

EDITED BY HARRY ELMER BARNES

AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE
HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY



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AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE
HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY

To the Memory of
ALBION WOODBURY SMALL

PREFACE

THIS collaborative work on the history of sociology is presented as a comprehensive summary and critical appraisal of the growth of sociological thought from the ancient Near East to our own day, with the main emphasis on the systematic sociologists from Comte to Sorokin. An effort has been made to indicate what social philosophers and sociologists have said about the origins of human society, the ways of group life, the development and expression of social interests, the modes of social discipline and social control, and the main causes of both cultural lag and social progress.

The book both covers the development of the concepts and subject matter of sociology and provides the reader with a panorama of the ideas and problems with which social philosophy and sociology have wrestled for the last three thousand years. Hence it embodies many a practical and illuminating analysis of the chief processes and problems of social existence and group life, as well as furnishes a discriminating and critical anthology of the formal doctrines of the leading social philosophers and sociologists. We have sought to steer away from a mere musty and antiquarian review of esoteric lore and have tried to bring out as vividly as possible the manner in which the chief writers on the subject have handled the main issues involved in group behavior and social organization down through the years. While the sociological systems dealt with are cogently elucidated, it is also made clear how these systems of social thought usually grew out of the conditions and problems of the time and were regarded, in one way or another, as a solution of the social questions and crises of the era and culture of the writers. The sociological theories are thus traced directly back and related to the life and times of each of the writers considered.

Our survey of the development of sociological thought begins with a brief review of the ideas of the sages and prophets of antiquity on the origins and purposes of social life and then passes on to a consideration of the Greek ideas of the good life, the ideal society, and the perfect state. The Roman adaptations and variations of these Greek theories are next

summarized. Then the rise of the Christian philosophy of life and social goals is presented, along with a consideration of the medieval view of the role of church and state in organized society. Turning next to modern times, we examine the social theories associated with the rise of the national state, the right of revolution, and the growth of representative government, such as the "divine-right" theory, the doctrine of a social contract, the notion of secular absolutism, and the conception of popular sovereignty.

Well down into the eighteenth century, all these problems of associated life were dealt with by what we term "social philosophy," which covered social organization, political life, legal concepts, economic activities, ethical problems, and the like. During the late eighteenth century and the first third of the nineteenth, this larger, enveloping matrix of social philosophy gradually differentiated into sociology and the special social sciences, sociology emerging as the basic and normative social science in the writings of Saint-Simon, Comte, and Spencer. A larger body of material which threw light on social life and an increasing interest in the historical and inductive approach to social problems were the main factors accounting for the rise of sociology and the special social sciences, a process which is examined with some thoroughness. But the main portion of this work is reserved for a consideration of systematic sociological writing which begins with Auguste Comte. There was plenty of sociological thinking before Comte, but no sociological systems.

In analyzing the systematic writings of the outstanding sociologists, primary stress has been placed upon emphasizing the basic conceptions and contributions of the author rather than upon seeking out each fugitive detail, thus avoiding the mistake of losing sight of the forest of essentials in a wandering quest for the trees of triviality. Aside from the chapters written by the editor, it can be said that each author has almost invariably possessed some special knowledge and competence with respect to the sociologist treated, and, in some instances, the author is the foremost authority in the world on the person whose doctrines are analyzed. Special emphasis is laid on the public significance of the system and doctrines of the sociologists studied, indicating their bearing upon political policy and social reform. The editor has carried throughout his chapters a definite scheme of presentation and analysis in accordance with this purpose, but he has not forced his collaborators to conform to any preconceived plan of exposition, believing that the

systems themselves will naturally suggest the most suitable pattern of presentation. It is believed, however, that a reasonable degree of uniformity and consistency of treatment has been attained—at least as much as the very nature of the project would permit, without artificiality and unnatural rigidity.

The history of systematic sociology really gets under way with the analysis of the eminent pioneers in systematization: Comte, Spencer, Morgan, Sumner, Ward, and Gumpłowicz. The more important contributions of each of these authors to the clarification of the province of sociology and to its content and purpose are pointed out at some length. For the most part, their systems represented, in one way or another, the impact of evolutionary doctrine on social thinking. The highly contrasting conceptions of these writers as to the possibilities of social planning are made clear—Comte, Morgan, and Ward believing that the main purpose of sociology is to facilitate planned progress, while Spencer, Sumner, and Gumpłowicz held that the great practical service of sociology is to warn against the futility and danger of the notion that man can facilitate and hasten social progress through deliberate action.

