Sociology Responds to Fascism

Edited by

Stephen P. Turner and Dirk Käsler

ROUTLEDGE

SOCIOLOGY RESPONDS TO FASCISM

Over recent years there has been growing interest in the relations between academic intellectuals and professionals and the Nazi regime—several works on Heidegger, Nazi doctors and Paul de Man have appeared. This book attempts to do for sociology what has been done for other Fields: to demythologize the prewar role of sociologists and provide a serious historical basis for reflection on it. The myth is simple: that the noble and clear-sighted Frankfurt School was expelled by Hitler and raised the consciousness of the West. The realities are considerably more complex. *During* and *after* the war, a consensus account of fascism emerged, but in the interwar years sociologists misanalysed, misunderstood or supported fascism. The book examines the historical record in Germany, Austria, Italy, Hungary, the USA and the UK to provide a rich and at times perplexing account of sociologists and fascism.

Novel in its comparative framework and invigorating in its conclusions, the book will occupy the centre of debate for many years to come. It will appeal to sociologists with an interest in history, and historians with an interest in sociology.

> 'Turner and Käsler have done professional social science a profoundly necessary, if painful service…. A major contribution to the history of sociology as a discipline and institution…. A refreshingly unsentimental exposé of the collaboration and connivance between academic sociology and fascism, it should be widely studied and debated.'
>
> Professor Bryan S.Turner, *Department of Sociology, Essex University*

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London and New York

First published in 1992 by Routledge 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada by Routledge
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005.

"To purchase your own copy of this or any of Taylor & Francis or Routledge's collection of thousands of eBooks please go to www.eBookstore.tandf.co.uk."

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data
Turner, Stephen P., 1951–
Sociology Responds to Fascism/Stephen P.Turner and Dirk Käsler.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Sociology—United States—History–20th century.
2. Sociology—Europe—History–20th century. 3. Fascism—History. 4. Sociologists—United States—History–20th century. 5 Sociologists—Europe–20th century. I. Käsler, Dirk, 1944–. II. Title.
HM22.U5T873 1992 91–43900
301–dc20 CIP

ISBN 0-203-16907-7 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-203-26443-6 (Adobe eReader Format)
ISBN 0-415-04086-8 (Print Edition)

To the memory of Theo and Sasha Suess, and the son whose mortal sacrifice enabled them to escape from German fascism.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Karen Kier and Ken Wilkinson typed many revisions of the chapters and assembled the text for publication. For their patient effort I am grateful.

Stephen P.Turner

I would like to acknowledge the lively interest in the theme of this project from the members of the Research Committee on the History of Sociology (RCHS) of the International Sociological Association (ISA). During the TCHS conference in Munich 1984 I had proposed to organize a session on the theme of 'Sociologists and Fascism' at the following conference of the RCHS. Two such sessions on the theme of this book were held during the XI World Congress of Sociology in New Delhi, India, in 1986 where most of the authors of this volume had intended to give first presentations of their papers. Because of the inability of some colleagues to come to New Delhi, and on the basis of the very vivid discussions following the presentations of some of the papers, the idea of the publication of a collection of papers covering the theme of 'Sociologists and Fascism' in the variant national sociological traditions developed. Without the encouraging support of the scholarly community of the RCHS this project would never have been completed.

I would also like to acknowledge the encouragement and support of this work from my students at the Institut für Soziologie of the University of Hamburg who participated in my seminar on 'Sociological Analyses of Fascism and National Socialism' during the summer semester 1989.

I furthermore thank the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Culture and Society of the University of South Florida in St Petersburg for the invitation to spend my sabbatical semester during the months of August 1989 to January 1990 there and to continue my work on this edition.

In order to make this stay possible I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Universität Hamburg, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

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SOCIOLOGY AND FASCISM IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD
The myth and its frame

Stephen P.Turner

There is a well-entrenched belief that sociology is intrinsically an 'oppositional science'. The idea that distortions of sociological truth may aid reaction but genuine science is a handmaiden to progress has deep roots in the sociological tradition itself. One variant on this theme is the theme of betrayal: that true sociology has been suppressed by the bourgeoisie or by academic servants of power in favour of false, 'legitimating' sociology. Among the bases of the idea of sociology's oppositional essence are the supposed facts that sociology was actively suppressed by the Nazi regime and that sociologists generally resisted fascist regimes through emigration or inner migration. The idea that sociology in the fascist era was nonexistent or trivial, and that consequently the period was a blank, an episode of discontinuity, is closely connected to these supposed facts.[1] Fascist regimes, one is to infer, were fearful of the power of the empirical sociologist to reveal unpleasant facts about societies, facts that had been hidden for propagandists and ideological reasons, and were similarly fearful of the power of the theoretical sociologist to put the facts in a perspective that is threatening to the ideological self-conceptions of power. This fits the idea of sociology's intrinsically oppositional character in a flattering way. In their own accounts of their experience with fascism, many of the victims of Nazism cited evidence that was consistent with these supposed facts about sociology under fascism and this way of explaining them. Many of the sociologists whose careers had not prospered under these regimes found the status of 'Victim' to be an appealing one, especially under the circumstances of the postwar period.[2] Sociologists who had prospered sought to cover their tracks,[3] and the story of discontinuity was useful for them as well.

