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The Politics of American Sociologists

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Sociology has recently been subject to a severe critique by Alvin Gouldner (1970), who has repeated and sought to document the charge that the theoretical orientations fostered by Talcott Parsons carry conservative implications and have been dominant within the field. Such arguments now fall on fertile soil. A large number, especially among the younger and more left-wing sociologists, echo the claim that the major trends in the field sustain a conservative view of society and are basically biased against radical social change. The caucus of left-wing sociologists, the Sociology Liberation Movement, has been perhaps the most aggressive and critical among those leftist academics within various professional associations (Brown 1970; Roach 1970; Nicolaus 1969).

At the same time, however, as Gouldner himself has noted, one observes "the prominent role of young sociologists in current student rebellions" (Gouldner 1970, p. 10). Sociology has provided more support for student militancy than any other discipline. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who was himself a student of sociology at the University of Paris-Nanterre (one of the few institutions at the time in France which had a full-blown sociology department), asserts that "student agitation since 1960, abroad as in France, has been rife among sociologists far more than among other social scientists and philosophers. . . . The case was similar in the U.S.A., in France, in Germany, and also in Poland and Czechoslovakia" (Cohn-Bendit and Cohn-Bendit 1968, p. 47). On the other "side," David Riesman has lamented that "the field is becoming so politicized it's hard to bring sober people into it. Sociology is the soft underbelly [of the academy which is] the soft underbelly of society. It is interesting that all over the world student revolutionists have been led by sociologists; from Tokyo to the Free University of Berlin, sociologists have been the vanguard" (Riesman and Harris 1969, p. 63).

Long before the rise of the contemporary New Left, moreover, German sociology stood out as a leftist discipline amidst the general conservatism and even right-wing sentiment of professors in the Weimar period (Eschenburg 1965). There is, then, at least a superficial conflict between Gouldner's charge of ascendant conservative orientations in sociology and the picture of the field as the most activist and change oriented in academe. We shall here try to unravel the sources of this contradiction by examining

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the impressive body of survey data that explores the actual political views of sociologists.

ATTITUDES TOWARD NATIONAL POLITICS

In the 1950s and 1960s, a number of surveys of the views of social scientists—on civil liberties, party identification and voting behavior, and on politics generally—showed sociology to be among the most liberal fields in academe. The national survey of social scientists (1955) under the direction of Paul Lazarsfeld and Wagner Thielens found sociologists to be more disposed to vote for liberal and left candidates such as Truman, Wallace, and Thomas in 1948, and Stevenson in 1952 (Lazarsfeld and Thielens 1958). Along with social psychologists, sociologists were the most opposed to firing faculty for membership in the Communist party and were most likely to think of themselves as left of the rest of the faculty (table 1).

Another series of studies made between 1959 and 1964 found sociologists in the vanguard on several different measures of liberalism. Spaulding and Turner reported that sociologists (78%) identified as Democrats slightly more often than political scientists, historians, and psychologists, and much more than physical and biological scientists (for example, botanists 50%) and the applied fields (engineers, 27%) (Spaulding and Turner 1968). This support of Democrats reflects a generally liberal to left orientation. Using a 14-item index to measure the liberal-conservative dimension, only 12% of sociologists emerged as conservatives compared with 51% of botanists, 61% of geologists, and 66% of engineers. Similar findings which placed sociologists in the forefront of other disciplines were reported by Ladd in a study of academics who signed newspaper statements opposed to the Vietnam War and in questionnaire responses of a small sample of social scientists who signed such advertisements. The sociologists among them were most disposed to favor student activism (Ladd 1969, 1970).

This picture of the politics of sociologists, based on limited samples, may now be elaborated through an analysis of data from a comprehensive survey of 60,000 academics.¹ The questionnaire contained more than 300 items of information covering social background, professional activities and achievements, and opinions about issues and controversies ranging from those exclusively within the academy to matters of national and

¹ This is a massive survey of college faculty conducted in the spring of 1969 with the financial support of the Carnegie Commission and the United States Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. We wish to acknowledge our debt to Dr. Clark Kerr, chairman of the Carnegie Commission, Professor Martin Trow of the University of California, Berkeley, who directed the administration of the survey, and to their colleagues. The interpretations expressed in this publication are, of course, solely our responsibility.

TABLE 1

POLITICAL POSITIONS OF AMERICAN SOCIAL SCIENTISTS, BY DISCIPLINE
(LAZARFELD-THIELENS DATA; AS PERCENTAGES OF *N*)*

	All Fields (<i>N</i> = 2,451)	Sociology (<i>N</i> = 405)	Social Psychology (<i>N</i> = 141)	Political Science (<i>N</i> = 384)	History (<i>N</i> = 681)	Economics (<i>N</i> = 565)	Geography (<i>N</i> = 160)
Are you more liberal or more conservative than most of the faculty here [respondent's university]?							
More liberal	39	49	43	42	37	37	22
Same	39	36	38	33	39	41	50
More conservative	12	6	10	15	12	13	17
Don't know	9	8	9	9	11	9	11
Should an admitted Communist teaching in a college be fired?							
Yes	46	38	38	46	51	43	61
No	36	42	48	32	31	39	23
Don't know	18	19	14	22	18	17	16
1948 Vote†							
Dewey	28	19	24	27	32	28	28
Truman	63	70	62	66	59	66	63
Wallace	4	6	9	2	3	4	4
Thurmond	1	1	...	1	1	...	1
Other (mainly Socialist)	4	5	...	4	4	...	4
1952 Vote†							
Eisenhower	34	26	42	27	33	36	61
Stevenson	65	73	55	73	67	63	39
Others	1	1	3

* The data in this table were obtained from a secondary analysis of the data set made available to us by the Bureau of Applied Social Research of Columbia University.

† Nonvoters excluded from the computations.

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international affairs. Just 1.7% (1,036 persons) of the respondents are sociologists, which is about 20% of those teaching full time in sociology in American colleges and universities.²

In general, these data indicate that while liberal to left propensities are characteristic of all social scientists, there is a progression to the right from the social sciences to the humanities to the natural sciences, and an even stronger progression to the right by the applied fields with a close connection to economic enterprises—business administration, engineering, and agriculture. While they closely resemble their associates in the other social sciences on national questions, sociologists are almost invariably somewhat to the left. For example, only 6% describe their political views as conservative, as do 12% of all social scientists, 27% of the entire faculty, 41% in engineering, and 50% in agriculture.³ In the 1968 election, only 13% of the sociologists voted for Nixon, and in 1964 only 6% opted for Goldwater. Among all social scientists, support for these candidates was slightly higher, 19% in 1968 and 10% in 1964. On the other hand, Nixon received the votes of 41% in the natural sciences, 45% in medical schools, 56% in business administration, 58% in engineering, and 62% in agriculture.

When the survey was conducted in early 1969, about one-third of the sociologists supported the immediate withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam while another half believed the government should decrease its involvement and encourage the formation of a coalition government in South Vietnam (83% for both), compared with 26% and 49% for all social scientists. These figures should be contrasted with others who favored either immediate withdrawal or the encouragement of a coalition government: 73% in English, 67% in physics, 58% in chemistry, 55% in education, 44% in business, and 36% in agriculture.

The extent to which sociologists differ even from other social scientists in commitment to a liberal-left position is pointed up by the data in table 2. Three scales—"Liberalism-Conservatism," "Campus Activism," and "Black Support"—comprise pertinent items that cover an immense amount of ground, from Vietnam to the hiring of black faculty, yet it is striking that the various disciplines occupy the same relative position in each.⁴

² Sample and weighting procedures allow us to generalize from the survey's respondents to the entire full-time faculty in the United States. For a complete description of the sampling and weighting procedures and for a copy of the questionnaire with marginals, see Bayer (1970).

³ The question to which they responded was: "How would you characterize yourself politically at the present time?" The alternatives posed were "left," "liberal," "middle of the road," "moderately conservative," and "strongly conservative."

⁴ The dimensions used for analysis were derived from a factor analysis and orthogonal rotation. The basis for the scales is described briefly elsewhere (Ladd and Lipset 1971*b*, pp. 137-38). The texts of the questions in the scales, and the construction of

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TABLE 2

FACULTY POSITIONS ON CAMPUS ACTIVISM, BLACK SUPPORT, STUDENT ROLE,
AND LIBERALISM-CONSERVATISM SCALES BY FIELD (AS PERCENTAGES OF *N*)

Field	Liberalism- Conservatism Scale— Percentage Very Liberal and Liberal	Campus Activism Scale—Percentage Strongly Supportive and Moderately Supportive*	Black Support Scale—Percentage Strongly Supportive and Moderately Supportive
Sociology (1,033)	72	72	58
Social work (510)	71	60	62
Political science (1,267)	61	63	49
Psychology (2,103)	62	59	48
Anthropology (421)	64	55	41
Economics (1,490)	57	52	40
All social sciences (7,122)	63	61	48
Humanities (9,546)	55	52	42
Law (611)	51	46	38
Fine arts (3,475)	45	43	41
All fields† (52,364)	41	40	34
Education (3,277)	32	39	37
Physical sciences (7,599)	38	35	28
Medicine (2,384)	38	34	31
Biological sciences (4,403)	35	34	28
Business (2,080)	20	25	21
Engineering (4,165)	24	24	21
Agriculture (1,348)	13	16	19

NOTE.—*N* in parentheses.
 * Includes the percentage of the field with scores in the range of the two most supportive (liberal) quintiles for the faculty as a whole.
 † Some 7,664 respondents did not answer the question, "What is your principal teaching field?" and are excluded from the total. Included in the total are some fields not shown in this table.

