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Sociology 1957

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SOCIOLOGY

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SOCIOLOGY

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I

WHAT SOCIOLOGY IS ABOUT

"SOCIOLOGY," says Professor Ginsberg,¹ "may be defined as the study of society, that is, of the web or tissue of human interactions and interrelations." The subject-matter is indeed so vast that it is not surprising to find that sociologists differ in their attempt to analyse and group the topics which it includes into neat compartments. Durkheim maps out the field under three headings: (i) 'Social Morphology', which covers the geographical setting, the density of population and suchlike preliminary data; (ii) 'Social physiology', which is concerned with such dynamic processes as religion, morals, law, economic life, etc., each of which may be the subject-matter of a special discipline; (iii) 'General Sociology', which is the attempt to discover the general social laws manifest in the more specialized social processes.

Ginsberg,² too, has listed the principal problems of Sociology—this time under four headings: (i) Social Morphology, in which he includes not only "the investigation of the quantity and quality of the population", but also "the study of social structure or the description and classification of the principal types of social groups and institutions"; (ii) Social Control—"the study of law, morals, religion, convention, fashion, and other sustaining and regulating agencies"; (iii) Social Processes, by which he means: "The study of the various modes of interaction between individuals or groups, including co-operation and conflict, social differentiation and integration, development, arrest and decay"; (iv) Social Pathology: "The study of social maladjustments and disturbances." A brave attempt to confine an enormous mass of slippery material into a relatively simple system of pigeonholes.

From these two analyses some idea can be gleaned as to what Sociology is about, but not all books which would be

¹ *The Study of Society*, ed. Bartlett *et al.* (Kegan Paul, 1939), p. 436.

² *Ib.*, p. 436.

plausibly placed in the 'Sociology' section of a library are concerned with the whole field of the study. They will, however, be concerned either with *human social behaviour*, or with *human societies*, or with *human society*. This third analysis of the subject-matter of sociology is to be taken rather as a differentiation of emphasis than as a new grouping into these mutually exclusive topics.

Human Social Behaviour: "Societies," observed Professor Linton,¹ "are organised groups of individuals, and cultures are, in the last analysis, nothing more than the organized repetitive responses of a society's members." This 'last analysis' is important and must never be forgotten. When we speak of such social phenomena as 'class', 'political structure', 'social group', 'religion', 'capitalism' and so on, we are always referring *ultimately* to the conduct and beliefs of individual men and women. The behaviour of men and women, including ourselves with the addition of introspection, is our data, and it is in the behaviour of men and women that we must look for the verification or otherwise of our hypotheses. By calling it 'evidence' one does not, of course, mean that such behaviour is always observed by us; it may be inferred from archaeological finds, from historical documents, from the reports of anthropologists or from the position of bones in a grave; it may be collectively incorporated into statistics or distilled into correlative formulae, but our study of human society has as its basic material the meaningful conduct, and such beliefs, aspirations, estimations, and ideals as can be inferred from it, of individual persons. We so often think of a 'class', a 'nation' or a particular economic system as things apart from the individuals who accept a certain principle of social distances, or believe themselves to belong together as co-nationals, or 'run' the economic system, that we are constantly tempted to forget that they are mental constructs by means of which we refer to certain relatively constant and recurrent features which characterize the behaviour of particular persons; such constructs are always inferred and never directly observed.² This

¹ Linton: *Cultural Background of Personality* (Kegan Paul, 1947), p. 4.

² Cf. F. A. Hayek: *Scientism and the Study of Society*, *Economica*. Vol. X, 1943, p. 44.

does not mean that these constructs are not useful; on the contrary, we shall see that they are the main subjects of sociological investigation. The point is that we must be aware of their abstract nature.

This emphasis on social behaviour as the ultimate basis of sociological enquiry is to be found in the elaborate analysis of sociological concepts in Part I of Max Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. "Sociology," he says,¹ "is the science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action," and he defines social action as follows: "Action is social in so far as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals) it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby orientated in its course." The modern social psychologist will insist that 'subjective meaning' must be taken to include unconscious intentions and attitudes as well as conscious orientation, because it has become quite clear that unconscious motivations play an important part in the social conduct of children in the family group, and in the social conduct of adults in the factory, in politics, and in international relations.

There is, however, an important sense in which the principal problems of sociology transcend individual conduct, and a sense which is not covered by supplementing conscious intent by the addition of unconscious motivation as we have done above. While it is perfectly true that our data is, and must be, the actual behaviour of meaningfully acting individuals—whether directly observed or inferred from their traces—nevertheless the constructs which we for the most part study cannot be directly derived from the intentions of the individuals whose behaviour gives rise to them. Individuals may intend to get as much money in their purses as they can; they do not *intend* to produce that 'construct' which we call 'inflation'. Individuals look up to, or kow-tow to, other individuals, and are treated with condescension and reserve in return; they do not necessarily intend to produce or perpetuate what we call the 'class system', though in this case the idea of such a system may play some part in determining their behaviour.

¹ Weber: *Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (a translation of Pt. I of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*), (Hodge, 1947), p. 80.

The actual social interchanges which always take place between individuals involve certain conscious and unconscious motivation in each participant, that is clear enough, but certain of these social interchanges occurring on a vast scale have effects which are not directly intended by any participant. These unintended effects, however, once established, form part of the social environment and have a determining influence on future social interchanges. Furthermore, the retro-active effect, as we might call it, may be of two kinds: (i) it may make a difference in the total social situation, and (ii) this difference may be one which individuals or groups of individuals find advantageous or disadvantageous to themselves and then they may consciously or unconsciously try to perpetuate it in the first case or change it in the second. Thus what was primarily unintended may become a part of future conscious and—so the Marxist would insist—unconscious intention. No one originally set out to found a nation state as we know it now, but once it has come into being by means of the satisfaction of multitudes of quite other intentions its preservation may become the conscious intention of its nationals, and the founders of a state may consciously set out to turn it into a nation.

Now the study of actual social action, and actual social relationships (which are, of course, only established by social action), is the main concern of sociologists affiliated to what is called the 'Formal School of Sociologists'¹ of which Simmel, Vierkandt and von Wiese are distinguished representatives. For Simmel, indeed, the 'forms of social relationship' were the distinguishing content of sociology, what made sociology different from other social sciences. Such a view can hardly be maintained, because, as we shall see below, the formal relations which members of this school enumerate can only be fully understood in the concrete social settings in which they are exemplified, and these social settings themselves can only be understood in the light of other abstractions such as social structure, social stratification and the like.

For all that, the analysis of social relations is of interest.

¹ For accounts of the 'Formal School' see Sorokin: *Contemporary Social Theories* (Harper, 1928), chap. ix, and Ginsberg: *Reason and Unreason in Society* (London School of Economics, 1947), chap. v.

Simmel, for example, disentangles the leadership-obedience relationship, sub-ordination—super-ordination, competition, imitation, division of labour, from their concrete settings. These relationships are manifested in “a band of brigands, in a business organization, in a religious community, a school, and, in brief, in the most different social groups from the standpoint of their content”,¹ and according to Simmel, it is the business of the sociologist to abstract from such different contexts these simple and recurrent elements. Vierkandt, influenced by the Phenomenology of Husserl, takes us, as one might say, further back to the experienced attitudes of respect, shame, love and hate, submission, the need we experience for the approval of others, etc., and from these psychological data he derives the social relationships with which sociology, in his estimation, should be concerned:—leadership, obedience, punishment, community, struggle, power, etc. Again it is the form of relationship, not the content (i.e. whether you are dealing with a nation, a factory, or an Urban District Council), that matters.

Von Wiese bases his ‘Theory of Relationship’ (*Beziehungslehre*) on the simple polar distinction between approach and withdrawal, association and dissociation. “*Die Beziehungslehre kennt nur die Bewegungen zur Vereinigung oder zur Flucht; tertium in sociologia non datur.*” However, upon this simple distinction he builds a tremendous edifice of varieties and sub-varieties of social relationship. Between individuals we have relation *towards* one another (contact, approval, adaption, combination and union); *away* from one another (competition, opposition, and conflict; and *mixed* forms of these). Then, between and within groups there are four main processes: (1) Differentiating processes, such as promotion and degradation, domination and subordination, stratification, etc; (2) Integrating processes, such as tendencies to uniformity and stability; (3) Destructive processes, such as exploitation, corruption, commercialization; (4) Modifying-constructive processes like institutionalization, professionalization and liberation.

Finally we may mention Park and Burgess’ *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* as an example of a sociological com-

¹ Sorokin: *ib.*, p. 490.

pendium based on a simple classification of social processes under the following headings: isolation, social contact, social interaction, competition, conflict, accommodation, assimilation, amalgamation, social control, and progress.

As an example of the application of formal analysis of 'types of sociality' as he calls them to a special field of sociological research we may take Gurvitch's *Sociology of Law* (Kegan Paul, 1947). The writer differentiates between "sociality by interpenetration or partial fusion in the 'We', as opposed to sociality by simple interdependence between me, you, him, them" (p. 161). The latter type of sociality he divides into: 'rapprochement', 'separation' and a combination of both. He then proceeds to consider the types of law engendered by such social relationships: social law and individual law. Contractual law, for instance, is engendered by the mixed rapprochement-separation relation, because both parties wish to establish a mutual obligation, while each party wants something different.

It will be noticed that a new concept—*social process*—has been introduced, and this must be distinguished from the concept of *social relationship*; the latter denotes the field in which the processes are exhibited, and it is obvious that for the purpose of explaining social change an analysis of social processes is of the greatest importance. The social relationship of subordination is too abstract, it occurs in too many different settings, to be of much use, but the concept of, say, 'professionalization' is of use because it enables us to refer to a series of characteristic social changes which determine the social behaviour of individuals implicated in them in fairly definite ways.

Illuminating though these abstract classifications may be, it soon becomes clear that the bulk and thickness of real social life has evaporated. The master *vis-à-vis* his pupils, the Roman pater familias *vis-à-vis* those who are in his hands, or the feudal lord *vis-à-vis* his serfs may all represent instances of 'superordination', but the differences in the three situations outweigh the similarities. Each social relationship subsists in an ambience of expectations and customs, and in a network of other social relationships, which constitute what we call 'the school', 'the Roman family', and the 'feudal system', and to abstract the

super-ordinate relationship leaves out all that is of importance in the total situation.

Human beings, in fact, may seldom stand in what we might call purely private isolated relation to one another. Even the relationship between two friends is what it is partly because they are both members of the same culture in which the role of 'friend' implies certain courses of conduct, or because they are members of *different* cultures, in which case the role of 'foreign friend' may involve a special network of expectations. As Durkheim observes: "*Tout n'est pas contractuel dans le contrat*", meaning thereby that every contract is established in a system of accepted rules of obligation. Whenever we act socially we act *towards* and *in* a total social situation. The specific social situation in which we actually *are*, and towards which we respond, always involves a transcendent system of expectation, obligation and custom, which depend on the roles we are playing, and the roles of other people who are involved. But then, just as we abstract the general concept of space from the particular perspectives of individual observers, so we can abstract the general concept of the vast heterogeneous aggregate of customs, laws, roles, expectation, accepted ways of doing things, obligations and accepted social distances, which constitute the total social situation in which our actual social situations are to be found.

When we look at things from this point of view, the actual concrete social interchanges recede into the background, and such complexes as social structures, social stratification, social control, and social institution come to the fore. Three features of these complexes are at once noticed.

(1) They have a certain persistence which transcends the ephemeral social interchanges in which they are manifested. The school, with its tradition, its slang, its hierarchy goes on through generations of pupils, changing slowly, perhaps, but continuing in such a way that we can plausibly say that when one pupil leaves, another may *take his place*. The same may be said of the 'nation', 'the trade union' or the 'club'.

(2) These persistent schemes of relationship stand over against the newcomer, or the observer in quasi-objectivity. They can, says Durkheim, who took these 'social facts' as the

proper study of sociologists, be treated: *comme des choses*. This quasi-objectivity it is that has led some sociologists to postulate a group-mind over and above the minds of the individual persons who are members of the group. Such hypostasis of mental constructs is unnecessary and misleading, but the temptation to treat these persistent patterns as springing from some social source, external to individuals, is perfectly intelligible. They must, indeed, be treated *as if* they were independent entities; we cannot help ourselves. As Durkheim expresses it: social facts are exterior to us, and exercise constraint upon us.¹

(3) These persistent schemes vary from situation to situation, from place to place, from one group to another. There is one scheme of relationships and appropriate behaviour in the factory, another in the school; there is one general scheme which applies to Englishmen, another which applies to the Trobriand Islanders.

This last point brings us to the second emphasis in sociological study: the study of human societies.

The Study of Human Societies

One of the most important kinds of social relationship is that of 'co-membership' of a group. Here, however, our difficulties begin, because (1) we ordinarily use the word 'group' in a variety of different ways, and (2) even when we limit the meaning of the word, we still find the need of classifying the items included in the more precise category.

One source of our troubles is the difficulty we may have in making up our minds as to how far we are going to supplement objective criteria with subjective ones. We have already referred (p. 12) to Gurvitch's distinction between 'sociality by interpenetration' and 'sociality by simple interdependence', and in connection with the first we note that he introduces the first person plural: 'We'. There obviously are—and these are the principal objects of the study of human societies—groups of people (i) who enter into distinctive social relationships with one another,² and (ii) who feel a certain consciousness of

¹ Durkheim: *Règles de la Méthode Sociologique* (Paris ed., 1947), p. 11.

² Cf. MacIver's definition: *Society* (Macmillan, 1937), p. 13.

membership—i.e. “the idea of the group exists in the minds of its member”.¹ Such groups may have a persistence with varied membership; they have a unity and a boundary which marks them off from non-members and from other groups. Examples of these groups would be: a nation, a school, a village, a trade union, a regiment, a club, or a party of hikers. This heterogeneous collection of examples shows that further classification is necessary, and to that we must turn our attention later on. For the moment what is important to notice is the unity, integration, relative compactness, and distinctive separation of these ‘social groups’.

Now if we take Weber’s² definition of social relationships, which, he says, “consist entirely and exclusively in the existence of a probability that there will be, in some meaningfully understandable sense, a course of social action”, we can see that these social groups might be analysed in such terms. Certain responses are more probable among ‘Englishmen’ in their intercourse with one another than among ‘Englishmen’ and ‘Frenchmen’, and it would be possible to define ‘Englishmen’ in terms of such networks of probable response, without referring to the Englishman’s knowledge of being an Englishman and his feelings of loyalty to his ‘nation’.

There are, however, important social groupings which do not have this solidarity. There are boundaries to such groupings, otherwise membership could not be determined; there may be awareness of membership, but something, very difficult to name, but easy enough to see, is absent. Consider the three concepts: ‘class’, ‘income group’ and ‘age group’. These groupings are undoubtedly socially significant in a sense in which a purely statistical grouping of people by height, weight, or hair-colour is not. And yet there is not that cohesion present which is characteristic of the social groups we have just been considering. Furthermore, their social significance almost always lies inside the boundaries of inclusive social groups. Not quite always, because there is something to be said for the notion that the aristocracy of England have had in the past

¹ Cf. Von Wiese’s characteristics of *Gruppen*. Ginsberg: *Reason and Unreason in Society*, p. 11.

² Weber: *ib.*, p. 107.

more 'in common' with the aristocracy of the Continent than they have with their own co-nationals; we have all heard of the menace of 'international' financiers, and it is the 'workers of the world' who are encouraged to fling off their chains.

On the other hand, an oppressed class may develop a 'consciousness of kind', the 'teen-age girls' of America are so well-defined a group that they are specially catered for, and among the Nandi of East Africa the age-grouping is of such vital importance that social status, duties and privileges depend upon the age-set to which a person belongs, so that a certain degree of unity may be established in these groupings, which are based on single defining characteristics, and they may approximate to consolidated 'social groups'.

This contrast between the presence of something which we have called 'consolidation' in the 'social group', and its absence in the 'significant social grouping', is varyingly dealt with by sociologists. Ginsberg,¹ for instance, distinguishes between groups and quasi-groups, while MacIver² distinguishes between groups 'with definite organization' and groups 'without definite organization'. The fact is that the distinction, though perfectly intelligible, is very difficult to pin down with an appropriate name, and sometimes not easy to draw. A sect, a school 'house' or a small trade union at loggerheads with a larger one, display a high degree of consolidation, but what of the members of the Church of England? That is a loose enough configuration. And what, after all, of a 'nation'? In war-time, in time of national crisis, or when international relations are strained, there is, perhaps, some high degree of felt unity, but, for the most part, sectional and local groupings play the more effective role in people's lives.

The truth is that it is far more consistent to think in terms of *scales* rather than in terms of rigidly exclusive classification. If we do this we might apply two scales to deal with the point we are considering: a subjective one and an objective one. The subjective scale would have at one end those collectivities in which there is a high degree of *felt* consolidation, while at the other end there would be those with very little felt con-

¹ *Reason and Unreason in Society*, p. 13.

² *Society* (Macmillan, 1937), p. 144.

solidation. The objective scale would have at one end those collectivities in which there is a high degree of organization, while at the other end would lie the merely statistical groupings.

In this discussion of the problem arising when we try to draw a distinction between what we have called 'social groups' and 'significant social groupings', enough has been said to indicate the complexity which faces the classifier. No single classification of social groups can hope to bring out all the important distinctions. It will be more consistent, therefore, to consider certain important bases of classification, each of which is of use for certain purposes.

(1) *Personal contact of members.* Members of some groups are in 'face-to-face' contact with one another, while in other groups the relations are indirect. People working in the same shop or factory, people living in a religious or other 'community', children living in an institution, or students in a classroom, or members of a household are all instances of 'primary' or 'face-to-face' groups. Members of a nation or a large trade union are indirectly related.

(2) *Temporal persistence.* Some groups exist only while their members are co-present with one another; others, as we have seen, persist with varied membership.

Putting these two together, we have: (1) temporary face-to-face groups, e.g. a crowd (unorganized) or an audience or meeting (organized); (2) persistent face-to-face groups: e.g. a school or class; (3) temporary indirectly related groups: e.g. the 'public' at any given moment; (4) persistent indirectly related groups: e.g. a nation, a city, a learned society.

The study of (1), (2), and (3) is common ground between Sociology and Social Psychology. The scope of these two subjects is constantly overlapping, and it is not particularly profitable to attempt to draw exclusive boundaries round them. We should, however, briefly call attention to four types of study of small face-to-face groups.

(a) 'Crowd Psychology' has been the subject of numerous studies from Le Bon's *The Crowd* to the description of the crowd in Dollard's *Social Learning and Imitation*.

(b) The temporary face-to-face groups of a relatively

organized kind have been studied by Lewin¹ and his school by the application of a conceptual scheme of their own. They treat the social situation in terms of a field of tensions or vectors, attractions and repulsions, tendencies to remain 'in the field' or to escape from it. In Lewin's words: "To explain social behaviour it is necessary to represent the structure of the total situation and the distribution of forces in it." Especially interesting is a study of the effect of change of leadership-type on group structures, in which it was found that authoritarian leadership had a disintegrative and aggression-provoking effect upon the led, while a member, who had been submitted to one type of leadership and developed the type of response appropriate, was found to adopt a quite different pattern of behaviour when removed to a group of a different type. This experimental evidence should make us pause when we attribute indelible characteristics to members of enemy or, indeed, friendly nations (including our own). These studies are referred to as being concerned with 'temporary face-to-face groups', because the actual social conduct is described and assessed as it actually takes place 'in the social field'.

(c) The study of face-to-face groups as persisting over a period has been undertaken by a variety of social psychologists and sociologists. Moreno,² for instance, has founded a school of 'Sociometry' which attempts to measure the preference of members of a group for one another, and the rejection of some members by their followers. The results of these observations are mapped out in constellations of likes and dislikes, friendship, hostility and indifference. The popular are the meeting points of many lines, the isolates are seen sending out rays of invitation to the popular, but, alas, the lines of communication are cut all round them.

Another example of this kind of research is the work of R. C. Angell (*The Family Encounters the Depression*. Teubner, 1936). He studied the relation between members of a group of families before and after the Depression, and claims to show a

¹ Cf. Bowlby: *Psychology and Democracy*. (Political Quarterly, 1946.) *Studies in Topological and Vector Psychology*, No. 1. *Studies in Child Welfare*, Lewin: *Field Theory and Experiments in Social Psychology*. Am. J. of Sociology, 44, p. 868. Lewin: *Frontiers in Group Dynamics*. Human Relations, Vol. I, p. 5.

² Moreno: *Who Shall Survive?* (Washington, 1934.)

relationship between the degree of integration and harmony in the family circle and their capacity to stand up to the disintegrating influence of the financial crisis. (Cf. *20th Century Sociology*, p. 37.)

For other instances of the study of face-to-face groups the reader may be referred to Murphy, Murphy and Newcomb, *Experimental Social Psychology*, but special mention should be made of the work done by Mayo, Roetlisberger, and Whitehead¹ in industry. There is no room for any description of the celebrated investigations at the works of the Western Electric Company, but the upshot of them is of interest. The investigations claim that harmonious relations in a factory, and between people who are working together in close proximity, can be of as great importance as a factor influencing the output curve as are variations in physical conditions. They describe the unconscious integration of groups of workers who like one another, the disintegrating influence of change in companionship, and the importance of custom and structural stability in the factory as a whole.

Now that we have got the study of small face-to-face groups out of the way, we can proceed with the bases of classification which mainly concern persistent, indirectly united social groups.

(3) *Basis of Unification.* A social group may be such that "one's life *may* be lived wholly within it, that all one's social relations *may* be found within it".² Another may be such that it is joined by its members, or created by its members, for the "pursuit of an interest or group of interests in common".³ This distinction is of obvious importance. A village society is one in which multifarious interests are satisfied, and one in which innumerable social relations are developed; its relation to its members is more inclusive than that of the pig-club to those of them who belong to it. The village *may* deal with all sides of their lives, the pig-club caters only for their interest in pigs. There is a kind of natural, undirected growth about the village—it just comes into being, as it were, because the people live

¹ Cf. Mayo: *Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization*. (Cambridge, Mass., 1946.) Roetlisberger: *Management and Morale*. (Cambridge, Mass.) Whitehead: *Leadership in a Free Society*. (Cambridge, Mass., 1936.)

² MacIver, *ib.*, p. 9.

³ *Ib.*, p. 11.

close together, while the pig-club is founded and voluntarily furthered. This description must not be pressed into a definition, because a new town may be deliberately founded and fostered, a neighbourhood-unit may be vamped into life by the provision of a community-centre, appropriately placed schools, and other social services, and, on the other hand, a purposive group may develop without the express intention of founding one. For all that, the distinction is plain enough, and, since it arises out of living together, there is a territorial character about the village, the nation or the neighbourhood-unit, which is absent from the trade-union or the S.P.C.K.

The German sociologist Tönnies¹ gave names to these two types of collectivity; he called the kind we have exemplified 'by the village a *'Gemeinschaft'*, and the purposive type a *'Gesellschaft'*. This nomenclature was followed by Weber, while MacIver² has succeeded in standardizing the names: Community and Association. As usual there are two difficulties: linguistic and classificatory. The word 'community' in MacIver's sense has a wider denotation than it has in customary language; it includes the 'religious community' and the neighbourhood served by a 'community centre', but it also includes the town and the nation. This linguistic difficulty can soon be surmounted, but when we come to the question: is the family an association or a community? we are in one of those happy hunting-grounds of verbal dispute. This is, perhaps, an appropriate occasion for a general warning.

When we have abstracted a characteristic, or a pair of distinctive characteristics, we tend to forget that the concepts we have formed are mere tools for ordering a variety of different actual phenomena. We believe ourselves to have discovered real labels which were tied round the necks of objects since time began, but have hitherto remained undeciphered. We then proceed to search for the labels of some object we wish to classify—is it 'community' or 'association'?—and we are dismayed when we find that some read one thing and some another. We even feel that there is something wrong with the object itself, because it won't tell us clearly and unambiguously what it is. Having decided in the end to plunge for one reading

¹ Tönnies: *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. (Leipzig, 1887.)

² *Ib.*, p. 9.

rather than another, we feel we have made a grand discovery: the family is an association (or a community).

Surely what we ought to do is to ask which word, if either, is conveniently used of the family. The family is neither—it is the family, but an inspection of the family, in the sense of the household, shows that both words are appropriate for different aspects. In the sense that members of the family live together, in the sense that members of the family find the centre of many interests in the family circle, and in the sense that for the child almost all its needs are satisfied in the house, the word 'community' is appropriately used: we have made no discovery; we only stress, by the use of that word, certain features of family life. If, on the other hand, we say, as we very plausibly can, that family life is voluntarily embarked upon by two persons who wish to live together, to have sexual intercourse and to procreate children, then we draw attention to an aspect of the family for which the word 'association' is appropriate. The same may be said of the school; in so far as the school is considered as a group voluntarily entered for the purpose of absorbing or dispensing knowledge or character training, it has an explicit purposive (and therefore associative) aspect, but on those grounds to deny that it may have a community aspect as well would be to fly in the face of fact. To the boy in the boarding-school it is a world which may entirely occupy him, it is his 'world'. The fact is that groups are often so many-sided and complex that no simple conceptual scheme can hope to divide them all into neat boxes. This does not very much matter so long as we are not hypnotized by abstract words, and always give priority to the concrete reality.

The distinction between the face-to-face group and the indirectly united one, and the distinction between community and association, are the most important bases of discrimination, but there are others of no small utility.

(4) Weber differentiates between ('open' and 'closed' societies. The former are social groups, membership of which is open to anyone, the latter—and, *from the point of view of this distinction alone*, the more important ones—are those membership of which involves some special discriminating form of entry. A guild was closed to those who could not afford the

ritual garments or the material with which to make the masterpiece; a 'sect' is distinguished by Weber from a 'church' on the grounds that the former is a society closed to all but the elect—a feature which makes for consolidation and purity of doctrine; a professional body is closed to those who have not passed the appropriate examination or who cannot afford the entry fee; a caste is closed to those who are not born in it. So one might go on, and it is perfectly clear that the existence of closed societies is of importance as a means of furthering the interests of sections of the community, as a means of ensuring a standard of proficiency, and as affording a satisfying sense of distinction and, perhaps, prestige (though this is hardly the case with the closed order of prisoners) in the minds of the chosen members.

(5) Size seems a somewhat trivial characteristic, but it has its importance, particularly with reference to political structure: clearly a small-scale community, in which some form of direct participation in government is possible, presents different problems from those which face a large-scale modern society. A town in which the individual is lost must be a different kind of community from a village in which everyone knows everyone else.

(6) Finally we draw a distinction between an 'inclusive' society, such as a nation or tribe, and the social groups which it includes. A primitive community has its families, its clans, and its associations and it would be impossible to name all the social groups, family, industrial, sporting, political, collecting, learned, and so forth, which are contained within a present-day inclusive society.

These 'inclusive societies' are, in a sense, the units about which and within which the sociological study of societies is carried on, but before we consider instances of this kind of research there is an important characteristic of societies, especially of inclusive ones, which we must mention, and that is their organic nature. In addition to the social groups, and largely determining them, there is a general order, a general way of life, a network of political institutions, economic institutions, and cultural institutions, carrying and preserving a system of values and religious beliefs and practices, all of which pervade the whole inclusive society. When we speak of the

'capitalist system', the 'feudal system', 'the American way of life', we are referring to such pervasive patterns of belief and social action.

Furthermore, the whole concrete society, pervaded as it is by these 'institutional complexes', as MacIver calls them, hangs together as a dynamic system of interlocking parts, such that change in one part will have repercussions elsewhere. The economic set-up influences the political set-up, and vice-versa; economic changes will lead to a change in the position of women; a change in ideas, Weber has shown, may influence developments in economics. The word 'dynamic' is essential. The whole complex 'life' of an inclusive society is more of the order of a process than a static system of groups standing in relation to one another.

It is this inter-connectedness of everything with everything else that has led the biologically minded sociologists like Aristotle and Spencer to think of a society as an *organism*. There is no harm in this; indeed the word is useful, but the danger is that the analogy be pushed too far. This has been done in the past. It has been thought that the evolution of a society must obey the same rules as are said to apply to the evolution of biological organisms; the notion of 'natural selection' has been brought in to account for the perpetuation of certain types of social organization. This has darkened rather than illuminated the scene. What, however, we must accept is certainly the concept of organic integration of the manifold which makes up the social whole.

This, again, must not be taken to mean that every element of a society is harmoniously interwoven with every other. Such may be the ideal, but it is by no means always the fact. The religious beliefs may be in disaccord with economic practice, and one sectional interest may batten, we are tempted to say, like a cancer, on the rest of the 'body politic'. It is the struggle of harmonizing particular interests with the interests of the whole that generates a great deal of our law. We questioned above the status of a nation as a consolidated group, and it was there suggested that in war-time its organic unity is more manifest than in time of peace. We can almost feel, at the end of a long-drawn-out war, the loosening of the social ties, and we are not

surprised to find suppressed conflicts flaring up within the organism. For all that there is a certain consistency pervading the whole. Viewing a society from a distance and trying to grasp the economic set-up, the political order, the social stratification, the climate of ideas and the internal conflicts, we can sometimes glimpse a kind of immanent order, or '*Eigengesetzlichkeit*', as Weber calls it, a social consensus, as Comte puts it, and it is one of the most fascinating tasks which some sociologists have set themselves to feel their way into the 'situational logic' of an age.

Turning now to the studies which may be called studies of social groups, we may distinguish two broad types: (1) studies of social groups as a whole, (2) studies of particular aspects or features.

(1.) The number of studies of primitive societies is enormous. Malinowski has depicted the Trobriand Islanders, Firth has described the Tikopians, Deacon and Layard the Stone men of Malekula. These, and the works of Bateson, Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Boas, and Radcliffe-Brown, to mention only a handful more, are all attempts to give a living impression of the way of life, the institutions, beliefs and practices of a primitive group so that we can get the 'feel' of what it would be like to be one of them.

Large-scale inclusive societies are more daunting, and not unnaturally they are not usually dealt with as wholes, except in such a statistical fashion as we find in the 'Social Survey of England and Wales' by Carr-Saunders and Caradoc-Jones and 'The Condition of Britain' by G. D. H. Cole. There are, of course, descriptive works on the cultural outlook of large-scale societies, such as Mead's *The American Character*, or Benedict's study of Japanese culture in her *Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. The social groups studied in connection with large-scale societies are groups included within them, but as groups within and related to the context of the large-scale society which surrounds them. Such studies are social surveys. In England, Charles Booth's social survey of London, which was re-edited by H. Llewellyn Smith in 1930-1935, was followed by an ever-increasing number of studies. Important among them are: *Work and Wealth in a Modern Port* (Southampton, ed. by P.

Ford), *Survey of Merseyside* (ed. by Caradog Jones), *County Town* (Worcester. West Midland Planning Group), *Becontree and Dagenham* (Terence Young), *Industrial Tyneside* (Mess), and *Social Background of a Plan* (ed. by Ruth Glass).

These social surveys are mainly statistical rather than descriptive. They tell you how many people live there, what they pay for their house, how far they are from the centre of the town and so forth, but one gets but little idea of what their lives are like. In Charles Booth's study there are, it is true, descriptive accounts of working life in the sweated industries, but, with the exception of 'Exmoor Village', which does attempt to give an account of day-to-day routine—as noted down by a team of mass observers and put together by Mr. W. J. Turner, the English social survey does not attempt an all-round picture of the 'culture-pattern'. The reason for this is that surveys are usually financed by people who have a definite practical purpose in view: either to publicize the conditions of the poor or as a prelude to the material reconstruction of the area. Furthermore, there is differential facility in the actual obtaining of information; the lower income groups seem to be indefinitely accessible, while the 'upper classes' remain shrouded in mystery. It is the easiest thing in the world to find out what proportion of their income the wage-earners spend on food, lighting etc., etc., but no one has dared tackle the professional classes on this intimate question. The result is that our notions of the 'condition of Britain' are somewhat distorted, if we rely on the evidence of social surveys alone. If, as we are told, the English working-classes aim at 'bourgeoisification', it is unfortunate that we know so little about the 'culture-pattern' of the bourgeoisie.

In America, however, things are different. In the Lynds' studies of *Middletown* and *Middletown Revisited* we do get a more intimate account of the Middletown way of life, and the same is true of *Deep South* by Davis and Gardner, and James West's *Plainville, U.S.A.* Other instances of the study of communities are *A Japanese Village* by John F. Embree, Hsiao T'ung Fei's *Peasant Life in China* and *A Chinese Village* by Martin C. Yang. (All three published in Kegan Paul's 'International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction'.)

(2.) The all-round study of a community is a brave, and—in the case of modern towns—perhaps an impossible enterprise; we tend to get the dry statistical bones of a city where no-one seems to live, or impressionistic sketches with too little statistical backing. Much—perhaps most—sociological research is therefore concerned with some aspect of life within the inclusive society. In England there are the studies of delinquency by Burt, Bagot, Friedlander, and H. Mannheim, and in America by the Gluecks, Healy and Bronner, and Alexander. There are studies of Unemployment (e.g. *Men Without Work*, Pilgrim Trust) and poverty (e.g. Rowntree's *Poverty*, 1901 and *Poverty and Progress*, 1941) in England, in America the special study of *The Jack Roller* by Clifford Shaw and *The Gang* by Thrasher, and in Germany *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienbad* by Lazarsfeld-Jahoda and Zeisl.

In America the problem of social stratification has been intensively examined by Warner in the *Yankee City Series*. The negro problem has, as might be expected, received a great deal of attention (e.g. Dollard's *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, *Black Metropolis*, and Myrdal's *American Dilemma*), and Dr. K. L. Little has recently published a study of the negro in England.¹ The special American problem of the absorption of immigrant ethnic groups has given rise to a considerable amount of research (e.g. Wirth's *The Ghetto* and Warner and Srole's *Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups*).

To such investigations carried out by self-styled sociologists we may add the contribution of the economist and political scientist with their descriptive analyses of the economic and political institutional complexes of various large-scale inclusive societies. This brief account is intended merely as an illustration of the kind of research which is carried out on special problems within inclusive societies; it is, of course, a mere handful of examples—to attempt a complete account would result in a volume of bibliography and make extremely tedious reading.

The investigations which we have been considering are all concerned with specific societies; either the society is treated as a whole, as in Anthropological works, or some part of it is

¹ *Negroes in Britain*. (Kegan Paul, 1948.) Cf. also *Colour Prejudice in Britain*, by Anthony H. Richmond. (Kegan Paul, 1954.)

studied, as in the case of Social Surveys, or some aspect of it is examined. Now we have called attention to the way in which a 'culture pattern' hangs together with immanently operating principles of development peculiar to itself, and the question therefore arises: are not these social units so specific that from the study of one of them one can discover nothing which is in the least relevant to any other? or, in other words, does sociology study societies or 'society'?

Sociology as the Study of Human Society. The simplest way of averting the suggestion that every society is so peculiar that no general rules or principles can be derived is to refer to research which does make a perfectly plausible attempt to do that which is alleged to be impossible, to which we might add the epistemological point that if every culture were *absolutely* different from every other, and not a unique configuration of elements which are to be found elsewhere, we should be totally unable to understand them, which is quite certainly not the case. There are, however, several senses in which it may be said that sociologists study 'Human Society'.

(i) In his *History of Human Marriage*, Westermarck sets out to study the principle of restricted mating wherever it is found; Durkheim's analysis of the causes of suicide is not confined to French suicides; Weber's celebrated investigation into the relation between religious belief and economic development is a comparative study which sets out from the question: why did modern capitalism develop in Europe and not elsewhere? and in the course of his inquiry he propounds general rules about the function of the charismatic prophet, and the dead hand of tradition. These three examples are chosen to illustrate one type of investigation which refers to human society in general, and is not confined to one particular society.

(ii) There are two fields of investigation which, by their very nature, must transcend particular societies because they deal with the relation between them: the study of war, its practice and causes, and the study of cultural contacts.

(iii) The study of general aspects of human social life, which are to be found from one society to another, is by no means the only way in which sociologists may be said to study human society. There are more comprehensive works which seek to

demonstrate general principles of development in human society as a whole. The Marxist hypothesis of a dialectical principal of social change, based upon technical discovery and the ensuing class conflict, refers to human society as a whole; there is an inevitability about it which enables us to envisage one society as in the vanguard of progress, while the others lag very temporarily behind. Comte's celebrated law of three stages is another example, and so is Toynbee's enormous *Study of History*, in which he depicts the same principles of rise and decline of civilization as manifest throughout the whole of human history. Such hypotheses, under the general name of historicism, have been attacked by Karl Popper,¹ who argues that no such inevitable tendencies can be detected. In the same category, but avoiding many of the shortcomings of the narrow inevitabilist, we may place Hobhouse's great investigation into the principles of human development, in which he claims to trace, by a comparative study of institutions, a general expansion of the human mind and a tendency towards a greater respect for the human person in all walks of life.