Recent historical studies have shown that analogous 'victimization' stories in other fields are misleading. Biology (Weingart *et al.* 1988), physics (Beyerchen 1977), and Eastern European studies (Burleigh 1988) found ways to accommodate the Nazi regime and thrive under it. Cooperation, or at least accommodation, was the rule, not the exception, in scholarly life. Medical researchers engaged in physical torture and abuse as well as ideological rationalization for the Nazis (Proctor 1988). This was a perversion of the 'healing science'. To this sort of self-betrayal, sociology, or so it has been believed, was immune, if only because the Nazis were presumed to be so hostile to sociology that it could not have occurred.

There is another aspect to this story. Fascism, as one of the great social phenomena of the century, was part of the subject matter of sociology. If sociology claims to be of value in educating the public and improving the capacity of citizens to act, fascism is a subject which tests this claim. It is widely assumed that this challenge was met. The evidence usually adduced to support this claim is part of the same general picture of discontinuity, suppression, and emigration. It is taken for granted that exiles on the left, such as Mannheim and the Frankfurt School, were clear-sighted in their response to the developments from which they had escaped. It is further assumed that they provided or at least contributed heavily to the intellectual framework within which competent sociological and public opinion in the non-fascist countries to which they escaped came to analyse and respond to fascism. The standard evidence for this is the analysis of authoritarianism by the Frankfurt School during the 1930s, which culminated in *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno *et al.* 1950). The impression that this represented a coherent and influential point of view during the era of fascism perhaps rests primarily on an inference that the wide availability of the writings of the critical theorists and the related works of Wilhelm Reich in the 1960s, and the retrospective coherence that could be given these works, reflects the situation of the 1930s.

SELECTIVITY AND MYTH

The specifically historical part of this image is false. Sociologists were not notably successful in understanding fascism in the interwar era, much less in educating the public about the subject, and sociologists served the Nazi regimes just as other scholars did. The history of their service has been shrouded in misimpressions which have gradually been dispelled. Many of the leading figures in postwar German sociology who lived through the Nazi period knew a great deal about the role of sociology under the Nazis and did nothing to correct the misimpressions. But by the late 1970s, these misimpressions were a house of cards ready to fall: the literature of victimization that had developed over the years was full of inconsistencies resulting from the variety of occasions and circumstances under which the story was told. It could not survive serious historical examination. The larger story of sociology's response to fascism, however, cannot be disposed of so easily. The impression that sociologists in the non-fascist countries understood fascism, and edified the public, for example, rests not so much on the suppression of evidence as on its interpretation and presentation. This may be best understood considering the historiographic role of certain cases presumed to represent the truth about sociology's relation to fascism. The Frankfurt School was opposed to fascism and was also the source of analyses of fascism, was driven from Germany and subsequently became famous in the United States for its accounts of the authoritarian personality type. It apparently fits the myth perfectly. But the case is not representative, nor is it unproblematic.

The Frankfurt School indeed provided part of the intellectual impetus for *The Authoritarian Personality,* a major study sponsored by the American Jewish Committee. Members of this school, notably Fromm, Neumann and Marcuse, became influential authors in the *postwar* period, where they were noted especially for their reflections on authority and freedom. But the impression produced by these facts is that the sociologists who were part of the German left understood and illuminated Nazism *prior* to the struggle against it, and influenced the struggle itself. This impression is not accurate. The members of the Frankfurt School scarcely discussed the topic of Nazism (or indeed Italian fascism) before their departure from Germany. They had the most limited sort of edifying impact on their non-fascist hosts prior to the war itself. The reason for this lack of impact, apart from problems of language and difficulties in establishing themselves that were shared with other emigrants, was that the framework in which they understood fascism and their conviction that Germany represented the most advanced form of the historical process was not shared by sociologists or the public in the non-fascist countries.

When they arrived in the United States, the members of the Frankfurt School held to their faith in the historical inevitability of revolution and the idea that Germany represented the world-historical future. The rise of fascism was interpreted by the Frankfurt School in terms of a problem that was theoretically central to Marxism, namely the limited revolutionary capacity and inclination of the German working class on which the hope of Marxist revolution had been placed. Like other Marxists, the Frankfurt School simply added epicycles to the theory of the inevitable revolution of the proletariat to correct for its predictive failures: fascism became an additional 'final stage' in the development of capitalism. To be sure, the members of the Institute added many dimensions to this basic idea, and during the war some of them took positions that transcended it But a serious development of these ideas did not occur in time to affect public opinion in their host countries. *The Authoritarian Personality* was an extension of the idea that Germany was a harbinger of the future: the possibility of fascism was, the study claimed, latent in the American population. In the wake of the Holocaust, a ready audience in the American Jewish community was found for this thesis. *Prior to* the war and prior to the careful packaging of these ideas for an American audience, the problematic itself was shared, in its specific terms, only with other socialists.

