



A Radical Trajectory in Science Studies: Interview with Gary Werskey

Gerardo Ienna

Introduction

Gary Werskey has been one of the main animators of the debates around science and Marxism in the United Kingdom. He especially played the role of mediator between two generations of Marxist scientists: the old generation active during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s and the new one close to the new left who animated the debates between the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (see Werskey 1978; 2007).

Born in Salinas, California, on August 5, 1943, Gary Werskey studied at Northwestern University and later entered Harvard as a graduate student in history in 1965, completing his doctorate in 1973 under the joint supervision of Stuart Hughes and Everett Mendelsohn. At the time, Mendelsohn was one of the few historians of science who took seriously the Marxist tradition known by the derogatory term “externalism” (Ienna and Rispoli 2019; Ienna 2022a). Actually, Werskey discovered this tradition in his second year of doctoral studies and decided to write for his dissertation a collective biography of a group of five British Marxist scientists: John Desmond Bernal, Joseph Needham, Hyman Levy, John Burdon Sanderson Haldane, and Lancelot Hogben. In 1968, he travelled to the United Kingdom to conduct his research, becoming particularly close to the Needham family. During this period, he came into contact with various currents of the New Left and with developments in British sociology and history of science. This research project would become the basis for his now well-known monograph *The Visible College: A Collective Biography of British Scientists and Socialists of the 1930's* (Werskey 1978).

In 1970 he joined the Science Studies Unit in Edinburgh where the *strong program* in the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge was being developed by

Ienna, Gerardo. 2023. “A Radical Trajectory in Science Studies: Interview with Gary Werskey.” *Marxism & Sciences* 2(2): 135–147. <https://doi.org/10.56063/MS.2310.02210>

- *Correspondence:* Gerardo Ienna, University of Verona and University of Maryland.
- e-mail: gerardo.ienna[at]gmail.com
- ORCID: 0000-0001-5278-8838
- DOI: 10.56063/MS.2310.02210
- *Received:* 04.07.2023; *Accepted:* 06.07.2023
- *Available online:* 05.11.2023

David Bloor and Barry Barnes. At the same time Werskey joined the British Society for Social Responsibility (BSSRS), which was established in 1969, before becoming in 1972 one of the founding members of the *Radical Science Journal* (RSJ).

In 1971, largely thanks to him and his colleague Roy MacLeod, renewed attention was given to the famous contributions presented by the Soviet delegates, led by Nikolai Bukharin, to the second International Congress of the History of Science and Technology held in London in 1931. The resulting volume of papers, hurriedly translated into English and published under the title of *Science at the Cross Roads*, is still considered a classic of both the history of science and Marxist literature (Ienna and Rispoli 2021; Ienna 2022b). The republication of this text, as well as Werskey's important 1978 monograph, provided a cardinal resource connecting two generations of Marxist scientists.

The emergence of the Radical Science Movements in the U.K.¹ also has to do with the international circulation of ideas. Indeed, Werskey was among those researchers—such as MacLeod, Robert M. Young, Jerry Ravetz, and Les Levidow, for example—who migrated from the United States to the U.K. This migration encouraged an intellectual vibrancy and new forms of cultural hybridization (Turchetti 2016).

In 1969 the BSSRS took shape, initially without any particular political direction (although early supporters included the old generation Marxist scientists such as: Bernal, Needham and Levy). The goal was to bring together a wide range of scientists by creating a platform to expose the abuses and ideological uses of science.

As soon as radical activists Werskey, Ravetz, Young and Levidow arrived in the U.K., they immediately took part in the association. The BSSRS quickly became a more politically engaged organization (see Rosenhead 1972; Ravetz 1977). Composed initially of both radical and more liberal wings, internal rifts gradually grew within the group (Rose and Rose 1976, 18–24). On the one hand, two of the founding members of the BSSRS, Hilary Rose and Steven Rose, argued that the association was not sufficiently socialist. On the other hand, more establishment scientists like Michael Swann and John Ziman believed that its new direction was too radical and so broke away in 1973 to create the Council for Science and Society (Ravetz 1977).

