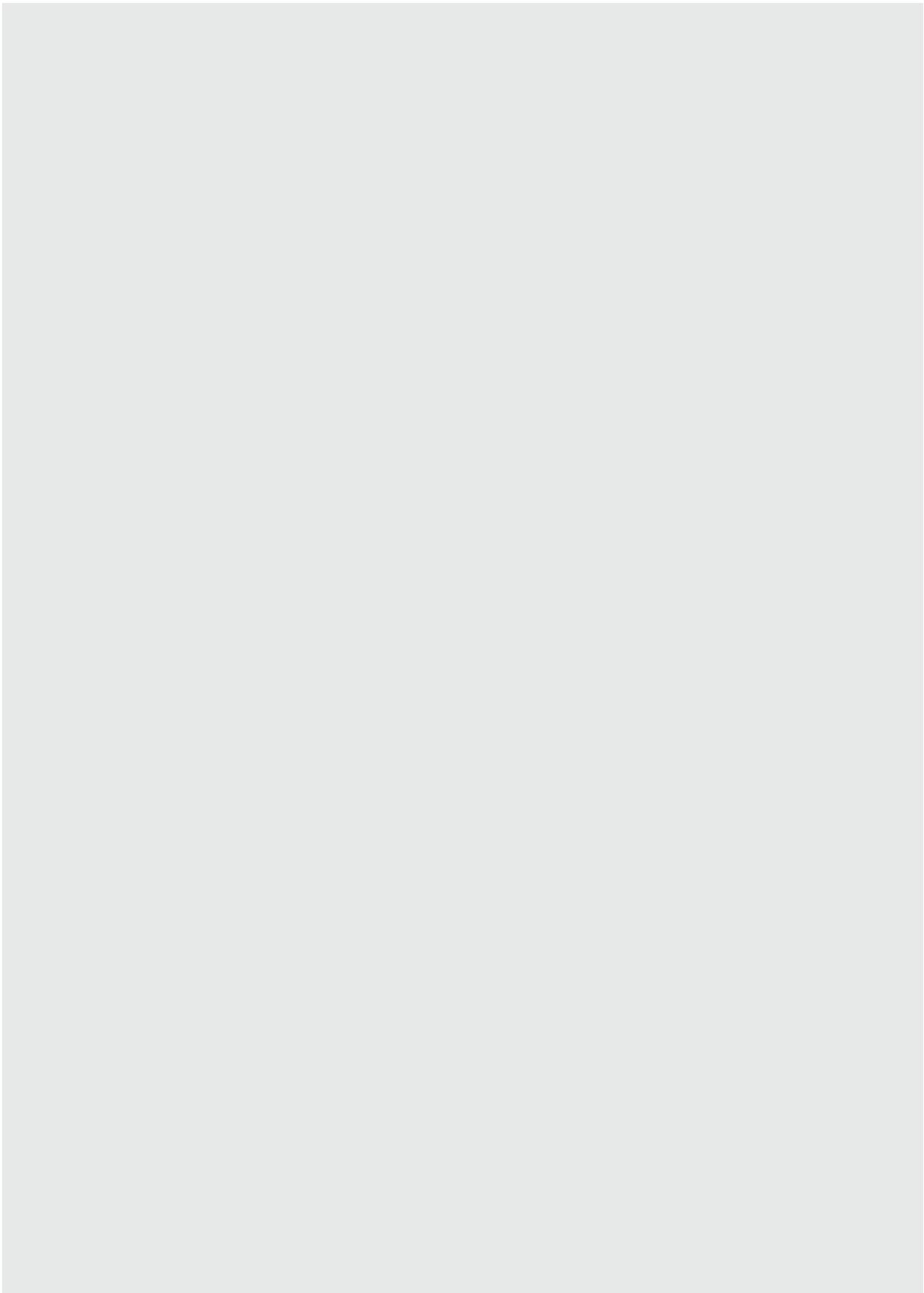


# **Place-Specific Material Resources**



## **DISPLACED KNOWLEDGE AND ITS SPONSORS: HOW AMERICAN FOUNDATIONS AND AID ORGANIZATIONS SHAPED ÉMIGRÉ SOCIAL RESEARCH, 1933-1945**

**Joseph Malherek**

The global refugee crisis precipitated by Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933 was viewed by university presidents, foundation administrators, and idealistic liberal internationalists in the United States as a serious humanitarian disaster in need of immediate attention. It was also, in their view, a historic opportunity to salvage — or, in a more cynical interpretation, exploit — the great minds of Central Europe being forced into exile. Alvin Johnson, director of New York's New School and founder of its famed "University in Exile," which became the institutional home for many prominent émigré scholars, later referred to the intellectual refugees as "Hitler's gift to American culture."<sup>1</sup> For the officers of the Rockefeller Foundation, who had long supported European scholars, the refugee crisis coincided with their increasing interest in the social value of sponsoring scientific studies on radio and mass communications, public opinion, and the vulnerabilities of all Western democracies to the totalitarian threat. The Nazis' purges first targeted Jewish and socialist professors at the universities, whom they forcibly transformed into intellectual refugees. The émigré scholars were thus both victims of national exclusion and agents of scholarly analysis in a time of disintegrating liberal democracy, rising fascism, and the global specter of authoritarianism.

With their background in humanistic inquiry and empirical research, the émigrés among European social scientists were ideally suited to study these problems. The sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld, for example, chose to remain in the U.S. as a traveling Rockefeller fellow when fascism took hold in his native Austria in 1934, and he went on to become the head of a major research institute, the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University. Lazarsfeld's émigré associates from Max Horkheimer's Institute of Social Research, who were also exiled at Columbia, had the unique experience and scholarly training to produce trenchant studies of American, capitalistic society and the motivations of its citizen-consumers. Their method of "Critical Theory" was a kind of philosophically oriented social analysis that incorporated empirical methods with Marxian theories, Freudian psychoanalysis, and the dialectical approach of

1 Quoted in Mitchell G. Ash and Alfons Söllner, "Introduction: Forced Migration and Scientific Change after 1933," in *Forced Migration and Scientific Change: Emigre German-Speaking Scientists and Scholars after 1933*, ed. Mitchell G. Ash and Alfons Söllner, 1-19 (Cambridge, 1996), 3.

the “Left Hegelians.” As Horkheimer’s group of exiled scholars would demonstrate, Critical Theory, with its emphasis on *reason* as a means of imagining a rational alternative to actually-existing social conditions, could produce profound insight into cultural tendencies in the United States that made its politics susceptible to the irrationality of authoritarianism and demagoguery — despite its democratic traditions. Though they espoused a Marxian desire for revolutionary socioeconomic transformation, the members of the Horkheimer circle often disguised their radicalism with terms like “dialectical materialism,” which stood in opposition to the behaviorism and positivism then prevalent in America.<sup>2</sup>

The dialectical character of Critical Theory was present not only in the architecture of its method but also in the material conditions of its production by displaced scholars in the United States, where the working relationship between its practitioners (the Horkheimer circle), their colleagues (social scientists, including other émigrés from the Lazarsfeld circle), and their sponsors (philanthropists, sympathetic university administrators and professors, and the officers of emergency aid organizations), was synthesized into a unique research style. The sponsors’ understanding of the nature of the émigrés’ research was always slightly askew, colored by their own prejudices, vague impressions, idealistic longings, and professional aspirations. This was true in many fields, but especially in the social sciences, which at the universities of Central Europe were still coming into being as disciplines distinct from the traditions of law, philosophy, and economics. Indeed, sociology did not properly exist as a separate discipline in Austria in the 1920s and 1930s, and Lazarsfeld had carved out his scholarly identity by combining psychology and mathematics with his political commitment to socialism.<sup>3</sup> The boundaries between fields of knowledge, and between the university and the practical world of business, were in a state of flux for the émigré scholars and their sponsors, but that very disciplinary liminality provided the crucial context in which Critical Theory could flourish as a new form of social research. By looking at this history of the migration and adaptation of knowledge — including its distinctions, styles, and modes of acquisition — one can more clearly understand the origins of Critical Theory and its adjacent modes of social and communications research. In this way, knowledge as a category of inquiry may act like a “chemical reagent” through which a history steeped in mythology may become legible as a product of displacement, migration, exile, and integration.<sup>4</sup> I argue that the

2 For a discussion of the origins of Critical Theory, see Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research* (Boston, 1973), 41–76.

3 Christian Fleck, “Austrian Refugee Social Scientists,” in *In Defence of Learning: The Plight, Persecution, and Placement of Academic Refugees, 1933–1980s*, ed. Shula Marks, Paul Weindling, and Laura Wintour, 193–210 (New York, 2011), 195; Paul Lazarsfeld, interview by Joan Gordon, November 29, 1961, Columbia Oral History, Rote Mappen, Paul F. Lazarsfeld Archiv, Institut für Soziologie, Universität Wien (hereafter, “PFL Vienna”).

