

be found in Marx on how social life is organised, especially in reference to communist politics, countering the void of politics in Marxian communism. Marchena concludes that the analysis is not an attempt to 'make Marx say what he didn't say' (p. 13).

Although the book includes interesting and relevant insights, I have a few concerns about some of the topics. The philosophical, anthropological, and political economy perspectives reflect and analyse key narratives but, on the other hand, pay limited attention to the problems surrounding contemporary reflections on politics as an emancipatory method for a communist society. However, Marchena identifies very important tools and methods for achieving an emancipated society within capitalism, where social actors have the best political resources 'inscribe[d] on its banners: From each according to his [capacities], to each according to his needs!' (p. 14).

Another key question for me is the restriction on achieving individual freedom. The author points out that 'Marx agrees with the liberals in that politics can only be a necessary evil, it can be appreciated in the proposal of a dictatorship of the proletariat— considered necessary due to the remnants of the class struggle – that would lead to the self-cancellation of political power' (p. 15). But the scope of the crisis, especially the sociological crisis, is not discussed.

In sum, this book makes valuable contributions to the discussion of personal freedom within the context of communism and political power. The book should be made available to policymakers and researchers in various countries with interests in Marxist ideology, capitalism, neo-liberalism, and the economy.

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Vera Szabari (ed.): *(Disz)kontinuitások. A magyar szociológia 1960 és 2010 közt. ((Dis)continuities. Hungarian Sociology between 1960 and 2010)*

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This volume is a premiere in the history of sociology in Hungary. Departing from the essayistic and fragmentary approach of their predecessors, the studies collected in this volume excel in rigorous documentation and subtle analysis. Focusing on the decades between 1960 and 2010, the studies cover a period that includes the hesitant restart of sociological research and its institutionalisation (with its counterpart beginning of university education in the field the 1970s) up to the redefinition of its tasks after the change of regime in 1990. This history, interspersed with crises due to the control of the communist regime, appears as a process of continuities and discontinuities. In fact, this characteristic defines the entire history of sociology in Hungary, which, after a spectacular beginning and evolution in the first two decades of the last century, under the guidance of Oszkár Jászi, was brutally annihilated by the conservative regime that came to power in the fall of 1919. Its representatives were forced to emigrate or abandon their previous scholarly interests. Even the notable attempts to research reality through the sociographic method in the 1930s did not lead to the consolidation of sociology. After the Second World War, the establishment of a department of sociology constituted a real hope for institutionalisation, but in the context of the Communist Party's fierce struggle for power, the prospects of the social sciences were gloomy. In 1950, the head of the department, Sándor Szalai, was imprisoned, the department was closed, and sociology was erased as a discipline from the academic field.

The process of Hungarian sociology's re-establishment starting in the 1960s is an-

analysed in depth by Vera Szabari. This ambivalent process is also illustrated through an analysis of several fields and branches of research consolidated over these decades. Research areas and themes that aroused the interest of the majority of sociologists throughout the period of the communist regime included prejudices (Judít Gárdos), values (Judít Gárdos and SÁgvári Bence), Roma issues (Róza Vajda), social structures, stratification, and mobility (Vera Szabari), the way of life (Timea Tibori), the Hungarian family (Erzsébet Takács), the concept of the informal (András Vigvári), the problem of poverty (Ibolya Czibere), and the formation of elites (Luca Kristof, Vera Szabari). An important merit of the chapters in this book is that they follow the evolution of these research topics after 1989 and assess the influence that research methods had after 1990.

Compared to the black-and-white view characteristic of the first years of freedom, when certain authors denounced 'socialist' sociology as enslaved to the regime, this volume adopts a more nuanced position. The chapters' authors demonstrate that the methods, ideas, and results of the discipline practised under the communist regime constitute an important and inspiring heritage for the post-communist period as well. Even a cursory review of new research results indicates that, despite political regime changes, there are many elements of continuity in subject matter, methodology, and interpretation.

The authors refute the superficial opinion that Hungarian sociology (as a matter of fact, Eastern European sociology in general) is nothing more than a 'mechanical' copy of Western sociology. It is true that, for ideological and political reasons, tutelary forums obstructed the resumption of earlier traditions. Under these conditions, Hungarian sociologists borrowed empirical methods from Western sociology. However, this did not mean that they unthinkingly adopted Western sociological agen-

das. Instead, they adapted these to Hungarian social issues. Taking over and creatively adapting the methods to Hungarian research increased its international visibility. Of course, the context of the beginning and that of the development of sociology were not and could not be entirely favourable owing to the dogmatic Marxism of some party ideologues.

However, after a decade of excommunication, even the communist regime allowed the social sciences to be re-established, owing to a desire to put an end to its international isolation. The process was difficult because even in the ruling party after 1956 there was no unity of opinion about the reinstitutionalisation of sociology. This influenced both the choice of research topics, the recourse to traditions, and the selection of future researchers. Despite this situation, which varied from one stage to the next, this book shows that the research and interpretation of social phenomena rarely ended up in apologetic work. The relationship between sociologists and power was permanently ambivalent, which sometimes resulted in administrative sanctions, as happened in the case of the first director, András Hegedüs, in 1968, and in the case of Iván Szelényi and György Konrád five years later. On the other hand, it must be emphasised that the Kádár regime did not want to close down the channels of communication with sociologists, and it therefore accepted even work that did not glorify socialist politics and its social consequences (in contrast with some neighbouring Eastern European sociologists).

The chapter authors distinctly emphasise a comparative analysis of Western and Hungarian (Eastern European) models, in order to identify the theoretical and methodological contributions specific to the region. And because they also address the period of transition to post-communism in the analysis of some continuities, they also inquire into the content of some categories:

would the meaning of the concept of poverty, for example, from the 1970s be similar to that of the 2000s? As well as these questions, the methods and ideas that 'survived' the regime change and have yielded results in our contemporary world raise the question of whether there is a significant difference today between Western and Hungarian sociology.

This book does not just deal with the inventory of the main directions of sociology over a span of more than fifty years, it also reflects on the functions and nature of the history of sociology. Compared to the old and often ahistorical practice of interpreting canonical theories, the contributors to this volume proceed to a perspective that considers sociology as a quintessentially

historical phenomenon. Thus, the task of the history of sociology, according to this conception, is to identify the alternatives of social research in the given historical political context and specific frameworks for interpreting the results of the empirical investigation. In sum, this volume is not the finish line of a project, but a challenge to broaden it. Important research topics, such as urban sociology, rural sociology, sociology of mass media, and sociology of youth, remain uncovered or underexplored, as do comparative studies with Eastern European sociologists who had similar aims in this half century.

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