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THE SLOVAK PERSONALISM IN THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY

The Slovak philosophy awakened very slowly in the 20th century after the coup in 1918. The elements of the Personalism started to appear only in the framework of the theological thinking. The first steps aimed at the emancipation of the Christian philosophy with the remarkable presentation of Personalism are found in Jan Elen Bor's work *Renewal of Metaphysic and Thomism*. In 1933 the work of *Jacques Maritain* was published in the collection of his treatises under the name *Return to the Past*. That act was commended in the journal of the Slovak catholic academics – *Svoradov*, by František Skyčák. Two years later Romano Guardini was presented by Ladislav Hanus in the same journal and pointed at the great possibilities of his dialogic philosophy. But at the period of the first Czechoslovak Republic a little information about Personalism can be found in the pages of the journals *Svoradov*, *Rozvoj* and *Kultúra*.

1. THE PERSONALISTIC THOMISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY

We can consider it as *the first wave* of the Slovak Personalism. It was represented by the thomistic philosophers and psychologists by whom the thesis about a man as a person was reflected only as an element of their philosophic-anthropological conception. They did not work up it separately

and they often simplified it in the sense that the whole personality of a man is included in a spiritual soul of a man and nothing is added to it from a body. Neothomism in its pure form occurs in the works of J. Šimalčík, J. Rybár and Š. Barnáš while in the works of P. Kost'ov and A. J. Šurjanský is modified namely by Blondelism. The named philosophers and theologians reached the top of their creativity in the period of the first Slovak Republic (1939 – 1945) and after the Communist coup in 1948, after they followed persecution they became silent and the curve of their activity started to descend. They contributed especially to the journals *Kultúra*, *Filozofický sborník* and *Obroda*. We are going to present the most important representatives.

Juraj Šimalčík (1895-1961) developed his anthropological conceptions in the book *Universe and God. Naturalscientific-philosophic Study* (1944) and in the preface to the Slovak translation of L.D. Nanassy's book *Human Soul* (1932). On the basis of the research of a living nature he came to the conclusion that spirituality does not come from a material basis but is created by God at all levels of life. He refused Darwinism resolutely. According to him, human soul is created by God directly. It is not divided, cannot be divided, is not destroyable and is personal on the basis by its own substance. God created it immediately after the creation of the embryo of a man. A man, as the most adequate picture of God in the world, has his basic role to give in the centre of his efforts – God. The divine chosen people, great persons, decide about the human history.

The Spiš's bishop **Štefan Barnáš** (1900-1964), in his study *Truth and Error of Individualism* (1944) refused the extreme individualism that contradicts to the Christian social teaching but he did not accept collectivism too. He solved the contradictory relationship between an individual and a collective by his conception of personality. He found possibility of its realization in the ranked society. In his study *Spirit is All* (1944) Barnáš meditated about the principle of spirit and spirituality as well as about their value at present. Spirituality of a man is according to him something sovereignly individual. Barnáš came from spirit to his conception of the spiritual culture that can grow up only at a communitarian basis. He developed the communitarian conception of the Catholic Church, from the Christocentric view in the work *Church and State and International Common Thought* (1947).

Peter Kost'ov (1911-1987), philosopher of the Croatian origin, took effort to the synthesis of the vitalistic and thomistic anthropology. In the work *The Problem of Soul from the Viewpoint of Vitalism* (1946) he came to the opinion by research of H. Driesch, Cl. Bernard and B. Bertalanffy that the

Vitalism offers scope for the philosophic research of soul that introduced him to a new way in anthropology, the problem of soul and its immortality. In the study *Psychical Phenomena and the Problem of Soul* (1946) Kost'ov found a cause and a scope of all psychical phenomena in soul, that he, however, understood substantial-statically, but in the connection with Vitalism he did not understand it as the substantial-dynamic personal factor. Kost'ov unified all his experiences about the vitalistic understanding of soul as a dynamic substantial factor (see the conception of N.O. Losskij) in his dissertation *The Problem of Soul in the Present Psychology* (1946).

