

# Chapter 4

## Science and Socialism: Otto Neurath as a Political Writer (1919–1932)



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**Abstract** In the case of Otto Neurath, there was always a close relationship between science and politics. It is worth noting, however, that he also intervened in politics of the day. The essay focuses on Neurath's time in Revolutionary Bavaria and Red Vienna and analyzes his articles in two newspapers in the interwar period: the German periodical *Economy and Order of Life* (a supplement of the *Art Guardian*) and the Austrian socialist daily *Workers' Newspaper*. The examination starts when Neurath definitely became a socialist and member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) after the war in Germany and ends shortly before his forced migration from Austria in 1934. The two series of articles differed in some respects. While in *Economy and Order of Life* Neurath focused only socialization, he addressed a number of different topics in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (AZ – *Workers' Newspaper*) ranging from guild socialism over housing, architecture and settlement to education and the scientific world-conception. The question of his role and his self-image was a common theme in many of these articles. Beyond that, however, there were even approaches to closely related themes that he developed more precisely only in his later life: the question of experts, citizens, and democracy.

### 4.1 Intellectual Interventions into Politics

As most readers of this book would probably agree, Otto Neurath was the most effective political character among the Viennese philosophers of Logical Empiricism. Although there was a politicized left wing within the Vienna Circle (Carnap 1963; Uebel 2005), which included Rudolf Carnap, Philipp Frank, Hans Hahn and – at its periphery – Edgar Zilsel, even among these, nobody ever played a role in politics comparable to that of Otto Neurath. His intellectual biography demonstrates that he had developed a strong profile in scientific and pedagogical fields such as the

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history of economy and political economy, sociology, the philosophy of science and visual education, and even more (cf. Sandner 2014a). None of his scientific and/or educational projects, however, can be strictly separated from politics. In Neurath's case, there was always a close relationship between science and politics. Politics, however, existed not only subcutaneously in his well-known intellectual projects such as unity of science or international picture language. Moreover, he actually intervened in politics of the day. He did so not only on a theoretical level but as an active part of political projects such as those in revolutionary Bavaria after the Great War or in Red Vienna of the interwar years. This is an obvious difference from both the other left-wingers in the Vienna Circle and many political philosophers and/or philosophers of science.<sup>1</sup>

This essay focuses on a particular category of Otto Neurath's political publications: his newspaper articles from the interwar period. The examination starts when Neurath definitely became a socialist and member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) after the war in Germany (Neurath 1920/1973, 21; Sandner 2014a, 127) and ends shortly before his forced migration from "New Vienna" or "Red Vienna" in 1934. In Vienna, he belonged to the Austro-Marxist intellectual group and played different roles in culture, education and politics (Sandner 2006).

Otto Neurath often and continuously published in newspapers and the daily press, starting as a young scholar and continuing more or less until the end of his life. A number of publications on the political Neurath have already focused on this issue (e.g. Sandner 2014a, b; Cartwright et al. 1996). This essay, however, concentrates on political writings in a narrower sense – on his role as a public disputer, and as someone who wanted to convince larger audiences as both an expert and a political activist. These publications are little known, and they are not part of any edition of collected writings. In addition, they were never translated into English.<sup>2</sup>

The publications in question represent two different series of articles published between 1919 and 1932: Firstly, his contributions for a supplement of the German journal *Deutscher Wille des Kunstwart* (*German Will of the Art Guardian*) called *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* (*Economy and Order of Life*) in 1919. In this period of less than a year, Otto Neurath explained and defended his ideas of a future socialized economy. Most of these articles were published very shortly before Neurath became president of the Central Economic Office in Munich. Although he developed similar thoughts and ideas on the issue of socialization in books, booklets and scientific essays, there are some peculiarities of these articles due to this particular medium and its expected readership. Secondly, there are his contributions in the socialist daily *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (*AZ – Workers' Newspaper*) in Vienna. The time-frame is considerably longer, between 1919 and 1932, and Neurath addressed a number of *different* topics, such as guild socialism, settlement, education, and the

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<sup>1</sup> On the political level of Neurath's philosophical thought, see Don Howard's chapter in the present volume.

<sup>2</sup> The most important collections of Otto Neurath's writings are the following: Neurath and Cohen (1973); Hegselmann (1979); Neurath and Cohen (1983); Haller and Rutte (1981); Haller and Kinross (1991); Haller and Höfer (1998); Uebel and Cohen (2004).

scientific world-conception. Although his forced migration from Vienna in 1934 did not mean the end of his political writings, it effected a deep impact, even in his political life.<sup>3</sup>

On the one hand, the present essay shows the range of topics that Neurath addressed as a political commentator and analyst. In most cases, it is obvious how these articles relate to his scientific and philosophical writings. On the other hand, Neurath's writings from these years reflect a theme that was starting to gain ground: the question of experts and citizens in a democracy. Of course, this was also a self-reflection on his role as an economist, philosopher of science and visual educator. Neurath's contemporary writings on the subject, however, did not make things easier. He often, and in many different times and contexts, insisted on his role as an apolitical social engineer who always aimed to work on and realize his utopian ideas independent of political power. Was he exclusively an expert or a partisan political commentator? Or did he assume both roles? What exactly was his idea and definition of politics? What did he want to achieve, and how were his social and political aims related to his scientific program? Did he just translate the scientific and philosophical program into political statements and positions, or was there an interdependency between his fields?

