

Chapter 5

Hans Reichenbach

and the *Freistudentenschaft*: School Reform, Pedagogy, and Freedom



Flavia Padovani

5.1 Introduction

For the young Hans Reichenbach, his university years represented an opportunity not only for professional and personal advancement by means of the subject he chose to study, but also for engaging in social and political activities. Between 1911 and 1914 (and to a certain degree in 1918 and 1919), Reichenbach briefly turned his attention from science and philosophy to the project of reforming the German university system, one of the main objectives of the Free Student Movement (*Freie Studentenschaft*).

Driven by the idea of the moral self-determination of individuals and freedom of choice regarding one's future, the Free Students (*Freistudenten*) strongly defended the autonomy of thought and thus opposed any form of dogmatism, whether scholastic, religious, philosophical, political, or institutional. During the period that Reichenbach was a member, the Free Students' criticism was especially aimed at reforming the German university, which they regarded as obsolete and inadequate to reflect their needs. It is against this background that Reichenbach developed ideals that would ultimately provide the basis for his philosophical thought and to which he would remain faithful until his death. In fact, Reichenbach's intransigent opposition to any form of hypostatized theory would rest on these ideals, as would his sharp criticism of speculative metaphysics, even in the form of neo-Kantianism and phenomenology, which he viewed as incapable of mirroring the crucial advances in the science of his time.

F. Padovani (✉)

Department of English and Philosophy, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA, USA

e-mail: flavia.padovani@drexel.edu

© The Author(s) 2022

C. Damböck et al. (eds.), *Logischer Empirismus, Lebensreform und die deutsche Jugendbewegung*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts Wiener Kreis 32, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-84887-3_5

This paper aims to provide a brief overview of Reichenbach's experience as a Free Student and of the impact of that experience on his later work.¹ To this end, I consider (1) archival materials that characterise Reichenbach's early involvement in the German Youth Movement² in relation to his political participation in university reform, which extended until 1919; (2) a psychological research project he undertook in approximately 1912–1913 while a student in Munich; and (3) his ambivalent position on the war, which is exemplified to a certain extent by his 1915 correspondence with education reformer Gustav Wyneken.³

5.2 School Reform and the Ideal of the *Freie Studentenschaft*

5.2.1 *The Pre-War Period and the Demand for Neutrality in Education*

Reichenbach began his academic studies at the Stuttgart Technische Hochschule in the winter semester of 1910–1911 in civil engineering, a discipline in which he initially hoped to find a wide-ranging methodology that combined theory and practice.⁴ Within a short time, he became a well-recognised member of the *Freie Studentenschaft*.⁵ His first publications as a Free Student considered two approaches to the study of science: one practical, the other theoretical. These two papers, “Universität und Technische Hochschule. Ein Vergleich” (Reichenbach, 1911a) and “Universität und Technische Hochschule” (Reichenbach, 1911b) compared the values and aims of studying technical disciplines at a *Fachschule* (i.e., a technical university) with those of studying general scientific topics at a more traditional university. Reichenbach was soon disappointed by the lack of in-depth theoretical investigation of technical

¹ Although such an investigation would exceed this paper's scope, it is worth noting that certain of the figures with whom Reichenbach was actively involved in the *Freistudentenschaft* — unsurprisingly and in varying respects — played important roles, direct or indirect, in his intellectual development. Among others, these figures include Kurt Lewin and Kurt Grelling. Regarding Lewin's relationship with Reichenbach, see Padovani, 2013; regarding Lewin, Grelling and, more generally, the Berlin Group, see Milkov & Peckhaus, 2013.

² See also the passages on Reichenbach in the contributions by Günther Sandner and Christian Damböck in this volume.

³ See the Appendix “The 1915 Reichenbach–Wyneken Correspondence: Between the Ethical Ideal and the Reality of War”, in this volume, and Sect. 5.3 below.

⁴ For a description of Reichenbach's early interests, see Gerner, 1997, 4–9.

⁵ See Wipf, 1994, 167ff. Already during high-school years, Reichenbach was most likely a member (or in any case close to being one) of the *Wandervogel*. The essence of this movement was initially a “mystique of fellowship”, as Carl Landauer phrased it, but this “mystique” had a formative influence on many of the ideas of those who later promoted the vision of an “unromantic, scholarly oriented *Freie Studentenschaft*” (Landauer, C. 1978, 26ff). Much has been written on Reichenbach's membership in the latter society. See especially Linse, 1974; Wipf, 1994, 2004; Reichenbach, M. 1978, and Kamlah, 2013, 159ff.

subjects in Stuttgart. During his second semester, he abandoned the institution to study mathematics, physics, and philosophy at the University of Berlin, where he enrolled first in the academic year of 1911–1912 and later in 1913–1914.

While his first publications testify to Reichenbach's early propensity for a philosophical understanding of academic disciplines, it was with his transfer from Berlin to Munich in the academic year 1912–1913 that he began to actively influence the *Freie Studentenschaft* in terms of its concerns and attitudes, especially in the quest for a programmatic vision for the movement.⁶ In his 1912 report on the state of the Munich branch of the *Freistudentenschaft*, published in the *Dresdner Studentische Blätter*,⁷ Reichenbach illustrated the points unanimously accepted at the Munich meeting of 4 July 1912. These points concerned 1) assigning equal rights and committee representation to all students, including those who were not, de facto, active members of student corporations or fraternities (the so-called *Nicht-Inkorporierte*); 2) implementing a reform of student rights through a self-governance organ that would repeal all elements of civil rights that could limit students (thus weakening their sense of responsibility); 3) providing extensive opportunities to complement university offerings through additional scientific, artistic, civic, and physical education courses while welcoming all students to partake in the discussions of pedagogical questions such extracurricular activities implied; and 4) adopting a neutral stance with respect to religious and political matters.⁸

In Reichenbach's view, the unifying principle of the movement, especially in relation to freedom of knowledge, still required spelling out.⁹ In an article he published in a brochure co-authored with Carl Landauer, "Die freistudentische Idee. Ihr Inhalt als Einheit" (1913c),¹⁰ Reichenbach articulated the Free Students' ideal, and their spirit of self-determination as follows:

The supreme moral ideal is exemplified in the person who determines his own values freely and independently of others and who, as a member of a society, demands this autonomy for all members and of all members.

This ideal is purely formal, for it says nothing as to the direction the individual should follow in choosing for himself. [...] Only one universal demand can be made: the formal ideal. We require the autonomous creation of the ideal; that is, we require that each person,

⁶ See, for instance, Reichenbach, 1912b, 1912c, 1912d, 1913d, 1913e, 1914c, and 1914d. In the paper "Studentenschaft und Katholizismus" (Reichenbach, 1912a), Reichenbach analysed the pre-suppositions of knowledge in Catholicism on the one hand and scientific knowledge on the other hand. In contrast to the theses defended by various Catholic student corporations (including the *Vereinigung katholischer Freistudenten*), Reichenbach insisted on total autonomy and "freedom from the authority of the church" for all students, concluding that the "cultural mission" of the *Freie Studentenschaft* had to be implemented by fighting both "internal and external enemies" (Reichenbach, 1912a, 106–107), whereby "internal enemies" potentially included the Catholic student corporations.

⁷ Reichenbach, 1912b.

⁸ See Reichenbach, 1912b, 2.

⁹ As Reichenbach phrased it, as "eine Bewegung ohne Ideale, wäre die Freie Studentenschaft zu einem lächerlichen Zerrbild einer studentischen Bewegung geworden" (Reichenbach, 1912b, 4).

¹⁰ A reprint of this article can be found as an appendix to this volume.

of his own free will, set the goal to which he will aspire and follow none but a suitable course of action. The individual may do whatever he considers to be right. Indeed, he ought to do it; in general, we consider as immoral nothing but an inconsistency between goal and action. To force a person to commit an act that he himself does not consider right is to compel him to be immoral. That is why we reject every authoritarian morality that wants to replace the autonomy of the individual with principles of actions set forth by some external authority or other. That is the essence of our morality [...].

If, in the formulation of our ideals, we put forth a second point of view concerning society, that is not to be regarded as contradicting the principle of autonomy just presented. It is incorrect to speak of a contradiction between individualism and socialism [...]. When we demand the autonomy of the individual and require at the same time that the individual grant to everyone else the same right to self-determination, we are really presenting one and the same thought from two different aspects. The second is an extension that is necessary to complete the ideal, an addition that transforms what is desired for the individual into a universal law. [...] The task of the Free Students is this: to educate students to the acceptance of this ethical ideal (Reichenbach, 1913c, 109–110).