Ján Rybár OSchP (1911-2004) in his book *Soul and Body. Relationships of a Soul and a Body and Their Mutual Influencing* (1943), comprehended soul from the nature of the mutual conditioning of psyche and physical status as an independent substance. According to him, the spiritual life is joined with brain but it oversteps this binding, it does not exhaust itself by some brain process. Rybár, in his understanding of a man, refused the spiritualistic and materialistic monism. He applies for dualism in the sense of what a man has a special soul. Rybár's observations aimed against racism and freudism applied at the personalistic viewpoint are especially precious.

Anton Ján Šurjanský (1912-1991), influenced by Blondelism, outlined the principles of his conception of a man in the extensive study *Being Appearance of Entity. Notes to the Ontology of Being* (1943). He came out of Kant, according to whom the most important task of a man is a position he has to occupy among beings and what he has to do to become more a man. He saw a human mission in this wanted "becoming" The basic value of a person lies in an implementation of himself. Therefore, the whole man is presented here, namely, not only in his ontic constancy and ability, but above all, in his active rising, in his activity. The whole man participates at the human action. The action is his existential face. Šurjanský found a deep connection between a man's existence and his acting. This, in the essence blondelic analysis, brought him to the concept of a person. According to him, the person is that "substantiality" human action that is the foundation (supposition) of the unique individual conscience and is the bearer of the responsible moral action. In the Šurjanský's anthropology the concept of humanity has a great importance. According to him, humanity is a unit of being of a man, his existential organization that is by one of his poles essentially the same at all people but through the second pole is remarkable by an individual being originality and personal uniqueness. A man, in fact,

becomes even by that, what he is, when he reflects his existential contents to his personal life, when he realizes it in the dimensions of his personality.

2. CULTURAL PERSONALISM

This stream of *the second wave* of the Slovak Personalism was formed from 1930 to 1945 in the outstanding new created spiritual-intellectual centre concentrated in the Theological Institute at Spišská Kapitula. The thinkers of that group were already oriented more distinctly personalistic and at the basis of Neothomism they actively acquired the impulses from the Austrian and the German dialogic personalists (especially F. Ebner and R. Guardini) and from the French personalists (especially E. Mounier and J. Maritain). But they drew a lot of impulses from the writers of the Christian literature (P. Lippert, T. Haecker, R.M. Rilke, G. Papini and the others). They formed ideologically more compact group. The person of F. Skyčák, the rector of the Spiš's Seminary, together with his most remarkable student L. Hanus, was its centre. S. Nahálka freely fastened them on. Leading order thinkers, more theologians than philosophers, I. Müller OP, J. Porubčan SJ, as well as the cardinal J.Ch. Cardinal Korec, improved their original personalistic conceptions on one hand in the direction of the ethical Personalism (Müller), on the other hand in the direction of the Teilhard Personalism (Porubčan) and in the direction of the Slovak national culture, namely its Cyril-Methodius tradition (J.Ch. Korec). The destiny of all of these thinkers was cruel. Skyčák died prematurely, Nahálka had to emigrate, and Hanus, Porubčan and Korec went into a deep illegality. They worked and delivered samizdated works there. Their works started to be published even after the November 1989. Š. Barnáš also belonged to this group, but he, because of his specific thomistic orientation, belonged more to the first group of the thinkers.

The father of the Slovak catholic cultural-philosophy, neothomist **František Skyčák** (1899-1945) stressed in his Personalism the importance of culture, namely in the specific Slovak conditions. In the work *New Slovak Claims* (1944) he understood under the culture a positive, especially, spiritual culture, encored in a person and in personality of a man. He limited the concept of the culture by the help of the marks of assiduity, human spirituality as well as the openness and liberality. He saws the substance of assiduity in the will to rise, forwarding, to leave the eyes open, to form the others and ourselves. According to him, specifically personal spiritualization

indicated by a purposive aiming upwards to the Holy Spirit (*The Independent Concept of World*, 1946), belongs to the substance of the cultureness. The substance of the openness and liberality is the courage to raise further and to gain the basic life's truths of a divine origin. A man liberates himself by openness from a hopeless, individual or social blocking or ceasing.

