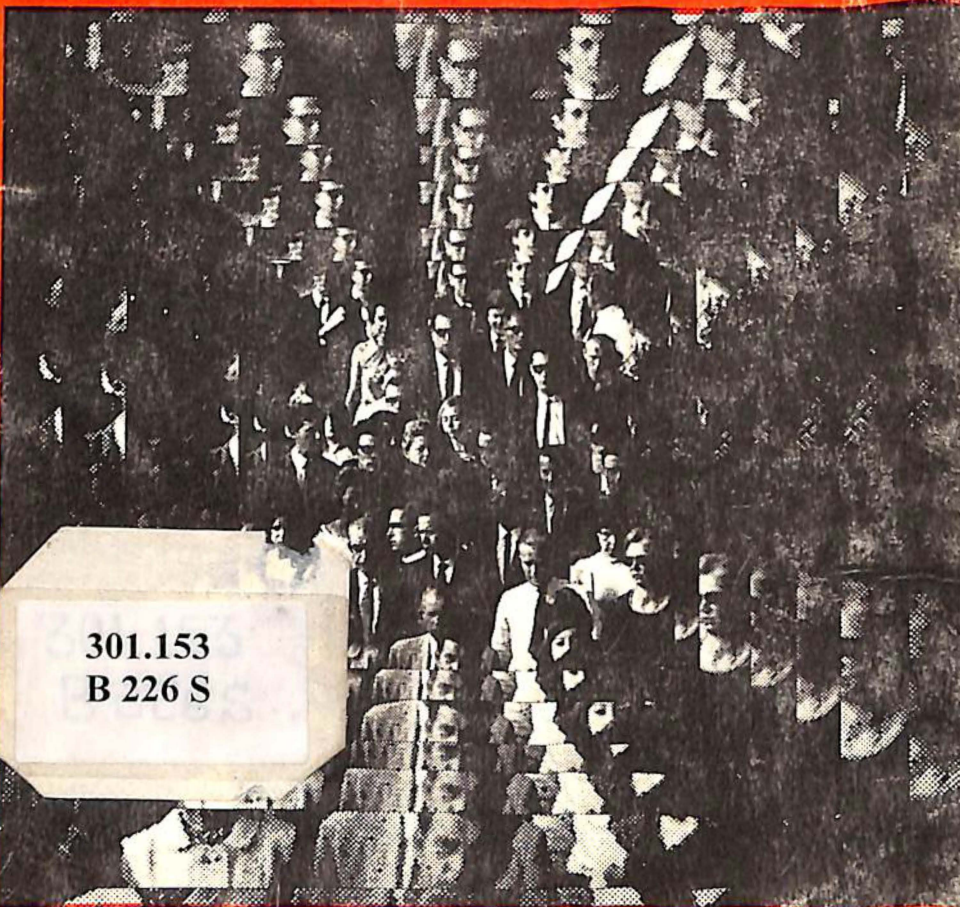


STUDIES IN SOCIOLOGY

**J.A. Banks**

**THE SOCIOLOGY  
OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**



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*University of Cambridge*

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# The Sociology of Social Movements

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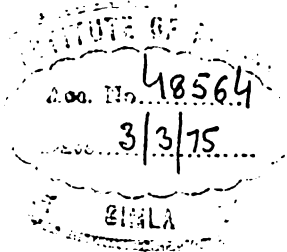
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## 1. THE PROBLEM

SOCIOLOGISTS are often accused of using unnecessary jargon. Certainly, some of them are prone to 'sociologese',<sup>1</sup> the preference for abstruse and abstract terms rather than for simple, commonsense words. All, at times, employ technical phrases, the meaning of which cannot be comprehended immediately by the general reader. Yet, for the most part, the vocabulary of sociology is still taken directly from everyday usage, in spite of the disadvantages which this practice entails; for it is not always realised that the simple language of the vernacular often results in serious misunderstandings, not only between people generally but also between sociologists themselves. The term 'social movement', or more elliptically 'movement' with an ostensibly clarifying adjective, is a splendid case in point. So loose and slipshod has the employment of these words become that they seem capable nowadays of application to any kind of group activity whatsoever. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, indeed, defines a movement as 'a course or series of actions and endeavours on the part of a body of persons, moving or tending more or less continuously toward some special end', which, for the sociologist, does not distinguish a social movement from any other form of social behaviour, considered over a period of time. The point is that the regular habit of taking as of equal sociological merit every phenomenon, which somebody or other has named a social movement, results in general debasement of the concept for fruitful sociological purposes. Some conceptual refinement is an urgent necessity, therefore, if sociologists are going to make any contribution to understanding what is peculiar to those forms of group behaviour

<sup>1</sup> Henry W. Fowler, *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, 2nd ed., revised by Sir Ernest Gower (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) pp. 569-70.

which differentiates them in a special 'movement' sense from all other forms.

From time to time, of course, this problem has been duly realised. Heberle, for example, has emphasised that

social movements are a specific kind of concerted-action groups; they last longer and are more integrated than mobs, masses and crowds, and yet are not organised like political clubs and other associations. . . . Group consciousness, that is, a sense of belonging and of solidarity among members of a group, is essential for a social movement, although empirically it occurs in various degrees. . . . By this criterion social movements are distinguished from 'social trends' *which are often referred to as movements* and are the result of similiar but uncoordinated actions of many individuals ([18] p. 439).<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Blumer has distinguished between 'spatial movements', such as mass migrations, and 'collective enterprises to establish a new order of life' ([4] p. 199), whereas Turner and Killian prefer the term 'quasi-movements' to cover migrations and similar phenomena on the ground that they 'possess some but not all of the characteristics of a movement' ([33] pp. 308-9). At this level the discussion is almost purely verbal and degenerates into 'definitions', mere typologies, taxonomies and natural histories. The alternative, clearly, is to locate the phenomena in question in a theoretical framework of general sociological significance.

The fact that this has not yet been achieved is probably why sociologists continue to fall into the trap of attempting to write about social movements in the same vague ways that they are referred to by the public generally, and why the sociology of social movements is so unsatisfactory. As Killian put it in 1964, 'social movements are conventionally regarded as part of the subject-matter of collective behaviour, but they might just as well be viewed as an aspect of social change. The field of collective behaviour, however, has been a neglected area of sociology, and in the study of social change, social movements have received relatively little emphasis' ([22] p. 426). Why should this be? The

<sup>2</sup> Italics not in the original. (References in square brackets refer to works listed in the Bibliography, pp. 57-62 below.)

twentieth century – a century which has experienced two world wars, frequent violent revolutions, and a continuous clash between the advocates of numerous social doctrines, of which socialism, communism, fascism and nationalism are only the most manifest – is above all the century of social movements, as well as the century of sociology. Why, then, have sociologists not found a more important place for them in their analyses of social processes? In essence, Killian's further point, that 'this is because men and groups have so often been regarded by sociologists as the creatures rather than the creators of social change', touches on the crucial issue, but it needs further elaboration.

In an earlier attack on the problem with Ralph Turner [33], Killian defined 'collective behaviour' as 'the behaviour of collectivities', that is, groups 'characterised by the spontaneous development of norms and organisation which contradict or re-interpret the norms and organisation of the society'. Not all sociologists, even in America, would think of collectivities in this fashion. Parsons, for example, regards any body of persons, 'mutually oriented to the common values' of 'relatively stable interaction in social systems', as a collectivity, regardless of whether these values are contradictory to, or congruent with, those of the wider society.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the narrower meaning has crucial significance in the present context because of the more usual practice among American sociologists of distinguishing between *collectivities* and *associations*, where the latter are regarded as properly part of the conventional organisation of social life while the former are not. Collective behaviour, from this point of view, is always to be contrasted with institutionalised behaviour and 'is formed or forged to meet undefined or unstructured situations' ([3] p. 139). Thus there is a family resemblance between collective behaviour in this sense and deviant behaviour, as many of the topics examined as examples of collective behaviour indicate – the panic, the craze, the lynching, the riot. The inclusion of social movements in this list implies that they have the same place in a sociological theory of the processes of social action as such collective outbursts of protest. They may be seen as symptomatic of some malfunctioning of society.

<sup>3</sup> Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1952) p. 41.

To the the degree, therefore, that some version or other of functionalism has dominated sociological thinking in the twentieth century, it would seem clear why the study of social movements has been neglected. Of course, if functionalists are merely described as attempting to treat social phenomena as a set of dynamically interdependent variables, any kind of collective outburst *could* be examined in its relationship to conventional forms of social behaviour. But it can hardly be denied that the enduring interest of those who have attempted to apply functionalist conceptualisation to theories of the working of social processes has been directed towards the problem of integration, to the prerequisites for any social system to persist in a state of equilibrium in the face of changes in its environment. Unconventional forms of behaviour of all kinds, seen from this angle, are always episodic. Those that over time become institutionalised are said to lose their 'distinctive characteristics' ([30] p. 8). Hence, social movements which become large and powerful, and perform endure, are described as having taken on the 'characteristics of an association rather than a collectivity' ([33] p. 307). Only those erstwhile collectivities which have become associations – such as the modern trade union movement – have any place in a functionalist analysis of society. Social movements which have not yet become part of conventional modes of life are in this sense not part of the social structure.

