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Social Control

A Survey of the Foundations of Order

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OF
ECONOMICS, POLITICS, AND
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SOCIAL CONTROL

To my Master

LESTER F. WARD

PIONEER AND PATHFINDER IN THE STUDY OF SOCIETY

THIS WORK

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

PREFACE

THE foundation of this book was laid in a series of articles under the title "Social Control," contributed to the *American Journal of Sociology* between March, 1896, and May, 1898. After protracted researches abroad, the series was taken up again, and seven supplementary articles have since appeared. To the ever generous appreciation and encouragement of the editor, Dr. Albion W. Small, is due not only the publication of the articles, but also in large measure the stimulus to round and complete the studies into their present form.

All these studies fall within one narrow tract in the province of Sociology. Social Psychology, which term I apply to the branch of knowledge that deals with the psychic interplay between man and his envioning society, falls into two subdivisions. One of these, Social Ascendency, deals with the domination of society over the individual; the other, Individual Ascendency, — embracing such topics as invention, leadership, the rôle of great men, — deals with the domination of the individual over society. Social Ascendency is fur-

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ther divided into Social Influence, — mob mind, fashion, convention, custom, public opinion, and the like, — and Social Control. The former is occupied with the social domination which is without intention or purpose; the latter is concerned with that domination which is intended and which fulfils a function in the life of society. This work, therefore, deals with only one subdivision in the field of Social Psychology.

In this book I seek to determine how far the order we see all about us is due to influences that reach men and women from without, that is, *social* influences. I began the work six years ago with the idea that nearly all the goodness and conscientiousness by which a social group is enabled to hold together can be traced to such influences. It seemed to me then that the individual contributed very little to social order, while society contributed almost everything. Further investigation, however, appears to show that the personality freely unfolding under conditions of healthy fellowship may arrive at a goodness all its own, and that order is explained partly by this streak in human nature and partly by the influence of social surroundings. As I now conceive it my task is, therefore, first, to separate the individual's contribution to social order from that of society, and, second, to bring to light everything that is contained in this social contribution.

In taking up this task I have had no other thought than to see things as they are and to

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report what I see. I am not wedded to my hypotheses nor enamoured of my conclusions, and the next comer who, in the true scientific spirit, faces the problems I have faced and gives better answers than I have been able to give, will please me no less than he pleases himself.

EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS.

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA.

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E. A. Ross

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SOCIAL CONTROL

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PART I

THE GROUNDS OF CONTROL



CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

A CONDITION of order at the junction of crowded city thoroughfares implies primarily an absence of collisions between men or vehicles that interfere one with another. Order cannot be said to prevail among people going in the same direction at the same pace, because there is no interference. It does not exist when persons are constantly colliding one with another. But when all who meet or overtake one another in crowded ways take the time and pains needed to avoid collision, the throng is *orderly*. Now, at the bottom of the notion of social order lies the same idea. The members of an orderly community do not go out of their way to aggress upon one another. Moreover, whenever their pursuits interfere they make the adjustment necessary to escape collision, and make it according to some conventional rule. If the weaker of two hunters that have brought down the same stag avoids a fight by yielding up the game, there is peace, but no order. But if the dispute is settled according to the rule that "first struck" decides

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the ownership of game, the solution is an orderly one. Similarly, there is order when teamsters shun collision by conforming to "the law of the road," or miners settle the ownership of claims according to priority of "pegging out."

The denser the traffic that is handled without confusion at a busy corner, the higher is the grade of order. Likewise, the more that the smooth running of social machinery implies the frequent breaking off or turning aside of individual activities, the more perfect is the social order. < *Successful coöperation*, therefore, bespeaks a high grade of social order, inasmuch as each of the coöperators must unfold specific activities within precise limits, and the results therefrom are enjoyed or shared according to some recognized principle. < *Hierarchical organization* is still more a test of orderliness, inasmuch as in the sharing of unlike burdens and the division of unequal benefits men are more apt to fall afoul of one another.

< The severest test of the régime of order occurs when, as in war or government, individuals are incited to a common effort, the benefits of which are shared in common. > The sacrificing of one corps of an army to save the rest, or the placing of the public burdens upon the non-governing classes, is recognized as putting the severest strain on discipline. In general, the absence of hostile encounter is a mark of social order, since it implies that interferences are adjusted according to some rule. But extreme division of social labor and high organization is the surest sign of order, since it requires the nice adjustment of multifarious activities according to some prearranged plan.

The readiness of men to disturb the peace or to violate rules in the pursuit of their personal interests depends upon their mental make-up. The

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peaceable turn aside from collision, while the pugnacious welcome it. The easily contented readily accommodate their desires and actions to the customary restrictions, but the enterprising are always pressing against and trampling upon barriers. The passive strive only to satisfy old wants, and are therefore much stronger in resistance than in offence. The aggressive are insatiate and put forth as much energy to seize what they have not, as to keep what they have. In a passive race, once order is established, the individual keeps to his prescribed orbit from sheer inertia. In an aggressive race order is perpetually endangered by the unruliness of the individual, and can be maintained only through the unremitting operation of certain social forces.

