

Czech Sociology of Industrial Working Class¹ Until 1948

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The submitted study tries to organize the heterogeneous sociological production devoted to the issue of (not only) the industrial working class until 1948. The purpose of such organization of sociological reflection of that period is to show the position of the issue in Czech sociology, to ascertain the main pieces of knowledge on Czech working class before 1948 and to try to assess what from the production of that period can be used also in the current historical-sociological research. Both sociology and history follow coincidentally the social phenomena and processes, but each of the disciplines does it from another perspective. The different character of the subject under research is given by the perspective, not by the subject as such.

As sociology tries to bring knowledge on the current of social events before current events become history, it ends up in an epistemologically different situation in relation to historical knowledge. The first feature consists in lower degree of presence of what is called historical distance. Less distance may reduce the objectivity of knowledge, because the researcher is more than in history involved in the process researched by him, and his value attitudes come more into play. On the other hand, it is evident for us to explain the present on the background of the past and to reinterpret the past according to our current situation: thus seeking objectiveness both of historical and of sociological knowledge does not concern two discrete options (objectiveness / non-objectiveness) but two poles of a continuum. Additionally, sociology creates different mechanisms of objectification (statistical analysis being the most strongest) to control subjective attitudes of the researchers.

Additionally to this rather abstract difference of epistemological situation of the sociologist and the historian, there is difference in creation of the data used in research. The data constitute symbolical representations of the reality we want to describe; they do not constitute the reality as such but representations of the reality at the lowest degree of abstraction. The historian usually (i.e. particularly except for oral history and related procedures) has such data as already given, and his proceeding resembles more the process of finding or discovering (seeking of data in the archive). The sociologist often really creates them, trying to capture the live reality into its symbolical representation through direct observation or by recording the actors' statements in a form that is often interactive (questioning, interviewing). The active element of data creation is much more present, although it is not completely absent in the historian's work either. The records (summaries) the historian keeps about the results of his research of archive materials (e.g. creation of database of names

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and characteristics of the life stories of persons described in the archives) are nothing else than creation of data about data, i.e. symbolical representations of symbolical representations. When interpreting such data of the first and second degree, the historian constructs historical facts and creates typologies and theories based on them.

By reconstructing the sociological perspective of a given period and by including it in historical perspective, we can try to interconnect both perspectives and both data types, i.e. sociological and historical data. The result should consist in a more comprehensive view on the phenomena studied and in a more faithful (re)construction of the picture of the past social events.

1. Periodization of the History of the Czech Sociology

The issue of periodization of the history of the Czech sociology is not related to much dispute, although the detailed periodization differs slightly in different authors' works. The history of the discipline coincides considerably with the political history of the Czech lands. The first, so called pre-sociological period can be dated from the mid-19th century to World War I. Sociology, or proto-sociology, respectively, had rather the character of history philosophy and social philosophy at that time. The most significant figures of that period, from the perspective of sociology, include B. Bolzano, G. A. Lindner and T. G. Masaryk. The latter was a figure of the same significance to the development of sociology as to the Czech, or Czechoslovak political development.

The twenty years between the two wars constitute a qualitatively new period of the Czech sociology. That period can be termed, without exaggeration, the "golden period of the Czech sociology"². Sociology develops at all levels: research, teaching, publication activity, translations, institutional background and public prestige. World War II was a strong intervention in the Czech intellectual life as a whole, including sociology. As recent research of Z. R. Nešpor has shown, sociology did not completely cease to exist in that period; several dozens of persons even performed it as a job. Nevertheless, the quality and the factual contribution of the studies, that were rather fictitious in some cases, were minimal, if any. The period of promising post war recovery did not last long. The political revolution of February 1948 caused stronger intervention to the Czech sociology than World War II. Sociology was declared "bourgeois pseudoscience" and cancelled at all levels. From the perspective of our interest in the period of 1938–1948, we can state that it was a period that had its inner continuity, in spite of the effect of World War II, and that the continuity was radically interrupted only by the year 1948.

Sociology was restored only in 1960s, and until 1989, we can speak of that third stage as of a period of Marxist sociology, although that adjective was partially imposed to sociology "from above". The new stage in the history of the discipline after 1989 reminds of the interwar period in many regards, as the discipline experiences quantitative development and further differentiation. But we miss the necessary historical distance to make a summarizing evaluation. We are, of course, interested mainly in the period until 1948 that concludes not only one stage of political development of the Czech lands but also the up to then

² That period is researched the most thoroughly in Zdeněk R. NEŠPOR, *Republika sociologů. Zlatá éra české sociologie v meziválečném období a krátce po druhé světové válce*, Praha 2011.

relatively most successful stage of the Czech sociology, although its discursive results may not seem too revolutionary to us.

From the perspective of institutional development, the Czech sociology had experienced the most substantial events in the interwar period already (the development of the Czech sociology until 1948 is mapped in detail in the publication called "Institucionální zázemí české sociologie před nástupem marxismu"³). Sociology obtained permanent position in university premises: first at Charles' University in Prague (1919) and subsequently in Brno (1921). In 1920s, Masaryk Sociological Society was established (1925). In 1930s, two branch journals were founded: "Sociologická revue" (1930) and "Sociální problémy" (1931). Sociology, similarly to sociology in Poland and unlike sociology in Hungary, had strong position in the State Statistical Office, i.e. in an organization with republic-wide reach, the most important organization from the perspective of collection, creation and archiving of quantitative social data.

