

Arkadij Gurland: Political Science as Critical Theory

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Arkadij Gurland¹ worked at Max Horkheimer's Institute of Social Research (ISR) from 1940 to 1945 and had previously contributed to the review sections of its journal *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*. During his years at the ISR, he became an important voice in the controversy within the Frankfurt School group about state capitalism.² But Gurland's understanding of critical theory was not focused on the ISR. Before his years with the Frankfurt School in exile, as a translator and political journalist he followed his own independent ideas about Marxist political and social criticism. After he left the ISR, he developed a unique program for a critical political science in the early days of the new academic discipline in West Germany. Even though Gurland failed to be successful as the manager of a research institute in Berlin, the substance of his ambitions put him in a special position within the tradition of critical theory.

Arkadij Gurland was born in Moscow on September 1, 1904.³ The families of his parents, Isaak and Debora Gurland, were of German descent and had lived in Poland and Lithuania. Gurland's father worked as an engineer in Moscow and Sebastopol. In the early days of the Russian Revolution, he was deeply impressed as a teenager by the mass assemblies following the revolutionary outbreak. As a Moscow high-school student, he participated in revolutionary mass demonstrations and he heard Lenin, Kamenev, Trotsky and other leaders of the Bolsheviks speak in person. In 1920, his father decided that the family had to leave the Soviet Union, and they moved into exile to Berlin, where he obtained his *Abitur*. Gurland and his parents never received German citizenship. Although the son of a rich and respectable family, he became a member of the *Sozialistische Proletarierjugend* [Socialist Proletarian Youth] and of the radical left USPD [Independent Social Democratic Party] during his time at the *Gymnasium*.

After completing his *Abitur*, he began to study at Berlin's Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in late 1922 and became a member of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). Officially a student of mathematics and physical chemistry, Gurland used his time as a student mainly to provide an academic foundation for his socialist views, taking lectures and classes with Gustav Mayer, Arthur Rosenberg and Heinrich Cunow. He continued his studies in Leipzig in 1924 in the subjects of economics, philosophy and history. As a student, Gurland translated several books by leading Russian Mensheviks like Aron Jugow and Theodor Dan into German. His critical view of Soviet politics and economy brought him in contact with Max Horkheimer's closest personal friend at the ISR, Friedrich Pollock,⁴ who was working on a book about the planned economy in the Soviet Union. Gurland finally graduated with a doctoral dissertation on the theory of dictatorship in 1929.

From 1924 to 1928, Gurland also taught at the Leipzig *Arbeiterbildungsinstitut* [Institute for Workers' Education], and from then until the collapse of Weimar, at the Berlin *Arbeiterbildungsschule* [School for Workers' Education]. In addition to his academic and teaching interests, Gurland started a successful career as a political journalist. From 1924 on, he contributed to practically the entire socialist press – for example, the *Außenpolitische Wochenschau*, the *Kulturwille*, the *Jungsozialistische Blätter* and Paul Levi's influential *Sozialistische Politik und Wirtschaft*; and from the beginning of 1932, he worked as editor-in-chief of the *Marxistische Tribüne*, a paper on the left wing of the SPD.

After the Reichstag fire in February 1933, Gurland first believed that the new coalition government with Chancellor Adolf Hitler would not last long. Urged by friends, he decided to leave the country in March of 1933, and he made it just in time: in early April 1933 an arrest warrant was issued for him by the Gestapo. Gurland first went to Belgium,

and in the summer of 1933 he moved to Paris, then one of the capitals of German emigrés. Gurland continued to maintain conspiratorial contacts with his comrades and friends in Germany, some of whom also supported him financially. He earned additional income as a translator, a sales director and an accountant in a newspaper distribution company, and as an employee of the French weekly *La Documentation de Statistique Sociale et Economique*. After the German invasion of France in May 1940, he was lucky enough to escape the Nazis again. He first fled to England and from there he was able to emigrate to the United States. His cousin by marriage, Henny Gurland, was with the group of Walter Benjamin who found their way – after Benjamin's suicide – through Spain finally to the United States (Brodersen, 1997: 252). It was A.R.L. Gurland from whom Horkheimer and Adorno first heard the details of Walter Benjamin's death in Port Bou (Horkheimer, 1996: 713–16, 727–30). Gurland's sister and mother also succeeded in leaving for England, but his father had already been deported to Poland in 1938 and was murdered in the Vilna ghetto in 1941.

In New York, Gurland was one of the emigrés whose political interest remained fixed on Germany. Together with the influential social-democratic journalist Max Sievers, he unsuccessfully attempted to revive the exile newspaper *Freies Deutschland* (Kaiser, 1981). In the fall of 1940, he was hired as a research assistant at the ISR by Max Horkheimer. Horkheimer and Gurland hardly knew each other beforehand. Joseph Maier, also a former doctoral student of Hans Freyer in Leipzig, who had started to work at the ISR, established contact with Horkheimer. Gurland stayed on the payroll of the ISR on a part-time basis until 1945. His two main fields of work were economic studies about Nazi Germany and antisemitism in Germany and the United States. Gurland also managed to get money for research projects under the roof of the ISR from other sources. After the ISR in New York was slowly dissolved in

1942, Gurland continued his research independently in New York for the American Jewish Congress (AJC), the Library of Congress and the Department of Labor. He also briefly worked with Neumann and Kirchheimer for the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) in 1945. Being stateless since his family had left Russia, Gurland achieved US citizenship in 1946 and changed his name to Arcadius Rudolf Lang Gurland. From time to time he still worked with members of the ISR. Alongside Adorno and Löwenthal, he collaborated with Horkheimer for his book *Eclipse of Reason*, which was published in 1947 (Wiggershaus, 1994: 344).

