



## Dilemmas of Social Movements

A Review of the Volume

Antal Attila (ed.): *Mozgalmi társadalom*<sup>1</sup>

[Movement Society]

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In almost every case, the social movement refers to a community enterprise where several individuals are grouped together in order to achieve a common goal and a better lifestyle. In fact, the volume starts with this thought, explaining the importance of socio-movement phenomena by putting the emphasis on the Hungarian politics and presenting a situation that is not so easy.

The cover of the book illustrates the key theme of the volume: movement society. The colourful, obscured, and dotted photo on the cover page that shows a smaller crowd reflects the idea that the main role in this book is intended for civilians – those civilians who can jointly renew the concept of modern society and who can introduce some social changes that either bring disagreement, conflict, or define a whole new direction of social life.

The volume is just over 300 pages, and it includes the research of twelve authors: Attila Ágh, Attila Antal, András Bakó, István Benedek, Áron Márk, Eszter Farkas, Ágnes Gagyí, Bálint Misetics, Dániel Oross, Réka Papp, András Pásztóy, and András Tóth. All of these studies have a common feature: the need for movement research and political organization. All the authors who appear in this volume try to focus on the aspects of the movement idea, taking into account the historical process, the current situation in East-Central Europe or Latin America, and from here on the Hungarian characteristics are also emphasized, starting from the activity of the *Kétfarkú Kutya Párt* (Two-Tailed Dog Party) or from the strategies of the *Momentum* movement.

The volume is structured into the prologue and two other main parts: the first part contains 3 studies and the second part seven. The studies in the first part discuss the theoretical and actual issues of social movements and also the theory

<sup>1</sup> Noran-Libro Publisher, 2018.

of movements. The second part contains the studies that attempt to analyse the movement society from the international and Hungarian perspective, including the possibilities and constraints that can truly affect the movement society. The volume ends with a brief presentation of the authors.

The common feature of the first three studies is that they all start out from the theory of movement and examine the situation in Europe, most of all, in Central and Eastern Europe.

According to Attila Ágh (*Generációs metszetek és társadalmi mozgalmak Magyarországon – Az európai kihívás és a kelet-közép-európai válasz* [Generation Engravings and Social Movements in Hungary – The European Challenge and the Central and Eastern European Response]), Europe is characterized by a kind of intergenerational separation in which every new generation tries to separate itself from the previous one. There appears a change in the system of thoughts, and so there is no meaningful dialogue between the two generations.

In her study, Ágnes Gagyí examines the theory of movement based on the characteristics of World War II, while at the same time she explains the notion of social movement not as a phenomenon of countries but as a different system of world economy.

In the following writing, Attila Antal (*Posztdemokrácia és a populista társadalmi mozgalmak* [Post-Democracy and Populist Social Movements]), the author, writes about the fall of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's liberal democracy, which lately turns into global democracy with the help of which a transnational political subject can be created. According to him, the transnational movement subject required for the further development of democracy must be created by transnational populism, which presupposes a nation-wide structure that can extend beyond the borders of the nation-state.

The second part of the volume focuses on Hungary and its current movements such as the Hungarian trade union movement or the 2017 protest wave.

The introductory study of the second part (András Bakó: *Populista mozgalmak a félperiférián – Latin Amerika és Kelet-Közép-Európa összehasonlítása* [Populist Movements on the Half-Periphery – Comparison of Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe]) may appear slightly out of line at first sight because it does not focus on Hungary. It tries to compare two Latin American and East Central European elected populist governments. Although this study does not fit into this section at first reading, it discusses a line of thought that makes it quite similar to other studies. With the help of these international-themed studies, we can get an international outlook that makes the Hungarian situation much more realistic. In this section, there appear the studies of more or less well-known authors such as András Pásztóy, Dániel Oross, Bálint Misetics, Márton Márk Éber, András Tóth, or István Benedek.

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Let us admit that the movement society, its characteristics and typologies can be read in detail and carefully: this book gives us the opportunity to do so. Not only is it professionally capable of providing a solid point of reference for those readers who are particularly interested in the various segments of social movements, the style of the authors and the way the works are structured to make the book readable and understandable for the readers who are less likely to have a deeper understanding of the issue are also noteworthy. In a word, the volume can be useful to everyone.

This work is indicative, wherefore I think that it is advisable to continue. The civil sphere offers a wide variety of topics, especially nowadays, when there are serious changes taking place. Society and, above all, the movement society must always be dealt with, whether it would be a movement, a research, or education. The issue of the movement society is definitely an issue that is not only interesting on a theoretical level, but it is also an experiment which is able to dissolve the scepticism and a series of negative prejudices on the subject. In my opinion, the book is definitely useful. I recommend reading it to those who are really interested in this topic.