From this it will be seen that the word 'society' in the expression 'human society' is used in a more general sense than is the case when we speak of '*human societies*' in the plural. In the latter sense, a society is a fairly well-defined entity which has some organic unity and structure, while no one treats of 'human society' in the singular as having the same kind of unity at all. Such unity as human society has is of an entirely different order; it is either a biological concept, the registration of a general field of enquiry in which the same elements recur in different contexts, or—in the sense of a world society—a pious hope.

It will by now have been apparent that there are two different emphases to be found in the work of sociologists. Some concentrate on the intimate detail and configuration of a single society—primitive or modern—while others take a wider range and try, by deriving the present from the past, or by comparing one society with another with respect to some characteristic, to discover general principles of development or laws of correlation. The former act as a constraint and salutary check on the

¹ *The Poverty of Historicism*. (*Economica*, 1944-45.)

latter. They insist that if you abstract a feature from a concrete setting you falsify it, and that concepts derived from our own modern world are often inappropriate and misleading when applied to primitive or ancient cultures. The latter stand corrected; they recognize that though many of the social predicaments of man—the predicament of absolute monarchy, the predicament of feudal monarchy, the predicament of an oppressed class or frustrated commercialism—are recurrent in human history and have what we may call their own immanent logic, nevertheless the specific manifestation of them in any given place and age will have unique characteristics due to the influence of unpredictable historical chance.

II

SOCIOLOGICAL METHOD

It has been said, surprisingly enough, that sociology is not a subject, and it has been said, somewhat less surprisingly, that sociology is not a science. The first accusation is somewhat tedious and will receive a very short answer; the second one is more interesting, but it involves technical problems of scientific methodology, the detailed treatment of which would take up too much space, and so the answer to that accusation, too, will not take us very long.

The reason why it has been said that sociology is not a subject is easy to see. It has been argued that economics, history and political science are specializations and that sociology is a 'mere' synthesis of the observations and hypotheses which are to be found in the work of specialists in these three fields. The answer is: (i) sociology is the very discipline which attempts to consider societies as organic unities, and to understand the relation between the various institutional complexes (economic, political, and ideological) which pervade them. This, however, may be what is intended by calling sociology a 'synthesis' of the social sciences, and this we counter with: (ii) sociology is the very science which deals with human social groups *as such*, classifying them and analysing the nature of their structure, and (iii) there are topics such as social stratification (class, caste, etc.), changes in population rates, changes in the function of the family which are not the subject matter of any other science. Of course, the sociologist borrows from the economist, the historian and the political scientist, but, as Huntington Cairns¹ has pointed out, the economist and the historian and the political scientist are influenced by sociological analysis. The problem is not of the slightest academic importance and we cannot help feeling that a desire to safeguard vested interests has permitted itself to obtrude upon our notice. It has, however,

¹ *Sociology and the Social Science in Twentieth Century Sociology*, ed. Gurwitsch and Moore (N.Y., 1945), p. 10.

practical repercussions: in many quarters of the English academic world sociology is not a respectable subject, and that is why it is only of recent years that English Universities have appointed professors and lecturers to teach it and to do sociological research.

The claim that sociology is a scientific discipline raises more interesting questions. The physical sciences have long held pride of place as examples of what sciences really should be. The verification of hypotheses by controlled experiment, the abstraction of such physical characteristics as are measurable and the discovery of functional dependence between one measurement and another, the establishment of broad unifying theories, in terms of which a teeming variety of phenomena are explained, together with that predictive accuracy which enables the scientist to apply his theories to the construction of bridges, steam-engines, aeroplanes, television sets and atomic bombs, all these have set a standard of 'scientific' research. If you cannot experiment, if you cannot measure, if you cannot establish broad unifying hypotheses, and if you cannot be confident in your social engineering, you cannot be said to be engaged in scientific study at all. However, problems of micro-physics in general, and the principle of indeterminism, in particular, have given rise to a great deal of uneasy reflexion. The changes in theory which have followed one another so swiftly have made us less certain that what 'science teaches' today will be what science will teach tomorrow. It is now realized that the abstract mathematical theories which apply to certain aspects of reality need not be of the same order as those which are appropriate for dealing with other aspects. The notion of what is meant by a science should not be taken to be the closest approximation to the procedures and formulations of the physical sciences; it is something far more general.

Scientific research aims at objectivity, order, and the establishment of hypotheses which can be tested, and the actual methods which are appropriate will naturally depend on the subject matter with which the scientist is concerned. Durkheim's *Règles de la Méthode Sociologique* is a general appeal for objectivity; social facts, he insists, are to be treated *comme des choses*. It will be readily understood, however, that

objectivity for the sociologist is not such an easy attitude to preserve as it is for the physicist. We are the children of one culture, and we cannot dissociate ourselves from the assumptions which we have absorbed from childhood. The sociologist, therefore, has to beware of subjective interpolation in a way which is not the case with the physical scientist. But when it comes to the real business of science, the propounding of hypotheses, sociology is bound by precisely the same basic rules as bind any other scientific discipline. Whether our hypothesis is that suicide is a function of social integration, or that the melting-point of iron is a numerically determined function of the heat to which it is subjected, the question always is: are the inferences deduced from these hypotheses verifiable and in fact verified? It is this deduction of inference from a hypothesis and constant appeal back to reality that is the hall-mark of scientific research, and this corrective applies to sociology as much as to any other branch of science.

There is, then, really no question as to whether sociology is a science, but the peculiar nature of its subject matter does, indeed, give rise to puzzling problems. When Durkheim speaks of treating social facts *comme des choses*, he may be suspected of meaning something rather more than that we must be objective in our approach, and this 'something more' may be questioned. We have seen that 'in the last analysis' sociology is concerned with purposefully acting human beings, though they may not always be aware of the purposes which determine all their actions, and this, surely, means that the data of sociology are not *choses* of the same order as the data of physics.

"Sociology" for Weber¹ "is a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects". 'Understanding' in human affairs means something more than understanding in physical affairs. We may 'understand' why something happens in the world about us, because we can relate it to general laws or hypotheses which so far have stood the test of verification, but when we say we understand why e.g. a person has committed suicide, we *might*, it is true, say that it is because he belongs to a protestant community and lives in a

¹ *Ib.*, p. 80.

town, and that the suicide rate among town-dwelling protestants is higher than the suicide rate of country-dwelling catholics (supposing this were established by observation). Whether this is really so need not bother us for the moment; the important point is that the hypotheses which we use to 'explain' an event in which human beings are involved as consciously active persons have not that 'take-it-or-leave-it' quality which characterizes the hypotheses of natural sciences. We demand that the hypotheses of sociology should be *intelligible*. That iron should melt at a certain temperature is no more intelligible than that it should melt at any other temperature. Durkheim's observation that the suicide rate of protestants is higher than that of catholics, and his inference that protestantism has something to do with it, is rendered intelligible by his subsequent analysis of protestantism as a religion which places a weight of responsibility on the shoulders of the believer. This is intelligible because we know from experience that a weight of responsibility is painful, and we 'understand' that anyone might find it too much for them.

This intelligibility is really an interpretation of sociological hypotheses in terms of certain generally accepted assumptions about 'human nature'. This does not mean that sociology can be reduced to psychology because so much that the sociologist is interested in is the unintended resultant of human social interchanges, such that if you analysed the motives which operated in each participant you would not be able to infer the social phenomena you are trying to explain. Nevertheless the 'emergent' phenomena are rendered intelligible by showing them to be the natural results of interacting human motives.

At the same time we cannot dismiss the possibility that sociological rules *sui generis* may be found; that is to say, principles of uniformity and order which cannot be reduced without residue to the interplay of intelligible human forces. It may be that there are integrative tendencies at work in societies which operate as determinators of social action in the direction of greater cohesion. Very properly sociologists nowadays are inclined to fight shy of such embarrassing hypotheses because so much can be made intelligible by reference to familiar intention (including unconscious motives)

that it is hoped in the interests of scientific parsimony that all social phenomena can be explained ultimately in these terms. The Pareto curve of income distribution, the alleged constancy of suicide rates, and such information, however, must at present be taken *as if* they were purely social rules.

This interpretive method gives us a certain pull over the physical scientist, in the sense that we have a peculiar understanding of our material, because we have an insight into its nature since we are of that nature ourselves.¹ It is, however, on account of this purposiveness, which is of the essence of human conduct, that difficulties arise. The ends which men pursue are values for them, and we must now face up to the fact that value is of the very essence of social action.

This, as it stands, sounds extremely discreditable, and 'unscientific', but when, with Hayek, in the article referred to above, one considers the matter carefully, one realizes that sociology and the other social sciences—e.g. economics and politics—deal with man in the physical environment as *he* sees it, and not as the physicist tells us it really is. To be told the physical analysis of a top hat would add nothing to our knowledge as sociologists; to be told that it is an object of awe to the savage and embarrassment to the civilized upper-classes opens up avenues of entrancing enquiry: culture contact, ritual symbol, changes of fashion, the attitude of the dispossessed to the symbol of their waning prestige—the top hat, as a phenomenon having a certain value in the eyes of its wearers, is of deep sociological significance. The world we live in as social beings is, in fact, drenched with personal and social meaning, so that, from the outset, any study of human beings, other than physiology or biology, involves a world of values. And human motives are most conveniently conceived of not as pushes from behind but as strivings for something ahead, e.g. to get rich in a world in which getting rich is an accepted value, or to get prestige by breeding hogs whose tusks curve back and through their jaws again, in a world where such animals are highly regarded. One cannot understand human social conduct save as a striving after, and response to, a system of values. If some

¹ Cf. Hayek: *Scientism and the Study of Society*. *Economica*, Vol. IX, pp. 267-291; Vol. X, pp. 34-63; Vol. XI, pp. 27-39.

esprit-fort sets out to ignore values altogether, he has set himself a standard of value the achievement of which would require miracles of self-control.

What, then, is the difficulty? There are two. The first is due to a simple confusion. We are very rightly told that science has nothing to do with judgments of value; how then can a discipline which has a great deal to do with judgments of value be called a science? The muddle is, of course, due to the fact that the sense in which science has nothing to do with value-judgment is quite different from the sense in which sociologists are deeply concerned with value systems. The first sense is concerned with the value judgments of the scientist, the second with the value-judgments which are part of the material which he studies. It is no business of the scientist to pass value-judgments on the value-judgment he is investigating; sociology, in Weber's phrase, must, like any other science, be *wert-frei*.

The second difficulty is more serious. If we are 'in the last analysis' dealing with purposive human beings, seeking what they regard as valuable, inspired and connected by the normative system of values current in their culture, how can we expect to establish any general rules of social conduct, or social change? The problem of the freedom of the will looms ahead. Fortunately we need not enter into the fray, because common experience is sufficient to show us that people on the whole do behave in accordance with rules; that their behaviour is, within limits, roughly predictable, that certain well-known values are commonly sought for, and that when anyone has certain values which he seeks to realize he will choose, within the compass of his knowledge, the most rational means to the end he has in mind.

There may well be choices which have important social repercussions, and which we could not have predicted; these choices may even be, in some sense, 'free', and in defiance of the suasions which normally determine human conduct. It may well be that in the course of human history the expected tendencies are furthered, reversed, or impeded by unexpected and incalculable choices, made by individuals in key positions—there can, indeed, be no doubt about it—but that does not mean that there is no regularity in man's social behaviour. One might

say that social behaviour as we know it would be impossible without regularity. Furthermore, it may be observed that any science is a corpus of hypothetical propositions with 'all things being equal' as a restrictive formula to every one of them. If a class of persons in a society see the chances of making money by commerce they will try to remove any obstacle in their path. The presence of a strong tradition against such activities may foil them, or an aristocratic class who wish to safeguard their own authoritative position may effectively stand in their way: 'all things', in fact, 'may not be equal', but this does not render the hypothesis useless, any more than the laws concerning falling bodies are disposed of when the bodies are dropped in a high wind.

We must admit, all the same, that the hopes of sociology are not as bright as the hopes of the physical sciences, though the demands of scientific validity are the same for both. The social scene is indefinitely varied, almost infinitely complex and unamenable to experimentation. When one passes in review the hot villages of India, the quilted theocracy of Thibet, the bureaucratic intelligentsia of Ancient China, the city-states of Athens and Sparta, the American way of life, the Egyptian dominated by his own artefacts, the industrial revolution, the Roman Empire, the malicious Dobuans and the teeming life of London, Paris, Birmingham and New Orleans, we are almost overpowered by the variety and complexity of our material, and all this is but a tiny fragment. The physical world is complicated enough, but in practice there seem to be well-marked independencies; the kettle boils independently of an incalculable variety of other contemporary circumstances. In man's social relation everything seems much more bound up with everything else, as we have remarked before.

The general order of scientific investigation is: observation, hypothesis, and further observation guided by hypothesis, but before anything can be done the concepts which are to be our tools must take some kind of shape. Sociology is still to a large extent in the classifying, ordering, and descriptive stage, because we are still not sure what is relevant and what is not. The result is that a great deal of sociologizing is more like a kind of random

botanizing, a collecting of data, i.e. statistics, personal case histories and the like, uncontrolled by the purpose of verification. This is inevitable, and certainly provides material on which the theorist can build, but at the same time it must be admitted that, while unbiased and unverified hypotheses are empty, a mere collection of data is blind.

The *variety* of social settings means that we must rely very much on statistical data, because there are always a significant number of deviates to any general tendency, and because statistical methods are a check on the alternative explanation in terms of chance. Statistical information, however, in the form of birth-rates, death-rates, distribution of income, changes in price, wages, etc., and correlation between one change and another or between the measurement of one characteristic—e.g. fertility and measurement of another—e.g. intelligence, are data; they are not explanatory. Another descriptive device, which helps us to deal with variety, is the definition of sociological concepts in terms of probability. Weber, for example, defines 'authority' (*Herrschaft*) as "the probability that a command with a given content will be obeyed by a given group of persons".

A more explanatory concept, expounded by Weber, is that of the 'ideal type'. We often use the notion of a type in common-sense psychological description, and by it we mean *not* an average, *not* an existent, person, but an imaginary, or ideal, personality to which a certain group approximates in varying degrees from individual to individual. For Weber, however, the 'ideal type' has a more dynamic flavour. It refers to social behaviour, and, in Weber's usage, to the rational aspect of behaviour. The notion of 'reasonable' behaviour involves certain difficulties. It may refer to an adaptation of means to ends, or it may refer to a suitable choice of ends, and it has been argued by Talcott Parsons¹ that Weber does not make this distinction clear.

If we use the word 'rational' to refer to adequacy of planning means to ends, then the ends or values which we seek, and which control our behaviour normatively, are 'non-rational' elements (not *ir*-rational). An ideal-type of social behaviour,

¹Talcott Parsons: *Structure of Social Action*. (MacGraw Hill, 1937.)

then, involves a description of certain aims and certain normative controls from which springs a notion of the rational course of action, *granted* these. Thus the 'feudal system', 'the absolute monarch', or 'economic man' are ideal types involving different schematic predicaments, and aims, and leading to different courses of rational behaviour to achieve these ends. The Feudal Monarch desires to preserve his power, therefore he must prevent the Barons from combining against him. How he will do it will vary from one situation to another, but by applying the general type of social predicament to particular situations we can understand better the reasons for his actions.

The 'ideal-type' method is, of course, constantly used with effect in Marxian interpretation, where the ideal-types are classes having conflicting objectives. The method can be used in the following ways: (i) as a means of interpreting particular situations, for sociology, like such physical sciences as geology and astronomy, is interested in the explanation of particular situations, as well as in the establishment of general principles. Here a type may be used as a single scheme which throws certain aspects of the situation into relief, or a number of types may be used. "For example," says Weber,¹ "the same historical phenomena may be in one aspect 'feudal', in another 'patrimonial', in another 'bureaucratic' and in still another 'charismatic'", i.e. may involve the attribution of some element of magical or divine quality.

(ii) It may be used as a generalizing concept by means of which we can disentangle a similar element from the variety of its manifestation.

(iii) It may serve as a means for detecting the causal force of *other* factors. Such and such, we say, is what we should expect in a predicament of this ideal type—here something different has happened. What emotional or chance or personal factors have interfered? We perform, as it were, an ideal experiment.

By such means we attempt to disentangle recurrent themes from the variety of their manifestation. When we turn to the *complexity* of society we are up against another source of difficulty. The problem of the scientist in search of a causal explanation is the same whatever the subject matter; he asks

¹ *Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (Hodge, 1947), p. 100.

the question: "Why here and not there?"¹ If we want to discover the causes responsible for a given suicide rate, or divorce rate or whatever else we may be investigating, we have to take contrasting rates and see what is present in the one and absent in the other; we have, in fact, to apply Mill's method of difference. In physical science this is the experimental method *par excellence*, but we have noticed that in sociology this is very rarely possible. Either we must take an enormous number of instances in the hope that irrelevances will, as it were, cancel each other out, or we proceed more circumspectly and laboriously. We suspect, perhaps, that town life is more disintegrative of the family than country life.

Bare comparative statistics of divorce may give preliminary confirmation, or, more correctly, may not *dis*-prove our contention, but our troubles are not nearly over. How do we know that religious people are not more often to be found in the country than in the town, and that it is not really presence or absence of religious belief that is responsible for variation in the divorce rate? We have to test this alternative hypothesis somehow by, say, comparing urban-dwelling groups with country-dwelling groups who hold the same religious beliefs. Is there any difference? The exclusion of alternative hypotheses is a feature common to all sciences in their early phases, when, so far as we know, almost anything might be relevant, and from the example given it may be seen that in sociological research it is a very lengthy business.

Sociology, then, is a scientific discipline which obeys the demands of validity implied by the word science. As such it is not different from any other scientific discipline. Owing to the extreme complexity and variety of its subject matter, it has not advanced very far. Its techniques of interpretation are different from those employed in the physical sciences, and it has its own conceptual tools which are gradually and slowly being forged. Perhaps, in the past, sociologists have bitten off more than they could chew; by taking the whole history of mankind as the field of one piece of research they pursue what Professor T. H. Marshall² has called the 'way to the stars'; it

¹ Cf. MacIver: *Social Causation*. (Ginn & Co., 1942.)

² Marshall: *Sociology at the Crossroads*. (L.S.E., 1947.)

may be that they have, as has been suggested above, and as complained of by Professor Marshall and Mr. Tom Harrison,¹ thought their task ended if they could present us with a page bespattered with figures, formulae and functions. But what is quite indubitable is the fact that in this country they have in the past had far less official encouragement than they ought to have had. Contemptuous remarks are often made about the 'armchair' sociologist. 'Get out into the field!' is the cry. And rightly so. But the brooding which has gone on in the armchair is not to be despised; it would be all to the good if certain American sociologists brooded a little more. However, what is wanted now is more direct observation of fact, but that, alas, costs money.

¹ Harrison: *International Journal of Opinion and Attitude Research*, Vol. I, p. 55, 1947.

III

RAW MATERIAL

SOCIOLOGY is concerned, among other things, with the quantity and quality of the populations which are its raw material, and also with the problem of how far geographical environment determines the way of life of its inhabitants.

The problem of *quantity* is occupying the minds of sociologists, economists and politicians at the present moment because there is a decline in the replacement rate in certain areas, which is bound to have social repercussions.

It is estimated that the population of the world

in 1650 was	545	million
in 1750 „	728	„
in 1800 „	906	„
in 1850 „	1,171	„
in 1900 „	1,608	„
in 1933 „	2,057	„

There has thus been an increase which has accelerated during the last hundred years. This has been mainly due to improved living conditions and medical services, so that the death-rate for infants and for the old has declined. This decline in the death-rate in fact masks the effect of a decline in the birth-rate in almost every area of the world except Asia. The decline set in during the latter half of the 19th century, and its incidence is calculated in terms of the net replacement rate, which is a measure of the degree to which successive generations of women replace one another when correction is made for those who die in infancy, and therefore before they can play any part in the process. A net replacement rate of 1 means exact replacement; below this means a decline, which, since there will be fewer women in succeeding generations to do the replacing, must necessarily have a cumulative effect.

The net replacement rate of England and Wales in 1932 was .78, in 1933 .74, in 1934 .76, in 1935 .76, in 1936 .77, in 1937 .78, in 1938 .80. In the 'forties it rose above .80, and there is

evidence of a further upward trend, but it is difficult to decide how far this is due to war-time conditions.

Assuming that the death-rate is as low as it can be, an assumption which may be disputed, especially with respect to the lower income groups (Titmuss in his *Birth, Poverty and Wealth*, p. 73, n. 37, shows evidence that the infant mortality rate for the higher income groups in 1931 was 21.7, and in the lower income groups 32.5, with an average for all classes of 30.9), there are three possibilities for the future: (1) If the family size remains at the same level as among couples married in 1927-38, the population in 2047 is predicted as 45.5 millions; (2) if family size goes up to a constant level 6% higher, it will be 52.7 millions; (3) if family size falls to 80% of that of couples married in 1927-38, the population will fall to 29.6 millions.¹

This decline is greeted with dismay in many circles, and for various reasons. From the international point of view the differential decline disturbs the political scene. In Russia, for instance, though the net replacement rate may be on the decline, it was estimated as 1.6 in 1926,² and the Balkan populations seem to be replacing themselves, while for the rest of Europe we have in 1940 France .90, Germany .97, Sweden .79, all except the Netherlands and Ireland under 1.

This undoubtedly has repercussions on the balance of power: a country with a declining small population cannot cherish the same ambitions or afford the same commitments as a country whose population is not declining so fast. England, in particular, is hard hit because it is felt in some quarters that we should keep close touch with the other members of the Commonwealth by means of a continual trickle of emigrants.

In the economic field the effects are no less distressing, so we are told. There may be fewer mouths to feed, and fewer consumers to cater for, but it is pointed out that there must come a time when you cannot reduce your productive and servicing personnel without reducing your standard of life. It is not here, however, that the main disturbance is held to occur. A declining birth-rate with a low death-rate means a dislocation

¹ Royal Commission on Population 1949.

² *Future Population of Europe and the Soviet Union*, Notestein *et al.* (League of Nations, 1944.)

in the number of people in different age-grades, so that there is a disproportionate number of old people to be catered for by the young. The youthful labour-force declines and the needs of the old make heavy demands on the production of industry. There is thus a declining demand all round, and a change in the sorts of things demanded; this raises the question as to whether industry is flexible enough to meet it. Furthermore, it is alleged, with some plausibility, that the old are by temperament less adaptable than the young, so that the new idea and enterprise which will be needed will, by the very circumstances which precipitate the need, be conspicuous by their absence.

Finally it is thought in some quarters that the decline of the world population in general, and the decline of the population of Great Britain in particular, are signs of human decay and defeat. It is said that we could not be happy with the population petering out all round us, because it symbolizes a general failure of nerve which would affect us all.

These pessimistic views have not gone unchallenged. Professor Clark¹ has called attention—not in this connection to be sure—to the poverty of the world when it comes to basic supplies of food, and so the general position of Malthus is by no means universally discredited. Professor Flugel,² for example, hails the empty cradle with delight. There are, in his view, far too many people about, and he accuses those who deplore the declining fertility of being unconsciously preoccupied with proofs of their own virility. There are those, too, who view the fading out of man with equanimity.

The causes of the declining birth-rate are, as might be supposed, various. There is a convergence of a variety of motives and new contraceptive techniques. The motives are mainly: *economic* (children are expensive anyway, and a few children can be given better educational and other facilities than is possible with a large number) and '*selfish*' (children are time-consuming, and alternative uses of leisure compete with them). To these may be added rationalizations, such as the 'cannon-

¹ *The Conditions of Economic Progress*. (Macmillan, 1940.) Cf. p. 3: "Of repeated phrases about poverty in the midst of plenty . . . turn out to be the most untruthful of all modern clichés."

² *Population, Psychology and Peace*. (Watts, 1947.)

fodder' argument, complicating the situation. There may also be physiological factors of increased infertility, but this is by no means certain.

But this general fall in the birth-rate is not spread evenly over the whole population. The country districts and agricultural countries are more fertile than the towns and predominantly urban countries, and the lower income groups are inclined to have more children than the upper levels.

In America Lorimer and Osborn¹ report 'a tremendous rural urban differential', with the highest rural fertility among the 'poor peasant-class'. Rural farm and not-farm replacement rates taken together give a figure of 1.47, while in 1930 towns from 2,500 to 25,000 had a net replacement-rate of .94; places from 25,000 to 50,000 had a net replacement-rate of .89; for cities from 50,000 to 100,000 it was .83, while for places over 100,000 it was .73.²

In England there has been for some time differential fertility as between the upper and lower income groups. Whether this is a passing phase, and if so how long it will take to pass, is unknown, but it must be admitted that, as Carr-Saunders puts it: "the social forces which have produced these differences still remain in operation".³

Between 1911 and 1921 the percentage drop in the number of legitimate births per 1,000 married men under 55 years of age among the upper and middle class in England and Wales was 17.6%; the corresponding figure for agricultural labourers was 3.7%, while the figure for all working classes was 13.1%.⁴ This difference between the fertility of the upper classes and that of the working class is, however, alleged to be evening out.

The significance of these differentials will be seen when we consider the intellectual quality of the population.

The population itself is not evenly distributed over the earth's surface. The density of population in England and Wales is 703 per square mile, while that of England alone was

¹ Lorimer and Osborn: *Dynamics of Population*. (New York, 1934.)

² Ogburn and Nimkoff: *Handbook of Sociology* (Kegan Paul, 1947), p. 331.

³ Thomson: *The Trend of National Intelligence*. Discussion (Hamish Hamilton Medical Books, 1947), p. 25.

⁴ Carr-Saunders and Jones: *A Survey of the Social Structure of England and Wales*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1937), p. 219.

estimated at 766 per square mile in 1939. Belgium ran us close with 702 per square mile, but Germany had only 347, Italy 345, France 197 and the U.S.A. 43 per square mile.

In England and Wales, again, the population is not evenly spread. In 1951 about 38% of the population of England and Wales lived in the six conurbations of Greater London, S.E. Lancashire, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Merseyside and Tyneside, while only 19.3% lived in rural districts.¹ The change in the direction of increased urbanization can be seen when we reflect that in 1851 49.8% was rural, in 1881 33.3%, in 1891 28.0%, in 1911 21.9% and in 1921 20.7%.²

Furthermore, the differential spread of the population changes. There has been a drift to the south-east. In 1801 49% of the population lived in London and the Home Counties, Lancashire, the Midlands, Northumberland and Durham, Mid-Scotland and South Wales, whereas in 1937 71% lived in these areas. Between 1921 and 1937 "the rate of increase of population in London and the Home Counties was nearly $2\frac{1}{2}$ times that of the population of the country as a whole",³ balanced by decrease in population in the North-East and in South Wales. This is, of course, mainly due to a change in the chief industries and to new developments in the sources of power used.

Turning, now, to the intellectual quality of the population, there have been a great many investigations into the effect of differential fertility and the general standard of intelligence. Lorimer and Osborn, in the book referred to above, find evidence that the most prolific members of the population are to be found among the least intelligent.⁴

In England numerous researches have produced the following evidence, about which there is almost universal agreement: (1) the *average* intelligence (as measured by intelligence tests) of children of the professional and highly skilled classes is

¹ Census 1951. Preliminary Report, p. xxii.

² Pearson: *Growth and Distribution of Population* (Allen & Unwin, 1935), p. 209.

³ Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population. (Cmd. 6153, 1940, 'Barlow Report', p. 37.)

⁴ Op. cit., p. 199.

higher than that of children coming from the lower income groups;¹ (2) this intellectual ability is due to inheritance to the extent of at least 50% of its variance—and probably more; (3) there is a negative correlation of about .20 between intelligence and size of family; (4) while this applies to *all* groups, it is also true that larger families are more frequently found at the lower income levels.

From this evidence decline in the national intelligence has been deduced.² This tendency might be partially reversed by improvement in environmental conditions, and the negative correlation may be partly due to the alleged lower intelligence of the younger children in a family;³ but the evidence in favour of intellectual capacity as an inheritable factor is so strong that the prophecy of a decreasing number of highly intelligent persons must be taken seriously.

At the same time it should be noticed that the *ranges* of intelligence in the various groups overlap, so that there are children of high intelligence coming from the 'lower' groups and children below average coming from the 'upper' groups, and it has been argued that the former do not get the educational facilities they deserve, while the latter are often granted facilities from which they cannot benefit.⁴ The assurance of better educational opportunities to the intelligent does not, however, solve the problem, unless they can be induced to breed. One of the unintended results of educational selection is that those selected for higher education tend to be placed in situations which encourage late marriage and discourage large families.⁵

Two other features of what we are calling the 'raw material' of society remain to be considered: race and the influence of geographical factors. These two have been, from time to time, pressed into service to explain the varieties of culture which we have already noticed.

Race. This method of grouping human beings is based on

¹ Cf. Burt: *Ability and Income*. (Brit. J. Educ. Psych., Vol. XIII, 1943.)

² Burt: *Intelligence and Fertility*. (Hamish Hamilton, 1946.)

³ Penrose: *The Trend of National Intelligence*. Salter Lecture, 1946, by G. Thomson (Hamish Hamilton, 1947), p. 31.

⁴ Gray: *The Nation's Intelligence*. (Watts, 1936.)

⁵ Thomson: *The Trend of National Intelligence*, p. 3.

physical characteristics, and, with one exception (blood groups), the physical characters chosen are those which—somewhat arbitrarily—strike the eye. Pigmentation, the form of hair (lanky, wavy or woolly) and its colour, the shape of head, the shape of eye-socket, and the construction of the nose, are the chief criteria which have been chosen. These features are genetically transmissible, with the possible exception of head-shape, which may be altered by change of environment. According to Boas,¹ East European Jews, migrating to the United States, have a cephalic index (ratio of breadth to length of head) of $\cdot 830$, while that of their children is only $\cdot 814$, and that of their grandchildren $\cdot 787$. However that may be, we certainly cannot help being struck by outstanding combinations of some of these characteristics: the lanky-haired, yellow-skinned, slit-eyed mongol; the woolly haired, black negro with his platyrrhine nose; and the wavy-haired Caucasian, to which group the European, and certain inhabitants of India, belong.

When, however, we try to be precise, we find that any group of people, living and intermarrying with one another, displays such diversity that the notion that they can be members of a 'pure race' is at once negated. Such shading of colour and such confusion of head-shape point at once to genetic mixture, so that the Andaman Islander and the Australian aborigines are the only claimants for the palm of purity left. For all that, we do still find that a certain consistency of mixture characterizes intermarrying groups and differentiates them from other groups, a consistency which can be expressed in terms of the probability that in such groups you will find such and such combinations of physical features. These regions of high probability for certain combinations are called 'ethnic groups'.² The original 'Mongolian', 'Negro', and 'Caucasian' races—or any others of the numerous 'pure' races which have been suggested—now become hypothetical origins, which may have been differentiated in different parts of the world, where climatic conditions favoured certain physiological features (the lips of the negro presenting a surface for cooling, the thin nose

¹ Boas: *Changes in the Bodily Form of Immigrants*. (N.Y., 1912.)

² Huxley, *et al.*: *We Europeans*. (Cape, 1935.)

of the Caucasian a warming funnel for the colder air), and which may have interbred to form the populations which now exist.

Similarly the population of Europe, which used to be divided into alleged pure races—Nordic, tall, blond, blue-eyed and dolichocephalic (longheaded); Alpine, short and brachycephalic (roundheaded); and Mediterranean, darker skinned, short of stature and dolichocephalic—is now recognized to be a mixture in which instances of a pure type are few and far between. Here, again, we have certain ethnic groups in which certain characteristic mixtures have been stabilized by endogamy. The truth is, however, that a map which marked out ethnic groups on a basis of physiological similarities would not fit with a political map which marked out the areas administered by states, and *roughly* corresponding to areas of culture pattern.

The disastrous habit of speaking of an English race, a French race, a German race and so on rests on no foundation whatsoever. The confusion is made more confounded by the application of the word 'race' to mixed groups who speak languages which belong to the same linguistic family, e.g. Aryan and Semitic 'races', and we tend very readily to use the word 'race' of groups of people who have some common tradition in way of life, which they transmit by education to their children, however complex their physiological make-up may be. The outstanding instance of this is, of course, the 'Jewish race', whom we may often try to identify by the presence of the Armenian nose, which feature is only possessed by a fraction of the whole cultural group.

Supposing, however, we manage to isolate members of ethnic groups, defined in terms of consistent physical mixture, can we infer anything about their psychological characteristics?

The answer is that no evidence of different psychological make-up correlated with physical constitution has been forthcoming. The application of intelligence tests in comparative studies of ethnic groups who have migrated to America certainly revealed different average standards among the immigrants, but: (1) It is very doubtful whether the tests are 'fair' in the sense that they penalize none of the testees. No verbal test can avoid

certain cultural assumptions which favour subjects brought up in the culture in which the test is devised, and the attitude of the subject to testing varies with his cultural background. (2) To infer from the tested immigrants to the population from which they came is, to say the least of it, precarious; in some cases the brightest might emigrate, in others the poorest and least capable of getting a living at home.

Klineberg¹ carried out an interesting investigation to test the hypothesis that there is some special superiority accompanying the Nordic physical characteristic. He selected 1,000 boys between the ages of ten and twelve. His thousand were made up of groups of 100. There was one group from Paris, one from Hamburg and one from Rome, while the remaining 700 were typical French or German Nordics, typical Italian, French or German Alpines, and typical French or Italian Mediterraneans, in groups of 100 each, drawn from the countryside. They were all submitted to a performance test (Pintner-Paterson), and the results were that the city boys had a higher average than the country boys, whatever their 'race', while among the country boys the German Nordics topped the list of averages, the French Nordics coming one from the bottom. The French Mediterraneans came in second, and the Italian Mediterraneans came in last. It does not seem from this evidence as though there were any capacity for gaining marks in intelligence tests, which is inherited along with a characteristic 'sub-racial' habitus.

So far as temperament is concerned, the tests which have been devised are not wholly satisfactory, and no significant ethnic differences have been found. The alleged hot-bloodedness of the Italian would seem to be a cultural product, and such evidence as there is of types of crime committed by immigrant ethnic groups show that they soon get adapted to American methods of anti-sociality.²

The upshot of all this is that so far as we know at present no psychological characteristics can confidently be predicated of ethnic groups, which would help us to understand the varieties of culture which have been precipitated. This should not surprise us when we realize that the American way of life is

¹ *Race Differences*. (New York, 1935.)

² Klineberg: *Race Differences*, p. 232.

lived by groups of people of all manner of ethnic origins, or that we have the variety of culture described by Margaret Mead¹ as characterizing the Mundugumor, the Arapesh and the Tchambuli, who all belong to the same ethnic group and live within a few hundred miles of one another in New Guinea.

In view of this negative evidence, we cannot say, as people have been tempted to do, that social change within any community is due to genetic mixture. McDougall, for instance, suggests that the decline of the Greeks was due to a saturation of Greek blood by Slav invaders. In point of fact, it appears that there is no evidence whatever of very much physical change in this case,² but even if there had been, there is an enormous amount of evidence of social changes occurring—in Italy, in Russia, in Japan—without any intrusive genetic agent coming in, and all cases in which genetic explanations are given of social change are open to grave objection.

This does not mean that the intrusion of an *unassimilated* ethnic group into a society makes no difference; it is the romantic notion of the deleterious qualities of 'mixed blood' which we are attacking. Of course, an intrusive group which aims to preserve its separatism, and which has ambitions of freedom, domination or mere self-preservation, will doubtless make what capital it can of its ethnic tradition of 'racial' purity—and a conflict situation may emerge of the utmost importation sociologically. The handful of whites in Africa feel that they must keep the native population at a distance; the growing negro group in America is—so it is alleged by E. J. Dingwall³—the object of unconscious sexual envy which sharpens the antagonism between the two colours. Similarly in Europe, when partition is discussed, groups will clamour for independence or for one alliance rather than another, and they will naturally make what show they can of their ethnic homogeneity. If culture is not a product of race, racism is certainly a product of culture.

Geography. Under this heading we include not only variation in land formation and substance, but climate, flora and fauna,

¹ Mead: *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*. (Routledge, 1935.)

² Ginsberg: *Reason and Unreason in Society*, 1947, p. 147.

³ *Race, Pride and Prejudice*. (Watts, 1946.)

and the liability to the destructive forces of nature as well: in fact, what we think of as the 'natural' environment.

