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Deborah E. Lipstadt. **Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945.** New York: The Free Press, \$19.95.*

Robert T. Golembiewski. **Humanizing Public Organizations.** Mt. Airy, Md.: Lomond Publications, \$26.50.*

Martha Derthick and Paul J. Quirk. **The Politics of Deregulation.** Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, \$28.95 (\$10.95, paper).

Lawrence M. Mead. **Beyond Entitlement: The Social Obligations of Citizenship.** New York: The Free Press, \$19.95.*

Uri Ra'anán et al. **Hydra of Carnage: The International Linkages of Terrorism and Other Low-Intensity Operations.** Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, n.p.*

Kenji Hakuta. **Mirror of Language: The Debate on Bilingualism.** New York: Basic Books, \$18.95.*

Reuven Brenner. **Betting on Ideas: Wars, Invention, Inflation.** Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, \$32.00.

Books in Review

THE WORKING CLASS IN WEIMAR GERMANY: A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

by Eric Fromm. *edited by* Wolfgang Bonss. Cambridge, Mass.:
Harvard University Press, 320 pages, \$22.50

Reviewed by Richard Hamilton

This small volume is a key document in the history of the Institut für Sozialforschung (Institute for Social Research), the center of the so-called critical school of sociology. The volume reports the results of a study that, in many ways, was the most important of the institute's early efforts. This survey provided the basis for the collection *Studien über Autorität und die Familie* (first published in 1936) and later provided the material for Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (published in 1941). The concept of authoritarianism was developed in the course of this research, it ultimately leading to the influential study, *The Authoritarian Personality*. The present volume, among other things, provides us with an insight into the methods underlying the early efforts of the institute, these being described by the editor of the volume, as "almost legendary."

The aim of the study, as indicated in an after-the-fact statement, was "to gain an insight into the psychic structure of manual and white-collar workers." A questionnaire was developed and distributed to some 3,300 recipients throughout Germany. These were given out by a group of "helpers," who, through their occupations, were "in contact with many workers," with persons "in communal and state welfare organizations . . . doctors, newspaper publishers, teachers . . . and members of co-operative organizations as well as party and trade union officials." A cover letter explained the purpose of the inquiry; respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire and return it in the stamped envelope that was provided.

The distribution of the questionnaire began "in 1929" (no month given) and continued "at periodic intervals" (no details provided). The last questionnaire was returned "at the end of 1931." The field work therefore covered a period of at least two years, a time during which massive changes were occurring in the German electorate.

The response rate, we learn from the editor's introduction, was just over 33 percent, but nearly half of the 1,100 completed questionnaires were lost in the course of the institute's move to the United States in 1933. Fromm himself does not mention this problem. His text reads: "We had very few questionnaires returned from women (47 compared with 537 men). These 584 responses formed the basis for the subsequent analysis. No indication is given as to what bias may have resulted through this loss.

The resulting sample is, in many respects, manifestly unrepresentative. Women were very much underrepresented; white-collar employees were underrepresented. Catholics were also much underrepresented (and the nonreligious very much overrepresented). Information on the geographic character of the sample is vague in the extreme—"Most of the 584 questionnaires, namely 71%, were from urban centres between Frankfurt and Berlin." The respondents lived almost exclusively "in urban areas," an expression that is nowhere defined. Small town and rural workers were very much underrepresented. Unskilled manual workers were also seriously underrepresented. An unexpectedly high proportion of party officials appeared in the



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sample. This bias is strongest among the Communist respondents, two of five announcing themselves to be office holders. All of these biases, we may assume, stem from the original sampling procedure, the dependence on a network of notables, in and around the working class, a procedure that would be predestined to gain better-off, urban respondents—ones who would have close ties with the parties of the Left. The sample, in short, is definitely not representative of the wage and salary workers of the nation.

One worker in five in the sample was unemployed. A serious problem appears in this connection, one that goes unrecognized in the text. Unemployment increased dramatically in the years during which the study was conducted; but Fromm's analysis, in all respects, is timeless. Change is an absent factor. The Communist party had extremely high rates of turnover in this period (indeed throughout its entire history), and yet none of this is indicated in Fromm's text. Some erosion of Social Democratic voting strength occurred in the period, some moving to support the Communists, a smaller group, mainly workers in rural areas, showing some movement to the National Socialists. None of these changes appear in Fromm's analysis.

