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From the Secretary

The next World Congress is knocking at our doors: ISA's XVth World Congress will be held in Brisbane (Australia) from July 7 to July 13, 2002. It is certainly one of the major events on next year's calendar of sociologists worldwide. "The Social World in the Twenty First Century: Ambivalent Legacies and Rising Challenges" promises a rich and diverse overview about the state of the art in our discipline.

The homepage of the Congress offers all the details you might need:

www.ucm.es/info/isa/congress2002.

I hope every RCHS member is now connected to the web. I therefore omit organiza-

tional details, about accomodation, weather, travel routes to the fifth continent, etc. Inquiries regarding organizational queries should be assessed to the Conference secretariat ISA XV World Congress of Sociology c/o The Meeting Planners, 108 Church Street, Hawthorn, Victoria 3122 Australia, Fax 61 3 9819 5978; E-mail: sociology@meetingplanners.com.au.

The only thing I want to mention is the deadline for submitting abstracts. They should arrive at the desks of the organizers not later than October 1, 2001.

Our committee will have the opportunity to held eighteen different sessions, because of the huge number of members of RCHS in good stading with their ISA membership too. According to ISA's secretary we do have 107 paid members. Therefore we are in the group of Research Committees with the highest number of sessions possible.

The promised report on archival resources on the web, has to be postpone again. There are troubling problems to be solved with regard to the accessability of different websites. The most spectacular web archives do have only restricted access. Therefore it won't be of much value for most of our members to present a report about unaccessible sites.

Secretary

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Letter from the President, No. 8

From Priests of Reason to Media Clowns

by Dirk Kaesler

Recently I participated in a conference in Berlin organised by Deutsche Bank. The general theme was "Bildung", a concept translated by "education" only very badly. There were three sociologists invited to present their views: Anthony Giddens, Peter L. Berger and myself. While leaving Berlin I was asking myself: what kind of roles do we, as sociologists, play at occasions like this? And the brutal answer is: the role of court jesters. Looking in the faces of those bankers, politicians and journalists that were the majority at this colloquium you could see that they didn't really care what Giddens said about globalisation, what Berger said about identity construction in multicultural societies and what I

tried to say about elite-formation in German society and social processes of exclusion. What they obviously liked to show that they are open-minded and not prejudiced at all against sociology. This is much in Germany these days, while already in two *Länder* (Schleswig-Holstein, Saarland) sociology is not offered in their universities any longer.

As sociologists that deal with the history of our discipline we are well prepared and qualified to analyse such historical changes: from priests of reason to media clowns, isn't this a nice formula to describe what has become of (some of) us as sociologists? In Brisbane I would like to offer my views about this theme and discuss it with you.

To communicate with me by E-mail: kaesler@mail.uni-marburg.de

Anna Larsson 2001 Winner of the Leo P. Chall Dissertation Fellowship in the History of Sociology

RCHS's Nominating Committee (Professors Dirk Kaesler, Marburg Jennifer Platt, University of Sussex, and Charles Crothers, University of Durban) nominated three candidates out of six applicants and the Board of Sociological Abstracts selected as the 2001 winner of the Leo P. Chall Dissertation Fellowship Anna Larsson, a Ph.D. candidate at the Dept of Historical Studies, Umeå University, Sweden. Congratulations! Below Anna gives an overview on her project.

C.F.

A Science of the Modern Society – Establishing Sociology in Sweden

This work describes how sociology as an academic discipline was introduced, established and prosecuted at Swedish universities in the period 1930-1955. The aim is to follow the establishment of sociology and call attention to dominating ideas of sociology, science and society. The relation between sociology and the demands and expectations of society will be reflected as well.

Expectations on the discipline are investigated, as they were expressed in official inquiries

and other political settings as well as in common press. Changes in university structure that led up to the establishment of sociology as a discipline are studied, as well as the official investigations that directly preceded the set up. Institutional activities in the new discipline are dealt with; persons, curricula, dissertations and investigations. Internal debates and conflicts are studied and analysed. The reception of sociology is considered, as well as the use of sociological knowledge in academy, industry and other domains.

