

# Hungarian Folk Dance Movement: Nationalism or Opportunity for Reconciliation Between Nations?

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**I'm going to represent and analyze how** – despite its ethnosymbolism and its nationalistic tendencies – how Hungarian Dancehouse Movement can encourage regionalism, localism and the understanding of neighbouring ethnicities.

I start with a brief history of the Hungarian Folk Dance (properly: Dancehouse) Movement and regional differences of Hungarian folk dances, after that I demonstrate the movement's connections with the so called „Népi” (peasantist) Movement of the 20th century, which was an effort by intellectuals and writers to thematize the hard life of the village and the poor peasant. Finally I analyze the alleged nationalism of the Dancehouse Movement and how it can build personal interethnic relationships.

## **The Dancehouse Movement<sup>1</sup>**

It started in 1972, when four folk ensembles hold a party of free dancing at Budapest at 6th May, which was repeated at 10th June and on 23rd October

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1 The only one comprehensive book in English about the Hungarian dancehouse movement with its antecedents including the world music scene, but without scholarly claim, is: Béla Szilárd Jávorszky: *The Story of Hungarian Folk*. Kossuth, Budapest, 2015. See also: Balázs Balogh – Ágnes Fülemile: *Cultural Alternatives, Youth and Grassroots Resistance in Socialist Hungary — The folk Dance and Music Revival*. Hungarian Studies 2008. Vol. 22. Nos. 1-2. 43-62.; Béla Halmos: *The Táncház Movement*. Hungarian Heritage, Budapest, 2000 Volume 1 Numbers 1-2 Spring/Autumn

(the last one was bravely dated to the anniversary of the starting of the revolution of 1956).<sup>2</sup>

Folk dance as such of course was no novelty for anyone, nor heritage groups. Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály went to collect folk music and folk songs from the end of the 19th century; between the two world wars the movement of Gyöngyösbokréta (1931-1944) encouraged villagers to form local ensembles for preserving their dances and for presenting it to urbanite audience.<sup>3</sup> Later communism „nationalized” folk dance further encouraging it as coreographed stage performance. Gyöngyösbokréta was disbanded because of political reasons in 1948 by the young communist regime.

Despite difficulties, researchers, coreographers still was going to Transylvania collecting folk music and folk dance. Szék (Sic), an ethnic Hungarian village in Transylvania became one of the most important inspirative place for the movement. What visitors saw there was a still completely remained tradition of folk music, folk dance, folk dressing and folk customs. Here the place of dance was called „dancehouse”, which became the name of a movement inspired by this particular experience later.<sup>4</sup>

What the four ensembles organized in 1972 – the poster said „Dancehouse like at Szék” – was that they put back folk dance to the floor from the stage. It wasn't a coreographed theater, but like originally: free dance, not for an audience, but for the joy of the very dancers. And exactly that was the horrifying problem for the communist authorities, who believed they have domesticated and have gained controll once and for ever over folk dance.

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2 Halmos, 2000.

3 Pálfi Csaba: *A Gyöngyösbokréta története.* („*The history of Gyöngyösbokréta.*”) In: Dienes Gedeon – Maácz László (ed.): *Táncstudományi Tanulmányok 1969–1970.* („*Studies about dance 1969-1970.*”) 115-161. Magyar Táncművészek Szövetsége Tudományos Tagozata, Budapest, 1970. Available online: <http://www.muharay.hu/index.php?menu=132>; See also: Krisztina Dóka - Péter Molnár (ed.): *A Gyöngyösbokréta. Írások és dokumentumok a mozgalom történetéből.* („*The Gyöngyösbokréta. Essays and documents from the history of the movement.*”) 2011. <http://folkradio.hu/folkszemle/gyongyosbokreta/index.php>

4 György Martin: *Szék felfedezése és táncagyományai.* („*The discovery of Szék and its dance traditions.*”) Táncművészet, 1981/1., 1981/2.; Also available online: [http://folkradio.hu/folkszemle/martin\\_szek/index.php](http://folkradio.hu/folkszemle/martin_szek/index.php).

