FROM CRITICAL THEORY TO POLITICAL SCIENCE: A.R.L. GURLAND’S PROJECT OF CRITICAL POLITICAL SCIENCE IN POSTWAR GERMANY¹

Hubertus Buchstein

The establishment of political science in the postwar Federal Republic of Germany was for the most part an initiative of those who had remained at home in Germany and had resisted Hitler during the Nazi years.² However, emigres such as Eric Voegelin, Ernst Fraenkel or Arnold Bergstraesser were soon counted among the most influential members of the new scientific community of political scientists. Leading members of the Frankfurt School like Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Friedrich Pollock, too, started to prepare their return to Germany after the collapse of the Nazi regime. But those among the former Institute of Social Research who had been engaged professionally with US and German politics, such as Otto Kirchheimer and Franz L. Neumann, were more reluctant about returning to Germany. Instead, they stayed in exile in the US, where they became acclaimed political scientists.³ It was only their former colleague at the Institute for Social Research in New York, Arcadius R.L. Gurland (1904-1979) who immediately took the opportunity to become part of the new and growing discipline of political science in Germany after the Second World War.

From the perspective of today’s historiographies, it may appear as if Gurland placed himself between two autonomous scientific fields in the 1950s - the returning Frankfurt School and the new emerging discipline of political science in Germany - and that he got lost in this
position. This may be the reason why historians both of the Frankfurt School and of political science have portrayed Gurland only marginally to date. Although he worked at Max Horkheimer’s Institute of Social Research from 1940 to 1945 and became a leading voice in the controversy within the Frankfurt School circle about state capitalism during those years, he is mentioned only briefly in the literature about the Frankfurt School. It was only very recently that Gurland was rediscovered as an important author within the tradition of critical theory and aptly called a representative of ‘the other Frankfurt School’ (Mark P. Worrell). The rich literature on the history of political science in Germany allots the same marginal status to Gurland and his work. When he is mentioned at all, it is only very briefly. To some extent, this is a fair reflection of Gurland’s failed attempt to become a founding father of the new discipline. Gurland was very ambitious when he returned to Germany after 1945, but he did not become a central figure in the establishment of political science in Germany. He was not a major force in establishing the German Political Science Association and he did not get an appointment to a Chair in political science in Germany until 1962. His failure, however, to become a leading player during the emergence of German political science is worth a second look because it hints at the loss of an alternative 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 acted 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 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 the political and on the methodological levels. The legacy of Gurland’s work in the 1950s could be understood as an early contribution to a critical theory focused on 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 about the distribution of political power in modern societies and a political science which does not shy away from being outspoken in its critique.
In the Weimar Republic:
From Menshevism to Revolutionary Hegel-Marxism

Arcadius Rudolph Lang Gurland was born in Moscow on September 1, 1904. 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 1920, the family left the revolutionary Soviet Union and moved to Berlin. Gurland attended the Goethe School in Berlin-Wilmersdorf, where he obtained his Abitur (secondary school degree). In the early days of the revolution in Moscow, he was deeply impressed by the mass assemblies following the revolutionary outbreak. As a Moscow high school student, he participated in some of those mass demonstrations and heard Lenin, Kamenev, Trotsky and other leaders of the revolution speak in person.

As a high school student in Berlin, he sympathized with the Russian Mensheviki and translated some of their brochures into German. Although a “son of a respectable family,” he became a member of the Sozialistische Proletarierjugend (Socialist Proletarian Youth) during his time at the Gymnasium. After completing his Abitur, he began his studies at Berlin’s Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in late 1922. Officially a student of mathematics and physical chemistry, he used his time mainly to provide an academic foundation for his socialist views, taking courses with Gustav Mayer, Arthur Rosenberg and Heinrich Cunow. He continued his studies in Leipzig in 1924 with the subjects of economics, philosophy and history. At just twenty-one, he promoted Marxism as a “method of thinking and doing research” in his first book, Der proletarische Klassenkampf in der Gegenwart (Proletarian Class Struggle Today), published in 1925. He wrote his doctoral dissertation three years later, with Hans Freyer, an outspoken right-wing Hegelian, as his advisor – and alongside Sigmund Neumann, Gurland was one of Freyer’s most successful students of the 1920s. Even if Gurland’s political positions strongly differed from his doctoral advisor’s right wing political attitudes, he was able to connect his work smoothly to Freyer’s concerning one issue: Freyer’s understanding of sociology as an empirical science of reality, which Freyer founded in Hegelian dialectics.