A main question is how sociology, when established, was understood and pursued. Soon, a clear conception was established in leading quarters. According to this conception, sociology was to be understood as a specialized discipline alongside other social science disciplines. The object of sociology was to be modern society and its social conditions, preferably in Sweden. The method was to be scientifically empirical which above all meant quantitative field surveys.

This study analyzes the formation of this conception. The apprehension was contested but persons representing deviating conceptions were marginalized. The "boundary-work" that was carried out is therefore considered especially significant. The boundaries were about the implication of the concept of sociology and conflicts and antagonisms revealed in the boundary-

work are being analyzed. It is argued in this study that the polemical and dichotomizing rhetoric style used by the actors was of significant importance. By describing, defining and legitimating sociology in terms of opposites; empirical-not speculative, American-not continen-

tal, quantitative-not qualitative; it was stressed that the subject of sociology was new, scientific and necessary for a modern and progressive community like Sweden.

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Maarten Mentzel on Utopia, again

In the preceding RC08 Newsletter ("Reflections of a session organizer", January 2001, p. 4-6) I discussed among other things the exposition in New York Public Library on "Utopia: the search for the ideal society in the Western World" (October 2000 – January 2001). In the meantime I received the exposition book, edited by Roland Schaer, Gregory Claes and Lyman Tower Sargent and published by Oxford UP (ISBN 0-19-514110-5, also in pbk). It seems useful to have some additions to my previous note.

In the first place, it is remarkable that the exposition was earlier to be seen in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris during the months April till July 2000. The information on this event must have been low key – nothing took my attention, and no reviews has been written in the newspapers and journals I am aware of. Perhaps I missed important contributions, however?

Secondly, the book Utopia is illuminating, not least because of numerous illustrations. (But this is no surprise, in view of the astonishing rare book collections in these two libraries.)

It contains 6 parts: Frames of references, The sources of utopia; Of other worlds: the spread of the utopian imagination, from Thomas More to the Enlightenment; Utopia in history: from the time of revolutions to the dawn of the twentieth century; Dreams and nightmares: Utopia and anti-utopia in the twentieth century; and Envisioning Utopia. In addition it has an extensive bibliography.

Although the many contributors (nearly 20) are mostly in the humanities division (history, philosophy, art history, literature, history of political thinking), several concepts and literature often mentioned will attract the attention of the social scientist or sociologist, like "avant-gardes", "communal movements" or "revolutions" and books of writers like Comte, Mannheim or Marx.

Two proclaimed sociologists took part in the project: Alain Touraine, Ecole pratiques des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris (with a chapter "Society as utopia") and Krishan

Kumar, who is at the University of Kent ("Utopia and anti-utopia in the twentieth century").

I was touched by the observations of one of the editors (Sargent) in his introductory note "Utopian traditions". He distinguishes three primary interpretators of utopianism in the 20th century, the already mentioned Karl Mannheim, Ernst Bloch and Frederick L. Polak.

Fred Polak is a Dutch sociologist, author of *The image of the future*, who died in 1984 and who is –surprisingly-- nearly forgotten in my country.

Also Alain Touraine underlines the importance of Mannheim and Bloch. It is striking that the involvement of Bloch in the history of revolutionary movements dates from 1915-1917. In that period he wrote his *Geist der Utopie*. His main treatise has appeared in English as *The principle of hope* not until 1986 (German: *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* 1955-59).

