ОБЩЕСТВО И ГОСУДАРСТВО

Modernity and the Failure to Maintain the Peace (1918–1938): Comparing the Cases of the Soviet Union and the German Reich

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Modernity brought the promise of a better world – a world in which society and the economy are more rationally organized and in which people themselves could be improved. In the 1880s, European states began to translate the findings of the social sciences into practical politics ("the scientization of the social"). Once the established monarchies had been overthrown in Germany and in Russia, the new political forces needed to legitimize their claim to power before the people. The most practical way to do so was to exploit the idea that the social could be subjected to scientization, and thus legitimize political domination by means of implementing a new type of rationality. With the transition to Stalinism and National Socialism, their approaches became more radical. Both dictatorships launched large-scale projects to restructure their societies according to the concepts of class and race respectively. They bet on an unprecedented degree of state organization and control over the economy and society. Their economic success in the 1930s owed much to rearmament programs, which could do nothing but resolve into a new war. Today it appears surprising how naively expert advice was handled at that time, such that the complete physical destruction of enemies and the idea that lives could be treated as worthless could be sold as a "scientific" means of creating better societies. In order to understand what happened in the Soviet Union and Germany, one cannot look at it from a single national perspective. That is why I adopt an entangled history approach. The dissemination of modern ideas and the scientization of the social were taking place through a network connecting scholars and thinkers from all over the world. This article sets the inter-war period in the context of the whole period during which the scientization of the social was taking place without any particularly critical reflection (from the 1880s to the early 1970s). In the first part, I present the concepts of Modernity and the scientization of the social and propose a periodization of their political use. In the second part, I focus more specifically on the events and developments in the Soviet Union and Germany, and the means of political communication by which the legitimization of the new powers were achieved.

Modernity brought the promise of a better world – a world in which society and the economy are more rationally organized and in which people themselves could be improved. In the 1880s, European states began to translate the findings of the social sciences into practical politics ("the scientization of the social") in order to implement these ideas. The fact that Modernity and the scientization of the social sphere proved so fertile in Germany and the Soviet Union was linked to the change in their political systems. Once the established monarchies had been overthrown, the new political forces needed to legitimize their claim to power before the people. In an era, when domination could no longer be justified as given by God, the most practical way to do so was to exploit the idea that the social could be subjected to scientization, and thus legitimize political domination by means of implementing a new type of rationality. Strategies of political communication with which the belief in the legitimacy (*Legitimitätsglauben*) of the new order could be won and maintained among the population were tested and implemented. After WW1, Germany and the Soviet Union tried to rationalize their economies and societies and to improve the social security of their populations. In doing so they relied on the advice of social scientists. However, the role of these scientists and their motives has received little attention to date [*Raphael* 2012]. Their authority was not particularly questioned in the inter-war period. With the transition to Stalinism and National Socialism, their approaches became more radical. Both dictatorships launched large-scale projects to restructure their societies according to the concepts of class and race respectively – both borrowed from social sciences. They bet on an unprecedented degree of state organization and control over the economy and society. Their economic success in the 1930s owed much to rearmament programs, which could do nothing but resolve into a new war. Today it appears surprising how naively expert advice was handled at that time, such that the complete physical destruction of enemies and the idea that lives could be treated as worthless could be sold as a "scientific" means of creating better societies. Public awareness of the ambivalence of such ideas only became prominent in the 1970s (formulated perhaps most blatantly by Zygmunt Bauman [*Bauman* 2005]). This article shows that Modernity is an indispensable part of the explanation for the inevitable resurgence of military confrontation in Europe.

In order to understand what happened in the Soviet Union and Germany, one cannot look at it from a single national perspective. That is why I adopt an entangled history approach. The dissemination of modern ideas and the scientization of the social were taking place through a network connecting scholars and thinkers from all over the world. As a result, an important element of non-simultaneity was observed after the 1880s. Regardless of the social and economic development of their countries of origin, scientists were involved in this discourse, and had immediate access to new ideas. Even in Russia, the belief in progress had become widespread among the urban educated elite long before WW1.

This article sets the inter-war period in the context of the whole period during which the scientization of the social was taking place without any particularly critical reflection (from the 1880s to the early 1970s). In the first part, I present the concepts

of Modernity and the scientization of the social and propose a periodization of their political use. In the second part, I focus more specifically on the events and developments in the Soviet Union and Germany, and the means by which the legitimization of the new powers were achieved. In this part, I first discuss the positive influence of scientization in the 1920s. Subsequent negative developments are addressed by analyzing post-war societies and their problems. Why were the crisis-ridden shocks at the turn of the 1930s regarded as an existential threat by the populations of both countries, opening the way to political radicalization? Specifically, I look at how the dictatorships used different concepts of "paradise" (i.e. communism, national community) to win the belief in the legitimacy of their rule and, through the control of political communication, led their people to accept as necessary the idea of exterminating their enemies. This is then followed by a short account of how the acceptance of such ideas was followed by the fundamental reorganization of the economy and society and the subsequent preparation for a new war. Finally, the comparative efficiency of each of the ideologies (from the point of view of their legitimizing effects) is considered, as are the changes Stalin made in the 1930s. In order to keep the article reasonably self-contained, I spare the effort of detailing the chronological sequence of events in both countries as the general aim of the article is to reveal the most important connections in order to stimulate new interpretations.

1. The concepts of "Modernity" and "the Scientization of the Social"

Modernity

The translation of the term *Modernity* into Russian is itself quite difficult. Some Russian scholars confuse it with the term *modernization*. However, my own use of the term *Modernity* is not synonymous with modernization.[1] Here I am not so much concerned with the specific end-states of Modernity or what is specifically understood by it, as I am concerned with the expectations and approaches to problem solving associated with Modernity at large. Accordingly, it is only when Modernity is loaded with the ideas of a specific societal organization (e.g. institutions of democracy or the market economy) that it makes sense to speak of multiple modernities. Michael David-Fox [*David-Fox* 2006] discusses this at length[2] by showing which specific ideas have been associated with which versions of Modernity, and the extent to which the notion of Modernity was applicable to the Soviet Union. This led to a debate in Russia.[3] In fact, the meaning and understanding of Modernity itself has changed several times since the

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[1] In one of my previous papers (cf. [*Merl* 2016]), this was falsely translated into Russian as "modernization" instead of "Modernity". The correct reading of the paper (and hence the argument) requires one to substitute "Modernity" for "modernization".

[2] Above all, he discusses different approaches in the American historical science (Modernity versus neo-traditionalism). The "multiple modernities" approach, however, is not unproblematic, because it is extremely difficult to define the institutions underpinning alternative modernities (e.g. for Latin America see [*Scheuzger, Fleer* 2009]).

[3] http://www.nlobooks.ru/node/7425

early Enlightenment. In this sense, the understanding of Socialist Modernity may differ from that of the Western or Transatlantic ones. If one limits the concept of Modernity to its political use, the inclusion of Russia and the Soviet Union is out of question. During the Enlightenment and its early period, well-known philosophers of the time stood in close exchange with the Russian Tsars, first Peter I and then Catherine II. This shaped the philosophers' ideas of Modernity [*Merl* 2015].

The concept of Modernity originates in the early Enlightenment. This was a time when ideas spread so that people could and should improve the way their economies and societies were organized by making them more rational. Early attempts at such rational policymaking become evident in the workings of some of the "enlightened" eighteenth-century monarchs, who began rationalizing the political systems of their countries. The idea of improving the economy and society "from above" remained popular in many countries in the 19th century. Back then many important and consequential reforms in Germany as well as in Russia (including the abolition of serfdom), were designed and implemented by "enlightened" bureaucrats. It was only later that democracy and parliamentary systems were considered among the criteria of Modernity. The idea of an "enlightened individual" entered the European discourse on Modernity only in the second half of the 18th century, and it was based largely on observing the impact of European immigrants on the developments in North America [*Merl* 2015; *Merl* 2016].