Why these two particular periodicals? A few words on the criteria for their selection may be added: Otto Neurath published in many different periodicals, and even in many different *socialist* ones. His essays and articles in Red Vienna, for instance, appeared in a number of party political or syndicalist-related newspapers and journals, such as *Arbeit und Wirtschaft* (*Labor and Economy*), *Bildungsarbeit* (*Educational Work*) or *Der Kampf* (*The Campaign*). Although the intellectual level of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* was remarkably high, its readership was much larger than that of *Der Kampf*, for instance, the programmatic and theoretical journal of the *Social Democratic Workers' Party* (SDAP). The *Workers' Newspaper* was the official daily of the Austrian socialists. Founded in the nineteenth century, the newspaper became the party's most important medium, despite being only one of many socialist periodicals in interwar Austria. In the mid-1920s, about 100,000 copies were published daily (Stadler 1990, 105; Pelinka and Scheuch 1989, 75–76). This implied a considerable readership, though not very large compared with the more than 700,000 party members at the end of the 1920s (Maderthaner 1995, 180). Anyway, it is fascinating to see in which ways Neurath developed his thoughts in his journalistic contributions and tried to impart knowledge in this political context.

The *Kunstwart* (*The Art Guardian*) had been founded in 1887 in Dresden and was edited by poet and publicist Ferdinand Avenarius (brother of philosopher Richard Avenarius). The frequency of its publication was mostly biweekly, sometimes only monthly. Although its circulation differed, there were never more than 20,000 copies published (Kratzsch 1969). Its focus was on culture (and especially the arts), not on politics. It was definitely not a declared socialist or leftwing journal; it was targeted to the educated middle class and covered a wide range of

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<sup>3</sup>The author has examined the “political Neurath” in both periods of emigration: Sandner (2011) and (2019a).

political orientations, including German nationalist ones. Nevertheless, Otto Neurath used its supplement *Economy and Order of Life* and even exploited it with the help of his friend Wolfgang Schumann. During the first half of the year 1919, they used the medium to influence a politically interested and educated bourgeois readership. They decided to back their ideas for a wide-ranging socialization of the economy with the help of this periodical. Both Otto Neurath and Wolfgang Schumann had already been active with the traditional *Der Kunstwart* before.

## 4.2 Socialization, Social Economy and Socialism

### 4.2.1 *The War Economist and Socialization Theoretician*

Before the Great War, Otto Neurath was primarily known in the intellectual world as an economist. Although he had also addressed subjects in other academic fields, such as the philosophy of science or, as a young man, even German literature, it was his theory of war economy that drew broad attention to his intellectual work. In this context, his focus was twofold: He both examined war economy historically (his doctoral thesis was on the history of economy) and studied contemporary wars and their economic consequences, especially the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 (Sandner 2017). Based upon this research, he developed his theory on war economy. In Neurath's view, political economy had previously paid insufficient attention to war economy. Aside from obvious and undisputable negative effects, he was convinced that war could also stimulate an economy. To evaluate and systematize these different effects of war on the economy, a special discipline of war economy was needed (as a sub-discipline of political economy). Although he was not the first to address the topic, as he himself admitted, he presented himself as the founder of this new approach as a special scientific discipline (Neurath 1913). Well-established scholars such as Max Weber respected and recognized him as an expert in this field, and economist Franz Eulenburg (1916/17, 1918) discussed his approach in the well-established journal *Archive for Social Science and Social Policy* (*Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*).<sup>4</sup> Franz Eulenburg, certainly, fundamentally rejected Neurath's thesis. For him, war was nothing but a rare case in economics that neither delivered useful advice nor served as any role model for a well-functioning peace-time economy.

Neurath, in contrast, was convinced that the instruments of war economy such as planning and scientific expertise, calculation in kind, and the strong focus on efficiency and productivity, were perfectly useful even and especially in peace. He was convinced that the future economy was an administrative and moneyless economy beyond the market. He insisted that there could always be a much better utilization of energies in the economy – and in his view, it was the war economy that

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<sup>4</sup>On Neurath's economic ideas, see Jordi Cat's, Elisabeth Nemeth's, and Thomas Uebel's chapters in the present volume.

demonstrated how this could be done. A peacetime economy that used these experiences was the key for a better future society. This new economic order could achieve its most important aim: A higher quality of life for the people. Thus, paradoxically, it was the war that paved the way for human happiness.

During the Great War, Otto Neurath's ideas of war economy were both exploited and institutionalized. Although he further insisted on his role of an expert, he sided politically, implicitly at least, with the Central Powers Austria-Hungary and Germany. Parts of the military were extremely interested in his research on war economy and tried to make use of it. After his deployment as an officer of the Austrian army on the Russian front, he returned to Vienna and became leader of a group in the *Scientific Committee of War Economy* (*Wissenschaftliches Komitee für Kriegswirtschaft*) in April 1916. Almost simultaneously, he got involved in the emerging Museum of War Economy in Leipzig, whose director he became in 1918 (Sandner 2014a, 85–99 and 2014c, 389–394).

After the war, there was a widespread intellectual consensus that there must be changes in both the political and the economic order. In this time “war socialism” – the idea that war had prepared the conditions for socialism – became popular (Krüger 1997; Sandner 2014a, 109–111). In some respects, at least, this concept was similar to Neurath's approach. There was a widespread mood for change. In this context, the question of socialization was widely discussed, not only by representatives of the radical left. Walter Rathenau, for instance, was among the references Otto Neurath often mentioned in his writings, as well as Rudolf Wissell, Wichard von Moellendorf and others (cf. Rathenau 1918, Moellendorff 1916).