RELEVANCE OF SURVEY ANALYSIS TO THE GOULDNER CRITICISM

Some radical critics of sociology, who are generally impatient with the use of survey data to deal with political questions, may argue that these data do not bear on the central theoretical emphases in the discipline. They contend that the dominant theme of sociology since World War II has been functional analysis (an approach inherently concerned with problems of system maintenance), that adherents of functional analysis have controlled the major positions in the field and led it away from social problems and involvement in social change. These criticisms have been most

each scale are available on request. We computed the raw scores for all 60,000 faculty members in the Carnegie sample on each of the scales—from most liberal to most conservative or from the most supportive of student activism and of the demands of blacks, to the most opposed—and then collapsed the raw scores into five approximately equal categories: that 20% of the faculty with the most liberal (supportive) responses, on down to the 20% most conservative (opposed). If the percentage in a field classified as very liberal exceeds 20%, then a larger proportion of this field is very liberal than of the whole professoriate.

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definitively set forth in Professor Gouldner's book, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*.

Therefore, in seeking to evaluate the worth of surveys as a means of understanding "domain assumptions," it should be noted that the largest single such survey of American sociologists was conducted by Gouldner and his then doctoral student, J. T. Sprehe, in 1964. They collected data from 3,400 members of the American Sociological Association (ASA) on 89 attitude items plus assorted other questions dealing with politics and the profession. Gouldner (1970) has defended investigations such as his in terms we would second completely:

Some methodological purists might object that such questions cannot be answered, or are "meaningless," or are lacking in specificity. Basically, however, such an objection either rests on the assumption that sociologists are fundamentally different from other human beings and do not hold the same kind of vague and "unproven" beliefs that others do, or else it wishes to blur the issue, which is an empirical one, with the irrelevant notion that sociologists *should* not have such beliefs. But, if our approach needs any defense, it was one of the elemental findings of our research that sociologists seem to have no more difficulty than anyone else in answering such broad questions, and, like other men, they do indeed hold the kind of beliefs that I have characterized as domain assumptions. [P. 36]

Gouldner relies heavily on the responses to one of the 89 attitude items to justify his contention that the work of Talcott Parsons has been predominant:

In the United States, where I believe Parsons' influence has reached its apogee, his work retains a considerable audience, and its standpoint still commands considerable respect. Thus, in the 1964 survey that Timothy Sprehe and I conducted among American sociologists . . . we asked these men to express their views on the following statement: "Functional analysis and theory still retain great value for contemporary sociology." Some eighty percent of the responding sociologists expressed agreement with it in varying degrees of intensity. We must thus center our discussions of the present state of Academic Sociology on Talcott Parsons' theory. [P. 168]

It is unfortunate that although the Gouldner-Sprehe survey is the largest ever conducted of sociologists, very little from it has ever been published. Apart from the one variable that Gouldner mentions, the only publication was a short article which appeared soon after the data were collected, reporting mainly on the marginals for most of the attitude items (Gouldner and Sprehe 1965). In Sprehe's dissertation (1967), he factor analysed the 89 attitude items. An examination of the marginals for various indices measuring these factors supports the conclusions of other surveys that, as a group, sociologists hold leftist positions. For example, he finds the "sample as a whole scored towards the radical side on the Index of Conservatism-Radicalism" (p. 321). Respondents were asked to list the three

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most pressing social problems facing the United States and whether “the solution would require basic change in American social structure and values.” As of 1964, race relations was perceived as the most pressing issue, followed by unemployment, mental health, and urban problems. “Only 13.3% felt little change in basic structure or values would be necessary to solve these problems; 10% were at the midpoint, 76.7% scored on the side of ‘Basic Change in Structure and Values’” (pp. 264–65).

Replies to statements about sociology suggest, moreover, that despite agreement by 82% that “functional analysis and theory still retain great value for contemporary sociology,” the large majority of sociologists do not accept a Parsonian view of the world or of sociology, nor do they define functionalism in conservative terms.

From the data in table 3 it appears that most sociologists in 1964 found merit in functional analysis, in focusing on social problems, in the use of mathematics, and in humanistic approaches. Over three-quarters of them also looked for basic changes in the “structure and values” of society to solve major social problems. Contradicting what one might assume would

TABLE 3

OPINIONS OF AMERICAN SOCIOLOGISTS (GOULDNER-SPREHE STUDY, 1964)
(%)

Item	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
Functional analysis and theory still retain great value for contemporary sociology	82.4	7.7	9.9
Some of the most powerful theories in sociology have emerged from the study of social problems	75.6	12.5	11.9
Emphasis on methodology too often diverts sociologists from a study of society to the problem of how to study society	61.0	10.4	28.6
The coming generation of sociologists will need much more training in the use of higher mathematics	80.0	7.5	12.5
Sociology should be as much allied with the humanities as with the sciences	58.0	9.9	32.1
The problems of modern society are so complex that only planned change can be expected to solve them	62.2	11.4	26.4
By and large, social problems tend to correct themselves without planned intervention	7.7	6.4	85.9
Many modern social institutions are deeply unstable and tenuous	61.0	14.8	24.2
The sociologist, like any other intellectual, has the right and duty to criticize contemporary society	91.1	4.4	4.5
One part of the sociologist's role is to be a critic of contemporary society	70.6	10.0	19.4

SOURCE.—Sprehe 1967, pp. 235, 236, 241, 247, 258, 259, 221.

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be the beliefs of professionals committed to Gouldner's image of functionalism, a large majority thought that many modern social institutions "are deeply unstable and tensionful," and that a sociologist should be "a critic of contemporary society." If Parsonian sociology has indeed been as conservative (system-maintenance oriented) as Gouldner argues, how could it have been so influential in a profession so concerned with system instabilities and tensions and with the need for radical change?

One possible answer is that the dominant sociologists—those who controlled the prestigious departments, who secured the largest research funds, who led the ASA—were indeed adherents of Parsonian sociology, did hold conservative functionalist beliefs, and did oppose a political activist, social change orientation. Dominant minorities clearly wield much more social power than does majority opinion as recorded in opinion polls. And the Gouldner-Sprehe survey did make this assumption about sociology. Sprehe observed that "there [is] a group of persons who informally dominate any social system." He sought to identify "dominant groupings within sociology and to examine their ideological leanings" (p. 150). Respondents were classified as members of the "dominant group" by such criteria as whether they came from a prestigious department, were employed in a large secular university, were tenured, had significant sums of research money, published often in professional journals, held office in professional associations. Sprehe states that the study began with the hypothesis that "dominant" sociologists would show positive orientations toward an emphasis on "Scientific Method," "Value Freeness" in social research, "Professionalization," and "Self-Image." Conversely, the "dominants" would tend "to score low on Optimism and Radicalism." That is, the more prestigious and highly rewarded sociologists should be more conservative, less optimistic about the possibilities of social reform, more supportive of a scientific view of the discipline, of the idea that social science research can and should be value free, and for establishing formal professional criteria for membership in the discipline. The dominants also "were expected to score low on Societal Roles" (involvement in action groups) because "those espousing the ideology of dominant sociology [should] engage principally in the work of sociology itself and not personally concern themselves with political or social action" (pp. 151–54).

Unfortunately, the results of the analysis did not confirm these hypotheses. The one indicator of "dominance" which was most frequently correlated with conservative academic and political views was academic rank, but, as Sprehe noted, this variable is strongly associated with age. Repeatedly, the precise opposite of what the investigators predicted occurred: As some of Sprehe's conclusions make clear, the dominants held the more left-of-center positions:

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Respondents from smaller schools tended to hold the concept of applied sociology in disfavor while those from larger schools scored higher on Societal Role. . . . In general, it appeared that the more research funds a respondent claimed to be responsible for, the higher he scored on Societal Role. . . . Those who participated heavily in professional associations tended to score high on Societal Role. . . . The higher the score on Societal Role, the lower the predicted score on dominance measures. For the variables, Prestige School of Origin, Size of School, Research Funds Responsible for, and the Indexes of Periodical Publication and Professional Participation, the . . . hypothesis appears disconfirmed. For the first three variables named immediately above, the relationship is apparently opposite to that predicted. . . . In summary, as regards general, diffuse beliefs concerning the role of sociology in solving society's problems, the over-all relationships seem to be: the higher the score on dominance measures the . . . higher the factor score. [Pp. 301-3]

The factors of "Value Freeness" and "Pure Sociology" were related inconsistently or inconclusively to the indicators of dominance, but "the more research funds a respondent is responsible for, the more likely he was to score low on Value Freeness. The statistical relationship was the strongest for any considered of this factor" (Sprehe 1967, p. 305). The investigators had posited that professionalization, that is, desire to limit membership in the ASA and set up formal qualifications, would be correlated with indicators of dominance within the profession. Again, Sprehe says "the . . . hypothesis . . . was largely disconfirmed." There was, in fact, some indication that low-status and aspiring sociologists ("respondents from non-prestige schools" and "nontenured faculty") were "more in favor of professionalizing sociology," while curiously, "the greater the amount of research funds a respondent had, the more likely he was to score low on Professionalization" (p. 314). "The . . . hypothesis for the Index of Radicalism stipulated that the dominant sociologists would be low scorers." This was also "largely disconfirmed" (pp. 312-13). The only measure of dominance which correlated positively with radicalism was the age-related factor of academic rank. With respect to possession of research grants, "radicalism tended to increase . . . as the amount of research funds grew larger, except for the very highest category" (pp. 327-33).

Since increasing age was generally accompanied by a more conservative position on academic and political issues, controlling for age should reduce any association of the dominance indicators with a conservative position and enhance the relationships with a liberal, radical, or activist position. In the body of his dissertation, Sprehe did not deal with the age variable, but in a later brief chapter some age-controlled relationships were presented. For the most part, these relationships strengthened the associations between dominance and an activist, reformist view of sociology and society—particularly among sociologists over 40 (pp. 446-51).

