

## REPLY TO ALFORD

Hans Albert  
Lehrstuhl für Soziologie und Wissenschaftslehre  
Universität Mannheim

Although my discussions with Fred Alford during his stay at the University of Mannheim were very interesting, I have the impression that I did not really succeed in giving him a clear picture of all my views. And I doubt that the book he has mentioned by Spinner is a good starting point for the analysis of my views. Spinner has been in Mannheim for a long time. But in spite of the opportunity he has had to discuss the problems in question, he has managed to misrepresent my views in a surprising way in order to be able to criticize them. I certainly have not "transformed" Critical Rationalism into a kind of skepticism, and I have not "watered down the meaning of rationality" at all. I don't see how my attempts to analyze critically a lot of influential views in social philosophy, epistemology, philosophy of social science, theology, etc. can be judged adequately in the way Spinner has suggested to his readers. I have at least partly carried out a programme which I find interesting.

As to the idea of "fundamental criticism" proposed by Fred Alford, I think that I never have refused to take into account fundamental alternatives to make possible better problem solutions. I have also never insisted on sticking to conventions which are not further criticizable. If you look for instance at the third chapter of my Treatise on Critical Reason, where problems of value are discussed, you will find that my criticism of Max Weber's position goes exactly in the direction suggested by Alford. I try to show how the immunity to criticism of so-called ultimate value judgments stated by Weber is avoidable.

In my paper "Die Verfassung der Freiheit," as Alford correctly states, I have indeed discussed the problem of legitimacy in the factual sense of this word. In my opinion this is an important problem for politics and for social technology, which is, nevertheless, not to be confused with the normative problem that is often examined under this heading. There is no danger of falling into this kind of confusion if we are clear about the distinction.

I think I have made clear many times - for instance in my criticism of Gunnar Myrdal's views on value problems - that there is no need to accept the value judgments of other people just because they are in fact accepted by these people. Such judgments must, however, be taken into account in the context of social technological problems in answering the question how to reach a certain measure of stability of the social order. Therefore, I have no reason to renounce discussing normative problems. I even recall having done this on many occasions. But I do think that a lot of idle discussion of this kind could be avoided if people would be clear about the social technological questions involved instead of jumping to normative conclusions without respect to the problem of realizability.

Another point in connection with such problems is that I doubt that it is useful to try to impose my ideals on other people. I would prefer to show their attractiveness. However, this is best accomplished by pointing to the results of pursuing these ideals in the real life situations of members of society. I therefore think that the best way of approaching the problem of an adequate social order would be to deliver a comparative analysis of

realizable social systems - with the institutional arrangements characteristic for these systems specified - with respect to the performance properties (criteria) found to be relevant according to normative points of view. This procedure in no way precludes discussion of these points of view, themselves.

## REPLY TO ALBERT

C. Fred Alford

Hans Albert's gracious and thoughtful response to my remarks does not adequately distinguish between methodological barriers to comprehensive reason, and those informal barriers that emerge in the practice of a school of thought. Perhaps I did not make this distinction as clearly as I might have. As I argued elsewhere (Philosophy of the Social Sciences 17 [1987]: 453-469), certain methodological restrictions imposed by Albert on fundamental criticism, such as the postulate of realizability, cannot help but render reason less comprehensive. However, in general it is surely the case that Albert does not set up systematic methodological barriers to comprehensive reason. Rather, his work is characterized by a practical reluctance to consider views regarding the good state and the good life that are not readily realizable with the institutional and cultural resources currently available. It is because I wished to address the practices of Albert's "school", rather than its formal methodological commitments, that I began with Spinner's book, which focuses upon the former aspect.

Not only is my alternative similar to what Paul Feyerabend calls counterinduction, but so too is the reasoning behind it. It is only by rediscovering and creating fundamentally different alternatives regarding the good state and the good man, whether or not these alternatives were ever realized, that we may hold our own views regarding these alternatives rationally. Otherwise expressed, we must do more than remain open to criticism. We must seek out even the most implausible alternatives, and actively confront them, if we are to be able to claim that our beliefs are more than mere conventions, but rather are rationally held ones. It is this strategy that Albert has not always pursued. Hence, his approach is not as comprehensively rational as it could be.

## POPPER'S CRITIQUE OF THE THEORY OF SOVEREIGNTY AND HIS OWN APPROACH TO POLITICAL THEORY

Andreas Pickel  
Political Science, York University

It is surprising that one of the most important and influential philosophies of this century plays almost no role in contemporary political theory.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>I am excluding here the extensive work of Hans Albert that directly address problems of political theory since it is not widely known among North American political theorists. Most of Hans Albert's works have not been translated into English - in marked contrast to those of Habermas. As