

MARIENTHAL

The Sociography of an
Unemployed Community

Marie Jahoda, Paul F. Lazarsfeld,
and Hans Zeisel

With a new introduction by Christian Fleck



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Introduction to the Transaction Edition

RARELY DOES a sociological study become a movie script. Even more rarely does this happen some fifty years after the book's first edition came out. When in 1988 Marie Jahoda, one of the surviving authors from the group which originally conducted *Marienthal*, saw the semi-documentary television drama, directed by the late Karin Brandauer, an experienced Austrian film director, she was astonished by what a filmmaker could make out of a social research study. Despite Jahoda's objections to the sentimental mood and some misinterpretations, this film has gained the status of introductory material for university courses in sociology and psychology in Germany and Austria ever since. The film's title cites a line from one of the time sheets an unemployed man from Marienthal village filled out around the turn of the year 1931 to 1932: *Einstweilen wird es Mittag* (In the meantime, midday comes around). Using time sheets was only one of the inventions elaborated in this exemplary study, and quoting ordinary people at some length occurred only seldom in scholarly publications at this time in Central Europe. The story of this innovative investigation, the fate of its authors and the book itself provide instructive insights into the history of European social research of the 1930s and beyond.

The Book

The original title of the small book is both telling and strange: *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal, ein soziographischer Versuch über die Wirkungen langdauernder Arbeitslosigkeit, mit einem Anhang zur Geschichte der Soziographie, bearbeitet und herausgegeben von der Österreichischen Wirtschaftspsychologischen Forschungsstelle* ("The Unemployed of Marienthal: A Sociographic Essay on the Consequences of Long-Term Unemployment, with an Appendix on the History of Sociography, treated and edited by the Austrian Research Unit for Economic Psychology.") In reading the baroque-sounding title, one could, however, grasp the manifest meaning of the book's content. A study about the consequences of being unemployed, but from which point of view, by using what approach, from what branch of the social sciences, and by whom?

Eight chapters running over some eighty printed pages, not a single reference to the scientific literature in the main body of the book, some simple tables, no real statistical analysis. On the other hand the authors used a vivid, down-to-earth language to give the reader a detailed portrait of the everyday life of an unemployed community during what in Europe was then called the Worldwide Economic Crisis and became known in the United States as the Great Depression.

An American browsing through the shelves of a university library or bookstore who opens this small book might be reminded of studies by students of the Chicago sociologist Robert E. Park. Even readers with more than a slight familiarity with the history of the social sciences in Europe seldom would detect that this piece stems from German authors. Nevertheless the so-called Chicago School did not have any direct influence on the group of researchers in interwar Vienna nor were they influenced by German social scientists of their time.

Only the introduction to *Marienthal* accommodates to conventional scholarly routines by informing the reader about what the researchers were reaching for and what they had actually done. Available statistics are superficial and reports by journalists cover only exemplary cases, claim the authors in the first paragraph. They had wanted to bridge the gap between those two approaches and

had tried to elude accidental impressions. The proposed "comprehensive picture of life in Marienthal" (2) is delivered through the rest of the book.

A tiny community some twenty miles southeast of Austria's capital, Vienna, Marienthal was created as an offspring of a flax mill in the first third of the nineteenth century. Around the mill, later enlarged to a factory, hired laborers from different corners of the Hapsburg Empire had settled and had become permanent inhabitants during the next hundred years. After the collapse of the monarchy at the end of World War I, the labor movement became stronger and used its influence to go on strike in the early 1920s. Only a few months later, a first wave of layoffs started, but the factory recovered and was in full workload until the Austrian bank system collapsed in the spring of 1929, sweeping along all those corporations reliant on the availability of bank loans. Over the summer of 1929 the factory and all its companion plants closed down and nearly every family in the small village became affected by unemployment. The big difference from former recessions was the sheer length of time this unemployment lasted. When the researchers first came to Marienthal more than two years after the shutdown of the factory, the situation had not changed at all; it had become even worse.

Chapter 3 on the "Living Standard" provides details about the living conditions in Marienthal. Only one out of five families had at least one member earning an income from regular work. Three-quarters of the families were dependent on unemployment payments, which were dramatically low at this time. From those individuals on relief only the tiny minority of 5 percent received the then maximum of sixty shillings (or \$ 102 in 2000 prices) per month and "consumer unit" (for the definition of consumer unit see note 2 on page 20). Here, and elsewhere, the study does not pause by giving raw data about income and usage of it but turns immediately to the experiences of the hungry people. So called "family protocols" present vivid descriptions of the struggle for survival in this desperate community. Allotments were the only legal remedies, but "when a dog disappears, the owner no longer bothers to report the loss" (22).

Contrary to the then well-established routines of social book-keeping developed by members of the *Verein für Socialpolitik*

(Association for Social Policy)¹ and social reportages used by the labor movement press the investigators moved on. The second half of the study is devoted entirely to the socio-psychological consequences of unemployment.

Starting with a portrait of "A Weary Community" the authors demonstrate the far-reaching consequences of the situation. Before the recession took place, Marienthal was a stronghold of the Social Democratic Labor Movement. There was a full-fledged Workers' Library, newspapers were widely distributed and read, participation in the community's life was strong, many clubs were active and participation in political campaigns and elections was high. Nearly everything had come to a stop after the closing of the factory and the following catastrophe. People who should have more time for reading books stopped borrowing them from the library; newspapers were not read as carefully as before, if at all; only organizations offering their members direct financial advantages showed an increase, in particular the Social Democratic cremation society and the cycling club, because of the insurance it provided to its membership.

