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## Secretary

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## From the Secretary-Substitute

The outgoing secretary, Charles Crothers, has been very busy during the past few months, so he was able only to submit the minutes of the business meeting, which you'll find on page 4; the incoming secretary, Andreas Hess, is still busy finishing a book, so the incoming president and former secretary agreed to volunteer as his substitute and produce the first newsletter of the new era himself. Here it is.

Take note of the call for papers for a conference organized by our new Executive Council member Jerry Schrecker and the preview to the interim conference in the summer of 2008 which will be hosted by our Swedish colleagues (by the way the XVII World Congress of Sociology will be held on July 11-17, 2010 in Göteborg, Sweden, too).

C.F.

## RCHS Executive Council

**President:** Christian Fleck, Austria  
**Vice-President:** Charles Crothers, New Zealand  
**Vice-President:** Sven Eliaeson, Poland - Sweden  
**Secretary:** Andreas Hess, Ireland  
**Members:** H H Bruun, Denmark  
Eleanor Townsley, USA

Irmela Gorges, Germany  
Janusz Mucha, Poland,  
Peter Baehr, Hong Kong  
Hedvig Ekerwald, Sweden  
Stina Lyon, UK  
Cherry Schrecker, France  
Vladimir Kultygin, Russia  
Gina Zabudovsky, Mexico

# Letter from the President. No. 1

## Avoiding Bullshit in the History of Sociology

When I heard – indeed read – that some people proposed me to become the new president of RCHS I started to think about how I could serve the Research Committee best. To be honest, first I felt purely honoured and then I asked myself the question every Austrian asks himself after being appointed to a distinguish position: “Hey guy, didn’t you have to do something better than this?” Overcoming my national character’s restrictions and putting the honour beside, one idea occupied immediately my thinking: How could I make a difference, as my American friends would phrase the task, or in the more modest way, we Austrians try to formulate the same: could I do anything others couldn’t? This idea burdened my mind between reading the e-mail asking me whether I’d be willing to take over RCHS’s presidency.

Sitting in my Durban Hotel’s room after the very first day of the XVI World Congress of Sociology a flash of idea illuminated my thinking about this topic which I liked to share with you, my fellow members of this distinguished group of scholars: We, I, should try to do whatever we can to improve the quality of our work! Two measures came to my mind during this evening: The first is a simple one but not easy to fulfil: We, I as the president, but also the other old boys at the Executive Council of RCHS – I hesitate to name my female colleagues “old girls” – should encourage the youngsters around the world to participate in our deliberations, not only during the World Congresses but especially at the so called Interim Conferences because I remember that I refrained from participating in the meetings when I was younger out of pure fear to be able to express what I have to say in a foreign language and out of fear from criticisms from the old boys I expected to be around at such meetings. To accomplish this particular job, I know we have to do a lot but I think everyone who attended a RCHS meeting for the very first time can assure everyone else that the old boys aren’t old tigers tear any newcomer limb from limb immediately (please make known this message to everyone!). To

reach the other obligation is a harder job: To be frank, not every paper presented at meetings of the RCHS is truly fine, meaning up to the standards the majority in the audience asks for. After some deliberations I decided the best way to overcome the shortcomings/restrictions of our community would be just to put them on the desk.

Calling this endeavour “avoiding bullshit...” has its own history. The renowned but outside philosophy still unknown philosophy professor from Princeton University, Harry Frankfurt, became nearly a celebrity when Princeton University Press republished in 2005 one of his until then still unrecognized articles as a small book. “On Bullshit” was quoted by some US newspapers afterwards still as “On Bull\*\*\*\*” besides the fact that Frankfurt elaborated the meaning of this central concept in some detail, referring to the authoritative Oxford English Dictionary and similar sources. Just by chance before Frankfurt’s book came out with Princeton UP I got a copy of a electronically widely distributed paper by G. A. Cohen, a distinguished member of the sometimes famous group of Analytic Marxists, called cold-bloodedly “Deeper into Bullshit”. After reading it I immediately fell in love with its message: Cohen pulls to pieces authors which are usually held in high esteem in some circles of academia.

After returning to Austria I spoke over the phone with Andreas, our incoming secretary, and along the way he mentioned that he has a piece in his files about the whole bullshit topic.

Immediately we reached an agreement to start publishing Andreas’ paper in the forthcoming newsletter, and here it is.

Let me just add that I’d welcome to get as much answers, criticisms, etc. as possible. I promise to do my best looking for instances of bullshit in the history of sociology business and report to you about these findings. Any suggestions are welcomed.

Perhaps we can improve our common endeavor by starting a debate on this topic.