But socialist opinion was not an unerring guide to fascism. The practical political implications of the idea that fascism was simply an advanced form of capitalism were deeply ambiguous. Many socialists who adhered to this idea were acquiescent in the face of what they saw as an inevitable part of the historical process. Another sociologist of the left, Hendrik de Man, went beyond nonchalance to active encouragement (Pels 1987, 1991). De Man had concluded that fascism, understood in its historical role, was an instrument for doing away with the bourgeois state and creating a centralized power apparatus that could then be used to create socialism. De Man represents an extreme case, but others on the left were also ambivalent toward fascism: hostility to 'bourgeois parliamentarianism' and the idea that fascism was a necessary cleansing also supported acquiescence. As the chapter by Käsler and Steiner shows, the political strategists of the socialist parties of Germany were placed in a horrendous dilemma by these affinities to fascism. They could not defend liberal institutions without abandoning the ideological premises of their parties. But they could not hope to expand their electoral power without adopting tactics, such as the promotion of nationalism, that would have made their parties more closely resemble, and thus legitimate, the fascist movements. The members of the Frankfurt School did not resolve this dilemma so much as erroneously interpret American life in terms of it. And the oppositional character of the School's response to fascism may be seen to rest on their allegiance to socialism rather than on the oppositional character of sociology.

Put differently, the case of the Frankfurt School does not test the 'oppositional' interpretation of the relation of sociology to fascist regimes. It is, rather, a case that may be described to fit it. Its 'importance' depends on the frame in which it is presented. The frame, which reads the fashions of the 1960s into the 1930s, excludes most of what passed for sociology in the interwar era. The centrality of the Frankfurt School story in the self-understanding of sociology stems from its affinity to the myth, just as the marginalization of the de Man story reflects its uncomfortable implications. It might be more precise to say that the myth depends on presenting the Frankfurt School as representative or central and ignoring the practical political ambiguities of socialist anti-fascism.

But 'representative' and 'central' are deeply problematic notions in historical writing generally and in the history of sociology during the interwar years in particular. The complexities of the historical problem of the relation of sociology to fascism underscore the problems. Some of the problems are quite mundane. Simply to classify persons as sociologists requires, in many cases, largely arbitrary decisions. De Man held an academic appointment as a social psychologist. The Frankfurt School stood apart from the institutional life of sociology, and consequently to consider any members of the Frankfurt School to be 'sociologists' in the interwar period itself is controversial, as Klingemann observes in his chapter. So even the apparently innocuous problem of the conventions one uses to categorize a person as a sociologist turns out to shape interpretation, and to do so crucially.

Conventional historiographical strategies serve to provide some protection against selectivity. Biographical studies meet standards of completeness with respect to the individual lives they consider; studies of the structure and development of theoretical ideas meet other standards of completeness. In each case there is some protection against taking particular utterances or acts out of biographical or theoretical context. Biography focuses on intentions and actions, and particularly on the evolution of an individual's plans and aims in response to circumstances. Analyses of theoretical positions stress the complexity and individuality of a vision of the world. But both strategies have their own limitations, limitations that have visible effects on interpretations in the case of sociology's response to fascism. Intellectuals are in the business of providing complex intellectual rationales and distinctive personal interpretations of the significance of their actions. Biographies and theoretical analysis focus on these. But the effects of action are often more a matter of the surface than the intellectual core, and this was the case in Germany. Surface acquiescence, however qualified by arcane private reservations or by 'inner migrations', however deeply felt, had the effect of public consent. These effects are more easily understood when they are compared to the full range of responses to fascism. The conditions under which sociologists acted and thought are better understood when they are compared to conditions that gave rise to different responses.

THE STRATEGY OF THE VOLUME

Sociology Responds to Fascism has a historiographic strategy that is neither biography nor a 'history of ideas'. It is a comparative historical study of the range and conditions of the intellectual and political response to fascism by sociologists in six nations: two anti-fascist countries, Britain and the United States; two fascist states, Germany and Italy; and two states in which fascism had an impact through annexation and absorption, Austria and Hungary. Where fascists held power, the conflicts and accommodations between fascism and sociology are part of the 'response'; in all of these countries, fascism was a subject for 'sociological' discussion and interpretation. Each of these studies is itself necessarily selective with respect to the sociological thinkers it considers. The chapters follow a general design, with the exception of the two chapters on Germany. The authors attempted to identify the widest possible range of representative and significant figures in the sociologies and proto-sociologies of the interwar era of each nation and to examine their analyses of fascism and role in supporting or opposing it. In the case of nations without fully developed academic traditions, writers on sociological topics were classified as sociologists for the purposes of the study. In countries with established sociological traditions, contemporary importance was the primary basis for inclusion. In the case of Germany, the questions of the institutional involvement of sociologists in the Nazi regime were separated from the problem of the analysis of fascism during the Weimar period: for a reason intrinsic to the German situation, the sharp break produced by Hitler's seizure of power, the two sets of problems do not overlap significantly.

