography studies at the university in Prague. He completed his doctorate in 1914 and habilitated in 1925. In 1926, he was appointed as extraordinary professor. He was J. Palacký's student and J.V. Daneš's friend.

Unlike him, he dedicated himself more to economic geography and as the first Czechoslovak geographer, he elaborated summarising papers in oceanography. During his time in Bratislava, he published a book about geography of Slavic countries (1927). He commuted to Bratislava 3 days in a week. In 1929 he accepted a professor's position at the Business College in Prague after V. Dvorský's serious illness (Häufner 1967; Martínek 2010). Štůla taught geography-related subjects during 8 semesters in 1925-1929.



He introduced lectures in hydrogeography, fundamentals of mathematical geography and regional geography of the Czechoslovakia. Apart from that, he taught general physical geography, general economic geography, physical geography of Europe and regional geography of Africa, Southern Europe, Asia and Americas as well as seminars and undergraduate-seminar exercises. Štůla initiated the habilitation of J. Hromádka which was completed by his successor J. Král after he had left.

Jiří Král

Jiří Král (1893-1975) was the fourth person involved who moved in Bratislava and, in contrast to his ancestors, he was fully available for the job. He studied geography, history and Czech philology at the university in Prague. He was a formed student of V. Švambera, J. V. Daneš and V. Dvorský.

He devoted himself to anthropogeography while his thought was influenced mainly by the French school of anthropogeography (P. Vidal de la Blache, J. Brunhes, A. Demangeon, P. Deffontaines), but he was also inspired by Anglo-Saxon geography (I. Bowman, E. Huntington, W. Cushing), some Polish geographers (L. Sawicki, S. Pawłowski) and Serbian geographer J. Cvijić. He assumed a definite attitude to German geography school and refused the genetic and statistical approach (Král, Kondracki 1951). He pointed out to a human role when forming geographical environment and urged the detailed field researches. He completed his doctorate in 1917, habilitated in 1924; in 1929 he was appointed as extraordinary professor of anthropogeography and in 1935 full professor.

J. Král was a very agile professor at the Seminar; he was continuously submitting various applications related to financial support for the activities and facility equipment. He established the edition series „Zeměpisné práce-Les Travaux géographiques” comprised of 13 volumes. He initiated the exchange of the publications whereby he significantly extended the geography library. He was one of the major organizers of 2nd Czechoslovak Geographers Congress held in 1933 in Bratislava at which 114 experts were present (Král 1937). He developed international scientific cooperation that mainly related to his position of a leader of Czechoslovak Section of the Slavic Committee for research of shepherd's life and shepherding in the Carpathians and in the Balkans. He closely cooperated mainly with Krakow geographers (L. Sawicki, W. Kubijowicz, Z. Hołub-Pacewiczowa) and French geographer P. Deffontaines. In connection with progressive militarization of economy, his efforts to establish a lectorate of military geography at the Comenius University were interesting in the second half of 1930s. In 1936 Král also agreed with the division of the Seminar into the Seminar for Physical Geography and the Seminar for Anthropogeography whereby conditions for full employment of J. Hromádka were created. Král was forced to leave Slovakia together with a majority of other Czech professors by the end of 1938 upon a resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic of 19th December 1938 (Martínek 2008, 2010, Matlovič 2018, Matlovič, Matlovičová 2018).



During his work in Bratislava, J. Král taught geography subjects during 19 semesters while he was able to cover a whole spectre of disciplines. Apart from traditional subjects such as general physical geography and anthropogeography (Král preferred the term "*human geography*"), he introduced a whole range of new subjects - geography of trade, geography of world transport, human and mountains, geography of rural settlements, regional geography of Australia, Oceania, Poland, Bulgaria, Soviet Union – European part, Eastern Europe, anthropogeography of Czechoslovakia and natural areas of Czechoslovakia. At seminars, he paid his attention to new publications and maps and some semesters were focused on the analysis of important geographical works – e.g. books by French geographer P. Deffontaine's "*La vie forestière en Slovaquie*" and the books by Polish-Ukrainian geographer W. Kubijowicz "*Pastyřský život na Podkarpatské Rusi*"⁵. The most noticeable student of J. Král in this period was F. Bokesz with whom he was in touch until his death.

Jan Hromádka

The fifth actor was Jan Hromádka (1886-1968), born in South Bohemia. Hromádka started studying geography and history and the university in Prague where he was mainly influenced by J.V. Daneš and V. Dvorský. His study had been interrupted by the 1st World War, after which Hromádka was sent to Slovakia and worked at the Teachers Training Institute in Spišská Nová Ves and since 1925 in Bratislava.

