

Tradition & Discovery

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Reviewed by Paul Lewis

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Preface

This year's annual meeting is a special one. The late session (9-11 PM.) on Friday, November 18 will focus on the long-awaited Polanyi biography published by Oxford University Press in May. William T. Scott and Martin X. Moleski's *Michael Polanyi, Scientist And Philosopher* now provides the standard reference point for Polanyi's career. It is a reference point that we have needed and that future scholarship will certainly rely upon. Marty Moleski along with the late Bill Scott's wife, Ann Scott, and others who have had a hand in the biography project will be present for the discussion. We will have a small party after the session in celebration of the book. The second session the following morning (9-11:30 A. M.) will examine the Hungarian influence on Polanyi's heuristic outlook in his epistemology and philosophy of religion. Speakers will be Leslie Muray, Andy Sanders and Richard Gelwick. See p. 5 for details.

The articles in this issue complement each other nicely. Both articles dig into history a bit more than most essays in this journal. Paul Knepper is interested in Polanyi's relation to Zionism in the thirties and forties, and particularly in his little known 1943 article titled "Jewish Problems." The other article, which Struan Jacobs and I wrote, discusses Polanyi's renewed friendship with Karl Mannheim in the period just after the writing of "Jewish Problems." Polanyi in fact planned to include this essay and several others from the period in a never published book in a Routledge series edited by Mannheim. These articles provide some perspective on Polanyi as he struggled with issues during the war. It is interesting to link the themes here to philosophical ideas found in later publications. Finally, note that this issue has two reviews, including one of Jeffrey Stout's celebrated *Democracy and Tradition*.

Phil Mullins

Tradition and Discovery is indexed selectively in *The Philosopher's Index* and *Religion One: Periodicals*. Book reviews are indexed in *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*.

NEWS AND NOTES

As was noted in the last issue, the long-awaited Polanyi biography, *Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher* by William Tausig Scott and Martin X. Moleski is now available from Oxford University Press. Used copies are already available on the web site for Amazon. com. If you are looking for shorter biographical material on the web, there are a number of sites to choose from. Among them is a short biographical statement about Michael Polanyi that focuses on his work in chemistry. This was written by Mary Jo Nye and appears in *HYLE—International Journal for Philosophy of Chemistry*, Vol. 8, No.2 (2002), pp. 123-127 at http://www.hyle.org/journal/issues/8-2/bio_nye.html. Also on the web on the Gospel and Culture site (<http://www.deepsight.org/articles/polanyi.htm>) is a short biographical statement about Polanyi with attached brief comments on philosophy, religion and Polanyi's thought. This was written by Phil Mullins and includes a short bibliography of Polanyi's writing and a very abbreviated bibliography of writing about Polanyi's ideas.

Paul Knepper's article, "Michael Polanyi and Jewish Identity," recently appeared in *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 35(3): 263-293.

YU Zhenhua, a member of the Department of Philosophy, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China (ecnuyu@hotmail.com), recently read a paper on the problem of tradition treated from a Polanyian perspective at an international conference in Shanghai. He reports a very interesting discussions followed delivery of the paper.

Recently, there have been some discussion on the Polanyi discussion list about Polanyi and Voeglin. Maben Walter Poirier's "Eric Voegelin on Christ and Christianity" was in *The Thomist*, 68: 2 (April 2004): 259-286.

The following letter to Craig Mattson, author of "Vico and Polanyi on Knowing and Making" in *TAD* 31:2, recently was forwarded to the editor.

Dear Professor Mattson,

Thank you for your article on Vico and Polanyi, which I have just gotten around to reading. I think you'll find the following anecdote interesting.

My wife and I spent the summer of 1972 bicycling around England. I was then just beginning my dissertation study of Polanyi ("Michael Polanyi and the Recovery of Rhetoric." U. Iowa, 1973), and Michael generously offered to spend several hours with us, at his home in Oxford. (I had met him at the Dayton conference that spring.) Here's how I represented the anecdote in my own dissertation (n. 13 to Ch. V, p. 389):

At one point during that conversation [August 1, 1972], Polanyi shared with me [translating from the original French into English as he read] a passage he had been reading, one whose eloquence (and sentiments) he admired. The passage praised Vico, whose name had not been mentioned until then, and it can be found in Paul Hazard, *La Pensee Europeene au XVIIIeme Siecle, de Montesquieu a Lessing* (Paris: Bolvin, 1946), I, 46. After Polanyi finished reading, I mentioned that Vico had been a rhetorician, a fact which he greeted with surprise [sic] and, I think, pleasure.

As I recall, in that passage Paul Hazard was arguing that if Vico's thought had been taken seriously at the time, the whole subsequent history of European thought — and events — might have been very different.

The possible philosophical kinships between Polanyi and Vico are ones I had hoped to follow up but never did. It's good to see that you are exploring those connections.

With best wishes,

Sam Watson
Emeritus Prof. of English, UNC Charlotte

Polanyi Society WWW Site Updated

In addition to the five Polanyi essays that have for some time been available on the Polanyi Society web site, links to nine additional Polanyi essays have recently been added.

TAD Digital Archives Are Open Access

In the last issue of *TAD*, it was announced that the new digital archives for *TAD* (accessed from the Polanyi Society web page at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/>) include issues from the present back to Volume 17, Numbers 1 & 2 (1990-1991). You can download a full issue or a particular article from the table of contents. Although the archives were earlier password protected, this has now been removed so anyone can retrieve materials. A Google search engine for the Polanyi site, including the archives, has been installed but it is not yet working. It should be functional before the end of the year.

Submissions for Publication

Articles, meeting notices and notes likely to be of interest to persons interested in the thought of Michael Polanyi are welcomed. Review suggestions and book reviews should be sent to Walter Gulick (see addresses listed below). Manuscripts, notices and notes should be sent to Phil Mullins. Manuscripts should be double-spaced type with notes at the end; writers are encouraged to employ simple citations within the text when possible. MLA or APA style are preferred. Because the journal serves English writers across the world, we do not require anybody's "standard English." Abbreviate frequently cited book titles, particularly books by Polanyi (e.g., *Personal Knowledge* becomes *PK*). Shorter articles (10-15 pages) are preferred, although longer manuscripts (20-24 pages) will be considered. Consistency and clear writing are expected.

Manuscripts normally will be sent out for blind review. Authors are expected to provide an electronic copy as an e-mail attachment.

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Electronic Discussion List

The Polanyi Society supports an electronic discussion group that explores implications of the thought of Michael Polanyi. Anyone interested can join. To join yourself, go to the following address: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/polanyi_list/join. If you have difficulty, send an e-mail to Doug Masini (masini@etsu.edu) and someone will see that you are added to the list.

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2005 Polanyi Society Annual Meeting to Focus on New Biography and Hungarian Roots of Polanyi's Heuristic Perspective

This year's annual meeting of the Polanyi Society will be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on November 18 and 19, 2005. As in past years, our meeting technically will be an "Additional Meeting" held in conjunction with the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society for Biblical Literature. For additional information on the AAR/SBL, go to <http://www.aarweb.org/annualmeet/default.asp>.

This year's sessions are celebrating the publication by Oxford University Press in May of the long-awaited biography by William T. Scott and Martin X. Moleski, S. J., *Michael Polanyi Scientist and Philosopher*. The first session on Friday evening will look specifically at the biography with the late Bill Scott's wife, Ann, Martin Moleski, and others. We will have a small party after the session in celebration of the book, its authors and collaborators. The second session will examine the Hungarian influence on Polanyi's heuristic outlook in his epistemology and philosophy of religion.

Note that the AAR/SBL Program Book listing for the sessions inverts the session titles. The 9:00 p.m. Friday, November 18 session focuses on the new Polanyi biography, *Michael Polanyi, Scientist and Philosopher* by William T. Scott and Martin X. Moleski, S. J. The 9:00 a.m. Saturday, November 19 session should have been titled "The Hungarian Roots of Michael Polanyi's Heuristic Philosophy of Religion." Information about both sessions is correctly listed below. Check AAR/SBL *Annual Meeting Program At-A-Glance* (available in Philadelphia) or the Polanyi Society web site (<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/>) later in the fall for room locations for sessions.

Friday, November 18, 2005 **9:00 p.m.—11:00 p.m.**

Theme: Discussion of *Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher* by William T. Scott and Martin X. Moleski

Phil Mullins, Missouri Western State University, opening commentary and moderator

9:00 Reflections on the process of the book's creation with Martin Moleski, Ann Scott, and others

9:45 Group discussion: What about the book most stimulated your thought or produced new insights?

Saturday, November 19, 2005 **9:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m.**

9:00 Theme: The Hungarian Roots of Michael Polanyi's Heuristic Philosophy of Religion

Moderator: Paul Lewis, Mercer University

Panelists:

Richard Gelwick, Bangor Theological Seminary

Les Muray, Curry College

Andy Sanders, University of Groningen

11:00 Business Meeting: Walter Gulick, Montana State University-Billings, presiding

Polanyi, 'Jewish Problems' and Zionism

Paul Knepper

ABSTRACT Key Words: Michael Polanyi, Zionism, Jewish intellectuals, Lewis Namier, Anglo-Zionism, non-Jewish Jews

Although his 'Jewish Problems' article of 1943 would be his only publication on the subject, Michael Polanyi thought, wrote, and lectured about Zionism throughout the 1930s and 1940s. He framed the issues concerning Jewish settlement in Palestine not within the immediate context of the Second World War but within the wider context of assimilation and Jewish encounters with modernity. Specifically, Polanyi engaged the arguments of Lewis Namier, a Manchester colleague and committed Zionist. Polanyi approached Zionism from the perspective of a 'non-Jewish Jew' who found common ground with some of the views expressed by Anglo-Zionism as well as the 'liberal critics' of Zionism. The fact that he felt compelled to enter this debate speaks to his identity as a Jewish intellectual who regarded 'assimilationists' and their building of in-roads to the modern world as the moral equivalent of the pioneers who settled the Land of Israel and made possible further immigration.

During the 1930s and 1940s, Michael Polanyi thought, corresponded, and lectured about Zionism. Although his 'Jewish Problems' article of 1943 represents his only publication, it was not the only occasion he reflected on the subject.¹ Polanyi articulated his views of Zionism shortly after his emigration from Germany to England in 1933. The themes and ideas he wrote down within a year of his arrival continued to reflect his thinking until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.²

'Jewish Problems' appeared in *The Political Quarterly* but it did not offer a contemporary political analysis. Polanyi did not examine the settlement of Jews in Palestine within the history of the Middle East, nor in the context of British foreign policy during the Second World War. The rise of Arab nationalism following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire came into direct conflict with Jewish national aspirations and created a dilemma over the British Mandate. During the 1930s, Arab nationalists saw Nazi Germany as their ally against the hated British and French colonial regimes. The Arab Higher Committee formed in 1936, and with Axis support, began a propaganda campaign resulting in Arab assaults on Jewish settlements. Violence continued until 1939, when the Labour government issued the infamous White Paper, severely restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine, and in effect, rescinding the government's promise to support the establishment of a Jewish national home. Although large numbers of Palestinian Jews fought alongside British troops during the war, relations deteriorated following the defeat of German forces in Libya in 1942. Tension between Jews and the British government increased in the years leading up to the bombing by the Irgun of the British military command at the King David Hotel in 1946.³

Polanyi saw Zionism in the context of another migration, that of 'Eastern Jews' into Europe, and against the collapse of another empire, Austria-Hungary. He recalled the fin-de-siecle ideals of Theodor Herzl, who envisioned an 'old-new land' as a hedge against anti-Semitism, and Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who laboured for a revival of Hebrew language and culture. Zionism did not express a coherent ideology, to accept or reject, but an ideological contest featuring rival and passionate aspirations for Jewish self-identity.⁴ Zionists invoked a religious and historical attachment to the land of Israel alongside modern ideals of secularism, self-determination, and civic society. They substituted a secular self-identity of Jews as a nation for the traditional

and orthodox self-identity in religious terms. Polanyi, who saw himself following the course of assimilated Jews who had turned away from national and religious identity, was moved to write about it.⁵

Polanyi did not support Zionism, and in declaring his non-support during the war, he could be read as expressing a troubling indifference to other Jews hoping to escape from Hitler's Germany. But the Jewish problems Polanyi has in mind when he discounts Zionism have to do with modernity generally and not Nazi terror specifically, and in this way, his thoughts on Zionism say more about his understanding of Jewish identity in world affairs than the extent of his commitment to Jewish refugees. In this essay, I compare his views to that of a strident Zionist, Lewis Namier, and a committed anti-Zionist, Eric Hobsbawm. The first part of this essay deals with Polanyi's correspondence with Namier in 1934 in which Polanyi affirms that he is a non-Zionist. In the second part, I discuss Polanyi's opposition to Herzl's ideas and Jewish messianism. Part three deals with Polanyi's reaction to Anglo-Zionism and his critique of Jewish nationalism. The final part discusses Polanyi's status as a 'liberal critic' of Zionism taking into account his comments about a post-war return to ancient political and religious arrangements.⁶

Manchester Zionists

When Polanyi arrived at the University of Manchester in 1933, he encountered a small but influential Zionist community. Several members of staff and students had founded Zionist organisations in the city and a number of Zionist meetings took place under the auspices of the university. It was in the laboratories of the university's chemistry department that Britain's most well-known Zionist, Chaim Weizmann, had made his important discovery regarding the artificial production of acetone. His contribution to the war effort marked the starting point of the road leading to the Balfour Declaration (1917): 'The British government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object.'⁷

No one at Manchester catalyzed Polanyi's thinking with regard to Zionism more than Lewis Namier. Namier's biography, like Polanyi's, overlapped religious and national identities. Namier was born in 1888 to Jewish parents named Bernsztajn, or Bernstein, in Russian Poland. His father, the administrator of a large estate, assimilated to the point of converting to Catholicism and Namier was raised and educated along the Polish Catholic pattern. At ten years of age, Namier learned about the Jewish part of the family story. This, his father had told him, left him without a community that would recognise him as one of their own. Technically speaking, being a Catholic Jew meant that he was 'nothing'. Later on, his mother clarified his situation: the family should be 'recognised as of Jewish descent, with strong Christian sympathies and Polish enthusiasms.'⁸

Namier attended the London School of Economics before achieving in 1911 a degree in modern history from Balliol College, Oxford. During his Balliol years he met Weizmann with whom he would work in Zionist activity until after the Second World War. In 1929, Namier joined the Zionist Organisation as political secretary to its Jewish Agency in London. His zeal exceeded the majority of Britain's Zionists and annoyed more than a few officials in the British government. He made a habit of standing in the hall of the Athenaeum Club, ready to button-hole every Colonial Office official who entered. He was much more effective as a writer. Isaiah Berlin, having read one of Namier's essays on the Jews of modern Europe, remarked that 'It was the best and most arresting piece on that subject that I or, I suspect, anyone had ever read.'⁹

Namier arrived at the University of Manchester two years or so before Polanyi, although 'arrived' is probably the wrong word. Namier became in 1931 professor of modern history at the university, but the university accommodated a schedule that allowed him to spend most days a week in London working on behalf of the Jewish Agency. Namier shared with Polanyi an interest in assisting Jewish academics stranded in Hitler's Germany. Namier organised in 1933 the Manchester Academic Society to facilitate the resettlement of Jewish refugees in the city and Polanyi and Namier collaborated to some extent in this effort.¹⁰

Polanyi sent Namier a handwritten letter dated 27th May 1934.¹¹ In it, he spelled out the reasons for his non-Zionism with as much commitment as Namier expressed his belief in the Zionist cause. The letter had been occasioned by Namier's introduction to Arthur Ruppin's *The Jews of the Modern World*, published by Macmillan that year.¹² Polanyi said that he 'reread carefully' this introduction, and while 'deeply impressed' by the clarity of argument, he was 'fundamentally opposed' to Namier's view.

Namier described the place of Jews in the world as 'anomalous, difficult, and often ambiguous.'¹³ The Galuth, or exile, had deprived Jews of a space to build national identity. 'A nation cannot, and must not, grow except in soil which it can call its own'. Prior to the present era, this problem had been understood as *luftmensch*, an 'untranslatable term [that] describes men without solid ground under their feet.'¹⁴ Denied access to education and professions, and without training or employment, Jews were forced to create a way of life out of thin air. The solution many Jews had found was individual assimilation. Jews rose to positions of wealth, distinction, and social rank as individuals, and consequently, they, or their descendents, became lost to the Jewish people. The solution of Jewish nationalism, Namier explained, 'expresses the desire of the Jewish people to be like unto all nations...with a Mother Country and Father State of its own'. The chief aim must be 'normality', achieved through national reintegration. 'Whatever will there is in us for Jewish survival must now be focussed on the common national future.'¹⁵

Polanyi acknowledged the dilemma of Jewish identity in the modern world but could not accept Namier's solution. On what basis should Jews aspire to statehood? Was it because they shared a 'common race, faith or language'? Forming a state of Jews could perhaps accommodate the desire for 'normality' of one percent of the world's Jews. What of the other ninety-nine percent? Statehood would not bring about 'what you consider normal in this confoundedly abnormal world', Polanyi told Namier; the logic of statehood only led to the 'absurdity of Zionism.'¹⁶ Polanyi added that while he admired the courage of the *halutsim*, the pioneers who settled *Eretz Israel*, he felt sorry for Jews who 'expect to buy self-respect in sending cheques to that country'. He regretted that those who promoted this 'noble adventure' believed themselves entitled 'to give the law to Jews in general'. Polanyi resolved to oppose 'a revival of the Ghetto spirit' in which some Jews persecuted others for learning 'worldly languages.'