Attempts have been made to correlate human vigour with climate, and the social way of life with the physical environment which is thought of as almost imposing a pattern upon its inhabitants. These theories are not very helpful, and are frequently based upon an inadequate examination of the evidence. The Indians are popularly thought of as indolent because India is hot—the military tradition of the Mahrattas is forgotten; the Italians are sometimes said to be feckless and lacking in energy for the same reason—the Roman legions are not referred to. No broad generalization relating climate or geography and way of life will hold water. Nevertheless in some sense geographical conditions are obviously of major importance, since man must get his living from his physical environment.

Physical conditions set limits to what men can do and provide opportunities for exploitation. In the frozen North a complicated civilization is improbable because the fight against nature is too severe; industrial civilization is not likely to develop spontaneously if there is no source of power; conditions in warm and fruitful areas may be so profuse that there is no challenge to do more than subsist upon what is at hand. Toynbee¹ has introduced this notion of a challenge which must not be so difficult that it is well-nigh hopeless to take it up, nor must it be too easy. It was, he suggests, in these temperate zones, where man has to do something, but where he can see the fruit of his labour, that civilization was prompted to begin. Something, however, is necessary, and this something is the enterprise of man to take the challenge up.

It is the response that matters. The Swiss are unlikely to become a seafaring people because there is no seaboard from which they can fare forth, but the presence of a seaboard does not of itself give rise to commercial enterprise. "It will be difficult," says Bruhnes,² "to find any less hospitable region in the Mediterranean than the little corner of the Syrian shore where are situated the ports of Tyre and Sidon, famous in antiquity", and yet the Phoenicians were a people of navigation

¹ Toynbee: *The Study of History*. (Oxford, 1934.)

² Bruhnes: *Human Geography*. (Harapp, 1920.)

and colonists. They had the enterprise, but there have been plenty of 'natural' harbours which were not exploited. Granted the enterprise to take up the challenge, then the opportunities offered by the geographical environment determine the direction which will be taken, but these opportunities, themselves, are only opportunities in any reasonable sense if the knowledge is there to make something of them.

In the early stages of civilization, social life will be much more determined by physical environment than is the case today, where we can use more advanced techniques to overcome obstacles. In the early days mountain ranges and oceans may be obstacles to easy communication. Later on seas are conquered by ships and much later still mountains are crossed by roads, pierced by railways and hopped over by aircraft.

Rivers may be boundaries or lines of communication. It is their latter role which has been most important. The river basins of Egypt, Mesopotamia, North China and North-East India were cradles of civilization, the Tyne and Mersey link rather than separate their banks (a point which raises problems of the suitability of existing local government units), and the Baltic amber trade passed the products of civilization from the south along the Rhine-Rhône trade route. Strategic position, the presence of fresh water, the existence of trade routes and convenient river crossings, all determined by geography, dictate the siting of towns. But with the development of new techniques man becomes freer from geographical determination. Water can be pumped from a distance, barriers can be crossed with comparative ease, and power can be carried to factories and houses along a network of wires. The extraction industries, mining, quarrying and the winning of oil, alone, tie the industrialist to a place.

But for all our emancipation from geographical limitations, they still exert a profoundly important influence on our lives. Oil is, so far, only found in certain places, climatic conditions still determine the growth of foodstuffs, and 'Nature' has her revenge when men farm too greedily.

The most elaborate studies of the influence of geographical conditions on human ways of life have been made by the school which follows in the footsteps of Le Play. In 1855 he pub-

lished his surveys of family life in a book called *Les Ouvriers Européens*. For him and his followers the family is the basic unity of society, and the family budget the quantitative reflection of their way of life. This, again, is determined by their *work*, and this, in turn, by their *place*. This analysis led to the elaboration of a conceptual scheme, the '*Nomenclature*', which served as an instrument for pigeon-holing and relating all the aspects of social life. Thus they derive patriarchal nomadic life as a response to the challenge of the steppes and the particularist tradition of independence which characterizes the Norse-men from the influence of the indented coasts of Scandinavia, where occupiable land was scattered and scarce. The ingenuity of such analysis is undeniable, but the general hypotheses are not always sufficiently tested for negative instances in other parts of the world.

The great modern protagonist of geographical influence is the American sociologist, Huntington,¹ in whose elaborate studies every possible effect of physical environment on human society has been explored. Particularly interesting, though not generally accepted, is his theory that climatic changes in the great Eurasian plain were responsible for the periodic movements of peoples which brought the Hyksos into Egypt and the Aryan-speaking peoples into India. Such changes are alleged to have been responsible for the *Völkerwanderungen* of the 5th century A.D. and for the onslaught of the Mongols in the 12th century, who established an empire stretching from Moscow to the Pacific, which crumbled as improved conditions in Asia caused an ebbing of the tide.

If psychological differences between 'races' cannot be used to explain cultural variety, and if geographical conditions only provide the natural means for social life, and not the genius to make use of them, what is responsible for differences in cultural pattern? We can only look, so it would seem, to the presence of relatively small groups of men—small influential élites, whose emergence at any time or place is incalculable. Their influence is, of course, itself determined by the climate of opinion and the

¹ See e.g. Huntington: *Civilization and Climate* (New Haven, 1924), and the general criticism of the 'Geographical School' in Sorokin's *Contemporary Social Theories*, chap. iii.

structure of the society in which they were born, and the actual historical circumstances in which they played a part. Doubtless there are broad ambitions which energize whole groups of human beings, they all want to live and enjoy the satisfaction of their needs, they are all faced—especially as culture becomes more complicated—with the great problems of death and the meaning of life; the powerful want to retain their power, the merchants want to gain wealth, while the ‘exploited’ when they come to conscious collaboration seek to better their lot. Such are recurrent themes, but the way in which these themes will manifest themselves is continually being jolted and changed by the unpredictable chances of war, individual ambition and genius, new formulations of religious belief, and the inventions of new techniques.

IV

THE FOCI OF POWER

IN the next three chapters an attempt will be made to consider three aspects of social structure: power, economics, and stratification. It is as though we looked at societies through three pairs of glasses in turn, each of which brings out certain dynamic features, while the rest is blurred into a background. It will be seen that these 'institutional complexes' are inter-related, and this interaction cannot be ignored, but since, unfortunately, sociology cannot be written as music, one can but deal with one aspect at a time.

However, before setting out to consider various power-structures, it will be convenient at this juncture to mention the broad differentiation of dominant patterns provided by Hobhouse.¹ He distinguishes three types of social bond, each of which seems to have been dominant at different 'stages' of human social development.

It must be noted that this notion of human development is based on three kinds of evidence: (1) recorded history up to the present day, (2) archaeological finds, (3) the study of primitive peoples as they were yesterday and are today. This last kind of evidence is, of course, somewhat difficult to assess; we infer on general grounds, on grounds of certain similarities of artifacts between those used by living primitives and those unearthed by the spade of the archaeologist, and on grounds of similarities between the way of life of some existing primitives and the way of life of the simpler peoples observed by writers in the remote past, that these primitive peoples can give us some clue to the kind of life lived by our remote ancestors.

Hobhouse's three principles of social structure are: kinship, authority and citizenship. Broadly speaking, we can distinguish a type of society dominated by the relation of birth, a type in which one or a few men have authority over the bulk of the population, and a type in which the bulk of the population has

¹ Hobhouse: *Morals in Evolution* (Chapman & Hall, 6th ed.), chap. ii.

achieved articulate expression and, whether ruled by a dictator or by their elected representatives, play a more effective role than they did when they were regarded as part of the 'patrimony' of the 'patrimonial monarch'. As usual these dominant bonds of society should be regarded as 'themes' of social relationship rather than as mutually exclusive social patterns. In China for thousands of years the kinship bonds have co-existed within a bureaucratically organized empire, and the kinship theme is dominant in all aristocracies who have to struggle to keep their power against the solvent influence of wealth, though it may not be pervasive throughout the society as a whole.

The theme of kinship, that is to say a social relationship in which the status and obligations of the individual are determined by birth, is dominant in most primitive societies, but the lines of affiliation may vary. There are three main types: (1) matrilineal, (2) patrilineal, and (3) bilateral or cognate. Under matrilineality the kin to whom you are affiliated are calculated through the mother, under patrilineality through the father, and under a cognate system through both parents.

A very common situation is a tribe, divided into two or more clans, members of which are not allowed to marry one another (exogamy). Sometimes they trace their descent from, or have as a unifying symbol, some animal, bird, or physical object, with instances of which they feel a close connection; such symbols are known as totems, but this kind of symbolism is not universal.

When affinity is traced through the female line, the husband may live with his own people, or he may come to live with his wife's people, and his obligations are often conflicting. He has obligations towards his sister's children and towards his wife's people, and he frequently has a deep-felt affection for his own children. This conflict, described for instance by Malinowski in his study of the Trobriand Islanders, is sometimes solved by cross-cousin marriage, when a man may marry his son to his sister's daughter, which brings him, as it were, into the sphere of class-obligation and inheritance of his father's group, and it means, further, that his sister's son will have the obligation of maternal uncle to our original man's grandson. It means also that a man and his son's son, by such a marriage, will belong by

birth to the same group, which gives rise to the close relation between grandfather and grandson, which is found as a recurrent motif. There is, however, a certain divisive feature in the matrilineal type of structure, though this must not be exaggerated. The matrilineal clans are marked off from one another, and members of each have special obligations to one another, but at times of funerals, marriage, initiation or other events in the family life, the groups of relations of both parents may have parts to play.

The other unilateral method of calculating descent, and inheritance, is through the male line, and it is the method with which we are most familiar. Here, it may be, the woman tends to become detached from her kin on marriage, but it by no means involves an absence of obligation on the part of her relatives to the household to which they have contributed a wife.

The central unit is always the immediate family, the clan groups form a scheme of obligation, based on blood-relationship, in which they are implicated and upon which they can call. "It is an undeniable fact," says Malinowski,¹ "that the family is universal and sociologically more important than the clan, which, in the evolution of humanity, it preceded and outlasted". Some groups, in fact, "the Andamanese, the Sakai and Semang of the Malay Peninsula, the Eskimo, the Indian of California, and the people of Tierra del Fuego", are clanless.² In the past, e.g. by Rivers, in his *Social Organization*, the importance of the clan has been somewhat exaggerated, partly because of the system of classificatory names, whereby the relationship terms for mother, brother, and sister are applied to a wider range of persons than the 'real' mothers, brothers and sisters, but Malinowski had observed that the primitives themselves are in no state of confusion, and indicate by their tone of voice which relative is meant.

The marriage rules among the unilaterally related kin may be extremely complex. Exogamy prevents intra-kin marriage, but there are often elaborate regulations as to the group within which a mate is to be found. Rules of inheritance, too, are

¹ Art. Kinship, *Enc. Britannica*, 14th ed.

² Firth: *Human Types* (Nelson, 1938), p. 121.

varied. Primogeniture is but one. Equal distribution among the male children, and a larger share to the youngest, are both found—the former leading to a break-up of land which has serious economic consequences. We even find that “among the Khans” (of N.E. India) “property in land or homestead passes from a mother to her youngest daughter”.¹

Immediately consanguineous groups may live together in one large house (e.g. in Samoa, among the Iroquois Indians of New York State, or in pre-1911 China) or in compounds (e.g. among the Kabyli and several African groups). This means that a child may become ‘socially weaned’ earlier than is the case when families live in separate houses, and that those exclusive and emotionally disturbing bonds which unite a child to his parents in our own society may not be developed so readily. For all that, the child living in a ‘joint family’, as it is called, will still feel itself peculiarly attached to its own ‘real’ parents.

Thus we see the small immediate family, sometimes living with, but always closely bound to, a group of relatives who play their role in a complicated system of mutual obligation, and this group of near relatives merges into a wider group, the clan or *siĥ*, all of whom feel themselves to be united by common descent, by the obligation scheme, and by a network of ritual observances of a quasi-religious character. But this is not all. The dead ancestors, too, play a part. It is not only as extra hands that a man may welcome children, he welcomes representatives who may tend his memory when he is gone. The dead may be vaguely conceived: just the ancestors, or certain famous figures and the recently departed may be primarily considered, but in China this motif has been elaborated to include a definite number of ancestors in the male line. Dr. Hsiao,² for example, reports that: “According to accepted principle, all the patrilineal descendants and their wives that can be traced to a common ancestor within five kinship grades consider themselves as belonging to a kinship group called *Tsu*,” and that “Spirits of ancestors further back than five kinship grades are removed from the list to be worshipped.” At

¹ Hutton: *Caste in India* (Cambridge, 1946), p. 26.

² Hsiao T'ung Fei: *Peasant Life in China* (Kegan Paul, 1939), p. 84.

the same time he tells us that this complexity of kin makes but little practical difference.

So far we have been concerned with unilateral kinship groups. When, for one reason or another, the complex system of mutual obligation which binds the clan together is replaced by another order, blood-relationship retains something of its importance, but the immediate relation of both parents may play an equal part. Heiresses may bring property, and alliances may bring support, but the range of obligation and assistance normally shrinks.

There is, however, one instance at least where this is not the case.¹ In Denmark, North Germany and the Low Lands, up to the 15th century, consanguine groups, sometimes ranging out to the descendants of eight pairs of great-great-grandparents back on both sides, provided the *wergeld* of a culprit according to a tariff of consanguine proximity, and received a pro-rata share of compensation when one of their own members was killed. They were also expected to act as compurgators or witnesses to character, in case of accusation. It is noteworthy that among the Icelandic Norsemen, and in England, this elaborate and, with every marriage, changing cloud of assistants and witnesses is not to be found. For a kinship system to be established and to persist, the kin must live near one another, and younger sons, who go off to establish themselves elsewhere, do not carry their clan habits with them.

Finally it may be noted that the kin-related groups are not merely objectively related: *such* groups can be worked out in any genealogical tree. The relationship is a felt and acknowledged one, and the obligations which knit the group together are part of the very texture of life. It involves a way of thinking, a conceptual system, so that in early days, when the kinship bond is being eroded by other relationships, the language of tribalism may be preserved. Thus, when the Romans thought of their past history it was in terms of four tribes, and when Cleisthenes reorganized Athenian society it was in tribal terms, though the members of the units were not related by blood. Similarly the family linguistic was used in the relations between the Chinese Emperor and his subjects.

¹ Phillpotts: *Kindred and Clan in the Middle Ages and After*. (Cambridge, 1913.)

Under a purely kinship system the official power is in the hands of the heads of households, or the heads of clans, and before the establishment of a system of law which overrides familial control the head of the household, e.g. the pater familias in Rome, holds the welfare and destiny of its members 'in his hands'. A new relationship develops when some authority is established which transcends, even if it does not obliterate, the kinship tie.

We come now to the problem of the emergence of the state. This distinguished notion, 'the State', has been a topic for social philosophers who seek to analyse and justify the nature of our obligations to it, and a word of abuse for political theorists who see in 'the state' merely a weapon in the hands of the exploiting rich.

We must, indeed, walk warily. The trouble is that in addition to the entanglements of the philosopher and the vituperations of the politician, the word 'state' is currently used in two different senses; on the one hand it refers to an inclusive group viewed as an organized whole, as in the phrases 'nation-state' or 'sovereign state'; on the other hand it is used to refer to the organization *within* the group which is responsible for administration, as when we speak of 'the state' being responsible for certain services, or a 'state-owned' railway. For our purpose, however, the point is that the state is something more than a collocation of kin-related groups, it implies an authority which transcends and unites kin-related groups under one domination.

In early days this transcendent authority may have been intermittent: old men, perhaps, who gave advice in a crisis, or a leader in time of war. War, indeed—domination by force—is our first thought when we seek for the origin of such a transcending rule. Lowie,¹ however, points out that *some* unifying factor, of an embryonic character, must be present before the war-like enterprise can be undertaken. He sees this in sheer unity of place. People who live in close proximity with one another, and away from other groups, may—whether related or not—acquire some sense of belonging together.

Undoubtedly, however, even if the small group develops

¹ Lowie: *Origin of the State*. (New York, 1920.)

some sense of unity over and above that which kinship establishes (and we have seen that sedentary life itself, or at any rate sufficient material means to enable large groups to keep together, is a *prerequisite* for the development of a kinship structure of any size), it does seem likely that force is required for one tribe or group to establish domination over another.

The possibilities of some peaceful fusion cannot be left out of account; the Iroquois League bears witness to that, and the presence of supreme qualities in a person may suffice to enable him to establish what Weber calls 'charismatic' leadership over a group, some members of which are not related to him by blood. At all events, however dominance is established, whether by force or charismatic charm or both, when it achieves any degree of permanence, and does not disintegrate with the death of its founder, then, for our purpose, a state is born.

The key to the structure of an inclusive society, regarded as a state, is to be found in the function of the state, as an association-like factor, within the society. This function is that of *administration*. Whether the state instrument be used in the interests of a section of the community, or in the interests 'of the people', its business in either case is administrative. The details will differ according to the interests which it serves, the degree to which it penetrates into the life of the community, and the special historical circumstances in which it operates.

Under the system of what Hobhouse calls 'Authority', the ruler or rulers wish to preserve their power, to increase their well-being and prestige, to defend their realm and, possibly, extend it, and to ensure what they consider to be the prosperity of their subjects. This last consideration will operate with varying degrees of intensity from ruler to ruler, and with respect to the range of the social hierarchy which he takes into account, but there is no earthly reason why we should adopt the over-simplified cynicism of political polemics and assume that the ruler is simply out to feather his own nest with down pecked from the breasts of the helpless poor. The preservation of his magical influence by the 'charismatic' monarch, of which type the Chinese and Japanese Emperors are good examples, by living according to certain ritual requirements, is accepted by him as a duty in the interest of all his people. In the *Analects*

of Confucius (XIII, 6) we read the following formulation of this principle: "The Master said, If the ruler himself is upright, all will go well, even though he does not give orders. But if he himself is not upright, even though he gives orders, they will not be obeyed."¹ The theme of the king-priest who is killed if his failing powers endanger the fertility of the community is the subject of Frazer's *Golden Bough*.

It is quite obvious that it is to the interests of monarchs to be willingly obeyed, and it is falsification of the facts to deny that many despots have been genuinely benevolent.

However this may be, certain requirements stand out as necessitated by the 'logic of the situation'. The King cannot administer the whole realm by himself—the 'iron law of oligarchy' holds sway here, too; he must have a 'staff' of administrators. He needs soldiers, and somehow or other they have to be fed and equipped. For these purposes some form of taxation, in kind or money, has to be established, and some arrangement must be made for the provisioning of his officials. In order to expedite the work of administration and defence, communication must be elaborated, thus we find Huang Ti Shi, the first Emperor to attempt to bring China under unified control, building 'royal roads' throughout his empire, centralizing armaments, organizing a system of taxation, and establishing a standard method of calculating weights and other measurements.

Provision must be made for the King's court and dignity, and, it may be, for his life after death.

The solutions which have been devised to meet these essential requirements are, as might be supposed, of enormous variety. Two pure types may be thought of as lying at the ends of a scale: (1) The pure 'patrimonial' monarch who administers everything from one centre, through a bureaucracy and army completely dependent upon him for their payment and equipment, and (2) the theoretical Western European feudal pyramid, cemented with loyalty and mutual obligation, a decentralized administration based upon grant of land in return for services.

In fact, of course, these pure types are seldom, if ever, realized, but systems of authority may be arranged according

¹ Waley's translation. (Allen & Unwin, 1938.)

to their approximation to one pole or another. The conception of the Absolute Monarch is simple enough, but the conception of 'Feudalism' is extremely confused. Common to all uses of the word is the implication of an agricultural society in which there are large estates, cultivated by persons in varying degrees of servitude, and with various obligations. Such a state of affairs may develop out of a tribal system as it emerges, for one cause or another, from a relatively egalitarian regime into a differentiated stratification in which some members of clans become dominant over other members of their tribe, or of other tribes which they have conquered. It may, on the other hand, come about with the collapse of a social structure, when men retire from the political and urban life, to live on their estates. This is what happened as the Roman Empire drifted into decline.

Usually, however, the word 'feudalism' implies more than this. It implies (1) the holding of land on condition of services, either administrative or military, and (2) a personal relation of loyalty between vassal and lord. Either of these may be stressed at the expense of the other, or both may be equally important. In primitive societies "we shall find the distinction between feudal and tribal system mainly in the degree to which a political system is superimposed upon ordinary tribal practice".¹ In Ashanti we find a regime extraordinarily like that of European feudalism. The kings were acknowledged as paramount; the greater chiefs owed services, 'suit of court', and 'reliefs' when a tenant died, while "every man or woman would work on the chief's farm a few days each year".² In Buganda, again, there was a supreme monarch, the *Kabaka*, and under him three classes exercising local authority: "(a) the *Bakungu* or chiefs appointed by the *Kabaka* to govern the administrative areas into which the country was divided; (b) the *Batangole* or particular individuals to whom land was allotted by the *Kabaka* in return for services rendered; and (c) the *Bataka* or heads of the indigene class who exercised their authority by immemorial right".³ Here all the motifs intertwine: bureaucracy, fief, and tribal custom. The service in these two instances is based on

¹ Liversage: *Land Tenure in the Colonies* (Cambridge, 1945), p. 19.

² *Ib.*, p. 23.

³ Meek: *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies* (Oxford, 1946), p. 132.

land; as an example of services based on personal loyalty, with all the devotion and chivalry which it entails, we may take the Samurai of Japan in relation to the Daimyo, who supplied them with rice but not with fiefs.

Thus we can envisage a political system of authority superimposed on tribal customs, among which must be noted the traditional and regulated presentations due from the tribesmen to the chief¹, and on a state of affairs in which there are already estate-holders in possession, on land tilled by people who are more or less tied to the soil, and often with dependants (e.g. the Roman *colonus*) who owe them service. The more the monarch can administer by means of a bureaucracy, and a paid army, the more 'absolute' his power is; the more he has to decentralize administration, grant fiefs and benefices in return for services, and confirm land-ownership on the same terms, the more he approximates to 'feudalism' in the political sense, and beyond feudalism, if the power of the monarch is weak, and his administrative organization immature, lies that threat of anarchy which besets the policy of the feudal king.

To begin with he ensures a certain patrimony for himself: the 'stool' land in Ashanti and elsewhere in Africa, the Capetian lands round the Seine and Loire, and the Crown lands in England. This gives a primary source of wealth. The Incas of Peru, when they conquered their neighbours, established an elaborate bureaucracy. They divided the land into three portions: one for the Sun, one for the Inca, one for the 'Ayllu', or tribes. They broke up the existing tribal organization into '*pachacas*' of 100 households, and established a ninefold hierarchy of administration. Below the officials in charge of each '*pachaca*' were those in charge of ten households, and those in charge of fifty households, while above were grades of officials, some chosen from chiefly families, some from the Incas themselves, who were in charge of 500 households, 1,000 households, 10,000 households, 50,000 households (or 'provinces'), the four

¹ Cf. Meek, *ib.*, p. 132, n. 2. "It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the practice, general all over Africa, of paying 'tribute' to chiefs in the form of annual gifts of agricultural produce must not be interpreted in terms of 'rent' or 'feudalism'."

quarters of the Empire, culminating in the Sapa Inca himself. The land of the Sun, and that of the Inca, were tilled as tribute, and arrangements were made for the periodical redistribution of the third portion among the households.¹

In China the Emperor kept in his hands the means of warfare. A bureaucracy of *literati* was established by the Han dynasty, and improved by the examination system of the dynasties of T'ang and Sung, a development which went a good way towards providing a career for talent, wherever it might be found. Governors were not allowed to rule over districts in which their families lived, and they were constantly switched round from one district to another. They paid for themselves and their retinue out of the taxes they collected.

Egypt is described by Weber² as an enormous '*oikos*', or estate, of the Pharaoh, who owned a huge army of slaves.

The Mamelukes were originally slaves introduced by Sultan Er-Sâlih Eyyûb in the 13th century; they were allowed to pay themselves out of taxation, and eventually set up an independent kingdom of their own in Egypt, which was not overthrown until 1517, an instance of the dangers that beset the monarch who cannot keep control over his own servants.

The Janissaries, too, were recruited from Christian boys from the Balkans, enslaved and educated as ministers and soldiers. Such methods left the landowners to vegetate upon their estates where they would be less liable to make nuisances of themselves. Another technique, which had the same effect, was to create a prestige-giving and brilliant court, such as that of Louis XIV, which kept the nobility under the eye of their master, while he ruled through the middle-classes.

The element of bureaucracy, which appears in some form in almost all autocratic states, though it only reaches full development in late 'patrimonial' kingdoms, and modern democracies, generates a type of social life of its own. Payment by salary, definite spheres of competence, official hierarchy, technical education, and the careful keeping of records are among its characteristics. It is a professional calling, demanding a devotion to the 'job' or the 'office' rather than to a person,

¹ Means: *Ancient Civilization of the Andes* (Scribner, 1931), p. 288.

² Weber: *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen), p. 684.

which precipitates a standard of impersonal conduct.¹ This is very different from the ethos of feudal knighthood, with its honour, loyalty, panache, and contempt for the office and the counting-house.

Trade monopoly, again, is a support for absolutism, because it provides the wherewithal to pay the administration and army. The Ptolemies in Egypt had control of trade, the Tudor monarchs accumulated a treasury, and the power of African kings was often broken by the removal of their monopolistic rights.²

When, as in all cases, the monarch cannot supply his own needs, he grants rights and land in return for service. When the rights are attached to persons and offices without the relation of personal fealty being stressed this grant may be called a 'benefice' to distinguish it from the grant of land to a sworn vassal. In the former category are the tax-farmers, though they often appropriated land in addition to the collection of taxes. A 'benefice' is in fact halfway between a salary and a fief. The Indian Zamindar was a tax-gatherer who had managed to accumulate an estate, and the same is the case with the Bojars of Roumania.

In Western Europe the fief was the commonest method of ensuring an army, equipped at the expense of the holder of the land. This practice froze the land into appropriate parcels, and involved the disintegrative dangers to which we have referred. Power was dispersed, and in order to counteract the inevitable fissiparous tendency, a variety of measures are taken by the head of the state: royal progresses are made, enquiry agents are dispatched, royal offices are appointed in the provinces—sheriffs, governors, bailiffs and the like, and itinerant judges may revolve round their circuits bringing the King's justice, and, in a measure, by-passing the baronial courts. The relative stability of the system in England, as compared with the continent, was due to the efficiency of this control system, though readers of the Paston Letters will appreciate the power of the local 'great'. The 'great' and the less important feudatories form a knightly class—a '*Ritterstand*'—which tends to close its ranks to aspirants from the merchant classes, and

¹ From Max Weber (Kegan Paul, 1948), chap. viii.

² Weber: *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 740.

which establishes what local authority it may, with courts and jurisdiction. Out of this develops a self-interested sense of public duty, which, in England at any rate, leads up to habits of public service in such offices as those of Justices of the Peace and others, which the landed gentry alone have time and money to fill.¹ Counter-measures on the part of the nobility were taken from time to time: in England, Magna Charta; in Sparta, the division of authority; in Japan the seclusion of the Emperor by the Shogunate.

When we turn to local affairs we are faced with a further complication. Authority is superimposed upon village life. All over the world—in England, China, and India—village life, whether based upon kin or the followers of a conquering settler, has a certain independence. There may be collective responsibility for order (e.g. frankpledge in England) and taxation (e.g. the Russian Mir and the Indian village), and internal arrangements are frequently made for the regulation of co-operative agriculture.

It must not be thought that the monarch holds sway merely by threat of force, there must be some principle of legitimacy. Weber distinguishes three: (1) the personal *charisma* of the leader, the magical aura, the divinity which doth hedge a king or the prowess of the chosen warrior; (2) the *traditional* acceptance of a certain order of succession; (3) the acceptance of authority because it has been *legalized*.

With the principle of citizenship we reach a stage where more and more members of the inclusive society have influence, and a more conscious notion of belonging together. This may emerge in the city state or gradually develop within a larger authoritarian state. First commerce, then industry in the hands of a few, then smaller industries (the *arti minore*), and then the proletariat come to the fore. It is not only economic activity that is important; methods of fighting are important, too. The hoplites were recruited from the smaller farmers, the Athenian navy was manned by men who could not even afford the equipment of the hoplite, and the country farmers of Biblical times

¹ The part played by the 'great unpaid' is of importance. They are found performing 'liturgical' services in the Greek *polis*, taking honorary office in Rome, and performing all kinds of voluntary services today.

could keep their end up against the wicked rich of the cities because they were needed as soldiers.

The pattern of development of the ancient city states differs from that of the medieval city states in several ways. In the ancient city states kings are ejected by the aristocracy, but they, in turn, have to fight a losing battle against the men of commerce, who base their claim on wealth rather than birth. Tyrannies are established and the framework of society is altered from an aristocratic dominance to a classification of people and privileges on a property basis. Solon in about 594 B.C. did this for Athens, and Cleisthenes in 508 reorganized the structure of society on a basis of locality, which effectively cut across the ties of birth, and paved the way to a more 'democratic' regime. With the complex changes in political regimes which form the internal history of Athens and the other city states of ancient Greece we have not space to deal. The battle won against the claim of birth, a new conflict centres round the claim of wealth and the attempt to balance power between the rich and the less rich in such a way that the substance of power is in the hands of the former, while the shadow of a check, in the public assembly, is allowed to the latter.

In Rome in the 6th century B.C. Servius Tullius organized the army on a basis of differential wealth. Here, too, the 'impure by descent', the Plebs, demanded a say in the affairs of state, and backed their demand by a strike in 494 B.C. Their success was registered in the establishment of the tribunate and in Rome the division of the people by localities was established.

Sparta, alone, stood out against this evolutionary trend. They preserved the aristocratic principle and developed a stern warrior ethos, and successfully held in check the undermining forces of commerce.

In the ancient Bronze Age Empires the government and economic development was in the hands of the head of the state with his bureaucracy and dependants; the trades were essentially unmilitary. The cities of the Middle Ages grew up in an atmosphere of self-equipped military service; it was the duty of the citizen to fight, and he fought for the independence of

his city, manning the walls against aristocratic intrusion.¹ The thawing out of commercial life in the Middle Ages offered a different problem from that presented by the recession of tribal ice before the advancing heat of the Mediterranean trade. In the Middle Ages the cities had to win their freedom from the pretensions of feudal and ecclesiastical lords. The story is complicated and differs as one passes from Italy, to Germany, to the Hanseatic towns, and across the English Channel, but similar principles are to be discovered amid the variety. First the struggle against the nobility and the achievement by the sworn brotherhood of citizens of some measure of independence, frequently under the governorship of a bailiff appointed by the nobles. This compromise gave way in time to greater freedom, so that in 1291 the Florentines were able to exclude the nobility from office—the 'nobility' being those who live a knightly kind of life. Then the growth of a restricted rich merchant patriciate who closed their ranks against the smaller craftsmen, and controlled the major institutions of government ('*consules*' in Italy, '*Schöffen*' in Germany, '*échevins*' in the Netherlands). They were the men of property who had time and money to consolidate their position, but the '*popolo grosso*' had to contend with the claims of the '*popolo minuto*', the members of the rising craft guilds, led by some '*capitanus popoli*'.

The conflict in Italy often led to the establishment of a 'tyranny' supported by the 'petit-bourgeoisie', which composed difficulties within and provided for defence from rivals. North of the Alps the cities remained within the loose, but progressively tightening, framework of a state. In England the state was more firmly organized, the bureaucratic administration more effective, so that rights and charters could be used as bargaining instruments. The struggle against local nobility, and more particularly against monastic power, certainly played its part, but the nobility were early on contaminated by the scramble for wealth and in the 15th century "the younger sons of the gentry, apprenticed to London masters, rose to be City magnates".² The main difference between the internal conflicts of the city states of the Middle Ages and

¹ Weber: *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 542

² Trevelyan: *English Social History* (Longmans, 1944), p. 84.

those which made the history of the city states of Greece and Rome was that in the former it was producers' interests that conflicted, while in the latter consumers' interests were at stake. In the former there was a clash between commercial and industrial enterprise, while the danger for antiquity lay in the presence of a ruined, indebted collection of citizens, demanding remission of debts, division of property and the use of public money for free entertainment.¹

On the larger scale of the national state the same economic motif influences the change in the distribution of power. Harrington, writing in the 17th century, points out that "different property systems have different types of government as their necessary consequence", and when there is a dislocation between the official system of power and the actual system of power "the only possible remedy for the resulting disorder is the reconstruction of political institutions in accordance with the requirements of the changed social structure".² The change lies in the gradual broadening of the base of the effectively interested citizenry. In this country the effective power of the Commons was proved in the 17th century, but it was not the tradesmen that reaped the fruits of victory. The landowning class kept power until the Reform of 1832, and since then the electorate has, by successive enactments, become larger and larger. In 1832 there was a redistribution of seats, and a great many anomalies in voting power were removed. In the counties the forty-shilling freeholders, who already had votes, were joined by copyholders with tenements to the annual value of £10, and by leaseholders with tenements to the annual value of £50. In the towns the vote was given to householders who paid a rent of £10.

In 1867 household suffrage was introduced into towns, and certain classes of lodgers also were granted the vote, while in the counties the occupants of premises rated at £12 were enfranchised. In 1884 the counties were brought roughly into line with the boroughs, and in 1885 some attempt was made to divide the country up into constituencies of approximately

¹ Weber, *ib.*, p. 583.

² Tawney: "Harrington's Interpretation of His Age", *Proc. Brit. Ac.*, Vol. XXVII, p. 13.

equal size. These voting rights were hedged round by various conditions of length of occupation and residence.

In 1918 the male franchise was widened to include practically all men over 21, and it was extended to women of 30 and over. In 1928 the voting powers of women were brought into line with those of men, and the conditions of residence were reduced.

But in representative government it is not the electorate alone that counts, if the mode of government is to be called 'democratic'. After all, dictators have been known to increase the franchise and court the masses in order to get their support, as [Louis Napoleon did in 1852. All government is oligarchic, because one man cannot administer a large estate by himself, and 'the people' cannot deliberate and make decisions. Every government has, officially, what Bentham¹ described as 'indefinite' power, unless limited by express convention.

What makes the difference between despotic and democratic government is "the *manner* in which the whole mass of power, which, taken together, is supreme, is, in a free state, distributed among the several ranks of persons that are sharers in it, and the source from whence their titles to it are successfully derived",² together with such features as ease of change, public discussion and criticism, the liberty of association, and the rule of law, separated as a function from the executive making of decisions.

The method whereby candidates are chosen, the provision for change of government and the relation between the executive and the legislature: these are the really important elements in democratic government as a system of institutions. The spirit in which they are worked is what matters in democratic government as a reality. If the executive in power chooses the candidates for election, or brings pressure to bear on the choice, the regime would not be 'democratic', even if votes were granted to babbling babes. When, however, the right of association is preserved, opposing policies can be elaborated, and—since collaboration is the only way to get your policy

¹ Bentham: *Fragment on Government*, ed. G. Harrison (Blackwell, 1948), p. 94.

² Bentham, *ib.*, p. 94.

implemented—parties will emerge. "The moment we distinctly conceive that the House of Commons is mainly and above all things an elective assembly, we at once perceive that party is of its essence. There never was an election without a party. You cannot get a child into an asylum without a combination", writes Bagehot.¹ Since, in the elective assembly, decisions are made by majorities, it is obvious that a multiplicity of parties will have to bargain and combine on every issue, and the result is that government is weak and ineffective, as can be seen when we look at the history of France and Germany.

In England we have had a succession of major opponents. The Tories who stood for the tradition of the Stuarts, and the Whigs who supported the curtailed monarchy of the Glorious Revolution; the landed interests versus liberal commercialism; the employing interests versus the party which claims to stand for the interests of the workers.

In America the issues are not so clear-cut, and, as was the case in England of the 18th century, it has been suggested that the spoils of office are the main preoccupation of the 'outs' who want to be 'in',² a statement that is only very broadly true of the past, and may be progressively less true in the future.

The existence of parties who support and offer officially sponsored candidates means a dictation of party policy by the party executive—another instance of the 'iron law of oligarchy'.³ The existence of certain spoils of office—local appointments, influence in connection with nationally controlled industries and the like—encourages the harnessing of interests at election time which are not wholly concerned with matters of public welfare—witness the corruption of the early days of American history.

The mechanism for changing the government permits of two varieties: either you have a fixed term of office with no power of dissolution or you have a limiting period of office with power of dissolution. The former is the case in America, where

¹ Bagehot: *English Constitution*, World's Classics Edition, p. 125.

² Finer: *Theory and Practice of Modern Government* (Methuen, 1932), p. 419.

³ Cf. Burnham: *The Machiavellians* (Putnam, 1943), Pt. V on Michels, who is responsible for this phrase.