There are a number of interesting elements in this presentation of the movement's central tenets. However, the emphasis is clearly on the educational work necessary to attain this *ethical ideal*, more specifically, on the conditions of possibility for this work to be carried out and on how to finally achieve the goal of unification within the student movement.¹¹ The core message is rooted in the idea of the “autonomy of the individual”, a form of “neutrality”—as Reichenbach envisions it—that should enable education to lead to self-education through focusing on the ethical ideal and its equally fundamental implementation in society. The means to achieve this ideal is school reform: the university and all of academic life must be restructured in such a way that, as Reichenbach phrases it, “the student can educate himself according to the ideal of autonomy as a universal precept [*nach dem Ideal der Autonomie als allgemeinen Gesetzes*]” (1913c, 111).

Welfare agencies must make up for the limited opportunities of students with restricted means to fight social inequalities, which is “the Free Students’ task at the university with regard to *politics* [*die hochschulpolitische Tätigkeit*]” (1913c, 111). Nationalism (as well as Catholicism and religion generally) should also have no place in the movement. Considerations based on, e.g., politics, religious affiliation, or race should neither influence the hiring of instructors, which must be performed with complete neutrality,¹² nor the academic and intellectual development of students.¹³ This is why Reichenbach demands freedom of research and teaching from any influence by outside authorities, which would ultimately guarantee scientific autonomy. A reform of the student code of rights would enable students to develop their views freely in accordance with their knowledge and their self-determination, thus rejecting the “principle of education by authority”.¹⁴

¹¹ See Reichenbach, 1913c, 120. On the meta-ethical perspectives of Reichenbach's text, see the contribution of Christian Damböck in this volume.

¹² Reichenbach later strongly reaffirms this demand for neutrality in education. See Reichenbach Reichenbach, 1914e and 1914f.

¹³ Reichenbach, 1913c, 117–119.

¹⁴ See also Linse, 1974, 16.

Another interesting element of this programmatic text is the idea that students must be accorded the right to self-organisation in general student committees. In another paper along the same lines, “Der Sinn der Hochschulreform” (1914b), Reichenbach emphasises how university reform must begin with a critique of science as a form of organised knowledge.¹⁵ This critique would promote a spirit of *community* in contrast to the divide between professors and students and thus create a close tie between the two groups, resulting in a more vital academic organism.

5.2.2 *The Post-War Period: From Neutrality to Socialism*

Through his involvement in the *Freistudentenschaft*, Reichenbach meant to transform and ultimately improve the scholastic and educational system, which he viewed as static and too rigid. For him, this system represented an obstacle to the students’ aspiration to freely follow their inclinations, develop their lives in line with them, and finally determine their own destinies. This involvement had a sequel in 1918 when Reichenbach addressed the reform of the university system from a more political (socialist) perspective. Such politicisation was a natural development for many Free Students, especially considering the radical tendencies of the left wing of the *Freistudentenschaft*, which largely contributed to creating the groundwork for this development. Among these students, Reichenbach stood out as a “leading figure of this passage from democratisation to socialisation of the university”, as Linse put it (Linse, 1974, 12).

At the heart of Reichenbach’s pre-war writings lie the ideas of social responsibility and community. All the measures suggested in his criticism of the educational system ultimately included a robust social component. Clarifying the risks of the loss of scientific freedom did not just symbolise the starting point of the liberation from an obsolete, non-neutral university organisation and education. It also opened the way to a criticism of the social structure. Especially immediately after the war, Reichenbach perceived that such societal change could not be realised within a capitalistic framework. Thus, a remodelling or reorganisation of society on the basis of socialist principles was not only desirable but also necessary if radical change was to be implemented at any social level.¹⁶

It is with this socialist model of reorganisation in mind that in 1918 Reichenbach drafted the programme of the Socialist Student Party and published a number of pamphlets that would be distributed in various alternative circles, including the “Programm der sozialistischen Studentenpartei” (“Platform of the Socialist Students’ Party”), the “Bericht der sozialistischen Studentenpartei Berlin. Erläuterungen zum Programm” (“Report of the Socialist Student Party, Berlin and Notes on the Program”), the manuscript “Die Sozialisierung der Hochschule”

¹⁵ See Reichenbach, 1914b, 129.

¹⁶ See Hecht & Hoffmann, 1982, 652.

(“Socializing the University”), and the paper “Student und Sozialismus”.¹⁷ The central idea of the first text, the “Platform of the Socialist Students’ Party” (1918a), is the application of the basic tenets of socialism to society in general and to schools in particular. For Reichenbach, the reformation of the university should occur “in accordance with the socialist platform” (Reichenbach, 1918a, 132). All of elements sketched in this short document appear to be a natural development of Reichenbach’s *Freistudent* views, which now include the abolition of fees for lectures, registration, and examinations, particularly for disadvantaged students (while higher fees are envisaged for better-off students), in addition to state support for those lacking private means. Another characteristic element of this “socialist trend” is the demand for freedom of speech and the hiring of lecturers and the admission of students regardless of social class, political party, religion, race, sex, or nationality. The promotion of student committees to implement student self-government, emphasised in this first paper, already appeared as a desideratum in the work Reichenbach performed in the Munich division of the *Freistudentenschaft*. As we have previously noted, in “Die Neuorganisierung der Münchner Freistudentenschaft” (1912b), Reichenbach discussed how the entire system of instruction should be reformed according to agreed-on pedagogical principles and by actively engaging the complete student body. An interesting new demand concerns the creation of new faculty chairs in the areas of education, socialism, and sociology.¹⁸

From a theoretical viewpoint, the richest and most elaborated document among these writings on socialism is “Socializing the University” (1918b). The paper’s introduction emphatically states the importance of the key concept of community and how it should be organised to promote cultural development.¹⁹ In Reichenbach’s words:

Cultural development will always rest basically upon community, and all creative periods will find their support in communities. [...] The significance of society consists in its serving as a precondition for the existence and expansion of communities. [...] [A] justly organized society—which has never yet existed—may be called the precondition of culture. [...] [W]e must look for the conditions that this society will have to fulfil if it is to become the precondition for the development of spiritual and intellectual culture, i.e., if the effects of the intellect are to be manifested in communities, if organizations are to be based upon mutual respect, if the just society is to arise among people who differ completely in material and intellectual respects. Socialism has already undertaken to solve this problem (Reichenbach, 1918b, 137–141).

¹⁷ These texts are available in the Hans Reichenbach Collection at the Pittsburgh-Konstanz Archives for Scientific Philosophy (ASP), catalogued as HR 023-23-01, HR 044-05-37, HR 041-18-01, and HR 016-11-17, respectively. Except for “Student und Sozialismus” (1919), the documents have been translated into English (in Reichenbach, H., 1978, Vol. 1). See Reichenbach, 1918a, 1918b, 1918c. In the following, all the material from the Hans Reichenbach Collection is cited with the permission of the ASP and identified with the prefix HR. All rights are reserved.

¹⁸ See Reichenbach, 1918a, 134.

¹⁹ As we have noted, this idea of community was previously discussed in “Der Sinn der Hochschulreform” (Reichenbach, 1914b). Reichenbach returns to the idea again at the end of his life.

The socialist ideal requires the abolition of privileges in favour of a meritocratic system that rewards students for their competence and potential.²⁰ Once again, the elimination of academic prejudice among students according to “class, party, church, race, sex, or citizenship” (Reichenbach, 1918b, 158) is an essential part of the reform process. Additionally, every person should be granted the right to education, and the state should support such egalitarianism in the spirit of genuine inclusion. Socialising the university is not simply viewed as a useful procedure but as a “necessary condition” to enable those with a “purely scientific orientation” (Reichenbach, 1918b, 148) to sincerely and effectively realise the ideal of an open, socially just, and conceptually creative university community. The implementation of these socialist features would not only help develop a better university and, overall, a better society but would also go hand in hand with the highly desirable development of the university as an international institution.²¹

Since scientific and intellectual progress is impossible without social progress, members of the different societal levels should cooperate towards creating a new society. Hence, as Reichenbach argues in “Student und Sozialismus” (1919), the urgency to connect all the layers of youth—both proletarians and those benefitting from an academic education—to create a genuine societal “organism”. The fight for a more “rational social order” embodies the “societal task of the students in a socialist state”. Students should therefore abandon the limitations placed on them by their social origins to join in and promote “the one and only great movement of our time: socialism” (Reichenbach, 1919, 9).²²

The strong appeal to intellectuals to cooperate and implement this change ultimately implies a *reorientation of philosophy* towards a new, radical approach.²³ For

²⁰ “The socialist ideal is to eliminate all legal privileges based upon secondary characteristics in order to allow for the ranking of people in accordance with their potential” (Reichenbach, 1918b, 146).

