

THE SPECIAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

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At first glance the population of Czechoslovakia may seem to be anthropologically uniform. Only one ethnic group differs in the outward anthropological features from the remaining body of the population. These are the people of Gypsy origin. But even this difference will in the course of time disappear, as it seems now, because the number of half-breeds is on a steady increase. In these half-breeds the striking Gypsy features are much less pronounced in the first and especially in the second generations.

In the remaining bulk of the Czechoslovak population it is not possible to distinguish the individuals of Czech, Moravian, Silesian, Slovak, German, Ruthenian or Hungarian origin. The anthropological examination and analysis of the Czechoslovak population is carried out in the course of large scale research, which is conducted in adult population in five-year intervals and in children and school children in ten-year intervals. Only in great samples can we recognize the differences in basic anthropological characters, for example between the population in Bohemia and Moravia on the one hand and the population of Slovakia on the other. The anthropological differences in the population of Czechoslovakia have on several occasions been evidenced by the fact that it is not possible to evaluate the physical condition of Czechoslovak population according to norms of physical characters worked out for populations of different ethnic origin. This fact appeared for the first time in our work on the youth. The American norms of Woodbury—Baldwin proved to be entirely unsuitable for the Czechoslovak conditions and had to be replaced by new norms worked out in the course of research in 1951.

On the basis of this research M. Prokopec worked out diagrams containing developmental streams, through which it is possible to study the normal development of the individual in the course of time. J. Suchý worked out tables showing the relations between height and weight of children between the age of 7 and 18, and the author of the present article worked out, on the basis of Spartakiad-games, tables showing relations between weight and height in adult population. Thus, we have at present some valuable aids according to which we can evaluate the physical condition of the population. These tables, it must be pointed out, correspond

with the special anthropological character of the Czechoslovak population.

Special anthropological character, however, is not found in Czechoslovak population only. In spite of the intermixing of various ethnic elements we can still today see in Europe that regions of high values of height are in the north and south of the continent. The central parts of Europe are regions of intermediate height. The colour of eyes and hair takes on darker shades when we proceed to the south of Europe.

Some special anthropological features of the Czechoslovak-population have already been observed by travellers in the Middle Ages and even by ancient historians. The Roman historian Procopius, who lived in the 6th century A. D., reports that the Slavs were marked by light complexion. He writes about the Slavs "Pantes hyperythroi ejzin" — "all are more than red-haired". Ibrâhîm ibn Jâkub, in the 10th century A. D., says that the Czechs, in contrast to other Slavs, were dark-complexioned. This-dark complexion was a survival of the populations which inhabited our country before the arrival of the Slavs. These were the Celts or the Illyrians, who came to the present Czechoslovakia from the southern and western regions. The relatively weaker influx and infiltration of the Slavs from the north and the east and the mixing with the original population of darker complexion resulted in the fact that the new population lost the light colour of hair and eyes, which is typical of the Slavs. It follows from what has been said that the special anthropological character of the population of Czechoslovakia is not a fiction but a real fact.

SUMMARY

The only special anthropological type among the population of Czechoslovakia are the Gypsies. Otherwise, it is not possible to recognize in the bulk of the Czechoslovak population and individual of he Czech, Slovak or any other nationality.

On the basis of nation-wide anthropological investigations of the youth, which are conducted in ten-year intervals, and of anthropological investigation of the adult population, carried out on five-year intervals, it has been possible to establish differences

in basic body dimensions between the Czechs and Slovaks. These differences may be explained, in the opinion of the present author, by a different anthropological composition of both these nationalities.

Large-scale investigations have proved that it is impossible to use in Czechoslovakia foreign standards, worked out for ethnically different populations, for

the evaluation of the somatic condition of our children, youth and adults. Therefore, new standards have been worked out on the basis of nationwide investigation of the Czechoslovak population.

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