A research sociological institute focused on workers' issues was almost created. In 1930, the author of the first bigger study on working class, I. A. Bláha, presented a lecture called "Workers' research institute"⁴ in the Masaryk Sociological Society, presenting a proposal of a research workplace with such focus and supporting it with arguments, but the proposal was not implemented. Undoubtedly also because the Great Depression started catching fire again. The text of the lecture was printed in the subsequent year on the pages of the main branch periodical, "Sociologická revue". Its text shows both Bláha's simple analytical scheme used to analyse the workers' way of life and the absence of more creditable analyses of the Czech working class, or of Czech analyses of the workers' issue that would particularize the very concept of working class as a tool of sociological analysis.

Additionally to Bláha's contribution to the area of building of sociological cognition, he contributed significantly also to building of sociological institutions, which included, additionally to establishing and long-term directing of the first Czech sociological periodical, establishing and directing of the academic institution of Brno, also organization of research and research teams. Bláha's study of the peasant and the worker as two social types corresponds to his leading of sociological section at the Agricultural Academy and to research implemented at the Sociological Seminar of Masaryk University. In 1924, the Czechoslovak Agricultural Academy was established. Milan Hodža, long time minister of agriculture and later prime minister (1935–1938), who was also member of Masaryk Sociological Society, became its president. Commission for Sociology of the Country was established at the Agricultural Academy at his instigation. Bláha was appointed its president and Chalupný⁵ its vice-president. Nevertheless, the surviving articles by A. Štefánek, published in the Bulletin of the Czech Agricultural Academy, show that the Sociological Condition definitely did not rank among the most productive ones; in other words, it was the part of one of the least

3 Zdeněk R. NEŠPOR, *Institucionální zázemí české sociologie před nástupem marxismu*, Praha 2007, 89.

4 Inocenc A. BLÁHA, Výzkumný ústav dělnický I., in: *Sociologická revue*, 2, 1931, 2, 165–175; Inocenc A. BLÁHA, Výzkumný ústav dělnický II., in: *Sociologická revue*, 2, 1931, 3, 310–316.

5 Emil VORÁČEK, Emanuel Chalupný, problémy rozvoje sociologie v Československu 20. let a vznik Masarykovy sociologické společnosti, in: Emanuel Chalupný, česká kultura, česká sociologie a Tábor, Josef ZUMR (ed.), Praha 1999, 107–132.

active sections of the Academy, of the Enlightenment Section, presided by Štefánek ⁶. Another plan, the Women's Research Institute, ended up similarly to the Workers' Research Institute. So the above stated efforts remain as a document of the ability of sociological anticipation of principal sociological topics of the second half of the twentieth century. More successful was his initiative in the organization of empirical research within the Sociological Seminar of Brno. In 1932, case study of the village of Velká nad Veličkou⁷ was performed; after the war, he coordinated an extensive research Brno that, unfortunately, became subject to political disputes and arguments, which was partially reflected in the return rate of the questionnaires used and in the data quality.⁸ But the surviving data complex has respectable size; the gross estimate of its volume is about 20,000 questionnaires.

The Czech pre-Marxist sociology of working class owes for example contributions of the second generation of the Czech sociologists to Bláha's organizational and founder effort. Thanks to his scientific and teacher performance and to considerable level also thanks to his personal charisma, Bláha became head of so called Brno Sociological School, often called also Bláha's Sociological School. Mojmír Hájek was the one from that second sociological generation who contributed most considerably to sociology of working class. We will deal particularly with their texts in the following analysis of the Czech book production.

2. Industrial Working Class in Reflection of the Czech Sociology Until 1948

To understand the sociological production related to the issue of Czech industrial working class before 1948, it is necessary to embrace a relatively extensive book and journal sociological production. The book production captures particularly extensive research and relatively long-term research activities. Journal studies, on their part, reflect more the variety of the sociological studies of that time, including smaller studies performed individually. Processing of the book production is facilitated by the existence of the "Bibliografie české knižní sociologické literatury"⁹. In case of sociological journals, we could rely on our preceding studies, using the existing data from their contents analysis.

2.1 Book Production

The first publications related to worker issues emerge in the proto-sociological period already. The probably first thorough theoretical work of that period, dealing with working

6 Anton ŠTEFÁNEK, K úkolům VI. odboru ČAZ v oboru venkovské sociologie, in: Věstník Československé akademie zemědělské, 1928, 4, 393–395; Anton ŠTEFÁNEK, K dalším úkolům ČAZ v oboru sociologie venkova, in: Věstník Československé akademie zemědělské, 1929, 5, 325–327.