This 'comparative' approach is a strategy with its own limitations, a frame into which many things do not fit. The elaboration and complexity of individual responses captured by biographical research is necessarily lost.[4] But certain broad historical questions which might well be addressed by a study of sociology's relation to fascism are also largely excluded. For example, one contemporary opinion was that fascism arose from the same intellectual context of anti-rationalism and nostalgia for *Gemeinschaft* that was central to the sociologies not only of Tōnnies but of Durkheim and many others as well (Ranulf 1939). The framework of this study does not permit one to address this thesis directly. But this and similar broad-gauge issues do not disappear entirely. One of the influential figures in the German-speaking world, Othmar Spann, discussed at length in Gerald Mozetič's chapter on Austrian sociology, exemplifies the line of development from sociological anti-individualism to fascism. The émigrés, because they were, on the evidence, without influence in any of the national sociologies discussed, are excluded by this design, and the limited group of national sociologies considered excludes such problematic figures as de Man, a Belgian. But here again, the underlying pattern is exemplified in other ways. De Man was not the only figure on the left ambivalent about fascism. The disputes between left-wing tacticians in Germany, discussed in Käsler and Steiner's chapter, are indicative of the ambiguous significance of fascism and the intellectual difficulties it presented to the left. Némedi's study of Hungary, similarly, identifies preconditions for acquiescence to fascism that were widespread among European intellectuals: the ambivalence toward fascism felt by reformers of various political persuasions who saw fascism as a potential catalyst for the changes they advocated. Némedi also points to other effects of sociology that influenced responses to fascism, including cynicism toward politics and reductionistic class analyses that sustained this cynicism.

THREE STAGES IN THE RELATIONSHIP

The cases discussed in this volume suggest a distinction between several stages in sociology's relation to fascism. The first is the stage of the making of climates of opinion. Spann, and much of classical sociology, had a role in this stage. The literature of the classical period was marked by overt expressions of revulsion toward bourgeois parliamentarianism and capitalism, and the search for fundamentally different alternatives. Marxists, such as Lukács and de Man, were joined by the major classical sociologists in the belief in the possibility that radical alternatives to these forms could be realized.

The list of affinities between sociology and fascist ideas is long. Durkheim, whose *Division of Labor in Society* pronounced the existing industrial order to be 'pathological', in his introduction to the second edition (1933) sketched a model of a 'normal' corporativist society. The idea, widely shared in various forms, was to have a long history in the fascist regimes themselves, as Losito and Segre show in their chapter on Italy, and K sler and Steiner in their chapter on Weimar-era German commentary on fascism. There are many very direct connections between fascist ideas and early sociology. Weber's enthusiasm for the leadership state presaged Michels' embrace of Mussolini as the *capo carismatico*. Pareto's and Mosca's theories of elites reflected related dissatisfactions with the existing order. Holding these thinkers responsible for the climate of opinion that produced fascism is nevertheless difficult. If their 'influence' had been absent, one suspects, little would have changed: their views were merely visible symptoms of deeper currents in opinion that they did little to alter.

The difficulties in assigning responsibility are evident when we consider a second stage in the relation of sociology to fascism, the actual use of sociological ideas to legitimate and criticize the emerging fascist movements. The case of Spann, as discussed in detail by Mozetič, shows how a sociologist could position himself as an intellectual leader of a fascist or proto-fascist political force. But Spann's experience also shows the ambiguity between 'leading' and anticipating the movements of the one he pretends to control. When Spann sought to guide the movement he contributed to, he was ignored.

The relatively long period of fascist rule in Italy, and the relative openness of its intellectual life, made this country into a kind of laboratory for the study of intellectual influence. Critics who have argued that sociology has routinely betrayed its mission through its pro-establishment biases have generally assumed that the discipline's capacity for ideological service to established orders, notably to capitalism, has been great, that the need and demand for legitimation has been similarly great, and thus that the capitulation of sociology to these demands has been consequential for the societies in which this has occurred. The cases of Mosca and Michels indicate the complexities of legitimation. As Losito and Segre show, Michels, by becoming a propagandist for Mussolini, *lost* his 'influence'. The *ideas* of Mosca, which no less an authority than David Beetham has pronounced to have a 'natural connection…to support for fascism', were *not* used to legitimate the regime because of Mosca's *personal* opposition to Mussolini (Beetham 1977:163). Like Spann, the German sociologists who sought to provide ideological justifications for Nazism discovered that once in power the Nazis had a strong interest in preserving the purity of their own doctrine and little or none in 'legitimation'. Nor did either major fascist regime exhibit much fear of sociology: they regarded the subject as largely superfluous where it did not coincide with their own programmatic ideas, and not as a threat to be suppressed.

A third stage was the period in which sociologists attempted to serve the regimes technically rather than ideologically. One might regard this service as opportunism, and, consistent with the belief in sociology's progressive, oppositional essence, regard it as betrayal. But the easy absorption of sociologists and social researchers into the apparatus of the Nazi system of academic patronage, documented by Klingemann, suggests otherwise. Sociologists participated in the Nazi order in large numbers and for the same kinds of reasons as sociologists participate in schemes of subsidized scholarship today. If anything, the Nazis were modernizers of sociology: they brought the machinery of subsidized scholarship and publication in empirical sociology and substantive research significantly closer to present models of research subsidy and relations with the state.[5] As Klingemann shows, there was even a great deal of continuity in personnel in the sociology of the Federal Republic.

