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## A CONTRIBUTION TO HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY IN THE WORK OF ĐORĐE TASIĆ

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**ABSTRACT:** The paper will present a part of Đorđe Tasić's creative opus published in 1938, in the first issue of the *Sociološki pregled / Sociological Review*, the journal of the Society for Sociology and Social Sciences. In this issue alone, Đorđe Tasić published five papers and a large number of critical reviews. Their thematic character is very diverse and directed towards his understanding of sociology, its position in the system of social sciences and its relationship with other social sciences. A detailed description is given of its development and the current situation in Serbia until the end of the 1930s, including consideration of the contribution to sociology by social theorists in the period preceding the period in which Tasić and his contemporaries worked. Moreover, there is a review of the state of sociology in other European countries of the time. For that reason, we believe that the works of Đorđe Tasić have multiple significance for historical sociology. First, they provide us with an insight into the interest in sociology in Serbia until, and especially in the late 1930s; second, in this way, directly, through the prism of the author himself, we learn about his attitudes towards the contribution to the development of sociology of earlier writers, but also those who were interested in this science trying to improve it in a period close to Đorđe Tasić. Third, we gain insight into the state of sociology throughout Europe during the 1930s, about which the author also directly informs us as a contemporary, with his good knowledge of sociological literature and critical reviews dedicated to this topic, but also through his personal participation at international congresses dedicated to the sociological problems of the time.

**KEYWORDS:** sociology, historical sociology, Đorđe Tasić, Serbia, Europe.

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## 1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

A jurist by vocation and a true erudite in his commitment and vivid interest in social sciences in general, Đorđe Tasić, a tragic figure and victim of the Second World War, as corroborated by his biography, has left a considerable mark in Serbian sociological science. From his rich opus, limited by his short life as a result of tragic suffering, for the purpose of this paper we have selected the texts and critical reviews published by this author in the first issue of the *Sociološki pregled / Sociological Review* (1938), the journal of the Society for Sociology and Social Sciences, the forerunner of the Serbian Sociological Society. For the historical-sociological analysis we intend to perform in this paper, the journal itself, as well as Đorđe Tasić's articles and critical reviews, have multiple significance. This also applies to its contents, more precisely the papers and reviews published in it, with a special emphasis on those written by Đorđe Tasić. For this reason, the entire analysis presented in this paper will be based on our understanding of historical sociology as a scientific discipline,

*“which bases its scientific explanation on the ‘natural’ synthesis of historical and sociological theories and methods, using relevant historical sources. That is, qualitative and quantitative analysis of historical material, using hermeneutics, comparative method, content analysis, and historical method that unifies: statistical methods, case method, biographical method, survey research, etc., with the aim of determining causal links between two or more different social phenomena”* (Baščarević, 2021: 59).

In that respect, in accordance with the subject of the research itself, by a detailed insight into the content of the *Sociological Review* from 1938, we have established the following: out of the total of 28 scientific and professional papers published in this journal, 5 represent the authorship of Đorđe Tasić, which makes 17.56%. Furthermore, out of a total of 131 critical reviews, Đorđe Tasić wrote 54, or 41.2%. All published scientific and professional papers and critical reviews by Đorđe Tasić represent a unit of the content analysis in our research.

## 2. HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY IN THE WORK OF ĐORĐE TASIĆ

### 2. 1. Đ. Tasić's understanding of sociology

According to Đorđe Tasić,

“sociology studies social life but, in doing so, it assumes a certain biological and psychological basis or substratum in man. These bases actually form moments, and therefore sociology must not lose sight of them for a single moment, including the natural, external conditions in which people live [...]”<sup>2</sup> (Tasić, 1938a: 27).

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<sup>2</sup> “No one could, taken literally, deny the existence and importance of biological and psychological factors, since man is a biological and psychological being. It would have been too naive

From the aforementioned definition of sociology, we realize the author's contemporaneous attitude, very close to today's understanding of sociological science, which is further confirmed in his view that

“today science must refrain from giving a precise definition. Examination of the connections among the elements becomes more concrete and profound; all the sciences and methods together are applied to help in breaking down the elements and determining their interdependence relationships in the best possible manner [...] What determines sociology are these social conditions in which human opinion and knowledge are developed and, specifically, in which rational thinking emerges [...]” (Ibid: 28).

With this, the author accurately and clearly points to the fact that social reality is extremely complex and that as such, it places a challenge to the science of society with the aim of its scientific explanation and understandings. In this regard, the subsequent differentiation of sociology into numerous scientific disciplines depending on the subject of interest, that is, social phenomena as parts of the overall social reality, seems quite justified and understandable. Nevertheless, given the complexity of each social phenomenon individually, the author does not remain in the domain of defining sociological science, but recognizes the necessity of interdisciplinary cooperation of general sociology and its scientific disciplines with other sciences on nature and society, and that only in this way can relevant scientific explanations and understanding of natural and social reality be obtained<sup>3</sup>. As put eloquently by Đorđe Tasić himself,

“we do not in any way deny the importance of biological and psychological. But we believe that all these theories forget in one way or another the tremendous importance of social life and historical development [...] Social life is [...] a world for itself, built from the interrelationships of people, created under given conditions [...]” (Ibid: 30-31).

