

American Sociology and Holocaust Studies

The Alleged Silence and the Creation of
the Sociological Delay

Perspectives in Jewish Intellectual Life

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The Alleged Silence and the
Creation of the Sociological Delay

ADELE VALERIA MESSINA

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... Every man in regard of his intellect is connected with
Divine Word [logos], being an impression of, or a fragment
or ray of that blessed nature ...

–**Philo**, *On the Creation*

And yet He is there, in silence, in filigree.

–**Elie Wiesel**, in a 1978 interview with
John S. Friedman

To my father,
When your voice pauses my heart,
I remember all the times that you asked me:
“Would you like to read, for me, a tale?”

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Obviously, the final responsibility rests with me—all errors are my own.

Preface

At a time when references to the Holocaust saturate American popular culture and the media, and at a time when the so-called Final Solution has come to epitomize absolute evil in the United States – a country that opened a museum in the heart of its capital dedicated to an event that took place, on foreign soil, more than two decades before finally opening one dedicated to the history of African Americans – it is difficult to imagine a time when the Holocaust was not considered *the* moral and historical touchstone, *tout court*. In fact, as historian Peter Novick and others have shown, the history of the Holocaust – or rather its reception – has a history itself: it did not always receive the same level of public or scholarly attention that it does today. And the same holds true for Germany. Raul Hilberg, the late doyen of Holocaust studies in the United States, once observed that the genocide of the European Jews attracted some attention in the Federal Republic in the 1960s as a result of the Eichmann and Auschwitz trials, but was not a focal point of the “sixty-eighters,” i.e., the youthful participants in the protest movement that rocked Germany in the latter part of the decade by asking their parents’ generation what they had done during the Third Reich. It was not until a decade later, in fact, with the broadcast of the American miniseries *Holocaust* in West Germany in 1979, that the Final Solution finally entered popular consciousness there; it has since become a perennial source of public discussion.

That the reception of the Holocaust has a history that changed over time has generally become an accepted idea – one that has also come to be accepted with regard to the field of American sociology, as Adele Valeria Messina reminds us in this fine study, the first one-volume synthesis in English of the history of the sociology of the Holocaust in the United

States. But, as the author shows, there was no “delay” in approaching the Holocaust: rather, it was a topic that attracted attention in American sociological circles immediately after 1945 – and even during the war itself. Drawing on an abundance of evidence, Messina not only debunks that misperception, but also persuasively describes the reasons how and why the idea of a “missing tradition” in American sociology came about.

As a historian of modern Germany, there is another aspect of this review of American sociological studies of the Holocaust from the end of the Second World War through the present that I find especially attractive: by alerting us to a number of important studies that have unjustly been long neglected, it points to ways in which historians can better integrate the sociological tradition of Holocaust studies into their own field. And, as the author herself concludes, her monograph strongly suggests the need to revisit the sociological traditions of other countries as well, where the study of the Holocaust may very well have an equally rich heritage. By alerting us to this possibility, Messina has performed a valuable service to her own field, as well as to cognate ones such as my own.

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Introduction

Just as with many good things that happen by chance, this book has also come to be by happenstance: it is a bit associated with a fortunate event. When I started to approach the Holocaust topic, by reading *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989) by Zygmunt Bauman, I sincerely knew almost nothing of what it really meant. In my mind, I thought I knew enough about the Holocaust: around 6 millions of Jews were killed. That's all I needed to know. But in working with a feeling that I had upon trying to look at it more closely, I started to examine any writing related to the topic I could find. One day my eyes accidentally fell on an article by Burton P. Halpert: "Early American Sociology and the Holocaust: The Failure of a Discipline" (2007). I had never read such a thing: it was absolutely new for me. So I proceeded with the abstract, and then my eyes ran over this passage:

American sociology, established as an academic discipline in 1905, passed through two early developmental stages, Christian reformism and sociological positivism, together forming the basis for what was taught and researched in the academy. Topics not fitting this religious and positivistic paradigm were dismissed by the leaders of the discipline. Included among the neglected topics was the Holocaust, the paradigmatic genocide of the twentieth century. Permeated with religious ideology and anti-Semitism, American sociology as practiced in the leading universities in the United States institutionalized a professional milieu that precluded recognition of the Holocaust, even after World War II.¹

¹ Burton P. Halpert, "Early American Sociology and the Holocaust: The Failure of a Discipline," *Humanity & Society* 31 (2007): 6.

I really understood that something was amiss in my mind and that the Holocaust was a more deeply felt question. Contemporaneously I was becoming fascinated with Italian book *Auschwitz e gli intellettuali* by Enzo Traverso.² These two works, like two heavy stones, were making room in my consciousness and thought, and “like a beacon in the night” they were starting to illuminate my research. Actually, I was finding myself facing a new perspective of study. This was my starting point: I wanted to have more knowledge of the scholars of sociology and about the failure of sociology concerning the Holocaust.

Halpert’s statement—that “American Sociology permeated with religious ideology and anti-Semitism institutionalized a professional milieu that precluded recognition of the Holocaust”—became a nagging, burdensome question for me: I continuously asked myself how Christian reformism and sociological positivism could be related to the Holocaust. Once more conscious of this, I commenced to peruse whatever Holocaust sources (symposium publications, papers, articles, books, essays, letters to the editor, reviews, and so on) and more and more to look at any writing about sociology and the destruction of the Jews. So, step by step, I was focusing on the approach sociology adopted in studying the Holocaust.

Since Halpert’s article seemed to confirm the thesis according to which the post-Holocaust sociology started with *Modernity and the Holocaust* by Bauman, I wanted to verify that. Thus this book resulted from two questions: Does post-Holocaust sociology only start with *Modernity and the Holocaust* by Bauman in 1989 and after the fall of Berlin Wall? This is a concern of my study. The second question has to do with the role Bauman’s book played in both American sociology and the wider Holocaust discussion, namely, should it be considered an exception in the field, as most scholars appear to think it is. In searching for an answer to these questions, I started to examine the sociology of the Holocaust and its related themes, and I ran into a set of unforeseen and astonishing outcomes beyond the Holocaust and concerned with academic realm.

I hope to make the reader aware of the “Jewish problem” of sociology and provide what this academic discipline urgently needs: a one-volume history

2 Enzo Traverso, *Auschwitz e gli intellettuali: La shoah nella cultura del dopoguerra* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2004 [1997]).

of the sociology of the Holocaust, that is, a single volume suited for a broad audience.³ Moreover, although I run the clear risk of some omissions, I hope that my approach will be sufficient to point out the fundamental issues.

Since my original doubt occupied me with reviewing the history of sociology, this book is going to offer the first résumé in English of up-to-date research on the sociology surrounding the destruction of the Jews during World War II: a genocide that did not have its beginning in “mobile killing operations” and “killing center operations,” as Raul Hilberg states. The destruction of the Jews, between 1933 and 1945, was prepared by certain steps: a definition by decree, concentration phases, and deportations.⁴

Even if this book affords a guide to the current state of knowledge, it does not aim to present itself as the last word on the subject. Filled with new elements and aspects that challenge contemporary and common scholarly theses, the volume tries to examine, as well as it can, the sociological literature that studied the Holocaust from the end of the conflict to the present day. Further, I will investigate the event of the Holocaust by retracing some stages of the sociological scholarship. Thus I am going to analyze sociology as academic *corpus* and as a discipline, namely, the sociological devices and concepts adopted by sociologists over the years in comprehending the Holocaust and the focus of sociological thoughts confronted by the event. Additionally, in rethinking the sociology of the Holocaust, the book will move across the history of the same sociology. However, the focus on almost every page is on the “alleged delay of sociology” in the comprehension of the Jewish genocide.

Before 1989, the year *Modernity and the Holocaust* by Bauman was published, scholars used to speak of a sociological problem, in the sense that the sociologists “have been reluctant to study the Holocaust”⁵ or “have so far failed to explore in full the consequence of the Holocaust.”⁶

3 Ronald J. Berger, review of *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust: Memories and Identities in Jewish Diasporas*, ed. Judith M. Gerson and Diane L. Wolf, *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 27, no. 1 (2008): 151, accessed October 2, 2009, doi:10.1353/sho.0.0275.

4 Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1961), 43–53, 106–635; David Cesarani, *Final Solution: The Fate of the Jews 1933–1949* (London: Macmillan, 2016).

5 Fred E. Katz, “A Sociological Perspective to the Holocaust,” *Modern Judaism* 2, no. 3 (1982): 273.

6 Zygmunt Bauman, “Sociology after the Holocaust,” *British Journal of Sociology* 39, no. 4 (1988): 469.

Briefly put, few sociological works dealt with the Holocaust, with the exception of, for example, *Accounting for Genocide* by Helen Fein in 1979.⁷ “The upshot of sociologists’ silence,” in Fred Katz’s words, “is that distinctive sociological contributions to knowledge of the Holocaust remain relatively untapped.”⁸ Hence, the exigency and urgency for a book on the sociology of the Holocaust that collects and analyzes sociological works (authors and their theories) that have dealt with the phenomenon, especially because things seem not to have changed much since Barry Dank stated in 1979 that “there is in essence no American sociological literature on the Holocaust.”⁹ Therefore, this book attempts to solve the problem. I will start with an important conference, offering as balanced an outline of as many facets of its points as possible.