Only seventeen National Socialists were picked up in the sample. It is not indicated whether these were 1929 respondents, or from 1930, or 1931. This too seems a serious underrepresentation, certainly for 1931. This timelessness means that the respondents are treated as having a fixed or unchanging essence, a patently unrealistic assumption. The analysis is flagrantly ahistorical.

Fromm recognizes the difficulties with the sample and, at the outset, declares that "no proof" can be anticipated. That seems fair enough. Then, at several points, he declares the sample to be representative and treats it as such. Words of caution are few and far between in the subsequent pages. The results are treated statistically, as if the percentage differences, many of them ranging from minus-ule to small, actually meant something.

The character of the questionnaire will surprise many readers. We would anticipate a strong Marxist thrust and that many questions would reflect the author's psychoanalytic approach; but among the 271 questions, there is very little that is clearly appropriate to either concern. Where we have been led to anticipate sensitivity, just the opposite proves to be the case. The questionnaire opens with routine demographic questions: year and place of birth, sex, and marital status. The fourth question, for the single respondents presumably, asks: Why are you not married?

We would anticipate a series of probing

questions dealing with early family experience. We would expect questions about childhood, about each of the parents, about the brothers and sisters, and the quality of family relationships. After a series of crude demographic questions, there are only two questions inquiring about family relationships: Was your childhood happy? Yes or No? Do you think your parents had a happy marriage? Yes or No? There is not a single question in the entire survey that probes directly on the subject of authority and the family.

Many of the questions inquire about routine, commonplace, everyday activities. What pets do you have? What furniture do you have in your dwelling? How much bed linen do you have? (sheets? pillow cases?) How often in the month is there a big wash? Do you have a radio? (This last question was asked at a time when less than a quarter of the population had a radio.) Are you afraid of illness? Do you have a good digestion? Did your wife have any miscarriages? If yes, how many? Rising above the everyday routines, we have: Would you like to live long?

There is an extraordinary disparity between the declared intent—to gain an insight into the psychic structure—and the content of the questionnaire. A priori one would never guess that it was the work of a psychoanalyst. It reads much more like the work of a market researcher. Only about one-tenth of the questions appear in the text of this volume.

What about the presentation? What did Fromm do with the material he had collected? The discussion of the findings appears in three substantive chapters. The first, a brief one, deals with "the social and difficult situation" of the respondents. The second, a very long one, deals with "political, social, and cultural attitudes." This chapter forms more than half of Fromm's text, making up 122 pages of a 224-page total. This is followed by a chapter on "personality types and political attitudes." Here we find his detailed exposition of the authoritarianism concept. The work also contains a brief appendix written by Fromm's collaborator, Ernst Schachtel. Devoted to "literary style and personality traits," it is condescending, pretentious, and empty.

The presentation of data for the most part, consists of simple cross-tabulations. In that large third chapter, various political, social, and cultural attitudes are presented, these being tabulated in each case by "political orientation." It amounts to the serial discussion of a handful of questions. The entire presentation is very much ad hoc, there being little logic or development in the discussion.

The analysis is marred throughout by Fromm's persistent reading of his interpreta-

tions into the results. At no point are the respondents allowed to speak for themselves. People were asked if they had any favorite books. Fromm, with no evident qualm, sees the responses as falling into two categories, those expressing "individual" and those expressing "conventional" interests. These terms, he says, "are not meant to describe the quality of the book, but the relation of the respondent to it." There is no way he could establish a respondent's attitude toward any work; but the lack of a suitable method does not stop him.

The same crude injection of meaning, the division into individual versus conventional, occurs with almost all themes explored. A preference for classical operas ("above all those of Wagner") or for Schiller and Goethe plays are "conventional," that is "works . . . known through school or [that] were approved by conventional taste." Respondents who liked Georg Kaiser, or Hauptmann, Shaw, or Strindberg had "individual" tastes.

Asked how they decorated their homes, some respondents, 40 percent of them, responded with "flowers and pictures." The all-knowing analyst-commentator sees this too as "an expression of a relatively conventional taste." One respondent in eight was classified under the heading "no special decoration." Again Fromm knows the meaning: these replies were given by "people who regarded decoration of the home as something superfluous and who believed that cleanliness, simplicity and order were the best ornaments a dwelling could have." Asked what pictures or photographs they had hung up, some 41 percent replied, with no further specification, "family pictures." Fromm refers to these, together with "flowers and pictures," chosen by 40 percent, as "imprecise replies," something he sees as indicative of "a certain retardation of cultural development."

