

## Pursuing the significance of “living together” Siegfried Landshut: a portrait of a German-Jewish intellectual

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# *Pursuing the significance of “living together”*

Siegfried Landshut: a portrait of a German-Jewish intellectual

**Elena Fiorletta**

Translation : Daphne Granot

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“I am profoundly impressed by everything that I have seen. While not ignoring in any way the difficulties and often the concerns of the many aspects of community life, this land offers nonetheless in its entirety a lively and persuasive reflection of willpower and transformation. From a professional point of view, it is such a particularly attractive field to implement new forces that I have no other desire than to be able to work on it”.<sup>1</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> The author indulges in these lines during a few moments of optimism after his forced exile, three years after his departure from the port of Hamburg. This is said after Siegfried Landshut, a young German-Jewish intellectual is thrown out of the university of the Hanseatic city when the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service is passed on April 7, 1933. The land he deeply favors is Palestine, which has become the favorite destination of the Jewish communities who have to escape the anti-Semitic persecutions in Europe and who are seduced by the Zionist project that was initiated fifty years earlier. The “difficulties” and the “concerns” he evokes refer to the complexity of the historical and political context of the place, which is marked by a civil war that has been fuelled by the national aspiration of the Jewish immigration and by the desire for independence from the Arab population. His only true desire is to continue with his research work, specifically at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. There, several Jewish foundations act as his sponsor in order to allow him to finally take up his intellectual activity in an academic environment, even if only precariously.
- <sup>2</sup> There is one additional point in these lines that is filled with hope and expectation, which is worth dwelling on. This last point is a window on the intellectual profile of our author: “I – he writes – am not ignorant of the difficulties and the concerns of the many aspects of community life”, which he is ready to confront. We can see that it is not only a question of the refugee’s perplexity toward the perspective of finding himself in an

unheard of condition of existential insecurity. He characterizes it with the adjective that he uses in order to describe the "life" that awaits him in Palestine. This adjective, "collective", completely illustrates his reflection on politics [*das Politische*] from the very first research projects and up to his last works.

- 3 This letter is a unique testimony to this period, marked by what is described as a "rupture in civilization"<sup>2</sup> [*Zivilisationsbruch*], which is unparalleled in the modern age. Nevertheless, the combination of references to historical facts, to personal points of view, to the prospect of new opportunities for life and finally, to the main theme of his research, which is put forward in a more implicit manner, does in fact turn it also into a document of the time and a synthetic overview of his intellectual profile on which the scientific community has not dwelled on until now.
- 4 The following pages thus offer the opportunity to explore a few elements of the author's biography – which today is only available in German thanks to the pilot work of the historian Rainer Nicolaysen from Hamburg – with particular attention to the years of exile in Palestine. These preliminary notes provide us with a first insight on the concepts of "living together" with one another [*miteinander zusammenleben*] and of man as an individual living in a community [*Gemeinwesen*], which both play a central role in Landshut's work and which will undergo a significant semantic alteration during his stay in Jerusalem.

## First part

- 5 We cannot remain insensitive to the many parallels, which link his journey to the intellectual scene of the Weimar Republic when reading Siegfried Landshut's biography. He was born in Strasbourg into an assimilated Jewish family. Landshut attended the local protestant grammar school when he was a child. There, he acquired a humanistic education, which later guided him towards classical studies. Apart from Latin and Greek, he also studied English and French. He used the latter in his studies on Rousseau, Montesquieu and Tocqueville as well as during his exile in Egypt. When he was seventeen years old, Landshut was enlisted into the German ground forces that sent him to the front in the Middle East as a non-commissioned officer. He was wounded and returned to Germany after one and a half years at war and then again, five years later, at the end of the hostilities. The war had taken him to Turkey, then to Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Be'er Sheva, cities to which he would return twenty years later as a refugee. The experience of the conflict marked his life and his future choices profoundly, as his letters, filled with doubt and worry for the future, reveal.
- 6 This uncertainty towards his "new existential situation"<sup>3</sup> lead him to abandon his law studies in order to study political economy in Freiburg with Robert Liefmann and in Frankfurt with Franz Oppenheimer, In 1921, he completed his doctorate with a thesis that focused on the concept of "*l'homo oeconomicus*" as part of the theoretical debate regarding the autonomy of the social and historical sciences that sought a new methodological status. While he was trying to find an answer "to the problematic nature of life",<sup>4</sup> which was typical for the fragile balance of the Weimar Republic, Landshut opted for the philosophical disciplines. At first, he pursued his studies with Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger in Freiburg and then, in Marburg and after that with Max Scheler in Cologne and Alfred Weber and Karl Jaspers in Heidelberg. He met Karl Löwith, Hannah Arendt,

Günther Anders, Hans Jonas, Herbert Marcuse, only to name a few young German-Jewish intellectuals who had shaped the "Weimar Laboratory".