Neurath systematically adapted his concept for socialization from his theory of war economy. Again, he tried to implement his economic ideas practically and to intervene directly into politics. The addressees, however, were no longer the military powers of Germany and Austria. Now, he applied to the post-war revolutionary governments. Together with Wolfgang Schumann and Hermann Kranold, he designed the so-called Kranold-Neurath-Schumann plan in February 1919 (Neurath 1919). They developed their idea for a total socialization<sup>5</sup> and indicated concrete measures for its implementation. The booklet ended in 21 legislative proposals. The three men were convinced that socialist governed Saxony could be an ideal place to start with the necessary transformation of the economic order. Much to their regret, however, the left-wing government refused their proposals (Sandner 2014a, 111–114).

Neurath's ideas for socialization were anything but unclear. “The aim of socialization is to produce and distribute the final product socialistically,” he put it (1920/2004, 377). The year before, he had explained: “Of a complete realization of socialism, however, one can generally speak only when both the socialist distribution and the planned administration of production takes places through society” (1919/1973, 137). With thoughts like this, however, he tried to convince the readership of a well-established German periodical.

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<sup>5</sup>As Neurath (1920a, 7) pointed out, the term total socialization (*Vollsozialisierung*) was not his own but was introduced by Wolfgang Schumann.

#### 4.2.2 *The Articles for the Supplement Economy and Order of Life*

Beginning in 1908 and continuing through the prewar period, Otto Neurath wrote a number of articles for the *Kunstwart*, even addressing the subject of war economy in them (cf. Wilhelm 1911). Moreover, he became a friend of Wolfgang Schumann, the stepson of editor Ferdinand Avenarius. It was the beginning of a collaboration between Neurath and Schumann that continued for many years. Wolfgang Schumann not only contributed continuously to the journal, later acting as its editor, but was also a fellow-campaigner in another venture of Avenarius – the *Dürerbund* (*Dürer League*), an organization that was active in cultural policy (Kratzsch 1969).

Between October 1915 and March 1919 *Der Kunstwart* was published under a new name as *Deutscher Wille des Kunstwarts* (*German Will of the Art Guardian*). This name as well as the idea behind it was obviously related to the war. Addressing a “German Will” in times of war implied both ideological militarization and politicization; it denoted the will to win the war, the German will to victory. According to the editorial concept of the *Kunstwart*, however, it was not only and even not necessarily a war on material things (such as territories, population, industries etc.) but a war between national or ethnic communities that differed in character, spiritually as well as morally (Kratzsch 1969, 364–398).

After the war, the journal appeared in a new format, and with a new supplement called *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* (*Economy and Order of Life*). In January 1919, it was presented as a *joint venture* between the traditional *Kunstwart* and the newly established *Deutsches Wirtschaftsmuseum* (*German Economic Museum*), the follower of the *War Museum* in Leipzig. Otto Neurath was still its director, and his museum was responsible for the supplement. The two parts of the journal, the *German Will* and its supplement, differed even in design: Old German lettering in one (*Deutscher Wille des Kunstwart*), alphabetic characters in Latin in the other (*Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung*). Even in its short history of nine months, the supplement’s subtitle changed repeatedly. It was usually *Papers of the German Economic Museum* (*Blätter des Deutschen Wirtschaftsmuseums*) with or without the appendix *Biweekly of economic understanding* (*Halbmonatsschrift für Wirtschaftsverständnis*). Only in a few issues it was explicitly indicated that the periodical was directed by Otto Neurath and Wolfgang Schumann.

In an introductory essay, four men explained the character of the joint venture: Editor Ferdinand Avenarius and publisher Georg D.W. Callwey spoke for the traditional *Kunstwart* and, for the *German Economic Museum*, its director Otto Neurath and its general secretary Wolfgang Schumann chimed in (Avenarius et al. 1919).

On the whole, the supplement appeared in the journal’s issues 1–14 of 1919 (published in the period between January and September). Due to the role of Otto Neurath, there was an obvious trend: The later the date of the publication of the supplement’s issue, the fewer his own contributions. He was extremely active in issues 1–6, but in the later ones, he published only a single article or nothing at all.

The journal as a whole was renamed *Kunst- und Kulturwart* (*Guardian of Art and Culture*) in April 1919, and the supplement continued for only a few months.

In the introduction to the series, Otto Neurath and Wolfgang Schumann stressed their idea of economic enlightenment without any party political bias. The supplement's idea, as they put it, was to transfer social and economic knowledge to the people, not to proclaim political doctrines (Neurath and Schumann 1919). This position corresponded with their view on socialization: Both men were convinced that the advantages of a socialized economy can be demonstrated and even be proven by science. Therefore, socialization needed to be discussed objectively and reasonably. It would not be political polemic but scientific evidence that would help to transform the economy.

In fact, the supplement had only a very few authors. Wolfgang Schumann and especially Otto Neurath were by far the most frequent contributors. In Neurath's case, however, this was not obvious *prima facie*. It was the use of pseudonyms that concealed the obvious staffing shortage. Otto Neurath wrote not only with his real name but also under two other identities, as "Fonsow" and as "Karl Wilhelm." While the former name was not that easy to identify, the latter – a pseudonym he had used before and would use afterward – was obvious: The author's full name was Otto *Karl Wilhelm* Neurath. Most of the supplement's issues consisted of only eight pages and included, besides the texts of Neurath, Schumann and a few occasional authors, historical texts such as those of John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx or Karl von Vogelsang.

