Hungarian Educational Research Journal 15 (2025) 2, 259–279
DOI: 10.1556/063.2025.00382

1828
AKADÉMIAI KIADÓ

The intellectual odyssey of Karl Mannheim: On sociology and political education

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Received: January 22, 2025 • Accepted: March 24, 2025
Published online: April 28, 2025

ABSTRACT

The article considers the intellectual odyssey of the Hungarian sociologist Karl Mannheim (1893–1947) during the three phases of his career: as a Jewish intellectual and philosopher in Hungary during the communist revolution of 1919, as an exile in the German Weimar Republic from 1920 to 1933, and as a refugee from Nazi Germany in England from 1933 to his death in 1947. It considers his transition from philosophy to sociology through his *Habilitation* degree at the University of Heidelberg which qualified him as a university teacher. Mannheim's publications in German are noted including those on structures of thinking, conservatism and generations. Mannheim's appointment as a lecturer in sociology at the London School of Economics and publications in English, including *Ideology and Utopia* (1935), on the sociology of knowledge, culture, education, planning in a democratic society, and the public role of the social scientist are noted. There was also Mannheim's association with the Christian discussion group *The Moot* and appointment to a Chair at the Institute of Education, University of London. The article concludes by noting critics of Mannheim and with an assessment of his work and relevance today.

KEYWORDS

Mannheim, ideology, utopia, knowledge, education, values, intellectuals, planning

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INTRODUCTION

Karl Mannheim (Manheim Károly: 1893–1947) was an Hungarian sociologist who was noted for his contributions to the sociology of knowledge, education, and political education. These were made during his exile first in Weimar Germany and later in England from 1919 to 1947. Mannheim was perhaps best known during the Second World War and for some decades after with several substantial commentaries published on his work.[1] He has, however, been relatively neglected since.[2] Mannheim was at best ignored in his homeland Hungary during the years of state socialism and little interest has been shown in his work subsequently. The purpose of this article is to bring Mannheim's life and work to the fresh attention of Hungarians, and of readers generally, in the context of what was for him a personal and intellectual odyssey.

Mannheim was one of several outstanding Hungarian expatriates during the first half of the 20th century. He was thus in company with leading public intellectuals such as the brothers Polanyi: the political economist Karl (Pollacsek Károly: 1886–1964), (Polanyi, 1945/2024) and the physicist and philosopher Michael (Pollacsek Mihály: 1891–1976), (Polanyi, 2009); the journalist, author, communist, and later Cold Warrior, Arthur Koestler (Kösztler Artúr: 1905–1983); and the Marxist literary critic and prominent Hungarian Communist Party ideologist Georg Lukács (Löwinger György Bernát: 1885–1971). This is by no means a complete list. Those named were from secular and prosperous Jewish families with a common origin in the social, cultural, political, and intellectual milieu of the final years of the Habsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire that disintegrated on its defeat in the First World War.

This experience was similar to that of intellectuals from elsewhere in the ruined empire, notably that of Austrians such as the philosopher Karl Popper (1902–1994), (Popper, 2002); the political economist Friedrich von Hayek (1899–1992), (Hayek, 1944/2007); and the author Stefan Zweig (1881–1942), (Zweig, 2009). It should be remembered that German was the common language of the intellectual as well as the governing élite of the former Habsburg empire; and Germany was the first destination of Hungarian expatriates including Mannheim, although the United Kingdom and the United States were important later destinations. The most notable exception was Georg Lukács who, with the failure of the 1919 communist revolution in Hungary led by Béla Kun in which he had participated as a Deputy Commissar for Public Education, went to the Soviet Union as an *apparatchik* of the Communist International (Comintern) (Lukács, 1977; Morgan, 2003, 2007). It should be noted that Arthur Koestler, a journalist with the prestigious publishing house Ullstein Verlag, Berlin, was a clandestine *apparatchik* of the Communist International and spent some time in the Soviet Union before leaving the Communist Party in 1938 (Koestler, 1954a, 1954b).[3]

[1]Notably, Wolff (1971), Maquet, J. (1973), Remmling, G.W. (1975), Simmonds, A.P. (1978), Kettler, D., Meja, V, and Stehr, N. (1984a), Woldring (1986), Longhurst (1989), Meja and Kettler (2017).

[2]There is now a renewed interest in Mannheim stimulated by populism as a recent political phenomenon (Hammersley, 2023). See also Meja, V. and Kettler, D. (Eds.) (2017).

[3]Koestler published later the anti-Stalinist novel *Darkness at Noon* (1940/2019). It came to public notice only slowly, but proved very influential during the early Cold War, with Koestler a prominent figure in the Congress for Cultural Freedom financed covertly by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

In 1933, the coming to power in Germany of Hitler and the National Socialists forced their intellectual opponents to move on;[4] in the case of Karl Mannheim to the London School of Economics, the United Kingdom. We shall consider these stages in Karl Mannheim's intellectual odyssey, before analysing his sociology of culture and education, including the idea of generational experience; the role of intellectuals; and political education in a modern democratic society; together with some criticisms of Mannheim, notably by the Austrian philosopher Karl Popper and the American sociologist Edward Shils. We conclude with a brief assessment of Mannheim's work and the continuing relevance, if any, of his social and political thought to developed societies today.

AN HUNGARIAN JEWISH INTELLECTUAL

Mannheim was born in Budapest on 27 March 1893 into a secular Jewish family, with an Hungarian father, a prosperous textile businessman, and a German mother who had a cultural and linguistic influence on her son. After a conventional gymnasium education, Mannheim had a peripatetic university education, reading philosophy and literature at the University of Budapest, with further studies at the University of Berlin, including with the sociologist Georg Simmel (1858–1918), whose anti-positivism anticipated the later critical theory of the Frankfurt School during the Weimar Republic (Wolff, 1950), and in Paris, before returning to Hungary. He graduated with doctorates from the University of Budapest and the University of Heidelberg. It was a common enough pattern for intellectual young men of his class, the sons of prosperous Jewish families in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the German Empire, and indeed in the Russian Empire.[5]

During the First World War, Mannheim was exempted medically from military service and this enabled him to join discussion groups of like-minded intellectuals from the same social and cultural class,[6] notably the Galileo Circle, an anti-clerical, atheistic, and materialist student group, founded originally in 1908, in which Karl Polanyi and, to a lesser extent, his brother Michael were prominent; the historian Oscar Jászi's Social Science Association, the focus of which was on sociology, social psychology, and social policy;[7] and the *Sonntagskreis* or 'Sunday Circle' in which Georg Lukács was a leading figure. This was an informal, by invitation, discussion group in Budapest between 1915 and 1918. Its focus was on the social and historical development of concepts such as culture and knowledge which were to prove fundamental to Mannheim's later academic work and political thinking.