²¹ See Reichenbach, 1918b, 161. In the “Bericht der sozialistischen Studentenpartei Berlin” (Reichenbach, 1918c), Reichenbach went as far as promoting the chief task of the Berlin Socialist Student Party’s programme to “contribute to scientific enlightenment on problems of socialism” by suggesting a series of lectures on the topic. See Reichenbach, 1918c, 183ff. As Maria Reichenbach emphasised, this party “saw its task more in enlightening students about socialism and in educating the proletarian youth than in political activism” (Reichenbach, M. 1978, 99). See also Linse, 1974, 55. However, irrespective of the priority assigned to education over political activism, Reichenbach must have maintained a special connection (at least at heart) with his early political activities even much later in life. As Sidney Hook recalls, “we became even friendlier when Reichenbach discovered that I had strong socialist views. He had never met an American socialist before and seemed as surprised to learn that there were American socialists as some proto-Nazi students at Munich had been when I told them that there was a Jewish proletariat in the United States. I then learned that Reichenbach had been head of the German Socialist Student Union and had played a very active role. He regaled me with stories about events that anteceded the First World War” (Hook, 1978, 34).

²² “Darum verlasse die Studentenschaft die engen Schranken ihrer bürgerlichen Herkunft; darum vergesse sie die hemmenden Vorwürfe ihrer Väter und gliedere sich ein in die große, die einzige große Bewegung unserer Zeit: in den Sozialismus” (Reichenbach, 1919, 9).

²³ See Reichenbach, 1919, 6.

Reichenbach, the new, socialist trend was bound to result in a restructuring of society, a task that students could not accomplish in the pre-war period. In a similar vein, Reichenbach will envisage another reorientation of philosophy and a consequent, equally radical new approach when he shifts his focus from educational and societal matters to scientific philosophy beginning in 1920.

5.2.3 *Reichenbach's Political Background and the Berlin University Appointment*

The portrait of Reichenbach that emerges from his early political writings and from the letters he exchanged with colleagues or family in the 1910s is that of a researcher who although very young is endowed with an ability to think independently and a resolute determination to fight for his objective: the reform of the educational system in general and that of the German universities in particular.

His political writings from the post-war period caused Reichenbach trouble in 1925, when he endeavoured (with the help of his former teacher Max Planck) to be appointed as a full professor at the University of Berlin.²⁴ In this period of his life, Reichenbach was no longer engaged in politics and was seemingly less proud of his early political activity, primarily because of his interest in pursuing an academic career. Because his early socialist pamphlets had circulated only within restricted groups, Reichenbach did not include them in the list of publications he submitted to the hiring committee. Nonetheless, the early publications came to notice during the appointment procedure.²⁵ As a result, Reichenbach was accused of trying to hide his political activity, the extent of which was deemed unsuitable for such an institution.

In a letter to Planck from February 1925, Reichenbach explained his activities in the Free Student Movement and his membership in the Socialist Student Party as being grounded in his liberal views. He further claimed to have always awarded priority to questions of education and *Weltanschauung*. To him, such questions were separate from party politics, in which he claimed never having been interested (something not entirely true, as we have just seen). As Reichenbach went on to explain, he was fully preoccupied by his scientific interests, which ultimately

²⁴ Reichenbach's difficulties in Berlin were not principally due to his early political engagement but to his philosophical background and scientific worldview. Despite his attempts to be hired as full professor in "*Naturphilosophie*" by the Philosophy Department in early 1925, he was eventually appointed by the Physics Department in the summer of 1926 and started teaching there the following winter semester.

²⁵ This was especially the case with "Student und Sozialismus" (1919), which was an actual publication, not just a pamphlet circulating among a restricted number of students. Crucially, this publication also included the "Programm der Sozialistischen Studentenpartei" (Reichenbach, 1918a) in an appendix. The core of the criticism by the Berlin hiring committee in charge of Reichenbach's candidacy was the inappropriateness of the tone and content of this publication in particular. See Hecht & Hoffmann, 1982, 654.

prevented him from pursuing purely educational matters.²⁶ This, at least, is the explanation he presented to the politically conservative Planck. Maria Reichenbach, however, suggested a different reason for Reichenbach to relinquish his educational and political interests. In her view, Reichenbach's turn from politics was related to the fact that after the publication of his habilitation thesis, *Relativitätstheorie und Erkenntnis Apriori* (Reichenbach, 1920), he aspired to an academic career and, from a more practical perspective, needed to earn money to support a family with two children.²⁷ Whatever the motives behind Reichenbach's decision, it is difficult to regard his political, educational, and ethical activism as completely separate from his scientific engagement: in Reichenbach's student years, they were definitely two sides of the same coin.²⁸

5.3 Pedagogy

As we have noted in Sect. 5.2.1, at the time of his involvement in the Munich *Freistudentenschaft*, Reichenbach suggested that university education be complemented with more "neutral" and independent learning opportunities that the Free Students would organise and offer to first-year students. These educational activities were targeted at the creation of free thinkers, i.e., "self-determining people," and "carried out through the organization of mass lectures, discussion evenings for smaller groups, tours of every kind, student trips, and athletic activities" (Reichenbach, 1913c, 111–112).

In the frame of this educational work, one debate that fascinated Reichenbach concerned the study of philosophy not only as a university requirement but also as a tool for life. Other debates prompted further reflection on the form in which the independent courses would need to be taught.²⁹

²⁶ Reichenbach sought to explain as follows: "Ich habe von jeher in manchen Dingen eine freiheitlichere Auffassung gehabt als andere und mich nie gescheut, dies auszusprechen; dabei sind mir allerdings Fragen der Erziehung und Weltanschauung stets wichtiger erschienen als Politik, um die ich mich eigentlich nie recht gekümmert habe. Auch handelt es sich dabei für mich nicht um den Anschluss an irgend eine Partei oder 'Richtung'; meine wissenschaftlichen Interessen halten mich viel zu sehr gefesselt, als dass sie mir gestatteten, solche Dinge weiter zu verfolgen" (Reichenbach to Planck, 25 February 1925, HR 016-15-27).

²⁷ As Maria Reichenbach wrote in a letter to Linse: "Die Frage nach der Abwendung von der Politik kann ich nur für Hans beantworten. Er hat ja 1920 schon sein erstes Buch veröffentlicht (*Relativitätstheorie und Erkenntnis apriori*), hatte sich also schon seinem Lebensberuf zugewandt. Außerdem musste er Geld verdienen, die Kinder sind ja bald gekommen. Hans gab sogar das Schachspielen auf, in dem er sehr gut war, weil ihm die Partie immer weiter im Kopf herumging und er nicht zum produktiven Arbeiten kam. Dies hielt er für wichtiger" (quoted after Linse 1981, 112).

²⁸ See also Wipf, 2004, 168ff.

²⁹ As Reichenbach's fellow Munich Free Student Hilde Landauer recalled, "Hans was in favour of a beginner's seminar starting with methodical questions of a given system and demonstrating step by step how questions had been asked and answers been tried under given conditions, thereby taking in what has become the general problem of integrated social science" (Landauer, H., 1978, 31).

Another noteworthy example of his inclinations is the draft of a research project that Reichenbach most likely undertook in the framework of Aloys Fischer's lectures on "Character and the Formation of Character", which he attended at the University of Munich in the winter semester 1912–1913. The purpose of this incomplete research project, entitled "Psychologische Untersuchungen an Volkshochschulkindern",³⁰ seems to have been to clarify and assess the modality of constitution of an "ethical conscience" as compared to Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*.³¹

The draft consists of a series of questionnaires administered to eleven-year-old children interviewed by Reichenbach. The questionnaires focused on the children's attitudes towards and psychological reaction to illicit acts, such as stealing and lying. Each questionnaire was analysed in combination with the autobiographical profile of the interviewee. Based on these data, Reichenbach outlined what he defined as the "frequency of motivational elements" (*Häufigkeit der Motivations-Elemente*), that is, the reasons why a certain answer was given. These reasons were informed by the children's self-portraits and Reichenbach's observations. His analysis focused on the twofold nature of conscience formation. On the one hand, he looked at the belief systems to which the children were subjugated by their families, schools, and society. On the other, he investigated the individual character, feelings, and aspirations of the children. According to Reichenbach's notes in the margins of the document, before considering any other aspects, it was imperative to distinguish between two possible viewpoints: either one only looks at "the consequences of an action" or one seeks to show these consequences "under the assumption that all men would do the same" (HR 021-02-03).³² Albeit fragmentary, this research is remarkable because it demonstrates how Reichenbach applied his analytical method very early on in an empirical investigation. It also illustrates how Reichenbach was prepared to draw conclusions irrespective of the fact that these conclusions could contradict influential philosophical positions, as is the case here. Although he did not fully spell out his reasoning, to his mind, for those defending Kant's position in ethics, only the latter approach could be pursued, while the first, which Reichenbach embraced, would have to exclude any ethical evaluations with respect to the twofold nature of conscience construction.