- 7 During this phase of his intellectual work, Landshut developed the central theme of his research activity: politics as a living body of knowledge, oriented toward the common good but also as a dimension essential for the human community. In 1925, his first analytical paper was published under the title *A few basic concepts of politics*,<sup>5</sup> which was about the definition of a few "basic" concepts of modern politics in the light of semantic change which was brought about by modernity. Even though his article, which was published in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* and which was edited by the brothers Weber, was praised by Wilhelm Hennis<sup>6</sup> as the certificate of birth of German political science, it wasn't able to assure him a steady position at the University of Heidelberg. The wave of anti-Semitism, which actually raged through Baden-Württemberg before it took over the rest of the country, *de facto* prevented him from receiving his appointment, which was granted each year to one single person among candidates who were not of Aryan origin.<sup>7</sup>
- 8 Thus, Landshut moved to Hamburg where he received a position as a researcher at the *Institute for Foreign Politics*, which was led by the pacifist and liberal democratic jurist Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy. This was one of the first research institutes in the field of international relations and peace treaties in the world. There, Landshut wrote a study on the systems of mandates and bonded labor, which was never published<sup>8</sup> but he was nevertheless able to address more precisely the problems related to the political situation of the time.<sup>9</sup> In 1926, he published an article on the system of mandates by *Die Gesellschaft*,<sup>10</sup> the international German Social Democrats magazine. In 1927, he began working together with Eduard Heimann, a professor of political economy at the University of Hamburg and a Social Democrat who played an active role in the fight against the antidemocratic and unconstitutional wave that was already undermining the basis of the fragile Weimar Republic.
- 9 The following five years were marked by intensive research and publications. At that time, he defined the directions of his theoretical work: the ideal historical [*geistesgeschichtliche*] analysis of the concepts of politics, the nature of modern democracy, the conditions in which one could imagine the future of a Europe of peoples, but also the methodological question that Landshut approached on the perspective of the criticism of sociology and the method of Max Weber's Ideal Type. Landshut dedicated one of his essays, which was one of the most important ones written at that period,<sup>11</sup> to the sociologist Heidelberg. Furthermore, he wrote an intellectual and historic biography of Karl Marx<sup>12</sup> and started establishing contact with the SPD in order to publish Karl Marx writings from his youth, which he actually did a few years later.<sup>13</sup>
- 10 In 1928, he presented his candidacy for tenure in "politics", a discipline that had not been taught at German universities until then. The subject of this thesis, a "criticism of sociology", as well as his reputation as a Social Democrat and the hostility from the academic corporation compelled him to withdraw his application and to write another thesis, which was dedicated to the historical-systematic analysis of the concept of "economics" [*das Ökonomische*].<sup>14</sup> Yet, this was not sufficient to ensure his goal: the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service that went into force on April 7, 1933, forced him as well as millions of other intellectual Jews to leave the university and, shortly after, the country. Almost a fifth of the teaching staff was forced to leave the University of Hamburg, among them Ernst Cassirer, Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy,

Eduard Heimann and Erwin Panofsky. Landshut's expulsion from the university was a dramatic interruption to his promising intellectual career: in 1929, he had published his highly controversial "criticism of sociology" that had provoked a heated debate inside and outside of the academic circle.

- 11 At first, he went into exile to Egypt, where he was due to hold a series of conferences at the University of Alexandria during the summer of 1933. Although he had hoped to receive a post at the University of Cairo, his expectations were promptly dashed. Disillusionment and profound bitterness overcame him and he had to bear an increasingly difficult economic situation. The following year he wrote and published two essays in French, which were dedicated to the analysis of the transformation of "living together", to the development of modern society and to the role of capitalism in the western society.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, he worked for a short time at the library of the Borchardt Institute. In Alexandria he taught in a school, translated several texts into French for an import-export company while continuing his research that focused on the history of contemporary Egypt and the constitutional Egyptian history. In Cairo, Landshut met Alexandre Koyré whom he might have met at the university in some courses, which were taught by Husserl or in Cologne with Scheler. At that time, Koyré worked at the university before being called back to Paris in 1934.<sup>16</sup>
- 12 During that same year, Landshut started to look for an alternative destination, elsewhere than Egypt. Heimann put him in touch with the director of the *League of Nation's Commission for Jewish Refugees from Germany*, Norman Bentwich. He thus hoped for a work opportunity at the very young Hebrew University of Jerusalem. As the perspective of being integrated into the University in Jerusalem got closer, Landshut decided to resume his project that he had started two years earlier and to which he had dedicated a few conferences, namely the study of "The European Judaism through the Emancipation", a two-level research work – on the one hand, the importance of emancipation for the "Jewish human being" and the Jewish tradition and on the other hand, the influence of emancipated Judaism on the development of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup>
- 13 The project never saw the light of day even if the efforts made by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem started to bear fruit. Fritz Warburg, a banker from Hamburg, put Landshut in contact with the intellectual Ernst Simon who took some initiatives in order to ensure him a fellowship at the University of Jerusalem. Among the diverse letters that were submitted to the *Rockefeller Foundation* in order to promote Landshut's candidacy, we must here mention Alexander Rüstow's letter who deemed his "criticism of sociology as one of the most significant and promising contributions to the German sociology during the last decades"<sup>18</sup> as well as the one by Richard Koebner, a professor of contemporary history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who considered his integration to be "very desirable".<sup>19</sup>
- 14 During the summer of 1936 he finally left for Palestine where in October, he started his research at the University of Jerusalem. For the first time since the beginning of his exile, Landshut was able to concentrate on his research projects in a real academic environment. Unfortunately, the reality disappointed his expectations again: the Hebrew University had been created only eleven years earlier and in 1936, there was still neither a department devoted to social sciences nor to political sciences or political economy where Landshut could have applied his intellectual skills and his professionalism.
- 15 The topics that had nourished his works until then – especially the history of the relationship between the State and society, the methodological conflict in the social