Gurland’s doctoral dissertation topic was the concept of dictatorship in the materialist approach to history. The book is still worth
reading today and 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.\(^\text{10}\) The arguably most exciting theoretical parts of the dissertation are the passages on the theory of science in which Gurland undertakes a kind of synthesis of Max Adler’s simple empiricism and Georg Lukács’s subtle theory of class consciousness as guarantors of “correct” insights.\(^\text{11}\)

Without a clear job perspective, Gurland’s began a political career as a journalist. In 1924, he started working with the Social Democratic daily newspaper *Leipziger Volkszeitung* as a trainee for questions of economic policy, and in 1925, he briefly tried his hand as editor-in-chief of a freethinkers’ newspaper. In the following years, he contributed to practically the entire socialist press, for example the *Außenpolitische Wochenschau*, the *Kulturwillen*, the *Jungsozialistische Blätter* and Paul Levi’s influential *Sozialistische Politik und Wirtschaft*, and from 1932 on he worked as editor-in-chief of the *Marxistische Tribüne*. In those years, sharp-tongued Levi, who had been a close friend of Rosa Luxemburg, became a sort of political idol for Gurland. From 1924 to 1928, Gurland 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).

His political positions placed him on the party’s left wing, and he sought to influence the SPD to become a party of 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 cultural-revolutionary agitation that made the connection to the workers’ everyday experiences, as he detailed in his most well-known Weimar piece ‘*Das Heute der Proletarischen Aktion*’ (The Actuality of Proletarian Action).\(^\text{12}\) From today’s point of view, the theory of fascism he developed using the example of Italy and presented in the same piece is 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 larger scale takes place. Gurland discussed the ideological power for both the socialists and the fascists as being fairly high. This perspective later permitted him to take an unbiased approach and to revise his Marxist economic categories.

Escape to Paris

After the Reichstag fire in February 1933, Gurland first believed that the new coalition government with chancellor Hitler would not last long. Urged by his friends, he decided to flee abroad in March of 1933, and just in time: in early April 1933 an arrest warrant was issued for him. Gurland first went to Belgium, and in the summer of that year, he moved to Paris, then one of the capitals of emigres from Germany.

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.” He continued to maintain conspiratorial contacts with his friends in Germany, some of whom also supported him financially. He earned additional income as a translator, as a sales director and an accountant in a newspaper distribution company, and as an employee of the weekly Documentation de Statistique Sociale et Economique. Gurland’s main activity in his French exile, however, remained political journalism. From 1937 on he directed ongoing reporting 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, published in Belgium, 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 years of painstaking work – to the extent permitted by the demands of earning a living – he compiled material for an academic project in order to find an answer to the question why the 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”. The five-part analysis was to summarize socialist theory and practice in the 19th and 20th 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 discussed several years later in New York at Max Horkheimer’s Institute of Social Research, and the outline of his work displays parallels with the later analysis of fascism in Franz L. Neumann’s book Behemoth. However, Gurland could not find financiers for his project and 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 emigres’ newspaper, together with Friedrich Torberg.

After the German invasion of France in May 1940, Gurland was lucky enough to escape again. This time he first fled to England and from here he made it 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 in Port Bou – through Spain finally to the US. His sister and his mother also succeeded in leaving for England, whereas his father had already been deported to Poland in 1938 and was later murdered in the Vilna ghetto in 1941.

A Member of the Frankfurt School in Exile

After his arrival in New York, Gurland was one of those emigres whose political interest remained fixed on Germany. Together with Max Sievers, he unsuccessfully attempted to revive the exile newspaper Freies Deutschland. When Max Horkheimer finally hired him as a research assistant at the Institute of Social Research in the fall of 1940, at last he had found a position in the world of academia that had so long eluded him. Friedrich Pollock, whom Gurland knew from Germany, and Joseph Maier, also a doctoral candidate of Freyer’s in Leipzig, who had started to work at the Institute had established the contact to Horkheimer. Horkheimer and Gurland hardly knew each other beforehand. However, it was Gurland from whom Horkheimer and Adorno had first heard the details, if not the original news, of Walter Benjamin’s suicide.
Gurland concerned himself with two areas of work at the *Institute*: the economic analysis of fascism and research on anti-Semitism. 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 *Institute*’s previous work. 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 *Institute*’s core members had placed national socialism within their theory of capitalist society. 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 *Institute* in English in 1941, he sought to prove the existence of a correlation of technology policy and the political system 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. At times he collaborated quite closely with Neumann and Kirchheimer. In 1943, the three of them published a study on small businesses in Hitler’s Germany, and Gurland contributed his economic analyses, some of which he had written while still an emigre in France, to *Behemoth*, Neumann’s voluminous study of National Socialism.