Congress is elected every four years, and was the case with the Chamber of Deputies in the French Constitution of 1875. The latter is the case in England, where the executive can, on its own, or forced by a vote of no confidence, 'appeal to the country'. This means that there is a threat hanging over the heads of the Members of Parliament, which may well sharpen their sense of responsibility, while if they 'sat pretty' for a term of years they might not have to be so conscientious for half the time, while they might spend the other half with their eyes averted towards their constituents to see the effect of their words upon them. In England, as Jennings¹ put it, "His Majesty's opposition is His Majesty's alternative government."

The relation between the legislature, who pass bills and pay, and the executive, who propose bills and spend, presents an extremely delicate problem, the solution of which has proved too much for many an attempt to impose a democratic form of government on a country in which it is not indigenous. The business of the executive is to govern from day to day, the business of the legislature is twofold: to facilitate government by granting supplies, and to act as a critic, a sounding-board of grievances, and therefore a curb to authoritarianism.

In England the solution is that the executive, the Cabinet, should be a committee of the party which has the majority in the House of Commons. "It chooses what shall be discussed, when it shall be discussed, how long the discussion shall be. So long as its party majority holds, the government is in complete control of the House of Commons".² This, at least, has the advantage of not tying the hands of the executive. At the same time, it must be noted that the interests of the minorities are not thereby assured. In point of fact they cannot be. The only assurance of fair dealing lies in the rooted tradition of common sense and fair play. Furthermore, it enables a government to obtain powers to govern by decree, or order in Council, when the country is faced with a crisis, and there is no assurance that they will resign such powers, save their dislodgment in a statutory election, provided they have not altered the statute, which they might conceivably do.

In the early adventures of democratic government in China

¹ Jennings: *Parliament*.

² Jennings, *ib.*, p. 118.

several attempts were made to deal with the legislative-executive issue. By the first constitution of 1912 it was impossible for the President to perform any essential executive action without first obtaining the approval of Parliament—"which approval it was often impossible to get", so Yuan Shi-Kai, the President, dissolved the assembly. Li Yuan King reassembled Parliament in 1916, but it proved incapable of organized executive action, and therefore did nothing, and was dissolved under military pressure in the following year, when another Parliament was elected under new rules, while in 1918 the old one retired to Canton, declaring that it had not been dissolved at all, only to discover that all its members had outlived their term of office. W. W. Willoughby,¹ from whom this account is drawn, points out that the whole Chinese way of thought, the lack of conception of law, the importance of the personal character of officials, rather than of the regime as a going concern, all militated against the smooth working of a 'constitution' of the Western type.

In America the system of checks and balances is such that it is a tribute to the great vigour of that nation that it works at all. The President, elected indirectly by the people, appoints his cabinet, Congress holds the purse-strings and passes—or not—the bills. Congress is elected every four years, and during these four years there is a Presidential election, in which the Chief Executive is chosen to hold office for four years. The Senate consists of 96 members, two for every state, so that, while population density determines the representatives of states in Congress, equal state representative is preserved in the Senate. Foreign treaties have to be passed by a two-thirds majority in the Senate, so that thirty-three Senators can wreck a foreign policy, and these thirty-three may represent the least populated states of the Union. Finally, above all is the Supreme Court of nine Judges which stands guard over the Constitution, and can declare any Act, whether of the Federal government or of any state government, to be unconstitutional.

The difficulties which attend the carrying out of a consistent policy can well be imagined, if the President is a member of a

¹ Willoughby: *Constitutional Government in China*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1922, No. 47.

party which has not got a majority in Congress, and is faced by a Senate who may not see eye to eye with either when it comes to Foreign Affairs.

The influence of the Supreme Court can be studied in connection with its interpretation of the 14th Amendment,¹ which ensures that no State shall "deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law". It was originally intended to protect Negroes from discriminative treatment, and also to entitle the Supreme Court to interfere in state legislation. The Negroes, however, faded into unimportance. In 1873 the Court upheld state legislation against monopolies; it was decided that private property could be controlled in the interests of the public. In 1887, however, in the *Minnesota Rate Case*, the earlier decision was reversed; while a New York statute limiting bakeries to work ten hours a day was deemed 'unreasonable', 'arbitrary', 'illegal' and 'meddlesome interference' with the rights of individuals. In 1908, on the other hand, sociological influences made themselves felt, and Oregon was allowed to limit hours of female labour, and, in 1917, to fix a ten-hour limit to work in factories.

All this shows that while the Supreme Court interprets the Constitution, and therefore occupies a key position in legislation, the actual interpretation reflects the spirit of the time in which they are made. The 'nine old men' can, however, be awkward. In 1937 Roosevelt found them an obstacle to his 'new deal' and made some attempt to appoint additional judges (an old method with a recalcitrant 'Upper House'). Death and judicious retirement, however, got him out of his difficulty and he was able to appoint seven members out of the nine.

Besides the focus of official power in the central government, there are provincial foci of power to be considered. Parish Councils, Rural District and Urban District Councils, County and County Borough Councils in this country all have spheres of administration delegated to them, which are financed out of local taxation and grants-in-aid. There is no room for an analysis of the various powers of these bodies. Their exercise is enlivened by an amiable atmosphere of criticism, directed by the 'men on

¹ Alfarge: *Supreme Court and the National Will* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1936), chap. VI.

the spot' against the ignorance of 'Whitehall', and the centre has at its disposal a weapon which it can use against recalcitrant Local Authorities in the shape of a threat to withhold financial assistance.

So far we have been concerned with the formal distribution of power, but this is by no means the whole story, and we must now refer briefly to the difficult problem of unofficial powers.

The skeleton of the state structure is clothed and operated by successive administrations. The state has the monopoly of force and this is in the hands of the government, which is therefore officially supreme, and—theoretically at least—reflects the opinion of the majority of votes or some compromise between the interests of large groups, none of which has a clear majority over the others. This power is in the hands of a group of men who make decisions, and are responsible to the legislature. Such a broad scheme, however, by no manner of means exhausts the foci of power within the state. The decisions which are made by the government and the general running of the country are at least partially determined by the presence of power in the hands of people *outside* the circle of those who hold office in the administration. No full account has ever been given of the pressure of such groups, and only a few can be mentioned here.

(1) *The power of existing wealth.* Any administration coming to official power finds the state a going concern, with laws safeguarding property and certain traditions which guide the day-to-day life of the community. The directors of industry and finance naturally exert pressure on an administration which represents their interests, but their powers still remain to confront an administration which is supported by those who are hostile to such interests. Dispossession is no easy matter; not only does it involve an upheaval of traditional ideology, but—a more practical difficulty—it means that the government would have to find some method of doing what the dispossessed already do, and, quite apart from any fear of violent resistance, no government will risk the chaos which would almost certainly accompany a change-over. Besides the power that comes from being in possession, the controllers of industry have resources

to fall back on, which the employees have not, in the event of a dispute between them.

(2) *The power of the technician.* The intricacies of management and organization, whether in industry or in the civil service, are so complicated that non-specialists have to rely on the opinions of the experienced. The managers and technicians in industry are held by Burnham¹ to know so much more than the directors that they really run the show, so that the directorate has degenerated into a hindrance, while the civil servant has the weight of experience behind him when he advises his ministers.

(3) *The power of the key position.* Certain industries are vital to a country's welfare: coal, iron and steel, transport, the exporting industries, etc. If the workers in these industries are organized in such a way that they can take the negative action of a strike, they can paralyse the running of the state; such, indeed, is their power that they are almost in a position to dictate terms.

(4) *The power of the individual.* We may have done away with the charismatic power of kingship, but the charismatic leader is a familiar phenomenon, whether on a national scale or controlling the deliberation of smaller groups.

Such foci of power act as restraints on the decisions of government, and we have enumerated only a few instances. We have not mentioned the power of the Roman Catholic Church in France and South Germany, the alleged insidious power of Communism, or the voting strength of American farmers, but sufficient has been said to mark the point: that the bare paper constitution gives no notion of the real centres of force in a community. Government decisions are determined by multitudes of decisions made elsewhere.

Finally we must note that the disposition of power in a state is only one instance of the general topic of power structure. In factory and school, in trade union and county council there are foci of power—some people whose decisions are important, and others whose suggestions are negligible. Some members of a society have power because of their 'personality', some because they hold the purse-strings, others because they have

¹ Burnham: *Managerial Revolution*. (Putnam, 1942.)

technical knowledge, some because they represent interests which have to be treated with respect, and others again because they are holders of office in a recognized hierarchy. Every society, however small, tends to develop a political aspect.

V

THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

WITHIN the structure of the state, protected by it (for even *laissez-faire* is an active, not a passive, notion), and, in turn, determining its shape, is 'carried on the economic life of the community. In this chapter we change the lenses of our spectacles and put on those which show up this economic aspect. We use the word 'economic' in its widest sense to mean the general methods of provision, whether the means be scarce or not.

The economic aspect of a community has a special relation to its other aspects. It is basic in an important sense, and its influence is pervasive. To have emphasized this is the great contribution of Marx and his followers. Man must live, and the means of his livelihood are matters of his deepest concern. He also has almost boundless desires for material enjoyment above the bare subsistence level, and therefore the control of the means of production and acquisition are matters of constant preoccupation.

Thus the 'set-up' of a society is largely determined by the methods of production, and the struggle for opportunities of acquisition, and for the power over other men which strategic positions in the conflict may give. In primitive life all may have an equal chance, but the moment luck or cunning gives one man more land than another the race begins. New techniques provide new opportunities of gain, and this leads to specialization on the one hand and to a struggle for the control of the technical apparatus on the other. One system is appropriate to the windmill and the ox-plough, another to a mixed industrial and rural economy with tractors, and an urban population to feed.

In the world of thought, what appeals to economic interest has a *prima-facie* attraction, and may even be conjured up as a rationalization of economic ambitions. Economic ambition sets problems to the scientist, who provides new knowledge of

techniques, which, in turn, pose new problems to the scientist.

In the field of politics men retain power in order to safeguard their economic interests, or those of their class, and they try to wrest power from others for the same purpose. The middle classes, merchant and industrial, struggle against the landed proprietors and traditional aristocracy of birth, and the proletariat, in their turn, struggle with the middle classes. The first struggle cannot start until the techniques of production and commerce are sufficiently developed. The second struggle cannot take place unless there is a significant wage-earning population concentrated enough to allow of organization.

In our own day the clash of interests has led to four alternative politico-economic systems: the perpetuation of capitalism in America; Fascism, with its façade of corporations, control over private enterprise, and crushing of working-class movements; Communism, with its state-ownership; and Social Democratic gradualism, which aims at a compromise between socialism and capitalism, to the increasing disadvantage of the latter.

A full account of all the different economic systems that have developed would entail volumes of economic history, and would be far beyond the powers of the present writer. In what follows an attempt is made to underline certain important features which are of importance to the sociologist.

Our remote ancestors lived, no doubt, in small family units, scouring the forests for food, living in caves or temporary shelters, hunting what animals they could kill with their rude implements, or fishing if they lived by the sea. The first great revolution took place when the discovery of some primitive form of agriculture and the domestication of animals ushered in the Neolithic period, some 7,000 years ago. The importance of this, and of the technique of pottery and weaving which came soon after, lies in the fact that at last man could settle down to a sedentary life, or wander in large groups, so that kinship affiliation could develop. Under the conditions of food-gathering the groups presumably had to split up as supplies failed, and there was not much more differentiation in wealth than could be attributed to differences in personal skill and good fortune,

the results of which would be impermanent. Under village conditions, however, difference in skill, good fortune and prestige can have a more lasting effect, and class differences may gradually emerge.

The triumphs of the human intellect which resulted in the making of pottery, the selection of animals for breeding, and the development of more complicated methods of agriculture are seldom recognized for what they were;¹ we accept them all too readily. However, they paved the way for another revolution which was just as astonishing: the improvement of agriculture to such a point that city life became possible. Kings and nobility were doubtless provided with food under village conditions, just as they are among primitive communities today, but the building of cities and the catering for their inhabitants, nobility, military administration and ecclesiastics requires a considerable labour force which somehow has to be fed off the land.

And then another method of gaining wealth makes its appearance. According to Heichelheim² the first interest-bearing capital was seed lent to the needy in return for a share in the harvest, or cows lent on similar conditions. (The Sumerian word '*Mûs*' means calf and interest.) City life would seem to have made its first appearance in Central Asia,³ but the major developments took place along the river systems of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and by the banks of the Indus, and the Yellow River.

Even in village life some form of exchange develops; it may be in the form of direct barter when the participants place their goods side by side, emerging from a hiding-place to do so, until a satisfactory compromise is reached. Among primitive peoples today a kind of ritual exchange between trading partners is sometimes found, as in the celebrated *kula* of the Trobriand Islanders, who interweave the exchange of useful articles into a complicated ritual intercourse with trade-partners living in neighbouring islands, in which necklaces change hands for arm-shells, the former moving round one way, the latter

¹ Childe: *Man Makes Himself*. (Watts. Thinker's Library ed.)

² Heichelheim: *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Altertums* (Leiden, 1938), p. 62.

³ *Ib.*, p. 110.

moving round the other.¹ Money, in the sense of a medium of exchange between other objects and a measure of their value, is not common. It does, however, occur; for example, in the Nicobar Islands, "needles are exchanged at twelve coconuts per dozen, matches at twenty-four nuts per dozen, boxes and red cloth at 1,600 coconuts per piece".²

When, however, our remote ancestors evolved a system of money, whether in the form of cattle which breed by nature or metal which breeds by usury (the Greek '*tokos*' means both offspring and interest), the stage is set for the entrance of the capitalist adventurer, and land itself becomes a commodity and a mortgagable asset. The debtor class have to be protected. In one of the earliest known legal codes,³ the "compact made by the king", Urukagina of Lagash, in about 3000 B.C., "with the god Ningusu on behalf of his people", it is written: "If the house of a great man joins the house of a humble subject of the king and the great man says to him: 'I will buy it', when he buys it, let him say to him: 'Pay in silver as much as satisfies my heart and my house.'" In the Laws of Hammurabi of Babylon (about 2000 B.C.) there are laws establishing wage rates, rates for hiring animals, and interest rates. "If a man hires a field-labourer, he shall give him eight *gur* [a *gur* = $3\frac{1}{2}$ bushel] of corn per annum" (257); "if a man has hired an ox for threshing, twenty *qu* [a *qu* = $\frac{1}{4}$ pint] of corn is its hire" (268); "if a trader has lent corn or silver at interest, then for every *gur* of corn he shall take 100 *qa* as interest. If he has lent silver at interest, then for each shekel of silver he shall take a sixth part of a shekel, plus six grains, as interest" (90).

The need for such legislation shows that commercial life is well away. The capitalism of the Bronze Age Empires was adventurous, permissive and protected. It was fitted into the fabric of the authoritarian state, and the struggle with the aristocracy for power was not an issue unless the power of the central authority was weak. The trade was mainly in luxury goods, the royal household and temples frequently providing

¹ Malinowski: *Argonauts of the Pacific*. (Routledge, 1932.)

² Firth: *Human Types* (Nelson, 1938), p. 91.

³ *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. I, p. 337.

the capital,¹ while the temples performed many of the functions which we associate with banking. The introduction of iron implements, c. 1000 B.C., gave a new impetus to commerce. Iron was more plentiful than bronze, and could be used for a further improvement of agriculture; it enabled small peasant states to hold their own against the great Bronze Age kingdoms with their central administration, and was the basis of the rise of the city-state economy in Greece.

Two private banks were founded in 7th-century Assyria; in 4th-century Nippon flourished the firm of bankers called Muraschschû and Sons; in 5th-century Greece the '*trapezetai*' added banking to their business as money-changers.²

Between 800 and 700 B.C. coinage was invented to take its place beside the officially weighed and stamped blocks of precious metal and the primitive tool money of Old Europe making mass-production profitable. With the growth of industry society became more complex, and by the side of the small landowner are to be found landless free wage-earners, temporary foreign workers (*xenoi* in Greece, *nokhrim* among the Hebrews), and foreign settlers (*metoikoi* and *gerim*). In the Bronze Age only the court-nobility could equip themselves for war. The new Iron Age conditions bring first the heavy chariot-borne aristocracy to the foreground, but they give way to the 'yeoman' hoplite army, just as the heavy-armed French nobility fell before the yeomen archers of England. This gave an importance to the small farmer, who could equip himself and his sons to fill the ranks of the phalanx, and whose interests must therefore be safeguarded.

All this commercial activity, which benefited the estate of the Bronze Age monarchs, and brought wealth to the successful in the Iron Age kingdoms and city-states, had its seamy side. We have noted the need for protection of the weak which is registered in early legislation, but even in the code of Hammurabi we read: (54) "If a man has not means to reimburse his creditor, he and his goods shall be sold for silver"; but it is further enacted that: (36) "Neither field nor orchard nor house of a heavy-armed, or light-armed, or a feudatory shall be sold separately for silver

¹ Heichelheim, op. cit., p. 139.

² *Ib.*, pp. 350, 355.

(38) . . . neither can they be pledged for debt." Debt, sale of land, mortgaging, and debt-slavery were the price paid by the unsuccessful for the commercial prosperity on which city life was built. Something had to be done to limit the size of land-holding, to prevent the sale of land, and to ease the burden of debt. No wonder the voice of the small farmer was heard proclaiming against usury in Biblical literature, in Rome, and in India, where moneylenders were outcasted.¹ Solon limited the amount of land to be bought by individuals, promised a moratorium of all debts, and forbade debt-slavery; in Rome a limit was placed on the amount of public land which could be bought in 367 B.C., while in 342 the *lex Genucia* fixed interest rates. Such restrictions were, of course, as ineffective in the long run as the ban on usury in the Middle Ages. In the 1st century B.C. a senator suggested the revival of the *lex Genucia*, but was lynched by an army of creditors. In the 1st century B.C. the Jewish interest-ban collapsed and a compromise was evolved by Hillel.

In the Ancient Bronze Age Empires commerce was state-controlled; so it was in those Iron Age kingdoms which were assimilated to the same type, such as the Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian and Saitic Egyptian kingdoms; so it was again in Ptolemaic Egypt, the kingdom of Syracuse and other Hellenistic monarchies, and in India as described in the *Artashastra* of Kautilya. In the Greek city states it was free. Rome tended more and more to the earlier model, especially from Hadrian onwards. The vast bureaucracy, the army, and the provision of food and entertainment for the citizens of Rome involved a crushing burden of taxation. Consumers' demand gradually declined so that the wheels of commerce were clogged, to such an extent that the provision of goods and services by private enterprise could not be counted on. The result was that transport of all kinds was controlled by the state, the occupation being made hereditary by law,² and craftsmen were bound into hereditary 'colleges' to ensure production.

In early days these '*collegia*' were mutual-aid societies and burial clubs, which seemed also to protect the trade interests of the members: flute-players, gold-smelters, smiths, dyers,

¹ *Ib.*, p. 258.

² *Ib.*, p. 818.

cordwainers, curriers, brassworkers and potters.¹ Their power brought them under suspicion and they were practically abolished by Julius Caesar, only to revive with diminished influence. Slave-owners suspected free labour, and the mass-unemployment due to slavery and the ruin of small farms which could not compete with the great '*latifundia*' rendered the organization of labour a risky business. When, however, the supply of slaves was cut off, from Augustus onwards, and their number reduced by manumission, the state had to direct labour, and revived this ancient institution for the purpose; the army had to be supplied at all costs.

Thus, by the 5th century A.D. "an almost oriental system of caste has made every occupation practically hereditary, from the senator to the watchman on the Tiber, or the sentinel at the frontier post".² The landowners who could retired to their self-contained estates, the barbarians poured in and the hollow shell collapsed. The dark ages brought trade almost to a standstill in the West and subsistence economy prevailed. In the East Byzantium and the Islamic states maintained much of ancient civilization, including even a temporary, but very remarkable, refinement of money economy, and the creation of a town economy in the Slavonic East.

When capitalism started again in the sphere of the Latin Church it was a more formidable affair. It was not merely a matter of adventurous *entrepreneurs* who operated within a traditionally sanctified framework, though it certainly started as such. It generated a pervasive spirit of its own. Wealth is pursued not for enjoyment alone—if at all—but as a duty. In fact a certain this-worldly asceticism, a depreciation of luxury as 'waste of money', was an attitude which favoured the accumulation of riches. Hard work, devotion to 'the business', the rationalization of action to the single end of profit-making, and the exclusion of all traditional or emotional impediments to an improved bank balance: such is the spirit of capitalism. Its permeation of life is registered in familiar watchwords, such as 'Time is money', 'Honesty is the best *policy*', 'making good',

¹ Paul Louis: *Ancient Rome at Work* (Kegan Paul, 1927), p. 48.

² Dill, S.: *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empires* (Macmillan, 1905), p. 228.

which nearly always means 'making money', and the criteria of decision is: 'Is it a business proposition?'

Weber¹ notes that this 'ethos' only developed indigenously in Europe at the time of the Reformation. He produces evidence to the effect that it developed more among Protestants than among Catholics, and then proceeds to show, by a brilliant analysis of the spirit of Calvinism, that this spirit would give rise to precisely those attitudes which are favourable to the rise of capitalism. Things of this world are to be despised, therefore there must be no luxurious display, and traditional sanctions, which savour of idolatry, are to be disregarded; man's task is to labour in God's vineyard with all his power, therefore he must devote all his energy and his reason to any task he undertakes; he may be doubtful about salvation, but if success attends his efforts he has ground for righteous hope, while if his neighbours fare ill he can point to the vices of intemperance, idleness, love of luxury and fecklessness.

The Protestant ethic, according to Weber, was the decisive factor in the emergence of modern capitalism. He supports this view by a comparative study of 'ethics', within which capitalism, as we know it, did not grow.² The desire for wealth is universal, capitalistic adventure attends all civilizations, but the spirit of capitalism is something more. In China the literary bureaucracy preserved tradition unbroken until this century and money-making was an officially deprecated pursuit; among the Jews their concern with the covenant kept tradition alive, and their belief in themselves as a peculiar people hampered their relations with gentiles; in India the Brahman preserved the ancient way of life, the caste system hampered intercourse, and the only breach with everyday tradition was of an other-worldly nature. The introduction of capitalism into Japan, China and India is another matter, so is the exploitation of capitalism and its institutions by the Jews. Weber's point is that in no other place is capitalism *indigenous*.

Whatever may be thought of this view as an answer to extreme Marxism, there can be no doubt that capitalism since the Reformation has dominated the Western scene as a principle

¹ Weber: *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Allen & Unwin, 1930.)

² Weber: *Religionssoziologie*. (Tübingen, 1934.)

of life, and Weber makes it quite clear that religious aspiration is not the only factor at work. As conditions "for obtaining a maximum of formal rationality of capital accounting in productive enterprise" he provides the following list:¹ (1) The appropriation of all non-human means of production, and a market free from traditional limitations; (2) free opportunity for *entrepreneurial* activities; (3) freedom in choice of labour; (4) freedom of contract—no regulation of consumption, production, prices or wages, (5) calculability of technical means, (6) security of contract by rational public administration and a calculable legal system; (7) "the most complete possible separation of the enterprise and its conditions of success and failure from the household or private budgetary unit and its property interests"; (8) a monetary system with the highest possible degree of formal rationality.

These conditions, in turn, are brought about by divers means. The impersonal 'firm' which is a central feature of modern capitalism develops out of a 'family business' in which there is no differential accounting—much like the case of the small farmer of yesterday. Then there seems to have been a stage when each member has a private account in the firm, and regulated by the firm, then persons who are not members of the family are incorporated.² Interestingly enough, among the kin-conscious Japanese, the big four industrial organizations, Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda are mainly family concerns, and the House of Mitsui is governed by a family council, one of the rules of which is that members of the family must "dispense with excessive luxury and practise simplicity and economy in living."³

This is not the place to describe the gradual emergence of modern capitalism in England. The stratified peace of self-subsistent rural economy was shaken in the 13th century by the beginning of the wool trade. Land became profitable, and the consolidation of holdings proceeded apace. After the wool trade came the manufacture of cloth, and the organization of

¹ Weber: *Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (Hodge, 1947), p. 252.

² Weber: *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, pp. 209, 211.

³ Brady: *Business as a System of Power* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1943), pp. 93-94.

industrial processes by the *entrepreneur*, who provided raw material or partially processed goods for the household to deal with. The serf was gradually emancipated from the soil and became a small farmer or wage-earner, and many drifted to the towns to become apprentices and journeymen. The Black Death gave an enhanced value to labour, and encouragement to enclosure for sheep farming, which needed fewer hands than are required for arable land. Fluctuations in the value of money due to the influx of silver and the debasement of coinage by Henry VIII caused upheavals in the distribution of income; rich became poor, and poor became rich. Confiscation and death in battle spelt the ruin of the old feudal nobility, but the land was still supreme.

Then, at last, came the 'industrial revolution' at the end of the 18th century, and the new methods of agriculture that went with it. Changes in rural life had produced the yeoman farmer, as tenant or free-holder, the squire and the country gentleman, and in the 18th century the large-scale landlord with his turnips and other improvements. But England was becoming more and more a country of shopkeepers and industrialists. A writer to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, p. 109, in 1763 asks: "Why do owners of small estates tie their eldest sons to them? The younger brother in business is 'the better gentleman'." In 1942 Professor S. R. Dennison, in his minority report appended to the 'Scott Report' of the Committee on Land Utilization in Rural Areas,¹ throws cold water over the proposals of his colleagues for a flourishing agriculture. England, he says, is an urban society and we cannot afford to support agriculture as a method of landscape gardening. The Second World War has altered all that, but the revival has to take place among a town-minded, cinema-going, drain- and electricity-conscious population.

In England ever since the serf won his 'freedom' there has been a rural 'proletariat'; in France, on the other hand, the wage-earning labourers never formed a strong rural class. After the French Revolution, when the land was appropriated by its peasant occupants, the size of holdings was, in an enormous number of cases, remarkably small. The range of sizes of farms

¹ Cmd. 6378.

in England in 1851¹ omitting holdings under 5 acres, runs from 5 acres to 1,000, and over,² while in France a table³ of holdings has as its lowest category 'very small—under 2½ acres' and its highest category 'very large—250 acres and over'. In 1908 there were 2,088,000 in the first and 29,000 in the second.

Of Germany it is impossible to generalize. Broadly speaking, in the west and south, after the slow process of emancipation, peasant proprietorship—in Bavaria this includes a class of 'big peasants' owning 50-250 acres—developed, while in the west we find the enormous states of the Junkers of an average size of 2,000 acres. At the end of the 17th century in Mecklenburg 60% of the land was in holdings of over 250 acres; in Würtemberg and Bavaria only 2%; in Bavaria 50% of the land was in holdings of 12½-50 acres.⁴

Industry was mainly carried on in England before the industrial revolution in the houses of the operatives. There were, of course, groups of craftsmen who worked in small-scale factories or workshops, and in the establishment of Jack of Newbury

“Within our room, being large and long
There stood two hundred looms full strong,”

but the numbers are exaggerated.⁵ However, they had music while they worked, for:

“. . . in another place hard by
A hundred women merrily
Were carding hard with joyful cheer
Who singing sat with voices clear.”

Each worker, however, worked on his own account. When methods are devised to harness non-living power to a number

¹ Clapham: *Economic History of Modern Britain* (Cambridge), Vol. II, p. 264.

² In 1947 there were 61,022 holdings under 5 acres and 445 of 1,000 acres and over—an increase since 1938, when there were 334. (Information supplied by W. E. Heath, Reader in Agricultural Economics, Nottingham University School of Agriculture.)

³ Clapham: *Economic Development of France and Germany* (Cambridge), p. 165.

⁴ Clapham: *Ib.*

⁵ Eileen Power: *Mediaeval People* (Pelican, 1924), p. 158.

of machines at once, the 'satanic mill' is in sight, though the earliest source of power was water, the supply of which sets limits to the size of the undertaking. Capital and enterprise are alike required, and so is a large labour force. The 'new' men long ago left the constricting guild-dominated atmosphere of the old towns and set up in freer communities, founding such cities as Birmingham and Manchester. Children and women were victims of the machine, and worked in the mines which supplied its power, until social legislation, in the shape of the Peel Act of 1802, which aimed at safeguarding the 'Health and Morals of Apprentices', the Acts of 1819, 1825 and 1833, which limited the hours for young persons, and the Act of 1844, which extended its provisions to women, imposed a limit to the freedom of contract.

As time goes on, in the iron and steel industries particularly, the industrial units, with their ancillaries, grow larger and larger, but not to such an extent that the small firm is obliterated.

In 1935 nineteen of the establishments in silk and artificial silk industries employed over 750 operatives, and though they were only 5.5 of the total number of establishments, they produced 57.2 of the total output.¹ In the woollen and worsted industries, on the other hand, the 594 firms who employed between 100 and 399 employees, and who made up 39.1 % of the total number of establishments, produced 48.2 % of the total output, as against the 43 establishments, employing over 750 employees, who were responsible for only 21 % of the total output.² In electrical manufacturing, however, 5.7 of the establishments (i.e. 37 in all) produced 59.5 % of the total output, and they employed over 1,000 employees, as compared with 64.6 % of the enterprises (422 in all), employing 11-99 persons, who produced only 7.1 %.³ Working Party reports show that in cotton spinning large combines own more than one third of all spindles, but there is a very large number of small firms. In weaving the average size of units is much less than in spinning, and most of them are private firms. The same is true of furnishing and hosiery.

¹ Compton and Bott: *British Industry* (Lindsay Drummond), p. 58.

² *Ib.*, p. 56.

³ *Ib.*, p. 64.

For large-scale enterprises combinations of *entrepreneurs* are required. They are to be found in the Ancient East, and in medieval England with its Staple and Merchant Adventurers. Later on in Tudor times are added the Baltic, the Russian and the Levant Companies, in which each member traded on his own capital; while the East India Company and the African Company conducted their business as corporations, dividing the profits and losses among shareholders.

The need for capital to finance large-scale business has, however, led to the development of the gigantic superstructure of finance, with its banks and Stock Exchange. It has also led to an important change in the relation between ownership and control. As Berle and Means¹ express it: "The atom of ownership" has been dissolved "into its component parts: control and beneficial ownership". In their study of 200 large companies they show the enormous spread of shares. Only 6% could be said to be under private ownership and control through holding 80% of the shares. The rest were controlled by the majority of shareholders in varying degrees of indirectness. The result of this remoteness is that the salaried management assumes a position of strategic importance, while personal and paternal control is almost a thing of the past. Management has become more and more technical; there are movements afoot to make it a recognized 'profession', and—as we have already seen—the functions of the directorate have been called into question. When an industrial organization is neither 'private' nor particularly 'enterprising', why, it is asked, should not the state as a public authority, or some publicly controlled body, appoint the management?

In the case of public utilities, where a 'private' monopoly would be undesirable or where the capital outlay is so great that the return expected by private enterprise would require a prohibitive cost to the consumer, the utility is frequently provided by a local authority or by a 'public corporation', as in the case of the British Broadcasting Company (1926), the Port of London Authority (1908), the Central Electricity Board (1926), the London Passenger Transport Board (1933), the

¹ Berle and Means: *Modern Corporation and Private Property* (New York, 1935), p. 8.

Coal Board (1947) and the British Transport Commission (1948). These latter are financially autonomous, there are no proprietors to whom the governing body owes a duty to make profits, and they are free from full and continuous responsibility to a Minister, and therefore are not Government departments.

A system of finance, industry and commerce, operating under conditions of a free market, might be envisaged as a self-regulating mechanism, responding to the pressure of supply and demand. The price of labour would find its level, the price of goods would be adjusted by competition, and the needs of the community would so reveal themselves as to indicate the appropriate directions which investment should take. Impersonal economic forces might ensure smooth circulation of commodities in a manner more efficient than that which is exhibited by the system of customary obligations in a primitive community. Unfortunately, many factors impede such perfect flexibility. The labourer is pressed by hunger, a limit is set to his power of making his labour scarce, and he is not indefinitely adaptable for selling his labour in new markets. Furthermore, he demands—and the community accepts his demand—a certain minimum standard of life.

Perfect competition in industry is distorted by monopolies, and certain goods are of special importance because they are needed for the production of other goods. Moreover, investment does not always flow into the right channels. The interlocking system is, in fact, constantly liable to some dislocation or other, and artificial respiration must be supplied by state interference. And that is not all. The State itself is a business providing services, the cost of which is rapidly increasing, so that the economic life *in* the community is carried on within the economic framework *of* the community. The State, too, with its internal economy, does not stand isolated and alone, except in a few favoured instances. A small island, with a population close on fifty million, is, as we know to our cost, dependent for its livelihood on imports, and that means that it is entangled in the economic structure of the world.

In Russia, where every enterprise is state-owned, the individual plant is run according to the principle of 'profit-

ability and accountability in business terms'.¹ The prices of raw materials, goods produced and wages paid are fixed by the authorities. According to plan, a certain amount is to be produced which will bring in a planned income, part of which is the 'planned profit' and part the 'planned costs'. The function of the manager is to reduce the costs and increase the profit by producing more than was expected at a cheaper rate. The incentives are both positive and negative: bonuses which may be more than the basic salary, promotion with attendant increase in prestige and privileges, public praise, fear of demotion, public obloquy and worse.

Though it is true that what happens in Russia is too often seen through mists of prejudice or the rose-tinted glasses of displaced patriotism, it cannot be denied that a powerful incentive is enthusiasm for the cause—an idealistic motive which is somewhat difficult to square with the cruder formulations of materialism.

In England the conflicting interests of employers and employees have left an aftermath of distrust in the minds of the latter, and the general clock-watching principle of 'as little work for as much wages as possible' is a factor which militates against full economic efficacy. In America the same principle is in operation, but there it is somewhat counteracted by the 'pioneer spirit' which assumes that careers are open to talents.

The conflict of interests to which we have referred has given rise to the Trade Union movement. In Rome, as we have seen, workmen banded together into friendly societies; in the Middle Ages the social and religious guilds performed the services of benefit societies, and the merchant and craft guilds served the protective and professional ends of their members. The journeymen, who had but slender hopes of becoming craftsmen, very naturally banded together, and in 1387, for instance, the serving men of the London cordwainers, in rebellion against the 'overseers of the trade', were reported to be aiming at making a permanent fraternity. Equally naturally, measures were taken to stop this kind of combination, and a series of regulations were passed from time to time, culminating in the

¹ Bienstock *et al.* *Management in Russian Industry and Agriculture* (Oxford, 1944), p. 70.

Acts of 1799-1800. In 1824 emancipation began, and with temporary setbacks it may be said to have gone on ever since. In their long and bitter struggle with employers trade unionists have developed a fighting spirit and suspicious attitude which are appropriate to the function they have been called upon to fill. It remains to be seen how quickly they will be able to adjust themselves to new functions if our society moves further in the direction of socialism. The leaders, used as they are to negotiation, will find the change from hostility to collaboration more easy than will the rank and file, for whom employers turn out to be employers, whether they be 'privately owned' firms or 'public' corporations. Another feature of the development of trade unionism remains to be noted, and that is the increase in size of the units; the obvious advantages of this, in terms of increased funds and bargaining power, are offset by the distance between the leaders and the led, which causes a lengthening-out of negotiations, with accompanying exasperation of those on whose behalf the negotiations are undertaken.

Employers, too, have organized themselves into the Federation of British Industries and the British Employers' Confederation in England, and the National Union of Manufacturers and the National Industrial Council in America.

Ever since the Neolithic Revolution there has been differentiation in wealth, and from time to time attempts have been made to check what seems to be an almost inevitable tendency for incomes to spread themselves out in accordance with a singularly constant formula, which has received precise statement at the hands of Pareto. When land was scarce, the authorities tried to limit the amount of land which one man could own, and to prevent the alienation of land, particularly when it was required for the support and equipment of armed men. In our own day attempts are made at equalization by taxing and redistribution in the form of Public Service of one kind and another, so that freedom of contract is curtailed by a new status system in which being an infant, a child, a nursing mother, a widow, an old person or a blind man entitles you to privileges which you would not get if you were none of these things.

The assessment of the distribution of property, based on

estates passing at death, and on the calculation of the capital value of various sources of income, was undertaken by H. Campion.¹ He shows that in 1936 1% of persons owning possessed nearly 60% of the capital in private hands, while 5% owned about 80%. The point, however, is made that the growth of public property gives "the benefit if not the rights of property. For example, a life annuity equal to an old age pension of 10s. a week from the age of 65 would cost between £250 to £350 if it were purchased by an individual of that age from an assurance company".²

But besides the property registered as passing on death, there is an increasing amount of small savings in the Post Office Savings Bank, Building Societies, Friendly Societies, etc.,³ amounting to some £2,800 millions in 1936, which are not registered unless they form part of a larger estate. Durbin interprets the importance of this as indicating the acquisition on the part of the British proletariat of the characteristics of the *petit bourgeoisie*, and certainly the alleged threat to savings comes in useful as a propagandist weapon in the hands of right-wing parties.