historical sciences, Marx and Weber as social philosophers – faded little by little due to the highly topical concern of the socio-political context. During his two years as researcher at the Hebrew University, Landshut's research study changed into "the question of community facilities" in Palestine. Not only did Landshut have to work on a new subject and a new method but he also had to study Hebrew, which was essential for every teacher at the young University of Jerusalem. In addition, he had a difficult family situation, with a wife who was sick with tuberculosis and three children to care for. To have only two years in order to ensure him with a stable position due to the cutting off of funding from the Rockefeller Foundation turned the years 1936-1938 into an experience that was far from easy. However, Landshut was already able to teach lessons dedicated to Max Weber's social philosophy in Hebrew during the summer of 1938.

- 16 Neither the students' positive echoes of his teaching nor the pressures from his colleagues could however ensure him a stable employment: the President of the Hebrew University, Salman Schocken, refused to extend his contract. Even the personal positions taken on by Martin Buber, who had just arrived to Jerusalem, Hugo Bergmann, Richard Koebner, Georg Landauer, Arthur Ruppin and Ernst Simon didn't succeed in persuading the University's management to keep Landshut's post, at least until the end of his study on the community establishments in Palestine. In the end, from a professional point of view, the two years at the Hebrew University didn't represent a real return to work in academia but from a cultural and human point of view, they opened doors for him to the small Jewish-German intellectual community of the Universalist School that was a committed and active member of the *Brit Shalom* organization, which promoted the idea of a binational solution in order to put an end to the conflict between the new Jewish immigration and the Arab population.
- 17 Landshut never officially joined *Brit Shalom* but his works that were published during those years showed a convergence with the group's program on the cultural plan and ideas. In 1939, he wrote the essay *The social revolution in Landauer's concept*,<sup>20</sup> which constituted one of the chapters of a collective volume of the Histadrut cultural center, which also collected essays written by Hugo Bergmann, Max Brod and Martin Buber, devoted to the figure of the anarchist intellectual who had been killed twenty years earlier in Munich by the *Freikorps*. Two years later he published *At the end of the century (1840-1940)*,<sup>21</sup> another essay devoted to the analysis of mutations within contemporary society, with the very idea being in the epochal change of the role of the political authority and the masses.
- 18 His most important work was published in 1944 after four years of research when Landshut was no longer part of the teaching staff at the Hebrew University and had to cope again with particularly precarious financial difficulties that forced him to leave Jerusalem. This was when his research colleagues, and especially Martin Buber, proposed that he pursue his research work on the community institutions by conducting field research and by experiencing the social organization of a Kibbutz in Palestine. In 1940, Landshut moved with his entire family to the Kibbutz *Givat Brenner* where he analyzed the different aspects of the community experience of "production units", established by the new Jewish immigration in Palestine. The report was written in German and he was able to publish it only thanks to the "Ruppin Science" prize that allowed him to finance the translation into Hebrew. Yet, the author's skepticism to collectivism and the rigidity of the organization that centralized the rhythms of life, to the isolation of the Kibbutz in relation to its environment, to the consequences of the growing pressure imposed by the

industrialization's process condemned this first scientific work *Kibbutz*<sup>22</sup> to a rather cold and suspicious reaction.