The BSSRS contained within itself a heterogeneous mix of different political tendencies (Rose and Rose 1976, 19). The peculiarity of the BSSRS was that it adopted a critique of science in 'late capitalism' based on the concept of class instead of the idea of morality (Moore 2006, 256–257). The clear majority of members of the radical science movement were from an academic milieu, and

1. For more on the declinations of the Radical Science Movements in the UK, see Bharucha 2018.

some of these were directly concerned with issues related to the STS field. Activities were largely based in London and other cities such as Cambridge, Edinburgh, Leeds, and Manchester.

The BSSRS was composed internally of various groups dedicated to specific topics such as the *Hazards Group*, *the Woman in Science Group*, *the Politics of Health Group*, and *the Radical Statistics Group*. The newsletters *Undercurrent* (devoted mainly to alternative technologies) and *Science for People* were instruments through which the association publicized its reports and the various activities of the radical science movement in general (Werskey 2007, 432).

Alongside these, there arose at the initiative of Young, assisted by Werskey, David Dickson, Miuke Hales and Jonathan Rosenhead, the *Radical Science Journal* (now known as *Science as Culture*), which was an important channel for the development of STS in the UK. This journal consisted mainly of philosophers, historians, and sociologists of science who collaborated with each other on a common theoretical and practical issues. As can be deduced from the journal's first editorial, this project was constituted in a manner antithetical to the trend toward political neutrality that was coming to dominate the practice and direction of STS inside academia (see *Radical Science Journal* 1974). Within this broad and diverse radical science movement, there were numerous contributions that could be considered relevant to the STS field and its internal theoretical development. Although communication the radical and academic practitioners of 'science studies' was not always smooth, the latter recognized the contributions of the political militants as fundamental. Foremost among these are certainly the works of Werskey, Young, Ravetz and the Roses, which have been widely regarded as landmarks in the emergence of STS.

Until 1987 Werskey continued to teach in the UK, moving between Leicester, Bath and finally at the University of London. During this period Werskey gradually distanced himself from the institutionalized social studies of science, instead, concentrating instead on the development of a marxist critique of capitalist science.

This interview aims to explore Werskey's role in the development of Marxist debates on science during the 1970s and 1980s by highlighting the intricate relationships between Radical Science Movements, STS, Cultural Studies, and the British New Left in general.

GERARDO IENNA: *Why did you come to the Science Studies Unit in Edinburgh?*

GARY WERSKEY: I took up the lectureship there in January 1970. For the previous 18 months I had been doing research in the UK for my Harvard PhD on the British left-wing scientists of the 1930s. This period coincided with some momentous changes in both my political outlook and personal circumstances. Politically, my interviews with these old Marxists, as well as the events of May

'68 and increasing opposition to the Vietnam war, induced a leftward shift in my politics and world-view. This transformation coincided with meeting my future wife, who was herself an activist in the early days of second-wave feminism. It was against this backdrop that I decided to seek an academic appointment in Britain, which I was now finding more politically and intellectually congenial than the US. I think I was seen as a good fit at Edinburgh, given my Harvard connections with Everett Mendelsohn and other young progressive historians of science and my study of J.D. Bernal et al who were in a sense the ideological godfathers of the SSU, especially the Edinburgh geneticist C.H. Waddington.

GI: *And what was your relationship to Marxism at that time?*

GW: During my undergraduate years at Northwestern I was introduced to Marx in a variety of historical and philosophical courses as an important figure in the history and development of European modernist thought. This neutral/apolitical presentation legitimated the beginning of my interest in Marxism, at the same time as my disenchantment with American capitalism was growing via my involvement in the civil rights movement—following my participation in the March on Montgomery in 1965—and my early opposition to the American war in Vietnam. Everett Mendelsohn's lecture on the British Marxist scientists encouraged a closer engagement with orthodox Marxism and its application to the history of science (above all, Boris Hessen). This trajectory was strengthened between 1968 and 1970 while working in the UK, where I engaged with both young and old Marxists not just about the past but also contemporary politics and numerous challenges to 'diamat' versions of Marxism.

GI: *Why did you decide to leave SSU at a certain point?*

GW: I had a genuinely high regard for Barry Barnes, David Bloor and SSU's Director David Edge. Barry in particular took an interest in my work (which he saw as grist for his largely theoretical work) and helped to deepen my understanding of the sociology of knowledge as a discipline. Both David Edge and he also offered me outlets for some of my early publications. And Edge, by virtue of his former position as Science Editor at BBC Radio, enabled me to gain a commission from Radio 3 to do a documentary on the radical scientists of the 1930s.