Polanyi then developed what he believed to be his strongest counter-argument to Zionism. National pride had led to many great achievements in world history but Jews were the exception: the greatest Jewish achievements were carried out by those who rejected Judaism. 'Jews who were not satisfied to be Jews' had made tremendous contributions to humanity. This included Christianity, formed by 'those Jews who conceived the idea of World Religion against their tribalist persecutors'. Meanwhile, 'those who were well satisfied to be Jews' had expanded to a 'sombre squalid mass, of which we all, all, including very good Zionists, feel deeply ashamed'. Polanyi acknowledged that 'New Palestine might yet make Jewish history in the future. God help it'. But he defended the place of the 'assimilants' who 'have made Jewish history' as well. These 'pioneers of modern Jewry' who dared to become 'different from Jews and similar to the non-Jews' had not only been

‘treated with contempt by the righteous whom they left behind’ but also agonised over a lifestyle of ‘concealment and untruthfulness.’¹⁷

Namier had in making the case for a Jewish state invoked provocative issues about the place and future of Jews and Polanyi responded. Polanyi was not interested in solving a particular problem, as he did when he wrote about economics, but defended assimilation as a meaningful assertion of Jewish identity. It was an assertion he himself had tried to live.

Non-Jewish Jews

In a lecture to the Jewish Medical Society in Liverpool in January 1936, Polanyi explained that his impression of Herzl’s ideas reflected his outlook as a ‘non-Jewish Jew.’¹⁸ Herzl was not the first to use the word Zionism but came to be regarded as the founder of the movement because he succeeded in translating the idea of a Jewish State into an international programme. He convened in 1897 the First Zionist Congress in Basle and founded the World Zionist Organisation. ‘When I look back to my childhood’, Polanyi recalled that January night, ‘...I am astonished to discover with what supreme overbearance the successfully assimilant milieu in which I was brought up looked upon Herzl’s ideas. Assimilation had become a passion directed toward a luminous ideal, the perfectly non-Jewish Jew. Zionism, with its implications of a return to primeval habits, was simply horrifying.’¹⁹

Polanyi was born in 1891 in Budapest, the second capital of Austria-Hungary under the Habsburgs. His family resided in a grand house on *Andrássy út*, the address for the city’s wealthiest Jewish families. The family’s original name, since Emperor Josef’s edict of 1782 requiring Jews to take surnames, was Pollacsek. Adolf Pollacsek, Polanyi’s grandfather, operated a flour mill, and Polanyi’s father, Mihály, a civil engineer, multiplied the family fortune building railways. Polanyi’s mother, neé Cecile Wohl, was the daughter of a scholar at the rabbinical college in Vilna. She organised a salon, attended by the brightest lights in the Budapest intellectual scene.²⁰ Neither encouraged the practise of Judaism. They did not observe Jewish holidays or keep kosher. Polanyi did not attend a Jewish school, recite prayers in synagogue, or study Hebrew to become bar mitzvah, the traditional entrance into Jewish community life. The family spoke German, and he learned, from tutors in his home, English and French. He attended Trefort Street Gymnasium, the best in Budapest; it was also known as ‘the Minta’, a reference to its status as a model gymnasium. In 1919, Polanyi received baptism in the Catholic Church, before travelling to Germany to pursue a career in research chemistry. He married Magda Kémeny two years later, a Catholic, in a civil ceremony in Berlin.²¹

In what sense then could Polanyi have thought of himself as Jewish? The historian Eric Hobsbawm grew up in 1920s Vienna and his sense of Jewish identity offers some insight into Polanyi’s. Hobsbawm’s family took no notice of Shabbat, Jewish holidays, or dietary laws. He received minimal instruction in Judaism, something less than an hour a week at the gymnasium. He suffered nothing personally in the way of anti-Semitism and lived a life completely remote from the beliefs and practises of Judaism. Yet, as Hobsbawm writes in his autobiography, ‘though entirely unobservant, we nevertheless knew that we were, and could not get away from being, Jews.’²² On one occasion at about ten years of age, after he had made a remark about a relative’s behaviour being ‘typically Jewish’, his mother told him firmly: ‘You must never do anything, or seem to do anything that might suggest you are ashamed of being a Jew’. He aimed to live by this ever since despite his indifference to religion and virtually lifelong commitment to communism.²³

Vienna's non-Jewish Jews advanced the progressive Viennese imagination. The progressives were militantly secular, politically radical, and great believers in social reform, popular education, and technological progress. They renounced ethnic identity as prerequisite for assimilation. Jews comprised the majority of progressives in Vienna, although they would have denied that they constituted a nationality.²⁴ For Jews to be German or Hungarian in the context of Austria-Hungary did not express a political or national project, but a cultural project. 'It meant', as Hobsbawm puts it, 'leaving behind the backwardness and isolation of the *shtetls* and *shuls* to join the modern world'. The leaders of the town of Brody, in Galicia, a population in which eight of ten was Jewish, had petitioned the emperor years earlier to make the language of school education German, not because they aspired to become Teutonic but because they wanted to distance themselves from the Yiddish-speaking Talmudists and Hasidim. Middle and upper class Jews, whose parents had migrated from Polish, Czech, and Hungarian provinces demarcated themselves from the 'Eastern Jews' for this same reason.²⁵

This, I think, explains something very important about Polanyi's outlook and particularly his views of Zionism. As might be expected from an advocate of assimilation, Polanyi did not write his social philosophy in a self-consciously Jewish way. There are no Hebrew words or quotations from rabbis. He makes a point, in fact, of including references to Christian themes, and thereby affirming his non-Jewish status.²⁶ Yet in his reaction to the views of Zionists, he reveals how he thought of himself in relation to other Jews; a community he claims to have distanced himself from still retains a hold on him. As he explained in his letter to Namier, he feels 'ashamed' of the Eastern Jews. He defends assimilation as the best and most appropriate way of life for Jews, but admits to feeling guilty about living a life of 'concealment and untruthfulness'. He concludes with a personal confession: 'Every assimilated Jew has one time or another gone through the shameful experience of being glad not to be taken for a Jew. And many have sinned beyond that.'²⁷

Polanyi credited Herzl as having been 'the first to recognise that assimilation had proved a failure'. Polanyi accepted that if Jews succeeded in building a community of their own in Palestine, it would represent a 'great moral asset'. But he doubted that returning to the land would offer Jews any more of a 'chance to acquire dignity' than those who remained in the Diaspora. Some of them had simply been attracted, he suggested, by the possibility of escaping from the 'standard of conduct' imposed on them by their non-Jewish surroundings.²⁸

The most 'horrifying' part of Herzl's ideas was its allusion to Jewish messianism. For Polanyi, it invoked the history of the medieval period when Talmud scholars scoured biblical texts for clues about the year of Messiah's appearance. The tradition of messianic calculation continued into the early modern period. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, several messianic treatises appeared, along with several individuals claiming Messiah status and offering to lead a return to the land. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the Cossack rebellion that devastated Polish Jews heightened the yearning for national salvation, and in 1665 the arrival of Shabbetai Tzevi electrified the Jewish world. Claiming to be the Messiah, he attracted a large number of followers before converting to Islam and evoking widespread despair and disillusionment.²⁹ As Polanyi saw it, the Jewish people had produced nothing of human value during five hundred years of their history; rabbinic scholarship had wasted itself 'elaborating fruitless Talmudist speculations' and 'crude, fanatical visions of a national Messiah.'³⁰

Messianism confirmed what Polanyi believed was the backwardness of a Jewish population closer to home: 'a mass of orthodox Jewry, speaking Yiddish, their men with forelocks, their married women with wigs over their shaven skulls'. The non-assimilated recalled 'the original mass of medieval degradation and mental narrowness.'³¹ During the eighteenth century, messianic expectation continued to resonate with the *Hasidim*,

a movement that spread out from the Ukraine. The Hasidic version of rabbis, or *rebes*, rejected the impersonal intellectual approach of the Talmudists. They taught their followers through proverbs, myths, songs, and allegorical tales. Aside from their long beards and floor-length coats, they are often remembered for their ‘wonder tales’; accounts of angels descending from heaven to assist a poor Jewish water-carrier and glimpses of the prophet Elijah walking among the shtetls. A popular Yiddish song describes how when the rebe dances, all the Hasidim follow his lead and dance; when the rebe sings, all the Hasidim sing as well; when he sleeps, they sleep, when he sneezes, they all sneeze together.³² Some rebes were rumoured to have performed miracles and pilgrims travelled great distance to seek advice or a blessing.

How, Polanyi wondered, could Zionists ‘justify a return to Messianic traditions, from which the best of our forefathers 100 and 150 years ago turned away with such force and contempt?’³³ How could a ‘faith which seemed outworn and even degrading to men who were brought up in it’ possibly justify the actions of their descendents having been educated in western civilisation? He decided that Zionist leaders were simply insincere. Despite the ‘high emphasis on the Jewish religion and Messianic traditions’, most had little commitment to Judaism or to *Eretz Yisrael*. The appeals to an eternal faith in the Jews’ return to the land expressed no real conviction, Polanyi said. Most Zionists had no intention of emulating the pioneers and settling in the Land of Israel themselves; they only preached to others about its spiritual merits. ‘A faith is not real unless we are bound to live by its precepts. And we must live it by ourselves; not make others live by it on our behalf.’³⁴

Anglo-Zionism

Polanyi’s ‘Jewish Problems’ article originated as a lecture. In November 1942, he addressed the Manchester Branch of the Trades Advisory Council of the Boards of Deputies of British Jews. Zionism was, at the time, the foremost issue for British Jews concerned about Jews in Germany.

Beginning in March 1933, British Jews began reading about the Nazi terror directed at German Jews.³⁵ During the next few months, they organised committees to boycott German imports and made plans to lobby the Foreign Office in an effort to pressure the German government. By 1939, it had become increasingly clear that economic and diplomatic strategies were not working and the desire to aid Jews terrorised by Hitlerism centred on establishing Jewish national sovereignty.³⁶ As Polanyi told his Manchester audience, the idea that had attracted so little interest a few years earlier had acquired new and urgent importance. ‘When Hitler condemned all Jews in Germany—the orthodox, the reformed, the baptised and even those with only a fraction of Jewish blood alike—to the same common destruction, Zionism suddenly appeared in a new prophetic light.’³⁷

Prior to the war, the Board of Deputies of British Jews regarded Zionism not merely as irrelevant, but harmful. The leadership believed that Zionists endangered rights won by Jews over many decades and interfered with their loyalties as British subjects. Anti-Semitism had not been the problem in Britain it was on the Continent and British Jews affirmed their Anglo-Jewish heritage.³⁸ The Board of Deputies of British Jews sought to counter-act anti-Semitism by calling on British Jews to keep a low profile. In October 1933, the president of the board, Neville Laski, blamed Jews who ‘by their own conduct fostered anti-Semitism.’³⁹ Only after 1938, the year of Kristallnacht, did the Board consider Zionism. In December 1939, Selig Brodetsky became the new president. Brodetsky, who represented a group of Zionists connected to Anglo-Jewry’s elite, shared the organisation’s overall desire to maintain Anglo-Jewry as a tolerated minority in Britain. He expressed a form of Anglo-Zionism which sought to accommodate the call for a Jewish State within the

framework of British interests.⁴⁰ Zionists did not succeed in capturing a majority of the Board of Deputies until 1943.⁴¹

Much of what Polanyi said in opposition to Zionism would have resonated with his hosts. Polanyi distanced himself from Jewish nationalism and clarified his views of the *Yishuv*, the Jewish community in Palestine: whatever Jewish settlers accomplished there should occur within the larger political framework of the British Empire. Clearly, Polanyi had come to think of the British Empire with some affection. After his initial reluctance to accept a post at a provincial university, he came to appreciate Great Britain. It had extended hospitality to him as a refugee from Hitler's Germany. It represented, to Polanyi along with many other central and eastern European Jews, the most civilised and humane society in the world. 'Jews are still backward in many ways, and have yet more to learn from the great nations who built up our modern civilisation', Polanyi said.⁴²

German totalitarianism and British democracy were at war and he was eager to defend the place of Jews in this effort. There was an outbreak of public anti-Semitism in Britain after the start of the war; specifically, insinuations that Jews were prominent in the black market and were not doing their full share in the military services.⁴³ When in Germany, Polanyi had resigned his position at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physical and Electrical Chemistry in April 1933 as a protest against National Socialist policy against Jews. He numbered among a few Jewish scientists who would have been, technically speaking, exempt from the law seeking to remove Jews from government service, but resigned because he believed himself obligated to defend the dignity of Jews.⁴⁴ In Britain, following the outbreak of war in 1939, Polanyi offered his scientific talents to allied military needs, but was prohibited from contributing. He volunteered as a fire-watcher during bombing raids.⁴⁵

Polanyi conceded some benefit to establishing a Jewish community in Palestine but distanced himself from what he regarded as militant Jewish patriotism. He recognised the matchless spiritual significance of the Holy Land. It was bound to inspire, particularly when enjoined to a renaissance of Hebrew language and culture. He admired the *halutsim*. The pioneers who had settled the land after the First World War had given themselves to agricultural labour, draining swamps and establishing settlements. 'So far I will go, with willing admiration for settlers and organisers alike. I can see good reason for supporting their scheme so long as it does not conflict with more important interests.'⁴⁶ But he scolded 'some minor Jewish publicists' for 'disgracing their fellows' with insincere rhetoric about Jewish aspirations. In particular, he pointed to 'a Zionist leader'—he had Namier in his sites but did not mention him by name—who had encouraged Jews to think about themselves as Jews first and only second as human beings.⁴⁷ 'Such defiance only frightens our friends, while causing delight to our enemies.'⁴⁸ The Zionists appeal to nationalism represented a misguided attempt to instil a national identity; it had in the past spelled disaster for Jews. 'National life is a deep source of strength... But national life is not all; there is plenty outside it.'⁴⁹

Polanyi reiterated in his Manchester lecture themes he had developed in his Liverpool lecture. He described how a Jewish tendency in the nineteenth century to become 'violent nationalists' had contributed to the calamities of the twentieth. Nationalism of the National Socialist kind originated in the cafés of Munich, Berlin, Vienna, Prague, and Budapest after 1918, where nihilist intellectuals, many of them Jewish, spent so much time in speculation and gossip.⁵⁰ Polanyi reviewed the student radicalism in Vienna and nationalist tensions within Austria-Hungary. In 1880, Victor Adler, Heinrich Friedjung, and George von Schönerer met at Linz to formulate the *deutschnational* movement. The charter, which became known as the Linz Programme, centred on demands for radical social and political reform as well as for the satisfaction of extreme German

nationalist ambitions. The Linz programme, Polanyi said, ‘engendered the spirit of Hitler, who, a direct descendent of Friedjung’s mind’ determined to conquer the world for anti-Semitism. ‘The sad collapse of this perverse effort came with almost comic swiftness;’ two years after the Linz meeting, the programme was adopted by the pan-German party ‘with one addition only, “that no Jew could be a member of the party”’.⁵¹

At some point in the future, Polanyi speculated, the part of Jews in socialist revolution might bring them honour. But ‘at the moment, I can see only the miseries of the case’. The rise of anti-Semitism had driven Jews such as Adler and Friedjung from the movement. Adler, who founded the Austrian Socialist Party, turned to the ideas of two other Jews, Ferdinand Lassalle and Karl Marx. Polanyi saw the attraction of Jews to socialism as a feature of ‘militant internationalism’, resulting from ‘Jewish craving for full participation in civic life’. Adler pursued socialism out of ‘Jewish resentment and Jewish homesickness’. He felt sure that many Jews he had met would not have become communists or socialists if they had never been made aware of the fact that they were Jews. The ‘revolutionary solution’ advocated by the left was no less misguided than the attempt at a nationalist solution. Overthrowing civilisation in an attempt to resolve the Jewish situation spoke to a ‘miserable egocentrism’ on the part of Jewish intellectuals.⁵²

Polanyi chided the Zionists for professing to concern themselves with preserving the continuity of Jewish life generally rather than assisting individual refugees and their families, or presumably, civilian activities taken in military defence of Britain generally. He argued that the Zionist claim to be interested in securing the future for the ‘nation’ of Jews should not be taken literally. Jewish organisations had ceased to complain about the oppression of the largest population of Jews, those living in the Soviet Union. He made several trips to the Soviet Union between 1928 and 1935 and was familiar with the Soviet attitude toward Jews. If the Zionists believed the Soviets had abolished anti-Semitism, the Zionists were wrong. The Soviets prohibited Zionism, forbade use of Hebrew, and suppressed the practise of Judaism.

Liberal Critic?

Polanyi’s ‘Jewish Problems’ article became his only publication on Zionism. In publishing his Manchester lecture, he established himself as a liberal critic of Zionism.