The supplement's main theme was, naturally, socialization. Its key text was the four-part essay *Zur Sozialisierung der Wirtschaft* (*Towards the socialization of the economy*), in which Otto Neurath (as Fonsow) developed his idea of socialization and even discussed some problems that could face a future non-market economy. In the first part (Fonsow 1919a), he contrasts two different models of the economic order: The free market economy (*Verkehrswirtschaft*) on the one hand and the future socialist economy as an administrative economy followed by a plan on the other. In a socialized economy it is community, and not the individual entrepreneur as master, who makes production decisions. In a free market economy, those enterprises were undertaken that yielded the highest money profits. In the administrative economy, in contrast, the plan replaces net profits in regulating the economy. In the end, the economy yields the same advantages to all and increased people's happiness. Neurath eventually addresses some possible problems: If there is no profit, how to motivate individuals to collaborate in a "socialized society" (Fonsow 1919a, 4)? How can the danger of a dramatic decrease in production be prevented? In answer to this question, Neurath presents systems of premiums (i.e. gratifications for hard and efficient workers) in the second part of the essay. Premiums, as Neurath understood them, would be related to the requirements of the community. That means that premiums even may be paid if noisy works are not undertaken or dust formation is avoided (Fonsow 1919b, 11).

In the third part, he explains the systems of premiums in more detail and then points out that a future economy needs to find out systematically exactly which humans are suited for which activity. What were the best activities to assign each individual? How can planners optimize the use of capabilities? How can planners

bring about a combination of people and jobs such that a maximum of happiness is achieved? The socialization's aim was a socialized order of life, based upon improved efficiencies, but without any schematization of personal life. Probably, as Neurath prognosticated, there would even be greater diversification of ways of life in socialism (Fonsow 1919c, 22).

In the last part, Neurath portrayed the Central Economic Office as the decisive authority, shortly *before* he actually became president of exactly this institution in Munich, and he focused on the need for universal statistics and an economic plan as a basic principle. For Neurath, the ideal time for socialization was not sometime in the future, it was now. Socialization, he continued, could start even in a region smaller than a nation-state, and there was simply no need to wait for neighboring countries. In his view, socialization was the best system for the postwar economy because it could handle problems such as shortage and poverty with its strong focus on economic efficiency. In this context, he referred to the example of 3000 different pocketknives that seemingly existed at that time (Fonsow 1919d, 36). The setting of industrial norms and types implied the disappearance of many types that, in fact, nobody really needed. This could happen, however, without any decline in quality of life. Socialization, he continued, must be done without compromises. It always meant total socialization. To socialize or not was only a political question, he put it, but if a society decided on socialization, it needed to be done immediately, quickly and entirely (Fonsow 1919d, 37).

Beyond this core idea, he addressed a few other subjects. He explained, for instance, his concept of utopia (Neurath 1919) and stressed the importance of education for a future society (Wilhelm 1919a).

Otto Neurath played different roles in the issues of the journal. In sum, he published about 20 articles. As "Fonsow" he embodied the political economist, the established economic expert, who designed a future society, and discussed its perspectives and chances, as well as its possible problems. His argumentation was based on scientific evidence though *not* always beyond any party political bias. As "Karl Wilhelm" he examined some selected and concrete problems in greater detail, such as economy in kind and its effects on interstate relations, among others (Wilhelm 1919b, c, d). In comparison to Fonsow, who debated on principles, Karl Wilhelm was the empiricist who did little case studies. As Otto Neurath, he spoke *officially*, as editor of the journal and director of the museum. In fact, however, there was no clear separation between the authors, and, in the end, it was of course always Otto Neurath under different names.

Wolfgang Schumann, who published many articles in the journal, portrayed the *German Economic Museum*, for instance, that succeeded the Museum of War Economy in two parts (Schumann 1919a, b). Among the few other contributions, some of which are published anonymously, is one Neurath's companion Herman Kranold wrote about economic activities with and without a plan. No surprise, the former approach is by far the better one, according to the author (Kranold 1919).

Politically, two things are remarkable. Firstly, Neurath criticized the Spartacus League (the forerunner of the Communist Party) for its idealized idea of man (Fonsow 1919b, 9), and he also repeatedly rejected the politics of the Bolsheviks.

He not only explained his approach as an economic expert but also envisaged and reflected on a future socialist society. In addition, he stressed the fact that socialization, a socialist order of life, was a question of political will. However, he obviously did *not* address a particular *German Will*, as the title of the journal suggests. It was the will of the proletarian masses to realize socialism. For Neurath, there was no better way of living than in a socialized economy and socialist society. And if one thinks there is a better way, he continued, it needs to be demonstrated through scientific evidence (Fonsow 1919d, 37).

Although his essays did not represent a detailed analysis of his socialization theory (as he presented in some other publications) he delivered a summarized version of it and even discussed some practical problems as contributions to public debate. The aim was to persuade an educated readership, including multipliers such as teachers and publicists, that a new economic order was unavoidable.

In the supplement's last issue in September 1919, the revolutionary spirit had trickled away. Otto Neurath was no longer present, and Wolfgang Schumann (1919c) asserted the end of any effort to realize a planned economy, effective socialization and socialism. Interestingly, the dramatic events in Munich in spring and summer of 1919 played almost no role in *Economy and Order of Life*. Not in the supplement but in the journal *Der Kunst- und Kulturwart*, however, Wolfgang Schumann (1919d) touched on the subject. His article was, as the subtitle suggests ("personal experiences with the press") about his experiences with media reports. He complained about many false reports in the post-revolutionary Munich press, including those which reported his own assassination (!), and also responded to the defamations of his friend Otto Neurath. Moreover, both Schumann (1919e, f) and editor Avenarius (1919) looked back to Munich in three articles in which they tried to adjust and even relativize Schumann's role in revolutionary Bavaria.