However, while I hugely enjoyed the intellectual stimulation and camaraderie of the SSU between 1970 and 1972, my now increasingly radicalised *praxis* was encouraging me to read further afield from the emerging interests of what we would now call STS specialists. But it was only when I signed on to

the *Radical Science Journal* that I got really caught up with a variety of contemporary Marxisms that were more engaged with the challenges posed by feminism, anti-racism and anti-colonial struggles. The one tendency I toyed with but ultimately rejected was the writings of Althusser and his acolytes. However, the greatest lacunae in my education as a would-be Marxist was (and continues to be) my ignorance and understanding of *Capital*, beyond many attempts to dip into vol. 1. Although I've read most everything else of his and Engels, that gap—and my withdrawal from revolutionary politics beginning in the 1980s—means that I still regard myself as an aspiring rather than a genuine Marxist.

GI: *You mentioned the fascination with and rejection of the Althusserian perspective. Was this already occurring during your period of affiliation with the RSJ? This issue also allows me to go into depth on another question. The rejection of some aspects of the Althusserian perspective seems to me a rather common feature of the British debates of those years (I am thinking especially of E.P. Thompson's *The Poverty of Theory*). So, I wonder if, more generally, there were any points of contact (even if only theoretical or mutual intellectual influence) between the nascent projects of the SSU, RSJ, BSSRS and what in those years were beginning to be called the "Cultural Studies" (I am thinking especially of the Birmingham CCCS).*

GW: The greatest British supporters of Althusser in the 1970s were the editors of *New Left Review* (who also took almost no interest in questions about the political economy of science and the social/ideological construction of scientific ideas. So, it's not surprising that most British Marxist/Left historians were uncomfortable with the fairly mechanistic outlook and abstract categories that the French structuralists employed in their work. Otherwise, I think we at RSJ were open to quite a diverse range of radical/Marxist perspectives, especially if they managed to embrace feminist and anti-colonial writers. European Marxists, including the Frankfurt School, Gramsci, Lukacs, Benjamin, etc., were congenial, as were American Marxists associated with the *Monthly Review*, including Harry Braverman's labour process writings. In Britain we definitely had a lot of time for historians like Thompson and Raphael Samuel but also those gathered around Stuart Hall at the Centre for Cultural Studies in Birmingham—one of Stuart Hall's students, Maureen McNeil was on the RSJ collective. We were also closely aligned with the Marxist economists associated with the Conference of Socialist Economists and its journal *Capital & Class*, as well as the non-sectarian scholars associated with *Radical Philosophy* (including the historian of science Simon Schaffer).

GI: *What tensions did you see between the SSK program and the problems faced by the Radical Science Journal and the BSSRS?*

GW: Put simply, I think our conception of science and its enmeshment with the globalising social relations of contemporary capitalism was so different from the preoccupations of the SSK crowd that there wasn't sufficient common ground for any tensions to arise. The two camps simply went their separate ways, with of course the institutionalisation of STS and the ascendancy of SSK achieving the academic hegemony that they continue to enjoy. Where the real tensions arose was between RSJ and BSSRS—but such is the way when theorists and activists of the left fail to understand each other's intent and practice.

GI: *If they took different paths, is it possible to say that STS and Radical Science movements had common roots (e.g., the famous debate on the two cultures, the pressing need to address the relationship between science and society, Waddington's role in promoting the creation of SSU, Bernalism etc.)?*

GW: 'Science' in the broadest sense was front and centre in the post-war political and policy debates in both the USA and the UK. Above all the bomb and the American-Soviet arms race fuelled the militarisation of science and the growth of the military-scientific-industrial complex (and the peace movements of the 1950s). There were moral and technocratic panics about whether enough scientists and engineers were being trained and educated to sustain the 'white-hot technological revolutions' required to sustain the West's military and economic superiority. By the mid-Sixties and America's escalation of the Vietnam war, a radical political critique of Big Science had begun to emerge.