THE FAMOUS OCTOBER 2001 CONFERENCE: THE SOCIOLOGICAL TURNING POINT

An international conference on “Sociological Perspectives on the Holocaust and Post-Holocaust Jewish Life” took place at Rutgers University in New Jersey, October 25 to 27, 2001. In the working conference, sociologists and specialists well acquainted with Holocaust discourse and its familiar topics (from Jewish identity and migration to collective memory, by way of ethnicity and so on) participated.

What mattered, in the eyes of these academics, in those three days of the conference, was principally the analysis and the viewpoint of the situation, that is, sociology’s status in respect to the Holocaust. A big role in the satisfactory outcome of the symposium was played, particularly, by Judith M. Gerson—associate professor of Sociology and Women’s and Gender Studies at Rutgers University, where she is also an affiliate faculty

7 Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide: National Response and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust* (New York: Free Press, 1979).

8 Katz, “A Sociological Perspective to the Holocaust,” 273.

9 Barry M. Dank, review of *On the Edge of Destruction: Jews of Poland between the Two World Wars*, by Celia S. Heller, *Contemporary Sociology* 8, no. 1 (1979): 129. For example, Bauman speaks of a symposium on “Western Society after the Holocaust” summoned in 1978 by the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Social Problems, but it was only one episode. See Jack N. Porter, “The Holocaust as a Sociological Construct,” *Contemporary Jewry* 14, no. 1 (1993): 185.

member of the Department of Jewish Studies and a recipient of a residential research fellowship at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum—and by Diane L. Wolf, professor of sociology and a member of the Jewish Studies Program at the University of California, Davis.

Hosted by the Institute for Women's Leadership of the Rutgers University, "Sociological Perspectives" aimed at favoring a scholarly dialogue and interchange between intellectuals and researchers working in Holocaust Studies and related fields for enhancing Holocaust research in sociology and called for a comparative analysis, as evident from invited papers and contributions.

Thanks to the support of several organizations (such as the American Sociological Association, the National Science Foundation's Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline, the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, and the Research Council of Rutgers University) and the concrete and solid work by many scholars, the conference took place and, first and foremost, it was possible to address relevant questions surrounding why Holocaust Studies programs were considered marginal to most academic disciplines and why sociologists had not taken up this issue years before.

During the conference, scholars mostly agreed that there had been a delay of sociology in studying the genocide of the Jews—a recurring expression was "silence" (of sociology) in relation to the Holocaust—and that there was a "dearth of a sociological understanding of the Shoah."¹⁰

In almost a general scholarly consensus, it seemed that only *Modernity and the Holocaust* by Bauman had broken the silence of sociological studies on the Holocaust. And this was in 1989, after the fall of Berlin Wall,

10 Among numerous presentations, I mention the following: "Remembrance without Recognition: Jewish Life in Germany Today" by Y. Michal Bodemann; Post-Holocaust Identity Narratives: A Sociological Approach to Collective Consciousness, Memory and History" by Debra Renee Kaufman; "Availability, Proximity, and Identity in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: Adding a Sociological Lens to Studies of Jewish Resistance" by Rachel L. Einwohner; "On Halloween We Dressed Up Like KGB Agents': Identity Strategies of Second-Generation Soviet Jews" by Kathie Friedman-Kasaba; "The Holocaust and Jewish Identity and Identification in the United States" by Chaim I. Waxman; and "The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory" by Daniel Levy. See Judith M. Gerson and Diane L. Wolf, eds., *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust: Memories and Identities in Jewish Diasporas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 3, 11.

when the book was published. Indeed, the fall of the Berlin Wall constitutes a decisive moment in the history of Europe because next the collapse of communism, the resulting opening of the archives of the East, and the outbreak of civil war in ex-Yugoslavia (1991–95) all led several social scientists to reapproach, in their academic discussions and with new perspectives, the causes of the genocide of the Jews. It is not an accident that, in 1999, a workshop on “The Holocaust and Contemporary Genocide” took place at the University of Minnesota: almost as if in response to the genocide against Kosovar Albanians in 1998–99. The civil war in the ex-Yugoslavia awakened the “historical sociology of genocide.”¹¹ This will be more evident in Chapter 3.

Now, Bauman’s wake-up call for sociology’s involvement with the Holocaust essentially meant two things: first, that before *Modernity and the Holocaust* only a few sociological works dealing with the topic existed, and, second, that these few sociological studies did not contain appropriate sociological tools or a formulation of a theoretical system that analytically treated the extermination of the Jews. After the publication of Bauman’s study, Gerald E. Markle in 1995 and Debra Kaufman in 1996, for instance, tackled the problem.¹²

“A ‘glaring paucity’ of sociological scholarship exists on the Holocaust” (as stated in the opening pages of *Modernity and the Holocaust* [xiii]) became a kind of call to action for some sociologists:¹³ thus in the 1990s, Jack N. Porter dealt with the presumed delay of the sociological discipline. According to Martin Oppenheimer’s speculations, there are specific reasons for the lack of sociological studies on the Holocaust. Briefly,

1. that sociologists avoid “deviant cases”—because these incline them to description more than to analysis; 2. that grand narratives lead their authors astray methodologically, and evoke harsher-than-usual reactions from competing paradigms (as some of the historians have

11 Michael Freeman, “Genocide, Civilization and Modernity,” *British Journal of Sociology* 46, no. 2 (1995): 207.

12 See Jack N. Porter, “Toward a Sociology of the Holocaust,” *Contemporary Jewry*, 17 (1996): 145–48.

13 Cf. Gerson and Wolf, *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*, 11.

learned); 3. that “big” subjects like these are a poor fit for journal publication; 4. that American sociologists do not command the relevant languages; 5. that there is an uneasy fear of being academically ghettoized; 6. or worse, that there is fear of being labeled opportunist, for climbing onto the bandwagon of the Holocaust Industry (“shoah-business”).¹⁴

The October 2001 conference rightly represents a turning point in sociological studies related to the Holocaust: it brought to fruition a productive and fertile scholarly movement; since that time the number of academic courses and scholarships, in several universities, have grown at great speed: indirectly, most of them are a consequence and product of that conference. Examples of course offerings included Sociology and the Holocaust (fall 2005 at New York University), Sociology of the Holocaust (spring 2007 at the University of Nebraska), Holocaust and Genocide Studies (in 2009 at Keene State College), and Sociology of the Holocaust at the University of Warwick in the same year.

The papers given in 2001 to the scholars of that conference were original contributions and resulted in a book: *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust* (2007). However, the contributions to the book are not simply from the 2001 conference proceedings: rather, that conference had invited, or compelled, a review of the sociological literature, categories, and methods and forced scholars to think of the Holocaust in terms of sociological devices.¹⁵ The book edited by Gerson and Wolf is rooted in this context.

“Whether sociology itself has a ‘Jewish problem,’ or its scholars lack the language skills, historical background, or mere interest to study it,

14 Elihu Katz, review of *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust: Memories and Identities in Jewish Diasporas*, ed. Judith M. Gerson and Diane L. Wolf, *Social Forces* 87, no. 4 (2009): 2222, accessed October 2, 2009, doi:10.1353/sof.0.0198.

15 See the list of scholars “who have read at least one paper in 2007,” http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/590978?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (accessed September 28, 2015). The conference was in 2001, and the book came from that conference in 2007. The 2001 conference has compelled many sociologists to deal with or face the Holocaust: for instance, just the simple assessment of the papers, by referees, becomes an occasion to speak of the sociology of the Holocaust. In reviewing the papers there is already a kind of dissemination of the sociology of the Holocaust.

Sociology Confronts the Holocaust attempts to ‘bring the study of the Holocaust and its aftermath up to speed in sociology,’—so Lynn Rapaport began her review of the volume edited by Gerson and Wolf, one year after its release.¹⁶ For the editors, and not only them, it was necessary to heal and to recover the lost time, just as had Bauman and Fein, who were greatly appreciated by the academic community for their “heroic efforts to approach the horror of the Holocaust sociologically.”¹⁷

As stated by Martin Oppenheimer, in their twenty-three-page contribution, Gerson and Wolf outline “some of the strands of research that do exist.” Oppenheimer’s “critique” of Gerson and Wolf’s edition weaves a series of relevant issues.¹⁸

If the October 2001 conference represents a turning point and if that conference came out of the aim to reconsider the status of sociology, the 2007 book, as a result of that symposium, may be properly conceived as the volume opening and inaugurating the sociological scholarship confronting the genocide of the Jews.

So, what more can be added to Gerson and Wolf’s work? Is it possible to say something not yet said? The present book accepts the invitation by the two editors, in 2007, and by Berenbaum¹⁹ in 2010, to “bring together what until now have been distant fields of knowledge.”²⁰ At this point, the reader might ask: Which questions does this volume intend to answer?

Actually, I will ask myself a series of questions, of which the first is this: Does a book on English-speaking sociologists tackling the Holocaust exist? Or better: Do we know of a volume that collects and criticizes and at the same time, as a compendium, gathers the history of post-Holocaust sociology from 1945 to 2016? In other words, is there a book on “sociology

16 Lynn Rapaport, review of *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust: Memories and Identities in Jewish Diasporas*, ed. Judith M. Gerson and Diane L. Wolf, *American Journal of Sociology*, 113, no. 6 (2008): 1794. See Gerson and Wolf, *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*.