These unpublished results of the Gouldner-Sprehe study present a

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picture of sociology that is consistent with other surveys, including the recent Carnegie one. At the same time, their findings sharply contradict many of the assumptions about dominant trends within the discipline which Gouldner uses to justify his detailed polemical criticisms of Parsons.⁵

The 1964 survey was explicitly designed to locate the “domain assumptions” of sociologists. Yet all through *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970) Gouldner continues to identify as the “domain assumptions” of sociology positions which, in 1964, he had found were not adhered to by the majority of sociologists and were particularly rejected by the most productive and most rewarded scholars.

It may be worth noting that a much smaller “survey” of “30 outstanding sociologists at . . . Columbia, Harvard, Boston, Brandeis, Chicago, University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and University of California in Berkeley” who were interviewed in depth in 1963–64 by a Yugoslav sociologist, Mihailo Popovich, yielded results highly congruent with the Gouldner-Sprehe findings. Twenty-two of the 30 who presumably were all among Gouldner’s dominants did not think that there is any “general theory which is dominating or prevailing in today’s American sociology.” When asked “which problems are among the most important in contemporary sociology,” the largest number (10) mentioned “social change”; next in order of frequency (five) was “social problems of economic development.” Only three mentioned “problems of social integration.” Most strikingly, when these 30 “outstanding sociologists” were asked, before the recent wave of campus activism and revived left ideology, about the relationship of Marxism to other sociological theories, most found a considerable overlap in approach and concerns. As Popovich (1966) reported, “it is a significant fact that almost all of the interviewed sociologists think that there are some ‘common points’ between Marxist theory and non-Marxist sociological theories. These common points concern not only certain categories or principles, but also some problems. As is pointed out above, problems of social change and economic development are mentioned the most as *the* important issues of modern sociology. Are not they the problems with which Marxist sociologists mainly deal, at least on a theoretical level?” (p. 135).

⁵ Some readers may think that we are unfair in identifying Gouldner with a study whose primary product is an unpublished (though publicly available) manuscript written by J. T. Sprehe. We should note, therefore, that Gouldner refers to this study in the following terms in his book: “In a study of the American Sociological Association, Timothy Sprehe and I polled its 6,762 members”; “the national opinion survey of American sociologists conducted by Timothy Sprehe and myself”; “Thus in the 1964 survey that Timothy Sprehe and I conducted among American sociologists, . . . we asked . . . the following”; “The findings of the national survey of American sociologists that Timothy Sprehe and I conducted in 1964. In this survey we sought”; “As previously mentioned, the national survey of American sociologists conducted by Timothy Sprehe and myself asked them” (Gouldner 1970, pp. 24, 36, 168, 247, 377).

OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE GOULDNER CRITICISM

Since the Gouldner-Sprehe survey did not inquire directly about the influence of Talcott Parsons or of any other sociologist, Gouldner sought indirect measures of Parsons's impact to justify his criticism of the work of a man whom he considers "more Delphically obscure, more Germanically opaque, more confused and confusing by far than . . . any other sociologist considered here or, indeed . . . any whom I know" (p. 200). In fact, statistical data on the scholarly influence of Parsons and other leading functionalists do exist in studies of the frequency with which various individuals are cited in the literature of the field. All such surveys indicate that Parsons and Merton are invariably the two most cited modern sociologists (Oromaner 1969, 1970; Bain 1962). Though these indicators of intellectual influence are ignored by Gouldner, other supposed evidence of Parsons's organizational or political control are given, namely that some of his students have played "dominant roles as officers of the American Sociological Association and as editors of its journals" (Gouldner 1970, p. 168). In fact, an examination of the editors of the *American Sociological Review* and of the contests for president of the ASA since World War II suggests that Gouldner is mistaken. Only one editor, Neil Smelser, was a student of Parsons or any other exponent of functionalism. Most, in fact, were severe critics of the functionalist approach, as the following list indicates:

- 1946–48, Robert C. Angell
- 1948–51, Maurice R. Davie
- 1952–55, Robert E. L. Faris
- 1955–57, Leonard Broom
- 1958–60, Charles H. Page
- 1960–62, Harry Alpert
- 1963–65, Neil Smelser
- 1966–68, Norman B. Ryder
- 1969–present, Karl F. Schuessler

The results of the contests for the presidency of the association also challenge the view that the rank-and-file membership followed Parsons. The first two times he ran for the presidency he was defeated by Louis Wirth and by Franklin Frazier, both of whom represented a clear social-problems, nonfunctionalist viewpoint. Parsons defeated Thorstein Sellin, the criminologist, in his third effort. His close friend and Harvard colleague, Samuel Stouffer, was beaten on his first try by Robert Cooley Angell but was elected in 1953 over Florian Znaniecki. A direct confrontation in 1953 between a functionalist, Robert Merton, and an SSSP (Society for Study of Social Problems) proponent, Herbert Blumer, produced a victory for Blumer. Merton was elected the following year, followed in succession

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by two other students of Parsons, Robin Williams and Kingsley Davis. These contests, from 1954 to 1957, were the high point for the functionalists of the Columbia-Harvard school. Then Paul Lazarsfeld, regarded by critics as an exponent of a value-free or “scientistic” approach, was twice defeated, by Howard Becker and Ellsworth Faris. Lazarsfeld won on his third try against the same Thorstein Sellin who had been beaten by Parsons. Another prominent functionalist student of Parsons, Wilbert Moore, also had two electoral defeats, from Everett Hughes and Pitirim Sorokin, before finally winning against Philip Hauser in 1964. However one interprets these results, they certainly do not add up to domination of the field by Parsons and the “pure sociology” approaches allegedly represented by Harvard and Columbia sociologists.

In spite of the fact that Parsons’s students and collaborators have not played “dominant roles as officers of the American Sociological Association and as editors of its journals, “there can be no question that Parsons has had more impact on sociology than any other modern scholar. Yet the Gouldner-Sprehe survey and our own findings in the Carnegie study sharply challenge Gouldner’s conclusions that a commitment to functionalism, and particularly to Parsons’s version of it, has served to conserve the discipline. It might even be reasonable, with the needed research, to question Gouldner’s contention that as a result of lifelong antisocialist orientations, Parsons occupied himself with undermining Marxist and other radical thought. Unfortunately, Gouldner has done little or no serious research on Parsons’s early academic career and seriously misinterprets some of his initial publications and scholarly activities.

Far from being an apolitical or conservative student, at Amherst College Parsons was a member of the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), a direct ancestor of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) —a membership which various histories of the league and of its student affiliates have proudly noted over the years. Both SLID and SDS were formed as affiliates of the adult league. Parsons published his first article in what was the major left student magazine of the 1920s, *The New Student* (Cutler and Parsons 1923). In a joint article with another Amherst undergraduate, Addison Cutler (later a Communist intellectual who published frequently in the Marxist magazine, *Science and Society*), Parsons discussed the factors related to the firing of Alexander Meiklejohn, the liberal academic and reformist president of Amherst. He noted that “there was a very definite split in the faculty . . . [among] Old Guard, New Guard, middle ground men” (Cutler and Parsons 1923, pp. 6–7). Parsons subsequently went abroad to study at the London School of Economics (LSE) in part because of its image as a center of socialist scholarship.

It is interesting that although Gouldner does not refer to Parsons’s undergraduate activities or his choice of the LSE for study, he does

analyze in some detail Parsons's first scholarly paper as part of his effort to show that Parsons was always fighting socialism. To demonstrate that Parsons's early interest in three "anticapitalist" thinkers (Marx, Sombart, and Weber) represented a defense of the established order, Gouldner (1970, pp. 178–84) says that "Parsons believed modern society could be gradually perfected *within* the framework of capitalism: that is 'on the basis which we now have'" (p. 183). It is clear from the original article of Parsons that this is not so. In the context of criticizing Sombart and agreeing with Marx, Parsons (1928) wrote: "There seems to be little reason to believe that it is not possible *on the basis which we now have* to build by a continuous process something more nearly approaching an ideal society. In any case the process of social change is certainly neither so radically discontinuous nor so radically determined by any 'principles' as Sombart would have us believe. *In the transition from capitalism to a different social system* surely many elements of the present would be built into the new order. This is precisely *what socialism wishes to do*, retaining all the technical progress of capitalism" (p. 653) (italics ours).

In his effort to identify the conservatism of the sociological interests of the young Parsons, Gouldner discusses his membership in the Pareto Circle, a seminar of faculty and graduate students which met regularly at Harvard from 1932 to 1934. Gouldner (1970, pp. 148–51) uses selective "guilt by association" to demonstrate that membership in the circle implied conservatism. By citing statements of L. J. Henderson, the chairman of the group, George Homans, and Crane Brinton, he presumably shows that each became interested in Pareto as an outgrowth of a conservative philosophy, and attributes their supposed motivations to Parsons as well.⁶ But while Henderson and Homans were political conservatives, other members of the circle were involved in liberal and even left-wing activities and associations. Brinton, for example, was an early member of the Harvard Teachers' Union, then under heavy attack as allegedly controlled by the Communists. Gouldner does not refer to the membership or politics of Henderson's senior colleague in the seminar, Charles P. Curtis, Jr., who subsequently wrote a book with Homans about Pareto. Although Curtis was a member of the Harvard Corporation (its governing board), he was quite surprisingly a "liberal and New Dealer," according to his coauthor. In his discussion of the circle, Gouldner notes that "also attending were R. K. Merton, Henry Murray, and Clyde Kluckhohn," but says nothing

⁶ Gouldner relies heavily for his information and quotations referring to the Pareto Circle on an article by Barbara S. Heyl (1968). This article is taken from a master's thesis written at Washington University which we have not read. It should be noted that Miss Heyl carefully differentiated the influence of Pareto on Henderson, Homans, and Brinton, from that on Parsons. She noted that Parsons "did not embrace the Paretan social system and equilibrium concepts as immediately or as completely as did the others" (p. 333).