Ladislav Hanus (1907-1994) contributed significantly to the further development of the personalistic anthropology created on the basis of the Slovak cultural philosophy. He represented the opinion that the real, personalistic oriented anthropology can be created and applied in life only on the basis of the Christian universalism that, according to him, includes everything progressive from the cultural tradition of the West as well as from the traditions of the other cultures. Hanus understood the Christian humanism as the catholic one, namely in the broader meaning of the word "catholic" as "all embracing" (*Well-Rounding*, 1943). In the *Discourse about the Cultureness* (1944) he adhered the opinion that the catholic universalism is not in opposition to the catholic pluralism. The construction of a real and fruitful universalism can be, indeed, only pluralistic and integrative. The cultureness was understood by Hanus similarly to Skyčák. He only added to it the attributions of the natural basis, religiousness and goodness. In his cultural anthropology that was published after his death, *A Man and Culture* (1997), he was inspired by R. Guardini, T. Haecker, M. Scheler, D. Pecka, by the German culture anthropologists, but also by G. Marcel, P. Teilhard de Chardin. He came out of the thesis that a man is a person by his being, by that, he is a man, by that, and he is a bearer of a human nature. A man is pilgriming continually, from himself to himself and he is aiming to the fullness of his personality. The evolution of personality is possible, namely, not the person himself, but by the manner, that he becomes a spiritual and moral personality. The relationship between the person and personality expresses together with N.A. Luyten in the sense that personality, in his own sense, is a psychological realization of a prerogative of a person. To be a person, it is an ontological fact, to be personality; it is, however, an accomplishment. A man, though, is according to Hanus a complex ontological entity with the primacy of the spiritual principle. He is a rational, free, person-personal and not in the last level a historical being. History, historical period is inevitably needed by a man to be able to fulfill the contents and sense of his humanity, to be able to reveal at all sides and aspects.

Inocent Müller OP (1911-1994) emphasized Christocentric oriented Personalism. In the work *Natural Life of a Man* (1943) he characterized a man as

a personalized micro cosmos in which three levels of life – spiritual, sensitive and vegetative ones overlap through a very complicated way. Christ's person is present really in each believing Christian and it is intimately penetrated by his person. Christ is also a great mediator of the personal trinitary Divine life – *Mediator* (1944). In his study *The Virgin Mary and Our Spiritual Life* (1945) he considered the Mother of God for the human quintessence of the incarnated Sophie.

Štefan Nahálka (1916-1975) was forced to live in emigration from 1953. He oriented his conception of the Christian realism under the influence of the ideas of Thomas Aquinas, M. Blondel, and N.O. Losskij explicitly personalistically. He was influenced deeply by the philosophy of J. Maritain, whose study *The Catholic in the World Today* he published in 1946. He also published a study about Maritain in the journal *Verbum* in 1948. He belonged among the first who propagated G. Marcel's dialogic Personalism in Slovakia. In his dissertation *Love in the Spiritual Life* (1947) he presented convincingly that the modern, individualistically based psychology and philosophy neither led to the increase of love nor it knows the phenomenon of love cope with. In the study *Love as Ethos of Personality* (1947) Nahálka showed at the great possibilities of the ethic Personalism based on the understanding of living and a concrete interpersonal love. He could, together with other Slovak emigrants, publish his philosophically and theologically oriented studies in the Slovak emigrant journals *Most*, *Echo*, *Slovak Studies*, *Hlasy z Ríma*, *Diakonia* and the others, even during the totalitarian regime.