Research on anti-Semitism became Gurland’s main field of work in New York. *The American Jewish Committee* (AJC), the largest and oldest of the major Jewish defense agencies in the US, funded some of the research, which was officially done by the *Institute of Social Research*, beginning in 1943. Gurland and Paul Massing collaborated on preparing the section on the economic and social origins of anti-Semitism. It was Franz Neumann, who had initiated some of these projects, and who wanted to enlarge the project to include research into anti-Semitism among the American labor movement. This idea, however, provoked Horkheimer’s 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 anti-Semitic trouble. This, however, was part of the reason why Neumann and Gurland were interested into this topic. Thanks to the intervention of a friend at the *American Labor Committee* (ALC), Gurland was
finally able to secure financing for a separate project on anti-Semitism that dealt specifically with the topic “labor and anti-Semitism”.  

In the mid-1940s, Horkheimer’s circle began to close ranks. Horkheimer dismissed most of the Institute’s staff and together with Adorno moved to the West coast. The changes were based largely on two factors: first the intellectual differences over the economic basis of German National Socialism, and second the difficult financial situation of the institute in exile. In a lengthy letter to Leo Löwenthal on November 29, 1941, Horkheimer expressed his concern that the Institute would rapidly decline if it continued to operate with Gurland, Neumann and Kirchheimer. According to his view, the Institute would simply explode into different groups. In contrast to his colleagues Marcuse, Kirchheimer and Neumann, who obtained long-term positions with the Office of Strategic Services, Gurland succeeded only in working there on a short-term basis. Due to this fact, the AJC became the main sponsor of his work in 1946 and 1947. He started to prepare new studies on anti-Semitism in Germany and the Soviet Union as a freelance researcher for the AJC and composed a few manuscripts amounting to more than 3,000 pages altogether.

When reading these manuscripts today, it is striking to discover how strongly Gurland disagreed with the pessimistic outlook given by Horkheimer and Adorno. Whereas the main philosophical heads of the Frankfurt School presented in their Dialectic of Enlightenment (1944/1947) a diagnosis of their times which described the emergence of authoritarian capitalist societies and growing anti-Semitism, Gurland’s empirical findings made him much more optimistic with respect to the future of western capitalist societies. The labor anti-Semitism study examined the attitudes of 566 workers in New York, Detroit, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia. Examined were both organized workers (in the two main unions at that time) and unorganized workers. The studies methods were innovative because they partially referred to as ‘screened interviews’, which means that fellow workers on the shop floor gathered some of the material and follow-up interviews. Gurland concluded in his research on anti-Semitism in the US labor movement that younger workers, women and workers with higher education could be identified as being basically immune to anti-Semitism. In particular American white-collar workers possessed “amazingly liberal” attitudes which pointed to a crucial difference compared with their counterparts in Europe. Blacks
and Hispanics also emerged from the study as being relatively free of anti-Semitism. Since those groups were growing among American labor, their political attitudes were to be understood as foreshadowing a more democratic (and not fascist) future in modern capitalist societies. 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 anti-Semitism.” The research was supposed to be published along with another empirical project at the Institute, which later became the famous book The Authoritarian Personality. However, the labor project was stopped by Horkheimer because it clashed with his philosophical reflections about growing anti-Semitism in modern societies.

Back to Germany?!

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. After returning to the US in August, 1947, he decided to move back to Germany as soon as possible. He intended to help reestablish institutions for workers’ education in the Ruhr area and in the region of Hannover, where the social democratic party had its headquarters. But after he was (wrongly) denounced by English officials for allegedly having collaborated with the Nazis before 1945, the occupation authorities did not issue him a new entry visa to Germany. Thus Gurland continued to work for the AJC in New York and got by on research commissioned by the Library of Congress and the Department of Labor.