Nevertheless, the contemporaneous understanding of the practical importance of sociology, which the author writes about in the age strongly influenced by neopositivism,

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and unscientific [...] When sociology managed to emancipate itself from philosophy, biology, psychology, anthropogeography, in one period of its development, which came as a reaction to the previous one, it tried to provide an explanation about things, for which it is not competent. It set out to explain the laws of our opinion and knowledge and to resolve the issue of morality and religion. Social life would be the explanation for all these questions in their entirety. In this regard, it took the paths of empiricism: psychology or biology; but it, in turn, pointed out as an essential and decisive factor social life as an absolute and only source of knowledge [...]” (Ibid: 27).

<sup>3</sup> “The question is what is primary: spiritual or social. If the spiritual is primary, then it is associated with man and humanity, or more precisely, with man as a member of humanity. If the need for social inclusion is recognized, in the form of specific communities, it will be subordinated to a system of objective values valid for people in general, in other words the system of natural law. If, on the contrary, the social is primary, then the spiritual will subdue to the historically concrete, usually a nation and state, as usually done by the Germans; but in that case it will decide about the concrete form, i.e., nation or state, is more valuable, and about the ratio of forces (practically, therefore, war). Namely, putting some objective value system above them means returning to the individual and to humanity [...]” (Tasić, 1938a: 30-31).

leaves a very vivid picture of its possible application in practice, admitting in the end that this does not have to be its purpose in itself. This can be seen in Tasić's view that

“sociology has shown ambitions to serve practical life since the first moment of its emergence into the world. Sociology believed that it would serve people as they serve the natural sciences, and that there could be no science that could not be used in practice. One can even speak, conversely, about the impact of practical interests and practical conceptions of people on social science and sociology. Originally bold positivism became much more modest with Durkheim in this regard [...]” (1938b: 166), therefore

“sociology, shattering the illusions that by the power of will everything can be done, opens simultaneously wide horizons to people of action, because it takes care of the collective phenomena and objective conditions of individual phenomena, which should be influenced. The question of the possibility of our activities is to be solved on the basis of the given concrete facts, within the limits of the general knowledge of social legality, in which this one is known to us”<sup>4</sup> (Ibid.).

However, distancing himself for a moment from neopositivism, Đorđe Tasić cannot reject his democratic principles that take him back to the domain of science and practice. Thus, considering the theory of racism, which was at that time very widespread and would, among other things, serve as a theoretical basis for emerging fascism, first in Germany and then in Italy, the author points out that

“[...] it is true that objective scientific knowledge bears a single truth useful and practical. If science proves, for example, that the theory of racism is wrong - and science has proved it - it therefore provides one proper orientation for practice and those who do not obey it will encounter today or tomorrow difficulties that come from it”<sup>5</sup> (Ibid: 171).

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<sup>4</sup> “...if we look at things dynamically, it does not follow that what they develop will be better just because it is new. Knowledge of evolution will show us what is possible to achieve and what means will be the most convenient and successful in achieving one goal and performing one function. But there is a need [...], to adapt to the new conditions that are emerging. Evolution should be understood in the constant efforts of the being to adjust and achieve certain of his goals and to meet certain of his needs [...] This is where we start from man as an active being who has aspirations to adapt to the conditions and, what is more, to implement one logic in his life; but also, from man who can and wants to take advantage of objective knowledge of things” (Ibid: 169). “The analysis of his formulas reveals to us even that he had a priori presumptions. Such is his presumption that man wants to live in society ... it comes out in the same way as the preferences of the aprioristic philosopher. Namely, if people want to live in a society, it does not come out at all that they want to live exactly in the group in which they will find themselves, and not in another one” (Ibid: 170).

<sup>5</sup> “This was always about the immediate impact of sociology on moral concepts. Realizing morality as conditioned by the social state, we can influence on it by changing this last one” (Ibid: 171). “But at such a moment when we will feel the masters who will create society and people, what kind of society will we choose and what kind of man will we choose as an ideal? Disproportionately seems his dependence on his moral views at the moment, on his enormous power to create a new society and a new man. Will the way out not be in this power being in truth and not as we

## 2.2. The state of sociology in Serbia and the region until the end of the 1930s

Đorđe Tasić informs us very exhaustively about the state of sociology in Serbia and the region until the end of the 1930s, thereby providing us with a historical insight into the era in which he writes, leaving a valuable testimony useful to historical sociology. Looking at the “pre-sociological” time in Serbia, he points out that

“sociology has barely existed in our country to this day, and it is only being created now. At the University of Belgrade, it was given plenty of attention by Slobodan Jovanović (while Živojin Perić was more inclined towards ethics). Of the younger ones, it is worth mentioning Mirko Kosić in the first place [...] then Živko Jovanović, who was quite promising in this area. From the older ones outside the University, we should mention Mihailo Avramović and Kosta Stojanović. The latter advocated mechanistic sociology. In the younger generation, there was also M. Stojanović, who published a book in French about optimism and pessimism in sociology, and N. Vukićević, who wrote a doctoral thesis on nationality” (Tasić, 1938c: 239).