This conclusion sharpens Cohen's important argument that the reason why functionalists have never produced adequate theories of social change is not because their formulation has no room for it, but because 'they have not produced adequate theories of social persistence'.<sup>4</sup> In particular, they have emphasised that 'strains' may occur between the units of which societies are composed, but it is not at all clear how such 'strains' operate to maintain societies as such, even if conflict between groups may be said to bind them together.<sup>5</sup> For the functionalist, it seems, the significance of social movements, as indeed of all forms of such collective behaviour, lies merely in their capacity to indicate where these strains occur. Thus, in a detailed study of

<sup>4</sup> Percy S. Cohen, *Modern Social Theory* (London: Heinemann, 1968) pp. 58, 148–60.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis A. Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956).

the impact of the Industrial Revolution on the Lancashire working-class family between 1770 and 1840, Smelser devoted two chapters to the evolution of what may be regarded as parts of the working-class movement of that time, namely trade unions, and friendly and co-operative societies. These he described as specialised organisations, complementing the new family structure produced by the demands of the textile factory system, and providing in their final, institutionalised forms functional substitutes for the regulation of employment and the organisation of consumption, which were previously performed by the family itself. It is true that Smelser emphasised that he was looking at these new organisations from the point of view of the family and not from that of, say, the economy; it is also true that he was able to make use of the same seven-stage sequence of differentiation and reorganisation in describing their history, as in the account of the changing division of labour within the family; but the main point to notice is that *collective behaviour*, in its narrower meaning, occurs between 'stage one' – 'dissatisfaction with the goal achievements of the social system or subsystem in question and a sense of opportunity for change in terms of the potential availability of facilities' – and 'stage seven' – the routinisation of 'responsible' implementation of innovations, – when presumably those social movements which have campaigned for such innovations have become fully-fledged associations in the new institutional structure, and 'their extraordinary character thereby diminishes'.<sup>6</sup>

For Smelser, that is to say, there can be no social movement without *previous* subsystem strain, since such strains are the 'important set of determinants in the genesis of collective behaviour'<sup>7</sup> ([30] p. 47). For Smelser too, only those social movements are worthy of detailed attention which are 'successful' in the sense that they became part of the conventional social order, performing functions in the new society *which other associations performed in the old*. From this point of view of history social

<sup>6</sup> This seven-stage sequence is characteristic of all 'structural changes which involve the disappearance, re-creation and reorganisation of the social system's roles'. Neil J. Smelser, *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959) pp. 14–16.

<sup>7</sup> Note also the remark in [30] p. 23, n. 4: 'In certain respects the theory to be developed in this volume marks an extension of the thought begun in my study of social change in the North of England during the Industrial Revolution.'

movements are epiphenomena. Those who subscribe to them may genuinely believe that they are setting about the introduction of something novel, an innovation in social life, but what they can and do achieve depends upon the structural changes which are occurring, as it were, independently of their efforts. If their intentions are congruent with the course of historical development they will apparently succeed; if they are not, their activities are doomed to become of no avail. Thus, the driving force behind social change in the Industrial Revolution was seen by Smelser as an expansion in the market for textiles in the late eighteenth century beyond the capacity of the existing productive system to supply. Dissatisfactions about the use of raw materials and equipment by workers in the domestic system of manufacture were exacerbated by this event. The institution of the factory system of production to increase the manufacturer's control over capital and labour, and the invention of machines with increased output, then set in train those structural changes in the family division of labour which produced the trade union, friendly society and Co-operative movements, part of the enduring order of the new industrial system.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the historical record, however, is the evidence of *enduring* dissatisfaction with the social system. From the prophet Amos to the present day, a regular sequence of dreamers has appeared, contrasting 'the bitter realities of the present with a possible future where justice and brotherhood in the affairs of men would at last prevail' ([25] p. 3, and part I *passim*). Concern for the structural characteristics of a society which 'permit or encourage episodes of collective behaviour' ([30] p. 15) would therefore suggest that sociological analysis should indicate how and when such utopian visions become incorporated into behaviour to innovate social structures less likely to cause dissatisfaction. From this point of view the three movements referred to above might be seen as not merely creating organisations which perform functions previously carried out by the family, but also as motivating a whole series of actions, legislative and voluntary, consciously designed to achieve – and actually achieving – desired structural changes.

A word is in order here about the relationship between specific organisations, such as the Amalgamated Society of

Engineers, the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows or the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, and that vaguer *conscience collective* that gives support to such bodies in the communities where they are found. Gusfield has argued, for example, that

there is a mixture of formal association and informal, diffuse behaviour encompassed in the concept of a movement. A significant distinction can be made between 'directed' and 'undirected' movements or segments of movements. The *directed* segment of a movement is characterised by organised and structural groups with specific programs, a formal leadership structure, definitive ideology, and stated objectives. Its followers are *members* of an organisation as well as partisans to a belief. The *undirected* phase of a movement is characterised by the reshaping of perspectives, norms, and values which occur in the interaction of persons apart from a specific vocational context. The followers are *partisans* but need not be members of any association which advocates the change being studied. ([15] p. 445)

Smelser's historical sequence, like that of sociologists who favour a natural history approach to the study of social movements, implies that the undirected phase *always* precedes the directed in time, or rather, that the directed phase *emerges* out of a previously inchoate groping towards the collective consciousness of similarities and differences and then in its turn accumulates around it a wider body of partisans. Of course, in the sense that people have to come together before they can organise themselves to take action in a decided direction, such an emergence from an undirected phase seems plausible. Nevertheless the question really at issue is the extent to which some, at least, of the persons concerned bring to such meetings pre-conceived notions, not merely of what they want them to achieve, but also of the means to such achievement.

Thus, the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers was formed by some twenty-eight working men in 1844.<sup>8</sup> At the graveside of one of them twenty-four years later it was said that

<sup>8</sup> D. H. Cole, *A Century of Co-operation* (Manchester: Co-operative Union, 1944) 'Appendix: Who Were the Pioneers?' pp. 402-13; Arnold Bonner, *British Co-operation* (Manchester: Co-operative Union, 1961) pp. 499-501.

Mr Howarth propounded that the working classes should become their own purveyors and shopkeepers. The Pioneers' Society's rules were mostly drawn up by him, and the principle of dividing profits on purchases in proportion to each member's trade was his proposal. The rules further provide that the government of the Society should be in the hands of the members, the management being vested in a committee elected by and from amongst themselves. Mr Howarth also assisted in drawing up the constitution of the Rochdale District Corn Mill Society. Later still he assisted in forming the North of England Co-operative Wholesale Society . . . and was one of its first directors.<sup>9</sup>

Evidently Charles Howarth had some experience of the Rochdale Friendly Co-operative Society which went bankrupt in 1835, 'foundering', it has been said, 'upon the rock which wrecked most societies – credit trade'.<sup>10</sup> Certainly he seems to have invented the idea of dividend upon purchases, for all that others before him had had the same idea.<sup>11</sup> However, the main contribution of the second Rochdale Society, under Howarth's guidance, was not the novelty of the several ideas which became the principles of the world Co-operative Movement, but their combination to make up 'a total that was essentially new'.<sup>12</sup> It was this combination which Howarth, and more especially his friend, William Cooper, propagated in season and out of season as capable of producing a viable Co-operative Society.

Looked at from this point of view, the advent and spread of Co-operative organisations appears no different a form of social phenomenon from any other which has been studied as an example of innovation. There is evidence in this case, that is to say, to support the fundamental assumption that 'any innovation is made up of pre-existing components; and, secondly, that new combinations are entirely the products of mental activity'.<sup>13</sup> The

<sup>9</sup> George J. Holyoake, *The History of the Rochdale Pioneers* (London: Swan, Sonnenschein, 1900) pp. 165–6.

<sup>10</sup> Cole, *Century of Co-operation*, p. 63; Bonner, *British Co-operation*, p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> George J. Holyoake, *The History of Co-operation*, revised (London: Unwin, 1906) pp. 278–9.

<sup>12</sup> Cole, *Century of Co-operation*, p. 68.

<sup>13</sup> Homer G. Barnett, *Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953) p. 181.



clement of creativity in the formation and perpetuation of such a social movement is in no way distinct from that which produced the steam engine and the motor-car. There is, moreover, further evidence in this case to support the validity of distinguishing between the processes which lead to invention – Howarth's experiences in Rochdale and association with trade unionists, Chartists and co-operators already experimenting socially – and those which result in the diffusion of such invention through a social system – the efforts of Howarth, Cooper and other members of the Rochdale Society to encourage the creation of societies similar to their own. In terms of internal dynamics the sociological study of the Co-operative Movement should demonstrate the same characteristics as the rural sociologists' account of the way in which farmers have come to accept new agricultural practices, and the mass communication experts' study of new drug adoption by doctors.

Where there is perhaps a difference of some importance is in the nature of the consequences in the two instances. Social change, if it is referred to at all in technical innovation studies, is seen as an unanticipated, or at least unintended, consequence of technological development. The creation of a Co-operative Movement was a deliberate and anticipated consequence of the efforts of Charles Howarth and his colleagues. The distinction becomes less crucial, sociologically speaking, if it is recognised that from time to time men have invented social techniques and exploited them, much in the same fashion as they have with material techniques. Indeed, only when it is admitted that such social technologies are possible can social movements be regarded as creators rather than creatures of social change. Of course, this is not to deny that much of what Smelser and others have written about social movements in the context of collective behaviour is useful to sociologists, but it does bring out the emphasis of this study that the other forms of behaviour referred to – panics, riots, crazes, outbursts – are qualitatively different because they are in no sense *socially constructive* but constitute, rather, social responses to situations of stress. The element of emphasis here, that is to say, is on the realistic nature of the future orientation of those social innovators who create and maintain social movements which, so to speak, actually move,

even if they do not become part of the conventional order as this is interpreted by functionalists. There is a distinction of some sociological importance to be drawn between socially creative organisations, and their supporters, which is how social movements are thought of here, and other forms of collective partisanship which are no more than social protest. This study is primarily concerned with the development of this theme.