17 Katz, review of *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*, 1.

18 Martin Oppenheimer, “The Sociology of Knowledge and the Holocaust: A Critique,” in Gerson and Wolf, *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*, 331–36. See Gerson and Wolf, *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*, 11–33.

19 Michael Berenbaum, review of *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust: Memories and Identities in Jewish Diasporas*, ed. Judith M. Gerson and Diane L. Wolf, *Journal of Contemporary History* 45, no. 2 (2010): 505–7, doi:10.1177/00220094100450020110.

20 Gerson and Wolf, *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*, 9.

and the Holocaust” criticizing the discipline from within (i.e., sociologists who studied the event; concepts, categories, and methods applied to analyze it; theoretical system elaborated and so on)? It seems not. Thus, this book seeks to fill a gap or to provide a kind of missing link in the history of sociology. But, I hope it will also deepen and enhance Holocaust Studies (because herein the destruction of the Jews is illustrated differently, namely, with sociological tools not used previously). Finally, it links disciplines, such as history and sociology, that often diverge.

Other questions still arise in my mind—a kind of doubt, such as, has sociology really had a “Jewish problem”?²¹ Has it “been slow to ‘confront’ the topic,”²² as affirmed by most scholars? I naïvely ask myself: Is all this really true? And more profoundly: Was there really a delay? Have the scholars arguing that there was a delay read the entire sociological literature since 1945 connected with the Holocaust? This book intends to be a kind of response to Gerson and Wolf’s volume and to the common assumption that there was a delay in post-Holocaust sociology. Therefore, at this point the matter is simple: if sociologists did not analyze the entire post-Holocaust sociological literature, the problem does not exist (in the sense that they only need to read the literature). On the contrary, if they have read everything, there may be a problem, because there may not have been a delay. In this case, I asked myself why these authors did not realize or recognize, reviewing the sociological literature, that there was not a delay. And yet: Did they not ask what caused the alleged delay? That is, why have scholars been led to speak of “delay,” and even to arguing this thesis? Did they not attempt to theorize systematically the origins of this alleged delay in any publications? To these and other questions, this book tries to give the answer that the delay could be half true.

I will attempt to explain why authors who did indeed study the Holocaust were not considered by other scholars, in their own time and later; why observers, over the years, have come to speak of an absence of sociology in the study of the Holocaust; and why this sociological tradition is omitted, ignored to the point of creating, for most scholars, “a missing

21 Berger, review of *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*, 151.

22 Rapaport, review of *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*, 1794.

tradition.” Thus, I endeavor to show in what way we can speak of a *missing sociological tradition*.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological ways with which I approached these matters were conceived as a tool that aims principally to answer my questions, and the method I adopted shows the liaison between the world of scientific research and the construction and dissemination of sociological knowledge in a dynamic context profoundly modified by new online multimedia devices.

In the beginning of my research, there was a timely and simple interrogative: Were there any sociological writings related to the Holocaust before the publication of *Modernity and the Holocaust* by Bauman in 1989? In order to clear up my doubts, I decided to peruse everything. To verify if, before Bauman’s book, there really was no sociological work dealing with the destruction of the Jews and related topics, I poured over—as much as I could—the entire sociological literature since 1945.

I did not just look for great theories or eminent names of good reputation, that is, those known to most or all of the academic community. Rather, I looked at any book, essay, article, doctoral dissertation, book review, paper, letter to the editor, conference announcement, and fellow list surrounding and related to the Holocaust. For example, I also investigated the list of the names of the *American Journal of Sociology* (AJS) board and read annotations to the names of the directors of the journal. At this point, the reader might ask why I did this. I’d answer by saying that the reading of academic positions together with scholarly publications allows me to enter into the academic realm and to *inter*-read the scientific context that accounts for the conditions for the dissemination of research topics: this will be a key point in understanding the alleged delay of sociology.

Therefore, some readers may still ask how the research has been carried out. I literally browsed and considered all the online academic sociological journals: I used EBSCOhost databases, particularly since 1945, in order to, I repeat, see which authors have written on the genocide of the Jews of Europe and its related themes.

This means that I utilized key concepts typical of the sociological discipline and those concerned with the Holocaust (such as “movement,”

“bureaucracy,” “totalitarianism,” “political violence”). With different combinations accommodated by Boolean operators, I researched abstracts, titles, articles, reviews of articles, and so on, or I looked for the related names of the authors in editorial contributions, letters to the director, and conference proceedings.

I’ve stated that I started with 1945 and the end of World War II, but actually I went back to 1933 (the year of Hitler’s assumption of power) and even to the 1920s to acquaint myself with the academic realm of sociological research and its research funding.

I chose to adopt the method of online academic reviews for two reasons: first, because it is highly innovative and accurate—in the field of history, this method has recently brought significant relevant results, as demonstrated by the researches of Gisella Fidelio, Christian Fleck, Maurizio Ridolfi, and Carlo Spagnolo.²³ Through the online scientific reviews it is possible to contribute to writing history or, in other words, it is possible to do history through the reviews. Second, the method of online academic reviews provided me innovative interfaces with an optimization of the value of my work along with the breadth and depth of contents. In other words, to resolve my doubts and satisfy my curiosity, I had to sift post-Holocaust sociology: only such a research method could allow for “premium online information resources,” primary sources, and open access to full-text searches, in short, a scientific, well-equipped knowledge.²⁴

There was a conference that showed how this method is a fertile and useful tool of investigation that took place in Viterbo, Italy, May 25–26, 2006, promoted by the faculty of the Department of Political Science at the University of Tuscia and under the aegis of the Italian Society for the Study of Contemporary History (Sissco), with the organization of the Centre of Studies for the History of Mediterranean Europe.²⁵ I imagined that sociologists could take advantage of this new historical approach. Hence my choice to adopt it for the present work: I pored over writings, articles, and dissertations in sociology. However, I have to inform the

23 See also http://www.technologysource.org/article/free_online_scholarship_movement/ (accessed October 28, 2015).

24 See <https://www.ebscohost.com/> (accessed February 13, 2016).

25 See <http://www.sissco.it/articoli/la-storia-contemporanea-attraverso-le-riviste-549/> (accessed June 28, 2016).

reader of an important aspect: in going through the literature, I have tried to always keep in mind some guidelines that oriented my research: when a sociological work was written; who is the author of the piece; to which school of thought the author belongs; what is the content of the study; which sociological tools have been adopted (such as totalitarianism, movement, etc.); was it published after World War II? (in which year? and under which masthead?); and, finally, who was the author and when did he or she emigrate after Hitler's rise—keeping in mind the impact of the scholarly production of refugee sociologists on American culture.

It was in this manner that I acquainted myself with works by sociologists (by referring to their school, too, when possible) on the destruction of the Jews of Europe. I analyzed in which years the studies were published, and in which academic reviews, by measuring their productivity and the degree of appreciation for their works.²⁶ These measurements, productivity (how many written works the scholar has produced), and visibility (how many times the name of the authors appear in articles and reviews on EBSCO), and also the degree of appreciation of these works (calculated based on the number of citations that the academic environment has reserved for them) allowed me to verify the alleged delay and why there was said to be a delay.

I considered two broad periods: one from 1945 and following, and one that covers the years prior to World War II, examining all the publications that, at least once, have in the title of the article or book review terms related to the Jewish question. This method, halfway between hemerographia and metasociology, allows the measurement of some important indexes for this study, such as “the speed of publication” of research and “the

26 Cf. Maurizio Rodolfi, ed., *La storia contemporanea attraverso le riviste* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2008), 7–11; Christian Fleck, “Per un profilo prosopografico dei sociologi di lingua tedesca in esilio,” in “L'Europa in esilio: La migrazione degli intellettuali verso le Americhe tra le due guerre,” ed. Renato Camurri, *Memoria e Ricerca: Rivista di storia contemporanea* 16, no. 31 (2009): 81–101. On the use of databases, electronic journals, A-Link, and other university services in support of research and teaching, see <http://www.aib.it/aib/com/bc04/programma.htm3> (accessed March 29, 2009). The interface of EBSCO research allows interaction with other electronic resources present in the collection. There are more than 100 databases both of property and of user license and more than 8,000 reviews in full-text, OPAC catalogs, index, and abstracts for approximately 12,000 publications and coverage in PDF for 6,000+ titles and peer-reviewed journals. See Gisella Fidelio, “La ricerca bibliografica on-line” (2010), http://www.sssub.unibo.it/pagine_principali/fidelio.pdf (last access March 29, 2009).

scientific impact” of it on the academic public. For example, I visited the digital library JSTOR, which operates as an “open service,” and that permitted me to access to the contents of the archives and of particular publications for my research. A wide range of international journals was selected, classified by the publishing group and thematic content (to measure productivity and the rate of diffusion of the works relating to the matter). Additionally, through EBSCO, I could work with different databases, which, by surveying numerous international journals, facilitates access to older international publications and gives acquaintance with the quantitative diffusion of publications and intellectual quality of the author’s sociological production by electronic catalog. I can say that I have conducted a kind of little scientometrical analysis.²⁷ As the reader will see in Chapter 1, on the database JSTORE (acronym of *JournalStorage*, listing 85 journals) a research for “total author” allowed me to measure the visibility of Hughes and Parsons.

In retracing the entire sociological literature from 1945 on, I touched upon previously ignored or marginal subjects of investigation: from perusing online academic reviews, unknown papers emerged and cleared up my doubts related to the question of the alleged delay of sociology. I will attempt to demonstrate all that.