Furthermore there were "Responses to Deprivation," as the title of chapter 6 indicates. Here the reader finds what the German original specified more precisely as *Die Haltung* (meaning stance or attitude in a non-technical sense). A typology based on a close examination of some hundred families found four different *Haltungen* (attitudes): "unbroken – resigned – in despair – apathetic." Moreover the authors made a cross-tabulation between their psychologically grounded classifications and the average income per consumer unit (again, they did not call it this way, as they did not make use of the sociological or psychological concept "attitude" in the German original). The lower the income the more deprived the families reacted. Someone whose earnings were as low as thirty-four shillings a month (or \$ 58 at 2000 prices) counts still as unbroken, whereas families with a monthly income between nineteen to twenty-five shillings (or \$ 32 to \$ 42) fall in the category of broken (combining the two lowest levels of adaptation). These findings have become common knowledge for social scientists in the meantime and were confirmed more than once, but were a surprise in 1933. Political activists and social scientists expected

a more active, rebellious reaction to deprivation then; Marxists of all branches anticipated the revolution to come after the final breakdown of capitalism. *Marienthal* provided a telling lesson quite contrary to the conventional wisdom and history itself validated the experience.

A particularly interesting part of the study is chapter 7 on "The Meaning of Time." The insights presented there truly "emerged as a temporary derivative rather than as a focus for a continuing research program," as Robert K. Merton noted in his seminal paper on Socially Expected Durations.² The observations which led to the findings were neither part of the initial planning of the research team nor were they embedded in contemporary research styles or theories. A sociology of time was then still unknown. What the researchers figured out in *Marienthal* about the usage of time was completely unexpected but nevertheless important for further research. It was serendipitous. Near the very end of their stay in *Marienthal*, someone from the research group called attention to the fact that men walked more slowly across the main street and stopped more often on their way than women. Immediately they turned their attention to this behavior, they fetched a stopwatch and started to count the number of times people stopped and measured the walking speed from a concealed position. A conclusion of their unobtrusive observations was that women were not really unemployed but only unpaid: "They have the household to run, which fully occupies the day" (74). Not only did the researchers discover something unexpected about time use but also about gender differences in coping with unemployment. Both insights resulted from carefully conducted observations and as a result of an unprejudiced interpretation of empirical data.

The concluding chapter raises the question "How long can this life continue?" The authors did not feel in a position to give a sound answer as they frankly indicated. However, they draw the reader's attention to another point of view, the biographical dimension of coping with unfortunate conditions of life. Those people who "had been particularly well-off in the past were apt to develop a different reaction to unemployment" (94). Lack of resources prevented the researchers to elaborate this point further. The main text closes with a telling sentence: "We entered *Marienthal* as scien-

tists; we leave it with only one desire: that the tragic opportunity for such an inquiry may not recur in our time" (98).

Consequently the authors did not lose their interest in the fate of the people of Marienthal after they had finished their investigation and published their findings. Late in 1933, Marie Jahoda returned to Marienthal to see what had happened there since the team finished its investigation: "During the whole time of our investigation in Marienthal the desire sprouted in every member of the research group for once not to be restricted to the role of the investigator who describes but to organize and to help." In a memo to Paul Lazarsfeld who lived in New York at this time Jahoda summarized her experiences and discussed one major obstacle at some length. The new authoritarian regime had established its own scheme to give work to the unemployed by forcing them to join the *Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst* (Voluntary Work Service). Despite her strong opposition to nearly everything which stemmed from the "dictatorship mitigated by sloppiness," as the regime of Engelbert Dollfuss and his successor Kurt Schuschnigg was called by its Austrian opponents, Jahoda argued in favor of this welfare-to-work project: "Only the provision of any work could counter the resignation that comes with unemployment."³

The Methodology

The book's title refers to sociography as its methodology. Not only does this term sound unfamiliar today, it was so then as well. Why did the group around the young Paul Lazarsfeld not follow established paths, why did they feel encouraged to map out a new one? What was really new, and what was just a kind of re-invention? How did this innovation emerge, and why?

To answer these questions we can find some hints in the text itself because the authors report their research strategy at some length, although they neither compared their own way with those of competitors nor legitimized their decisions through discussing rival methodological options.

The research group did not waste its time debating preparatory meta-theoretical problems. Retracing their endeavor into the history of the social sciences is reserved for the appendix on the history of sociography, that was written after the investigation was

finished; the researchers started their project off the cuff. Preparations started in the autumn of 1931, with field-work beginning towards the end of the year when the young psychology graduate Lotte Danziger went to Marienthal to live in the community for six weeks. "[C]ontact with the population was facilitated by Dr. Lotte Danziger's [sic!] preparatory work ...; she inspired the confidence to which we owe the copious biographical material" (6). Lotte Schenk-Danzinger, as she was called after her marriage, described her somewhat mixed feelings about her experiences in an interview conducted half a century later:

"Well, I lived there for a while and did a number of interviews, but I really hated it. ... I had a terrible, an awful room, really awful. That was for about a week, or perhaps ten days I left the house in the morning and did a few interviews with different families, and then wrote them down in the afternoon, ... you could not really write them down in the presence of the people because then they would have immediately stopped telling their stories, so you had to draw up the protocols from memory."⁴

The fact that someone from outside the core group was commissioned to carry out the field-work most likely had very trivial reasons. Marie Jahoda was at the time completing her Ph.D. thesis and was studying for the final exams, Lazarsfeld was busy directing other surveys so that it was impossible for him to leave his workplace for any long period of time, and Hans Zeisel was working in his father's law office in Vienna, and was likewise unable to take an extended period of leave. We do not know how many temporary employees helped out occasionally, only that "ten psychologists" conducted the field-work and spent "some 120 working days" (9) there, Lotte Danziger thus undertook about one-third of the overall workload in the field.⁵

That the three authors of *Marienthal*, who later became associated solely with the study, were only marginally involved in the field-work was balanced through meetings which were held once or twice a week and where "arrangements for the following days" (9) were made. This is worth mentioning because it underscores that no definite research design had been worked out in advance, but many possible techniques and approaches were discovered only in the course of the investigations. Therefore one major advantage of the study is that the team was flexible and did not insist

on rigid methodological routines – they modified guidelines for the field-workers regularly.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the senior researchers' lack of involvement in the process of data collection was not the consequence of a developed division of labor between different statuses inside the research team, where the researchers responsible for the design used unbiased field-workers for methodological reasons as became a common standard later on.

