

Michał Głuszkowski

Mychaylo Hruszewski – the Precursor of Rural Sociology in Ukraine (1823–1942)

Mychaylo Hruszewski was born in Chełm, near Lublin in Poland in 1866. His father was a grammar school teacher. Hruszewski spent his childhood in the Caucasus where he finished grammar school. After completing his studies at the Faculty of Historical Philology at Kiev University (1886–1890) he was awarded a professorial scholarship. In 1894 he was appointed to the Department of the History of the Ukraine at the University of Lviv where he worked for the next twenty years. While working in Lviv, Hruszewski founded the Taras Szewczenko Academic Association, where he edited numerous periodicals.¹

It was already at that time that Mychaylo Hruszewski was closely involved in socio-political, and particularly ideological, activity. His views were closely linked to radical Ukrainian circles and his academic publications were considered to be an ideological prop of the nationalist movement. In his ten-volume work *Istoria Ukrayiny-Rusi* (The History of Ukraine-Rus'),² considered to be his greatest work, and in other work and numerous articles Hruszewski justifies the necessity of the Ukrainians' battle for freedom and independence. At the head of the History Faculty in Lviv he worked with political and academic activists in other towns of the Empire. Hruszewski was the founder of the periodical *Ukrayinskiy Viestnik* in St. Petersburg (1906), the Ukrainian Academic Association in Kiev (1907) and one of the leaders of TUP (Tovaristva Ukrayinskich Postupovciv – the Association of Progressive Ukrainians).

The outbreak of the Ist World War disrupted Hruszewski's socio-political and academic activity. In 1914 he was arrested by the Russians on unclear charges of alleged espionage on behalf of Germany and Austria.

¹ Among others *Zapiski* (Notes); *Literaturno-Naukovyj VisNIK*.

² Hruszewski worked on the *History of Ukraine-Rus'* from the beginning of his academic career until his death, without completing it.

After his arrest, came Hruszewski's deportation to Symbirsk, Kazan and Moscow. In Russia the February Revolution broke out in 1917, overthrowing Tsarism. Hruszewski could now return to Kiev, where the Central Council of Ukraine was founded, choosing him as first president of the Ukrainian People's Republic. To begin with, Hruszewski was in favour of an autonomous Ukraine within the Russian Federation but after the October Revolution, fearing the Bolsheviki he left Kiev together with other members of the Central Council of Ukraine. They returned under cover of the German army (war operations were underway) and on 11 January 1918 on the basis of the Fourth Universal, the author of which was Hruszewski, the Independence of Ukraine was announced. In those turbulent times for governments in Ukraine, fighting in addition to the Central Council of Ukraine were the armed forces – Hetman Skoropadski and his forces as well as the Bolsheviki. In February 1918, Ukraine concluded peace with the Bolsheviki and in March the Bolsheviki on behalf of Russia and the central states signed the Brest Peace Treaty. Hruszewski was in power until the overthrow of Hetman Skoropadski on 29/30 June 1918. During its periods of government, the Central Council of Ukraine wrote four Universals, trying to realise Hruszewski's socio-political ideas. Ukraine was to be a multi-national state where non-Ukrainians could have full civil rights. The Council gave some thought to the degree of sovereignty of Ukraine and its rapport with Russia and Europe, yet regardless of its geopolitical position the newly built state was meant 'not for the bourgeoisie but for the working masses of Ukraine.'³

After the revolution, Hruszewski continued to live in Kiev for a while. Compulsory political unemployment brought him back to the academic world. He refused to work academically with the new authorities and after resigning from work in the founding committee of the Ukrainian Academy of Science, he left for Kamieniec Podolski. After the fall of the hetman and the advent of the Bolsheviki, Hruszewski tried to reactivate the ideas of the Central Council of Ukraine but did not meet a positive reaction. In Kamieniec he worked on the history textbook for Ukrainian schools and edited the *Holos Podillia*. A month later, in March 1919 Hruszewski decided to emigrate. That was the beginning of his 'sociological' period.