## 2. HISTORICAL SPECIFICITY

THE suggestion that social movements should be treated as self-conscious and successful attempts to introduce innovations into a social system raises the question of whether they are historically specific, in the sense in which modern, scientific and technological innovations are historically specific: namely, that there have been historical periods when they have been favoured and powerful and others in which they have been ignored and weak. Equilibrium analysis of social change, it should be emphasised, makes allowance for such a possibility, at least in part. For example, Smelser's seven-stage sequential scheme of structural differentiation is categorically described as being 'especially characteristic of growing and developing social systems' and not, therefore, applicable to, say, 'the decline of the British cotton industry since 1914'. The kind of social movement which he describes as located between steps 1 and 7 of his sequence, that is, may be seen as a product of advancing development, not of economic decline. At this point of his thinking, to be sure, Smelser still expresses himself cautiously, using the conditional clause to introduce step 7 - 'if the implementations of step 6 are received favourably . . .' - although the final impression of his study is one of the inevitability of the sequence, even from step 6 to step 7, 'presumably because the original "sore-spots" of the social structure have been modified during the course of structural differentiation'.<sup>1</sup> What is needed, in fact, is some determination of the conditions in which the transition from one stage to another occurs, and of those in which it does not. More specifically, are there conditions which occur, historically deter-

<sup>1</sup> Smelser, *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution*, pp. 15-16, 31.

mined by certain other features of social organisation, which pave the way for the maintaining of successful social innovation?

Smelser's *Theory of Collective Behaviour* goes a little way in this theoretical direction, by distinguishing between a natural history approach and what Smelser, with a background in economics, puts forward as an analogy to the value-added approach. This sees every stage in a process as 'a necessary condition for the appropriate and effective addition of value in the next stage. As the value-added process moves forward, it narrows progressively the range of possibilities of what the final product might become.' For Smelser, the crucial question is 'What determines whether one type of collective behaviour rather than another will occur?'; or, in the present context, what determines whether a social movement rather than a panic, a craze or a hostile outburst will occur? Smelser pays some attention to the historically specific nature of structural factors, conducive to the creation of social movement, and to the kinds of social controls which come into play once they emerge, although he does not elaborate the analysis. Thus, 'the presence of channels for effecting normative arrangements which are open, but within which the chances of success and the chances of failure are balanced precariously' is a condition for the appearance of what he calls a 'norm-oriented movement', namely, 'an attempt to restore, protect, modify, or create norms' in a society; whereas 'when alternative means for reconstituting the social situation are perceived as unavailable' ([30] pp. 14, 18, 285, 325), or when a norm-oriented movement is met by government action, closing all channels for peaceful agitation, the outcome is a value-oriented movement, concerned to restore, protect, modify or create values. Inevitably, because of his functional leanings, Smelser points to precipitating factors, structural conduciveness and social controls as the determinants of the type of social movement which emerges, without considering in this connection the possibility that men learn from experience how best to organise social change, and pass on this knowledge to the next generation.

An alternative to this particular approach is to look for a 'value' to add which parallels that in innovation on the technological and scientific levels. For example, Merton has argued that

science, as a large-scale activity which involves the continued interaction of many persons, must above all be countenanced by society if it is to find any systematic development. Otherwise put, the very existence of science and scientists presupposes that they occupy some positive level in the social level in the social scale of values which is the final arbiter of the prestige attached to various pursuits. [But] the persistent development of physical science occurs only in societies of a definite order, subject to a peculiar complex of tacit presuppositions and institutional constraints. What is for us in the modern age a normal phenomenon, demanding no explanation, and securing for us a long chain of self-evident cultural values, has been in other times and still is in many places abnormal and infrequent. Scientific pursuits may continue only when the drift of interested and capable persons toward the various scientific disciplines is continuous and unflinching, and this vocational espousal of science is assured only through regulated and canalising forces operating in certain directions rather than by the haphazard proclivities of individuals striking out to satisfy their several interests.<sup>2</sup>

Social movements, thought of less as organised attempts by men and women to apply a social-scientific technology, than as the application of a rule-of-thumb, pre-scientific, yet nevertheless systematic knowledge to the reorganisation of social affairs, are aptly parallel. Just as Puritanism and capitalism were seen by Merton to be the essential ingredients for the cultural acceptance of the emergence of the large-scale pursuit of science and scientific technology in the seventeenth century, so they may be seen similarly as essential for the emergence of social movements in the nineteenth.

A consideration of millenarian activities in the Middle Ages is instructive in this context. Cohn has defined these as religious movements,

inspired by the phantasy of a salvation which is to be

(a) collective, in the sense that it is to be enjoyed by the faithful as a group;

<sup>2</sup> Robert K. Merton, *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England* (New York: Fertig, 1970) p. 225.

- (b) terrestrial, in the sense that it is to be realised on this earth and not in some other-worldly heaven;
- (c) imminent, in the sense that it is to come both soon and suddenly;
- (d) total, in the sense that it is utterly to transform life on earth, so that the new dispensation will be no mere improvement on the present but perfection itself;
- (e) accomplished by agencies which are consciously re-regarded as supernatural.<sup>3</sup>

All these elements of the definition are important in distinguishing millenarian from other forms of mass behaviour, but the second and third are of special significance because they are characteristic also of that kind of socially innovative movement which is the subject of this study. At least to the extent that members of social movements busy themselves with the task of achieving social change here and now, they are this-worldly in outlook and believe such change to be realisable soon. For this reason some forms of millenarianism are often confused with genuine social movements. Thus, Worsley regards the distinction between activist and passivist millenarianism as more 'basic' than that between millenarian and non-millenarian agitation, since 'preparation for the Day' which is imminent involves adherents in confrontation with the societies in which they live, whereas resignation and the search for salvation in the next world do not.<sup>4</sup> Worsley, of course, was not concerned with medieval millenarian activities, but with cargo cults and millenarianism in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, his emphasis on the social implications of the distinction between activism and passivism applies equally to the past as to the present. To those for whom the Heavenly City was to appear on this earth and its joys to crown, not the wanderings of individual souls, but the epic exploits of a 'chosen people', immediate action against the existing social order was a prerequisite of salvation.

Such exploits were common enough, from the beginning of the

<sup>3</sup> Norman Cohn, 'Medieval Millenarianism: Its Bearing on the Comparative Study of Millenarian Movements', in Sylvia L. Thrupp, *Millennial Dreams in Action* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970) p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1957) p. 236.

twelfth until the middle of the sixteenth century, in the valley of the Rhine, in Belgium and northern France, in some areas of southern and central Germany, in Holland and Westphalia, and to a minor degree around London and in Bohemia. In every case priests and monks, knights and nobles, merchants and bankers, became enemies of the believers and therefore obstacles in the way of the millennium. Militant egalitarianism inevitably led to armed insurrection, with disastrous results as the rulers of medieval society took violent and bloody reprisals. Activism without consequences, either in the sense of the total transformation of life on earth or even its partial improvement, was the essential characteristic of rebellion by such social primitives, the 'surplus population living on the margins of society – peasants without land or with too little land even for subsistence; journeymen and unskilled workers living under the continuous threat of unemployment; beggars and vagabonds – in fact that amorphous mass of people who were not simply poor but who could find no assured and recognised place in society at all'.<sup>5</sup>

This is not to deny that an essential feature of the Co-operative, trade union and friendly society movements of the nineteenth century was also activism, but the point at issue here is that this activism consisted of procedures and consequences very different from those millenarian 'movements' described by Cohn and Hobsbawm. As the latter has vividly put it, 'millenarian movements share a fundamental vagueness about the actual way in which the new society will be brought about'. Revolutionary and activist they may be, in the willingness of their members to kill and to be killed for the cause, but they

are not makers of revolution. They expect it to make itself, by divine revelation, by an announcement from on high, by a miracle – they expect it to happen somehow. The part of the people before the change is to gather together, to prepare itself, to watch the signs of the coming doom, to listen to the prophets who predict the coming of the great day, and perhaps to undertake certain ritual measures against the moment of decision and change, to purify themselves, shedding

<sup>5</sup> Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London: Mercury Books, 1962) pp. 34, 308.

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the dress of the bad world of the present so as to be able to enter the new world in shining purity.<sup>6</sup>

An exception to this unrealistic activism might perhaps be made, at least in part, in the case of certain of the later medieval Anabaptists who saw themselves as 'small islands of righteousness in an ocean of iniquity',<sup>7</sup> and sought to preserve their identity as a community by avoiding all social intercourse outside their own ranks, while at the same time showing their willingness to respect the authority of the state, save in matters of conscience. This they have achieved over four centuries, in spite of the persecutions which drove them from Switzerland and Germany to Moravia, from Moravia to Slovakia, from Slovakia to Transylvania, from Transylvania to Wallachia, from Wallachia to Russia, and from there to the United States and Canada, where they maintained their religion and their community way of life.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the important feature of this Hutterite migration has been its complete lack of impact on the practices of the peoples on whose territories it has rested. The Hutterites may truly be said not to be part of the host society although located physically within it. The social teaching of the Hutterites has been for the faithful alone and has not been a factor in social change in the sense that social movements are so regarded here.

This community-creating feature of some millenarians is rather more important in the present context than may appear at first sight because of the attraction of the community ideal for the early nineteenth-century reformers, especially the Owenites. One of the objects of the Rochdale Pioneers, for example, was stated to be: 'as soon as practicable, this Society shall proceed to arrange the *powers of production, distribution, education and government*; or, in other words, to establish a self-supporting home colony of united interests, or assist other societies in establishing such colonies'. The inspiration for this objective came from the efforts of Robert Owen to establish such 'colonies' in Britain and America between 1825 and 1839. Indeed, one of these still existed in 1844 at Queenswood in Hampshire, and it was later

<sup>6</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester U.P., 1959) pp. 58-9.

<sup>7</sup> Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium*, p. 274.