Moreover, it is from Đorđe Tasić that we learn about the moment when sociology as an academic discipline was introduced at certain faculties in Serbia, as well as about the establishment of the Society for Sociology and Social Sciences. The author accurately testifies to this by pointing out that

“2 to 3 years ago (1935/1936, added by I. B.), we had the Department of Sociology introduced at the Faculty of Law and the Economic and Commercial College. Together with and under the leadership of Slobodan Jovanović, there was another lecturer, Jovan Đorđević, PhD, whose interest was primarily general and political sociology. At the Economic and Commercial College, Dragoslav. Todorović, PhD, taught both General Sociology and Economic Sociology. Interest in sociology at the University is very active, and in ten years we will have a generation fully trained for sociological discussions and studies and with evident scientific results [...]” (Ibid: 239).

As the author himself points out,

“however, it is characteristic among the Serbs that there have been several attempts to synthesize our history and our problems”. Previously, Svetozar Marković gave a synthetic view of the history of Serbia in the 19th century, and Slobodan Jovanović does the same in his papers on our political history of the 19th century. Stanoje Stanojević looks at the creation and development of the Serbian people. Mirko Kosić publishes a discussion in German (in *Kölner Vierteljahrshefte für Soziologie*) about our social structure and our problems. Many years ago, Dragoljub Jovanović, PhD, wrote in a similar manner in the

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expected and because social legality has limits in the spontaneous expressed in man’s psychological and moral aspirations?” (Ibid: 172).

*Serbian Literary Gazette*. Komadinić makes a general overview of our economic and social development in some of his writings”<sup>6</sup> (Ibid: 239-240).

Also, according to Đorđe Tasić,

“a number of surveys of people’s life need to be recorded. First of all, there is literature about our family cooperatives, where the name of the talented Valtazar Bogišić stands out. Independently of cooperatives, in general, besides Cvijić and his school, and T. Đorđević, there are others worth mentioning, most of whom worked outside the University: M. Avramovic, M. Vlajinac. D. Lapčević, S. Popović, S. Vukosavljević, A. Pribičević, A. Petrović (physician) and S. Vidaković, to name but a few. With their observations, these people contributed to our sociology on a larger or smaller scale. But it is not only material and facts, but also their explanations and interpretations, which can also be of interest and useful to sociology [...]” (Ibid: 240).

On the basis of the above, the author himself considers that

“all this shows too clearly that sociological studies are necessary for practical reasons. This is confirmed once again by the fact that we have several centres where, if there is no true sociology, there is plenty of interest in it. These are ideological and practical movements, such as cooperative or workers’ movements. These movements generate literature on social and economic issues. It is not scientific sociology because things tend to be seen from one particular point of view, but it has an interest in sociology by facts and by explanation. From a practical point of view, especially the educational one, it is very important” (Ibid: 240).

All these facts listed by the author lead to the conclusion that

“sociological studies deserve much more attention from our society and the state, our universities and other scientific institutions, and that sociological studies should be carried out on as broad a scale as possible. In fact, we will give it the place it has had in the world for a long time, and even in smaller countries (e.g., Belgium or Romania)” (Ibid: 241).

Nevertheless, Đorđe Tasić also points out certain shortcomings of previous research on social phenomena, considering that

“methodological issues have been insufficiently dealt with, as well as the problem of relationships between certain social sciences. It also seems to us that the collection of materials or the study of special issues lags in proportion to the attempts at synthesis,

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<sup>6</sup> There are also such works about Montenegro (e.g., Đonović) or Vojvodina. And we have even had something similar (although with different goals) about Bulgaria (V. Savić) and other countries. These works will undoubtedly be of use; and some even precious; but they are mostly historical; sometimes they are influenced by certain political or social concepts. Regardless of this, a more comprehensive and detailed investigation will certainly be needed to obtain a reliable synthetic picture, at least as far as the current situation is concerned” (Ibid., p. 240).

which, however, is needed not only to review the path travelled but also to correctly determine the problems and the goals of the investigation. To this day, it could be understood, and perhaps even justified, but we do not believe that it can be done in the future. We are afraid that the absence of feeling the need for synthesis will not play a role here. The absence of this feeling would, among other things, explain the slight interest in sociology to this day, because every effort towards synthesis will lead to sociology, which provides the most complete synthesis. In return, the treatment of sociology will help to deepen special sciences and help them to reach their syntheses”<sup>7</sup> (Ibid: 241).