To identify the innovative character of *Marienthal* we have to use comparisons. Which of the techniques employed by the research team had been used before (in their own investigations or in studies by others), and, secondly, in which category would they fit according to our present classifications? As table 1 illustrates, the method most frequently employed today, that is, personal interviews in which subjects are asked about their views and attitudes, was of little significance then. If interviews were carried out at all, they followed very different guidelines from those used today. No questionnaire was utilized by the collaborators during their conversations with the villagers. Apart from official statistical information the researchers developed highly original methods of data collection which they had not encountered before, neither in their training nor in the relevant literature. The methods they could have been familiar with, from the surveys carried out by the *Verein für Socialpolitik* and from what they learned at the Department of Psychology at the University of Vienna, were experts interviews, the recording of life-histories, prompting of school essays and the use of psychological tests (shortage of funds restricted the scope of this technique, however).

In today's terminology one would classify the main method as "action research," although strictly speaking this is incorrect because the Marienthal team did not primarily seek to activate the respondents politically. Action research ultimately implies that the researchers know what is "good" for the community they investigate. Therefore research is interventionist, with the investigators seeking to generate the kind of social movement that they feel the community lacks. What distinguished the researchers in Marienthal was that they subordinated their objectives to the people's "needs." "We made it a consistent point of policy that none of our research-

Table 1
Methods Used in Marienthal and Their Present-Day Counterparts

	Present day classification		Original notation
	Quantitative data	Official existing statistics	* Election results * Population statistics * Housekeeping Statistics * Reports and complaints made to the Industrial Commission * Account books * Library records (loans) * Subscriptions to newspapers * Membership figures of clubs * Family Diaries
Unobtrusive data collection		Content analysis	* Measurement of walking speed * Visits to families Clothing project Medical consultation Pattern design course Girls' gymnastics course Political activities * Parent Guidance
	Qualitative data	Structured observation	* Reports from teachers, parish priest, town mayor, doctors, business people, officials from political clubs and other organizations
	Quantitative data	Participant observation	* School essays, prize essay competition
	Qualitative data	Action research	* Psychological tests Family files, with separate files for each member * Meal records Time sheets * Life Histories
		Expert reports	
		Projective material	
		Psychological tests	
		Written records	
	Quantitative data	Personal interviews	
	Qualitative data		
Intrusive data collection			

Note: Asterisks in the right column indicate previous use in social science research projects.

ers should be in Marienthal as a mere reporter or outside observer. Everyone was to fit naturally into the communal life by participating in some activity generally useful to the community" (5).

Table 1 also clearly shows the "mixture of methods." The researchers used *triangulation* long before this kind of research was coined by Norman K. Denzin.⁶ Efforts were made to employ different ways of collecting data or combinations of them. In an exemplary manner, *Marienthal* adhered to the principle that the methodology should be appropriate to the subject, and that the choice of methods should be appropriate to the circumstances.

Jahoda later recalled that "the methods emerged as a result of the concentration on the problem, and not for their own sake."⁷

Even before *Marienthal* was published, Zeisel presented similar arguments to counter any "criticism of our procedure." He rejects suggestions that the design they had selected displayed "little uniformity from the point of view of any specialized science" and did not respect the "methodological barriers, laboriously erected to keep psychology and sociology apart," by emphasizing "the special advantage" of the chosen approach, which according to Zeisel was that

our design ... did not want to adopt a single uniform perspective, but allowed us to give a unified description of the social phenomenon which the unemployed village of Marienthal represented. The methodological advantage of this approach is directly linked to the ultimately applied purpose of social science research: It wants to provide a basis for our actions.⁸

This cursory glance at the methodology raises the question of what made this innovative approach possible. Again, because "about sixty-six pounds" (9) of the original materials were lost due to political circumstances, we have to try to reconstruct the answer from the surviving information. Lazarsfeld provides some clues as to what a possible answer might be in his introduction, where he discusses the problem of collecting the data:

"Our idea was to find procedures which would combine the use of numerical data with immersion (*sich einleben*) into the situation. To this end it was necessary to gain such close contact with the population in Marienthal that we could learn the smallest details of their daily life. At the same time we had to perceive each day so that it was possible to reconstruct it objectively; finally, a structure had to be developed for the whole that would allow all the details to be seen as expressions of a minimum number of basic syndromes" (1f.).

Following the same line of argument, Zeisel emphasizes the importance of the American method of "unobtrusive observation" in those parts of the original appendix which were omitted from the American translation.⁹ Contemporary readers of the study consequently felt that the greatest achievement of *Marienthal* was its "functional penetration," as O. A. Oeser called it:

[T]he observers approach the community to be studied not as reporters with notebook and camera, but as far as possible as accepted members of

that community, having several definite and easily intelligible functions within it. It is clear that the frame of mind with which questions will be answered by a member of a community will depend on his attitude of acceptance, rejection, or neutrality towards the questioner. On the other hand, the fact that an observer has a part to play in a community makes it not only easier for him to ask questions, but will suggest many observations and questions that might otherwise not have occurred to him.¹⁰