The academic and intellectual ramifications of these developments led to the development of the institutions and 'schools' that would provide the foundations for both STS and 'radical science'. This could be seen in the UK with the rise of SSU-type departments being developed at Edinburgh, Sussex, Leeds and Manchester Universities. One of the intellectual influences spurring this development was 'Bernalism', which had been assimilated as a world-view by the Wilson government in the 1960s. Sociological studies of science associated with the likes of Robert Merton and Joseph Ben-David were also available, as was the 'Two Cultures' debate inspired by C.P. Snow. But probably the most intellectually subversive figure was Thomas Kuhn, whose *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* loosened a lot of assumptions about science's neutrality and objectivity.

These were the ‘common roots’ of the ferment around the growth of both STS and the radical science movements. The difference is that the latter formation was also drawing on a variety of contemporary Marxisms, as well as the increasingly influential feminist and post-colonial critiques.

GI: In your article “Marxist Critique” you report that all these tensions were resolved by the transformation of the BSSRS into a more radical and militant society, through the exit of the older and more conservative scientists (Werskey 2007). In one passage you say that also participating in the BSSRS were “younger STS teachers and scholars, who of course were licensed to get science and engineering students thinking about both the social dimensions of their work and their professional responsibilities.” Who were these STS scholars? What role did they have in the BSSRS?

GW: The most active of these STS teacher-scholars in BSSRS (and *Science for People*) was Dorothy (Dot) Griffiths, who was then based at Imperial College (where I later joined her). Dot was also on the RSJ collective but drifted away as she gravitated toward the newly founded *Feminist Review*. Donald Mackenzie, a former student of mine at Edinburgh who worked in both BSSRS and the SSU (I think), was also very active. In the Manchester Liberal Studies in Science department, I’d nominate Ken Green as a key figure, although I’m not sure whether BSSRS had much of a local presence in Manchester. Another important STS teacher was Brian Easlea. Based at SPRU (the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex) and an RSJ member, Brian’s *Liberation and the Aims of Science* was certainly the most influential STS textbook in the 1970s. Another younger activist at Sussex was Mike Hales, a founding member of the RSJ collective. Finally, a somewhat older and less radical figure but an influential STS scholar in his own right was Jerry Ravetz at Leeds whose monograph *Scientific Knowledge and Its Social Problems* enjoyed quite a following.

GI: Both the radical science movements and SSK in a way aspire to show the “non-neutrality of scientific knowledge.” The radical science movements accomplish this through Marxist theoretical tools, social critique and the analysis of the relationship between science and ideology. The SSKs, on the other hand, aim to construct a theoretical model that has the claim to be neutral itself... How were the principles of symmetry and impartiality read by the radical science movements? Is this the key to understanding the mutual loosening? Did the RSJ question itself on this issue?

GW: Others would probably be better able to answer this epistemological question. The best source would undoubtedly be Bob Young’s writings in the 1970s, especially his RSJ articles. What’s surprising, in retrospect, is how Young’s argument that “Science Is Social Relations” was perfectly compatible with a conventionally ‘realist’ view that the findings of science were “true”. For more on this, including a useful contribution from Maureen McNeil, I’d direct

you to the Bob Young festschrift (edited by Kurt Jacobsen & David Morgan), *Free Associations: Psychoanalysis, Science & Power* (Routledge 2022/2023).

GI: *Related to what you said before, you mention in your article "Marxist Critique" that some radicals (e.g. Young) came into tension with the BSSRS and that others (i.e. Hilary Rose and Steven Rose) even left the society. Is this related to the tension you mention between the RSJ and the BSSRS? Didn't the RSJ originate within the BSSRS (as well as other journals such as Undercurrents and Science for People)?*

GW: We all emerged out of the common intellectual and political context of the late Sixties. Some of the divergence from BSSRS in its early years arose from personal/sectarian differences (e.g., the Roses' early departure). Others simply reflected where the skills and ideologies of different actors led them to focus more on BSSRS than, say, RSJ. Sometimes, however, these differences could inspire personal animosities, with grassroot activists occasionally questioning the value of the more academic/theoretical work of, e.g., Bob Young. The RSJ collective itself felt it represented a broad non-sectarian spectrum of interests, included the alternative technology people gathered around Pete Harper (an early RSJ member) and *Undercurrents* and others active in the Conference of Socialist Economists. Remember, too, that some of us (including me) were wishing to engage with other struggles through broader Left groups such as the British Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party, International Socialists, Big Flame, etc.