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about their politics. Since all of them have been close collaborators of Parsons and belonged to the circle, an inquiry about their politics might have been fruitful.

The record seems clear that Robert Merton, as a young faculty member at Harvard, was deeply interested in assorted left-wing causes and ideas. One aspect of his Cambridge friendship pattern is reported in an autobiographical work by Granville Hicks, then a close friend of Merton's, a member of the English department, and deeply and publicly involved in the Communist party as its chief literary spokesman (Hicks 1965, pp. 170, 172, 174, 175). Merton and Hicks had been active in the Harvard Teachers' Union. Merton published one of his early papers on science in the Marxist journal, *Science and Society*, in 1939, and a subsequent eulogy of the magazine's longtime editor, Bernhard J. Stern, in 1957. As executive officer of the Columbia sociology department during the early 1950s, Merton played a major role in defending Stern against attacks stemming from Senator Joseph McCarthy. In 1952, the New York *Daily News* attacked Merton together with other Columbia sociologists, Robert MacIver and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, as "reds" and "pinks." Clyde Kluckhohn also had liberal to left sympathies, according to those who knew him. This may be seen from the fact that, among other things, he wrote two highly sympathetic reviews (1946, 1955) of books by Marxist scholars, Vernon Venable and Herbert Marcuse. His description of *Eros and Civilization* as a "stirring" and "significant" book brought Marcuse's work to general intellectual attention at a time (1955) when such praise of the work of Marxists in the mass media was rare. Henry Murray reports that as a young student of psychology he was totally "apolitical."

In citing some of the "leftist" links of some members of the Pareto Circle to counter Gouldner's attempt at "guilt by association," we are not trying to substitute a form of "absolution by association" that would be equally illogical and irrelevant. But the kind of quick imputation of political orientation by affiliation or friendships can be seen as meaningless by demonstrating how easy it is to find contradictory evidence of the kind on which the imputation is based. The conservative or leftist views of members of the Pareto Circle have no bearing on an attempt to characterize Talcott Parsons, nor do they help to explain why he joined George Homans and Robert Merton in the seminar.

It is worth noting in this connection that the principle of "guilt by association" was applied in the fifties to Samuel Stouffer, who was told when he appealed a denial of clearance by a federal agency that one of the negative facts on his record was his close personal association with Talcott Parsons. Lest this article become an exercise in correcting errors about Parsons's biography, we will leave things here in the hope that we have demonstrated that Gouldner's inferences from Parsons's career display

the same weakness as those he drew from survey data and the history of the leadership of the ASA. (Parenthetically, we would note that Gouldner was also in error [1970, p. 15] when he reported that C. Wright Mills “never became a full professor” as evidence that a radical outlook has blocked chances for academic rewards. As a matter of easily accessible fact, Mills became a full professor at Columbia in 1956.)

LEFT-OF-CENTER POLITICS OF THE INTELLECTUAL ELITE

In beginning their research with the assumption that the “dominants” would be more supportive of left views than the “rank and file” sociologists, Gouldner and Sprehe had apparently been unaware of earlier surveys which found that the most successful academics were seldom “conservative” in any accepted sense but were rather the most liberal or left-oriented faculty. The earliest studies of faculty religious beliefs conducted by James Leuba, a psychologist (1921, 1950) in 1913–14 and again in 1933 revealed that the more distinguished professors, both among natural and social scientists, were much more irreligious than their less eminent colleagues. Leuba sampled members of the ASA both times and found that academic members were more inclined to atheism or “liberal” religious beliefs than the nonacademic, and that the most creative sociologists (as judged by a panel) were the least religious. Only 19% of the “greater” sociologists reported a belief in God in 1913, by contrast to 29% of the “lesser” and 55% of the nonacademic members of the ASA (Leuba 1921, pp. 262–63). Although religious and political beliefs are clearly different, many investigations have shown that, among Americans, religious unbelief is associated with liberal to left political values.

The Lazarsfeld-Thielens study of social science opinion mentioned earlier found a clear relationship between scholarly productivity and propensity to vote Democratic, and to see themselves as further left in their views. Moreover, “the proportion of productive scholars rises as we move from the very conservative to the very . . . [liberal] respondents, with respect to opinions on academic freedom” (Lazarsfeld-Thielens 1958, pp. 17, 144–46). Secondary analysis of the data shows that the more productive sociologists are clearly to the left of those less involved with research and lower on indicators of achievement (table 4).

More recent studies support the same conclusion. Eitzen and Maranell (1968), in their national survey of party affiliation, found a comparable relationship (p. 150). Ladd (1969) showed that the signers of anti-Vietnam War petitions were quite disproportionately academics of higher rank and status. His findings for the faculty generally, have been confirmed for sociology in a study of the characteristics of the 1,300 who signed the

TABLE 4

POLITICAL POSITIONS OF SOCIOLOGISTS, BY ACADEMIC STANDING AND ACHIEVEMENTS
(LAZARSFELD-THIELENS STUDY; AS PERCENTAGES OF *N*)

Achievement of the Sociologist	Disagrees That a College Professor Who Is an Admitted Communist Should Be Fired	Considers Himself More Liberal than Most Faculty at His University
Number of publications:		
None (104)	33	42
Three or more (239)	46	50
Number of books published:		
None (258)	39	46
Some (145)	45	52
Number of papers delivered at professional meetings:		
None (109)	36	41
Three or more (185)	44	48
Index of personal academic status:*		
Low (131)	38	42
Medium (198)	41	47
High (76)	51	53

NOTE.—*N* in parentheses.

* The index is based upon highest degree held, whether dissertation was published, whether the respondent had held office in a professional society, and whether he had served as a consultant.

“Open Letter to President Johnson and Congress” in November 1967 opposing the Vietnam War: “The overrepresented signer is male, an ASA Fellow with a Ph.D., primarily engaged in research or teaching at an academic institution located in the Northeast. These characteristics hardly describe the younger, less professionally socialized, and more alienated member of the profession. Rather, they point to a signer who is well integrated into the profession and who signs from at least an objective position of security and strength” (Walum 1970, p. 163).

Our own 1969 Carnegie survey of the politics of academics, not surprisingly, reinforces the findings of previous investigations. The more scholarly and highly achieving faculty appear significantly more disposed to left-liberal views than the professoriate generally (Lipset and Ladd 1970, 1971*a*; Lipset 1972*a*). In addition, sociologists who had, in the 12 months preceding the 1969 survey, served as paid consultants to some federal agency or who had held federal grants were much more opposed to United States policies in Vietnam and more supportive of an immediate U.S. withdrawal than were the rank and file of the profession. Those receiving federal research grants gave more support in 1968 for left-wing third-party candidates than their colleagues who had not received grants and furnished much less backing for Richard Nixon’s candidacy. The reason for such

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TABLE 5

POLITICAL POSITIONS OF SOCIOLOGISTS, BY ACADEMIC STANDING AND ACHIEVEMENTS
(1969 CARNEGIE SURVEY; AS PERCENTAGES OF *N*)

	VERY LIBERAL AND LIBERAL, LIBERALISM- CONSERVATISM SCALE	FOR IM- MEDIATE U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM (SPRING 1969)	1968 VOTE		
			Left Candidates*	Humphrey	Nixon
Achievers (140)	85	48	8	90	2
Consultants (173)	80	40	8	85	7
All sociologists (1,036)	72	32	7	79	14
Research support:					
Received federal grants during last year (287)	82	43	8	86	5
No federal grants (722)	70	30	6	77	16
Teaching vs. research:					
Primarily committed to research (484) . .	83	39	9	82	8
Primarily committed to teaching (532) . .	68	28	6	77	17

NOTE.—*N* in parentheses.

* Includes Dick Gregory, Eldridge Cleaver, and the established minor parties of the left.

“curious” findings, of course, is that the federal government appoints as consultants and awards grants to a disproportionate number of high achievers—that segment of the academic community most disposed to left views. Achievers in sociology (defined in table 5 as those with five or more scholarly publications in the preceding two years and holding positions at major universities) are predominantly to the left of the general membership of the discipline on all measures of opinion on important issues.

Findings of a relationship between academic achievement and liberal social and academic views are all the more impressive if we recall the high correlation between age and opinions. More so than in extramural society, younger academics are much more liberal politically than their elders (table 6). Since older sociologists are more likely to have achieved “positions of dominance,” the older dominants should show up as even more liberal when compared with their age peers who have been less productive or less involved in research—as indeed is the case. Thus, according to the Carnegie data, among sociologists 50 years of age and older, of those who received a federal research grant during the year prior to the survey, 70% rate as liberal or very liberal by contrast to 48% of those who did not have a grant. Sixty-four percent of the older members who had five or more publications in the previous two years were liberal compared with 43% of

TABLE 6
 POLITICAL POSITIONS OF SOCIOLOGISTS, BY AGE STRATA
 (1969 CARNEGIE SURVEY; AS PERCENTAGES OF *N*)

Scale	Over 50 Years of Age (<i>N</i> = 205)	Aged 40-49 (<i>N</i> = 294)	Aged 30-39 (<i>N</i> = 358)	Under 30 Years of Age (<i>N</i> = 179)
Liberalism-conservatism:				
Very liberal and liberal	50	58	80	85
Conservative and very conservative	28	13	9	12
Percentage liberal minus percentage conservative	+22	+45	+71	+73
Campus activism:				
Strongly supportive and moderately supportive	54	70	77	86
Moderately opposed and strongly opposed	23	24	6	6
Percentage supportive minus percentage opposed	+31	+46	+71	+80
Black support:				
Strongly supportive and moderately supportive	24	56	58	70
Moderately opposed and strongly opposed	35	21	26	16
Percentage supportive minus percentage opposed	-11	+35	+32	+54

those who had not published. Older recipients of federal grants were more likely (36%) than those who had no government funds (24%) to favor immediate U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam, as of spring 1969. Clearly the "dominants," the men who supposedly controlled the field, were to the left of those who had lesser publication accomplishments and research resources.⁷

The association between academic status, left views, and propensity to be used as consultants or to receive grants from the federal government has affected the pattern of participation in assorted government-funded projects which have been under severe criticism from the left. Thus the ill-fated notorious Project Camelot (financed by the Department of the

⁷ It should be noted that the pattern varies somewhat with respect to opinion on campus controversies, relationships discussed in detail for the social sciences elsewhere. Many who are liberal or leftist on national and international issues, and who reject the idea that social science can be neutral, are not supportive of student activism or the demands for intramural student power. The antiestablishment-disposed, research-oriented faculty may be troubled by activist attacks on the research complex. But whatever factors are involved, it remains true that the correlations between academic achievement and left views do not hold up for campus issues (Ladd and Lipset 1971a).