Although officially the communist regime was led by the „Hungarian Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government”, and peasantry, as formerly equally oppressed class as workers, was considered to be an ally of them, in reality the regime was suspicious about peasantry as a reactionary class which does not want to be liberated, which adhered to its owned land and habits, customs of the past; those customs which are unscientific, religious and nationalistic. The movement heavily focused on traditions of Hungarians living outside Hungary, but in the Carpathian Basin, especially in Transylvania; and this focus endangered the fragile relations between Central-European communist countries, which inter alia lied on the ignorance of those minorities. So an enduring debate started about free folk dance, urban dance houses and the authenticity of artistic usage of folk dances.<sup>5</sup>

The newly born Dancehouse Movement fell into the category of „tolerated” things. Communist regime divided cultural and artistic products to three category: prohibited, tolerated and supported. This was the politics of »three T” (which goes for „tiltott, túrt, támogatott”, the three categories in Hungarian). This policy associated with the name of György Aczél, the communist „culturpope”. The regime considered folk music and dance better than the capitalist, American rock, but they also think it could turn to be dangerous.

Nevertheless, it became popular in certain circles. The movement produced its own music bands, with such internationally recognized ones like Muzsikás. It later changed the attitude and methodology of professional ensembles over time, and over the last decades those ensembles were rather allies and friends of amateur folk dance, than enemies; even their dancer comes from the movement, so now they are considered to be part of it, which was not the case in the seventies. Going to Transylvania became popular among folk dancers and musicians, and for many, this kind of „pilgrimage” became regular, although the nationalist Romanian communist regime tried to block it.

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5 See: Ferenc Sebő: *A táncház sajtója. Válogatás a korai évekből, 1968-1992.* („*The press of the dancehouse movement. Selection from the early years, 1968-1992.*”) Hagyományok Háza – Timp Kiadó, Budapest, 2007.

The first folk dance camps were organized in Transylvania immediately after the fall of communism, in 1990. Today there is no week on the summer without camps, from the most popular ones of Kalotaszentirály and Válaszút to the small camps of Kommandó and Zabola.<sup>6</sup> The Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music established a folk music department in 2007; now young folk and world music band are mushrooming and they eager to learn from the last remaining old local traditional gipsy musicians of Transylvania. (We have folk dance department at the Hungarian Dance Academy for decades.) UNESCO listed „dancehouse method” on its intangible cultural heritage list, Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in 2011.<sup>7</sup> And the movement has been living it’s renaissance after 2012, when the first series of television talent show of Fölszállott a páva („The Peacock Has Taken Off”, after the first line of a popular folk song) was broadcasted (the show is aired now on an annual basis). Now the movement attract hundreds of thousands of people.

### **But what are those folk dances? A landscape<sup>8</sup>**

Folk dances of the Carpathian Basin are somehow unique phenomenon. Across Europe historically during the Middle Ages circle dances were dominant. Pair dances became popular and permitted during the Renaissance, but over the following centuries more rigid and simple dances came to fashion, washing over dances of renaissance and baroque rich in various movements and touchings. We find a kind of preserved Middle Ages at the Balkan regarding folk dances, because of the Turkish invasion. And because of the same we find a preserved renaissance and baroque dance culture across the Carpathian Basin, especially in Transylvania. Circle dances of Csángó Hungarians in Moldva, just outside the Carpathians also represent the Middle Ages. Gypsies ever have had their own style, also very ancient. Romanian invertitas represent the

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6 The most comprehensive list of summer folk camp across the Carpathian Basin:  
<http://tanchaz.hu/index.php/en/summer-camps>

7 See: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/BSP/tanchaz-method-a-hungarian-model-for-the-transmission-of-intangible-cultural-heritage-00515>.

8 In English see: Iván Balassa – Gyula Ortutay: *Hungarian Ethnography and Folklore*. Corvina, Budapest, 1984. Available online: <http://mek.oszk.hu/02700/02790/html/index.html>. In Hungarian: Pesovár-Felföldi (ed.): *A magyar nép és nemzetiségeinek táncagyományai*. („Dance traditions of Hungarians and their neighbouring ethnicities.”) Planétás, Budapest, 1997.