GI: *I would ask you for some more details about how the RSJ collective was formed. Who had the first idea? how did the collective gradually expand? who took part in it?*

GW: Bob Young almost certainly was the moving force in getting RSJ started. I'm a bit hazy about the start date, but I'm guessing it kicked off sometime in 1972. Bob hooked me in on the strength of an incendiary seminar he gave in Edinburgh in 1971. I moved down to Leicester in 1972 and so was able to participate in the RSJ collective's early meetings in London. But you'll notice that the first issue of RSJ didn't come out until January 1974. It had sold out (2200 copies) by the time the next issue (2/3) appeared in 1975. The names of collective members were published at the head of each issue. (One of its most significant contributors, Les Levidow, didn't join the collective until c. 1976.) The collective members were drawn eclectically from science activists working through the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science and the alternative technology *Undercurrents* network to those with an interest in science and technology working out of feminist and Left groups. Certainly a significant minority were Bob's former and past students and colleagues. We generally met at Bob's house at Freegrove Road and later Cardozo Road, not far from the Caledonian Road tube station in Kentish Town.

GI: *Did you also organize seminars? How did the process of theoretical comparison among the members take place? What were the main intellectual resources used? with what forms of hybridization?*

GW: Ideologically we were quite a broad church, which was both invigorating and debilitating. Apart from our critiques and concerns about how capitalism was transforming science ideologically and technologically into a powerful set of forces for the oppression of workers, women and the Global South, what we had in common was our disdain for Eurocommunism on the one hand and the structural Marxists of the *New Left Review* on the other. Our eclecticism to some extent mirrored Bob Young's omnivorous intellect and interests, as well as our willingness to collaborate with a wide range of other radical intellectuals, including those working in *Radical Philosophy* and the Conference of Socialist Economists. We also hybridised our readings of British and European Marxism with American New Left and Marxist writers like Harry Braverman, Barbara and John Ehrenreich, Donna Haraway and those associated with the Monthly Review Press. However, we rarely organised or participated in public forums. An exception was our intervention in a conference on the history of biology organised by *Past & Present* and the British Society for the History of Science.

GI: *Could you tell me more about this intervention for P&P and BSHS that you mentioned?*

GW: I don't recall either the title or the exact date, but it would have been sometime in the late 1970s. I was a commentator on one of the papers on eugenics, possibly given by William McGucken. I gave a passionate but frankly ill-prepared reply which didn't sit well with me (or some in the audience), even though Bob Young & Co loved it.

This reminds me of a similar uncomfortable presentation I gave around the same time to a session organised by the 'Communist University' at University College London. Though I was publicly apologetic about my contribution, it did at least go down well with one audience member, Geoff Roberts, who went on to become a distinguished historian of the Stalin era and is today an important critic of 'Western' government and media commentary about the war in Ukraine.

GI: *How was the internal work of the RSJ organized? How were contributions selected? Were there meetings to determine the editorial line?*

GW: In line with our credo as libertarian Marxists, the collective was strongly committed to being as open and participatory in our conversations, decision-making and editorial processes as possible. This meant at times excruciatingly long meetings, endless editorial reviews and rewrites and a very low rate of

journal production. Bob Young was both a force that brought many of us together and equally someone whose dominating presence and combative style could paralyse proceedings and lead to the exodus of some very valuable comrades.

GI: *What contacts and interactions did you have with other militant journals? I guess especially exchanges, on the one hand, with other British journals such as Science for People, Undercurrents, or Radical Philosophy? Were you in any way coordinated?*

GW: I think I've answered this above. All of the publications you mentioned were important to us, as well as the CSE's *Capital & Class* and the American journals *Science for the People*, *Monthly Review*, etc. However, there was little coordination and even at times antagonism with BSSRS, some of whose activists disparaged our preoccupations with theoretical as opposed to their agitational practices.