<sup>8</sup> Victor Peters, *All Things Common: The Hutterian Way of Life* (Minneapolis: Minnesota U.P., 1965) chaps. 1-2 *passim*.



claimed by an Owenite missionary that 'when they were about to commence their new venture, the founders of the Rochdale Store sent a deputation to Queenswood for advice and instruction', although there is apparently no other evidence for this assertion. Howarth, Cooper and a number of the original members of the Rochdale Society are known to have supported Holyoake when he was attacked for criticising the management of the Queenswood community in 1843, so it is likely that if the Pioneers learned anything at all from the experiment, it was, as Mrs Webb put it, to concern themselves 'little with beatific visions of the promised land of their inheritance'. Instead, they concentrated on making their present venture a successful one and on encouraging others to follow their example. What they did, in fact, was to convert the changing pattern of capitalist retailing for a growing working-class market<sup>9</sup> into a form relevant both to the conditions of life of the potential members of Co-operative societies and to their own idealistic purposes – substituting democratic organisation of activities in place of private ownership of the retail store, and replacing dividend on the capital invested by dividend on the cash value of transactions by their members. This combination of practices from the existing form of society with a novel element which will achieve a change in its form is what constitutes a social movement in the innovative sense, and it is to be emphasised that this was possible *only because social experimentation is commonplace in capitalist, industrial society*.

Looked at from this point of view, the nineteenth-century Co-operative Movement may be seen as a reform movement, the ideological implications of which were obscured by its everyday concern for efficient business practice. Yet the regular reference in its literature to the Co-operative Commonwealth is reminiscent of its original Owenite, community preferences; for although the achievement of the Commonwealth was, and is, always con-

<sup>9</sup> Holyoake, *Rochdale Pioneers*, p. 12 (italics in the original); John F. C. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969) pp. 163–92; Lloyd Jones, *The Life, Times and Labour of Robert Owen*, 3rd ed. (London: Swan, Sonnenschein, 1900) p. 427; Joseph McCabe, *Life and Letters of George Jacob Holyoake* (London: Watts, 1908) 1 182–3; Beatrice Webb (née Beatrice Potter), *The Co-operative Movement in Great Britain* (London: Allen, 1914) p. 32; James B. Jeffreys, *Retail Trading in Britain, 1850–1950* (Cambridge U.P., 1954) chap. 1 *passim*.

sidered as occurring within the existing social framework through the gradual advance of co-operative at the expense of capitalist enterprise, the nature of the system which is envisaged as eventually emerging is one without competition – a federation of self-governing co-operatives of consumers and producers. Thus, the Co-operative Movement has always been a ‘value-oriented movement’ in Smelser’s terminology, in spite of the fact that the potential for violence, which he regards as ‘always present in such movements’, seems to have been altogether lacking, even in phantasy. Smelser’s practice of equating norm-oriented movements with what other authors think of as reform movements, and value-oriented movements with revolutionary movements ([30] chaps. 9–10, and p. 434), is contradicted by this case, since the Co-operative Movement has never espoused physical force – or the convincing threat of it ([7] p. 15) – to overthrow a government or political regime. In the nineteenth century, in particular, its attitude to the state was that it should not interfere in economic life, but act as a referee, providing Co-operative societies with the necessary elbow-room whereby they might get on with the business of superseding capitalism by peaceful means. When it became obvious that governments were willy-nilly becoming involved in the economy – even perhaps to the disadvantage of the Movement, as during the First World War – its previous pressure-group activities were deliberately widened to include the establishment of a separate political party, but even then as a *defence* for its commercial interests rather than as a means for imposing the Co-operative Commonwealth on a relatively indifferent public. It is true that an alliance with the Labour Party has been the practice, on an organised basis since 1927, although for most practical purposes from the beginning; yet it is equally true to state that ‘circumstances rather than principle led the Co-operative Movement into a political alliance with the Labour Party’. The British Co-operative Party, like the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in Canada,<sup>10</sup> has been

<sup>10</sup> B. J. Youngjohns, ‘Co-operation and the State, 1814–1914’, *Co-operative College Papers*, no. 1 (Mar. 1954); Thomas F. Carbery, *Consumers in Politics: A History and General Review of the Co-operative Party* (Manchester U.P., 1969) pp. 16–27; G. W. Rhodes, ‘Co-operative Labour Relations, 1900–1962’, *Co-operative College Papers*, no. 8 (Sep 1962) p. 121; J. W. Bennet and C. Krueger, ‘Agrarian Pragmatism and Radical Politics’, in Seymour M. Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism* (New York: Doubleday, 1968) pp. 347–64, where it is argued that Lipset’s acceptance of the ‘socialist label’

pragmatic rather than ideological in its approach to the state, and this pragmatism is a direct consequence of its nature and circumstances, as an innovative social movement in a political system which is open to social experimentation.

The Co-operative Movement is thus a clear example of a class of social phenomena which, although first occurring in the late eighteenth century, are primarily characteristic of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Holyoake termed such endeavours 'self-help by the people',<sup>11</sup> and this apt phrase graphically emphasises the deliberate creation of new social forms, run by the people themselves for themselves within the confines of existing societies and operating successfully as part of them. The tolerant acquiescence of these activities both by the political authorities and by the immediate locality is what characterises this period, in contrast with the earlier persecution of the Hutterites and, more recently in England, the intransigent hostility of the inhabitants of St George's Hill to the Diggers of 1649.<sup>12</sup> Yet it should not be assumed from this that innovative social movements are confined to the self-help form. The modern period is also characterised by the emergence and acceptance of what have been called 'cause groups', that is, groups who 'represent some belief or principle' and who 'seek to act in the interests of that cause',<sup>13</sup> mainly by influencing the organs of government to pass legislation, to make administrative orders, or in other ways to impose new social forms from above. Such pressure-groups, it is true, also appeal to the general public to join their ranks, to contribute funds, and to support them in their efforts to change government policy, but they do not expect the people themselves to undertake the creation of these social forms on a self-help basis. Rather it is their intention that governments should modify some already existing operations or establish entirely fresh agencies to realise the aims espoused in the cause. It is characteristic of such pressure-groups, moreover, that they do not

from Saskatchewan political circles led him to misunderstand the nature of the Federation's politics.

<sup>11</sup> *The History of the Rochdale Pioneers* was originally published as a series of articles in the *Daily News* in 1857 under the title of 'Self Help by the People'. Holyoake also wrote *Self-help: A Hundred Years Ago* (London: Sonnenschein, 1888).

<sup>12</sup> David Petegorsky, *Left Wing Democracy in the English Civil War* (London: Gollancz, 1940) pp. 160-75.

<sup>13</sup> John P. Stewart, *British Pressure Groups* (Oxford U.P., 1958) p. 25.

expect their own organisations to take over these constructive tasks, save where they have set up self-help bodies to put their aims into practice while persuading the government to act. Why such 'cause' pressure-groups are social movements in the sense of this study is that their members, and especially their leaders, usually have a fairly clear idea of the form viable organisations must take for the purpose of social change; and to the degree that they succeed in persuading the government to move, their conceptions become the chief organisational elements in the administrative system which is eventually created. The existence of social movements of this 'cause' pressure-group nature, therefore, depends upon three factors: (1) the readiness of the population and its masters to tolerate social experimentation by some members of a society; (2) the willingness of governments to undertake positive experimentation of this kind themselves; and (3) the possibility that governments will allow themselves to be persuaded by some members of the society to experiment in ways which the governments themselves had not thought of. The era of 'cause' pressure-group movements, that is to say, is the era of the welfare state, or more accurately the era of the social service state which preceded it.<sup>14</sup>

This raises the question of whether the effective opportunism of self-help movements and 'cause' pressure-group movements in the modern world, prodding governments towards piecemeal social engineering, has been paralleled by a similar, effective opportunism in the case of revolutionary social movements, bent on taking over the state, by force if necessary, in order to destroy the existing social system and to establish a new one all at once. The problem here is that a long history of political change through violence, since at least 1961 B.C. ([7] p. 18), seems to negate the argument that innovative social movements are relatively modern. Yet even as late as the great upheavals which are usually regarded as crucial to the beginning of the modern era – the English Civil War and the French Revolution – what occurred was a relatively sudden expansion of already existing social forms rather than the introduction of new ones. Since 1789,

<sup>14</sup> A. Briggs, 'The Welfare State in Historical Perspective', *European Journal of Sociology*, II (1961) 221–58. See also T. H. Marshall, 'The Welfare State: A Sociological Interpretation', *ibid.*, pp. 284–300.

of course, the art of insurrection has developed considerably, but it was not until October 1917 that a *tradition* of successful insurgent organisation with revolutionary innovative consequences was begun.<sup>15</sup> From that time, that is to say, there has been a steady progress in the art of preparing for, and carrying through, *armed revolt* against the state which *also* results in the organisers of the revolution becoming political leaders *constructing a radically different social order* from that overthrown. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries, indeed, have witnessed the emergence of what Lenin called the 'professional' revolutionary, one for whom revolution is a vocation. Such a revolutionary, he argued, must be 'trained professionally no less than the police' for disseminating illegal literature among the people and eventually for 'preparing for, appointing the time for, and carrying out the *nationwide armed uprising*'.<sup>16</sup>

In the present context it is also necessary to add that such a professional revolutionary, as in Lenin's own case, stays in control after the uprising to govern the country and to usher in economic, political and social programmes which are radically different from those which had been implemented by the supplanted regime. It is above all this deliberately intended, innovating feature which differentiates the modern revolution properly from the mere use of violence to replace a nation's government. As Hopper has put it, to the degree that revolutionaries 'seek to avoid the stigma of permanent classification as rebels', they will attempt to perpetuate the revolution by establishing the legal and political foundations for the kind of society to which the revolutionary movement is committed. They will, that is to say, institutionalise the revolution ([20] pp. 270-9), and it is indeed characteristic of such modern social movements that the process of institutionalisation is often begun before the old regime is defeated. In peasant societies in particular, 'an inaccessible place is chosen, a settled life is initiated, and the first small industries begin to be established: a shoe factory, a cigar and cigarette factory, a clothing factory, an arms factory, bakery,

<sup>15</sup> Barrington Moore, Jr, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966) chaps. 1-2; Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, Vintage Ed. (New York, Random House) pp. 79-86.