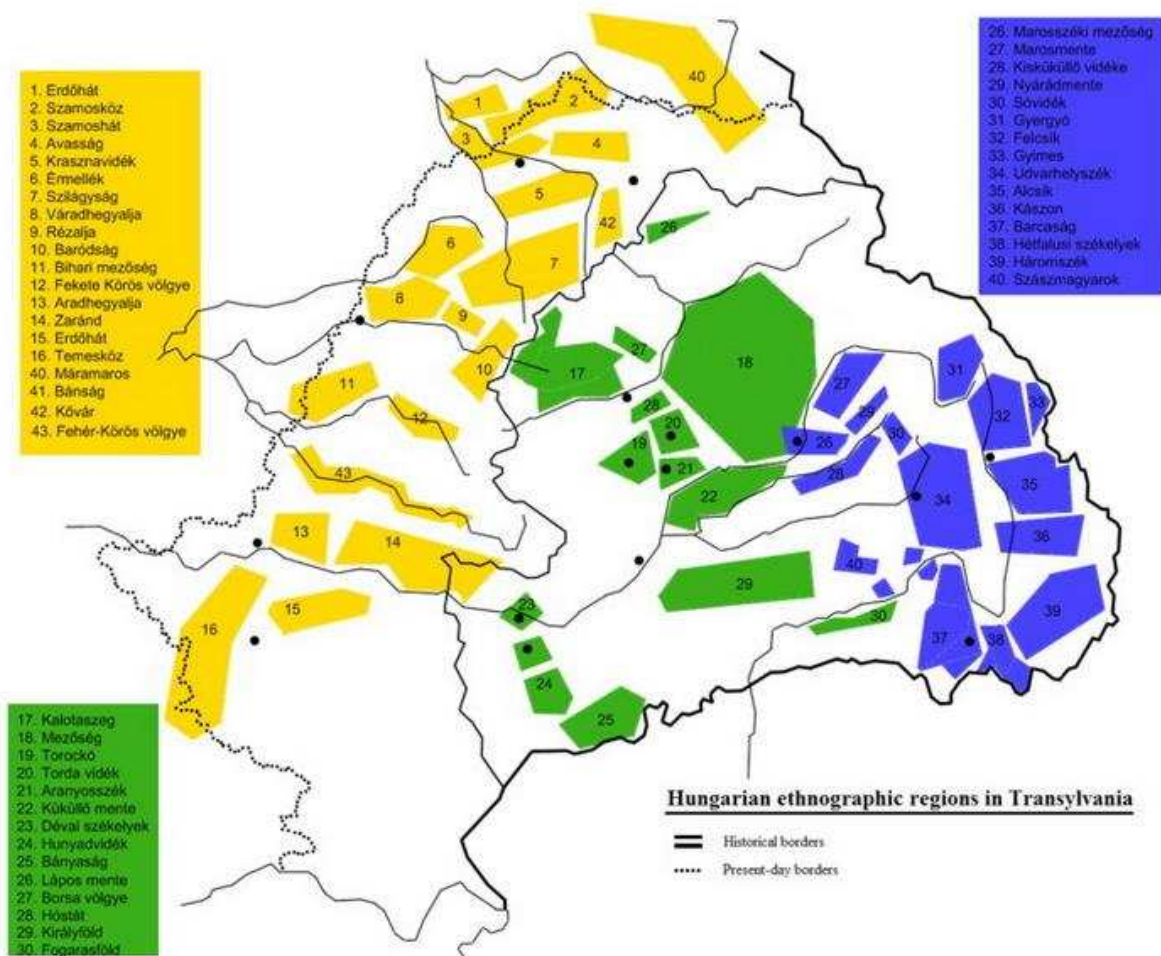
Renaissance, while Hungarian changes invertitas to csárdás dances from the end of the 18th century. Folk music is a folklorised version of the Renaissance and Baroque (and so on) musical high culture of aristocrat courts. The styles of classical music are defined by time; in the folk music its place, but almost you can pair them with each other. So folk music of villages of the Marosmente region (among the Maros river at Székelyföld), for example the popular Vajdaszentivány, have the taste of wiener classicism; while the music of Szatmár region and Kalotaszeg (especially new style folk music of Kalotaszeg) have the taste of Romantique. The music of the region of Mezőség (middle of Transylvania) is not comparable so easily, but it has reminiscences of gregorian.<sup>9</sup>

