

Andras Bozôki

## Intellectuals and Democratization



Born 1959 in Budapest, Hungary. Degrees in law and political science (1983) and sociology (1985) at the Eötvös University Budapest. PhD in political science. Dissertation: *The Theory and History of Anarchism*. From 1988 associate professor at the Department of Sociology, Eötvös University. Main fields of research: political ideas, democratic transitions in comparative perspective, the main actors (intellectuals and other groups) in the process of democratization in East Central Europe. Fellowships for research: University of California at L.A. (1988-89), Institut für die Wissenschaft vom Menschen, Wien (1990 — 91). Activity in politics: participant at the political negotiations and spokesman of the Federation of Young Democrats (1989). From 1994 — present beside lecturing at the Eötvös University — professor at the Department of Political Science, Central European University, Budapest. From 1992 on editor of the Hungarian Political Science Review. Books: *Tdrsadalomismeret* (Social Knowledge, textbook, co-author, Budapest, 1991); *Anarchizmus* (Anarchism, co-editor, Budapest, 1991); *Liberty and Socialism* (co-editor, Savage, MD, 1991); *Post-Communist Transition* (co-author, London-New York, 1992); *Az anarchizmus elmélete és magyarorszdgi története* (The Theory and History of Anarchism in Hungary, co-author, Budapest, 1994); *Democratic Legitimacy in Post-Communist Societies* (editor, Budapest-Tübingen, 1994). — Address: School of Law and Government, Department of Sociology, Eötvös Lorand Universität, 1364 Egyetem tér 1, H —1112 Budapest.

I came to Berlin with the hope of writing a book on the role of intellectuals in the process of transition to democracy in East Central Europe, and to complete some of my half-finished research on 1. populism, 2. democratic legitimacy and 3. comparative democratic transitions.

Concerning the latter three, I was able to do what I had planned. In the subject of populist movements ideas and discourses, I wrote and published

a long comparative study published both in Hungarian (*Politikatudományi Szemle*, vol. 3. no. 3, 1994) and English (Central European University, Working Paper 5, 1994) and I regard this as a first step toward a future book comparing the American, Russian, Argentine and Hungarian populisms. (Working on this article, I learned a lot from my conversations with Eduardo Rabossi.) I also finished a study in the problems of democratic legitimacy which became a chapter of my edited book, entitled *Democratic Legitimacy in Post-Communist Societies*. This book is a result of an international cooperation of scholars, since the contributors came from different countries of the region, giving accounts of the chances of and obstacles to democratic legitimacy in almost each country in East Central Europe. As the editor, I am grateful to Christian Schumacher and Hans-Georg Lindenberg of the staff of the Wissenschaftskolleg for their indispensable technical assistance. Finally, I completed a co-authored article comparing Portuguese, Spanish and Hungarian democratization, which is due to come out in a book in the United Kingdom in 1995 (G. Pridham & P. Lewis, eds., *Rooting Fragile Democracy*).

On the other hand, my project on intellectuals turned out to be much more complex than I had expected. After a couple of months I had to realize that I had overestimated my capacity to carry out this ambitious project in such a short period of time. Moreover, discussing the topic with historians and sociologists in the Kolleg, crucial parts of my original hypothesis were shaken, and I had to continuously re-examine my views. One may regard this as an embarrassing phenomenon, but I rather believe it was my luck. Participating at the meetings of the reading group called *Mittwochsgesellschaft*, I am especially grateful to my colleagues and friends (Gianfranco Poggi, Robert Darnton, Jürgen Kocka, François Hartog, Mark Lemstedt and others) who showed me some new aspects of the problem. Taking different examples from history (from the "men of letters" of the 18th century France to the ex-GDR opposition), I benefited a lot from their methodological approaches and observations. With a little exaggeration I would say: finally I saw these meetings as being "dedicated" to helping my work. Studying systematically the literature on the political role of intellectuals in different historical upheavals, I now understand better the motivations and behaviour of the intellectual members of the East Central European "transitional elites" of the 1989 "velvet revolutions". I think this could not have happened without the communicative intellectual atmosphere of the Wissenschaftskolleg.

I wrote some chapters of the book in Berlin (an introductory chapter on possible interpretations; an analytical framework for the typology of creative-technical, political-nonpolitical intellectuals and their roles in the different fields of public life; and a case study on the informal power of intel-

lectuals and their movements in Hungary), but the book in its final shape can only be the result of further research in the coming years. A preliminary study was already published (in: C. Rootes & H. Davis, eds., *Social Change and Political Transformation*. London: UCL Press, 1994) which study, I hope, will be followed by others.

During my stay at the Wissenschaftskolleg, I was offered a job by the Budapest College of the Central European University. This offer presented new challenges to me in teaching the history of political ideas and East European politics in English. With the extensive use of the library, I also took the opportunity to prepare for the new courses I am to teach. That is why I have to express my thanks to Gesine Bottomley and all the librarians for their kindness and patience concerning my never-ending requests.

All in all, I regard my past year in Berlin as one of the most productive (and most pleasant) periods in my life. When I first visited Berlin in 1979, I saw only a dark city in a hopeless situation and desperate mood on the East side. Later I also visited West-Berlin, in the autumn of 1984: it was a strange little island of freedom closed around by walls. On my third time here, in May 1990, Berliners and tourists were all working hard and enthusiastically to destroy the still-existing wall with special home-made instruments. In the last ten months, I again saw a different city, with characteristic districts, operas, museums, and vivid cultural and intellectual life. It is still struggling with its divided past, just a few years after the historic change, but, no question, Berlin is going to be one real, cosmopolitan city again. It was an especially rewarding experience for me to be a witness of this unprecedented process, together with my new friends from all over the world.