

THE PEOPLE AND THE NATION IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF ANTON ŠTEFÁNEK

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As a result of personal and political circumstances, Anton Štefánek began his academic career only late in life and at an inopportune time. When he published his first major works in the thirties, his concepts did not meet the approval of Slovak nationalists. Later on the one-sided approach of the communist rulers toward sociological science further contributed to the relative silence around this eminent Slovak scholar. In the first essay one sees that Štefánek was not only a follower of Masaryk, but that he also was and foremost an original thinker who created a sociologically-founded theory of Slovak democratic populism. His studies as an empirical sociologist were influenced by German scholars, particularly Ferdinand Tönnies, but his works clearly established him as the leading Slovak sociologist at the time. His critique of modern society and the nationalist phenomenon, however, transcends the narrow philosophical basis of Czechoslovak statehood and indicates that Štefánek at least anticipated some of the problems affecting European society in the present.