As Walter Laqueur explains, the most plausible case against Zionism, and the most often heard until the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, concerned the ‘utopian’ character of the Zionist vision.⁵³ Critics insisted that Jews had been scattered throughout the world over a period of centuries and that nothing could be done to reverse this historic and sociological process. Western civilisation was leading toward a cosmopolitan culture; social and economic developments were breaking down national distinctions. Further, it was simply a case of too many Jews. Zionists speculated that several hundred thousand, and perhaps as many as a million, Jews might settle in Palestine, but the ‘Jewish problem’ in Eastern Europe had to do with millions, not hundreds of thousands. ‘The Jewish question in the West would ultimately be solved by assimilation; as for the situation in East Europe, no one had an answer.’⁵⁴

Except that in Polanyi’s case ‘liberal critic’ is too simple. Eric Hobsbawm did not support Zionism either—‘Communist Jews, were of course, anti-Zionist on principle.’⁵⁵ For Hobsbawm, the principle was internationalism, the idea that communism was a movement for all people and not any particular section of it. He recalled how many young Jews who had started out as Zionists became communists because they recognised however visible the victimisation of Jews, it was only part of universal oppression. Or as one former Zionist

turned communist put it: 'the smaller aim has to give way to the bigger.'⁵⁶ Polanyi seems to be making this argument, or a version of it, as well. The Jews who emigrated to Palestine would 'make no mark in Jewish history', he predicted, because by isolating themselves within an inward-looking Judaism, they would recreate the tribalist outlook that contributed to their isolation. 'The Jews' in Polanyi's understanding 'are descendants of a religious tribe which having given the Bible to the world, ran into heavy conflict with the later developments of its own ideas, and was ever since left more or less outside the main flow of humanity.'⁵⁷ Yet Polanyi has something more in mind than a political programme; his idea of a bigger purpose has to do his own vision of the place and future of Jews in the world.

After ridiculing Jewish belief in a messianic age, Polanyi offers his own vision of a cosmopolitan commonwealth in which national identity would wither away. The Zionists had, in attempting to make national identity the basis for Jewish identity, wagered their future on a political order headed for obsolescence. Nationalism would give way to cosmopolitanism in the decades after the war. Jews should be imagining the basis for cultural life in a world without nation-states which, he surmised, would not survive in the aftermath of Hitlerism. 'Whatever will be left of Europe after Hitler has finished with it will be under international organisation', he said.⁵⁸ Jews had a special place in this reconstruction *as Jews*. The time might come when Christianity, confronted by the 'religions of brutality', might hang in the balance. 'Jews might remember then that this religion was founded by their ancestors, and that in upholding Christianity they might fulfil their international mission.'⁵⁹

He concluded his Manchester speech with reference to this same vision of an emerging international federation. 'The world is now heading towards a western commonwealth, comprising Europe and North America, in which men of a cosmopolitan kind will be needed'. Jews, given their experience in promoting 'universal thought', first Christianity and second socialism, would be valuable to this 'Western Commonwealth of the future' which would likely be threatened by particularist dissensions.⁶⁰ Polanyi surmised that it would 'resemble the Roman Empire about the time of Constantine'. This political order would be based on the rule of law, equal citizenship, and 'a religion rather similar to early Christianity with its admixture of Greek philosophy.'⁶¹ The image Polanyi invents here is striking. The second millennium ends where the first began: an empire in which people had no consciousness of national identity and in which Christianity was understood as a sect of Judaism.⁶²

In its religious aspect, this conception resembles Namier's vision of a future reconciliation between Judaism and Christianity. Namier articulated this idea in his essay 'The Jews' originally published in November 1941. How long Namier had thought about the issue is not clear. He had an interest in Christianity, and the formative centuries of Christianity in particular, since his student years at Balliol.⁶³ He had come to think of Judaism and Christianity as something along the lines of two branches of a common faith: 'Nineteen centuries ago our people divided: one branch, the Hebrew Nazarenes, carried into the world our national faith coupled with their new tidings, the other, as a closed community, preserved the old tradition. Yet both were part of one nation, and both are part of our national history. Only by seeing them as one whole shall we recover the full sense and greatness of our history.'⁶⁴ The 'branch' that went the way of the Gentiles transformed these other nations and left them an enduring and binding creed. The other branch became the 'remant', awaiting return from exile to the land.⁶⁵

In 1947, Namier married a Christian and received baptism into the Anglican church, resulting in the loss of Weizmann's friendship. At a London party hosted to 'find common ground between enthusiastic

Christians and persecuted Jews’,⁶⁶ Namier met Julia de Beauobre, a Russian émigré who had arrived in England during the 1930s after many years in Stalin’s labour camps. She was a devoted Christian and insisted on his baptism as prerequisite to their wedding. Namier’s new status as a ‘baptised Jew’ made him ‘more Zionist than ever’, Blanche Dugdale (Lord Balfour’s niece) told Weizmann; Namier was convinced about the need to pursue a fusion of Christianity and Judaism and that this could only happen in *Eretz Israel*.⁶⁷ Weizmann could not see anything positive in Namier’s apostasy. In changing his affiliation from the Jewish religion to Christianity, Namier had decided to sever connections with his people. Abandoning the weak for the strong simply and unavoidably meant betrayal. ‘What he tells you about the integration of Christianity and Judaism are meaningless phrases which do not make this act any better or beautiful. It is a bad thing at all times...’⁶⁸

Polanyi knew of Namier’s effort to find common ground between Judaism and Christianity. His Manchester lecture of 1942 responded to Namier’s collection of essays *Conflicts*, which appeared earlier that year. Namier’s ‘The Jews’ appeared in this book and Polanyi refers to the book at several points in his essay. What Polanyi’s thought about this aspect of Namier’s writing is difficult to say. Polanyi does not comment on Namier’s idea concerning the joining-up of Judaism and Christianity, nor is there in the archived correspondence between Polanyi and Namier anything to suggest that Polanyi appreciated this aspect of Namier’s outlook.⁷⁰ It also is important to recognise that Polanyi did not seek to integrate his comments about a future western commonwealth within his wider social philosophy (as it appears in his *The Study of Man*, for instance). This reference expressed the expectation, shared by many in Britain during the later years of the war, that dramatic social reconstruction and political realignment would follow the Allies’ success over Nazism.

Conclusion

It is difficult to read some of the statements Polanyi makes in opposition to Zionism. He published them at a time when Hitler had intensified the war against the Jews in Europe and the British took active steps to prevent their emigration to the Yishuv. Polanyi chose not to think of Zionism in its immediate context but within a more personal context. Zionism, and particularly the ideas of Lewis Namier, provoked a committed and passionate response. Namier dealt with issues at the centre of Jewish identity in the modern world and in this way recalled an issue Polanyi had settled, or perhaps had wanted to settle, earlier in his life. To understand his response, it is necessary to frame his comments not around events during the time in which he wrote them, but around events that had occurred before the Second World War, before Hitler, before the demise of Austria-Hungary. To write his critique of Zionism, Polanyi turned the clock back fifty years.

Essentially, Polanyi disagreed with Namier’s solution but acknowledged that he had specified an important problem. Polanyi believed that the threat to Jews as individuals was bigger than the collective solution of nationhood. Modernity represented a deeper and tougher dilemma that could only be negotiated on individual terms. In making the case for a Jewish state as the solution to anti-Semitism, Zionists had thrown up an array of mistaken identities, defining Jewishness in political, religious, and cultural terms. Polanyi rejected this as inward-looking, even reactionary; he pursued an outward-looking understanding based on the relationship of Jews to non-Jews. Polanyi saw assimilated Jews not as running away or denying Jewish identity, but instead, as pursuing a truer and more significant expression of Jewishness. Polanyi regarded the assimilationists and their building of in-roads to the modern world as the moral equivalent of the pioneers who settled the land of Israel and made it possible for further immigration.

Polanyi's lack of support for Zionism reflected his outlook as a non-Jewish Jew. Polanyi grew up in a milieu not unlike many other middle-class and upper-class Jews in Austria-Hungary: non-observant, Hungarian or German acculturated. From this perspective, Herzl seemed to be advocating a return to the *wunderrabbis* and *yeshivabokhers*. It was as if the Zionists had wanted to reverse Jewish history, to return to a pre-enlightenment Jewish world organised under 'the Ghetto spirit'. Polanyi did not accept the theory that the only difference between Jews and non-Jews was religion and that in converting one could make a discrete and uncomplicated exit from the Jewish world. Converted Jews, even those who had never experienced Jewish life via the practise of Judaism, maintained bonds of kinship requiring mutual aid. Polanyi knew because he experienced some anxiety in distancing himself from poorer Jews; he had felt the sting of rejection from Jewish traditionalists who questioned his Jewishness.

Polanyi was not so much anti-Zionist as non-Zionist. He had no contempt for Zionists nor did he insist that they abandon their project. He admired the courage and tenacity of actual Zionists, the pioneers who emigrated to the Land of Israel, in making their vision a reality. Polanyi conceded the benefit to Jews of establishing a Jewish community in Palestine but believed that this community should be built within the overall framework of the British Mandate. In this he shared the view of Anglo-Jewry's elite who resisted Zionism because it interfered with Jewish loyalty as British subjects. To Polanyi's ears, Jewish patriotism had the sound of the reckless nationalism advocated by Central Europe's café intellectuals before the First World War. This misguided yearning for national identity on the part of Jewish intellectuals had in the nineteenth century contributed to currents of radicalism that fuelled the war against the Jews in the twentieth. He drew on his own experience as a Jew to understand how Zionists, socialists, and others came to their way of looking at the world.

In a sense, Polanyi can be read as a liberal critic of Zionism, a critic who discounted the idea of a Jewish state because of its utopian aspects. However, Polanyi offered an alternative to Zionism as 'utopian' as the Zionists' vision of a planting a European nation-state in the Middle East. Polanyi imagined a western commonwealth that would transcend national boundaries. In this federation, free of religious superstition and ethnic prejudice, no one would question Jewish origins or challenge Jews' claims to possessing no ethnic identity at all. The political configuration would resemble an empire in the ancient world, and its prevailing religious outlook something akin to Second Temple Judaism, when the line between Jews and Christians was less clearly drawn. And, Polanyi went so far as to suggest that Jews had a major historical role in making this happen.

Endnotes

¹ This essay has also been reprinted in R.T. Allen (ed) *Society, Economics and Philosophy: Selected Papers* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1997). I am working from a manuscript version entitled: 'Jewish Problems: A Tradition Rejected', in the archive collection. Michael Polanyi Papers, Department of Special Collections, University of Chicago Library, Box 31, Folder 1.

² Polanyi's 'Jewish Problems: A Tradition Rejected' manuscript includes a handwritten note on the cover page indicating that it has been 'Typed out from "The Political Quarterly"' on 8 September 1947. The fact of this typescript containing Polanyi's handwritten editorial changes indicates that Polanyi had not changed his views at this date.

³ Raymond P. Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People*. (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp.225-233; Norman Rose, 'The Arab Rulers and Palestine, 1936: The British Reaction', *Journal of Modern History* 44 (1972), pp. 213-231.

⁴ Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), p. 13.

⁵ The collapse of Austria-Hungary, the rise of Hitlerism, and the outbreak of war forced Jewish intellectuals out of Central Europe. Many of these émigrés did not, as Malachi Hacoheh has observed, engage in open discussion of their problems. Instead, they developed a ‘coded discourse’ to express their anxieties as intellectuals of Jewish origin. While the extent to which Polanyi engaged in such coded discourse has yet to be explored, he was, I think, somewhat of an exception to this in the sense that he lectured and published on Jewish issues per se. Malachi Hacoheh, ‘Dilemmas of Cosmopolitanism: Karl Popper, Jewish Identity, and Central European Culture’, *Journal of Modern History* 71 (1999), pp. 132, 134.

⁶ In a separate essay, I explore the influence of Polanyi’s Jewish identity on his philosophy of science; particularly, his reference to the ‘baptised Jew’ as a model for the scientist-as-discoverer. Paul Knepper, ‘Michael Polanyi and Jewish Identity’, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 35 (2005), 263-293.

⁷ Israel M. Sieff, ‘The Manchester Period’, in Meyer Weisgal and Joel Carmichael (eds) *Chaim Weizmann: A Biography by Several Hands*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962).

⁸ Julia Namier, *Lewis Namier: A Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 37-38.

⁹ Isaiah Berlin, *Personal Impressions* (London: Hogarth Press, 1980), p. 63.

¹⁰ There is a letter dated 7th July 1934 in the Polanyi archives in which Namier tells Polanyi there may be a place for ‘Miss Werner’ in a ‘big chemical firm’. Namier explains that the position is currently held by ‘another German-Jewish refugee’ who is likely to leave it on account of marrying a British subject. Michael Polanyi, Letter to Namier 7 July 1934. Michael Polanyi Papers, Department of Special Collections, University of Chicago Library, Box 2, Folder 17.

¹¹ Michael Polanyi, Letter to Namier 27 May 1934. Michael Polanyi Papers, Department of Special Collections, University of Chicago Library, Box 2, Folder 16.

¹² Arthur Ruppin, *The Jews of the Modern World* (London: Macmillan, 1942).

¹³ Namier, ‘Introduction’ in *Jews of the Modern*, p. xiii.

¹⁴ Namier, ‘Introduction’, p. xxv.

¹⁵ Namier, ‘Introduction’, p. xxix.

¹⁶ Letter to Namier 27 May 1934.

¹⁷ Letter to Namier 27 May 1934.

¹⁸ The phrase is associated with Isaac Deutscher. A decade before he died, Deutscher gave a lecture with this title in which he discussed six Jewish heretics who were revolutionaries of modern thought, including Spinoza, Marx, and Trotsky. David Horowitz, ed., *Isaac Deutscher: The Man and His Work*. (London: Macdonald, 1971).

¹⁹ Michael Polanyi, ‘On the Position of Jews’. Address to the Jewish Medical Society, Liverpool, 21 January 1936. Michael Polanyi Papers, Department of Special Collections, University of Chicago Library, Box 25, Folder 8, p. 12.

²⁰ Ersébet Vezér, ‘The Polanyi Family’, in Kari Polanyi-Levitt (ed), *The Life and Work of Karl Polanyi*. (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1990). In his description of Karl Polanyi’s family background, J.R. Stanfield says that Mihály Pollacsek ‘converted his wife and children to Protestantism’. See his *The Economic Thought of Karl Polanyi* (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 1-2. He offers no specific attribution for this, but thanks Kari Polanyi-Levitt for ‘helping me to avoid the more egregious errors in the biographical synopsis of Polanyi’. No similar statement appears in Vezér’s biography, also edited by Polanyi-Levitt.

²¹ William Scott, ‘At the Wheel of the World: The Life and Times of Michael Polanyi’, *Tradition and Discovery* 25 (1998-1999), pp. 10-24.

²² Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth-Century Life*. (London: Abacus, 2002), p. 21.

²³ Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times*, p. 24.

²⁴ Malachi Hacothen, 'Karl Popper in Exile: The Viennese Progressive Imagination and the Making of the Open Society', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 26 (1996), p. 469.

²⁵ Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times*, p. 22.

²⁶ This point has been made by Martin Moleski, Polanyi's biographer, who kindly replied to an email enquiry from me concerning the issue of Jewish identity.

²⁷ Letter to Namier 27 May 1934. There is a letter in the *Manchester Guardian* collection at the University of Manchester from Magda Polanyi to the editor, A.P. Wadsworth, in which she defends the dignity of Jewish people. She suggests that Michael would have agreed with her in her desire to publish a response. Specifically, she writes to say that she became 'very worked up' by a review of Arthur Koestler's *The Invisible Writing* the paper had published that morning. While she distances herself from Koestler's views, she believes that the reviewer, Maurice Cranston, had been unfair in his critique and out-of-line in his commenting that Koestler's publisher was Jewish. 'What has this got to do with it—unless the reviewer thinks that it has'. Magda Polanyi to A.P. Wadsworth 28 June 1954. Manchester Guardian Collection, John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, B/P 194/2.

²⁸ Polanyi, 'On the Position', p. 12.

²⁹ Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Jewish Messiah* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1997), pp. 101-149.

³⁰ Polanyi, 'Jewish Problems', p. 4.

³¹ Polanyi, 'Jewish problems', p. 9.

³² Miriam Weinstein, *Yiddish: A Nation of Words* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001), p. 51.

³³ Polanyi, 'Jewish Problems', p. 12.

³⁴ Polanyi, 'Jewish Problems', pp. 14-15.

³⁵ In the pre-war period, when there was free communication between Britain and Germany, information about Nazi atrocities was available. The *Manchester Guardian*, in fact, gave extensive coverage to Nazi crimes.

³⁶ Sharon Gewirtz, 'Anglo-Jewish Responses to Nazi Germany 1933-39: The Anti-nazi Boycott and the Board of Deputies of British Jews', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 26 (1991): 255-276.

³⁷ Polanyi, 'Jewish Problems', p. 12.

³⁸ Walter Laqueur, 'Zionism and its Liberal Critics, 1896-1948', *Journal of Contemporary History* 6 (1971): 161-182.

³⁹ Geoffrey Alderman, *The Jewish Community in British Politics*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 121.

⁴⁰ Gewirtz, 'Anglo-Jewish Responses', pp. 270-271.