It took him three more years to return to Germany again. Now his old hometown Berlin became the focus of his interest. In response to the political repression at the university in the Eastern sector, the Free University (FU) had opened its doors in Berlin’s Western sectors in November 1948. Gurland took the initiative to get a teaching position at the new university in the Western sector. He was officially named an Expert Consultant for the FU along with Paul Tillich and Ludwig Teleky and immediately inquired about an unlimited position at the
FU with the American military authorities in Berlin. Gurland hoped to obtain a chair at the new faculty of law and economics. However, in January 1949 the faculty council voted against his application, arguing that his academic subject was “mainly political sociology.” To Gurland it seemed that his FU plans would come to nothing.

But a surprising turn of events occurred in the following months when his former colleague at the Institute of Social Research, Franz L. Neumann, officially made him an offer that would resolve all his financial worries and give him the chance to go to Berlin: Gurland was to receive a position at a new political science research institute to be founded in the Western sectors of Berlin. Co-founded by the FU Berlin and the Deutsche Hochschule für Politik, which held equal numbers of seats on the body overseeing the new institute, it was named Institut für politische Wissenschaft (IfpW, Institute of Political Science). The IfpW was financed by the city of (West-)Berlin, and in addition it received more than 50 percent of its budget in its early years from the Ford-Foundation in order to start its first research projects.

In those days, Neumann’s word carried weight in the Western sectors of Berlin. In contrast to Gurland, he had succeeded in launching a successful academic career during his exile in the US. In 1948, he had become Visiting Professor and in 1950 Full Professor of Government at Columbia University in New York. Altogether he had three functions in dealing with German affairs for American institutions: as ombudsman at Columbia for the partnership with the FU Berlin; as a Visiting Consultant for German university reform for the State Department; and as an intermediary in financial matters for the Ford Foundation. Establishing the IfpW was his top priority, as he was dissatisfied with the FU because it was not creating a political science faculty. Thus Neumann sought other possibilities to find a place for academically oriented political science in Berlin.

With respect to the directorship of the new institute, Neumann made a proposal in a memorandum for the State Department in the summer of 1950: “Dr. Otto Suhr should become the director (...). Dr. A.R.L. Gurland would be the ideal chief researcher.” Gurland happily accepted Neumann’s offer. Not only did this position hold the prospect of an end to his financial plight, but he would finally be able to pursue his own independent political and scientific plans. Moreover, he had placed high political hopes in Berlin because of its feisty anticommunist resistance during the blockade: “I believe” he wrote to SPD chairman Kurt Schumacher in 1949 “that since the uprising of
the socialist Jewish laborers in the Warsaw Ghetto, there has not been a single socialist action against a totalitarian dictatorship that could be compared even remotely with what Berlin’s workers are achieving." \(^{41}\)

Gurland was not able to travel to Berlin as soon as he had hoped, however. Visa problems delayed his arrival yet again. As a result, the other personnel decisions at the IfpW had to be made without him. After Otto Suhr declined Neumann’s offer to become the first director, Neumann suggested Otto Heinrich von der Gablentz for this position. In terms of personnel policy, this was a poor decision. At the time, Gurland and von der Gablentz hardly knew each other. Although both were committed opponents of National Socialism, their political views and concepts of science differed even in the most basic terms. Von der Gablentz came from a venerable aristocratic Prussian family and had been a follower of religious socialism in the Weimar years. During the “Third Reich,” he belonged to the resistance group “Kreisauer Kreis,” where he was responsible for questions of social policy. After 1945, he began what was later to become a large number of publications with the programmatic piece *Über Marx hinaus!,* (Beyond Marx!) in which he proclaimed a new conservatism founded on Christianity. \(^{42}\) In June, 1945, he signed the manifesto to establish the Berlin branch of the Christian Democratic Party CDU. So he was a kind of opposite to the atheist, emigre and Marxist socialist Gurland in practically every regard.