### 2. 3. The state of sociology in Europe until the end of the 1930s

While visiting the Universities and Institutes of Western Europe, especially Belgium and France, either as a participant at various international congresses or as a guest lecturer, Đorđe Tasić, in his later reflections, informs us exhaustively and in detail about what he saw as a participant or an observer, without failing to compare his experiences with the situation in Serbia at the end of the 1930s. All this represents a first-class source for historical sociology. Thus, the author informs us that he had the opportunity to review many publications of the Solvey Institute in Brussels, thereby gaining an insight into the sociology and social sciences there, pointing out that they are very intensely elaborated and published there<sup>8</sup>. Not hiding his enthusiasm for the Belgian approach to sociology as a science, the author points out that

“[...] it is a country where sociology and sociological education occupy a prominent place in all matters. It is also a country where sociological orientation has gained visible expression in certain social sciences. This is especially the case in legal science, which I had the opportunity of getting to know quite well. A positivist spirit permeates

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<sup>7</sup> “We hope that our special sciences will go that way and that, being free from unnecessary and senseless competition or ambition in terms of rank, they will help each other, even with full understanding, and make a common effort to arrive at a synthesis of social phenomena and especially our society. It would have first-class cultural significance and thus great practical significance” (Ibid: 241).

<sup>8</sup> “Their concepts may not have much momentum, but they make plenty of common sense. Since its beginning as a state, Belgium has had an outstanding national problem - because Belgium is established, as it is known, depending on the interests of large neighbouring states. It is composed of the Walloons and the Flemings - it is this problem that has interested their social sciences, and especially their history. Some well-known historians have developed a theory about Belgians as one nation, which was opposed by the theory that the Walloons and the Flemings are two nations, especially since the Flemish movement after the war took on a wide scale and became a serious state problem. But Belgium also lived under such social conditions, that its citizens built clear views: liberal, Catholic and socialist (Marxist), which assumed the characteristics of certain theoretical positions of principle, philosophical and sociological” (Tasić, 1938d: 303). “It is characteristic for the publications of the Institute, as, apparently, and for the Belgians in general, that there are many papers speaking about practical and concrete issues, and those that concern Belgium” (Ibid: 305).

the sociological orientation. And against this spirit, there has been a reaction from Catholicism, which will not deny the value of sociology, social sciences, as well as social issues, but will very energetically put limits on sociology's claims, particularly regarding moral and religious problems. In Belgium, you will be able to read one of the most serious criticisms of Durkheim's sociology and the views of the philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas. That criticism could exaggerate, be thrown and transferred, that is for me not only probable but certain. It shows how deep and big problems and moral contradictions fill the life of Belgians. Despite this, this cultured nation exists and will continue to develop" (Tasić, 1938d: 304).

Furthermore, the author speaks about his participation at international congresses as follows: "What we observed at some legal congresses, could be observed at many others as well. But here is the congress, which they showed us in all its grandeur, as imposingness by the very number of participants, discussions and, unfortunately, conflicts. There were two sociological ones: one called the *Conference internationale des Sciences sociales*<sup>9</sup> and the other congress of the International Institute of Sociology (*Institut international de Sociologie*)" (Tasić, 1938e: 314).

What the author observes, and we also consider important for understanding the contemporary state of sociology, is the fact

"that he will speak about social sciences, not just sociology. It is a valid expression of interest and ways of working in France, and to some extent in the world; it is also an expression of the understanding of the cooperation and mutual assistance of all social sciences, as well as their connection to sociology, which, having fertilized them with its synthetic view of the whole, seeks support in them"<sup>10</sup> (Ibid: 315). Đorđe Tasić informs us that he submitted two reports at the first congress. In one report, he proved

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<sup>9</sup> "...the congress was mainly organized by Professor Bugle, who presided over it. Professor Bugle chose three topics that are very relevant today: (1) the relationship of special social sciences with one another and with sociology, (2) The state of social sciences in certain countries, (3) The importance of social sciences for education" (Ibid: 314-315).