After leaving Ukraine, Mychaylo Hruszewski went to Vienna, where he attempted to create the Ukrainian Sociological Institute. Although this attempt failed, he managed to set up a publishing house, which alongside other important publications resulted in important works in Ukrainian sociology. These included *Poczatki gromadianstva*. *Geneticzna sociologia* (The

³ Mychaylo Hruszewski, *Na porozi novoy Ukrayiny* (On the threshold of a new Ukraine). 1918, p. 84.

beginnings of citizenship. Genetic sociology) by M. Hruszewski (1921)⁴ and *Tieoria naroda* (The theory of the nation) by V. Starosolski (1922).

The Ukrainian émigrés later moved to Czechoslovakia, which was met with considerable approval by the Czechoslovak authorities. As a result of the activity of the Ukrainian Citizens' Committee under the leadership of M. Szapovala, two Ukrainian universities were founded in Podebrady and Prague, and in 1924 the Ukrainian Sociological Institute was founded with Hruszewski's cooperation. The Institute's statute included knowledge and clarification of bio-social, cultural, political and economic issues concerning modern society, its organisation and the historical genesis of these forms. The main aim of Ukrainian sociologists was, however, acquiring knowledge about their own society and the societies of Ukraine's neighbouring states, comparing the phenomena taking place in Ukraine and other countries and predicting these phenomena. The Institute also had educational goals. The Ukrainian Sociological Institute had three departments: the sociology department with the following sections: theoretical sociology, economics, law and politics; the ethnography and culture department with the following sections: ethnography and the products of the social process as well as a popularising department.

The Ukrainian Sociological Institute in Prague did not cooperate with the Bolshevik authorities in Ukraine and for that reason it was impossible to realise much direct sociographic research concerning Ukrainian society. In spite of that, members of the institute managed to carry out several interesting studies of the Ukrainian rural community. B. Zalevski, O. Koszela and M. Szapovala have greatest credit in this respect.

Mychaylo Hruszewski did not remain in Czechoslovakia for long. In 1922 he eventually dissociated himself from contacts with Ukrainian circles battling with the Soviet authorities, since he was not in favour of that battle. He reacted positively to the creation of the USSR and the Politburo gave approval for his return. In March 1924 he returned to Ukraine to found the Institute of Ukrainian History at the Ukrainian Academy of Science (at the end of 1923 he was chosen as an academician). In the twenties and thirties the institute which was headed by Hruszewski, alongside other sections of the Ukrainian Academy of Science in Kiev and Kharkiv, belonged to the most important sociological centres in Ukraine. The Institute of History, like its founder, dealt with many areas of learning. These included the following sections: historical geography, cultural history, folklore and so-

⁴ *Poczatki gromadianstva. Geneticzna sociologia* (The beginnings of citizenship. Genetic sociology) Vienna 1921, is Hruszewski's main sociological work. It consists of three parts, the first of which is a polemic with earlier concepts of social development; in the second part, the author presents his own theory of development and in the third he presents a short overview of Ukrainian works on the theory of development (genetic sociology).

ciology. The sociology section dealt with historical and contemporary sociology, and also sociography. This is where works bordering on sociology and ethnography came into existence, such as *Popytka nauczno obyasniti' narodnyye pogovorki* (An attempt at a sociological clarification of folk proverbs) by the historian and sociologist, Katierina Hruszewska, the scholar's daughter.

In 1929 Hruszewski became a full member of the USSR Academy of Science, but this did not mean total acceptance by the authorities and that his political activity was forgotten. His pre-revolution academic output was depreciated and his works were ostracised. He was even pushed away from working at the Ukrainian Academy of Science. In 1931 he was accused of counter-revolutionary activity; after his arrest and interrogation in Kharkiv and Moscow he was released but was persecuted for the rest of his days. He was forbidden to return to Ukraine and was ordered to compulsory residence in Moscow. He concentrated exclusively on academic work until his death in 1934.