I will describe, decade by decade, and in detail, which works concerning the Holocaust were conducted after World War II. Hence the more primarily descriptive nature of the book rather than that critical. I will also try to explain for what reasons these studies were not considered by their own contemporary academy or by later scholars.

This book aims at unearthing these works and describing their themes of focus. I will not criticize them, but I will limit myself to presenting and introducing them, organically, to an academic audience, because my aim in this book is primarily to demonstrate that it might be an error to speak of sociological silence in post-Holocaust sociology. I have to say, additionally, that this perusal permitted me to revise several important views of sociology: for example, when and how this discipline was born in American academies. It allowed me to approach the topic using *AJS* and the *American Sociological Review* (*ASR*), the most important

27 See Fleck, “Per un profilo prosopografico dei sociologi di lingua tedesca in esilio,” 96, table 4.

sociological academic journals, which founded sociology itself, since they disseminate research activities. Meanwhile, I will identify the fathers of sociology and the of the American Social Gospel. And still further, I'll see how sociology developed, especially after 1945—since it was my key focus or my chronological device—in Europe, the country/place of the destruction of the Jews (for example, in Poland by addressing the Pawełczyńska and Bauman cases) and in the United States (the destination of emigration and the country hosting German refugee sociologists).

Precious for my research were e-mail dialogues that I had with Jack N. Porter, Martin Oppenheimer, Rick Helmes-Hayes, Christopher Simpson, and Viviana Salomon during my doctorate research, particularly in 2011, and three Holocaust-survivor interviews conducted with Anna Pawełczyńska, Hanna K. Ulatowska, and Zofia Posmysz-Piasecka in Warsaw in December 2011.

English-Language Sources

I privileged this research-online-perusing with sources in English: I considered above all English papers and writings: the most availability is in English and much came out on the discipline of American sociology. This perusing through the online reviews permitted me to sift and scrutinize the sociological discipline in detail. That several of these writings were unnoticed, for different reasons, is what I will attempt to explain.

In particular, I deal with the sociology of English speakers for specific functional reasons. First of all because American sociology claims to be universal and provide a more complete overview. Second because of the visibility and radius of influence it had and still has. I am aiming at creating a valid, general, and “immune” discourse, which means that I intentionally decided not to initiate a work starting from a particular perspective that might be called “German.” I preferred to avoid, for example, all what in Italian might defined as “*tedesco-foro* discourse” (an Italian coinage from Greek φόρος, “bringing, bearing,” and Old High German *theod*, “German people”).²⁸ Therefore, hereafter, when I speak of sociology I refer above all to an “Anglophone sociology,” so to speak.

28 I would like to thank Giuseppe Veltri for the expression “*tedesco-foro* discourse” and for his suggestions.

Moreover, German sociology makes an inner and indirect discourse. Anyway, it does not mean that I will not address German scholars in this volume, but simply I do not start from a German viewpoint. The importance of German sociology (of the Holocaust), as I will try to demonstrate, deserves a separate book, which I intend to tackle in a specific way in the near future. Here I will limit myself, for instance, to citing *Value-Free Sociology* by Sven Papcke, a relevant work in German sociology that the scholar conducted with Martin Oppenheimer.²⁹

Another reason I thought of has to do with the United States as a country (and not only because, at the end of World War II, it needed to express itself in the language of the victor). The United States became the container-country hosting refugee scholars from Europe: sociologists spoke the language of the country in which they were welcomed. In Germany, sociology was interrupted in 1933 because the best scientific minds were exiled and sociology as theoretical appointment was widely discredited. Nationalistic German sociology was born, but I will speak of this in another place. However, in postwar Germany, sociology proceeded only with difficulties.

Finally, there is a pragmatic reason: it is impossible to sip and taste the sociology of any country, after World War II, in any language. It is an encyclopedic work, for now, a scholarly prodigy. This reduction, on the basis of the language, is guided by a goal: that this new history of sociology, now, deserves to be made available and exposed to academic public. In my opinion, it is more worthwhile to show the results of my historical interpretation of the status of the sociology, that is, it is not appropriate to speak of an absolute silence of sociology in dealing with the Holocaust or to state that the sociological discipline was on delay in addressing the destruction of the Jews.

Rather, I will attempt to demonstrate that the indifference or disinterest argued openly since 1989 by the academic field of sociology was—as the reader will see later—implicitly or explicitly “prepared”: in the academic realm, there were conditions to expel this topic from the research agenda.

29 I personally thank Martin Oppenheimer for having recommended to me this study: Sven Papcke and Martin Oppenheimer, “Value-Free Sociology: Design for Disaster German Social Science from Reich to Federal Republic,” *Humanity & Society* 8, no. 3 (1984): 272–82. Martin Oppenheimer, e-mail message to author, May 31, 2011.

Chronology

The chronological approach I have adopted for this volume is an attempt to better address the facts and to allow the reader to comprehend more thoroughly what exactly happened when. This will help the reader with a preparatory account leading to the alleged delay of sociology. It will be useful to focus attention on sociological traditions (such as the Chicago School of Everett C. Hughes) and on how sociology evolved, specialized, and differentiated. This is the reason I will touch on the initial interest for sociology in “evolutionary theory” and the “economic determinism” popular in Europe until the 1980s, American functionalism (debated in the 1940s–60s), and the rising partitioning of sociology: as the reader will note, it helps to comprehend the context in which the alleged delay was rooted.³⁰ I will also touch on the period at the end of the Vietnam War, when the legacy of American ameliorism of the early twentieth century—of which the traces were still strong in 1950s and 60s—and the easy consensus in quantitative sociology had come to an end, while theoretical and permanent divides arose in the discipline. (There was a decline in general theory-building, and a lot of theory-building grew within specialties, even if communication among these specialties was lacking, which process gave rise to “national methodological preferences,” a continuous development locally and temporarily in sociology.)³¹

This book intends to be just the start of a long research work that could be an innovative study in analyzing the sociology of any country after the end of World War II: step-by-step, year after year, department by department. It wouldn't be difficult to imagine that sociologists would take an interest in this new approach: one that would review French sociology, for example, and thus examine which institutions supported which research after World War II in France, and which authors wrote on the Holocaust. The Polish Academy of Sciences could use this approach, or German and Israeli sociology after the Congo crisis in 1960s. Or even the sociology in Japan that replaced the earlier philosophical approach

30 Robert E. L. Faris and William Form, “Sociology,” *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, 1–4, accessed September 1, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/sociology>.

31 *Ibid.*, 8.

with an empirical research method, or industrial sociology at the end of the global conflict. So to speak, it could be of use to any sociological study or department across the world.

This book does not pretend to be exhaustive. It is far from finished; rather it hopes to inaugurate and “hug the road” to this kind of strand on post-Holocaust sociology.

Coming back to the timeline, the method of reconstruction of events by date allows, one to consider the contextual framework with an interpretative and explanatory clarity. In fact, there is a multiple usefulness in adopting chronological order: by perusing the online academic sociological reviews year by year it is possible to glance at and examine who promoted which research project and in which scientific reviews. It may monitor how since the 1960s sociology was differentiated and how the editions and publications on the Holocaust increased after 1975, when sociology started, as academic discipline, a period of segmentation. It can look at when a sociological faculty or the American Sociological Society was established, and which arguments were more studied (in which country and in which years). As I will attempt to demonstrate, a review of these aspects is linked with the aims of this book: the origins of the alleged delay. Sociology as discipline is based on, depends on, and is built by the scientific reviews and the dissemination of works and by the establishment of a faculty at a particular institution. It would be very interesting—but this isn’t the right place for it—to account for the institution of the Centre for Advanced Study (CAS) in Sofia, Bulgaria, since its establishment in 2000: how it was developed says a lot about the period of the Cold War and the anti-Semitism still present today in Europe.

THE OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

This book results from my doctoral research on sociology with respect to the destruction of the Jews from 1933 to the present day. It comprises four chapters: Chapter 1, “Sociological Thinking about the Holocaust in the Postwar Years, 1945–1960s,” focuses the reader’s attention on a very crucial time: the end of the war and the beginning of the Cold War. The chapter

will explain how scholars acquainted with sociological tools attempted to comprehend just what happened, namely, the destruction of a nation, the Jews. Chapter 2, “The Destruction of the Jews in a Sociological Perspective during the 1970s,” deals with sociological works written during the 1970s, the historical environment in which they were conceived, and the authors who were devoted to this theme. A particular focus is on the sociological tools they adopted. Chapter 3, “Toward a Sociology of Genocide, 1980–1989,” addresses post-Holocaust sociology and its noteworthy, ever-increasing production in the 1980s. The Chapter 4, “The Problem of the Holocaust after 1989,” is rightly dedicated to analyzing post-Holocaust sociology after the fall of communism and upon the opening of the secret archives in the territories of the former Soviet Union.

Chapter 1. I outline sociological studies related to the Holocaust and conducted during and soon after World War II, but, unfortunately, they were few. An exception is the open case of Talcott Parsons. I will sketch his interest in the Jewish question from his sociological writings related to the destruction of the Jews to the silent years after 1948. I will explain the academic and cultural circumstances in which sociological researches related to the Holocaust formed and the difficulties of different types that faced scholars approaching the Jewish question from the end of the war until the 1960s, when a turning point took place in the discipline of sociology and more sociology scholars started to address specific aspects of the destruction of the Jews. I will try to illustrate the reasons why during the 1960s scholars were becoming more sensitive to the Holocaust, which had been invisible to most intellectuals, and why authors had delayed the publication of their works until such a late date. A series of political and cultural events (for example, the Six-Day War) will be recalled along with some traditions of thought that affected sociology in approaching the theme. This chapter aims at illustrating where the alleged delay of sociology took root and how academic sociology legitimized the delay.