7 Inocenc A. BLÁHA, Sociologický výzkum Velké, in: Sociologická revue, 15, 1932, 1–2, 92–99.

8 According to I. Gaďourek, the questionnaire of the Brno research was enclosed to food stamps and Bláha promoted the survey in form of press conference where media promised to support him. But, by mistake, one (undisclosed) right-wing newspaper was not invited and, in return for it, it pitched into the survey as a "new means of the communists to control people", which provoked a media skirmish and subsequently mistrust of the respondents. That, understandably, was reflected in the return rate and the quality of data (Ivan GAĎOUREK, Cestou Komenského. Vzpomínky z mládí účastníka třetího odboje, Brno 2006, 75–76).

9 Nela HESOVÁ a kol., Bibliografie české knižní sociologické literatury (do roku 2009), Praha 2010.

class issue from more abstract perspective, is Masaryk's "Otázka sociální"¹⁰, constituting at the same time the first thorough Czech critical review of Marxism. The first empirical work, although approaching empiricism as was usual at that time, is Chalupný's "Poměry dělnictva Táboorského"¹¹ inspired by Engels' work "The Condition of the Working Class in England". Particularly Bláha's work "Sociologie sedláka a dělníka"¹² deserves mentioning from the "golden period" of the Czech sociology. Bláha's work was in fact the first systematic sociological attempt to approach the issue of working class as a whole. Working class became subject of research interest rather in the context of sociology of settlements, specifically sociology of the town, and in studies focused on the area of social policy and social work, because a substantial part of the working class ranked among the poorest classes of population who worked, although Bláha alerted to a strong social differentiation of the working class already. I. A. Bláha and M. Hájek, the representatives of the Brno Sociological School, dealt with working class in narrower sense, i.e. as with the main subject of research interest; we will pay them more detailed attention.

2.1.1 Bláha's "Sociology of the Peasant and the Worker" As Research of Social Types

Bláha's processing of the working class issue can be characterized as research of social types. His research of social types includes a broad thematic range: additionally to researching the worker and the peasant as two different social types¹³ and additionally to researching the topic of intelligence, research by Bláha in the long term,¹⁴ it may include a great part of Bláha's deliberation of the issue of people, nation, nationality and typical features of Czech national character¹⁵. Although the three first topics – worker, peasant, intellectual – constitute structural elements of the national society and the issues of people and nation are related to its complex, it is useful to approach them individually when discussing Bláha's sociology, because in this way we can characterize in summary Bláha's mature sociological work approximately from mid-1920s, particularly from the methodological perspective, but also from the perspective of sociological theory.

Bláha's approach to the social type is situated somewhere between Durkheim's approach, explained in the "Pravidla sociologické metody"¹⁶, and M. Weber's methodological tool of ideal type. Both Durkheim and Weber seek systematically the middle course between the extreme of historical monographs of historicism, breaking the general laws in description of unique situations, and the opposite tendencies of philosophy of the history, specifying in speculative manner universally valid concepts with the ambition to include the whole mankind. Durkheim himself suggested the method of definition of social types in the direction of building of so called social morphology, dealing primarily with geographic, demograph-

10 Tomáš G. MASARYK, *Otázka sociální* I., II., Praha 1948.

11 CHALUPNÝ, Emanuel – PAVLÍK, Josef: *Poměry dělnictva Táboorského*, Tábor 1903.

12 Inocenc A. BLÁHA, *Sociologie sedláka a dělníka. Příspěvek k sociologii společenských vrstev*, Praha 1925.

13 Ibidem.

14 Inocenc A. BLÁHA, *Sociologie inteligence*, Praha 1937.

15 Inocenc A. BLÁHA, *O české národní povaze*, in: *Morava (zvláštní otisk)*, 2, 1926, 5.

16 Émile DURKHEIM, *Pravidla sociologické metody*, Praha 1926.

ic and organizational characteristics of groups. Weber's ideal type, on his part, is a purely heuristic tool to capture general characteristics of a specific phenomenon or process. When researching the social type, Bláha tries to depict the distinctive characteristics (physiological, mental, morphological and moral) and features in a specific group¹⁷. Without referring explicitly to Durkheim or Weber, he connects Durkheim's intention to structure the all-encompassing sum of people – termed vaguely "the society" – with Weber's effort not to reduce the qualitative particularities of different groups (e.g. by introducing unilaterally the economic criterion for division of classes).

The specific character of social relations in which the individual is situated and of the corresponding social pressures including the related material and geographic conditions plays a crucial role in the structure of the social type. Social type is primarily a specific mental and moral type, but it has its manifestation also at the material level (in dressing, housing, consumption structure, etc.). The examination of the social types of peasant, worker or intellectual includes primarily the examination of their life style. The social type created in a specific social situation may be examined at different levels of generality as well as social situations. Therefore we can speak about the nation also as about a type developed in social situation.

