

International Political Science

After the Revolution: Political Science in East Germany

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In some ways the East German revolution of November 1989 revealed the failure of German political science, both East and West. East German political scientists were neither catalysts of nor participants in the protest movement. West German political scientists failed to foresee the crises and breakdown of the regime or even give an adequate analysis of the starting point of German unification. Despite tremendous difficulties the two German states are now growing together. Political science is only one small aspect in this transformation. However, the transformation of the discipline illustrates the complexity of the process of unification, with its encumbrances, radical breaks, and continuities. As *pars pro toto* political science mirrors the process by which the East German society will develop and what will be left of the old political order.¹

1. Before the Revolution: Two Sciences in Two Countries

The concrete problems in the process of growing together in German political science are rooted in the differences in the history of the discipline up to fall 1989. A comparison reflects the differences in the political systems as well. In the FRG political science was founded along with the new state in 1948–49. Nearly all of the founding fathers—there had been no mothers—of the discipline had been in opposition to the Nazi Reich before 1945.² It is not unimportant for the current debate on political science in East Germany that there had been no personal, institutional or epistemic continuities between political science in the FRG and the politically dominated sciences during the

Third Reich (Buchstein and Göhler 1986).

The founding of the discipline was supported by American agencies along with the help of German emigrants like Sigmund Neumann. The discipline needed this support badly. Political science had not previously existed as an academic discipline in Germany. To introduce it meant changing the traditional division of competence in the old German university system. Like the founding of American political science seventy years before, there was a pedagogic bias involved. According to the way the founding fathers saw themselves they had a distinct political impetus: to fight totalitarianism and to struggle for democracy. The fight against totalitarianism in these years was placed on three battlefields: criticizing the political order in the GDR—it was not by accident that West Berlin became the main center of the discipline (Buchstein and Göhler 1991); second, struggling with still existing Nazi-infected opinions in the German population; and finally criticizing the academic disciplines such as sociology, history and above all the law faculties. In all these ways political science after 1948 was an oppositional science. It criticized other disciplines for still existing personnel or epistemic continuities from the era of Nazi science.³ After some difficulties and setbacks in the first ten years, political science in the FRG eventually developed into a large, academically respected and internationally oriented academic discipline.⁴

In comparison to the western success story, 'political science' in the GDR went a shorter and totally different way. It could neither claim to be an oppositional science, nor had it been a science for democracy. It was not until the spring of the Honecker

era in 1974 that scientists of the GDR set up a scientific association for political scientists—the Nationalkomitee für Politische Wissenschaft der DDR (National Committee for Political Science in the GDR). In 1975 the Nationalkomitee joined the IPSA. Despite this administrative decision political science never really developed into an independent academic discipline. According to Karl-Heinz Roeder,⁵ political science was "based on the doctrines of Marx, Engels, and Lenin" (Roeder 1989: 753). To be fair, one has to admit that every attempt to introduce political science in East Germany faced a difficult set of circumstances. Unlike history and sociology, political science had no traditional academic niche where it could withdraw from time to time. Its primary subject, politics, was in the center of the ideological interest of the regime.

Unfortunately, East German scientists were not able to overcome or circumvent these difficulties. Political science never became a self-sufficient academic discipline with distinct scholarly approaches. Mainly it remained a headline for the work some social scientists did, in order for them to participate in international conferences. After the proclamation of 1974 a so-called political scientist did exactly what he or she had done all the years before: study the theoretical, political and economic developments of socialist countries and analyze international relations under the direction of a planning commission. As Roeder recently described the controlling monopoly of the ruling party: "The central research plan for social sciences is subject to approval by the Politbureau of the SED and is supervised by the same institution" (Roeder 1989: 757). The founders of the Nationalkomitee may have had more ambitious inten-

tions. But political scientists never took steps toward establishing a new academic discipline which breaks methodologically and politically from the domination of the broader epistemic concept of Marxist-Leninist "Gesellschaftswissenschaft" (the science of society). There were no faculties of political science, no periodicals, no textbooks and no curricula for students. The official political dictionary, a voluminous 1150-page handbook, did not even contain an entry under 'political science'; instead there is a reference to "bürgerliche Politologie" (bourgeois political science) where the entire approach of modern political science is rejected as an unscientific project.⁶