In what follows I specify three criteria that allow a defining of Modernity without implying any specific social or economic order, namely: the belief in progress; the relevance of this belief for policymaking, and the firm conviction that progress can be shaped and planned [*Merl* 2015].

The belief in progress refers to the idea that the world, but also people themselves, can be improved. Using the terms introduced by Immanuel Wallerstein [*Wallerstein* 1995], it makes sense to distinguish between *the modernity of technology* and *the modernity of liberation*. The intellectuals who believed in the Enlightenment expected that scientific and technological progress would liberate people from traditional constraints. Accordingly, the assumption developed that people themselves could become better (i.e. turn into "new men") through rational education. In the 20th century, socialist modern thought as well as the modern thought in Germany firmly held to the expectation that a modern, rationally-thinking individual would be a higher-order human capable of shaping the world according to his or her ideas. *The modernity of technology*, i.e. the chain of new inventions and knowledge that impact the environment in which people live, is unstoppable. *The modernity of liberation* is based on the promise of human emancipation and is much more closely tied to moral values. It belongs to the field which is nowadays claimed by the social sciences. (The communists strived to establish a social order in which, once exploitation was completely eliminated, everyone reached self-fulfillment through work). Both of these facets of Modernity co-existed in the first years after the October Revolution: for instance, Aleksey Gastev developed his ideas of how work processes could be efficiently organized by drawing on an analogy with machines, and Alexandra Kollontai emphasized the emancipation of women from patriarchal constraints.

Furthermore, the belief in progress must gain importance in the political context to legitimize regimes: either by an enlightened ruler or through the promise of those in power of a better future. This was effectively exploited by the Bolsheviks, the politicians of the Weimar Republic, and the Nazis. In pre-revolutionary Russia, the critical circles of the autocracy-opposing educated elites embraced the belief in

progress, with which they justified the inevitable transition towards a socially just society and the demise of autocracy. Even Peter the Great used the belief in progress to legitimize his powerful rule.

Finally, the belief in progress must lead to action: faith in God was replaced by the conviction that progress could be experienced immediately, that it could be shaped by people and scientifically planned, that humanity could turn things around and use progress to solve its problems. The rational promise of science replaced the religious idea of paradise in a secular world [*Schmidt* 1996]. At its extreme, Socialist Modernity promised an unrestricted capacity of people to mold the world according to their needs. Stalinism, and to a certain extent National Socialism, grounded their claims heavily on the scientific nature of their respective doctrines. The examples of the belief in this progress-enabled omnipotence appear in the early utopias described in the *Red Star* of Alexander Bogdanov [*Bogdanov* 1908], *The Journey of my Brother Aleksei to the Land of Peasant Utopia* of Alexander Chayanov [*Chayanov* 1920], yet another example is Stalin's Great Plan for the Transformation of Nature.

b) The Scientization of the Social

The historical review of the use of social science in policymaking has only recently started [*Raphael* 1996; *Raphael* 2012; *Raphael* 2018]. The terms employed in this field – as with Modernity – are not yet clearly defined. Here, in particular, I use the term *the scientization of the social* in its broadest sense to refer to all possible applications of the knowledge from social sciences in state management [*Ziemann, Wetzell, Schumann, Brückweh* 2012, p. 1]. Raphael speaks of the presence of human and social science experts, and their expertise in managing affairs within different organizations, enterprises, parties and parliaments, as well as in the worlds of different social groups, classes or milieus [*Raphael* 1996, p. 166; *Raphael* 2018, p. 14]. This includes the attempts to shape and reconfigure existing social structures. Different disciplines are involved in this, ranging from health and medical sciences to legal and economic expertise, but also psychology and social sciences in the narrower sense. In doing so, I distinguish this term from the concept of social engineering in order to abstain from its usually negative connotation and its narrower interpretation by Thomas Etzemüller [*Etzemüller* 2010][4].

Thus, I regard the scientization of the social as a primarily positive extension of the human political enterprise. Problems in and, ultimately, abuses of social science applications resulted above all from exaggerated expectations, the belief that a better, more rational world order could be established and that most human problems could be solved quickly and efficiently as promised by Modernity. This belief was also widespread in the interwar period, when both the Stalinist and the Nazi dictatorships attempted an implementation of highly specific insights from social sciences in order to reorganize their economies and societies.

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[4]   In his book *The Open Society and its Enemies* first published in 1945, Karl R. Popper wrote of the possibilities and dangers of social engineering. He warned against "utopian" social engineering, i.e. the idea that one could design and create an ideal society, yet welcomed "piecemeal" social engineering, i.e. highly targeted interventions that solve specific social problems.

Three clearly distinct phases, or "learning phases" as I refer to them, can be distinguished with regard to how social science was treated and applied in policy making. For a better understanding of the interwar period of active state intervention, which is in focus here, I also look at the surrounding periods: the preceding period of 1880–1910 marking the onset of many important social reforms and the period of "planned modernization" after the WW2 until the 1970s, i.e. up until the period of "disenchanted science" as described by Raphael [*Raphael* 1996, p. 178], when skepticism began to prevail in the West as regards the promises of science to solve human problems.

I regard the concept of the scientization of the social as extremely important. It refers to the transformation of scientific ideas about rational political organization (i.e. *the modernity of liberation*) into the field of practical politics. While these ideas were borne and refined by many great thinkers, their implementation was carried out by people who acted in accordance with their own interests and thus were inclined to endow them with highly particular interpretations. In his study of Russia and the Soviet Union, David Hoffmann [*Hoffmann* 2011] also considers the developments that fall under the same concept.

From Laissez faire to social reforms (1880–1910): the actors and sources of ambivalence

The scientization of the social would have been impossible without the development of national statistics. At first, these provided only basic elementary data with which the rulers could evaluate the potential of their countries, and on which they could base their effort to develop them further. However, as time went on, statistical methods improved, and the interest of the rulers grew.

Once statisticians learned to count and classify social phenomena, scientists and bureaucrats recognized the potential to redefine social issues. The decisive insight had to do with the fact that in the aggregated analysis of statistical data, differences between individuals disappear and thus general statements can be made. This questioned one of the basic assumptions of liberalism, i.e. that of individuals being exclusively responsible for themselves, and paved the ground for the use of socio-scientific knowledge for the sake of protecting people. The tension between individual responsibility and the individual dependence on society was put at the center of public attention.

The emergence of statistical data about populations allowed for a new quality of state intervention. The rising suicide and divorce rates that such data revealed were treated as symptoms of social problems, signaling troubling social trends and the gradual dissolution of social ties. Systematic statistical surveys keeping track of deviant behavior, unemployment and accidents revealed that they were not simply the consequences of individual misconduct. Social scientists came to realize that crime was not an innate trait, rather it is socially influenced by poverty and lack of security. This meant that society could fight crime by intervening in the social environments that fostered it. The nascent science of criminology started to come up with evidence-based explanations for crime, pointing to a number of social and biological factors. Psychiatry contributed to this by examining the mental state of criminals and searching

for treatments. Poverty too now appeared as a serious social problem that could be eliminated through decisive state action by turning the poor into productive citizens. It seemed as if reducing crime and economic hardship only required a break with the conditions under which both emerged. The concepts of typical or average persons and racial hygiene, which were closely linked to the statistical notions describing central tendencies, were now used to advocate state interventions that could lead to statistically measurable improvements in terms of race or the social composition of the population [*Raphael* 2012; *Hoffmann* 2011].

