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## Slovak Discourse on Science at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries

This project focuses on the phenomenon of Slovak scientific nationalism at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. It examines its presence in public discourse on science within Slovak periodicals and through the example of the Slovak Museum Society (Muzeálna slovenská spoločnosť) as an institutional platform for organizing Slovak science, established in 1893. The study explores how science (with an emphasis on the study and reception of natural sciences) was constructed as a tool for national emancipation, cultural legitimization, and the modernization project of national ideology within the broader Hungarian and European political and cultural contexts. This work is based on research conducted for my doctoral dissertation (2023) titled *Science and Scientific Progress in the Reception of the Slovak Elites at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries* and intended to further elaborate this research with the aim of preparing a monograph.

The methodology of the project is built upon a theoretical framework that integrates two core concepts: the circulation of knowledge in the context of ideological and political reception of scientific ideas and nationalization of science. Specifically, I employ the concept of scientific nationalism as introduced by G. Palló, who defined two possible meanings of the concept of scientific nationalism: I. as the straightforward political instrumentalization of science and its results for the purpose of legitimizing nationalist ideology and politics and secondary, II. as the reflection of national ideology in scientific methods, in the structure of scientific institutions, and in the content produced.

Given that the Slovak polemics regarding science were not primarily academic or professional disputes but rather a broader cultural and ideological reception of science, I draw also upon Kapil Raj's concept of the circulation of knowledge, which posits that the reception of science functions like a relay race, where information is actively transformed by both the transmitter and the recipient according to their respective local contexts. Therefore, I analyze how the Slovak intelligentsia appropriated science or transformed scientific ideas through their reception, aligning them with the objectives of their political ideology. The German research project *Weltanschauung, Philosophie und Naturwissenschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* (2007), edited by Kurt Bayertz, Myriam Gerhard, and Walter Jaeschke, proved exceptionally inspiring for interpreting archival research findings within the context of ideological disputes over the normative function of science.

A significant portion of the primary sources of research consisted of contemporary periodicals (*Časopis Museálnej slovenskej spoločnosti*, *Hlas*, *Katolícke noviny*, *Národné noviny*, *Prúdy*, *Robotnícke noviny*, *Sborník Slovenskej Museálnej spoločnosti*, *Slovenské listy*, *Slovenské pohľady*, etc.) in the Slovak language, specifically program-defining articles on science and progress, alongside separately published essays. The qualitative analysis focused on the conceptualization of science and its instrumentalization within the context of political ideology and worldview. The archival research was also conducted through an analysis of sources related to the Slovak Museum Society, as well as the Associations of Slovak students in Prague (under the name *Detvan*) and in Vienna (*Tatran*), whose members stood behind the establishment of the journal *Hlas*. Furthermore, I examined manuscript collections and the personal correspondence of key intellectual and political figures, who were actors in Slovak public discourse on science, including B. Pavlů, V. Šrobár, A. Štefánek, Š. Osuský, J. A. Wagner, F. Jehlička, I. Lilge, S. H. Vajanský, J. Škultéty, A. Kmet', J. Janoška, and others.

A central finding of this research is the phenomenon of chronological compression: the circles of Slovak intelligentsia close to journal *Hlas* and later *Prúdy* enthusiastically adopted positivism and ideas of darwinism, as well as social evolutionism, at the exact moment when the European intellectual mainstream began to embrace fin-de-siècle anti-positivism and irrationalism. Consequently, an intellectual irony emerged: while the progressives

championed a „delayed“ positivism to modernize national ideology, the conservatives paradoxically drew argumentative support, alongside Catholic neo-tomism, also from the European trends in scientific agnosticism or in rehabilitation of irrationality, religion and mysticism (Du Bois-Reymond, C. Flammarion, Benjamin Kidd as illustrative examples) to defend their traditional worldviews.

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