[4]It should be noted that other political opponents of the Nazis, for example in the German labour movement, rarely had the option of refugee exile.

[5]The poet and novelist Boris Leonidovich Pasternak is an example. Later the author of *Doctor Zhivago (1957)* he read philosophy at the University of Marburg before the First World War. Sergei Leonidovich Rubinstein, later a famous Soviet psychologist, was a fellow student.

[6]Such circles were common among students and intellectuals of each of the contending religious, cultural, and political groups in Hungarian society e.g. the Catholic St Imre Circle, the Protestant Gabriel Bethlen Circle, and the Zionist Maccabean Circle.

[7]Oscar Jászi (1875–1957) later wrote the classic *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (1929). He emigrated to the United States in 1925 and had a long career as a professor at Oberlin College, Ohio.

During the Hungarian Revolution of 1919, Mannheim taught briefly at the University of Budapest's Pedagogical Institute, probably through the ideological patronage of Georg Lukács, then Deputy Commissar for Public Education. The collapse of the Hungarian Soviet Republic (and its replacement by the Regency of Admiral Miklös Horthy)[8] saw the left-wing ideological and political groups such as the Galileo Circle proscribed by the Horthy regime and their leading members go into exile, with Mannheim, who was not a communist, leaving for Weimar Germany rather than join his friend and mentor Lukács in the Soviet Union, although he continued to consider Marxism as he developed his theory of knowledge.

IN WEIMAR GERMANY

Mannheim had not published any significant philosophical or sociological work when he arrived in the German Weimar Republic.[9] He went first to Heidelberg where he completed a *Habilitation* thesis on German conservatism supported by the social geographer Alfred Weber (1868–1958)[10] and the political economist Emil Lederer (1882–1939),[11] who were co-directors of the University's Institute for Social and State Sciences between 1923 and 1931. It is worth noting, given Mannheim's subsequent intellectual direction, that Weber was a pioneer of the sociology of knowledge and culture, of the role of intellectuals in society and the concept of *freischwebender*, an independent or 'free-floating' intelligentsia (Weber, 2000).

The *Habilitation* degree qualified Mannheim to offer lectures and seminars at the university as a *Privatdozent* or private scholar, although this was a precarious existence for someone only recently married and naturalized for residence in Germany. However, Mannheim won recognition through regular publication of theoretical work in which he applied philosophical perspectives to the relatively new discipline of sociology to inquire into the roots of culture. Much of this early work, published in German, such as S*tructures of Thinking* (1922–24/1980), *Conservatism: A Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge* (1925/1986), the paper on 'The Problem of Generations' (1928/1952), and *Sociology as Political Education* (1930/2001) was made available to an Anglophone readership long after Mannheim's death. However, *Ideology and Utopia* (1929), probably his best-known book, was published in English in 1936, translated by the American sociologist Edward Shils (1910–1995), who was himself interested in the role of intellectuals in society.

In 1929, Mannheim became a professor of sociology and political economy at the Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, with Norbert Elias and Hans Gerth, later prominent contributors

[8]Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya (1868–1957) was Regent of the Kingdom of Hungary from 1 March 1920 to 15 October 1944 and was in alliance with Nazi Germany. He died in exile in Portugal.

[9]In 1921, he married psychologist Julia Lang (Juliska Károlyné Lang), (1893–1955). A cultured woman, she proved to be a consistent, if sometimes unacknowledged, intellectual collaborator throughout Mannheim's subsequent career; and not least in arranging the publication of her husband's posthumous work.

[10]The younger brother of the sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920). He resigned his Chair in 1933 in protest against the Nazis and went into an internal exile. He was reinstated in 1946.

[11]A secular Jew, originally from Bohemia in Austro-Hungary. In 1933 he was expelled from a later post at the Humboldt University, Berlin. He left Germany, first for the United Kingdom, and then the United States where he contributed to the University in Exile at the New School of Social Research, New York City.

to the sociology of culture, as his assistants. Mannheim's macro approach to sociological analysis and focus on the structures of knowledge and culture brought him and his work into competition with that of Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and other members of the *Institut für Sozialforschung* (Institute of Social Research) also at the University of Frankfurt, which was Marxist in origin. Also known as the Frankfurt School, in 1934 it went into institutional exile at Columbia University, New York, during the Nazi era, returning subsequently to the University of Frankfurt. The Frankfurt School was a pioneering source of a critical social theory that was influential, not least in the Anglophone world, during the second half of the twentieth century. However, Bottomore notes the Frankfurt Schools paradoxical political quietism, saying: "The Frankfurt School thus came to resemble, as Jay also remarks, Mannheim's 'free-floating intellectuals' poised above the *mêlêe*" (1984, 34).[12]

Mannheim's years in Germany brought him into contact with conservative, nationalist, and other right-wing political movements; especially in German academic life; and in sociology in particular. Hans Freyer (1887–1969), a professor at the University of Leipzig, was a prominent example. In 1925, Freyer was invited to set up a department of sociology at the University. A nationalist and ideologist of the conservative revolutionary movement, under his direction the Leipzig department adopted an historical and cultural and increasingly ethnic and racial theoretical perspective. Freyer supported Hitler and national socialism from 1933 and may be compared to better-known academic supporters of Nazi ideology such as philosopher Martin Heidegger and professor of jurisprudence Carl Schmitt.[13] The latter's early critical analyses of the constitutional basis of the Weimar Republic such as *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy,* published in Germany in 1923 and in an extended edition in 1926, argued that parliamentary democracy depended on discussion and openness in political discourse and that their shallow roots explained the weakness of Weimar parliamentarism.[14] Such arguments would have been known to Karl Mannheim and influenced his thinking about political education in a democracy.

Mannheim's response to the rise of fascism in Europe and to national socialism in Germany has been considered by Hammersley (2023) who compares it with current attitudes to populism in a liberal democracy. Mannheim, it is said, believed that liberal democracy was itself in a process of change that brought with it a new form of government which necessitated social and economic planning. According to Mannheim, the failure to engage in social planning by the liberal democracies had led to the pathological alternatives of fascism and national socialism with their existential threat to Western civilization. It might be added that Stalinist state socialism in the Soviet Union was another such pathology, while liberal democracy in Russia had failed to establish itself during the period of constitutional monarchy, 1907–1917, because of the impact of the First World War. The literature on these issues is, of course, voluminous.