In his work from the 1920s, Bláha elaborated a simple, but not trivial, scheme for sociological description of the working class as a specific social type (consisting from further subtypes). The worker category is a category of a specific type of professions. That is why Bláha pays attention to the methods of classification of professional and working activities. According to him, physical work aimed at production of economic goods¹⁸, working dependence and lack of liberty consisting in absence of own production means¹⁹ are characteristic to the worker's profession; the working inferiority is accompanied by economic inferiority, i.e. poverty. He summarizes his characteristics of the worker's social profile: "Thus material work, working dependence and poverty, these are three social features of worker's profile."²⁰ An essential part of the analysis is devoted to the way of life, created based on a specific profession. That way of life, or, in Bláha's terminology, "life structure", is divided into mental and material. Bláha tried to depict the peasant and the worker as specific "social types" who "are not opposed to each other as two classes but as two different ways of life"²¹. When studying social types, Bláha studied particularly their life styles. In compliance with the holistic approach to study of social phenomena according to the axes indicated above, Bláha divided the study into material "life structure" (housing, nutrition, clothing, structure of expenses, character of work, etc.), and mental "life structure" (language, aesthetic taste, preferred cultural goods, relation to education, etc.) and paid attention both to collective characteristics (using statistics) and individual displays (using illustrations from own observation but also artistic illustrations, particularly literature of fiction). Characteristic was his emphasis of own observation, findings from interviews and meetings with repre-

17 BLÁHA, 1925.

18 Ibidem, 29.

19 Ibidem, 30.

20 Ibidem, 32.

21 Ibidem, 98.

sentatives of industrial workers and peasants. Additionally to the income, housing and character of work, he paid attention also to minor and seemingly individual characteristics, stating that "the movements, gestures, vesture and speech reflect specific life structure, specific requirements of politeness, taste, popularity, fashion..."²² and trying to link those "soft" social characteristics to the above stated "hard" characteristics, drawn extensively from official statistics. He did not implement his own quantitative research of the working class. He got the nearest to it when studying the post war Brno, but the study has not been processed yet.

2.1.2 Hájek's Sociology of the Mine Workers

Bláha's footsteps were followed most consistently, in empirical line, by Mojmír Hájek who focused mainly on the mining profession. His sociology of the miner displays marked imprint of Bláha's sociology of social types and of his methodological pluralism and terminology. To collect data, Hájek used primarily different types of group and individual interviews, as well as participating observation (during the occupation, he performed forced labour in the Július mine in Zastávka u Brna where his intention to work about the miners originated), analysis of written official data and statistics, interviews with experts on different sections of miner life, miner autobiographies, correspondence and different individual written records and statements. Questionnaires constituted rather a supplementary tool, due to their unreliability in the social environment "where mistrust to written language prevails"²³. But it rather seems that it was Hájek's mistrust to quantitative sociology, or to validity of questionnaire inquiries, respectively, because he had similarly avoided questionnaire inquiry in his pre-war monograph on the sociology of the country, arguing that country people do not like to fill in "forms"²⁴. But Hájek's effort resulted in relatively comprehensive description of miner life style, divided, analogously to Bláha and with the help of Bláha's terminology, into "material life structure" (clothing, housing, nutrition and consumption in general, hygiene, population behaviour) and "spiritual life structure" (political, cultural, religious, legal, moral, aesthetical life). He paid attention to details like hairstyle of miners' women and girls in different life stages or miners' slang. Hájek "inherited" not only cold relation to questionnaire inquiries but also an extraordinarily lengthy style of writing from Bláha.

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Additionally to works dealing explicitly with working class, the worker issue was indirectly reflected in a number of books; their detailed detection is almost impossible and it probably would not be efficient. It is necessary to make at least a mention of three areas of the sociologists' interest that reflected the workers' issue indirectly, but not marginally. At the level of sociological theory, it is primarily the political aspect of the working class, i.e. the issue of socialism, Marxism and political organization of the working class. At the

²² Ibidem, 43.

²³ Mojmír HÁJEK, *Sociologie horníka I.* (manuscript), Brno 1966, 6.

²⁴ Mojmír HÁJEK, *Jak funguje moravská vesnice (Neslovice) v oblasti života kulturního?*, in: *Sociologická revue*, 11, 1940, 3–4, 174–189.

level of empirical studies, it is the sociological production from the area of social policy and social work. Probably the largest implemented research of this type is represented by Machotka's study of socially needy families in the capital, Prague²⁵. The study reaches also a third area, consisting in the sociology of the town. The working class and primarily the industrial working class constitute mainly a town phenomenon, and therefore it becomes naturally an integral part of analysis of the town as modern social phenomenon. The most extensive research of that type in interwar period consisted in the study of urbanization of the surroundings of Prague, supported by Rockefeller Foundation in 1938²⁶. The second big research consists in Bláha's postwar study of Brno, from which only marginal outputs without relation to the worker issue were published, and the major part of the material is still waiting for processing. Working class was of course dealt with not only by sociology but also by other social sciences. We should mention particularly the work of V. Verunáč, an economist, "Dělnická otázka a náš průmysl"²⁷ that was published even before the above stated Bláha's book, or his "Racionalisace, vědecká organisace a otázka sociální"²⁸.

2.2 Journal Production

2.2.1 Characteristics of Sociological Journals

Professional journals represent perhaps the most representative platform of sociological discourse of that time. In the relevant period, until 1948, there were three sociological journals in total on the territory of the Czech Republic, two of them in the Czech countries and one in Slovakia. We have included the Slovak journal in the analysis as well, first because also Czech authors published their articles in it, and second because in the period when the journal was published, the Czech and Slovak sociology constituted formally the Czechoslovak sociology.