**Building up a Political Science Research Institute**

When Gurland finally arrived in Berlin in November, 1950, work had already begun at the IfpW; important preliminary decisions regarding the organization of work, selection of topics and research methods had been made without him. Directly after arriving, Gurland composed a counterdraft to von der Gablentz’s proposal. \(^{43}\) Although the IfpW was already committed to three areas of research – sociologist Stephanie Münke was to study the Berlin election of December, 1950; historian Karl-Dietrich Bracher headed a research group on the collapse of the Weimar Republic; and Ernst Richert was commissioned to work on propaganda in the GDR – Gurland demanded that the institute observe the entire political landscape on a continuous basis instead.
According to Gurland, the IfpW was to have twelve research departments to cover all policy fields – from associations and parties to political economy, from contemporary history to international relations and military policy – in the practice of its research. At the same time he criticized von der Gablentz’s own project entitled Die Lebenskreise des Berliners (The Berliner’s Social Milieus) as being too weakly specified in thematic and methodological terms. Although at first, it was possible to negotiate an agreement between the director of the institute and the director of research, the differences in terms of their conceptions of science later proved insurmountable. Von der Gablentz considered political theory to be a kind of reflection on political concepts. On the occasion of the opening of the IfpW, he explained to his staff that political theoreticians had to clarify their basic political concepts “in conversation – as ecclesiastical historians say: with the fathers and the brothers – with the classical scientific authors and our colleagues in Germany and abroad.” According to Gurland would not have rejected such conversations fundamentally – but the foundation for such an undertaking, in his opinion, would have to be the existence of hard empirical data for analysis.

Gurland immediately and vehemently intervened in Stephanie Münke’s ongoing election research, took on the leadership of a broad-based study of parties, began a project on the GDR, announced several times that a study on trade unions was about to be completed, established an editorial department responsible for all IfpW publications in which he himself also worked, was involved in organizing the establishment of the library, initiated a review study of American political science, taught classes on methods, totalitarianism and anti-Semitism, and traveled to the US several times for the institute. In spite of the differences between von der Gablentz’s and Gurland’s points of view, conspicuous from the outset, the way work began at the institute put its initiator Neumann in an optimistic mood: Since Gurland’s arrival, “the project had gotten off to a good start” and “was up to the applicable scientific standards.” But the conflict between Gurland and von der Gablentz was to escalate by early summer. Von der Gablentz complained to Suhr that Gurland was constantly undermining his ideas and had taken an entirely negative stance toward him. It was hoped that a new delineation of competencies between the head of the institute and his deputy would settle matters. However, this did not solve the problem. Von der Gablentz testily complained to
HUBERTUS BUCHSTEIN

Redslob, the president of the FU, that Gurland was “naively overestimating West Berlin’s Social Democratic Party” and displayed “nothing less than hateful aversion toward conservative and religious forces.” Gurland also found the disputes to be nerve-wracking: “And anyway, it is characteristic of the Berlin condition to be stuck in a more or less pointless bustle all the time that produces meager results. You talk, you confer, you meet – especially the latter – and no time is left for reading or other work,” he wrote to Otto Kirchheimer about the situation that summer.

The conflict left its mark on the practical work at the institute, and all the departments except for Bracher’s group were affected. “Instead of working they make intrigues,” Franz Neumann complained to his friend Ernst Fraenkel, increasingly annoyed, “they have not even been able to produce a coherent work program for the Institute. If they cannot settle their differences, one or the other of the two gentlemen will have to disappear.” Just a few weeks later, Gurland presented his *Organization and Research Program*, a plan that Neumann had demanded. He declared the institute’s main task to be conducting empirical analyses of power. “How power materializes, what purposes it serves, and under what circumstances it is bound to disintegrate, were the central questions that imposed themselves.”

In the end, von der Gablentz was the first of the two to give up. In late July, he complained to Otto Suhr that Gurland had sent out the Research Program without consulting him first, and announced his resignation as of December. On December 6, 1951, Gurland was appointed the new Director of the IfpW. A letter of Gurland’s to Adorno indicates that he considered this a “victory” for his ideas about the institute’s future work: “There was a cabinet crisis here that lasted several months and has only now been concluded. The result: von der Gablentz has left after my theoretical points of view prevailed in all decisive issues.”

A Different Program of Critical Political Science

Gurland wanted to see his concept of political science fully implemented at the IfpW. Now, at the beginning of 1952, he started conflicts on two fronts at the same time: firstly, he wanted to stake a claim for a radical program of political science; and secondly, he intended to
carry out particular research topics. However, Gurland had the knack of treading on everyone’s toes. His intentions were often jeopardized by his impulsive temper and the chaotic style of work he had become used to in the previous 20 years.

