

March 2016

I send you a message of greetings and congratulations on the special issue of *Intersections*, including papers contributed to your Karl Polanyi conference of 2015. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Karl Polanyi Centenary Conference organized by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1986, and the return of my parents Karl and Ilona to eternal rest in Budapest. Much has changed in the thirty years that have passed, and Karl Polanyi's work has become ever more important in our dangerously disordered world. He would be happy to know that his work is now receiving attention in his homeland.

In this regard, we recall that this year also marks the 60th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, crushed by Soviet tanks. Many Hungarians chose to leave the country, but for Karl Polanyi 1956 marked a homecoming. As he wrote in a letter to his brother Michael, '1956 re-conquered me for Hungary. More than that: it gave me a mother country... I admire the fighters of October... They have redeemed Hungary, a non-people, from Ady's "szégyenkaloda", the "stocks" of history.' In the same letter, he expressed his concern that Michael was engaged in assisting Hungarian intellectuals to establish journals in Western countries, with covert official American funding.

As a tribute to Hungarian intellectuals who chose to continue the struggle for socialism and independence on Hungarian soil, Karl and Ilona collaborated in the production of *The Plough and the Pen*. The title of this collection of translations of Hungarian writings and poetry speaks to the regenerative power of populist literature past and present. My parents believed that Hungary had the capacity to reclaim the power of the people from the communist bureaucracy. Literal translations made by Karl and Ilona were rendered into poetry by eminent Canadian writers. With an introduction by W. H. Auden, and a dedication to their old friend Endre Havas, the book was published in Toronto and London in 1963.

In these last years of his life, Karl Polanyi created the journal *Co-Existence*, to initiate international communication of Socialist intellectuals. In light of the divisive forces impacting societies in an increasingly interdependent world, the co-existence of peoples and nations, religions and ethnicities, assume new dimensions and complexities. Should we consider the challenge of reviving *Co-Existence*, in the tradition of Karl Polanyi?

In conclusion, I wish to share with you a brief manuscript, written in 1960. I have reproduced this text several times because it speaks to contemporary issues.

With my deepest appreciation for your important work,

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Karl Polanyi. Draft article – Statements on Political
Philosophy, 1960.

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Karl Polanyi. Draft article – Statements on Political Philosophy, 1960.

Pluralist democracy, national independence, industrial culture and a socialist international order are the vistas of humanist socialism which point towards immense tasks but come out of one and the same impulse.

1. Pluralism. This encompasses democracy and inner freedom in the constitutional, social and inner-party spheres, first and foremost in regard to Trade Union autonomy.

2. National independence. Comprising the economic autonomy of a country and the positive aspect of Titoism.

3. The humanization of industrial civilization, or the universal task of socialism in the moral and personal sphere. This comprises the qualitative re-shaping of the process of production. The organic fusing of the world of the machine with human motivation.

4. The evolving of modes of action which can effectively influence the total order of human affairs in the burning political, economic and cultural questions, such as the new nations, racial emancipation, nuclear bombs. In the economic field by allocation of raw materials, stabilizing of currencies, long-term price fixing, concrete arrangements between people, reciprocal relations – by introducing elements of planning which ward off violent upsets and to which societies of the market type do not lend themselves.

Source: Karl Polanyi Archive, Container 37, File 18.