There are three big Hungarian folk dance dialects: the dialect of the Danube River, the Tisza River and of Transylvania. Danube and Tisza dialect involves more jumping and is more playful, Transilvanian dialect is more romantic. (Hungarian folk dances of Slovakia and Serbia belong to the two first dialects). So we have a historical differentiation by time; and a territorial one, by dialect region, village and individual dancers. But diverse dances evolved even within regions and villages, for a dance of a village is in reality an „order of dances”, with slower and faster versions of the local csárdás variant, with different rhythms and melodies and usually with a lads dance. Usually one order of dances three to six different part. Over time some part we lost, so in some villages there is no mens dance cause nobody dances them for decades.

Here you can see the dialects, the folk regions of Transylvania, and finally important villages inside Mezőség region (no. 18 on the Transylvania-map):

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9 Interview with Góbé band, Mandiner, 10th January 2016 (made by the author):  
[http://fesztival.mandiner.hu/cikk/20160106\\_gobe\\_pofatlanul\\_felvallaljuk\\_hogy\\_nepdalokbol\\_ihletodunk](http://fesztival.mandiner.hu/cikk/20160106_gobe_pofatlanul_felvallaljuk_hogy_nepdalokbol_ihletodunk)





# ÉSZAK-MEZŐSÉG, BELSŐ-MEZŐSÉG, KELET-MEZŐSÉG



If you ask a Hungarian folk dancer to show you „csárdás”, he will ask back: which? There is no such a dance as one, single „csárdás”, for that csárdás is a style and a step and also one part of the »dance order” of a village or region. In the strictest sense there is no national folk dance, danced by everybody. There are regional dances and even variant within villages. If you ask a band at a dancehouse for »mezőségi”, the music of the central region of Mezőség, the band is apt to respond: ok, but which village? Magyarpalatka (considered being „the” mezőségi dance, because its the best known and far the most popular from there), Mezőkeszű, Ördögösfüzes, etc. In dance classes teachers often teach the dance of an individual pair, someone well known in his village as one

of the best dancer.<sup>10</sup> Music can vary from village from village even within the same region, dance can vary from pair to pair within a certain pattern.

Bonchida is a characteristic village of Mezőség, but its csárdás is interchangeable with other villages of Mezőség, for the same music. Except its invertita, about we have only one easily accesible videotape with two pairs in the front, dancing remarkably different way („big hand” and „up hand” they called); their dances goes with this particular music and interchangeable, but you cant dance it for any other music.<sup>11</sup>

Depending on the ethnic built up of a region or village, there can be different order of dances of different parts for gypsies and romanians, but many times the music is the same of ethnicities dances their own for the music of the other also. For example there is a Hungarian and a Romanian version of csárdás at Kalotaszeg, but the music is almost the same, while invertita considered being Romanian, although Hungarian also can dance it. This is the same in the village of Bonchida. At Vajdaszentivány beside mens dance five parts of the order builds up just two different dances, but one of them is „gypsy csárdás”, where gypsies dance differently from Hungarians. Even folk songs not represent „clearly” which dance belong to which ethnicity, for example there are Hungarian folk songs for the Romanian invertita of Bonchida.

Folk musicians traditionally were gypsies (because if you worked in agriculture as a peasant, you didnt have good hand for precised play), usually a succesful band played for more villages, ethnicities and served for a region. Even there are Gypsy musician dinasties.<sup>12</sup>

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10 For example György Martin wrote (but unfortunately not finished) a monumental monography about the dance of István Mátyás 'Mundruc', a villager of Magyarvista: György Martin: *Mátyás István 'Mundruc'. Egy kalotaszegi táncos egyéniségvizsgálata*. Planétás, Budapest, 2004.

11 See the online film database of the Music Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences: [http://db.zti.hu/neptanc/tanc\\_en.asp](http://db.zti.hu/neptanc/tanc_en.asp), search for Bonchida.

12 Csongor Könczei: *On the Social and Cultural Network of the Gypsy Musicians of Kalotaszeg*. The Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities. Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvar), 2012.