Two years after the war, Gurland made his first attempt to return to Germany. In the spring of 1947, he traveled throughout the British and American zones of occupation as a Visiting Expert Consultant to the US Department of Labor in order to observe the development of trade unions in Germany (Gurland, 1949). In 1950, he decided to move to Germany. His former colleague at the ISR, Franz L. Neumann, had offered him the directorship of a new political-science research institute to be founded in the Western sectors of Berlin, the *Institut für politische Wissenschaft* (IfpW, Institute of Political Science). Gurland stayed at the IfpW for four years. After personal conflicts with other members of the IfpW, he went back to New York in 1954. Although considered briefly for a sociology chair at Marburg University in 1957, he did not return to Germany until 1962, when he was appointed to the Chair for Political Science at the Technical University in Darmstadt, with the help of Adorno.⁵ After his arrival in Darmstadt, however, Gurland did not intensify his contact with Horkheimer and Adorno in nearby Frankfurt. Politically, he was closer to Wolfgang Abendroth, the supporter of Jürgen Habermas's *Habilitation* in Marburg. In the late 1960s and 1970s, Gurland sympathized with those groups of the student protest movement who wanted to engage with the left wing of the social democratic party. A.R.L. Gurland died on March 27, 1979.

MENSHEVISM, REVOLUTIONARY HEGELIAN-MARXISM AND SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

As a high-school student in Berlin, Gurland sympathized with the left wing of the Russian Mensheviks. He translated a number of their brochures into German. At 21, in his first book, *Der proletarische Klassenkampf in der Gegenwart* [Proletarian Class Struggle Today], he promoted Marxism as a 'method of thinking and doing research' (Gurland, 1925).⁶ He finished his doctoral dissertation three years later, with Freyer, one of the most prominent sociologists in Germany, as his advisor in Leipzig. Freyer was an outspoken right-wing Hegelian. In his understanding of sociology as a *Wirklichkeitswissenschaft* [science about reality], Freyer tried to combine empirical social research with Hegelian dialectics and attracted a number of left-wing students in the 1920s.

The topic of Gurland's doctoral dissertation was the concept of dictatorship in the materialist approach to history. The book offers a Marxist counterargument to Carl Schmitt's book on dictatorship, which had appeared in 1921. In his predominantly philological work, Gurland sought to differentiate between a 'bourgeois' and a 'socialist' understanding of dictatorship, thus 'exposing' the Weimar parliamentary democracy as a bourgeois dictatorship (Gurland, 1930). Arguably the most exciting theoretical parts of the dissertation are the passages on the theory of science in which Gurland undertakes a kind of synthesis of Georg Lukács's theory of reification and Max Adler's empiricism as a starting point for a theory of class consciousness in late capitalist societies (Gurland, 1930: 32–46).

Due to his Russian connections, Gurland was in contact with Dawid Rjazanov, the editor of the collected works of Marx and Engels in Moscow, and was invited to collaborate on the new critical edition. This plan fell short after Rjazanov was purged by the Stalinist regime in 1931. Gurland's political positions

placed him on the left wing of the SPD, and he sought to influence the party to become part of a movement for revolutionary struggle. In the years of Social Democratic government participation in the Weimar Republic after 1928, he was one of the most vocal critics of the policy of entering into coalitions with the 'bourgeois' parties. Although he changed course in the early 1930s, he did so only for tactical reasons. Gurland considered the reformism of the German labor movement to be a result of its historic development, and believed that this stance could be overcome by means of revolutionary agitation that connected with workers' everyday experiences, as he detailed in his best-known Weimar piece, *Das Heute der Proletarischen Aktion* [The Actuality of Proletarian Action] (Gurland, 1931). Gurland was a socialist who propagated a mixture of Luxemburgism and cultural revolutionary activities within the working class. The theory of fascism he developed using the example of Italy and presented in the same piece is probably the most interesting part of the book. Gurland did not consider fascism the product of capitalism at a new level but as an expression of economic and social backwardness. Fascist ideology would seep into the working class only when crisis-driven deindustrialization on a large scale takes place. Gurland considered the ideological power of both the socialists and the fascists as being fairly high. Later, this perspective permitted him to take an unbiased approach to Marxist economic categories and to revise them.

Gurland's main contributions to the political thought of the Weimar republic are his Marxist concept of dictatorship, his theory of fascism and his emphasis on culture and education as means to mobilize the working class.

RESEARCH ON THE NAZI SYSTEM

After his escape to France, Gurland soon made contact with the Paris branch of the

ISR, via Friedrich Pollock.⁷ Gurland contributed reviews for the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, using different pseudonyms.⁸ Looking back at the collapse of the Weimar Republic, Gurland castigated the Social Democratic policies of the Weimar years as 'the most abominable capitulation that the history of class struggles (...) has ever seen' (Gurland, 1935: 184). His main activity in his French exile was political journalism. From 1937, he directed the ongoing reports on Germany's economic development for Max Sievers's weekly paper, *Freies Deutschland*. He wrote more than 400 articles, mostly on questions of economic policy, until the paper was discontinued in the summer of 1939. The overarching theme of his articles and theoretical deliberations was the question of why the labor movement in Germany had been defeated without a struggle.