"Sociologická revue" was the most significant journal. It started being published in 1930 and, with a war break between 1941 and 1945, it was published relatively regularly until 1949 when its publishing was stopped for political reasons. "Sociologická revue" was the official periodical of Masaryk Sociological Society. It was funded probably in part by the Society, but a considerable part came from private resources, including from the income of I. A. Bláha, its editor in chief, founder of the Sociological Seminar in Brno, who led the journal during its whole existence, until World War II together with E. Chalupný and J. L. Fischer. The journal was published quarterly, but its issues were sometimes combined. The creation of the "Sociologická revue" journal completed the process of institutionalization of the Czech sociology that first settled down at the Universities of Prague (1919) and Brno (1922), got to research institutes (e.g. State Statistical Bureau 1919, Sociological Commission of the Czech Agricultural Academy 1924), gained a platform in form of the Sociologi-

25 Otakar MACHOTKA, Sociálně potřebné rodiny v hlavním městě Praze, Praha 1936.

26 Zdeněk ULLRICH, Soziologische Studien zur Vestädterung der Prager Umgebung, Praha 1938.

27 Václav VERUNÁČ, Dělnická otázka a náš průmysl. Důležité události ve vývoji naší sociální politiky průmyslové po politickém převratu, i perspektiva budoucnosti, se zvláštním zřetelem k technické ekonomii, Praha 1923.

28 Václav VERUNÁČ, Racionalisace, vědecká organisace a otázka sociální, Praha 1927.

cal Society (1925) and finally obtained its own journal²⁹.

Additionally to the "Sociologická revue", one more Czech sociological journal started being published in the 1930s, "Sociální problémy". The journal was established actually as a "sulking project" (Nešpor) of the Prague sociologists against the "Sociologická revue"³⁰. "Sociální problémy" picked up the threads of Sociologická tribuna (i.e. of sociological section) of the "Parlament" revue that existed only during one year, 1928/29. It started being published in 1931 and was published with interruptions until 1947. Later, its publishing was stopped for political reasons related to the year 1948. Two different sociological schools are often related to the Prague and Brno journals. The central editors were: J. Král, Z. Ullrich and O. Machotka for the whole duration of the journal. They had a circle of stable co-workers from related branches (e.g. A. Boháč, statistician and demographer, J. Mertl, political sociologist, V. Vybral, national economist, etc.). The journal was published in commission of the Orbis publishing house and probably faced financial problems during its whole existence, which led to its irregularity. The journal was published first each two months, later quarterly, but its issues were frequently combined.

"Sociologický sborník" was the first Slovak sociological periodical. It was published during a relatively short period after World War II, between 1946 and 1948; then its publishing was stopped due to political reasons. The journal was published by the sociological section of the Slovak League as a quarterly. Peter Gula was its executive editor and Alexander Hirner its editor in chief (responsible editor) during the whole existence of the journal.

The issue important to our study is how and in what manner the sociological journals dealt with the working class topic and what rank (dominant or marginal) the topic had in proportion to the space devoted to other topics. We searched the answers to the above stated questions with the help of the method of contents analysis of the journals of that time.

2.2.2 Contents Analysis of Journal Production

The contents analysis of the sociological journals of that time made use of the methodology and data matrix from similar previous analyses³¹. The procedure used focused both on characteristics easily measurable with formalizable procedures (the number of articles, their

29 For more details on institutionalization see NEŠPOR, 2007.

30 I. A. Bláha, the founder of Sociologická revue, first considered founding a joint journal with his colleagues from Prague. Its final publishing in Brno was probably decided upon due to Bláha's fear of stagnation if published in Prague – in his correspondence with Chalupný, Bláha complained about B. Foustka's laziness manifested when founding Masaryk Sociological Society already (see: VORÁČEK, 107–132). J. Král's unwillingness to cooperate if the new journal was not to be published in Prague may have been one of the reasons too (see: Helena PAVLINCOVÁ, Chalupný a Brno, in: Emanuel Chalupný, česká kultura, česká sociologie a Tábor, Josef ZUMR (ed.), Praha 1999, 23–31) and some disputes between Král and Chalupný, germinating in Masaryk Sociological Society, were perhaps added too.

31 The methodology is described in detail in Sociologický časopis (see: Dušan JANÁK, Autorská a tematická struktura Sociologické revue. Příspěvek k sociologickému rozboru dějin české sociologie, in: Sociologický časopis, 47, 2011, 5, 991–1016), containing the detailed analysis of Sociologická revue. Independent processing was performed with other two journals as well (see: Dušan JANÁK – Anna BEREŠ, Autorská a tematická struktura časopisu Sociální problémy. Příspěvek k sociologickému rozboru české sociologie, in: Lidé města, 13, 2011, 1, 3–25; Dušan JANÁK, Obsahová analýza Sociologického sborníku. Příspěvek k dějinám česko/slovenské sociologie, in: Sociológia, 43, 2011, 5, 584–603).

extent, text type, authorship, the author's origin, etc.) and on determination of the thematic contents of the articles. To capture the thematic contents of the articles, combination of closed and open coding was used. Based on quick systematic reading of the text, each text was first classified in the thematic typology containing five categories: social reality, sociology, sociological theory and epistemology, methodology of empirical research, and others. Further, codes capturing the thematic contents were assigned to each article (in maximal number of eight words or phrases). The codes were further analysed and codified again, in order to acquire more general concepts covering broader thematic areas. We use the term "thematic centres" for them.