⁴¹ Bernard Wasserstein, 'Patterns of Jewish Leadership in Great Britain During the Nazi Era', in Randolph Braham (ed), *Jewish Leadership During the Nazi Era*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 42.

⁴² Polanyi, 'Jewish Problems', p. 16.

⁴³ Wasserstein, 'Jewish leadership', p. 41.

⁴⁴ Stefania Jha, *Reconsidering Michael Polanyi's Philosophy*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), p. 16. Like his colleague and friend, Fritz Haber, Polanyi could have remained in his position given an exemption in the Nazi civil service law of 7 April 1933 (intended to eliminate Jews and socialists from government posts) for veterans of the First World War (which would likely have recognised his service as a medical officer). See my article 'Michael Polanyi and Jewish Identity' for further discussion of this point.

⁴⁵ Scott, 'At the Wheel', p. 21.

⁴⁶ Polanyi, 'On the Position', p. 13.

⁴⁷ Namier offers this anecdote in *Conflicts* (London: Macmillan, 1942), p. 163. It had first appeared

in 'Zionist Review' during 1941.

⁴⁸ Polanyi, 'Jewish Problems', pp. 15, 17.

⁴⁹ Polanyi, 'On the Position', p. 15.

⁵⁰ Michael Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998), p. 129.

⁵¹ Polanyi, 'On the Position', p. 7.

⁵² Polanyi, 'On the Position', pp. 8, 9, 10.

⁵³ Laqueur, 'Zionism', pp.161-182.

⁵⁴ Laqueur, 'Zionism', p. 162.

⁵⁵ Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times*, pp. 172-173.

⁵⁶ Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times*, p. 137.

⁵⁷ Polanyi, 'Jewish Problems', p. 16.

⁵⁸ Polanyi, 'On the Position', p. 16.

⁵⁹ Polanyi, 'On the Position', p. 16.

⁶⁰ Polanyi, 'Jewish Problems', p. 19.

⁶¹ Polanyi, 'Jewish Problems', p. 19.

⁶² There is also Polanyi's conclusion to 'The Perils of Inconsistency' . In the last paragraph, Polanyi describes the influence of Christian Messianism. His reference here to modern thought as an unstable compound of 'Christian beliefs and Greek doubts' invokes a concept not unlike Namier's theory of transference theory. The combination of faith and scepticism, brought about by the fusion of Christian beliefs and Greek doubt, animated western civilisation. It produced 'moral inversion', by directing the heritage of moral passion for materialistic and totalitarian purposes, the chisel of scepticism driven by the hammer of social passion. The formula was unavailable in the ancient world, 'before Christianity had set alight new vast moral hopes in the heart of mankind' .Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty*, p. 135.

⁶³ Namier, *Lewis Namier*, p. 261.

⁶⁴ Lewis Namier, *Conflicts* (London: Macmillan, 1942), p. 134.

⁶⁵ Namier, *Conflicts*, pp. 134-135.

⁶⁶ Namier, *Lewis Namier*, p. 248.

⁶⁷ Norman Rose, *Lewis Namier and Zionism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 149.

⁶⁸ Rose, *Lewis Namier*, p. 146.

⁶⁹ The handlist of the Namier papers held at the University of Manchester contains no reference to Michael Polanyi.

Michael Polanyi and Karl Mannheim

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ABSTRACT Key words: Michael Polanyi, Karl Mannheim, “the Moot,” “planning for freedom,” Polanyi’s criticism of historicism, Polanyi’s account of freedom

This essay reviews historical records that set forth the discussions and interaction of Michael Polanyi and Karl Mannheim from 1944 until Mannheim’s death early in 1947. The letters describe Polanyi’s effort to assemble a book to be published in a series edited by Mannheim. They also reveal the different perspectives these thinkers took about freedom and the historical context of ideas. Records of J.H. Oldham’s discussion group “the Moot” suggest that these and other differences in philosophy were debated in meetings of “the Moot” attended by Polanyi and Mannheim in 1944.

Anyone who examines the *Guide to the Papers of Michael Polanyi* quickly notices that Polanyi corresponded with a wide range of people in his generation who later were recognized as significant thinkers in the twentieth century. One of these figures was Karl Mannheim (1893-1947) to whom Polanyi not only wrote but also met on several occasions. Like Polanyi, Mannheim was a Hungarian Jewish émigré who eventually came to live in England. Both men left their homeland just after World War I when the Horthy government came to power. Mannheim had been appointed to a professorship by the communist government of Bela Kun that fell before the end of its first year.

Polanyi and Mannheim had known each other in Hungary. In their newly published biography of Polanyi, Scott and Moleski suggest that Polanyi and Mannheim first met when they were students in Budapest in 1915.¹ Mannheim is but two years younger than Polanyi and both participated in the Sunday afternoon discussions at the home of Bela Balazs.² When he fled Hungary, Mannheim moved to Germany where he spent twelve years working in German universities and eventually achieved a measure of eminence as a sociologist of knowledge; his *Ideologie und Utopie* (1929) caused a “great commotion” in Germany, according to Edward Shils.³ As a sociologist of knowledge, Mannheim argued that knowledge claims must be situated in a social context; in any social world, there is always tension between conservative forces whose ideology favors stability and more radical forces whose ideology favors more utopian ideas. In 1933, the same year Polanyi came to Manchester, Mannheim left Nazi Germany for a position in London.

In 1944, Polanyi and Mannheim became reacquainted. Éva Gábor has recently published, as part of her book of selected correspondence of Mannheim, the Polanyi and Mannheim letters running from January of 1944 until September of 1945.⁴ All twelve letters in the Gábor collection are from the archival collection of Polanyi materials at the University of Chicago. They tell an interesting story, one that in fact decidedly hints at the contours of Polanyi’s emerging philosophical ideas and one that points out differences between Polanyi’s views and those developed by Mannheim. These letters are particularly revealing if they are linked to some other archival materials (including a few additional letters) that treat the interaction of Polanyi and Mannheim. Both were figures who participated in the discussion group called “the Moot” led by J. H. Oldham. Looking back at this time, Polanyi, in the 1960s, remarked to Richard Gelwick that his involvement in Oldham’s discussion groups (“the Moot” and successor groups) was an influence upon his ideas second only to his work as a research scientist.⁵ The Scott and Moleski biography of Polanyi briefly discusses both Polanyi’s friendship

with Mannheim and Polanyi's involvement in "the Moot." However the Polanyi-Mannheim correspondence and its connections with two particular Moot meetings is rich enough to warrant a more detailed exploration which is what we undertake here.

I. The Initial Book Proposal

Polanyi and Mannheim's friendship in England began in January of 1944 when Polanyi sent Mannheim a book proposal.⁶ Mannheim was by this time the editor of Routledge and Kegan Paul's series titled "The International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction." Polanyi's first letter to Mannheim was a very business-like outline for a volume in Mannheim's series, but he indicated that he already had been sending occasional reprints of his writings to Mannheim for a few years. These reprints, he said, show "that I am taking an active interest in the general problems of our time" (No. 240). Mannheim's reply to Polanyi's letter suggested that he "was always very much interested in your essays and I am looking forward to their reading in the new setting."⁷ Polanyi's book proposal outlined a plan to knit together revised versions of five recent essays with another chapter summarizing their themes; the five were "Science—Its Reality and Freedom"⁸, "The Autonomy of Science"⁹, "The Growth of Thought in Society"¹⁰, "The English and the Continent"¹¹, and "Jewish Problems."¹² Mannheim's prompt response to Polanyi's letter was a cordial offer to read (or perhaps re-read) the material, looking at it in terms of its suitability to compose a book; he asked that Polanyi draft a "brief statement which would somehow explain the unity of this book. I shall want this in case my Board of Publishers should raise the problem either of the coherence of the topics or of the sociological aspect of their treatment" (No. 241).

Two weeks later, Polanyi sent to Mannheim all of the essays that he intended to pull together in his book. In the accompanying letter, he apologized for not yet writing "the outline of the sixth paper," noting that he recognized Mannheim could not adequately judge the material without this. Nevertheless, he proposed that Mannheim go through the essays "as a matter of friendly interest." Polanyi explained that his failure to provide an outline of the sixth essay was due to "my intense preoccupation with a book on 'Unemployment, Laissez Faire and Planning.'¹³ He hoped to finish the draft of this book by the end of the month and did not wish to interrupt his work with anything that could wait. Later in this letter, in a very cordial manner, Polanyi proposed that he and Mannheim meet for a discussion when he came to London sometime after Easter:

I feel very much the loss of never meeting you. The more so perhaps, because our views are, I think, in closer harmony now than they were at earlier times. My throat trouble may prevent me from using my voice for another month or so, but I hope to be free from it by Easter, when I propose to spend a few weeks in London. I shall try to arrange a meeting with you and your wife on that occasion (No. 242).

II. The Visit and Polanyi's Subsequent Letter

This visit to Mannheim's home apparently occurred in early April of 1944 since Polanyi wrote Mannheim a follow-up letter after the visit. The letter of April 19 reported that Polanyi enjoyed the visit "intensely"¹⁴ but this letter is more than one offering polite thanks. This is a long letter that seeks to clear up some things which seem to have been left pending in the visit. Scott and Moleski (194-195) have quoted this letter at length because this is one of the rare Polanyi documents in which Polanyi discusses his personal

religious convictions as well as his very early response to the Hungarian Marxist government. Polanyi reported on the waxing and waning of his interest in Christianity from his twenties to his present age, 53, and on his early dissent against the communist government in Hungary after World War I. While certainly Polanyi's religious pilgrimage is of interest, what is of equal interest and importance are some of the things that Polanyi says about his ideas about economics and political philosophy. These are worth reviewing in some depth.

Early in this letter, Polanyi credits his new life as a British citizen as providing him with a true understanding of civic liberty:

It is true that I had no conception of the true nature of civic liberty before coming to this country in 1933. But I never had supported in any form and on any occasion the rule of a power which was contrary to civic liberty. I needed no conversion to this ideal but merely instruction in it, on grounds prepared for its reception (No. 244).

Polanyi also sets forth his sympathy for Keynesian economic ideas, linking Keynes with his own recent work on a film on the trade cycle. He concludes the discussion of these matters by saying "I think I represent among my friends the most 'radical' Keynesian attitude which—incidentally—involves the least 'planning'" (No. 244). The proclamation is intended directly to confront Mannheim's interest in "planning" as his next comment makes clear: "I cannot agree with your use of this word as for example in your phrase 'Planning for Freedom'" (No. 244). There follows an effort to set forth more precisely the meaning of "planning":

The only sense in which the word planning can be used in my view without creating misconceptions is to designate by it discriminative dispositions concerning an aggregate of particulars. Indiscriminate disposition over an aggregate of particulars on the other hand should not be called planning but simply legislation—law being a generalised command, as distinct from specific (executive) commands (No. 244).

It is clear that Polanyi here makes a sharp distinction between "discriminative" and "indiscriminate dispositions" and that he thinks Mannheim's "planning for freedom" blurs this distinction. "Indiscriminate dispositions over an aggregate of particulars" is law understood as a generalized command, which should be distinguished from specific commands.

Today, this is odd language, but it is easy enough to recognize that Polanyi's distinction is basically the same as that drawn in 1940 in his lecture "Collectivist Planning" that he incorporated as the second chapter of his 1940 book, *The Contempt of Freedom*.¹⁵ Here Polanyi distinguishes planning as a method of ordering human affairs from what he identifies as the alternative method, supervision (CF 30). Supervision "ultimately relies on a multitude of individual initiatives which planning would subordinate to a central will" (CF 30). Polanyi draws his examples of planning from military actions. He sees planning as a comprehensive top-down activity: "no stage adds anything to the original plan as conceived by the one man at the top, every further and further detail fits into it, and has significance only as its execution; the plan does not change by being put into effect" (CF 33). Discipline is essential to planning or activities to be accomplished by planning (CF 34). Supervision aims not at simple execution but at regulating

manifold impulses in conformity with their inherent purpose. It achieves this by making generally available social machinery and other regulated opportunities for independent

action, and by letting all the individual agents interact through a medium of freely circulating ideas and information (*CF* 36).

In “Liberal society,” Polanyi argues, “there is a wide domain of activities in which ideas are cultivated under the supervision of organizations or public authorities” (*CF* 37) Such cultivation relies upon “widely dispersed sources of initiative” and requires that “mental communications are open throughout the community.” (*CF* 36). Polanyi suggests that

artistic pursuits, religious worship, the administration of justice, scientific research are the main manifestations of the permanent principles to the cultivation of which such a society is pledged. Supervision authorities guard the occasions and regulate the channels for these manifestations, and they keep communications free for public discussion and instruction concerning them, but must not interfere with their substance (*CF* 37).¹⁶

With regard to the law, Polanyi emphasizes that the state provides the machinery for the administration of justice but it also

rigorously guards the decisions of the courts from public influence. The courts are sole masters of their conscience and interpretations under the law which they are required to apply, and as they make their decisions, these are instantly added as amplifications, valid throughout the land, to the law from which they have just been derived. (*CF* 38)¹⁷

In his April 19, 1944 letter to Mannheim, Polanyi implies that Mannheim uses the words “planning for freedom” in a particularly loose fashion that obscures important distinctions regarding the law. Below we discuss Polanyi and Mannheim’s interaction in J. H. Oldham’s group, “the Moot.” For the second Moot meeting in April of 1939, Mannheim wrote a paper titled “Planning for Freedom” for discussion.¹⁸ There is no evidence that Polanyi read this particular paper but Mannheim’s work inside and outside of “the Moot” overlapped. Gábor reports that Mannheim has used the expression “planning for freedom” in several publications by this time.¹⁹ Apparently, Polanyi thinks that Mannheim is too quick to link all kinds of law to planning. He warns Mannheim “that we must not give new names to ancient human institutions but rather try to find the old names and conceptions which will cover, guide and sanction our modern endeavors” (No. 244). Polanyi offers to explain the importance of this point in more detail to Mannheim. In sum, what seems clear is that Polanyi views Mannheim’s ideas about planning as akin to ideas of Bernal and others who have championed a Soviet style planned science. By the time he becomes re-acquainted with Mannheim in England, Polanyi has spent some years vigorously arguing against such planning and he thus has no sympathy for any similar tendencies in Mannheim’s thought.²⁰

Polanyi closes his April 19, 1944 letter to Mannheim by moving from his criticisms of “planning for freedom” to a more global criticism of Mannheim’s perspective as a sociologist of knowledge. He distinguishes Mannheim’s approach to history from his own:

As regards the social analysis of the development of ideas, suffice to say that I reject all social analysis of history which makes social conditions anything more than *opportunities* for a development of thought. You seem inclined to consider moral judgments on history as ludicrous, believing apparently that thought is not merely conditioned, but determined by a

social or technical situation. I cannot tell you how strongly I reject such a view (No. 244).

Although, his ideas are not developed here, this comment is an important one that draws on earlier ideas developed in publications like *The Contempt of Freedom*. It is also a comment that foreshadows ideas Polanyi develops later about human callings and about the interpretation of history.²¹ In *The Contempt of Freedom*, Polanyi attacks what he calls the “Marxist doctrine of social determinism and the kindred teaching of Fascism” for “claiming that thought is the product of society and ought therefore to serve the State;” such a view removes “all ground on which to consolidate an authority to which man could justifiably appeal against the commands of the State” (CF 10-11). Polanyi argues that “the realm of thought possesses its own life” and this means that “freedom is not only made possible, but its institution becomes a social necessity” (CF 11):

Freedom is made *possible* by this doctrine because it implies that truth, justice, humaneness will stand above society, and hence the institutions which exist to cultivate these ideas, such as the Press, the law, the religions, will be safely established and available to receive complaints of all men against the State and, if need be to oppose it. Freedom also becomes *necessary* because the State cannot maintain and augment the sphere of thought, which can live only in pursuit of its own internal necessities, unless it refrains from all attempts to dominate it and further undertakes to protect all men and women who would devote themselves to the service of thought from interference by their fellow-citizens, private or official—whether prompted by prejudice or guided by enlightened plans (CF 11).

Later in *The Contempt of Freedom*, Polanyi emphasizes how “guiding principles” complement supervisory authority:

As long as certain guiding principles—of truth, of justice, of religious faith, of decency and equity—are being cultivated, and as long as commerce is protected, the sphere of supervision will predominate and planning will be limited to isolated patches and streaks (CF 39).

He is clear that “comprehensive planning” must ultimately eliminate guiding principles and the freedoms that are basic to human activity in an environment in which supervisory authority is predominant:

Conversely, if comprehensive planning were to prevail, this would imply the abolition of both the cultivation of guiding principles and the pursuit of commerce, with all the liberties inherent in these forms of life. Hence collectivist revolution must aim at the destruction of liberty, and in particular must suppress the privileges under which Universities, Law Courts, Churches and the Press are upholding their ideals, and attack the rights of individual enterprise under which trade is conducted (CF 39-40).

In sum, the April 19, 1944 letter to Mannheim offers a condensed statement of Polanyi’s social vision, which Polanyi regards as fundamentally at odds with Mannheim’s vision. Interestingly, Polanyi suggests that his social vision came together only as he began to understand the British tradition and particularly civil liberties. Polanyi implies that Mannheim misreads the critical role of freedom in social life and that Mannheim is also confused about the role of planning in society. Planning cannot produce freedom but is by its nature an alternative to a liberal society with supervisory authorities that relies on the freedom and initiative of persons.