GI: *Did you also have contacts with journals based in other cultural contexts? I'm thinking especially of Science for the People (US), Sapere (Italy), Testi e contesti (Italy), Medicina Democratica (Italy), Suivre et vivre (France), Labo-Contestation (France), Le Cri des Labo (France), Impascience (France)? or more generally, did the RSJ have transnational contacts? There are several articles published by non-British scholars in the journal....*

GW: Sadly, we were far more oriented to the Anglosphere than we were to our European counterparts. You are right that on occasion we would publish the odd continental writer but more through our academic networks than any more specifically political connections.

GI: *About your academic networks. How were these constructed? It is true that maybe they did not travel on the same channels as political militancy but, I imagine, however, that you built a network of transnational academic exchanges based with other scholars interested in Marxist studies on science. Can you tell me more about that?*

GW: My academic networks were neither large nor extensive, based largely on close contacts with past mentors and open-minded colleagues. There was a Harvard network back to my PhD supervisor Edward Mendelsohn which included Loren Graham at MIT and Roy MacLeod at Sussex Uni. My Edinburgh colleagues Barry Barnes, David Bloor, and David Edge were important influences, as were some of my students, notably Donald Mackenzie. At Bath University I was connected to Harry Collins and Trevor Pinch, while at Imperial College my only close contact was Dorothy Griffiths. I also had occasional but useful encounters with Steve Shapin (who succeeded me at Edinburgh), Simon

Schaffer (through Radical Philosophy), Jerry Ravetz at Leeds (an older American kindred spirit), and several members at the Manchester Liberal Studies in Science group, including Ken Green and Jon Harwood.

A propos of networks, it was David Edge who introduced me to Michael Totten, a producer at BBC Radio 3 who enabled me in 1972 to do both an hour-long documentary about the Red Scientists of the 1930s and a talk comparing and contrasting that generation's views about science and socialism and my own. That talk greatly angered the Head of Radio 3 who was appalled that his network was propagating my Marxist 'propaganda.' I've actually got the audio of both programs. They are massive files but I could send those to you via WeTransfer if you were interested.

GI: How did the transformation of the RSJ into Science as Culture come about? Does this transformation process have to do with a process of academization of the RSJ's original project? To date, I would say that Science as Culture is considered as one of the journals in the STS field... I also wonder if this transformation has not generated some internal controversy within the board.

GW: This transition occurred after I left the RSJ collective. Les Levidow (still with *SaC*) would be the right person to talk about this. I think it partly arose because of the Left's depression following the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and the consequent exhaustion of carrying on in the same fashion as we had in the Seventies. We were all pretty burnt out by this stage, and I think Bob Young in particular needed a more stable context for supporting his and others' radical scholarship. So, *SaC* provided some continuity with our tradition but could also act as a bridge to the more critical end of STS.

GI: Another question related to transnational networks: I had a chance to view the archives of the PAREX project (the project between the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme and the University of Sussex). I noticed that you, you participated in some of the activities of this group while you were at SSU. Can you tell me more about this experience?

GW: This was an initiative of Roy MacLeod at Sussex, working with Chris Freeman at the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) there, to establish this link with the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. I only attended one of their seminars in Paris, where I gave a paper about my work on the Left scientists (around 1971). It was an interesting initiative, but I have no knowledge what impact it had practically or intellectually. Roy MacLeod has the archive of this endeavour and is, I think looking for a home for it either at Sussex or Paris.

GI: *Let's come to contemporary aspects: Do you think a rapprochement between Marxist-oriented studies of science and technology with the academic field of STS is possible (or desirable) today? If yes, what do you think might be the mutual benefits of opening up potential dialogue? Or are you convinced that these fields are destined to remain incompatible with each other?*

GW: I've been too long absent from both the political and academic interventions around science and technology to say anything meaningful about the important questions you pose. The far greater integration of research and development into the fabric of twentyfirst century capitalism must have tilted the concerns of all those still engaged either politically or academically with these developments. I imagine the problem with most STS academic units is that they must now be as much assimilated into the requirements of the capitalist state as their colleagues in the faculties of science and engineering. So, while always open to learning from anyone with a good mind and a good heart, I would guess that I would still be focussing most of my efforts into supporting those wanting to change as well as understand our societies.

GI: *Any final thoughts?*

GW: I'd like to close with a few reflections concerning pessimistic thoughts about the future when things don't seem to be going well either professionally or politically.