Participation in activities helpful to members of the community, however, only becomes possible if several preconditions are met. First, the researcher will have to oppose the coercion towards ever-more rigid demarcation lines between the disciplines in their work, and then they will have to be prepared to abandon their socially elevated and secure position and relinquish the role of objective observing scholar, for reasons of *methodology*. This does not mean that they will have to regress to a dedicated attitude in which their personal involvement in the everyday life of the community overwhelms their role as observers. In fact, the approach might best be described by the following, almost paradoxical, characterization: The researchers temporarily join the social group they want to study. Acting the role of a new member of the group allows one to explain one's presence to the members of the community, as well as to find a more detached role within the community in which one will be able to pursue one's scholarly interests. Constantly one has to balance one role against the other, yet the "immersion into the situation" gives one "first-hand information and compassionate understanding"¹¹ of the social life one is investigating. Once the field-work has been completed, this knowledge will help the participant observer to arrive at a more valid interpretation and description of the social realities. It is only when the collected material is being *assessed* that quantification can start.

The usage of participant observation, unfamiliar in European social science circles of the time, was possible only because the researchers had distanced themselves from the contemporary European practice where social scientists were primarily concerned with achieving a maximum of objectivity, for reasons of reputation and as a consequence of their social status. Zeisel described this detachment in an article published simultaneously with *Marienthal*:

Between the general overview which the statistical data of the contemporary administration network can give and the relatively abstract knowledge which science-based sociology provides there is a gap in our knowledge of social events. We feel that it should be the task of sociographic methods to fill this gap.¹²

Another factor, supporting the innovative character of the study, was the positive reception of behaviorism by the Bühler School, where the new ideas were never allowed to ossify into sterile dogma, but inspired a certain methodological approach. Lazarsfeld's comment that the team tried "to illustrate the psychological aspect of unemployment using modern research methods" was therefore a very apt description of their objectives.¹³ In addition, the *Forschungsstelle* received through the intercession of the Böhlers' money from the Rockefeller Foundation to realize the proposed study of an unemployed community (additional small funds came from the Viennese Chamber of Labor, under its Social Democratic leadership).

Listing only the cognitive aspects which made *Marienthal* an innovative study would create an incomplete picture; the political and social aspects were, in fact, just as relevant. In the appendix on the history of sociography, Zeisel points out that outside Europe several researchers had tried before to employ the methods of participant observation. Yet none of them had raised the question of what social preconditions would have to be met before such an approach could be taken. Of course, researchers wanting to be more than reporters of facts or neutral observers in the community that they study might not always be able to carry out their plan, and obviously, whether or not their plan succeeds depends on more than just their efforts. Resistance to their investigations, misunderstandings, and personal inability of the researcher may contribute to its failure. *Marienthal* does not seem to have encountered any such difficulties. Indeed, one might argue that it was the embeddedness of the researchers into the Social Democratic Labor Movement, as well as the fact that *Marienthal* was a village whose entire population had become unemployed, that allowed the researchers to succeed in their investigation. Because everyone in the village had become a potential subject, selection of a group interested in the study, or establishing contacts with them, was not

the problem. The common Social Democratic background shared by the researchers and the majority of their respondents also helped them to overcome potential difficulties. The mutual respect the social scientists and the Social Democrats had for each other encouraged cooperation between the two fields. The research team, for example, discussed their initial plans with Otto Bauer, the leading intellectual of the Social Democratic Party, who persuaded them to abandon a plan to study leisure-time activities of workers in favor of investigating the destructive consequences of being unemployed. Beyond that Bauer called the attention of the young social psychologists to the tiny village of Marienthal as a research site with strategic advantages. On the other hand, an intellectual-turned-politician like Bauer never would have forced the social scientists to withhold or polish results for political reasons. This matching of politics and scholarship has seldom been replicated.

The Socio-Cultural Micro-Environment

As indicated earlier *Marienthal* originally appeared without the names of its authors on the title page. The reason for this was simple. The book was published by the Leipzig-based publishing company Hirzel and appeared in the spring of 1933, just a few weeks after Hitler had seized power in Germany. The publisher asked the authors to omit their names from the title pages to avoid political difficulties because of the Jewish sounding names and the group of authors agreed. Probably they also erased some politically objectionable sentences.¹⁴ The surprising lack of political interpretations in *Marienthal* however could have been the result of the series in which the study appeared: *Psychologische Monographien* was edited by Karl Bühler who advocated strictly academic language, a lesson Lazarsfeld had to learn earlier when his first manuscript submitted to the Böhlers had been turned down because of its political tone.

[S]he [i.e., Charlotte Bühler] objected strenuously to the tone in which my section on proletarian youth was written. I was, indeed, full of compassion, talking about exploitation by the bourgeois society, and the hortative style of this section was quite different from the rest of the manuscript. I could not deny this fact, and finally rewrote it. None of the argument was omitted, but the whole tone became descriptive and natu-

realistic, instead of critical. I have no doubt that this episode affected my subsequent writings and is a contributing factor to the debate on the role of sociology that was later led by C. Wright Mills."¹⁵

The way Lazarsfeld and his colleagues accommodated themselves to the new political environment was still very different from what others did at this time. Whereas the authors of *Marienthal* abandoned an opportunity to earn a reward, opportunists flattered the Nazis. Even some with family names easily detectable for "Jew-sniffers" tried hard to continue their academic career under the new rulers. For instance Theodor Wiesengrund, who only after his coming to the U.S. became Theodor W. Adorno, even published texts praising Nazi musicians and applied for a membership in Goebbels' newly erected *Reichsschrifttumskammer*.¹⁶

Although Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, and Zeisel sacrificed in strict professional terms a lot by dissolving their names from their first major publication their renunciation was in accordance with their sociopolitical socialization in Vienna.¹⁷