Putting social science knowledge into practice required effective communication between science and politics. For science, this communication involved "experts", i.e. mostly (but not exclusively) academics such as professors and researchers, who were prominent in their fields and therefore could effectively influence the relevant policies. On the political side it involved politicians themselves, i.e. professional administrators, and public servants, who had the ability to implement the proposals of the experts. This created room for a certain ambivalence in the application of social science knowledge, because "pure" science could now be mixed with personal motives and interests [*Raphael* 2012; *Ziemann, Wetzell, Schumann, Brückweh* 2012]. Therefore, it now becomes important to distinguish the motives of the experts and the politicians involved. Driven by personal ambition, experts could deliberately frame their scientific work (including simply forging scientific findings) in accordance with political demands. Driven by similar motives and the lust for power, politicians could rely on science selectively in search for the legitimacy of their political claims and actions. The scientization of the social thus pertains to the conversion of science into interest-bound politics. Subjective factors inevitably play a role.

To date little research has been done on the origins of different expert groups who eventually supplied ideas for massive state interventions. For one thing such groups could (although not necessarily did) form the basis of new clearly defined professions. Using Pierre Bourdieu's terms, Raphael speaks of a "field of expert knowledge" that emerges and defines itself as the result of conflict over the best knowledge in each field. There was room for conflict, since social scientific expertise was often based on different disciplinary backgrounds and experts could enter coalitions with other actors to pursue their own interests [*Raphael* 2012, p. 45].

The clients who were potentially interested in what social science had to offer in order to gain an edge in their field typically included public administrators at different levels, party leaders and clergy. They often enjoyed a good range of competing proposals from social scientists and experts and thus had a strong negotiating position. Clients and experts could also struggle for ultimate control over the implementation of their respective social technologies. As a result, it is not surprising that the application of the latest developments in social science was often carried out without appropriate scientific rigor merely to justify moral or political judgments. Sometimes clients also resisted the application of new technologies, and then compromises had to be made. Even the institutions that were created for the implementation of such technologies did not always work successfully. They could fiercely resist reforms and limit the transformative power of expert groups [*Raphael* 2012, pp. 47–49].

Other clients became the objects and victims of this peculiar scientization process: they were kept outside of the discourse. The scientific approach empowered social scientists with the means and the rationale for dehumanizing their objects of study, which

widened and legitimized the social exclusion of respective groups. Research shows, for instance, that in the domains of racial hygiene, criminology and psychiatry, experts themselves did not shun violence against the marginalized groups [*Raphael* 2012, p. 46].[5]

The increased demand for scientific expertise was coupled with the efforts of social scientists to secure better funding and support from the state. In many countries, various social reforms started between 1880 and 1910, resulting from so called "discourse coalitions" [*Wagner* 1990], i.e. alliances of social scientists and politicians who reinforced each other in their claims about the appropriateness of their reform packages. However, it was also the case that scientists almost never had complete control over the application of their knowledge [*Ziehmann, Wetzell, Schumann, Brückweh* 2012, p. 8].

Where specialists from different fields and positions could find a common language, they gained sufficient authority to initiate their reform programs. University professors and scientists actively collaborated with public figures and politicians. Such coalitions often helped to overcome existing political divisions: conservatives, liberals and social democrats could side with each other. In Germany, the memoranda of the Association for Social Policy received enormous attention: their statistical records of social problems inspired politicians to act. The starting point of discourse coalitions in the 1880s were acute social problems, such as the "workers' question" or the usurious rate of interest demanded from peasants. The aim of the reforms was above all to improve the situation of the working poor and to reduce mortality from disease. However, after the turn of the century, the initially inclusive discourse started to fragment. It later broke down into different and often antagonistic discourses.

Parallel to these developments, the social categories introduced and maintained by social science changed the self-perception of society. Through their specific conceptual loading the notions of "race" and "class" shaped social reality [*Ziemann, Wetzell, Schumann, Brückweh* 2012]. A classic example of the power of sociological description is the Marxist terminology of classes and the attempt to statistically substantiate it in early Soviet society. In the West, the dubious doctrine of race was particularly widespread. This doctrine maintained that there exists a hierarchy of races, which could be used to derive the idea that races must be kept pure. It played a disastrous role not only in its implementation under National Socialism in Germany, but also in Scandinavia, the USA and other countries, where the idea of racial hygiene and euthanasia have been pursued since the end of the 19th century [*Etzemüller* 2009]. "For a historical perspective on the scientization of the social it is therefore helpful to distinguish the social structure of society and the semantic forms of self-description, and to bear in mind that the human science can transform both" [*Ziemann, Wetzell, Schumann, Pity* 2012, p. 2].

Raphael argues that social sciences contributed significantly to the nationalization of Western societies by setting standards of normality and deviation at the national level. He considers how the dissemination of these ideas into society took place through changes in the discourse. It almost took the form of a translation of existing language codes, which social scientists used in their internal debates, into the languages of both politics and everyday speech. Accordingly, before WW2 social scientists liked to employ metaphors from the discourses of other disciplines such as medicine, demography and even the political biology of nations [*Raphael* 2012, pp. 43–45].

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[5]   Jürgen Habermas [*Habermas* 1970] refers to such oppressive practices as "the colonization of the lives of ordinary citizens".

Social reforms (1880–1910)

At the end of the 19th century, medicine particularly demonstrated with astonishing success what the implementation of scientific achievements could bring to humanity. Medical research clarified the causes of diseases and epidemics, and developed the methods to prevent or at least significantly reduce their negative outcomes. Plague and cholera were defeated and child mortality drastically reduced. What could be more natural than to expect similar success from the practical application of social science in bringing about better life for everyone? From the 1880s, the conviction grew that it was possible to treat social problems in a similar way, and with the fascination with science and what it could bring, the first attempts were undertaken to "improve" societies.

By the end of the 19th century, the expectations social science for curing social diseases were high. They were fueled by the fear of threatening trends: rising crime and the moral decline of society. Rising urban poverty, which was perceived as one of the primary social causes, became a matter of national concern and the provision of social benefits was urged [*Hoffmann* 2011, pp. 22–23]. Public opinion and pressure from the educated classes finally began to influence social policy, and the voices of scientists started to be heard.

At that time, social sciences were based on the premise that objective knowledge is possible. Evaluating societies by means of statistics and making scientifically grounded proposals about their development and improvement, social scientists proceeded to claim they were above the rights and interests of particular social groups and individuals. They claimed to be able to offer comprehensive solutions to all social issues. The Enlightenment's hope of rearranging the human world into a rational social order seemed to have become a reality [*Hoffmann* 2011, pp. 22–25]. Scientists promised that ignorance and deviance could be overcome. Many understood the welfare state project as a way to reform the lower classes and to rationalize their daily lives. It was not just about eliminating social problems. Another goal was to maximize the efficiency and raise the harmony of the entire society [*Hoffmann* 2011, pp. 22–30]. Very soon, however, scientists went beyond simply the elimination of existing problems: they claimed to be able to prevent further problems from emerging by the prophylactic monitoring of the population [*Hoffmann* 2011, p. 27]. They downplayed the fact that social sciences always remained subjective. Even statistics were designed to monitor only what social scientists considered relevant.

Russia was also involved in this international discourse. In particular, local municipal authorities were keen on following the developments of the West. Their press releases often quoted foreign experiences and practices in the search for solutions to their own problems. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Finance were particularly active in the field of workers' protection. For instance, they summoned expert hearings to discuss the regulation of working hours and the use of youth labor. The gradual improvement of the social situation was therefore not just the result of strikes and pressure from the workers' representatives, but also the result of action from above influenced by scientific expertise [*Hoffmann* 2011, pp. 29–38]. In Russia, statistics also prospered in the late 19th century. Numerous studies were carried out on the change in living conditions in Russian cities. Budget statistics were developing. Russian county statisticians quickly gained international leadership in their statistical surveys of rural households, and it is on this basis that Chayanov's theory of peasant farming came into being [*Shanin* 1972].