4 Simone Lässig and Swen Steinberg, “Knowledge on the Move: New Approaches toward a History of Migrant Knowledge,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 43, no. 3 (July–September 2017): 313–46, 320.

specific form of the institute’s Critical Theory and Lazarsfeld’s contrasting, but related, “administrative” social and communications research<sup>5</sup> — which was later denigrated by his disgruntled colleague C. Wright Mills as “abstracted empiricism”<sup>6</sup> — were deeply affected by the social conditions, personal relationships and animosities, and financial arrangements that defined their experience as exiled intellectuals.

Scholars of immigration and intellectual history have taken various approaches to the study of the Central European émigré scholars, a relatively small but highly influential group of refugees from the Nazi terror. The classic, early studies were sometimes conducted by the émigrés themselves or with their cooperation as they neared the end of their productive careers in the mid- and late-twentieth century. These works often included first-hand accounts and attempted a comprehensive, in some cases encyclopedic, documentation of the émigrés’ contributions to their respective fields, as well as their broader contributions to the culture and intellectual life of their adopted countries.<sup>7</sup> Later, edited collections and Festschriften — which often anticipated monographs by their contributors — took a closer look at German and other Central European trends and traditions in the social sciences and other fields and the extent to which they challenged or were incorporated into the methods of scientific inquiry in host countries.<sup>8</sup> A persistent source of fascination for scholars has been the intellectual communities created by and for exiled scholars, and the University in Exile at the New School and the Institute of Social Research, better known as the “Frankfurt School,” have attracted particular attention.<sup>9</sup> More recently, intellectual historians have used the study of German-speaking intellectual immigrant communities to make broader arguments about their influence on democratic institutions and the course of American economic and foreign policymaking over the course of the twentieth century.<sup>10</sup>

This essay advances this scholarship by focusing on the work of one of the most important American agencies aiding the refugee scholars, the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, and the Rockefeller Foundation, which did more than any

5 Paul Felix Lazarsfeld, “Remarks on Administrative and Critical Communications Research,” *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 4 (1941): 2–16, 8.

6 C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York, 1959), 55.

7 Major works in this vein include Laura Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants:*

*The Intellectual Migration from Europe, 1930–41* (Chicago, 1968); Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds., *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930–1960* »

» (Cambridge, MA, 1969); H. Stuart Hughes, *The Sea Change: The Migration of Social Thought, 1930–1965* (New York, 1975); and Jean-Michel Palmer, *Weimar in Exile: The Antifascist Emigration in Europe and America*, trans. David Fernbach (New York, 2006 [original 1987]).

8 See, for example, Ash and Söllner, *Forced Migration*; David Kettler and Gerhard Lauer, eds., *Exile, Science, and Bildung: The Contested Legacies of German Emigre Intellectuals* (New York, 2005); Claus-Dieter Krohn, Patrik von zur Mühlen, Gerhard Paul, and Lutz Winckler, eds., *Handbuch der deutschsprachigen Emigration, 1933–1945* (Darmstadt, 1998); and Christian Fleck, *A Transatlantic History of the Social Sciences: Robber Barons, the Third Reich and the Invention of Empirical Social Research*, trans. Hella Beister (London, 2011).

9 The most essential works on the Frankfurt School are Jay, *Dialectical Imagination*; and Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, trans. Michael Robertson (Cambridge, MA, 1994 [original 1986]).

10 See, for example, Angus Burgin, *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets since the Depression* (Cambridge, 2012); and Udi Greenberg, *The Weimar Century: German Émigrés and the Ideological Foundations of the Cold War* (Princeton, 2014).

other philanthropy to support the intellectual émigrés, placing hundreds of them at universities and other academic institutions, often working in concert with the Emergency Committee. The refugee aid work of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Emergency Committee is considered, at least in its general outlines, in the aforementioned studies, and some more recent scholarship has examined this work in greater detail.<sup>11</sup> The history of the work of the Emergency Committee, furthermore, was published in an account by its own director and secretary, just as the Rockefeller Foundation's early work was enshrined in print by its president.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to these approaches, this essay draws on archival sources to examine the motives and values, both broadly humanistic and intensely personal, that drove the émigrés' American sponsors as well as the officers of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Emergency Committee, especially in their relationship with two of their most prominent beneficiaries: Max Horkheimer and his Institute of Social Research, and Paul Lazarsfeld and his Office of Radio Research (later the Bureau of Applied Social Research), which coexisted for a time at Columbia University. As Thomas Wheatland has shown, Horkheimer's institute and Lazarsfeld's bureau did not only exist for themselves and for the social value of the scholarship they produced, but also to boost egos, satisfy professional aspirations, settle intradepartmental disputes, and elevate the particular social and political values of their American sponsors.<sup>13</sup> As a consequence, the shape of the scholarship the émigrés produced in their research institutes was often determined by the interests of their sponsors, the needs of university administrators, and, importantly, the desire among aid officers to avoid provoking resentment and antisemitism among native American professors and researchers, especially in the context of the Depression, when academic jobs became scarce. However, the émigrés' sponsors, such as the sociologist Robert Lynd, did not always get what they wanted: in his view, Lazarsfeld's commitment to socialism was tainted by his willingness to take commercial contracts, and the institute's dedication to the abstractions of Critical Theory removed it from the urgency of empirical social research.

### Formation of the Emergency Committee

The Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums (Law to Restore the Professional Civil Service), which went into effect in April of 1933, began the forced exodus of university faculty members

11 See, for example, Tibor Frank, "Organized Rescue Operations in Europe and the United States, 1933-1945," in *In Defence of Learning*, ed. Marks, et al., 143-60; Marjorie Lamberti, "The Reception of Refugee Scholars from Nazi Germany in America: Philanthropy and Social Change in Higher Education," *Jewish Social Studies* 12 (Spring 2006): 157-92; and Simone Lässig, "Strategies and Mechanisms of Scholar Rescue: The Intellectual Migration of the 1930s Reconsidered," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 84, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 769-807.

12 Stephen Duggan and Betty Drury, *The Rescue of Science and Learning: The Story of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars* (New York, 1948); Raymond B. Fosdick, *The Story of the Rockefeller Foundation* (New York, 1989 [original 1952]).

13 Thomas Wheatland, *The Frankfurt School in Exile* (Minneapolis, 2009), 86-94.

and *Privatdozenten* who were deemed inimical to the German state, and thus unsuitable for their positions, either by virtue of their “race” as Jews or “non-Aryans,” or for their political identity as social democrats, communists, or liberals. They did not only lose their positions, but they were also denied any possibility at all of earning a living in Germany. The National Socialists’ political aim, which was supported by many students, was to restore the “fundamental German character” of the universities. Yet they instantly destroyed the German tradition of *Lern- und Lehrfreiheit*, which had protected the freedom of academic inquiry, in their determination to refashion German universities as centers of antisemitic, pro-Nazi indoctrination.<sup>14</sup> More than a thousand academics would lose their jobs by the end of the year, and more than two thousand would be dismissed by the end of the 1930s, a trend that was intensified by the 1935 Nuremberg Laws and the 1938 pogroms. About one-third of all faculty positions were terminated altogether. Another ten thousand may be added to the number of dismissals when artists, writers, and professionals are included in the total. Jewish centers such as the University of Frankfurt — which had been founded by Jewish merchants before the First World War as a center of the new social sciences — were particularly hard hit. Relative to the half-million German refugees created by Nazi expulsions and terror before the ultimate collapse of the Reich, the number of intellectual émigrés may seem small, yet entire schools of thought were eliminated, especially in the social sciences. About sixty percent of the dismissed academics emigrated, which immediately produced about 650 refugees in the first wave of 1933.<sup>15</sup>

In the May of 1933, as the scope of the refugee crisis from Nazi Germany was becoming apparent, Edward R. Murrow, then the assistant director of the Institute of International Education (IIE) in New York, notified Walter Kotschnig, General Secretary of the International Student Service (ISS) in Geneva, that he had compiled a list of the names of about sixty German professors who were looking for teaching positions in the United States. Murrow, who was also nervous about the IIE’s ability to continue its student exchanges with Germany, did not expect that American universities in the midst of the Depression would be able to marshal the resources necessary to accept such scholars, however eminent they might have been.<sup>16</sup> News of the IIE’s list spread among the elite of the philanthropic Jewish society in New York, and a physician and clinical researcher at the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, Alfred E. Cohn, contacted

14 Duggan, *Rescue*, 3–4.

15 Ash and Söllner, “Introduction,” in *Forced Migration*, 1–7; Claus-Dieter Krohn, *Intellectuals in Exile: Refugee Scholars and the New School for Social Research*, trans. Rita and Robert Kimber (Amherst, 1993 [original 1987]), 11–15; “University Disturbances, Dismissal of Professors by the Minister of Education” (translation from the German), *Frankfurter Zeitung*, May 12, 1933, Folder 4, Box 172, Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars Records (hereafter, “EC”), Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library.

