

The Plenary Session and Congress of the Masaryk Czech Sociological Association

The plenary session of the *Masaryk Czech Sociological Association* took place on Friday, December 10. The report on the Association's activities was presented by the current President, Professor Miloslav Petrušek, who, elected in January 1990, has held the post for two terms. The report, published in the *Sociologické Aktuality* (Sociological Actualities), evoked a luke-warm discussion by the relatively meagre plenum, despite the number of pressing questions to be dealt with: a matter of particular importance being that the new mail-vote elected leadership should involve the wider sociological community, especially young sociologists, in the activity of the MCSA. This necessitates both a change in the nature of activities and, perhaps, a general redefinition of its function and both its intrasocietal and social vocation.

The *Masaryk Czech Sociological Association* congress took place at Charles University the following day. At the plenary meeting, entitled *Společnost v pohybu* (Society in Motion), there were stimulating papers by Jiří Musil (CEU) on the integrative and disintegrative processes in Europe, Michal Illner on the social aspects of the transformation at regional and local levels and Martin Potůček on social policy changes in the new Czech state. Among other participants in the discussion was the doyen of Czech and Dutch sociologists, a distinguished, regular guest and active participant of the postnovember life of our sociological community, Prof. Ivan Gaďourek. Prof. František Zich then made an interesting observation on the neglected aspects of transformational processes, with Hynek Jeřábek and others contributing to the discussion that followed. The final paper of the plenary meeting was presented by Josef Vavroušek, who examined the problematic role of value orientations in solving the ecological crisis. Professor Musil's paper is to be published in *S-obzor* (Sociological Horizons), Potůček's in the *Czech Sociological Review*, while Vavroušek's contribution has already been published in

Literární noviny (Literary newspaper) (1993, No. 5).

The afternoon session comprised of three sections: the theoretical section chaired by Prof. Petrušek, in which the topical issues of the development of contemporary sociological theory, including the so-called postmodern challenge, were discussed, the section on social transformation chaired by Pavel Machonin and the methodological section by Hynek Jeřábek. The papers presented were for the most part of high quality and great interest and despite the original pessimistic assumption, there were too many participants seeking active participation for the time available. This shows that such meetings are indeed necessary and that the exchange of views in a friendly, tolerant and critical atmosphere binds and enriches the life of the sociological community. The following points should not, however, go unmentioned: 1) Although they had been invited, some prominent Czech sociologists were absent, the standard of the congress seeming perhaps too „neighborly“ for them (the content and the character of congress refuted this assumption); 2) the participation of others invited was prevented by influenza. In most cases, apologies were made, thus belying the rumours that the Brno sociologists boycotted the congress; 3) the facilities at the faculty of social sciences, inspite of a symbolic fee, were nonetheless far from well-heated and there was no on-going service. It would be worthwhile to have some student participants for the obvious benefits for them as well as for organizational reasons. On the other hand, we were delighted by the Prof. Josef Solar's letter, in which he not only wished us well, but also offered us a wealth of valuable information, the letters of apology from our Slovak colleagues (Krivý, Bútoras', Szomolányiová, Schenk), but, above all, the personal appearance of the scientific secretary of the *Slovak Sociological Association* Zuzana Kusá, and Dilbar Alijeva's active participation in the theoretical section - her contribution *Makrosociologické nostalgie současné sociologie* (Macrosociological Nostalgias of Contemporary Sociology) is to be published in