State interventionism (1918–1940)

WW1 (and later WW2) proved important catalysts for the implementation of the insights of social science. They paved the way for larger scale interventions in European societies. New technologies and methods were tested and new institutions emerged. Many countries applied psychoanalytic and psychiatric techniques to treat soldiers. Russia is a particularly good example of the accelerating impact of war, where special welfare organizations emerged to provide unprecedented help to soldiers' wives and families, and care for war widows and the wounded [*Raphael* 2012, p. 48; *Hoffmann* 2011, pp. 38–39]. Many social programs were in place to provide support to war veterans, the disabled and the unemployed. In the post-war years, the Soviet state was far less concerned with the eradication of capitalism as it was with the creation of a modern non-capitalist economy, a rational and productive economic order, in which the state protects and fosters the interests of the working class and in which everyone had to be involved in socially useful work [*Hoffmann* 2011, p. 18].

After WW1, a new political and national reality emerged that made the return to the old social agenda impossible. Etzemüller provides a view of the international dimension of how social science achievement were put into practice [*Etzemüller* 2009]. Most countries now relied on social science and legitimized its use with arguments about national restoration. Most of the discourse which emerged in pre-war science now received wide public attention. The dangers they had previously anticipated seemed to have been gaining momentum, and their warnings were therefore taken more seriously in post-WW1 society. In Germany, this amplified the concern about the nation's degeneration and even extinction, whereas, in Soviet Russia, the superiority of the social class of workers with respect to the rest of the classes was now openly proclaimed. The multitude of new crises – demographic, behavioral, industrial and family relations – all of which were discovered and brought into the public discourse by social scientists, seemed to confirm all the dangers. In order to attract public attention, the scientists emphasized the urgency of the situation: if the necessary actions were not taken immediately, it could be too late because irreversible damage would have already been caused. They insisted on the implementation of their ideas by selling it as a sort of heroic intervention in times of great need, taking on the role of national prophets and publicly advocating radical solutions.

Ferdinand Tönnies' concept of *Gemeinschaft*, emphasizing the sense of *community*, was particularly promoted in Germany as a general remedy for the instability of capitalism, and for the individual and societal diseases and problems that were considered to be the result of raging individualism. Community, or a sense of communality, was also thought to reduce conflicts between the industrial classes [*Raphael* 2012, pp. 50–51]. The demographic projects of the 1930s are a good example of the politicians' response to the crises recognized: fearing that their own nation would die out due to a low birth rate, they introduced strong measures to support families and reward births. In the Soviet Union, Stalin revoked the right for the previously legalized abortion, introduced additional maternal benefits and ordered the glorification of motherhood in national propaganda [*Hoffmann* 2003, pp. 88–117].

While in liberal and democratic states the decision-making power of politicians was restricted, in the Soviet Union and the Nazi Germany from 1933 it was far less

constrained and allowed bold social scientific experiments. Their regimes opened possibilities which would be denied in democratic countries [*Raphael* 2018, pp. 51–94]. The idea of protecting the healthy national body quickly came to the fore: accordingly, the "sick", or "parasitic", parts of this body had to be removed. The deficient minorities (such as, for instance, people with mental disorders) were classified as ill and thus subject to removal in order to protect the healthy majority (e.g. through euthanasia). The social scientists whose ideas aligned with the dominant political views of their time, promoted such actions as scientifically just. Moreover, they found support among the Catholics, the Social Democrats, the conservatives, and of course, most of all, the radicals, the fascists and the Nazis. The threshold keeping scientists from using violence against humans in the name of science was crossed. Not only in the Nazi concentration camps did surgeons carry out experiments on humans; in their understanding, scientists sacrificed individual human beings in the sake of entire society.

Planned modernization (1945–1970)

At the end of WW2, people in most European countries were convinced that it was the state's task to regulate the economy, to ensure stable growth and full employment, and to counter imminent economic crises in good time. This was based on the belief that current social science had readily available solutions that worked. The problems of the inter-war period were attributed to the impoverishment of the population and uncoordinated national initiatives. To a certain extent, many Western countries tried to implement the development model which was most explicitly pursued by the Soviet Union. In some countries, such as France, the planned economy was seen a means of accelerated modernization. The understanding of planning was, however, different from the Soviet model of a command economy [*Merl* 2017]. Many countries relied on Keynesianism to stabilize economic development and to achieve full employment by maintaining stable economic growth.

On the global level, most social science intellectuals – initially including those of the Soviet Union – advocated for the effort to avoid the repetition of global crises. They managed to achieve a broad consensus over several issues: for instance, that uncoordinated national initiatives were an obstacle to the overcoming of the negative consequences of world economic crises since the early 1930s. That social misery and the resulting existential crisis that affected large parts of the population had prepared the ground for the emergence of dictatorships in Europe. To date, however, there is no agreement on the exact causes of the global economic crisis [*Borchardt* 1979]. The only thing that is beyond dispute is that in the medium term it would not have led to such devastating consequences had there been joint coordinated supranational action. The measures that were considered against repeating these dangers included the introduction of state welfare policies and the creation of effective international organizations that promoted international cooperation. In Bretton Woods, the post-war order was discussed in 1944 and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was adopted paving the way to a worldwide free trade agreement (from which the World Trade Organization later emerged). The World Bank and the World Monetary Fund were established in order to help countries in times of economic crisis. The United Nations replaced the League

of Nations which failed in the interwar period and became the international organization which was responsible for maintaining and promoting peace.

Convinced that Modernity would empower states to overcome hardship and poverty through continued economic growth, governments were set with the task of providing adequate social security to their populations. William Henry Beveridge coined the term *welfare state* – the term which stands in complete contrast to the Nazi "warfare state" [*Hoffmann* 2011, p. 18]. The welfare state represents the idea that social intervention and regulation must be used in order to improve people's quality of life, and educate people about social practices and behavioral norms that make them productive individuals and thereby contributing to the proper development of society. This was particularly reflected in the Beveridge's liberal model of welfare state (developed in the UK in 1944) and Karl Schiller's Keynesianism-influenced "Concerted Action" (1967) in Germany. The Soviet Union pursued a more or less similar model after Stalin's death: this was clearly expressed in Khruschev's model of Communist consumption (1957) which became more tailored to satisfy the needs of the citizens [*Merl* 2015].

In the phase of planned modernization, the conviction that man could reform the economy and society for the better was for the first time coupled with the idea of preserving peace. This idea should not be neglected, even though most expectations appeared utopian and could not be fully achieved. In any case, compared to 1944, the world gained both in terms of increased worldwide economic prosperity and the ability to avoid further global wars. Although most cases of the implementation of social science achievements can best be described as "half-achievements", it is important to ask what the world would have looked like without these efforts to improve it.

Disenchanted science (since the 1970s)

By the early 1970s trust in social sciences had faded. The expert advice it produced did not bring efficient enough solutions to the problems faced by societies. The term "disenchanted science" coined by Raffael appropriately reflects the spirit of that time. In the West, more and more doubts were raised about the conviction that people could come up with effective recipes for making the economy and society more rational. As the post-war economic boom ended, Keynesian optimism, which was linked to the idea that Western governments could counteract economic cycles and thus permanently maintain full employment, was lost. The oil price shock and the first worldwide post-war recession brought much disappointment. In addition, the ever-increasing costs of health provision and the struggle against unemployment raised the concerns about the limits to social spending. (Some social scientists even believed that "Postmodernity" had started.) Despite increasing prosperity and expanding mass consumption, even the wealthiest states found it difficult to expand their social systems.