An extensive review essay *Political Science in Western Germany* he wrote in 1952 exemplifies the panache with which he went to battle. In a kind of large-scale critique 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 contrasted the existing literature with the state of the discipline of political science in the US. The traditions of a “Mohl, 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. Effectively in contrast to this *Library of Congress* review, he published an overview of relevant American studies on elections the same year. He saw approaches used in the US that a critical German field of political science could employ for its own orientation.

Gurland’s own conceptual ideas of that time were published only in part during his lifetime. The contours of these ideas are more easily discerned if we take into account some of the unpublished manuscripts he produced then, in which he attempted to unequivocally define the relationship between empirical research and political theory. Political science was to take on a task in terms of a critique of ideology, albeit not in the Hegel-Marxist sense of deciphering “necessarily false consciousness,” but with a simply 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.” 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.”
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." 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 methods, some of which were unknown in Germany at the time, was so important to him that he taught several classes on methodological problems and also 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 the discipline practically automatically always stands in favor of freedom and democracy. In the early 1950s, Gurland could claim certain originality within the discipline, due less to his declared belief in democracy than to his particular position in the theory of science. He grounded taking sides for democracy, inherent to political science, neither as a proclamation of eternal normative orientations nor as a dialectical development of an immanent historical truth. On the contrary, he hypothesized that political science had a normative center, as its scientific discourse itself is essentially bound to the existence of political freedom. Scientific progress is based 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 is 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.

By tying it to freedom and democracy, Gurland also sketched out the critical task of political science. Its object was 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.”\textsuperscript{57} 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.”\textsuperscript{58} Governance in mass democracies is hiding under the cloak of common interests. The task is 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.”\textsuperscript{59} According to Gurland, political science is the restless search for the societal conditions of political power.

**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 prove the existence of and criticize the tendencies of restoration in the Federal Republic, and to express concern about the continued existence of the Bonn democracy.

Gurland criticized three aspects in particular: Firstly, he declared denazification a complete failure and bitterly called its factual results “renazification.”\textsuperscript{60} Secondly, the Western allies had neglected to over-ride 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.\textsuperscript{61} Thirdly, 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”\textsuperscript{62} he complained in an article which appeared in ‘Commentary’ in September 1949.

Gurland painted a dark scenario of the young republic (some of which today’s readers can appreciate only with difficulty), which a substantial part of the political left seriously feared at that time. A
growing unemployment rate, an intensifying economic crisis and monopoly capital rejecting full-employment policy - Gurland saw National Socialist forces thriving again on the breeding ground this situation. Alarmed, he reported to the American readership about neo-Nazism and the resurgence of anti-Semitism.

During his years at the IfpW, Gurland did not retract any part of this diagnosis. He considered the IfpW’s political function to be to ferret out restoration down to its most subtle manifestations, thereby exposing it to public criticism. A study on the history of the founding of the 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. The reason it was never completed was that Gurland had already left the IfpW in anger. But it was not only its unforeseen expansion that explained why the partially finished manuscript was not published in the IfpW’s series. A commission at the institute consisting of Hans Herzfeld and Gurland’s former adversary von der Gablentz rejected publication also due to the work’s content and language. According to Herzfeld, the study lacked the necessary effort to be scientifically objective, and von der Gablentz criticized it, saying that it could be successfully published only as a piece of Social Democratic propaganda.63 The comprehensive manuscript was published twenty-five years later after Gurland’s death by Dieter Emig under the title Die CDU/CSU.64

The manuscript 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 sociopolitical orientation was dissolved in a process encompassing five phases. Little by little, the CDU had degenerated from “socialism car-
rying Christian responsibility” to a party with a “background of restoration” (p. 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 to a political force oriented toward large corporations. He used words of concern to predict the CDU’s future development, fearing that the “hierarchical influencing of the masses and leadership” would return and pose a danger due to the “charismatic authority of the party leader” Adenauer (p. 464) – in other words, more than merely anticipating the later term of so-called chancellor democracy.

But Gurland also found little praise for the SPD, his own old party. Immediately after the war, Gurland had reestablished contact with his former fellow party members, and he had also been offered various positions within the SPD. His name had been mentioned in 1947 as secretary to party chairman Kurt Schumacher, among other posts, but his visa problems stood in the way. A year later, he was a candidate for the position as the editor of a journal on theory to be published by the left wing of the SPD around Otto Brenner, according to whom Gurland appeared to be particularly suited “to substantiate the party’s strategy and tactics from a Marxist perspective.”