The role of independent thought in society for Polanyi is central. It is the key not only to the success of endeavors like science but of other institutions of liberal society.

III. The Continuing Conversation

Mannheim's response to Polanyi, dated one day after Polanyi's letter, is an interesting one. Mannheim notes that he, like Polanyi, found their discussion frank and invigorating. He protests that Polanyi's letter implies Polanyi has misread his intentions in asking Polanyi direct personal questions. Mannheim says he explored Polanyi's development not in order to make accusations but such exploration was

only the expression of a human interest to find out through what type of experiences you arrived at your present attitudes. Just because I myself felt when reading your studies that there are so many points of agreement and similar ways of looking at things, I was also keen to find out where our differences lay.²²

Mannheim then suggests that Polanyi's reaction to the social analysis of the development of ideas seems to be an emotional reaction that rules out further confrontation of evidence. Polanyi jumps to moral conclusions in proclaiming that social conditions cannot be anything more than *opportunities* for the development of thought. Mannheim thinks that sometimes there may be not enough evidence to conclude that social conditions are more than opportunities, but at other times there may be evidence that demands social conditions have a more significant impact.

At the end of his letter, Mannheim turns again to Polanyi's projected Routledge volume, asking for a short statement showing

the main content of the Introductory article to be written, how it will unify the two sets of problems with which you deal in the studies which are with me: the one being the discussion of the necessity for freedom of science and the second with social political problems of nations and groups, as, for instance, the article on England and the Continent and the other on the Jewish question (No. 245).

Mannheim's skill as an editor shows in the way he outlines for Polanyi precisely how he can pull his diverse set of essays into a unified whole:

As a possible title I thought of 'Re-discoveries', meaning by this that you and we all of a sudden rediscover values which have been taken too much for granted, and have therefore nearly disappeared from our consciousness and reappear as an answer to the totalitarian challenge. Such a re-discovery is that science cannot flourish with[out]freedom, that the Jews need not necessarily share the nationalism of the modern age but can make a better contribution by utilizing their peculiar chances of becoming a ferment in the integration of bigger units under Anglo-Saxon guidance, that England has a peculiar function in the re-birth of Europe, and that last but not least Europe as a new entity has to be re-discovered too (No. 245).

In early May of 1944, Polanyi responded to Mannheim's April 20, 1944 letter and this too was a lengthy reply. Polanyi seems to have believed that he could transform some of Mannheim's epistemological notions

about the bearing of facts and evidence on human knowledge. He points out that scientific experiments presume “that natural events can be analyzed in terms of causal sequences” but in a laboratory environment “failures prevail overwhelmingly over successes.”²³ A research director must work to boost morale in the face of regular disappointment. Scientists don’t abandon assumptions about naturalistic causality simply because apparent evidence does not support them. Polanyi argues that the case of science is analogous to that of moral life:

Similarly, I suggest, as moral beings we are dedicated to an interpretation of human actions in terms of right and wrong. The latter form a more complicated pattern than that of causality which had its application of course to an entirely different field. Moreover I suggest that as Christians and Westerners we are dedicated to seek and uphold human interpretations more especially in the terms of our own moral tradition. That is what we are here for, as I understand our purpose in life (No. 246).

Polanyi suggests that thinkers like Marx abandon this view, regarding history as “the manifestation of economic necessities conditioned by technical progress” (No. 246). There is a tendency in modernity to “regard material forces as the ultimate reality in human affairs” and once thinkers follow this course, they “will not find it easy to entrust their minds ever again to a more intangible aspect of these affairs” (No. 246). He concludes by saying that evidence seems only very vaguely connected to fundamental beliefs:

Evidence, in short, can neither kill nor create fundamental beliefs. What we accept or reject in these matters is life itself. To some extent we can choose our forms of existence, to some extent we are born to them, to another part again we may be battered by experience to abandon one form for another (No. 246).

He suggests that in the middle of

rising and falling convictions there remains fixed a deeper secret pivot of faith, round which we keep revolving; we follow throughout a code of duty of which we are so unconscious that we could not formulate one single syllable of it (No. 246).²⁴

What seems clearest in the context of this discussion is that, unlike Mannheim, Polanyi holds that human agents necessarily have basic convictions, and also define “facts” and “evidence” in relation to such convictions:

So there is no way out. We must choose—and usually we have chosen already by implication. That is, we must choose in such a fashion that what we instinctively love in life, what we spontaneously admire, what we irresistibly aspire to, should make sense in the light of our convictions. When the prospect of such a solution opens up before our eyes, we undergo a conversion. Henceforth we do not doubt the faith to which we have been converted, but rather reject such evidence as may seem to contradict it (No. 246).

Polanyi notes that one of his essays, “The Autonomy of Science,” that he has sent Mannheim as a proposed part of a book makes precisely this case for those who are scientists. He points out that in making the case for “a professional life dedicated to the convictions of science,” he “was constantly bearing in mind the generalizations arising from this scheme in the wider field touched upon by your questions. Perhaps this letter conveys a hint of the programme of such a generalisation” (No. 246).

Just this “programme of such a generalisation” is what Polanyi undertakes in his 1951 and 1952 Gifford Lectures and later in *PK*. It is not difficult to see a rather direct line of development between this May 1944 letter to Mannheim and such passages as the following in *PK*:

We must now recognize belief once more as the source of all knowledge. Tacit assent and intellectual passions, the sharing of an idiom and of a cultural heritage, affiliation to a like-minded community: such are the impulses which shape our vision of the nature of things on which we rely for our mastery of things. No intelligence, however critical or original, can operate outside such a fiduciary framework (*PK* 266).

So also it is easy to notice the connection between ideas in this letter and Polanyi’s later account of philosophical reflection:

I believe that the function of philosophic reflection consists in bringing to light, and affirming as my own, the beliefs implied in such of my thoughts and practices as I believe to be valid; that I must aim at discovering what I truly believe in and at formulating the convictions which I find myself holding; that I must conquer my self-doubt, so as to retain a firm hold on this programme of self-identification (*PK* 267).

The letter exchanges in the remainder of May and June 1944 are primarily concerned with planning for Polanyi’s book tentatively titled “The Autonomy of Science.” Despite the fact that Polanyi seems not to have written either a précis or a synthesizing essay, Mannheim advises Polanyi on May 10 that “my publishers accepted my suggestions and they on principle will be glad to go ahead with the publication of your proposed book.”²⁵ Polanyi proposed using the text of a recent broadcast in place of an essay synthesizing his book’s themes.²⁶ Apparently, Mannheim did not think the text of the broadcast was a suitable substitute for a synthesizing essay. On June 13, Polanyi reports that he is ready to sign a contract and is “prepared, in fact I am quite eager now, to write a comprehensive essay which will fulfill the function of integrating the book and of bringing up the number of words to 50,000 or more”²⁷ Near the end of July, Polanyi reports to Mannheim that he has signed the contract and sent it back.²⁸ He asks if Mannheim is coming north and whether he would like to stop over at his home for a visit. Polanyi also sends Mannheim a copy of his “Reflections on John Dalton” published in late July and suggests this might be included in his forthcoming book. On August 10, 1944, Mannheim acknowledges receipt of Polanyi’s letter and article. While he praises Polanyi’s article, he cautions Polanyi that he should not put the article as it is in the book because the book will become an unintegrated series of essays. He asks Polanyi to send to him immediately a hundred-word prospectus for the book²⁹ but Polanyi replied that he was preoccupied:

I do hope you will allow me to postpone the statement about my forthcoming book for a few more days. I am in the midst of completing the last section of the last chapter of my book and would like to avoid turning my mind away from it. It is not quite easy to give a reasonably good description of the forthcoming book without thinking the matter over very carefully.³⁰

By early October, the prospectus had been written and editorially redacted. Polanyi was not altogether happy with it (he suggested allusion to “wider problems” in later announcements and he complained that there is too much stress on his opposition to planning in science) but he accepted the following:

The Autonomy of Science. By Prof. Michael Polanyi. F. R. S.

The distinguished Scientist investigates the social conditions of scientific progress. As one of them he considers the existence of a scientific community of scholars. Out of their co-operation ideals and standards emanate certain scientific beliefs which together form a tradition and guide their work. Although an organ of society this community can only flourish if its autonomy is maintained. Any interference by an external power such as the State can only destroy this inheritance instead of fostering it. This plea for the freedom of science is extremely timely at present when in the name of misinterpreted planning State guidance is propagated by those who ought to be the guardians of scientific liberty.³¹

IV. “The Moot” and Its June 1944 Meeting

These late spring and summer 1944 letters also mention another venue in which Polanyi and Mannheim were to meet, J. H. Oldham’s group called “the Moot.” Oldham was an important British Christian ecumenist who, in 1938, as the world moved toward war, organized this intellectual discussion group. Its membership included a number of leading British intellectuals: T. S. Eliot, Eric Fenn, Walter Oakeshott, Geoffrey Shaw, Walter Moberly, Hector Hetherington, John Middleton Murry Alexander Vidler, John Baille, Fred Clark, Herbert Hodges as well as Mannheim. Mannheim had become a member of “the Moot” in its second meeting.³² “The Moot” usually met in a retreat setting for a long weekend and Oldham organized and led the sessions. He was careful to keep the number of participants in any given meeting manageable and he divided the weekend up into a number of different sessions. Oldham’s hearing was impaired and he orchestrated the discussion in a very deliberate manner so that he could follow.³³ Usually, there was a set of papers, written by Moot members or guests, which were pre-circulated to those attending; different papers were slotted for discussion in different sessions. Each meeting ostensibly had a topic or major theme, but sometimes the variety of the papers suggests that the topic consisted in rather diffuse ideas.

Although “the Moot” began meeting before Britain entered the war, its focus was, generally stated, on post-war reconstruction and the role that the Christian church and Christian laypeople were to play in it. From the beginning, questions about how an order or a Christian order might shape reconstruction were central to discussions. “The Moot” was a diverse group with a range of different opinions but a shared concern for shaping the new post-war society.³⁴ Mannheim’s intellectual interests seem to have been a natural fit with the concerns of Oldham and “the Moot.” After Mannheim joins “the Moot,” he becomes – after Oldham himself - the most active Moot member, attending all meetings until the end of 1944, and producing a number of papers.³⁵ Clements notes that Mannheim was “the most prolific” author of papers in and for “the Moot,” while Oldham looked on Mannheim as “the most important” Moot recruit that he “ever secured.”³⁶ Taylor and Reeves report that Alec Vidler, a theologian member, also identified Mannheim as the central figure in the group. Further, they suggest that Mannheim’s views about “social planning in a democracy as an alternative to bureaucratic totalitarianism” had substantial support in “the Moot.”³⁷

Oldham in 1943 became interested in Polanyi’s article “The English and the Continent,” which was published in *Political Quarterly* that year. This is one of the articles that Polanyi in early 1944 sent to Mannheim to consider as part of his proposed book. Oldham wrote Polanyi on 12 November 1943, asking for permission to publish a shortened version of the article as a “Supplement” (an occasional paper series) of the *Christian*

News-Letter, which was a publication sponsored in part by “the Moot.” Not only Oldham saw this article and was interested in it, but also Moot member Walter Moberly (another friend of Polanyi’s) had been given the article by Polanyi and, on his own initiative, recommended it to Oldham.³⁸ Polanyi’s publications and his interests in the late thirties and early forties thus seem to have had enough affinity with interests of Moot members to attract attention.

Polanyi was officially invited by Oldham, on May 2, 1944, to be a guest at the June 23-26 Moot meeting to be held in a rural setting near Horsham.³⁹ Polanyi acknowledges in a letter to Mannheim that he in fact owed this invitation to Mannheim (No. 248). In regard to this invitation, Mannheim rather generously compliments Polanyi for being so articulate about a perspective markedly different from Mannheim’s own views. In this compliment are visible both Mannheim’s respect for “the Moot” and his confidence in the importance of “the cross fertilization of Ideas” at this stage of history :

When I suggested that you should be invited to the Moot, I only obeyed my conscience, which told me that a meeting will be enrichment to you and to them. I believe too much in the creative power of a real discussion as to be afraid of rival views. The next period in history is one of the cross-fertilization of Ideas—so important after a phase of dogmatism. Personally, I felt I can trust you. I believe in you and know that you deeply mean what you say.⁴⁰

The discussion at the June 1944 meeting certainly appears to have again covered some of the same territory that Mannheim and Polanyi covered earlier in their April 1944 meeting at Mannheim’s home and in their succeeding correspondence. Eric Fenn’s notes on this meeting indicate that H. A. Hodges provided two papers “dealing with the Christian attitude in and to the collective commonwealth.”⁴¹ T. S. Eliot, although he did not attend the meeting, wrote a letter commenting on Hodges’ papers, which Oldham read to the group in the first session of the June meeting. Fenn’s notes report that the session was lively and that Polanyi, even though this was his first Moot meeting, was outspoken and at odds with Hodges and Mannheim:

In the preliminary discussion, arising out of the reading of Eliot’s letter and the working out of an agenda for the meeting, the chief point was a direct challenge by Michael Polanyi to the presupposition of Hodges’ paper and Mannheim’s position in regard to Planning. Polanyi did not think that planning was as decisive, or as new, or as sweeping as seemed to be assumed He maintained that western society showed a steady process throughout the Middle Ages and up till the present day. The dramatic departure was the Russian Revolution, which was not merely an economic revolution but a sudden “going mad” in the moral and intellectual sense. The civilised society had always been able to draw from its own tradition the power to extricate itself from social difficulties and clear up its messes. The Russian Revolution said that all history was wrong and had to be rolled up and begun again. There was some preliminary discussion of this view, chiefly between Polanyi and Mannheim, and at the end of the meeting Polanyi was asked to elaborate his thesis in the form of a paper for the next meeting of “the Moot.”⁴²

This report of an exchange in the preliminary discussion was likely the reason that the other guest at this June meeting (i.e., other than Polanyi), Philip Mairet, reported in a letter 25 years later (1969) that he remembered, from 1944, a “ding-dong battle between Polanyi and Mannheim, the latter being taken by surprise

at Polanyi's demonstration of the intuitive and traditional element of all vital scientific discovery."⁴³ Also the twelve pages of notes on the several sessions of this Moot meeting make clear that Mannheim often is interested in and confident about social planning and Polanyi holds, as Fenn summarized his views in one session, "in a complex society it was necessary to rely more on individual initiative than in a simpler society."⁴⁴ Fenn's summaries of Polanyi's views clearly suggest that Polanyi linked his criticisms of planning with comments on the Russian Revolution and his larger account of the development of modern history as the following summary shows:

The notion of planning rested in XIX century science taken up with such thinkers as Saint-Simon and Marx, and bearing fruit in the Russian Revolution. In 1917 there were none of the modern techniques (wireless, aeroplanes, bombs, etc.). There was only the deep inspiration of men who thought they could take the place of God; that it was their duty to command the good of mankind.⁴⁵

V. The December 1944 Moot Meeting

The last chapter in the Polanyi-Mannheim encounter in the context of "the Moot" occurs at the next Moot meeting held December 15-18, 1944. Unfortunately, there are not as many available records for this gathering as for its predecessor but the correspondence and some other material do point to some interesting things. As noted above, T. S. Eliot could not attend the June 1944 Moot meeting, but he wrote a response to Hodges' papers and this response apparently initiated the June discussion between Mannheim and Polanyi. Although he did not attend "the Moot" as regularly as Mannheim, Eliot was an active Moot member and he frequently contributed to Moot discussions. Eliot certainly was familiar with Mannheim and the views that Mannheim promulgated in "the Moot." While Eliot had considerable respect for Mannheim, his views were more socially and politically conservative than those of Mannheim.