<sup>16</sup> V. I. Lenin, 'What is to be Done?' in *Collected Works*, v (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961) 466-515.

hospitals, possibly a radio transmitter, a printing press, etc.’ The revolutionary organisations, in this instance a guerrilla band, now has ‘all the characteristics of a small government. A court is established for the administration of justice, possibly laws are promulgated and the work of indoctrination of the peasant masses continues, extended also to workers if there are any near, to draw them to the cause.’ Together with the extension of the fighting against the existing regime, the building of the new proceeds apace :

The council – or central government of justice, revolutionary laws, and administration – is one of the vital features of a guerrilla army fully constituted and with territory of its own. . . . For example, during our experience in the Cuban war we issued a penal code, a civil code, rules for supplying the peasantry and rules of the agrarian reform. Subsequently, the laws fixing qualifications of candidates in the elections that were to be held later throughout the country were established; also the Agrarian Reform Law of the Sierra Maestra.<sup>17</sup>

Of course, such revolutionary innovations are not to be confused with the self-help activities of those social movements already referred to above. Like the ‘cause’ pressure-group movements, revolutionary movements seek to operate by means of the administrative machinery of government, although unlike them the intention is that the revolutionary leaders shall themselves constitute the alternative government. Their challenge is essentially political, and because they eschew the existing institutionalised arrangements for access to power, recourse to violence is necessary in their case because the established government will use force to preserve the political *status quo*. Nevertheless, the essential point for present purposes is the historically specific argument that this kind of revolutionary movement is possible only in an age when governments regularly undertake positive experimentation in social affairs. There is nothing particularly novel, so to speak, about revolutionary organisations undertaking such functions in the twentieth century. Political systems had already begun to experiment in the nineteenth.

<sup>17</sup> Che (Ernesto) Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969) pp. 82, 95.

### 3. THE DIFFUSION OF A SOCIAL INNOVATION

THE notion that socially creative movements are historically specific rests upon inference from evidence to the effect that, broadly speaking, societies differ in the orientation of their members towards innovations of *all* kinds. Where their technology is dominated by tradition, people are also slow to change their ways in social matters. Where, by contrast, changes in their technical practices regularly occur and are regularly anticipated as a normal course of events, and where large sections of the population positively welcome them, social movements flourish. This should not be read as a theory that orientation to social innovation is technologically determined. Both types of change may well be produced by the same underlying cultural factors; but the history of European scientific, technological and social creativeness lends weight to the view that the anticipatory, transmutative attitude began first and proceeded most rapidly with respect to man's non-human environment and only later showed signs of extension to the social field. The argument, indeed, that the latter was merely an extension of, and not a radically different process from, the former, raises the question of the degree to which the invention and diffusion of new ideas and practices in social behaviour follow more or less the same general pattern as invention and the exploitation of invention in the scientific, technological and professional spheres of life. What can be learned about the processes of social innovation from the study of other kinds of innovation?

In his examination of the social mechanisms of invention and discovery, Barber contrasted his own 'cultural antecedents' approach with an older 'heroic theory' of invention which stressed 'the particular and peculiar genius of the inventor as against the

contribution society itself made to his discovery'. The heroic theory, he continued, was well suited to the simplicities of adulatory biographies and popular mythology, and especially to the enthusiasm of nationalistic patriotism'.<sup>1</sup> It is relevant to ask whether this adulatory, biographical emphasis has not also influenced the sociology of social movements. Clearly, the fact that such movements have organisational aspects draws the attention of the sociologist to the special part played by 'leadership' and the authority of leaders in them. An element of enthusiasm for heroes on the sociologist's part is therefore likely to result in the *role* of the leader becoming less emphasised in his analysis than the impact of the leader's *personality* on his followers. Thus, although he is careful to assert his avoidance of a 'great man' or 'conspiratorial' conception of value-oriented (revolutionary) movements, Smelser nevertheless regards Weber's charismatic leadership as characteristic of them, as compared with norm-oriented (reform) movements. The emphasis on personality characteristics, indeed, is but another facet of the tendency to regard social movements as deviant. Even Heberle alleges that 'amongst the founders of militant social movements, political as well as religious, we find a fair proportion of abnormal personalities, especially of neurotic or paranoiac individuals. The same is true of the early adherents of such leaders, the first disciples or followers' ([18] p. 110); while Greer maintains that the change from utopian to practical ideals on the part of social movements is characterised by different personality variables among the leadership ([14] pp. 275-6), the implication being that deviant personalities become replaced by more conventional ones.

Of course, the tendency to regard radicals and revolutionaries as men set apart from their fellows because of their extraordinary – and, possibly, psychopathic – qualities parallels the equally popular stereotype of the inventor as eccentric, unpractical in ordinary, everyday affairs, and largely incomprehensible in the sense that his preoccupation with invention causes him to be an unwilling participant in the normal relations of social life. No doubt inventors *as such* have certain distinctive personality characteristics which correlate with the creative imagination

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Barber, *Science and the Social Order* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1953) p. 198.



necessarily for new discoveries,<sup>2</sup> and it is probable that they are 'somewhat sceptical of the validity of conventional thinking in general', that is, that they are 'mental nonconformists' with exceptional confidence in their own judgements. Yet to lay much stress on their atypicality is to ignore the part played in the *exploitation* of their inventions by what La Piere has called 'advocates and adopters' – 'those who foster the introduction of the innovation into the social system and those who utilise the innovation and so make it an operative part of society'; men who are also atypical in the sense that they make novelty their business. Innovation, that is to say, 'does not win its own way. Some member of the society must perceive its ultimate value and devote himself to its exploitation.' Others, similarly, must see the value of the innovation to themselves, irrespective of the indifference, or even the hostility, of the rest of the population.<sup>3</sup> The two activities – invention and advocacy – may, to be sure, be performed by one and the same person, or two people in unison. They are, that is to say, forms of role behaviour rather than attributes of personality *per se*, and the reference to such a division of labour between roles draws attention to the social nature of the innovatory process as comprising a network of roles, *all* of which must be performed if innovation is to occur. The heroic theory distorts the image of the network by over-emphasising the inventor's part in the process. Often it mythologises the *titular* inventor, in much the same fashion as the chroniclers of social movements mythologise their 'founders', giving them extraordinary and charismatic powers to perform the roles of inventor and advocate, without benefit of assistance in these respects from their immediate circle of followers, all of whom are taken to be adopters and, in contrast with the 'founders', remain vague and insubstantial in the chronicle. Since students of social movements tend to take their histories from these chronicles, they are apt also to overemphasise the impact of the leaders and hence attribute to them charismatic qualities which they may not in fact have possessed.

The emphasis here on role networks among the innovators –

<sup>2</sup> S. Colum Gilfillan, *The Sociology of Invention* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1970) pp. 78–82.

<sup>3</sup> Richard T. La Piere, *Social Change* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965) pp. 130–1, 141, and Chap. 6 *passim*.

inventor, advocate, adopter – brings to the forefront the further argument that innovation in social, as in technical, matters is carried out through the operation of a role-set. The nonconformity of the innovators, in this sense, is public rather than private. It is, following Merton, a form of conformity – ‘conformity with the values, standards, and expectations of reference individuals and groups’.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the similarity of personal qualities which innovators are said to have should rather be examined by the sociologist in terms of values, standards and expectations which they demonstrate. For example, in their study of the adoption of a new drug by doctors in four American communities, Coleman and his colleagues showed that in the first stage in the process – one to four months after the release of the drug – diffusion took place through what they called ‘dense professional ties’, as compared with the ‘dense friendship ties’ which dominated diffusion in the next stage – four to five months. Dense professional ties are those which were displayed by doctors who were members of hospitals and clinics, and shared offices with other doctors. Those who regularly discussed medical cases with other doctors and gave professional advice to one another, who were more likely to attend out-of-town medical meetings, who kept up with professional journals and generally were professionally oriented, were early adopters.<sup>5</sup> The reference of such doctors was to the profession of medicine as such and to their colleagues as an organised group of professionals, devoted to the pursuit of medicine as an organised discipline, rather than as friends with whom they shared leisure-time pursuits, although such friendships were not ruled out by the professional orientation.

The point of significance here is that the similarity in attitudes, which distinguished early adopters from the later ones, was a shared concern for the task in hand and the conviction that difficulties in it could be solved by the pooling of information and opinions among all with the same enthusiasm for the expertise, be it medicine, as in this case, or farming as in the case

<sup>4</sup> Robert K. Merton, ‘Continuities in the Theory of Reference Groups and Social Structure’, in his *Social Theory and Social Structure*, rev. ed. (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957) p. 359.

<sup>5</sup> James S. Coleman *et al.*, *Medical Innovation: A Diffusion Study* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966) chaps. 10–11.

of the diffusion of a hybrid seed-corn.<sup>6</sup> La Pierre calls such men 'marginals' because their position of esteem in the professional or occupational community subjects them to constant competition for elite status and they eagerly look for innovations 'that may aid them in preserving their status';<sup>7</sup> but this seems to imply that they believe innovations to be so esteemed that members of the local vocational role-set will regard them highly if they innovate. Yet all the evidence on the diffusion of innovation suggests that many local adopters are laggardly; far from welcoming innovation, they adopt reluctantly. This evidence also indicates that the early adopters see themselves less as esteemed members of the local role-set and more as deviants.<sup>8</sup> A more satisfactory approach than La Pierre's, then, would seem to be to regard them as primarily concerned with the innovative role-set as their reference group. Early adopters, that is to say, are people with a vocation in Weber's sense, people for whom the activity in question, be it medicine or farming, is more than just a way of earning a living but rather a 'calling' for which they have devotion.

When social movements are looked at in this fashion, the devotion of the activists for the cause may be seen as 'vocational' in the above sense, even though they may never make a living from it exclusively but throughout their lives pursue it as amateurs in the strict meaning of that term. In the case of social innovation, too, the fact that devotion to the movement implies a preference for forms of social relationship, not common in the society in which the movement is located, carries the further implication that the devotees *reject* the conventional forms of that society. It is this implication, indeed, which has led students of social movements to believe that dissatisfaction with the existing social order provides the driving force behind such movements. The vocational emphasis proffered here suggests, by contrast, that in societies where innovation of all kinds is a commonplace, the search for new forms is *an end in itself*. Of course, all social relationships entail moral judgements, and the

<sup>6</sup> Katz, 'The Social Theory of Technical Change: Two Studies of the Diffusion of Innovation', *Human Organisation*, xx (1961) 70-82.