In his Paris exile, he started to compile material for a larger academic project in order to find an answer to the enduring question of why the German working class had been defeated by the Nazis. According to his application to the American Guild for German Cultural Freedom, he wanted to work on a 'comprehensive study of the sociology, history of ideas, and critique of ideology of the modern – primarily the German – socialist labor movement'.⁹ The five-part analysis was to summarize socialist theory and practice in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and elaborate on the ideological situation of socialism following the victory of fascism in Germany. The most innovative part of his project was the plan to analyze the 'new capitalism' under state-interventionist conditions and the economic order of National Socialism. In taking up the question of 'state capitalism' or 'monopoly capitalism', Gurland began to address the problems that he extensively dealt with years later in New York at Max Horkheimer's ISR. Indeed, the outline of his work displays parallels with the later analysis of fascism in Franz L. Neumann's *Behemoth*. However, Gurland's

application to the Guild was unsuccessful, and he had to continue making at least some money from his work as a journalist. In September 1939, he briefly published in the *Pariser Tageszeitung*, an emigré newspaper, together with Friedrich Torberg (Peterson, 1987). In his articles in newspapers and journals about the Nazi system, Gurland emphasized the fragility of the social compromise among the leading social groups and insisted on the continuity of the capitalist system in Germany (Gurland, 1938a, 1938b).

After Gurland was hired by the ISR in 1940, he concerned himself with two areas of work: the economic analysis of German Nazism and research on antisemitism. In his work on economics, he cooperated closely with Franz L. Neumann and Otto Kirchheimer, as the three had been hired to fill the political-economy gap of the ISR. But instead of orienting their work toward Pollock's and Horkheimer's theory of state capitalism, as had been expected of them, the three ignited a controversy about how the ISR's core members had placed National Socialism within their theory of capitalist society.¹⁰

Horkheimer and Adorno's theory on National Socialism was grounded in Friedrich Pollock's concept of 'state capitalism', which understood the Nazi regime as one among other cases of an emerging new economic and social order that had transformed monopoly capitalism into a totalitarian 'command economy' (Pollock, 1941: 454). They were inclined to the view that the Nazi regime was like the Soviet regime. In contrast to these members of the inner core of the Frankfurt School, Gurland agreed with Franz L. Neumann, Otto Kirchheimer and partly with Herbert Marcuse (Jay, 1973: 143–72; Wiggershaus, 1994: 223–36, 280–91), viewing National Socialism as a monopoly capitalistic system, which was founded on the capitalist relations of private property. The economic imperatives of monopoly capitalism were intact, and the compromises among the elites of economy, party, military

and administration that had come about were based on an economic system of private capitalism. The debate between the IRS members on this issue turned out to be the last intensive and truly interdisciplinary debate at the Institute.

In this debate, Gurland was – from the beginning and in contrast to his earlier views – a proponent of the theory of continuity, according to which fascism was the appropriate political organizational form for developed monopolistic capitalism. In his best-known work from his years in exile, an essay in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, published by the ISR in English in 1941, he opposed Horkheimer's and Pollock's theory of state capitalism on empirical grounds (Gurland, 1941).¹¹ The manuscript was discussed within the ISR a couple of times and only after a number of revisions, which downplayed the dispute with Pollock and Horkheimer, was the article finally allowed to go to print.¹² Although Gurland agreed that technological rationalization had been advanced under the Nazi system, he did not turn this observation into a statement about the end of private capitalism. According to Gurland, the centralization and the bureaucratization of the economy had already started in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century. Gurland saw these huge private companies and cartels as still being much more powerful than the Nazi state companies like the Hermann Goering Stahl Werke (steelworks). The technological progress and innovations that Pollock had emphasized in his article were more the result of the activities of these big private conglomerates than those of the government. Again, he used empirical data from the chemical industry to prove his case. According to Gurland, the German economic system was still monopoly capitalist, based, however, on a social 'compromise' (Gurland, 1941: 252) between economic managers and state leaders. In this connection, Gurland saw it as highly important to recognize that the social position of the political machine which runs the state – the

party – had undergone considerable changes. First, the party elite was no longer a gang of *déclassés* but had become the leading group of organizers within the governmental set-up. And second, the active rank and file's claim for security and prosperity had been fulfilled. The party supporters participated in the universal prosperity as capitalists, managers or corporate officers.

In this context, Gurland focused his attention on the importance of economic expansion as a means to prevent conflict within competing social groups in the Nazi system. He opposed Pollock's argument that the power of big business had been crucially reduced. The government, he asserted, represented the anti-monopolistic resentment of the petit bourgeoisie; the Nazis had made plenty of anti-capitalist propaganda. But after they had come to power they did not attack the social power of the entrenched business interests. He argued that the discontented middle classes – small-business owners, petty bureaucrats and white-collar workers – had always had more interest in security and participation in prosperity than in destroying the big capitalist companies. According to Gurland, this yearning had been fulfilled to the benefit of both the Nazi government and big business by German imperialist expansion. Opposing Pollock's statements about state capitalism, Gurland suggested that the expansion guaranteed the realization of the capitalist profit motive, and the profit motive stimulated further German expansion. Gurland also opposed the pessimistic view held by Horkheimer and Pollock that saw state capitalism as an ultra-stable social system: the monopolist capitalist system in Germany 'maintains the pluralism in the social and political set-up, and preserves the inconstancy of the balance of power' (Gurland, 1941: 263).