After fifteen years of membership in the IPSA, our negative resume is not only disappointing in comparison to the development in the FRG. What is much more important for a fair judgement is the comparison to other social sciences in the GDR. Sociology, history and philosophy were all confronted with the same general problem of being seen only as extensions of a politically dominated "Gesellschaftswissenschaft" (Hager 1976). But to some degree they were able to develop into distinct autonomous disciplines with subtle oppositional discourses. This does not apply to the study of history (Fisher and Heydemann 1988). But in other disciplines the attained scholarly niches often functioned as political niches as well. Since the beginning of the 80s they gave shelter to a cautious but growing opposition to the ruling political doctrines. An example is the group of reform socialists led by Jens Uwe Heuer, professor of "Staatsrecht" at the Humboldt University in East Berlin, who introduced Gorbachev's ideas and tried to start a controversial debate on the Leninist meaning of democracy (Heuer 1989). Another example is East German's sociology, which had often been in cautious opposition to some party ideologies (Ludz 1964; Lötsch 1990). Political science never established such a critical niche. The revolution revealed the extent of the problem. No secretly written critical manuscripts or political analyses had been hidden in the drawers, waiting to be published. Political science in the GDR re-

mained merely a label, seen as an instrument for international contacts.

2. The Call for Political Science: A Useful Label in an Evaporating State

There have been different phases in the development of political science in the first year after the revolution. In the first phase immediately after the opening of the borders in November and December, suddenly many academics from East Germany presented themselves as 'political scientists' to West German universities and institutes. But this was only the beginning. Faculties and academies started changing their names to political science institutes. New institutions for political science were founded to replace some of the old institutes. A new national political science association was planned. Suddenly curricula for the study of political science were presented. Before the revolution, only a few of the activists in this foundation ever would have called themselves political scientists.

Actually, the series of hectic activities was a consequence of the former usage of the term political science in the GDR. As a label it was used strategically. The new-born political scientists of the first weeks stem from all kinds of social sciences and humanities backgrounds. Some were lecturers in Marxist-Leninist philosophy or other aspects of the SED party ideology at the universities, others in economic planning at institutes for socialist economics; some had worked for years at the Akademie der Wissenschaften (Academy of Sciences), a giant net of institutes in natural and social sciences with nearly 24,000 employees; and finally there were scientists from the ruling SED's party-institutes as well.

During the first weeks after the fall of the wall groups of East German scientists poured into West German political science facilities. Due to its geographic location, Berlin was the favored destination for these trips. Among the wave of new political scientists there were two identifiable groups. First, there were some critically-minded younger scientists, often holding junior ranking posi-

tions. For many it was their first opportunity to visit a western institute, to examine the supply of books in western stores, or even to read materials in a western library. These people often had a serious interest in political science. Without exact knowledge of the field, they saw in the founding of a new discipline a chance for a beginning in critical political analysis.

But this group was soon overridden by their leading or conformist colleagues. They mainly saw in political science a promising opportunity for their own personal survival in the science infrastructure. Since it became obvious that the revolution would not stop with a reformed socialist system and that the old political, economic, and scientific order would be swept away, the scientific caste indeed has good reasons to fear for their jobs. News media and the people increasingly questioned the responsibilities of the scientists in the old system and their qualification for the future. The critique was harsh and loud. At the universities, some of the scientists compared the atmosphere to that of a pogrom.⁷ Suddenly thousands of social scientists were desperately looking for a new legitimation to hold on to their jobs. Undoubtedly, the easiest strategy was a cosmetic change. Picking up the western sounding label 'political science' became one of the major tactics in the game. The case of a prominent professor of Marxist-Leninist philosophy from Leipzig may illustrate how superficial, desperate, and naive these attempts could be: he visited Berlin for one day, photocopied nearly 100 pages from a student textbook on utopian socialists and then immediately proposed cooperation with western colleagues in the field of general political theory.