After the pioneers are adequately expounded and appraised, we pass on to consider the leading sociologists, grouped by country and language. Within each national group the treatment is personal and individual rather than based upon schools of thought. This method of presentation has been chosen for several reasons. In the first place, nearly every history of sociological thought in the English language, with the exception of the second volume of the editor's work with Howard Becker, presents sociological thinking as organized about special schools of interest rather than as elucidating individual systems. Moreover, the Barnes and Becker volume aims more at a comprehensive review of all social thought in each country than at an extended exposition of the few outstanding systems of sociology. More important than anything else, however, is the fact that this work is primarily a history of systematic sociology, and the only practical way of setting forth and critically appraising sociological systems is to deal with one systematizer at a time, indicating, of course, his relations to, or dependence upon, other systematizers. The treatment of the systematic sociologists in each country is, however, prefaced by a brief survey of the various schools of sociological writing in that country. In the case of some countries, notably Italy and England, the systematic sociologists have been very

few, so we have had to rest content mainly with a sampling of characteristic types of sociological thought in these nations.

The analysis of sociological systems following the era of pioneers leads off with a consideration of the sociologists who wrote in the German language, and these authors are treated more completely and thoroughly than in any other work in English. Novicow and Kovalevsky are selected as representative of the Russian sociologists. The more important sociological writings in France, Italy, Spain, England, and the United States are reviewed at some length, and Cornejo is presented as the most important and productive of the systematic Latin-American sociologists.

It can safely and modestly be asserted that this book comprises the most comprehensive summary of systematic sociological writing in any language. It brings the history of sociological thought down to the era and stage where systematization was gradually but rather completely replaced by specialization in some more restricted field of description and analysis. This work thus ends logically at a highly appropriate point of termination. It is not likely that there will be many more attempts to create systems of sociology; hence these volumes may reasonably be regarded as the definitive summation and appraisal of this type of intellectual enterprise in the field of social thought. In other words, the era of systematic sociology has come approximately to an end; and our book describes its background, origin, development, and mature products. Sociological writing from this time onward promises to be mainly specialized forms of social theory; and what has already been accomplished in this type of work has been reviewed in the book which Professor Becker and the editor helped to write on *Contemporary Social Theory*.

The main purpose of this volume is, naturally, to bring together a critical summary of systematic sociological writing; but the by-products may have even greater practical value, namely, the bearing of systematic sociology upon the clarification and solution of some of our chief public problems and the manifestation of the various ways in which leading social thinkers have approached the critical issues of their day. Not only will the reader who goes through these pages attain a competent grasp upon the growth of systematic sociological thought; he should also secure a far wider and more penetrating understanding of the problems of the last century, which have thrown us, in our generation, into the most acute crisis in the history of the human race—one in which

a new social order is to be fashioned, either by deliberate planning or by revolution born of ignorance and evasion. Readers will gain acquaintance with the main questions which have been raised about social origins and relations, the problems of group life and interests which sociologists have discussed, the solutions that they have offered, the techniques that they have employed, and the manner in which time and place have affected social situations and the methods utilized in analyzing them.

Hence the perusal of this book will not only extend the reader's horizon and knowledge with respect to systematic sociology but should also improve his capacity to comprehend social problems and the sociological analysis thereof, thus enabling him to operate more effectively as an intelligent citizen of the republic. It has been the contention of sociologists from Auguste Comte and Lester F. Ward to Sorokin that the chief justification of sociology is the guidance it can furnish to public officials and private citizens relative to building a better social order. It has been maintained by such writers that only by heeding the teachings of sociology can a sound social system be constructed and perpetuated. If there is any considerable modicum of truth in this assertion, then these volumes should have great practical utility in our critical era, for here are to be found all the main doctrines of all the chief sociologists bearing upon questions of public import.