16 Edward R. Murrow to Walter Kotschnig, May 9, 1933, Reel 9-HF (9.1.25), Series 3, RG 1, FA1289, Institute of International Education Records, Alumni and Historical Files (hereafter, “IIE”), Rockefeller Archive Center (hereafter, “RAC”). This is the same Edward R. Murrow who went on to become a well-known broadcast journalist for CBS.

the director of the IIE, Stephen Duggan, who was an acquaintance of his, to inquire about getting a copy of this list.<sup>17</sup> Along with New York philanthropists Fred M. Stein and Bernard Flexner, Cohn soon arranged a meeting with Duggan, and the group quickly formed an “Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars” to address the deteriorating situation in Europe by seeking temporary university appointments for the refugees. Duggan, who had aided émigré scholars from the Russian Revolution and had been the head of the Carnegie Corporation-supported IIE since its founding in 1919, was ideally suited to lead the new committee.<sup>18</sup>

In Europe, citizens came to the assistance of the exiled German scholars via organizations such as the Academic Assistance Council (which later became the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning) in England and the Association Universelle pour les Exilés Allemands in France. In Zurich, a group of German exiles led by Philipp Schwartz formed the Notgemeinschaft deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland, which very quickly found placements for thirty scholars in Turkey and maintained a register of refugee scholars’ dossiers that was consulted by the other aid organizations.<sup>19</sup> In the United States, the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars became the central refugee assistance agency. “Emergency” implied that the situation would, its founders expected, soon pass, and “Displaced” was chosen over “Exiled” in the vain hope that the positions that the refugee scholars had left, or at least their pensions, might again become available once the political situation in Germany had improved.<sup>20</sup>

The Emergency Committee announced its intentions on May 27th in a letter to university presidents authored by Duggan. The committee acknowledged that, given the financial straits of American universities and the difficulty that young, native scholars were enduring in securing positions, the universities themselves were in no position to sponsor appointments for the refugee scholars for fear of generating homegrown resentment or antisemitic feelings. Instead, the committee suggested, funds to assist the refugee scholars would be raised from sources outside the universities, such as from wealthy individuals and foundations, funneled through the committee. University presidents would invite individual, well-regarded scholars for limited-term appointments of one or two years, designated as honorary chairs. In cases where universities had no specific scholar in mind, the committee would be prepared to submit a list of qualified refugee scholars.<sup>21</sup>

17 Alfred E. Cohn to Stephen Duggan, May 19, 1933, Folder 21, Box 4, FA802, Alfred E. Cohn Papers (hereafter, “AEC”), RAC.

18 Duggan, *Rescue*, 6–7; “Fourteenth Annual Report of the Director,” Institute of International Education, Fourteenth Series, Bulletin No. 4, New York, October 1, 1933, Folder 12, Box 5, FA802, AEC, RAC.

19 Like the Emergency Committee, the most urgent mission of both the AAC and the Notgemeinschaft was not solely humanitarian; rather, the preservation of science and the German scholarly tradition through the placement of the refugees was the pressing concern. See Isabella Löhr, “Solidarity and the Academic Community: The Support Networks for Refugee Scholars in the 1930s,” *Journal of Modern European History* 12, no. 2 (2014): 231–46.

20 Duggan, *Rescue*, 5, 179; Krohn, *Intellectuals*, 21; Edward R. Murrow to Alfred E. Cohn, June 12, 1933, Folder 4, Box 4, FA802, AEC, RAC.

21 Duggan, *Rescue*, 173–76.

The committee itself would be composed of an Executive Committee to administer its daily affairs as well as a General Committee of university presidents and representatives of academic associations such as the Association of American Universities and the American Council of Learned Societies. Livingston Farrand, the president of Cornell University, was appointed as chairman of the Emergency Committee, with Stein as treasurer, Murrow as assistant secretary, and Duggan serving as secretary — the real leader of the committee. The Rockefeller Foundation, which would ultimately match about half of the Emergency Committee’s grants in the sum of nearly one-and-a-half million dollars over twelve years, was represented in early meetings of the Executive Committee by its vice president, Thomas B. Appleget, and Alan Gregg, the director of Medical Sciences at the foundation. Committee officers began regular correspondence with foundation officers, with whom they shared lists of displaced scholars, ranked according to their distinction in their respective field.<sup>22</sup>

The Emergency Committee made its plans public in July, inviting contributions and stating its mission:

It is everywhere incumbent upon university faculties ... to be alive to the dangers which threaten them and by a declaration of faith to range themselves on the side of freedom of speech and freedom of teaching. It behooves them to make known ... that they intend to maintain their historic duty of welcoming scholars, irrespective of race, religion and political opinion, into academic society, of protecting them in the interest of learning and human understanding, and of conserving for the world the ability and scholarship that might otherwise disappear.<sup>23</sup>

By August the committee had raised about \$60,000, a sum that would be nearly matched by the Rockefeller Foundation, which generally provided \$2,000 of the \$4,000 annual salary for each placed refugee scholar. By the end of November, the committee had succeeded in filling twenty honorary chairs for German refugee scholars at prominent American universities. The committee also began to establish working relationships with its European counterparts, such as Britain’s Academic Assistance Council, which had been established by William Beveridge, president of the London School of Economics.<sup>24</sup>

22 Duggan, *Rescue*, 77-78; 175-77; Edward R. Murrow to Max Mason, June 30, 1933; and Flora M. Rhind to Edward R. Murrow, August 22, 1933, Folder 4, Box 172, EC; Krohn, *Intellectuals*, 49.

23 “German Scholars to Be Aided Here,” *New York Times*, July 13, 1933.

24 Edward R. Murrow to Walter Kotschnig, August 2, 1933, Reel 9-HF (9.1.25), Series 3, RG 1, FA1289, IIE, RAC; “20 Reich Scholars Fill Chairs Here,” *New York Times*, November 26, 1933; Edward R. Murrow to J. P. Chamberlain, July 12, 1933, Folder 23, Box 138, EC; Stephen Duggan to Prof. Felix Frankfurter, July 18, 1933, Folder 4, Box 172, EC. Many refugee scholars passed through Britain on temporary appointments, later moving to the U.S. or elsewhere. According to Walter Adams, by the end of the war, 624 of the refugee scholars were in the U.S., 612 in Britain, 74 in Commonwealth countries, 80 in Central and South America, 66 in Palestine, and 62 in other parts of the Middle East, as well as smaller numbers in other European countries. Walter Adams, “The Refugee Scholars of the 1930s,” *Political Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1968): 7-14, 10.

The committee also coordinated with American allies such as Alvin Johnson, the director of the New School of Social Research in New York, who was organizing the University in Exile, a new faculty in the political and social sciences specifically for displaced German scholars. The committee would sponsor professorships across the U.S., and also at Hebrew University in what was then Palestine, but the New School was unique as a venue for a large number of refugee scholars aided by the committee.<sup>25</sup> Johnson had already gathered fourteen émigré scholars to begin teaching at the New School in the fall of 1933.

Founded in 1919 by a group of progressive, internationalist intellectuals that included John Dewey, Thorstein Veblen, Charles Beard, and Franz Boas, the New School was modeled on the German *Volkshochschulen* for adult and worker education. Johnson became director of the school in 1922, and he grew familiar with the German academic community through his work on the fifteen-volume *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, funded by the Rockefeller and Carnegie Foundations. When the refugee crisis hit in 1933, Johnson felt that, by establishing a “University in Exile,” he could salvage the German university tradition — which he had admired for its academic freedom and rigorous methodology — from total destruction by the Nazis. At the same time, he believed he could bolster the social sciences in the U.S. and the reputation of the New School as a cosmopolitan center of research. At the dawn of the New Deal, he also saw an opportunity to promote new, activist modes of scholarly thinking on depression economics — specifically the German “reform” economists of the Kiel School, whose unorthodox structural analysis presented a stark contrast to the individualistic, marginal-utility theories of Austrian neoclassicists like Ludwig von Mises. Johnson quickly raised money for the school in the summer of 1933, and he received pledges of support for scholars from the Emergency Committee and the Rockefeller Foundation, which would go on to provide more than a half-million dollars to support the salaries of refugee scholars at the New School over the next decade. Johnson used his academic contacts in Germany, notably the sociologist Hans Speier, to arrange contracts for the exiled faculty members, several of whom had authored articles for the *Encyclopaedia*. By August, Johnson had assembled the first core group for the University in Exile, made up largely of economists, including Gerhard Colm and Emil Lederer, but also including sociologists such as Speier and the Gestalt psychologist Max Wertheimer. Wertheimer, Lederer, and Colm also became the American representatives of the *Notgemeinschaft*. Overseen by Johnson and a provisional advisory