All three, and most of their collaborators, came from fairly well-established, Jewish upper middle-class families. They did not deny their Jewishness, but it did not play a major role in their self-awareness before the Holocaust. Their families did not pay attention to Jewish rituals but were assimilated to the Gentile majority. Very different from their contemporaries in Germany these Viennese "non-Jewish Jews"¹⁸ did not encounter a serious religious phase in their early life, as it happened in the cases of Erich Fromm, Walter Benjamin, and others. Vienna's middle-class Jews were predominantly agnostic in religious terms, leaning towards liberalism around the turn of the century and changed their inclination later to the Social Democratic Party. Paul Lazarsfeld was born in 1901, his father Robert was a lawyer and his mother Sophie ran a salon where leading left intellectuals met regularly. One of them became young Paul's mentor and Paul's mother's lover: Friedrich Adler, the son of the founder of the Social Democratic Party in Austria, Victor Adler. Friedrich Adler was a trained physicist who abandoned a job offer at Zurich in favor of Albert Einstein.¹⁹ He became well known during World War I when he assassinated the prime minister of the Hapsburg Empire as a signal for an anti-war upheaval. The court case against Adler and especially his eloquent plea politicized a

whole cohort of young people and convinced them to join the labor movement. Paul Lazarsfeld took part in a demonstration in front of the court house and was arrested. After the proclamation of the Republic in 1918 Lazarsfeld not only began studying mathematics, physics, and social sciences, but started a political career too. He published articles in papers of the labor movement, participated in discussion groups, acted in political cabarets, and organized so-called summer colonies where he met Marie Jahoda. They became a couple and married in 1926. The marriage ended in divorce in 1934.

Marie Jahoda was six years younger than Lazarsfeld. Under his influence she began studying psychology at the University of Vienna, where Hans Zeisel, born 1905, attended the Law Faculty to become a lawyer like his father. In addition Zeisel studied economics and volunteered as a sports reporter for the Social Democratic daily *Arbeiter Zeitung*.

Vienna was at this time a seedbed of psychology. Apart from the dominant psychoanalytic school of Sigmund Freud, the rivaling depth psychologist Alfred Adler tried to utilize his competence for social reform, parents education, and educational counseling. Both depth psychology circles did not have a footing in the universities; Freud himself held only an honorary professorship during his lifetime. The university department of psychology, then still part of the philosophy department, was chaired by Karl Bühler who came to Vienna in 1924, accompanied by his wife Charlotte who became the third woman to get a teaching appointment as *Privatdozent* at the University of Vienna. Thanks to the financial support from the municipality of Vienna and due to funds provided by the Rockefeller Foundation, the Bühler couple started a wide-ranging teaching and research program in psychology. Lazarsfeld's mother was a devotee of Alfred Adler, and her son and his friends participated first in Adlerian activities before they entered the Bühlers institute. Lazarsfeld started his career there as the expert for statistics. He never got a regular post in the university but was paid out of the Rockefeller funds.

Besides his doing statistical calculation for everyone at the institute, Lazarsfeld tried to establish a separate division for social psychology. Finally, in 1931, he created with the support of Karl

Bühler the *Wirtschaftspsychologische Forschungsstelle* (Research Branch for Economic Psychology). This small company was modeled after the Viennese *Institut für Konjunkturforschung* (Institute for Business Cycle Research) which was initially under the co-directorship of Ludwig Mises and Friedrich A. Hayek, and later came under the directorship of Oskar Morgenstern. Both institutes were formally located outside the university and its members had ties to the academic world only as *Privatdozent*. This adjunct position gave its holder the "right to teach" but no regularly paid post in the university. The very German institution of *Privatdozent* functioned as a waiting post for aspirants for a professorship. Someone who wanted to become a professor in Central Europe had to submit a post Ph.D. thesis, pass an examination by a special commission and had to wait afterwards for the next opening of a professorship. Due to the congestions of too many aspirants for too few posts, the waiting period lengthened and only wealthy people could afford it. The Bühlerts tried to secure Lazarsfeld such an appointment, but failed due to the increasing anti-Semitic mood in academic circles. As a compensation for this disappointment Lazarsfeld was nominated for a Rockefeller Fellowship for the academic year 1933-34.

In the short time between the creation of the *Forschungsstelle* and the departure of Lazarsfeld to New York the group of still very young social psychologists were tremendously productive in terms of raising contracts, performing small studies, and experimenting methodologically. The *Forschungsstelle* was mainly concerned with what was later called market research. They investigated the habits of consumers of tea, coffee, stockings, shoes, beer, milk, etc., not only in Vienna, but also in Zurich, Berlin, and other places in Central Europe. The surveys were usually conducted by hired *rechercheure*, or data-recall facilitators, at the remuneration of one shilling for every filled-out sheet. After some trial and error, the guidelines for data collection became relatively uniform: Starting with socio-demographic variables, the investigator had to turn to previous and earliest experiences with the product under investigation, followed by a detailed examination of the last purchase, the period of planning the purchase, the genesis of the intention to buy, the time between the forming of the intention and the buying act, and finally expectations with regard to the commodity.

Only few of these investigations were reported in print, most of them were summarized in some pages only for the particular client. After Lazarsfeld's departure, the *Forschungsstelle*, now under the directorship of Marie Jahoda, was planning to establish a quarterly, called "Sales Barometer," but due to the political circumstances this plan did not work out. From the surviving manuscripts one could learn that the market researchers were still thinking along the lines of Austromarxism, the specificity of Marxism that had omitted the crude dogmatisms of Karl Kautsky and Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, a.k.a. Lenin, and implanted into Marxism a sturdy shot of empiricism adopted from Ernst Mach's philosophy of science and his followers in the Vienna Circle of Logical Positivism. Only in such an intellectual environment was it possible to study the selling of soap or the purchase of coffee. The curious researchers gained new social psychological insights and satisfied business clients by the then complete new lesson social class was playing in the interpretation of advertisements and the role it had in the selection of brands.