Kojecky suggests that almost from the formation of "the Moot" there was a tension in the group between thought and action. By 1940, Mannheim was a Moot member who made "an appeal for decisiveness, and an active order, in strong terms, urging that a revolution from above must be initiated."⁴⁶ Although he did not want to insist upon this slogan, Mannheim wrote,

The Germans, Russians, and Italians are more advanced than we are in the techniques of managing modern society, but their purposes are wrong and even atavistic. We may look to elite groups in our society, e.g, the Moot, or enlightened Civil Servants, to use these techniques for different ends. The new techniques constitute a new opportunity and a new obligation. We want to mobilize the intelligent people of goodwill in this country who are waiting for a lead. At the same time there must be a popular movement to back what the elites are doing. You cannot build up a great movement without the dynamism of social leadership.⁴⁷

The records of "the Moot," as well as other Eliot writings of this period, make clear that Eliot temperamentally as well as intellectually balked at Mannheim's activism. Kojecky summarizes Eliot's views by saying "in general, Eliot was attracted rather by the idea of an intellectual than a directly political form of action."⁴⁸ In the early forties, Eliot is wrestling with questions about thought and action, about the nature of

post-war culture and the structure of society, and particularly about the ways in which Christian beliefs and values should shape public life. What is happening in Moot discussions is clearly central to Eliot's effort to develop his social philosophy.⁴⁹ In June 1943, Hodges prepared a paper for "the Moot" titled "Politics and the Moot" that Kojecky describes as "in many ways a defence of socialism" that came close to suggesting that continuing discussions in "the Moot" are in fact an evasion of responsibility.⁵⁰ Eliot seems to have been jolted by Hodges' paper, since he sent to Oldham five letters that were concerned with issues about the role of "the Moot" and these were circulated. The following is a part of the first letter:

Now it seems to me very doubtful whether the Moot, by the nature of its composition, is fitted to frame any sort of "programme" to which all the members would spontaneously and wholeheartedly adhere with no qualifications to blunt its force. We are actually people of as dissimilar backgrounds and activities as we could be and still have the common concern for Christianity and Society that we have. Hardly any two are even of exactly the same brand of Christianity. This variety is what has given the Moot its zest, and even its cohesion; it is what . . . has made this association, over a number of years, and bringing with it an unexpectedly deep and genuine sense of loyalty and kinship with the other members, so very fecundating. If it has made as much difference to everyone as it has to me, it has justified itself fully. But I am not sure whether these benefits are compatible with the fruits of collective effort to change the world, which we are so often adjuring ourselves to cultivate.⁵¹

Eliot did not attend either the October 1943 meeting of "the Moot" nor any of its meetings in 1944, in January, June and December. However he provided material that was used in most of these meetings in the form of letters to Oldham that were either pre-circulated or read to the group by Oldham.⁵² It was apparently Eliot's letter criticizing Hodges's views that touched off the June meeting's disagreements between Polanyi and Hodges and Mannheim. It is also, however, Eliot's hand in Moot affairs that shapes a component of Polanyi's participation in the December 1944 Moot discussion. Eliot wrote a paper for the December meeting titled "On the Place and Function of the Clerisy." In September of 1944, Oldham wrote Polanyi that Eliot was going to write this paper for the December meeting and had requested that Polanyi and Mannheim be the respondents.⁵³ Polanyi wrote a letter of response of about 1200 words to Eliot's paper, which he sent to Oldham on 16 October 1944⁵⁴ and to Mannheim later in the month.⁵⁵ After reading Polanyi's response, Mannheim wrote a much longer response letter⁵⁶ and both were circulated with Eliot's paper, and Eliot's short responses to both Mannheim and Polanyi, to Moot members as part of the material for the December 15-18, 1944 Moot meeting.⁵⁷

It seems rather clear that Eliot chose his respondents carefully. His social vision is in tension with that of Mannheim, but Eliot likely anticipated that Polanyi's views also would be in tension with views of Mannheim. Like Mannheim, Eliot had corresponded with Polanyi and was at least somewhat acquainted with Polanyi's views even before he had the opportunity to read Fenn's notes on the June 23-26, 1944 Moot meeting. In early June of 1944, Polanyi inquired about publishing a book on "Science and Human Ideals" with Eliot at Faber and Faber Publishers.⁵⁸ A mutual friend provided Eliot with a copy of Polanyi's essay "The Autonomy of Science." which Eliot reports that he read "with great pleasure and approval."⁵⁹ Eliot indicates he is impressed with Polanyi's essay and other Polanyi essays that he has seen and to which Oldham has referred.

VI. Moot Papers of Eliot, Polanyi and Mannheim

Although we cannot here extensively review the contents of this interesting set of Moot papers, some comments are in order. Eliot's paper, as its title suggests, focuses on the role and function of the "clerisy," a term which he has apparently borrowed from Coleridge which points to an elite whose members have distinguished themselves by training. Undoubtedly, "the Moot" discussants recognized Eliot's paper as one more thread in the general fabric of common Moot discussions about postwar reconstruction and, specifically, their own role in that reconstruction. "The Moot" itself might be thought of as a "clerisy." Eliot argues that the clerisy originates the ideas and defines the sensibilities that are operative in a given culture at a given time. He ponders the links and distinctions between the clerisy and classes in a society. He identifies differences between types of clerics (intellectuals and emotives) and ponders the implications for society when too many clerics are unemployed; he speculates about a hierarchy within the clerisy and outlines ways different clerics promulgate particular ideas. Certainly, one current that runs through this essay concerns whether the clerisy can be expected to take concerted action of the sort Mannheim and others seem to have advocated for "the Moot":

The point is, however, that we cannot ask for any common mind, or any common action, on the part of clerics. They have a common function, but this is below the level of conscious purposes. They have at least one common interest—an interest in the survival of the clerisy. . . but they will have no agreement on how to promote this. Agreement, and common action, can only be by particular groups of clerics. When clerics can form a group in which formulated agreement is possible, it will be due to affinities which distinguish them from other clerics.⁶⁰

Eliot ends his essay with four sets of questions that he apparently wants his respondents and Moot discussants to address. Most of his questions concern how the term "clerisy" can be made more useful and meaningful, but his last set of queries concerns whether the culture of Britain is declining in quality.

Polanyi's response to Eliot is a very positive one, although he does not try directly to address the questions that Eliot posed at the end of his essay. Instead, Polanyi says he wants "to define my own position with respect to it [Eliot's position] so as to make clear the points at which Eliot's remarks seem most helpful to me."⁶¹ Polanyi begins by emphasizing that the heritage of the West is carried forward by the clerisy through what he terms "personal transmission"⁶²:

in the modern West there exists and is being passed on from one generation to the next a great heritage of the mind: religion and law, hundreds of branches of science and thousands of technologies, history, philosophy, economics, and the whole wealth of language and music, paintings, poetry, etc. Most of this heritage can continue to live only by a process of personal transmission. If any part of it is not actively and creatively cultivated for a period of, say, 50 years – and successive new generations are not initiated to it – its secret is lost and it falls into petrification if not complete oblivion – from which it can be recovered only by the exceptional event of rediscovery. The first function of the clerisy is to keep the mental heritage alive and to hand it on to its successors.

Polanyi then suggests that the scope of knowledge in modernity is broad and this means that growth of

knowledge continues only because there are today “specialist clerisies” such as that in the world of science. Each domain of knowledge has such a specialist clerisy which is a

miniature society of experts whose function is to supervise the apprenticeship of novices, to preside over the discussions of mature members and pronounce a verdict on their achievements or at least to clarify their professional standing, to sanction (or deny) the professional character of their products and attach grades or valuation to these as they are being handed out to the wider public. I have outlined this structure for the clerisy of science in an essay “The Autonomy of science” [sic.] and I am glad to see that Eliot’s study suggests some new elements to be included in a generalised description of specialist clerisies.

Polanyi contends that a specialist clerisy such as that in science

collectively possesses knowledge and collectively conducts processes of thought which no individual could even remotely attempt to possess or to conduct. It is literally an embodiment of thought; if you damage it you impair thinking; if you reduce it you narrow down truth. The internal organisation of each clerisy must be such as to give scope to its internal necessities of growth.

Polanyi calls a specialist clerisy “a dedicated society” that is defined by its service to purposes that have been received by way of tradition and are believed to be good. A specialist clerisy is thus “an expression of faith in its particular realm.” This faith “consists in the acceptance as good of certain traditional skills, values and insights forming together a traditional inspiration.” But Polanyi points out that there is a tension within a specialist clerisy between the accepted and the new:

Each generation of a living civilisation must accept the overwhelming majority of thoughts as handed on to it; but at the same time it has to exercise criticism and make rational changes. There is a continuous clash of authority and revolt, of old and new inspiration.

Polanyi claims that there is no simple way to resolve conflicts and in a sense “the clerisy is at every moment literally in the hand of God and to this extent again society as a whole is in the same position”:

There is no one to decide then; each generation must decide certain points ultimately by force. It must keep the cranks and fools in check and must risk to starve many an unrecognised genius in the process of doing so. This is where each generation is left to itself—to hark back to the original inspiration of our civilisation; to its own conscience and to God.

Polanyi ends his response to Eliot by proclaiming that the life of the clerisy has bearing on three issues concerned with “ultimate power, ultimate truth and liberty.” The presence of clerisies makes clear that there are “social structures which are powerless radically to change their purpose, function and laws of growth because they can continue to exist only so far as they remain dedicated to the tradition of which they are guardians, expositors critics and promoters.” About the “problem of ultimate truth,” Polanyi says that a human being can understand and improve the world only “by attaching his faith to some parts of the heritage which then serve him as a guide.” This means that by maintaining faith,

truth can be pursued by a definite process of collecting experience and of interaction with the opinion of the clerisy.

Every time we affirm any kind of validity (truth, beauty, etc.) we express by implication certain amount of faith in a part of the common mental heritage and also some reliance on the clerisy in charge of it. Thus every recognition of truth contains both a spark of faith and an element of social loyalty.

Polanyi's final point touches on his political philosophy and sounds very like comments made in both *The Contempt of Freedom* and his letters to Mannheim:

So long as clerisies live there is a rightful ground to stand up against oppression by the State, because to the extent that the State upholds the realm of clerisies its powers are ipso facto restricted. Hence subjection of the people to tyranny must always involve the corruption of the clerisy. It requires substitution of faith in traditional cultures, and the acceptance instead of purely temporal authority. That is the structure of totalitarian power.

What is visible in Polanyi's response to Eliot's paper are themes that are developed in his later philosophy; these themes are also nascent or to some degree articulated in other essays in the late thirties and early forties. Polanyi's interest in tradition, in specialization, in novel knowledge or discovery are part of his essay "The Autonomy of Science" (1938), *Science Faith and Society* (1946), *Personal Knowledge* (1958) and are treated in many other publications such as "The Republic of Science" (1962) which brings all these themes together in a mature statement. Eliot's reflection on the clerisy seems to have served primarily as a vehicle for Polanyi to begin pulling together the different threads in his emerging philosophy. Certainly, there is some affinity with some points in Eliot's discussion but Polanyi moves beyond Eliot's concern with reframing Coleridge's ideas about the clerisy to understand the contemporary cultural situation and "the Moot" itself. In fact, when Polanyi sent his response to Eliot's paper to Mannheim on October 23, 1944, he identified what he had written as containing "in very rough form the summary of the philosophy at which I am aiming by my studies of the scientific life."⁶³ He proposes to Mannheim that he "agree to my suggestion and accept the outline of ideas as stated in the letter to Oldham as the groundwork of my proposed introductory essay" (No. 254).

Mannheim's response to Eliot's discussion of the clerisy makes an effort to address the many questions that Eliot posed at the end of his essay. He suggests that Eliot's term would be more useful if Eliot distinguished it from somewhat comparable terms in the sociological and philosophical literature, including "intelligentsia" as he used it in *Ideology and Utopia*. Mannheim suggests that Eliot is really referring to an elite within the elite with the term "clerisy," since what Eliot is most interested in is people who have the mental capacity to break with convention. Convention breakers are important in dynamic societies, but Mannheim suggests Eliot's analysis is too simple if he thinks class is always a force against change while a clerisy is a force for change. Mannheim spends much of his space discussing how new ideas are disseminated in society. He implies that Eliot has a certain disdain for popularization, but Mannheim thinks those who "bring ideas into circulation"⁶⁴ are important:

This is why I think it is a mistake to consider those who express the real substance on a simpler level as publicity agents only. Those who succeed in the great venture of being genuine on the lower levels of communication, contribute at least as much to the preservation of culture as those who keep the existing fires burning in small selected circles.

In the third section of his response, Mannheim responds not only to Eliot's paper but also to Polanyi's response to Eliot. This is a section in which Mannheim reflects on the "promotion of culture" and particularly the role that tradition plays in such promotion. Mannheim identifies Polanyi's response as an "important contribution" of which he offers only one criticism:

If the things I have said so far are taken together, the real clerics are not only united on that abstract level of promotion of culture but their interplay is bound to lead to a new pattern. I mean a new pattern but not a new organisation. At present this pattern is only in the making because most of them who can see the need for a clerisy are on the defensive. This is my criticism of Michael Polanyi's otherwise very important contribution. He only sees the tradition aspect of culture, and gives expression only to the panic which so many of us experience when we see the danger that the little groups which handed over through generations their intimate experiences and specific skills are bound to be swept away by the vulgarising and organising tendencies of mass society.

Mannheim here seems to be criticizing Polanyi's notion of tradition as one that is more like Eliot's—tradition is distinguished from vulgar popularization.⁶⁵ But Polanyi's response to Eliot does treat both the conservative force of tradition and the challenge of new knowledge. To anybody who has read Polanyi's later thought, Mannheim seems somewhat to miss the mark. Polanyi argues that respect for innovation and creativity is part of the tradition of science at least.

Mannheim goes on to make clear how important he thinks the rediscovery of tradition is; he refers not only to his own earlier writing about the importance of closed groups but emphasizes the importance of personal transmission (Polanyi's term) and the need to integrate different levels of the clerisy:

The re-discovery of the significance of tradition is certainly very important and the exploration of the conditions under which tradition may survive should become one of the central themes of sociology. In this connection I wish to emphasise once more the needs for the existence of closed groups in which new ideas find time to mature before they are thrown into the open market. I still think that this type of exclusiveness is a precondition for creativeness in culture, but today I should like to add to this that the maintenance of culture is only one aspect of the story. The existence of small nuclear groups where tradition is transmitted through personal contacts is vital, but it is equally important that these groups should communicate with each other through personal contacts. Just as St. Paul saw his task in developing communication between Christian communities in order to keep inspiration alive in an expanding world it is even more important for us to invent the equivalent to writing epistles, to establish forms of real mooting beyond what organisation can do in this respect. A new type of clerisy will only develop if such a living web in a horizontal and vertical direction will unite them. Living contacts between the higher and lower clerics is as important as deep level understanding between the clerics of different nationalities. Thus, apart from the invention of new forms of popularisation the establishment of new forms of personal contacts between living groups and individuals who have the powers of inspiration is the outstanding task.

Mannheim seems to think one important factor in the emerging highly organized mass society is the need “to find a remedy against the detrimental effects” of more organization and this he terms “planning for freedom”:

Planning for freedom means so to organise that the organisation itself should establish within its own cosmos those rules and unwritten laws which protect the solitary thinker, unorganised thought, the attempt at transcending established routine, and conventionalisation against the impact of the stereotyped mind. How this is to be done cannot be answered at this stage. Concrete experiences have to be collected and careful descriptions of lost battles of spontaneous minds in their struggle against the vested interests of routine, established in the name of which the clerisy can protect if injustice or victimisation occurs. As it is one of the essentials of democracy that it not only admits minorities and non-conformists (in the broadest sense of the word) but ascribes creative significance to them, it is equally important that it should defend those minorities on whose constructive co-operation the life of culture depends; culture as life and not as a routine and organisation.

VII. Mannheim’s Death and Polanyi’s Book

Unfortunately, there are no Moot meeting notes reporting how the discussion of these three papers went in December 1944.⁶⁶ On January 1, 1945, Mannheim wrote Polanyi a short letter indicating he was pleased to hear Polanyi enjoyed the December discussion; he laments the fact, which apparently Polanyi had noted, that Moot members were dilettantes in regard to economics. Mannheim expresses regret about the way in which he criticized the rate of change in England: “I really feel what I expressed perhaps too abruptly at the Moot that this country cannot afford any longer to bring about change at such a slow pace as in the past.”⁶⁷ Mannheim indicates he is pleased to hear Polanyi is working on his book.

What we do know is that Mannheim must genuinely have liked Polanyi’s response paper or, at the least, he thought that the piece would serve as a good introduction to Polanyi’s projected Routledge book. On October 27, 1944, Mannheim wrote to Polanyi “I have read your comments on T. S. Eliot’s paper with very great interest and I feel they will make a very good introduction to the book.”⁶⁸ He cautioned Polanyi that the essay needed to become an integrating piece and not simply another essay, but Mannheim, ever the skillful editor, then gave Polanyi a prescription for how to accomplish this:

But this can be easily done because starting with the theme Tradition, you can at the same time reach your problems concerning the continuity in science and its autonomy, you can show that Europe is precious to us as a specific tradition and that just in this respect England has a chance of giving leadership and finally, you can discuss the problem of the advanced Jewish intellectuals as a specific configuration within the stream of European tradition. I am very much looking forward to the reading of the Introduction (No. 254).