## The „Népi”(Peasantist)<sup>13</sup> Movement

The movement of „népi writers” started in 1931 in the eastern city of Debrecen. It’s goal was thematize the life of the countryside, the village and peasantry. Many of the népi writers came from agrarian backgrounds. They were interested in social problems (regarding agrarian life), and their characteristic genre was sociography (although they wrote novels, short stories and poetry as well).<sup>14</sup>

Népi Movement has rejected the aristocratic manner and the conservative-liberal approach of social politics of the government of count István Bethlen (one of the most influential figure of the decades between two world wars named after governor Miklós Horthy: „Horthy-regime”). This society between two world wars was called a „neobaroque” one by historian Gyula Szekfű<sup>15</sup> (who himself although sympathized with népi writers, was known as a Habsburg-sympathizer, monarchist, catholic conservative; today we would call him precisely an old school christian democrat).

But they also rejected the urbanite way of life and urbanite radicalism (or liberalism) of the progressive artistic subculture, especially in literature. They viewed it as something decadent, cosmopolitan, sometimes effeminate scene and thinking. They wanted social progress, more economic possibilities, more social mobility to agrarian poor and peasantry, but in the same time they were

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13 „Népi” could be translated by word as „folkish”, but that would be very unfortunate because of its pejorative and historically loaded reminiscences; it cant be accurately translated, like the German „völkisch” or Russian „narodnyik”; in Hungarian „népi” does not have unpleasant meaning. Calling it „third way” or even „populist” movement would be better, but those can be misleading too. The best choice in English maybe is „peasantism”. Regarding terminological problems and parallel phenomenons see: Ákos Bartha: *Tojástartók a populizmus körül. A magyar népi mozgalom fogalmi keretei és regionális dimenziói* („Sail close to the wind of populism. Conceptional framework and regional dimensions of the Hungarian népi movement.”) *Múltunk* 2014/4. 58-104.

14 The latest general history of the népi movement: István Papp: *A magyar népi mozgalom története. 1920-1990*. Jaffa, Budapest, 2012. Népi writers who belonged to the first wave were for example: Zsigmond Móricz, Kálmán Sértő, József Erdélyi, István Sinka, Péter Veres, Gyula Illyés, Géza Féja, János Kodolányi, László Németh, Ferenc Erdei, József Darvas, etc.; Áron Tamási from Transylvania also associated with the movement; Dezső Szabó is considered as an early precursor; Sándor Csoóri, who died in 2016 was one of the last népi writer.

15 Gyula Szekfű: *A neobarokk társadalom. (The Neobaroque Society.)* In: *Három nemzedék és ami utána következik*. ÁKV-Macenas, 1989, Ötödik könyv, II. fejezet, 402-415.

patriotic, sometimes nationalistic (not without exceptions) and protectionist. That's why it called itself being a „third way” between a feudalistic national and an egalitarian-cosmopolitan approach; because it was egalitarian, but with strong national sentiments and patriotic-nationalist ideas. And that's why it became quickly ideologically diverse (actually it never was ideologically homogenous, for it has never had a clear ideologue, just a common topic and concern for peasantry and the poor). Until the second world war some of them found himself among communists or socialdemocrats, on the radical Left; others found themselves on the radical or even far right end of the political spectrum.<sup>16</sup>

And the movement fought its bitter debates not against the „neobaroque”, explicitly counterrevolutionary leadership of the country (it labelled itself counterrevolutionary against the prevailing, 133-day long communist regime of Béla Kun of 1919), but against the urbanite counterpart.

Although the movement saw itself as something unique, and urbanites labelled it sometimes „provincial”, it was not without international antecedents or parallels. Russian narodniks were something similar, as Gergely Egedy also found some ideological relationship with the Southern agrarians of the USA,<sup>17</sup> or others with English distributism of Hilaire Belloc and Gilbert Keith Chesterton.<sup>18</sup> But the agrarian-urbanite tension were well known and even