³⁰ See HR 021-02-01/-07 and HR 021-03-01.

³¹ While in Munich, Reichenbach had extensive opportunities to study Kant. After attending Ernst von Aster's seminar on Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* in the summer semester of 1912, Reichenbach attended von Aster's lectures on the major post-Kantian systems in the winter semester 1912–1913, which included "exercises" (*Übungen*) on Kant's ethical writings. See HR 041-07-06.

³² Reichenbach explains as follows: "Vor der logischen Unterrichtung ist aber zwischen zwei Standpunkten zu unterscheiden. Entweder man unterrichtet lediglich die Folgen der Tat, oder man unterrichtet sie unter der Voraussetzung, dass alle Menschen sie tun würden. Für den Anhänger Kantischer Ethik kommt allein das letzte in Betracht. Das erste scheidet für ihn bei den ethischen Bewertungen gänzlich aus" (HR 021-02-03).

This research project also reveals Reichenbach's initial propensity for "psycho-ethical" topics. It is also the only document indicating that he implemented his analytical approach in an explicitly psychological domain. Despite being conceived of as a university assignment, this research is presumably also related to Reichenbach's involvement in the creation of a *Pädagogische Abteilung* within the Munich division of the *Freie Studentenschaft*.³³ In her memories of Reichenbach, Hilde Landauer recalled that one topic they often discussed in the *Freistudentenschaft* in Munich during those years was in fact "education in the specific sense of 'family or institutions'". She also commented as follows:

We favored different sides, although our discussion was carried on in the most friendly terms. I felt that the initial role of the nuclear family in bringing up an infant enabled and even destined it to be a potential source of mutual assistance, enjoyment and enrichment in the relationship of the generations; Hans, possibly on the basis of personal experiences, was inclined to emphasize the shackling influence of the family and visualized the institution as a tool for liberating the personality (Landauer, H., 1978, 31).

For Reichenbach, an appropriate school reform was the only option for implementing a new pedagogical strategy that would truly lead youth to freedom of choice and self-determination.

In the "Bericht der sozialistischen Studentenpartei Berlin" (Reichenbach, 1918c), promoting additional lectures for students constituted a central part of the socialisation of students within the hoped-for socialist reorganisation of the university. In this document, Reichenbach himself was listed as having taught a course on the philosophy of socialism in which he had first addressed the materialist conception of history and later examined issues related to ethics and socialism.³⁴

5.4 Reichenbach, Wyneken, and the War

One of the most significant influences on the young Reichenbach was radical school reformer and founder of the *Freie Schulgemeinde Wickersdorf* Gustav Wyneken, whom Reichenbach most likely met in Berlin at the beginning of 1912 and whose pedagogical ideas and worldview strongly shaped his own as a Free Student.³⁵ Several of the ideas we have discussed are either a direct consequence of this

³³ See Wipf, 1994, 167. See also Reichenbach, 1913a.

³⁴ See Reichenbach, 1918c, 182. Unfortunately, the drafts of these lectures are not found in the Reichenbach Collection.

³⁵ Wyneken presented the paper "Die Freie Schulgemeinde" to the *Berliner Freistudentenschaft* on 23 February 1912 (see Wipf, 1994, 167). Regarding Wyneken's programmatic stance towards the German Youth Movement, see also Christian Damböck's contribution in this volume.

charismatic leader's views or evolved from common roots in the back-to-nature movement known as the *Wandervogel* that most such "alternative" tendencies shared.³⁶

Already in his role as teacher at Hermann Lietz's *Landerziehungsheime* at Ilsenburg and Haubinda between 1900 and 1906, Wyneken endorsed an educational model that agreed with the core values later expressed by the *Freistudentenschaft*.³⁷ This model was marked by the view that education should not involve authoritarianism. In contrast, the educator's role was to foster through a joint effort with the student the achievement of a previously agreed-upon objective. Guided by this principle, in 1906, Wyneken found and directed his own boarding school at Wickersdorf, the famous *Freie Schulgemeinde*.³⁸ For reasons we cannot discuss here, Wyneken had to resign from the directorship of the school in 1910 although he did not cease to influence the Wickersdorf community as well as various youth movements developing in those years.³⁹

In 1913, Wyneken delivered the keynote address at the *Erster Freideutscher Jugendtag*, also known as the *Meißen Tagung*.⁴⁰ This meeting was an important step in the attempt to unify the various youth movement groups.⁴¹ As Carl Landauer recalls, it was not so much the adoption of a resolution that contributed to this unification but rather the meeting's impact on public opinion and the criticism the gathering attracted due to the more radical (and somewhat politicised) groups in attendance, including one led by Wyneken.⁴² Within a year and with the war

³⁶ Even so, not all *Wandervogel* members became Free Students. Some later joined the *Freideutsche Jugend*, whose anti-authoritarian spirit was appreciated by Wyneken, while others joined the *Akademische Freischar*, an academically oriented fraternity that granted its members full freedom of expression (see Reichenbach, 1913e). Alternatively, some *Wandervogel* members joined the *Jungdeutschland-Bund*, which leaned towards becoming a paramilitary group (see also footnote 53 below). Regarding the *Wandervogel* and its fate, see Wipf, 2004; Kamlah, 2013; Reichenbach, 1978; Adriaansen, 2015, Chap. 1. Regarding Wyneken's influence on the Free Student movement, see Linse, 1974, 14ff.; Dudek, 2017, Chap. 3.

³⁷ Regarding Wyneken and the *Landschulheim* movement, see Kamlah, 2013, 161ff.; Dudek, 2017, 39ff.

³⁸ Wyneken wrote extensively on the ideas behind this school community. See Wyneken, 1919, section I: "Über Schule und freie Schulgemeinde".

³⁹ For details on Wyneken's reasons to step down, see Kamlah, 2013, 162.

⁴⁰ The address is reprinted in Wyneken, 1919, 263–270.

⁴¹ Wyneken was also among those who formulated the famous Meißner formula: "Die Freideutsche Jugend will nach eigener Bestimmung, vor eigener Verantwortung, in innerer Wahrhaftigkeit ihr Leben gestalten. Für diese innere Freiheit tritt sie unter allen Umständen geschlossen ein. Zur gegenseitigen Verständigung werden Freideutsche Jugendtage abgehalten. Alle gemeinsamen Veranstaltungen der Freideutschen Jugend sind alkohol- und nikotinfrei" (quoted after Brauch, 2003, 6).

⁴² Paul Natorp, among others, was particularly opposed to Wyneken's views, especially with respect to promoting an idea of education dangerously bordering on "self-education." See Dudek, 2017, 92ff.

approaching, the pre-war movement of the Free Students ceased to develop as a unified movement and eventually dissolved.⁴³

In his writings of 1914, Reichenbach again addressed what he considered to be the problematic (i.e., nonunitary) image of the *Freie Studentenschaft* and its ramifications. In “Die Jugendbewegung und die Freie Studentenschaft”, he focused on the idea of youth that had emerged from Wyneken’s left circle.⁴⁴ This idea of youth rested on the concept that the period of youth should not be interpreted as one of mere preparation for adulthood but as a period in which young individuals developed their own values and which, as such, should be meaningful in and of itself.⁴⁵ An important feature of youth, according to Reichenbach, was not the possession of “truth” but the *search* for it, which embodied the “*experience* of science” (Reichenbach, 1914d, 158).⁴⁶

Reichenbach’s attitude towards the various youth movement groups and their leaders was consistent with the principle he defended, i.e., that no authority must be blindly followed. He also applied this principle to his relationship with Wyneken, particularly after the controversial public address that Wyneken delivered at the Munich *Freie Studentenschaft* on 25 November 1914, which was a lecture that marked the moment Reichenbach distanced himself from Wyneken. In the lecture, entitled “Der Krieg und die Jugend” (published in Wyneken, 1915), Wyneken tried to make sense of the absurdity of war after his brother Ernst had been killed in combat in August 1914. In his address, he portrayed the war as an ethical experience providing an opportunity to fulfil a moral obligation that young people, whom he viewed as often dominated by moral anarchism, should welcome with joy.⁴⁷ Furthermore, he argued that the war had to be interpreted as an important step towards a societal transformation through the emancipation of youth that such a conflict would necessarily bring about. Strikingly, Wyneken tried to harmonise his role as an education reformer with the brutality of war, arguing that military service represented an intermediate stage between adolescence and adulthood, one that schooling was unable to offer. For him, this new intermediate stage would eventually

⁴³ See Landauer, C., 1978, 28ff. Regarding the reception of the *Meißner Tagung*, see Mogge & Reulecke, 1988.