<sup>10</sup> "In addition to methodological problems in sociology and certain sciences (there were three reports on the relationship between legal science and sociology), there were reports on the teaching of sociology and social sciences." But there were reports that examined the social spirit of today's school teaching, and that even, relying on sociology or pedagogy, propagated a certain point of view, a certain spirit, especially in favour of internationalism. There were reports discussing very special issues, issues that will concern one country. Often, the papers discussed a narrower issue, or were content to underline the importance of one element. But there were some that presented blueprints of entire systems. A considerable number of papers were devoted to the review of social sciences in certain countries; unfortunately, it was not enough to have a general overview all over the world. Such a broad-minded congress could not carry out strictly one plan and proportions [...] Most of all, the discussion between historians and sociologists, and between economists and sociologists was conducted, and the same dialogues of 10 and 20 years ago were repeated once again, those that we had been able to read about previously. It is interesting that there were also representatives of the anti-sociological method. This is how a Viennese professor defended the famous Austrian school of economics [...]" (Ibid: 315-316).

the indispensable need for the philosophy of law to be based on sociology, criticizing *a priori* constructions often encountered today, and he also formulated his views on some basic issues of the relationship between sociology and philosophy. In the second, he presented a brief overview of the state of social sciences in Serbia, emphasizing how they are also studied in our country, citing as an attempt at synthesis, scientists who are of particular importance for Serbian sociology, namely V. Bogišić, J. Cvijić and S. Jovanovic. He also noted that official scientific institutions such as the Academy of Sciences, did not show enough interest in social sciences, such as sociology, economics, law, etc. (cf. Tasić, 1938e: 315-316). At another congress, organized by the International Institute of Sociology based in Geneva, the

“question of balance in society [...] was discussed and many papers were submitted on different issues, from the most diverse areas of social sciences, wherever the idea of balance can be applicable [...] the topic is not happily chosen. In it, as it is, he can put whatever he wants. But that was visible immediately from the main papers<sup>11</sup> [...] At the same congress, our Belgrade Society for Sociology became a member of the International Federation of Sociological Societies” (Ibid: 318-319). Đorđe Tasić speaks very vividly about the state of sociology in France at the end of the 1930s. According to him,

“in France, which is to some extent the cradle of modern social science, sociology overcomes great difficulties in order to take its rightful place in school curricula<sup>12</sup>. At the French *Institute of Sociology*, discussions were organized on the subject of teaching sociology in general, so their conclusions were largely related to teacher training schools. At the same time, numerous surveys were conducted that confirmed the need to introduce sociology into their curricula. This action finally succeeded and sociology has been a compulsory subject in teachers’ schools for 20 years now. Sociological teaching in secondary schools (*lyceums*) has its own problem. It will be taught as an optional subject to graduation candidates by teachers and philosophers who usually have almost no basic concepts about the subject they have to teach, and sociology is far from being satisfied

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<sup>11</sup> “The report by Professor Dupra aimed to pose the problem and determine the framework within which he would discuss it. Giving it a fundamental theoretical importance (because balance is an essential moment in social life), he gave it a practical one at the same time. But it will be seen immediately that he could do it at the cost of falling into an understanding close to organic and, especially, psychological, and, ultimately, that he could do it on the basis of a political and social idea. Another report was presented (or co-authored) by Professor Sorokin, the president of the Institute, who rejected the notion of balance in general and found it not only unnecessary but also harmful to science [...]” (Ibid: 318-319).

<sup>12</sup> “Paul Lapie, one of the contributors to the first volumes of the French Sociological Year and the director of elementary education, led the movement to introduce sociology into teachers’ schools a number of years ago. Future teachers would thus bring with them an awareness of the reality and complexity of human society, which would somewhat correct the unilaterality of their education. In this way, not only would the teaching have direct benefits, but it would also form an entire cadre of French teachers more intellectually. The project, which met with great approval among the students themselves, had to pass through the fire of conservative criticism, which came substantially from Catholic circles” (Tasić, 1938f: 320).

with its place in the curriculum of secondary schools in France. Higher sociological teaching is also facing the problem of its radical reform. There are separate sociology departments only in Paris, Bordeaux and Strasbourg today. Otherwise, sociology in teaching goes along with ethics at the faculties of philosophy. Taught by philosophers insufficiently interested and knowledgeable in the problems of social reality, sociology often suffers from their individual viewpoints and determinations” (Ibid: 320-321).

All of this leads the author to the conclusion that

“under such circumstances, for the time being, there can be no question of serious and thorough sociology taught at French universities as a whole. Curricula, on the other hand, give priority to certain philosophical and methodological problems of sociology, keeping mostly to the classic writers, while the social reality itself remains as inaccessible to students as before. Universities as such (with two or three exceptions) today do not provide sufficient opportunities for extensive sociological research. More serious students are mainly focused on themselves and on non-university opportunities, and even doctoral theses in sociology, which are often significant scientific studies, bear the hallmarks of independent persistent work rather than being indirectly the product of university teaching” (Ibid: 320-321).