Touraine's erudite essay covers the importance of writers like Thomas More, Charles Fourier and George Orwell (his 1984). Mannheim's *Ideology and utopia. An introduction to the sociology of knowledge* appeared originally in 1929 and was translated by Louis Wirth and Edward Shils in 1936. Touraine's witty remarks on Mannheim:

"Between the Morean utopia of the model society and the Orwellian utopia of absolute totalitarianism lies the utopia of progress, that is to say, the utopia of society-history, engaged in self-transformation through the contradictions made passé by dialectic. It was in this long period, during which Enlightenment philosophy was replaced by the philosophy of progress (and Kant's influence was replaced by Hegel's and then Marx's), that utopia itself became historical, inseparable mixed up with ideology." (p. 27)

Historically seen, utopia "became a model of counter-society when capitalist industrialization removed from political power the control over economic and social life. It was transformed, finally, into a nightmare at the moment when the Party-State devoured society and removed all freedom." (p.30)

Although Touraine's essay is very learned, it is remarkable that the influential statement of Karl Popper on the open society is missing. In

fact the whole exposition book neglects Popper and doesn't mention in the Index of Personal

Names –which contains hundreds of names-- his name.

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XVth ISA World Congress of Sociology, 2002: Call for Papers

What follows are the outlines for sessions submitted in due time by those who volunteered to function as session organizers. The secretary did not receive replies from some members who suggested particular topics during the business meeting last year in Torun, or later by email. Yet those session titles are listed below. I hope the original proponents will assume the burden to organize their sessions.

Everyone who wants to present a paper in Brisbane should get in touch with the most appropriate session organizer and send him/her a meaningful abstract before October 1, 2001. In the next newsletter, scheduled for October, we will publish a first list of accepted paper presenters.

In addition to the sessions listed below we will hold a business meeting and will have our RCHS dinner. Suggestions for 'Author meets Critics' sessions are still welcomed.

Collective biographical moments and their impact on the history of sociology

Organiser: Dirk Kaesler

Institut für Soziologie, Philipps-Universität Marburg, Ketzerbach 11, D-35032 Marburg, Germany; Fax: 49-6421-282 6642;

E-mail: kaesler@mail.uni-marburg.de

Ever since the publication of Maurice Halbwachs' "La mémoire collective" (1950) we, in the history of sociology, are well familiar with the concept of "collective memory" as an important element in the analysis of societies.

For this session papers are invited that deal with the impact and importance of select collective historical and biographical moments for individual and/or or collective works in the history of sociology. The question papers in this session should deal with are questions like these: What did the French Revolution mean for the formulation of classic sociological works like those of Comte and Marx? What did World War I mean for the sociological work of sociological classics like Georg Simmel, Max Weber and Norbert Elias? What did the collective experience of National-Socialism and Fascism mean for the formation of classical sociological works like those of the Frankfurt School?

Without limiting the scope of papers to be presented in this session let me mention some such "collective biographical moments" of which the assumption seems to be plausible that they shaped much of sociology's work:

- German Reichsgründung
- Third French Republic
- World War I
- National-Socialism / Fascisms
- Socialist/Communist Experiences
- World War II
- Exile / Emigration
- '68-Experiences
- '89-Experiences

What I have in mind is - of course - another round of papers that deal with the relation between sociological work and historical developments, papers that analyse the capacity of sociology to produce scholarly diagnoses of their times, and papers that elucidate the self-reflexive connection between historic and social contexts and the production of scholarly work.

The history of empirical social research and statistics

Organiser: Irmela Gorges

Hagenstraße 31, D 14193 Berlin, Germany, Fax 49-30-8257678;

E-mail: Irmela.Gorges@fhv.Verwalt-Berlin.de

Papers on the historical examples of empirical or statistical social research, or on historical methodical or methodological issues within sociology are cordially invited to join the session. There is no limit with regard to the country of origin or epistemological approach of the examples. Those who are interested in the subject will be invited to join the 'network on the history of empirical social research and statistics.'