Discussing a question on sex education for children, Fromm reports that a negative attitude toward sex "is mostly found in people whose lives are determined by Protestant middle-class morals based on the principles of duty, work and subordination." That suggests a conclusion, something based on some kind of evidence, but that is not the case. One aspect of that claim is contradicted by the sentence immediately following: "an analysis of the answer in relation to age and occupation showed no significant differences." The lack of difference by occupation means that his "middle-class" morals claim is unjustified. There is no indication that he tested to see if the tendency was specifically Protestant.

At some points Fromm reports findings he does not like. White-collar workers, for example, are somewhat more likely than blue-



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collar workers to report they had a happy childhood and that their parents had a happy marriage. The unemployed and unskilled workers, in both respects, report the lowest levels of happiness. That result, he says, could be partly explained by their strained economic situation. "On the other hand," he states, "one can hardly assume that the childhood and homes of the unemployed and unskilled were really so much unhappier than those of the skilled workers." Their present economic deprivation, he argues, has led them to "a general disillusionment." The affirmative replies of the white-collar workers also cannot be taken at face value. They can, partly at least, be ascribed "to the tendency of these groups to maintain their illusions and not to question conventional ideas about the happiness of childhood and marriage." He has found a difference here, Fromm is telling us, but he knows the finding to be spurious. Why should one bother with the pretense of research if one knows, in advance, how the findings should come out?

Given the difficulties outlined here, very little weight ought to be given any finding. Many of the findings will strike readers as trivial and/or truisitic. For example: Do you sleep well? Seventy-nine percent reported no sleep problems. Examining the pattern by income, Fromm found that "nervous sleep disorders occur more frequently among poorer respondents than among the better-off."

Two questions discussed in the book are deserving of attention. They might well be valid and of some greater importance. One asks: "How, in your opinion, can the world be improved?" Remarkably enough, in a sample that is heavily skewed to the Left, only 41 percent of the respondents made reference to

"some form of Socialism." This belief found a majority among the Communists, among the small number of "left Socialists," and, by a small margin, among Social Democratic leaders. Elsewhere, the belief in socialism was clearly a minority position. Only about one-third of the Social Democratic supporters saw it as the solution to the world's problems. Considering the large numbers of small town and rural workers omitted from the sample, it is likely that the support for socialism would have fallen well below that one-in-three level.

The second of these questions asks: "Which form of government do you think is the best (Democratic Republic—Fascism—Monarchy—Soviet [Council] System)?" Fromm is rather sparing in his presentation of the responses. One finding is of more than passing interest: Communists "were more likely to choose the Soviet system as the only realization of their political theory (17% compared with 4% in other groups)." Put differently, some four out of five Communists did not see the Soviet or council system as the ideal arrangement for governing human affairs. The question is a bit ambiguous since it is not clear whether the reference is to the Soviet Union or to the brief experience with *Räte* in Germany in 1918-19. Some scholars in recent years have concluded that the latter arrangement offered a viable realistic alternative for German society. Few workers, it would appear, shared that judgment. Given the relatively high level of political activism evident in the sample, it seems likely that many of them would have had direct experience with the German council experiment.

The personality types developed in this work are, in the first line of analysis, political

rather than psychological. The polar opposites are Left and Right or, in another phrasing, Socialist-Communist as opposed to the anti-Socialist authoritarian philosophy. There are three components to the definition, general political opinions, emotional attitudes to authority, and attitudes toward collective or individualistic approaches to life. The Left position with respect to political opinions would involve "an unqualified adherence to the programme of the workers' parties" meaning that one "accepted the totality of their views about the present and future of the working class, of the German people, and of mankind." Such "unqualified adherence" or total acceptance would probably, in most people's minds, be counted as an authoritarian response. For those with any detailed understanding of the German Social Democratic and Communist parties of the Weimar period, the definition will look, to say the least, a bit bizarre. To put them in the same category, as if both of those parties were agencies of freedom and human decency is, again to say the least, a bit starry-eyed.

The portrait of the "good Socialist" (or Communist) is best described as a beatific vision: it is a world in which the lion will lie down with the lamb. The authoritarian, the manifest enemy, is a predator moving in a Hobbesian world—"The ideal of the right-wing parties by contrast is of someone who has no regard for others, but unscrupulously pursues his own advantage as reflected in the principle of *homo homini lupus est*."