Army to study “internal conflict” or revolution) was headed by the late Rex Hopper, a serious student and partisan of revolutions in Latin America, a man who was a strong public admirer of C. Wright Mills (Hopper 1964). Many of the sociologists who served the project have been active in assorted activist causes, a fact implicitly attested to by C. Wright Mills’s literary executor, who reports his concern about whether to deal with the subject because so many of those involved with Camelot “were former students of mine, while yet others were and remain colleagues and warm acquaintances” (Horowitz 1967, p. vi). (Parenthetically, it may be worth noting that three of the best-known radical spokesmen at Berkeley, Harvard, and M.I.T. have been long-term recipients of personal grants from the defense department. It is “bad form” to mention such facts about the far left, but seemingly proper for some on the left to invent such items about those they seek to discredit or intimidate.)

THE INTELLECTUAL AS SOCIAL CRITIC

The relative liberalism of the dominant in academe must be viewed as a manifestation of the general tendency of achieving intellectuals to support a politics of social criticism (Lipset and Dobson 1972). What factors, then, inherent in the social role of intellectuals result in their persistent position as critics of the larger society, in their fostering what Lionel Trilling (1965) has perceptively called the “adversary culture”?

Thomas Hobbes, writing in the *Behemoth* in the mid-17th century about the English revolution, noted that “the core of the rebellion as you have seen by this, and read of other rebellions, are the universities.” Whitelaw Reid, American abolitionist leader, in an essay on “The Scholar in Politics” (1873) described behavior in a variety of Western countries that led him to conclude that “exceptional influence eliminated, the scholar is pretty sure to be opposed to the established. . . . Wise unrest will always be their [the scholars’] chief trait. We may set down . . . the very foremost function of the scholar in politics, *to oppose the established*” (pp. 613–14) (italics ours).

Intellectuals, as distinct from professionals, are concerned with the creation of knowledge, art, or literature. Status within the occupation accrues from creation, innovation, from being in the avant-garde. Inherent in the obligation to create, to innovate, is the tendency to reject the status quo, to oppose the existing or the old as philistine. Intellectuals are also more likely to be partisans of the ideal, of the theoretical, and thus to criticize reality from this standpoint. The need to express the inner logic of their discipline, of their art form also presses them to oppose the powers—the patrons—who seemingly are philistines, who prefer continuity rather than change.

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A similar argument was made over half a century ago by Thorstein Veblen (1934) in an attempt to account for “the intellectual pre-eminence of Jews”:

The first requisite for constructive work in modern science and indeed for any work of inquiry that shall bring enduring results, is a skeptical frame of mind. The enterprising skeptic alone can be counted on to further the increase of knowledge in any substantial fashion. This will be found true both in the modern sciences and in the field of scholarship at large. . . . For [the intellectually gifted Jews] as for other men in the like case, the skepticism that goes to make him an effectual factor in the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men involved a loss of that peace of mind that is the birthright of the safe and sane quietist. He becomes a disturber of the intellectual peace. [Pp. 226-27]

In their effort to explain why faculty at high-quality schools had the most liberal and left views, Lazarsfeld and Thielens (1958) pointed out that such institutions “attract more distinguished social scientists,” and they pointed out that creativity is associated with “unorthodox views” about society (pp. 161–63).

The pressure to reject the status quo, is, of course, compatible with a conservative or right-wing position as well as with a liberal or left-wing one. In some European countries, intellectual opposition to the status quo has often taken the form of right-wing extremist critiques of democracy because it fostered a mass society in which the vulgar taste of the populace destroyed creative culture and in which populist demagogues undermined national values. Although right-wing intellectual criticism remains vital, it is clear that since the 1920s, in the United States and increasingly in other Western countries, intellectual politics have become left-wing politics. The American value system, with its stress on egalitarianism and populism, fosters challenges to the polity for not fulfilling the ideas inherent in the American creed.

This stress on the critical antiestablishment role of the intellectuals may imply more support for reformist and radical social objectives than actually exists within the professoriate. Obviously, only a small minority of American intellectuals are radicals or revolutionists, as is even more true in the polity generally. In a country where 1% or less of the electorate call themselves “radicals” and where leftist parties secure but a handful of votes, we cannot expect that intellectuals, no matter how much farther left they are than other groups, will contain a dominant revolutionary segment.

Of course, most of the opinions voiced in our Carnegie survey and in the Gouldner-Sprehe study can be classified as liberal, not radical or revolutionary. Yet evidence definitely suggests that there is a much higher proportion of radicals among sociologists than among any other occupa-

tional group. In 1948, 11% of sociologists favored Henry Wallace and Norman Thomas, in contrast with 8% among social scientists generally, and only 2% among the American electorate. More strikingly, perhaps, in 1968, left-wing third-party candidates were on the ballot in considerably less than half the states, and went unmentioned in most discussions of the election. Yet 7% of sociologists reported voting for them, compared with 4% among other social scientists, 2% among professors generally, and well under half of 1% in the electorate. Wherever the choices offered by the larger American political system are extended, sociologists have disproportionately supported the most left-of-center alternatives. In 1968, a larger proportion of sociologists than of any other discipline preferred McCarthy (66%) to Humphrey for the Democratic nomination.

In other countries, where there are more radical alternatives, sociology is in the forefront of academic backing for them. This has generally been true in eastern Europe, where sociology has stood out as the discipline most identified with opposition to Marxist orthodoxy and regime politics.

The one survey of sociologists in a non-Communist country with strong radical movements, Japan, reinforces our conclusion (Suzuki 1970, p. 368). This study indicated that most sociologists voted for the Left Socialists (pro-Peking), with the Communists receiving the next highest support. Only one in 10 voted for the "bourgeois" Liberal Democrats, the majority party in the country, while less than 10% chose the Democratic Socialists (pro-Western). Yet these predominantly radical Japanese scholars, when asked to name non-Japanese sociologists worthy of considerable attention, listed Talcott Parsons more frequently than anyone else (24%), with Robert Merton in second place (19%) (Suzuki, p. 383).

Even more striking in the Japanese results is the fact that preference for radical politics and for the sociology of Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton was strongest among the youngest scholars. Sociologists under 30 years of age gave more backing to the Communists (35%) than did any other age group, and they did not supply a single vote for either the Liberal Democrats or the Democratic Socialists. Conversely, those aged 54 and over were the most conservative—35% Liberal Democratic—with not one Communist voter among them. Yet endorsement of the two leading American exponents of functionalism (31% for both Parsons and Merton) was most frequent among the sociologists under 30, none of whom mentioned Karl Marx. The others who received the remaining endorsements from this youngest cohort were Dahrendorf, Fromm, Homans, Lipset, and Weber. Support for Parsons and Merton generally declined with age, and was lowest in the oldest age group.

A comparable link between support for socialist politics and praise for functionalist sociology may be found in British data. The 1964 sample survey of the British academic profession, conducted by A. H. Halsey and

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Martin Trow (1971), indicated a relationship between discipline categories and political orientation very similar to that in the United States. Two-thirds of the social scientists (66%) reported supporting the Labour party, while 70% defined their politics as "left." Other fields showed much less backing for Labour: arts, 47%; natural science, 36%; technology, 32%; and medicine, 26% (p. 430). The Halsey-Trow sample was too small to permit specification within disciplines, but our guess that a larger survey would also show British sociologists to be to the left of their colleagues is given weight by the findings of a survey of students at the LSE in 1967, during a student boycott and sit-in. This study found much higher percentages of sociology students, both undergraduate and graduate, giving "support" to and participating in the sit-in. The same pattern occurred with respect to political allegiance; sociologists were more preponderantly socialist, with higher percentages backing groups to the left of the Labour party than those in other social sciences (Blackstone et al. 1970, pp. 212–15, 277). Though American sociologists are involved in "liberal" politics and the British, like the Japanese, back "socialist" or "left" causes, English-speaking scholars on both sides of the Atlantic agree in citing Parsons, Merton, and Durkheim, major theorists of functionalism, most frequently in their literature (Oromaner 1970, p. 329). Clearly, the Japanese and British data indicate that there is no incompatibility between adherence to radical and socialist politics and positive attitudes toward American functionalism.

There are, of course, sharp differences in social and political outlooks among academics, but we suggest that they result, in part, from different levels of commitment to intellectual and hence critical functions. Most faculty are, in fact, primarily teachers, dedicated to the passing on of existing traditions, not to the enlargement or critical rejection of it. And, of course, many faculty, even those who are doing research, are not concerned with "basic" work, with the core of ideas centered in the so-called liberal arts faculties.