The reliability of dichotomic and rarely varying variables was tested by so called Holsti's coefficient with satisfactory result, 0,85. The thematic type variable, capturing the topic of the article by closed coding, used Scott's π coding, whose result was 0,82. Closed coding cannot make use of quantifying procedures; but common discussion of semantic similarity of the codes used can be used here (to determine whether for example the codes "Štefánek" and "Štefánek's sociology" can be considered encoder concordance or lack of concordance). But assigning of the article under codes of higher generality can be subject to formalized reliability test again, and in this case, the value of Scott's π was 0,8³².

The by far most extensive journal was "Sociologická revue" with more than nine thousand standard pages; "Sociální problémy" took less than a half of its extent, and "Sociologický sborník" less than a tenth, due to its short existence. The above stated disproportions are a little relativized, considering that a substantial part of "Sociologická revue" consisted of reviews; but the dominant position of that journal is indisputable in spite of that fact.

The contemporary approach of the working class topic is characteristic by its connection with the topic of economic crisis and unemployment, as well as by the investigation focused on the issue of work as such. That is why the thematic centre covering most texts devoted to working class was marked with the triple code "work-working class-unemployment" within open coding. That thematic centre ranked among the larger ones on the pages of the Czech journals. In "Sociologická revue", it was a thematic centre of second category, with 23 articles (by the number of articles), the worker topic dominating about half of them. In all journals subject to analysis, the largest thematic centre consisted in sociology as such (i.e. reflection of the development of a newly establishing discipline), both

32 One article can be assigned several codes in principle. Even partial concordance, when one encoder assigned an extra code additionally to the congruous code to the article, was considered concordance in the calculation. My acknowledgement for help with the reliability testing goes to my colleague, Martin Stanoev.

The basic Holsti's coefficient is described in a well arranged manner for example by Helmut SCHERER, Úvod do obsahové analýzy, in: Analýza obsahu mediálních sdělení, Winfried SCHULZ – Lutz HAGEN – Helmut SCHERER – Irena REIFOVÁ – Jakub KONČELÍK (eds.), Praha 1998, 29–53.

For more sophisticated coefficients including calculation of Scott's π and for the discussion of its possibilities and limits see for example: Stefan TITSCHER – Michael MEYER – Ruth WODAK – Eva VETTER, Methods of Text and Discourse Analysis, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi 2003, 65; Philip BELL, Content Analysis of Visual Images, in: Handbook of visual analysis, Theo van LEEUWEN – Carey JEWITT (eds.), London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi 2001, 10–34; Daniel RIFFE – Stephen LACY – Frederick G. FICO, Analyzing Media Messages. Using Quantitative Content Analyses in Research, Mahwah, New Jersey, London 2005, 122–155; W. A. SCOTT, Scott's π (Pi): Reliability for Nominal Scale Coding, in: The Content Analysis Reader, Klaus KRIPPENDORF – Mary Angela BOCK (eds.), Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore 2009, 347–349; Klaus KRIPPENDORF, Testing the Reliability of Content analyzing Data: What is Involved and Why, in: The Content Analysis Reader, Klaus KRIPPENDORF – Mary Angela BOCK (eds.), Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore 2009, 350–357.

national or international, and it would be redundant to state it or to analyse it. The situation in other journals was similar. The working class issue in narrower sense dominated approximately one half of the given thematic centre in the other two journals as well.

2.2.3 Characteristics of Thematic Groups Related to Working Class Issue

In relation to the Great Depression, five texts devoted to the issue of unemployment were published in "Sociologická revue" in 1933 and 1934. The topic was processed systematically in the context of the working class issue by B. Zwicker in 1934 and 1935.³³ The discussion of the working class issue was most frequently related to life style analysis. That topic was focused both by some national articles,³⁴ and by two foreign articles coming from Poland³⁵. The national studies used Bláha's conceptualization of life style as model and, to some degree, as program orientation. Bláha's example was followed in different manners by his disciples, Zwicker, Hanáček and Hájek. Hájek was probably the most consistent, publishing a study on miner hygiene in "Sociologická revue"; but the study constituted only a fragment of his work on miners that has been preserved in manuscript in great part³⁶. Jaroslav Hanáček approached sociological research rather as occasional activity; nevertheless, in the above stated study written by him during the war but published, for understandable reasons, only after the war, he asked the interesting question of empirical basis of Marxist class awareness and he dealt with the issue of growth of worker self-conscience as a real substrate of Marx' theoretical concept of class "for itself". Bruno Zwicker was markedly influenced also by the Polish sociological tradition following Znaniecki's methodological procedures. Unfortunately, the talented Bláha's disciple died in a gas chamber in Auschwitz, and therefore his only relatively large work consists in his contribution to sociology of the unemployed of 1930s. Additionally to the texts devoted to working class, we can also mention the fact that a part of the texts dealt with the issue of work and measurement of work performance in general. An innovative experimental study on the relation of working performance and remuneration for work was published in the first volume by P. Sorokin, a Russian emigrant who used the interwar Czechoslovakia before his residence in Harvard, U.S.A.³⁷ The son of the founder of the journal, Aleš Bláha, published three texts on measurements of working performance in the post war volumes.³⁸ Similarly to the journal of Brno, the authors of "Sociální problémy" also paid considerable