The next few months were characterized by common activities between East and West. It started in January 1990. After a short period of gazing in astonishment, real efforts toward cooperation and support were enthusiastically started in western institutes and faculties. In Berlin, for example, the first big conference with the whole staff and the students of the political science department of the Free University (FU) and the

East-Berlin Hochschule für Ökonomie was held on January 26. In a plenum with hundreds of participants, in workshops and standing groups, the common political and scientific future was discussed. The readiness to cooperate in the West was based on the will to "support the process of democratization."⁸ More meetings were organized and commissions from both countries developed exchange programs. A series of special lectures with more than thirty seminars in political science started in May 1990 at the East Berlin Humboldt University and was held by western scientists; in exchange East German scientists lectured at the FU. Plans to exchange books and data were discussed.

This honeymoon lasted only a short time, though. Since April more and more complaints of a still missing "geistige Erneuerung" (intellectual renewal) in East Germany's social sciences have become public. In Leipzig, for instance, the process of self-cleaning did not occur, according to a report by four leading mathematicians: "There has been a giant attempt at obscuration in the last months. Titles of institutes and professorships have been changed gratuitously; e.g., the "Sektion Wissenschaftlicher Kommunismus" (scientific communism) is now called political science. The old personnel is still in power, only the vocabulary has changed. One is expressing one's confidence in each other. Critical young scientists fear that they will be the first ones to be dismissed."⁹

Another striking example is the East Berlin Humboldt University. A lot of scientists in the former Marxism-Leninism section are again in power.¹⁰

Similar disappointing observations have been made by western cooperators. Actually, only a few East German students participated at the offered seminars and lectures; some had to be cancelled. After showing early openness, the East German partners switched to ignorance and refusal. They did not announce the offered seminars; western placards were destroyed. According to Peter Grottian, one of the western initiators of the cooperation, the East German partners are not really interested in cooperation.¹¹ As a conse-

quence, the department of political science at the FU refused to continue its exchange program. Due to these developments it became clear that fostering political science in East Germany would require a radical reform of institutional structures together with a careful renewal in teaching. Currently, East German academic institutes present a varied picture in their attempts to catch up with the standards in international political science. The risk that old cadres of the SED will teach their old doctrines under a new label is apparent but not yet banned. A more promising example in the necessary structural reforms can be seen at the former "Akademie für Staats- und Rechtswissenschaft der DDR," now "Hochschule für Recht und Verwaltung" in Potsdam. Here nearly fifty percent of the old staff has already been dismissed. The entire curriculum has been reformed by analogy with western models. New courses have been installed. The financial situation is still unclear now; but if the "Hochschule" in Potsdam can start in fall 1990, there will be six visiting professors in political science from West Germany to teach the main domains of the discipline.

3. A Growing Science from a Growing West Germany: Future Political Education and Political Research in East Germany

Traditionally West German political science had two equal-ranking goals, political research and political education. Nowadays in East Germany the main challenge is political education. Not that political science alone can instill western democratic values in the East German people—the case of the FRG after World War II is proof that this inculcation is much more dependent on economic welfare, time, practice, and a pluralist media system than upon democratic propaganda. But what is seen as a concrete and urgent problem is the education of old and new East German teachers. The first step in the reform of the old system of political education is already complete. Pupils' professional prospects

are uncoupled from political conformity. A second step still to be taken is to change the substance and the pedagogic style. Political education played a key role in the entire system of the old regime. Its theoretical basis had been the Leninist approach, viewing education as a part in the population's infiltration with the avant-garde party's ideology. In East German practice this implied a specific didactic method. The concept was as simple as it was illusionistic: the more often you pour people with the right ideas, the better socialists they will become. So the governmental planning commissions introduced sophisticated programs of life-long propaganda. According to Harro Kendschek's¹² observations, forty years of propaganda did not produce faithful disciples of the regime but rather people who are now averse to political propaganda in general and political education in particular. They never learned to discuss political matters freely in public. They are not accustomed to a society with open political conflicts and controversies. Most have a deep-rooted desire for harmony and an aversion for "Parteiengenzänk" (party struggle). There is an apparent parallel to the political apathy in West Germany after World War II (e.g., Arendt 1950).