WHY SOCIOLOGY?

It is obviously necessary at last to ask why sociology has been the most liberal-left field in academe. What makes those who practice it, particularly the more successful and scholarly among them, more favorable to basic social change than those in other fields, even in the other social sciences? What factors produce the Gouldner-Sprehe finding that 77% of the sociologists in 1964 affirmed the need for "basic change in structure and values" to accomplish necessary social reforms?

First we should note that neither the greater liberalism of sociologists nor the distribution of political orientations among the various disciplines

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TABLE 7

SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF FACULTY, BY FIELD

	Father's Education (Percentage Having Attended College)	Father's Occupation (Percentage Manual)	Father's Occupation (Percentage High Status)*	Religious Background (Percentage Jewish)
Sociology	34	25	18	13
Social work	34	26	23	16
Political science	48	22	26	13
Psychology	41	22	20	17
All social sciences	42	22	21	15
Anthropology	53	16	30	12
Economics	43	18	21	15
Humanities	43	21	24	8
Law	50	14	32	25
Education	30	32	14	6
All fields	40	23	22	9
Medicine	57	10	39	22
Physical sciences	41	25	21	8
Biological sciences	42	23	22	10
Business	32	27	13	8
Engineering	39	26	19	9
Agriculture	25	21	9	1

* Working with the Duncan occupational prestige scale, occupations were classified as high status, middle status, and low status.

can be attributed to differences in the social origins of their members. The academic fields do contain different mixes of social backgrounds, and at the extremes these are quite substantial. The percentage of those of Jewish parentage (table 7) ranges from 25 in law and 22 in medicine to 15 in the social sciences—the most Jewish of the liberal arts and sciences groups—down to less than 1% among the faculties of agriculture. Professors of law and medicine also come, on the whole, from families of much higher socioeconomic status than the faculty as a whole: fathers of nearly 60% of the medical school faculty, for example, attended college, and only 10% were blue-collar workers—compared with 23% in the whole professoriate and 60% in the country's male labor force in 1950. Sociology, contrary to some speculation, has a slightly smaller proportion of Jewish faculty members than the social sciences collectively, and indeed it is not much more Jewish than the faculty at large. Sociologists and their colleagues in social work come from families of lower socioeconomic status than other social scientists; the contrast with political science and anthropology is quite striking.

Interesting as these data on social origins are, they do not account for differences in political orientations. Whether a faculty member was brought up in a working-class family with parents who only attended grade school

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or was the child of a college-trained professional shows little effect on his present political opinions. Class position of parents is not closely correlated with any of the scales or with any political-opinion variable included in the Carnegie questionnaire. This holds for all fields.

Religious background is another matter. Faculty members of Protestant and Catholic parentage do not, as groups, differ much in their politics, but Jewish faculty members are much more liberal-left (Lipset and Ladd 1971*b*). The liberalism of social sciences, however, is not a function of Jews "bringing up the average." Jews in the social sciences are very liberal, but so are the others. Indeed, the more liberal the field, the smaller the differences between Jews and non-Jews. In such conservative disciplines as business or engineering, professors of Jewish backgrounds are much more liberal than their non-Jewish colleagues: in engineering, for example, 54% are very liberal or liberal on the liberalism-conservatism scale, compared with just 20% of the faculty of Protestant and Catholic parentage; in business, 51% of the Jews but only 17% of the Gentiles are in the two most liberal quintiles. Those factors which have operated to make American Jews disproportionately liberal-left operate as well among Jewish academics, and, in conservative fields, Jews are thereby sharply distinguished. But in the liberal fields, Protestant and Catholic faculty are—contrasted with their religious peers in the general public—distinctly liberal, and the Jew-non-Jew differences are not large. Besides this, sociology is less Jewish than any of the social sciences except anthropology.

To understand the political commitments of sociologists, we should begin with the fact that academe as a profession has recruited heavily through the years from the more left-inclined segment of undergraduates (Rosenberg 1957; Davis 1965). For example, a study of the Berkeley undergraduates in 1959–61 found that those who "realistically considered" becoming a college professor were more likely to have a left political self-identification. A large majority of those describing themselves as "socialists" (62%) considered becoming professors, followed by liberal Democrats (34%), liberal Republicans (20%), conservative Democrats (14%), and conservative Republicans (15%). "Other findings which [independently] support this conclusion are that those who give liberal responses to questions concerning the Bill of Rights, labor unions, and minority groups are more likely than illiberal responders to have considered college teaching" (Currie et al. 1968, p. 541). Studies of student images of various occupations give professors "a high score on radicalism" and on "power in public affairs" (Beardslee and O'Dowd 1962; Knapp 1962).

If academe attracts more left-disposed students, then social science should have the most appeal to those who would combine an academic career with a concern for social problems. As Alain Touraine (1971) put it, "It is normal that those who have chosen to study society should be

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most aware of social problems" (p. 312). The 1969 Carnegie surveys of undergraduate and graduate students found that a higher proportion in the social sciences were oriented to social reform.

And if social science intrinsically appeals to the more politically oriented and reform-minded among students, it may be anticipated that sociology should be even more attractive to students with left predispositions than the other social sciences, concerned as it is with topics which remain a focus for discontent—race, stratification, urbanism, power, crime, delinquency, etc. It differs from the two directly policy-relevant social sciences, political science and economics, in having less focus on government as a source of social change. Charles Page (1959) has explicitly suggested that the view of sociology as "an ameliorative enterprise . . . fairly widespread in academic faculties and among college students, draws many of the latter to classes in sociology" (p. 586).

The Carnegie faculty questionnaire permits a limited test of these assumptions since it asked about the politics of the respondents while they were seniors in college. The results (table 8) seem to generally confirm

TABLE 8
PERCEPTION OF FACULTY MEMBERS OF THEIR POLITICS
AS COLLEGE SENIORS, BY CURRENT DISCIPLINE

Field	Left	Liberal	Middle of the Road	Moderately Conservative	Very Conservative
Social work	15	51	20	12	2
Anthropology	15	42	26	16	1
Sociology	12	48	21	16	3
Political science	10	50	22	16	3
All social sciences	10	46	23	18	3
Economics	9	44	24	19	4
Psychology	7	46	26	18	3
Humanities	6	41	25	22	5
Law	6	41	26	20	7
Medicine	5	35	26	28	6
All fields	5	34	29	27	6
Biological sciences	4	32	30	29	6
Physical sciences	4	31	30	30	6
Education	3	32	31	28	6
Business	2	26	30	34	9
Engineering	2	24	33	33	8
Agriculture	1	16	33	41	9

the "selective ideological recruitment" thesis. Fifty-six percent in the liberal social sciences remember their undergraduate politics as "left" or "liberal," compared with just 28% of the faculty in business, 26% in engineering, and 17% in agriculture. The differences, however, among the various social sciences are much too small to validate the hypothesis that

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sociology has been more attractive as a career to reform or left-minded students than political science, for example. Clearly, sociologists as faculty members are further to the left of those in the other social sciences than they were as students. These impressions are reinforced by the results of the Carnegie surveys of undergraduates and graduate students, which show smaller differences between sociologists and other social scientists on the student than on the faculty level. If we compare the retrospective findings of table 8 with the current views of scholars in different disciplines (table 2), it becomes evident that postgraduate activities of sociologists have had a more radicalizing or less conservatizing effect on their political views than have the experiences of those in the other social sciences.

Much of the grand (and petty) tradition in sociology has fostered the "distrust of reason," through the effort to explain opinion and behavior as motivated by hidden private drives, by concealed self-interest and by the system needs of societies. Methodologically, the sociologist is cautioned against accepting rational manifest explanations for human activity (Bendix 1951, 1970). Robert Merton (1968) has effectively pointed out that functionalism does not differ from Marxism in this respect. As an example, he outlined the similarities between the functionalist and Marxist analyses of religion, that both see it "as a *social mechanism* for 'reinforcing the sentiments most essential to the institutional integration of the society'" (p. 98). Elsewhere, one of us (Lipset 1970) has analyzed the fact that the three major approaches to social stratification—those of Marx, Weber, and functionalism (Durkheim)—each assumed a form of alienation, of self-estrangement, as a consequence of inequality. Thus no "school" of sociology believes that social hierarchy can constitute a stable system accepted fully by the lowly. As Lipset noted, "Functionalist sociology . . . like the Marxist and Weberian forms of analysis . . . points to ways in which the demands of a stratification system press men to act against their own interest, and alienate them from autonomous choice. However, the focus in functionalism on means-ends relationships reveals the conflict-generating potential of stratification systems, in which goals are inherently scarce resources. Hence, functional analysis, like the other two, locates sources of consensus and cleavage in the hierarchical structures of society" (p. 184).

Sociology also has a "debunking" effect on belief in basic assumptions through its production of empirical data which invariably "disprove" the validity of collective self-images. Research which is relevant to social stratification conclusively indicates the existence of sharp inequities with respect not only to income, status, and power, but also to education, health, housing, treatment before the law, and many other values. Whether it is sociological research on social mobility and education in the Soviet Union

and Poland, on the skin color of people in differentially rewarded positions in Yugoslavia, on infant mortality or job possibilities in the United States, on the factors related to job satisfaction in many countries, the evidence all points to punitive character of social systems on the personalities and life chances of those segments of the population who are the offspring of the lowly valued. And given the legitimation of authority in most “advanced” societies, whether communist or capitalist, on the basis of populist and egalitarian values, the findings of sociology reinforce the position of left antiestablishment critics. Whether these results affect the views of many outside the discipline is debatable, but that they are known to most sociologists can hardly be doubted.