33 Bruno ZWICKER, Nezaměstnanost, in: Sociologická revue, 4, 1933, 1, 82–87; Bruno ZWICKER, K sociologii nezaměstnanosti I., in: Sociologická revue, 5, 1934, 4, 296–306; Bruno ZWICKER, K sociologii nezaměstnanosti II., in: Sociologická revue, 6, 1935, 1–2, 34–43.

34 Jaroslav HANÁČEK, K otázce dělníkova sociálního sebevědomí I., in: Sociologická revue, 12, 1946, 1, 41–46; Jaroslav HANÁČEK, K otázce dělníkova sociálního sebevědomí II., in: Sociologická revue, 12, 1946, 2–3, 24–35.

35 Felix GROSS, Výzkum prostředí a plánovitého sebevzdělání dělnictva, in: Sociologická revue, 6, 1935, 3–4, 285–291; Zygmunt MYSLAKOWSKI – Felix GROSS, Náš výzkum proletariátu, in: Sociologická revue, 9, 1938, 1–2, 9–16.

36 Mojmír HÁJEK, Hornická hygiena, in: Sociologická revue, 14, 1948, 2–3, 192–206.

37 Pitirim SOROKIN, Experimentální metoda ve vědách sociálních, in: Sociologická revue, 1, 1930, 1, 41–52, 280–291.

38 Inocenc Arnošt BLÁHA, Srovnání práce sedláka, dělníka a jiných povolání, in: Sociologická revue, 13, 1947, 1–2, 7–19.

attention to unemployment (e.g. Vacek, Mertl, Čákrťová³⁹), particularly in connection with working class, which corresponded to the perceived needs of the period during and after the economic crisis, as well as to the issue of work in general, constituting a fashionable sociological topic of that time. It is quite interesting that as late as in 1937, i.e. relatively after the greatest strain of the economic crisis, an article focused on the issue of possible composition of the menu of a worker family tormented by the consequences of the crisis was published. The specific area of the working class issue was pointed out by Malík in his study on so called home work of the workers⁴⁰, characteristic for some peripheral regions of Czechoslovakia where textile, wood processing and glass making industry was developing. J. Šnobl's studies on the sociology of business constitute a presage of a new sociological sub-discipline⁴¹ that started developing only in the era of state socialism. Petr Savickij⁴² who published a study of Stachanovian movement in the Soviet Union was the only foreign author who published articles focused on the issue of working class in the "Sociální problémy" journal. Four studies on the issue of working class were published in the Slovak journal, "Sociologický sborník". Two of them are worth mentioning. The first of them is an article by V. Decker dealing with the country origin of the Slovak town workers⁴³ and the other is a study by M. Hájek⁴⁴, dealing with his main topic, i.e. the miner's sociology.

3. Conclusion and Discussion

Before 1948, the working class issue was represented much more frequently in the population of specialized articles than in books, not only in absolute but also in relative numbers. The thematic centre "work-working class-unemployment" ranked rather among the larger ones in the Czech sociological discourse. Studies focused on the working class in the strict sense of the word constituted about one half of that set, a little more than twenty articles in total. In 1938–1948, when the intellectual life was violently interrupted by World War II, we can find ten of them. But our analysis did not include statistical and demographic publication where further, although probably not too frequent texts can be expected. Sociological processing of the working class issue in books and journal studies was relatively varied; in spite of that, we can see specific trends and suggest a basic typology of the existing conceptual approaches to the issue, frequently combined within one study. A

39 Josef VACEK, Technologická nezaměstnanost, in: Sociální problémy, 1, 1931, 1, 42–49; Jan MERTL, Naše péče o nezaměstnané, in: Sociální problémy, 3, 1934, 1, 1–21; Marie ČÁKRTOVÁ – M. P. RIEGLOVÁ – Hynek PELC, Pokus o stanovení typu normální stravy pro dělnickou rodinu, in: Sociální problémy, 6, 1937, 1, 13–40.

40 Karel MALÍK, Základní ráz výskytu domácí práce v Československu, in: Sociální problémy, 1, 1931, 6, 401–439.

41 Jaroslav ŠNOBL, Sociologický výzkum a vnitřní nábor v podniku I., in: Sociální problémy, 7, 1947, 2, 130–133; Jaroslav ŠNOBL, Sociologický výzkum a vnitřní nábor v podniku II., in: Sociální problémy, 7, 1947, 3, 210–217.

42 Savickij was active in the trio of the Prague Russian structuralists, Jakobson, Trubeckoj, Savickij. He was the only one of them to settle down in Prague for life. But after World War II, he was imprisoned at the instigation of the Soviet authorities. (compare Patrick SÉRIOT, Struktura a celek. Intelektuální počátky strukturalismu ve střední a východní Evropě, Praha 2002).