Political science can help to interrupt the current business-as-usual mentality in the education system. Like West Germany in the years after 1945, the East German education system not only needs support, but pressure from the outside. What is urgently needed are both new didactic styles and new content. Becoming a teacher of politics became a last resort for people who otherwise would not have been allowed to study. These mostly unpassionate teachers are mixed with former military officers who received the teachers' certification after only one year of additional training. This is the personal 'material' which East Germany provides after the revolution. The official pedagogic practice was the old German 'Professor Unrat'-style. In the Eastern bloc only Albania had a more rigid system.

More than 40% of inquiries about western help in education are for political education; that is more than

in computer science or engineering. In response to this demand, there have been several meetings between the political science department at the Free University in Berlin and East German institutions which have been responsible for political education since December 1989. A first common conference was held in February. At this meeting it was clear from the beginning that East Germany would adopt the ideas and institutions of the western pattern.¹³ There already had been meetings between administrators of the new East German government and western experts in spring 1990. After intense discussions the new programs for political education in schools are to be enacted on September 1, 1990. It is only a matter of time before the whole western system is adopted. What some East Germans defend as worth bringing from the old heritage into the new order is the emphasis on the esthetic dimension in didactics (a well-trained practice by which critical teachers respond non-overtly to their opposition) and the traditional socialist concern for global world problems.

In the recent mish-mash of western models, Stalinist traditions, and subtle critical elements, one can only speculate what will happen during the next few years. For sure the institutional heritage of the old educational system will fade away. In the eyes of many East German people the longtime teachers, advisers, and trainers in political education are untrustworthy. Often they held personal responsibility for political repression, e.g., expelling children from school due to political reasons. Now some of them just change the language. Instead of 'Marxism-Leninism' they now talk about 'Democratic-Pluralism,' without any real knowledge of the controversial western debate on democratic theory. There is the fear that a business-as-usual mentality in political education will give rise to a cynical and eventually apathetic generation. It seems that a new language needs new faces to be trustworthy and that a non-authoritarian didactic needs new people already used to some of the personal requirements of a western democracy. Where the line between the old and the new will be exactly drawn in future political edu-

cation's personal politics is not clear today. But it is doubtless that a lot of former political educators will lose their jobs. The big winners will be the West Germans. Thousands of unemployed teachers, especially in social sciences, are waiting for new jobs in the East.

From the perspective of political science, the main by-product of the reform in political education is a push toward expansion. In Germany the responsibility of teacher training rests with the universities, nearly all of which are state owned. Since the key priority is now political education there is an urgent demand for new or retrained teachers. Therefore it will be much easier to justify financial proposals to the government for political science faculties than it will be for other social sciences. It is a paradox—the winner in the competition for funds will not be the traditionally critical East German sociology, but the once opportunistic political science.

What can the East German heritage in social sciences provide to a future political science? The statement made by the western Max-Planck-Institute that East German social sciences are nothing but "a desert"¹⁴ surely is an exaggeration. During the 80s there was a successful uncoupling from the party's ideology in some fields of work in social science (Anweiler 1989: 386 pp.). But as stated already: unfortunately political analyses and political theory had not been in the forefront of the emergence of 'immanent-critical' (Anweiler) social sciences. Therefore the East can provide only a small body of political research while their demands for well-trained political scientists from the West is high. Despite the recent efforts made by East German scientists to secure positions on new political science faculties in the long run, the demand for qualified scientists will open the market for West German political scientists. It will cause more unemployment among East German scientists and at the same time help to reduce the high unemployment rate of scientists born in the years 1945-55 in West Germany. Winners in the development of a future East German political science may well be West German scientists.