Austrian women of the lower classes are extremely antagonistic to any lightening of their household work: they object to centralized cooking in the community houses; they are unwilling to send out their laundry, even though this costs no more than when done at home; they do not care for labor-saving devices – and all because they are afraid that their importance for the husband and family will diminish if they have less to do.²⁰

"Proletarian consumers" used cologne only on special occasions whereas the well-to-do used it regularly. Therefore advertisements should address different social strata accordingly.

Much later, Lazarsfeld was criticized for his submissiveness to big business, the market researchers, and advertising industry by the student movement's spokespersons and critical theorists presumptuously rejecting mass culture. Reading the surviving papers from the *Forschungsstelle* could lead one to a complete different conclusion. The Social Democratic social psychologists detected the integration of working-class people into the market society at a time when their purchasing power was still negligible. To take ordinary people seriously was a core effort by Vienna's Social Democrats, and to stretch this endeavor to ordinary consumers sounds

much more egalitarian than high-brow reasoning about the masses and their vices.²¹

The story of the Forschungsstelle and its market research reveals something different too: the reconcilability of micro and macro approaches in the social sciences. An undogmatic reading of Marxism provided the group around Lazarsfeld with a macro-sociological frame of reference and the purely academic psychology taught by Karl and Charlotte Bühler offered them through their teaching about learning, language, perception, mental development of children, tools for analyzing decision-making processes. Lazarsfeld who loved anecdotes and paradoxical messages once put it this way: his Viennese market research resulted in "the methodological equivalence of socialist voting and the buying of soap."²² In both cases choices are the core of the action.

Politics destroyed the micro-environment in which those ideas were first formulated and the members of the Forschungsstelle were turned into victims of political repression who narrowly escaped. Lazarsfeld who was urged to return to his Austrian home base after the end of his Rockefeller Fellowship was able to prolong his stay in the U.S. for a second fellowship year. After the final expiration he did not change his place of residence but only his status, "from a distinguished foreigner to an undesirable alien."²³ After some struggle, he got a foothold in the U.S., first as the director of a marginal research project in New Jersey and afterwards as the research director in the then-famous Princeton Radio Research Project, before starting his academic career at Columbia University.²⁴

His former wife Marie Jahoda took over the directorship of the Forschungsstelle but shifted again more into politics after the defeat of the labor movement uprising in 1934 and the ban of all Social Democratic organization by the authoritarian regime in Austria. When she used the Forschungsstelle as a cover address for underground activities she was imprisoned, indicted, and finally convicted for illegal political activities. Jahoda spent more than a half year in prison and was released only on condition that she abandon her citizenship and leave Austria. This happened during the summer of 1937. Half a year later, the Nazis took power in Austria and the country became part of the German Reich. If Jahoda would have declined to leave Austria the summer before, the Nazis

would have deported her to a concentration camp which she would not have survived because she was a Jew. Hans Zeisel and others escaped after the *Anschluss* and no member of the Forschungsstelle became a Holocaust victim. Whereas Jahoda stayed in her first country of refuge, England, until the very end of World War II, Zeisel emigrated to the U.S. before the war broke out; initially he worked for market research companies in Manhattan and became a professor of law and sociology at the University of Chicago in 1953. In 1945 Jahoda relocated to New York too and lived there for the next decade, before returning to England.

The Fate of the Book and a Research Program

Surprisingly enough, given the political conditions of the time, *Marienthal* received a warm reception immediately after its appearance. Leading journals reviewed the study of the not very well-known Viennese group. Reviews, written in different languages, appeared in print in journals of more than one scientific discipline. Around a dozen reviews were published in Germany, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Even the official German *Reichsarbeitsblatt* published a short and friendly review. The outstanding German sociologist Leopold von Wiese devoted three pages in his *Kölner Vierteljahreshefte für Soziologie* to the study.²⁵ Nearly half of the reviews accepted the fact that no names of authors appeared on the front page, but the other half searched the book's content to find out the names of its authors. Given the political circumstances of the time *Marienthal* received a fairly warm reception in academic and political circles. However the political conditions in Austria prevented its authors from gaining full advantage of their success and transforming their new reputation into professional promotion.

Only Paul F. Lazarsfeld, whose visible contribution to *Marienthal* was his signing of the introduction, benefited from his work before he left Austria for the U.S. He used several occasions to present the results of the co-operative research whose *spiritus rector* he definitely was.²⁶ He presented the findings from *Marienthal* at the International Congress of Psychology in 1932, and he wrote summaries for academic journals.²⁷ In addition, an American visitor to Vienna published a report about the study in the *Nation* under the

telling title "When Men Eat Dogs."²⁸ Robert S. Lynd, who acted as Lazarsfeld's mentor during his fellowship period in New York, pushed the young Austrian. Lynd's *Middletown in Transition* made extensive use of the findings reported in *Marienthal* and as a consequence Lazarsfeld started not only translating *Marienthal* but wrote his first paper in the U.S. about the methodology used in *Marienthal*. "Principles of Sociography" never appeared in print because neither truly American journals nor the University in Exile's newly established journal *Social Research* was interested in publishing this article, nor did the translation appear at this time. It was circulated only in a photo-copied version. Nevertheless the methodological reflections must have had some personal value for Lazarsfeld himself because he used this old paper for his "Forward to the American Edition Forty Years Later." (The corresponding quote is on page xiv of this edition.)²⁹