To communicate with me by E-mail: [christian.fleck@uni-graz.at](mailto:christian.fleck@uni-graz.at)

# Andreas Hess from Nonsense to Bullshit and vice versa

## Overture: The Sokal Hoax

In 1996 Alan Sokal (Physics, New York University) and Jean Bricmont (Physics, University of Louvain) published an article in the peer-reviewed cultural studies journal *Social Text* (No 46/47, Spring/Summer 1996) entitled "Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity".

Simultaneously the authors revealed in another journal that their text was a hoax and that their intention had been to demonstrate that cultural studies in general and postmodernism and post-structuralism in particular had degenerated to such an extent that most of the writings in the field had become completely meaningless. More specifically, the authors took issue with the idea of social constructivism i.e. the idea that only that is real and exists which we give meaning to and which we construct.

The question of course arises how the object world of the natural sciences fits into such a radical social constructivist paradigm ("Does the world exist independently, outside of us, independent of whether we give meaning to it?")

In order to prove their argument that much of the thinking in cultural studies has become complete nonsense, Sokal and Bricmont in their hoax article strung together meaningless terms – in other words, they used popular jargon - but they did so in grammatically correct sentences that seemed to make sense. In particular Sokal and Bricmont weaved in terms that had been used by some of the most quoted cultural and social theorists of the time, such as Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Paul Virilio, Jean Beaudrillard and other mainly French, thinkers that had become fashionable in the English-speaking world. However, in order to insure that their hoax was successful and to cover their tracks, the authors proposed to deal with a rather unfamiliar topic within cultural studies – they addressed a topic which seemed, at least on first sight, to resemble a real problem in the natural sciences,

but which when read carefully made no sense whatsoever.

The revealed hoax got Sokal and Bricmont worldwide media attention; it caught the headlines of The New York Times, The International Herald Tribune, The Observer, The Guardian and Le Monde. In turn, the editors of *Social Text* were rather reluctant to acknowledge that something had gone wrong. A debate developed about the state of cultural studies and the way neo-structuralist and post-modern jargon has been used. Until the present day arguments over what is now known as the Sokal hoax are being exchanged. However, the hoax has left the defenders of such fuzzy thinking in a rather weak position and it is now widely acknowledged that the use and ubiquity (if not to say popularity) of exotic language in some quarters of cultural studies need to be radically questioned and, if necessary, exposed.<sup>1</sup>

## The case against bullshit (Harry Frankfurt)

While Sokal and Bricmont's essay led to a serious discussion about the connection between sheer nonsense, jargon and relativism in academia, Harry Frankfurt, a renowned moral philosopher, now Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Princeton University, takes the argument a step further by asking why our contemporary culture seems to produce so much intellectual nonsense: "One of our most salient features of our culture is that there is so much bullshit. Everyone knows this. Each of us contributes his share. But we tend to take the situation for granted. Most people are rather confident of their ability to recognize bullshit and to avoid being taken by it. So the phenomenon has not aroused much deliberate concern, nor attracted much sustained inquiry. In consequence, we have no clear understanding of what bullshit is, why there is so much of it, or what functions it serves." (Harry Frankfurt, *On Bullshit*, Princeton University

<sup>1</sup> A more recent debunking attempt is Francis Wheen's "How Mumbo Jumbo conquered the world" (London 2004: 4<sup>th</sup> Estate).

Press 2005, p1. The article on which the short book is based was first published in 1986.)

Looking at the etymological history of the word bullshit, Frankfurt tries to separate bullshit from other words that, at least on first sight, seem to be close to bullshit in content and meaning, such as humbug, bluffing, lying or producing hot air. However, in the course of his argument Frankfurt dismisses such anticipated similarities and parallels and distinguishes bullshit as belonging to a completely different class and activity altogether.

While humbug and lying relate at least partly to a state of mind or an intention, hot air clearly falls short of belonging to the same communicative realm as the obvious meaning of the two words immediately indicate. Bluffing in turn evokes the idea of conveying something false – and doing so intentionally.