Wartime sociology itself is beyond the limits of the studies presented here, but the parallels between sociology in this third stage in Germany and the case of

American wartime sociology should be noticed. One might suppose that the conditions which led sociologists into involvement with the Nazi regime described by Klingemann were unique to Germany and the Nazi system. But in both Germany and the United States, sociologists as experts and technicians attempted to contribute to national purposes, and were so employed. The areas of work were largely the same: studies of morale, aid in the administration of occupied territory, and the training of officers. Many sociologists served in interdisciplinary survey and research units for the War Department.[6] Talcott Parsons himself tried to get funds and legitimation for sociology by working in the area of national morale and received funding for the training of officers in the Far East (Buxton and Turner 1992).

THE ROLE OF THE SOCIOLOGIST

These symmetries are suggestive. But the questions they raise about the professional role of the sociologist or the ethics of sociology in service to the state are not answerable by facile moralizing. Were these acts of service by sociologists, which in no case had any great practical effect, immoral as such, immoral or moral because of the immorality or morality of the causes they served, or a violation of normative requirements of detachment intrinsic to the sociologist's role? If they were violations, precisely what was the role they violated? The studies may be said to provide an answer of sorts to these questions, though it is a negative one: none of the formulae that have purported to guide sociologists in their relations to the state or political purposes proved themselves in the face of fascism to be unerring guides. As Bannister shows, the ideal of scientific objectivity as practised by certain quantitatively oriented American sociologists *prevented* them from contributing to the understanding of fascism. Some German sociologists made themselves into 'objective' technical instruments of the state; in their case, adherence to the 'objective' did nothing to exculpate them from moral responsibility for the consequences of their technical help. Nor did the supposed inherent progressiveness of sociological truth cause the Nazis to refuse this aid. The rain of government patronage for sociologists fell from just and unjust regimes alike.

The idea of an edifying sociology, one that serves to instruct the public, fared no better in the face of fascism. The romantic notion of reweaving a social order destroyed by impersonality, shared by Tōnnies, Durkheim, and many others, such as Spann, contributed, however indirectly, to the climate of opinion in which fascism took hold. So did the elitism of Pareto and Mosca. It would be convenient to excuse these thinkers on the ground that intellectuals ought not to be held accountable for the consequences of their ideas or their use by others. But in each of these cases, and in the case of sociologists generally, this defence fails. Ranulf suggested that their efforts were the moral equivalent of Nazi propaganda. This is perhaps harsh. But the differences in intent were matters of degree, not kind: *both* the sociologists and the fascist propagandists sought to influence opinion and for their opinions to have political effects. The scholarship was *intended* to edify: these thinkers *wanted* their ideas to influence action and promoted their ideas accordingly. And even those sociological purists whose idea of sociology was farthest removed from these edifying intentions were financed because it was believed by ministers of state or the public that the pursuit of sociology ultimately served some practical purpose.

The ideal of an engaged sociology also fared poorly. As Weber says, to enter into politics is to contract with diabolical powers. If the engagement of sociological thinkers in 'progressive' political causes is to be judged on its consequences, the consequences will rarely be unproblematic. One can err in choosing which 'party of progress' to ally oneself with. And one may err in choosing principles. The 'principles' that some of the Marxists discussed by K sler and Steiner 'preserved' by their refusal to compromise ideological purity and the goal of revolution do not look particularly progressive from today's perspective. Instead, these principled Marxists appear partly culpable for the weakness of the political resistance to Nazism, which was at the time of the seizure of power a minority movement made powerful by the divisions between its opponents. The Critical Theorists, who held to the same theory of historical development, seem scarcely less culpable. Intellectuals in Europe found within the sociological tradition many reasons to be acquiescent or to support fascism, and few to reject it or inform a political resistance to it.

One fundamental constraint on the conduct of sociologists is underscored by the German case. Sociology and social research is a subsidized activity, state-subsidized for the most part, and is thus morally bound to its patrons and historically conditioned by the relations and forms of patronage that support it. In practice, sociologists can escape the *pact diabolique* only by retirement or by exile and a change of patrons. Several of the Italian sociologists discussed by Losito and Segre chose this course. But exit is not a choice without moral implications either.

THE CONDITIONS OF ANALYSIS

How well did sociologists do as analysts of fascism? The phenomenon of fascism produced two kinds of interpretation: analyses that presented fascism as a novel and distinctive form, and analyses that assimilated fascism to patterns that were found elsewhere in more benign forms, such as administrative centralization, or that subsumed fascism under such overarching trends as 'anomia', 'materialism', or 'the end of economic man'.[7] The motivations for these interpretations were local or specific to particular situations, and were largely ideological. The American discussion largely reflected sociologists' attitudes toward Roosevelt and *his* programme of state intervention. Stalin, Mussolini, and Hitler were all construed as leaders who, like Roosevelt, had centralized state power and introduced 'planning'. These same equivalences were made by Europeans facing their own expansions of state power. They led de Man to become a supporter of the cause of centralization. In the United States, the effect of these analyses was to 'normalize' these regimes. Treating them as similar political responses to the world economic crisis, as *sociologically* analogous, undermined attempts to differentiate them morally, such as Charles Ellwood's warnings of the dangers of Italian fascism.