In 1925-1926 he continued his geography and history studies at the Comenius University under the guidance of professor Štůla. In 1928 he completed his doctorate and in 1930 he habilitated and started to work at a grammar school and at the Bratislava university as a private lecturer. In 1931-1932 he took part in a research fellowship at Sorbonne in Paris with prof. A. Demangeon and E. de Martonne and at the same time he participated in the International Geography Congress in September 1931 in Paris⁶. In 1938 he was appointed as extraordinary professor of physical geography and in 1939 full professor of general geography.

After J. Král had left to Prague, he took over the Seminar for Anthropogeography leadership and after the establishment of the Faculty of Science in 1940, he became a director of its Geographical Institute where he worked as long as until 1946. He educated the first generation of Slovak geographers; his most noticeable student and successor was M. Lukniš.

Hromádka's research was focused on geomorphology and regional geography. His geomorphologic papers were influenced by J.V. Daneš and E. de Martonne.

5 CU archive, RUK Fund. *Register of persons and institutes and national exam committees. List of winter semester lectures. List of summer semester lectures.* UK/SU Academic Senate, Bratislava, 1921-1949.

6 CU Archive, FA CU, E, 1390/1930-31, a.k. 126.



He acknowledged the theory of geographic cycle by W.M. Davis. He applied a synthetic approach and studied georelief in association with other geographic factors including a man. His regional-geographic papers reflected the concepts of the French geography school of P. Vidal de la Blache. He did not avoid the topics of political and historical geography that was mainly influenced by V. Dvorský. Hromádka started teaching geography disciplines at the university in 1930. Until 1938 he was a private lecturer and his main workplace was the Masaryk National Grammar School in Bratislava (Lukniš 1987, Martínek 2010, Matlovič 2018).

Hromádka mainly delivered physical-geography subjects and courses – geomorphology, continental hydrography, oceanography and general physical geography. Thanks to him the offer was broadened by climatology, biogeography (geography of fauna and flora) and limnology. He also organized a geology course for geographers. As for regional geography subjects, he taught geography of South America, physical geography of Asia and Europe. A special subject was devoted to the Czechoslovak Carpathians and geography of the Tatras. As for general subjects, he taught the fundamentals of mathematical geography and general Earth features, physical-geography seminar, cartography course and cartographic exercises.

Table 2 Geography Teachers at the Comenius University in 1922-1938

Person	Term of work	Number of semesters	Number of subjects
Chotek	1922-1930	17	19
Daneš	1923-1925	3	9
Štůla	1925-1929	8	35
Král	1929-1938	19	70
Hromádka	1930-1938	13	30
Novák	1931-1932, 1933-1934	2	3
Kuchař	1931-1932	1	1

Source: CU Archive, RUK Fund. Register of persons and institutes and national exam committees. List of winter semester lectures. List of summer semester lectures. CU/SU Academic Senate, Bratislava, 1921-1949.

Karel Kuchař

Karel Kuchař (1906-1975) substituted lectures and exercises in cartography in Bratislava during Hromádka's exchange fellowship in the winter semester of 1931-32. Kuchař was born in Prague. He studied geography at the Charles University in Prague and was most influenced by cartographer B. Šalomon and geographer J. V. Daneš. These influences were reflected in his orientation to cartography and physical geography, especially hydrology and hydrogeography. He defended his dissertation thesis in 1928 and was focused on cartometric analysis of some maps from the turn of 15th and 16th Century. He habilitated in 1935 based on his thesis on



lakes in Eastern Slovakia and Ruthenia. Kuchař educated one generation of Czech cartographers (e.g. O. Kudrnovská, L. Mucha, R. Čapek). His student was also excellent Czech physical geographer and hydrologist and former president of the Czech Geographic Society Bohumír Janský (Martínek 2017, s. 213).

Vladimír J. Novák

Vladimír J. Novák (1882-1951) substituted lectures in physical geography and geography of Africa in Bratislava during Hromádka's absence due to his exchange fellowship in Paris in the winter semester of 1931-32 and also led lectures in geography of Africa in the winter semester of 1933-34. He was born in Brno. He studied geography in Prague and later in Vienna with Albrecht Penck. In 1924 he habilitated while mainly dealing with geomorphology (Morphologic Development of Neogenic Lowered Areas in Morava). He also occupied himself with geography of population and settlements. (Martínek 2017, s. 213).

STUDY SUBJECTS AND COURSES

Geography lectures at the Comenius University in Bratislava started in the summer semester of 1921-1922. It happened thanks to the suggestion of the Professor's Board held on 20th January 1922 that K. Chotek should teach substitute lectures. The Ministry took its time to make a decision despite Chotek already giving geography lectures, which is confirmed by the records of the Professor's Board held on 24th June 1922 stating that geography lectures were given twice a week. At the same time, the records contain a request for sending a reminder to the Ministry in this matter⁷. The Ministry provided its reaction not earlier than after a few such reminders dispatched. By the letter dated 17.01.1923 No. 125.658-IV, the Ministry approved the Professor's Board resolution of 20th January 1922 and retroactively authorised K. Chotek to substitute geography in the summer semester of 1921/22⁸.