<sup>7</sup> La Pierre, *Social Change*, pp. 200-1, n. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: Free Press, 1962) pp. 198-205.

advocates of new forms regularly seek to stress the virtues of what they are advocating with a rousing declamation of the moral demerits of the forms which they are intended to replace. Failure to understand this feature of social advocacy can lead the student to be seriously misled by the evident fact that some of the members of social movements often profit economically and in other ways from the very activities the advocates of their movement denounce. Individuals with a vocation for some kind of social change are capable of pursuing it whole-heartedly, that is to say, while at the same time continuing to make a living off social forms with which it is incompatible – in much the fashion that Frederick Engels remained ‘a highly respected member of the Manchester Stock Exchange and prominent both in the business and in the pleasures of the English bourgeoisie, in fox-hunting and its Christmas parties’,<sup>9</sup> although supporting Marx and his family and collaborating with him in his revolutionary work. Only those members of a social movement who succeed in becoming full-time, paid workers for the movement and are able to devote themselves exclusively to promoting it can escape this paradox of the social innovator.

The rise of permanent organisations for the pursuit of social innovations may, perhaps, be explained by reference to such a paradox, since social movements become apparently more efficient when some of their members begin to participate strictly vocationally, rather than merely avocationally; that is, on a full-time rather than part-time basis. Thus, the Webbs wrote of the early trade union movement :

. . . so long as the function of the national executive was confined to that of a centre of communication between practically autonomous local branches, no alteration in the machinery was necessary. The duties of the secretary, like those of his committee, were not beyond the competence of ordinary artisans working at their trade and devoting only their evenings to their official business. But with the multiplication of branches and the formation of a central fund, the secretarial work of a national union presently absorbed the whole time of a single

<sup>9</sup> Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx: The Story of his Life* (London: Lanc, 1936) pp. 231-2.

officer, to whom, therefore, a salary had to be assigned.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the consequence of this step was that the trade unions extended their purely domestic economic activities to include economic *and political* action on a national *and* international scale in order to establish themselves fully as viable bargaining bodies. Of the five men whom the Webbs called 'the Junta', only one, George Odger, was not a full-time official, and he, they thought, on his own 'would have added little to the strength of Trade Unionism', although in combination with the other four and with the support of an even wider circle of trade union leaders and middle-class sympathisers, he assisted in the establishment of the positive recognition of the trade union movement as a force for change in society which could no longer be ignored either by employers or by the government.<sup>11</sup>

The sequence of events, indeed, is well exemplified by the Rochdale Pioneers :

At the opening of the Store, all services were voluntary and unpaid, tendered at their own sweet will by the leading members or promoters of the association, but we see an attempt to force all members to contribute their quota of labour under a penalty of fines – a rotation of services of all the members, whether skilled or unskilled in the trade of shop-keeping – the naïve idea of an infant democracy. Presently as the society grew in consequence, trifling sums were awarded for the time expended, and compensation for money actually out of pocket in journeys to and fro on the society's business. In the minutes of a board meeting in 1851, we discover the first appearance of discipline . . . and at the following quarterly meeting the first salaried officer was appointed in the person of James Smithies, one of the original Pioneers, to act as secretary at a salary of £15 per year, with a staff of a superintendent and two shop-men at the weekly wages of 18s., 16s., and 15s. respectively.<sup>12</sup>

At that remuneration, Smithies, it is reasonable to assume, was

<sup>10</sup> Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *Industrial Democracy*, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green, 1898) p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism*, new ed. (London: Longmans, Green, 1911) chap. 5 *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> B. Webb, *The Co-operative Movement*, pp. 73–4.

not a full-time officer. Such an arrangement was not in fact made until 1855, when William Cooper, another of the original Pioneers, was appointed 'permanent' secretary at a wage of one guinea a week, 'and raised 1s. per quarter till it reach 25s., if he should be thought worth it'. Therafter Cooper was able to devote himself, not only to the Society in Rochdale, but to the establishment of the Co-operative Wholesale Society and the Co-operative Insurance Society, as well as corresponding with people in Britain and abroad 'giving information and advice on the forming and management of co-operative societies', Cooper was regarded in his time as 'the best informed man in Britain regarding co-operative principles and methods of administration'.<sup>13</sup>

Of course, where a leading adopter-cum-advocate has a private source of income he may live for a movement without living off it. An example is William Busfield Ferrand, one of the leading figures in the English movement for factory reform, who was 'heir to squirearchical families'.<sup>14</sup> He was a 'Church and King Tory of the deepest blue' and first entered Parliament in 1841 as a Tory member. From the point of view of the movement's more famous leader, he was 'the almost complete embodiment of everything Oastler believed the country gentleman should be', and devoted himself to the cause as expounded by Oastler. The obvious contrast in this case is with Thomas Thornhill, who employed Oastler as steward on his estate near Huddersfield and to begin with encouraged him in his campaign. But eventually, in 1838, Thornhill summarily dismissed his steward after eighteen years' service – possibly because some of his friends, 'connected with the Government, persuaded him to put Oastler out of the way'<sup>15</sup> – and then sued him for debt. Oastler's position vis-à-vis Thornhill, indeed, illustrates the problems facing an organiser of a pressure movement who has no private income of his own to rely upon. He was unable to meet his debt to Thornhill and went to prison in 1840. The movement responded to his need by organising a campaign to raise funds, but it could not do more

<sup>13</sup> Bonner, *British Co-operation*, appendix vi: 'Some Extracts from the Minutes of the Rochdale Equitable Society of Pioneers in its Early Years', pp. 482–516.

<sup>14</sup> John T. Ward, *The Factory Movement, 1830–1853* (London: Macmillan, 1961) p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> Cecil Driver, *Tory Radical: The Life of Richard Oastler* (New York: Oxford U.P., 1946) pp. 241, 413.

than obtain his release from prison, so that once free again Oastler was obliged to find another employer. His activities were for the most part, that is to say, avocational in spite of their intensity; and it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that this rather precarious position of its advocates is a further reason why pressure-group movements try to raise funds to employ them full-time for the cause.

Revolutionary movements, because of the need for secrecy, find the problem of self-support crucial during the pre-revolutionary period. Lenin, for example, made a living at the turn of the twentieth century by translating and placing articles occasionally with non-party magazines. He also received small sums of money from his mother. Trotsky began with aid from his family but eventually supported himself wholly by journalism. Stalin was a 'night clerk' in an astronomical laboratory. Plekhanov addressed envelopes. Axelrod made and sold yoghurt. Only later did the movement, not through dues but through donations and bequests of wealthy liberals, and, for a while after 1905, through the revolutionary hold-ups, acquire enough money to give these 'professionals' a wage of anywhere from five or ten roubles to thirty to fifty roubles a month.<sup>16</sup> Just as the diffusion of a technical innovation involves inventors and advocates in the task of finding money to exploit its possibilities, so the diffusion of social innovation entails a concern with the economics of organising effective social movements. Thus at some point in the process a further division of labour among advocates seems inevitable. What Roche and Sachs call 'bureaucrats' – a better term is 'organisers' – become differentiated from 'enthusiasts' (champions), with the possibility of conflict arising at the psychological level, because 'whereas the bureaucrat is likely to equate "The Cause" with its organisational expression, the enthusiast, with his fondness for abstraction, identifies it with a corpus of principles' ([28] pp. 248–61). Yet it is important for the sociologist not to exaggerate the significance of what are in fact *polar* psychological types here. To assume, as some students of social movements have inclined to do, that the pursuit of subscriptions, donations, financial support of all kinds, dominates a growing movement's

<sup>16</sup> Bertram D. Wolfe, *Three who Made a Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966) p. 190.

organisers to the exclusion of its more 'fundamental' aims and purposes is quite unwarranted. A preoccupation by some of its advocates with means does not necessarily divert a movement from attaining its ends. On the contrary, because enthusiasm is quickly dampened if an advocate is weighed down by the cares of earning a living, it is exceptional for social movements to rely exclusively upon avocational advocacy to realise their goals. As a general rule, whole-hearted and full-time devotion to the cause demands a vocational leadership. Hence some attention must be paid by adopters to guaranteeing a regular source of income to the advocates and to meeting the other expenses of promoting innovation. Paradoxically, social movements can continue to recruit champions the more they make room for the organisation men. This, of course, does not deny the possibility of internal conflict and even fragmentation of a movement because of contentions between such role-players, as indeed can occur anyway between inventors, advocates and adopters, and between any further proliferation of leaders at the psychological level into 'power-seekers' and 'prestige-seekers'. As organisations, social movements are not immune from the internal stresses experienced by all other associations which have been regarded as the subject-matter of the sociology of organisation, although it is notorious that the study of the processes whereby schisms and factions are produced – schismogenesis and factionalisation ([36] pp. 327–41) – has been accorded scant attention by sociologists who have also on the whole neglected long-term change in conventional collectivities.

