MANNHEIM, Karl (March 27, 1893, Budapest – January 9, 1947, London)

Karl Mannheim was one of the most influential sociologists of the early twentieth century. He received a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Budapest, but soon immigrated to Germany in response to Hungary’s political turmoil. There he studied with Alfred Weber (brother of Max) and published his most influential work, *Ideology and Utopia* (1929)— one of the founding texts of the sociology of knowledge. For Mannheim, as for Marx and other early sociologists, our knowledge is historically constructed. Mannheim, though, argues that this construction can take different forms, with different political outcomes. An idea is “ideological” if it distorts reality in the interest of the status quo, while it is “utopian” if it seeks to transform reality such that it might match the idea. Mannheim was critical of ideology, and ambivalent about utopia. In 1933, he immigrated once again to Britain, where he worked with many other émigrés at the London School of Economics. In his British phase, he attempted to theorize how his sociological insights could be used to craft policy in a “planned democracy” (*Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction,*1935).

Bibliography: Colin Loader, *The Intellectual Development of Karl Mannheim* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

James Chappel