Otto Neurath published only at rare intervals in the later issues of the journal's supplement, obviously because of his activities in economic planning in Munich. He became president of the Central Economic Office on 27 March 1919 under a socialist-bourgeois government and remained in office under two short-term council republics. After only a few weeks, he was dismissed in May 1919 and accused of high treason. After the trial and his condemnation to one and a half years of prison, he was instead extradited to Vienna in February 1920 thanks to the continuous interventions of the Austrian government, including and especially two social democrats, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Otto Bauer and Chancellor Karl Renner (Sandner 2014a, 132–143). In early 1920, his new career in Red Vienna started. In his booklet on *Experiences of Socialization in Bavaria* (*Bayerische Sozialisierungserfahrungen*) he recapitulated the past months as follows:

I think we need not give up hope that all those in opposition to capitalism could join forces to replace a capitalist order with a socialist planned economy, in a peaceful manner, without submitting to compromise. I still believe that we could introduce socialism in the near future if we definitely want it. Those who say this are being sharply attacked, even hated by many; this has to be suffered, but we should not react with counter-hatred and emotional distortion. Only by remaining dispassionate ourselves can we demand objectivity from our opponents, only then can we hope that the future will led in without bitter fight. Socialism will come anyhow; may it come, not with hatred, but with love. (Neurath 1920/1973, 28.)

## 4.3 The Austro-Marxist

### 4.3.1 Back in Vienna

Back in his birthplace, Vienna, Otto Neurath began working feverishly. He organized schools and training sessions for members of the newly founded workers' council in early 1920 (Sandner 2014a, 158) and became general secretary of a *Research Institute of Social Economy (Forschungsinstitut für Gemeinwirtschaft)*, that consulted the Austrian commission for socialization and carried out economic studies (Sandner 2014a, 162–165). Despite the existence of workers' councils and ongoing research on social economy, in fact, the Austrian efforts toward socialization ended, at the latest, in October 1920 when the Social Democratic Party lost the general elections and went into opposition. Only a very small sector of the Austrian economy was successfully socialized i.e. transformed into a social economy: the former corporations of the military apparatus in Vienna (Weissel 1976; Gerlich 1980). For Neurath (1922e), however, this was not socialization but only “social capitalism” because these enterprises were still embedded in a market economy.

Nevertheless, he did not lose his ambitions and further developed his theoretical approach: He explicitly linked his socialization theory with guild socialism, and discussed the writings of British left-winger G.D.H. Cole. Although he rejected some elements of Cole's theory, he also combined its organizational idea with total socialization (see below). By 1921, Otto Neurath had become one of the settlement movement's most important representatives and the mastermind of its unification and centralization. The settlement movement was based upon common property and thus represented social economy. Its organization was similar to the idea of guilds. Thus, Neurath became secretary of the social housing guild (*Baugilde*) and general secretary of the *Austrian Association for Settlement and Allotment (Österreichischer Verband für Siedlungs- und Kleingartenwesen)*. The latter organized an exhibition on settlement in Vienna in autumn 1923 which resulted in the foundation of a museum for settlement (Sandner 2014a, 165–176).<sup>6</sup> These activities paved the way for his most important institution, the *Social and Economic Museum (Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum)*, the director of which he became in 1925. In addition, he was extremely active in adult education and was, among many other activities, one of the teachers in the socialist Worker's University (*Arbeiterhochschule*), founded in 1926. From 1924 onwards, the meetings of the Schlick-Circle (resp. Vienna Circle) took place. Thus, Otto Neurath was active in many Viennese intellectual and educational fields. His numerous lectures and speeches demonstrate the astonishing variety of his themes (regularly announced in the periodical *Arbeiter-Zeitung*).

Otto Neurath was a member of the Austrian Social Democratic Workers' Party (SDAP) and collaborated with the left-wing government of the city of Vienna. Although he was never a party official he published many articles for socialist

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<sup>6</sup>For more on Neurath's involvement in the Settlement movement, see Sophie Hochhäusl's chapter in the present volume.

periodicals. It is worth noting that some of these socialist papers, including the *AZ*, frequently used picture statistics according to his Vienna Method (though they also used non-Neurathian picture statistics). In the election campaign of 1927, the *Vienna Method of Picture Statistics* was extensively used to promote socialist slogans such as “*Einheitsschule statt Einheitsliste*” (comprehensive school instead of unified list of candidates).<sup>7</sup>

### 4.3.2 *The Articles in the Workers’ Newspaper*

Between 1919 and 1932 Otto Neurath wrote 25 articles for the daily *Workers’ Newspaper* (*AZ*). Thematically, these articles can be divided into four different groups (which are, nevertheless, related to each other). The first group is on socialization and guild socialism: In fact, these show a smooth transition with respect to his publications in *Economy and Order of Life*. On March 27, 1919, the day he became president of the *Central Economic Office* in Munich, Neurath published an article on the question of total socialization vs partial nationalization (Neurath 1919). Unsurprisingly, he clearly favored the first option and rejected the second. It included also a message for the Austrian socialists: Neurath developed the idea of a joint venture in socialization between Saxony, Bavaria and Austria that would, in his view, exert political pressure on the German Reich to finally implement and realize a serious socialization policy.