As to the distribution of income, numerous assessments have been made from time to time since that of Gregory King in 1696 to those of the 20th-century statisticians Bowley, Stamp, and Colin Clark. The change in distribution between 1938 and 1951 has been set forth in the Annual Abstract of Statistics for 1954, and shown in the table on the following page.

Such figures, owing to the increased information required by the extended range of taxation, may give a more accurate picture than previous assessments, but no table has ever been devised which is more than a very rough guide. The difficulties of estimation have been analysed by Bowley in his note on 'National Income' (1944), in which he points out the three factors in the situation: (1) income assessed for income-tax purposes; (2) income other than wages, below the income-

¹ Campion: *Public and Private Property in Great Britain*.

² Campion: 'The Distribution of Property', in *The Social Sciences*, ed. T. H. Marshall (Le Play House, 1938), p. 42.

³ Durbin: *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* (Routledge, 1940), p. 372.

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN DIFFERENT RANGES OF NET INCOME
ASSESSED IN 1938-39 AND 1953-54¹

Table 13

Range of income after tax	1938-39	1953-54
£125-150 ²	2,508,000	..
£150-250 ³	4,630,000	3,385,000
£250-500	1,940,000	10,030,000
£500-750	375,000	5,020,000
£750-1,000	132,000	1,015,000
£1,000-2,000	142,200	621,400
£2,000-4,000	54,600	121,900
£4,000-6,000	11,600	6,500
£6,000 and over	6,600	200
Total	9,800,000	20,200,000

tax exemption limit; and (3) wages, are each of them (particularly (2) and (3)) very difficult to disentangle, and that in order to estimate people's standard of life one wants to know how much money is coming into each household, which is impossible to discover.

In Russia it appears⁴ that since 1921 wages are calculated in terms of multiples of a basic rate, manual and lower clerical workers getting 1-2.7 times, other clerical workers 1.2-3.5 times, technical personnel 1.6-5.0 times, and leading administrators 4.0-5.0 times, to which must be added differential bonuses and remuneration in kind.

Such a brief mention of some of the bones of the economic body can give no adequate notion of its working, the principles of which form the special study of economic theory, and the manifestations of which are the concern of the applied economist. The recipient of the incomes classified above, unless he

¹ Annual Abstract of Statistics, H.M.S.O. 1956.

² Figures for 1953-54 are not available for incomes below £155, the effective exemption limit for that year.

³ Figures for 1953-54 relate to the range £155-250.

⁴ Bienstock *et al.*, *ib.*, p. 92.

be an economist engaged in economic thought, merely sees the part of the system with which he comes in contact. His income means his opportunities of expenditure in the price-system with which he is confronted, and the sorts of things he wants are determined by class-usage, his personal taste, and his aspirations. The scale of wages and salaries is 'there', his unearned income, if any, is 'there', and prices are 'there'; changes in his income mean a new evaluation of prices, while changes of price increase or decrease the value of his income.

For the most part he is caught in a network of causal relationships of which he feels himself to be a victim, but of which he is, in point of fact, a constituent. The economic system provides one of the outstanding examples of a concatenation of unintended results springing from conscious motives of a relatively simple kind. Of course, the degree to which these unintended results can be foreseen depends on the perspective of the participant. People who are used to budgeting week by week cannot be expected to consider the remoter repercussions of their economic conduct, whether in expenditure or in the demand for higher wages. On the other hand, people whose practice it is to plan for years ahead are better placed for the appreciation of the results of the alternative courses of action which lie before them. But even the planner, who views the whole field, is bound to respect the 'logic of the situation', and realize that even with indefinite adaptability of machines and men, you cannot conjure two pints out of a one-pint jug.

Small-scale societies, within the sovereign states, do not develop an internal economy in the same way that they develop an internal power system. Under peculiar circumstances, however, this may come about, and Mr. R. A. Radford has described such an economic evolution in a prisoner-of-war camp in Germany.¹

¹ R. A. Radford: *The Economic Organization of a P.o.W. Camp* (Economics, 1945), Vol. XII, p. 189.

VI

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

CHANGING once more our lenses, we see societies, great and small, stratified like Neapolitan ices into bands of prestige. Such stratification may be based upon a variety of interpenetrating principles: free and unfree; caste, estate, or clan; occupation; administrative hierarchy; or income level, as we have seen in the last chapter.

The first method of classification distinguishes between the free men, the freed man, the slave and the serf. The slave, whose rights are reduced in some communities to a minus quantity, is so much at the disposal of his master that he has been classed as 'property'; but Westermarck¹ disputes the convenience of this ascription. For Westermarck 'slavery' is essentially an industrial institution, which implies compulsory labour beyond the limits of family relations, and defends his position by pointing out that the slave is from one culture to another variously protected—so for that matter are domestic animals. The difficulty could doubtless be got over by a more complex notion of 'property' as a constellation of exclusive rights, than the common notion that it—a man's property—is something he can do what he likes with, provided he does not injure his neighbour. Whatever view one takes, however, about the appropriate pigeon-holing of the concept 'slavery', it must be clearly understood that the position of the slave is less uniform than is currently realized. He can always be bought and sold, and he passes with his master's estate, but his treatment and the degree of protection accorded him vary from place to place and from time to time. He only appears at all where economic conditions make it possible to feed him or profitable to employ him. He comes from various sources: war, slave-raids, purchase, birth, or seizure for debt. As a domestic he may receive kindly treatment, and may be placed

¹ Westermarck: *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (Macmillan, 1912), Vol. I, p. 670.

in a position of confidence. As a worker in the *ergastula* or at the mines, he may be as ill treated as modern political prisoners.

Serfdom connotes attachment to the soil. By self-committal, debt and conquest, those who were formerly free are now bound, again under varying conditions. They usually had some plot of land or strips in the open field which they might cultivate for themselves, but tilling the fields of their immediate landlord was the condition of their tenure, to which may be added a variety of dues payable under certain circumstances: e.g. heriots before taking up a holding, merchet if their daughters married, and they had to make attendance at and submission to various courts. They might be sold with the land, and they were not allowed to leave it at will; but again, as with slavery, there is no uniformity in their condition from place to place or from time to time. In the Middle Ages in Europe their position was regulated; they could appeal to the local court of the manor, in which their neighbours sat, and base their claim on immemorial custom. The unfree inhabitants of England, however, varied in their degrees of unfreedom. Socmen, villeins, bordars and cottars all differ in their condition of tenure,¹ and the distribution of people with lighter burdens varied from one part of the country to another: in the Eastern counties, for instance, there were more people with light burdens than there were in the west, owing to the influence of Danish occupation.

The unfree, in a sense, merge into the free in feudal times, but if we draw some arbitrary line and look above it, or if we consider a society in which all men are free before the law, we are faced with a stratification based not on the presence or absence of servile duties, but upon accepted and felt estimation of superiority and inferiority. "Social classes," says Ginsberg,² "may be described as portions of the community, or collections of individuals, standing to each other in the relation of equality, and marked off from other portions by accepted standards of inferiority and superiority." Subjective attitude and objective behaviour are essential. As T. H. Marshall³ observes:

¹ Cf. Vinogradoff: *English Society in the Eleventh Century*. (Oxford, 1908.)

² Ginsberg: *Sociology* (H.U.L.), p. 159.

³ Marshall: *Sociological Review*, Vol. XXVI, 1934, p. 60.

"The essence of social class is the way a man is treated by his fellows (and, reciprocally, the way he treats them), not the qualities nor the possession which cause the treatment." Every social class is a group in which certain behaviour is to be found with greater probability than elsewhere; it determines to a great extent the 'life-chances' of its members, and is frequently characterized by customs of connubium and commensality.

Systems of stratification of this kind may be 'closed' or 'open', i.e. it may be possible, difficult or impossible to pass from one class to another. In the last case it is convenient to use the word 'caste', and of course the chief example of such a closed hierarchical system is that found in India.

The Indian caste system forms an organic 'plural society', the units of which are theoretically endogamic, and characterized by strict rules of commensality, which are administered in most cases by a council of five (*panchayat*). There are some 3,000 castes, most of them having a traditional occupation, while some preserve a unity of tribal descent or sectarian worship. They form a hierarchy, with the various Brahman castes invariably at the top, but lower down the scale the positions vary geographically, and from time to time. By this encapsulating device the "caste system has afforded a place in society into which any community, be it racial, social, occupational or religious, can be fitted as a co-operating part of the social whole, while retaining its own distinctive character and its separate individual life".¹

The origins of the system are complex. In the Vedic Age the Aryan invaders seem to have been divided into four classes (or '*varnas*' = colour): Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras. According to Hutton, they probably found the pre-Aryan inhabitants divided into caste-like tribal units, with strict magical rules about food, which he regards as "probably the keystone of the whole system".² The resultant structure bears the marks of the superposition of a hierarchical patrilineal society on a cellular arrangement of matrilineal tribes, and of the restrictive practices of groups engaged in the same occupation, the whole being suffused with primitive food tabus,

¹ Hutton: *Caste in India* (Cambridge, 1946), p. 101.

² *Ib.*, p. 62.

systematized by the Brahman castes for their own aggrandizement, and made palatable by the doctrine of 'Karma', according to which caste membership is the result of good or bad conduct in a previous life, while rebirth into a higher caste may be achieved by those who behave appropriately in the caste in which they have been born.

The Indian caste system is unique. Hereditary occupational groups were established in the Western Roman Empire in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., but this organization was purely occupational and established from above; it bears none of the magical characteristics of the Indian variety. In Egypt, according to Herodotus, there were seven occupational groups, which were also hereditary, and, in the case of the priests and swineherds, involved ritual and tabu elements, but here again there is not that restriction on intercourse which we find in India.

Another system of stratification is the 'status' or 'estate' system of feudal Europe, which did not develop in its fullness until the 12th century.¹ The feudal lords and their more important vassals were able to extort immunities from taxation and other administrative demands, and they were confirmed in their local government jurisdiction, partly because there was no other method of local government available and partly because the central administration was too weak to remove them. Such positions, which doubtless were originally and theoretically personal, gradually became hereditary and a class of 'nobility' with its sense of family, privilege, and knightly conduct emerged as a closed body. The Church followed suit, and obtained its own legally sanctified immunities and juristic privileges. The special characteristics of the 'estate' system in France and Germany was, in fact, "that inequality was not primarily economic, but juristic, and that in spite of gross disparities of wealth, it rested on difference, not merely of income, but of legal status. Civil, not to mention political, rights were not identical for all men, but graded from class to class."² The two 'estates' of Church and nobility were summoned to

¹ M. Bloch: *La Société Féodale. Les Classes et le Gouvernement des Hommes* (Paris, 1940.)

² Tawney: *Equality* (Allen & Unwin, 1931), p. 121.

consult with the King, and to these were added, in France in the 14th century, the '*tiers état*' which included representation from the towns.

Burgesses, whether in England or France, had their immunities and privileges, and the whole of society was thus—doubtless more in theory than practice—divided into a neat hierarchy of groups, each of which was conceived as performing a necessary function in the working of the state. Members of classes were, indeed, expected to do their duty in the station to which it had pleased God to call them. This sense of proper function, due privilege, and appropriate conduct is of great importance for the understanding of German and English class systems. In France, not long after the indignant tirades of the Duc de Saint-Simon against the pretensions of lawyers and the recently ennobled at the court of Louis XIV, the whole system of privilege was suddenly swept away. In England and Germany it was slowly modified out of existence, but in Germany the formality and the sense of 'position' lingered longer.

So far as personal intercourse between members of different 'estates' goes, it may be easier than it is in a competitive 'open' system, because neither party has 'pretensions', and, except through the Army and the Church, the notion of 'rising in the social scale' is out of the question: *noblesse oblige* and the inferior is prepared to be obliging.

In England the closed-estate system never really developed. There was certainly a sense of degree, and in 1363 a statute of Edward III, enacted for the purpose of trade, fixed sumptuary rules of dress for servants, handicraftsmen and yeomen, gentlemen under the estate of knights, and so forth, but according to Pollock and Maitland:¹ "Men are either free men or serfs; there is not much more to be said. When compared with tenure, status is unimportant." In early days there was not that contempt of trade that came later on, the younger sons never withdrew themselves into a noble caste, and the ennoblement of successful merchants kept the channels of

¹ Pollock and Maitland: *History of English Law*, Vol. I (Cambridge, 1911), p. 407. Cf. Bloch, *op. cit.*, p. 75. "Au sens français ou allemand du mot, l'Angleterre médiévale n'eut pas de noblesse. . . . Sur le sol anglais, le simple freeman en droit ne se distingue guère du gentilhomme."

circulation open. In Tudor times, Trevelyan¹ tells us, "individuals and families moved out of one class into another by acquisition or loss of property, or by simple change of occupation". So that "the contemptuous attitude affected by some gentlefolk in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries towards 'soiling the hands with trade' was particularly absurd, because nearly all such families had risen wholly or in part by trade, and many were in fact still engaged in it".

This facility of intercourse does not mean that the rich were not frequently castigated; ecclesiastical wealth was a stock target of abuse. The very rights of property themselves were called into question by John Ball in the 14th century and by the Levellers in the 17th, but it did not amount to much. The accepted right of the gentry to rule in local government and in the central administration has lasted on until quite recent years, and Weber remarks that "the characteristic 'Geist' of the English gentry would never have emerged if there had not been the specific feudal tendency to hold office in the past by right of being holders of landed property".²

The 'estate' system, then, such as it was in England, was gradually transformed into the 'class' system as we know it today. The dynamic of change was economic development operating with somewhat different results in town and country, to produce two parallel spectra which are by no means easy to fit the one against the other. The distinctions in an open-class system are subjective, in the sense that they are what they are because they are accepted, and manifested in appropriate behaviour. The estate system proper can be objectively defined in terms of legalized privilege, but no such objective criteria apply in a class structure; the objective criteria that are sometimes used, such as that of occupation, themselves imply a class hierarchy. The Church, the Army, the Navy and the professions got their prestige because the gentry went into them, and conversely because they have prestige they are 'suitable' occupations. The ambiguous position of the auctioneer and the dentist is due to the fact that they have not been, until recently, 'received'.

¹ Trevelyan: *English Social History*, p. 162.

² Weber: *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 719.

This does not mean that class has no significance: it has enormous significance. It dictates the intimate culture-pattern prevailing at different levels, and expresses "the values which societies attach to different modes of life".¹ In our society, which the Americans consider more class-ridden than their own (a judgment which recent studies of American class relations make us question), movement is possible but not easy, the effect of which, as Ginsberg puts it, "is to heighten a consciousness of the difference, especially on the frontiers between classes, since there will often be experienced the strong desire to rise, or the fear of sinking in the social hierarchy".

Class is outwardly manifested in such things as speech and dress, and since the 'upper classes' were at the outset richer than those below them, they were able to set the tone in education which served to culturize the succeeding generation of those who had made money in industry and trade. Class, as we have seen, largely determines one's associates and the kinds of societies and clubs to which one belongs; this feature has been the subject of intensive study in an American town by Warner and Lunt in their 'Yankee City Series'.

'Yankee City' has some 17,000 inhabitants, who are members of various social groups: families, cliques, associations, and so forth. Some of these groups are confined to single social strata, some of them contain members of more than one class. A person's behaviour is partly determined by his status in the group with which he is consorting at any given moment: e.g. a middle-class member of a clique which contains upper-class members as well will behave differently in the presence of his co-members from the way in which he will behave when he is in the company of members of a clique which contains only middle-class members. In both cases he is occupying characteristic positions in what the authors call the 'positional system'. They have made an elaborate analysis of the possible positions in which a man might find himself, and there are no less than 89.² This analysis is made in behaviouristic terms, and reveals

¹ Ginsberg: *Sociology*, p. 160.

² Yankee City Series, Vol. II: *The Status System of a Modern Community*. (Yale University Press, 1942.)

that preoccupation with class-differences which goes with high-grade class mobility.

The result of this relative segregation of commensality and class endogamy is to establish markedly different ways of life and thought as one passes from one class to another, though, as in a spectrum, there is no clear dividing line between one 'band' and another. An attempt to enumerate the numbers of classes, therefore, meets with insuperable difficulty. The usual threefold division into 'upper', 'middle' and 'lower' has been elaborated in American studies¹ into a sixfold one: upper-upper, lower-upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-lower and lower-lower, but however refined the differentiation there will always be disputes as to who belongs to which group, and as to the basis of classification. A behaviouristic criterion of interpersonal treatment, gestures of respect, camaraderie, or hauteur is too difficult to apply with any hope of success. Perhaps a more 'objective' criterion might be found in terms of expenditure-patterns, as is suggested by R. G. D. Allen,² but here again the collection of data presents almost insuperable difficulties. At present one can only rely on impressionistic typology.

The 'upper classes' who have inherited the 'gentry' tradition are able to afford an ease of manner based on security. "The higher the rank," writes Frances Pelham in Bulwer Lytton's *Pelham*, "the less pretence, because there is less to pretend to. This is the chief reason why our manners are better than 'low persons': ours are more natural, because they imitate no one else; theirs are affected, because they think to imitate ours." Whether we class the 'professionals' with the lower-upper or the upper-middle is simply a matter of the refinement of our classification, but as we pass 'down' the scale we enter a world of preoccupation with appearances, the sardine-tin tends to be placed in a dainty glass container shaped for the purpose, the tablecloth assumes a diagonal position on the tea-table, round which new vowel-sounds and words are heard and, as the paper serviettes are taken up, the meal

¹ Warner and Lunt: *Social Life of a Modern Community*. (Yale, 1941.)

² "Social Levels and Patterns of Expenditure." R. G. D. Allen in *Clan Conflict and Social Stratification*, ed. T. H. Marshall (Le Play House, 1938), p. 44.

'commences'. Again, through subtle but vitally significant gradations, we pass to a world in which wages and the shortage of money are current matters of conversation, where meals are determined by the working and licensing hours, and where the desire not to be beholden is registered with: 'I don't mind if I do', because the repayment of favour is so often impossible. The preoccupation with small sums of money, the deprivation of small comforts, the embarrassment at being 'shown up' before your own children because you cannot afford the toys they have set their hearts on, and the desire every now and then to make a splash with a wedding or a funeral, and a hundred and one other features of working-class life, are of major importance for understanding the background from which comes the vast majority of the population.

In the country a similar hierarchy presents itself, but with a somewhat different history behind it. The rise of the yeoman farmer, the purchase by the gentry of the land confiscated from the Church, sold by the Crown, or disposed of by Parliament during and after the Civil War,¹ the emergence of the 'squire', the Justice of the Peace, the large-estate movement in the 18th century, and the vicissitudes of farming when we started to import our corn from overseas, all these factors have had their effect on rural class structure. The 'estate' system still glimmers in remote areas but it is impossible to 'place', say, the farmer who runs a farm of 1,000 acres, and who might be asked to the garden-party but not to dinner, in a position which is exactly equivalent to a position on the urban scale.

The class structure, as described here, is a matter of intimate details of life, but the whole question of classes has, of course, received different treatment at the hands of Marxian theorists. For them, class is determined by economic interest and opportunity, and it is significant that German writers, such as Weber, have two words at their disposal: '*Klasse*', which Weber² defines in terms of economic opportunity, and '*Stand*', which he defines in terms of 'social estimation'. The

¹ Tawney: "Harrington's Interpretation of His Age". *Proc. Brit. Ac.*, Vol. XXVII, p. 24.

² *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 633, 635.

Marxian theory is simple. After a history of other class conflicts, the owners of the means of production stand opposed to the proletariat; the number of the former will decrease, and the middle range will gradually get proletarianized—'precipitated into the proletariat', as the Communist Manifesto has it, so that a vast proletariat will then be able to dispossess the oppressors and usher in the class-less society. This simple scheme has not materialized. The small business still holds its own, and the large business has had to develop a bureaucracy of its own: the new middle-class of technicians and white-collar workers, who think themselves a cut above the worker at the bench. The percentage of income devoted to wages in 1911 was 39.5, and that devoted to salaries was 15.6. In 1934 these percentages were 41.5 and 26.5 respectively.¹ In April 1939 there were 382,709 non-industrial civil servants in departments with over 1,000 staff; in April 1947 the figure was 702,363. (*The Times*, July 2, 1947.)

The middle class from the point of view of class conflict is by no means dead, but at the same time it would be wrong to suggest that this amorphous collection acts as a political unit.

Besides determining a way of life, class frequently determines where its members will live, and changes of residential habit have left their mark on the unplanned layout of our cities. With the spread of new means of transport the 'residential areas' in the city have been deserted for mansions outside: "The manner of most gentlemen and noblemen also is to house themselves (if they possibly may) in the suburbs of the city, because most commonly, the air there being somewhat at large, the place is healthy." So quotes Mumford² from *The English Courtier*. These suburbs in turn get swamped by the outward-spreading city and their inhabitants fly further afield. Attempts may be made to keep select suburban streets uncontaminated by people whose uniform betrays their occupation, but once they get a footing the district is deemed to have declined, and those who can afford it make good their escape, while those who cannot, make excuses. When they can escape they scour the countryside for a 'dream cottage in woodland

¹ Clark: *National Income and Outlay* (Macmillan, 1937), p. 94.

² Mumford: *Culture of Cities*. (Secker & Warburg, 1940.)

setting; inglenook lounge, sun loggia, minstrel gallery, 4 bed, bath, etc.; $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres; 28 miles London'.¹

This social ecology has been observed in America. In Warner and Srole's *Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups*, for instance, 'Yankee City' is divided into four zones. Along the waterfront, in River Street, live the poor and the new immigrants, up on Hill Street live the upper-classes and the rich, between them is the climbing-ground, charged with resistances as one goes further away from the river, while outside the city lies Zone IV, 'a secondary gate of ingress', in which squat impoverished newcomers, waiting their chance to enter the competition for residence in a 'nice' neighbourhood.

Class mobility in time of great economic expansion is brisk; under conditions of stability, or the final closing of a frontier, it becomes sluggish. Under the later circumstances each class tends to recruit itself from its own members.² In England a group of studies were undertaken by Ginsberg³ in which the occupations of children were compared with those of their parents and grandparents; a slight upward trend was revealed.

Taking a wider view, we may ask whether those who take the lead in trade or manufacture at one time are followed by their own descendants or whether new waves of 'new' men replace them from time to time. Pirenne⁴ has analysed the successive waves of *entrepreneurs* from the wandering merchants of the 11th century (Godric of Finchale) to the industrial revolution, operating in phases of freedom and regulation. The successful adventurers of each phase settle down as *rentiers* and buy land, while 'new' men find their place in a world dominated by the 'restrictions of the old', or break new ground when these restrictions prove too irksome. Similar conclusions, on the more detailed scale of the medieval wool trade, are reached by Eileen Power;⁵ here, again, it is a case of 'new' men seizing new opportunities, rather than of established men changing their roles.

¹ Advertisement in *The Times*, July 30, 1947.

² Cf. Sorokin: *Class Mobility*.

³ Ginsberg: *Studies in Sociology*. (Methuen, 1932.)

⁴ Pirenne: *Les Périodes de l'Histoire sociale du Capitalisme*.

⁵ Power: *Medieval English Wool Trade*. (Oxford, 1941.)

Pareto,¹ too, formulated a general theory of 'circulation of *élites*'. According to him, men differ in their psychological make-up in ways which have important social repercussions. Those who are well endowed with what he calls the 'residues of combinations' are inventive, enterprising, and 'speculators', while those who have the 'residues of the persistence of aggregates' well developed are conservative, stabilizers and *rentiers*. The former are responsible for phases of expansion, but they have to call in the latter—the 'foxes'—to help them consolidate their position. The *rentiers*' regime is then, in turn, displaced by the 'lions' of enterprise, and so, without end, the process goes on.

In any society which has achieved stability and has saturated its area, so that there is no West to which pioneering spirits can escape, social mobility is bound to be difficult. Educational facilities tend to be more at the disposal of the dominant class,² 'social background' is liable to hamper aspirants. In the recent past the possibilities of 'rising' were very much slimmer than they are now. There was a turn of the tide in the 19th century when the civil service was thrown open to competitive examination. Trollope³ was furious.

"As what I now write will certainly never be read till I am dead," he says in his Autobiography, "I may dare to say what no one now dares to say in print—enough of us whisper it occasionally into our friends' ears. There are places in life which can hardly be well filled except by 'gentlemen'. The word is one the use of which almost subjects one to ignominy. . . . Berths in the Civil Service should be given exclusively to gentlemen."

New movements in education have long since made such a position out of date, but the sentiments expressed are not unheard. Finally, we must mention that under all regimes there are exceptional cases of mobility. Distinction in the world of art,

¹ Pareto: *Mind and Society*. (Cape, 1935, Vol. IV.)

² For America see: Lloyd Werner *et al.* *Who Shall be Educated? The Challenge of Unequal Opportunities*. (Kegan Paul, 1946.)

³ Trollope: *Autobiography* (Shakespeare Head ed., 1929), p. 29.

letters, science or sport are instances, and under autocratic rule the caprice of the rulers may raise the inferior to high rank, as is exemplified by the story told of Charlemagne by the Monk of St. Gall: the sons of some nobles had not profited by the educational opportunities given them as much as had the sons of poor men, and the Emperor, favouring talent at the expense of birth, gave 'splendid bishoprics and abbacies' to the latter and a mark of disapproval to the former.

The problem of class in Russia is of interest because the regime is officially class-less. We have seen, however, that there are marked differences in income and privilege, but this, it is said, does not lead to very unequal standards of life,¹ and though investment is possible, very little can be passed on by way of inheritance—a channel which is of major importance in perpetuating economic disparity.² Another factor which may give rise to class differences in Russia and certainly perpetuate them is differential educational opportunity. Before 1940, secondary education (15–17) was free to all who passed the requisite examination standard; since 1940 a small fee has been charged to all except very bright children, but it is hoped to make secondary education compulsory for all children by 1960, when all fees will be abolished.

Classification in terms of occupation is purely objective, and only achieves a hierarchic aspect as a reflection from the existing class structure, though certain occupations, such as metalworking, have been singled out from one society to another as having some intrinsic virtue or baseness. In a society in which there is a well-entrenched literary bureaucracy (China)—or a military-minded land-owning aristocracy (Japan)—industry and trade tend to be held in low repute; but this, as we have seen, was not the case in the early days of England's commercial development. All this does not, of course, mean that there is no connection between class and occupation. When social prestige is attributed to certain occupations, then these will be preferred by members of the upper-classes, and access to them from below will confer a certain class

¹ Bienstock *et al.*: *Management in Russian Industry and Agriculture*, p. 26.

² Cf. Wedgwood: *The Economics of Inheritance*. (Routledge, 1929.)

position. In 1911 the Registrar General attempted a hierarchical classification of English occupations into five classes:

- Class I: capitalists, managers, scientists, artists, professionals, etc. ;
 „ II: small shopkeepers, lower professionals, farmers, etc. ;
 „ III: skilled labour ;
 „ IV: semi-skilled labour ;
 „ V: unskilled labour ;

and for 1921 the percentage of the population falling into these grades was as follows:¹

All classes	I	II	III	IV	V
100	29.3	20.35	43.47	20.45	13.40

This rough classification is frequently used for statistical purposes, e.g. to determine the degree of intelligence required for each class of occupation, or the class-difference in mortality or incidence of illnesses.

In 1950 a new scale was developed by John Hall and D. Caradog Jones,² known as the 'Hall-Jones' scale, which has largely replaced that of the Registrar General for purposes of research. It comprises the following seven occupational classes:

1. Professional and High Administrative.
2. Managerial and Executive.
3. Inspectional, Supervisory and other Non-Manual, higher grade.
4. Inspectional, Supervisory and other Non-Manual, lower grade.
5. Skilled Manual and routine grades of Non-Manual.
6. Semi-skilled Manual.
7. Unskilled Manual.

The change in the prestige-level of occupation may be brought about partly by changes in remuneration, partly

¹Ginsberg: *Sociology*.

²*British Journal of Sociology*, I, p. 31. 1950.

by changes in technique which demand higher standards of education, and partly by the efforts of people employed in certain occupations to achieve 'professional status', as it is called. One after another the law, medicine, surgery, etc., have become 'respectable', ensuring high standards of professional conduct and trained efficiency.¹ These factors, increased remuneration and technical skill, by no means ensure improved social prestige: an office job may have higher prestige value though less well paid, than one which involves soiling the hands, and the mechanical skill now demanded of the farm labourer has not enhanced his social position. The position of the rat-catcher, on the other hand, is no doubt improved now that he is called a 'rodent-officer'.

The last basis of stratification which we need consider is that based on the administrative position. Variations in rank in the services, variation in responsibility in industrial management, and the graded hierarchy of the Church are obvious examples. Badges of rank and special clothes frequently mark out administrative status, and in the civil services grades are distinguished by the shape of chair upon which the official sits and size of the desk at which he writes. "In the Inland Revenue Department before the war there was a standard of 100 square feet for the first official in an office, and 60 square feet for every subsequent person."² Such official stratifications are to be found in every unit of administration from the Empires of the Ancient World and the Inca Empire of Peru, to the factories and Girl Guide and Boy Scout organizations of today.

These hierarchies—income level, occupational prestige, official position and social class—are all intimately related. Broadly speaking, members of the upper-classes in the social scale will be found in the upper sectors of the other hierarchies; and, conversely, those who achieve high positions in the occupational, income, or official grades improve their social position and that of their children. The four methods of grading do not, however, group together exactly the same

¹ Carr-Saunders: *The Professions*. (Oxford, 1933.)

² Evidence before a Home Office Committee of Enquiry, reported in *The Times*.

persons in their upper, middle and lower strata. A man may have a relatively high social position, a medium-range income, a relatively high occupational status and a variety of administrative ranks according to the role he plays in such administrative units as he belongs to.

This illustrates the pervasive and objective nature of the 'functional systems' with which we have been concerned: the system of power, the economic structure and the social stratifications. Men and women, born into a community, find these objectively before them. They start with certain life-chances determined by the position of their family in the social configuration, and their subsequent social action and intercourse with their fellow men are determined by the already existing, but always changing, pattern of social life in which they are enmeshed. Economic activity and practice are carried on within an existing framework; key positions of power, though they may change from time to time, are at any moment a part of the social landscape and, as such, independent of the particular individual who has to take account of them; orders of social prestige, change though they may, are matters of objective fact determining at any given moment the individual person's social responses.

VII

PUBLIC OPINION AND SOCIAL CONTROL

AT the end of the last chapter the objectivity of the various aspects of social structure with which we have been concerned was emphasized, but this objectivity is not the same as the objectivity of the physical world. It is true that the phenomenal world in which we live derives its meaningfulness from something more than the mere impression the physical world makes upon our senses, as was soon discovered by the advertiser who prepared a poster depicting a native on a bicycle being chased by a leopard, intending to show that the bicycle would help him to get away; the natives interpreted the poster to mean that if you rode a bicycle you were bound to be chased by a leopard. This is no place to discuss the philosophical problem of the relative status of physical phenomena, and such constructs as a 'nation', 'marriage', or 'the market'; but it is quite clear that the latter depend for their existence on a complicated system of beliefs, acceptances, expectations and habits. Society, therefore, means not only the bare skeletal structure, aspects of which we have attempted to describe, but something else which we may call a 'climate of opinion'.

Now the subject of 'Public Opinion', being concerned so obviously with what is going on in people's minds, is usually dealt with by social psychologists, but there are certain aspects of it which we must discuss. Public opinion has been described by Dicey¹ as 'a body of beliefs, convictions, sentiments, accepted principles or firmly rooted prejudices', words which bring out the cognitive and affective elements which constitute it. It is, as Ginsberg² puts it: 'a co-operative product'; it manifests itself in conversation, gestures, and grimaces, in the awareness of warmth or coldness when certain views are given utterance, in the topics which are chosen for discussion, and the attitude which is taken towards them. It, again, is

¹ Dicey: *Law and Opinion in England* (Macmillan, 2nd ed., 1926), p. 19.

² Ginsberg: *Psychology of Society*, p. 141.

quasi-objective to the individual who may shape his opinion to fit it or express himself with telltale emphasis, when he defies it.¹

The first difficulty we come up against is, as usual, a difficulty of current speech. We speak as though the 'public opinion of this country', 'of France', or 'of the United States' were a single homogeneous unity. On certain issues, and disregarding a few dissident views, this may be the case: war-time hatreds, a disaster at a pit or actions of excessive brutality, but such homogeneity is rare. Under closer inspection, 'Public Opinion' dissolves into the opinion of publics. If you move from one group to another within the same inclusive society you find different things being said, and different views being acceptable. The multiplicity is overwhelming. Two types of distinction may, however, be made: (a) according to the range of opinion and the way in which it unites or divides people, and (b) according to the topic about which the opinion is held.

A. (1) An opinion-attitude may concern the whole of an inclusive society, or it may concern only a group in the society, such as doctors, persons living in a village or town, or people working in a given factory; (2) whatever unit may be taken as the 'public' concerned, the opinion-attitude may be homogeneous on a certain issue or (3) the 'public' concerned may be divided into opponent groups. The whole country may be shocked by a railway disaster, a whole village may be indignant about the behaviour of the parson, or the workers in a factory may be unanimous in their approval, or disapproval, of some policy; on the other hand, the country is divided upon a variety of issues, the town may be divided about the Sunday opening of cinemas, and the doctors disagree about the projects for a National Health Service.

B. Opinions and attitudes are concerned (1) with contemporary events, (2) with relatively immediate policies, (3) with deeper-lying principles: e.g. actual handing over of

¹ Cf. Durkheim: *De la Division du Travail Social*. Ed. 1902, p. 46: "L'ensemble des croyances et des sentiments communs à la moyenne des membres d'une même société forme un système déterminé qui a sa vie propre; on peut l'appeler la conscience collective ou commune. Sans doute elle n'a pas pour substrat un organe unique; elle est, par définition, diffuse dans toute l'étendue de la société; mais elle n'a pas moins des caractères spécifiques qui en font une réalité distincte."

the mines, the nationalization policy of the Government, the general principles of socialism. From these examples it will be seen that opinion with regard to events, policies and principles is closely interconnected. Thus everyone, according to the role we are considering, as a member of the inclusive society, or a member of any sub-group to which he belongs, is subjected to the atmospheric influence: (1) of opinion in the small societies of which he is a member, with respect to day-to-day events, policies and principles which concern it; (2) of the clash of oppositional opinion in the inclusive society; (3) of sudden, almost unanimous, waves of indignation, hope, or anxiety which 'sweep the country'; or (4) of generally accepted policies and principles which underlie our attitudes as Englishmen to the changing panorama of events.

The material which is woven into 'public opinion' by the intercommunication of many minds is provided by similar experiences from person to person: the Press, the wireless, public meetings, books and so on. These agencies will have a different effect on different sub-groups, from one issue to another, because they operate upon an already existing dynamic set-up. It is, indeed, doubtful whether exhortation does much more than reinforce the opinions of those sections which already agree, leaving opposed sections unmoved or confirmed in their opposition. This, of course, is not always true, and one of the most important matters for social psychological inquiry is to discover what springs of uncertainty and unsatisfiedness are prerequisites to bring about a change of view. It would not be true to say that reason plays no part in convincing people of the righteousness of a policy or principle to which they are not initially favourable, but reason has to contend with the forces of interest and prejudice, and—so modern psychological research will insist—of unconscious attitude of guilt and hatred.

Pareto made a celebrated inquiry into the forces which give rise to opinion and attitude. He distinguishes first between logical action, in which the intended subjective purpose of action coincides with its objective result, and non-logical action, in which the ideology of the action is different from the objective result. He is not particularly interested in the former and

devotes his attention almost exclusively to the latter. The main-springs of non-logical action he calls 'residues', and these he groups under six headings: (1) residues of combination, which make us associate things together in all sorts of ways; (2) residues of the persistence of aggregates, which make us perpetuate associations we have made; (3) residues which make us express our sentiments through external acts; (4) residues in regard to socialibility, which enforce uniformity, neo-phobia, etc.; (5) residues which make us try to preserve our personal integrity against social pressure; (6) residues concerning sex.

These fundamental principles, which he expressly says are not instincts,¹ are verbalized into ideologies (or 'derivations', as he calls them), and we *think* we are pursuing the verbalized end, while *really* we are driven forward by our residues. A reader of Pareto's book cannot fail to get the impression that he takes (and gives) great pleasure in calling attention to the 'illogical' and silly behaviour of men. In fact, the 'residues' are by no means a satisfactory list, and Pareto's distinction between 'logical' and 'non-logical' action is not a happy one, because 'logical' action in his sense must have some 'non-logical' driving force, and may well operate in the service of any of his 'residues'. For all that, he has done a great service in pointing out the non-logical basis of human social action.²

The picture which we are attempting to conjure up is of an inclusive society, with its sub-groups, all of them pervaded by living dynamic opinion-trends, memories of the recent past, various and frequently opposed interests, formulated beliefs and principles, and at any moment this complex 'apperceptive mass', as the old psychologists would have it, is presented with newspapers, wireless programmes, books, speeches, and current predicaments which form the subject-matter of conversation. Furthermore, there is something to be said for Mussolini's observation: "Really, the tendency of our modern folks to believe . . . is quite past belief";³ there would seem to be a hankering after satisfying formulations. Moreover,

¹ Pareto: *Mind and Society* (Cape, 1935), sec. 875.