In contrast, bullshit is faking something but by way of pretending it does not necessarily intend to deceive and is not purposely aiming at getting it wrong. Rather it is the “lack of connection with truth”, “the indifference to how things really are” that Frankfurt identifies as the essence of bullshit. Furthermore, the frame of reference is broader in bullshitting than it is in the other products and related activities mentioned:

“... A person who undertakes to bullshit his way through has much more freedom. His focus is panoramic rather than particular. He does not limit himself to inserting a certain falsehood at a specific point, and thus he is not constrained by the truths surrounding that point of intersecting it. He is prepared, so far as required, to fake the context as well... (T)he mode of creativity upon which (bullshitting) relies is less analytical and less deliberative than that which is mobilized in lying. It is more expansive and independent, with more spacious opportunities for improvisation, color, and imaginative play.” (p52f)

For Frankfurt a closer investigation also reveals that the “fact about himself that the bullshitter hides... is that the truth-values of his statement are of no central interest to him; what we are not to understand is that his intention is neither to report the truth nor to conceal it.” (p55) Thus, Frankfurt concludes that the bullshitter is “neither on the side of the true nor on the side of the false. His eye is not on the facts at all.” (p56)

In relation to the original question of why we have so much bullshit in contemporary culture Frankfurt maintains that “(t)he production of bullshit is stimulated whenever a person’s obligation or opportunities to speak about some topic exceed his knowledge of the facts that are relevant to that topic. This discrepancy is common in public life where people are frequently impelled...to speak about matters of which they are to some degree ignorant. Closely related instances arise from the widespread conviction that it is the responsibility of a citizen in a democracy to have opinions about everything...” (p64)<sup>2</sup>

More specifically, Frankfurt points towards the ridiculous sincerity of public figures who have become something like worldly preachers and who pretend to know how the world needs to be saved but who really do not know very much when it comes to the specific details: “The lack of any significant connection between a person’s opinions and his apprehension of reality will be even more severe ... for someone who believes in his responsibility, as a conscientious moral agent, to evaluate events and conditions in all parts of the world.” (p64)<sup>3</sup>

However, the situation would not be so bad and result in the production of so much bullshit were it not for the cynical attitude of many public figures in which “various forms of scepticism ...deny that we can have any reliable access to an objective reality, and which therefore reject the possibility of knowing how things truly are.” (p64)

In the end what Frankfurt exposes here is the strange form of narcissism characteristic of many public figures. Frankfurt concludes: “Rather than seeking primarily to arrive at accurate representations of a common world, the individual turns toward trying to provide honest representations of himself. Convinced that reality has no inherent nature, which he might hope to identify as the truth about things, he devotes himself to being true to his own nature. It is as though he decides that

<sup>2</sup> Noam Chomsky provides the best example in this context. Somebody who shows competence in one academic field – in Chomsky’s case linguistics – doesn’t necessarily provide good arguments in other fields (such as political science or international relations).

<sup>3</sup> U2’s front man Bono would be the outstanding exemplar for this kind of ‘democratic’ moral attitude.

since it makes no sense to try to be true to the facts, he must therefore try instead to be true to himself.” (p66f) A point has been reached where sincerity itself - some observers might even refer to it as ‘authenticity itself’ - turns into bullshit.

### Deeper into the matter (G. A. Cohen)

In a Festschrift for Harry Frankfurt (Contours of Agency – Essays on Themes from Harry Frankfurt, edited by Sarah Buss and Lee Overton, MIT Press 2002) G. A. Cohen, a well-known defender of an intellectual group called Analytical Marxism, has attempted to challenge some of Frankfurt’s central arguments and assumptions. In his contribution, entitled “Deeper into Bullshit” (in the same Festschrift, pp321-339) Cohen pays homage to Frankfurt, particularly for having brought this “largely unexamined cultural phenomenon” into the public arena. However, Cohen also begs to disagree. Frankfurt, he writes, is mainly interested in bullshit in ordinary life, whereas he is more interested in the academic side of the story, “bullshit of a different kind” as he calls it (which brings us back to the Sokal-Hoax).

In order to make the distinction(s) clear, Cohen refers to two different readings in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED):

**bullshit** n & v coarse sl. – n. **1** (Often as int.) nonsense, rubbish. **2** trivial or insincere talk or writing. – v. intr. (-**shitted**, -*shitting*) talk nonsense; bluff. **bullshitter** n. (p324)

Cohen points out that while Frankfurt is interested in definition 2 of the noun bullshit (trivial or insincere talk or writing), which Cohen sees as referring to the bullshit-producer’s state of mind - actually more a process or an activity than a final product -, Cohen himself is more interested in definition 1 of the noun bullshit, which he thinks is more output-centred and which seems to be the result of an activity.

More specifically, Cohen takes issue with the problem of intention. For Cohen intention is not necessarily a precondition for bullshitting since it is perfectly possible to bullshit unintentionally: “I countenance a bullshitter who has tried, but failed, to produce bullshit – what comes out, by accident, is good sense – and I also countenance a lover of truth who

utters what he does not realize is bullshit” (p331) Such possibilities are not addressed in Frankfurt’s phenomenology, yet they remain real possibilities even when the truth factor is been taken into account: “An honest person might read some bullshit that a Frankfurt-bullshitter wrote, believe it to be truth, and affirm it. When that honest person utters bullshit, she’s not showing a disregard for truth.” (p332) Against Frankfurt, Cohen maintains that “it is neither necessary nor sufficient for every kind of bullshit that it be produced by one who is informed by indifference to the truth, or, indeed, by any other distinctive intentional state.” (ibid) In other words, it is not intention or conscious disregard for the truth that helps us to define bullshit.