[12]Bottomore's reference is to Jay (1973, 292). As Bottomore also points out, Georg Lukács was another critic of the Frankfurt School's political passivity.

[13]In 1933, Freyer was a signatory to the *Vow of Allegiance of the Professors of the German Universities and High-Schools to Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist State*. See Morgan (2025, 57–66). Between 1938 and 1944, Freyer directed the German Institute for Culture at Budapest, by which time Hungary was a vassal state of Nazi Germany. It was an example of German cultural imperialism in *Osteuropa*. Freyer was allowed to resume university teaching in West Germany, at least partially, after the Second World War.

[14]Published in 1988 in an English translation by Ellen Kennedy (Schmitt, 1988). There has been a renewal of interest in Carl Schmitt recently, especially in the United States.

As we have noted, Mannheim's thoughts were set out initially in *Ideology and Utopia,* published first in German in 1929 and English in 1936 following his arrival in England. This key text will be considered later.[15]

A REFUGEE SCHOLAR IN ENGLAND

In 1933, Mannheim was forced out of the University of Frankfurt by the racial policies of Nazi Germany and, as did many other academics and intellectuals, moved on, this time to England.[16] There he taught sociology at the London School of Economics (LSE), at the invitation of Harold Laski, a left-wing Labour Party member and Marxist professor of political science, and sponsored by the Academic Assistance Council, an initiative of William Beveridge, the LSE's Director.[17] Mannheim's official academic position was tenuous and, although a productive scholar, he was not offered a Chair, and it is reported that he had an uneasy relationship with some colleagues, was dissatisfied with the reception of his work in England, and explored the possibilities of moving on to the United States (Kettler, Meja, and Stehr, 108–113).

In 1941, Sir Fred Clarke[18] invited Mannheim to teach sociology at the Institute of Education, also part of the University of London, on a part-time basis, his teaching at the London School of Economics being limited by wartime conditions. In 1942, Mannheim's growing public reputation was enhanced by the invitation from the publishers Routledge and Kegan Paul to be general editor of its pioneering series *The International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction*, later known simply as *The International Library of Sociology*, (Platt, J. 2014). Mannheim's collaboration with Clarke was a fruitful one and, from 1 October 1945, he succeeded Clarke, who had retired at the end of the previous academic year, as the Institute's tenured Chair of Education.

The influential journal *Nature* had this to say in an unsigned notice in its *News and Views* pages: "Mannheim's appointment may be regarded as both daringly original and a sign of the times. A Hungarian by birth, who gained his doctorate in philosophy at the University of Budapest, and was becoming known as a sociologist of repute while teaching in Germany before 1933" (*Nature*, 1945, 743). After noting Mannheim's refugee status, post as lecturer at the London School of Economics, and publications, such as *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (1940) and *Diagnosis of Our Time: Wartime Essays of a Sociologist* (1943), said to have placed him in the front rank of sociologists, *Nature* continued: "Mannheim has always shown himself peculiarly sensitive in his sociological studies to the importance of education, and since 1941 has been attached to the staff of the London University Institute of Education, but can

[15]Mannheim did not however, consider antisemitism specifically either before or after national socialism despite his Jewish ethnicity and personal experience in both Hungary and Germany. The reasons are examined by Kettler and Meja (2012) who argue that Mannheim's analysis of intellectuals as a socio-cultural bloc, together with a theory of assimilation put forward by his student Joseph Katz, explains this.

[16]It should be noted that other political opponents of Nazism, for example in the German labour movement, rarely had the option of sponsored exile.

[17]See Morgan (2025, 14–19).

[18]Sir Frederick Clarke (1880–1952), an influential social democratic and internationalist educator, was Director of the Institute of Education, University of London, 1936–1945.

scarcely be regarded as possessing the normal professional qualifications for a professorship in the subject.' (*Nature*, 1945, 743) However, having given this scathing assessment, *Nature* concluded positively: "Paradoxical as it may seem, this is probably why he has been appointed. The Institute, under the leadership of Sir Fred Clarke, has in recent years been laying increasing emphasis on the social aspect of public education, and insisting that the philosophy of education must be worked out on a sociological basis. No one is better fitted to undertake this task than Mannheim" (*Nature*, 1945, 743).

It is reasonable to infer that Sir Fred Clarke had a major influence on choosing his successor. Clarke was known for his interest in the social and political aspects of education shown in books such as *Essays on the Politics of Education* (1923), *Education and Social Change: an English interpretation* (1940) and, later, *Freedom in the Educative Society* (1948). He had invited Mannheim, who shared this approach, to teach at the Institute of Education and this enabled their intellectual relationship to develop. Importantly, Clarke was also a member of *The Moot,* an invitation discussion group comprised of Christian intellectuals convened in 1939 by the Christian ecumenist J.H. Oldham[19] to consider the role of religion and culture in post-war society. The poet, dramatist, literary critic, and publisher T. S. Eliot (1888–1965) was a prominent member.

Mannheim, a secular Jew, was invited to join *The Moot,* again probably on Clarke's initiative, and, together with his fellow Hungarian Michael Polyani, took an active part (Kurlbeg, 2019; Mullins and Jacobs, 2006). An example is their individual written responses to Eliot's paper on the role of the clerisy (or opinion-forming intellectuals) in society. Eliot had asked: "Does the term 'clerisy' convey enough meaning to be useful? Does it identify a type of activity such that we can say that a clerisy must exist in any civilised society? Can the function of the clerisy be defined? If so, to what extent is it fulfilled and to what extent is it in defect in this island at the present time?" (Cited in Mullins & Jacobs, 2006a, 163). Mannheim responded at length concluding: "Tradition is only half understood if one understands by it the past only. Tradition is only alive if it has the power of adjusting itself continually to ever new situations. Tradition for tradition's sake is bad…… The vested interests of routine and convention prevent their own disciples seeking for really new ways. There is little revolt among the young, but rather a spirit of resignation. Instead of that, there is much talk about great changes without real regeneration. The clerisy is too often a conventionalised clerisy or afraid of the established powers."[20]

Nevertheless, Mannheim advocated a similar, essentially Platonic, solution of an élite of 'free-floating' intelligentsia capable of providing a political education or guidance to citizens through their independent academic work. He was well-placed to have an important intellectual influence on the sociology of education and knowledge and public policy in his adopted home of the United Kingdom. Tragically, he died of heart failure on 9 January 1947, aged only 53. Mannheim was however to have a continuing influence on the sociology of knowledge, culture, education, and public policy through the posthumous publication of his work.