These are works whose sociological outlines and concepts—such as anti-Semitism, mass ideology, and the banality of evil—even if they seem to return in other writings of the Holocaust, present a crucial difference between them, a difference apparent on every page. These are the studies of the Frankfurt School, Parsons’s writings, the researches by

Edward A. Shils and Morris Janovitz related to the *Wehrmacht* in World War II and the study on the NSDAP by Seymour Lipset. Also, the conceptual link of totalitarian power seems to bind these writings together. Special attention is given to the eight-page essay “Good People and Dirty Work” by Everett C. Hughes on the banality of evil. With this essay, the sociological tradition of Chicago School enters into post-Holocaust sociology. Written in 1948, the study was published in 1962, the year in which Hannah Arendt prepared her report on the Adolf Eichmann trial as a correspondent for *The New Yorker*, which appeared in the magazine in February and March 1963. I will explain how the Jews became a social problem by consensus and the difficulties faced by sociologists in addressing the Jewish question and publishing Jewish works in the postwar years, when intellectuals were strongly influenced by the power balance of the Cold War.

Chapter 2. I describe how important the rethinking of post-Holocaust sociology was in the 1970s: especially in the years that the Yom Kippur War influenced events and thinking. I will try to explain how the legacy of the Six-Day War endured and how echoes were still heard of “The Commanding Voice of Auschwitz” by Emil L. Fackenheim:

When at Jerusalem in 1967 the threat of total annihilation gave way to sudden salvation it was because of Auschwitz, not in spite of it, that there was an abiding astonishment. Nothing of the past was explained or adjusted, no fears for the future were stilled. Yet the very clash between Auschwitz and Jerusalem produced a moment of truth—a wonder at a singled out, millennial existence which, after Auschwitz, is still possible and actual.³²

I hope to illustrate how in little less than a decade the situation changed: the focus on the Jewish question gradually grew as if there was a kind of awakening in sociology. I will present the works characterizing this period, their

³² Emil L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections* (New York: New York University Press, London: University of London Press, 1970), 95–96.

common thread, the analytical categories adopted by scholars, and the impact on scholarship. Notable will be the sociological analysis of the concentration and death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau elaborated by Anna Pawełczyńska: a noteworthy work for her original concept of hodological space of Auschwitz and for her new conception of resistance, conceived by her in a period in which “resistance” in Holocaust Studies was a theme not yet much explored or addressed, especially in the literature related to the camps.

In this chapter, I also outline the original thesis, for social sciences, of Celia Heller: in 1977 she unearthed that at the base of genocide of the Jews in Poland there was Polish nationalism and anti-Semitism, an important thesis that in 2001 would strongly emerge in *Neighbors* by the historian Jan T. Gross.³³ Moreover, the reader’s attention will be focused on what Barrington Moore means by “surrender to moral authority” in dealing with the Jewish question.

Finally, the second chapter will examine *Accounting for Genocide*, the most comprehensive sociological work, even to this day, conceived with statistical data. Published by Helen Fein in 1979 and based on crucial sociological categories (national anti-Semitism, Nazi control), it deserves to be considered post-Holocaust sociology. However, this volume did not receive the same plaudits in the academic realm that *Modernity and* obtained in 1989. I will attempt to explain why.

Chapter 3. This chapter addresses the sociological orientation adopted by scholars in the nine years before the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989. I will outline the sociological shift that characterized sociology in addressing the extermination of the Jews in the early 1980s. These years essentially featured a noteworthy and ever-increasing production that has to be linked with increased and overall attention for what was happening contemporarily in several countries on the African continent. The event termed “genocide” becomes an analytic tool: I describe how, starting from and around the concept or the definition of genocide, a series of sociological writings aiming at investigating the extermination of the Jews developed. I hope to show how in these years post-Holocaust sociology developed by starting

33 See Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jews Community in Jedwabne* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

from the juridical definitions of “genocide” and “state.” I will explain how authors used the juridical notion of genocide in a sociological way to explain the Holocaust. I will also attempt to demonstrate that these scholars were active politicians or had a big role in political life of their countries. Thus, it is possible to say that Holocaust Studies in these nine years, from 1980 to 1989, can be labeled more properly as “genocide sociological studies.” It will be my intention to put in evidence how some scholars, such as Leo Kuper and Irving L. Horowitz, acquainted themselves with juridical sciences and recognized the centrality of the political dimension following a multidisciplinary conference on the Holocaust and genocide in 1982, and thus helped to define the concept of “state-sponsored genocide.” These scholars contributed to delineating a sociology of genocide or, in other words, to defining a sociology of the genocidal state. It follows that these studies will affect the political scene, in the sense that several government policies will be taken into account with respect to their agenda. These works find manifestation in Wolfgang Sofsky’s later work.

I also aim to trace the sociological frame outlined by Katz, who individuates the “routinization” and the “bureaucratization” phases in the extermination of the Jews and the role of *Einsatzgruppen* and the repositioning of banality of evil.

Additionally, the focus will be on the sociological categories adopted by Nechama Tec, who presented her post-Holocaust sociology in 1982 with her own personal history, *Dry Tears*, and up through *Defiance* in 1993. I illustrate how in her long sociological path she considers basic elements of Holocaust Studies (such as Polish nationalism, anti-Semitism, resistance, rescuers, survivors, bystanders) and uses tools typical of sociology (statistical data, survivors interviews), showing the need of a dialogue between sociology and history.

Finally, I will discuss *Modernity and the Holocaust* by Bauman. I retrace his formation, the English exile period, starting in 1968, and how it was decisive in his recognition of the negative consequences of anti-Semitism in Poland and the recognition of human suffering. This latter becomes, for the author, an indispensable sociological notion for analyzing several problems of society. The concept of human suffering was studied and classified into four types according to four specific historical periods. For

Bauman, at the base of his works there is human suffering. However, I will attempt to explain why Bauman, who was a victim of Polish anti-Semitism, chose to explain the destruction of the Jews not by referring to this but through the category of modernity. This is my open question.

Chapter 4. This chapter is longer than the others because almost twenty-five years of post-Holocaust sociology are scrutinized—from 1990 to the present day. I focus first and foremost on the news and novelties sociology dealt with and on the issues the discipline had to confront. I especially outline how the era of globalization and the sociological categories related to it changed the sociological approach towards the Holocaust, prompting Holocaust Studies and sociology itself into a sort of renewal. It will be clearer in the works of Daniel Levy, Natan Sznaider, and Jeffrey Alexander. At the same time, it will be demonstrated that since 1990 the topic of the Holocaust has been approached in different ways, with the result of crossing the theme with other, unexpected, categories (such as those of gender, collective memory, and collective action) and with different issues (such as migration in Israel and the experience of the second-generation survivors). I attempt to illustrate how these mixings create some confusion in distinguishing the writings proper to the Holocaust from those related to affiliated themes and how the introducing of the category of gender in these studies brought some innovation to the research.

I also trace the passage from collective national memory to cosmopolitan memory in Holocaust sociology during the age of globalization. The conception of the Holocaust in modern society will be confronted with the conception of the Holocaust in the new global society, where it becomes a “moral touchstone”—a global icon of evil—in a period in which everything changes.

Finally, I outline how Rachel L. Einwohner updates sociological studies of the Holocaust thanks to a new conception of the Jewish resistance as social movement. I will focus attention on her three comparative cases studies. What has been hitherto lacking is the effort to draw out these sociological researches into a synthetic and comprehensive description. It is this mission the present book aims so far as possible to fulfill. I hope that through the use of sociology and history I will help render the

Holocaust more comprehensible and explain the “sociological delay.” We can say that this delay had real and concrete roots.

I will attempt to demonstrate how the alleged delay of sociology was rooted in the cultural realm of sociology, or found its *raison d'être* in its own historical development as a discipline, namely, when it set itself apart from moral philosophy and evolved into a specialized academic discipline. We can see this in sociology in the United States, where the legacy of biologism and industrial scientific progress of the early 1920s was continuing to endure in the postwar years.

In covering aspects ranging from the Social Gospel to the Cold War by the way of World War II, I will attempt to demonstrate the following: (1) it is not appropriate to speak of a “delay of sociology” (and if it is, it has to be called a “desired” delay); (2) it is not appropriate to say that since 1989 the Holocaust has been a subject of sustained research in sociology; (3) it is not appropriate to state that there were not scholarly works written related to the Holocaust in the postwar years.

In other words, I hope to help to show that a reassessment of post-Holocaust sociology is useful, necessary, and fertile; to start to demolish the common misconception that sociology has delayed the study of the destruction of the Jews; and, finally, to readdress some of major lines of interpretation of important scholars and to encourage more systematic research in the future.