However, a similar transition to a critical evaluation of the potential of social sciences did not occur in the Soviet Union. Until its very demise it remained stuck in the phase of planned modernization, albeit with limited success. Regardless of maintaining hope in the virtues of planning, it continued to fall behind Western countries in terms of developing innovative technologies and failed to accomplish some of its projects such as industrialized agriculture [*Merl* 2019]. The Soviet Union faced similar problems in the

explosion of social spending, which was particularly exacerbated by its commitment to the subsidization of food. The problem was politically taboo until the end of the 1980s and thus was not subject to public debate.

Although skepticism about the dominant therapies and technologies produced by the social sciences was spreading in the West, this did not lead to a general departure from scientization of the social. What it led to was an increase in the diversity of expert advice. The 1970s marked another boom in the development of social sciences and their professionalization. Instead of the commitment to one correct and all-solving therapy, the field of social policy expertise was now best described as pluralistic. Raphael even speaks of a "therapeutic culture": different groups of experts advocated different approaches [*Raphael* 2012]. The on-going fragmentation of social science disciplines into competing approaches and schools of thought contributed to the scientists' inability to fully control knowledge production in their field. Others describe the situation in the 1970s as a transition to the "science of muddling through" [*Ziemann, Wetzell, Schumann, Brückweh* 2012, p. 7].

The resulting devaluation of scientific authority ultimately led politicians to exploit expert statements for virtually any course they wanted to take, with which they could claim the "scientific nature" of their political actions. In the 1950s, Khruschev introduced in the Soviet Union the idea of public hearings involving scientific experts, which became an essential part of the decision-making process in policy making. With this he demonstrated, like most Western politicians, that experts can be at odds with each another, and that for every political course to be fully legitimized expert opinions (even if corrupt) should at least be given a scientific appearance [*Merl* (1) 2002; *Merl* (2) 2019].

In the second part of this paper, by drawing on the examples of the Soviet Union and the Nazi Germany, I further consider what could have happened, had the social constraints keeping social scientists from implementing their ideas been completely released. Dictatorships justified the killing people as stemming from the social science of their time. In other words, what happened next was completely in line with the Zeitgeist of the interwar period.

2. A comparison of the development of Germany and Soviet Union between WW1 and WW2

After considering the concepts of Modernity and the scientization of the social, we now examine what use the Soviet Union and the Nazi Germany made of them. Unlike democracies, dictatorships are far less restricted in the implementation of radical changes in social structures. However, they confronted the problem of achieving public acceptance for the extermination of "enemies". That is why I pay special attention to their use of political communication for achieving the belief the legitimacy of their rule.

Comparisons between National Socialism and Stalinism took off with the introduction of the term *totalitarianism* already in the 1930s. Although today both modernization theory and totalitarian theory, which were developed during the Cold War, remain largely abandoned, some studies of the Soviet Union conducted in this framework retain their value in terms of thorough source investigation [*Berliner* 1957; *Fainsod* 1958; *Inkeles, Bauer* 1961]. For instance, introducing the concept of "Stalinism

from below" Sheila Fitzpatrick claimed that she was entering an uncharted territory. However, first serious scientific attempts at comparing the two regimes started to appear in the 1970s. It was no longer about equating Stalinism and National Socialism, rather, the aim was to better understand the two dictatorships by highlighting the similarities and the differences. The anthology by Ian Kershaw and Moshe Lewin was perhaps the first powerful step in promoting such comparisons [*Kershaw*, *Lewin* 1977], since they had been long obstructed by the emphasis on the uniqueness of Nazism and the today discredited idea of the German *Sonderweg*. Another prominent collection is that by Matthias Vetter published after the opening of the Soviet archives [*Vetter* 1996]. Finally, the most recent anthology by Geyer and Fitzpatrick can be considered as a conclusion to these series of comparisons [*Geyer, Fitzpatrick* 2009]. For the first time, it combined comparative chapters written jointly by experts on National Socialism and Stalinism. It is the most complete compilation of state-of-the-art research on the subject so far. However, John Connelly correctly notes that many of its authors seem to remain within the limits of their own preconceptions and do not gain much by learning from each other's cases [*Connelly* 2010].

Such a comparison also suffered and continues to suffer today from different states of research. Whereas the study of National Socialism has led to controversial and fierce debates (cf. the argument between structuralists and intentionalists [*Kershaw* 2006] which resolved into the conclusion that neither alone is fruitful for the debate), there has been no comparable treatment of Stalinism. Partly this can be explained by the fact that the Soviet archive was made available to the public only in the 1990s. Another important issue is that the debate in the US has long remained mostly polemic and the parties involved have not exhibited much willingness to respond constructively to each other's arguments. Some well-known scholars were more concerned with their own reputation rather than with the further development of their fields. For instance, Jörg Baberowski [*Baberowski* 2012] blatantly continues to insist on the use of the intentionalist approach in the interpretation of Stalinism and to explain the phenomenon of Stalin's tyranny using obsolete notions developed as far back as in the 1950s [*Merl* (2) 2012]. It is therefore of utmost importance that the results and progress of the debate on National Socialism are considered in promoting a similar debate on Stalinism [*Kershaw* 2006]. Even if the direct exchange of ideas and arguments is impossible, it could at least inform the choice of which more general interpretational approaches could be successful. My own comparative research, which I developed at the Bielefeld Collaborative Research Center on the History of Political Communication, is largely based on this approach. In particular, it focuses on the question of how the two regimes succeeded in making the majority of population tolerate mass terror and maintaining the belief in the legitimacy of their rulers [*Merl* (1) 2012; *Kil'dyushov* 2014; *Ermakov* 2013].

Positive examples of social science applications in the 1920s

Both regimes relied on the Modernity discourse in order to legitimize themselves after WW1, and on the advances of social sciences in order to reconstruct their societies. In Germany, monarchy was replaced by parliamentary democracy. The Weimar Constitution of 1919 adopted various elements of social reform with the aim of bringing more social

justice. The Stinnes-Legien agreement redefined labor relations by institutionalizing trade unions and worker organizations [*Krüger* 2018]. Unemployment insurance and social housing were introduced. Altogether these changes redefined social security and led to a decisive improvement in the living conditions of the German people. Importantly, the role of social science experts and their influence over the development of relevant policies substantially increased. In Berlin, the Institute for Economic Research started work, the aim of which was to inform policymakers with forecasts of economic development and facilitate a more rational management of the economy [*Merl* 1985; *Merl* 2020].

In the Soviet Union, the Modernity discourse affected the transformation of society to an even greater extent. The belief in the possibility of a better world – a central element of Marxism – was politically connected with the idea of the rational planning of the economy and of society. According to the stage theory of Marx, the working class was designated as the new dominant class, and the new state administration, referred to as the "dictatorship of the proletariat", ruled out the possibility of any political opposition. A state planning commission was set up in conjunction with the state electrification plan, and to inform their activities and planning efforts many social scientists were recruited along with the development of powerful statistical monitoring. It was expected that state regulation would accelerate economic development and the restoration of the economy went much faster than initially expected. Already by 1927, the experts involved presented their first five-year plan for the development of the national economy [*Merl* 1985]. The New Economic Policy proved to be a success. Using advice from experts in agriculture, the party leadership began implementing a well-grounded approach to agricultural development ("Turning the face to the countryside" 1924) [*Merl* 1981; *Merl* 2019].

I intentionally do not go into further detail in order to make my argument. There is little doubt that peace was not yet lost in the 1920s. Even though the establishment of the Soviet Union and the radical societal restructuring it brought were more turbulent than the reforms in Germany, the politics in both countries were committed to the peaceful pattern of change. There was also an intense intellectual exchange between social scientists in the Soviet Union and the West. Even those in exile were part of this on-going communication [*Bruisch* 2014].