² Cf. Talcott Parsons: *Structure of Social Action*. (McGraw-Hill, 1937.)

³ Albigh: *Public Opinion* (New York, 1939), p. 15.

we must not forget that the people who write the newspapers, organize the wireless programmes, speak to us over the air or face to face, are themselves members of the society in which they operate; they, too, are caught up in the network of opinion.

In the British Isles¹ there were in 1938 20 morning, 4 evening, and 11 Sunday papers published in London, and 24 morning, 70 evening, and 5 Sunday papers published in the English provinces. There are about four major groups of owners,² and comparatively few papers are privately owned. Their importance lies not so much in the editorial views they put forward, for reasons we have suggested above, as in being the 'principal agenda-making body for everyday conversation'.³ Opinion cannot be about nothing, and the newspapers and the wireless news bulletins provide the stuff of opinion in so far as it concerns everyday events and policies. This means that the general layout of the papers, the prominence given to certain items, and the language used in headlines is of paramount importance. As a general agency for the spread of information, the newspapers came into the field on 28 May, 1896, when the *Daily Mail* appeared at a halfpenny a copy.

Broadcasting started its career in 1920, when the Westinghouse Electric Company of East Pittsburgh broadcast the results of the Harding election. The B.B.C., as a privately owned company, dates from 1922. This means that the 'public' which has immediate access to current events has been enormously increased during the last fifty years, and that the possibility of exploiting the hopes, fears, discomforts, and ambitions of vast numbers of people has been so magnified that political techniques have been transformed. More people have the vote and are politically alert than before, and the apparatus for approaching them is there to hand. 'Public opinion' before, say, 1850 must have meant something vastly different from what it means today, and we must beware of interpreting such expressions of opinion as have survived, or

¹ P.E.P. Report on the British Press, 1938, p. 47.

² Camrose: *British Newspapers and Their Controllers* (Cassell, 1947), p. 15.

³ P.E.P. Report, p. 33.

such moral and legal formulations as we may come across from the remote past, as being characteristic of the whole of the society from whence they come.

Besides the influence of the various agencies of information and exhortation, acting on a specific array of interests, hopes, and fears, in a setting of principles and assumptions, which have descended with imperceptible, but none the less real, changes from a remote past, there is another factor of importance. Small groups of men and women in a society decide that certain changes should be made; it may be the abolition of child-labour, alcohol or slavery, it may be the introduction of compulsory education, or improved treatment of the mentally afflicted.

Within such a circle, the 'public opinion', on whatever topic they have at heart, is pungent and acts coercively upon the timorous doubter. By various devices they attempt to persuade the general 'public', and, more particularly, the legislature. If they are successful, permissive or compulsory legislation may be achieved, even though vast masses of the public may be indifferent or even hostile. Subsequent generations brought up under the new regime know no different, and gradually what was once an innovation is so taken for granted that no one would dream, even in days of crisis, of making children work in factories, of reintroducing slave-labour, or of substituting the free display of lunatics for the more expensive mechanical entertainment of the cinema. That this does not always work is obvious enough when we remember the fate of prohibition in the United States of America.

Presumably there must be some sure method of preventing evasion of the law, but the law itself must be consonant with some, at least, of the desires which move the majority of men. Love of children and sympathy with the afflicted are real enough, even though they may be held in check by other motives; one must suppose that anti-drink laws appealed to nothing in the general public of America which would serve to counterbalance the inevitable irritation at having customary desires thwarted. One cannot, of course, generalize about any particular subject-matter of legislation; the charismatic tradition of many Islamic communities is already so firmly

fixed against the consumption of alcohol that specific legislation is unnecessary. The point is that for legislation to be accepted and to generate customary ways of life it must appeal to existing tendencies, whether these be cultural products of long standing or basic characteristics of human nature.

Attempts have been made of recent years to measure 'Public Opinion': the 'Gallup Poll' in America, Mass Observation and the Institute of Public Opinion in England are examples, to which we may add the 'Listener Research' carried on by the B.B.C. The difficulty of such enterprises will be obvious from our analysis of the nature of 'public opinion'; some method must be adopted to ensure an adequate 'cross-section'. Accordingly various sex- and class-categories are distinguished, proportions of these in the total population are estimated, and in every sample an appropriate number of persons is approached. Another difficulty lies in the framing of suitable questions, such that the answers are unambiguous and warrant an inference to future behaviour. In spite of all these obstacles to accuracy, some of these 'polls' have proved singularly predictive. It must, however, be noticed that we have here an example of a complication in measurement, from which measurement in the physical sciences is free, and that is the fact that the actual publication of results may possibly influence their confirmation in the future. The very measurement of 'public opinion' may be a method of influencing it.

It may be objected that the concept 'public opinion' has been used in a much wider sense than is usual in ordinary parlance. Admittedly we usually have in mind the ripples on the surface which are concerned with contemporary events, but this wide range which we have been employing, bringing in the deep-seated assumptions which are so accepted that they are hardly mentioned, is important for the sociologist. We cannot understand the shifting changes of 'public opinion', whether of the country or of a factory, unless we view them as determined to a very great extent by unspoken principles. It is this, for instance, that baffles the foreigner in a strange land, or the colonial administrator when he conscientiously does his best for the native population. Human social action is seldom, if ever, a purely *ad hoc* adjustment to a situation for the purpose

of achieving the satisfaction of a narrow material desire. The channels or 'Folk-ways', as W. G. Sumner called them, along which we may achieve satisfaction of our needs are patterned by the culture to which we belong, and these channels are sanctified by public acceptance, perpetuated by habit, protected by law, and justified by appeals to morality and religion. Such are the main agencies of social control—the 'mores' which guide us along the 'folk-ways'.

Social Control is of various kinds: custom (with the attendant concepts of convention, fashion, and etiquette); law; morals; and religion. In ordinary usage these form something of a hierarchy of justification for action: it is the custom, it is the law, it is right, it is the will of God. If we take 'custom' in the sense of a way of doing things, such as wearing black as a sign of mourning, shaking hands rather than rubbing noses, having certain things to eat at certain times, holding festivals at certain seasons, having family prayers and so forth, we put it on a lower level of importance than law or morality. Custom, in this sense, merges into ritual, the difference lying in the accentuation in the latter case of a stereotyped series of responses which may lend dignity to the performance, and may once have had (and may still be felt as having) some magical significance which depends upon accurate performance.

Fashion is well described by MacIver¹ as 'the socially approved sequence of variation on a cultural theme'. Fashions in dress, literature, painting and general conduct of life imply certain habits upon which the fashionable changes flourish, though it is true that fashion itself has a modifying effect on general custom. It is, on the one hand, a compromise between desire for novelty and desire for conformity, and, on the other, a constant reminder of the dynamic processes of social life.

Convention and etiquette are social conveniences, which smooth difficulties in social relations, and serve the official aspect of social life, which is constantly in danger of being disturbed by personal feelings and reactions.

These norms undoubtedly play a part in determining behaviour-probabilities, in making us do this rather than that,

¹ MacIver: *Society*, p. 364.

but they are concerned rather with current responses at particular times and in specific situations than with the more general normative principles which guide our social intercourse.

When, however, we penetrate more deeply into the problem of social control we find ourselves pursuing our way through a morass of ambiguities, with the great forests of ethical controversy on the one hand, and the vast rambling edifice of law on the other; only too easily do we lose ourselves in the strange corridors of the one, or find ourselves entangled in the thickets of the other. The word 'custom' itself presents difficulties; its meaning ranges from the trivialities of social intercourse to the boundaries of law in such phrases as 'the laws and customs of the realm', and the 'custom of the manor'. The language of jurisprudence is worse; 'right', 'rights', 'a law', 'the law', 'the reign of law' are words and expressions which have been known to confuse even the expert.

Apart, however, from linguistic problems, there are differences of attitude towards the whole problem of 'social control', under which heading we include for the moment custom, law, and morality.

Durkheim, in his *Règles de la Méthode sociologique*, bids us treat sociological facts '*comme des choses*', and speaks of them as being external and coercive. This makes us victims of something outside us; but later on, in his *Education Morale*, and in the *Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, his tone changes, and moral obligation is presented as something more of the order of internally accepted discipline, and he speaks of a 'unity of allegiance to a common body of values'.¹ This notion of values as somehow internal to a society and not imposed from without is clearly the right one, if only because there is no 'outside' force which can impose a morality. With the problem of the objective reference of moral predicates we are not concerned. Whether there be external magnets which draw us, or whether moral values are but the projection of our own feelings, it is in societies that the attractive force is felt, and in societies, in their various predicaments, that the moral principles are generated.

If we go further than this we can see that custom, law, and morality are not only stabilizing controls which bind us to

¹ Cf. Talcott Parson's account of Durkheim in *Structure of Social Action*.

fixed channels of action, but that they are also constantly changing. This point is brought out by the American sociologist Cooley in his *Social Process* (1918). He insisted that revolt against institutions is as characteristic of social control as what he called the 'ethos of the mores'. A society, for Cooley, is creative.

The same notion is implicit in the work of Hobhouse, for whom the mind of man, and human institutions, are endowed with a tendency towards greater rationality.

Gurvitch¹ takes much the same view, so far as the attribution to societies of a creative aspect is concerned; he distinguishes three *forms* of control: "(a) symbolic cultural patterns (rules included); (b) values, ideas, and ideals themselves; (c) experiencing, seeking and creating new values, ideas and ideals". The *kinds* of social control include religion, morality, and law (the nature of which, for Gurvitch, we shall examine presently). The *agencies* of social control are the various inclusive societies, with their different control systems, according as they are uncivilized, patriarchic, feudal, bourgeois, capitalist or socialistic, together with the groups they contain: the family, the Church, the State, the trade unions, the schools, clubs, etc. These aspects of control must be distinguished from a fourth: the *means* or *techniques* of social control, such as propaganda, education (though Gurvitch includes this among the 'kinds' of social control), punishment of various kinds, ostracism, public obloquy, the stocks, the cold shoulder and laughter.

The difficulty in formulating any theory which attempts to cope with social control as a totality of values, spontaneously generated and ever changing, lies in the fact that one can hardly help implying some internal mystic urge which keeps a society together and causes its patterned changes. There are sociologists—Durkheim is one—who do not shrink from such a hypothesis. The solution of the problem may come from an intensive study of small face-to-face groups by social psychologists. It may be that when a group is formed for some co-operative process, the bare fact of co-operative activity,

¹ 'Social Control' in *Twentieth Century Sociology*, ed. Gurvitch (New York, 1945), p. 290.

carried on by individuals each of whom has the same end in view, may generate habits and dispositions the study of which will throw a light on the generating of social values and ideals. Until this is done, however, we must at all costs avoid the notion that what are called 'social controls' operate *against* the natures of the persons who are submitted to them, and if this means talking *as though* a society had a unifying force which springs from the 'social side' of man's nature, then that is better than ignoring co-operation and creativeness in social relations.

Law, as we have seen, is included by Gurvitch as only one of the social controls, and this view is taken by several sociologically minded jurists, notably by Roscoe Pound. They differ, however, in their usage of the word. The problem here is, happily, a relatively simple one. Shall we keep the word 'law' for the specialized systems with their codes, their apparatus for settling disputes, and their penalties for those who have broken the rules, or shall we regard these as mere specializations of a similar kind of control which may be found in unorganized forms or in organized forms, but without what we ordinarily think of as 'legal' sanction?

The argument in favour of the former view is that the science of jurisprudence, with its vast literature, makes it convenient to use the word 'law' in a specialized sense, while the arguments for the latter are (1) that primitive peoples have something which we should like to call 'law'; (2) that codified and common law springs from less-organized regulative principles, in terms of which the early judges or old men gave their decisions; and (3) that the codes of a club, a university or a trade-union, and the regulative principles of a household, or of a group of men working on a stack, are, in their way, as determinant of action as the 'law of the land'.

Roscoe Pound and most jurists take the first view. The opposite line is taken by Gurvitch, whose view we shall discuss shortly, by Hauriou, with his purposive groups or 'institutions', each tending towards incorporative personification, and each having its own regulative principles, by Timasheff, with his hierarchy of power-structures, with the state as merely *primus inter pares*, and by Ehrlich, with his plurality of societies, each so permeated by an 'inner pacific order' that the individual

members are as little aware of it as the competent chess-player is of the rules of the game while he is playing it.

One alternative might be to use the word 'custom' for unorganized, or loosely organized, law, as is presumably intended by such a statement as that 'law is codified custom' or 'is based on custom'. This, however, is not satisfactory. Malinowski,¹ in his detailed study of the Trobriand Islanders, disposes of the myth of the savage hidebound by routine, which was set up against the equally mythical notion of the savage as a noble fellow unchained by any rules at all.

Primitive man is entangled in a network of reciprocal obligations, about which he may grumble, and which he may try to evade like any other man, but these mutual obligations are held in place by 'very complex psychological and social inducements'. His relations with his fellow men, in manipulating a canoe, in barter and exchange, and in the religious ceremonial interchanges on such important domestic occasions as death and marriage, are carefully regulated so that he can expect reciprocal duties from those who have the right to his service. "'Civil law,'" writes Malinowski, "the positive law governing all the phases of tribal life, consists of a body of binding obligations, regarded as a right by one party, and acknowledged as a duty by the other, kept in force by a specific mechanism of reciprocity and publicity inherent in the structure of their society" (p. 58). This system seems something more than 'custom' in the ordinary sense, and Malinowski makes the distinction. There are stereotyped methods of craftsmanship, and rules of good manners, but these are different from the framework of mutual obligations, and the latter deserves the name of 'law'.

This account of primitive regulations, which could be paralleled elsewhere and would seem to be characteristic of the simpler societies, shows Durkheim's² celebrated contrast between the 'repressive' law, which he believed to characterize simpler 'segmental' societies, where everyone had to behave alike, and 'restitutive law', which characterizes the solidarity of those societies which have developed division of labour and

¹ Malinowski: *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*. (Kegan Paul, 1926.)

² Durkheim: *Division du Travail*.

which he called 'organic', to be over-simplified. The opposition of criminal to civil law is not satisfactory in any case, because it may be argued that both aim at the social interest in their different ways,¹ and it would appear that 'civil law' is to be found in primitive society quite as much as—perhaps more than—penal law.

However that may be, it does not look as though the word 'custom' is a satisfactory name for pre-codified law, but it is extremely difficult to find a satisfactory word intermediate between 'custom' and 'law'.

The sociology of law in the narrow sense, as Pound² has pointed out, has to consider three things: "A. What is better called the social order, that is, the regime of adjusting relations and ordering conduct by the systematic application of the force of a politically organized society; B. the authoritative grounds or guides to determination of disputes in such a society; C. what Cardozo has taught us to call the judicial process, to which we must add the administrative process." It may be said to derive from the philosophy of law. The philosophers sought to justify legal demands by reference to a law of nature to which they should approximate, or from an analysis of the nature of man, or the nature of liberty or the nature of the state.

Such investigations into what law *ought* to be naturally provokes a realistic reaction. We have Austin's celebrated definition to the effect that: "Laws properly so called are a species of command. But, being a *command*, every law properly so called flows from a *determinate* source or emanates from a determinate author," to which he adds that: "Every sanction properly so called is an eventual evil annexed to a command." In our own day Chief Justice O. W. Holmes³ wrote that "prophecies of what the courts will do in fact, and nothing more, are what I mean by law", while an extreme realist school declares that the actual words and gestures of lawyers are the proper study of the legal sociologist.

Such realist pinning of attention to what law *is* gives rise to

¹ Roscoe Pound: 'Sociology of Law' in *Twentieth Century Sociology*, p. 307.

² *Twentieth Century Sociology*, ed. Gurvitch, p. 300.

³ Holmes: 'The Path of Law' in *Collected Legal Papers* (1921), p. 173.

two converging trains of thought: one concerned with legal order, the other with the judicial process. The historical approach of Savigny and Maine showed that law is neither the *fiat* of a sovereign body nor the pale reflection of an immutable order laid up in Heaven, but that it has a history of development from a time before state authority existed as we know it, and, furthermore, it was pointed out that International Law is no less 'law' because no sovereign has uttered it, while Gierke differentiated between the kind of law which goes with collectivities based on collaboration (*Genossenschaften*) and the kind which is appropriate to those based on domination (*Herrschaft*).

This hostility to the idea that the state dictates law, and that that is all there is to say, leads to a denial that the state is even necessary for the emergence of order. The source of law must be sought in the nature of society itself, and Duguit goes so far as to say that if any command runs counter to the order which springs from a natural tendency to social interdependence it is no law at all; he even suggests a tribunal composed of representatives of all social classes to judge of the legality of the law.

This extrusion of the state—a position reached by Comte and Spencer from a somewhat different direction—is hardly satisfactory; it is unrealistic, and ignores the fact that the state is part of the inclusive society and not an external interfering body. However, the search for the source of order in the nature of society itself leads to the views of the writers mentioned above, and the denial that the 'state' is the necessary fountain of order makes for the claim of *any* society, whether inclusive or included, to have its imminent order dignified by the name of 'law'.

In every society, however small, each member has his own will (Kant), interests (Ihering), or values (Weber), and these must be accommodated to the purpose of the whole, or to the mutual interest of contracting parties.

Such is the function of law.

"Law," writes Gurvitch,¹ "represents an attempt to realize in a given social environment the idea of justice

¹ Gurvitch: *Sociology of Law* (Kegan Paul, 1947), p. 47.

(that is, a preliminary and essentially variable reconciliation of conflicting spiritual values embodied in a social structure), through multilateral imperative-attributive regulations based on a determined link between claims and duties."

Inclusive societies consist not only of persons, but of groups with various orders of their own, and the claims or 'values' of these must be adjusted in the whole, just as in each sub-group the spontaneous springs of order give rise to their own parochial adjustments. There must, therefore, according to Gurvitch, be different types of law for different types of 'sociality': 'social' law for groups, which will differ according to whether the groups are loose masses, communities or closely compact communions, and 'inter-individual' law, which will differ according to whether the relationship be *rapprochement*, separation, or a combination of both.

Furthermore, the inclusive societies will have different senses of what is just, according to their structure. It will be one thing if they are pervaded by a magical belief in the charismatic quality of a king, another if the society is a loose hierarchy of autonomies as in feudal society. A rationalized city or an empire system with their commercial and administrative problems present other alternatives, and so does a modern state, with its doctrine of freedom of contract and the need, which Weber pointed out, for a rational legal system as a framework of predictable probabilities in which capitalism can develop.

So far as the 'nature of the judicial process' is concerned, we have the analysis of it by Cardozo,¹ a Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States. He shows that the bare application of rules by logical deduction is not the sole task of the judge, partly because few cases are strictly analogical to previous ones, and partly because the very meaning of the guides with which he is provided changes with changing social needs and sensitivities. The judicial power is not a static intellectual game, it fulfils a social function and must therefore be influenced by the creative generation of norms which is part of social activity.

This deriving of law from spontaneous order is undoubtedly

¹ Cardozo: *The Nature of the Judicial Process*. (Yale, 1941.)

right, and the blurring of the distinction between organized legal order and other, less organized, or subsidiary, orders, marking out the competences of each, has its advantages from a sociological point of view. There is, however, the danger, which we have noticed in Duguit, and which we find also in Gurvitch, that the immanent tendencies to social interdependence should be stressed so much that we forget the conscious law-making of the state institutions, which ostensibly springs from decisions made by governments for what they deem to be the advantage of the society as a whole.

Much law-making is, doubtless, the making *de jure* of what has spontaneously developed *de facto*, but much is not. It is absurd to deny the word 'law' to the regulations which are promulgated and enforced by the state, and it is false to say that such regulations are always to be deplored. The fact is that even if you consider 'law' in the ordinary narrow sense, the content of it is not homogeneous with respect to its origins. The 'sociological school' runs the risk of being as philosophical and unrealistic as the schools which it sets out to displace. The fact is that organized law springs from at least two sources: (1) 'spontaneous' adjustments, and (2) conscious administration; sometimes the one type of origin, sometimes the other, is emphasized in any piece of legislation.

Whatever view may be taken about the appropriateness of using the word 'law' of the regulative systems of all groups, the problem of the development of organized systems of law in the narrower sense remains. Broadly speaking, we may agree with Llewellyn, another American lawyer, whose writings are brisk and colloquial, that organized law, in the popular sense, develops for the purpose of 'cleaning up messes', but the types of 'messes' which have had to be cleaned up, and the sensitivity of society to the undesirability of a 'mess', have been different from age to age.

Hobhouse¹ has traced the development of organized justice from a regime of personal or group self-help, bringing out the parts played by 'sacral offences', which were publicly important because the repercussions might affect the groups as a whole, occasional justice when the sympathies of a tribe

¹ Hobhouse: *Morals in Evolution*, Pt. I, chap. iii.

are aroused, the institution of an optional adjustment of disputes, regulated vengeance, which might take the form of a slanging match, a moral fight or armed combat, and the importance of the 'King's peace' for purposes of administration, together with a preference felt by the weak for royal justice, when their own strength was too feeble to ensure victory.

An interesting account of the difficulties which beset the attempt to establish a legal system in a society of individualistic Norsemen is to be found in the Icelandic saga of 'Burnt Njal'.

In early days the old men or a charismatic judge delivered his oracular verdict ('Kadi-justiz', as Weber calls it), and sometimes the populace played a part by acclamation.¹ In China the Emperor sent out general ethical directions, but left the actual decision to his representatives on the spot, while an 18th-century emperor, Kang Hsi, urged that "those who have recourse to the courts be treated without any pity, and in such a manner that they shall be disgusted with law, and tremble to appear before the judges", in order to keep litigation at a minimum.²

In cases where an oracular judgment is demanded, one of the most important problems was the nature of the question to be asked, a problem which has played an important part in the early history of English law, and the study of which is one of the springs of jurisprudence.

There has been a change, too, in the attitude towards the 'mess' itself. In early days it was the act and the injury that mattered, and the balance could only be restored by some equivalent damage, whether to the person of the guilty party or to one of his family or clan. When reparation is the main concern, compensation in goods for damage, even for murder, is a natural consequence, but when the accusing finger moves towards the 'responsible' person (or thing), then punishment and its various justifications come to the fore.

The codification of existing regulative principles, or the pronouncement of public decrees to correct current practice,

¹ Weber: *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 409.

² Willoughby: *Constitutional Government in China* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1922), p. 50.

springs from various causes: the need for the authorities to protect the weak from the pressure of economic development (e.g. codes of Urkagina, Hammurabi, Solon—examples pointing to the incompleteness of a theory which derives *all* law from spontaneous orderliness), the demand of the unprivileged for the publication of the laws which the privileged have hitherto interpreted (e.g. the Twelve Tables); the desire of a privileged class to stabilize their position (e.g. laws of Manu and Lycurgus); the need for a statement of traditional practices (code of Leviticus and post-exilic code); the need to cope with foreigners (e.g. Anglo-Saxon codes and the development of the *fus gentium*); to which must be added the general administrative needs of a complex society after a social upheaval (e.g. Code Napoléon, Soviet Law).

Granted that law, as commonly understood, is a functional system integrated in the general system of social controls, it is obvious that the relation between law and ethics is extremely close. The sanctions of morality are so unreliable that they must, in matters regarded as essential in any community, be backed up by pains and penalties of which the state has the monopoly. At the same time, the law is concerned with regulations which cannot easily be derived from any moral principles, and morality bids us not stand pat upon our legal rights, and imposes upon us wider duties to our neighbours than the law does. The two kinds of control have, indeed, different functions, but moral principles are always the justification given for legal principles and for particular legislation, even though from time to time the justification may not satisfy us, and the grand principle which the law seeks to embody, and in terms of which the judges interpret it, is the moral principle of justice.

Quite apart, then, from the sociological considerations with which we have dealt above, the law cannot be regarded merely as an arbitrary technique for keeping order, it is always an attempt to achieve justice, according to the lights of the society or of its rulers. The difficulty is, of course, that estimations of justice vary, and the legal *apparatus* may be so exploited by those who control it that it is used as a weapon of violence and all pretence of legality is given up.

The sociology of morals is too vast a subject to be dealt with here. We all know that morality has a different content as we pass from one society to another, but, as Ross¹ has pointed out, these differences can well be exaggerated. Such duties as fidelity, reparation, requital, equitable distribution and beneficence are to be found everywhere, and many of the variations in moral codes can be explained in terms of the special predicaments in which societies have found themselves.² The main significant problem, which is missed by the moral relativist, or not satisfactorily explained by him, is that human action should be judged in terms of the categories 'good' and 'bad' at all. If morality is but prudence, it is odd that so much that is imprudent should nevertheless be regarded as 'good'.

Morality, law, and custom are not the only kinds of social control. Overriding them all is the religious formulation within which they take shape. To find a definition of religion which will satisfy everyone is, indeed, impossible; if it attempts to cover all the varieties which are included in a book on 'Comparative Religion' it is too vague; if it singles out characteristics which the framer of the definition thinks essential to 'true' religion it is liable to be too narrow. Perhaps the most satisfactory statement of the function of religion is that given by Hobhouse:³ an effort on the part of man to get on terms with the world, while an essential feature, which differentiates between a philosophical attempt to get on terms with the universe and a religious one is Durkheim's distinction between the sacred and the profane.

Religion, it is generally agreed, is more than mere belief, it involves feeling and action as well, and Thouless⁴ has introduced all these aspects in his definition of religion as "a felt practical relationship with what is believed in as a super-human being or beings".

There is, however, another concept—magic—which is closely connected with religion, but which some writers

¹ Ross: *The Right and the Good*. (Oxford, 1930.)

² Ginsberg: *Reason and Unreason in Society*.

³ Hobhouse: *Morals in Evolution* (Chapman & Hall, 6th ed.), p. 398.

⁴ Thouless: *Psychology of Religion* (Cambridge, 1923.)

sharply distinguish from it. Among primitive peoples, among the less-tutored members of our own society, and occasionally manifesting itself in the unreflective behaviour of civilized men, we find actions which seem to imply causal relations and efficacies which are not validated by scientific knowledge. The Rev. James Macdonald told Frazer¹ that "in his boyhood, when he was fishing with companions about Loch Aline and they had had no bites for a long time, they used to make a pretence of throwing one of their fellows overboard and hauling him out of the water, as if he were a fish; after that the trout or sillock would begin to nibble, according as the boat was on fresh or salt water". "In Prussia they say that if you cannot catch a thief, the next best thing you can do is to get hold of a garment which he may have shed in his flight; for if you beat it soundly the thief will fall sick."² These are examples of what Frazer calls 'imitative' and 'contagious' magic respectively, and according to him it is when "a tardy recognition of the inherent falsehood and barrenness of magic set the more thoughtful part of mankind to cast about for a truer theory of nature" that religion develops as "a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man, which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life". Now besides these practices, which imply a causal relation, there is another set of beliefs which are usually called 'magical'. Certain people or places or things are felt to be imbued with some strange potency, a 'charismatic' grace, which renders them dangerous, mysterious, and effective. This potency is often called by a name used for it in Melanesia: '*mana*', and, according to Marett,³ regard for this 'sacred' agency is the basis from which religion has sprung.

Magic ritual certainly seems to be associated with the 'sacred' aspect of existence rather than with the 'profane', though ordinary activities are frequently reinsured by magical accompaniments. According to Malinowski,⁴ magic practices are distinguished from religious ones by the fact that they

¹ Frazer: *The Golden Bough* (abridged edition), (Macmillan, 1922), p. 18.

² *Ib.*, p. 44.

³ Marett: *The Threshold of Religion*. (Oxford, 1909.)

⁴ Malinowski: 'Magic, Science, and Religion', in *Science, Religion and Reality*, ed. J. Needham. (Sheldon Press, 1925.)

always have a definite end in view, a definite effect which they are intended to produce, while religious ceremonial is always an end in itself—the placing of the worshippers in contact with spiritual forces, the collective emphasizing of certain faiths, such as the immortality of the soul, and the solemn inculcation of traditional morality. Furthermore, he insists that magic is essentially a human power, exerted by means of a spell, and resident in a specific charismatic human being.

The implications of magical practices have given rise to various speculations about the mentality of primitive man. Kelsen¹ holds that primitive man views every happening in nature as being determined by personal intentions. Primitive man, according to him, cannot view nature save as personified, and, as it were, socialized—that is to say, acting in accordance with the system of obligations and retaliations which are characteristic of society as he knows it.

Hobhouse² and Levy Bruhl³ in very different ways also suggest that primitive magical practices are due to the immaturity of the savage mind, which has not developed the differentiated categories of cause and effect, substance and attribute (Hobhouse), or is still in a state of mystic participation with other elements in the universe (Levy Bruhl), while the psycho-analysts point out that a magical belief in the power of ideas is characteristic of infancy, and still lurks in the unconscious part of the civilized mind. This interpretation of magic in terms of immaturity has, however, been disputed.

Malinowski⁴ describes how the savages he lived among had perfectly rational beliefs about the physical causes which play a part in the making of a successful garden, but used spells and magic-working gestures to ensure the success of their activities; 'magic' for them was an additional explanatory and useful system which filled in the interstices of ignorance or lack of skill.

Religion, concerned as it is with the forces which mould man's destiny, will vary in its formulation with the current

¹ Kelsen: *Nature and Society*. (Kegan Paul, 1946.)

² Hobhouse: *Morals in Evolution*, p. 384.

³ Levy Bruhl: *L'Âme Primitive*. (Paris, 1927.)

⁴ Malinowski, *ib.*, p. 30.

conceptions of the nature of man, and the world he inhabits, and with the matters which are of supreme importance to him at any stage of his development. Whatever may be the truth about the impersonal force of '*mana*' (Melanesia), '*orenda*' or '*wakanda*' (North American Indian)—and we know very little about such beliefs—it is certain that in the early stages of religious belief the world is thought to be populated with spirits and ghosts, of a helpful or harmful nature. Where fertility is of importance, religion will sanctify that aspect of providence; where the forces of nature are matters of concern, religion will sanctify the approach to them; while death, initiation to the traditions of the group, and other important episodes in life, will be surrounded with religious ceremonial, which serves to encourage the constructive attitudes of the believers, and to counteract the fears and temptations to individual licence, which would serve to break up the harmony of the tribe.

The more elaborate polytheism, which still may have a background of primitive magic, removes the powers that govern the universe into another sphere, and endows them with more personal characters. They may, as in Greece, be themselves subject to a rule of moral law, and act as protectors of good and avengers of evil.

Gradually a spiritual world is conceived which stands opposed to the world of every day. In India, and, with Taoism, in China, the everyday world shrinks into such unimportance that it is a mere illusion; in Persia life is portrayed as a struggle between the forces of light and the forces of dark and evilness, while for a brief moment in Egypt Amenophis IV, in defiance of the priesthood, conceived of a single God from whom all goodness flows, as the light from the sun. The Jewish prophets later on proclaimed a single God of righteousness, who desired from his worshippers goodness of heart rather than burnt offerings.

This brief and inadequate account of the varieties of religious formulation is merely intended to remind the reader of that very variety. It is a fact which makes it impossible to expect that any single theory of the social function of religion will account for all cases. Durkheim, in his '*Formes élémentaires*

de la vie religieuse', puts forward a view based on a study of the totemic beliefs and practices of the Australian native. He asks: What is the nature of the 'sacred'? It is something which operates coercively from outside, and yet it finds an echo in our hearts. Surely that, Durkheim says, is just what society is? The 'sacred' for him is the social pull, the gods are projections of social unity, while ritual, with its orderly gyrations, seems to reinforce social order and solidarity. No doubt there is some truth in this—gods have been identified with cities and with groups of men—but it fails to account for private religious experience and for the universal religions which are certainly not backed by a felt unity of mankind.

Weber's contributions to the sociology of religion are concerned with its social aspects. In the chapter devoted to religion in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* he relates types of religious belief to types of believers. There is no pretence at a one-to-one relationship which can be universally generalized; it is rather that certain classes of men in various predicaments find certain formulations attractive. The priests and rulers of empires tend to favour a single dominant god, who keeps order in the universe. Peasants tend to preserve traditional magic beliefs, but develop a religious fervour of their own when oppressed, as the Jewish peasants were, by the city-dwellers. A warrior nobility, who believe themselves to be worthy enough, are unlikely to generate an atmosphere of piety, they favour rather a belief in Fate, in gods of battle,¹ in a religiously phrased 'fight for the faith' (cf. Mithraism), and in an after-life of reward rather than salvation. The Confucian officials preserve a belief in an orderly, rational, non-salvationist 'Way of Life', leaving the lower orders to their magical practices. The *petit-bourgeois* provides, according to Weber, a seed-bed for a variety of developments, leaning to sectarianism of a salvationist character (Christianity, he says,² is a typical '*Handwerkreligiosität*'). The lower classes find solace in quasi-orgiastic ceremonial (early Methodism and the Salvation Army), while the intellectual, seeking some unifying vision of the meaning

¹ Cf. Chadwick: Comparison between Norse and Greek religion in *The Heroic Age*. (Cambridge, 1912.)

² *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 275.

of life, may seek salvation in rationalized forms of mental discipline.

The second of Weber's contributions concerns the relation between the charismatic prophet, the 'tool of god', with a message to deliver: 'the law says . . . but I say unto you', and the priesthood, who tend to consolidate their scriptures against him.¹ Particularly interesting is his theory of the reduction of the charismatic succession to a tradition, as hidebound and scripture-bound as the priestly tradition which it set out to break. This '*Veralltäglicbung*' of the charisma, the transformation of a charismatic authority into an everyday organization, takes place not only in the world of religion, but, when the charisma attaches to a military or political leader, it takes place in the world of lay affairs. The problem of the succession to the leader, the part played by his followers, and the reverence paid to his teaching is one which we can watch today in the drama of world affairs.

Weber's third contribution has already been mentioned. In the *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* he studies the interaction between religious ideas and values and the social and economic life of China, India, the Jews, and Europe at the time of the Reformation. His main purpose is to discover, by application of the comparative method, what was present in Europe when modern capitalism developed, and absent elsewhere where it might have developed (so far as resources were concerned), but did not. The general conclusion has been indicated above, but there is far more in these studies than that. With prodigious learning he analyses the shifting changes in the religious and social history of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism and Christianity, and his work is a model of sociological interpretation.

Finally, three problems which arise out of a study of social controls must be mentioned, though there is no room for any adequate discussion.

If we look on social controls as forming an integrated whole, each kind of control influencing every other, the question of causal relation between kinds of control is raised. For example, do changes in religious formulations precede changes in moral

¹ *Ib.*, p. 262.

values, which is the *prima facie* view, or is it the other way round? A good argument can certainly be made out for the thesis that changes in moral sensitivity and the expansion of a sect into a church have, in the history of Christianity, preceded changes in doctrine.

The second point concerns the homogeneity and consistency of social controls. This varies from one society to another. In more primitive societies, and in medieval Europe, there appears to be far more uniformity than there is today in our own society. If a single uniform doctrine holds sway, every man is inclined to accept it and adapt himself to it, though—as Malinowski points out—we ought not to exaggerate his willing subservience. If, however, there is a variety of competing ideologies and values, any one of them may be exploited as an excuse for pursuing one's own interests: the formidable question, 'Why should I . . . ?' presents itself and receives no agreed answer, so that, as Margaret Mead¹ puts it, 'education for choice' takes the place of simple social training.

Finally, we should note that the whole problem of social controls, interpreted as we have done, raises the question: Do ideas and rational reflection ever really determine our social actions and policies, or are these ideas merely epiphenomenal formulations, which spring entirely from the internal clash of material interests, having no causal efficacy whatever? Such is the view of the 'materialists'. The problem is an extremely difficult one, and cannot be discussed here, but two observations may be made: (1) ostensibly we certainly do act as though in the service of certain ideals, though in the choice of ideals we are doubtless more influenced by our material interests than we should be prepared to admit. The onus of proof that the conscious pursuit of values plays no independent part in determining social action rests with those who deny causal efficacy to mental action, not with those who assert it. (2) The curious fact is that those who do deny the causal efficacy of a recognition that certain states of affairs are better than others are frequently the very people to whom one would point as examples of men who self-sacrificingly seek

¹ *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Penguin ed., p. 137f.

to bring about social change just because they are imbued with a sensitivity about the welfare of the oppressed sections of mankind. If change of beliefs does not make us behave differently, why should such people try to persuade us of the righteousness of their own beliefs?