In a lengthy letter to Leo Löwenthal of November 29, 1941, Horkheimer expressed his concern that the ISR would rapidly decline if it continued to operate with Neumann, Kirchheimer and Gurland – that

the Institute would simply explode into different groups (Horkheimer, 1996: 223–30). Further, Horkheimer explained to Neumann in a letter of February 1, 1942 that the profound theoretical and political differences concerning the nature and structure of National Socialism had led to unbridgeable disputes between the members of the ISR (quoted in Laudani, 2014: 3–4). The social climate at the ISR became even colder than before.

In this situation, Gurland's collaboration with Neumann and Kirchheimer at the ISR became even closer. In 1943, the three authored a study on the fate of small businesses in Hitler's Germany for the Special Committee to Study Problems of American Small Businesses of the United States Senate (Gurland et al., 1943). Most of the empirical work for this book was done by Gurland, as the drafts and letters in his papers indicate.¹³ The vast empirical evidence about the decline of small businesses in Germany and the ever growing economic and political power of big business was interpreted by them as supporting their view of the monopolist capitalist character of the Nazi system. Gurland also contributed his economic analyses to *Behemoth*, Franz L. Neumann's voluminous study of National Socialism.¹⁴

The controversy within the IRS about the alleged emergence of state capitalism could not be settled. The different implications for political action drawn from the two contrasting positions were profound. The state-capitalism theory stated that the contradictions of the capitalist system had been suspended, whereas the monopoly-capitalism theory argued that these contradictions were actually intensified. Gurland and his collaborators' empirical challenge for the state-capitalism theory was not taken up by the core group at the ISR. Neither Horkheimer nor Adorno had any real interest in empirical economic research. In 1943 and 1944, Horkheimer's circle began to close ranks. Apart from the intellectual differences over the economic basis of German National

Socialism, the financial situation of the ISR in exile had become difficult.¹⁵ Horkheimer dismissed most of the ISR's staff and moved with Adorno to the west coast.

RESEARCH ON ANTISEMITISM

Research on antisemitism became the second field of research for Gurland in New York. The American Jewish Committee (AJC) had already started to fund Gurland's research on antisemitism in 1943. Officially, it had been undertaken by the ISR. Gurland collaborated with Paul Massing on preparing the section on the economic and social origins of antisemitism. Franz Neumann had initiated some of these projects, and he and Gurland wanted to enlarge the project to include research into antisemitism among the American labor movement (Wiggershaus, 1994: 333–5). This idea, however, provoked Horkheimer's harsh opposition. In a letter to Neumann dated November 8, 1942, Horkheimer proclaimed that the labor study was pointless insofar as labor did not represent a 'hotbed' of antisemitic trouble (Worrell, 2006). This, however, was part of the reason why Neumann and Gurland were interested in the topic. Thanks to the intervention of a personal friend at the American Labor Committee (ALC), Gurland was finally able to secure financing for a separate project on antisemitism that dealt specifically with the topic 'labor and antisemitism'.¹⁶

When reading Gurland's research reports today, it is striking to discover how strongly he disagreed with the pessimistic outlook taken by Horkheimer and Adorno. Whereas the philosophical heads of the Frankfurt School presented in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944/7) a diagnosis of their times which described the emergence of authoritarian capitalist societies and growing antisemitism (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1994), Gurland's empirical findings made him much more optimistic with respect to the future of Western

capitalist societies. The labor and antisemitism study examined the attitudes of 566 workers in New York, Detroit, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Philadelphia who belonged to the two main unions at that time – the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) – as well as unorganized workers. The study's methods were innovative because they partially referred to 'screened interviews', which meant that fellow workers on the shop floor gathered some of the material and conducted follow-up interviews.¹⁷ Gurland concluded that younger workers, women and workers with higher education could be identified as being basically immune to antisemitism. In particular, American white-collar workers possessed 'amazingly liberal' attitudes, which pointed to a crucial difference from their counterparts in Europe. African-American and Hispanic workers also emerged from the study as being relatively free of antisemitism. Since those groups were growing in number among American labor, their political attitudes were to be understood as foreshadowing a more democratic (and not fascist) future in modern capitalist societies.¹⁸ In the words of Mark P. Worrell: 'The labor report postulated that the future of American labor was heading, decisively, away from authoritarian ideology and that important segments of the working class were resistant or allergic to antisemitism' (Worrell, 2006: 281). The research was supposed to be published along with the outcomes of another empirical project at the ISR, which later became the famous book *The Authoritarian Personality*. However, Gurland's empirical labor project was not published by the ISR. In the internal discussions, Adorno asked for a theory which distinguished between middle-class antisemitism and working-class antisemitism. Horkheimer complained that the research emphasized the quantitative findings too much while neglecting qualitative analysis and philosophical considerations.¹⁹ Segments of the study have only recently been published, under the title 'Social Power and the Fetishization of Jews:

American Labor Antisemitism During the Second World War' (Gurland, 2008).