The creation of a new collective identity at the turn of the 1930s

In order to develop and maintain a new collective identity under dictatorships, people must have lived through a period of chaos, violence and political instability which emphasize their concerns about their own survival. It was only in this context that radicalization, naturally leading towards the new war, was possible. Such conditions made people susceptible to the propagandistic claims promising solutions to their problems, and the promises of a "paradise" bringing peace and prosperity to everyone.

This existential insecurity hit societies at a time when their social fabric had already been torn by war and revolution. Although economic recovery took off in both countries around the 1920s, the damages that were dealt to the social structure of both societies proved enduring. In Russia, the revolution fostered the emigration of the nobility and the remainder of its still weak bourgeoisie. The resulting weakness of its elites and the lack of clear structures allowed the Communist Party to take over easily.

Even though revolution and civil war had almost wiped out the existing classes, the party paradoxically continued to make use of traditional class distinctions for pragmatic and ideological reasons. The living conditions of the great masses of people were miserable. This was a "quicksand society" (Moshe Lewin) with an inability to organize, and the fluidity of its social structures. In Germany, on the other hand, the structure of the society remained largely intact. However, many people lost their previous political orientation and commitment. The national consciousness quickly came up with a comforting legend explaining the defeat in WW1. The Versailles Treaty, which put all the blame on the Germans and obliged them to make all the reparations, was widely rejected. It was therefore difficult for the Weimar Republic to come to terms with the conditions and to accept this as its own burden. Both right- and left-wing politicians openly attacked its democratic structures. While national identity united Germans, they were divided by class cleavages and political attitudes. In the Weimar period, previously stable identities waned, with the exception of the Catholic identity, which overwhelmed that of class. The moderate liberal parties of the political center lost their integrating power. Coupled with increasing street terror, such political fragmentation also turned Germany into a quicksand political society. Against this background, it is therefore no longer surprising that the National Socialist German Workers' Party succeeded in uniting a heterogeneous mass movement even including the social democratic electorate. It largely represented German society [*Browning, Siegelbaum* 2009, pp. 231–238].

The shaking of the social structure was a necessary condition for the rise of dictatorships. A sufficient condition was the severe economic and political crisis that hit both Germany and the Soviet Union in the late 1920s. In the Soviet Union, the crisis was largely homemade. Its "revolution from above" combined with accelerated industrialization and the compulsory collectivization of the peasants once again increased social dislocation. The world economic crisis reached the Weimar Republic late in 1929. The sense of lost hope that overwhelmed people in both countries was quickly recognized by the Nazis and the Communists.

In order to gain widespread acceptance, the new collective identity was linked to the attractive promise of a glorious new future. Communism was portrayed as a society without exploitation, fostering self-fulfillment and material well-being. Similar sentiments, albeit with a specific emphasis on homogeneity and equality, were voiced in the vision of the national community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) that was sold to the German people by the Nazis. However, the attainment of this glorious future could not be achieved instantaneously and required certain effort, including the elimination of those who stood in the way of achieving it. In order to facilitate inclusion, the sense of belonging to the majority that shared such visions was sold as a privilege [*Merl* (1) 2012]. Stalinism and National Socialism also coupled their ideal futures with the ideal of the "new man" [*Halfin* 2002, p. 7; *Browning, Siegelbaum* 2009]. This created a powerful narrative, which in the eyes of a single individual legitimized the use of physical violence against the regimes' enemies. This model of legitimation was not that much different from that of which is often found in most religions.

In order to protect their (artificial) collective identities from becoming the subject of critical debate, the dictatorships had to sell them as a belief or axiomatic basis of social order that could not be subjected to rationalization [*Giesen* 2004, pp. 73–75; *Merl* (1) 2012]. While formally free, the decision to associate oneself with such a collective identity was, nevertheless, forced by the surrounding context, since everyday people

were confronted by the unenviable fate of those who did not embrace it. In Germany, particularly Communists and Jews were persecuted and marginalized, whereas in the Soviet Union similar fate awaited *kulaks*, bourgeoisie and the clergy. This was further enforced by propaganda which pictured the enemy such that most people could easily recognize them and in a language which they could understand. The promise of a glorious future had to be formulated with sufficient vagueness in order not to provoke opposition. Thereby anyone could decorate the new identity with more or less any aspects he or she wanted [*Klemperer* 1966; *Hanisch-Wolfram* 2010].

No dictatorship would have lasted long if the majority actively opposed the elimination of the enemies. Thus, the willingness of people to turn a blind eye to arrests and repressions was what made the dictatorships possible [*Wildt* 2007; *Gellately* 2001]. While this does not mean that people actively supported such physical violence (after all, active opposition was connected with an unpredictable, potentially fatal risk for individuals), everyone who did not actively resist subordination to the regime was considered included [*Wildt* 2007]. In fact, this was considered no less binding than active support of the slogans of the new regime. Such passive inclusion was widespread in Germany, but also in the Soviet Union after the late 1930s.

However, dictatorial rule also relied on some pre-modern ideas both in Germany and in the Soviet Union. The paternalistic understanding of power remained familiar and acceptable to many people. In both countries, the majority saw nothing negative in committing to a strong leader [*Wildt* 2007, pp. 51–53; *Merl* (1) 2012]. Incidentally, paternalism also served as means of solving the paradox of the failure of dictatorships to deliver on their promises. Confidence in the leader coupled with the belief in the existence of enemies made it easy to attribute the blame for such failures to anyone but the dictatorship itself. Stalin perfected this technique by making whipping boys out of his functionaries, when necessary, whom he accused of incompetence, standing in the way of fulfilling his promises to the people. The readiness of the population to accept, without question, such blame – which was completely arbitrary as viewed from the outside – remained unbroken [*Merl* (1) 2012].

The organization of society according to the concept of community

The large-scale projects of societal reorganization in line with the spirit of Modernity, which were pursued by Stalinism and National Socialism in the 1930s, were also designed to facilitate warfare. They aimed to reduce class antagonism and substitute it with a clear structure consisting of the leader and his followers. For this purpose, the polarizing concepts of capital and labor had to be eliminated.

The first measure to establish dictatorships (in 1930 in the Soviet Union and in 1933 in Germany) was the elimination of independent workers' movements. In Germany, the trade unions were disbanded, whereas in the Soviet Union they were simply deprived of the function of an autonomous representation of workers' interests. Nevertheless, both dictatorships sought for alternative ways to buy the loyalty of the workers. For instance, the Nazi founded the German Labor Front (DAF) uniting employers as the "leaders" of the enterprises and employees as their "followers". DAF was the biggest and the most powerful association in the Nazi regime. It served

to eliminate the class struggle in factories and integrate the workers into the new regime, both of which it achieved with great success.

In factories, DAF was given the power and responsibility to organize almost every aspect of work which did not involve politics. This included work ethics, the organization and modernization of catering, the construction of sports facilities, improvements related to worker hygiene. In the Soviet Union, similar concerns were reflected in the promotion of a culturally rich life among workers [*Petrone* 2000], their on-the-job training and further education.

Both dictatorships maintained community through competitions. From 1934 national professional job competitions (*Reichsberufswettkämpfe*) were held in Germany, in which millions of mostly young workers took part. German enterprises also competed with each other and a handful of exemplary companies were given awards annually. This resembled a similar practice in the Soviet Union, where top performers and enterprises were also rewarded for their contributions the fulfilment of economic plans. Both regimes also tried to influence the leisure activities of their workers [*Wildt* 2008, pp. 93–94; *Petrone* 2000]. For instance, in Germany, an organization called "Kraft durch Freude" (KdF) was created, which in 1935 alone organized short trips for almost 6 million workers. 336,000 workers made annual contributions to eventually receive one of the cars promised by the KdF. Through such services, the Nazis aimed to convince the workers that maintaining a strong national community was also what benefitted their real working and living conditions. In Stalinism, upward social mobility was also intentionally manipulated to break with previously existing barriers. To satisfy the demand for entertainment, both regimes relied in particular on film production. In the Soviet Union, some elements of Hollywood musicals were borrowed in order to develop a specific film genre. It effectively conveyed ideological messages to the audience in way that could escape critical judgment [*Hänsgen* 2005].