VIII

SOCIETY AS A SYSTEM OF INSTITUTIONS .

WE have looked at societies from various points of view; we have—to use the metaphor employed above—changed our lenses so as to bring out in turn the foci of power, the economic system, the various stratifications, and the system of guiding ideas and values. Inclusive societies display all these aspects; smaller included societies, however unorganized, display all except the economic one.

Every society can be analysed into a system of power centres, and a stratification of prestige levels, and every society is in some sense purposive, and embodies certain values—a word which must be taken to include *all* ambitions and aims from the selfish collaboration of thieves with their precarious system of honour to the high ideals of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Furthermore, it has been obvious that the system of power, economic structure, stratification and ideology interact, a predominant but not exclusive role being played by economics.

Economic advantage goes with power, and power seeks to preserve itself not only for the sake of domination, but for the sake of economic advantage. Power and economic success send those who enjoy them to the top of the social ladder, while those at the bottom only have power if they are organized and if they occupy key positions in the economic system. Systems of value display ever shifting and always uneasy compromises between the interests of individuals or sections, and the demands of the society as a whole, and even of a wider vision of human welfare.

Supposing we now try to look at societies as wholes, and not from special points of view, we might, if we were far enough off, see their component members something like ants performing their social activities within an area marked off by our observation. There would be more mutual interchanges

within the area than between individuals inside and members of the neighbouring circles outside. We should see them going through repetitive patterns of behaviour, and if we were behaviouristically minded sociologists that is all we should be interested in. Supposing, however, we introduce a temporal dimension and take frequent looks at successive generations of our ants, and supposing the individual differences between one ant and another were to vanish, the pattern of action, repeated with close similarity all over one area, might stand out, much as the path traced by a whirling torch congeals into a circle. The vision we might get of these congealed patterns would bring us near to seeing the society as a system of institutions.

An institution is defined by Ginsberg¹ as "recognized and established usages governing the relations between individuals and groups". One can witness the birth of an institution, or of something very like it, in everyday social life. When, say, three people set up house together, various problems arise: Who shall sit where at the table or in the sitting-room? What time are meals to be taken? Who shall use the bath when? And so on. They may confer on the subject or a solution will be found as occasion arises, but after a while we usually find that this is 'A's chair', that is 'B's chair', and that 'C's', luncheon is at one o'clock, and A has his bath before breakfast, and such rules quite often dominate the lives of those whom they were intended to serve. A sits in B's place, and we hear: "How odd you look sitting there!" The seating arrangements, the time of meals and bathing have been 'institutionalized'.

This homely example is not, of course, intended to suggest that the great institutions of a community, marriage, the family, banks and so forth, have been consciously invented, but it is intended to suggest that these 'established forms or conditions of procedure', as MacIver calls them, grew up as socially accepted solutions to human social problems.

As usual, when we try to solidify living social reality into abstract conceptions, we find borderline discrimination difficult. Here we find it well-nigh impossible to draw a distinction between 'institution' and 'custom'; in fact there are phenomena to which either term could be applied. "An 'institution'," says

¹ Ginsberg: *Sociology* (Home Univ. Library), p. 42.

MacIver,¹ "implies a more definite recognition. We should call the marriage feast an institution, but courtship a custom, and certainly we should call marriage itself an institution." This is a case where we must avoid the tyranny of words; it really makes very little odds whether you call the marriage feast an 'institution' or a 'custom', but the more schematic and firmly fixed a relationship is, the more one is likely to find the word 'institution' appropriate.

We have incidentally mentioned whole classes of institutions when dealing with the 'institution-complexes' of economics and government. If, as happens in time of shortage, there are *ad hoc* barterings between friends, there is no institution; if people bring their surpluses to a particular place for exchange, then a market develops and an institution comes into being. If one man lends another 10s., that is not an institution, even if he demands 11s. in return; but if a number of people who have money to lend arrange for some organized method of letting this be known to those who want to borrow it, then—if the *ad hoc* arrangement is copied and perpetuated—you have an institution. The number of administrative institutions, economic institutions, institutions to facilitate the election of representatives or the business of committees and so forth is legion, but three types of institution have been singled out for special treatment: institutions concerned with mating and the care of children, institutions concerned with the access to commodities, and institutions concerned with adapting the young to play a part in adult society.

From his enormous collection of evidence, Westermarck² concludes that the hypothesis of a primitive state of promiscuity is untenable. You always find, it would appear, some formal restriction on sexual intercourse, though premarital promiscuity is frequently permitted. The nature of the restriction varies. It may be temporary or permanent, it may be that one group of brothers has exclusive access to a group of sisters, or one man may have exclusive access to a group of women, or, again, one woman may have exclusive access to a number of men, though this last (polyandry) is rare. Economic considera-

¹ MacIver: *Society*, p. 15.

² Westermarck: *Origins of Human Marriage*. (Macmillan, 1912.)

tions are, as usual, important: a man may be allowed to have more than one wife, but may not be able to afford it, and, in the case of Tibetan marriage between one woman and more than one man, the men are usually brothers, and the single channel of offspring serves to prevent the division of the property.

Economics, again, play a part in the negotiation. If a bride-price has to be paid, this fact may dominate the economics of a whole society, and a young bridegroom may spend his life paying off the debts incurred on his marriage. If, on the other hand, the bride is expected to bring a dowry, the provision of it, and the choice of a husband who will take less, are, as readers of the Paston Letters will remember, matters of deep concern. In fact it is relatively recently that romantic love has been considered the only proper basis for the complicated technicalities of setting up house. The dissolution of a marriage, again, is variously arranged, from a simple act of leaving home, to the disallowing of any dissolution whatever.

The general functions of the family are analysed by MacIver as three: the perpetuation of the race, the stable satisfaction of the sex instinct, and the provision of a home, but the part played by the home has undergone a long history of change. In primitive society today, and, so we may suppose, in our own distant past, the family is encircled by a network of kin to whom obligations are due, and from whom services may be expected. It is not, however, submerged; it preserves its identity, but is not cut off from other relatives as the family tends to be today.

The size of the family household varies. In some societies, in China, and among the Kabyli, for instance, and exemplified in the *zadruga* of Yugoslavia, the small family of mother and father and children is expanded to include grandparents, uncles and aunts, forming a '*gross-familie*' or 'joint-family', all living either under one roof or in a collection of houses or huts built round a courtyard. The *Zadruga* formed a 'co-operative organization for production, sometimes embracing up to 100 members'.¹ When it was a flourishing institution the always delicate relation between the incoming daughter-in-law and the lady of the house was firmly controlled by the patriarchal

¹ Ehrlich-Stein: *Sociological Review*, XXXII, p. 226.

head, the son backing up his mother in insisting on obedience; but with the break-up of the system there is a change, the daughter permits herself airs, and her husband tends to take her side.

Gradually the size of the household has shrunk; the young people expect to set up for themselves, houses are too small to accommodate more than one family, and so far from the boys bringing their wives home, the girls may refuse to marry if they have no home of their own.

The position of women, too, has changed. Among primitive peoples, as Langton-Davies¹ has pointed out, the attitude towards women is complicated by magical considerations: they may be thought to have valuable fertility-giving magic, or, it may be, their physiological functions are regarded as so dangerous that special precautions have to be taken to avoid the evil effects of contamination.

In Babylon women could hold property, in Rome when women freed themselves from the bonds of early Roman marriage, and enjoyed the freer union of '*usus*',² they achieved a position of comparative freedom.

In the Middle Ages womanhood was placed upon a variously accessible pedestal by the chivalrous knight, but such romanticism must not make us forget the practical efficiency with which Margaret Paston tried to defend her castle at Gresham against the armed force of a claimant to the property. In this country the story since the 18th century has been one of continuous emancipation; control of property, voting, and access to professions have led to the demand that their pay should be equal to that of a man doing the same kind of work. We must, however, receive any account of the changing status of women with caution.

The question of whether women are happier now than they were is, of course, one which we cannot decide, but it is quite obvious that the influence of women does not wholly depend upon their legal position, and when we read about the position of women in other days we must remember that the accounts

¹ Langton-Davies: *Short History of Women*. (Watts, 1938.)

² If they stayed away from their husbands for three nights in the year they did not pass entirely 'into his hands'.

usually refer to women of the upper-classes. As one passes through those country districts where women habitually and for generations have worked in the fields, one cannot help wondering whether their position is, in practice, very different now from what it was hundreds of years ago.

This is not to say that the independence of women has made no difference to the shape of society; it clearly has, if only in the sense that marriage is not now the only career open to them. Furthermore, the writers of the report¹ on unemployment commissioned by the Pilgrim Trust in 1938 found the general social atmosphere different in these districts where women worked in the factories from what it was elsewhere.

The family, under Western cultural conditions, has shrunk functionally, a matter of greater importance than the quantitative shrinkage in the size of the household. Not so very long ago the household was almost self-supporting, providing its food and clothing and its own social services. Babies were brought into the world, tended, and, in poorer families, educated; such leisure as there was was spent in the village, with occasional visits to the neighbouring town, and care of the old was an obligation upon the young and middle-aged.

Gradually, however, the state has undertaken to provide pre-natal attention, kindergarten schools, infant schools, and other forms of education; expanded medical services are available; the factory and office provide the place of work; the bicycle, the bus and the motor-car have burst the village boundaries and made accessible the new kinds of mechanical entertainment; clubs and youth associations cater for individual members of the household so that a new anti-family note is struck.

We hear that family influence positively impedes the efforts of the educator, and in Russia, in early revolutionary days, numbers of children were removed from their parents and brought up in state institutions. If people find their education, their work, and their pleasure outside the family circle; if women can get jobs which make them independent; and if, in the country, the idea of the self-supporting family, which necessitated the sons and daughters staying at home to

¹ *Men Without Work*. (Pilgrim Trust, Cambridge, 1938.)

help on the farm, is practically dead, surely the existence of the family may seem to be doomed?

Such a view is, however, not by any means accepted. Arguing from psychological premises, Westermarck¹ declared that the needs which the family satisfies are innate in human nature, and can only be satisfied by the family; marriage itself, says Westermarck, "is rooted in the family rather than the family in marriage". Russia now favours family life. The provision of kindergarten facilities and day-nurseries is not to be regarded as a symptom of family dissolution, but rather as a method of easing the burdens of child-rearing.

In Peckham a group of doctors,² basing their action on a theory of the essential biological function of the family, started an 'experimental' club for families, in which the health of their members was attended to and the enjoyment of individual members severally catered for under the same roof, so that the children were gradually infiltrated into adult life in the same society as that frequented by their parents and older brothers and sisters.

Psychologists³ have stressed the inadequacy of character in those brought up in institutions. Lectures in homecraft, the bringing up of children, and so on are provided by anxious local authorities, and the value of the happy home is contrasted with the disastrous effects of the 'broken' one, in the literature of criminology.

It is not surprising that many people are uneasy when they contemplate the divorce rates. According to the Registrar General's statistics for 1940, the rate of Divorce and Annulment per 100,000 of the population of England and Wales for the quinquennium 1876-1880 was an average of 1.2 a year; for 1916-1920 it was 4.5, and between 1921 and 1933 it varied between 6.8 and 10.2. In 1937 it was 11.9; 1938, 15.2; 1939, 19.2; and in 1940, 16.0. In 1936, when the English divorce rate was 10 per 100,000, in Norway it was 35, Sweden 46, Belgium 37, Holland 35, France 52, Germany 75, Denmark 86 and U.S.A. 129.⁴

¹ Westermarck: *The Future of Marriage*. (Macmillan, 1936.)

² Pearse and Crocker: *The Peckham Experiment*. (Allen & Unwin, 1943.)

³ E.g. Freud and Bellamy: *Infants Without Families*. (Allen & Unwin, 1943.)

⁴ Myrdal: *Nation and Family*. (Kegan Paul, 1945.)

The interpretation of these figures is extremely difficult. It is clear that divorce rates provide only a very indirect measure of family instability because they do not include cases of 'broken families' which have not reached the divorce courts. It may be that with a reduction in the cost of divorce proceedings, disunions are regularized which formally would not have been, so that it may be argued that an increase in the divorce rate means no increase in the number of unstable families, and it may further be argued that the comparatively low rate in England indicates a stability in those families which do not avail themselves of the modern facilities for divorce, and that it is just as well that the comparatively few families who cannot get on together should be legally broken up so that the parties can enter more stable unions.

The number of petitions for divorce in England and Wales varies with the duration of marriage and with the number of children: in 1940, 32 petitions were filed during the first year of marriage, 636 after 2-5 years, 1740 after 5-10 years, 2,308 after 10-20 years, and 956 after 20 years. In the same year, 2,421 petitioners had no children, 1820 had one, 887 had 2, 553 had 3-6, and only 10 had more than 6 children—but then, that is a rarity in any case.

The same tendency, with regard to the number of children, has also been observed in America.¹ The comparative figures set a complicated problem in statistical interpretation, and one which has not been solved. No single causal hypothesis will account for the difference. Religion doubtless plays some part, since Catholics forbid divorce; but England, a non-Catholic country, has a low rate. Urbanization does not account for all the difference, because in America the divorce rate is highest in the West, where, according to MacIver, "the mobility of life so characteristic of the United States, and particularly of the West, has weakened [the] sense of continuity". Legal facility does not account for everything, though it obviously makes a difference, because in Norway and Sweden divorce can be obtained by mutual consent of both parties, and yet their rates are lower than those of certain countries where this is not the case. One must conclude that in

¹ Ogburn and Nymkoff: *Handbook of Sociology* (Kegan Paul, 1947), p. 477.

each community the attitude towards divorce is a function of several variables: tradition, estimation of 'romantic love', legal conditions, religion, etc., and that no single factor is of universal predominance.

The nature of the institution which deals with the use and fate of material objects, land, and immaterial entities, the institution of property, is one of the most complex topics in sociology. One of the main difficulties is that we think of 'property' in terms of our own culture, and, even so, in terms far too simple. The commonplace notion that 'ownership' is a simple relation between 'owner' and thing 'owned' stands in the way of any understanding of the institution of property in different cultures.

Ownership, when one examines it, dissolves into a constellation of rights exclusive to the subject, whether a person or a body of persons, in whom they are vested. Put somewhat clumsily, it may be said that ownership is concerned with the question: who has the right to do what with what? The constellation of rights will vary (1) with the nature of the subject owning, (2) with the nature of the thing owned, and (3) in general from one community to another. The rights with which ownership is mainly concerned are: rights of use, alienation by gift or sale, destruction and bequest, and each of them may be limited in various ways. In our society the fullest constellation of rights is held by an individual with respect to such personal effects as his watch, his pen, his clothes, etc., but when we come to land-ownership, the rights, for reasons which are obvious enough, are liable to be drastically curtailed.

The kinds of things which are said to be owned may conveniently be classified as movable objects, including livestock, land and water, and such immaterial entities (*choses in action*) as shares, leases, songs, copyrights, advowsons and so on. These rights may be vested in individuals, corporate bodies, offices (*corporation sole*), and groups of individuals, including in the last case groups who, in collective conclave or through representatives, can control the rights of use, or alienation, which may be exercised by individuals or families.

The fullest system of rights, as has been said already, centres round personal effects, utensils and weapons, though customary usage may, as among the Greenland Eskimos, dictate that anyone has the right to borrow anything of which he may stand in need. Animals killed in hunting expeditions or large sea game washed up on the shore often have to be shared according to an elaborate scheme of kinship rights.

It is when we come to land that the varieties of rights become so bewildering. A glance at the analysis of property rights as found among simple people in Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg's compendium¹ is enough to indicate the enormous range of difference that is to be found, and no attempt can be made here to summarize the evidence. One thing, however, is made clear in all recent inquiries into primitive systems of land tenure, and that is that the prevalent idea that primitive peoples enjoy primitive communism is nonsense.

The expressions 'common ownership' and 'collective ownership' are sometimes used interchangeably and no clear idea is given of precisely what is meant. The following notions must be distinguished: (1) the notion of a tribe regarding an area of land as theirs to hunt in, or cultivate, and to be defended against intruders. This seems to be universal among all settled and many nomadic peoples; (2) the absence of individual or sectional rights within the tribal area: such may sometimes be the case with the lower hunting people with respect to *all* the land regarded as theirs, but more often, as economic technique became more developed, this strictly 'communal' ownership is restricted to certain areas of pasturage or woodland; (3) collectively controlled individual and sectional rights (of clans or families) within the tribal area. This establishment of sectional claims mounts continually as agriculture becomes more and more complicated.²

Leaving aside the comparatively rare cases of pure communal ownership, where any member of a tribe can hunt anywhere, or plant anywhere, within the tribal area, land

¹ Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg: *The Material Cultures and Social Institutions of the Simpler Peoples* (L.S.E. n.d.), p. 243.

² *Ib.*, p. 248.

among primitive peoples "is held on (a) kinship and/or (b) a local group basis. Individuals have definite rights, but these are qualified by membership of a family, kindred and ward (or small village). Similarly, the individual claims of families exist concurrently with the wider claims of the clan or local groups. Title, therefore, has a community character. It is also usufructuary rather than absolute".¹ To this quotation we may add another from the same work² to the effect that: "One of the main distinctions between native systems of holding land and those of Western societies is that the former are largely dominated by personal relationships, whereas the latter are subject to the impersonal legal conception of 'contract'."

Land is both necessary to life and inextensible, so that, as population presses upon it, it is bound to give rise to a multiplicity of claims. The general principle that "he who clears a piece of land is the owner of it", which finds expression in the Laws of Manu, is universal, and land is only valued for what it produces in food for man and beast, so that under conditions of primitive subsistence agriculture the notion of land as a commodity to be bought and sold hardly arises. It is the source of food for individual, clan, and tribe, so that any or all may have rights in it. Rights to use it may be transferred in some cases, e.g. among the Wa-Bena of Tanganyika, "when a man has inherited a good field at some distance from his home, he may negotiate a transfer to another, usually a relative, receiving in exchange goods, cash, or services of some kind".³ It may be pledged to pay a bride-price, it may be subject to periodic reallocation, and rights may be held over compact areas or over strips in different places.

The system of inheritance may further complicate the texture of the network of rights. Among the Hebe "a man must subdivide his land so that his wives and his children have plots of their own",⁴ or else it may be that there is a fragmentation of the rights held over one piece of land, and in the Sudan "matters have reached such a pass that it is said even a palm

¹ Meek: *Land Law and Custom in the Colonies* (Oxford, 1946), p. 26.

² *Ib.*, p. 16:

³ *Ib.*, p. 19.

⁴ Quoted from Brown and Hutt: *Anthropology in Action*, by Liversage: *Land Tenure in the Colonies* (Cambridge, 1945), p. 17.

tree may be subject to a complex fractional ownership."¹ Fragmentation has been the curse of many village communities in India, as has been pointed out by M. L. Darling in his *Punjab Peasant in Property and Debt*. These primitive systems of land tenure are, of course, being transformed by contact with European peoples, crops are grown for commercial purposes, and land is more and more becoming a salable commodity.

This brief consideration of property rights in land among the simpler peoples has, it is hoped, served to show them as a network of rights or claims held by various persons in virtue of their status in the community—their membership of family or clan. In Western society the network of rights depends on purchase or contract, but in both cases the result is the same: the vesting in certain persons of the protected power of making certain effective decisions. In Europe, too, *what* these decisions may be has varied. When the function of land was to provide armed men there were restrictions on alienation, fragmentation, and free decision as to its fate in the future by bequest. When its function was to provide a surplus out of which an income could be derived, it itself became a commodity which people were prepared to buy and sell, and which they wished to bequeath as they pleased, but it was not until the passing of the Statute of Wills in 1540 that bequest of land became possible in England.

With the growth of agricultural trade property in land as a source of income became more and more important, and to its attractiveness was added the prestige which land-ownership conveys. With the importation of food from abroad, the heavy taxation of land and the imposition of death duties, land as a source of private income gave place to claims upon the profits of industry. And with the gradual emergence of new ideas about the claims of an enormous landless proletariat, the function of land comes to be regarded not so much as a source of income to the individual *rentier* or farmer but as a source of food and a place of recreation for the community at large. With this insistence on the subservience of private rights to public interest, these private rights have been once more curtailed.

¹ Liverson, op. cit., p. 18.

Rights with respect to chattels, livestock and land are, by the very nature of the thing owned, different from rights with respect to immaterial entities. Here we are concerned with claims to profits, rights to vote in the election of directors, rights restricting publication, rights of appointment to livings, rights among primitive peoples to sing certain songs or dance certain dances and so forth. Obviously the sort of things that can be done with such rights varies from case to case, and the rights themselves are variously transferable from one person to another.

The situation changes again when we consider the holder of the rights. It may be a person holding them because they are vested in him, or holding them because he holds an office, e.g. a rectorate or a bishopric. It may be a corporate body, such as a joint stock company, or the 'corporation' of a city. In such cases the decision as to how the object owned shall be used rests, with certain reservations embodied in the incorporating instrument, with a group of persons who are elected according to certain rules. Alienation is possible, but bequest does not arise. What is commonly known as 'public property' does not mean anything like what we have called 'pure communal ownership', it means that the rights of decision as to the use of the property are vested in elected or appointed bodies.

'Nationalization', therefore, simply means a reshuffling of rights to make effective decisions about the use of objects; it does not mean the abolition of a *thing* called 'private property', but the curtailment of certain rights in one place and the creation of rights in another. The directors of a 'private company' make effective decisions about the assets of the company, and they are elected in a certain way and have certain interests in view; if the company is 'nationalized', then other people, differently elected or appointed and, possibly, with different ends in view, will make the decisions. Which set of persons will make the wisest decision depends partly on the standards one is applying, partly on the relative intelligence and knowledge of the parties concerned, and partly on the effectiveness of the administration they have at their disposal.

Property rights cannot be understood apart from the rest

of the social situation in which they function. Changes in agricultural economics, e.g. in the structure of the plough (which largely determined the convenient shape of a holding, in long strip or in squares) or in the conversion of arable into pasture, changes in the social hierarchy, e.g. the emergence of a landless urban proletariat or of a class of nobility, variation in custom (e.g. the prestige-destruction of property by the Kwakiutl chiefs), changes in climate: e.g. the report of Lowie¹ that Kirghiz bands in Asiatic Russia were communists in the summer when land was abundant, but individualists in the winter when there was a dearth of sheltered quarters, changes in industrial technique: e.g. the development of mass-production—all these and other changes mean changes in the function of resources, and therefore changes in the nature and importance of the right over them.

When the fullest constellation of rights over things, including land, is vested in individual persons, it has the advantage of providing them with security, the means of self-expression and self-development, and a basis upon which they can indulge in freedom of action and opinion, and no one can deny the cultural importance of these things. If rights to resources are divided out according to status, so much for the old, so much for the infant, so much for children, so much for nursing mothers, so much for the sick and so on, the resources get more evenly spread round. The dangers of the second alternative are that an incentive to work is removed, and, under certain dispensations, the right to resources may be withheld from those who displease the dispensers. The problem today is so to reshuffle rights as to get the best of both systems. While it is false to say that we are returning to primitive communism, it is arguable that we are tending towards a resuscitation of the 'usufructuary rather than absolute' notion of property, which Dr. Meek noted as a feature of primitive systems of tenure; the usufructuary rights, however, are not apportioned according to a kinship scheme, but according to social status and function.

The problem of property is complicated because no set of concepts derived from Western legal usage exactly fits the

¹ Lowie: Art. 'Land Tenure', *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*.

systems of property rights in other cultures; the problem of education, on the other hand, is not so complicated from a conceptual point of view, but the enormous range of institutions which attempt to solve the educational problem makes it impossible to deal with the subject with any adequacy. All that can be done is to indicate some of the general sociological aspects of education.

In a simple society, in which techniques are few and the procedures deemed necessary to deal with sacred matters are relatively uncomplicated, no institutions of education are called for; children absorb the ethos of their culture and such techniques as there are, much as they learn the elements of farming in the country today. When, however, society becomes more complex and every age has its place and function, and when more complicated rituals, appropriate only to adults, are developed, some explicit training, however short, may be required. The institution of initiation serves the purposes of marking the passage from childhood to adulthood, and of passing on certain pieces of ritualistic information. The themes which are interwoven are various, and among them, perhaps, is a certain resentment on the part of the adults at the reception of a newcomer into their circle. This resentment of the in-group against outsiders is common enough in all societies, and at all ages, as has been demonstrated by Dr. Susan Isaacs in her studies of children,¹ and may well account for the cruelty of initiation ceremonies both among savage peoples and in certain spheres of modern factory and school life. The test of endurance may thus serve at least two purposes: the gratification of resentment and the inculcation of ideals of conduct.

As religious ideas develop, the sacred doctrines and practices become the special province of a priesthood, who are only too anxious to preserve the monopoly of contact with sacred things. Here, again, special training has to be arranged and sacred symbols must be learnt. When the keeping of a sacred covenant is all-important, or when a sacred book has to be followed, special schools are set up for the teaching of these matters: hence the early establishment of schools by the Jews, by the followers of the Prophet, and, much later on,

¹ Isaacs: *Social Development of Children*. (Routledge, 1933.)

the establishment of schools in Protestant countries to teach children to read the Bible.

The growth of administration calls for a trained bureaucracy; the elaboration of techniques of measurement and calculation calls for special training, and the proliferation of commercial activities, with their ancillary techniques of banking and the registration of contracts, sets up a demand for persons who can write. The general principle is that if the techniques and culture of a society can be communicated in the ordinary course of upbringing, as children are permitted to enter more and more into adult life, there is no need for special institutions of education. When, however, skills are demanded which cannot be imbibed in this way, then educational institutions, for those who intend to use these skills, are required. What these techniques will be will depend upon the cultural and technological pattern of the society in question.

Technological and professional training are, however, not the whole story. In the first place, we must note that once an educational institution, with its curriculum, is established, it tends to persist unchanged; teachers and the body for which the training is designed have vested interests in its perpetuation, so that education for the Chinese bureaucracy, for instance, remained unchanged for many hundred years. Secondly, as artistic creation and philosophic reflection make use of new techniques, another and far more important purpose is served by educational institutions. Thirdly, the element of prestige enters in. Not only do educational institutions serve to provide scribes and priests, to enable people to enjoy and create works of art, and to put people in the way of attaining salvation, they also seem to endow the educated with prestige.

That this is not always so is illustrated by Philip de Comines,¹ who contrasts the education of Louis XI with that of the French nobility, who

“are brought up to nothing but an idle kind of vanity, both in their apparel and discourse. They have no knowledge of letters, no wise men are suffered to come near them to

¹ *Memoirs of Philip de Comines*, Eng. trans., 1817, p. 57.

improve their understanding; they have stewards and governors that manage their business, but they do nothing themselves: nay, there are some upstart ridiculous Frenchmen who, though they have but a very slender income, will take a pride to bid you 'go to his servants, and let them answer you'."

Lord Chesterfield, on the other hand, tells his son to mind his spelling, because "I know a man of quality who never recovered from the ridicule of having spelled *wholesome* without the *w*," and urges him to read Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, and Thucydides.¹ The contempt of manual work, characteristic of a leisured class, and characteristic, too, of those professions which make their living by words, has tended to give prestige to 'book-learning' and a subordinate place to the acquisition of manipulative techniques, with the result that as scientific and technical training became more and more needed a certain reaction has set in, and 'book-learning' may have to struggle to retain its position, except in so far as it is deemed socially 'useful'.

The need for specially trained persons varies, as we have seen, from one culture to another. When the rewards for being educated, in terms of income and prestige, are sufficient to induce people to pay for education, and when the number of educated persons required is not large, the provision of educational institutions can be left to private enterprise and charity. When, however, it becomes necessary that everyone should be educated, the state must take a hand. The rich may, here and there, protest that education is quite unnecessary for the poor; the poor may protest at the temporary removal of potential earners from the home; but these obstacles can soon be overcome because educated employees are more useful than illiterates, and education is soon regarded as a panacea for the ills of poverty. The great difficulty is the adequate selection of pupils for the different sorts of educational institution which are to be provided, and we have already noted the complaint that a great many children of ability are not getting the educa-

¹ Quoted by Trevelyan: *English Social History* (Longmans), p. 405.

tion they should, and that some children of wealthy parents are being submitted to educational processes from which, owing to a lack of ability, they are not likely to profit.

It has been remarked already, but it cannot be too often stressed, that the whole fabric of social institutions hangs together in a complex interactive pattern. Economics affect politics and both influence the social hierarchy. The institutions concerned with mating and the care of children, with access to resources, and with training in specialized techniques, are similarly interwoven with the institutional complexes of economics and politics, and all these institutions are preserved by a system of beliefs and attitudes.

The study of social institutions is closely connected with what we are discussing when we speak of 'national character'. "The institutions of a people," says Ginsberg,¹ "must reflect the character of the individuals composing it, but this in turn is moulded by the institutions". At first sight it might appear that the 'character' of a people must be responsible for its institutions, but we have already seen that the correlation between ethnic composition and temperamental qualities has not been established. Undoubtedly a society is composed of people with different temperaments and different intellectual abilities, and the proportions in any given population will differ from those which characterize others, but, at the same time, historical circumstances, new discoveries, and changes in the economic set-up give opportunities to certain temperamental and intellectual qualities rather than others, so that these tend to be emphasized and cultivated. It might be that any people, with a random distribution of temperamental and intellectual potentialities, would develop characteristic English institutions if faced with the same historical and geographical situation, and, on the other hand, the type of institution characteristic of modern Germany if they had been faced with Germany's historical and geographical predicaments.

The alleged individualism of the English has found one mode of expression under conditions "which prevented the growth of a centralized administration and encouraged the growth of local government, and of a legal system serving to

¹ Ginsberg: *Reason and Unreason in Society*, p. 157.

protect the liberties of the individual",¹ while German individualism, also noted by observers, has a history behind it of unfettered feudalism and comparatively recent unification, with the result that "not being accompanied or balanced by the capacity for spontaneous organization [it requires] evidently organization based rather on some form of subordination".²

To sustain the thesis that institutions mould natural character, and that institutions are the response of a society with a *random* distribution of psychological characteristics, rather than a distribution of characteristics which differs from all others and has left its characteristic mark, would obviously require very considerable investigation, but in the light of our ignorance of genetic mental qualities such a hypothesis ought to be tried out before we postulate unique ethnic temperaments.

Modern psychologists are certainly tending more and more to regard individual character as moulded by experience out of relatively undifferentiated potentialities; attempts have been made to derive certain temperamental qualities, which are stressed in a community, from the prevalent customs of weaning and house-training,³ and it may be that further research will show that what we think of as fixed 'national characters' are really the effect on undifferentiated 'human nature' of the pressure of events.

¹ *Ib.*, 153.

² *Ib.*, 142.

³ E.g. Bateson and Mead: *Balinese Character* (New York, 1942) and Gorer, *Themes in Japanese Culture*, Trans. of the New York Acad. of Science, Vol. V, 1943.

IX

SOCIAL CHANGE

WE have frequently had to refer to the obvious fact that cultures change during the course of years. Are there any rules which determine the course which these changes will take? This question has been answered by sociologists in many different ways. There are, indeed, two main ways of dealing with it: a long-range view and a short-range view. Those who take the former seek to discover certain stages in human development which are depicted as the more or less inevitable manifestations of some underlying process, which pursues its way more or less independent of human intention, though doubtless influenced by it. The degree to which we are represented as the victims of a process which operates, as it were, *through* us, and the degree to which we can assist or impede it by our own effort, is hardly ever made clear, because the authors of these theories tend to regard the past as determined by some transcendent process, while they wish to give advice about the present.

Such theories of social change date far back in the history of human speculation. Hesiod's ages of gold, silver, and iron, and the great political series: kingship—oligarchy—democracy—tyranny are instances. In more recent times Comte propounded a law of three stages: in early days man interpreted the world about him in *theological* terms, as the work of gods and spirits; later on impersonal forces of a *metaphysical* kind were believed to underlie the phenomena about us, while in our own day we are alleged to be in a position to abandon infantile theology and metaphysical powers in order merely to register observed regularities as being such and such without trying to give any further explanation—we have reached the stage of *positivism*. Comte's theory is nowadays but a museum piece; it is pointed out that religion is not dead, that positivism is of the order of a metaphysic, and that Comte himself did not preserve the bleak positivist position which he recommended to

others. For all that, he raises important questions about the nature of scientific method, he warns us against metaphysical abstraction, and he has given us a word, 'positivism', which is frequently conjured with.

Besides these broad changes in man's conceptual apparatus, there has been, according to Comte, a serial progression in the specialisms which he has developed. First comes Mathematics, then Astronomy, then Physics, then Chemistry, then Biology, and finally Sociology. All these sciences pass through the religious, metaphysical, and positivist stage, and Comte believed that he was inaugurating the final stage in the study of society. Paradoxically enough, his own final stage was contaminated by the metaphysical principle of 'Humanity' raised to the objective of religious ceremonial.

Comte's theory is one of mental development, and so is the far more elaborate and important theory of Hobhouse.¹ It is impossible to give more than a very brief account of Hobhouse's contribution to this aspect of sociology. He traces the co-ordination of behaviour from the mere reflex response which typifies the reaction of the simplest organism, through stages in which experience of the past influences the behaviour of the future, to the stage when man emerges with the power of abstraction, at first feeble and ineffective, and later developing into scientific and philosophical reasoning. At first the creature is at the mercy of its environment, then in the light of past experience it conducts its response in a more orderly way, until eventually it can achieve full rational integration.

This increase of order is, for Hobhouse, evidence of practical reason at work. Reason is not the mere capacity to draw conclusions from premises, it is also a co-ordinating process which orders the ends of action as well as indicating the means to their attainment. Furthermore, just as the ends of individual action are co-ordinated into a harmonious symphony of satisfaction, so the ends of individuals living in society are mutually co-ordinated. Such is the trend. There is no pretence that there are not setbacks, but once we realize the nature of reason we can assume greater and greater control over our own destinies.

¹ Hobhouse: *Social Development*. (Allen & Unwin, 1924.)

These stages in the development of the human mind, and that network of minds which we call a society, are exhibited in the stages of ethical and religious development. As general ideas emerge, religious development is in the magico-animistic stage, and morality dictated by custom and fear of immediate danger if wrong be done. Later, anthropomorphic gods make their appearance, with a sense of impartial rules. When man's power of reasoning becomes reflective we have the 'spiritual religions' and 'ethical idealism', but reason turns critically upon its own products, and these stages are followed, in Hobhouse's scheme, by 'critical spiritualism' in the realm of religion, and a morality of 'realistic humanitarianism'.¹

Looking at societies, not so much from the point of view of the mentality made manifest in their culture, but rather as groups of people interacting with one another, Hobhouse² saw the problem of development in terms of an adjustment of the demands of society to the needs of individual development. He suggested four criteria of development. Societies increase in scale, that no one can deny; they increase in efficacy or "the adequate apportionment and co-ordination of functions in the service of an end"; they may increase in the "scope for thought, character, and initiative" which their members can enjoy; finally, there is "increased mutuality of service" in which "each who serves participates". Advance in efficiency may impede freedom, and advance in scale may involve decreased efficiency, when the larger society is compared with a very much smaller one, which has fewer problems to cope with, but advance along all four fronts is a sign of development.

MacIver³ criticizes these criteria on the ground that Hobhouse is not keeping his promise to avoid all value judgments. The first two criteria may be objective, in MacIver's view, but "the two further criteria, freedom and mutuality, belong to a different order altogether. What Hobhouse is now putting forward is his concept of progress." The crucial question is: can 'freedom' and 'mutuality' in Hobhouse's sense be objectively defined? There seems no reason why they should

¹ Hobson and Ginsberg: *L. T. Hobhouse* (Allen & Unwin, 1931), p. 173.

² Hobhouse: *Social Development*, chap. iv.

³ MacIver: *Society*, p. 511.

not be, and if they can be objectively defined they may serve as criteria of development.

MacIver, like Hobhouse, uses the concept of evolution. They both make it clear that evolution as applied to societies is brought about in a manner different from that which is involved when we are thinking of living organisms. Physical birth and mutation are the channels of evolution in the development of species; changing relations and the transmission of culture are the channels of social evolution. But evolution for MacIver is not mere change, it is an immanent process resulting in increased complexity and differentiation. "The kernel of organic evolution," he writes,¹ "is therefore differentiation, a process in which latent or rudimentary characters take a distinct and variable form within the unity of the organism."

Durkheim, in what we have seen to be a somewhat exaggerated form, distinguished between primitive 'segmentary' society and 'organic' society with its division of labour, which he thought came about through the pressure of population on supplies.