⁴⁴ See Reichenbach, 1914d. This paper is a slightly revised version of a talk Reichenbach presented on 21 January 1914 in Munich and on April 8 of the same year in Hamburg. See the manuscript of the talk, HR 044-33-39.

⁴⁵ In Sect. 5.4, I outline how Reichenbach re-emphasises this idea in 1931.

⁴⁶ In another talk, entitled “Hochschule” (HR 018-06-01), delivered to the Göttinger *Freistudenten* and the local members of the academic youth movements on 2 July 1914, Reichenbach expressed this very idea starting with a quotation from Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason*: “A human being is indeed unholy enough but the *humanity* in his own person must be holy to him. In the whole of creation, everything one wants and over which one has any power can also be used *merely as means*; a human being alone, and with him every rational creature, is an *end in himself*” (Kant, 1788/2015, 72).

⁴⁷ “Diese Jugend, der man sittlichen Anarchismus glaubte zutrauen zu müssen, begrüßt vielmehr aufatmend, jauchzend die Gelegenheit zu wirklicher Pflichterfüllung. [...] Der Jugend ist der Krieg in erster Linie nicht ein politisches, sondern ein ethisches Erlebnis” (Wyneken, 1915, 19–20).

result in the sought-after dismissal of the dominant educational system through renewed self-conscience, i.e., a new sense of responsibility shared by the totality of youth, not only by young workers but also by students.⁴⁸

In Reichenbach's view, military service was completely at odds with the ideal of youth self-determination, which was, as we have noted, at the heart of the unifying movement he had firmly and openly advocated since his first days as a Free Student. In his 1914 paper "Militarismus und Jugend," Reichenbach had already analysed how the romantically oriented *Wandervogel* movement began as a "healthy reaction" (Reichenbach, 1914a, 1234) *against* the rigidity of the school system, fostering instead originality and self-expression. However, for him, this early movement lacked a unitary goal; thus, when it expanded, the various positions animating certain of the "anti-something" *Wandervogel* tendencies developed into a wide range of perspectives often in contrast with one another, despite emerging from the same movement.⁴⁹ According to Reichenbach, this phenomenon also occurred in the case of the paramilitary movement known as the *Jungdeutschland-Bund*. Reichenbach deemed this development to directly oppose the initial "open" message of the *Wandervogel*, which emphasised the spirit of freedom and adventure, and yet, paradoxically, the *Wandervogel* eventually became affiliated with the *Bund* and adopted its nationalistic ideology.⁵⁰ As the *Jungdeutschland-Bund* increasingly gathered force, it attracted the positive recognition of school and state because of the idea of order and obedience it embodied, which resulted in a movement that was politically reactionary and thus no longer aligned with the *Wandervogel*'s original ethos.⁵¹

⁴⁸ "Dieser Waffendienst darf eben kein Spiel mehr sein. Er kann in unserer Jugenderziehung einen gewaltigen Schritt vorwärts bedeuten, indem er jene Zwischenstufe zwischen Knaben und Mann, die zu schaffen die Schule unfähig gewesen ist, herzustellen, wenigstens anzuerkennen beginnt. Mit ihm wird das herrschende Erziehungssystem grundsätzlich entthront. Das Vaterland, der Staat, das öffentliche Leben beginnt auf den Jüngling mitzuzählen, auch auf den Jüngling der gebildeten Stände und der höheren Schule, der bisher hinter dem jungen Arbeiter so ganz und gar zurückstand. Das wird das Selbstbewusstsein der Jugend heben und auch ihr Verantwortlichkeitsgefühl. Und es wird der Schule nichts anderes übrig bleiben, als dieser neuen Einschätzung der Jugend Rechnung zu tragen, d.h. auf eine Bildung und Führung im Geistigen zu denken, die sich neben dem Ernst des jugendlichen Waffendienstes sehen lassen kann" (Wyneken, 1915, 42).

⁴⁹ Among the groups that evolved from the *Wandervogel*, the *Freideutsche Jugend* was anti-intellectual and antipathetic towards politics, whereas the *Freie Studentenschaft* was neither anti-intellectual or anti-political. After the war, the first *Freideutsche Jugend* reformed as the so-called *Bündische Jugend*, which eventually dissolved during the Nazi period. Another worrisome characteristic of the *Wandervogel* was its increasing anti-Semitic sentiment in the name of a renewed German, i.e., *nationalistic*, sense of self. Reichenbach expressed his dismay in "Der Wandervogel und die Juden", again referring to the importance of human values, which for him had nothing to do with race or nations. See Reichenbach, 1913d, 539, as well as his (1913b), Sect. I.

⁵⁰ See Reichenbach, 1914a, 1234.

⁵¹ As Reichenbach wrote, "Arme Jugend! Die das schönste Recht der Jugend, ganz Mensch sein zu dürfen, hergibt, um Soldat zu spielen. [...] Der Wandervogel war die Reaktion der Jugend gegen das herrschende Schulsystem. Die Wehrkraftbewegung ist politische Reaktion" (Reichenbach, 1914a, 1238).

Unsurprisingly, pro-war feelings typically went hand in hand with patriotism and, by extension, nationalism. As Carl Landauer wrote, Wyneken, “like many Germans, succumbed to the temptation of extreme nationalism” (Landauer, C., 1978, 28). Reichenbach opposed the position expressed by Wyneken’s provocative 1915 brochure in an open, extensive exchange with him that occurred in early 1915 and circulated among a limited number of Free Students, certain of whom directly participated in the discussion.⁵² This exchange indicates how strong the influence of Wyneken’s worldview was on Reichenbach’s and on his concept of the objective knowledge of “good,”⁵³ but it is also a testament to the highly independent mindset that Reichenbach defended against any authority, even those who had once substantially shaped his thinking, including Wynken.

In his first letter, dated 18 February 1915, Reichenbach stressed the risk implicit in war of losing one’s sense of authentic, good values if one believed such an “abominable” act could embody the ultimate fulfilment of youth. In this letter, he firmly opposed Wyneken’s suggestion that war could help young individuals make the transition to adulthood through the hardship imposed on them by severe economic and military conditions. These conditions, Wyneken had argued, would prompt the best qualities of youth to emerge, thus leading to a renewed sense of responsibility that schools were unable to convey.⁵⁴ Reichenbach, in contrast,

⁵² Letters were sent to Walter Benjamin, Hermann Kranold (who was on the editorial staff of the *Münchener Akademische Rundschau*), Carl Landauer, Walter Meyer, and Bernhard Reichenbach and through them to other friends, such as Alexander Schwab, Immanuel Birnbaum, Herbert Weil, Walter Heine, Ernst Joël (editor of the radical student journal *Der Aufbruch*), and Heinrich Molkenhuth, who also participated in the open discussion. The original plan, which did not come to fruition, was to publish the exchange in the *Münchener Akademische Rundschau*; see the letter from Kranold to Reichenbach from 18 March 1915 (HR 018-04-025). Maria Reichenbach reported on this important exchange as follows: “One year later, right after the outbreak of World War I, Hans, who earlier had tried to realize some of Wyneken’s ideals in the *Freie Studentenschaft* and who had collaborated with him in some publications, chided Wyneken in an extensive exchange of letters for his extremely nationalistic stance. This correspondence (as yet unpublished) was circulated secretly among a small number of those adherents of the *Freie Schulgemeinde* who had not been infected by the hurrah-patriotism to which many other German intellectuals fell victim at the beginning of the war. It was impossible to have it printed at that time” (Reichenbach, M., 1978, 94). Most of this exchange and related documents are available in the ASP and can be found in the folders HR 017-06-36, -37; HR 018-04-26, -27; HR 026-09-02; HR 044-03-02, -05, -08; and HR 044-06-15, -16, -18, -20. The four letters between Reichenbach and Wyneken discussed in this section are reprinted in “the Appendix The 1915 Reichenbach–Wyneken Correspondence: Between the Ethical Ideal and the Reality of War” in this volume.