In the Berlin party association, Gurland participated especially in theoretical discussions held in the Socialist Forum, a regular series of events in the 1950s. His lectures focused especially on questions of Marxism. As before the war, Gurland was one of the proponents of a leftist but nonetheless strictly anticommunist party line. Although his left-socialist position met with a favorable response on the part of the Social Democratic party leadership in Berlin, it had no influence at all on the “rightist” majority of the faction around Ernst Reuter, Otto Suhr and Willy Brandt. What else could Gurland do if not criticize things from the distant position of a social scientist?

We find some potshots against his own party even in his study of the CDU. For example, he accused it of bearing a large part of the responsibility for Adenauer’s victory regarding the legislation on socialization. His accusation: “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” (p. 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 carried out in Berlin’s Western sectors in December 1950. The election study was the first in the young Federal Republic. In formal terms, the research group was headed by Stephanie Münke. But Gurland, as editor-in-chief of the book-series and as the director of the institute, intervened again and again in the preparation of the manuscript; at times, he rewrote entire chapters. In the foreword, he explicitly took over responsibility for the content of the sections on the SPD in the book. He explained the party’s massive losses – from 64% to 45% – by asserting that the SPD had neglected to take the political offensive: It had failed as a party of a new socialist beginning.66

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, in fact it had close ties to the Social Democratic Party. Even though Gurland did not need to reckon with direct consequences due to his criticism, influential party members were no longer prepared to hold a protecting hand over him.

The End of the Experiment

But Gurland would have urgently needed support as the difficulties at the IfpW soon became too much for him. The only research group to make rapid progress without major problems was Karl-Dietrich Bracher’s. It was Bracher’s study Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik (The Dissolution of the Weimar Republic), completed in just four years, which established the IfpW’s international scientific reputation in the 1950s. The other departments did not progress as well, due not least to Gurland’s lack of sensitivity in directing his staff.

Gurland’s personal work habits also conflicted with his regular activities heading the institute. He usually worked at night, and sometimes did not arrive at the institute until the early afternoon. After working on his own for years in exile, he also had difficulties delegating tasks. To be on the safe side, he often rechecked information provided by his staff, or rewrote entire texts. As a matter of course, he did not stick to deadlines, sometimes only to recalculate tables yet a third time. Completion of the literature review for the Library of Congress
mentioned above was delayed several times. When the end of May 1952 was finally agreed upon as the deadline for printing Gurland had delayed his work so often that Otto Suhr, angered, finally took over responsibility and dictated the new deadline. A revision of the text for the German-speaking readership was to be published in 1953 but never completed. An almost-finished study of trade unions and the project Ostzone (Eastern Zone), which had been started, suffered the same fate. And finally a widely announced portrayal of US political science was cut down to an article on election analyses. In organizational matters, too, the institute did not really find its feet under Gurland’s aegis. The minutes of the institute leadership’s meetings in the years 1950 to 1954 reveal at least ten proposals for restructuring, as Gurland still planned to make the IfpW into a place of continuous and comprehensive monitoring of all main aspects of modern politics. In addition, the transfer of the institute’s financing from American authorities to German ones posed such great problems that the IfpW found itself facing closure several times.

In this situation, the atmosphere began to turn against Gurland in late 1953, and his leadership was gradually called into question. In the end, even Franz L. Neumann no longer wanted to retain him as director of the institute. In light of the criticism, Gurland visibly became more and more unhappy: “I can only repeat that I am definitely nearing the point of quitting,” Gurland wrote in a letter to Neumann in New York, “if I had a job waiting for me in the States, I would probably quit at once.” Neumann no longer could – or wanted to – run interference for Gurland. A crisis plan provided for entrusting Neumann himself with directing the institute, but this plan came to nothing, due to Neumann’s tragic death in a traffic accident in September 1954.

Finally Otto Stammer was selected to take over the institute. Stammer had a considerably better relationship with Gurland than von der Gablentz had had. Stammer and Gurland had been friends during their student days in Leipzig and their political work on the left wing of the Weimar SPD. Stammer suggested providing job security for Gurland by commissioning him with a research project on methodological problems of political science, and even wanted to entrust him with a department of the IfpW for this purpose. But Gurland was not willing to settle for such a solution. Ensuing legal disputes concerning his employment dragged on until the late summer of 1954.
The price of these disputes was that Gurland did not finish his voluminous study on the CDU that had grown to 700 pages. Instead he booked a passage on a ship to the US and, a bitter man, turned his back on Germany.