25 “Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee, Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars,” August 30, 1933, Folder 19, Box 6, FA802, AEC, RAC; Duggan, *Rescue*, 78–80.

committee that included Dewey and Robert M. Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago, the school officially opened on October 1st as the “Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science” at the New School.<sup>26</sup>

The Graduate Faculty was unique in its conception and concentration of German émigré scholars. With successive waves of immigration after Germany’s *Anschluss* of Austria in 1938 and the invasion of France in 1940, the school would come to host a greater variety of scholars. Although, in its earlier years, the political composition of the émigrés was almost uniformly on the left end of the political spectrum, émigrés of other political backgrounds would also join the faculty, including the conservative antimodernist Leo Strauss, who arrived in 1938. The school became a magnet for émigré scholars — especially prominent ones who had preexisting ties to American colleagues who came to the aid of their friends — and it was inundated with some five thousand requests for assistance annually by the late 1930s. An Emergency Visitor’s Visa Program was established by President Roosevelt in 1940 to assist political refugees on a non-quota basis, though Johnson quickly encountered bureaucratic resistance to the smooth processing of visa applications for refugee intellectuals. Along with other émigré intellectuals in New York, including Friedrich Pollock of the Institute of Social Research, a number of New School faculty members also formed a “self-help” group, imposing a tax on themselves to aid other refugees.<sup>27</sup>

But the centralization of émigré scholars at the University in Exile at the New School was an exception. Typically, the aid organizations sought to avoid such clusters for fear of stoking antisemitism at existing institutions. Placements by the Emergency Committee, which insisted that it considered refugee scholars without regard to their religion, were typically limited to two-year appointments for distinguished scholars, entirely funded by outside sources. In addition to the Rockefeller Foundation’s matching grants, the committee received regular financial contributions from several prominent foundations such as the American Friends Service Committee. The support of Jewish individuals and foundations — particularly the New York Foundation, the Nathan Hofheimer Foundation, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee — long sustained the work of the Emergency Committee. Given that the preponderance of refugee scholars was Jewish, this is not surprising, and the committee made reference to its own Jewish members in funding requests to

26 Krohn, *Intellectuals*, 21, 59–72, 77; Daniel Bessner, *Democracy in Exile: Hans Speier and the Rise of the Defense Intellectual* (Ithaca, 2018), 48–52.

27 Krohn, *Intellectuals*, 74–89.

Jewish foundations and wealthy individuals. Yet among the Emergency Committee's most durable supporters was the Oberlaender Trust of Philadelphia, which had been established in 1931 to promote the contributions to American society made by German immigrants and native Americans of German descent. The Oberlaender Trust supported the work of the committee, but it also provided its own form of direct financial assistance, often in the form of smaller sums or loans, to German refugee scholars, professionals, and artists in order to help them "get a start."<sup>28</sup>

The Emergency Committee issued its first report in January of 1934, distributing 15,000 copies to university professors, administrators, and journalists. The committee had up to that point sponsored the university positions of thirty-six refugee scholars and assisted in negotiations resulting in appointments for another ten. Meanwhile, the European refugee problem was only growing more acute, with some 60,000 Germans already living in exile from the Nazi regime, desperately seeking to establish themselves in a foreign land. About a fifth of those were intellectuals of some kind, and about 1,200 were from the academic professions, many among the most distinguished in their respective field.<sup>29</sup> About 300 managed to get appointments outside of the U.S., and at that early stage only about seventeen had found positions at the New School.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Rockefeller Foundation, Radio, and Paul Lazarsfeld**

The synergies of émigré social research on the American scene were anticipated by the work of the Rockefeller Foundation, which, before it became a major funder of the New School and the Emergency Committee, had already developed an interest in the social sciences and mass communications research in the 1920s, and was instrumental in the founding of the Social Science Research Council. It was also a major supporter of the social sciences in Germany, where it allocated hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships in the years before 1933. Throughout the 1920s, the foundation, through its Paris office, had supported traveling fellowships to the U.S. for many German-speaking social scientists. When the crisis hit, the Rockefeller officers and German alumni fellows became important contacts for the re-establishment of exiled scholars.<sup>31</sup> The study of critical social problems, such as unemployment, was an urgent concern in the context of the Depression, and foundation officers were looking for opportunities for a "scientific attack" on the problem.<sup>32</sup> The situation was made even more urgent in 1933, when the Hitler regime

28 Duggan, *Rescue*, 85–88; 188; Fred Stein to Rabbi William G. Braude, Folder 23, Box 138, EC.

29 "Report of The Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars," January 1, 1934, Folder 13, Box 5, FA802, AEC, RAC; "Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars," Feb. 2, 1934, Folder 19, Box 6, FA802, AEC, RAC; "Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars," January 4, 1934, Folder 19, Box 6, FA802, AEC, RAC; Betty Drury to Alfred E. Cohn, June 6, 1934, Folder 3, Box 4, FA802, AEC, RAC.

30 Diana Rice, "Exiles Aid Study Here; German Scholars Placed on American Campuses through Two Plans," *New York Times*, May 27, 1934.

31 Krohn, *Intellectuals*, 32–34.

32 "Social Sciences — Program and Policy: Past Program and Proposed Future Program," extract from Agenda for Special Trustees Meeting, April 11, 1933, Folder 12, Box 2, Series 910, RG 3, Subgroup 1, Administration, Program and Policy (hereafter, "APP"), FA112, Rockefeller Foundation Records (hereafter, "RF"), RAC.

threatened the practice of the social sciences and the “independence of inquiry” in Germany and across the Continent. Fellowships to foreign social scientists were viewed as a means of preserving social science, improving international relations, and tackling critical social problems like unemployment.<sup>33</sup>

Paul Lazarsfeld was one of the most important fellowship recipients in the social sciences, although his grant in fact came from the foundation’s humanities program. Lazarsfeld was a Viennese sociologist who had become well known for his study of the unemployed in the depressed Austrian village of Marienthal. The study was first published in 1933, but it was known before then from Lazarsfeld’s presentations of the findings at academic conferences.<sup>34</sup> Lazarsfeld was highly recommended for the Rockefeller fellowship by his mentor, the social psychologist Charlotte Bühler, who directed the Psychological Institute, along with her husband Karl, at the University of Vienna. Bühler, who specialized in child psychology, had herself been the recipient of a Rockefeller fellowship in 1924–25 and would receive one again in 1934–35.<sup>35</sup>

At the time he was awarded the Rockefeller fellowship, Lazarsfeld was the director of the *Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle* (“Economic Psychology Research Center”) in Vienna. This research center, which was formally distinct from but loosely linked to the university, conducted studies on consumer behaviors and motivations for private companies, among other projects. The *Forschungsstelle* also served as an organization for the development of large-scale, cooperative empirical research and as a means of employment for many of Lazarsfeld’s friends and associates from the Social Democratic Party. Lazarsfeld and many of his fellow researchers at the *Forschungsstelle* were Jewish, and for that reason they could only work as *Privatdozenten* or adjunct instructors at the university. Lazarsfeld and a colleague of his at the Bühlers’ Psychological Institute had been technically eligible for a permanent *Dozent* position around the same time in 1931, but because of rising antisemitism it had already become “impossible” for a Jew to acquire a permanent university post. “Never for a second could he think of a university position,” recalled Lazarsfeld’s close friend and colleague Hans Zeisel, a co-author of the Marienthal study. At the same time that the extremist Right was barring Jews from the university, the conservative Austrian government had introduced a new austerity policy that further limited professional opportunities for academics. The *Dozent* position ended

33 “Interim Report of Activities during 1933 in Fields of Concentration Proposed at April Meeting,” trustees meeting, December 13, 1933, Folder 13, Box 2, Series 910, RG 3, Subgroup 1, APP, FA112, RF, RAC.

34 Österreichische Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle, ed., *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal: Ein soziographischer Versuch über die Wirkungen langdauernder Arbeitslosigkeit mit einem Anhang zur Geschichte der Soziographie* (Leipzig, 1933).