The corollary to all this is that the analysis of creative social movements in terms of such a concept as 'bureaucratisation', especially where this is taken to imply some notion of 'the routinisation of charisma', is entirely misplaced and misleading. Indeed, the application of such terms even to millenarian organisations is of dubious validity. As Worsley has pointed out in the context of modern Melanesia, 'there is often not one charismatic leader, but a division of leadership between an inspired prophet and "political organiser"'. The prophet is also often less important than the political leader.' Social inventors and advocates, champions and organisers, appear together so closely in time in the history of a movement that reference to the



routinisation of charisma as an account of change is as little appropriate as an alternative hypothesis which might be called 'the sanctification of *praxis*'. Just as the champion's call to the people to embrace the cause must be accompanied by practical measures to make hesitant adopters enduring members rather than mere partisans, so the organiser's manipulation of funds and strategies must be attended by persuasive rhetoric that will justify the means in terms of the ends to be achieved. What is usually regarded by sociologists as ideology – popularly accepted ideas about a movement's history, structure, situation and values – parallels in social innovation the underlying substance of the publicity and persuasion which are used to popularise new artefacts and processes in the technical field. The relationships between theory and practice, ends and means, ideas and action, are so reciprocal, that is to say, that the ideologues of social movements are continually re-adjusting their definition of principles to accord with the possibility of success in situations which have, in part, been created by the bodies they serve. How the 'essential features' of the Rochdale Principles have been maintained by the Co-operative Movement through progressive reinterpretation to meet changing circumstances and unanticipated problems is an illuminating case in point.<sup>17</sup>

Of course, the precise nature of the 'dialectic' of interaction between organisational exigencies and advocational rhetoric will vary according to the type of appeal which a social movement takes as fundamental. Where social innovation is planned through self-help collectivities, members of the movement are adopters by definition, so that a loss of membership automatically entails discontinuance of the practice on the part of renegades. In the technical field late adopters have been reported as much more liable to discontinuance than are early adopters. If this is also true in the social sphere, it is understandable why self-help movements, once they have recruited a hard core of vocational adopters, become regularly preoccupied with ideological reappraisals. These are attempts to widen the appeal in the first instance and to contain subsequently the apostasy of late adopters. On the other hand, where social innovation

<sup>17</sup> Paul Lambert, *Studies in the Social Philosophy of Co-operation* (Manchester: Co-operative Union, 1963).

occurs through state intervention, the decision to innovate by a government may well result in a loss of membership by a pressure-group or a revolutionary movement, without there necessarily being any further effect on the diffusion of those innovations for which it stands. In such cases ideological reappraisal will not be prompted. Rather will it occur when the movement is small and still striving to find a means to influence or replace a government.

Much of this analysis of the diffusion of a social innovation has perforce been speculative because the necessary research has been lacking. Indeed, the treatment of ideology by sociologists has either been largely descriptive – ideology as a thing in itself – or derivative: the ideology of a group is a reflection of its position in the social structure. The notion of a social movement as a collection of persons acting to bring about consciously willed social innovation entails that its ideology be examined step by step in relation to the circumstances it faces throughout its history and to the interplay of the actors in the role network which comprises the structure of the movement as a viable collectivity. From this point of view a social movement has not one ideology but many, at different points in time and by reference to the various groups of which it is composed and the various publics to which it addresses its appeal. The processes whereby a social innovation begins as an idea in its inventor's head and ends as a way of life for a whole mass of people require for their examination a sophisticated sociology of innovation which as yet does not exist.

THE socially creative organisation, with its innovating leadership and programme of ideologically supported measures for change which its partisans adopt sometimes enthusiastically, sometimes perfunctorily, is of course not the only force for change in social affairs. Indeed, the argument of this study, that it is a relatively recent innovation itself, is based on the conviction that before its advent social changes were the unintended, unanticipated and often undesired and widely disliked consequences of attempts by human beings to alter permanently some aspect of their circumstances. It follows from this conviction that for long periods of history, and for many events at the present time, explanations for social change *per se* may be validly developed without recourse to the voluntaristic, action frame of reference which has been employed here for analysing social movements. It also follows that where unintended and intended changes occur side by side some decision is necessary as to whether these different approaches are contradictory or may be merged together. In particular, it must be decided whether, if functionalist equilibrium analysis must be abandoned as altogether too deterministic to account for social movements, all kinds of functionalism whatsoever must also be abandoned as incompatible with this wider purpose.

The charge that the functionalist analysis of social systems is incapable of explaining the evident fact that societies change has regularly been levied. The work of Talcott Parsons in particular has been singled out for adverse comment along these lines. Thus, in accord with the fashion of the moment, Gouldner has recently written that about societies Parsons has

long tended to emphasise that they are governed by self-maintaining processes and to highlight the *order*-maintaining mechanisms inherent in them. . . . The Parsonian social system is one whose equilibrium, once established, is conceived to be perpetual; whose essential reality is believed to be its inner coherence, rather than the conflicts, tensions and disorders that are usually considered secondary disturbances or aberrations, and that are never seen to derive from the necessary and inevitable requirements for social life.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, this notion that Parsonian functionalism *necessarily* entails persistence and stability in social systems, *plus* integration of their elements and consensus about goals on the part of the people who compose them, has been contrasted with what is assumed to be the only possible alternative – ubiquitous social change, dissensus and conflict, disintegration *and* the coercion of some members of society by others.<sup>2</sup>

Strangely enough, this contrast has usually been seen as the opposition of Parsons to Marx. Yet it is really not very difficult to show that although the latter emphasised precisely those features of human experience which the former plays down, his general approach to the analysis of such experience has all the characteristics of functionalist interdependence of integrated elements. 'What is society, whatever its form may be?' asked the young Marx in the context of Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty*; and he answered :

. . . the product of men's reciprocal action. Are men free to choose this or that form of society? By no means. Assume a particular state of development in the productive faculties of man and you will get a corresponding form of commerce and consumption. Assume particular degrees of development of production, commerce and consumption and you will have a corresponding form of social constitution, a corresponding organisation of the family, of orders or of classes, in a word a

<sup>1</sup> Alvin Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (New York: Basic Books, 1970) p. 352. For the alternative view that Parsons has always been concerned to explain social change, see William Mitchell, *Sociological Analysis and Politics: The Theories of Talcott Parsons* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967) pp. 145–7.

<sup>2</sup> Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959) pp. 161–2.

responding civil society. Assume a particular civil society and you will get a particular political system, which is only the official expression of civil society.

Of course, no sociologist would confuse this passage with one written by Parsons, if only because of the overriding emphasis given in it to economic elements in the system, but the repetition of the term 'corresponding' in this passage creates the same impression as the repetition of the term 'boundary interchange' by Parsons and Smelser 110 years later. Correspondence between social forms suggests some underlying conception of compatibility between them or, in view of the Marxist emphasis on change, of some kind of adaptation. Boundary interchange cannot occur without symmetrical reciprocity, matching at the boundary; and Parsons and Smelser are anxious to emphasise that 'there must be constraints on the range of compatibility of the values of different variables in the same system at the same time. A large change in *any* one, therefore, is likely to induce change in the others sufficient to produce a change of state of the system as a whole.'<sup>4</sup> The weakness of their kind of functionalist analysis is not that it cannot logically account for social change – a fallacious conclusion derived from the misapplication of organic and thermodynamic analogies to human affairs by some functionalists and generalised by some critics of functionalism to all forms of it – but rather that it leaves unanswered the question of how it is that some parts of a social system seem to be more open to pressures for innovation, which then induce changes in the rest, than are others. The argument of this study, that successful social movements actually innovate, implies that their organisers have discovered where their activities may be most actively deployed to this end. If functionalist analysis has no place for this fact, so much the worse for functionalism.

For Marx the issue was not problematic. What accounted for persistence and stability in social systems was the power of the

<sup>3</sup> Karl Marx, 'Letter to P. V. Annenkov', 28 Dec 1846, reproduced in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d.) p. 40. For a more general discussion of dialectical materialism in these functionalist terms, see Alfred G. Meyer, *Marxism: The Unity of Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1956) pp. 25–39.

<sup>4</sup> Talcott Parsons and Neil J. Smelser, *Economy and Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956) p. 248.

ruling class. In part because it controlled the mechanisms for propaganda and education, and hence could socialise the working class to accept the *status quo* as legitimate – the Parsonian function of ‘pattern maintenance’ – and in part because it controlled the police and the armed forces, and hence could coerce where socialisation failed – the Parsonian function of ‘integration’ – the ruling class could maintain itself as an exploiting class and ensure that its interests dominated the activities of the society – the Parsonian function of ‘goal-attainment’. Exploitation in this sense, to be sure, entails inherent incompatibilities in the system. For example, no matter how much the wealth produced by a society may increase absolutely, relatively more for the ruling class necessarily means relatively less for the ruled, and vice versa. Nevertheless, such conflicts of interest *per se* are insufficient to bring about a change of system. Only when the exploited class develops genuine class consciousness, causing it to seek the abolition of its subjection through revolution and the destruction of the political power of the exploiting class, will the system change. Such a political revolution, that is to say, sets in train changes in the class system, the organisation of the family, the nature of commerce and consumption, and the productive faculties of man.

The clear appreciation of this type of functionalist analysis makes plain why so many of the revolutions of the twentieth century have been inspired by Marxist ideas. In spite of the emphasis given to technical and organisational factors in the materialist conception of history, the central focus of Marxist analysis is directed towards an examination of class structure and the various, historically different, modes in which surplus labour is extorted by the ruling class from its subjects. The history of all hitherto existing societies, so to speak, is the history of the replacement of one class system by another as a consequence of the unanticipated and unintended intensification of class conflict, brought about by technical and organisational inventions – steam power and the factory system of production, for example – which have sharpened men’s awareness of the inherent incompatibilities of their social environment. The advent of scientific socialism changes all this. Men still cannot clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles in the way of realising their desire to end exploitation, offered by the successive

phases of the 'normal' development of society, but they can shorten and lessen the birth-pangs.<sup>6</sup> Knowledge of the mechanics of the social system makes possible conscious control of change, not simply through the conquest of the state, but through the deliberate creation of revolutionary movements, inspired not only by the willingness to kill and be killed for the cause but also by a readiness to undertake the more mundane tasks of administering an economic system during and after the period of civil war. The political emphasis in the Marxist revolutionary ideology explains why all such revolutionary regimes have always industrialised from the centre and have not, as a general rule, favoured steps to sponsor self-help activities among the people themselves locally, independently of administrative control.