After leaving the IfpW, Gurland initially contacted Horkheimer in order to get a position at his Frankfurt institute. When this attempt failed he sought longer-term academic employment in the US. He continued his research as a freelancer on political parties in Germany, antidemocratic thought in Germany and on Soviet Ideology for the Library of Congress, the Harvard Russian Research Center and the Rand Corporation. At one point, when he felt desperate because he was unable to find appropriate employment in the US, he saw, as he wrote Max Horkheimer, “really no other alternative to becoming an academic civil servant in Germany.”

Although considered briefly for a sociology chair in Marburg in 1957, he did not return to Germany until 1962, when he finally was appointed to the Chair for Political Science at the Technische Hochschule Darmstadt, near Frankfurt by the Social Democratic Secretary of Culture in Hesse. But Gurland, who turned 58 shortly after he finally got a full professorship, had lost his innovative energy and his enthusiasm for conflicts. The death of his son and the illness of his second wife also drained his energy. Instead of writing articles or books, he spent most of his time on translations. 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 Broué and Témime. Gurland attracted significant attention only one more time, at the 16th Congress of the German Sociological Association in Frankfurt in April 1968. Confronting Adorno, who presented a pessimistic vision about the development in late capitalist societies, Gurland held fast to the use of Marxist economic categories, the Marxist critique of capitalism, and the chances for a democratic and socialist society - arguments and political ambitions which found resonance among members of younger groups of social scientists at the congress, for example, Claus Offé. After several years of illness, A.R.L. Gurland died in Darmstadt on March 27, 1979.

Gurland’s significance in terms of the history of the Frankfurt School and of German political science can be found on substantial and on methodological levels. On the methodological level, Gurland integrated positivist empirical research into his approach and broke
with the Hegel-Marxist tradition of the Frankfurt School. In addition, he presented a rigorous critique of the normative orientations of most of his colleagues in early German political science. On the substantial level, between 1950 and 1954, he championed positions which were uncompromisingly outspoken in their critique of political restoration in Germany. Neither the members of the Frankfurt School in Germany – at least in their statements to the public – nor his colleagues within the newly founded community of political scientists found sharper words against “re-nazification” in West Germany after 1945 than Gurland.
NOTES

1. I am grateful for the critical comments of two anonymous reviewers of an earlier version of the paper. In particular I would like to thank Sandra H. Lustig for translating the manuscript.


8. A.R.L. Gurland, Der proletarische Klassenkampf in der Gegenwart. Leipzig 1925. The German quotations were also translated by Sandra H. Lustig.
18. The contributions to the intra-institute controversy have been compiled and edited with comments by Helmut Dubiel and Alfons Söllner (ed.), *Wirtschaft, Recht und Staat im Nationalsozialismus. Analysen des Instituts für Sozialforschung*. Frankfurt/M. 1984.
22. On Paul Massing’s contribution to these studies see: Mark P. Worrell: Paul Massing, the Frankfurt School, and the Question of Labor Authoritarianism during World War II. In: *Critical Sociology* 35 (2009), 625-635.
34. Some of the conflicts at the Institute about the study are described by: Kevin S. Amidon/ Mark P. Worrell, A.R.L. Gurland, the Frankfurt School and the Critical Theory of Antisemitism. In: Telos 144 (Fall 2008), 129-147.
FROM CRITICAL THEORY TO POLITICAL SCIENCE...

41. Letter by Gurland to Kurt Schumacher, January 20, 1949 (original in the possession of Dieter Emig, Darmstadt).
66. “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.” Stephanie Münke (with A.R.L. Gurland), Wahlkampf und Machtverschiebung. Geschichte und Analyse der Berliner Wahlen vom 3. Dezember 1950. Berlin 1952, p. 23.
69. See his mimeographic manuscripts: Antidemocratic Currents in German Political Writing 1950-54. Library of Congress (1955); Doctrinal Change in the Communist Party of theSU 1954-1955. Harvard Russian Research Center (1956); Parties and Interest Groups in Germany. Rand Corporation, Santa Monica (1957).