

LÁSZLÓ NEUMANN (1949–2019)

László Neumann was one of the renowned researchers of workplace-level domestic labour markets and industrial relations.

László Neumann studied sociology at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, and economics at Karl Marx University, Budapest. He acquired his Ph.D in 2001.

Until the democratic transition, he was part of the wave of researchers who studied the so-called second economy, which emerged in the wake of the timid and selective liberalisation measures of the Kádár regime. He was one of the most renowned researchers into the emerging domestic labour market within socialist firms and the semi-entrepreneurial world of workers in the last decades of the socialist regime.

When the transition began in the late eighties, he actively participated in the pro-democratic movement to bring about democratic transition. He was one of the key organisers of the democratic trade union movement and actively supported, as a volunteer, the work of the League of Democratic Independent Unions, which was a pro-democratic trade union that aimed to create a social-liberal market economy and a liberal democracy with a strong neo-corporatist style institutional balancing network.

His voluntary work for democratic unions resulted in a shift in his research interests. He became interested in the study of trade unions and industrial relations, and became one of the founding fathers of industrial relations as an emerging academic field in Hungary. He published widely on issues related to labour market changes, the impact of privatisation on unions, and on industrial relations themes.

As a renowned expert, László Neumann contributed to the creation of several institutions, such as the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committees; he participated in trade union education programmes and gave expert advice to government agencies and trade unions. In these ways, he made a meaningful contribution to the creation of European style democratic institutional order in Hungary after the collapse of the socialist regime.

He remained active after reaching retirement age. He worked practically until the last minute of his life, publishing articles, organising conferences and giving lectures.

László Neumann was not only an outstanding and prolific researcher but also a wise, warm-hearted, reliable and good person.

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