The fate of Polanyi’s book with Mannheim is something of a mystery. The correspondence record does not mention the book again, but it does show that Polanyi tried to set up a London meeting with Mannheim in late May of 1945.⁶⁹ It also shows that Polanyi is hard at work on other projects. In March of 1945, he sent to Mannheim a 1944 article on patent reform that was perhaps published late or had just reached Polanyi. Polanyi seems to have sent the essay to Mannheim in order to make a point regarding his stance on centralization:

I would be glad if you could find time to read the enclosed pamphlet. It should show you that I am not at all opposed on principle to an extension of centralized control over economic activities. Actually, I am entirely in favour of it wherever the conditions require it.⁷⁰

Later in the fall of 1945, Polanyi sent Mannheim a letter proposing a new journal to be sponsored by the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society.⁷¹ Polanyi apparently had been working on this proposal and he asked that Mannheim seek support for this journal from Routledge, which Mannheim did, although the journal was not funded.⁷²

There are no archival records of correspondence between Polanyi and Mannheim after the fall of 1945. Polanyi signed a contract for his Routledge book in Mannheim's series in July of 1944 and that fall the advertising summary for the book was completed (see discussion above), but the book does not appear in 1945 or 1946. If one looks at a Polanyi bibliography or the discussion of these years in Scott and Moleski, it is clear that Polanyi is hard at work on a number of publications, including *Full Employment and Free Trade* (1945) and *Science, Faith and Society* (1946). The latter is based on his Riddell Lectures at the University of Durham and it develops many ideas similar to components in the projected Routledge book. Perhaps Polanyi was simply too busy to complete Mannheim's requested revision of his response to Eliot, recast as an integrating summary of his essays selected for his promised book titled "The Autonomy of Science."⁷³ Polanyi may have had further discussions with Mannheim at the July 1945 and the May 1946 Moot meetings but there is no record of these meetings. On January 9, 1947, the day before the twenty-fourth Moot meeting at which he was expected and for which Polanyi submitted a short paper, Mannheim died of a heart attack at 54.⁷⁴

Some material to be included in the projected book titled "The Autonomy of Science" was eventually published in 1951 as part of Polanyi's *The Logic of Liberty*, but this volume also includes other material, much of it published after Mannheim's death.⁷⁵ *The Logic of Liberty* was, however a part of the Routledge series edited by Mannheim, the "International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction."⁷⁶

VIII. Conclusion

Polanyi's acquaintance with Karl Mannheim in England stretches over the last three years of Mannheim's life. Records of this friendship are sketchy but there are several interesting letters that focus on a projected book that never was published. There are also some records of "the Moot" and two Moot papers that are interesting responses to T. S. Eliot. Polanyi's paper includes some early formulations of themes that are more fully developed in his philosophical works that come after this period. The Polanyi-Mannheim letters and some records of "the Moot" also reflect important philosophical differences between these figures. They seem to have held quite different views about the nature of knowledge, freedom, planning and the meaning of history. Polanyi's reviews of two posthumously published Mannheim works show that Polanyi remembered Mannheim in terms of some of these sharp differences in their perspectives.⁷⁷ Polanyi's 1951 review of Mannheim's *Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning* was titled "Planning for Freedom." Although this is a short review with praise for Mannheim's intellectual prowess, it ends on this note:

A sweeping mind whose power to assimilate and reformulate was unsurpassed in its time is present on every page. Yet in the end the process of 'planning' on which the book dwells so persistently remains altogether obscure. All kinds of social reform that have been practiced

for centuries are comprised under this designation and it is not apparent what, if anything, is to be added to them in a 'planned society'. But in spite of such deficiencies that may be unavoidable in a posthumous work, the book will remain an important source for the study of Mannheim's thought which has woven itself widely into the intellectual fabric of our Age.⁷⁸

Polanyi's 1952 review of *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* is also short and it focuses on Mannheim's optimism about the outcome of struggle in history between groups with conflicting interpretations. Pointing to the ways in which communism "crushed the free interplay of ideas on which Mannheim relied,"⁷⁹ Polanyi says history has not justified Mannheim's optimism. He then turns again to his criticism of Mannheim's view that minds are determined by historical forces:

But even as this outcome of history refutes Mannheim's optimism it bears out his analysis of the modern mind which, having consented to regard its own mental processes as determined by the existing social structure, has renounced any standing from which it might pass judgment on an act of violence which transforms the social structure. In the pursuit of his false hopes, Mannheim has explored this fatal situation, which he calls "our fundamental trend towards self-relativisation", more persistently than any other writer has done. While we no longer share his delusions we shall continue to profit from his penetrating account of a dilemma in which we remain deeply entangled.

Endnotes

¹ William Scott and Martin Moleski, *Michael Polanyi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 194. Subsequent citations are simply Scott and Moleski and page number and, when the context is clear, citations are by page numbers in parentheses in the text. See also Scott and Moleski, 41, which indicates that Polanyi and Mannheim, as well as George Lukács are listed in Balazs's diary entry of Dec. 23, 1915 as members of the Sunday Afternooners' group. How frequently Polanyi attended and how long he was affiliated with this group are unclear. Scott and Moleski are relying on Lee Congdon's work in "The Making of a Hungarian Revolutionary: The Unpublished Diary of Bela Balazs," *Journal of Contemporary History* 8 (1973).

² Certainly there are suggestions in the early Polanyi-Mannheim correspondence in the mid forties (discussed below) that each figure already knew something about the other. Scott and Moleski (196) also provide additional evidence, including a letter from Oscar Jászi, showing that Polanyi has an interest in Mannheim's work.

³ Edward, Shils, "Karl Mannheim," *The American Scholar*, Spring, 1995: 221. Shils, who translated some of Mannheim's works into English and was a friend of Polanyi, offers an interesting account (221-235) of Mannheim. It is not clear if Shils knew Polanyi in 1944, when Polanyi becomes acquainted with Mannheim in England. But it is certain that Shils knew Polanyi before Mannheim's death in 1947. Shils reports ("On the Tradition of Intellectuals: Authority and Antinomianism According to Michael Polanyi," *TAD* 22: 2: 10-26) that he was invited by Polanyi to give an address in Manchester in January of 1947 (21). In Shils' article on Mannheim (234), Shils also tells a story about telling Polanyi that Mannheim had died in January of 1947.

⁴ Éva Gábor (ed. with assistance of Dézsö Banki and R. T. Allen), *Selected Correspondence (1911-1946) of Karl Mannheim, Scientist, Philosopher, and Sociologist* (Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2003). Since most Polanyi-Mannheim letters have now been published and they are numbered in Gábor's collection, first citations to specific letters in the collection are hereafter abbreviated, using only the number of

the letter in the collection, the sender and receiver, and the date of the letter. Subsequent citations of published letters simply note the letter number in parentheses in the text following the quotation.

⁵ Richard Lee Gelwick, "Michael Polanyi: *Credere Aude* His Theory of Knowledge and Its Implications for Christian Theology," Th. D. Dissertation, Pacific School of Religion, 1965: p. 11, note 8.

⁶ No. 240, Polanyi to Mannheim, January 10, 1944.

⁷ No. 241, Mannheim to Polanyi, January 14, 1944.

⁸ Then in press but published in *The Nineteenth Century and After* 135 (February 1944): 78-83.

⁹ *Memoirs and Proceedings of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society* 85 (February 1943): 19-38. Also in *Scientific Monthly* 60 (February 1945): 141-150. Also as "Self-Government of Science" in Polanyi's *The Logic of Liberty* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951): 49-68. Hereafter *The Logic of Liberty* is abbreviated *LL*.

¹⁰ *Economica* 8 (November 1941): 421-456. Richard Allen (*Society, Economics, Philosophy: Selected Papers by Michael Polanyi* [New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997]: 362-363) notes this was partially reprinted (and/or reorganized and reprinted) in two other places later and in *LL*. *Society, Economics, Philosophy: Selected Papers by Michael Polanyi* is hereafter abbreviated *SEP*.

¹¹ *The Political Quarterly* 14 (October-December, 1943): 372-381. Also in *Fortune* 29 (May 1944): 155-157.

¹² *The Political Quarterly* 14 (January-March 1943): 33-45. Also in *SEP*: 33-45.

¹³ No. 242, Polanyi to Mannheim, February 1, 1944. As Gábor intends to note (her footnotes to this letter [453] are scrambled), this is an early title for *Full Employment and Free Trade*, which is published in 1945 by Cambridge University Press. Later letters give this various titles but mention that Cambridge Press is considering the material.

¹⁴ No. 244. Polanyi to Mannheim, April 19, 1944.

¹⁵ Michael Polanyi, *The Contempt of Freedom: The Russian Experiment and After* (London: Watts & Co, 1940, New York: Arno Press, 1975). Subsequent quotations from this work are noted in parentheses with *CF* and page number only. Polanyi identifies the essays in this 1940 book as notes taken in the important years between 1935 and 1940 (*CF* 5). If you extend this period forward to 1943, it is clear this is an extraordinarily fruitful period for Polanyi's developing philosophical perspective. Scott and Moleski (192) point out that Polanyi had written "fifty pieces in defense of the liberal tradition" by the spring of 1943. Five of these had been published, fifteen given as lectures, five were incomplete book manuscripts and there are twenty-five fragments and short essays. Although we draw on *The Contempt of Freedom* to set forth Polanyi's developing views, similar ideas are found in this larger body of material. See, for example, Scott and Moleski's discussion (184) of the late 1940 addresses "Planning, Culture and Freedom" and "Planning, Efficiency and Liberty."

¹⁶ Somewhat later in his discussion, Polanyi adds a discussion of how supervision is also most appropriate for "the economic field" (*CF* 38):

This field, therefore, cannot be managed by the imposition of a governmental plan, but must, on the contrary, be cultivated by a supervisory authority which assures the individuals of suitably regulated opportunities for giving effect to their desires. Supervision in the case of individual economic desires is embodied in the machinery of commerce, operating through the market which keeps commercial ideas and information in universal circulation (*CF* 39).

¹⁷ There are some suggestions that Polanyi may have been particularly interested in the law in this period. There is a 44 page essay dated February 26, 1942 titled "The Law" that is apparently part of a longer manuscript titled "The Structure of Freedom" in the University of Chicago Polanyi archival collection (Box 33, Folder 2). This is an extended discussion of the law and its evolution; Polanyi compares the law and science and tries to show the law is a bulwark of self-government.

¹⁸ William Taylor and Marjorie Reeves, *Christian Thinking and Social Order*, ed. Marjorie Reeves (London: Cassell, 1999): 28.

¹⁹ Gábor, 454. See No. 244, note 1.

²⁰ See especially Scott and Moleski, 185-186 for a discussion of Polanyi's work with John Baker and the Society for Freedom in Science.

²¹ The idea of "calling" is developed in *PK* (see 321-324) as an alternative to this deterministic view. In *SM*, the book that he publishes in 1959 just after *PK* (1958), Polanyi's notes in the Preface (9) can be seen as both an introduction and an extension of the inquiry of *PK*; it treats the problems of interpreting history. See Yu Zhenhua's excellent discussion of *SM* in "Two Cultures Revisited: Michael Polanyi on the Continuity Between the Natural Sciences and the Study of Man," *Tradition and Discovery* 28:3 (2001-2002): 6-19.

²² No. 245. Mannheim to Polanyi, April 20, 1944.

²³ No. 246. Polanyi to Mannheim, May 2, 1944.

²⁴ Scott and Moleski (197), suggest that this tracing of conviction to an unformlizable code is an early hint at the importance of what later Polanyi calls the tacit dimension. This seems correct although what Polanyi is at this stage beginning to work out is the fiduciary program rather than the epistemological model that grows out of it.

²⁵ No. 247. Mannheim to Polanyi, May 10, 1944.

²⁶ No. 248. Polanyi to Mannheim, May 27, 1944.

²⁷ No. 249. Polanyi to Mannheim, June 13, 1944.

²⁸ Polanyi letter to Mannheim, 27 July 1944, Box 4, Folder 11 in The Papers of Michael Polanyi held by the Department of Special Collections of the University of Chicago Library. All quotations of material in The Papers of Michael Polanyi are used with permission of the University of Chicago Library. Subsequent citations to archival letters in the Chicago collection will be shortened to the letter and date, box and folder number. This and a few other letters were not included in the Gábor collection.

²⁹ No. 252. Mannheim to Polanyi, August 10, 1944,

³⁰ Polanyi letter to Mannheim, 16 August 1944, Box 4, Folder 11.

³¹ Polanyi letter to Mannheim with enclosure, 2 October 1944, Box 4, Folder 11.

³² For a general discussion of "the Moot" and its context see Roger Kojecky *T. S. Eliot's Social Criticism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971): 156-197, 238-239, and Taylor and Reeves, 24-48. This list of members combines those listed in each of these sources.

³³ Kathleen Bliss, "Oldham, Joseph Houldsworth," *Dictionary of National Biography: 1961-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 806-808.

³⁴ Taylor and Reeves, 26-28. See also Kojecky, 163 who points out that those who attended the first Moot meeting had received a letter from Oldham "raising the idea of a Christian order." Kojecky, 163-197 provides a rich account of the unfolding set of Moot discussions up until Mannheim's death in January of 1947. Ideas about an order or an elite with a special role are never far from the center of gravity in this group; this is the background for the December 1944 papers by Eliot, Mannheim and Polanyi on the "clerisy," the term that Eliot adopted from Coleridge.

³⁵ Taylor and Reeves, 25.

³⁶ Keith Clements, *Faith on the Frontier* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1999), 384.

³⁷ Taylor and Reeves, 25. See also, for example, J. H. Oldham's chapter "Planning for Freedom" in his 1942 book *Real Life Is Meeting* (Macmillan; Seabury, 1953), which is a review and paean of praise for Mannheim's claims for planning. See <http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Philosophy/Sui-Generis/Berdyayev/essays/rlm.htm> .

³⁸ Oldham letter to Polanyi, 12 November 1943. Box 15, Folder 3.

³⁹ Oldham letter to Polanyi, 2 May, 1944. Box 15, Folder 3.

⁴⁰ No. 251. Mannheim to Polanyi, June 29, 1944..

⁴¹ Notes of Moot Meeting of June 23-25, 1944, p. 1, Box 15, Folder 6. Kojecky, 164 (note) identifies Fenn as the scribe for the meetings for which notes exist.

⁴² Notes of Moot Meeting of June 23-25, 1944 , pp.1-2, Box 15, Folder 6.

⁴³ Quoted by Kojecky, 155. There is also a letter from Mannheim to Polanyi on June 29, immediately after the June 1944 meeting, that indicates that Polanyi provided an apparently impressive “historical expose” (No. 251) at this (his) first meeting. It is possible that Mairet’s memory and what impressed Mannheim came not from the preliminary discussion in which Polanyi and Mannheim were at odds but from a later session of the three-day June 1944 meeting. Although there are no detailed Fenn notes on the final session, it is described in the order of events as a “closing discussion and statement on the philosophical position of science by Michael Polanyi.”

⁴⁴ Notes of Moot Meeting of June 23-26, 1944, p. 6. Box 15, Folder 6.

⁴⁵ Notes of Moot Meeting of June 23-26, 1944, p. 5. Box 15, Folder 6.

⁴⁶ Kojecky, 174.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Kojecky, 175, apparently from a 1940 Mannheim Moot paper.

⁴⁸ Kojecky, 176.

⁴⁹ Peter Ackroyd, 243 in *T. S. Eliot* (London: Abacus, 1985) acknowledges the influence of interaction with figures in “the Moot” in shaping Eliot publications such as *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939) and of *Notes Towards the Definition Culture* (1948). Peter Scott, 71-73 in an article (“The Social Critic and His Discontents,” *The Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot*, ed David A. Moody [Cambridge: CUP, 1994] makes similar claims.

⁵⁰ Kojecky, 186.

⁵¹ Quoted in Kojecky, 188.

⁵² Kojecky, 194.

⁵³ Oldham to Polanyi, 12 September, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3.

⁵⁴ Polanyi to Oldham, 16 October, 1944, Box 15, Folder 3.

⁵⁵ No. 253. Polanyi to Mannheim, October 23, 1944.

⁵⁶ Mannheim apparently wrote his response to Eliot about the same time Polanyi did since he refers to it in his October 27, 1944 (No. 254) letter to Polanyi.

⁵⁷ These papers, with an introduction by the present authors, are forthcoming in *Journal of Classical Sociology*. Eliot’s paper has also been published as an appendix in Kojecky, 240-248.

⁵⁸ Polanyi to Eliot, 3rd June 1944. Box 4, Folder 11. Ultimately, Polanyi does not pursue the possible publication with Eliot because his agreement with Mannheim’s employer gives Routledge an option for two future publications. Polanyi to Eliot, 27 June, 1944, Box 4, Folder 11.

⁵⁹ Eliot to Polanyi, 7th June 1944, Box 4, Folder 11.

⁰ Kojecky, 245. Also “Notes by T. S. Eliot” and “On the Place and Function of the Clerisy,” Box 15, Folder 6.

⁶¹ Letter from Michael Polanyi, Box 15, Folder 6 (also Polanyi to Oldham, 16 October 1944, Box 15, Folder 3). Succeeding quotations without a source listed in this and the next several paragraphs, as the context makes clear, are from this same letter of response to Eliot’s paper.

⁶² Éva Gábor (“Michael Polanyi in the Moot,” *Polanyiana* Vol. 2, No. 1-2 [1992]: 124) suggests that Polanyi’s emphasis upon “personal transmission” here is really the germ of his later term “personal knowledge.”

⁶³ No. 253. Polanyi to Mannheim, October 23, 1944.

⁶⁴ Letter from Karl Mannheim, Box 15, Folder 6. Subsequent quotations without a source listed in this

and the next paragraphs, as the context makes clear, are from Mannheim's response to Eliot's paper.

⁶⁵ Kojecky notes (196) that Mannheim wanted to democratize knowledge, but Eliot thought this was either impossible or simply objectionable. Mannheim may be reading Polanyi's emphasis upon specialization as a simple elitism.

⁶⁶ At least no notes are available in the Polanyi archival material. Kojecky (239) lists Fenn, the person who took notes, as absent from this meeting so there likely were no official notes at all for this meeting.

⁶⁷ No. 258. Mannheim to Polanyi, January 1, 1945.