#### 2. 4. Perspectives and the future of sociology according to Đorđe Tasić

Đorđe Tasić’s views on the perspective and prediction of the subsequent development of sociological science in Serbia, and in general, are perhaps best presented through his prism of criticism of monographs and other editions published up to that time. In his critical reviews of the books, the author undoubtedly presents his understanding of social science, his inclination towards multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity in the research of social phenomena, personal observations about the reach of individual authors, but also his own political orientation, democratic orientation and opposition to the fascist and racist ideology of that era. Thus, in a critical presentation of the book *Le Probleme logique de la societe* (Malgaud), contrasting his own understanding of sociology with the author whose work he is analyzing, Đorđe Tasić points out the following:

“Malgaud wants to explain society through logical development. There is no doubt that there are necessities and correlations in society, and there are certain essential elements. However, all that, in its concreteness, cannot be deduced by logical means. This way of explaining society approaches Malgaud’s point of view to formal sociology. But it has already been proven that forms cannot be separated from content [...] After all, why take action as a starting point and not some other psychological or biological factor? In truth, there are several elements, not one, and external factors also play a role here” (Tasić, 1938g: 334).

On the other hand, Đorđe Tasić does not hide his partiality towards domestic authors whose works, although multidisciplinary in their character, he categorizes as

sociological in order to affirm sociological science itself in Serbia, which he considers, as it has already been said, an underrepresented academic community. In this way, Tasić encourages domestic authors to deal as much as possible with domestic sociological problems, which, in his opinion, are almost marginalized, unknown and therefore invisible. He speaks very favourably about the works of Veselin Čajkanović (*Studies from religion and folklore, Life and Folk Customs, Several General Phenomena in the Old Serbian Religion, Several Observations with Serbian Christmas Day and Christmas*, pointing out that

“[...] Čajkanović [...] approaches his topics with very much erudition, and he gives, perhaps more than any other scientist of ours, who will deal with these issues, scientific arguments<sup>13</sup> [...] We are not competent to evaluate the accuracy of these results. We just want to make two notes from a methodological point of view. Čajkanović is exploring the origin of customs; however, it is also necessary to research their evolution and adaptation, because they will, in the course of history, be able to change and mix and even merge. It is equally important to show how the custom was transmitted, and what maintained it. Finally, if the custom is religious in essence, is it both in details and, more importantly for sociology, what it is in society that supports the religion in question” (Ibid: 342). And he concludes that “from these incidental remarks, it can be seen how sociology looks at problems more broadly, but also how it fully encompasses the problems and provides the most reliable evidence, serving, without a doubt, the results of many special social sciences” (Ibid: 342).

In a similar way, Đorđe Tasić gives a critical analysis of the papers by Dušan Popović (*About the Outlaws, Belgrade 200 years ago and About the Aromanians*)<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> “However, he approaches it as a historian, who is interested in the origin of customs.” On a comparative-historical basis, he finds a religious origin in many of our customs, and in this he shows plenty of subtlety: from one detail, he can reveal the traces and origin of an institution” (Ibid: 342). “Studying the character of a nation and its psychological traits encounters many difficulties. Hardly accessible, directly exposed, when they observe through action, to different interpretations, and especially exposed to the dangers of subjectivism in various forms. It is characteristic that characterology, and perhaps social psychology in general, will be pleased to use the intuitive method, if not exclusively, certainly to a large extent. On the other hand, they put a lot of emphasis on the psychological moment and consider it easily the most important of all, finding that basic of cultural orientations. Thus, they fall into one-sided idealism. But not only that, they easily arbitrarily extend the borders to one group of peoples (Latin, Slavic, German)” (Tasić, 1938p: 349). “Characteristic and social-psychological studies will usually connect the problem of our cultural orientation, a problem that certainly makes sense. Nevertheless, this problem will have to be related to social and even political conditions, since cultural life is also dependent on them. Cultural emancipation or independence is undoubtedly a matter of consciousness, and therefore has its psychological as well as its moral side; but it also has a social and historical one” (Ibid: 350).

<sup>14</sup> “In the book *About the Outlaws*, D. Popović chose a phenomenon that played an important role in the history of our nation and certainly left a visible mark in its psychology and mentality [...] this phenomenon is of particular interest for sociology, because, although abnormal, it is not criminal in the eyes of the people. Hence customs, morals, mentality as well as, on the other

“we are also grateful to D. Popović for these works, which will be very useful for sociological studies. But they will have their full value when they perform an analysis in order to establish causal relationships, and place things in a comparative-historical and directly sociological wider framework, which, it seems, their author himself sees” (Tasić, 1938i: 343).