[19]Joseph Houldsworth Oldham (1874–1969). *The Moot* continued until 1947.

[20]Mullins and Jacobs (2006a and 2006b) give full accounts of the relationship between Michael Polyani and Karl Mannheim and their responses to Eliot's idea of a *clerisy*, itself derived from the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834).

MANNHEIM'S SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE, CULTURE, AND EDUCATION

Karl Mannheim was prolific in the output of sociological essays written from a philosophical perspective. These were collected later as single thematic volumes, often through the agency of his wife, the psychologist Julia Lang, and of former students, notably Paul Kecskemeti. These included *Structures of Thinking* (1922–24/1980), *Conservatism: A Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge* (1925/1986), the important essay "The Problem of Generations" (1923/1952), and *Sociology as Political Education* (1930/2001) that were products of Mannheim's work in Germany. *Ideology and Utopia* (1929/1979), also published first in German and Mannheim's best-known full-length work, was published in English in 1936, although even this comprises five essentially independent essays. It was followed by the wartime and posthumous collections *Man and Society* (1940), *Diagnosis of Our Time: Wartime Essays of a Sociologist* (1943), *Freedom, Power, and Democratic Planning* (1951), *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (1952), *Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology* (1953), and *Essays on the Sociology of Culture* (1956). There was also *An Introduction to the Sociology of Education* (1962), with W. A. C. Stewart.[21]

POLITICAL EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS

It has been argued that Mannheim was similar in his intent to the French essayist Julien Benda (1867–1956), author of *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (1969), in that both looked to renew the rationalism of the 18th-century Enlightenment through independent or 'free-floating' intellectuals, the *freischwebender* of Alfred Weber or the clerisy of T. S. Eliot, having a public role. H. Stuart Hughes, commenting on *Ideology and Utopia,* says that Mannheim's appeal to rational thinking was so well covered by "German sociological paraphernalia as frequently to pass unnoticed. Yet the author's intent should have been unmistakable. His book aimed at "inquiring into the prospects of rationality and common understanding" in an era that apparently "put a premium on irrationality and from which the possibilities of mutual understanding" had all but disappeared" (Hughes, 1979, 418–419).[22] As Hughes observes: "Never in European history had there been a population better educated and culturally aware. Never had the conflict of ideologies been more intense" (Hughes, 1979, 419).[23]

Mannheim saw this as an historic opportunity, saying: "At this point in history when all things which concern man and the structure and elements of history itself are suddenly revealed to us in a new light, it behooves us in our scientific thinking to become masters of the situation…" (Cited in Hughes, 1979, 421–422). Influenced by the brothers Max and Alfred Weber and indirectly by the ghost of Karl Marx,[24] this led to the paradox of the book's contradictions

[21]William Alexander Campbell Stewart (1915–1997), then Professor of Education, Keele University.

[22]H. Stuart Hughes also considers the rationalist humanism of German novelist Thomas Mann, notably in *The Magic Mountain* (1927) to be comparable to that of Benda and Mannheim (Hughes, 1979, 404–427).

[23]Hughes might have said 'better credentialled" which doesn't necessarily mean better educated in the rational understanding and discrimination of evidence, as his next sentence indicates.

[24]In a discussion of the relationship between technocracy and democracy, George Lichtheim (1912–1973) said: "…it makes no great difference whether one starts from Marx or Weber, or from the eclectic compromise between them proposed by Karl Mannheim. This is because both Marx and Weber proceed from the assumption that there exists a complex interconnection between material and immaterial factors in social change." (Lichtheim, 1972/1999, 331).

and its wide appeal (despite a prolix Germanic style).[25] It was commented: "Rarely has a sociological study succeeded in arresting the attentions of so wide a public. Not only sociologists but economists, historians, philosophers, and theologians, too, participated in the discussion" (Cited in Hughes, 1979, 420). The concluding vision was that failure on the part of intellectuals and particularly those in the social sciences to seize the opportunity would lead to a barren social and cultural world "….a prophetic position almost Spenglerian in its vision." (Hughes, 1979, 423), a reference to Oswald Spengler (1880–1936), the author of *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (The Decline of the West), the definitive edition of which was published in 1923 (Spengler, 1971).[26]

Mannheim would undoubtedly have known Spengler's thesis, although he doesn't refer to it specifically in *Ideology and Utopia*.[27] Although written at a specific historical and cultural time and location, Mannheim's book is still of interest in that it argues that sociology and the social sciences generally are public responsibilities that contribute to the healthy functioning of democracy in an advanced economy and society.[28] "Political pedagogy," said Mannheim, "signifies the transmission of a particular attitude towards the world which will permeate all aspects of life. Political education today signifies further a definitive conception of history, a certain mode of interpreting events, and a tendency to seek a philosophical orientation in a definite manner" (Mannheim, 1979, 131).

He continued: "The formation of party schools will accentuate this tendency and carry it to its logical conclusion" (Mannheim, 1979, 151). However: "The present structure of society makes possible a political science which will not be merely a party science, but a science of the whole. Political sociology, as the science which comprehends the whole political sphere, thus attains the stage of realization" (Mannheim, 1979, 132). As we have noted, Mannheim saw this as a task for independent free-thinking intellectuals or *freischwebender*, not tied to class, nor committed to an ideological party line, or to the loyal service of state power. Such an intellectual êlite would, he believed, be capable of scientific objectivity.[29]

This was both êlitist and naively optimistic, surprising in a man who had experienced the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, the failed Hungarian communist revolution of 1919, the chaotic politics of the Weimar Republic, and the coming to power of National Socialism in Germany. It assumed a grasp of social, economic, and political realities that proved tenuous among European intellectuals committed to rationalism, whatever their academic background, until the catastrophe was upon them. As H. Stuart Hughes noted of Mannheim: "And his fidelity to this type of thinking frequently blinded him to the tenacity of ideologies hostile to it" (Hughes, 1979, 423). This was true of so many other Western intellectuals of Mannheim's cultural and educational type.

[25]That adds to the difficulty of translation.

[26]See also *In the Shadow of Tomorrow*: *A Diagnosis of the Modern Distemper* (1936/2019) by Dutch historian Johan Huizinga (1872–1945) and *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930/1994) by Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gassett (1883–1955) for similar analyses of the cultural tensions in contemporary mass societies. It is a truism that people and societies in crisis grasp at diagnoses of their condition in the hope of a cure.