The history of sociology in Australia

Organisers: Peter Beilharz and Michael Crozier

Peter Beilharz, La Trobe University, Bundoora campus, Victoria 3086, Australia; Fax: +61 3 9479 2705 (BH);

E-mail: P.Beilharz@latrobe.edu.au

Michael Crozier, Department of Political Science, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia; Fax: 61-3-93447906; E-mail: m.crozier@politics.unimelb.edu.au

History of mainstream sociology in non-Western societies

Organiser: Irmela Gorges
Hagenstraße 31, D 14193 Berlin, Germany, Fax 49-30-8257678;
E-mail: Irmela.Gorges@fhv.Verwalt-Berlin.de

In this session papers should be presented from sociologists of non western countries, i.e. countries in which no 'positivistic' or Marxian 'mainstream' sociology was developed or where these 'mainstream' sociologies were adapted to the respective needs of the country. Paper presenters should talk about the historical development and practical use of the discipline in their countries.

Public understanding of sociology

Organizers: Christian Fleck and Dirk Kaesler
Christian Fleck, Dept of Sociology, University of Graz, Universitaetsstrasse 15, A 8010 Graz, Austria; Fax: 43-316-380 9515;
E-mail: christian.fleck@uni-graz.at
Dirk Kaesler, Institut für Soziologie, Philipps-Universität Marburg, Ketzerbach 11, D-35032 Marburg, Germany; Fax: (49) 6421 – 282 6642;
E-mail: kaesler@mailier.uni-marburg.de

During the last century sociology became more and more methodological sophisticated, similar to any other scientific discipline, and lost therefore to a certain degree the ability to speak to ordinary people and to be understood by citizens. At the outset sociology was the quintessential public discipline but this relationship became weaker and weaker over time.

Historians of sociology produced during the last decades a remarkable amount of studies about key figures, so called classics, about major developments in sociological theory and methodology, the emergence of research centres, and the historical development of sociology in particular countries. Commonly these publications refer to factors like 'influence,' 'impact,' and 'consequences' of the work done by sociologists in the past with regard to their then audiences but the relationship between scholars and their different audiences, including the public at large, seldom received the attention it deserves.

Yet historians of sociology claim to provide valuable insights from the past for the future, but frequently they (i.e. we) fail to reach the audience too.

The utility vs the interpretation of the classics

Organiser: Sven Eliaeson
Pl 3340, SE-712 94 GRYTHYTAN, Sweden,
E-mail: Sven.Eliaeson@Kau.se

The discussion over the proper pursuit of intellectual history has been going on for a long time in several academic disciplines, such as sociology, history and political science. Quentin Skinner's mementoes generated many reactions and parallel debates have taken place in various contexts and language guises.

Retrospectivists / presentists vs historicists / contextualists is a recurrent tension and the two sides perhaps don't come closer, since both extremes are both arguable as well as debatable, but in the wake of the ensuing debates pivotal crucial points are highlighted. There is no closure in sight on this perennial theme - but undoubtedly a higher methodological awareness has resulted, and a biased appropriation of the classic authors, such as Max Weber, have repeatedly been victims of, is hardly possible any longer. Social theorists cannot create the classics they need. Theoretical overinterpretations and / or creative extensions will prevail but not so easy.

It is perhaps not possible to bridge the gap to lost and gone contexts and we might be prisoners in our own problem horizon, far away from the problem situation of the classic author under scrutiny. But even if we allow ourselves a retrospectivist or "Whiggish" contextualism as a minor violation of a more orthodox Skinnerian program, we now know the limitations and problems of interpretation. If we believe that we study the classics in order to learn something about present day society this might be legitimate in itself - but it invites to chronocentrism. If we forget everything that happened afterwards, the attempt to "talk with the dead ones" might become rather arid and pointless. Machiavelli is a good example, a late Medieval thinker imprinted by Antiquity and a premature pioneer of early Modernity. The former might be more true, the latter more useful.

Papers addressing the theme are welcome, esp. in the form of case studies of prominent "Dead white males," although theoretical comments on e.g. Koselleck's "Begriffsgeschichte," "Q Skinner and his Critics," are also welcomed, insofar they have relevance for the art of interpretation of sociological classics.