Thinking of the cardinal **Ján Chryzostom Cardinal Korec** (1924) is forwarding in the intentions of the Slovak cultural anthropology in which the ontological encoring of a man in Transcendence and his beingly given openness to God and eternity is underlined brightly. In the work *Who is a Man?* (1993) he developed the thought that, for the fact, a man should not become – said with Max Picard – a man “...on the run before him himself, before that, what he denied and reproved in himself”, it is inevitable to open himself to Transcendence. A man, at understanding of his final destination and opening to God, can forever enlarge his spirit, namely not the empty-fying and helpless spirit of the rationalists but the evangelical apostle Paul, intensified by the Holy Spirit. A man can raise himself to the higher unity in culture and in the whole civilization only with such a spirit. He reaches it all by his spirit, but only in the case, when the Holy Spirit that raises whole his complex being to the admirable personal unity appeals at him. According to Korec, to reach such an understanding of a man, the embodying

in the spiritual and cultural tradition of the whole mankind, especially the Christianity, as well as in the tradition of the nation to which we belong, is inevitable. In the case of the Slovak nation this original and everlasting renewing tradition in the history is the Cyril-Methodius tradition (*Cyril-Methodius Tradition*, 1993, *Contemplations about a Man I-II*, 1992-1993).

Influenced by P. Teilhard de Chardin and E. Mersch, **Jozef Porubčan SJ** (1925-1998) developed Christ centric oriented Personalism. In his basic work *Evolution and Love*, meditation about the Gospel, which was published as a book only in 1993 under the title *Gospel, a man and Cosmos*, Porubčan developed the concept of a new man – *homo diligens* as the last, the highest “wave” in the creation-evolutionary forwarding of cosmos. He was a convincing apostle and a follower of the civilization of love.

3. SOCIAL-PHILOSOPHICAL PERSONALISM

The real prosperity of the Slovak Personalism started after the World War II (*the third wave*). It claimed in the opposition against each form of the totalitarianism and extreme nationalism at one side but also against all forms of the socialism fraught by the communist and atheistic ideology. It appeared under various names – as solidarism, Christian socialism, Christian social theory and the others. It was reflected namely in the new intellectual centre gathered around the Košice publishers of the periodical *Verbum* that was preceded, in 1944 and 1945, by the revue *Obroda*. *Verbum* was allied also by the journals *Filozoficky sborník*, and *Nová práca*. A prompt publication of some papal social encyclical letters helped to the expansion of this stream of Personalism. At the lutheran side the periodicals *Nové prúdy* and *Tvorba* were published in a very similar spirit. To point at the political dailies, it was, above all, the organ of the Democratic Party – *Čas*. The works of some outstanding Christian personalists were translated and more carefully interpreted than before, namely J. Maritain, E. Gilson, M. Blondel, H. Bergson, R. Guardini; from the western Europeans and from the Russian side V Solovjov, N.O. Losskij, P. Sorokin and N. Berdjajev. The spiritual entity of religion, philosophy, science, policies and economy was stressed at the personalistic basis. They presented the thesis about a mutual openness of Christianity and socialism. The wanted Christianity becomes more social a socialism more Christian. Communitarism and a status system were preferred to democracy and Christian socialism. This stream was hardly suppressed

in February 1948 by the communists and its representatives – except of S. Hatala – they were not able to create and continue in their work and publish their samizdates in illegality. We are going to introduce the main representatives of this stream.

Ignác Gašparec (1915-1987) saw in Personalism the basis for the restoration of a natural order of values and finding the right measure at all fields of life of an individual and society. Particularism and universalism in Personalism can be brought to its full-meaning oneness. Through its understanding it is possible to release from the power of each forms of the social and political tyranny. In social philosophy Gašparec subscribed thoughts of the social establishment.

Cyril Dudáš (1910-1982) as a professor of a moral theology and Christian social philosophy also formulated his anthropological origins, namely, in his large-scale work *Problem of Equality. Studies from the Social Ethics* (1946). He developed, in it, his conception of the ethic Personalism on the basis of the thomistic philosophy. Opposite to the extremes of liberalism and collectivism he elucidated in his work the synthesis of the Christian Personalism where only each human individual as a person with his dignity and non-substitution can be appreciated properly. He deepened his personalistic anthropology, especially, in the study *Person and Personality* (1947).

The lutheran bishop of the Zvolen district **Rudolf Košťal** (*1913) further completed the Christian communitarism up to the social consequences. In the work *Christianity and Social Issues* (1946) revalues from the personalistic view up to now teaching of the Christian Churches about the relationship to the private property. He relativized noticeably claims for a private property. According to him, an ownership is legitimate until it does not deform a human personality.