Cohen suggests another reading which brings him closer to the aforementioned definition 1 of the OED. It is not the state of mind, a lack of intention of finding out the truth which matter but the unclear end-product itself. “Unclarifiable unclarity” are the keywords here. “Rubbish, in the sense of arguments that are grossly deficient either in logic or in sensitivity to empirical evidence” (p333). Jean Beaudrillard’s statement that the Gulf War did not happen just because it was on TV is such a statement, or Cohen’s own example, a David Miller sentence: “Of course, everyone spends much more time thinking about sex now than people did a hundred years ago.” (ibid)

The question that of course arises is this one: why is there so much of ‘unclarifiable unclarity’ in academia, why is there so much academic bullshit? Could it be that we are dealing with aim-bullshitters, i.e. people who want to remain unclear, obscure and unintelligible, maybe in order to impress? Alan Sokal and his hoax may have revealed exactly that. Issues of self-importance, navel-gazing and false sincerity, maybe even narcissism come to mind. In the end, some speculative moment must remain – which might have something to do with the very matter in question.

What can be said, however, is that Cohen succeeds in clarifying an unresolved dimension of bullshit and he may even suggest what might be called a real paradigm shift in the Thomas Kuhn sense. Frankfurt’s strong claim of bullshit as being ultimately grounded in the intentional disrespect for truth is being dismissed mainly on the grounds that it remains ultimately Hegelian; Frankfurt only looks at

the process. In contrast, Cohen maintains that it is much more important to criticise the final product, which he maintains “is visible” while “the process ...is not” (p336). It is at this cru-

cial juncture that we are immediately reminded of the relationship between Hegel and Marx and we have to ask: Could it actually be that Cohen has put Frankfurt on his feet?

## **Minutes of the Business Meeting held at the World Congress site in Durban**

Note: I have posted copies of newsletters I edited at

[http://dcms.aut.ac.nz/schools/social+sciences/staff+research+topics/charles\\_crothers.html](http://dcms.aut.ac.nz/schools/social+sciences/staff+research+topics/charles_crothers.html)

Business Meeting, 25th July 2006

Agenda:

(1) Apologies/Members present

Chair: Jennifer Platt

Secretary: Charles Crothers

Members in attendance:

Marja Alastalo

Anirban Banerjee

Hedvig Ekerwald

Michael Vořínšek

Donald Fisher

Christian Fleck

Irmela Gorges

Olivier Martin

Meletis Meletopoulos

Roberto Motta

Janusz Mucha

Cherry Schrecker

Jeremy Smith

Markus Schwaiger

Frank Welz

Gina Zabbluorsky

Apologies: Martin Bulmer

(2) The minutes of the last Business meeting (held at Marienthal) were noted.

(3) Report from Secretary

Some 85 members of the section pay through ISA with a further 6 who directly pay their

membership. The ISA derived funds remain with the ISA as there had been no immediate call for expenditure.

The main activities of the section had been the midterm conference held at Marienthal and the twice-yearly newsletters. Since these had been circulated mainly by email (with the few posted being covered by AUT) no costs had been incurred.

The constitutional amendment had been approved by 31 members by email.

Some attempts had been made to link with other appropriate organisations which study history of the social sciences, but none eventuated.

Jennifer has attended the midterm ISA conference in her capacity as President. She also represented the section at the 2006 ISA elections. (Some candidates were members of the section.) It was noted that Jennifer is chair-elect of ASA's HOS section. In the meantime there is considerable cooperation with this section through its current chair.

(4) Constitutional Matters: Jennifer had prepared a proposal for constitutional changes which has been circulated in the newsletter. In addition to those who had Ratified by email a note circulated received ratification from a further 15, so the amendment is declared accepted. No member had queried the amendment let alone disagreed with it.

(5) Election of Officers:

Nominations had been called for by email and since the list of nominations exactly filled the posts available these had been declared elected.

President: Christian Fleck, Austria

Vice-President: \*Charles Crothers, New Zealand

Vice-President: \*Sven Eliaeson, Poland/Sweden

Secretary: Andreas Hess, Ireland

Members: \*H H Bruun, Denmark

Eleanor Townsley, USA

\*Irmela Gorges, Germany

\*Janusz Mucha, Poland

\*Peter Baehr, Hong Kong

Hedvig Ekerwald Sweden

Stina Lyon, UK

Cherry Schrecker, France

Vladimir Kulygin, Russia

Gina Zabudovsky, Mexico

Note: \* denotes already serving officers

(6) The offer of a midterm conference venue in Umeå, Sweden was presented and discussed.