Finally, this book illustrates another aspect: how the sociology of the Holocaust can be integrated into the discussion of historians. That sociology and history were academic disciplines not in close dialogue with each other on this topic over these years is evidenced by that fact that Holocaust sociology seems not to be affected by the four main strands of historiography of the Holocaust: functionalism-structuralism, intentionalism, Freiburg School, and recent theories of Otto Dov Kulka and Ian Kershaw. Most sociological works seem to handle the Holocaust separately. Obviously, there are some exceptions: for instance, Fein was affected by Hilberg's groundbreaking work, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, and by the intentionalist Lucy S. Dawidowicz, in 1975, with her *The War against The Jews, 1933–1945*. But these are special cases. Actually, by analyzing any of these sociological works, it is possible for the

reader, working backwards, to find traces and references of intentionalism or intentionalist theories; however, it is work that the reader can only do a posteriori. At any rate, this approach is possible starting from the 1960s, when the first publication of Hilberg's work inaugurated the history of the Holocaust and when history as a discipline started to approach the theme. This happened because history at first analyzed the event starting from perpetrator documents—Nazi papers in German archives, writings of the Third Reich, or collections of sources scattered in many different languages across Europe—and the main aim was that of preparing the Nuremberg case and other cases against Nazi criminal wars. The attention was not focused on the victims, but on the perpetrators. This approach led, erroneously, to the idea that only history as academic discipline—by its appropriate devices and methods—was able to study and examine the Holocaust. It was shaping the event in scholars' minds. And for many years studies on the Holocaust saw the prevalence of historical disciplines, even monopolization by historians.³⁴ But, as I'll attempt to demonstrate in this book, several sociologists approached the theme apart from historians. Even if I have tried to outline to the best of my possibilities the historical and sociological approach, I believe that more than one reader will disagree with my assessments or interpretation. I apologize if sometimes, in analyzing the works of individual authors, one has the impression of getting lost in sociological devices and explanations. However, this method seems to be the most appropriate. In order to test my thesis, it will be necessary to enter specifically and singularly into these writings. I aim at opening the scholarly mind to debate, and not only to satisfy an intellectual curiosity but also with the goal of continuing the research on what happened. And I hope I hit the target.

34 See notes 3 and 5, below (chapter 1).

CHAPTER 1

Sociological Thinking about the Holocaust in the Postwar Years, 1945–1960s

I heard the Brown Shirts in the streets of Nuremberg in 1930 singing, “The German youth is never so happy as when Jewish blood spurts from his knife”; I wrote “Good People and Dirty Work” and used it as a special lecture at McGill University where in the 1930s I taught a course on Social Movements that came to be known as “Hughes on the Nazis.”

—Everett C. Hughes

1.1. A PRELIMINARY

After the end of World War II, when worldwide society came to terms with modern civilization, which involved the extermination of inferior races, change seemed to happen fast. Nevertheless, a small number of scholars or politicians considered the extermination of the Jews as the event that, for a variety of factors, transformed the contemporary world: it took more than thirty years for the world to become aware of what had happened. Social sciences are well suited to describing makeovers of a society. In outlining these various sciences all definitions are ideal types, and it seems quite impossible to find a completely exhaustive description. These sciences investigate the fundamentals, representative manifestations of social life, aspects, processes, and structures of social organization. Social sciences are all those disciplines with objectives, different areas of research, peculiar and specific analysis tools, often complementary, which, although having a similar methodological and epistemological horizon as background, do not end in a unitary and equal theory.¹

1 Cf. Adam Kuper and Jessica Kuper, eds., *The Social Science Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 1985), 784; Raymond Boudon and François Bourricaud, “Storia e Sociologia,” in *Dizionario critico di sociologia*, ed. Lorenzo Infantino (Rome: Armando, 1991), 488–95.

At the end of World War II, although it was difficult to account for, as precisely as possible, the complex chain of events that had recently taken place, nevertheless, it was necessary to analyze what had occurred. How had modern society come to the extermination of the Jews? A set of historical-political situations and strange cultural contingencies led some intellectuals to reflect on the experience, touched as they were by the totalitarian Nazi regime, and they were forced to flee Germany and go into exile, were direct witnesses of the Nazi massacres, or were Holocaust survivors.² To examine how these social scientists approached the Jewish question and, particularly, the Holocaust after the war, means to analyze the procedures and devices through which modern liberal society becomes the mirror of a state that has removed moral responsibility from the individual, which places among its projects genocide. Following the insight of Maurice Duverger, who considers the social sciences as the study of social phenomena in the broadest sense, it may be good to review the ways in which these disciplines and scholars have reacted to the extermination of the Jews of Europe. On the basis of (especially) German sources, these researchers, convinced that the story of the destruction of European Jewry goes through the writings of the Nazi state, focused on the responsibility of the perpetrators of the genocide and the way in which the National Socialist state came to the annihilation of the Jews of Europe.³ This historical study prospective concerned with perpetrators and the German state was reflected in the post-Holocaust sociology of the 1950s and 60s, which is evident in “The Gleichshaltung” by Hughes (1955) or in Lipset’s work of 1960.⁴ Historical attention to the victims, starting symbolically with *While Six Million Died*, in 1967, is rather visible in sociological works of the

2 See Traverso, *Auschwitz e gli intellettuali*.

3 See Gerald Reitlinger, *The Final Solution: The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe, 1939–1945* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1953); Joseph Tenenbaum, *Race and Reich: The Story of an Epoch* (New York: Twayne, 1956); Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*; Maurice Duverger, *I Metodi delle Scienze Sociali* (Milan: Etas Kompass, 1967); Karl A. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz: Nazi Policy toward German Jews, 1933–1939* (Urbana–Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1970); Uwe Dietrich Adam, *Judenpolitik im Dritten Reich* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1972); Léon Poliakov, *Histoire de l’antisémitisme*, Vol. 4: *L’Europe suicidaire (1870–1933)* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1977).

4 Everett C. Hughes, “The Gleichshaltung of the German Statistical Yearbook,” *The American Statistician* 9, no. 5 (1955): 8–11, accessed March 2, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/>

1970s:⁵ especially in Fein—as one will see—who dedicates a part of her *Accounting for Genocide* to the victims. The founding researches of Léon Poliakov, Gerald Reitlinger, and Raul Hilberg, in 1950s to the 1970s, were followed by a phase in which historians were more oriented towards specific issues and ran the risk of losing sight of the overall context of the events. Only in the last two decades has there been a revival of research on global dimensions.⁶

Here I will not analytically address post-Holocaust historiography: this is not my aim; instead I am going to attempt to explore if and how post-Holocaust sociological studies were confronted (or not confronted) in the postwar period with historical works, since documents in archives and collections of sources, scattered across Europe, were mostly monopolized by historians. I will briefly focus attention on the historiographical debate, within which it is possible to distinguish four research strands, as Yehuda Bauer notes in his *Rethinking the Holocaust*.

First, the functionalist theory, according to which the Nazi policy of annihilation was a mechanism by discontinuous and irregular rhythms dictated by a system that moved independently of the people and their ideas. The functionalists, called also structuralists, focus on the social and economic structures of German society, the mechanism of the regime

stable/2685502; Seymour M. Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960).

5 Cf. Philip Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers: The Christian Heroes and Heroines Who Helped the Oppressed Escape the Nazi Terror* (New York: Crown, 1957); Arthur D. Morse, *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy* (New York: Random House, 1967); David S. Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938–1941* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968); Jacob Presser, *The Destruction of the Dutch Jews* (New York: Dutton, 1969); Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (New York: Macmillan, 1972); Ari J. Sherman, *Island Refugee: Britain and Refugees from the Third Reich, 1933–1939* (London: Elek, 1973); Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939–1945* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979); Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); Israel Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939–1943: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); Dina Porat, *The Blue and the Yellow Star of David: The Zionist Leadership in Palestine and the Holocaust, 1939–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

6 See Saul Friedländer, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1995); Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

machine, on bureaucracy, whose actions are dependent on the objectives to be achieved. In this respect, Dan Diner speaks of “a methodological retreat into the description of structures.”⁷ Economic, political, and social crises are put at the center of reflection. These crises, starting from the last decades of the nineteenth century, transformed Germany into an authoritarian regime with a dictator acting as an arbiter between the power centers in a struggle between them. Genocide is conceived of as an unexpected result. If, on the one hand, functionalism denounces the rivalry between different authorities, then, on the other, it emphasizes how personal power is established in a cultural context imbued with racism and anti-Semitism. According to some of its greatest exponents, such as Hans Mommsen, Götz H. Aly, and Karl A. Schleunes, a decisive role in the extermination was carried out by the bureaucratic apparatus, while political structures and, consequently, the ideology and decisions of central government played a most marginal part.⁸

Instead, the intentionalist school considers the Nazi anti-Jewish policy in a linear manner: by stressing the ideology of the Aryan race and the role of the dictatorship. For Eberhard Jäckel, Helmut Krausnick, Gerald Fleming, and Lucy Dawidowicz, decisional and intentional factors of the central government (personified by Hitler) were essential in the extermination of the Jews and Jewry.⁹ Intentionalist scholars especially argue the centrality of Hitler in the anti-Jewish policy of extermination and his almost divine role compared with that of the other Nazi leaders. The tension between both historiographical schools is clear, and they seem to have been superseded by the Freiburg School, for which ideology and local collaboration were the main analytical and explanatory keys of

7 See Dan Diner, *Beyond the Conceivable: Studies on Germany, Nazism, and the Holocaust* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2000), 165.

8 See Hans Mommsen, *Auschwitz, 17. Juli 1942: Der Weg zur europäischen “Endlösung der Judenfrage”* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002); Götz H. Aly, *Hitler’s Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005).