43 Viliam DECKER, K sociálnemu pôvodu slovenskej robotnickej triedy, in: Sociologický sborník, 1, 1946, 2, 105–112.

44 Mojmír HÁJEK, O významu sociologického průzkumu v hornictví, in: Sociologický sborník, 1, 1946, 3–4, 175–179.

probably most extensive area consists in studying the working class from the perspective of life style. Particularly Bláha's pioneer work was replicated by his disciples, Hájek, Hanáček and Zwicker; but the working class lifestyle was naturally researched also in other texts by authors outside the group of the Brno sociological school. The worker was researched particularly as a specific social type differing by specific way of life, determined by the worker's position in the social space.

Another significant approach consisted in researching the working class in the context of unemployment during the Great Depression. Both minor individual studies and extensive questionnaire investigations with involvement of the Czech Statistical Office were implemented in that area.

Political context of the worker issue constitutes an essential, although not dominant chapter of working class sociology. In that case, the theory of socialism was primarily considered and Marxism was discussed. Rather empirical works in that context include Hanáček's war research of worker self-conscience⁴⁵ that insinuated some social change that occurred two years after the results were published.

The last two approaches, which were not dominant, were related rather indirectly to working class. The first consisted in the issue of work as such, which was probably constituted as sociological issue resulting from research of some basic categories of the socialist or Marxist theory (work, value of work, creation of surplus value, commodification of work). A rather marginal issue of the end of the period under research, which came into vogue only in the period of so called state socialism, consisted in the sociology of business.

The Czech pre-Marxist sociology considered the workers as representatives of a specific social type but, at the same time, pointed out the inner segmentation and heterogeneity of the category. For our present research, it alerts us to the need of specification of the concept of industrial working class, the need of its definition for the purpose of contemporary historical and sociological research. I. A. Bláha, the classic of the sociological discipline, saw three connecting features of the worker social type in manual work, working inferiority (i.e. subordination in employment resulting from lack of ownership of agents of production) and economic inferiority, i.e. poverty.

I consider it quite useful to stick by the inspiration of that classical sociology of social types. With regard to the variability of the category in the course of the period of 1938–1948, the relevant historical-sociological output of the research of industrial working class should consist in the description of the relevant worker social types, in the determination of the dominant ones, of the receding ones, of the ones constituting only a temporary phenomenon of World War II and of the ones emerging after it. It seems to me as one of the principal possibilities of a general view of the working class issue of the period under research.

The working class is viewed in sociology from the perspective of class analysis most frequently. Sociology has two basic approaches of class analysis. The first is the Marxist approach, pointing out class antagonism and class polarization. The second approach follows Max Weber's work; class antagonism and polarization are not indispensable attributes but one of the possibilities of class configuration. Weber considers class as a group of people whose social similarity results from their similar position on labour market. It cannot

45 HANÁČEK, Sociologická revue, 12, 1946, 1, 41–46; HANÁČEK, Sociologická revue, 12, 1946, 2–3, 24–35.

be stated in advance how many classes there are; that depends on the development of the labour market. Nevertheless, when specifying the concept of working class and when studying it empirically, the issue of working and economic inferiority must be considered; it is a key characteristic of working class in Marxist tradition and it should be paid special attention. The development of sociological reflection dealt by us suggests a transformation or shift: In 1920s, subordination is a key characteristic; Hanáček's studies suggest a change of perspective and growth of working class self-conscience; and after the war, in the context of the political and ideological transformations, the decisive social role of the workers starts being mentioned, although rather in a new ideologically prescriptive than neutrally descriptive context. In my opinion, the properly asked question should be: Did only the ideological picture of reality or the reality itself transform? The answer to this question, that would observe Weberian line of interpretation of the concept of working class, should show, in my opinion, whether in the course of the given period specific social types, which had been marginal for example at the beginning of the given period, started prevailing in the course of the period.

But in the historical-sociological research, the dimension in which we can describe the worker social types will depend more on the possibilities of the basis of archive sources than on the optimal set of predefined variables whose values we wish to know and by which we can set the tools of data collection in contemporary sociological research. But the basic general analytical categories we should try to fulfil should still consist in the issue of description of the world of work, world of family, leisure time and policy. Nevertheless, the specification of those categories should be subject to further discussion, as it is not the ambition of this text.

Abstract

The submitted study organizes the heterogeneous sociological production devoted to the issue of (not only) the industrial working class until 1948. The purpose of such organization of sociological reflection of that period is to show the position of the issue in Czech sociology, to ascertain the main pieces of knowledge on Czech working class before 1948 and to try to assess what from the production of that period can be used also in the current historical-sociological research. The text identifies and classifies the main thematic areas in which the issue of the working class was analysed: the largest consisted in life style research, followed by working class in context of social policy, political context of workers' issue, issue of work as such and business sociology. We see analytical potential in the sociology of social types, developed by I.A. Bláha, sociologist, particularly in the interwar period.

Keywords

Czech sociology, industrial working class, 20th century, contents analysis, sociological journals

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