This would be hosted by Per Wisselgren and Hedvig Ekerwald, with their preference being the end of August, 2008. It was noted that Umeå is 7 hours from Stockholm (see below).

Possible topics include:

Christian Fleck: Sociology & communist regimes

Meletis Meletopolous: Sociology and High Schools

Hedvig Ekerwald: peripheries and gender; sociological couples

Christian Fleck: Methodological problems in the history of sociology

Didactic issues in relation to methodology of the history of sociology

A note was circulated concerning convenient times for interim conference, with the following results:

Mid-June: 1

by end of June: 3

beginning of July: 3

August last week only: 2

Forthcoming Conferences:

Voyages Transatlantiques. University Nancy 2: 31/05/2007 au 1/06/2007 (see below).

(7) AOB

Apart from consideration of publishing conference material, no further matters were brought forward.

Christian Fleck moved a vote of thanks to Jennifer and Charles.

(8) A note was circulated concerning recent Publications (see below) Other members indicated that they will send in their list of recent publications.

Charles Crothers

## **Interim Conference. Umeå. Sweden. August 21-24. 2008**

### **Insights from the outside / Marginal Insights: Peripheral Perspectives on the History of Sociology**

In August 2008, the International Sociological Association's (ISA) Research Committee on the History of Sociology (RCHS) has decided to locate its interim conference to Umeå, in the northern part of Sweden. It will be the very first time that Sweden hosts one of RCHS's quadrennial conferences, which usually assemble several of the world's leading researchers on the history of sociology. As local organisers of the conference, we regard this as an excellent opportunity to bring up to the forefront a theme that is both

congenial to the choice of place and of more general relevance in today's globalised world, namely the still relatively unexplored potential of the peripheral perspective in the history of sociology and the social sciences.

The conference addresses questions related to theme, "Peripheral perspectives on the history of sociology", in its broadest sense. While history of sociology often has been too easily associated with the study of the theories of the so-called classical founding-fathers in metropolitan Europe, the aim of this conference is to stretch the boundaries from within and draw attention also to the "other sides". An important standpoint is however not to regard this relationship in terms

of one-sided influences from the centre to the periphery, but instead to emphasize the mutual and complex patterns of interdependence and exchange. New insights are often produced from the outside or in the margins. (Eller som Gustav Hedenvind-Eriksson uttryckte det: "det är bara i utkanterna man kan se hela historien".) In this conference geographical, social, disciplinary and temporal peripheries will all be placed in the centre of attention. How is the local related to the global? Is there a political geography of social theory? (Connell) In what ways have gender, ethnicity and class structured the production of social knowledge -- and our understandings of it? (Yeo) Is a transnational history of the social sciences without a cognitive centre possible or even worth striving for? (Heilbron) What does Ibn Khaldun's marginalised role in the history of sociology, say about today's spatial and temporal limits, and power relations? (Alatas)

By addressing these questions, inviting a number of the most outstanding scholars on these topics, and welcoming researchers from sociology as well as from other disciplines, the conference aims to offer an updated overview of recent research related to the peripheral perspective. This is not however an entirely new research area, but a trend that have been maturing within the history of sociology research for quite some time by now. Important contributions have for example been made on the history of social research methods (Platt), the cultural practices of social investigations, the role of extra-academic social research (Bulmer), the often invisible role of women pioneers (Deegan), the institutional contexts of sociology in non-western countries (Pereyira), etc. By drawing together these and other strands dealing with peripheral aspects of the history of social research, the conference intend both to make visible what have been achieved and point at the still unexplored potential of the peripheral perspective. That way we also hope to open up a window towards a future research terrain where the history of the social sciences is seen not as a marginal but a dynamic and multidisciplinary area of research which constitute a central component in a richer and more complicated understanding of the past as well as today's globalised knowledge society.

The conference especially welcomes sessions and papers related to one or several of the subthemes suggested below. But since the aim of the conference is to offer an open and inclusive understanding, paper on other aspects of the

history of sociology and the social sciences in general are welcome as well:

- Geographical peripheries: history of sociology in Sweden and other small or non-western countries; glocal and/or postcolonial perspectives, etc.
- Social peripheries: women as newcomers on the sociological scene, social scientific couples, class and racial perspectives, power relations, etc.
- Institutional peripheries: extra-academic social research; state investigations and non-governmental organisations; disciplinary boundaries and academic hierarchies, etc.
- Temporal peripheries: 1968 -- forty years later; long-term historical perspectives; cultural historical perspectives, etc.