⁵³ See especially the letter from Reichenbach to Wyneken of 14 March 1915 (HR 044-06-18), below, in the above-mentioned Appendix to this volume.

⁵⁴ “Das ist das niederschmetternde Erlebnis unserer Zeit, dass die Menschen wertblind geworden sind, dass sie glauben, in jenem abscheulichen Schauspiel des Krieges die letzte Erfüllung zu sehen. [...] Sie glauben, durch die Not des Krieges erst zu starken Menschen geworden zu sein; dass sie an den wirtschaftlichen oder militärischen Aufgaben, die ihnen der Krieg stellt, erst ihre besten Eigenschaften entwickeln, die der Frieden in ihnen unausgebildet ließ. Das geht mit einer Verachtung der Friedensarbeit parallel, die sich sogar bis ins Gebiet der Wissenschaft hinein erstreckt” (Reichenbach to Wyneken, 18 February 1915, HR 044-06-15). See also the Reichenbach–Wyneken exchange reprinted in this volume.

considered support for the war repulsive and counter to the nature of youth.⁵⁵ For him, “the old culture” of the nations was offering their citizens the “drama of a mad Europe” in which youth was given—and was supposed to participate in—an enormous task but was in fact “the victim of that madness” (HR 044-06-15). This task certainly did not provide a better form of education than that offered by traditional schooling. Even less acceptable to Reichenbach was the idea that the same elderly men who had dragged the young generation into this “miserable catastrophe” (HR 044-06-15) still dared to talk about ethics and define the aims of the lives of young men.⁵⁶

In his long reply of 27 February, Wyneken reaffirmed his appreciation for the great opportunity for renewal of the soul of youth that the war offered, certainly not the worst disgrace of their generation, in his opinion.⁵⁷ In his response of 14 March, Reichenbach complained that Wyneken did not address the points he had raised in his initial letter while asserting that no true human value could ever find expression in military action. Moreover, opposing the idea of “war as a value-oriented entity” (HR 044-06-18) was supposed to be their primary task, especially as *Freistudenten*.⁵⁸ He further emphasised that it was their moral obligation to develop their own culture with their original educational—and ultimately ethical—ideal in mind, the very ideal that Wyneken was betraying. Predictably, Wyneken did not change his opinion in response to this argument.⁵⁹

Like many of his contemporaries, Reichenbach was compelled to participate in the tragedy of the First World War. Although his critical view of the war during his involvement in the *Freistudentenschaft* and prior to his exchange with Wyneken was

⁵⁵ Even more, he stated his utter lack of an “inner commitment” to the war as follows: “Wie wollen Sie denn die Jugend zur Freiwilligkeit zwingen, wenn die Sache ihrer innersten Natur zuwider ist? Ich selbst bin einer von denen, die nur die Staatsgewalt zum Kriegsdienst zwingt. Man hat mich als Rekrut ausgemustert, und ich werde in allernächster Zeit eingezogen. Aber ich spüre nicht die geringste innere Verpflichtung zu diesem Kriege” (HR 044-06-15). See, however, here below, where it appears that Reichenbach was not merely “recruited,” but rather volunteered to become a soldier and join in the war.

⁵⁶ “Ich verstehe Sie in diesen Dingen nicht mehr. Die alte Kultur bietet uns das Schauspiel eines wahnsinnigen Europas, und der Jugend soll es eine Eingliederung in das Volksleben bedeuten, wenn man sie zum Opfer dieses Wahnsinns erwählt? [...] Glauben Sie wirklich, dass die Jugend keine bessere Antwort hat als die: weil ihr uns diese große Aufgabe zumutet, müsst ihr uns auch eine bessere Schule geben? Ich wüsste etwas ganz Anderes zu sagen. Ich würde sagen: Ihr Alten, die ihr uns diese erbärmliche Katastrophe eingebrockt habt, ihr wagt es überhaupt noch, uns von Ethik zu sprechen und unserem Leben Ziele zu geben?” (HR 044-06-15).

⁵⁷ “Der Krieg als solcher ist gar nicht die tiefste Blamage unserer Generation. Die Schande unserer sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse oder der kirchlichen und politischen Geistesnebelung im Frieden ist viel größer” (Wyneken to Reichenbach, 27 February 1915, HR 044-06-16). See the Reichenbach-Wyneken correspondence reprinted in this volume.

⁵⁸ “Eben darum behaupte ich, dass es unsere Aufgabe jetzt nicht ist, einer der Parteien zum Siege zu verhelfen, sondern vielmehr, die Idee des Krieges als einer wertrichtenden Instanz zu bekämpfen” (Reichenbach to Wyneken, 14 March 1915, HR 044-06-18).

⁵⁹ See also Dudek, 2017, 148–151.

evident, the exact circumstances that led him to join the army are unclear.⁶⁰ Despite his critical views and his strong opposition to participation in military activity,⁶¹ Reichenbach's military passport states that he registered as a volunteer and served in an infantry regiment as early as the beginning of August 1914.⁶² Later, he sought training as an aviator although he was aware he was unsuited for such duty (he suffered from acute myopia). Eventually, Reichenbach ended up serving in a signal corps unit in Neuruppin, near Berlin.⁶³

How important the exchange with Wyneken was for Reichenbach is evident from the fact that he meticulously kept copies of all their letters. Their discussion on war was not the end of their connection, although it was the end of an *intimate* connection. At the end of 1918, Reichenbach contacted Wyneken to enquire about a position at the *Freie Schulgemeinde Wickersdorf*, to which Wyneken had meanwhile returned. In his letter from 28 December 1918, Reichenbach emphasised that their parting of ways in 1915 was not due to a difference in their understanding of values but rather to a difference regarding, as he put it, "the intellectual ordering of the empirical" (HR 017-06-36). He affirmed that for him his willingness to work in Wyneken's school and community was not only attributable to "desire for youthful

⁶⁰ See Gerner, 1997, Sect. 5.2.3.

⁶¹ See especially Reichenbach, 1914a. It goes without saying that this opinion was not shared by every student movement. Certain of them, in fact, promoted the participation in the war, something unsurprising, given their paramilitary organisation. See above, Sect. 5.4, as well as footnotes 36 and 49.

⁶² See HR 041-07-02. Reichenbach's first assignment began on 8 August 1914 as a member of an infantry regiment in Göttingen, from which he was dismissed because of problems with his varicose veins, as he reported in a letter to Erich Regener from early 1925 (HR 016-16-03, exact date not specified).

⁶³ Like Reichenbach, Rudolf Carnap and several other Free Students volunteered for the war in the summer of 1914. Carnap's induction and activity in the army present analogies with Reichenbach's, including his duty in the area of wireless telegraphy towards the war's end. While Reichenbach never clarified why he volunteered, Carnap did explain the circumstances that led him to volunteer despite of his pacifism. In his "Intellectual Biography" (1963), he wrote, "The outbreak of the war in 1914 was for me an incomprehensible catastrophe. Military service was contrary to my whole attitude, but I accepted it now as a duty, believed to be necessary in order to save the fatherland. Before the war, I, like most of my friends, had been uninterested and ignorant in political matters. We had some general ideals, including a just, harmonious and rational organization within the nation and among the nations. We realized that the existing political and economic order was not in accord with these ideals, and still less the customary method of settling conflicts of interests among nations by war. Thus the general trend of our political thinking was pacifist, anti-militarist, anti-monarchist, perhaps also socialist. But we did not think much about the problem of how to implement these ideals by practical action. The war suddenly destroyed our illusion that everything was already on the right path of continuous progress. During the first years of the war I was at the front most of the time. In the summer of 1917, I was transferred to Berlin. I remained an officer in the army, but I served as a physicist in a military institution which worked on the development of the new wireless telegraph and, toward the end of the war, of the wireless telephone" (Carnap, 1963, 9–10). Regarding the involvement of Carnap's circle in the war, see Werner, 2014.

life” but also to his very “strong scientific commitment” (HR 017-06-36)⁶⁴ and, certainly, to a practical need to find employment. Reichenbach’s intention was to teach physics and philosophy at Wickersdorf, but the plan never materialised.