It is interesting to see Đ. Tasić's understanding of Marxism, presented in a critical review of *Dialectic Materialism and Mutual Effect* by Georges Friedmann, where he says that “this small brochure is characteristic and representative; it reveals to us the need for Marxism, that, inside the ranks of Marxists themselves, to liberate itself from “simplicism”. But striving to find a more correct and profound formula, the question is how far it can go and still remain Marxism. In this way, it is possible, following internal necessity and the law of logical evolution, to overcome itself”<sup>15</sup> (Tasić, 1938j: 354). Đorđe Tasić best explains his democratic principles and intolerance towards fascism and racism through critical reviews of the books *International Plebiscites* (Vidan O. Blagojević), *Ideological Conflict of Democracy and Fascism* (Dušan Nedeljković), *Italian Nationalism I, One Will*, and *Articles about Italy* (Miodrag Ristić), as well as *Yugoslavia and the Jewish problem* (E. V. Gajić). The problem of international plebiscites after the Great War, discussed in Vidan Blagojević's book, is observed by Đorđe Tasić in a completely different way, pointing out that

“generally speaking, international plebiscites did not produce even close to the results that were rightly expected from them. They did not serve as a correction of injustice, but rather they enabled, despite the clearly expressed will of the people to the contrary, many non-German minorities to remain under the rule of the previous masters, precisely because the situation established by the official statistics of the German and Austrian authorities from before the war was not taken as a benchmark, but the

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hand, relations they will create, towards the people and towards the enemy, acquire a special form and can cause a very lively sociological interest. There is plenty of sociological material and indications, but, being historical, the discussion does not contain any sociological analyses. He is particularly interested in the legacy of these outlaws, but it also seems that we should look more critically in connection with other issues, i.e., phenomena of the social life of our people, and especially with the outlaws that will be reported later. The second book is even more historical, containing a description of Belgrade 200 years ago: attitudes, social, economic and especially religious life, public, private and social organizations etc. [...] In his third and most famous book, Popović talks about the Aromanians, emphasizing that *they* (italics by I. B.) were one of the most important creators of common Balkan culture. The culture which they brought to a society that was still rural, peasant and patriarchal could be marked as bourgeois and rationalist, and that is why it gets the marks of (at least to a certain extent) Western European, whose certain institutions they actually transmitted [...]” (Ibid: 343).

<sup>15</sup> “This may also be the case with Georges Friedmann's formula, which underlines that the dependence of all factors on the economic structure should be understood in such a way that these factors also exert their influence on this side, and turn the formula into a formula of mutual dependence, which will be subsequently freed by Marxism of the realization of strict temporal determination, because e.g., there may be ‘delays’” (Tasić, 1938j: 354).

people's consciousness was called for where it was not sufficiently expressed and where it could not express itself freely, since the opponents were not equal" (Tasić, 1938k: 384).

Furthermore, Đorđe Tasić largely agrees with the views of Dušan Nedeljković, considering that in his work

"Nedeljković very decisively but also very shrewdly points out the contradictions and insincerity in the fascist ideology, especially when they want to present fascism to us as a ("concentrated") democracy. He understands democracy itself as a dynamic process, in stages of development, and what he will call a crisis is, according to him, actually a climb to a higher level towards social and cultural democracy, while fascism is a 'downward' tendency" (Tasić, 1938l: 385-386). He also praises the work of Miodrag Ristić, whom he considers one of the

"few Serbs who follow and know Italian life and civilization<sup>16</sup>. The development of the national movement sheds light on the understanding of Italy in the World War and the peace treaties, but also on the appearance of the fascist movement [...] Written in a literary and vivid manner, sometimes with partiality towards the Italians, but also with a critical or reserved attitude towards fascism (even at its outset), these two books represent not only a very useful, but also a very pleasant reading" (Tasić, 1938lj: 393). Finally, referring to the work of E. V. Gajić, Đorđe Tasić points out that "the writer proves the unscientific nature of racial theory, and that the Jewish question does not exist in Yugoslavia either in the number of Jews neither in terms of their role, and especially not in terms of their attitude, because Jews are good patriots" (Tasić, 1938m: 401). Đorđe Tasić looks at the future perspectives of sociological research into less elaborated social phenomena that mostly concern economic underdevelopment, labour rights and the role of trade union organizations, as well as poverty. Critically analyzing the works of Nikola Konstantinović (*Economic role of workers unions*), Mijo Mirković (*Development of economic thought in the 19th century*), Sekula Zečević (*Poverty of Yugoslavia*) and Rudolf Bičanić (*How the people live*), Đorđe Tasić shows his full understanding of the position of the working class, its poverty and the role of trade unions in the defence of workers' rights, as well as the consequences of the economic underdevelopment of Serbia at that time. In this respect, Đorđe Tasić states that

"in this work [...], Mirković is able to grasp the matter in a sufficiently concrete way and to reveal the general attitudes of people in the issues, and even the practical

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<sup>16</sup> "In the first book, which makes a whole, Ristić presents the origin and development of the Italian nation as a separate political movement or party. Just as the youth before 1910 had been socialist-oriented for some time (and there is probably no significant figure in Italy who, more or less, went through this school), from 1910 onwards it became national. Such nationalism carries, in addition to the general features it has in other countries, a belief in the mission of the Italian people, or the idea of Roman greatness and the glorification of war (anti-pacifism) [...] In the second book, there is a collection of articles from which you can get information about many and many issues and phenomena, both historical considerations and often statistical data. But that will refer to the time when fascism had just appeared and to the first years of its government. That is why, without a doubt, Ristić refrained from trying to connect these articles into one whole" (Ibid: 393).