Although Hitler and Stalin regarded peasants as a powerful anti-communist force and therefore treated them respectively either as pillars or enemies of their regimes, there are striking similarities in how both approached agricultural policy as far as maintaining economic self-sufficiency and preparation for war were concerned. Both regimes pursued the goal of organizing peasants. However, in the Soviet Union, their inclusion in the collective farms (*kolkhoz*) also served the purpose of their political neutralization. In Germany, the peasants were united on the basis of previous forms of cooperation and association into a compulsory cartel of the Reichsnährstand. "Peasant leaders" were expected to lead the peasants organized at the local and central level into the battle for increasing agricultural production. Just as Stalinism placed its peasants on the "Grain Front", so too did National Socialism prepare its peasants for the provision of the German population in the case of war [*Merl* 1996; *Merl* (2) 2002].

Both regimes also relied heavily on cartels and other collective forms in organizing their industry and manufacture. By the second half of the 1930s each had more or less established an economic system which was tailored for war, a system through which the state could easily allocate resources and control foreign trade. Nazi Germany also adopted a four-year plan [*Petzina* 1968]. The economic upturn in the 1930s in both countries was largely based on investment in the defense industry, which was justified by the need to prepare for possible outside aggression. With the Hitler-Stalin Pact, Nazism and Stalinism also defined their spheres of interest and influence in Europe, in which they claimed back the territories that were lost during WW1.

The images of the enemies: alien threat scenarios

Both regimes also maintained the fear of external threats and portrayed their enemies as being controlled by foreign powers (including the Jewish world conspiracy). These images of the enemy were effective, not least due to the fact that they were framed in the mythical world of ideas that was implanted into the popular conscience.

The enemies were almost always portrayed as supporters or even agents of hostile ideologies, e.g. as spies and saboteurs. Their stigmatization was sweeping, such that, for instance, in Germany, it reached out even to assimilated Jews. In the Soviet Union, the enemy image of the mythical *kulak* transformed successful peasants into bourgeois counterrevolutionaries. It affected even those peasants who had previously proven their loyalty to the Communists [*Merl* 1990, pp. 61–103; *Wildt* 2007]. Moreover, anyone who showed solidarity with the accused was put under suspicion [*Gellately* 2001; *Wildt* 2007]. In all of the cases, the external enemies were also constructed as social entities, which reinforced the inclusiveness of the numerous underprivileged. The world Jewry, the capitalists, the imperialists, the exploiters, and the kulaks were all designated as undeservingly privileged, against whom it was easy to incite the common people. Such framing also made the population surprisingly immune to foreign radio stations [*Merl* (1) 2012].

The extent to which these enemy images were internalized reflects itself well in the enthusiasm with which some people were involved in detecting enemies. In the Soviet Union, for instance, a lot of people were convinced that kulaks existed. They were also convinced that the enemies could most easily be found at work – a likely site of sabotage – and that they were responsible for all the failures [*Schlögel* 2008, pp. 119–135]. In Germany, popular masses endorsed the idea of extraditing Jews, Communists, foreign workers and prisoners of war seeing them as criminals threatening the national community [*Gellately* 2001; *Fitzpatrick, Lütke* 2009, pp. 275–281, 298–301]. The Nazis even managed to blame the Jews for the war, and the conviction that it was a Jewish war was shared by many [*Klemperer* 1966, pp. 189–198; *Gellately* 2001]. Wildt has traced the extent to which actions against Jews were initiated by common people from 1933 onwards. He argues that it did not matter whether one approved of these actions openly or secretly opposed them. Passive observation was akin to giving consent and this was the basis of the support on which the dictatorship rested. Even though spectators, strictly speaking, cannot be equated with perpetrators, the former provide legitimacy to the actions of the latter. Their silent presence alone made them accomplices of anti-Semitic politics. With only a few exceptions most people did not show any sign of opposition at all to what was happening [*Wildt* 2007, pp. 68, 214–217, 351–374; *Gellately* 2001; *Johnson* 1999]. Propaganda and the policy of violence thus achieved their goals at even at the very local level. In Germany, people lost their neutrality with respect to Jews. Many said to themselves: "Actually, the Nazis are right!" [*Wildt* 2007, p. 215]. Similar things were taking place in the Soviet Union, where the people by resolutions at closed assemblies welcomed the condemnation of certain groups of people or the executions following show trials [*Merl* (1) 2012].

The collective stigmatization of marginalized groups, such as vagabonds, prostitutes, and homosexuals, as antisocial or alien also took place under both Stalinism and National Socialism [*Browning, Siegelbaum* 2009, pp. 249–258]. The population perceived them as criminals, just as it valued the regime's successful struggle against crime in general as one of its most important achievements [*Gellately* 2001].

Political communication for the preservation
of the belief in the legitimacy of rule

In order to preserve the belief in the legitimacy of their rule among the people, it was crucial for the dictatorships to exercise effective control over public communication. This was greatly facilitated by the clear structuring of virtually the entire population by different places of work or places of living. That way the state could easily reach out to its people through regularly organized meetings and events, all of which required compulsory attendance.

Through the public of closed assemblies the dictatorships gained an effective means of social integration. It ensured everybody's participation. During such meetings, the participants had to express their individual position in the politically correct language. The actors and spectators were identical, and there were no bystanders. The meetings were organized such that the participants always supervised each other. Through the performative function of the ritual, mere participation was enough to provide a sense of integration into the community. While closed assemblies suggested political participation, it was only superficially aligned with the principles of democratic decision-making. Deviating views could be expressed, but it was crucial that they were framed in the language supported and internalized by the regime. Those who raised criticism without sticking to the commonly accepted rules risked being overrun by the state security organs. The participants knew that a dissenting vote would have consequences. In fact, the assemblies almost always willingly and unanimously supported any resolution prepared by the regime. This was reinforced by the vicious circle of passivity and the fear of speaking out publicly with a dissenting opinion. The meetings also became increasingly ritualized. The participants used the language of the regime in their speeches with formulas internalized from the propaganda. All of this instilled a sense of obligation without the need to actually convince anyone. Thus, by means of the public of closed assemblies the dictatorships could control the will of their subjects and direct it anywhere they wished [*Merl* (1) 2012; *Erren* 2010].

Both regimes used rituals, symbols, and rhetorical means to engage the masses [*Browning, Siegelbaum* 2009, p. 247]. To openly display integration people were also obliged to participate in major festivities and similar events. To prevent people from avoiding them, the dictatorships tried to make participation more attractive by introducing different rewards. In the Soviet Union, a significant improvement in the supply of food and alcoholic beverages to the public in the days preceding the holidays was obligatory [*Petrone* 2000; *Merl* (1) 2012].

In the Soviet Union, in conjunction with the new constitution of 1936, "general, equal, free and secret" elections to the Supreme Soviets were introduced. Obligatory participation in the elections served as yet another means of the performative integration into the community. Stalin also used the Soviet election at the end of 1937 to demonstrate to the world that the entire Soviet population was behind him. He spared no effort. Prior to the election, several hundred thousand priests and former kulaks were shot in a secret mass action so that they could not influence the election by spreading opposition [*Merl* 2011]. The Nazis carried out referendums with similar purposes in mind. Both dictatorships attached great importance to demonstrating the joint support of the entire population for their policies, both internally and externally. It was therefore a patriotic obligation for each eligible voter to vote [*Gellately* 2001; *Merl* 2011].