35 “BUHLER, Charlotte (Mme),” Box 3, RG 10.2, Fellowship Recorder Cards (hereafter, “FRC”), Discipline 5: Humanities Fellows, FA426, RF, RAC; “BÜHLER, Prof. Charlotte,” Box 3, RG 10.2, FRC, Discipline 5: Humanities Fellows, FA426, RF, RAC.

up going to Lazarsfeld's Gentile colleague instead, but the Böhlers, who were in Lazarsfeld's view "very decent" and embarrassed about the injustice, instead put Lazarsfeld's name forward for a Rockefeller traveling fellowship to the United States. On the basis of the Böhlers' endorsement and the buzz around the Marienthal study, Lazarsfeld's application was approved by the Paris office of the Rockefeller Foundation on April 4, 1933. Lazarsfeld later appreciated the dark irony that antisemitic discrimination had been his salvation: "I would now be dead in a gas chamber of course if I could have become a dozent [laugh] at the University of Vienna."<sup>36</sup>

Lazarsfeld began his fellowship in the United States in September of 1933, traveling from place to place across the country to meet his peers and mentors in the fields of social science, psychology, and market research. He was already known from the Marienthal study, and he was greatly helped by the sociologist Robert Lynd, who became his chief sponsor and ultimately his colleague in the sociology department at Columbia. Lazarsfeld worked on a study of the unemployed in Millville, New Jersey, for the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and he also spoke before audiences of corporate executives and market researchers about his innovative techniques of studying human decisions and motivations. As Lazarsfeld toured the U.S., the political situation in Austria deteriorated with the rise to power of Engelbert Dollfuss, who effectively ended the first Austrian republic and outlawed the Social Democratic Party in February of 1934, which greatly endangered Lazarsfeld's teaching prospects as well as the work of his Forschungsstelle. Indeed, many of his friends, colleagues, and family members — including his wife, Marie Jahoda, and his parents — were imprisoned, along with anyone "who was in any way connected to the Socialist Party." In the course of his fellowship, Lazarsfeld essentially became a refugee. Fortunately, he was able to get a year-long renewal of the Rockefeller grant in June. He continued his travels in the U.S., though at the time he believed he would finish the fellowship somewhere in Europe. He worked on research projects for Professor David R. Craig, director of the Research Bureau for Retail Training at the University of Pittsburgh, and he also worked with prominent researchers and sociologists at the Psychological Corporation in New York, the University of Rochester, and the University of Chicago. Lazarsfeld also made a name for himself as a groundbreaking market researcher who mixed quantitative and qualitative methods. He was profiled in an important marketing trade journal, and he published an influential article, "The Art of Asking

36 Christian Fleck, "Introduction to the Transaction Edition," in *Marienthal*, xxi-xxii; Paul F. Lazarsfeld, interview by Ann K. Pasanella, Biography Tapes, Feb. 21, 1975, PFL Vienna; Hans Zeisel to John Haag, Jan. 29, 1979, Folder H [1/3], 1950-1992, Box 3, Hans Zeisel Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library; "LAZARSFELD, Dr. Paul Felix (Jewish)," Box 3, RG 10.2, FRC, Discipline 5: Humanities Fellows, FA426, RF, RAC; Fleck, "Austrian Refugee Social Scientists," 194-98.

WHY in Marketing Research,” in the Summer 1935 issue of *National Marketing Review*.<sup>37</sup>

In the summer of 1935, Lazarsfeld returned to Vienna, but by then the situation there had become so hopeless that he resolved that he would continue his career in the United States, where he had a position lined up working for Craig that earned him a visa. Although that position ultimately fell through, Lazarsfeld still returned to the U.S. that fall and, through Lynd, secured a position as the supervisor of work-relief students at the University of Newark, where he quickly set up another research institute.<sup>38</sup>

In May of 1937, the Rockefeller Foundation awarded \$67,000 to the School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University for the first two years of a proposed four-year study on the “value of radio to listeners” in the interest of “broadening radio’s range of public service.” The study was proposed by Professor Hadley Cantril of Princeton and Dr. Frank Stanton, a market-research director at CBS who would go on to become the company’s president. Cantril and Stanton would serve as associate directors for the study, which would use the school as its headquarters. There would also be an Executive Committee composed of educators as well as representatives of major commercial broadcasters. Beyond basic questions of who listens to what and when, the proposed study aimed to discover the role of radio in the lives of listeners and the social effects of radio-listening. The research on radio-listening that had been done up to that point had been almost exclusively of a commercial nature and in the interest of increasing the mass appeal of radio for the industry and its advertising sponsors. To some extent, the industry even had an interest in remaining ignorant about some aspects of radio-listening: studies might show that there were not as many listeners as they claimed, or that certain programs lacked the mass appeal that advertisers desired.<sup>39</sup> The foundation’s efforts finally coalesced as the “Princeton Radio Research Project,” which aimed to discover those “public needs which radio can satisfy.”<sup>40</sup>

Cantril and Stanton had encountered Lazarsfeld during his travels as a Rockefeller fellow, and they were impressed with his research skills, novel methods, and his ability to manage large research bureaus, which he had done in Vienna with the Forschungsstelle and had continued at his Research Center at the University of Newark since resettling in America. They offered him the directorship in August of 1937, sweetening the deal by also offering an assistantship to his

37 “Doctor in America,” *Tide*, November 1934, 58-62; Paul F. Lazarsfeld, “The Art of Asking WHY in Marketing Research: Three Principles Underlying the Formulation of Questionnaires,” *National Marketing Review* 1, no. 1 (Summer 1935): 26-38; Paul F. Lazarsfeld, interview by Ann K. Pasanella, Biography Tapes, Feb. 21, 1975, PFL Vienna.

38 “LAZARSELD, Dr. Paul Felix (Jewish),” Box 3, RG 10.2, FRC, Discipline 5: Humanities Fellows, FA426, RF, RAC.

39 “Princeton University — School of Public and International Affairs — Study of Radio,” RF 37072, May 21, 1937, in “Humanities Appropriations, 1936 — 1940,” Folder 8, Box 2, RG IV2A34, David H. Stevens Papers (hereafter, “DHS”), RAC.

40 John Marshall, “Next Jobs in Radio and Film,” memorandum, Sept. 13, 1938, Folder 50, Box 5, Series 911, RG 3.1, APP, FA112, RF, RAC.

second wife, Herta Herzog, herself an innovative social researcher from the Forschungsstelle in need of employment in the U.S. They also permitted a hesitant Lazarsfeld to base his operations out of his Newark Research Center, so the “Princeton Radio Research Project” never actually operated out of Princeton. Lazarsfeld’s project — also called the “Office of Radio Research” — would eventually move to Columbia University, where Lazarsfeld would join the sociology department.<sup>41</sup> The early work of Lazarsfeld’s radio research group impressed officers at the Rockefeller Foundation, and in August of 1938 John Marshall, assistant director of the humanities, reported that the “resources of social psychology” were proving effective in approaching the problem of propaganda and the pathologies of influence and ignorance. Knowing more about how propaganda operated, Marshall suggested, could be beneficial in developing uses for it with positive, democratic ends.<sup>42</sup>

Denied a university career because of antisemitism in Austria, Lazarsfeld eagerly embraced the opportunities presented to him during his traveling Rockefeller fellowship in the U.S., where he encountered academics such as Lynd, foundation officers such as Marshall, and businesspeople such as Stanton, all eager to nurture his unique talents and experience. Lazarsfeld would deliver as an exiled scholar-entrepreneur, though not always in ways that his sponsors had imagined. Meanwhile, his research institutes would provide much-needed employment for many other refugee scholars streaming in from Central Europe.

### **The Institute of Social Research in America**

Among Lazarsfeld’s most important colleagues in social research while he was in Vienna were members of Max Horkheimer’s Institut für Sozialforschung, which was based in Frankfurt. The Institut was founded in 1923 by Felix Weil, a millionaire Marxist who supported the work of the social theorist Horkheimer, the musicologist Theodor Wiesengrund-Adorno, the philosopher Herbert Marcuse, the literary analyst Leo Lowenthal, and the psychologist Erich Fromm, among others. It was associated with the University of Frankfurt, and although it was primarily a research institute, it did offer seminars and courses on topics of interest to social researchers that were often neglected at German universities. It was indeed a center for Marxist “Critical Theory” and cultural analysis, but the Institut also sponsored empirical studies from the time Horkheimer assumed the directorship in 1930.<sup>43</sup> Lazarsfeld’s research center in Vienna assisted

41 For a more detailed discussion of Cantril and Stanton’s courting of Lazarsfeld, see my dissertation, “Émigré Scientists of the Quotidian: Market Research and the American Consumer Unconscious, 1933-1976” (PhD diss., George Washington University, 2015).

42 John Marshall, “Next Jobs in Radio and Film,” Aug. 31, 1938, Folder 50, Box 5, Series 911, RG 3.1, APP, FA112, RF, RAC.