If the editor may be permitted a personal word, this project brings to an end his labors in the history of social theory, to which he has devoted, in one field or another, some eleven volumes. It is hoped that this book may be deemed a fitting conclusion. If some disagree widely with the methods and procedure followed, it may be observed that the field is open to other books, and the best proof that this enterprise does not complete the task is to produce a better book. It is a source of personal gratification that this work is being published by the University of Chicago Press, for it was just thirty years ago that Dean Small published in the September, 1917, issue of the *American Journal of Sociology* the editor's first contribution to the history of social thought. The editor also wishes to express here his thanks to Howard Becker for invaluable suggestions as to competent authors.

HARRY ELMER BARNES

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PART I

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

SOCIOLOGY BEFORE COMTE

CHAPTER I

ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

HARRY ELMER BARNES

I. SOCIAL THINKING IN THE ANCIENT ORIENT

THE social philosophy of ancient and medieval writers must be gleaned from a large mass of philosophical, theological, economic, political, and legal doctrines, for, as might be expected, there was no strict differentiation between social philosophy, on the one hand, and religious, moral, economic, and political theories, on the other hand. Nor is there to be found in many cases any serious attempt to build up a definite or well-balanced system of social philosophy.

At the same time, the recognition of these facts furnishes no adequate justification for refusing to go back of Comte for the sources of sociological thought. It is hoped that even this brief survey of the pre-Comtian period will substantiate the truth of the statement that, from the time of the Egyptian social prophets onward, thinkers were approaching, and to a certain extent successfully formulating, the chief problems of sociology. Indeed, as Professor A. W. Small pointed out, only the most mediocre writer can be adequately described merely by classifying him as sociologist, historian, economist, or political scientist.^{1*} The aim and purpose of the writer constitute the most reliable basis for estimating his contributions to social science. One is, therefore, justified in seeking the origins of sociological thought as far back in the past as a conscious attempt can be discovered on the part of any writer to record or to explain the fundamental problems of social relationships, organization, and development.

In any attempt, however cursory, to trace the development of sociological thought, it is necessary to keep in mind the fundamental truth, so well expressed by Professor Giddings and Professor Small, namely, that the doctrines of any writer lose much of their significance if their relation to the prevailing social environment is not pointed out and

* For the greater convenience of the reader, the footnotes in this book are grouped at the end of each chapter.

the purposes of the work clearly indicated. While in this survey the treatment of these important phases of the general topic must, like the summary of doctrines, be extremely condensed, an attempt will be made to indicate the general conditions out of which the sociological thinking of each period developed.

Anything like a systematic discussion of social phenomena began with the Greeks. The writers of oriental antiquity were prevented by the general conditions of their social environment from offering any strikingly original generalizations concerning the origin and nature of social institutions. An agrarian economy, caste, superstition, an inflexible religious system, and sumptuary legislation, begotten of the passion of the antique mind for homogeneity, tended to give social institutions a fixity and sanctity which discouraged any extensive speculation as to their origin, nature, or possible means of improvement. When social institutions were "frozen" by a tyrannical customary code and upheld by an inscrutable Providence, there could be no "science" of society. Consequently, in oriental antiquity most of the thinking upon social problems consisted in formulating justifications of the existence of the given social regime, these mainly centering about the sanctions of a unique revealed religion or the superior wisdom of ancestors.

Fundamental moral and social precepts and ideals of social justice are to be found in the works of the Egyptian scribes; valuable bits of applied and descriptive sociology may be gleaned from the Babylonian records, particularly from the Code of Hammurabi; much of sociological interest may be found in the ancient books of India; the Hebrew legal codes and prophetic teachings are replete with sociological and anthropological interest; and most of the Chinese religious and moral doctrines come from a more remote antiquity than those of the great philosophers of Greece; but the first coherent analysis of social phenomena and processes, so far as extant records furnish the basis for judgment, originated with the Greek philosophers of the post-Socratic period.

The outstanding traits of ancient oriental social thought may safely be characterized somewhat as follows: the social thinking was informal, sporadic, and unorganized rather than systematic or the product of deliberate study. It was highly personal and individual in origin and expression, and not the outgrowth of schools or types of social thought or of conscious social analysis. The individual rather than the group was