The national community and the evolution of Stalin's concept of inclusion

In order to promote a sense of community, the new collective identity also had to maintain integration as one of its core founding ideas. For National Socialism this was successfully resolved in the idea of the *national community*. However, this also implied that in order to stay in power and maintain their dictatorship, the Nazis were not allowed to do anything that would have set this idea under threat by public communication, depriving them of the status of harbingers of the glorious future and of the legitimate right to destroy their enemies. Stalin, on the other hand, faced the challenge of improving inclusion to lead the Soviet people into the "harmonious unity of socialist nations", which in many respects resembled that of the national community.

Hitler made use of the concept of national community, which already existed and had a positive connotation. The concept posited the reunification of the whole German nation in order to face the external enemies at the beginning of WW1. The national community was also considered a "German alternative" to democracy. *Community* (or *Gemeinschaft* in Tönnies' terms) was directed against Western individualism: the unity of the state and the people subordinated private interests for the sake of the common good. What the Allies saw as a lack of freedom was in fact the specific German understanding of it. *Comradeship* was juxtaposed with the Western term *equality*. The concept of the national community as of 1914 included all the social groups of German society. Even socialist ideas about the people's state, the state for the whole people, were based on it [*Bründel* 2003, pp. 238–243; *Wildt* 2007; *Wildt* 2008]. However, in the years of political fragmentation in 1916–1917, the concept became increasingly refined to exclude certain groups, such as, for instance, Jews and Poles. Later the Nazis took these exclusionary ideas to their extremes. They also fused the notion of the national community with an ethno-biological and anti-Semitic meaning, while emphasizing the continuity with the ideas of 1914. (According to Bründel [*Bründel* 2003, pp. 301–313], neither the concept of the people's state nor the ideal of the national community was anti-modernist, rather it was an expression of a specific understanding of Modernity in the interpretation of the German elites.)

Intended as a dictatorship of the working class, Stalinism first pursued the class principle. The first concept of Soviet nationality politics (*korenizatsiya*), which sought to promote nation-building among different ethnic groups (before they were later reunited through the working class), accepted ethnic differences as given and tolerable for the time being. Paradoxically this implied that Stalininsm was oriented more towards division than a comprehensive inclusion of its peoples [*Martin* 2001; *Browning, Siegelbaum* 2009, p. 247]. In 1926, Stalin introduced some changes to this doctrine, which improved the promise of Communism: by drawing on the slogan of "building socialism in one country" he distanced himself from the internationalist claims of world revolution and thus became more aligned with the nation-state building trend of the interwar period. However, it still had the disadvantage of class rhetoric, which did not allow the inclusion of the whole population and thus endangered the belief in the legitimacy of his rule. It is therefore not surprising that in the mid-1930s, Stalin retreated to his earlier agenda. In his speech before economists in June 1931, he turned back to the "bourgeois specialists" whom he previously declared as enemies of the regime and allowed them to take sides with the working class. The Stakhanov movement renounced the class criterion altogether [*Merl* 2017].

The mass terror against peasants during the collectivization was also directed against specific ethnic groups and effectively ruined the idea of nation building. Stalin desperately needed a concept that would glue his multiethnic dictatorship together with an appropriate sense of belonging. In the mid-1930s, he moved away from the dividing class concept. As a "diligent dictator" (Ian Kershaw), he apparently closely observed National Socialism and recognized that he lacked an ideology that could effectively integrate all Soviet citizens, i.e. ideology similar to that of the national community. With the introduction of the Socialist constitution in 1936, he presented his people with the idea of the "harmonious community of socialist nations". This redefined Soviet people into a new entity during WW2 [*Martin* 2001]. The notion of the *people's enemy* replaced that of the *class enemy*.

For the formerly independent peasants, who were forced into collective farms, the integration offer was limited, even though they had to participate in the elections in order to express their affiliation with the collective whole. Otherwise, Stalin pursued only their political neutralization, not their equal integration. The collective farmers were deprived of crucial civil and social rights, such as the right to free movement (they were not entitled to internal passports), and the 1936 constitution explicitly excluded them from state social security [*Merl* 1990; *Getty* 1991].

Thus, by carefully constructing the history, culture and constitution of the Soviet people, Stalin placed his dictatorship on a firm footing that lasted beyond his death in 1953. The central importance of this process of unification becomes fully apparent only from the point of view of the communicative strategy of the dictatorship.

Concluding remarks

After the WW1, many people believed the promises of Modernity that a brighter and better future could soon be attained because the constraints of the previous political systems could be overcome through rational planning. Drawing on the incredible success of modern medicine, they willingly believed the promises of social scientists who claimed to possess the recipes to change their societies. Dictatorships also embraced such advice and the restructuring of societies in the 1930s effectively pushed the world towards the brink of a new war. By drawing on the "scientificity" of the advice of social science and its promise of delivering a glorious future to their nations, dictators won the belief in the legitimacy for their rule. On this basis, they molded new societies like gardeners by weeding (often physically) the undesirable elements from their social structures. Through the implementation of the concepts like "national community" or "Soviet people", National Socialism and Stalinism shaped the communities that could secure their claim to power. I argue that in this way the expectations of Modernity and the scientization of the social eventually contributed to the renewed military conflict in Europe after the WW1. It is in this respect all the more concerning that the international organizations created after the WW2, which were designed to avoid the repetition of similar scenarios in the future and which have achieved certain success in this respect, are becoming increasingly attacked by populists and resurgent nationalism.

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Модерн и проигранный мир:
Советский Союз и Германский рейх в сравнении (1918–1938)

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Одна из основных надежд, связанных с эпохой модерна, состояла в том, что сопутствующий ей расцвет наук и взрыв научных достижений в различных отраслях знания должны быть использованы с целью существенного улучшения качества жизни людей. Эти ожидания распространялись в том числе и на общественные науки, открывавшим, как многим казалось, возможности к достижению не только более совершенного и рационального социально-экономического порядка, но и к совершенствованию самих индивидов. С 1880-х гг. в Европе начали проводиться первые систематические эксперименты по перенесению идей из сферы социальных наук в сферу практической политики, положившие начало процессу, который в существующей литературе (а также в настоящей статье) получил название «онаучивание социального». После свержения монархий в конце Первой мировой войны новые политические силы в Германии и Советском Союзе встали перед проблемой легитимации своего господства, и «онаучивание социального» оказалось в некотором смысле одним из инструментов для решения этой задачи. Обе возникшие диктатуры – сталинская и национал-социалистическая – довели эту идею до крайности, запустив масштабные проекты по переформатированию собственных обществ в соответствии с господствующими социальными теориями своего времени – классовой и расовой соответственно. В обоих случаях контроль государства над социальной и экономической жизнью был доведен до беспрецедентно высокого уровня, а их экономические успехи, подстегиваемые в значительной степени масштабными программами перевооружения, неизбежно закладывали фундамент новой войны. Сегодня кажется немыслимым то, с какой наивностью достижения общественных наук использовались в практической политике, однако в те времена физическое уничтожение «врагов режима» и «неполноценных личностей» с легкостью преподносилось людям как одно из необходимых и научно-обоснованных средств создания лучшего общества. В данной статье анализируется, какие формы процесс «онаучивания социального» принял в Советском Союзе и Германском рейхе в относительно мирный период, разделявший две мировые войны. В первой части статьи проводится концептуальный разбор понятий «модерн» и «онаучивание социального», а также предлагается периодизация их использования в политическом контексте. Во второй части рассматриваются сходства и отличия указанных процессов, а также стратегий обоих режимов по легитимации собственного господства.

Ключевые слова: современность, «онаучивание социального», вера в легитим-
ность, политическая коммуникация, сравнительное изучение диктатур, межвоен-
ный период, сталинизм, национал-социализм

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