43 Jay, *Dialectical*, 24-7; Eli Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis* (New York, 2004), 234-35; “International Institute of Social Research: A Report on Its History, Aims and Activities, 1933-1938,” n.d., Folder 19, Box 1, AEC, RAC.

the Institut with empirical studies such as the *Studien über Autorität und Familie*, which would conclude that the German working class was vulnerable to Hitler and Nazism because the patriarchal German family structure fostered submission to authority.<sup>44</sup>

But that study would not be published until 1936, by which time the members of the Institut had reorganized as a community of exiles in New York. The Institut, whose director and members were mostly Jewish socialists, had been shut down by the Nazis in March of 1933. In anticipation of the closure, the staff had shipped most of its library out of Germany, and its financial holdings had already been taken out of German banks. The Institut first moved to Geneva and became the Société Internationale de Recherches Sociales, and it also established branches in Paris and London. It also transferred the publication of its predominantly German journal, *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, from C. L. Hirschfeld in Leipzig to the Librairie Félix Alcan in Paris. The precise manner by which the Institut received an invitation to move to Columbia University is a matter of some speculation, and historian Thomas Wheatland offers several theories. But it seems likely that Robert Lynd, who had a close relationship with Lazarsfeld — who, in turn, was intimately familiar with the work and personalities of the Institut — was an instrumental figure in this transatlantic relocation. Wheatland suggests that the interpersonal politics of the sociology department at Columbia would have given Lynd a strong incentive to endorse the incorporation of the Institut, the members of which he would have viewed as intellectual allies. Indeed, the Institut specifically thanked Lynd, along with Robert MacIver, chair of the sociology department, and especially Nicholas Murray Butler, president of the university, for his “expression of scientific solidarity” in offering a building on Morningside Heights to house the group in May of 1934. When the Institut moved into 429 West 117th Street, it was rechristened as the “International Institute of Social Research.”<sup>45</sup>

Thanks to some foresight, the institute was on fairly sound financial footing when it was relocated to the U.S., having a capital of between four and five million Swiss francs. The funds were held as an investment trust based in Holland, which, in addition to holding some amount of gold bullion in London, managed securities in several European countries and in the U.S.<sup>46</sup> The institute’s initial financial security ensured that its scholars had some independence to pursue research as they saw fit, and its journal continued to be published in German. For this

44 P. F. Lazarsfeld, “Sociology,” in *The Human Sciences*, n.d., PFL Vienna, Rote Mappe, Papers Va, Mappe 2/2; Michael Pollak, “Paul F. Lazarsfeld: A Socio-Intellectual Biography,” Program on Science, Technology and Society, Cornell University, n.d., p. 7, PFL Vienna, Blaue Mappen 3 (about PFL-1), Mappe 2/2; Paul Lazarsfeld and Käthe Leichter, “Erhebung bei Jugendlichen über Autorität und Familie,” in *Studien über Autorität und Familie: Forschungsberichte aus dem Institut für Sozialforschung*, ed. Max Horkheimer (Paris, 1936).

45 Wheatland, *Frankfurt*, 29–30, 39–60; Jay, *Dialectical*, 39; “International Institute of Social Research: A Report on Its History, Aims and Activities, 1933–1938,” n.d., Folder 19, Box 1, AEC, RAC; “International Institute of Social Research: A Short Description of Its History and Aims,” 1935, Folder 35, Box 142, EC.

46 Frederick V. Field to Edward R. Murrow, October 11, 1935, Folder 35, Box 142, EC.

47 Bessner, *Democracy in Exile*, 60–72; Hans Speier, “The Social Conditions of the Intellectual Exile,” *Social Research* 4 (September 1937): 316–26.

48 Robert Lynd, postcard to Paul Lazarsfeld, May 6, 1935, Folder, 10, Box 2B, Paul Felix Lazarsfeld Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York (hereafter, “PFL”).

49 Philip Eisenberg and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, “The Psychological Effects of Unemployment,” *Psychological Bulletin* 35, no. 6 (June 1938): 358–90; Max Horkheimer, “Preface,” in Mirra Komarovsky, *The Unemployed Man and His Family: The Effect of Unemployment upon the Status of the Man in Fifty-Nine Families*, vii–viii (New York, 1971 [original 1940]). The project began as Komarovsky’s dissertation, which was financed by the institute. Paul Lazarsfeld, interview by Joan Gordon, Nov. 29, 1961, Columbia Oral History, Rote Mappen, PFL Vienna.

50 The fascinating story of Adorno’s difficult experience working on “administrative” research is already well covered. See Theodor W. Adorno, “Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America,” in *Intellectual Migration*, ed. Fleming and Bailyn, 338–70; David E. Morrison, “Kultur and Culture: The Case of Theodor W. Adorno and Paul Lazarsfeld,” *Social Research* 45 (Summer 1978): 331–55; and David Jenemann, *Adorno in America* (Minneapolis, 2007), 50–93.

51 Wheatland, *Frankfurt*, 77; “International Institute of Social Research: A Report on Its History, Aims and Activities, 1933–1938,” n.d., Folder 19, Box 1, AEC, RAC.

the institute drew some criticism from other émigrés, notably the sociologist Hans Speier, a non-Jewish German sociologist at the New School, who wrote a negative review of the institute’s *Studien über Autorität und Familie* when it was published in 1936. Speier, who was deeply skeptical of psychoanalysis, was harshly critical of Horkheimer’s peculiar research methods and the institute’s aloofness from practical affairs. In a time of crisis, Speier felt, it was the duty of the intellectual in exile to be politically engaged in the present society of his host country. Horkheimer, for his part, viewed the institute’s Critical Theory as a method of exposing the fundamental structures of society as a way of opening up possibilities for future action, and in that way it was politically engaged, albeit indirectly. Yet Speier felt that Horkheimer’s institute was abdicating its intellectual duties, and his passion for the issue was articulated in a 1937 speech that was later published in the New School’s journal *Social Research* as “The Social Conditions of the Intellectual Exile.” Speier advocated an engaged cosmopolitanism, as opposed to a cloistered provinciality, which is how he characterized the Institute of Social Research — but only by implication, not by name.<sup>47</sup>

While the Horkheimer circle may not have carried out the kind of engaged scholarship that Speier idealized, it was not quite fair to characterize the institute as being isolated. In fact, members of the institute, including Horkheimer and Erich Fromm, had already established friendly relations at Columbia with Lazarsfeld’s American benefactor Lynd, who encouraged their further collaboration.<sup>48</sup> While Lazarsfeld was still at Newark, Lynd and members of the exiled institute assisted him with a study on the psychological effects of unemployment, particularly as it related to parental authority.<sup>49</sup> Lazarsfeld’s collaboration with the institute also resulted in Theodor W. Adorno’s somewhat rocky tenure working on the Rockefeller Foundation-funded radio research project.<sup>50</sup> In addition to its scholarship, the institute offered courses and seminars through the Extension Division at Columbia, which included a seminar on social-science research taught by Lazarsfeld, a seminar on psychoanalysis and social psychology taught by Fromm, and a seminar on the music of Richard Wagner taught by Adorno. The institute also hosted public lectures by its members, including a series of talks on authoritarianism given by Horkheimer.<sup>51</sup>

But by the mid-1930s, the institute began to suffer financial difficulties due to poor investments and misguided real-estate deals. Because

institute bylaws forbade drawing off the principal of the endowment, Horkheimer was forced to cut salaries, and he even had to let some members go, including, most prominently, Fromm.<sup>52</sup> Although its offices were provided by Columbia, the institute was not, according to assistant director Friedrich (often anglicized as “Frederick”) Pollock, an institution “in the legal sense.” For years it had channeled its finances through the Social Studies Association, which was formed merely as a membership association with Lynd, MacIver, and other Columbia colleagues.<sup>53</sup> The institute had to secure salaries for its members from outside the university, and it began to seek funding from sources including the Emergency Committee. Horkheimer applied for partial funding of the salary of political scientist Franz Neumann for the 1936–37 academic year, which was initially turned down but later approved on the condition that Neumann be made a permanent member in the institute at the close of the year, a common condition of committee support. Neumann was indeed made a permanent member, and he contributed to the institute’s project on German workers as he prepared the manuscript for what would become his monumental work on the origins of National Socialism, *Behemoth*, a project for which he received a grant from the Emergency Committee.<sup>54</sup>

When the war broke out, about \$200,000 of the institute’s capital became blocked in Europe, and it was forced to step up its fundraising efforts.<sup>55</sup> The institute’s funding situation was serious enough, Horkheimer and Pollock warned, that even prominent scholars such as Neumann and Herbert Marcuse, who were essential for maintaining the institute as an “integrated scientific organization,” could not be kept on staff without outside support.<sup>56</sup> Between 1939 and 1943, the Emergency Committee approved grants for many institute scholars, including sociologist Albert Lauterbach, philosopher Maximilian Beck, political scientist Otto Kirchheimer, philologist Franco Bruno Averadi, legal scholar Karl Strupp, literary theorist Kurt Pinthus, as well as Edgar Zilsel, Hans Fried, Ossip Flechtheim, Paul Massing, and Fritz Karsen.<sup>57</sup> Horkheimer and

55 TBK, memorandum, Apr. 2, 1941, Folder 313, Box 14, Cox and Reece Investigations (FA418), RF, RAC.

56 Max Horkheimer to Betty Drury, Apr. 24, 1940, Folder 36, Box 142, EC; Frederick Pollock to Stephen Duggan, May 6, 1940, Folder 36, Box 142, EC.