Marie Jahoda experienced similar difficulties trading off the recognition earned through *Marienthal* into an occupational reward after her forced departure from Vienna in 1937. Due to the help of British sociologists, especially Alexander Farquharson from the Institute of Sociology in London, she was able to continue her research. She was commissioned to study a self-help project for unemployed miners organized by a group of well-meaning, middle-class Quakers. Jahoda spent some months in Welsh miners' communities and reported her findings in a book-length manuscript which she handed over to the Quaker leader, Jim (later Lord) Forrester. After reading her slightly Marxist interpretation about the difference between real work and surrogate work, according to the view of the miners, Forrester told Jahoda that her interpretation would destroy his lifework. Since Jahoda was deeply indebted to Forrester's help in bringing her family members out of Nazi Vienna, she withdrew the manuscript from publication. It appeared in print only some fifty years later.³⁰

In spite of its immediate recognition as a sound and worthwhile study, *Marienthal* disappeared from the scholarly scenery for more than thirty years. Through the 1930s world politics defined other topics as pressing, and in the years after the end of World War II unemployment disappeared from the scene at least for two more decades. No one, neither in Central Europe nor in the U.S. was

interested in a study that examined the socio-psychological consequences of unemployment. Social problems like this were seen as purely historic subjects.

Marienthal reappeared in 1960 in a series *Klassiker der Umfrageforschung* (Classics in Survey Research), edited by the leading German public opinion pollster Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. After the publication of the American and English translations in 1971 and 1972, respectively, a reprint of the German 1960 edition in the leading German publishing house Suhrkamp added to the fame of *Marienthal* its wide circulation up to today.³¹

When unemployment recaptured center stage in highly developed countries, social scientists looking for prototypes rediscovered *Marienthal* and the two surviving authors, Jahoda and Zeisel. While Zeisel limited his contributions to some reminiscences about Red Vienna and his socialist convictions³² Jahoda resumed studying work commitment and unemployment after her retirement as a professor of psychology at the University of Sussex. Over the next thirty years *Marienthal* functioned as a blueprint for successors' studies. Jahoda's contributions about the latent functions of paid work had a lasting effect on students of work and unemployment from different disciplines and a wide range of countries.

Taking *Marienthal* as a case-study in itself one could argue that different factors played a role in its long lasting influence. First, as an empirical research report it attracted attention only when the subject under investigation worried ordinary people and scholars simultaneously, second, as an exemplary text it was attractive for novices and researchers looking for advice, and third, the multifaceted troubled circumstances of *Marienthal*'s origin illustrate compellingly that in the social sciences outstanding work can live at the very margins of the scholarly world.

Notes

1. See Anthony Oberschall, *Empirical Social Research in Germany, 1848-1914*, Paris: Mouton 1965.

2. Robert K. Merton, "Socially Expected Durations: A Case Study of Concept Formation in Sociology," in: *Conflict and Consensus: A Festschrift in Honor of Lewis A. Coser*, ed. by Walter W. Powell and Richard Robbins, New York: Free Press 1984, 272.

3. Zwei Jahre später, four-pages long typed fragment in: Paul F. Lazarsfeld Papers, Columbia University's Butler Library Rare Book and Manuscript Division, box 39.

4. Interview with Professor Lotte Schenk-Danzinger by the author, Vienna, June 14, 1988 (transcript in the Archive for the History of Sociology in Austria, AGSÖ, Graz).

5. Paul Lazarsfeld, "An Unemployed Village" in: *Character and Personality* 1. 1932: 148. In an interview conducted shortly before his death Lazarsfeld provided names of collaborators and maintained that the later chancellor of Austria, Bruno Kreisky, was one of his subordinates in Marienthal. Nico Stehr, "A Conversation with Paul F. Lazarsfeld," in: *American Sociologist* 17. 1982 (3): 150-155. There is no independent confirmation for this claim, but one could find other names in the Marienthal files in the Lazarsfeld Papers.

6. Norman K. Denzin, *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall 3rd ed., 1989, 234ff.

7. Marie Jahoda, "Aus den Anfängen der sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschung in Österreich," in: *Zeitgeschichte* 8. 1981: 133-141; *British Journal of Social Psychology*.

8. Hans Zeisel, "Zur Soziographie der Arbeitslosigkeit," in: *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 69. 1933 (1): 105. The paragraph from which these quotes are taken seems to have been adjoined after the proof reading, therefore it could be seen as a rejoinder to criticisms by a reviewer or another contemporary commentator (one should bear in mind however that at that time peer review procedures were unknown).

9. Hans Zeisel, "Zur Geschichte der Soziographie," in: *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal*, Leipzig: Hirzel 1933, 120.

10. O. A. Oeser, "Methods and Assumptions of Field Work in Social Psychology," in: *British Journal of Psychology* 27. 1938: 352.

11. Marie Jahoda, *Arbeitslose bei der Arbeit. Die Nachfolgestudie zu 'Marienthal' aus dem Jahr 1938*, ed. by Christian Fleck, Frankfurt: Campus 1989, 4.

12. Zeisel, "Zur Geschichte der Soziographie," 1933, 96.

13. Lazarsfeld, "An Unemployed Community," 1932, 147.

14. As a consequence of war related demolitions the publisher's archive did not survive. The story follows therefore from the memories of the authors of *Marienthal*, given at different occasions.

15. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir [1968]," in: *The Varied Sociology of Paul F. Lazarsfeld*, writings collected and edited by Patricia L. Kendall, New York: Columbia University Press 1982, p. 24.

16. Rolf Wiggershaus, *Die Frankfurter Schule: Geschichte, theoretische Entwicklung, politische Bedeutung*, Munich: Hanser, 1986, 180 and 199.