In February 1921, Neurath reviewed G.D.H. Cole’s book on guild socialism, introduced by Wolfgang Schumann and translated by his wife Eva Schumann (Neurath 1921a). Guild socialism was an important movement in the early twentieth century, especially in Great Britain, Germany and Austria. It implied (among other things) that *different* groups of employed persons (blue collar workers, white collar workers etc.) were to be organized as guilds in their particular economic sectors. Guild organization contrasts with the organizational model of the trade unions, which focused on the same groups of employed persons from different economic firms and economic sectors. In Neurath’s view, it was important to combine this organizational approach with an economic plan (and especially in this respect, he adapted or complemented Cole). A few months later, he explained in another article that, in fact, there were two different political formations of guilds: guild liberalism and guild socialism (Neurath 1921b), and he clearly favored the latter. In December 1921, he reported on his activities in the settlement movement and the making of the housing guild (*Baugilde*) (Neurath 1921c).

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<sup>7</sup>“Einheitsschule“was the name for the socialist conception of school organization. It meant the same school for all children, independent of family background and social class. The “Einheitsliste” was a coalition of rightwing parties that ran successfully for the general election of 1927 against the feared socialist electoral victory. The *Einheitsliste* won more than 48% while the SDAP took only 42% (cf. Dachs 1995, 150). For the election campaign see the article “Wählt Einheitsschule statt Einheitsliste” (Vote for comprehensive school – not for the unified list of candidates), in: *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 16 April 1927, 9.

The development of the settlement movement in Vienna dates back to the time of around 1918, when the city was suffering from economic hardship and severe food shortages. In postwar Austria, the movement was a self-help initiative that became a kind of small-scale realization of a non-capitalistic, social economy. Nevertheless, the Austrian economy remained far from total socialization, and even in the social democratic movement, most intellectual debaters rejected Neurath's ideas (Sandner 2014a, 147–150). In July 1922, Neurath wrote an article on class struggle and guild socialism, in which he described an existing and growing polarization between the proletariat and the bourgeois “front” in Austria (Neurath 1922a). In his view, the guild was a decisive instrument for the former because it helped to integrate social groups beyond industrial workers, including manual workers, clerks, bookkeepers, physicians etc. Guilds included working people of an entire economic sector, and therefore they broadened the proletariat front. The housing guild, for instance, represented among others construction workers, tenants and settlers. Altogether the guild included about 250,000 members (Sandner 2014a, 169–170).

With respect to the heavy Marxist class rhetoric he used, it is interesting to note that Otto Neurath had his own problem with respect to the strong polarization between the bourgeois and the proletariat front. As a representative of the settlement movement he published an article for the bourgeois liberal newspaper *Neue Freie Presse* (Neurath 1921d). The fact that a socialist author wrote for a non-socialist periodical was hereupon heavily criticized by an anonymous author in the *AZ* (Anonymous 1921), and Neurath had a hard time explaining why he had done so (Neurath 1921e; Sandner 2014a, 171–173).

Consequently, in August 1922, Neurath claimed that farmworkers and forest workers should be organized in the same guild and join this venture with the settlement movement (Neurath 1922b). A few months later, he announced an international meeting of the *Baugilden* in Vienna and developed some ideas on the unification or internationalization of national guild organizations (Neurath 1922c).

The second group of articles addressed the subjects of housing, architecture and settlement. In August 1922, Neurath intervened into debates on social policy and proposed a new measure against unemployment: Public funding for workers in particular economic sectors, for instance in cooperative housing estates. The idea was that communities, corporations etc. get the out-of-work benefits to create new jobs (Neurath 1922d). In the following year, he discussed the so-called one-kitchen house (*Einküchenhaus*). Its idea was that collectively organized meals for all tenants in a house reduced women's housework and enabled them to do paid work. Neurath discussed the idea critically, because many working class families refused to live in such houses, he argued. In fact, it were mainly bourgeois intellectuals who favored this way of living. Nevertheless, he presented it as *one* possible way of proletariat living – as was living in the settlement (Neurath 1923a). In a later article, he argued for an architectural program for the rapidly changing city of Vienna (Neurath 1923b). Consequently, he favored the idea of a general plan of architecture (*Generalarchitekturplan*) (Neurath 1923c). Especially in these articles, he demonstrated that he had remained a planning enthusiast: Only an architectural plan could

bring the necessary architectural unity. Whether the city of Vienna followed this plan or not was a crucial question for the future standard of living of its people.

In January 1926, Otto Neurath reviewed two small books written by architects on proletarian architecture and proletarian houses of culture (Neurath 1926). He mostly agreed with the ideas of the authors and asserted affirmatively that a proletarian architecture is on its way forward. Class struggle, Neurath agreed, is also a cultural conflict, and the issue of architecture plays an important role in it. Otto Neurath was also active in the Viennese *Werkbund exhibition* of 1932. He published two articles on this topic in the *AZ*. In the first one (Neurath 1932a), he portrayed the *Werkbund* settlement as an adequate example for happy future living. The settlement of 70 houses designed by different architects in an outward district of the city of Vienna was presented as a model for modern living. In the second article (Neurath 1932b), he formulated some closing words on the ending exhibition and came to an ambivalent conclusion. Not everything planned was achieved. The project's initial idea to make an exhibition of a communal housing estate could not be realized. Nevertheless, it represented an exhibition of many different model houses and put up the housing problem for discussion.

The third group of articles focused on questions of education. In this context, Neurath reflected on the school of the future (Neurath 1923d). The organization of the educational system was a crucial issue for the working class. Future public schools, he pointed out, have to be accessible regardless of social class. The existing schools, however, were based on a strict separation between bourgeois and proletarian kids. He additionally stressed that the worldview or ideology of the existing teachers would also be decisive for future political development. Therefore, the question needed to be raised of how to exert appropriate political (socialist, he meant) influence on them.