After the dissolution of the ISR in New York, Marcuse, Kirchheimer and Neumann, members of the group in opposition to Horkheimer, soon obtained long-term positions with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Gurland succeeded only in working for the OSS on a short-term basis. As a result, the American Jewish Committee (AJC), the largest and oldest of the major Jewish defense agencies in the United States, became the main sponsor of his work in 1946 and 1947. He went on producing studies on antisemitism in Germany and the Soviet Union as a freelance researcher for the AJC and composed a number of research reports, which together amounted to more than 3,000 pages.²⁰

THE PROGRAM FOR A CRITICAL POLITICAL SCIENCE IN POSTWAR GERMANY

After the collapse of the Nazi regime, Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Friedrich Pollock soon returned to Frankfurt University, where they became influential academics in German philosophy and sociology. In political science, the case was different. Although a number of former emigrants took part in the founding of the new academic discipline in West Germany, the emigrés with a political-science background from the former ISR were reluctant about returning to Germany. Otto Kirchheimer and Franz L. Neumann stayed in the United States, where they became acclaimed political scientists. Gurland took a different path: he immediately looked for opportunities to participate in the new and growing discipline of political science in West Germany.

Gurland arrived in November 1950 with an ambitious research plan for the new IfpW in Berlin.²¹ He wanted to break with the tradition of German *Geisteswissenschaften* and

create a new and critical political science in Germany.²² In *Political Science in Western Germany*, he exemplifies with great flair the battles that lay ahead. In this large-scale book review for the Library of Congress, he reviewed more than 1,000 books by 384 German authors who had commented on political issues since the end of the war. His verdict was scathing. Affinities with National Socialism, pan-Germanism and a lack of analysis of the National Socialist era were only a few of his charges (Gurland, 1952a). Gurland contrasted the existing literature with the state of political science in the United States. The traditions of a 'Mohr, a Stein, a Marx and a Gneist' had emigrated there, and that was where the requisite modernization of the subject of political science had taken place. In a further publication later that year, he emphasized how the nascent German political science could employ approaches developed in the United States (Gurland, 1952b).

Gurland's own conceptual ideas of that time were published only in part during his lifetime. But the contours of these ideas can easily be reconstructed if we take an additional look at the internal papers he produced for the IfpW. Gurland intended to redefine the relationship between empirical research on the one hand and social and political theory on the other. Political science was to take on the task in terms of a critique of ideology, not in the Hegel-Marxist sense of deciphering 'necessarily false consciousness' but simply with an empiricist understanding. Political science would be in a position to hold its own as a discipline in its own right and stake its claim vis-à-vis the existing social sciences to the extent that it elaborated on procedures that would increase empirical knowledge of political structures, processes and functional relationships and permit a precise description of phenomena about which previous theory formation had made 'for the most part only ideological statements'.²³ German political science was lacking such empirical data to a serious degree. The goal was to capture reality by means of theory, just as in all other

social sciences. Theoretical work could not be accomplished 'in the seclusion of a retreat', but 'derives the decisive impulses from empirical research' (Gurland, 1952c: 35).

According to Gurland, 'political science [...] should first and foremost observe and classify the facts and sift the evidence; at a later stage hypotheses would be formulated, to serve as starting points for theoretical evaluation'.²⁴ In this construct, empirical research has the function of delivering data. Gurland envisioned a broad palette of methods of empirical social research, including clinical analyses and analyses rooted in depth psychology, methods for precisely measuring politically relevant means of influencing the masses (qualitative semantics), representative statistics and participant observation. Introducing these procedures, some of which were unknown in Germany, was so important to him that he taught several classes on methodological problems and encouraged his Berlin colleagues to participate in the training he offered.

In keeping with his empirically oriented program, Gurland referred to Max Weber's postulate of a 'value-free' social science time and again. To him, however, political science was not a value-free undertaking, as it almost always automatically argues in favor of freedom and democracy. The political scientist's preference for democracy was neither the consequence of external normative considerations nor the result of a dialectical historical truth. On the contrary, Gurland hypothesized that political science had an internal normative center, as scientific discourse itself is essentially bound to the existence of political freedom. Scientific progress was founded on the possibility of correcting mistakes. That is the case only where science enjoys the freedom to test itself time and time again. Political science was a kind of litmus test of political freedom because of its subject: politics. As a consequence, under the existing historical conditions, there could be no political science without freedom of speech (Gurland, 1952c: 35).

By tying it to freedom and democracy, Gurland also sketched out the critical object of political science: political power. From the perspective of freedom, it was never a science of the supposedly correct use of power in terms of a 'science of governance' but rather served to ruthlessly decipher power relationships. At the center of the discipline's epistemic interest, therefore, are 'society's power structures that determine political decisions as active factors, and the social, economic and psychological processes from which political power in modern society emerges, in which it develops to form an order and through which it is subverted' (Gurland, 1952c: 25). Gurland derived this epistemic interest not least from the National Socialist past: 'Under the impact of the last decades' cataclysmic events, the study of politics has become to a large extent an inquiry into the nature, the sources and the functions of power' (Gurland, 1952a: 2). Governance in mass democracies was hiding under the cloak of common interests. The task was to tear this cloak apart in order to reveal the actual relationships of power: 'In democracies, too, processes of forming power are increasingly characterized by the anonymity of the power of control, the lack of transparency of political decisions and the concealment of power'.²⁵ According to Gurland, political science is the restless search for the societal conditions of political power.

THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL RESTORATION IN WEST GERMANY AND BERLIN

Political parties were at the center of Gurland's restless search for power structures during his four years at the IfpW. All of his works, even if they covered other topics, had the same theme: to criticize the tendency to restore capitalism in the Federal Republic and to express concern about the emergent character of West German democracy.

Gurland criticized three aspects in particular. First, he declared denazification a complete failure and bitterly called its factual results ‘renazification’.²⁶ Second, the Western allies had neglected to override the power of the ‘bureaucratic caste’. This was particularly worrying, as the German civil service had been nothing less than a bastion of anti-democratic policy since the establishment of the Reich and had paved the way for fascism (Gurland, 1947b). Third, he accused the occupying powers of having done nothing to prevent capitalist monopolies from attaining key positions anew: ‘The political power of [...] big business – pro-Nazi, semi-Nazi, or profiting from the Nazis – rests on its close links to the Bizonal and Land Bureaucracies and the CDU party machine’ (Gurland, 1949: 242), he complained in an article in *Commentary* in September 1949, which was widely discussed among the old Frankfurt School group. Gurland painted a dark picture of the young republic, articulating the fears and anxieties of a large part of the political left at that time. A growing unemployment rate, an intensifying economic crisis and monopoly capital rejecting full-employment policy, Gurland saw this situation as a breeding ground for National Socialist forces. Alarmed, he reported to his US readership about neo-Nazism and the resurgence of antisemitism.

During his years at the IfpW, Gurland did not retract any part of this diagnosis. He considered the IfpW’s political function to be the detection of any form of restoration, down to its most subtle manifestations, thereby exposing it to public criticism. A study on the history of the founding of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) developed into one of his most ambitious projects. Originally conceived as an essay for an edited volume on the West German political parties, his manuscript rapidly grew beyond that framework. But it was not only its unforeseen expansion that explained why the partially finished manuscript was not published in the IfpW’s book series: a commission at

the IfpW rejected the publication due to the work’s content and language, saying the study lacked the necessary effort to be scientifically objective, thus falling to the level of social-democratic propaganda.²⁷ Gurland gave up, leaving the IfpW in anger, and never finished the manuscript. The extensive study was finally published after his death 25 years later by Dieter Emig (Gurland, 1980) and is today seen as one of the best empirical studies about the early phase of the German party system.

The study presents the history of the founding of the CDU in seven sections. The first three chapters are compilations of the dates, background and personnel of the various CDU organizations that were established after the war; next is a description of the party programs from the *Cologne Principles* to the *Hamburg Program* of 1953; and, finally, Gurland examined the ideological bases of the founding circles, focusing on the stream of ‘Christian socialism’. In the next three chapters, in which he himself took a stand most distinctly, Gurland reconstructed the debate about the formation of the first Bonn government as well as the course of the legislative process regarding socialization in Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia. He made a detailed attempt to show how Konrad Adenauer’s followers had taken over power within the CDU step by step. Gurland believed he could detect that the will of the founding circles to accomplish a new socio-political orientation was dissolved in a process encompassing five phases. Little by little, the CDU had degenerated from ‘socialism carrying Christian responsibility’ to a party intended on ‘restoration’ (Gurland, 1980: 417). The party’s rejection of controlling monopolies and its dedication to the philosophy of the market were the logical end points of its development into a political force oriented toward large corporations. He expressed his concern about the CDU’s future development, fearing that the ‘hierarchical influencing of the masses and leadership’ would return in dangerous form because of the ‘charismatic authority of

the party leader' Adenauer (Gurland, 1980: 464). In other words, he anticipated so-called chancellor democracy.

But Gurland also found little to praise about the SPD, his own old party. For example, he accused it of bearing a large part of the responsibility for Adenauer's victory regarding the legislation on socialization. His accusation was as such: 'Basically, the SPD didn't know what to do with the coal industry; even if the best case of socialization had simply fallen into its lap, the party still wouldn't have known what to do: it had no stated goals in terms of production policy, technology or economic geography' (Gurland, 1980: 325). Two years before, he had taken the Berlin party association to task. The first volume of the IfpW book series, *Wahlkampf und Machtverschiebung* [Election Campaign and Power Shift] was an exhaustive empirical analysis of the election in Berlin's Western sectors in December 1950. The election study, the first in the young Federal Republic, was headed by Stephanie Münke, but Gurland, as editor-in-chief of the book series and as director of the IfpW, intervened in the preparation of the manuscript, at times rewriting entire chapters. In the foreword, he explicitly took responsibility for the content of the sections on the SPD. He explained the party's massive losses – from 64% to 45% – by asserting that the SPD had neglected to go on the offensive: it had failed as a party of a new socialist beginning.²⁸

Gurland, not a person to shy away from disputes, knew what he was getting into in uttering such criticism. In spite of all the rhetoric that political science in Berlin was politically neutral, it had close ties to the SPD; and even though Gurland did not need to fear direct consequences because of his criticism, influential party members were no longer prepared to protect him. The atmosphere began to turn against Gurland in late 1953, and he finally had to leave the IfpW as personal conflicts and disputes about research projects became more intense.²⁹ The price of these disputes was that Gurland did not

finish his voluminous study on the CDU that had grown to 700 pages. In 1954, Gurland returned to New York.