57 Betty Drury to Frederick Pollock, January 13, 1939; Betty Drury to Frederick Pollock, Mar. 2, 1939; Betty Drury to Frederick Pollock, May 13, 1939; Betty Drury to Frederick Pollock, Oct. 11, 1939; “Emergency Committee Grantees at the International Institute of Social Research,” n.d.; Betty Drury to Frederick Pollock, December 1, 1939; in Folder 35, Box 142, EC; Betty Drury to Max Horkheimer, January 19, 1940, Folder 36, Box 142; Betty Drury, “Minutes of Luncheon Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars,” Sept. 26, 1940, Folder 25, Box 6, AEC, RAC; “Minutes of Meeting of the Subcommittee on Applications of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars,” Dec. 8, 1942, Folder 2, Box 5, AEC, RAC; “Emergency Committee Fellowships: Franco Bruno Averadi, Philologist,” Apr. 6, 1943, Folder 24, Box 6, AEC, RAC.

52 Wheatland, *Frankfurt*, 82.

53 Frederick Pollock to Fred Stein, July 7, 1941, Folder 37, Box 142, EC.

54 Max Horkheimer to Stephen Duggan, May 20, 1936, Folder 35, Box

142, EC; Stephen Duggan to Max Horkheimer, June 8, 1936; John Whyte to Max Horkheimer, Sept. 24, 1936; Betty Drury to Stephen Duggan, Nov. 10, 1939, in Folder 35, Box 142, EC; Max Horkheimer

to Betty Drury, Apr. 24, 1940; Betty Drury to Max Horkheimer, May 23, 1940, in Folder 36, Box 142, EC; Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (London, 1942).

Pollock made regular appeals, which included vigorous letters of recommendation, to the committee to fund institute scholars such as film theorist Siegfried Kracauer and philosopher Ernst Bloch.<sup>58</sup> The committee usually (but not always) obliged, often on the condition that an equal sum be granted from another source (often the Rockefeller Foundation or the Oberlaender Trust), and that the total salary of the scholar not exceed \$4,000.<sup>59</sup> Committee member Alfred Cohn became so interested in the institute's work that he joined its advisory committee.<sup>60</sup>

Nevertheless, the network of scholarly relationships among émigrés and the intangible quality of reputation probably had more to do with the Emergency Committee's support for the institute than the substance of its work because the non-specialist committee members relied so heavily on letters of recommendation in making their funding decisions. They hardly could have anticipated the course that Critical Theory would take.

### The Columbia Expedition

When Hitler annexed Austria in March of 1938, the German crisis became a Continental crisis, and the committee expected a flood of new applications.<sup>61</sup> Accordingly, the name was changed to the "Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced *Foreign* Scholars" on November 9th, and, indeed, applications began to appear from Czechoslovakia and elsewhere as Nazi Germany encroached on its neighbors.<sup>62</sup> The committee had reduced its contribution per scholar to between \$1,200 and \$1,500 by the late 1930s as it faced this influx of new applications. Members of the committee also became increasingly worried about reaching a "saturation point" for placing refugee scholars, as well as the possibility, occasionally supported by anecdotal evidence, of feelings of resentment and antisemitic attitudes at American universities. Committee members even became territorial about their mission, and they sometimes resented the efforts to address the refugee scholar problem carried out by their allies, who did not always follow their strict protocols, such as only placing scholars in the prime of their careers while excluding the very old and the very young.<sup>63</sup>

Yet those allies, such as the Oberlaender Trust, were often quite successful in their efforts, often at a much lesser expense than the Rockefeller Foundation or the committee. Groups concentrating on scholars in specific fields were also successful in placing refugees. The Committee on Displaced Foreign Psychologists, for example,

58 Max Horkheimer to Betty Drury, Nov. 5, 1938, Folder 11, Box 6, AEC, RAC; "Application for New Scholar: Ernst Bloch," May 23, 1940, Folder 14, Box 6, AEC, RAC.

59 Betty Drury, "Minutes of the Luncheon Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars," May 23, 1940, Folder 25, Box 6, AEC, RAC.

60 Max Horkheimer to Dr. Alfred E. Cohn, June 12, 1940, Folder 8, Box 1, AEC, RAC.

61 Betty Drury, "Minutes of the Luncheon Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars," June 6, 1938, Folder 21, Box 6, FA802, AEC, RAC.

62 Betty Drury to Alfred E. Cohn, November 22, 1938, Folder 15, Box 4, FA802, AEC, RAC; "The Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars: Annual Report," Dec. 1, 1938, Folder 13, Box 5, FA802, AEC, RAC.

63 Stephen Duggan to Frederick P. Keppel, Apr. 15, 1939, Folder 29, Box 4, FA802, AEC, RAC; Ralph E. Himstead to Stephen Duggan, Apr. 28, 1939, Folder 29, Box 4, FA802, AEC, RAC.

secured a position for Karl Bühler, who had presided over Lazarsfeld's Forschungsstelle, which had been shut down in the wake of the *Anschluss*.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, nearly all of Lazarsfeld's colleagues from the Forschungsstelle were forced to flee in 1938, including Zeisel, his coauthor with Jahoda on the Marienthal study, and Dr. Hermann M. Spitzer, who had served as its director and sought the Emergency Committee's support for a position at the Bureau for Retail Training at the University of Pittsburgh, where Lazarsfeld had worked with David Craig on his Rockefeller fellowship.<sup>65</sup> Zeisel and others, including Leo Lowenthal, took jobs at Lazarsfeld's radio research project as they tried to establish themselves in the U.S. In addition to being at the forefront of communications research, the radio research project was a refuge for émigré social scientists who had fled the short-lived democratic republics of interwar Central Europe.

This exodus of Austrian social psychologists coincided with Rockefeller Foundation officers' increasing interest in mass psychology and the modern means of propaganda, especially radio. The project's early studies, such as a famous study on the mass hysteria caused by Orson Welles's radio adaptation of H. G. Wells's novel *War of the Worlds*, were focused on the role of radio in the lives of listeners and the effects of listening on different types of listeners.<sup>66</sup> These studies, eventually published in special issues of the *Journal of Applied Psychology* and in several bound volumes,<sup>67</sup> were distinct from the strictly commercial studies, which were only interested in listeners insofar as they were consumers.<sup>68</sup> The research techniques that Lazarsfeld developed at the radio research project, such as the "panel" technique of interviewing the same set of respondents over a period of time, were applicable in the commercial context, but their impetus came from a desire to understand the effects of mass media on ordinary people as democracy as an institution became threatened.<sup>69</sup>

By the fall of 1939, due partly to the conflict between Lazarsfeld and his co-director, Hadley Cantril, the project moved to Columbia University — once again with the help of Robert Lynd. Since Fromm's departure, Lynd had become disillusioned with Horkheimer's institute because, according to Thomas Wheatland, it "signaled an elimination of empirical research for the sociology department." In his capacity on the advisory board to the Rockefeller Foundation, Lynd had vigorously supported Lazarsfeld's move to Columbia to fill this "empiricism gap" emerging in his own department, whose chair, Robert MacIver, had come to champion the direction of the

64 Barbara S. Burks to Dean George D. Stoddard, Apr. 27, 1939, enclosed in Betty Drury, memorandum to Members of the Executive Committee, April 28, 1939, Folder 17, Box 4, FA802, AEC, RAC.

65 Betty Drury, "Minutes of the Luncheon Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars," Oct. 6, 1939, Folder 23, Box 6, FA802, AEC, RAC.

66 Hadley Cantril, Hazel Gaudet, and Herta Herzog, *The Invasion from Mars: A Study in the Psychology of Panic* (Princeton, 1940).

67 Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *Radio and the Printed Page: An Introduction to the Study of Radio and Its Role in the Communication of Ideas* (New York, 1940); Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Frank N. Stanton, *Radio Research, 1941* (New York, 1941); Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Frank N. Stanton, eds., *Radio Research, 1942-1943* (New York, 1944).

68 "Princeton University — Radio Research," June 9, 1939, in "Humanities Appropriations, 1936-1940," Folder 8, Box 2, RG IV2A34, DHS, RAC.