Tönnies believed that we could show a development from *Gemeinschaft*, a spontaneous and natural unity, to *Gesellschaft*, a type of unity in which there are associations of men for various purposes.

Both these suggestions are incorporated in MacIver's notion of social evolution. He describes "primitive society as functionally undifferentiated"; its "main divisions—families, clans, exogamous groups, totem groups—are segmentary or compartmental". Differentiation—a word which, "properly understood, connotes integration"—would mean such phenomena as (a) greater division of labour, (b) "an increase in the number and variety of functional associations and institutions", and (c) a "greater diversity and refinement in the instruments of social communication".

All these have undoubtedly come to pass, and we may not unreasonably take them as criteria of degrees of evolution, and in fact there does not seem an unbridgeable gulf between MacIver's instances of social differentiation and Hobhouse's criteria of development. Surely, it may be argued, "an in-

¹ *Ib.*, p. 410.

creased variety of functional associations" means increased scope for thought, character and initiative" for those who belong to them, while 'mutual participation' is a function of their integration into a harmonious whole.

Be this as it may, MacIver is emphatic about the impropriety of introducing the notion of progress, while Hobhouse, concerned though he is to keep the notion of development free from value judgments, is by no means content to leave the relation between development and progress out of discussion. What he attempts to show is (1) that development has in fact taken a certain course with many ups and downs, and (2) that that course does in fact lead to a state of affairs which, in his opinion, embodies a greater amount of ethical value.

The whole question of objective standards of values is one which we cannot enter into, and the concept of progress is confused by emotional cross-currents. In the near past, progress was taken for granted; now, in some circles, the very idea arouses indignation, and the multitudinous deficiencies in human social conduct are pointed to with something approaching triumph. Supposing, however, we do assume an objective standard of value. If we think that increased scope for personal development is really better than opportunity only for a few, if we think, with Westermarck (who had no business to think any such thing), that detachment and knowledge make for more '*enlightened*' moral judgments, and, further, if we believe that in any society more people now have scope for development than before, and that more people are enlightened in their judgment of others than before—then we may justly say that that society has progressed. This is a justifiable judgment for a sociologist to make because, if he is speaking the truth, it is a fact about that society. Of course, for those who do *not* believe in an objective standard of morality, the judgment is merely an evincing of our own feelings and not a judgment about the society at all.

We have been taking for granted that 'progress' must always be measured by some standard of moral value, but this is by no means the case. We can take any standard of human purpose—health, wealth or speed—and measure the 'progress' of a society in such terms. Considerations of this kind have

led some sociologists—MacIver and Alfred Weber among them—to make a distinction between ‘civilization’ and ‘culture’. The two words are, as might be expected, ambiguous. For the anthropologist ‘culture’ may be an omnibus word covering all aspects of social life: canoes and cannibalism; for the archaeologist the word may be used of different varieties of stone implements. Toynbee, on the other hand, uses the word ‘civilization’ to refer to all aspects of a way of life which pervades a territorial area, irrespective of the political units within it.

When a distinction is made between ‘civilization’ and ‘culture’, the former refers to the apparatus of life, and the latter to art, religion, ethical aspiration and knowledge, and it is obvious that ‘progress’ in the one field of human activity is very different from progress in the other.

The progress of man in control over nature will be denied by no one. What is questioned is cultural progress. Art may borrow its technique from civilization, it may be influenced by the stage of development of the society in which it is produced, and certain social conditions—the existence of an educated and sensitive leisured class¹ or the turmoil of economic and political change—may be specially propitious, but the majestic creations of the human spirit are timeless, and mechanical apparatus or social influences are, from the point of view of aesthetic value, irrelevant. Progress in religious thought will be variously judged, but it may be argued that reflection and knowledge have progressively refined religious formulation.

It is round moral progress, as we have seen, that conflict rages. A case, however, can be made out for moral progress, and Ginsberg has gathered together the threads of argument in his Frazer Lecture² on that subject. The acceptance of such basic virtues as fidelity, gratitude, beneficence and refraining from injuring others is widespread, and variation in the more detailed content of moral codes can be explained in terms of ignorance, special circumstances, and a fanatic reliance on authority. It is not that the basic moral virtues have changed, but rather the range of application and mode of conceiving them.

¹ Cf. Bell: *Civilization*. (Chatto & Windus, 1928.)

² Reprinted in *Reason and Unreason in Society*, p. 29.

Ginsberg summarizes the trends of progress under three headings: (1) a tendency to universalism, a consideration of others outside the narrow confines of the tribe. More people care about more people. We feel embarrassed by the presence of prisoners of war, we are shocked by the perfectly rational use of prisoners for the purposes of physiological experimentation, and when a handful of Jews refuse to leave a ship, no one dares suggest that they should be quietly dumped in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. (2) There has been, in ethical conception, a gradual tendency towards regarding morality as a pursuit of virtue for its own sake, rather than for prudential reasons, and there has been a change in the refinement of our notions of responsibility. Collective responsibility is, of course, not dead. In war, villages and towns are held responsible for the actions of certain of their inhabitants, and in international affairs we blame whole nations for the act of their rulers, but on reflection we find it difficult to defend such accusations and vicarious punishments. (3) This is closely connected with Ginsberg's third trend: a "growing rationalization of the moral judgement". We are no longer content simply to blame; we make some attempt to disentangle the conventional from the moral, and to criticize our spontaneous disapprovals in the light of more fundamental considerations.

Certainly recent experiences have made for despair, but the general moral standards of our time are extremely difficult to assess for three reasons: in the first place, never have so few been able, with the weapons at their disposal, to do so much harm to so many; in the second place, the range of people about whom we hear, and whose actions matter, is enormously increased. What happened in the slums of our towns in 1840, what happened among the poor in Ancient Egypt or to the slaves in their Roman *ergastula* we shall never know, but nowadays if a woman is discovered to have ill-treated a child the spotlight of publicity is thrown on her. Thirdly, the moral problems of a shrinking world are more complicated than those which faced humanity when people were less dependent on one another. The load of responsibility weighs heavier, choice between alternative ends is harder to make, and the presence of insecurity puts a greater strain on moral resistance.

The distinction between 'civilization' and 'culture' has given rise to the notion of a 'cultural lag'. It is often said that we are not culturally advanced enough to make use of the new methods of controlling nature with which civilization provides us. If this means that we wish people would drive more carefully on the roads, and that nations would not go to war, now that the instruments of war are so destructive, no one would venture to disagree, but the phrase 'cultural lag' is somewhat misleading, because it seems to imply religious and ethical ideas having to adapt themselves to technical advances. However convenient for some purposes the distinction between the 'material' and the 'non-material' may be, it must be emphasized that the two—technology and values—are intimately fused in social life; they are not two separate systems, one of which has to catch up on the other.

In the working of society, it is true, changes occur in the technical field which have repercussions in unexpected places: industrial development involves accidents and the need for compensation; no one intended the accident and no one foresaw the need to compensate the victim, but it is ill-expressed to say that our culture lagged behind our inventions.

The fact is that change in one direction produces changes elsewhere, and something has to be done about it, or changes occur which render old-fashioned ways of thinking obsolete and we have to adjust ourselves painfully to the new situation. We are more kind-hearted about our prisoners, and model prisons have to be constructed; we make discoveries about atomic energy, or bacterial culture, and statesmen are faced with a new international situation. Sometimes a change occurs in what people call the 'cultural field', sometimes in the region of applied science; in each case adjustments elsewhere are called for.

The theories which we have been discussing all imply some underlying directional process. The Marxian theory, on the other hand, is ostensibly different, not only in the springs of change on which it lays emphasis, but in the method whereby the change is brought about. According to this theory, social change is primarily due to the natural tendency of human beings to seek the maximum satisfaction of their material wants. This

leads in the first place to a search for new and more efficient techniques by means of which the raw material provided by nature is accumulated and transformed for human consumption.

Materials, however, are relatively scarce, and the equipment for dealing with them is scarce, so that if a section of the community obtains strategic control over the means of production and the source of materials, they can reduce the rest to a dependent labour force. Their position is, nevertheless, precarious. Slaves and serfs can be kept in their place, no doubt, but traders and manufacturers, who minister to their comfort, are not so easily controlled. Class conflict develops, and becomes more acute as new techniques place greater power in the hands of the rising middle class. The clash is inevitable, because the bourgeoisie seek to free themselves from the restrictions imposed upon them under the regime of the landed nobility. They may make use of the proletariat as shock troops, but their knowledge of affairs and their possession of the key positions of production enable them to keep control of the situation. But not for ever. The bourgeois regime secretes its own destructive poison.

In pursuit of profit the owners of the means of production keep wages down, and therefore have to seek markets elsewhere, which brings them into conflict with other nations in a vast imperialistic race. The workers are forced to combine in self-defence, and the standards of education required by industrial development, together with the increasingly large industrial concerns which bring them together, give them the knowledge and opportunity for organized collective action. Furthermore, the ever increasing size of industrial units reduces the number of controllers, while the dispossessed join the ranks of the opponent class. The clash will come again. Capitalism is inherently contradictory, because the pursuit of profits is incompatible in the long run with the distribution of products; the workers, once organized, hold a key position, and the enormous bureaucratic organization of industry renders it ripe for the proletarian spearhead—the communist party—to ‘take over’.

So, in pursuit of their own profit, the oppressed will inevitably oust the oppressors, and a classless society will emerge: ‘classless’, because when all collectively own the

means of production, and when each has according to his need, no class conflict can arise. The springs of change are, then, technological development and the conflict between classes for its exploitation. A note of inevitability has been struck, and it would appear that no efforts to bring about an alternative solution can, according to the theory, be successful.

All these theories, though differing in regard to the mechanism involved, are of a linear order. They allow for setbacks, as we have seen, but social change is portrayed as occurring in a general direction. In this they differ from theories which depict social change in terms of a circular movement, or a succession of rhythmic ups and downs.

According to Pareto, whose theory we have already mentioned, social change is associated with an alternation in the type of élite who are in control. There are two alternatives, those who possess an overdose of the residue of combination, the *speculators*, and those in whom the residues of the persistence of aggregates is more highly developed, the *rentiers*. Supposing the conservative *rentiers* give the tone to the *élite*, the type of government which they will produce will be one relying on physical force and religion. They need, however, the speculator's help, but they become exclusive and do not incorporate rising members of the speculator class, who then become restive, and the *rentiers* tire of using force. The speculators, then, get control, by means of their superior cunning and their capacity for appealing to the multitude. Their regime, however, is unstable; they need the consolidating efforts of the conservatives, and so, by a compensating movement stabilization sets in.

This type of theory is cyclic and undulating,¹ and the social changes occur within the confines of individual states. On a grander scale are the theories which seek to explain the rise and fall of whole civilizations. Spengler, and others, have interpreted the rise and fall of civilization to the natural processes of birth, growth, maturity and decline, but the objection to such hypotheses is that they transfer concepts appropriate to biology over to sociology, where they are quite inapplicable.

More complicated, and more formidable, is the theory of

¹ For other instances cf. Sorokin: *Contemporary Sociological Theories*, p. 786.

Toynbee.¹ In his enormous *Study of History* he distinguishes twenty-one civilizations of which six—the Egyptian, Andean, Sinic, Minoan, Sumerian and Mayan—sprang out of primitive life to meet the challenge of their natural environment, a challenge which was not too easy, nor too daunting. Other 'abortive' civilizations were defeated by the excessive severity of the conditions, physical or social, with which they had had to contend. These six, however, stood firm. The first two were unrelated to any following civilization, but the Sinic is 'apparented' to the Far Eastern, from which branched a Japanese offshoot. The Minoan is 'apparented' to the Hellenic and the Syriac. To the Hellenic are 'affiliated' the Western and Orthodox Christian, the latter sending an offshoot to Russia, while the Syriac is 'apparented' to the Iranic and Arabic, which fuse to produce the Islamic. The Sumeric is 'apparented' to the Babylonian, possibly the Hittite, and possibly the Indic, from which, by affiliation, comes the Hindu. Finally, the Mayan is 'apparented' to the Yucatec and Mexic.

Such is the genealogy. The causes of change and decay are of a spiritual order. The founding *élites* lose their charm, and the creative gift of transferring their energies to internal spiritual creativeness in the world of ideas, where it is freed from the gross material struggle for a livelihood. They compel instead of persuade, they can no longer change their institutions to solve new problems, they 'rest on their oars', they are seized with *hubris* and intoxicated with victory. The dominant, and now uncreative, minority stand over against an internal subject proletariat, and outside lurks an 'external proletariat' which has tasted the fruits of civilization and bides its time. A 'world-state' is established, but it is not the triumph it appears, it is the beginning of the end. The 'internal proletariat' elaborates a 'higher' religion of its own, the 'external proletariat' breaks through the world-state *façade* and the fabric collapses.

Egypt and the Andean civilization vanished. The other four were followed by a 'time of troubles' out of which emerged new leaders, teaching the religion of the 'internal proletariat' of the civilization which had gone, and founding one of their

¹ Toynbee: *A Study of History*.

own, which is doomed to follow the same pattern. The outstanding example is, of course, the Hellenic civilization, but with prodigious learning Toynbee tests his hypothesis on all the others. Western society presents difficulties. The 'internal proletariat' is there, but no new 'higher' religion; the external barbaric proletariat are almost non-existent, unless we contemplate tom-toms on the Thames, but Toynbee points to a new kind of barbarism in our midst. Such barbarism is, however, not 'external', and one may suppose that the future of Western civilization will be different from that of previous ones: it may, indeed, be the last.

All these theories are 'long term' in the sense that they claim to establish persistent trends, whether quasi-biological as in the case of the evolutionary type, or derived from reflection on the nature of man, and the general implication is that the detailed variety of history is composed of ripples on the surface of underlying currents, which continue their course more or less undeterred by casual events. It is not always easy to find out how far the authors of such theories believe that by an effort we can change the rhythm or impede the tendency, but in so far as there is any extra-polation into the future we must presume that some quasi-independent causal agency is at work. Such an inference from the study of the past has been attacked by Karl Popper.¹ He points out that a tendency is a function of the circumstances in which it is manifested, so that if the circumstances change the tendency ceases to exist; that is to say, there is no transcendent 'force' which makes the circumstances assume the order they do assume.

Such considerations bid us pay more attention to 'short-term' changes rather than seek to establish a 'long-term' inevitable rhythm. Social change, in the 'short-term' view, is determined by an accumulation of changes in various sections of social life. Inventions, culture-contact, changes in monetary policy and so on have repercussions which we can detect, and the changes they will cause will be determined by the specific conditions appertaining at the time. The importance of these smaller-scale changes cannot be denied. The discovery of

¹ Popper: *The Poverty of Historicism*. (Economica, 1944-45.)

iron made an enormous difference to agriculture and military strength in the ancient world, the invention of the bicycle transformed village life, the exploitation of wireless transmission has introduced a new element into politics, while the discovery of a cheap method of melting iron by the use of coal altered the dispersal of the population of this country.

So we could go on. It is clear from the few casual instances mentioned that this kind of study is liable to take the form of a mere catalogue of repercussions. In their *Handbook of Sociology*,¹ for instance, Ogburn and Nimkoff quote a list of no less than 150 "social effects of the radio in the United States", Gilfillan² and Ogburn³ have both made studies of the way in which new inventions are derived from previous ones, and penetrate with their effects into unexpected corners of social life, and so pave the way for yet further discoveries. Generalizations are hard to seek. It may be true that "to be adopted readily an invention must meet a need and yet must not disturb or dislocate a society greatly",⁴ so that there are limits to the influence of new discoveries; on the one hand they are themselves determined, or rather limited, by the conditions of the time, and their acceptability is a function of existing theories.

We may be able to say why certain inventions were *not* made at certain times, or, if made, not acceptable, but we do not yet know what inventions will be made, or what their effect will be. The only sphere of social life in which such predictability is at all developed is the sphere of economics; elsewhere the profundity of our ignorance is only equalled by the height of our hopes. Now that we have freed ourselves from the magical beliefs and sanctified customs which make new technical inventions unpalatable to primitive peoples, the only bounds to such novelties are, perhaps, the interests vested in the techniques which are threatened.

When it comes, however, to new ideas less connected with material things, all we know is that they will meet with resistance from the body of ideas and attitudes already in existence.

¹ P. 564.

² *The Sociology of Inventions*. (Chicago, 1935.)

³ *Social Change*. (New York, 1922.)

⁴ Ogburn and Nimkoff, *op. cit.*, p. 553.

The function of trade-unions with regard to a 'nationalized' industry is different from what it was when, by a restrictive policy, they attempted to safeguard the interest of their members, but the rank and file will doubtless for a long time view any accord between the employing body and the trade-union officials with deep suspicion. The idea of uniting nations to ensure world peace and prosperity has to struggle against existing attitudes of suspicion, and the tacit assumption of war as the only way of settling disputes. The Western idea of democracy cannot be imposed straight away on cultures which have radically different notions of government.

To register this fact of resistance is not nothing, but one of the great tasks of the future is to discover, by means of a careful, comparative study of the past, what changes are likely to have the desired effects not so much in the technological field as in the world of ideas. Particularly interesting in this connection is the study of changes in social organization caused by the clash between a complex and a simple culture. The bonds which bind the simple culture to their kin, their chiefs, and a narrow road of customary life are broken, as their contacts get spread over a wider area. It has been figuratively put¹ that the network of relations which was once tight and thick, encompassing a compact area, is now spread thinly over a much wider one, so that the old duties and obligations become tenuous and no new ones replace them. The problem is: how can we introduce changes without disrupting social life? It is one which exercises the mind of colonial administrators today.

¹ Wilson: *Analysis of Social Change*. (Cambridge, 1945.)

X

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

THE preoccupations of any discipline are determined not only by the general desire to pursue truth in every corner of its province, but also by the problems offered by society to the scientist for solution. In a perfectly harmonized society, or harmonious union of societies, the sociologist would study only the nature and rules of social intercourse, and of social change, but societies are not harmonious, and the inclusive societies face one another with hostility and suspicion. A topic, or rather several topics, of maladjustment therefore present themselves, and sociologists and social psychologists have turned their minds to their investigation.

The existence of physical sickness has given rise to a profession of healers. In many primitive communities the sick are regarded with aversion, because it is believed that their illness is due to some delinquency on their part.¹ When contagious sickness reaches the proportion of a plague, the administration must take steps, if only to remove the bodies; in a more humanitarian age, when it becomes clear that the family cannot be expected to provide medical attention, special institutions are desired to promote medical knowledge and to provide the treatment such knowledge prescribes.

In the history of the treatment of the sick we have an instance of the influence of private benevolent action on the development of social institutions. The administration has to deal with crises which impede the general work of the community, but spasmodic sickness or physical deficiency does not necessarily do this. Such persons are, at first, catered for by private enterprise, prompted by pity and religious motives. Gradually their work is observed, admired, taken for granted and expected as a right; the state then has to supplement the

¹ Kelsen: *Nature and Society*. (Kegan Paul, 1947.)

resources of the voluntary bodies and take over their work. Practically all of what are called 'social services' have their origin in voluntary enterprise.

The mentally sick present an additional problem. Leaving aside the question of hereditary predisposition, it is generally recognized that most mental diseases are caused by the pressure of environmental circumstances, frequently harking back to infantile experience. But 'environmental circumstances' include general social conditions, in the widest sense, as well as personal relations peculiar to the patient. In a society in which sexual relations are restricted, the pressure put on the individual member is more severe than would be the case if they were freer. Thus the culture of every society places certain strains on the people who compose it, and different cultures impose different strains. In her study of *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* Margaret Mead calls attention to the fact that among the quiet the more aggressive member is at a disadvantage, while among the competitive it is the quiet temperament which is penalized. The general social ethos, then, is largely responsible for the maladjustment of those who cannot conform to it easily.

When the family ties were strong and covered more than the immediate nucleus of father, mother and their children, the aged were no social problem, but with the restriction in scope of the family they have become one. Benevolence has created the institution of the almshouse, but now something more is demanded. They want independence, and entertainment, and an inquiry¹ has been made into their needs and the ways in which these can be met.

Suicides, it might be thought, present nothing more than a problem of removal. The attitude towards suicide is, however, of interest: at times it is an honourable way out of a difficult situation; at times, as in China and Japan, it may be used as a weapon, the very threat of which may be enough to curb an oppressive official who dares not run the risk of being plagued by the angry spirit of a petitioner who has committed suicide on his doorstep; it may, as in Japan again, be the accepted

¹ *Old People* (Nuffield Foundation, Oxford, 1947), and *When You Are Old.* (B.M.A., 1947.)

recourse for those who feel themselves shamed in the public eye.¹

It is, however, the causes of suicide that attracted the attention of Durkheim.² After examining the various causes of difference in the suicide rate which have been put forward—motive, climate, etc.—and finding them wanting, he turns to *courants suicidogènes* in societies themselves. He discriminates four types of suicide which spring from peculiarities in the relation between the individual and society: 'altruistic', 'egoistic', 'anomic', and 'fatalistic'. The 'altruistic' type of suicide is found when the individual is so immersed in his social relations that his own life counts but little, as in an army or in Japan. 'Fatalistic' suicide is an extreme variety of this. 'Egoistic' suicide, on the other hand, springs out of the opposite situation. He claims to show that the suicide rate among Catholics is lower than among Protestants, and he interprets this as being due to the fact that Protestantism puts too much responsibility on the individuals for some of them to bear. The arms of Mother Church encompass the Catholic, the Protestant faces God alone. The '*suicide anémique*' is the most interesting.

Basing his argument on the correlation between the suicide rate and the business cycle, when peaks as well as troughs show an increase in the number of suicides, he suggests that any disturbance in a man's socially accepted standards is upsetting to his equilibrium. Loss of money as a cause of suicide would not surprise us, but an access of fortune as a cause of suicide is less easy to understand, unless we suppose that people are more closely fitted into their social niche than we commonly believe. If their stability depends upon preserving their social position with its customary standards, then even the removal of obstacles to wider possibilities may prove disastrous. The winners of football pools are not, it would appear, to be envied without some qualification.

Unemployment presents a social problem of a complex nature. If there are needs to be satisfied and men, who might be employed in satisfying them, are in point of fact standing idle, there must be some maladjustment somewhere. Economists

¹ Morris: *Traveller from Tokyo*.

² Durkheim: *Le Suicide*. (Paris, 1897.)

have explained the causes of unemployment and its cumulative tendencies, distinguishing between the 'frictional' unemployment due to a change-over from one job to another, and the immobility of those who do not feel inclined to move away to a strange district to find work, on the one hand and unemployment due to more profound economic dislocation on the other. Then, again, there is the difference made in the attitudes of workmen and employers when there is a large pool of unemployed for the one to join and the other to employ.

The problems of industrial discipline take on a new complexion when there is something approaching 'full employment', and a high standard of self-restraint is demanded of the operative who knows that his boss will not find it easy to replace him. A condition of labour scarcity supervening on a condition of labour plenty provides the sociologist with an instructive example of the embarrassing vitality of outworn attitudes.

Such problems are usually studied by economists. The sociologist has turned his attention to the effect of unemployment on the unemployed themselves. The Pilgrim Trust in 1938 sponsored an investigation into the unemployed of six areas; four 'depressed' areas—Crook (Co. Durham), Blackburn, Liverpool, Rhondda—and two relatively flourishing ones, for purpose of comparison: Deptford and Leicester.

The most interesting result of the inquiry was the way in which the effect of unemployment varied from one community to another. In Wales, for instance, where cultural activities, such as the chapel and the choir, engaged the interests of the men, so that their social life was not entirely shattered, the effects were not nearly so deleterious as they were elsewhere.

Sickness in mind and body, old age, and unemployment are social problems in the sense that when the administrators feel, or are made to feel by public opinion, that steps must be taken to cure the sick, tend the aged, and minimize the ill-effects of enforced idleness, they must invent institutions to deal with the difficulty. The sick, the elderly and the unemployed do not arouse resentment. A problem of another kind is set by the criminal.

"Chaque état de civilisation," says Durkheim,¹ *"a sa criminalité"*

¹ Durkheim: *Règles de la Méthode Sociologique*, (Ed. 1947), p. 75.

propre." He points out that if you take 'crime' as being what the collectivity disapprove of sufficiently to punish, there will be changes in a community and differences between communities as to what action will be included under the title 'criminal', and that as men become less violent other offences against the person will be taken account of. Furthermore, he suggests, it is in the interests of social vitality that deviates from the norm should be produced, even though some may deviate in ways which prove to be intolerable.

The effect of changes in the acts listed as criminal, defects in the statistical material,¹ and changes in police efficiency make it extremely difficult to compare the causes of variation in the crime rate, by correlating their variation with changes occurring elsewhere. When, however, as happens after a war of great devastation or after the upheaval of a revolution, there is a shortage of supplies and inadequate administrative supervision, it is not surprising that the crime-rate goes up. In 1939² the number of crimes known to the police (excluding offences against Defence Regulations) was 303,771 and 47,223 adults and adolescents were found guilty of indictable offences. In the war years, the figure mounted to 478,394 crimes known to the police in 1945 and 72,758 adults and adolescents found guilty.

The usual method of investigation is by the study of case histories and samples compared with control groups. It is not to be expected that any one cause will account for all forms of crime. The criminal, after all, is a human being who has failed to acquire the restraint which most of us have absorbed, and this failure may be due to a variety of circumstances. Lack of intelligence may lead to getting caught, but it may also prejudice the understanding of social demands; an unbalanced emotionality is found³ among juvenile delinquents; unhappy home conditions⁴ impede the development of a socialized character because a child tends to approach the wider society

¹ Mannheim, H.: *Social Aspects of Crime in England Between the Wars*. (Allen & Unwin, 1940.)

² Criminal Statistics for 1939-1945. H.M.S.O. Cmd. 7227. For contrasting figures for 1914-1918 see H. Mannheim: *War and Crime*. (Watts, 1941.)

³ Cf. Burt: *The Young Delinquent*. (Univ. of London, 1927.)

⁴ E.g. Healy and Bronner: *New Light on Delinquency*. (Yale, 1936.)

in terms which he has learnt from the first social contacts he has made; poverty exacerbates desire, and to be brought up in a world in which all methods of appropriation—*theft*, *'pinching'*, *'fiddling'* and *'knocking off'*—are so far from being out of the question that they are only rejected, if at all, because of the danger of being *'copped'*—a world in which it is up to the *'wide'* to prey upon the *'mugs'*, who are so prolific that one is alleged to be born every minute—is not conducive to the inculcation of habits of restraint. All these factors play a part, sometimes one bulking large, sometimes another as one turns from case to case.

The treatment of criminals has passed through a long history in which a variety of motives have played their part. In earlier days, and among primitive peoples, the crime was more important than its perpetrator. Responsibility was not clearly fixed, and, provided the disturbed balance was restored to equilibrium, vicarious *'punishment'*, which is no *'punishment'* at all, or collective punishment in which the innocent suffers with the guilty, or compensation for damage done, were what was needed.

When, however, the person who has committed the deed is marked down as guilty, then the question of his treatment arises, and various attitudes towards him find expression in so many *'theories of punishment'*. The current attitude presents a *'fusion'* of theories which have from time to time emerged. *Retaliation*, though not considered respectable, plays its part, particularly in cases of sexual violence.

Retribution, considered old-fashioned, is not by any means dead. Many people still feel that a man should be made to recognize his guilt, that if he recognized it he would also recognize the appropriateness of pain consequent upon his action, and that it is monstrous to treat human beings as merely animals to be socially trained by threats and rewards. If a man could be mesmerized into habits of honesty, should we feel that his treatment, after a robbery, was *'appropriate'*?

Deterrence is the most obvious motive in penal treatment. Even if we do not feel angry, and if the criminal does not display appropriate emotions of guilt and sorrow for what he has done, can he not be frightened from doing it again, and will not the

spectacle of his penalty deter others from following his example? It is quite absurd to deny the deterrent effect of punishment. All we can say against its efficacy is that the degree of deterrence does not correlate with the harshness of punishment.

The complexity of the motives which inspire us is illustrated by the fact that we could not bring ourselves to apply the deterrent theory wholeheartedly. As Westermarck has pointed out,¹ such theories would bid us punish the comparatively common minor offence much more severely than the rarer 'serious' ones, but our resentment is not strong enough, *or we should not regard such punishment as 'appropriate' to the crime*; conversely, if we were convinced that the threat of hanging has never deterred a murderer, it is very doubtful whether we would let him go scot free, because we feel he 'deserves' to be punished.

The *reform* of the criminal is ostensibly the main motive in his treatment today, and the Institute for the Scientific Study of Delinquency is engaged in exploring methods for so doing.

It is clear that the problem of the adult criminal is different from that of the juvenile, and among the adults the first offender is a more hopeful subject for reform than the old lag. Accordingly these classes are treated separately, and attention is concentrated on the re-education of juveniles and the rehabilitation of such first offenders as can be saved, by psychological methods or by some attempt to induce a more socially desirable attitude.

The present century has been peculiarly fruitful in inventing new institutions and altering old ones for this purpose. Approved schools replaced the old reformatories and Industrial Schools in 1932. Borstal training to suit various different types of delinquents of an age between 16 and 23 was started in 1908; the probation system reached institutional status in 1907.

Of the success of these institutions it is impossible to speak with any certainty. We cannot tell whether the institutions have been responsible for the 'cure' of such delinquents as do not reappear before the courts, or whether they have simply, as the Gluecks² put it, "gotten delinquency out of their system" by a

¹ Westermarck: *Origin and Development of the Moral Idea*, Vol. I, p. 81.

² Glueck S. and E.: *After-Conduct of Discharged Offenders*. (Macmillan, 1945).

process of social maturation. There are those,¹ too, who think that in the treatment of juveniles we underestimate their sophistication and their toughness. As with any type of medicine, we do not know what would have happened if we had not given the dose. From the sociological point of view the most interesting experiments in the treatment of delinquents are those conducted by Aichhorn² in Austria, and Wills³ in England.

Disharmony within the community is paralleled by disharmony between communities, and attempts have been made to assess the causes of war. There are two main classes of theory: economic and psychological. The former sees the causes of war in the clash of economic interests, the latter in the nature of man. In the past the economic causes were comparatively simple: 'the valley sheep were fatter', the expansion of empire brought booty and tribute, huge movements of peoples pushed their way from Central Asia into Europe, Egypt, India and China. We think of war in those days as a noble and accepted occupation.

In our own time, however, there is a paradox. Colonial wars may end in the occupation of the conquered territory, but, with the exception of valuable slices here and there, modern war does not seem to have that in view; the causes, in so far as they are economic, must be more recondite. Hobson⁴ and the Marxians take the line that war is the inevitable outcome of imperialism, and that imperialism—the need for new markets and new places for investment—is the inevitable outcome of capitalism. Imperialist economic factors undoubtedly played a part in the Boer war and in the Russo-Japanese war, but the general thesis that expansion is always in the service of investment has been disputed.

Another view⁵ is that the autarchic restriction of trade, and the erection of barriers which impede the flow of goods from one country to another, is the cause of war.

Again evidence can be produced, but to suppose that one

¹ Jones: *Juvenile Delinquency*. (Penguin Series.)

² Aichhorn: *Wayward Youth*. (Putnam.)

³ Wills: *Hawthorpe Experiment*. (Allen & Unwin, 1941.) *Barns Experiment* (Allen & Unwin, 1945.)

⁴ Hobson: *Imperialism*, (Allen & Unwin, 1938.)

⁵ Robbins: *The Economic Causes of War*. (Cape, 1939.)

single economic factor is the cause of war is obviously too simple. To begin with, people must be ready to fight, and the reasons for this have been explored by the psycho-analysts.¹ They bring to the solution of the problem the explanatory apparatus of unconscious motives and mechanisms. Man, they say, is aggressive when frustrated, the normal house-training of a child frustrates it, but the aggression so generated cannot be unloaded onto the cause, because it is also a loved object; it must be therefore repressed.

But the family circle is not the only frustrating body; later on the various agencies of social control operate upon us, and, again, aggression in response is forbidden. The result is that we have an accumulation of unexploded aggression which is ready to flare up when opportunity offers. The mechanism of projection and displacement play their part. Our own guilty feelings are projected upon the hypostasized image of another nation, or a minority group within our own. They are the guilty party, guilty of harbouring aggressive desires against us. Foreign politics are viewed in terms of our own internal dislocation, and we are therefore always ready to discharge our domestic hatred on to another nation, which is so clothed with a projection of our own wickedness that the ensuing war is seen to be a righteous one.

Such views are important. No one would dream of saying that international relations are conducted in a purely rational spirit, and the sudden outbreak of a war which the vast majority of people do not consciously want is a paradox which calls for explanation. One cannot help feeling, however, that simpler and more conscious factors are important: the desire for power, the identification of the individual with the prestige of his group, and the sense of insecurity in modern economic life. To these Ginsberg² would add "resentment left behind by former wars", "the existence of armaments", and the fact that statesmen cannot take the responsibility of abandoning the right of their country to defend itself.

But there is another more obvious, and yet more insidious, factor, to which Ginsberg also calls attention: we think in

¹ E.g. Glover: *War, Sadism and Peace*. (Revised ed., Allen & Unwin, 1946.)

² *Reason and Unreason in Society*, p. 194.

terms of war. There is, as Ginsberg says, nothing which we could call a will to peace. "The truth is that the mass of the people do not feel either individually responsible or competent to deal with the complex issues that arise, and realizing that they cannot control policy they leave events to take their course," says Ginsberg, and he quotes Lowes Dickinson's remark that: "There is a general slithering into the pit, into which, nevertheless, everybody would say they do not wish to fall."

A study of the precipitating events of wars in the 19th century impresses us with the extraordinary 'chancy' nature of the outbreak. Dispatches are exchanged, ministers confer, ultimata are delivered and then the fatal order is given. The duty of ministers is to safeguard what they deem to be the interests of their country, and at the back of their minds is always lurking the idea: "This may mean war." They are faced with the twin tasks of preventing it and being in a favourable position if it breaks out. Conflict of economic interests may precipitate a quarrel, we may all have unconscious motives which can be tapped by intelligent propaganda, and members of one nation may think of members of another with fear, suspicion and desire for revenge, and if these things were not so the course of history would undoubtedly be different, but one cannot neglect the events which immediately precede a war, nor the particular ambitions and characters of those who play a part in them.

No war is inevitable, unless there are persons in strategic positions who deliberately plan to bring it about, and even then it would not be inevitable unless the masses of the community were prepared to obey orders. And even if a statesman desires war, and can count on obedience, it is risky to say that war is 'inevitable'. If the publication of the altered Ems telegram had not provoked Napoleon, can we be certain that Bismarck would have chosen other and successful means?

The issue is one between those who think in terms of mysterious undercurrent cause-factors which sweep individual human beings along in their wake, and those who think of social relations in terms of a network of social interaction between individuals. If the latter view be taken, and if it be agreed that the decisions of some individuals are of paramount importance,

then, although they are confined within certain limits by the 'logic of the situation', swayed by the prevailing climate of opinion, and limited by their own personal abilities, there is no reason to suppose that their decisions are completely determined.

Another aspect of war which is of interest to the sociologist is the attitude of the masses of the community after it has broken out. This has been investigated with considerable diligence by 'Mass-Observation'.¹ The theoretical single-minded co-operation is, of course, a myth. A multitude of cross-currents, complaints, exasperations, and selfishnesses are recorded, but underlying these there does seem to have been a conception of the country in danger and a readiness on the part of a very large number of persons to put themselves out to save it. It would be idle to compare the degree of unanimity and self-sacrifice in a large-scale community with that which one can expect from a small face-to-face community exposed to a threatening situation, but some degree of unanimity was surely apparent.

The studies which were made, valuable though they are, were mainly concerned with the reaction of the public to slogans, and ministerial decisions, with constructive criticism of day-to-day measures and the way in which they were 'put over', and with the ways in which the public sought escape from the pressure of events. The Mass-Observer "found that people will put up with almost any inconvenience, *provided the reason for it is frankly explained to them*, and provided that it is imposed as part of a consistent plan which is carried through, not applied half-heartedly or withdrawn half-way".

This is undoubtedly good advice, but subsequent events seem to show that another factor is essential, and that is a belief in the seriousness of the situation. What we do not know is: what sorts of experience must people have for this belief to be inculcated? The events of 1947 would seem to show that no amount of explanation is enough to make people "put up with almost any inconvenience", unless they apprehend the situation which the community has to face as serious. War, with its vivid imagery and spectacular evidence of destruction, is a

¹ E.g. *War Begins at Home*. (Chatto & Windus, 1940.)

close and present danger; an economic crisis would seem to be remote and unreal, almost a malicious invention of a government ever on the lookout to plague the citizen. What we have not discovered is how to induce in peace-time such unanimity and self-sacrifice as was exhibited in time of war.

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