9 Cf. Helmut Krausnick, “Judenverfolgung,” in *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, band 2, ed. Hans Buchheim et al. (Olten; Freiburg: Walter, 1965), 338–55; Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler’s Weltanschauung: A Blueprint for Power* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1972); Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The War against the Jews, 1933–1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975); Gerald Fleming, *Hitler und die Endlösung* (Wiesbaden: Limes, 1982).

the genocide. Ulrich Herbert, the greatest supporter of this viewpoint currently, has studied, along with Christian Gerlach, Dieter Pohl, and Michael Zimmermann, the mass killings perpetrated on local initiative between the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942 in Belarus, Lithuania, in eastern Galicia, and in the general government.¹⁰ For these authors, behind the extermination campaigns carried out for economic reasons (to get rid of superfluous mouths to feed) or political-demographic motivations (to search for new settlements for German and Polish nationals), there was an ideological substratum, powered by an anti-Semitic intelligentsia, who considered the projects of the Nazi elite as normal. The transfer of entire populations, in the specific case of the Jews, constituted for the central and peripheral authorities, always coordinated with each other in the times and methods, a major goal in order to obtain a living space in which to extend their own national hegemony. In this regard, as Bauer remembers, Herbert refers to the continuous communication between Berlin and the periphery.¹¹

Finally, it is relevant to mention the studies of Otto Dov Kulka and Ian Kershaw¹² to explain which role, especially for Kershaw and the sociologist Peter Merkl, anti-Semitism played in extermination: their research shows how a high percentage of members of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP), and a large segment of the German population, was not radically anti-Semitic. Rather there were moderate feelings of discomfort towards the Jews.¹³ In its propaganda, the NSDAP never really

10 See Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien, 1941–1944: Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996); Michael Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genozid: Die nationalsozialistische "Lösung der Zigeunerfrage"* (Hamburg: Christians, 1996); Christian Gerlach, *Krieg, Ernährung, Völkermord: Forschungen zur deutschen Vernichtungspolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1998); Ulrich Herbert, hrsg., *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik, 1939–1945: Neue Forschungen und Kontroversen* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1998).

11 Cf. Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*.

12 Ian Kershaw, *Der Hitler-Mythos: Volksmeinung und Propaganda im Dritten Reich* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1980); Otto Dov Kulka and Eberhard Jäckel, eds., *The Jews in the Secret Nazi Reports on Popular Opinion in Germany, 1933–1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

13 Cf. Peter H. Merkl, *Political Violence under the Swastika: 581 Early Nazis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975).

pushed the theme of anti-Semitism: its program points were mass unemployment, social and economic crisis, and the defeat of Germany during the Great War. But all of these points were in conformity with a moderate anti-Semitic spirit present in public opinion, and that had as its outcome the removal of the Jews from their economic and political positions. Hitler mostly affected false intellectuals or intellectuals of lower rank, namely, teachers, students, lawyers, but also Protestant pastors, engineers, soldiers, and aristocrats, who, after 1918, found themselves sharing the same social and political disappointments. Moved by resentment and eager to occupy the positions of the Jews, they saw the NSDAP as a remedy for social diseases. What attracted them was the thought that Aryan people could ensure safety and be at the center of a global empire.¹⁴

To complete this broad overview, it is proper to remember that several sociological writings, in 1960s, were affected by the theological and philosophical reflections of Emil L. Fackenheim and Richard L. Rubenstein.¹⁵ The elevation of the genocide of the Jews to the rank of metaphysical category makes the Holocaust an event that, surpassing human understanding, cannot be compared with other historical events.¹⁶ Additionally, the conceptual category of genocide (typical of the discipline of anthropology) plays a sizable role: the literature emerging has allowed the comparison of the Holocaust and other genocidal types in history, making it an easier event to understand. As Bauer recalls in *Rethinking the Holocaust*, the difference should not be seen in terms of suffering, as suffering cannot be measured (namely, there are no differences in terms of numbers, either in

14 Cf. Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*.

15 Cf. James E. Dittes, review of *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism*, by Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, *Review of Religious Research* 8, no. 3 (1967): 183–87; Richard L. Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History: The Holocaust and the American Future* (New York: Harper Colophon: 1978); Rubenstein, “Was Dietrich Bonhoeffer a ‘Righteous Gentile’?” *International Journal on World Peace* 17, no. 2 (2000): 33–46; Emil L. Fackenheim, “Jewish Faith and the Holocaust: A Fragment,” *Commentary*, August 1, (1968): 30–36; Fackenheim, *Quest for Past and Future* (Boston: Beacon, 1968); Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London: Edward Arnold, 1985); Hans Jonas, *Der Gottesbegriff nach Auschwitz: Eine jüdische Stimme* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1987); Sebastian Rejak, “Judaism Facing the Shoah: American Debates and Interpretations,” *Dialogue & Universalism* 13, no. 3/4, (2003): 81–102.

16 See Enzo Traverso, *The Origins of Nazi Violence* (New York: The New Press, 2003), 1–12.

absolute or in percentage), but rather one should understand the causes, factors, and procedures separately.¹⁷ For an improved comprehension of the Holocaust, as total and unique genocide, the science *of* and *on* crime has contributed since the 1990s.¹⁸

It is important enough to remember in which works, for Porter, emerged the relevance of sociology or of sociological tools in understanding the Holocaust: especially from Rubenstein's and Hilberg's studies,¹⁹ in which a historian and a theologian find fruitful concepts, such as modernity, bureaucracy, and authority, in Max Weber's sociology.²⁰ At this point, one may ask if sociology really ignored notions such as the totalitarian regime, extermination camps, authority, responsibility, resistance, and so on, and reread the Holocaust themes in postwar sociology, which means "sieving sociological studies."²¹ A review of the thesis supporting the delay of sociology in the studying of the Holocaust appears to be indispensable, given that, since the rise of Hitler to power, several intellectuals started to

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- 17 Cf. Christian P. Scherrer, "Towards a Theory of Modern Genocide: Comparative Genocide Research: Definitions, Criteria, Typologies, Cases, Key Elements, Patterns and Voids," *Journal of Genocide Research* 1, no. 1 (1999): 13–23, doi:10.1080/14623529908413932; Stephen C. Feinstein, "Art of the Holocaust and Genocide: Some Points of Convergence," *Journal of Genocide Research* 1, no. 2 (1999): 233–55, doi:10.1080/14623529908413953; Gunnar Heinsohn, "What Makes the Holocaust a Uniquely Unique Genocide?" *Journal of Genocide Research* 2, no. 3 (2000): 411–30; Zygmunt Bauman, "Categorical Murder, or: How to Remember the Holocaust," in *Re-presenting the Shoah for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Ronit Lentin (New York: Berghahn, 2004), 25–40.
 - 18 See Irving L. Horowitz, *Taking Lives: Genocide and State Power* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1982); Ryan D. King and William I. Brustein, "A Political Threat Model of Intergroup Violence: Jews in Pre-World War II Germany," *Criminology* 44, no. 4 (2006): 867–91, doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.2006.00066.x; Andrew Woolford, "Making Genocide Unthinkable: Three Guidelines for a Critical Criminology of Genocide," *Critical Criminology*, 14 (2006): 87–106, doi:10.1007/s10612-005-3197-7.
 - 19 Cf. Rapaport, review of *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*, 1794–96; Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History*; Benno W. Varon, *Professions of a Lucky Jew* (New York: Cornwall, 1992); Porter, "The Holocaust as a Sociological Construct," 184.
 - 20 See Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).
 - 21 The expression recalls the metaphor "sieve the history" by Walter Benjamin, used by Traverso, *Auschwitz e gli intellettuali*, 9, 40n1. See Piotr Sztompka, "The Renaissance of Historical Orientation in Sociology," *International Sociology* 1, no. 3 (1986): 321–37, doi:10.1177/026858098600100308; Barbara Engelking, "Reflections on the Subject of Polish-Jewish Relations during World II," *Polish Sociological Review* 137 (2002): 103–7.

reflect on the crisis of the liberal state in Europe. In accordance with Hilberg and Cesarani, the Holocaust actually started in the 1930s with anti-Jewish measures. The intellectuals in question were mainly European scholars who, forced to leave Germany in 1933, took refuge in the United States. Their works, of great interest for analyzing the structure of the National Socialist Party, trace the deterioration of liberal values pursuant to the advent of National Socialism. Among the works dealing with the promulgation of the Nuremberg racial laws, defining fascism, are the researches of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. For instance, linking fascism and anti-Semitism is Max Horkheimer, while Otto Kirchheimer is distinguished for the fact that, in analyzing Nazi criminal law, he suggests two phases in legal theory after 1933: one authoritarian and one racist.²²

As concerns concepts like responsibility, democracy, or the banality of evil, it is useful to evoke Morris Janowitz's investigations into the Secret Service: from his hundreds of interviews, it emerged that German respondents, "aware of the existence" of the concentration camps, "denied knowing" what was happening or deviating from their responsibility—Janowitz reported this in 1946!²³

22 After the Nazi power conquest in Germany in 1933, the Institute was closed for "tendencies hostile to the State." The members of the Frankfurt School—the most famous were Max Horkheimer, director from 1931, Theodor L. W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Friedrich Pollock, Leo Lowenthal, and Walter Benjamin—all emigrated to the United States, with the exception of the last, who did not leave Europe, but committed suicide in 1940 while attempting to cross the border between occupied France and Spain; see Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, and Herbert Marcuse, *Studien über Autorität und Familie: Forschungsberichte aus dem Institut für Sozialforschung* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1936); Max Horkheimer, "Die Juden und Europa," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 8, no. 1/2 (1939):115–37; Otto Kirchheimer, "Criminal Law in National Socialist Germany," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Sciences* 8, no. 3 (1939), 444–63; W. Rex Crawford, ed., *The Cultural Migration: The European Scholar in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953); Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950* (London: Heinemann, 1973); H. Stuart Hughes, *The Sea Change: The Migration of Social Thought, 1930–1965* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975); Lewis A. Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America: Their Impact and Their Experience* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); Max Horkheimer and Th. L. W. Adorno, eds., *Lezioni di sociologia* (Turin: Einaudi, 2001 [1956]).