The intellectually consequential analyses of fascism were not the product of disinterested sociological reflection, but of sociology motivated by *political* concerns. In Britain, where 'sociological' commentary on fascism was in the hands of writers who were not part of a disciplinary tradition, there was a quite different response, because there was a local political motive for making distinctions. Fascism was problematic, especially for socialist writers, in a way that it was not for academic theorists, whose views typically could be elaborated or stretched to accommodate fascism as a special case of a previously understood pattern. For British socialists, the equivalences raised uncomfortable questions about their own political ideals, questions famously exploited by Orwell. Their analyses of fascism and Nazism were in part attempts to find differentia between the socialist programme of the expansion of state power and the fascist program. As Lassman shows, they found the differentiating concept they sought in 'totalitarianism', a term originating in the propaganda of fascism itself. The historical image of fascism cultivated by such figures as Mussolini and Carl Schmitt was that fascism represented the replacement of the liberal system of compromise between partial interests with a 'total' regime, with the comprehensive incorporation of partial interests under the authority of the state. Labour socialism, oriented to the mundane interests of an economic and moral constituency within a parliamentary structure, was a different species of socialism, and British socialists sought to articulate this difference. The circumstances of reception, including the Cold War, favoured the interpretation. At the same time the revelation of the dimensions of the Holocaust worked against the 'normalizing' analyses of Nazism which had competed with the concept of totalitarianism: the abnormality of the Holocaust demanded an abnormal cause.

What was missing in academic sociologists' discussions, even in the cases of those who understood the dangers of fascism, was an account which connected the destructive potential of fascism to sociological facts.[8] The much disputed theory that Nazism was the product of the 'new middle classes' is an apparent exception to this. But it is an exception that proves the rule. The connection between the cause and the relevant consequences was made only by conjoining it with the Reichian idea of the degree of sexual repression unique to this class, and the special consequences for mass psychology and aggression of repressed sexuality. The idea of 'class basis' was itself merely the extension of a familiar explanatory pattern, the determination of politics by class-interest, which accounted for the novelty of the phenomenon by identifying a novel class to cause it. But it and the question of the class basis of fascism was in its actual effect a political sedative which misled the opponents of fascism about its potential strength and potential future course. Contempt for the class led to an underestimation of the movement which was based on it. The reduction of politics to class interests and class-specific psychology proved largely irrelevant to fascism in power.

The puzzle of fascism remains, half a century after the conclusion of the war against the fascist regimes. This study does not pretend to shed much direct light on this puzzle. But it does illuminate a little discussed and poorly understood precondition for fascism: the intellectual confusion that this 'bolt from the blue' engendered. Sociologists were not immune to this confusion, just as they were not immune to temptations of participation in the fascist regimes. Myths die hard. The myth of sociology's opposition to fascism and of the wisdom of sociology in the face of fascism deserves to die. But with it some other myths ought also to be undermined. The myth of sociology as a 'legitimator' whose services are much in demand ought simply to be forgotten. The idea that sociologists can be freed of responsibility for the consequences of their sociology ought also to be given up. There is nothing that assures that the effects of sociology will be progressive or constructive other than the definitional equation of 'true' sociology with the good. No sociology of the interwar era grasped fascism fully or produced an unambiguously 'correct' political recipe for dealing with it. The continuing dispute over the character of fascism and the interwar 'fascist' regimes suggests that these are inappropriately high standards for social science. But the failure to meet them indicates that the pretensions to political wisdom of social science are inappropriate as well.

NOTES

1 As Theodor Adorno once put it, Hitler was the sworn enemy of sociology (Lepenies 1988:336).
2 Lepenies speaks of the 'strange consensus between *émigré* and Nazi collaborator' on this version of events (Lepenies 1988:336).
3 E.g. Hans Freyer. Cf. Jerry Muller 1987:367.
4 Muller's excellent study of Freyer shows how complex the intellectual and personal response of individuals might become. What is difficult to see from such studies is the larger prosographical pattern of which the life in question forms a part within a given political order. It is also of course impossible to identify the specific conditions that made these national patterns distinctive.
5 Something similar may be seen in the case of psychology. See U.Geuter 1984.
6 Indeed, sociologists were readily found who were willing to cross the Constitutional line between morale surveys and political polling in support of Roosevelt (Converse 1987:152–53).
7 Analyses which subsume fascism under some other broad pattern have enjoyed a kind of second life owing to the moral horror of the Holocaust. Today it is possible, not to say fashionable, to attack some movement of thought or tendency, such as modernity, technology, rationality, capitalism, irreligion, and the like, by associating it with Nazism.

8 The ‘new middle class’ thesis did not do so; the analysts, contempt for the class and its ‘psychology’ led to contempt for the party that presumably represented its interests and was the expression of its psychology. The exception to this rule of failing to connect the explanation of fascism to its destructive potential was Thorstein Veblen’s analysis in his eerily prophetic *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* of 1915, and his successor work of 1917, *An Inquiry into the Nature of Peace and the Terms of its Perpetuation*. Joseph Dorfman’s claim for the former, that ‘So well had Veblen caught the spirit of the Third Reich twenty years before its birth that its accredited spokesmen sound as if they are merely obeying Veblen’s logic not in broad outline but in specific detail’, no doubt grossly overstates the case. Veblen had no inkling of Hitler or the specifics of the Nazi movement. But Veblen’s analysis of what has come to be called the *Deutsche Sonderweg* showed in detail the destructive potential of unbalanced German development in a system of democratic states. Some of the virtues of this approach are retained in the work of Kirkpatrick discussed by Bannister in his chapter on American sociology.