Another important factor that will support this trend is the status of "DDR-Forschung" (GDR-research) in West Germany. From the beginning, research on the other German state was one main focus of West German political science. After a short period of ideological critique, this field of political analysis developed in the mid-sixties into an empirically-based discipline.¹⁵ Now, after the evaporation of their subject of interest the community of GDR researchers is in a phase of rethinking.¹⁶ They are looking for new prospects and opportunities in their scientific work. They are not only mostly well trained. Due to their use of official data from the old regime in a critical and sophisticated way, they also have more knowledge about the East German political and social situation than East German scientists ever had. After the opening of East German archives some of them will no doubt step into the field of historical research, since a lot of unanswered questions remain in the history of the GDR. Others will conceptualize the field of GDR research into the scientific observation of the current transformatory process of a former socialist society back into a capitalist one. Although they lost their original subject of research, due to their knowledge of the GDR many are willing and able to fill the gap in East German political science.

4. After the Revolution: West German Political Science in Former East Germany

It is not yet clear how large the newly founded discipline of political science in East Germany finally will be. There is a lot of skepticism among East German students about the current transformation at the universities. Thousands of East German students are expected to come to West Germany. A high percentage of them will study political science. East German applicants to some universities like the FU already have to compete for a limited number of slots. Yet it is not clear on the other side how many West German teachers, political education advisers, and political scientists will go to East

Germany. And it is also not clear how many East German institutes and scientists will find a place for themselves in the new order. But for sure thousands of former political ideologists of the old system in academies, party institutes, and universities will have to look for new jobs. Some of them are still averse to the revolution, others are dreaming of a political order of a 'third way' with a humanist socialism (Heuer 1990). Both groups are trying to defend their posts. But in the long run they are in a hopeless situation because the reconstruction of the scientific system in East Germany will depend on western money. And the money will come for sure. Since there is the real threat that the West German universities will collapse under the masses of East German students, the western Ministry of Sciences and Education has already promised nearly \$4 billion to renew the East German universities and give Eastern students an incentive to stay. So-called 'flying faculties' with western economists and political scientists will begin to fill the biggest gaps in fall 1990.

After all, it is desirable that amid the euphoric triumph of the capitalist West there be enough objectivity and tolerance to give critical young East German scientists an opportunity to participate in the development of a new political science. But there should be some skeptics as well. As always, the history of political science in Germany will probably be nothing but a reflection of the major developments in society.

Notes

1. The article was finished in July 1990. We are grateful to Dawn Kellman for comments and valuable suggestions on an earlier draft.

2. Some, like Otto Suhr, Otto Stammer, and Otto Heinrich von der Gablentz were activists in the small German resistance movement; others like Dolf Sternberger and Theodor Eschenburg lived in an 'internal exile'; finally there was a group of scientists who like Ernst Fraenkel, A. R. L. Gurland and Ossip K. Flechtheim had emigrated after 1933 to the United States and returned to Germany after the war. The only relevant exception is Arnold Bergstraesser who tried to ingratiate himself with the Nazi government; due to his Jewish grandmother he had to leave Germany in 1938. His influence,

IPSA XV WORLD CONGRESS will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina July 21-25, 1991

Main Theme: *Centers and Peripheries in Contemporary Politics*

Program Chair, Professor Jean Leca of the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, presents the program in this way:

(Excerpts from *Participation, Special Issue*, June 1990)

"The dominant paradox emerging over the last twenty years is the view of contemporary world politics as increasingly interdependent and interconnected, as well as increasingly fragmented. The processes of nation-building (or sometimes 'nation-crumbling') display more and more divergent patterns of structure and legitimation of power.

"Looking at the cognitive paradigms, or ideologies, never has so venerable a concept as 'civil society' (a cornerstone of liberal and Marxist political theories) been so widely (and loosely) used to make sense of a host of crises (ranging from crisis of the welfare state to that of the national or authoritarian states.

"The XV World Congress will look at the contradictory patterns of evolution by using the center-periphery image: a central idea would be that we live in a world of structured, but not immutable power relations, that along several, but not necessarily over-lapping, dimensions define various centers and layers of peripheries.

"As any metaphor, the center-periphery image (very familiar to political geographers, psychologists, sociologists, but less so to political scientists who are not versed in the politics of territory or international political economy), is difficult to manipulate. In order to trigger (and keep under control) our scientific imagination, it seems relevant to combine different views, congenial to political scientists.

