

**Robert Klobucký: Hlasistické hnutie: národ a sociológia. Začiatky sociologického myslenia na Slovensku (The Hlasistic Movement: Nation and Sociology. The Beginning of Sociological Thinking in Slovakia)**

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Democratic liberalism in the Slovak politics is a very unique phenomenon. One could almost say it is a “revelation”. It is phenomenon that is hardly noticeable from both sides of the ideological spectrum. The leftists (socialists) blame it for absence of solidarity and empathy with the weak ones. The conservatives (not only the present ones) used to, according to the author, criticize it, because “liberal opinions are not the part of national life... they had been imported from foreign cultures and therefore there is no place for them in Slovakia.” (p. 96) This is how in the context of mutual conflict of national conservatives (namely Svetozár H. Vajanský) Slovak intellectual society at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries is understood by author of an interesting monograph about pioneers of (not only) the Slovak political sociology, about the (self)critical nationalism but also about the economic emancipation of the Slovak nation. The author is Robert Klobucký and the monograph is *Hlasistic movement: Nation and Sociology*.

The publication appeared as a result and outcome of PhD study of Robert Klobucký at the Sociological Institute SAV. This is when he managed to uncover the unknown lines of the Slovak revival movement at the turn of the 20th century, which had been seen by the major society only as a fight against Magyarization and presumably only very few saw it also as stream of new scientific disciplines and directions that served as a foundation for the Slovak science, intellectual community but also policy during the whole era of the first Czechoslovak Republic. It was later used by a reform movement during Prague Spring and democratization of the Czechoslovak society after 1989.

The author decided that the goal of the monograph is to “map yet unreviewed texts of classic authors... sociological accepts in the Hlasist’s thought... to identify sources of Hlasistic ideas but also the overall context of Hlasistic thinking at that time.” (p. 9). The author did not limit his work to the well-known facts about the creation of Prague Detvan and Vienna Tatran, on which fields the intellectual basis of HLAS appeared. He also did not limit himself to follow the political and ideological determinants of Masaryk’s philosophy or mutual and unconcealed hostility towards Slovak conservatives starting with famous Hurban Vajanský at their head, but he also focused his interest away from the geographical borders of (Czecho)Slovakia. The publication is divided into 5 parts (chapters) that are continually dealing with

individual problematic areas starting with methodology of processing and studying of history of Slovak sociology, which – just like the author himself states – “is not yet processed in a complex manner” (p. 28) – and ending with the definition of fundamental obstacles of Hlasistic sociology of a nation. When it comes to the availability of literature about the history of Slovak sociology, the author claims the lack of complexity and processing, which is the result of a negative attitude of the regime before 1989 towards the sociology itself as a (bourgeois) scientific discipline. In spite of the fact, that the only art work is the piece of Alexander Hirner (1968 – 1970) and later just the publications from the edge of 1990s of 20th century (see pp. 28-33), the author managed to accumulate sufficient amount of materials (particularly contemporary) and primary sources of hlasists, which he accordingly used as a historical and ideological analysis of the creation of sociology in Slovakia in first years of the 20th century. A rich bibliographic apparatus, numerous and frequent quotations give to the work the feel of scientism and attractively and the contemporary context typical for the Hlasism in Slovakia.

It has already been mentioned that the author devotes the first chapter to methodological problems of studying the history of Slovak sociology. Here he also focuses on difficulties that he had to face, which was except for the disfavour of the regime also its own “slenderness” (pp. 33-36). This chapter works more or less as an extended introduction to the topic and the author develops some of its specifics in the following chapters, too. The second chapter offers the reader an overview of ideological and society contexts of evolving of the Hlasistic movement since its beginning and slow accommodating within the Slovak society. He begins with a description of the conditions in the Kingdom of Hungary, which was under a strong influence of Magyarization, which on the one hand lead to the passivity of traditional Slovak political and social movements and on the other hand helped to activate a young generation of Slovak intelligence – the Hlasists. Very interestingly done is especially the conflict between Vajanský and the Hlasists, and also the inner diversity of the Hlasists themselves, where Šrobár’s accent mixed with social-democratic ties up to Hodža’s agricultural patriotism. This chapter is a great bridge to the political analysis of Slovak policy at the beginning of the 20th century.

The author continues similarly within political thinking or political philosophy in the following, third chapter: Creation, evolution and ideological orientation of the Hlasistic movement. We learn in this chapter about the creation of HLAS journal at the end of 1890s, Masaryk’s involvement in its creation, inner conflicts of Šrobár vs. Blaho and the end of the journal. This, however, was no end of the political movement, whose representatives, as Klobucký points out (subchapter 3.3), turned into political and social elites of

the first Czechoslovak Republic. Klobucký offers an interesting analysis of the class status of the Hlasists – new Slovak elites in the last part of this chapter. While in the previous decades they were mostly priests and teachers, the author highlights that at the edge of the 20th century and in the Hlasistic movement explicitly it was the so called “countryside doctor”, who made it up to the forefront.

Through the following chapter *Sociological thought of the Hlasists*, the author again returns to the essence of his work on sociology, the beginning of which in Slovakia he connects mostly to the existence of the HLAS journal. The primary argument of his analysis of sociological thinking of the Hlasists, the first sociologists in Slovakia (especially A. Štefánek), is the fact that they did not try to create own ideological schools but most of all took and applied the theories of important sociologists of that era – Spencer, Le Bon and Wundt. According to Klobucký, they contributed to presenting sociology in this space by their systematic work and they also made it easier for their followers. Noteworthy are also author’s thoughts of copying and using information about the Slovak nation from contemporary romantic literature, which the Hlasists often used in creating of their view on the negative sides and mistakes of Slovak nation (p. 85).

In the last chapter *The main obstacles of Hlasistic sociology of nation*, Klobucký focused at the very sources of Hlasistic sociology and he divided them into four groups. In the first place there is the aforementioned problem of the definition of the term nation, which even the Hlasists were not able to avoid and that let them into the most controversial argument with the conservatives and with S. H. Vajanský. The author then deals with the limits of coexistence of nations using Masaryk’s humanism as well as individual approaches to the respective ethnic groups (Hungarians, Czechs and Jews). However, the question of determination of negative economic anti-Semitism of the Hlasists seems to be processed only very broadly. The author focused the last two chapters (5.4 and 5.5) at economic and social interests of the Hlasists and their sociological thinking. Political scientists will be especially interested in this insight into the subchapter 5.5.2 that deals – unfortunately just briefly and at the very end of the book – with the interconnection between applied sociology and creation of political party of an agrarian kind within the environment of the (Czecho)Slovak political and party system.

At the end we can say that the publication of Robert Klobucký fulfils even the strictest criteria of a scientific as well as popular-scientific contribution. The text is scientific and very readable at the same time. The author uses rich sources of information and literature and enriches the text with primary sources of quotations even in their original form what helps to create an image of authenticity and reliability of author’s conclusions. On the other hand, notable

is the original intention of the work to process the area of birth of Slovak sociology. Speaking of its use for the needs of political science and political scientists, it is limited to only one specific part that is appropriate for studying. After further reading and analysing, the reader can find lots of interesting material even in the purely sociological sections of the monograph, whether it is historiography in general or its Slovak part. Thanks to Robert Klobucký's book, the reader can learn a lot about the days, when pioneers of (not only) Slovak sociology were building grounds of political and social system of the future Czechoslovak Republic and one century later of democratic pillars of today's Slovak Republic. Except for that, the book can also serve in a way for students of political science, who, as a part of their preparation for the state examinations, can learn more about the Hlasistic movement and especially its ties to philosopher Tomáš G. Masaryk.

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