

## REVIEW ESSAY

### INTELLECTUAL PARTNERSHIPS AND GRUDGES; GERTH'S RELATIONSHIP WITH C. WRIGHT MILLS<sup>1</sup>

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Hans Gerth was like a character Thomas Mann might have invented to wander in and out of the pages of *Doctor Faustus*. He had mastered music—he was an accomplished pianist—and philosophy and then saw the two as integrated parts of a single *weltanschauung* or world view. After being forced out of his native Germany by the Nazis, he carried to the United States the intellectual legacies of Max Weber and Karl Mannheim with the latter describing him as “the most gifted of all my former students” (cited in Oakes and Vidich, 2000: 157).

Gerth singly or together with either C. Wright Mills or Don Martindale translated four of Weber's books into English—he more than anyone else was responsible for making the works of Max Weber cornerstones of social science theory on this side of the Atlantic. After Mannheim's unexpected early death, Gerth co-edited one of his unfinished manuscripts for publication under the title *Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning*. In addition, he translated, with Mills and Martindale, articles by Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin. Gerth also translated into a book the minutes from the fifth congress of Marx and Engels's First International that contained the debate over Mikhail Bakunin's expulsion, which signaled the definitive ideological split between Marxian socialism and anarchism. The original handwritten minutes had been in the papers of a German immigrant socialist from Milwaukee and had subsequently found their way to the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Gerth's most famous article was “The Nazi Party: Its Leadership and Composition.” Using data from an internal party survey that he smuggled out of Germany, he showed, among other things, that the Nazis had a greater base of support in the middle than working classes. The occupational group that was most over-represented were school teachers. Gerth interpreted this astounding statistical finding to mean that school teachers were especially attracted to the Nazis' authoritarian call for order.