LATE WORK

During his time at the IfpW, Gurland reconsidered his thoughts about the economic theories of Marxism and about the rise of fascism in Europe. He defended the importance of an economic theory to explain the success of fascism in Europe but criticized the dismissal of the role of the middle classes in traditional Marxist thought (Gurland 1953a, 1953b). Before he returned to New York, Gurland contacted Horkheimer to figure out whether he would get the opportunity to work on these topics with the ISR in Frankfurt.³⁰ When this attempt failed, he sought longer-term academic employment in the United States. He continued his research as a freelancer on political parties in Germany, anti-democratic thought in Germany and on Soviet ideology for the Library of Congress, the Harvard Russian Research Center and the Rand Corporation.³¹ At one point, when he felt desperate because he was unable to find appropriate employment in the United States, he saw, as he put it in a letter to Max Horkheimer, 'really no other alternative to becoming an academic civil servant in Germany'.³² After he took up a professorship at Darmstadt University in 1962, he attracted significant attention one more time, at the 16th Congress of the German Sociological Association in Frankfurt in April 1968. Confronting Adorno, who painted a picture of an integrating cultural system in late capitalist societies (Adorno, 1969), Gurland held fast to the use of Marxist economic categories and the critique of capitalism. In contrast to Adorno, Gurland was optimistic about possible changes in the direction of a democratic and socialist society (Gurland, 1969). His arguments and political ambitions found positive resonance among the younger

generation of critical theory such as Claus Offe. Gurland invested most of his time in Darmstadt in teaching and on translations of academic books into German. He spoke and wrote fluently in seven languages. Thanks to him, Otto Kirchheimer's *Political Justice* got a superb German translation (which is still in print to this day); the same holds for *Revolution and the Civil War in Spain* by Pierre Broué and Émile Témime.

GURLAND'S LEGACY

From the perspective of today's historiographies, it may appear as if Gurland placed himself between two distinct scientific fields in the 1950s – the returning Frankfurt School and the emerging discipline of political science in Germany – and that he nearly got lost in this position. This may be the reason why historians both of the Frankfurt School and of political science have often portrayed Gurland as a marginal figure. It was only very recently that he was rediscovered as an important author within the tradition of critical theory, aptly called a representative of 'the other Frankfurt School' (Worrell, 2006, 2008; Amidon and Worrell, 2008), and championed as an original figure among the founding fathers of German political science (Buchstein, 2010; Keßler, 2010; Detjen, 2016: 315–25). His work at this crucial time is worth a second look because it hints at the loss of an important alternative critical-theory approach within the newly founded discipline.

A closer look at Gurland's life, his intellectual development and his academic projects in the early 1950s indicates that he did indeed work at a particular crossroads between critical theory and political science which has been overlooked until today. Retrospectively, the historical significance of his work can be found in the fact that he championed an academic project which broke with the philosophical positions held by members of

the returning Frankfurt School on the one hand and by the new professors of political science in Germany on the other, both on political and methodological levels. The legacy of Gurland's work in the 1950s could be understood as an early contribution to a critical theory as a critique of political power structures in modern democracies. In order to fulfill this goal, Gurland argued for a political science based on empirical findings on the distribution of political power in modern societies that does not shy away from outspoken critique.

The three former political scientists at the ISR followed different intellectual paths after 1950. Whereas Neumann and Kirchheimer integrated the critique of reification and consumer society by the core group of the ISR into their political thought, Gurland insisted on a Marxist analysis of society which was primarily based on empirical analysis. Gurland's significance in terms of the history of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School can be found on substantial and on methodological levels. On the methodological level, Gurland integrated positivist empirical research into his approach and broke with his own and the Frankfurt School's Hegel-Marxist tradition. In addition, he presented a rigorous critique of the *geisteswissenschaftliche* and primarily normative orientations of most of his colleagues in early German political science.³³ On the substantial level, during the disputes at the ISR in the early 1940s with Pollock and Horkheimer, he insisted on the monopoly-capitalist character of German Nazism based on his empirical economic analysis. Gurland did not change his position on this controversy at all. Following his old line of argument after the war, he championed positions that were uncompromisingly outspoken in their critique of economic and political restoration in West Germany. Neither the members of the Frankfurt School in West Germany – at least in their statements to the public – nor his colleagues within the newly founded community of political scientists found sharper words against 'renazification'

in postwar West Germany than Gurland. Within the field of the next generation of critical theorists, the empirical research by Claus Offe in the 1980s and 1990s probably comes closest to Gurland's ambitions.

Today, after the empirical turn in mainstream political science, Gurland's criticism of the speculative and normative biases in social research has lost its sting. More interesting are his considerations of different stages of capitalist development. In his article 'Technological Trends and Economic Structure under National Socialism' (Gurland, 1941), he argued that the correlation of technology policy and political systems can be observed at three levels: liberal capitalism corresponded to the steam engine, bourgeois mass democracy to electricity, and the new chemical industry required a fascist state to develop under capitalist conditions. It might be worthwhile to consider the contemporary meaning of Gurland's idea. What would the thesis of the correlation of technology policy and political systems hold in the light of nuclear technology, alternative energies or the information technology of today?