Reichenbach’s path led elsewhere. However, in 1928, he contacted Wyneken again, this time to send his student Hans Stotz to teach mathematics and physics at Wickersdorf. Reichenbach also visited Wyneken at the *Freie Schulgemeinde Wickersdorf* in May 1931. This last visit was most likely motivated by Reichenbach’s interest in further discussing educational matters with Wyneken after receiving an invitation to write a piece on the Montessori Method.⁶⁵

5.5 The End of the “Ethical Ideal”?

In addition to theoretical philosophy and physics, ethical questions and the importance of individual self-determination were at the centre of Reichenbach’s interests in the early years of his studies, as we have seen. Given Reichenbach’s active involvement in the *Freistudentenschaft* and his strong interest in educational and ethical questions, as attested by a long list of publications and activities in 1911–1914 and 1918–1919, it is striking that Reichenbach did not even marginally continue to work on these issues following the publication of his habilitation thesis in 1920, especially as this period was one in which Germany was undergoing a dramatic historical turn.

One exception to this neglect is a paper on the Montessori School that Reichenbach wrote in the early 1930s.⁶⁶ In the paper, the fundamental ideas developed during his school years reverberate with all their initial intensity.⁶⁷ Reichenbach compared old and new approaches to education, emphasising how negative recollections of one’s school years could only be the result of schooling that perceived as its main task merely the introduction of the younger generation to the established cultural

⁶⁴As he wrote: “Ich habe jetzt das Gefühl, dass diese Trennung nicht begründet war in einem Unterschied der Wertauffassung, sondern nur in der intellektuellen Einordnung des Empirischen. Wenn ich jetzt in der Schulgemeinde mitarbeiten möchte, so geschieht es nicht nur aus dem Wunsch zu einem jugendlichen Leben, sondern auch aus einer starken wissenschaftlichen Verpflichtung heraus“(HR 017-06-36).

⁶⁵See below, Sect. 5.4.

⁶⁶Reichenbach had a connection with the Montessori School in that both his children attended the Montessori School in Berlin-Dahlem. See Kamlah, 2013, 165.

⁶⁷Reichenbach was invited by the chair of the *Bund Entschiedener Schulreformer*, Paul Oestereich, to present a lecture at the *Hohenzollernschule* in Berlin-Schöneberg on 18 November 1930. The topic of the discussion, which also included papers by the previously mentioned *Freistudent* Kurt Lewin and by Eva von der Dunk-Essen, was the Montessori approach and “education to the present” (“Die Montessori-Erziehung und die Erziehung zur Gegenwart”). See the document HR 014-37-19. The text of the lecture was later published under a similar title: “Montessori-Erziehung. Erziehung zur Gegenwart” (Reichenbach, 1931).

tradition. According to Reichenbach, education had to focus more on creativity and productivity in learning than on passive reception.⁶⁸

For him, a more effective idea of schooling could only be established by adopting the free will of children as the foundation of instruction. Thus, he echoed the method Wyneken originally fostered at Wickersdorf. The principle of self-affirmation had to be at the core of a new, progressive education, as perfectly exemplified by the Montessori Method. This method represented a way to overcome the obsolete approach to education that relied on the reiteration of a fixed type of teaching and the imposition of a closed canon of culture on younger students. For Reichenbach, there was no corpus of culture to be inherited. The disintegration of traditional values that could be observed in society was nothing to be passed on to the coming generations. In this sense, understanding the present implied rejecting the traditional educational system in favour of a radical and novel approach, one that would make sense of the present and not be guided by outdated priorities. In Reichenbach's view, the contrast between these two educational models was epitomised by the difference between the curriculum of a traditional humanistic *Gymnasium* and a curriculum that would include the newest trends in technology, much more appreciated by the students at that time and more in line with the spirit of the era. Ultimately, for Reichenbach, a school had to provide an interpretation of the present rather than become a "temple of the past" (Reichenbach, 1931, 93).

The Montessori Method and School embraced the idea that childhood should be experienced as an *end in itself*, not as a stage of preparation for adulthood. Reichenbach fully shared this view and observed that such thinking was certainly not only appropriate to the type of education promoted by Maria Montessori but also characteristic of the youth movement groups that participated in this type of debate in pre-war Germany.⁶⁹ The idea of childhood as a period with its own values is an idea that Reichenbach forcefully expressed, especially in his essays from 1913–1914, which were closely aligned with Wyneken's early views.⁷⁰ The awareness that childhood had value was now also understood as the "ideological basis" (Reichenbach, 1931, 94) of the Montessori School. Its "moral basis", for Reichenbach, was the trust awarded to children to allowing them to do what they would do spontaneously, which corresponded to what they *wanted* to do.⁷¹ For Reichenbach, the Montessori School, far from underestimating the importance of learning how to deal with obligations in life, addressed learning effectively by shifting the emphasis from coercion by authority to that of compulsion by life situations

⁶⁸ See Reichenbach, 1931, 91–92.

⁶⁹ See the footnote in Reichenbach, 1931, 93.

⁷⁰ See, for instance, the first few lines of "Die Jugendbewegung und die Freie Studentenschaft": "Die Idee der Jugend beruht auf der Erkenntnis, dass die Jugend nicht nur eine Vorbereitungsstufe für das Alter, nicht eine Durchgangsstufe vorstellt, sondern dass sie eigenen Wert, einen eigenen Daseinssinn hat" (Reichenbach, 1914d, 158).

⁷¹ See Reichenbach, 1931, 94.

themselves.⁷² When Montessori students learned to follow their inclinations and to do what they were capable of doing freely, they would learn a fundamental value, i.e., that of taking their present seriously by experiencing and thus deeply understanding it.⁷³

By recognising the value of children's self-determined acts, this new form of education was intended to strengthen pupils' lives by developing an awareness of the present, a sense of self-confidence, and the full affirmation of the child's existence in a time of change. In this sense, Reichenbach concluded, "education to the present is the most beautiful motto that a school could ever have" (Reichenbach, 1931, 99).⁷⁴

Another notable exception to the absence of ethical discussion in Reichenbach's later work is the seventeenth chapter of *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy* (1951), entitled "The Nature of Ethics", where an echo of his early interests reverberates. In concluding it, he writes as follows:

Whoever wants to study ethics, therefore, should not go to the philosopher; he should go where moral issues are fought out. He should live in the community of a group where life is made vivid by competing volitions, be it the group of a political party, or of a trade union, or of a professional organization, or of a ski club, or a group formed by common study in a classroom. There he will experience what it means to set his volition against that of other persons and what it means to adjust oneself to group will. If ethics is the pursuit of volitions, it is also the conditioning of volitions through a group environment. The exponent of individualism is shortsighted when he overlooks the volitional satisfaction which accrues from belonging to a group. Whether we regard the conditioning of volitions through the group as a useful or a dangerous process depends on whether we support or oppose the group; but we must admit that there exists such group influence. [...] Whenever there comes a philosopher who tells you he has found the ultimate truth do not trust him. If he tells you that he knows the ultimate good, or has a proof that the good must become reality, do not trust him, either. The man merely repeats the errors which his predecessors have committed for two thousand years. It is time to put an end to this brand of philosophy. Ask the philosopher to be as modest as the scientist; then he may become as successful as the man of science. But do not ask him what he should do. Open your ears to your own will, and try to unite your will with that of others. There is no more purpose or meaning in the world than you put into it (Reichenbach, 1951, 297–302).

Reichenbach died in April 1953, just two years after the publication of his book. He concluded his career in the same spirit in which he began it, emphasising not only the importance of one's personal volition and goals and, basically, the social origins of ethics but also the fundamental significance of community. Without doubt, this

⁷² "Denn der Zwang des Lebens ist niemals der Zwang einer *Autorität*, sondern stets der Zwang einer *Situation*" (Reichenbach, 1931, 96).

⁷³ See Reichenbach, 1931, 98.

⁷⁴ "Eine Schule, die solches Bewusstsein vom Wert des eigenen Tuns zur Grundhaltung aller Erziehung macht, vermag im Kinde Lebenskräfte zu wecken, deren Spannkraft noch das spätere Leben tragen wird, dass es ein Leben wird voller Gegenwartsbewusstsein, voller Selbstvertrauen, voller Bejahung des eigenen Daseins in seinem alltäglichen Wechselschritt. In diesem Sinne scheint mir Erziehung zur Gegenwart das schönste Leitwort zu sein, das man über eine Schule überhaupt schreiben kann" (Reichenbach, 1931, 99).

view was a legacy of his time as a *Freistudent* and a leitmotiv that persisted throughout his life.

Acknowledgements I wish to thank the Konstanz and Pittsburgh Archives for Scientific Philosophy for their permission to quote from the Hans Reichenbach Collection. I am especially grateful to Brigitte Parakenings of the Konstanz Archive for her valuable help in locating published and unpublished material (all rights are reserved). I would also like to thank Alexandra Campana and Meike Werner for providing helpful comments on a previous draft of this paper.