What the relevant factors are that press sociology to greater support for leftist views and social activism may not be decided here. It is clear, however, that sociology must be rated as most socially critical, or at the very least, “less conservative” in its dominant ideological orientations or “domain assumptions” in university life. This would seem to support Merton’s (1968) thesis that “the fact that functional analysis can be seen by some as inherently conservative and by others as inherently radical suggests that it may be *inherently* neither one or the other” (p. 93).

Moreover, this conclusion throws considerable doubt on the effort to create a politically linked dichotomy between functional analysis and supposed radical sociology—in which the latter is differentiated by its prophetic image of potentialities of society, compared with the preoccupation with things as they are in functional systems analysis. Though Gouldner seeks to present Parsonian sociology as a conservative ahistorical approach to social analysis, a decade ago he saw it in terms which are not antagonistic to an emphasis on the concrete historical sources of maintenance and change: “Both Merton and Parsons agree that in any accounting for any social or cultural pattern an effort must be made to relate this to the context in which it occurs, so that it may not be understood in isolation but must be analyzed in relation to other patterns” (Gouldner 1959). He included his earlier comparison of functionalist and Marxist theory by insisting that the real distinction among sociological theories was not, as some critics of functionalism then argued, between system and factor theories (those which emphasize the primacy of certain factors such as the economic) but rather “between implicit [Marxist] and explicit [functionalist] system theories” (1959, p. 211). And he suggested that functionalists, unable to specify the causal weight of particular factors possibly “because they then lacked the mathematical tools for a rigorous resolution of the problem,” might soon be able to deal with it given “mathematical and statistical developments.”

Two East European Marxists, Helmut Steiner of the Academy of Sciences of the German Democratic Republic and Owsej I. Schkaratan of the

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Academy of Sciences of the USSR, presented a paper at the 7th World Congress of Sociology in Varna (1970) in which they also argued that with all its major deficiencies from their point of view, Parsons's "functional system theory is preferable to most of other mentioned [western sociological] concepts because it tries to understand the social structure as a social organism. That makes it possible to conceive the social structure not only as a complex of statistical variables but as a system of social interrelations. . . . The Marxist understanding of society as a social system is based on the idea that the most important social processes are determined by socio-economical factors. It must be emphasized that in most cases the forms of the socio-economic determinations are extremely interrelated—the more so as a great number of misunderstandings of the Marxist concept derive from neglecting this fact" (p. 3).

Gouldner's earlier position has recently been reiterated by the Marxist sociologist, Pradeep Bandyopadhyay (1971), who observes that "Marxian sociology is often just as concerned [as functionalism] with the analysis of system, structure and equilibrium" (p. 19). And though he has sharp disagreements with the Parsonian theory, Bandyopadhyay points out that the issue between the two approaches is not, as some radical sociologists argue, one of alternative paradigms of analysis. He criticizes many of the contemporary radicals for attacking those objectives which Marxism shares with functional analysis when they seek to show that since all thought has some ideological referent, scientific analysis is, in effect, impossible. Bandyopadhyay notes that this position is not a radical one, but one which has been argued against sociology by conservatives in order "to deprive radicals of their justification for social change" (p. 21).

Given the predisposition to the left of most sociologists, including inevitably most functionalists, much that has been written by functionalist sociologists supports a left ideological position. However one interprets the relevance of the empirical findings to the ideological concomitants of given theoretical approaches, the fact remains that data collected by scholars of different political persuasions over six decades indicate the following: (1) Those involved in intellectual pursuits, including academics, have been farther to the left than any other occupational group on religious and political issues. (2) Within academe, those who possess dominant characteristics (particularly when age is held constant), who have done more as scholars and have been more rewarded, are to the left of the nondominants; and those who emphasize research are to the left of those who focus on teaching. (3) Sociology has been the most critical and change oriented of all academic disciplines. And since the dominants within sociology are more critical of the status quo than others in the field, the leading scholars in sociology are as a group the most antiestablishment. Even the anarchist leader of the French student revolt of May 1968, Daniel Cohn-Bendit

(1968), though convinced that universities inherently serve the needs of capitalism, notes that “sociology professors like to pose as Leftists, in contrast to the heads of other departments who apparently still hanker after the good old times” (p. 39).

Perhaps the reason that there is so much literature in sociology attacking other sociologists for their alleged “conservatism” is that the left is more heavily represented in this field than in any other, and that within a “left discipline” (as within a radical political party) the question of who is the “most revolutionary” becomes salient. The extremity of such criticism may be seen in the manifesto put out by the sociology students of Nanterre, “Tuer les sociologues,” in which they called for boycotts of “reactionary” sociology courses. They bitterly attacked American sociology for, among other things, reacting to riots in the ghetto by taking government funds to “study the movements of mobs and furnish recipes for repression.” In their judgment, sociology in France and at Nanterre is equally bad since “all current sociology in France is imported from the US, with a few years’ delay.” The task is “to unmask the false arguments, throw light on the generally repressive meaning of a career in sociology, and to dispel illusions on this subject” (Cohn-Bendit et al. 1969, pp. 374–75, 378).

To appreciate fully the politics of this manifesto by sociology students who were among the principal leaders of student activism in Nanterre, it is necessary to recognize that, in general, there has been considerable sympathy for Marxist and dialectic approaches in French sociology.⁸ The major figure at the Sorbonne, and in French sociology until his death in 1965, was Georges Gurvitch who “was able to effect in France his own highly original synthesis of Marxism, phenomenology and empirical sociology” (Birbaum 1971, p. 16). As René Lourau (1970) notes: “Among the principal representatives of French sociology are professors and research workers who have been members of the Communist party for periods of a few months to several years” (p. 228). The most important of these former Communists, Henri Lefebvre, was the first sociologist appointed at Nanterre. He was followed by Alain Touraine, also a radical sociologist. Though hostile to each other, both men have been strong critics of American empirical and functional sociology. They were instrumental

⁸ A national survey of French university students in the faculties of letters and the human sciences (May–June 1965), three years before the “events” of 1968 and in a period of relative quiescence in university politics, found that the sociology students were more active in syndicalist or political groupings and much more supportive of Marxism than were those in any other field. When asked to which school of thought they adhered, 35% of the sociology students replied, “Marxism,” more than mentioned any other approach (Delsaut 1970, p. 53). Student views, of course, need have no relationship to the opinions of the faculty, but there is some indication that they did in the French case.

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in appointing almost all the junior faculty (“assistants”) still at Nanterre in 1968. Radical sociology dominated Nanterre even though the next two professors appointed there, François Bourricaud and Michel Crozier, could not be described in these political terms (Crouzet 1969). These men, however, were much less influential, since the assistants (lecturers) who dominated communications with the students were largely unsympathetic to them.

In Germany, where sociology students and assistants have also played a major role in university-based radical protest, the leading leftist sociologist of the postwar era, Jürgen Habermas—as a student and later a member of the Frankfurter school of Marxist sociology made famous by men like Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse—has also been denounced as a conservative by younger sociologists. Adorno, the most creative of the senior members of the Frankfurt Institute, died in 1969 soon after his class was disrupted by students. His long-time friend, Carla Henius, has recently written that these events had so “hurt him and broken him that they probably caused his death.” Habermas, admired by many American “critical sociologists,” has given up teaching at Frankfurt for a full-time research appointment at the Max-Planck Institute near Munich (Lasky 1971, p. 64). Norman Birnbaum (1971), a self-described “revisionist Marxist” and disciple of C. Wright Mills, could not restrain his astonishment at such charges by German and French student radicals: “These were students taught *inter alla* by Alain Touraine and Henri Lefebvre: depicting them as agents of the oppression is as grotesque as the curious belief manifested by some German students that Jürgen Habermas is reactionary. . . . [This] suggests the discipline has been unable to assimilate the self-critique administered by radical professors like Habermas, Lefebvre, and Touraine” (p. 230).

The division within the Left which plagues sociology has, on the one hand, those protagonists who are primarily concerned with social action and who want the discipline to be its handmaiden, and on the other, those oriented toward traditional forms of scholarship. The latter include many who consider themselves as radicals. In an effort to defend himself from the radical attacks on *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* Gouldner (1971) has made it clear that the issue is largely one of a commitment to basic scholarship versus activism, rather than radicalism or other forms of politics. He states explicitly: “Sociology today does not need a Karl Marx or an Isaac Newton; it needs a V. I. Lenin,” that is, a theorist concerned with political action (p. 96).

The activist, whether student or young faculty member—and our data indicate that age is by far the most important correlate of activist orientations within the American professoriate generally and sociology in particular—is inherently more of an advocate than a scholar. An activist

must seek to simplify problems if he is to help the movement. Scholarship, on the other hand, and functionalist theory in particular, seems to emphasize an opposite style. Stressing interrelationships and the fact that, in the absence of a key factor theory of change, harmful “unanticipated consequences” may result from “purposive social action,” functional analysis implicitly argues for some caution in radical social change. The functionalist, in effect, tells the young (or old) activist that he should move—carefully. And his course of “action” is usually a request for more research, more consideration of the interrelationship of assorted factors.

The concentration on functional interrelationships and the consequent concern for “unanticipated consequences” does have political or ideological implications, then, to the extent that it stresses the complexities involved in social change. Still, as Irving Horowitz (1968) argues in a sophisticated analysis of functionalist ideology, men committed to sharply different political values may employ functional analysis in their scholarship. Thus, Tawney was able to conclude that “profits extracted from industry which serve the cause of conspicuous consumption; and in general, ownership divorced from production,” were dysfunctional from a larger system point of view. Functional analysis supported his socialist beliefs (Horowitz 1968, p. 240). Or if we consider the two classic theorists of functionalism, Horowitz continues, “there is no more a ‘functionalist imperative’ for Malinowski’s individualism than there is for Durkheim’s socialism” (p. 243). The same can be said about the more recent controversy concerning the functions of systems of stratification between Kingsley Davis and Melvin Tumin. Davis sought to demonstrate that unequal rewards are necessary to motivate people to take on various “responsible” positions and to associate jobs with talent. Tumin countered with evidence that many highly rewarded positions do not in fact require scarce talent, prolonged training, or tension-breeding tasks, and that alternative systems of motivation can be envisaged. Yet both men saw themselves engaging in functional analysis. A recent methodological critique of functionalism by a Polish scholar, Piotr Sztompka (1971), lists the following scholars as functionalists: “R. K. Merton and T. Parsons, as well as some other writers like K. Davis, W. E. Moore, A. Gouldner, G. Sjoberg, M. Tumin, M. Levy” (p. 369).