More theological oriented neothomist **Ján Bubán** (*1914) laid the foundation of his understanding of a man in his work *Philosophy of Freedom* (1944). According to him, human action understood in its basis as a love leads to good, due to its naturalness that is spiritual and personal. So he is spontaneously looking for good, he loves, perfects himself and desires for blessedness. All of a man's soul mightiest – intellect, will and feelings participate at every human action. Will is, principally, free. It is an immediate manifestation of soul as a metaphysical substance. A man can be lead to freedom from outside and from inside. So the cardinal freedom of a will should be, according to him, distinguished from the finishing freedom.

The finishing freedom takes its character of the moral freedom only when is supported by the moral law.

The neothomist **Štefan Hatala** (1913-1991) developed parallel with L. Hanus at the Slovak special cultural anthropology. In the work *Christian Humanism* (1944) he outlined the possibility of the synthesis of Christianity with the Modern Age by transferring to the synthesis of the all positive, that the history brought. As Hanus, Hatala understood Catholicism in its universal sense. According to him, the whole nature through the morally cleaned naturalness of a man is raised and integrated to the historical Christianity. Only this universal and universalistic Christian humanism that was strictly presented by J. Maritain is able to transform to a positive development in the history. In the article *Our Catholic Present* (1944) Hatala stressed that the catholic universalism or universalistic Catholicism needs a whole man and it is possible only when Christ enters the man's life and his culture. Hatala's book *Christian Social Order* (1948) followed this direction. It is a great contribution to the Christian solution of the social issue and the social ethics at the personalistic basis. Hatala, from the personalistic point of view, criticized the individualism of the West, culminating in liberalism and pointed at the pillars of the harmonic real possible social system. He defended freedom of every man, namely against the marxist and scientific determinism in his work *Role of Personality in History* (1947). He paid also a great attention to the personalistic anthropology of Teilhard de Chardin in the non-published works *Theillard's Phenomenon. Noosphere of Structures. Noosphere in Understanding V. I. Vernadskij, Historical Materialism and Teilhard de Chardin* (1950).

4. PERSONALISM IN THE LAST TWO DECADES

After 1990 the personalistic philosophy could be finally developed freely also in Slovakia. But it connected the tradition that was before 1948 only hardly and sporadically. The communist regime totally cut down the historical continuity. At the Department of Philosophy of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Trnava a research in the field of philosophical Personalism started successfully. From 1996 there were solved gradually more institutional projects. At present a grant project in the field of Personalism is solved. All members of the Department gradually are oriented at the personalistic philosophy and so we can speak about *the fourth wave* of the Slovak Persona-

lism. The Department publishes a series of monothematic anthologies *Acta Philosophica Tyrnaviensia* around that a great number of the Christian oriented philosophers are gathered. The Department and the anthology was founded by **Ján Letz** (*1936), who published, before November 1989, as samizdates several works from the field of the Christian philosophy and the Slovak philosophy. Some of them are relating to the problems of the philosophic Personalism. In 1994 he published the monograph *Philosophic Anthropology* where he was concentrated in a special part of the philosophy of a person aimed at the important ethical and eschatological consequences. He tried to bring his original philosophical conception of the creative-evolutionary and experiential-evolutionary philosophy to the special personalistic synthesis. He consciously followed up with the Slovak thinkers J. Porubčan, L. Hanus and A.J. Šurjanky and at their philosophic-theological conceptions. In 2006 he published monograph about the personalistic philosophy of the 20th century *Personalistical Methaphysics* in which he presented more than two hundred personalistic thinkers from the whole world. In the framework of the series *Acta Philosophica Tyrnaviensia* gradually were published these collections: *Understanding of a Person in the Christian Philosophy* (1997), *The Personal Identity of a Man* (1998), *The Problems of Personal Self-Identification at the Present Culture* (1999), *Personality of a Man in His Spiritual Dimension* (2000), *The Fundamental Role of Love in the Dialogue Among Civilizations* (2001), *The Actual Issues of Philosophic Personalism with the Perspective to Future* (2002), *Past and Present Forms of Personalistic Philosophy* (2003) and *For the Personalistic Culture* (2004). The Department organized six scientific conferences oriented at the problems of the personalistic philosophy: *Personal Self-Identification in the Present Culture* (1999), *A Man, Culture, Values thinking* (2000), *Role of Love in a Dialogue among Civilizations* (2001), *The Actual Issues of Philosophic Personalism* (2002), *For the Personalistic Culture* (2004) and *Man and Woman from Personalistic Point of View* (2005). As for the titles of the conferences and collections presented in the original studies, more than seventy solve a great number of the problems from the personalistic philosophy, the identity of person, personal identification in ontogenesis of a man, personal identification in the present culture, relationship of a person and personality, relationship between conscience and a person, relationship of value and a person, the role of love in the interpersonal dialogue, forms of personalistic philosophy, as well as the perspective of personalistic, especially perichoretic, agapic and trinitary metaphysic.