References

- Adriaansen, R.-J. (2015). *The Rhythm of Eternity. The German Youth Movement and the Experience of the Past, 1900–1933*. New York-Oxford: Berghahn.
- Brauch, D. (2003). Die Wurzeln der Meißnerformel. *Ludwigsteiner Blätter*, 53(221), 1–11.
- Carnap, R. (1963). Intellectual Biography. In *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap* [The Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. 11], ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, 1–84. Evanston, Ill.: Open Court.
- Dudek, P. (2017). “*Sie sind und bleiben eben der alte abstrakte Ideologe!*” *Der Reformpädagoge Gustav Wyneken (1875–1964) – Eine Biographie*. Bad Heilbrunn: Julius Klinkhardt.
- Gerner, K. (1997). *Hans Reichenbach. Sein Leben und Wirken*. Osnabrück: Phoebe Autorenpress.
- Hecht, H. & Hoffmann, D. (1982). Die Berufung Hans Reichenbachs an die Berliner Universität. *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 30(5), 651–662.
- Hook, S. (1978). Memories of Hans Reichenbach. In Reichenbach, H. (1978), Vol. 1, 32–35.
- Kamlah, A. (2013). Everybody Has the Right to Do What He Wants: Hans Reichenbach’s Volitionism and Its Historical Roots. In Milkov, N. & Peckhaus, V. (eds.) (2013), 151–175.
- Kant, I. (1788). *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*. Riga: Johan Friedrich Hartknoch. English translation: Kant, I. (2015). *Critique of Practical Reason*, ed. Mary Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Landauer, C. (1978). Memories of Hans Reichenbach. In Reichenbach, H. (1978), Vol. 1, 25–30.
- Landauer, H. (1978). Memories of Hans Reichenbach. In Reichenbach, H. (1978), Vol. 1, 31–32.
- Linse, U. (1974). Hochschulrevolution: Zur Ideologie und Praxis sozialistischer Studentengruppen während der deutschen Revolutionszeit 1918/1919. *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 14, 1–114.
- Linse, U. (1981). *Die entschiedene Jugend 1919–1921. Deutschlands erste revolutionäre Schüler- und Studentenbewegung*. Frankfurt am Main: Dipa.
- Milkov, N. & Peckhaus, V. (eds.) (2013). *The Berlin Group and the Philosophy of Logical Empiricism* [Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science, Vol. 273]. Springer.
- Mogge, W. & Reulecke, J. (eds.) (1988). *Hoher Meißner 1913. Der Erste Freideutsche Jugendtag in Dokumenten, Deutungen und Bildern*. Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik.
- Padovani, F. (2013). Genidentity and Topology of Time: Kurt Lewin and Hans Reichenbach. In Milkov, N. & Peckhaus, V. (eds.) (2013), 97–122.
- Reichenbach, H. (1911a). Universität und Technische Hochschule. Ein Vergleich. *Berliner Freistudentische Blätter*, 4(16), 243–247.
- Reichenbach, H. (1911b). Universität und Technische Hochschule. *Berliner Freistudentische Blätter*, 4(20), 310–312.
- Reichenbach, H. (1912a). Studentenschaft und Katholizismus. *Das monistische Jahrhundert* 16 (November): 533–538. English translation: The Student Body and Catholicism. In Reichenbach, H. (1978), Vol. 1, 104–107.
- Reichenbach, H. (1912b). Die Neuorganisierung der Münchner Freistudentenschaft. *Dresdener Studentische Blätter*, 6(November), 1–4.
- Reichenbach, H. (1912c). Student und Schulproblem. *Münchner Akademische Rundschau*, 6(6), 94–97.

- Reichenbach, H. (1912d). Der Student. *Münchner Studentisches Taschenbuch* [Wintersemester 1912–1913], 42–44. München: Max Steinebach. English translation: The Student. In Reichenbach, H. (1978), Vol. 1, 102–103.
- Reichenbach, H. (1913a). Der Student und die pädagogischen Bestrebungen der Gegenwart. *Münchner Akademische Rundschau* 6/10: 178–179.
- Reichenbach, H. (1913b). Die Militarisierung der deutschen Jugend. *Die Freie Schulgemeinde*, 3(4), 97–110.
- Reichenbach, H. (1913c). Die freistudentische Idee. Ihr Inhalt als Einheit. In Kranold, H. et al., *Freistudententum, Versuch einer Synthese der Freistudentischen Ideen*, 23–40. München: Max Steinebach. English translation: The Free Student Idea: Its Unified Contents. In Reichenbach, H. (1978), Vol. 1, 108–123.
- Reichenbach, H. (1913d). Der Wandervogel und die Juden. *Der Berliner Börsen-Courier* 539: Beilage.
- Reichenbach, H. (1913e). Freischar oder Freistudentenschaft. *Der Student* 6/7: 88–89.
- Reichenbach, H. (1914a). Militarismus und Jugend. *Die Tat*, 5(12), 1234–1238.
- Reichenbach, H. (1914b). Der Sinn der Hochschulreform. In *Studentenschaft und Jugendbewegung*, 7–11. München: Max Steinebach. English translation: The Meaning of University Reform. In Reichenbach, H. (1978), Vol. 1, 129–131.
- Reichenbach, H. (1914c). Die Jungdeutschlandbewegung. Die Jugendbewegung der Gegenwart und ihre Bedeutung für die Hochschule. In Reichenbach, H. et al., *Studentenschaft und Jugendbewegung*, 12–33. München: Max Steinebach.
- Reichenbach, H. (1914d). Die Jugendbewegung und die Freie Studentenschaft. *Münchner Akademische Rundschau*, 7(9), 158–162.
- Reichenbach, H. (1914e). Jugendbewegung und Freie Studentenschaft. *Akademische Blätter Breslau*, 7(22), 243–247.
- Reichenbach, H. (1914f). Jugendbewegung und Freie Studentenschaft. *Münchner Akademische Rundschau*, 8(13), 224–225.
- Reichenbach, H. (1918a). Programm der sozialistischen Studentenpartei (HR 023-23-01). English translation: Platform of the Socialist Students' Party. In Reichenbach, H. (1978), Vol. 1, 132–135.
- Reichenbach, H. (1918b). Die Sozialisierung der Hochschule (HR 041-18-01). English translation: Socializing the University. In Reichenbach, H. (1978), Vol. 1, 136–180.
- Reichenbach, H. (1918c). Bericht der sozialistischen Studentenpartei Berlin. Erläuterungen zum Programm (HR 044-05-37). English translation: Report of the Socialist Student Party. In Reichenbach, H. (1978), Vol. 1, 181–185.
- Reichenbach, H. (1919). Student und Sozialismus. *Der Aufbau* 5 [Flugblätter der Jugend].
- Reichenbach, H. (1920). *Relativitätstheorie und Erkenntnis Apriori*. Berlin: Springer. English translation: Reichenbach, H. (1965). *The Theory of Relativity and A Priori Knowledge*, ed. Maria Reichenbach. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Reichenbach, H. (1931). Montessori-Erziehung. Erziehung zur Gegenwart. *Die Neue Erziehung*, 8, 91–99.
- Reichenbach, H. (1951). *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy*. Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Reichenbach, H. (1978). *Selected Writings: 1909–1953*, 2 Vols, eds. Robert S. Cohen and Maria Reichenbach. Dordrecht/Boston: Reidel.
- Reichenbach, M. (1978). Introductory Note to Part I. In Reichenbach, H. (1978), Vol. 1, 91–101.
- Werner, M. G. (2014). Jugend im Feuer. August 2014 im Serakreis. *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* VIII/2: 19–34.
- Wipf, H. U. (1994). „Es war das Gefühl, daß die Universitätsbildung in irgend einem Punkte versagte...“ – Hans Reichenbach als Freistudent 1910 bis 1916. In *Hans Reichenbach und die Berliner Gruppe*, Hrsg. Lutz Danneberg et al., 161–181. Braunschweig-Wiesbaden: Vieweg.
- Wipf, H. U. (2004). *Studentische Politik und Kulturreform. Geschichte der Freistudenten-Bewegung 1896–1918*. [Edition Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung, 12]. Schwalbach im Taunus: Wochenschau Verlag.

Wyneken, G. (1915). *Der Krieg und die Jugend: Öffentlicher Vortrag gehalten am 25. November 1914 in der Münchner Freien Studentenschaft*. [Schriften der Münchner Freien Studentenschaft, Heft 4]. München: Georg C. Steinicke.

Wyneken, G. (1919). *Der Kampf für die Jugend. Gesammelte Aufsätze*. Jena: Diederichs.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