[27]There are, however, several references to Carl Schmitt and to Hans Freyer.

[28]See Hammersley (2021) for a valuable recent analysis.

[29]See Pels (1996).

Such élitism may be explained by Mannheim's interest in conservative thought that had been the topic of his *Habilitation* thesis at the University of Heidelberg in 1925. This and related papers were published first in German, with an English translation as *Conservatism: A Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge* forty years after Mannheim's death (Mannheim, 1986). The editors, in a most useful Introduction, say that the work is more than an empirical study of the social factors that shape a specific pattern of political belief. "But, as the work was written, it also manifests Mannheim's preoccupation with the nature of political *knowledge*, not belief alone, and his continuing hope that modes of scientific inquiry can serve as the way to such knowledge without sacrificing scientific devotion to evidence or disinterestedness." Again, the idea behind Mannheim's study, it is said, is found in his belief in the influence of 19th-century German conservatism on the development of the historical and social sciences (Kettler, Meja, & Stehr, 1986, 2).

Mannheim was, of course, steeped in the German philosophical concept of *Bildung which* may be defined briefly as personal cultural and intellectual development that shapes both individuals and the community in which they live and to which they contribute as free citizens. This requires both personal agency and educational institutions in which the individual may flourish in a lifelong process of human development that is more than the acquisition of factual knowledge or skills.[30] It may also explain Mannheim's concept of generations by which he linked generational cohorts to their collective experience of significant historical events, such as the First World War that saw the collapse of the Romanov Empire in Russia, the Habsburg Empire, and the Hohenzollern *Kaiser Reich* in Germany.

In the essay *Das Problem der Generationen* (The Problem of Generations), first published in 1928, Mannheim suggested that the impact of such events on birth cohorts could explain attitudes to cultural traditions, identity, social change, and participation in social and political movements and that this would have an effect on future generations. This led him to consider the life patterns of different age cohorts based on the stratification of their common experience and social consciousness. This was innovative and had clear implications for the sociology of culture, knowledge, education, and public policy.[31]

SOCIOLOGY AND DEMOCRATIC PLANNING

Mannheim's time at the London School of Economics and his extra-mural participation in *The Moot* produced essays that were indicative of his concern for the condition of contemporary society. He believed that society was suffering from economic and social ills that might be cured through the rational contribution of sociologists and social scientists generally to the formulation and implementation of public policy. He was convinced that recent history indicated the

[30]The model of university education developed at Berlin by the Prussian philosopher and educational administrator Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) is an example. See also the German *Bildungsroman* or novel describing an individual's development to maturity. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–96; Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship) is a classic example. The genre is by no means exclusive to Germany, but has been of historical importance there. See also Baehr (2013) who compares Mannheim, Karl Jaspers, and Hannah Arendt.

[31]Pilcher (1994) suggests that Mannheim's theory of generations is an 'undervalued legacy'.

end of laissez-faire capitalism with its characteristics of boom and bust and their social and political consequences. At the same time, he rejected the Stalinist and the National Socialist alternatives as bureaucratic Party-State capitalisms, tyrannies over the individual citizen, sustained by a combination of propaganda and force.

Mannheim envisaged instead what he described as a 'Great Society'[32] in which individual freedoms would be maintained in a liberal democracy that would be guided in its public policy planning through the disinterested advice of its natural and social scientists whose knowledge and skills would be disseminated through public education, formal and informal. This is seen in *Diagnosis of our Time: Wartime Essays of a Sociologist* (Mannheim, 1943) which deals with the potential problems of post-war reconstruction, a matter of general debate as the military defeat of the Axis states of Germany, Italy, and Japan looked likely.[33]

Mannheim argued that the health of a post-war democratic society depended on its self-awareness of economic and social conditions and the education and moral, indeed religious, development of its citizens, the second half of his diagnosis being given to this. Mannheim attributed the catastrophe of the World War to a collapse of the values of the 'world of yesterday,' leaving a vacuum that had yet to be filled (Zweig, 2009). The pathological perspective indicated in the title of Mannheim's book is comparable to that of Johan Huizinga's *In the Shadow of Tomorrow: A Diagnosis of the Modern Distemper* (1936). It is also indicative of Mannheim's association with the Christian intellectuals at *The Moot,* notably T. S. Eliot, whose *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* was published in 1948 (Eliot, 1948), and the influential Protestant theologian and social critic Reinhold Niebuhr (1891–1971). Mannheim, essentially a conservative social democrat, believed that a free society in the post-war world should also be a planned one, its direction agreed upon democratically through rational discussion in the public debate of empirically tested options.

KARL MANNHEIM AND HIS CRITICS

A general criticism of Karl Mannheim is that his eclecticism sometimes resulted in antinomies, such as his views on generations and social class. This was aggravated by a prolix style which lacked clarity and precision. There were also specific criticisms. These were by fellow refugees: from Austria, the philosopher and sociologist Otto Neurath (1882–1945),[34] the political economist Friedrich A. von Hayek (1889–1992), and the philosopher Karl R. Popper (1902–1994).

[32]The phrase anticipated President Lyndon B. Johnson's programme *The Great Society* from 1964 to 1968 that aimed, albeit unsuccessfully, at eliminating poverty and racial injustice in the United States.

[33]A later comparison might be with Karl Polyani's *The Great Transformation:* The Political and Economic Origins of our Time, an important work of political economy by another Hungarian expatriate and brother of Michael Polyani. Mannheim does not mention either Polyani, although Michael did participate in *The Moot* occasionally.

[34]Otto Neurath (1882–1970), himself an advocate of a technocratic socialism, was a prominent member of the *Wiener Kreis* (Vienna Circle) of an élite invitation group of logical empiricists from the natural and social sciences that met regularly between 1924 and 1936. He was another intellectual refugee from Nazism after 1934. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) was also a member of the *Wiener Kreis*. Karl Popper was not a member, but was in close sympathy with its aims and idea. The *Wiener Kreis* had a significant influence on the philosophy of science and analytic philosophy.

There were also criticisms by the American sociologist Edward Shils (1910–1995) and the English sociologist of education Jean Floud. (1915–2013).