When *The Visible College* finally appeared in late 1978—after a decade of bringing it to fruition while prioritising politics—I became quite depressed about the book's lack of impact generally and particularly in conversations on the Left (Werskey 1988). Though I had good reviews in prestigious outlets like the *Economist* and the *New York Times Book Review*, my publisher judged that interest in radical publications had peaked and therefore put no effort into promoting it. Of course, Thatcher's election soon afterwards vindicated that judgment and by 1980 I was convinced that I had wasted a decade of my life trying to engage the world in new conversations about science and socialism.

Fast forward 25 years to the International Congress of the History of Science & Technology in Beijing which I attended as *Minerva's* book review editor. To my amazement there was a session on the Red scientists of the 1930s led by a new generation of scholars quite unknown to me. Many of them actually assumed from my long silence that I had died! The knock-on effect is that I was then invited the following year by two young historians of science at Princeton to deliver the keynote address to their annual conference which focussed on the legacy of *Science at the Crossroads*. That was the text that then found its way into my 2007 *Science as Culture* article. Fifteen years later via Academia.edu I'm receiving periodic news of continuing citations of my work, thanks partly to

younger scholars like yourself and my onetime PhD student at Imperial College, David Edgerton, who's now an influential professor at King's College London.

But of far greater importance—and little owing to me and my work—a new generation of radical science activists are working on numerous fronts employing their own frameworks to make sense of contemporary capitalism and combat its worst manifestations. In other words, one benefit of living 50 years after all those earlier disappointments is not to prejudge the long-term effect of one's work and struggles, thanks to the cunning of history. *Venceremos!*

REFERENCES

- Bharucha, Zac. 2018. *The Radical Science Movement in the U.K. 1968-1978; Struggles Against the Impact of Capitalist Ideology on Science, Technology and Social Relations of Science*. Poland: Amazon Fulfillment.
- Ienna, Gerardo and Giulia Rispoli. 2019. "Boris Hessen at the Crossroads of Science and Ideology: From International Circulation to the Soviet Context." *Society & Politics/Societate și Politică* 13(1): 37–63.
- . 2021. "The 1931 London Congress: The Rise of British Marxism and the Interdependencies of Society, Nature and Technology." *HoST-Journal of History of Science and Technology* 15(1): 107–130.
- Ienna, Gerardo. 2022a. "The Double Legacy of Bernalism in Science Diplomacy." *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* 45(4): 602–624.
- . 2022b. "The International and Interdisciplinary Circulation of Boris Hessen's Theses" In *Manuscripts and Documents on the History of Physics: A Historical Materialist Textbook*, 75–130, edited by Omodeo, Pietro D., Sean Winkler and Hessen Boris. Venice: Verum Factum.
- Moore, Kelly. 2008. *Disrupting Science. Social Movements, American Scientists, and the Politics of the Military 1945–1975*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Radical Science Journal. 1974. "Editorial." In *Radical Science Journal* 1(1): 2–3.
- Ravetz, Jerry. 1977. "The British Council for Science & Society." In *Newsletter on Science, Technology, & Human Values* 19: 15–19.
- Rose, Hilary and Steven Rose. 1976. *The Radicalisation of Science. Ideology of/in the Natural Sciences*. London-Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Rosenhead, Jonathan 1972. "The BSSRS: Three Years On." In *New Scientist* 134–136.
- Turchetti, Simone. 2016. "Looking for the Bad Teachers: The Radical Science Movement and Its Transnational History." In *Science Studies during the Cold War and Beyond*, edited by Turchetti, Simone and Elena Aronova. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Werskey, Gary. 1978. *The Visible College: A Collective Biography of British Scientists and Socialists of the 1930s*. London: Allen Lane, 1978; second edition: London: Free Association Books, 1988.
- . 2007. "The Marxist Critique of Capitalist Science: a movement in three acts?" *Science as Culture* (42): 397–461.
- . 2021. *Picturing A Nation: The Art & Life of A.H. Fullwood*, Montgomery: NewSouth Books.
- Werskey, Gary and Natalie Wilson. 2023. "The Artists of the Atlas: Their Role in Creating Settler-Colonial Australia's Visual Culture." *Journal of Australian Studies* 47: 322–343
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2023.2167852>