⁶⁸ No. 254. Mannheim to Polanyi, October 27, 1944. Scott and Moleski, 194, note 112 suggest a Polanyi essay "Three Periods of History" was originally intended as the introduction. There is evidence in the early paragraphs of the text of this essay (found in Box 29, Folder 8) that this was probably originally written as an introduction to the projected Mannheim book titled "The Autonomy of Science." As we discuss below (footnote 73), however, "Three Periods of History" appears to have become a part of another projected book. There is no discussion of "Three Periods of History" in Polanyi and Mannheim's letters, but it is clear quite clear in the letters that both Polanyi and Mannheim want to see Polanyi's response to Eliot reshaped as the introduction to Polanyi's projected book in Mannheim's series.

⁶⁹ Polanyi's letter to Professor and Mrs. K. Mannheim of 23 May 1945, Box 4, Folder 12, proposes a lunch meeting on the 31st of May that would include Eliot. Polanyi wrote a similar proposal to Eliot (23 May 1945, Box 4, Folder 12). Subsequent letters in Box 4, Folder 12 (Eliot to Polanyi, 25 May 1945; Mannheim to Polanyi, 25 May 1945; and Polanyi to Mannheim, 26 May 1945) suggest that a lunch for all three parties could not be worked out, although it is possible that Polanyi and Mannheim had lunch and Polanyi and Eliot met later in the afternoon of the 31st at Eliot's office.

⁷⁰ No. 259. Polanyi to Mannheim, March 6, 1945.

⁷¹ No. 260. Polanyi to Mannheim, September 14, 1945.

⁷² No. 261. Mannheim to Polanyi, September 18, 1945. Gábor, 459, No. 261, note 2 reports that Routledge did not fund the project.

⁷³ It is certainly also possible that Polanyi, either before or after the December 1944 Moot meeting, wrote another introductory essay. As noted above (footnote 68), Scott and Moleski, 194, note 112, have found an essay titled "Three Periods of History" in archival material for this period (Box 29, Folder 8). The text of this essay does suggest that the essay was intended as an opening essay in the unpublished book for Mannheim titled "The Autonomy of Science." "Three Periods of History" is, however, nothing like Polanyi's response to Eliot which both Polanyi and Mannheim seemed so enthusiastic about. As its title suggests, "Three Periods of History" offers a rather grand schematization of Western history that treats the period of dogmatism, the period of free thought or liberalism, and the contemporary period, a period moving toward nihilism. This scheme is an early Polanyi attempt to describe the critical tradition and its problems. This essay seems to fit with some of the suggestions in the letters and notes on the June 1944 Moot meeting at which Polanyi argued with Mannheim and offered an account of the transformation of history that the Russian Revolution represented (see discussion above). "Three Periods of History" is located in the archival material with a set of other essays from 1944 with curious numbered tags; Cash (the archivist who organized this material) identified everything here as miscellaneous short manuscripts. But the tags suggests that Polanyi at some point intended the essay to be part of yet another book other than that projected for Mannheim. In his original response to Eliot's paper, sent to Oldham in letter form (16 October 1944, Box 15, Folder 3), Polanyi mentions at the end of the letter that he has just finished a book manuscript titled "Principles of Economic Expansion." It is possible that "Three Periods of History" and the other material located with it are parts of this book that was never published.

⁷⁴ Kojecky, 196 reports that Mannheim planned to attend this meeting. Polanyi's "Old Tasks and New Hopes" published in the January 4, 1947 *Time and Tide* was material for this meeting on the subject the survival

of democracy. There is a copy of this (dated 6 January 1947) among Moot materials in Box 15, Folder 8 and it is identified as material for the meeting in an Oldham circular. A postcard dated 30-11-44 from Oldham to Moot members (Box 15, Folder 3) also indicates Polanyi's "Science and the Modern Crisis" was added late to material for the meeting. In his original response to Eliot's paper, sent to Oldham in letter form (16 October 1944, Box 15, Folder 3), Polanyi mentions at the end of the letter that he has just finished a book manuscript titled "Principles of Economic Expansion" that has a long chapter on the European crisis. He promises to send Oldham a revised version of this chapter "since it covers the field you asked me to talk about in December at the Moot." "Science and the Modern Crisis" is apparently the shortened and revised version. One copy of this essay that is in Box 19, Folder 14 identifies it as an "address delivered at the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society Meeting on 14th November 1944."

⁷⁵ Polanyi's 1951 (perhaps written in 1950) preface identifies the material in the volume as coming from the last eight years (*LL*, vi); a review of the separate ten essays in *LL* and their notes suggests that five and parts of others were first published after Mannheim's death. See also Allen's effort (*SEP*, 366) to run down where Polanyi has previously published elements of *LL*. Scott and Moleski, 194, note 112, are not quite on the mark in suggesting all of the material that Polanyi and Mannheim were working with was eventually published after Mannheim's death as *LL*.

⁷⁶ Mannheim is still listed on the flyleaf as the editor for the series, although the first edition dust jacket identifies Mannheim as the series founder and W. J. H. Spratt as the editor.

⁷⁷ The two posthumously published books by Mannheim that Polanyi reviewed are *Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950) and *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. Paul Kecskemeti (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951).

⁷⁸ Michael Polanyi, "Planning for Freedom," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, July 3, 1951, p. 4.

⁷⁹ Michael Polanyi, "Mannheim's Historicism" *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, December 9, 1952, p. 4.

Polanyi Society Membership

Tradition and Discovery is distributed to members of the Polanyi Society. An electronic (pdf) version of the current issue as well as past issues back to 1991 are available on the Polanyi Society web site (<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/>). The Polanyi Society has members in thirteen different countries, although most live in North America and the United Kingdom. The Society includes those formerly affiliated with the Polanyi group centered in the United Kingdom which published *Convivium: The United Kingdom Review of Post-critical Thought*. There are normally three issues of *TAD* each year.

Annual membership in the Polanyi Society is \$25 (\$10 for students). The membership cycle follows the academic year; subscriptions are due November 1 to Phil Mullins, Missouri Western State University, St. Joseph, MO 64507 (fax: 816-271-5680, e-mail: mullins@missouriwestern.edu). Please make checks payable to the Polanyi Society. Dues can be paid by credit card by providing the card holder's name as it appears on the card, the card number and expiration date. Changes of address and inquiries should be sent to Phil Mullins. New members should provide the following subscription information: complete mailing address, telephone (work and home), e-mail address and/or fax number. Institutional members should identify a department to contact for billing. The Polanyi Society attempts to maintain a data base identifying persons interested in or working with Polanyi's philosophical writing. New members can contribute to this effort by writing a short description of their particular interests in Polanyi's work and any publications and /or theses/dissertations related to Polanyi's thought. Please provide complete bibliographic information. Those renewing membership are invited to include information on recent work.

WWW Polanyi Resources

The Polanyi Society has a World Wide Web site at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/>. In addition to information about Polanyi Society membership and meetings, the site contains the following: (1) the history of Polanyi Society publications, including a listing of issues by date and volume with a table of contents for recent issues of *Tradition and Discovery*; (2) a comprehensive listing of *Tradition and Discovery* authors, reviews and reviewers; (3) digital archives containing many past issues of *Tradition and Discovery*; (4) information on locating early publications not in the archive; (5) information on *Appraisal* and *Polanyiana*, two sister journals with special interest in Polanyi's thought; (6) the "Guide to the Papers of Michael Polanyi", which provides an orientation to archival material housed in the Department of Special Collections of the University of Chicago Library; (7) photographs of Polanyi; (8) links to a number of essays by Polanyi.

REVIEWS

Ted Peters and Gaymon Bennett, eds. *Bridging Science and Religion*. Theology and the Sciences. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003. Pp. xii + 260. ISBN: 0-8006-3625-2. \$17.00, paper.

Ted Peters, Professor of Systematic Theology at Pacific Lutheran Seminary, and Gaymon Bennett, of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, have compiled an anthology that locates the dialog between science and religion in a global setting in which contextual concerns will receive their due. Comprised of thirteen essays grouped into three sections, this book begins with two chapters on methodology, i.e., how one goes about building a bridge between science and religion. The second section, “Constructing Scientific Spans,” contains four essays that begin with issues that arise from the theoretical and practical implications of the sciences and address such topics as evolution, genetics and neuroscience. The final section, “Constructing Religious Spans” contains seven essays by Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish thinkers that begin the dialog with issues that arise from their religious communities.

This anthology promises more than it actually delivers. The strength of this work lies in its breadth. Whereas most books on science and religion address only the metaphysical issues raised by scientific work, this one also addresses the moral. Unlike most books on science and religion that work within the framework of one faith tradition (usually Christianity), this one incorporates perspectives of the major faith traditions, with chapters written by adherents to those faiths. The weakness of the work is its unevenness. Some essays are not very accessible for readers unfamiliar with the discipline. For example, Nancey Murphy’s essay on postmodernism requires the reader to already know quite a bit about the history of philosophy. Some essays are unsatisfyingly succinct (e.g., Laurie Zoloth’s essay on Judaism), whereas others are almost overbearing in the amount of ground covered (e.g., Peter’s essay on genetics). Some ac-

counts of the sciences are quite accurate, whereas others are not—which is only to be expected when the vast majority of the authors are not scientists (perhaps here is a lesson for all those writing in the field of science and religion: all work needs to be co-authored by a theologian and a scientist—unless one is trained in both discourses).

In spite of its flaws, this book makes at least three contributions to the field of science and theology. First, the book provides a lucid and succinct history of the development of this academic field (Chapter One). Secondly, it takes developments of postmodern philosophy into account. Murphy’s undeveloped suggestion that the best way to bridge science and religion is by examination of their methods will perhaps resonate most with readers of Polanyi. Finally, this book “complexifies” the field by bringing other religious traditions into the discourse. One implication of these essays, for example, is that different religions will resonate with different issues in the sciences. For example, Buddhism, given its inherent interests, will be more interested in the cognitive sciences than astrophysics, or Judaism will be more attuned to the ethical implications of science and technology, given its emphasis on justice in this world. The book thus points out fruitful directions for further work.

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Jeffrey Stout. *Democracy and Tradition*. New Forum Books. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004. Pp. xv + 348. ISBN: 0-691-10293-7. \$49.95, cloth; \$19.95, paper.

Jeffrey Stout, Professor of Religion at Princeton University, writes for a post 9/11 world in which questions arise about what kinds of people we are, as well as the role of religion in public life. Addressing his readers primarily as citizens of the United States, i.e., as people who accept “some measure of responsibility for the condition of society” (p.

5), Stout steers a course between the answers to these questions offered by liberal political theory (exemplified by John Rawls and Richard Rorty) and the “new traditionalism” of Alasdair MacIntyre, John Milbank, and Stanley Hauerwas. The former suggest that we are individuals for whom religion is a private matter and therefore has no place in public discourse, while the latter suggest that we are communally-formed people for whom faith is integral to our lives and for whom democracy is decidedly unfriendly. Finding both sets of answers problematic, Stout takes inspiration largely from John Dewey, Walt Whitman, and Ralph Ellison to argue that democracy is itself a tradition that can promote democratic virtues that are desperately needed in the contemporary world.

Stout makes his case in three steps. In the first part of the book (Chapters 1-2), he makes a case that democracy is not anti-virtuous, but instead transforms old world virtues. As cases in point, Stout suggests what two virtues, piety and hope, might look like when transformed by/in a democratic culture. Piety becomes the virtue that enables all people (hence its democratic transformation) to achieve a higher excellence, in part through recognition of their dependence upon gifts that can never be fully repaid (pp. 29-39). Hope, construed democratically, is engendered by working for at least small improvements, using democratic means in a spirit that is at once both critical and generous (pp. 58-60).

In the second part of the book, Stout criticizes the opposing factions of liberal political theory (Chapter 3) and the new traditionalism (Chapters 4-7), noting that both share a similar assumption, i.e., that “the political culture of our democracy implicitly requires the policing or self-censorship of religious expression in the political arena” (p. 84). Rawls’ commitment to arguing only on the basis of premises all reasonable citizens might agree to fails to realize “how much work candid expression and imminent criticism . . . perform in real democratic exchange” (p. 73). Rorty’s fear that introducing religion into public discourse will stop the conversation fails to realize that conversations stop for many reasons and that the reasons citizens actually share usually do not answer our pressing questions (pp. 87 and 89). Offering extensive criticisms of MacIntyre and Hauerwas, Stout contends that their “rhetorically-excessive” criticisms

of liberal democracy actually undermine public discourse. What is needed then is a third way.

Stout supplies that third way in the final part of the book, where he describes democracy as a form of “pragmatic expressivism that takes enduring social practices as a tradition with which we have good reasons to identify” (p. 184). This view of democracy permeates the book as a whole, not just the final section, so it is perhaps best summarized by drawing from the work as a whole. Doing so, one finds that democracy construed as a tradition exhibits several features. The first is that it is made up of practices that have moral substance, contra the proclamations of theorists and the fears of the new traditionalists. The moral substance of democratic practices lies in holding one another accountable by giving reasons for the norms one holds (p. 13). Democratic practice is, in short, analogous to a vigorous conversation that is open to all comers (p. 222). Stout does not have in mind all conversations, however, only public ones, i.e., those in which participants address one another as citizens on matters that pertain to the common or civic good (p. 93). In these settings, participants must give reasons for their stances, choices or preferences, reasons that will reflect commitments that individuals make and attribute to others (p. 209). Those reasons can derive from many sources, including one’s religious convictions, but an authentically democratic conversation has a Socratic character in which each partner respects the other’s convictions by interrogating those convictions and their implications (p. 72). Moreover, one might use different kinds of reasons in different settings. For example, one might personally arrive at a stance for religious reasons but use reasons that are non-religious in character when making a case for a different audience (p. 114). Moreover, at least two virtues are necessary in order to engage in this conversation well: the ability to speak civilly (207) and the willingness to recognize and defer to the moral authority of reliable (but not unchallengeable) witnesses, an authority based not on hereditary rank, but upon recognition of one’s interpretive skills (pp. 212-220).

Stout concludes by admitting the deficiencies of democratic practice and calling the readers to continue the hard work of democracy in the face of three powerful constituencies in contemporary Ameri-

can life (the business elite, “diaspora groups” and the cultural right). He acknowledges that democracy rarely lives up to its highest ideals (p. 289). He admits that democratic authority can devolve into a tyranny of an undiscerning majority (p. 281). He recognizes that one will have to live in tension with some who will never agree (p. 201), as well as in a nation that adopts policies that one finds deplorable (p. 299). Calling readers not to confuse the civic nation with the nation state, Stout argues that democratic citizens must “hold together contempt for and appreciation of” democracy (p. 290), and develop the virtues of self-trust and courage that enable one to resist culturally-prescribed roles (p. 293). The religious left must recover its energy and confidence (p. 300) and all people must work together to promote common activities at the local level, activities that will presumably nurture the virtues necessary for democracy to survive.

Democracy and Tradition is an engaging and provocative work. Stout is informed by his deep knowledge of the philosophical traditions, as well as his personal knowledge of and history with his opponents. There is a sense in which the book is the latest installment in an ongoing conversation between Stout, Rawls, Rorty, and Hauerwas. His treatment of them is, as usual, insightful, challenging, even-handed and sometimes playful. Moreover Stout draws on his own experiences as soccer coach and member of his local community to give concrete purchase to his ideas and proposals.

The book makes several contributions to the conversation about religion and democracy. First, his account of democracy’s substantive moral commitments cogently answers the criticism that democracy is morally empty. Secondly, his description of democracy as an ongoing conversation in which things that matter are negotiated creatively acknowledges both the validity of bringing religious convictions into public debate and the persuasive limits of doing so. In addition, his discussion remains at a concrete (pragmatic) level—which is where it needs to be. Finally, his discussion of the problem of moral disagreement (chapters 10 and 11) rightly argues that common morality is a goal to be achieved on an ad hoc basis. By shifting the focus from a matter of metaphysics to a matter of practice, Stout argues that saying something is true is to say something about what it means in a

particular discourse, not that it is metaphysically true. He thus tries to separate the matter of whether a statement is true or not from the issue of whether one is justified in believing that it is true. For Stout, we learn what is true, over time, by means of practice, (p. 255). There is therefore an objectivity to moral norms, but one that is socially grounded (p. 274), much like the rules that define sandlot baseball (p. 271).

Of course, questions remain. Are the moral commitments intrinsic to democracy substantive enough to sustain and reproduce democracy in each new generation? Permeating this work is a profound sense of and commitment to justice, but where does Stout derive the content for his notion of justice? While Stout’s attempt to separate notions of truth from justification and from metaphysics accomplishes much of what he wants it to do, one still wonders: is there nothing more to truth?

Readers familiar with Polanyi will find several affinities between his work and Stout’s, especially the recognition that knowledge and commitment go hand in hand (e.g., pp. 208, 218, and 233-236), what is involved in learning to see (e.g., pp. 220-221), and the fact that we often know more than we can say (e.g., 221, 234 and 237). One wonders, too, if Polanyi’s notion of universal intent might not help Stout come to a more satisfying account of truth, metaphysics and justification.

As always, Stout produces a work that addresses contemporary issues and thinkers with passion, skill and intelligence. His commitment to democracy and to justice is to be commended. One now waits eagerly for the dialog to continue (Hauerwas has already responded in print with a post-script to his *Performing the Faith*).

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