Otto Neurath was one of Mannheim's earliest critics, writing a scathing review of the original German edition of *Ideologie und Utopie* (1930) for *Der Kampf* (The Struggle), the official paper of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, of which he was a member. In practised polemical style, Neurath places Mannheim's book among the bourgeois commentaries on Marxism and identifies its eclecticism, saying: "Karl Mannheim for example, in his book *Ideologie und* Utopie in a certain sense consciously adopts what he calls a Marxist standpoint in order then to demonstrate that Marxist do not apply Marxism to themselves, and that, viewed from a higher vantage point, Marxism appears to be one among other partial perspectives. Salvation can thus only come via a synthesis in theory and in instruction" (Neurath, 1930/2020, 235).

Neurath noted Mannheim's prolix style: "If we do not allow ourselves to be confused by the metaphysical–soulful language common in German works of sociology, with its twists and turns, and fluid meanings, the upshot of the first two parts of the book in particular is roughly as follows: all thought processes depend on the sociological location of the observer such that a history of shifting human understandings cannot be detached from a history of human social conditions" (Neurath, 1930/2020, 436). However: "From the start, Marxism has always and everywhere seen itself as the ideology of the proletariat, and, quite apart from the countless statements [to this effect], its whole educational and political praxis is one continuous testimony to that fact" (Neurath, 1930/2020, 236).

Identifying a characteristic of Mannheim that persisted, Neurath argued: "As a consequence of his inclination to generate types, which, particularly since Dilthey, has wreaked havoc on German research,[35] Mannheim fails to see that one can investigate ideologies sociologically alongside each other where one has a scientific and the others an unscientific character! The unscientific ideologies can be overcome by a scientific stance, the scientific, however, cannot" (Neurath, 1930/2020, 236–237). Neurath continues: "It is clear as a consequence of our inadequate data alone that several scientifically consistent theories of society are possible. And it makes good sense to justify sociologically the selection between scientifically possible suppositions. There is, however, no higher vantage point from which this scientific inadequacy, which differs from era to era, can be overcome other than through scientific research that narrows the options!" (Neurath, 1930/2020, 237). But adds: "All this Mannheim overlooks. Because Marxism chooses among possible scientific constructs one that is empirically demonstrable, Mannheim associates it with "irrationality." And now he distinguishes between five conceptions of the world [*Weltauffassungen]* that correspond to the major political-sociological groups: "1. bureaucratic conservatism; 2. conservative historicism; 3. liberal-democratic bourgeois thought; 4. the socialist-communist view; 5. fascism" (Neurath, 1930/2020, 237).

Neurath explained why he believed Mannheim to be incorrigibly bourgeois in thinking, concluding: "Mannheim seeks the all-encompassing view, an angle on the whole "world;" that is to say, metaphysics! Marxism, in contrast, seeks to make accurate statements concerning social

[35]That is for over seventy years. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) was a German hermeneutic philosopher who distinguished between the aims and methodologies of the natural sciences and the social sciences and humanities. The former aimed at law-based causal explanations of nature and the latter at the understanding of human and historical life. There were, indeed, intellectual similarities between Dilthey and Mannheim, notably the Hegelian and Bismarckian influences on their ideas of the relationship between the citizen and the State.

processes! It wants to predict the future fate of the proletariat and other classes! Metaphysics versus science! In the end, and despite all his kindness, Mannheim versus Marxism: the bourgeois front versus the proletarian front! It's the old familiar tune!" (Neurath, 1930.2020, 240).

Also in 1930, such was the interest among both academics and politicians, especially those of the Left, in Mannheim's book, *Die Gesellschaft* (Society), the theoretical journal of the German Social Democratic Party commissioned critical reviews by Herbert Marcuse, of the Frankfurt School, the Christian socialist theologian Paul Tillich (1886–1965), Hans Speier (1905–1990), a sociologist active in SPD worker education, and Hannah Arendt (1906–1965), then a philosophy student of Martin Heidegger. Three years later, including ironically Arendt, each was in the United States, an intellectual refugee from Nazi Germany.[36]

As we have noted, from 1933 Mannheim was an intellectual exile in England where he and his work received less attention than it had in Weimar Germany. However, in 1944, Mannheim was criticised from a completely fresh direction by the political economist Friedrich von Hayek, also of the London School of Economics. In his now famous book *The Road to Serfdom* (Hayek, 1944), Hayek took as a primary target Mannheim's arguments for economic and social planning. Mannheim, said Hayek, referred to the contemporary trend "… to replace the impersonal and anonymous mechanism of the market by collective and "conscious" direction of all social forces to deliberately chosen goals" (Hayek, 1944, 15).

Hayek continued: "The difference cannot be better illustrated than by the extreme position taken in a widely acclaimed book on whose programme of so-called "planning for freedom" we shall have to comment on yet more than once" (Hayek, 1944, 15–16). The book to which Hayek refers was Mannheim's *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, that had been published in 1940. He quotes: "We have never had to set up and direct [writes Dr Mannheim] the entire system of nature as we are forced to do today with society…Mankind is tending more and more to regulate the whole of its social life, although it has never attempted to create a second nature" (Hayek, 1944, 16).

The explanation, Hayek, an Austrian, found in the dominance of German thought in Europe since 1870, during which time "…England lost her intellectual leadership in the political and social sphere and became an importer of ideas." By this Hayek meant a move away from individual liberty, classical economics and its concomitant free trade towards collectivism and statism (Hayek, 1944, 16). He continued: "Whether it was Hegel or Marx, List,[37] Schmoller,[38] Sombart[39] or Mannheim, whether it was socialism in its more radical form or merely "organisation" or "planning" of a less radical kind, German ideas were everywhere readily imported and German institutions imitated" (Hayek, 1944, 16). This was at the cost of ideas such as individual liberty, civil society, democracy, and free trade and that "…long before the Nazis" (Hayek, 1944, 17).

Hayek quotes Mannheim on the role of parliamentary sovereignty: "The only way (*sic*) in which a planned society differs from that of the nineteenth century is that more and more

[36]On the reviews see Meja and Stehr (1990). See also Baehr (2013).

[37]Daniel Friedrich List (1789–1846) developed a nationalist and protectionist theory of political economy.

[38]Gustav Friedrich Schmoller (1838–1917) was another prominent supporter of a nationalist political economy.