Number of provided subjects progressively increased in the course of the monitored period. In the following year of 1922-1923 ethnographer K. Chotek was the only one to teach the two-semester course titled Geography of Asia, three lessons a week. The offer of subjects was broadened after J. V. Daneš had joined in the autumn of 1923 and during the 1920's there were 5-6 subjects a year. After J. Král came and J. Hromádka habilitated at the beginning of 1930's, the number of subjects increased to 11. In the years to follow, there was a decrease that related to the worsened position of geography at the Faculty of Arts and that was further analyzed by J. Martínek (2010, p. 26). In the context of financial problems and insufficient number of students, the Professors' Board reached a decision on 27th April

7 Archív UK, Fond FiF UK, Zápisnice profesorského zboru A1 1921-1931, ak 5.

8 Archív UK, Fond FiF UK, Zápisnice profesorského zboru A1 1921-1931, a.k. 5.



1934 that the study program was cancelled which was contained in the Decree of the Ministry of Education and National Uprising of 7th June 1934 cancelling the study of *geography teaching for secondary schools*; only rigorous state exams study remained because it was scientific preparation. Because of this, the Ministry reduced the financial donation and restricted J. Hromádka's work-load which led to a reduced number of delivered courses (tab. 3). The study of *Teaching* was renewed after multiplied requests not earlier than in 1937 (Martínek 2010, p. 26). The worsened position of geography evidently had a connection with obstacles, which had facing J. Král in the proceedings with respect to his appointment as full professor in 1933-1935, mainly due to the disagreement of some members of the Professors' Board.⁹

During the first stage of the formation of geography education at the Comenius University in Bratislava, 167 subjects appeared on aggregate. According to specialization, the subjects can be divided into four groups – physical geography, human geography, regional geography and general geography and seminars (see similar in Ilieș et al. 2017). During the whole monitored period, the general geography subjects had the highest share according to hourly rate, namely 32.8 %, followed by general geography subjects with seminars of 31.6 %. The third was physical geography with the share of 22.1 % and the last were human geography subjects (anthropogeography) with the share of 13.5 %.

As for physical geography, there were 36 subjects in physical geography delivered by 5 teachers (Daneš, Štůla, Král, Hromádka, Novák). The most frequently taught was general physical geography (14), geomorphology (6) and hydrography (5). Less frequent was climatology (3), biogeography or geography of fauna and flora (3), geology for geographers (2) and only once there was oceanography, human and mountains and limnology.

As for human geography, there were 26 subjects in human geography delivered by 4 teachers (Chotek, Daneš, Štůla a Král). The most frequently offered was the basic anthropogeography course or introduction to anthropogeography (8) and general economic geography (6). Apart from that, there was geography of transport (4), political geography (3), geography of settlements (3) and geography of trade (2).

As for regional geography, there were 50 subjects delivered by 5 teachers (Chotek, Štůla, Král, Hromádka, Novák). The most frequently offered was regional geography of Asia (10) and Czechoslovak Republic (9). In some cases, the courses were divided into physical geography of Czechoslovakia (e.g. natural areas in Czechoslovakia) and anthropogeography or economic geography of Czechoslovakia. Apart from that, there was geography of Africa (6), Europe (4), Americas (3),

⁹ Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic Archive, Jiří Král Fund



Table 3 Selected Characteristics of Geography Teaching at the Comenius University in Bratislava in 1922-1938

Indicator	1921/22	1922/23	1923/24	1924/25	1925/26	1926/27
Number of teachers	1	1	2	2	2	2
Number of subjects and courses	1	1	5	5	5	6
Hourly rate per week	2	6	15	20	20	22
Physical geography	0%	0%	20,0%	30,0%	25,0%	0,0%
Human geography	0%	0%	13,3%	20,0%	5,0%	27,3%
Regional geography	0%	100%	26,7%	30,0%	50,0%	45,4%
General geography and seminars	100%	0%	40,0%	20,0%	20,0%	27,3%
Indicator	1927/28	1928/29	1929/30	1930/31	1931/32	1932/33
Number of teachers	2	2	3	2	4	2
Number of subjects	6	7	10	11	13	11
Hourly rate per week	26	32	32	32	32	32
Physical geography	23,1%	31,3%	25,0%	25,0%	28,1%	31,3%
Human geography	15,3%	12,5%	0,0%	15,6%	18,8%	9,4%
Regional geography	23,1%	31,3%	50,0%	31,3%	28,1%	25,0%
General geography and seminars	38,5%	24,9%	25,0%	28,1%	25,0%	34,3%
Indicator	1933/34	1934/35	1935/36	1936/37	1937/38	1938/39
Number of teachers	3	2	2	2	2	2
Number of subjects	8	7	6	11	9	8
Hourly rate per week	18	16	23	32	23	18
Physical geography	22,2%	43,8%	8,7%	12,5%	43,8%	27,8%
Human geography	16,7%	18,8%	13,0%	31,3%	8,7%	16,7%
Regional geography	27,8%	12,5%	60,9%	25,0%	13,0%	11,1%
General geography and seminars	33,3%	24,9%	17,4%	31,2%	34,5%	44,4%