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16 For example Ferenc Erdei and Péter Veres sided with the radical Left; József Erdélyi and Kálmán Sértő sided with the far right. The communist regime either silenced and punished them (those who sided with the far right); either let them to work. Ferenc Erdei became a minister of agriculture and later an academical professor; others were more or less consolidated and the regime let them to write. Most of the nép writers believed in a certain third way, László Németh for example is famous about his theory of „quality socialism”. Regarding népi writers siding with the far right see: János Gyurgyák: *Szélsőjobbaldaliság a népi mozgalomban. („Radical right in the népi movement.”)*. In: Ignác Romsics (ed.): *A magyar jobboldali hagyomány, 1900-1948. („The Tradition of the Hungarian Right, 1900-1948.”)*. Osiris, Budapest, 2009. 449-473. Regarding the ideas of László Németh, the latest work, with rather unique approach, is: Márton Békés: *A hagyomány forradalma – Németh László politikája. („The Revolution of Tradition – The Politics of László Németh.”)* Kortárs, Budapest, 2009.

17 Gergely Egedy: *Konzervatív gondolkodás és politika az Egyesült Államokban. („Conservative thinking and politics in the United States of America.”)*. 241. Századvég, Budapest, 2014.

18 Soma Hunyadkürti: *„Három acre és egy tehén” – Az angol disztributizmus. („Three acres and one cow – English distributism.”)* Népi blog, 19th January 2017.  
<https://www.facebook.com/notes/n%C3%A9piblog/hunyadk%C3%BCrti-soma-h%C3%A1rom-acre->

formulated even by the Greeks and even can be very helpful to explain some recent political events in the USA; so its something enduring phenomenon across history.<sup>19</sup>

After the fall of communism the poisonous, old conflict thematized Hungarian public life again between „peasantist” and „urbanite” intellectuals (called „peasantist-urbanite debate”), and of course, because its nature, folkdance-movement was considered being on the side of the peasantry, without asking its representative personalities and considering that in fact the movement is made up of middle-class habitants of major cities. Also it was considered by „urbanites” being „provincial”. This peasantist-urbanite conflict mostly has vanished from the mainstream public life over the last decade.

The systematic analysis of the connections and mutual influences between Népi Movement and the Dancehouse Movement is still lacking, but we can mention some examples: works, poets of Gyula Illyés, László Nagy, Ferenc Juhász, István Sinka and especially Sándor Csoóri were frequently mentioned at lectures organized within the dancehouse movement. Sebő Ensemble instrumentized many poets of népi writers (although not exclusively at all). As Balázs Balogh and Ágnes Fülemüle emphasizes, „László Nagy dedicated his poem Táncbéli táncszók (Dance-verses) to the Bartók Folk Dance Ensemble”, and also „in his poem written about Muzsikás, one of the definitive music ensembles of the Dancehouse Movement, Sándor Csoóri (whose son was a member of the band) called the group »brave lads facing death with copper axes,« which aptly expresses the strength of tradition, the resolve in opposing the regime, and at the same time its hopelessness.”<sup>20</sup>

Despite its ideological diversity, the views about the nation of most of the Népi Movement can be called ethnosymbolist or even perennialist. As it is known, perennialism means thinking about nations as eternal phenomena.

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[%C3%A9s-egy-teh%C3%A9n-az-angol-disztributizmus/1061449907333939](https://www.city-journal.org/html/trump-and-american-divide-14944.html) Népi blog although is not a scientific forum, but researchers of the népi movement publish there their daily thoughts in an informative way.

19 Victor Davis Hanson: *Trump and the American Divide*. City Journal, Winter 2017 PAGES!! Available online: <https://www.city-journal.org/html/trump-and-american-divide-14944.html>

20 Balogh-Fülemüle, 2008.

Ethnosymbolism were explained by professor Anthony D. Smith, who taught that although nation and nationalism as such is modern phenomenon, it has ethnic origins („ethnic core<sup>2</sup>) and nation-like community identities in the premodern past.<sup>21</sup> Smith therefore had a different position, than his teacher, Ernest Gellner, who expressed his idea that nation is entirely modern phenomenon, which was formed by the technical improvements of the early modern era;<sup>22</sup> and than Benedict Anderson, who attribute the emergence of nation and nationalism entirely to modern capitalism and printing, and thinks that nations are „imagined communities”.<sup>23</sup>

But it didnt mean that they werent able to think about, for example, as Dezső Szabó imagined, a Central-European federation, not without possible contradictions.<sup>24</sup>

### **Dancehouse Movement and it's alleged nationalism**

Still contradictory opinions exist about the Dancehouse Movement's alleged „nationalism”. Ethnosymbolism and perennialism are also surely dominant across the movement, although we lack a systematic research on the topic. A journalist-wrote a bookreport<sup>25</sup> on dancehouse movement from 1986 and the only one sociological study from the recent years which I know strengthens that members of the movement mostly are urbanite students and intellectuals (in the sense that they have college- or university degree or have intellectual

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<sup>21</sup> Anthony D. Smith: *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 1986.