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2
OUTSIDERS AND TRUE BELIEVERS
Austrian sociologists respond to fascism

Gerald Mozetič

The view that national socialism brutally brought sociology to a standstill and reduced it to silence, long promoted by René Kōnig and widely accepted, can no longer be taken seriously. The evidence is that National Socialism promoted certain forms of sociology, among them the efforts of those sociologists who said that 1933 marked a new beginning for sociology. These ideologically ambitious sociologists were generally disappointed in the opportunities the new order afforded them. But the demand for certain kinds of empirical sociology increased considerably, and in consequence during the Third Reich there was more sociology than before (Rammstedt 1986). The historical ambiguities of the term 'sociology' make this a difficult conclusion to establish.

The image of the history of sociology in general depends on what is considered to be 'sociology'. In the special case of the relationship between sociology and fascism this turns out to be crucial. The approach of this chapter will be to treat as a 'sociologist' whoever thought of himself or herself as a sociologist, or wrote what was then regarded as sociology. This means that some of what we might today decline to call sociology will be included.

In the case of Austrian sociology, the ambiguities of the term 'sociology' are matched by the variety of 'fascisms' to which it responded. Immediately after Hitler's seizure of power in Germany, Dollfuss's government in Austria began to abolish democratic institutions and human rights. The suppression of the working-class movement, the prohibition of the Social Democratic Party, the free trade unions, and eventually all political parties led to a system called Austro-fascism or the authoritarian corporate state (Larsen *et al* 1980). Dollfuss was killed in an unsuccessful *Putsch* carried out by the Nazis in 1934. Austria allied itself to Italian fascism in this period, and Italian political interests kept Austria and Hitler apart. This means that, for our purposes, we must take into consideration these three distinct varieties of fascism.

The common situation of the defeated countries after the First World War is part of the political and socio-economic prehistory of fascism. Revolutions of the left and revolutions of the right were regarded as everyday events, and it was widely and fervently believed that democracy promotes socialism. An anti-democratic, authoritarian policy was seen to be the only solution to the problem of social and political order. These convictions had developed over decades, so one can say that the history of fascism reaches back to the nineteenth century. These ideas came into currency during the processes of industrialization and democratization in Austria. To some extent they represent a general phenomenon which occurs in all developing countries. But some of the intellectual manifestations of this kind of reaction were peculiar to Austria. Finally, the Austria that came into being in 1918 was indeed a 'rest', something that had remained after the dismembering of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Whether this 'Austria' could survive was a matter of dispute. The idea of *Anschluss* (annexation) thus was co-equal with the establishment of the First Republic in Austria.[1]

BEGINNINGS AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY IN AUSTRIA

At the end of the nineteenth century several Austrians proposed 'sociologies'. They were academic outsiders, like Ludwig Gumplowicz (Mozetič 1985), or private scholars, like the military officer Gustav Ratzenhofer. Both of these thinkers were taken quite seriously in the USA and in France; but they were nearly unanimously rejected in Austria and Germany. They neither founded a school nor established sociology as a discipline at the universities. The private scholar Rudolf Goldscheid played an important role in Austrian sociology on account of his organizational talent and energy. He participated in the founding of the *Soziologische Gesellschaft* (sociological society) at Vienna (1907) as well as the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie* (1909). Another sociological society, whose main activity was the organizing of lectures, was founded in Graz in 1908, the year in which Gumplowicz ended his academic career. After 1918 this society published a series of essays, including works of Joseph Schumpeter (1918) and Ferdinand Tönnies (1918). Published contributions to sociology at the time came from academics who worked in the field of philosophy (Wilhelm Jerusalem and Rudolf Eisler), jurisprudence (apart from Gumplowicz, Eugen Ehrlich and Karl Renner wrote on the sociology of law), and political economy (Joseph Schumpeter and Friedrich von Wieser).[2]

The beginning of the First Republic was inauspicious for the development of an academic sociology. There were only three universities in Austria: Vienna, Graz, Innsbruck. The academic market for Austrian scholars had become much smaller and the chances of making a career had decreased dramatically with the end of the Habsburg empire. The University of Vienna remained the intellectual centre of Austrian life. But the academic hinterland of the Empire, which had supplied Vienna with geniuses and which offered many lecturers the opportunity to obtain a professorial chair while they were still young, thus enabling them to concentrate on their scientific work in safe positions, was absent. The universities in Austria were public institutions. So the sorry financial situation of the state during the First Republic had direct effects on the universities.

Under these circumstances the prospects of establishing new scientific subjects and institutes—not to mention the difficulties and prejudices sociology was confronted with anyway—were rather poor, and successful steps forward were few and feeble. When Hugo Spitzer in Graz established a *Seminar für Philosophische Soziologie* in 1921, he reported at the end of 1924 that the library of the seminar consisted of forty-five books. One can see from this how restricted the possibilities were (Matthes 1973:222). The fact that 'Gesellschaftslehre' was introduced into political science as an examination subject in 1926 and that it could be chosen as a dissertation subject was celebrated as a major success at the Fifth Convention of the German Sociological Society (which took place in Vienna) (Käsler 1983). Sociology was still a marginal subject.