23 See Rudolph Heberle, *From Democracy to Nazism: A Regional Case Study on Political Parties in Germany* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1945); Morris Janowitz, "German Reactions to Nazi Atrocities," *American Journal of Sociology* 52, no. 2 (1946):

1.2. A TOTALITARIAN ORDER

Studying how sociology approached the Holocaust at the end of the World War II means to fathom the reaction of intellectuals faced with the genocide of the Jews at a fairly crucial time, not too distant from the events from which echoed the dimensions of the Cold War that was to govern international relations.²⁴

When World War II ended, very few people cared about the genocide of the Jews: about a destruction process initiated with administrative devices, with a definition by decree in April 1933. (As Hilberg states, the destruction process starts with the “definition,” which is then implemented by a series of decrees). The Holocaust did not occupy an essential position; on the contrary, it was secondary in the culture and reality of the postwar period, marked by socioeconomic transformations, new definitions of boundaries, and regime changes. The legacy of an enduring anti-Semitism weighed heavily on this indifference or silence. This is rather evident in the field of sociological studies. Retrieving the first attempts to study the Holocaust involves searching for exceptions, *extra-ordine* works: above the ordinary, beyond the obvious inconvenience of facing similar issues. It is not uncommon to encounter sociologists who faced difficulty in the study of the problem and were forced to delay the publication of their research.²⁵

By the end of the war and throughout the 1950s, one can distinguish a period characterized by only a few works, almost all of which dealt with the themes of German fascism or militarism or political and ideological components of the German state. A turning point came during the 1960s when research on specific aspects of the extermination of the Jews increased. In this period, especially in the 1960s, more social scientists started to become sensitive to this event, which was invisible to the majority of intellectuals or, better, more scholars approached the theme

141–46, doi: 10.1086/219961; Jessie Bernard, *American Community Behavior* (New York: Dryden, 1949); Gerson and Wolf, *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*, 14.

24 Cf. Nigel West, *Venona: The Greatest Secret of the Cold War* (London: HarperCollins, 1999); Traverso, *Auschwitz e gli intellettuali*, 9; Salvatore Zappalà, *La tutela internazionale dei diritti umani: Tra sovranità degli Stati e governo mondiale* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2011), 40.

25 See Traverso, *Auschwitz e gli intellettuali*, 9–48.

with fewer difficulties. To pave the way to this was the Russell–Einstein Manifesto, introduced in London on July 9, 1955, by some leading scientists: among them, Einstein and Russell, who, in the center of the Cold War, begged the world to avoid more destruction. This meant that several sociologists identified the problem, analyzed it with sociological tools, and spread publicly results from their research. It happened because a set of events (of cultural order and within the academy) and other factors, such as public international policies, were changing. In other words, a succession of circumstances allowed it to occur.

At the center of these sociological works, one can find the categories of anti-Semitism, mass ideology, social movement, and the banality of evil. The greatest innovation that scholarship reached was exactly the combination of these concepts with the reality of the concentration camp system: it signified that their researches investigated how ordinary or good people contributed to the reality of the totalitarian system.

Among the noteworthy contributions of this period are works by the Frankfurt School, Talcott Parsons, Edward A. Shils and Morris Janovitz, Seymour M. Lipset, and Everett C. Hughes. What these scholars demanded is roughly as follows: What reasons led good people to consent to the policy of National Socialist racial hygiene? New interpretations were kick-started by the Eichmann trial in Israel.²⁶ That is an important theme and it is crucial for seeing how quickly the effects triggered by the decision of the State of Israel to seize and prosecute in Jerusalem one of the most central administrators of the extermination morphed into a serious discussion about the Holocaust and human justice, both in historical and in sociological scholarship. This demonstrates well the fate of a difficult discussion in the academy.

Once again, it is important to consider the international political context, which had profoundly changed by the end of the war: there was communism on the one hand and capitalism on the other. Hence a series of political and economic policies on behalf of one or the other position, and the collaboration of the Western scientific community, especially by the

26 See Antonella Salomoni, “I libri sulla Shoah: Una guida storiografica suddivisa per periodi e per temi,” *Storicamente* 5, no. 23 (2009): 2, accessed October 24, 2009, doi:10.1473/stor200.

United States, with intelligence services in the fight against communism, a collaboration that exclusively procured the publication of research with a focus on these issues. Government and private foundations funding universities had a big role in establishing what and who was to be researched within academic institutions, which often needed federal and private support to conduct their agenda and research programs. Particularly, governmental policies had specific aims: since 1945, Western policy prioritized the defeat of communism. Other topics did not receive sufficient financial resources to be addressed and be made public; some issues, such as the destruction of the Jews, in sociological research, were set aside. During this competitive coexistence, there were other interests in that period and “in the name of the Cold War,” but the Holocaust as the object of research was not among the key interests of academics.²⁷ In all these studies a shared element, “the common thread running through them and unites them,” revolved around the concept of “totalitarian power” on which the cited authors reflect through the categories of “totalitarian order” and “anti-Semitic discrimination.”²⁸ According to the classical literature, the term “totalitarian state” appears for the first time explicitly in 1939 during a “Symposium on the Totalitarian State.” On the occasion, a group of American scholars set in place a set of knowledge, economic, and political terms against the dangers of this type of regime. During the World War II years, however, the term “totalitarianism,” rather than as a historical interpretive category, was stated as an instrument of moral condemnation against another regime. But it was in 1951 that the term received a peculiar

27 See Christopher Simpson, *Blowback: The First Full Account of America's Recruitment of Nazis, and Its Disastrous Effect on Our Domestic and Foreign Policy* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988); Jon Wiener, “Talcott Parsons’ Role Bringing Nazi Sympathizers to the U.S.,” *The Nation*, March 6, 1989, 309; Sigmund Diamond, *Compromised Campus: The Collaboration of Universities with the Intelligence Community, 1945–1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Martin Oppenheimer, “To the Editor,” *Sociological Forum* 12, no. 2 (1997): 339–41.

28 Traverso, *Auschwitz e gli intellettuali*, 15. In general, a conceptual outline of the history of the category of “totalitarianism” includes a before, which appears in an elaboration of totalitarianism intertwined with the kind of fascism—of which the totalitarian phenomenon would be a variety—and an after, in which the two categories instead are to separate and occupy two different disciplines; see Mariuccia Salvati, “Antifascismo e totalitarismo nelle scienze sociali tra le due guerre,” *Contemporanea* 4 (2002): 623–26. Let me thank Tiziana Noce for having suggested Salvati’s work.

definition by political scientist and philosopher Hannah Arendt. With *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft*, where *Herr* means “lord” and *schaft* “power,” she examines what “concern[s] a total lordship.” The next year, in London, Israeli historian Jacob L. Talmon gave birth to *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*. Through *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* in 1956, Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski instead represent the totalitarian phenomenon as a form of autocracy centered on modern technology and the legitimacy of the masses.²⁹

The history of the concepts—as J. Petersen recalled in his groundbreaking paper of 1975 referring back to *Begriffsgeschichte* initiated by Koselleck in Germany—is an invaluable tool for a historical approach, capable of returning to us the ways in which political passions were experienced, expressed and elaborated in certain historical periods. Totalitarianism as an ideal type is that of Friedrich and Brzezinski, totalitarianism as a historical concept has a story which is more complex and changeable.³⁰

Among the texts symbolically opening reflections, at the end of the World War II, there were the analysis on anti-Semitism in the United States, *Escape from Freedom* by Erich Fromm (1941), and the inquiry on fascism written by Adorno starting from a 1942 paper dedicated to Aldous Huxley, author of *Brave New World* (1932). *Escape from Freedom*, perhaps the best

29 Cf. “Symposium on the Totalitarian State,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 82, no. 1 (1940), i–vi, 1–102; Salvati, *Antifascismo e totalitarismo nelle scienze sociali tra le due guerre*, 646–47. See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1951); the German edition, Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft: Antisemitismus, Imperialismus, totale Herrschaft* (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1955); Jacob L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London: Seecker and Warburg, 1952); Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956); Valerio Marchetti, “Resistenza ebraica, antisemitismo, totalitarismo,” in *Nazismo, fascismo, comunismo: Totalitarismi a confronto*, ed. Marcello Flores (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 1998), 259–88.

30 Salvati, “Antifascismo e totalitarismo nelle scienze sociali tra le due guerre,” 624, with reference to “La nascita del concetto di ‘Stato totalitario’ in Italia,” in *Annali dell’Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento*, ed. Jens Petersen (Bologna: il Mulino, 1975), 1:145 (my translation).