"The preceding remarks must be understood as a general orientation of the main problématique of a Congress that will be held in the Southern hemisphere, where issues of power asymmetry are likely to be perceived and assessed in ways that might, in dialogue with various perspectives from the North, enrich our knowledge about many crucial problems in our discipline.

"The Congress's main theme will be subdivided into four subthemes corresponding to the subfields of political science: political theory; micro and macro-politics (political processes and political institutions); policy studies; international relations. It is expected, too, that significant channels of communication will be open, or broadened, with neighbouring disciplines, anthropology, sociology and economics."

About 200 sessions, including Special Sessions and sessions of the IPSA Research Committees and Study Groups, are planned.

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however, on West German political science after 1945 is often exaggerated.

3. Therefore, from a broader point of view political science marked an early turning point in the history of German social sciences; it took nearly a generation of scientists in history or law schools to let the mainstream give up the idea of a German 'Sonderweg' and join the western discussion.

4. For a short history of West German political science, see Kastendiek (1987).

5. Roeder is professor of theory and state and law and acting director of the Institute of Theory of State and Law at the Academy of Sciences of the GDR. He is President of the Nationalkomitee and member of the Executive Committee of IPSA.

6. See: *Politisches Wörterbuch*, New Edition 1988. East Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 157 pp.

7. For a description of the atmosphere in the universities and institutes in these days, see Zittern und Klappern. An den DDR-Universitäten fürchten Professoren um ihre Stellen. In: *Der Spiegel* 22, May 28, pp. 82-85.

8. Resolution, January 18, 1990. Department of Political Science, Free University Berlin.

9. Leipziger Professoren vermissen geistige Erneuerung in Der Karl-Marx-Universität. In *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 5, 1990.

10. About former SED scientists at the Humboldt University, see Weiter auf anti-kapitalistischem Weg—die PDS Gesellschaftswissenschaftler an der Berliner Humboldt Universität geben nicht auf. In: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 13, 1990. Deutsch-deutscher Streit um Uni-Stellen. In: *Die Tageszeitung* (Berlin edition), July 17, 1990.

11. See: Kein Interesse an West Professoren. In: *Die Tageszeitung* (Berlin edition), May 18, 1990.

12. Harro Kendschek works in a teachers' training college in Leipzig.

13. For a survey of the various activities in Berlin, see Massing (1990).

14. Hans Zacher, president of the Max-Planck-Institute. In: *Die Welt*, June 22, 1990.

15. Much of this development was the result of the work of Peter Christian Ludz (see Buchstein 1989). For an excellent review of forty years of West German GDR research in political science, see Thomas (1990).

16. See: Die DDR-Forschung wird ihren Gegenstand überleben. In: *Die Tageszeitung* (Berlin edition), June 12, 1990.

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Soviets Sanction Gender Studies

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The USSR Academy of Sciences has established a Center for Gender Studies within the Institute for Socio-Economic Studies of Population. Gender studies is an entirely new field in the USSR. In fact, until recently there was no word in the Russian language corresponding to the English word of "gender." As a consequence, a Russian neologism "gender" (pronounced with a hard "g") has been created to connote this social concept.

Dr. Anastasia Posadskaya, Deputy Director of the new center, visited the United States in June and met

with me in APSA's Washington office to describe the work of the gender studies center. Dr. Posadskaya explained that the establishment of her center would have been impossible prior to Perestroika when the fiction that Soviet men and women were treated equally was officially maintained. Fundamental to promoting that fabrication was the Communist Party's Women's Committee, which still exists in the precarious status experienced by many party nomenclatura today.

While the new center has apparently not been accepted with open arms

by many of the old guard in the Soviet Academy, it has garnered some important resources with which to carry on its research, including five professional staff lines, some space, and telephones. While she was in the U.S., Posadskaya additionally obtained a fax machine donated by the Soros Foundation so that communication can be facilitated between the center and colleagues around the world. Still, the center is in need of such basic materials as books for its meager but growing library and a personal computer. Much of the professional staff's time is squandered