For a long time Mychaylo Hruszewski reconciled his socio-political activity with academic work. Nowadays, he is primarily remembered as a politician, Ukraine's first president and historian. His sociological and ethnographic achievements are less known, which does not mean that they are less significant. The sociological perspective and the use of ethnographic knowledge are also present in Hruszewski's historical works. At that time there were no sociologists as such in Ukraine. Society was analysed by historians, philosophers and alumni of other disciplines who devoted attention to sociology, having a considerable amount of academic experience. During Hruszewski's time being a President-sociologist was not unusual, which can be confirmed by the example of T. Masaryk in Czechoslovakia.

Hruszewski left behind far more political and historical than sociological works. Apart from the earlier mentioned 'History of the Ukraine-Rus' and 'Genetic sociology,' mention should be made of works concerning the Ukrainian nation and state, such as *Chto taki Ukrayincy i czoho voni chozut* (Who are the Ukrainians and what are their demands), Kiev 1917; *Zvidki pizlo ukrayinstvo i do choho vono ide* (Where does 'Ukrainhood' come from and where is it heading), Kiev 1917.

The 'History of the Ukraine-Rus' deserves to be mentioned as a work using archaeological, philological and ethnographic data. In his work Hruszewski proves in a different way to Russian historians, that the heir of the state system of Kievan Rus' after its collapse into districts in the XII century was not the principality of Vladimir-Suzdal (with Moscow) but the principality of Halicz-Volhynia (Western Ukraine) and that the Grand Duchy of Lithuania uniting under its power the West Ruthenian territories in the XIV century was not a weaker centralising point than Moscow. How-

ever, the adoption of Catholicism by many Russian princes in the period of the Polish-Lithuanian union (from the end of the XIV cent.) led to the alienation of the Ukrainian peasant population and its reorientation towards Moscow Rus'. The cultural-religious polonisation of a section of the Russian nobility meant that the Ukrainian nation consisted almost exclusively of peasants. The Ukrainians became merely passive subjects on their own territories for many centuries, both under the power of the Republic and that of the Tsar, or wishing to defend their rights, they stood in opposition to the authorities.

Hruszewski devoted much attention to the peasantry, their life and uprisings in his 'History of Ukraine-Rus'. The peasantry as a social group played an important role in Mychaylo Hruszewski's academic creativity and socio-political activity. He considered that social group as the most important component of the Ukrainian nation and the source of 'Ukrainhood.' It was for them that a free Ukraine had to come into being. As a politician and social activist, Hruszewski intended to guarantee total social freedom to the peasants.

In all his historical works Hruszewski paid a lot of attention to historical memory as a mainstay of statehood. That memory was conveyed by the people, their language, culture and organisations. That is why in his numerous publications he tried to describe as many mechanisms of Ukrainian statehood as possible in its various aspects. Hruszewski's significant works, devoted to the institutionalisation of the socio-political life of the Ukraine, include a collection of articles *Z politycznego zittia staroy Ukrayini* (From the political life of the old Ukraine) from 1917, as well as publications in writings published by the already mentioned Taras Szewczenko Association.

The scholar emphasised the significance of the non-development of class structure in Ukrainian society. Class uniformity was an incentive for him to try to unite as many social groups as possible for the realisation of the 'Ukrainian revolution,' which was to give Ukraine its independence. He carried out this intention as a politician both in social theory and in practice.

Mychaylo Hruszewski's contribution to the development of Ukrainian sociology and ethnography was not only his own creativity but also institutional achievements which cannot be overrated. Research carried out at the Ukrainian Sociological Institute in Prague, which he helped to establish and later the Institute of the History of Ukraine headed by him, was clearly influenced by the interests of their founder. Both of these institutions dealt with sociology in its broad understanding, in its theoretical and practical dimensions, as well as in many of its sub-disciplines.

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