Rather a big attention is also devoted to the research of the historical forms of philosophical Personalism (for instance – to the dialogic and axiological Personalism), as well as to the important personalistic thinkers (R. Guardini, A. Saint-Exupéry, J. Patočka, L. Stefanini, A. Rigobello, E. Levinas, K. Wojtyła, J. H. Newman, J. Maritain and the others). They also studied the uniquenesses of the national Personalism (the American – J. Letz and L. Tkáčik, the French – J. Letz, the Italian – A. Rajský, the German – J. Letz, the Polish – B. Motyl', and the Russian – H. Hrehová). At the study of personalistic philosophy there were purposely applied various viewpoints: metaphysical (J. Letz, S. Gálikova-Tolnayová), epistemological and phenomenological (A. Démuth, A. Rajský, P. Rusnák), anthropological (S. Gálik, J. Letz, O. Brezinský), ontological (J. Letz), philosophic-theological (R. A. Slavkovský), mystical (S. Gálik), religionistic (R.A. Slavkovský, S. Gálik, B. Motyl') and not at the last level ethical (H. Hrehová, L. Tkáčik, M. Mandzela, Y. Bárniková, K. Glasová, J. Hrašková and Z. Žilová). The Department of Philosophy educated several successful young philosophers through the problems of personalistically and existentially oriented philosophy, analyzed in dissertations, namely **Slavomir Gálik** (*1965), **Adrián Reginald Slavkovský** (*1963), **Ladislav Tkáčik** (*1973) and **Andrej Démuth** (*1974). **Helena Hrehová** (*1950) is oriented in the spirit of personalistic philosophy, at the moral philosophy (Thomism, Neothomism), ethics (history of the ethics and social ethics) and moral theology (theology of virtues). She grew up intellectually in Italy. Her researches in the field of The Russian-Orthodox personalistic philosophy are remarkable (P.A. Florensky, B. Vyšeslavcev, S.N. Bulgakov, and the others).

Further perspective evolution of the Slovak Personalism can be expected.

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SŁOWACKI PERSONALIZM W XX I XXI WIEKU

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Artykuł prof. Jána Letza z Trnawy (Słowacja), napisany w języku angielskim, pokazuje trzy źródła personalizmu uprawianego na terenie Słowacji: myśl tomistyczna, kultura chrześcijańska i myśl społeczno-filozoficzna, mająca również w dużej mierze podłoże chrześcijańskie. Na podkreślenie zasługuje fakt, że autor artykułu po raz pierwszy dokonuje całościowej prezentacji tego nurtu, który ma być wyróżnikiem kultury myślowej Słowaków, związanej przez stulecia z duchem chrześcijaństwa. Dzięki przedstawionym poglądom poznajemy wspólnotę tradycji, kultury i ducha – łączących Słowację i Polskę.

Słowa kluczowe: słowacki personalizm, antropologia chrześcijańska, osoba, osobowość, tomizm.

Key words: Slovak personalism, Christian anthropology, person, personality, Thomism.