17. It is not without irony to recognize that most of the reviews indicated the names of the two main authors Jahoda and Zeisel and some of the early quotations separated Marie Jahoda-Lazarsfeld from her then husband Paul Lazarsfeld and added his name to make the study a collaborative work of three instead of the two – unmentioned – authors: "Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, and Zeisel 1933". One could find further evidence for the disinterested and "communist" role performance of Lazarsfeld in his practice of publishing articles under the pseudonym Elias Smith because he "considered it more important to publicize the institution than to lengthen my personal list of publications," "Memoir," 45.

18. Isaac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays*, edited with an introduction by Tamara Deutscher, London: Oxford University Press 1968.

19. Philipp Frank, *Einstein, His Life and Times*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1947, 19.

20. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "Appendix D. Social Prejudice in Buying Habits," undated English written manuscript in Paul F. Lazarsfeld's microfilmed files from his study, reel 1, AGSÖ Graz. Also in Lazarsfeld Papers, Columbia University's Butler Library, box 34, folder 5.

21. Ronald A. Fullerton published two short but insightful articles about Lazarsfeld's Viennese market research activities: "Tea and the Viennese: A Pioneering Episode in the Analysis of Consumer Behavior," in: *Advances in Consumer Research* 21. 1994: 418-21 and "An Historic Analysis of Advertising's Role in Consumer Decision Making: Paul F. Lazarsfeld's European Research," in *Advances in Consumer Research* 26.1999: 498-503.

22. Lazarsfeld, "Memoir," 19. see: Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "Development of a Test for Class-Consciousness," in: *Continuities in the Language of Social Research*, ed. by Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Ann K. Pasanella and Morris Rosenberg, New York: Free Press 1972, 41-3.

23. "Memoir," 39.

24. "History of Communication Research."

25. Reviews appeared in *Arbeit und Wirtschaft* (Austria), *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (Germany), *Kölner Vierteljahreshefte für Soziologie* (Germany), *Archiv für die gesamte Psychologie* (Germany), *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik* (Germany), *Reichsarbeitsblatt* (Germany), *Mensch en Maatschappij* (Netherlands), *Sociology and Social Research* (USA), *Archivio italiano di psicologia* (Italy), *Revue de l'institut de Sociologie* (France), *Freie Wohlfahrtspflege* (Germany), and *Literarisches Centralblatt für Deutschland* (Germany).

26. There is still some quarreling about the true authorship of *Marienthal*. Evidently the book was the result of a collaborative effort even if it is true that Jahoda wrote the main text.

27. Philip Eisenberg and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "The Psychological Effects of Unemployment," in: *Psychological Bulletin* 35, 1938: 358-390; Boris Zawadzki and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "The Psychological Consequences of Unemployment," in: *Journal of Social Psychology* 6, 1935: 224-251.

28. Robert N. McMurry, "When Men Eat Dogs," in: *Nation* vol. CXXXVI, number 3533, January 4, 1933, 15-18.

29. See for an extensive interpretation: Christian Fleck, "The choice between market research and sociography, or: What happened to Lazarsfeld in the United States?" in: Jacques Lautman & Bernard-Pierre Lécuyer, eds., *Paul Lazarsfeld (1901-1976). La sociologie de Vienne à New York*, Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1998, 83 - 119.

30. Marie Jahoda, "Unemployed Men at Work," in: *Unemployed People: Social and Psychological Perspectives*, ed. by David Fryer and Philip Ullah, Milton Keynes: Open University Press 1987, 1-73 and Marie Jahoda, *Arbeitslose bei der Arbeit. Die Nachfolgestudie zu 'Marienthal' aus dem Jahr 1938*, ed. by Christian Fleck, Frankfurt: Campus 1989. See for complementary interpretations of Jahoda's experiences David Fryer, "Monmouthshire and Marienthal: Sociographies of two Unemployed Communities," in: *Unemployed People*, 74-93 and Christian Fleck, "Einleitung," in: Jahoda, *Arbeitslose bei der Arbeit*, vii-lxxii.

31. *Marienthal* became also translated into French, Italian, Spanish, Norwegian, Korean, and Hungarian.

32. Hans Zeisel, "The Austromarxists: Reflections and Recollections," in: *The Austrian Socialist Experiment: Social Democracy and Austromarxism, 1918-1934*, ed. by Anson Rabinbach, Eagle Point: Westview Press 1985; idem, "Zeitzeuge," in: *Vertriebene Vernunft II. Emigration und Exil österreichischer Wissenschaft*, ed. by Friedrich Stadler, Vienna: Jugend & Volk 1988, 328-331, idem, "Die Hälfte des Gespräches, das ich gerne heute mit Paul Lazarsfeld über Sozialismus geführt hätte," in: *Paul F. Lazarsfeld. Die Wiener Tradition der empirischen Sozial- und Kommunikationsforschung*, ed. by Wolfgang R. Langenbucher, Munich: Ölschlager 1990, 31-37.

FOREWORD TO THE AMERICAN EDITION

Forty Years Later

THE STUDY on which this book is based was done in 1930 in Austria, at the time of a depression that was much worse than anything the United States went through. The first thought that may come to mind is that the findings therefore may be out of date and out of place. The substantive problem is still very much with us, of course, although we now talk more generally, about poverty rather than about unemployment specifically. But it could well be that forty years of research have changed our thinking about the effects of unemployment. A brief look at the literature shows that this is not the case.

One of the main theses of the Marienthal study was that prolonged unemployment leads to a state of apathy in which the victims do not utilize any longer even the few opportunities left to them. The vicious cycle between reduced opportunities and reduced level of aspiration has remained the focus of all subsequent discussions. As a matter of fact, this insight was a simultaneous discovery.

When I came to this country in 1933, I began to collect all available publications on unemployment.¹ One Ameri-

1. A summary, containing 112 references, was later published with the help of a colleague. Eisenberg, P. and Lazarsfeld, P. F., *The Psychological Effects of Unemployment*. *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 35, no. 6, June, 1938.