Next generation

Organizers: Christian Fleck and Jennifer Platt
Christian Fleck, Dept of Sociology, University of Graz, Universitaetsstrasse 15, A 8010 Graz, Austria; Fax: 43-316-380 9515;

E-mail: christian.fleck@uni-graz.at.

Jennifer Platt, School of Social Sciences, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9QN, England,

E-mail: J.Platt@sussex.ac.uk

This session for young scholars [students] will offer the opportunity to report on work in progress like Ph. D theses or similar projects, with the opportunity for the presenters to receive helpful feedback as well as making contact with colleagues with related interests. The organizers will try to be as helpful for the paper presenters in advance and during the session as possible.

General session

Organizer: Christian Fleck, Dept of Sociology, University of Graz, Universitaetsstrasse 15, A 8010 Graz, Austria; Fax: 43-316-380 9515;

E-mail: christian.fleck@uni-graz.at.

Special session on knowledge societies: Rising expectations and ambivalent (or: contested) prospects

Organizer: Maarten Mentzel

Maarten Mentzel, 38 Johan de Wittstraat, 2334 AR Leiden NL Tel. +31-71-5172570

E-mail: m.a.mentzel@planet.nl

Maarten Mentzel is trying to organize a special integrative session with RC 14 Sociology of Communication, Knowledge and Culture and RC 23 Sociology of Science and Technology on theories about Knowledge Societies.

Additional proposed sessions

The following proposals were made during the business meeting in Torun last year or later on but the proponents did not supply an outline of their topic. (Session proponents in parenthesis):

1. The history of the relations between economics and sociology (Hans Ludwig Ay)
E-mail: k-l-ay@lrz.badw-muenchen.de
2. The connection between sociology and history (Helena Z. Lopata)
E-mail: HelenaZL@aol.com
3. Continuities and discontinuities in the history of sociology (Sergej Flere)
E-mail: Sergej.Flere@uni-mb.si
4. different forms of narrative in reconstructing the history of sociology (Donald N. Levine)
E-mail: dlok@midway.uchicago.edu

Financial support to attend the World Congress

International Sociological Association and the Local Congress Organizing Committee of the XV World Congress of Sociology have made a provision in their budget to support invited speakers, session organizers and paper givers from developing countries, totalling USD 65,000. This amount is made up from an anticipated grant of USD 50,000 from the UNESCO Participation Programme and another USD 15,000 taken from the joint ISA-LOC Congress budget.

1. Who is eligible?

Only individual members of the ISA in good standing (i.e. having paid their individual membership fees) coming from developing countries (listed in categories B and C on the congress registration form) and who play an active role in the Congress programme either as a session chair or a paper giver.

2. What will the grants be?

The grants can be allocated for one or many of the following items: Congress registration fee; Airfare (in full or in part). Tickets will be purchased by the Local Organizing Committee; Accommodation (available in students residence). Regretfully no per diem can be allocated.

3. How to apply?

Letters of applications shall be received by November 15, 2001 at:

International Sociological Association, Faculty of Political Sciences and Sociology, University Complutense, E 28223 Madrid, Spain, tel: 34 91 352 76 50, fax: 34 91 352 49 45, e-mail: isa@sis.ucm.es

4. Decisions

The Congress Grants Committee composed of members of the Local Congress Organizing Committee and of the ISA Executive Committee will review all applications and distribute available funds accordingly by December 15, 2001, so that all successful applicants can pre-register to the Congress in January 2002.

Should the UNESCO grant be lower than anticipated, the allocation of grants will have to be limited accordingly.

Recent Publications

Alain Chenu

U.S. Sociology Through the Mirror of French Translation, in *Contemporary Sociology* 30. 2001 (2, March), 105-109.

Donald N. Levine

Theory and Practice Revisited: Reflections on the Philosophies of Richard McKeon and Talcott Parsons, in *Pluralism in Theory and Practice: Richard McKeon and American Philosophy*, ed. Eugene Garver and Richard Buchanan. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press 2000.