It is not easy to give a brief characterization of the sociological conceptions which could be found in Austria at the beginning of the First Republic. Neither Gumplowicz's or Ratzenhofer's naturalistic sociology had adherents. The spirit of positivism appeared again within the Vienna Circle. But Otto Neurath's later attempt to develop a sociology based on behaviourism was without influence.[3] The important 'Austrian School' in economics was responsible for some interesting sociological analyses and could have contributed to the establishment of a specific approach in sociology. But it lost ground at the university and continued only in private circles.[4] Wilhelm Jerusalem's sociology of knowledge remained only an episode, as did Max Adler's rigorous but fruitless attempt to present Marxism in the form of a positivistic sociology (Mozetič 1978, 1987). The sociological approaches one thinks of today as the Austrian contribution to the progress of sociology in the interwar years were formulated outside the university or at best at the margin of academic life. This is true of Paul Lazarsfeld, Marie Jahoda, Hans Zeisel and also of Alfred Schutz, Felix Kaufmann, and Edgar Zilsel.[5] Those sociologists who began careers in this period and contributed to the intellectual development of postwar sociology were correct in saying that they developed their innovations in opposition to the mentality dominating at the university at that time. All of them had to emigrate between 1934 and 1938.

The major exception to this pattern of marginality and failure was the consequence of a decision made at the University of Vienna in 1919. Othmar Spann was chosen to fill the late Eugen von Philippovich's professorial chair in political economy. In the previous years Spann had taught political economy at the School of Technology in Brunn. He had announced that he did not want to restrict himself to his nominal subject, but wished to teach sociology as well. The professors of the Faculty of Law and Political Science agreed. Only the dean of the faculty, Carl Grünberg— who in 1924 became the first director of the newly founded *Institut für Sozialforschung* in Frankfurt—expressed doubts. They were rejected by the ministry. In the summer term of 1920 Spann gave a lecture in which he roundly criticized the political basis of the young Austrian republic and presented the programme of an authoritarian state. These expositions were first published in 1921; by 1938 they had gone into a fourth edition (Spann 1921). Spann welcomed efforts to eliminate democracy in Austria and replace it with a 'corporative' state. This declaration against parliamentary democracy was not the private opinion of a scholar at his desk; it was a prominent expression of a widespread aversion to or at least scepticism towards parliamentarism—a fact which makes it easy to understand that Spann could publish his work unmolested and unstigmatized.

From the beginning of his work as professor in Vienna, Spann took advantage of his position to gather disciples and to spread as widely as possible his theory of 'universalism'. In addition to his official lectures Spann established a private 'Sunday seminar' to which only his students and disciples were admitted. His consistency and resoluteness in establishing a following became evident through the number of *Habilitation* dissertations written under his supervision: Jakob Baxa in 1923, Wilhelm Andreae in 1925 (his previous attempt at the University of Berlin had failed), Johann Sauter in 1927, Erich Voegelin (who had worked as the assistant of Hans Kelsen) in 1928, Walter Heinrich in 1928, Ferdinand A. Westphalen in 1932, Hermann Roeder in 1933, and August Maria Knoll in 1934.[6] Spann's followers were quickly promoted, and not only in Vienna. Andreae became a professor at the University of Graz in 1926; in 1933 he went to Giessen in Germany where he continued to teach Spann's universalism (a fact which was probably responsible for the loss of his professorship in 1942). Hans Riehl at the University of Graz was another follower of Spann's universalism: his *habilitation* was supported by Andreae. Professor Theo Suranyi-Unger, who worked at the law school in Miskolc (Hungary), was also influenced by Spann.[7] In 1923 Adolf Günther was appointed professor at the University of Innsbruck. Although he was not a member of Spann's school he was in agreement with many of its political concepts. Ultimately, he became an admirer of National Socialism (Günther 1940). In 1940 he was appointed professor at the University of Vienna, as successor to Spann, who had been dismissed.

Spann and his students succeeded in permeating the universities, making his theory the dominant one. His efforts to promote and encourage those people who had adopted his concepts were relentless; the journal *Nationalwirtschaft. Blätter für organischen Wirtschaftsaufbau,* of which he was the co-editor, not only included contributions from Spann's already mentioned students but also several articles which were explicitly labelled as pieces from Professor Spann's seminar (Brandner 1928–29; Jander 1927–28). In this journal one can also find an article by the Japanese Toyojiro Akabane, Spann's student at the University of Vienna, who was considered Spann's representative in Japan.[8]

Most of Spann's students acquired their *venia legendi* in 'Gesellschaftslehre' (Baxa, Andreae, Sauter and Voegelin). *Gesellschaftslehre* was synonymous with sociology, and was not simply Spann's special domain: the Austro-Marxist Max Adler, for example, also acquired his *venia legendi* in *Gesellschaftslehre*. It was a novelty when Voegelin was appointed *Extraordinarius* in political science and *sociology* in 1935.[9] But Spann and his students meant something very special by *Gesellschaftslehre*. They traced the term back to the early period of romanticism in Germany; Novalis was said to have been the first to use it. Romanticism was considered to be the origin of German sociology—with Adam Müller as its most important philosopher —indicating the complete rejection of any kind of