Local organizers for the conference will be Hedvig Ekerwald, Uppsala University, and Per Wisselgren, Umeå University, in collaboration with Björn Wittrock and Peter Hallberg, Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS). Ekerwald and Wisselgren have both been active in RCHS since 1998 and are part of broad networks on the local, national and international levels. Ekerwald is a member of the Executive Council of RCHS. Wisselgren was one of the two initiators to the Swedish Network for Research on the History of Sociology and the Social Sciences (SNRHSS) with 60 researchers from ten disciplines from all over the country, and with a Newsletter. The Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS, formerly SCASSS), is a national scientific institution, chartered by the Swedish government as the national institute for advanced study in the social sciences and humanities. SCAS has for a long time been an important international research institution in the area of the history of the social sciences. As a co-organizer with experiences from similar arrangements, SCAS will offer both scientific and practical support.

Together, Ekerwald, Wisselgren, Wittrock and Hallberg constitute the scientific committee, which is responsible for the programme, choice of keynote speakers, etc. The internal division of labor: Wisselgren will take responsibility for the local practical arrangements, Ekerwald is responsible for the communication with Swedish Sociological Association and the RCHS. Wittrock and Hallberg...

Furthermore, the conference is anchored and institutionally backed up on the local, national and international levels, in the form of an orga-

nisation committee with members representing -  
- on the local level -- the Departments of Historical Studies, Sociology, and Teacher Education in Swedish and Social Sciences, -- on the national level -- SCAS as well as the Swedish Sociological Association and The Swedish Network for Research on the History of Sociology and the Social Sciences, and -- on the international level -  
- the President and the Secretary of the ISA Research Committee of the History of Sociology (RCHS).

The conference will take place on Umeå University's campus, which is easy accessible from the airport, located close to Umeå centre, and with all necessary facilities close at hand. On the practical arrangements and the budget: the roles of Kaarina Streijffert, Umeå Congress AB, and Kristina Adolfsson-Jacobsson, Department of Historical Studies, Umeå University. More on the budget (kommentera och motivera större budgetposter)...

Finally, another important aim, from a national point of view, is to bring the new dynamic Swedish research in closer contact and hopefully intensify its collaborations with the international research.

## Organisation

### Local organizers/ Scientific committee

- Ass. Prof. Hedvig Ekerwald, Department of Sociology, Uppsala University, and
- Dr. Per Wisselgren, Department of Historical Studies, Umeå University,
- in collaboration with Prof. Björn Wittrock, Principal, and Dr. Peter Hallberg, Research Secretary, The Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS), Uppsala.

### Reference group/ Organization committee

- Prof. Christian Fleck, Graz, President, (and Dr. Andreas Hess, Secretary?), ISA Research Committee of the History of Sociology (RCHS)
- Prof. Antoinette Hetzler, Lund, President, Swedish Sociological Association.
- Dr. Sanja Magdalenic, Stockholm, Coordinator, The Swedish Network for Research on the History of Sociology and the Social Sciences (SNRHSS)
- Ass. Prof. Lena Eskilsson, Head of Department of Historical Studies, Umeå University
- Prof. Stefan Svallfors, Department of Sociology, Umeå University
- Dr. Anna Larsson, Department of Teacher Education in Swedish and Social Sciences, Umeå University
- Mrs. Kristina Adolfsson-Jacobsson, Department of Historical Studies, Umeå University
- Mrs. Kaarina Streijffert, Umeå Congress AB

## **Preliminary programme**

### **Thursday 21 August** (Day of arrival)

Afternoon Registration (Humanisthuset)

Evening Opening Ceremony with Welcome Addresses by the Vice-Chancellor, the RCHS President and the Local Organizers (Hörsal G)

Keynote speaker 1 (Hörsal G)

Welcome Reception (Bildmuseet/ Läro-  
rutbildningshusets ljusgård)

### **Friday 22 August**

Morning Keynote speaker 2 (Hörsal G)

Parallell sessions (Hörsal E, F and G)

Afternoon Parallell sessions (Hörsal E, F  
and G)

Evening RCHS Business Meeting (?)

Dinner (Rex, Kont, Kåtan?)

### **Saturday 23 August**

Morning Keynote speaker 3 (Hörsal G)

Parallell sessions (Hörsal E, F and G)

Afternoon Parallell sessions (Hör-  
sal E, F and G)

Evening Keynote speaker 4 (Hörsal G)

### **Sunday 24 August**

Morning Parallell sessions (Hörsal E, F  
and G)

Closing ceremony (? Hörsal G)

Afternoon Optional tour (Norrfors, Raf-  
ting, Umedalen?)