Now, it is the purpose of this inquiry to ascertain how men of the West-European breed are brought to live closely together, and to associate their efforts with that degree of harmony we see about us. Social order, even among the passive, unambitious Hindoos, presents a problem for solution. But it is a much more serious problem among the dolichocephalic blonds of the West. The restless, striving, doing Aryan, with his personal ambition, his lust for power, his longing to wreak himself, his willingness to turn the world upside down to get the fame, or the fortune, or the woman, he wants, is under no easy discipline. The existence of order among men of this daring and disobedient breed challenges explanation. Especially is this true of the European man in America or Australia. The same selective migrations that made the Teuton more self-assertive than the docile Slav or the quiescent Hindoo, have made the American more strong-willed and unmanageable than even the West-European.

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To many, no doubt, a survey of the foundations of social order will appear superfluous. Most of us take order for granted, and are hardly more aware of it than we are of the air we breathe. Order being the universal and indispensable condition of all our social structures, we give no more thought to it than to the force of cohesion that keeps our machinery from flying into bits. Those to whom the fact is brought home by the persistence of a delinquent class assume, nevertheless, that the social fabric rests on a law-abiding disposition which is natural to all but the slant-browed few.

But it would be, in truth, much juster to assume a state of disorder. We ought to take for granted that men living in propinquity will continually fall afoul of one another. We ought to expect in the normal person not, it is true, the malice, lust, or ferocity of the born criminal, but certainly a natural unwillingness to be checked in the hot pursuit of his ends. Whenever men swarm in new places, — Dutch Flat, Kimberly, Siberia, Skagway, — the man-to-man struggle stands out naked and clear, and the slow emergence of order out of disorder and violence presents itself as the attainment of a difficult and artificial condition. Could we abstract from such communities the training received in older societies, the thrift that recognizes disorder as a blight upon prosperity, and the ready revolver which discourages aggression by equalizing men, we might arrive at a notion of the state in which the men of to-day, despite their high facial angle, would find themselves, if they were remanded to the zero point of social development.

Starting from this point, we must face the problem. By what means is the human struggle narrowed and limited? How has violence been purged away from it? How has the once brawling torrent

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of conflicting personal desires been induced to flow smoothly in the channels of legitimate rivalry, or even for a time to vanish underground in those numerous coöperations where conflict is absent until it comes to dividing the results?

It is a common delusion that order is to be explained by the person's inherited equipment for good conduct, rather than by any control that society exercises over him. Once it was held that normal human beings are born with a set of commandments etched upon the soul. When evidence accumulated as to the startling contrasts in the moral ideas of different times and peoples, the moralists contented themselves with declaring that the soul is, at least, endowed with a sense of *oughtness*. When the emptiness of this theory was demonstrated, and formalism was convicted of overlooking the emotional elements that lie behind conduct, there arose the theory that man's nature is constituted out of egoism and altruism. This in time was seen to be much the same as defining milk as a combination of whey and curd. Then came the charming tales of the mutual aid of ants, beavers, and prairie dogs, suggesting the existence of certain social instincts which moralists found it very convenient to use in explaining human society.

We are not yet sure, however, that man is the "good ape" Buffon supposed him to be. There is reason to believe that our social order is by no means a mere hive or herd order. It seems to be a *fabric*, rather than a *growth*.

But, in any case, it is important to know what human nature can furnish in the cause of social harmony. The gulf between private ends and public ends, between the aims of the individual and the aims of his fellows, is bridged from both sides, and we must know what abutments and

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spans are provided by the individual himself, if we are to measure the extent of the moral engineering that must be undertaken by society. It is our business, therefore, before entering upon the consideration of the social factors of order, to take stock of the moral capital of the person. We shall, first of all, ascertain the rôle of *sympathy*, of *sociability*, of *the sense of justice*, and of *resentment*, in establishing and maintaining social order.

CHAPTER II

THE RÔLE OF SYMPATHY

SYMPATHY, Sociability, Justice — these are the “mothers” to which, Faust-like, we must repair for the secret of natural goodness. For we are no longer free to reduce altruism to an extremely refined egoism, or to pronounce illusory the pains and pleasures felt on beholding the experiences of another. The metaphysical, strictly egoistic “self” of Helvetius or D’Holbach turns out to be a myth. Those cunning architects, Selection and Heredity, are quite competent to build into the nervous system sympathetic promptings as well as selfish appetites. In the light of the facts collected by many workers, it is no longer difficult to trace the slender stem of altruism rising from the lower levels of mammalian life side by side with the thicker and rougher trunk of egoism.

(The beginnings of sympathy lie in the later developments of the reproductive function. With the advent of the helpless mammalian young, sympathy acquires a high value for survival and is rapidly generated. In the human species the dependence of the young on the self-sacrifice of the parents is great, and the feeling of tenderness for the helpless becomes all-important. Those lacking in this quality do not leave so many children as the self-sacrificing, and so are crowded out and replaced. Thus has been developed in