[39]Werner Sombart (1863–1941) was an important sociologist and political economist who supported National Socialism after 1933. The author of *Why There is No Socialism in the United States?* (1906).

spheres of social life and ultimately each and all of them, are subjected to state control. But if a few controls can be held in check by parliamentary sovereignty, so can many….in a democratic state sovereignty can be boundlessly strengthened by plenary powers without renouncing democratic control" (Hayek, 1944, 51). But, said Hayek, this belief fails to see the distinction between monitoring the execution of tasks and decisions about what those tasks should be; with the whole system tending towards an elective dictatorship "….in which the head of the government is from time to time confirmed in his position by popular vote, but where he has all the powers at his command to make certain that the vote will go in the direction he desires" (Hayek, 1944, 51). Hayek concluded: "It is the price of democracy that the possibilities of conscious control are restricted to the fields where true agreement exists and that in some fields things must be left to chance" (Hayek, 1944, 51).

Hayek wrote also of his concern for the potential effect of a comprehensive system of state planning on the legal protection of individual liberty and choice. He said: "Nothing distinguishes more clearly conditions in a free country from those in a country under arbitrary government than the observance in the former of the great principles known as the Rule of Law" (Hayek, 1944, 54) and how these may be regarded by an 'elective dictatorship.' It should be noted also that both *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (1940) and *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) were published at a time when both the political caste and the general public (of all social classes) were conditioned in favour of planning by the economic and social circumstances of the war. At the time, Mannheim's book was read much more widely and appreciated than Hayek's rejoinder, although the latter was to become a key text for a later neo-liberalism.

In 1949, another Austrian expatriate, the philosopher Karl Popper, criticised Mannheim for what he regarded as the methodological error of *historicism*. This was in a series of articles published eventually: *The Poverty of Historicism* (Popper, 1949/1957). This had and still has a significant academic influence, but passed unnoticed by the general public. By *historicism* Popper meant belief in historical determinism, in historical laws of development superior to individual agency.[40] He found this in Plato, Hegel, Marx, and their followers and believed it used to justify a totalitarian ideology that included an holistic or utopian social engineering. He distinguished this from piecemeal reform of social ills. He says of Mannheim's *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (1940): "This book is the most elaborate exposition of a holistic and historicist programme known to me and is therefore singled out for criticism" (Popper, 1957, 67n2). Popper regarded such a programme as utopian, noting that 'Mannheim's Chapter 9 is called "The Problem of Transforming Man" (Popper, 1957, 79n). He also cites Mannheim as claiming that: 'There is no longer a choice "between planning and not planning," but only a choice "between good planning and bad" (Popper, 1957, 75n1).

On methodology, Popper cited Mannheim, not unlike Comte, as distinguishing three 'levels' in the development of thought: (1) trial and error or chance discovery (2) invention (3) planning. He commented scathingly:" I am so far from agreeing with his doctrine that the trial and error method (1) appears to me to approach the method of science more closely than any of the other 'levels.' An additional reason for considering the holistic approach to social science as pre-scientific is that it contains an element of perfectionism. Once we realize, however, that we

[40]See also Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies* published in 1945.

cannot make heaven on earth but can only improve matters a little, we also realize that we can only improve them little by little" (Popper, 1957, 75n3).[41] Citing Mannheim, Popper claimed that the holist believed that "the power of the State is bound to increase until the State becomes nearly identical with society" (Popper, 1957, 79) and pointed out that this formula was nearly identical to one by Carl Schmitt (Popper, 1957, 79n3).[42]

Popper noted that Mannheim wrote of: "The layman who observes the social world intelligently understands events primarily by the unconscious use of such *principia media"* by which he meant "particular principles which obtain only in a certain epoch." These may then be abstracted and generalised (Popper, 1957, 101, n2). Popper's view was that more general theories could be obtained by abstraction from regularities of habits or legal procedures which appeared to constitute Mannheim's *principia media*. Popper also argued: "What the 'sociology of knowledge' overlooks is just the sociology of knowledge—the social or public character of science: it overlooks the fact that the inter-subjectivity of sciences and its institutions for the dissemination of and discussion of new ideas is the safeguard of scientific objectivity. They also impose a mental discipline upon the individual scientist" (Popper, 1957, 157).

Such criticism had obvious implications for Mannheim's sociology of knowledge and education policies derived from it.[43] We consider here Karl Mannheim's contribution to the sociology of education according to his colleagues, W.A.C Stewart, who prepared the publication of *An Introduction to the Sociology of Education* (1962), and Jean Floud,[44] the Institute of Education, University of London. In a fair-minded, even sympathetic account of Mannheim's life and work, Stewart says: "Education was, from his point of view, a social science. It was a synoptic study for pursuing which collected and collated data from many different fields" (Stewart, 1953, 112). This was typical of Mannheim's eclecticism and indeed pragmatism, a similarity with the American educator John Dewey[45] that Stewart notes, and which was accompanied by the influence of Sir Fred Clarke. Stewart notes of Mannheim: "The kind of school he seems to envisage is of the Dewey stamp" (Stewart, 1953, 109). He cites Mannheim's much-quoted passage from *Man and Society* (1940): 'Sociologists do not regard education solely as a means of realizing abstract ideas of culture, such as humanism or technical specialization, but as part of the process of influencing men and women. Education can only be understood when we know for what society and for what social position the children are being educated' (Stewart, 1953, 105). Mannheim considered an élite intelligentsia to be the source of cultural life and standards and was surprised by what he regarded as a British disregard for theory and ideas. This

[41]Popper compared Mannheim to Ferdynand Zweig who in *The Planning of Free Societies* (1942) had answered "the question whether a planned or unplanned society is preferable by saying that this question does not arise, since it has been solved for us by the direction of the present historical development." (Popper, 1957, 75, n1). Ferdynand Zweig (1896–1888), a refugee from Nazism, was a Polish sociologist known for his studies of the British working class.

[42]Carl Schmitt (1888–1985) was a well-known German professor of jurisprudence and a Nazi.

[43]It is claimed that such criticism of Mannheim influenced Edward Shils, an American sociologist who, together with Louis Wirth, had translated *Ideology and Utopia* (1936) to turn against Mannheim's thought after 1945. This had implications for mass society theory. (See Pooley (2007).

[44]Jane Esther Floud (1915–2013), a student of Mannheim's at the London School of Economics, she was at the Institute of Education (1947–1962). She was later a Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford (1962–1972) and Principal, Newnham College, Cambridge (1972–1983).

[45]John Dewey (1859–1952), philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer.

conflicted with his Germanic philosophical education and explains some criticism of him. Yet, says Stewart, "….Mannheim went to the heart of democratic education-the education appropriate to the bulk of the population–"the lower strata'." He believed this required planning with the conscious aim of creating ''an educative society" (Stewart, 1953, 107). Yet, most of Mannheim's educational thinking came from the application of general principles and not from fieldwork in the schools as a sociological researcher. He was not, therefore, a 'practical teacher's thinker' (Stewart, 1953).