Notes

- 1 This article is based in parts on Buchstein, 2010. I would like to thank Eno Trimcev and Kerstin Pohl for critical comments. Gurland's papers are available at Goethe Universität Frankfurt (Universitätsarchiv, Na5, Nachlass A.R.L. Gurland). Additional biographical information can be found in 'Promotionsakte A. Gurland' in Universität Leipzig, Universitätsarchiv, Philosophische Fakultät, Promotionsakte 1701. For a bibliography of his publications see Gurland, 1991: 419–36.
- 2 See the references to Gurland in Jay, 1973; Wiggershaus, 1994; Demirovic, 1999; and Wheatland, 2014.
- 3 On Gurland's Weimar years see Emig and Zimmermann, 1988. Unless otherwise indicated, additional biographical information in this essay is based on conversations with Leo Löwenthal, Ossip K. Flechtheim, Hertha Zerna, Karl-Dietrich Bracher and in particular with Dieter Emig.
- 4 Information from Leo Löwenthal in a conversation with the author on October 5, 1988.
- 5 For the support of Adorno, see Demirovic, 1999: 238.
- 6 All German quotations have been translated by the author.
- 7 Information from Leo Löwenthal in a conversation with the author on October 5, 1988.
- 8 See Emig, 2013. Not all of his pseudonyms have been figured out. Under the name W. Grundal he reviewed books on French sociology, English socialist thought and American criminology (Gurland, 1934a, 1934b, 1934c).
- 9 Application by A.R.L. Gurland to the American Guild for German Cultural Freedom as of May 5, 1938, in Deutsche Bibliothek at Frankfurt am Main. Collection Deutsches Exilarchiv, 1033–45, EB 10/117.
- 10 For detailed studies on this controversy, see Wilson, 1982 and Dubiel and Söllner, 1984.
- 11 See Dubiel and Söllner, 1984: 18–20.
- 12 Information from Leo Löwenthal, the main editor of the journal, in a conversation with the author on October 5, 1988.
- 13 See the drafts on *The Fate of Small Business in Nazi Germany* in Goethe Universität Frankfurt, Universitätsarchiv, Nachlass Gurland.
- 14 Information from Ossip K. Flechtheim – Neumann's former research assistant – in a conversation (February 13, 1988). See also the acknowledgments of Gurland's extensive contributions to the economic sections of the book, Neumann, 1942 and Erd, 1985: 113 about Neumann's enthusiasm for Gurland's work.
- 15 About the frictions among the members of the ISR see Schmidt, 2007.
- 16 See Wiggershaus, 1994: 367. Gurland's research on antisemitism has only recently been more carefully discussed. See Worrell, 2008 and Amidon and Worrell, 2008.
- 17 More details about the methodology can be found in Worrell, 2008.
- 18 For a closer analysis of Gurland's findings on this point see Worrell, 2008: 286–8.
- 19 See Wiggershaus, 1994: 369.
- 20 See the reports by him: Gurland, 1947a, 1947b, 1948a, 1948b.
- 21 The founding of the IfpW in Berlin was orchestrated by Franz L. Neumann. On the early history of the IfpW in the context of the founding era of German political science, see Buchstein, 2011: 35–62.
- 22 On Gurland's approach within the context of postwar German political science, see Buchstein, 1992: 282–96.
- 23 A.R.L. Gurland, *Empirische Wissenschaft von der Politik: Forschung und Lehre* (1950) in Goethe Universität Frankfurt, Universitätsarchiv, Nachlass Gurland.

- 24 A.R.L. Gurland, IpfW – Organization and Research Program (1951) in Freie Universität Berlin, Universitätsarchiv, Collection Otto-Suhr-Institut, Archiv und Dokumentation, Sigel ID 1.6. (12).
- 25 A.R.L. Gurland, Die Parteien als Forschungsobjekt (1953) in Interner Rundbrief Nr. 2 der Deutschen Vereinigung für die Wissenschaft von der Politik (DVPW). Freie Universität Berlin, Universitätsarchiv der FU Berlin, Collection DVPW-Archiv, Rundbriefe.
- 26 A.R.L. Gurland: Between Reaction and Democracy – Western Germany after Five Years under Occupation Rule in Goethe Universität Frankfurt, Universitätsarchiv, Nachlass Gurland.
- 27 Vorstandsprotokoll IpfW vom 20 Januar 1955 in Universitätsarchiv der FU Berlin, Sammlung ZI 6, Institutsarchiv, Akte Vorstandsprotokolle.
- 28 'It [the SPD] did not succeed in constructing a concrete image of the socialist reestablishment of society and a clear picture of the opportunities of a mass party to effect change in a democratic order. Liberal ideas in the tradition of 1848 were cobbled together with unclear ideas of a planned economy in which the practice of the totalitarian regimes with controlled economies and war economies, which had not yet been dealt with intellectually, had left its mark' (Münke and Gurland, 1952: 23).
- 29 For the details of these personal as well as political conflicts, see Buchstein, 2011.
- 30 Letter by Gurland to Max Horkheimer of December 1, 1954, in Frankfurter Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek. Nachlaß Max Horkheimer, V 92/4–5.
- 31 See the mimeographic reports: Gurland, 1955, 1956, 1957.
- 32 Letter from Gurland to Max Horkheimer of November 12, 1957, in Frankfurter Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek. Nachlaß Max Horkheimer, V 92/1d–i.
- 33 For an overview of the methodological orientations in early German political science, see Mohr, 1988: 285–8 and Bleek, 2001: 289–99.
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