<sup>22</sup> Ernest Gellner: *Nations and Nationalism*, 1983.

<sup>23</sup> Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 1983.

<sup>24</sup> Regarding the ethnosymbolism of Dezső Szabó see: Dávid Kovács: *A közösségi identitás változatai Szabó Dezső életművében. („Variants of social identity in the works of Dezső Szabó.”)* Doctoral dissertation, Történettudományi Doktori Iskola Művelődéstörténeti Doktori Program, Budapest, 2011.; regarding his feredatial ideas together with Géza Féjas: Gábor Péterfi: *Trianon és a „kelet-európai föderáció” gondolata Szabó Dezső és Féja Géza írásaiban. („Trianon and the »Central-European fedaration« in the writings of Dezső Szabó and Géza Féja.”)* Kommentár 2010/4. The dissertation of Gábor Péterfi contains meaningful analysis about how nép writer thank about nation: *Szabó Dezső és Féja Géza Trianon-reflexiója és külpolitikai nézeteik. („The reflection of the Treaty of Tranon of Dezső Szabó and Géza Féja and their ideas about foreign affairs.”)* Eötvös Lóránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar Történettudományi Doktori Iskola, Új- és Jelenkori Magyar Történeti Doktori Program, Budapest, 2009. Especially 126-141.

<sup>25</sup> László Siklósi: *Táncház („Dancehouse.”)* Budapest, 1986.

work); the latter, although examined the values and lifestyle of members, did not focus on the ideas of the subjects regarding nation. Even just three subjects mentioned that their source of motivation is their nationality, not to say a word about theoretical questions about the origins of nation and its role; internationalism, patriotism or nationalism. (According to this research the main motivation for folk dance is simply being fun and going out.)<sup>26</sup>

Despite its folklorism and its natural ally with Népi Movement, the Dancehouse Movement is not so conservative or old fashioned in its values as one would assume, which can be explained by its urbanite and middle-class membership.<sup>27</sup> However, most of the participants, dancers and musicians of the movement are not academic intellectuals, with systematically considered and reflected views about the nation. It means sometimes contradictory views or attitudes accepted in the same time by the same person.

The mainstream of the movement more or less accepts an ethnosymbolist-essentialist-perennialist view. One can experience different approaches toward the Hungarian and other nations among the membership: romantic folklorism and patriotism is dominant, but it's very interesting, how a romanticized view of the old, traditional, „true” Hungarians of Transylvania, because of frequent visitation of the region, meets with the less romantic realities. Members tend to use a classic pathetic rhetoric regarding, sinking national strength and refutes consumerism, globalism, capitalism, internationalism. Also irredentist feeling are expressed frequently.

Despite all of this, there is no necessary logical connection between perennialism, ethnosymbolism and nationalist views. A perennialist or an ethnosymbolist is not necessarily a nationalist, and can promote reconciliation without contradiction (for example in a herderian attitude).

On the other hand, how they learn to dance and about the origins of dances, they also learn how different ethnicities of the Carpathian Basin lived together

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26 István Fábri-Katalin Füleki: *A táncházak közönsége: szociológiai jellemzők, értékek, életmód.* („The audience of dancehouses: sociological characteristics, values, lifestyle”). In: Ildikó Sándor (ed.): *A betonon is kinő a fű.* („Grass Grows even from Concrete”). Hagyományok Háza, Budapest, 2006. 41-66.

27 Fábri-Füleki, 2006.



and influenced each other's culture. Some Romanian and Gypsy dances are more and more popular: the Szászcsávás Band (the group of Gypsy musicians from the village of Szászcsávás) made very popular the dances of their Gypsy community as far as that the dances of the Hungarian villagers are overshadowed by them. Romanian invertitas of Kalotaszeg and the village of Bonchida are listed among the most popular dances.