- 19 Another article that was published in 1944 and was entitled *Reflections on Aliyah*<sup>23</sup> showed his doubts on the true ability to attract the Jews who were still in Europe to the "homeland" project in Palestine. This did not help him to ensure the trust of the academic community in Jerusalem. In fact, since 1942, Landshut had started to collaborate with the German Department of the *British Mediterranean Station*, the branch of the *Political Warfare Executive*, which specialized in the Middle East and which was based in London when nothing could have implied that he would return to the Hebrew University. He was still in touch with the German-Jewish intellectual group and he continued to collaborate with Buber, Simon, Landauer and Koebner as a lecturer at the *School for Adult Education* in Jerusalem and gave a conference on "Romanticism in the State and within the Society". The last act in his engagement with the German-Jewish community in Jerusalem was an essay dedicated to Karl Marx and Max Weber as well as to the concepts of alienation and rationalization as the key to interpreting modernity.<sup>24</sup>
- 20 Moreover, it was the ultimate evidence of Landshut's presence in Palestine that he decided to leave for Cairo where he directed the "Educational Section" of the *British Foreign Office* whose goal was to teach the German prisoners of war the values of democracy. He stayed there until 1948 and then, left for London at the end of his exile. There, he became the Research Director at the *Anglo-Jewish Association* and focused in particular on a research on the Jewish communities in the Muslim countries of the Middle East, which was published in 1949.<sup>25</sup> During that same year he renewed contact with the University of Hamburg, which offered him the Chair for Political Science, the discipline on which he focused until the end of his academic career, in 1951.
- 21 Siegfried Landshut and Eduard Heimann belonged to the few German Jews who returned to Germany "in order to stay there".<sup>26</sup> When the University of Hamburg had refused to grant him his tenure in "politics" eighteen years earlier and had forced him to interrupt his research, this same institution invited Landshut to devote himself to the difficult task of reestablishing a "political science" department that was missing from the academic curriculum. From 1952 to 1958, he joined the German Association for Political Science [*Deutsche Vereinigung für Politische Wissenschaft*] in order to encourage the renewal of contacts among the international scientific communities. From a theoretical point of view, the themes of his research works revolved around the clarification of tasks in politics and in political science in contemporary society.
- 22 His scientific activity continued at the university as well as at the Academy for Social Economics in Hamburg [*Akademie für Gemeinwirtschaft Hamburg*] and in the development of new editorial initiatives. In 1953, he published again the writings Marx produced in his youth. One year later, he started translating Tocqueville and oversaw the publication of a choice of several of his texts<sup>27</sup> by fostering a revival of the French thinker in Germany,<sup>28</sup> the analysis of the modern state by Herman Finer<sup>29</sup> and in 1959, the Political Parties by Maurice Duverger.<sup>30</sup> In 1967, he gave one single lecture dedicated to the State of Israel twenty years after its birth: the guiding principle of the research, the ideal link between the foundation project of the Jewish National State in Palestine and the movements for the emancipation of the European peoples, inspired by the French Revolution and the battle for human rights. It was the very first time since his return to Germany that Landshut addressed the matter of Israel, even though he had always expressed the greatest reservation on this issue.<sup>31</sup>
- 23 One year later, Landshut decided to visit the land, in which he had not set foot since 1945 and stayed there for several months. We cannot affirm if this journey was motivated only

by personal reasons or if he saw it as an opportunity to get in contact again with the German-Jewish intellectual community. A few months later, in 1968, Landshut passed away in Hamburg as the political order was changing almost all the countries in the world, thus claiming a radical transformation in society.

## Second part

- 24 In a recent article for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Jürgen Habermas<sup>32</sup> depicted a detailed portrait of the German-Jewish intelligentsia that had helped build a whole generation of young German intellectuals after the Second World War. Wanting to receive an answer to the questions of this historical fracture that had just been brought to an end within the European civilization, millions of students turned to the works of many German-Jewish intellectuals in order to find an answer to the questions that numbed the German culture.
- 25 With the precision and abundance of details that characterize his style, the German philosopher and sociologist provides an overview on the contribution that was made by those whom he calls "the generous ones who came back" to the recovery of an intellectual fabric torn by the *Zivilisationsbruch* when the "specifically German element of the Germanic culture and tradition" found itself unable to recover. Among the representatives of the Jewish-German culture, who, according to him, constitute more of a misalliance than a symbiosis, the author of the *Theory of Communicative Action* pays tribute to Ernst Cassirer, the devoted defender of the principles, rooted in the Spirit of the Enlightenment, of the Weimar democracy and ardent opponent of Heidegger's anti-humanism. He refers to Edmund Husserl, the father of phenomenology, the brilliant and ruthless interpreter of the crisis of European sciences. He talks about the *Skepsis* of Karl Löwith who was a critic of every philosophy of history that pretended to be a science. Finally, he remembers Gershom Scholem, whose studies on mysticism revealed the authentic Jewish essence that was hidden in the destiny and German Jewish culture.
- 26 He also names the theoretical contribution of the School of Frankfurt – Adorno, just like Horkheimer, who came back from exile, Helmuth Plessner who made an essential contribution to the foundation of a new philosophical anthropology, Ernst Bloch, whose "expressionist Marxism" boosted the hopes of the first student movement of the Federal Republic of Germany. Habermas does not forget the theoretical contribution provided by the German-Jewish intellectuals to analytical philosophy and neither does he forget the crucial role played by the intellectual community that was dedicated to redesign the nature of politics after the European crisis. Among them were Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Hans Jonas and Gunther Anders.
- 27 One would have expected him to mention the efforts made by Siegfried Landshut in the reorganization of the political science in Germany and in the spread of the cultural politics that would bring back together the individual and the public field after the trauma of the war. Yet, there is no trace of homage by Habermas to Landshut among the "generous ones who came back". Missing from the contemporary German intelligentsia's collective memory, this oversight proves to be a sad continuation of his existential exile, especially after the publication of his biography. This is all the more surprising given that there was abundant information and detail on his intellectual and human path that was emblematic of that time.