On the Critique of 'Utilitarian' Theories of Action: Newly Identified Convergences among Simmel, Weber, and Parsons, in: *Theory, Culture and Society* 17. 2000 (1): 63-78.

There have now been three published symposia on Visions of the Sociological Tradition. The most recent just appeared in *The Sociological Quarterly* 42:1 (Winter 2001), with a response by the author entitled 'Dialogues of the Nations: Revisiting Visions and Its Critics.' The earlier symposia, with my responses indicated, appeared as Thoughts on Visions and Its Creation, in *Sociological Forum* 11 1996 (4), 675-85, and 'On Visions and Its Critics' in *History of the Human Sciences* 10 1996 (1), 212-17.

Jennifer Platt

Una institucionalización problemática: la primera Sociología británica, in *La Institucionalización de la*

Sociología (1870-1914), ed. S. del Campo, Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas 2001, pp. 71-93.

Symbiosis or parasitism: ethics and practice in the social system of sociology, in *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 13. 2000: 663-672.

Abbott's Department and Discipline: a review essay, in *The American Sociologist* 31. 2000 (4): 83-92.

Antoni Sulek

Polish Survey. Essays on Questionnaire Research (in Polish), Warsaw: IFiS Publishers 2001, ISBN 83-87632-71-6, 291 pp.

Part 'On history' contains chapters: Paul Lazarsfeld and Polish sociology: a historical record of contact, perception and impact; Stefan Nowak's 'Student of Warsaw 1958' and other studies on social values in Ossowski's circle; Two masters' servant: public opinion research in the last decade of real socialism.

Zoltan Tarr

Georg Lukacs zur Judenfrage, In: Frank Benseker & Werner Jung eds., *Lukacs 2000*. Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag 2000.

Frederic Vandenberghe

La sociologie de Simmel, Paris, La Decouverte, collection Reperes 2000.

Dues Information

The basic RCHS subscription is US\$10 for one year, or \$30 for 4 years. For students, however, it is \$5 or \$15. This reduced rate also applies to others from non-OECD countries who would have difficulty in paying the full rate; if unable to arrange even the reduced rate, please write to the Secretary to explain the circumstances and ask for free membership. RCHS is a Research Committee of ISA, so RCHS members are expected to be ISA members.

There is also a facility for paying to the central ISA, which enables those who wish to do so to use a credit card; a copy of their form is on ISA's website

www.ucm.es/info/isa/formisa.htm, and it can be used even if you are not then also paying the ISA subscription - *though only if you are*

an ISA member. Here - with apologies for the complexity, which our need to avoid our account's high foreign-exchange charges makes necessary - is how to pay if *not* doing so via the ISA.

Only people using a British bank account should send their dues to the past-secretary, Professor Jennifer Platt; this can be done either by sending a cheque made out to „RCHS Platt“, or by direct transfer to Girobank account 12 574 8302. (The cheque should be in £ sterling, with the dollar amount translated into the equivalent at the tourist rate of exchange; at the time of writing, that is c. £6.08 or £18.24.) **All other members should send the money to the president of RCHS, Prof. Dirk Kaesler**, Universität Marburg, Institut für Soziologie, Ketzertbach 11,

D 35037 Marburg, Germany, or, in continental Europe, to minimize bank charges use the Postal Giro Service: Postgiroamt München (BLZ 700 100 80), Account 822 22-809 Kaesler RCHS. He will inform the Secretary, so only one letter is required. **Please think at the same time of sending news of publica-**

tions, meetings, work in progress etc., plus any address changes.

Membership in the RCHS is open to anyone interested in the field. You become a member as soon as your application form and money have been received by the secretary.

RCHS membership application or renewal

PLEASE TYPE, OR PRINT CLEARLY

Title and name :

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I do not object to my membership details being held on computer.