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Jenő Bangó (1934–2023)



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Jenő Bangó was born in 1934 in Szombathely. He joined the scout movement as a schoolboy and became a member of Regnum Marianum, Scout Troop 3. He wrote his first piece of academic work, an essay with the title *The role of fire in the cultural history of mankind*, while still in school, and won a prize for it at the annual Regnum youth competition. His interest in understanding social processes had been greatly influenced by these years and this community. He started his secondary education at the Kőlcsey Ferenc Secondary Grammar School in Budapest, but he told a joke on Rákosi in his class, which led to a disciplinary decision expelling him and excluding him from all secondary schools in Budapest.

Then a year of physical work followed; he was working for the Hungarian State Railways, rebuilding the houses in Nyugati tér (then Marx tér) in Budapest, which had been damaged during the siege of the city in World War II. In the spring, he received a recommendation from the DISZ (Union of Working Youth) secretary at his workplace, certifying that he had been doing useful work as a labourer and, as a result of his successful re-education in communist ideology, he was no longer a class enemy. This opened up the way for him to continue his secondary

education. He enrolled at the secondary grammar school in Újpest, where, with the help of his teacher of Hungarian, he could complete two years in one and graduated in 1952.

He applied for two universities. Following a rational decision, he chose a degree programme in Hungarian and German studies at Eötvös József University of Sciences, and, following his calling, he also applied for the seminary for priests in Esztergom. It was the seminary that he entered in mid-September (there were five students in the class at that time!). The 1956 revolution found her there, and she and her fellow students participated in the events as volunteers in an auxiliary capacity. When the Soviets occupied Hungary, they received a message which warned them to flee because they were wanted. They left the country on 6 November. He ended up at the Pazmaneum in Vienna at first.

In 1957, he enrolled at the University of Leuven, receiving a Ford scholarship. It was here that he learnt French. As his scholarship ran out, in 1960 he applied for a job advertisement looking for teachers to the Belgian Congo. He and his two friends taught in Bakwanga in the Congo for a year. On his return, he worked at the Central European Research Institute in Leuven, first as a research assistant and then as a research associate. He graduated in 1963.

He was involved in the editing of the journal *Documentation sur L'Europe Centrale*, where he worked until the institute closed in 1968. It was then that he wrote his thesis "Changes in the Hungarian village". In this work, he examined how village life was rendered impossible and villages deteriorated under the communist dictatorship in Hungary. In 1973 he obtained his doctorate degree. He continued his teaching career at the University of Aachen, and in the meantime he pursued postdoctoral studies at the University of Freiburg until 1975. He taught as Professor of Sociology at the Universities of Düsseldorf and Aachen. From 2005 to 2007, he was an academic consultant to the Prime Minister's Office of the German-speaking Community in Belgium.

He shared his research findings in his higher education courses in the fields of sociology of knowledge, sociology of values, sociology of time, socio-regions and social pedagogy, and social work.

From 2008 on, he was a guest professor at the University of Szeged. With his teaching activities, his personal charisma, and his clear intellectualism endowed with values, Professor Bangó richly contributed to the education of intellectuals and the distinguished academic standard the University of Szeged prides itself on. He gave a video-recorded biographical interview to the Oral History Research Group of the University of Szeged, thus contributing to our research on the micro-history of the 1956 Revolution and its application in the projects run by the MTA-SZTE Oral History and History Education Research Group.

Professor Bangó was also an active member of the International Advisory Board of the social science journal *Belvedere Meridionale*. In 2012, he wrote and published a textbook for higher education entitled *Basic Sociological Concepts for Teacher Education Students*, published by *Belvedere Meridionale*. In an interview published in our magazine in the summer of 2019, he shared his message to students of the future: "If you have a good goal that you wish to achieve, never give up!"

In 2015, he was awarded the Hungarian Gold Cross of Merit for his work in education.

His thoughts and wise insights expressed in the discussions after his Thursday classes at university will remain with us forever, and his cheerful personality will not be forgotten.



Bangó Jenő előadása után a hallgatókkal, 2015-ben

Interview with Jenő Bangó:

JANCSÁK, CSABA (2019): Bangó Jenő a megértő szemlélő [Jenő Bangó, an understanding observer] (Budapest, Leuven, Bakwangá, Aachen, Eupen, Szeged). *Belvedere Meridionale* 31. évf. 2. sz. 210–221. pp. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14232/belv.2019.2.16> 6 <https://acta.bibl.u-szeged.hu/62871/>

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