- 28 Naturally, there are several reasons for this oversight regarding Landshut. The first one is obviously the retreat of his scientific activity and the impossibility of taking it up again a few years later. We have already stressed<sup>33</sup> that Landshut's personal history is at the crossroads of the German cultural and philosophical history, which itself is closely linked to the history of the Jewish-German emigration to America. Whereas the main wave of the Jewish intelligentsia found refuge in the United States and reestablished contacts with the scientific community of Europe, Landshut took refuge at first in Egypt and then in Palestine where he continued to write in German and Hebrew, yet in a discontinuous manner. Furthermore, we could also attribute his lack of recognition due to his return to Germany after having lived in Palestine, a matter that was considered to be a true taboo for the Jewish community of Israel.<sup>34</sup>
- 29 The rediscovery of Landshut and his tormented biography allowed the German public to face for the first time a distinctive profile of an intellectual who had disappeared from the collective memory. His name thus went beyond the strict framework of the disciplines of political science and sociology – even though his works were quoted quite often – in order to become the protagonist of an important cultural and human history *in itself*. The biography has thus allowed linking the different chapters of his theoretical making to a thread that combines the different phases of Landshut's scientific activity under the notion of the "new foundation of the political science" in Germany.
- 30 This notion, which is key to understand Landshut's works, is quite in keeping with his uninterrupted reflection on the *metatema* of politics; it might however obscure the numerous nuances of Landshut's plural thinking and give the image of a philosopher whose sole purpose was to reestablish the corpus of the political science, dealing with the democratic regime after the *Zivilisationsbruch*. There is no doubt that his reflection constantly centered around *politics*, its variations and its aporetic excesses, around the *political thought* during classical times to modernity, but it is also true that there are significant differences between his writings during the 1920's and those after the War, in terms of the object of his studies, the method employed and the language used.
- 31 If Landshut and some of his colleagues from Hamburg, the city of bankers and ship-owners,<sup>35</sup> worked on and contributed to the revival of the political science since the 1950's during a time when "political education" was distrusted, it is also true that for the first time, Landshut was able to focus on the teaching of "politics" with great independence and in an institutional academic system. The political commitment had had quite a different significance in the 1920's when the Weimar intelligentsia had been paralyzed by the crisis of the century that revealed the flaws of the political thought in order to answer the urgent needs dictated by the current events.
- 32 Being apolitical was typical of that period, for which the German Wilhelmine intellectuals had to pay the price because of their incompetence to think about the crisis that swept across Europe in a political manner. The German intelligentsia treated the country's first liberal and democratic experience with continuous suspicion, a suspicion that was enhanced by the general indifference for the destiny of society as a whole. This attitude was quite widespread among the young intellectuals of that time who were not really interested in the political events of the century and were likely to find an answer to the "daily task", which Max Weber mentioned during the Munich conference in regard to science as a profession, in other disciplines, especially in philosophy, literature and poetry.<sup>36</sup>

- 33 This mistrust toward politics exercised a polarization effect: on the one hand, it saw how most intellectuals sought refuge in the private field and on the other hand, it favored the irresistible rise of the political myth and of irrationality. "The retreat from the public field, meaning from politics occurred only later – under the yoke of the total domination, dictatorship and persecution [...]. We have not learned politics thanks to Jaspers but, much later, thanks to Hitler",<sup>37</sup> proclaimed Dolf Steinberger, another witness of this troubled period and just as Landshut, a founding member of the political science field in the Federal Republic of Germany. Karl Löwith spoke along the same lines and decided to study in Freiburg in order to move away from the chaos of the Munich Soviet Republic. His autobiography gave him the opportunity to express his non-political stand.<sup>38</sup>
- 34 The spiritual profile of the time helps us understand Landshut's intellectual itinerary. During the "Roaring Twenties", unlike his research colleagues, Landshut took the time to study the fundamental concepts of politics and the nature of their contradictions. Landshut focused on the origins of the German crisis, a crisis that threatened the very spirit of European conscience, while reflecting on the connections between politics and power in order to avoid using the two terms as synonyms. While philosophy seemed to be imprisoned in its egotism, confirmed by the *cogito ergo sum* at the beginning of modern times, Landshut was one of the rare Weimar intellectuals to implement a critical pronouncement on the relations among people, in the *Mitmenschlichkeit*, in order to ponder on the solutions to the crisis of his time.
- 35 The theme of otherness imposed itself on the German philosophical debate during those years: Martin Buber put the relationship of "I and Thou" at the center of the intersubjective field within the community messianism of the Jewish tradition.<sup>39</sup> Karl Löwith elaborated on an anthropology of the "man-person" with the theoretical tools of phenomenology.<sup>40</sup> Landshut rediscovered the strictly political nature of living together and inaugurated a tradition of thought rooted in Aristotle's philosophy in order not to turn modern politics into the mere alternative of technical nature and decision making. While Buber and Löwith developed their concept of *Mitmenschlichkeit*, one in the realm of theological thinking, the other within the ethical domain, Landshut favored a truly political dimension, where mankind abandoned the *res intima* in order to fully become the *political animal*, a human being as "politician".
- 36 "The more I made progress in my work, the more I foresaw clearly this framework, which I really felt was mine: the discovery of the reasons that really function, which dominate the orders of *Miteinanderleben* and their historical conditions, in order to find out if from here on it will be possible to find an access to today's problems in a way sufficiently wide-ranging."<sup>41</sup> The orders of *Miteinanderleben*, its historical principles and its aporeia are the guideline of Landshut's work and are characteristic of his criticism against politics. Yet, his view of politics cannot be seen as a concept. Landshut never envisioned the existence of a "truth" in politics, of an essence or of a transcendent dimension at the root of an authentically political *logos*. Politics rather act in the living together because the human being is a *zoon politikon*. That very conceptual articulation of politics is emphasized in Landshut's work with his definition of *Miteinanderleben*, which sheds light on the meaning of living together.
- 37 So what does *Miteinanderleben* in Landshut's paradigm of hermeneutics mean? Can we give it one interpretation? Because of the asystematicity and, to a certain extent, because of the eclecticism of his work, it is difficult to give a positive answer to the second question, as the many meanings given to the "living together" by our author makes us wonder if

everything has been said about his intellectual profile. This same concept of “living together” is subjected to more than just a semantic distortion in the development of the author’s thinking. Thus, it is better to begin by briefly examining a few passages of Landshut’s first analysis devoted to the fundamental concepts of politics, an analysis judged by Hennis as the birth certificate of political science in Germany.