Many of the star musicians are Hungarian Gypsies or Romanian Gypsies, who teach music at the Hungarian folkdance camps across Transylvania. Szászcsávás Band plays at the camps of Magyarlapád and Szászcsávás. Magyarpalatkai Band and the Band and other musicians of the Mezőség region plays at the International Mezőségi Folk Dance and Folk Music Camp of Válaszút. Kisneti, Kiscsipás, Csűrös Band and other musicians of Kalotaszeg play at the Camp of Kalotaszentkirály. Local gypsy musicians play at Vajdaszentivány and many other camps.

Many of the star musicians are Hungarian Gypsies or Romanian Gypsies, who teach music at the Hungarian folkdance camps across Transylvania. Once I asked some prominent musicians about their ethnicity. István Jámor „Dumnezu”, the leader of the Szászcsávás Band said „Im Gypsy, but Hungarian Gypsy!”. Sándor Fodor „Kisneti”, a primite from the region of Kalotaszeg said „Im gypsy. Hungarian gypsy. Im a Calvinist Hungarian Gypsy. Florin Kodoba, the leader of the Magyarpalatka Band, from the region of Mezőség, stated he is orthodox and „Hungarian Gypsy”,<sup>28</sup> which is interesting because his mother tongue and his name is Romanian, but his ancestor were Calvinist Hungarian Gypsies. In many cases in Transylvania who changes religion to orthodox, also

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28 „– Én cigánynak vallom magamat, de magyar cigánynak! – vágja rá Dumnezu.

– Cigánynak. Magyar cigánynak. Református magyar cigány vagyok – mondja Neti.

– Volt abból valaha bajod, hogy cigány vagy?

– Nem, soha. Azért, mert zenészek vagyunk, lehet, ha nem lettem volna zenész, akkor igen. De ha zenész vagy, akkor minket mindenhol tisztelnek és szeretnek.

– Ortodox vagyok, apámék református voltak, anyámék ortodoxok. Nekem sem volt bajom, mint zenész – teszi hozzá Florin.

– De minek vallod magad? Magyar vagy, román vagy cigány? – kérdezi tőle Neti.

– Magyar cigány – mondja Florin, akinek egyébként a román az anyanyelve, de felvette a magyar állampolgárságot.” Gergely Szilvay: „Ember, muzsikálj!” – riport erdélyi cigányprímásokról. Mandiner, 8th February 2014,

[http://fesztival.mandiner.hu/cikk/20140129\\_ember\\_muzsikalj\\_riport\\_erdely\\_ciganyprimas](http://fesztival.mandiner.hu/cikk/20140129_ember_muzsikalj_riport_erdely_ciganyprimas).

changes nationality to Romanian, because of the official national status of the orthodox church.

Learning and singing of folksongs is another important activity in the movement. However, as scholars point out, there were no folksong before the revolution of 1848, that contained a reference to nation as such. Folksongs rather referred to regional and local identity. Actually why the nation as conceptual frame is defining since the 19th century in politics and history, peasantry even didn't „progressed” up to it, until traditional peasantry ceased away because of embourgeoisement, it had a local, fragmental historical thought (for example it had not national, but regional heroes), and its „we”-thought as class.<sup>29</sup>

Béla Halmos, one of the most prominent pioneers of the movement made a statement: „From the very beginning, the dance house movement has treated the folk cultures of Hungary's non-Magyar ethnic groups, and indeed, of every nation, as treasures of coequal value (and, in this sense, followed a principle and a practice that anticipated the 'Common European House' idea by some twenty years).”<sup>30</sup>

Despite its nevertheless existing (but not exclusive) nationalist tendencies, the Hungarian Folk Dance Movement helps to live healthy patriotism and regionalism, also provides many opportunities for building personal interethnic relations and to study the rich culture of the nations living together in the Carpathian Basin, therefore it has a great conflict-resolving potential.

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29 Ilona Dobos: *Paraszti szájhagyomány, városi szóbeliség* („Peasants oral tradition and the oral history of the city.”) Gondolat, Budapest, 1986. 109-117.

30 Halmos: 2000.