Hedvig Ekerwald and Per Wisselgren

## **Forthcoming conference and Call for papers**

### **Transatlantic Voyages**

#### **International Congress of Sociology**

**University of Nancy 2 the 31/05/2007  
and 1/06/2007**

#### **Call for papers**

Co-organised by

Laboratoire de Sociologie du Travail et de  
l'Environnement social

LASTES (University of Nancy 2)

Laboratoire « Cultures et Sociétés en Europe »  
UMR CNRS 7043

University Marc Bloch, Strasbourg

with the support of

I.S.A. International Sociological Association

RC 8 (History of Sociology)

A.I.S.L.F. Association Internationale des So-  
ciologues de Langue Française

CR 11 (History of Sociology)

CR 14 (Sociology of knowledge)

A.F.S. Association Française de Sociologie

RT 10 (sociology of knowledge, epistemology,  
history of sociology)

Transatlantic journeys, between Europe and the American continent have long been a source of inspiration for sociologists. They are a means of getting to know other cultures or academic worlds. These were often very prestigious in view of their long standing traditions, their thriving scientific and philosophical debates, as in the case of Germany, or their libraries such as those Max Weber visited in New York and which he mentions in his letters. Sociology as a discipline became organised via international congresses and associations. The early students became professors and diffused the sociology they had learned. Florian Znaniecki, for example, was the first to bring American sociology to continental Europe, whilst Robert Park based some of his teachings on Windelband's theories which had impressed him so much during his stay in Strasbourg, Germany, in 1900. There were also intensive exchanges between the US and Britain among people such as Sydney and Beatrice Webb and Jane Addams who, although they did not hold posts in sociology, are generally regarded as part of its history.

The journeys have been a source of comparison, of admiration or of astonishment. When Max Weber visited Chicago, a town sorely lacking in charm and amenities, he visited the Armour can company, which figured in the Baede-

ker of the time, and was greatly struck by the experience. As for Maurice Halbwachs, he was astonished by Chicago's spatial organisation, by its juxtaposition of different cultures. He was also intimidated by Robert Park's way of speaking. When Park first brought Booker T. Washington to observe the European poor, the visit became the basis for a comparative study which set the marks for a greater and more subtle understanding of poverty and exclusion.

Other journeys were a result of historical events as sociologists and other intellectuals were forced into exile in the face of rise of Nazism and fascism in Italy. Among the best known are Paul Lazarsfeld and the members of the Frankfurt School, but many others Europeans were obliged to emigrate at this time, be it because of their Jewish origins or because of their ideas. The blending European and American sociologies took place in universities and other institutions all over America.

After the war the exchanges continued, those who returned home brought ideas encountered in exile which enriched their national traditions. Georges Gurvitch, for example, brought back to France what he called micro-sociology, the sociology of small groups, which was developed by sociologists and psychologists alike. French students of the time visited the United-States, Henri Mendras and Michel Crozier, among others, came back with ideas which are still important in French sociology today. Academic exchanges were funded as part of the American policy for German occupation and reconstruction.. American professors lectured in Europe, as was the case of Everett Hughes who taught in Germany for a year. He was followed by Nels Anderson, who later invited Ernest W. Burgess. Also, during this period Erving Goffman stayed in the Shetland Islands studying the community and patterns of communication between its members. Before him, Arensberg and Kimball had studied another community, this time in Ireland.

Exchanges of ideas between social scientists on both sides of the Atlantic continue to enrich the sociological tradition today. Two examples are that of post-structuralisme, inspired among others by the works of Michel Foucault, while modern French sociology accords great importance to action theories, developed in Chicago and elsewhere.

Transatlantic crossings have been a factor in enriching our experience, furthering academic and intellectual exchange and increasing objectivity. The examples cited show that they have been the basis of collaboration between researchers, and of a continual evolution of sociological theories and methods.

Papers may address the following themes, but other suggestions will be very welcome:

The journey: contributions could describe the conditions under which the journeys took place and the travellers reactions on arrival.

The societies observed: many social scientists crossed the Atlantic in order to carry out a study of the societies they visited. The studies they made took the form of community studies, studies of social structure or of local customs. Contributions could throw light on these studies and their influence.

Exchanges of ideas and mutual influence: how do the journeys carried out by social scientists, be they researchers or students, affect the sociology of their home countries? Sometimes the exchanges may be carried out by means of letters, or via published material which gives rise to new ideas and research.