- 38 “The *simul vivere* – writes Landshut when he cites Thomas Aquinas – is the main theme of all discussions on the nature of politics, those that always relate to the *regimen*. It is specific to the people ‘living together’ [*zusammenlebenden Menschen*] to focus mainly on what really constitutes the coexistence [*das Zusammenleben*] [...], meaning a *finis* that corresponds exactly to the ‘together’ [...] This *finis*, the true *bonum multitudinis*, constitutes its unity. This *unitas* is the *very own* essence of coexistence, so that it becomes a ‘living with each other’ [*Miteinanderleben*]. This ‘with each other’ [*Miteinander*] – he states – does not indicate a ‘social link’ or something else [*ein dinghaftes Etwas*] but the manner and shape of the coexistence-together-with the others [*mit-anderen-Zusammenlebens*].”<sup>42</sup>
- 39 In this quotation, which summarizes quickly and effectively the theoretical objective of his research, Landshut assigns a clearly identified objective to politics: not power, force, technique but the *simul vivere*, the living together, the coexistence, the “living-with-each-other”. The human being is a political *naturaliter* while the isolated individual, who lives outside of the *polis*, of the human community, of the sphere of coexistence, as Aristotle states, is an animal or a god.<sup>43</sup> The nature of living together lies in its unity which at the same time is its *finis*.
- 40 While examining a few “fundamental concepts of politics”, which include the Nation, the State, the public opinion, Landshut explains more precisely the significance of this research: “The main interest that guides this work is not the State nor a similar concept but it is the people who live together, with each other, and for whom the State exists as a reference of coexistence for each other”.<sup>44</sup> The State is thus built on condition that it preserves the fact of living together but this is not the founding moment of coexistence. For Landshut, the unity among human beings is actually neither an externally imposed link nor a “social” contract among individuals or between individuals and a Leviathan. He doesn’t consider politics to be an instrumental relationship based on the means-end analysis nor a technical system that ensures a balance of forces represented by competing social interests.
- 41 Politics is rather the field of human relations that are never defined once and for all and always require a new definition: the continued search of the common good on the part of the individual who is engaged in a collective context is what makes a human being a *zoon politikon*. Even if Landshut talks of an introduction to the fundamental concepts of politics, he already explains his final goal: to try and reword the binomial *logos-demos*, which the crisis of the European conscience had dissolved by opening the door of irrationality to politics. At the same time, he also tries to define the nature of the “*demos*”, on which there is a political thought: in Landshut’s first writings after the philosophical experience of his life in Freiburg with Husserl and Heidegger, where the human world was fundamentally defined as a “common world” [*Mitwelt*] and then as a *Mitmenschlichkeit*,<sup>45</sup> politics can only be understood in the light of encountering the other.
- 42 His tone on the subject of politics is quite different during the period after the war. The emphasis that the young Landshut puts on the intersubjective dimension in his writings changes in the “form” of peaceful coexistence as the thinker matures. Landshut’s definition of politics in his *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon* is in this regard quite meaningful:

"The *political community*, the object of politics, corresponds to the community of life, meaning a reciprocal belonging that joins the entire existence of its associates [...]. The unity of the community is based on the universal link of a concrete concept of the conduct of life, of an *ethos* that steers the community [...] that shows the respect for every one of its members – whoever this person might be – the concept that corresponds to the unity of the collective entity [*Gemeinwesen*] is transcendent".<sup>46</sup> The concept of the [*Gemeinwesen*] thus logically precedes the historical and concrete existence of the political community that gains its unity from this *ethos* that seems to be, in this case, a given. Whereas the fundamental concepts of politics stem from the *Miteinanderleben* in his writings dating from the 1920's, the account is reversed thirty years later when the community becomes a function of this *ethos* that governs and transcends it.