Source: *CU Archive, RUK Fund. Register of persons and institutes and national exam committees. List of lectures in winter semester. List of lectures in summer semester. CU/SU Academic Senate, Bratislava, 1921-1949.*

Note: data from 1933/34, 1934/35 and 1938/39 are only for winter semester

South America (3), Poland (3), Eastern Europe (2), Czechoslovak Carpathians (2), North America (1), Australia (1), Oceania (1), Australia and Oceania (1), Tatras (1), Southern Europe (1), Bulgaria (1), Soviet Union – European part (1).

As for general geography, there were 55 subjects delivered by 6 teachers (Chotek, Daneš, Štůla, Král, Hromádka, Kuchař). The offer most frequently consisted of seminars, undergraduate-seminars and seminar exercises and excursions, presentations, new publications and maps. A certain conception of these activities can be found in the report of J. Král on the activities of the Geographical Seminar and the Geographical Proseminar 1930-1931. In that year, 6 students produced their



seminar works: Maříková (Pavlovské Mountains), Fuščíč (Polonina Boržava), Bokesz (Anthropogeography of Bratislava), Bobák (Košice Basin), Bukovinský (Alföld) and Sabo (Mineral Sources of Slovakia in the Past and Now)¹⁰. As for the rest of the subjects, there was cartography and topography (3), mathematical geography and general characteristics of the Earth (2) and general geography (2).

CONCLUSION

The paper came into existence on the occasion of the centenary of the Comenius University in Bratislava that was established in 1919. Despite the fact that they had not been successful in accomplishing the original intentions and the Faculty of Science was founded more than two decades later, not earlier than in 1940, geography started to develop within the structures of the Faculty of Arts since 1922. For a short period of time it joined in the shortly opened Department of Geography at the Elizabethan University. The founder of the Geographical Seminar was the ethnography professor Karel Chotek who also started giving lectures in the summer semester of 1921-1922. During the first stage of the formation of the workplace, where the key roles were played by Czech professors from the Charles University, there were also J. V. Daneš, F. Štůla, J. Král, J. Hromádka and for a short time J.V. Novák and K. Kuchař assisted, too. The most significant trace at the first stage of the formation of the workplace was made by K. Chotek and J. Král. Chotek was the founder of the workplace and during 17 semesters also taught 19 subjects and often promoted the interests of the Geographical Seminar at the Professors' Board sessions at the Faculty of Arts. Král worked in Bratislava 19 semesters and taught 70 subjects. He contributed to opening of the geography library and tirelessly urged and requested the support for the Geographical Seminar. He also agreed with the division of the Seminar into the Seminar for Physical Geography and the Seminar for Anthropogeography whereby conditions for full employment of J. Hromádka were created. After that, he was forced to go back to Prague by the end 1938. After he had been forced to leave back to Prague, Hromádka took over the leadership over the whole workplace and educated the first generation of Slovak geographers.

All in all, there were 167 subjects on offer during the first stage of the formation of geography education at the CU in Bratislava. According to their specialization, the subjects can be divided into four groups – physical geography, human geography, regional geography and general geography and seminars. During the whole monitored period, the highest share according to the hourly rate was represented by regional geography subjects, namely 32.8 %, followed by general geography subjects with seminars representing 31.6 %. The third came the group of physical

10 CU Archive, Geography Seminar Fund



geography with the share of 22.1 % and the last place was occupied by the subjects of human geography (anthropogeography) with the share of 13.5 %.

The curricular structure reflected the context of the time period in which regional geography disciplines prevailed. As for the territory, greater attention was paid to Czechoslovakia, Europe, Asia and Africa. A smaller share was represented by Americas, Australia and Oceania. From the point of trends in geographical thought, the biggest influence was made by French geography school that was linked with J. Král's contact with P. Deffontaine or research exchanges of J. Hromádka with A. Demangeon and E. de Martonne. In physical geography, the theory of geographic cycle by W. M. Davis maintained its influence as well as the concepts of E. de Martonne, A. Penck and J. Cvijić.

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