Questions of school and education were among the strongest ideological conflicts in interwar Austria, pitting conservative-clericals (and/or German nationalists) on one side against liberals and Marxists on the other. In an article from 1923, Neurath reported on the case of educator Gustav Wyneken, who was accused of pederasty (Neurath 1923e). For Neurath, Wyneken was a bourgeois reformer, not a socialist, and therefore not an ally of the working class. He pointed out that Wyneken's educational reform focused on the bourgeois youth, not the proletarian one.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, he remained distanced not only with Wyneken but also with his critics, and did not join in the storm of protest against the educator. Moreover, he did *not* condemn pederasty at all. This lack of moral condemnation, however, was the reason for reactionary protests by rightwing periodicals such as *Reichspost*, which polemicized heavily against Neurath (Anonymous 1923). There was even an aftermath of this article in a libel case of a Catholic educational organization against a journalist of the *AZ*. In this case, Otto Glöckel, the former state secretary of education and head of the Vienna school board, surveyed as a witness in the trial, was faced with Neurath's article. What did he say to this article – did it represent the socialist perception he was asked? Glöckel replied only cagily (Anonymous 1924).

<sup>8</sup>On Otto Neurath and the Youth Movement, see Sandner (2019b).

Neurath also discussed the problem of career advice in a class society and stressed the fact that education and choice of career always depended on class, which was more important than individual capability and competence (Neurath 1923f). He also focused on the differences between proletarian and bourgeois-liberal education reforms (the title, which denoted a “proletarian-bourgeois reform” was obviously an editorial mistake), and stressed the fact that this differentiation was a crucial issue for socialist policy (Neurath 1923g).

The fourth group of articles dealt with socialism and the scientific world-conception. Neurath reviewed a collection of essays of Ernst Mach, edited by his son Ludwig Mach. Ernst Mach was, as Neurath pointed out, not only an extraordinary physician but also an important forerunner of a scientific world-conception (Neurath 1921d). Later he reviewed a book of the Jesuit Heinrich Pesch (Neurath 1924). It was a book against socialism, including any Christian version of socialist thought. Neurath critically compared the author’s views with those of Karl Vogelsang and his writings in the nineteenth century. In contrast to Pesch, Vogelsang had demonstrated, in Neurath’s eyes at least, strong sympathies with Christian socialism. The idea of his article was to demonstrate that contemporary Christian thought had moved away from their former social and socialist-friendly tendencies.

In the following year, he presented Epicurus, especially his lessons on happiness, as a forerunner of socialism and as a counterpart to Christian morality (Neurath 1925a). For Neurath, Epicurus had paved the way to an ethics beyond theology. As in his later book, *Personal Life and Class Struggle* (Neurath 1928/1973), he subsequently interpreted Marxism as Social-Epicureanism.

A very remarkable example of Neurath’s contributions to the *AZ* is an article on the scientific world-conception (Neurath 1929). In fact, it is about scientific socialism, its development, its rise and its relevance. He claimed for an approach to workers’ education based upon modern science. Neurath explained that historically, the scientific world-conception was a child of the eighteenth-century enlightenment. While enlightenment and materialism were supported by the educated bourgeoisie, in the twentieth century it was only the working class who was an ally of enlightenment and scientific thinking. The bourgeoisie, in contrast, defended reactionary thoughts of theology and metaphysics. This article was printed shortly after the publication of the famous manifesto *Scientific World Conception. The Vienna Circle*, and only a few days after philosopher Moritz Schlick had received the booklet which was dedicated to him (cf. Mulder 1968/2012). Although the title was the same as that of the manifesto, its content differed considerably.

Beyond these four groups of articles, there was only one of Otto Neurath’s contributions for the *AZ* that addressed a different subject: In a rather surprising article, he wrote on the Indian reformer and pacifist Mahatma Gandhi (Neurath 1925b). Obviously, India and ideas from the Orient were very popular in these years. Neurath’s article, however, was not uncritical. He criticized, for instance, Gandhi’s “unworldly” proposal of stopping to beget Indian children under colonial rule; however, the article was obviously written with strong sympathy with his fight against economic exploitation against the backdrop of the colonial history of India.

Interestingly, and in contrast to many other periodicals, including socialist ones, Neurath never wrote about visual education and his *Vienna Method of Picture Statistics* in the *AZ*.

#### 4.4 Intellectual Interventions into Politics

Between the two journals in question, *Economy and Order of Life* and *Workers' Newspaper*, there was obviously a political difference. The supplement of the *Art Guardian* resp. *German Will of the Art Guardian* (*Deutscher Wille des Kunstwart*), was a joint venture of Neurath and Schumann with a heterogeneous and even bizarre ideological formation. It is questionable in many respects to what extent the political opinions and ideas of both sides were matched at all. Both men, indeed, had worked for the *Kunstwart* before. In the midst of Neurath's controversial article of 1917 on "the reversed Taylor System," there was an announcement of an Anti-British call to sign war bonds (Neurath 1917, 21). Moreover, the journal included a number of German nationalistic articles. How to remain objective, neutral and non-partisan? Although Neurath was neither a warmonger nor a nationalist, his idea of himself as an economic expert and a social engineer seemed to help him to bridge the resulting political gap.

The situation in Vienna was different. The *AZ* was a social-democratic, leftwing periodical. Neurath was only occasionally an author there and had no editorial role, but his articles were mostly in line with the editorial policy, even though the party did never follow his ideas on socialization. In fact, he was not only a political but also a party political writer.