To assert, as we do, that academic social science generally has an inherent built-in gradualist bias because of the scholarly dictum to consider all relevant hypotheses, factors, and possible evidence before coming to definitive conclusions is not to argue that political activists must draw policy conclusions from these inherent methodological considerations. It is simply to say again that scholarship and politics are different areas of human activity, even though some individuals are involved in both. A scholar is duty bound to report all evidence which challenges his basic assumptions and to stress the limitations of his results, their tentative and

uncertain character. A politician, on the other hand, is an advocate and an organizer. He is expected to make the best possible case for his point of view, to ignore contradictory materials, to make up his mind on the basis of the limited information he can secure before the deadlines imposed on him by his role, and then to act in a self-assured fashion. The worst thing that can be said about a politician is that he is as indecisive as an intellectual, an image held of Adlai Stevenson, to his sorrow. Conversely, an academic will be subjected to criticism for publishing before all the evidence is in, or for oversimplifying what is inherently a complicated phenomenon (Lipset 1972*b*).

Once these distinctions are made, it should be clear that the two roles, scholarly analyst and political actor, must be separated. The scholar who seeks to serve directly political ends does both scholarship and politics a disservice, unless he keeps the two roles as distinct as possible. One reason that Max Weber was so insistent on the need to keep politics out of the classroom and research was that he was an active politician. Those dedicated to politics, particularly to reform or revolution, should, of course, seek relevant information or scholarly knowledge, but only as advice relevant to the attainment of precise ends. There are times when revolutions are necessary; any scholarly assessment of the probabilities that they will attain the goals they seek can only serve to undermine the commitment of the rebels to risk all. Our conclusion that social science is inherently gradualist is based on this logic: the implications of an analysis that can only claim to explain part of the variance, that admits any conclusion may be very wrong in a specific case, can only be to move slowly and carefully.

The case may be made that social scientists are more likely to contribute to the "solution" of many social problems if they separate themselves from policy-relevant matters to be free to look for more abstract levels of generalization. This point has been urged effectively by radical historian Christopher Lasch (1969), who finds the work of Erving Goffman on stigma and "spoiled identity" particularly useful in analyzing leadership behavior among blacks and other socially oppressed groups: "Goffman deliberately excludes the race problem from his analysis of 'spoiled identity,' on the grounds that established minorities do not provide the best objects for an analysis of the delicate mechanisms surrounding the management of stigma. . . . At the same time an understanding of face-to-face relationships drawn from quite a different perspective throws unexpected light on certain aspects of race relations—notably on the role of 'professionals'" (p. 21).

These sources of difference between the orientation of the committed scholar and those primarily concerned with political reform or revolution are real and should be regarded in a noninvidious fashion. As noted earlier, many students and young faculty enter sociology because they seek

ways of enhancing their political objectives. Hence, the interest of many of them is not that of the scholar but of the activist or politician. Such an interest is both valid and necessary. Insofar as it is also academic, it resembles that of the engineer or physician more than of the physicist or biochemist. Some individuals in science and social science successfully combine both the activist and the scholarly roles. A difficulty arises, however, when the activist in social science sees a concern with scholarship alone as reactionary, as necessarily serving the interests of the status quo.

Similar controversies, of course, have appeared in many other disciplines with comparable arguments, although the "activist" faction tends to be weaker. As in sociology, the debate is often conducted within the left between those who emphasize the obligation of the politically concerned academic to the canons of scholarship and those who would place activism first. In history, for example, the three major leaders of the "scholarly" faction which has been dubbed "rightist" by its opponents have been H. Stuart Hughes, who has a record of third-party involvement dating back to the Henry Wallace Progressive party, who ran as an "Independent" peace candidate for senator in Massachusetts in 1962, and who has been the head of the antiwar group SANE; C. Vann Woodward, a participant in the Socialist Scholars Conference; and Eugene Genovese, a self-described Marxist historian who was pressured to resign from Rutgers University in 1965 for his public advocacy of a victory for the NLF in Vietnam and his praise for Mao and Communist China. Genovese (1971) has written eloquently concerning the tensions faced by the leftist academic. He concludes, however, that he must concentrate on his academic work, that it cannot be done well by anyone who considers it a "substitute for the more exciting vocation of street fighting or organizing" (pp. 7-8).

To emphasize the validity and importance of the scholarly undertaking is not to suggest, of course, that value-free scholarship, in any absolute sense, is possible. Personal values, variations in life experiences, differences in education and theoretical orientation, strongly affect the kind of work men do and their results. Max Weber, long ago, pointed out that the concept of ethical neutrality was spurious, that those who adhered to it were precisely the ones who manifested "obstinate and deliberate partisanship." He stated unequivocally that all "knowledge of cultural reality, as may be seen, is always knowledge from particular points of view" (1949, p. 81).

Weber wrote both as a scholar and a political activist. As scholar, he also argued that verifiable knowledge was possible given the communism of science, the exposure of findings to the community at large. Any given scholar may come up with erroneous results stemming, in part, from the way in which his values have affected his work. But the commitment of scientists to objective methods of inquiry, the competition of ideas and

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concepts, will increase the possibility of finding analytic laws which hold up regardless of who does the investigation. "For scientific truth is precisely what is valid for all who seek the truth" (1949, p. 84).

A similar argument has recently been made by the Marxist sociologist, Pradeep Bandyopadhyay (1971), writing in the oldest continuous journal of Marxist scholarship in English, *Science and Society*. He strongly challenges the contention of contemporary university activists that a Marxist sociology of knowledge would deny the possibility of objective knowledge in the social sciences and cites various comments by Marx himself which are directly relevant (pp. 17, 18, 22).

The increase in efforts to inject into sociology tests of ideological purity has made the discipline perhaps the only one in which "professional" reviews of books can take the form not of evaluating the evidence for the validity of the hypotheses enunciated but solely of seeking to demonstrate that the author reflects a "conservative" bias; and in which a scholar like Talcott Parsons, who has supported a great variety of programs designed to foster social welfare policies, racial equality, equal opportunity, and peaceful and friendly relations with the Communist world, becomes a symbol of conservatism.

The effort to denigrate intellectual work by labeling it in terms which are deemed opprobrious by the audience to which they are addressed can only serve to prevent intellectual dialogue. A recent review of Gouldner's work states the problem vividly. "A central idea . . . is that when we pit an ideological tag on a theory by calling it repressive, prophetic, or what-not, we say something about the validity of the theory. This notion is alarming, for it would turn sociology into substandard moral philosophy with the resonating of sentiments replacing reason and observation as the basis for constructing and judging theories. Thus . . . Gouldner . . . [has] attacked more than one brand of sociological theory . . . [he has] attacked the rational underpinnings of the entire discipline, without which it cannot and should not be taken seriously as an intellectual enterprise" (Simpson 1971, p. 664). How are we to evaluate Gouldner's earlier work if we recognize, as Jackson Toby (1972) has pointed out, that in his textbook (Gouldner and Gouldner 1963), written presumably to introduce students to the best thought in sociology, Gouldner has "only respectful references to Parsons? Indeed, the 15 references to Parsons in his textbook dwarfed the three to Karl Marx and indicated intellectual debts on a variety of subjects in a straightforward fashion."

This point of view is not limited to defenders of the academic profession. A Marxist also finds that such efforts undermine the radical's effort to gain acceptance for his theory. "To judge theories in terms of the values they promote is to mistake good intentions for knowledge. . . . By using our values for the acceptable or rejection of theories, we do no more than

provide crutches for ourselves. . . . To criticize a sociologist for the values he holds when unable objectively to demonstrate the error of holding those values is to allow him to get off lightly” (Bandyopadhyay 1971, pp. 22–23, 26).

Efforts to judge scholars and theories by the presumed political consequences of their work produces curious amalgams. Thus, for some years the radical sociologists adopted Pitirim Sorokin, White Russian emigré bitterly denounced by Lenin and militant anti-Communist, as a hero, presumably because he was a severe critic of the sociological “establishment,” and in his older years a strong peace advocate. Similarly, Alvin Gouldner sees conservative implications in the work of Parsons, but has much more praise for that of his colleague, George Homans, a self-proclaimed conservative who (as Gouldner acknowledges) has taken a variety of conservative positions on domestic, international, and university issues. Gouldner also prefers the sociology of Erving Goffman, as comprehensive an advocate of an apolitical, nonproblem, “pure sociology” as exists in the field today. We suspect that the unifying theme which makes sense of these positions is that Parsons, together with others identified with him—Merton, Lazarsfeld, and the late Samuel Stouffer—became identified as the “Sociology Establishment” from the late 1940s on, an establishment defined by scholarly achievement and influence.

Applying the class-interest theory of politics to academe, as reflected in the hypotheses of the Gouldner-Sprehe study, those who see themselves outside the “Establishment” attribute an inherent social and academic conservatism to those they identify as within it, and a more left-oriented posture to those outside it. But, in fact, whatever the politics of a given individual, statistically speaking the “dominants” within sociology have been and remain considerably to the left of the “nondominants,” a finding that should be analyzed by the radical critics of the university.

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