Finally, there are the views of Jean Floud, a student and colleague of Mannheim and later a prominent English sociologist of education. An important recent article considers these in the context of developments in the British sociology of education during the 1940s and the 1950s (Hammersley, 2024). This says that Floud compared Mannheim to Emile Durkheim in that both were concerned with social integration and social solidarity, rather than social change, let alone that of a radical or revolutionary kind; and this despite their specific historical circumstance and apparent difference in their approaches to social statics and social dynamics. They had in common an acute sense of crisis in Western society and social and political conservatism. (Hammersley, 2024).[46]

Floud, it is said, argued that: "[…] both men emerge as Utopians, and moreover, as Utopians of the Right. Durkheim favoured the inculcation through the formal agency of the schools and the teachers, as representatives of 'society,' of a new morality of social discipline. Mannheim favoured a Platonic solution of much broader sweep and imagination; the use by an intellectual elite of education as a 'social technique,' as 'a strategy,' for inducing in the masses the acceptance and introjection of a common set of values which would be the basis of social integration in a so-called 'democratic society' (Floud, 1963, p. 124)" (Hammersley, 2024, 3).

It is said: "Floud (1959, p. 43), suggests that Mannheim, like Durkheim, saw the sociologist as a 'good physician, supplying a correct diagnosis and prescribing remedies.' " (Hammersley, 2024, 4). And: "As Floud (1959, p. 41) comments, both aimed at reconciling 'revolutionary thought and romantic reaction'; in Mannheim's terms, reconciling utopia and ideology (Mannheim, 1936). Furthermore, both believed not just in the possibility and importance of social science, but also in a scientific ethics, politics, and pedagogy. They saw sociology as able to identify the proper ends as well as the means of education" (Hammersley, 2024, 4).

Hammersley considers this assessment, other criticisms of Mannheim's sociology, and Floud; 's own sociology of education concluding: "Some aspects of Floud's critique are questionable, but other points she makes are telling. The issues in dispute here are ones that continue to be of importance in the sociology of education, and in social science more generally" (Hammersley, 2024, 1).[47]

CONCLUSION

Karl Mannheim was an important member of a distinguished Hungarian intellectual diaspora after the First World War and the communist revolution in Hungary in 1919. He made the

[46]In Mannheim's case this was surely understandable given his experience of social and political collapse, first in Hungary and later in Germany.

[47]In a detailed discussion that cannot be repeated here. Hammersley is a notable recent commentator on Mannheim.

transition from philosophy to sociology during his time in the German Weimar Republic, especially when at the University of Frankfurt. He was prolific in publications notably on German conservatism and his innovative work on the effect of generational differences in attitudes to significant historical events, values, and subsequent political behaviour. *Ideology and Utopia*, probably Mannheim's best-known work, was published first in German in 1929 and translated to English in 1935, by which time he was a refugee in England from Nazi Germany. Translations of his other German publications followed, although often only posthumously.

The final stage of Mannheim's intellectual odyssey comprised the thirteen years that he spent in England, teaching sociology at the London School of Economics and, albeit briefly, at the University of London's Institute of Education. He was again prolific, chiefly of essays that were published later as book collections, often posthumously. In these essays he made important contributions to the sociology of knowledge and culture, to the relatively new subject of the sociology of education, and to the importance of planning in a democratic society, the last being his contribution to the debate on the social reconstruction that would be necessary following the end of the Second World War. This influenced the Labour Party's victory in the 1945 General Election.

Mannheim was ultimately a conservative democrat whose object was social cohesion and who rejected fascism and Stalinist communism as inimical to freedom and civilisation. Paradoxically, he was also convinced of the necessity for planning given the complexity of modern societies; and was eclectic in using theory in support of this. He argued that sociology and the social sciences generally should play a key role in public policy through the disinterested advice of independent academics and other so-called 'free-floating' intellectuals. Mannheim argued also for the expansion of public education as enhancing the capacity of citizens to understand and debate public policy options, seeing this as key to a healthy democratic society, both nationally and internationally (Whitty, 1997). These implied a rational detachment and abstraction that is utopian.

Mannheim believed also in the importance of moral values in public life. In England, his association with the Christian discussion group *The Moot* was an example of this and showed a growing social conservatism in Mannheim's thinking that remains relatively unexplored.[48] Mannheim believed that the collapse of shared values in Europe following the First World War had been crucial to the rise of authoritarian and totalitarian states that had replaced rational thinking with irrational, emotional, and violent politics. These views were shared by many concerned with the problems of international post-war reconstruction, especially in Europe (Morgan, 2025).

It explains Mannheim's continuing influence after he died in 1946, enhanced by the posthumous publication of work hitherto unknown to an Anglophone readership. This is shown in journal articles as well as in the full-length studies noted earlier.[49] Interest in Mannheim's ideas then faded although there has been a recent revival. The essay 'The Problem of Generations' is an example (Mannheim, 1928/1952), relevant today given the interest in birth cohorts such as the Baby Boomers, Millennials, and Generation Z. Again, as noted, there is a renewed interest in Mannheim's concept of rational and democratic political education and the possibilities of a

[48]Eva Gabor's edited collection of Mannheim's selected correspondence would he valuable to such an attempt (Gabor, 2003).

[49]A comprehensive review of journal articles has not been attempted here.

'Third Way' given the problems of mass society and the emergence of illiberal populisms, and deformed democracies in Europe, in the United States, and elsewhere; accompanied by prejudice such as the resurgence of antisemitism (Canta, 2023; Hammersley, 2021, 2023, 2024). This includes fresh utopian optimism about the possibilities of Mannheim's thought for global citizenship education (Yamada, 2023).

However, Mannheim's sociology was an Eurocentric one concerned necessarily with the historical circumstances in which he made his intellectual odyssey and, while no less utopian, this led him towards social conservatism.[50] Again, his eclecticism led him into antinomy. Nevertheless, despite his utopianism, Mannheim's commitment to social integration and democratic politics enhanced by a conscientious and disinterested social science is an example that is relevant today.[51]

Funding and conflict of interest: There was no funding or conflict of interest in the preparation of this article.

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[50]See Kettler, Meja and Stehr (1984b).

[51]See Rantanen (2024) for the most recent interpretation of Mannheim's sociology.

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