The choice of questions and the scoring procedures used by Fromm largely determine his result. For example: How, in your opinion, can the world be improved? Those who said "Socialism" were designated R (radical); those who said "better government" (or "more *Herrenmenschen*") were designated A (authoritarian). Some suggested "knowledge and enlightenment," or a tax on wealth, or mentioned ethics or education. They were Cs—compromise-oriented. Still others were designated as Ns—neutral. Very few people fell into the pure or extreme R or A categories. Supporters of the bourgeois parties (forty-eight respondents) and of the National Socialists (seventeen respondents) are heavily "A-centered," the respective percentages being 73 and 77. Some A-centeredness does appear on the Left, one-third of the Social Democrats falling in that category. The Communists turn out to be pillars of virtue, some 60 percent being R-centered (as against a mere 28 percent for the Social Democrats). Communist leaders receive the best score of all, 81 percent of them being R-centered.

Those rated as R in two or three of the "complexes," the purest of the R-centered category formed only 15 percent of the Left party constituency. They were, not too sur-

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prisingly, very well represented in the Communist leadership group (46 percent). Fromm indicates some regret about the small size of this group to which he assigns the task of leadership. "In critical times," he writes, "the courage, readiness for sacrifice and spontaneity needed to rouse the less active and to overcome the enemy, could only be expected from this rather small group." He is concerned that the group had "by and large not succeeded in changing the personality structure of its adherents in such a way that they could be relied upon in critical situations." On the other hand, the group is described as "a hardcore of highly reliable fighters which should have been large enough to pull the less militant along in certain circumstances."

This mixture of normative and empirical judgments leaves much to be desired. A formidable authoritarian demand is contained there: that they should have changed other people's personality structures. Those other people should have been made into "reliable" instruments for the policies of the 15 percent. That is a far cry from the free, generous, open personality delineated earlier. We might easily count it as cryptoauthoritarianism offered in a nonauthoritarian disguise.

A large array of questions are bypassed in those formulations. It is nowhere established that the 15 percent possessed courage, or that they were ready for sacrifice, or that they showed spontaneity. While many of them clearly held leadership positions, it is not demonstrated that they did lead, that they had "adherents." Fromm assumes their influence on the supposed followers to be positive. In the Communist experience the opposite was more often the case; at most times, most especially in the early thirties, they alienated followers and drove away possible adherents. No evidence is presented to show that the 15 percent were "fighters," let alone that they were "highly reliable fighters." It is not self-evident that the free spirits of Fromm's idyll would be either reliable or that they would be capable of fighting. We might just as easily predict the opposite on both counts.

Virtually everything in Fromm's statement here is read in, or better, wish-fulfillment. Fromm certainly must have known the highly problematic character of the scenario he was providing. The only recognition of the problem in the book comes in an all-purpose corrective statement, in a clause that follows his reference to "certain circumstances": "if a capable leadership and correct evaluation of the political position had been at hand."

A dust jacket statement by an eminent German social historian declares that "The reader will learn more about the daily world of German workers in the late Weimar Republic and about their political inclinations

and cultural needs than from any other contemporary or later work." If that were the case, it would be more of a commentary on the character of that other work than testimony to the merits of this book. It is akin to the statement of the used car salesman, that "this is the best car on the lot."

The book tells us more about some of Germany's intellectuals, about their styles and methods, than it does about Germany's workers. It provides a useful starting point for reconsideration of one modest area of intel-

lectual history. As social history it is of very limited value.

Richard Hamilton is professor of sociology at McGill University in Montreal. He has written on the politics of France, Germany, the United States, and Canada. His books include Affluence and the French Worker, Class and Politics in the United States, Who Voted for Hitler? and, with James Wright, The State of the Masses. He and Wright are working on a volume dealing with the United States in the 1980s.

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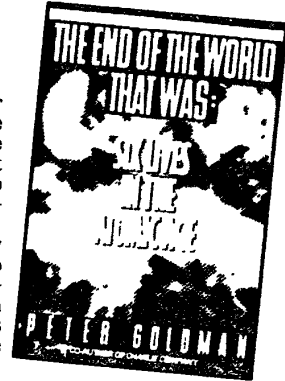
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