aspirations that the theoreticians will lead. And if he presents the doctrines separately and by their representatives, he explains their appearance by the economic evolution of one society and one nation. And he clearly has an economic and social point of view, not to say a sociological one, on the method of study, which he will see especially in his criticism of the psychological and mathematical school. We will fully agree with that" (Tasić, 1938n: 412). In the same way, speaking positively about the work of Nikola Konstantinović, he indicates that this author

"in his book (doctoral thesis) follows the trade unions from their appearance until today, observing them placed in the framework of capitalism, which he describes to us before the appearance of the trade unions and after their appearance". He explains to us the forms in which the unions appear, the struggle they have and the forms of that struggle to protect the interests of workers. He takes a positive attitude towards unions, showing plenty of understanding for the rights and interests of workers. But he also proves that trade unions, by their direct effect and influence on the economy itself, by their effect and influence on legislation, were beneficial not only to the working class, improving its position, but also to the national economy and the state" (Tasić, 1938nj: 412). Finally, considering the monographic editions of Sekula Zečević and Rudolf Bičanić<sup>17</sup>, Đorđe Tasić concludes that "with their works, these two authors have done us a great favour. There is no question more important than that of the economic situation of our peasants. By informing us about it, these authors will raise awareness of the need for action today or tomorrow. On the basis of such works, the problem can be determined correctly from a practical point of view, and necessary measures, if appropriate, will be found to improve or alleviate the situation. But for this, we must add, it is also necessary to know the entire social situation, because measures and their success also depend on other moments that are not purely economic" (Tasić, 1938o: 416).

## INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

Based on the historical approach used in the research, where we looked at the first issue of the journal *Sociological Review* from the time distance of 84 years, and considered it as a historical-sociological document, which also applies to its content, more precisely the works and critical reviews by Đorđe Tasić, we have established the following. Out of the total of 28 scientific and professional papers published in this journal, 5 of them represent the authorship of Đorđe Tasić, which makes 17.56%. Furthermore, of a total

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<sup>17</sup> "These two books speak about the economic condition of our people [...] and the need for urgent organized work". Zečević wants to dispel the widespread misconception about the wealth of our people: on the contrary, it is poor. In his work, he reviewed various branches of our economy and our economic policy. Bičanić presents the situation in our passive regions, western Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Dalmatia, where he personally conducted research in the autumn of 1935. His considerations and observations go beyond the purely economic framework and enter the realm of customs and culture. The findings he made are very unfavorable" (Tasić, 1938o: 416-417).

of 131 critical reviews, Đorđe Tasić wrote 54, or 41.2%. All published scientific and professional works and critical reviews by Đorđe Tasić represented the unit of the content analysis in our research. Through their interpretation, we learn that Đorđe Tasić's understanding of sociology is very close to today's modern interpretation of social science, if we exclude the influence of neo-positivism at the time, which the author was unable to resist, recognizing, however, due to the complexity of social reality, the necessity of both the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of sociological science itself, as well as cooperation and mutual assistance of sociology and other social sciences, and that only in this way can relevant scientific explanations and understanding of natural and social reality be reached. Furthermore, Đorđe Tasić informs us very exhaustively about the state of sociology in Serbia and the region until the end of the 1930s, thus providing us with a historical insight into the period in which he wrote, leaving a valuable testimony useful to historical sociology. While visiting the universities and institutes of Western Europe, especially Belgium and France, either as a participant at various international congresses or as a guest lecturer, Đorđe Tasić, in his later reflections on the occasion, informs us exhaustively and in detail about what he saw as a participant or an observer, without failing to compare his experiences with the situation in Serbia at the end of the 1930s. Đorđe Tasić's attitude about the perspective and prediction of the future development of sociological science in Serbia and in general have been presented through his prism of criticism of monographs and other works published up to that time. In his critical book reviews, the author clearly presents his understanding of social science, his inclination towards multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity in the research of social phenomena, personal observations about the accomplishments of individual authors, but also his own political orientation, democratic orientation and opposition to the fascist and racist ideology of that era. Đorđe Tasić does not hide his partiality towards local authors whose works, although multidisciplinary in nature, he classifies as sociological, thereby wanting to affirm the very science of sociology in Serbia, which he considers insufficiently represented in the academic community. In this way, Tasić encourages domestic authors to deal as much as possible with domestic sociological problems, which in his opinion are almost marginalized, unknown and therefore invisible<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> For more about the new paradigms of the relationship between sociology and history, see: Bašćarević, 2019.

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