

OBITUARY

Ovsey Shkaratan

(1931–2019)

Professor Shkaratan, who passed away on July 31, 2019, was a professor emeritus of the Higher School of Economics, head of the Laboratory of Comparative Analysis of Post-Socialist Societies (National Research University Higher School of Economics), as well as founder and editor-in-chief of the journal *Universe of Russia*.

Professor Shkaratan was acknowledged as a founding father of Soviet sociology. His book entitled *Problems of the Social Structure of the Soviet Working Class* (1970) and his field studies in Tatarstan became classics. In addition to being elected vice-president of the Soviet Sociological Association, he was one of the founders of the Russian Society of Sociologists. However, his most important contribution to academia was using his research to help establish sociology as a new professional discipline at a time when it was not officially recognized by the Soviet authorities. Shkaratan was among the few Soviet scholars known in other countries. In particular, he maintained active communication with Western sociologists despite all “iron curtain” restraints, and his books were published in a variety of languages.

Ovsey Shkaratan became a pioneer in many fields. He managed to establish the first self-financed sociological laboratories at the Military Mechanical Institute in Leningrad (Saint Petersburg at present). He was on the frontline in the areas of social stratification, industrial sociology, ethnic sociology, and urban studies. Many generations of Russian sociologists explored these fields by studying his books: *Worker and Engineer* (1985), *Industrial Enterprise* (1978), *The City, Social Stratification* (1996), and others.

Professor Shkaratan joined the Higher School of Economics and established the Department of Sociology, which was recognized as one of the best in the country, in 1995. Then, he opened a new teaching program in sociology at the Department of Economics.

As a very bright and creative scholar, he generated new ideas until the end of his life. He was also known as a dialogical person always aiming at collaborative work, including sharing his ideas with a large number of co-authors, such as young scholars. It was an absolute pleasure to know him on a professional and personal level.

His passing is a great loss for Russian sociology and us all. He will be greatly missed.

Vadim Radaev