

OBITUARY

Pavel Machonin (1927–2008)

Pavel Machonin, one of the most distinguished Czech sociologists, died on 14th of July, 2008.

Born in 1927, he became one of the creators of Czech sociology in the early '60s, promoting its revival after more than a dozen years of virtual non-existence. He was head of a research team during the Prague Spring pursuing complex social structure studies, unprecedented in the socialist countries. The research results were published (the work *Československá společnost* [Czechoslovak Society] appeared in Bratislava in 1969) and yet the team was dissolved, with many of its members shunted into professional limbo. Early on, Machonin found a job with ČTV Noctua, an organisation engaged, among other things, in applied researches into sports and leisure activities but, in 1974, he was compelled to take a job in poultry industry. At last, after 1989, Pavel Machonin could resume scientific work, directing Social Structure Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. In those years he wrote several books, ambitious and interesting, to mention one bordering on historical sociology which he wrote in collaboration with Jaroslav Krejčí *Czechoslovakia, 1918–92: A Laboratory for Social Change* (Palgrave Macmillan 1996), or his last book *Česká společnost a sociologické poznání* [Czech Society a Sociological Study] (ISV 2005).

Throughout the whole period of his scholarly pursuits, Pavel Machonin maintained close contacts with Polish sociology and friendly ties with Polish sociologists. Even in his last years when battling against cancer he did not abandon scientific research. Now he is gone and Polish sociology has lost a friend, and social sciences in Central Europe—a scholar of highest merit.

Jaroslav Kiliński
University of Warsaw