- 43 Within the limited scope of this article, it is difficult to further develop the reflection on his concept of the *unique ethos* in relation to the plurality of the notion of "living with the others", whose elements are "changeable and dynamic".<sup>47</sup> We can recognize the impact of this semantic shift more clearly in his essay of 1969: "The constitution is the order [*Status*] given in a collective political entity [*Gemeinwesen*]. There is no *Gemeinwesen* without a political constitution, meaning without institutions, rules and without specific relations that favor unity and the continued consistency of the collective existence. [...] The constitution and the political *Gemeinwesen* define the very same thing".<sup>48</sup> Thus, it is not the *Miteinander-Zusammenleben* anymore that determines the field of politics but the fundamental law of the State that coincides almost totally with this collective entity that constitutes coexistence.
- 44 After the omnipresence of the interpersonal sphere in Landshut's works written in his youth, we are thus able to find in his thoughts the transcendent power of the Constitution, meaning the link that leads again to the unity of the plurality of living together. We can probably find the reasons for this theoretical turning point in the political context of the Federal Republic of Germany where all disciplines, and especially political science, were influenced by the necessity to establish a new democratic order. However, Landshut cannot help but reflect on and wonder about the role played by the intersubjective dimension in his work.
- 45 If we look at Landshut's work as his contribution to the foundation of political science, the *Miteinander-Zusammenleben* – the founding concept and main theme of Landshut's first writings – is reduced to a concept in progress, shaped by the language of existential analytics. If, however, we examine the central theme of his work, its theoretical contribution to the politics of "living together" and its contradictions, we devote the same attention to the different steps of his work and it is then quite possible to approach critically certain passages of his thought in order to put to the test its hermeneutic potential.<sup>49</sup> This kind of interpretation seems to be confirmed by the essays and articles – rare, discontinued, distinct – written by Landshut during his exile. When looking at Landshut's essay about Landauer's revolution, at his philosophical and sociological analysis of the Kibbutz, or even at the article on the perspectives of a new Aliyah in Palestine from a retrospective view of Landshut as the founder of political science, his exile – from a mere scientific point of view – seems to be a prolonged interruption of his work. This is not the case if we see the *Miteinander-Zusammenleben* as a key that helps us interpret the politics and their historical and conceptual aporeia. The essay about Landauer thus seems to be a critical reflection on the ways by which the person is

connected with the community and on the concept of the revolution as a continued historical process.

- 46 The analysis on the Kibbutz thus turns out to be a study on the risks for the *Miteinanderleben* of the *Kibbutzim* caused by their increasing isolation from the surrounding world and by the disappearance of the ethos, replaced by the complex rules and regulations that are to be followed by the entire community. The article about the Aliyah reaches pessimistic conclusions on the efficacy of external factors (in this case, the growing wave of anti-Semitism in Europe) on the foundation of a *Miteinander* and of its ideal core. What matters most to Landshut, here as well as in his previous and future writings, is to firmly place the fundamental issue of the conditions of coexistence, of the common world, of the life together, of "living with each other" at the heart of the discussion: in short, the issue of men and women involved in coexistence within a public space, which, according to Landshut, was increasingly abandoned to the contradictions of modernity while no political thought was shaped in order to tackle these extraordinary times and fight its contradictions.
- 47 In this sense, we can confirm that the papers written during his time in Palestine have a central role: the critical reflection on the concepts of politics gives here a theoretical answer to the needs that were dictated by the reality of a community in formation. Landshut observes the different steps of this process in the field, just like his colleagues Martin Buber, Ernst Simon, Georg Landauer did. Yet, compared to them, Landshut's intellectual making during this period has largely been forgotten: when he started teaching again after returning to Germany, he never mentioned it, neither directly or indirectly. Nevertheless, it is precisely this silence that invites us to think about the scope of the considerations he developed then and to revisit the criticism of his thoughts that he elaborated during that time. By looking at Landshut's thoughts on the circumstances of the *Miteinander-Zusammenleben*, it would be interesting to study whether some decisive elements are hidden in this discontinued and sometimes even contradictory thought in order to develop, today, a genuine theory of democracy when the call for the "greater good" and "living together" in the political field can be increasingly heard.

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## NOTES

1. Letter from Siegfried Landshut to Fritz Warburg, 29.2.1936, in Rainer Nicolaysen, *Die Wiederentdeckung der Politik. Eine Biographie*, Frankfurt a.M. 1997, p. 218. The information on Landshut's life is based on this research monograph.
2. The definition is by the historian Dan Diner. Ibidem (ed.), *Zivilisationsbruch: Denken nach Auschwitz*, Frankfurt/M. 1988.
3. For more information, please see his curriculum vitae, which he himself wrote in 1928. See Nicolaysen, cit., p. 31.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Siegfried Landshut, *Über einige Grundbegriffe der Politik*, in Ibidem, *Politik. Grundbegriffe und Analyse*, ed. by R. Nicolaysen, Berlin-Brandenburg 2004, pp. 327-386.

6. Wilhelm Hennis, "Zu Siegfried Landshuts wissenschaftlichem Werk", in *Zeitschrift für Politik*, 17 (1970), c. I, pp. 1-14, here p. 4; now also in Wilhelm Hennis, *Politik und praktische Philosophie. Schriften zur politischen Theorie*, Stuttgart 1977, pp. 275-293, here p. 279.
7. This issue is quite disputed by historians, see Nicolaysen, p. 65.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
10. Landshut, "Eine Frage europäischer Politik", *Die Gesellschaft*, 3 (1926), Vol. II.
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16. Nicolaysen, cit., p. 498.
17. In a letter to Bernhard Kahn, at that time Director of the *European Office of the American Joint Distribution Committee*, Landshut explains the reasons that inspire his research: "I think that if a scientific reflection can still be taken on, then the task of clarifying the historical sociological point of view on the Jewish destiny in the modern world should be the task that a Jewish sociologist should do today". Nicolaysen, p. 208.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 503.
20. Landshut, *The Social Revolution in Landauer's Concept*, Cultural Center of the Histadrut (ed.) Gustav Landauer. *At the twentieth anniversary of his assassination*, Tel Aviv 1939, pp. 44-57 (in Hebrew).
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25. Landshut, *Jewish communities in the Muslim Countries of the Middle East. A survey*, for The American-Jewish Committee and the Anglo Jewish Association, edited by the Jewish Chronicle, London 1950.
26. Cf. Claus-Dieter Krohn, *Intellectuals in Exile, Refugee Scholars and the New School for Social Research*, University of Massachusetts Press, 1993, p. 199.



27. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Das Zeitalter der Gleichheit. Eine Auswahl aus dem Gesamtwerk*, ed. by Siegfried Landshut (Kröners pocket book edition 221), Stuttgart 1954. 2. Edition 1967.
28. Nicolaysen, cit., p. 366.
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30. Maurice Duverger, *Die politischen Parteien*, ed. and translated by Siegfried Landshut (Veröffentlichungen der Akademie für Gemeinwirtschaft Hamburg), Tübingen 1959.
31. According to Nicolaysen, Landshut asked his friend Daniel Dishon in Jerusalem at the beginning of the 60's to send him literature on the Kibbutz in order to resume his study on the "community establishments" but it is not known if he really pursued the development of the new studies. Cf. Nicolaysen, *op. cit.*, p. 427 and 559.
32. Jürgen Habermas, "Großherzige Remigranten. Über jüdische Philosophen in der frühen Bundesrepublik. Eine persönliche Erinnerung", in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2.7.2011.
33. Cf. E. Fiorletta, "Siegfried Landshut tra passato e futuro. Intervista ad Angelo Bolaffi", in <http://www.giornaledifilosofia.net/public/scheda.php?id=33>, last access on 10/12/2012.
34. Marita Krauss, "Jewish Remigration: an Overview of an Emerging Discipline", in *LBI Year Book*, Vol. 49 (2004), p. 111.
35. Cf. E. Fiorletta, "Er war ein Perspektivenöffner auf die Moderne. Interview mit Martin Sattler", in <http://www.giornaledifilosofia.net/public/scheda.php?id=32>, last access on 10/12/2012.
36. Max Weber, *Wissenschaft als Beruf*, W. J. Mommsen (ed.), *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe*, Bol. 17, Tübingen 1992, p. 46.
37. Cf. D. Sternberger, *Gang zwischen Meistern*, Frankfurt am Main 1987.
38. Cf. Karl Löwith, *Ma vie en Allemagne avant et après 1933: récit*, Paris 1988.
39. Martin Buber, *Ich und Du* (1923), Gerlingen 1974.
40. Karl Löwith, *Das Individuum in der Rolle des Mitmenschen* (1928), Stuttgart 1981-1988.
41. From CV, Landshut, cf. Nicolaysen, pp. 64-65.
42. Landshut, *Über einige Grundbegriffe der Politik*, cit., p. 327.
43. Aristotle, *Politica*, 1253a 29. What is remarkable is Landshut's reference to the political Aristotelianism that also contributed to Hannah Arendt's thoughts and to the entire German tradition of studies known as the rehabilitation of practical philosophy. Cf. Manfred Riedel, *Die Rehabilitierung der praktischen Philosophie*, Freiburg 1972.
44. Landshut, *Über einige Grundbegriffe der Politik*, cit., p. 328.
45. Besides the philosophers that have already been mentioned, such as Buber and Löwith, we should also recall Hermann Cohen, *Die Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums* (1919); Franz Rosenzweig, *Der Stern der Erlösung* (1921); Max Scheler, *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (1923).
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47. Landshut, *Über einige Grundbegriffe der Politik*, cit., p. 328.
48. Landshut, "Verfassung", First publication of the *Wörterbuch der Soziologie*, Wilhelm Bernsdorf (ed.), Second Edition, Stuttgart 1969, pp. 1230-1233, now Landshut, *Politik*, cit., p. 397.
49. Wolfgang Kessel perfectly understood the main role of the idea of the political community in Landshut's thoughts. Cf. Kessel, *Das politische Gemeinwesen*, in R. Nicolaysen (ed.), *Polis und Moderne. Siegfried Landshut in Heutiger Sicht*, Berlin-Hamburg 2000, pp. 81-93.

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Elena Fiorletta earned her degree in Philosophy (*magna cum laude*) from the University of Rome La Sapienza. In 2009, she earned her PhD in Contemporary Social Philosophies and Theories from the University of Bari. Her thesis, entitled "Economia, politica, società. Il contributo di Siegfried Landshut a un'analisi del moderno" aims to reconstruct three key moments of the first phase of the philosophical thought of this still unknown Jewish-German author. She carried out her research in Germany at the universities of Heidelberg, Frankfurt and Hamburg. In 2012, she completed her postdoctoral studies at the Franz Rosenzweig Research Center of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Currently, she is a Bettencourt Schueller Research Fellow at the French Research Center in Jerusalem (CRFJ), with a project on the concept of *Gemeinwesen* in Landshut's philosophical work. She contributes to the CRFJ research program on religious identities in Israel today.