69 "Conference of Motion Picture and Radio Project Directors," Oct. 16, 1939, Folder 3696, Series 1.2, FA058, GEB, RAC.

institute. But Lynd would later view Lazarsfeld's tendency to privilege the development of research methods through commercial contracts as a betrayal of his commitment to social democracy.<sup>70</sup>

Lazarsfeld's cohort of researchers became part of the university's Council for Research in the Social Sciences. His bureau was attached to the sociology department as a "research laboratory" with the aim of developing research methods and providing apprentice training and access to empirical data for graduate students. Lazarsfeld joined the Columbia sociology faculty at this time along with Robert Merton, who was to be the theoretical sociologist to balance Lazarsfeld's empirical approach, thus resolving a dispute over the methodological direction of the department. Merton worked closely with Lazarsfeld on the radio project, and he became its associate director when it was later rechristened the "Bureau of Applied Social Research" in 1944. At Columbia, Lazarsfeld's group continued to collaborate with Horkheimer's institute, and Lazarsfeld was instrumental in helping the institute secure a major research grant from the American Jewish Committee for a project on antisemitism that led to the Studies on Prejudice series.<sup>71</sup> In 1941, the scholars produced a special joint volume of the institute's new English-language journal, *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, which attempted to bridge the methodological and epistemological divide between the institute's humanistic, dialectical Critical Theory and Lazarsfeld's brand of empirical social research.<sup>72</sup>

Lazarsfeld's skill at organizing and leading research bureaus, along with his empiricism and inclination towards applied research, would make him a peculiar sort of émigré and a "doyen of American sociology," according to historian Anthony Heilbut.<sup>73</sup> Lazarsfeld's champion Lynd had initially been attracted to the Frankfurt School members' espousal of social reform and to Lazarsfeld's demonstrated commitment to social democracy, but he was also impressed by Lazarsfeld's devotion to empirical methods, which was partly inspired by Lynd's own approach to social research.<sup>74</sup> But Lynd may not have anticipated the degree to which Lazarsfeld would employ sociology in the service of commercial interests, and he would later ask Lazarsfeld where his *conscience* had gone. "He felt again that I am a kind of a traitor," Lazarsfeld remembered. "He always said that someone who is concerned with big social issues shouldn't do this kind of stupid research." Lynd thought that the commercial studies amounted to "selling out to the capitalists," as Lazarsfeld put it, whereas

70 Wheatland, *Frankfurt*, 84–90.

71 Thomas Wheatland, "Not-Such-Odd Couples: Paul Lazarsfeld and the Horkheimer Circle on Morningside Heights," in *Exile, Science, and Bildung*, ed. Kettler and Lauer, 180; Wheatland, *Frankfurt*, 91.

72 *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 4 (1941).

73 Anthony Heilbut, *Exiled in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America, from the 1930s to the Present* (New York, 1983), 77, 95.

74 Wheatland, "Not-Such-Odd Couples," 172, 181.

Lazarsfeld merely saw them as a way to practice methods, train graduate students, and fund the bureau's operations.<sup>75</sup> "Lynd expected that once settled as a tenured professor of Columbia Paul would be free to return to politically relevant topics," wrote Seymour Martin Lipset, who was a graduate student under Lazarsfeld, Lynd, and Merton. "Lynd was doomed to disappointment, a fact he did not keep hidden from graduate students and others."<sup>76</sup>

During the war years, many of the most prominent institute scholars, including Marcuse and Neumann, had left to work for the Office of Strategic Services, and Adorno and Horkheimer had gone to the West Coast, where they wrote *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* and began the work that led to *The Authoritarian Personality*. Despite the disintegration of the intellectual community, an internal investigation into the work of the institute, conducted in 1945-46, produced a positive assessment based in large part on the strong endorsement of Lazarsfeld, who had recommended splitting it into "empirical" and "theoretical" branches. In the end, the investigators recommended the institute's continued affiliation with the university on the condition that it orient itself toward empirical and quantitative methods. This was something Horkheimer could not abide, and he turned down the offer. It was the official end of the institute's affiliation with Columbia, though some of its members occasionally taught classes there through the late 1940s, and Neumann was brought on to the faculty. After the war, in 1949, Horkheimer repatriated the institute to Frankfurt.<sup>77</sup> For their sponsor Robert Lynd, it seems, Lazarsfeld had the method but had lost the progressive commitment in America, while the Frankfurt School scholars were committed socialists who had lost the method.

While Lazarsfeld's bureau had a major impact on communications and market research in the United States, and Horkheimer's institute introduced the methods of Critical Theory to an American audience, the varied and numerous social scientists of the Graduate Faculty at the New School may have had a more immediately recognizable influence in the United States relative to the other émigrés. Hans Speier and Ernst Kris, for example, conducted important studies on Goebbels's propaganda. Wertheimer helped to establish the New School as a center of Gestalt psychology, and his émigré students also became important social scientists: Rudolf Arnheim produced innovative analyses of daytime radio serials for Lazarsfeld, among other projects, and George Katona helped to establish behavioral

75 Nico Stehr, "A Conversation with Paul F. Lazarsfeld," *American Sociologist* 17 (1982): 150-55, 152; Paul Lazarsfeld interview by Joan Gordon, Columbia Oral History, Aug. 16, 1962, Rote Mappen, PFL Vienna.

76 Seymour Martin Lipset, "Paul F. Lazarsfeld at Columbia: A Great Methodologist and Teacher," in *Paul Lazarsfeld (1901-1976: La sociologie de Vienne à New York)*, 225-70 (Paris, 1998), 264.

77 Wheatland, *Frankfurt*, 91-94.

economics in the U.S. Especially through the Graduate Faculty's publication *Social Research*, the German reform economists of the New School provided an alternative to the laissez-faire approach of the Austrian school, and also to Keynesianism, which, in their view, could effectively *respond* to adverse economic conditions through measures like deficit spending but still relied on neoclassicist presumptions about the rationality of individual economic actors. The reform economists believed that Keynesianism did not do enough to provide for the effective *planning* of a national economy under capitalistic conditions. Their structural approach became an important conceptual ally for New Dealers, who were eager to engage the powers of the state to attack unemployment in the depression economy. A number of émigrés from the Graduate Faculty were called to Washington to act as consultants for the Roosevelt administration. The economist Gerhard Colm, for example, recognized the unique economic function of the state and argued against the necessity of balancing national budgets; he later became instrumental in shaping the economically forward-looking Employment Act of 1946.<sup>78</sup>

The Emergency Committee, for its part, had assisted 288 refugee scholars in securing university appointments and grants (not including dozens more stipendiaries whom it helped indirectly) over its twelve years of existence, but the flow of refugee scholars tapered during the war, and the committee was formally dissolved on June 1, 1945.<sup>79</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The subjects of this study were victims of Nazi purges of Jews and socialists from the universities and civil society. As social scientists, they were, at the same time, intellectual agents equipped to analyze the social, historical, economic, and technological factors that contributed to the crisis of capitalism and the rise of fascism. Their experience of displacement itself contributed to their special capacity for social analysis, which generated new forms of knowledge. Lazarsfeld, the accidental émigré, was thrust into a new environment through his Rockefeller fellowship in the United States. In this new context, he used his capacities as a director of research to establish new institutes with staffs significantly composed of refugee scholars, who brought with them an organized practice of social research that could produce new understandings of the effects of communication technologies and the behaviors of consumers. For Max Horkheimer's exiled Institute of Social Research, a dialectical engagement with

78 Krohn, *Intellectuals*, 93–175.

79 Duggan, *Rescue*, 64, 66, 76.

modern social history — including émigrés’ own experience of exile — coalesced into what was called Critical Theory. Though it was a radical analysis performed in the interest of transforming actually-existing social conditions, it complemented related forms of émigré social research that had practical applicability in contemporary American commercial and academic life.

In the view of the sponsors of émigré social researchers in the 1930s and 1940s, who sought to salvage a unique form of social and economic research — and at the same time bolster their own institutions and reputations — the distinction between Critical Theory and what Paul Lazarsfeld called “administrative” research was not always clear. Philanthropic and aid organizations, such as the Rockefeller Foundation and the Emergency Committee, as well as unique centers like Alvin Johnson’s University in Exile, sought to salvage the innovative work of European social scientists. They sometimes had a limited or mistaken understanding of the work of those whom they were supporting, often relying on reputation and recommendations to make their decisions. Foundation officers like John Marshall and academic sociologists like Robert Lynd supported the careers of émigrés like Paul Lazarsfeld, who was a brilliant communications theorist in Marshall’s view and a committed socialist in Lynd’s view. Lynd had a similar view of the scholars of Horkheimer’s institute, and he was instrumental in bringing both the Lazarsfeld and Horkheimer circles to Columbia University. But while Lazarsfeld increasingly took commercial contracts that seemed to betray what Lynd had viewed as his socialist commitment, the Frankfurt School scholars would not violate their commitment to their *own* method of Critical Theory to accommodate the interests of their university sponsors. The interests of the refugee scholars’ American sponsors were at once altruistic and selfish, and though the product of the émigrés’ research rarely matched the expectations of sponsors, it inevitably produced new insights into American society and culture. Such critiques might have a latent potential for revolutionary socioeconomic transformation, but perhaps more often they provided practical, methodological tools for finding solutions to problems of government, business, and the evolving markets of a consumer-capitalist society.

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