The home society: transatlantic journeys and exchanges were also a basis for reflection on the authors own society. One example is that of Everett Hughes whose reactions to Nazism were at the basis of the development of the concept of dirty work.

Propositions for papers, of one page or less, should be sent to Cherry Schrecker before the 1st of January 2007.

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## Charles Crothers

"Mapping the Social Sciences by exploring Performance-Based Research Fund data: Characteristics of New Zealand academic Social Sciences research outputs". in L. Bakker, J. Boston, L. Campbell & R. Smyth (Eds.). *Evaluating the Performance-Based Research Fund: Framing the Debate* 2006 (pp. 185-209). Wellington: Institute of Policy Studies: Victoria University of Wellington.

"The Reception (in Sociology) of Recent French Social Theorists" *Access* 24(1 & 2) 2005: Special Edition: The Legacy of Jacques Derrida.

"Heidegger's Reception within Sociology" *Access* 2003. 22(1/2): 73-84

"Building Capacity in the Social Sciences", Building Research Capacity in the Social Sciences: Occasional paper 3 2006, 22pp on BRCSS website

"The Diversity and Insularity of Sociological Traditions" Craig Calhoun, Chris Rojek and Bryan Turner (eds) *Handbook of Sociology*, Sage (2005).

"History of Social Structural Analysis" David Knottnerus and Sing Chew (eds.) *Structure, Culture and History*, Rowman & Littlefield, Boulder, Colorado. 2002 pp. 3-41.

"National Traditions in the Social Sciences" in Neil Smelser (ed.) *International Encyclopaedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Elsevier Science (2001): vol. 15: 10323-8.

## Christian fleek

Afterword, in: Paul Neurath, *The Society of Terror*, Boulder: Paradigm 2005, 279-317 (with Albert Müller and Nico Stehr)

Autrichienne (École), in: *Dictionnaire de la pensée sociologique*, ed. M. Borlandi, R. Boudon, M. Cherkoui, B. Valade, Paris: Presse Universitaires de France 2005, 46-48.

Probleme beim Schreiben einer Kollektivbiografie deutschsprachiger Soziologen, in: Eva Buchinger & Ulrike Felt (Hg.), *Technik- und Wissenschaftssoziologie in Österreich. Stand und Perspektiven* (= Österreichische Zeitschrift für Soziologie. Sonderheft 8), 225-253.

Bruno Bettelheim (1903-1990) und die Konzentrationslager, in: Amalia Barboza & Christoph Henning (Hg.), *Deutsch-jüdische Wissenschaftsschicksale. Studien über Identitätskonstruktionen in der Sozialwissenschaft*, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 180-231 (with Albert Müller)

## Vladimir Kulygin

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*Feminism in contemporary sociological theory* Moscow 2005 (in Russian)

*Facets of Social theory at the start of the Millenium* Moscow-Stockholm 2005 (in English)

*Multi-level Social Planning: historical experience of Russia*, Moscow-Bueonos Aires 2006

## Olivier Martin

Jean-Michel Berthelot, Olivier Martin, *Saviors et Savants: les etudes sur la science en France, 1950-2000* PUF (Paris)

Olivier Martin (ed) *Les Laboratories en sciences humaines Revue pour l'histoire du CRNS*

Olivier Martin, Jean-Christophe Marcel (ed) 'Nouveaux travaux en histoire de al sociologie' *Revue d'histoire des sciences humaines* 2005 no. 13

## Meletis Meletopolous

'Biographies of the most important Greek Sociologists in Greek Journals' *Greek Sociological Review*

*Conservative Ideology of the State in Modern Greece*  
Papazissis editions, Athens, 1993

*The Monarchy in Greece*, Livanis Editions, Athens  
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*Political Sociology* Papazissis Editions, Athens  
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Athens 1996 (2 editions)

*Nicos Poulantzas: critical biography of an eminent  
Marxist* Ellinica Gramma Editions, Athens 2000  
(2 editions)

### **Roberto Motte**

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vide, Bagues 2005

### **Cherry Schrecker**

*La communité, histoire critique d'un concept sociologi-  
que* Harmattan, 2006

### **Jeremy Smith**

'Global encounters in Japanese Sociology' *In-  
ternational Journal of the Humanities* 7

*Europe and the Americas; state formation, capitalism  
and civilisations in Atlantic modernities* Leiden: Brill,  
2006

'Civilisational sociology and atlantic moderni-  
ty' *Atlantic Studies* 2(2)

### **Gina Zabludovsky**

(ed.) *Sociologia, modernidad ? theories y com-  
bia onceptual* - Miguel Ange; UNAM

## **(No) Impressions of the World Congress**

Promised reports didn't arrive yet.

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