Therefore, the two series of articles differed in some respects. While in *Economy and Order of Life* he focused only on socialization, he addressed a number of different topics in the *AZ*. While in *Economy and Order of Life* he used pseudonyms, he published for the social democratic daily only with his real name. And while *Economy and Order of Life* was – at least in its first issues – also *his* periodical (he directed it together with Wolfgang Schumann), he only was one of many contributors to the *AZ*. Nevertheless, there were also common features and themes.

One of these subjects was the question of his role and his self-image. First and foremost, he was a social engineer, as he consistently revealed. But even as a commentator and debater, as someone who intervened into politics, he insisted on his role of an expert. Obviously, he never saw his role in terms of politics. He was convinced that science and politics could be separated clearly – and he was always on the side of science, even as a writer of articles for newspapers.

Beyond that, however, there were even approaches to closely related themes that he developed more precisely only in his later life: the question of experts, citizens, and democracy.

In his articles on socialization, for instance, he developed the idea that – although the economic plans were designed only by experts and socialization needed, in general, a large number of experts – it is, in the end, the people who decide about

different options. Ordinary men, the proletariat, should choose the plan that will be put into practice. A similar idea appears in some AZ articles. Although the experts (architects, for instance) work out their concepts for a future way of life, it will be the working-class, the people who have to decide how they will live. The debates on the *Werkbund* settlement or the one-kitchen house are striking examples. If working-class families did not want to live in those ways, other options must be chosen.

It was only in his later life that he linked this approach systematically with visual education as an instrument that enables necessary collaboration between experts and ordinary people, presenting Isotype, the International System of Typographic Picture Education, as a way to bridge the epistemic gap (Neurath 1996).<sup>9</sup>

## 4.5 A List of Otto Neurath's Articles

### 4.5.1 *Otto Neurath's Articles in Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung*

- Neurath, Otto, and Wolfgang Schumann. 1919. Zur Einführung. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (1): 1–2.
- Fonsow (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Zur Sozialisierung der Wirtschaft. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (1): 2–4.
- Wilhelm, Karl (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Zwischenstaatliche Naturalwirtschaft. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (1): 4–5.
- Nth. (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Utopien. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (1): 5–6.
- Fonsow (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Zur Sozialisierung der Wirtschaft. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (2): 9–11.
- K.W. (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Volkswirtschaftliche Lehrerkurse. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (2): 13–14.
- Nth. (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Der achtstündige Arbeitstag. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (2): 14–15.
- Wilhelm, Karl (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Papiergeldhamstern und kein Ende! *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (2): 15–16.
- Wilhelm, Karl (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Vom “guten Gelde.” *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (3): 20–21.
- Fonsow (= Otto Neurath). Zur Sozialisierung der Wirtschaft. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (3): 21–22.
- Neurath, Otto. 1919. Kriegswirtschaft–Übergangswirtschaft–Verwaltungswirtschaft. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (3): 23.
- Wilhelm, Karl (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Steuernot, Hamsternot, Zahlungsnot. Über uneinlösliches Girogeld. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (5): 33–34.

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<sup>9</sup>On ISOTYPE and pictorial education, see Elisabeth Nemeth's, Angélique Groß's, and Silke Körber's chapters in the present volume.

- Fonsow (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Zur Sozialisierung der Wirtschaft. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (5): 34–37.
- Wilhelm, Karl (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Waren statt Geld. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (5): 37–38.
- Wilhelm, Karl (= Otto Neurath). Arbeitskunst und Arbeitskunde. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (6): 41–42.
- Fonsow (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Staatsschulden und Volksvermögen. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (6): 44–45.
- Anonymous (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Das Taylorsystem in der Zukunftswirtschaft. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (7): 49–50.
- Neurath, Otto. 1919. Landwirtschaftlicher Kredit. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (7): 53–54.
- Anonymous (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Fiskus und Sozialisierung. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (7): 54–56.
- Neurath, Otto. 1919. Bauergeist. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (8): 62–63.
- Fonsow (= Otto Neurath). 1919. Sozialisierung und Landwirtschaft. *Wirtschaft und Lebensordnung* 1 (11): 87–88.

#### 4.5.2 *Otto Neurath's Articles in Arbeiter-Zeitung*

- Neurath, Otto. 1919. Vollsozialisierung oder Teilverstaatlichungen. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 27 March 1919: 2.
- Neurath, Otto. 1921. Der Gildensozialismus und unsere Zukunft. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 18 February 1921: 2.
- Neurath, Otto. 1921. Ernst Machs Vermächtnis. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 27 July 1921: 5.
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- Neurath, Otto. 1921. Kleingärtner und Siedler. Auf dem Wege zur Baugilde. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 18 December 1921: 12.
- Neurath, Otto. 1922. Walter Rathenaus Gesellschafts- und Lebensanschauung. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 9 July 1922: 7–8.
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- Neurath, Otto. 1922. Der Gildengedanke in der Land- und Forstarbeiterbewegung. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 14 August 1922: 3–4.
- Neurath, Otto. 1922. Zusammenschluß der Baugilden aller Länder. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 3 October 1922: 3.
- Neurath, Otto. 1923. Einküchenhaus. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 2 June 1923: 6–7.

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- Neurath, Otto. 1923. Erziehung und Eros. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 28 July 1923: 7–8.
- Neurath, Otto. 1923. Berufsberatung und Klassenkampf. *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 9 August 1923: 7.
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