What is not so clear, however, is how such revolutionary movements can arise in the first place, if the emphasis on correspondence between different 'parts' of society is to be maintained. Somehow or other the revolutionaries have escaped the constraints placed upon them from birth through the control of the ruling class over the mechanisms of socialisation and social control. Are they, perhaps, deviants in the sense that some physiological, biological or psychological feature of their personality has caused them to react atypically to conditioning by their social environments? Or does the class system so malfunction as to cause the ruling class to relax its grip? The original formulation of the Marxist analysis had at least the merit of preserving functionalist consistency in that the growth of revolutionary consciousness was seen as the end-product of a series of adjustments to technical and organisational innovations. For example, the urban factory system of production, introduced most widely in the later days of capitalism, brought together into one place for work and rest workers who previously had been scattered throughout the countryside. Although they continued to compete with one another for jobs, Marx pointed out, they now became aware for the first time that over the matter of wages they had a common interest against their employers. In brief, they became class conscious. Forming trade unions to protect and en-

<sup>6</sup> Karl Marx, 'Preface to the First German Edition', *Capital*, 1 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959) 10.

hance their wage interests, they soon found themselves in trouble with the police and the judiciary, because their employers used the political system to declare the trade unions illegal. Thus the workers became conscious of being involved in a class struggle and formed political parties to protect their trade union interests in Parliament. Soon, Marx thought, they would see such action as limited. The employers, in spite of ever concentrating their capital resources, would become more and more involved in economic crises, while the workers, regularly increasing in number as the number of capitalists decreased, would find themselves either unemployed or forced to accept wage cuts as growing unemployment threatened their jobs. Orthodox political action in the sense of attempts to get the Government to act on their behalf through agitation and the political parties in Parliament would soon be seen by the workers to be impotent in this situation, and they would eventually take the revolutionary step of forcibly replacing capitalism by a dictatorship of the proletariat.

As Marx summed it up, the working class, 'a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself', revolts against the 'misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation' of its condition.<sup>6</sup> Since 'it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness',<sup>7</sup> the revolutionary awareness that gives rise to such social movements is an unanticipated and unintended consequence of the impact of *other* kinds of innovation on the exploitative relationship between the ruling and subject classes; and this is possible because there is intrinsically nothing in the nature of class rule which discourages the search for new and more efficient ways of producing goods and services. Such a system, indeed, may function to encourage such innovations up to the point at which their social consequences become recognised as a threat to its perpetuation.

The history of revolutionary Marxist movements since the

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 763. For a more detailed treatment of this argument see J. A. Banks, *Marxist Sociology in Action* (London: Faber, 1970) Part 1.

<sup>7</sup> Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Chicago: Kerr 1904) p. 11.



time of Lenin, however, would seem to provide evidence that this growing class consciousness on the part of the proletariat has not been the crucial factor in social change. Rather does it appear that revolutions have been made in advance of the development of class consciousness. In the context of the lessons that may be learned from the Cuban revolution, 'it is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist: the insurrection can create them'.<sup>8</sup> Men may not be able to make revolutions as they please, in the sense that they can ignore altogether the social circumstances of their time and place, but they can *make* them nevertheless. Moreover, the leading figures in these revolutions have not for the most part been members of the working class but members of the intelligentsia, men whose origins are associated with occupations which have *not* experienced the sequence of events described above. If, therefore, the Marxist explanation for revolutionary movements is to be retained in its functionalist form in spite of its challenge by such contradicting facts, some amendment to it is necessary to provide an account of how it happens that such men come to be emancipated from the constraints of the class system. Why should some of the intelligentsia become social innovators while others do not? Why do some members of the proletariat and the peasantry innovate alongside them while others do not? The mere introduction of the terms 'false' and 'true' class consciousness in this context is an admission that the facts of innovative action are not what the Marxist hypothesis predicts. Yet, to work into the scheme allowance for social invention alongside economic, to admit the factor that some human beings can devise *effective* measures for non economic goals and for goals which are the negation of economic ones, would seem to be fatal to the materialist basis of the Marxist conception of history, namely that it is their economic interests which cause man correctly to define their class positions and which lead them into combination against the members of classes with conflicting economic interests.

At first sight the Parsonian alternative would seem to fare better in this respect if only because there appears to be no element in a social system which is held to be crucial either for

<sup>8</sup> Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, p. 13.

stability or for change. Explicitly Parsons has written, albeit in characteristically obscure fashion, to give the impression that change may occur *anywhere* in a social system; and his more recent and even more obscure reference to exogenous sources of change, such as 'genetic changes in the constituent human organisms and changes in the distribution of genetic components within populations', as well as to endogenous sources, working 'usually in combination with exogenous forces', merely serves to indicate that over the ten years between *The Social System* and *Theories of Society* he had apparently been able to make no progress in developing 'the conception of the plurality of possible origins of change'.<sup>9</sup> Undoubtedly Gouldner is right to claim that Parsons is extremely pessimistic about there ever being a satisfactory sociological theory of change, if by this is understood a theory which reduces the number of possible causes to manageable proportions. Nevertheless, the overwhelming impression of Parsonian functionalism is that the primary place is accorded to value-orientation and hence to consensus about values as the cement which holds society together. Certainly, in Smelser's treatment of social movements this is the emphasis, so that a change of social system, as opposed to a mere change within a system, requires a major, and perhaps revolutionary, change in values.

Parsons and his followers are thus inherently less immediately plausible than Marx, because whereas it is not really difficult to appreciate that societies change as a result of the efforts of human beings to wrest a more opulent living with less effort from a niggardly environment, it is rather more difficult to understand what it means to claim that they change because men somehow come to value the established social relationships less highly than of old. Of course, this must be true if men are to innovate at all – some of them must prefer change to stability – but the emphasis on consensus as a binding force suggests that all men, or at least a large majority of them, must take on a different orientation to their social order; and it is precisely this mass change of mind which requires explanation. The evidence of the working of social movements suggests that changes of behaviour on a large

<sup>9</sup> Parsons, *The Social System*, pp. 493–4; 'An Outline of the Social System', in Talcott Parsons *et al.* (eds.), *Theories of Society* (New York: Free Press, 1961) 170.

scale are rarely, if ever, induced by self-help organisations winning over large sections of a population to their point of view; and those changes which are achieved by governments, prodded forward by 'cause' pressure-groups or controlled by revolutionary leaders, carry more of the connotation of coercion than of consensus about them. This is not to argue that widespread changes of values never occur. The emergence in modern times of what may be referred to as the sexually tolerant society is surely a case in point, yet it is not very clear in the Parsonian framework of analysis how such changes could be explained, and his argument that 'probably considerably more important than the problems of the initiating factors of process of social change, are those concerned with tracing the repercussions of change once initiated throughout the social system'<sup>10</sup> is tantamount to the avoidance of the question, since it is the spread of a new value through the social system which is the initiation of change.

Elsewhere in *The Social System* Parsons indicated that he was impressed at that time by the Kardiner-Linton thesis of basic personality structure as an account of 'the internalisation of the value-orientation patterns embodied in the role-expectations for ego of the significant socialising agents',<sup>11</sup> although he did not develop further the possibility that changes in such basic personality structures might also be explained along the Kardiner-Linton line. For example, their description of the economy of the Tanala of Madagascar stressed how adult orientations were produced by a pattern of child rearing, tied to the cultivation of rice on a village basis, clearing new areas each year from the jungle and assigning the land as equitably as possible, so that a family which had poor soil one year was given good the next. When the Tanala borrowed the technique of wet rice cultivation from their neighbours, the Betsileo, production sites became permanent 'because the land could not be exhausted as was the land exploited by the dry method', villages became permanent, and families became *landowners*, with consequent changes in the village organisation, family life and the socialisation of the children. The basic personality structure of the Tanala and their

<sup>10</sup> Parsons, *The Social System*, p. 494.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228. The theme is treated in detail on pp. 226-43.

value-orientations generally became altered in reflection of such changes. Similarly, the Comanche Indians of North America underwent a change of basic personality and value-orientations with the coming of the white man and the horse.<sup>12</sup> In both cases the change between the the outlook of adults of one generation and those of another was an unintended and unanticipated consequence of modifications in the practices of child rearing, disciplining and socialisation generally, themselves a product of the new pattern of mother-father roles in the family, brought about by what were largely economic and technical factors.

Thus, the Parsonian scheme might have been adapted for the explanation of social change, although this would have required the introduction of a materialist dimension, working indirectly through its impact on adult value-orientations, rather than directly as in the Marxist, functionalist scheme. Social innovations in this formulation then become the consequence of 'movements' in the albeit unsatisfactory 'collective behaviour' sense of the spontaneous and widespread growth of a desire on the part of a new generation for change. In the present context this formulation is also unsatisfactory because it does not account for the evident differences in attitudes and behaviour among those whose social backgrounds are similar - who have in fact experienced much the same kind of upbringing. Social innovators, it might be argued, have different *characters* from their fellows, where 'character' is understood to have its Kardiner-Linton meaning, namely, 'the personal variant of the basic personality structure'; but how does it happen that their personal histories could have been so much at variance with those of their neighbours? Just as Marxist 'correspondence' between parts of a social system does not permit the sociologist validly to predict social innovators and social movements to emerge just where as a matter of fact they do, so the Parsonian conception of boundary interchange leaves him unable to determine where they can emerge at all. Indeed, short of a 'theory' of accidents or of divine intervention, the sociologist is obliged to regard social innovators as cases of unintended and unanticipated

<sup>12</sup> Abram Kardiner *et al.*, *The Individual and his Society* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1939) chaps. vii-viii; Abram Kardiner *et al.*, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1945) chaps iii-iv.

consequences of innovation elsewhere, as the Kardiner-Linton examples above might have been interpreted, if there had appeared social movements in the Tanala or Comanche societies of their analysis.

The nature of these remarks should not be misunderstood. No doubt it does make good sense to interpret many aspects of human history in either of the functionalist terms associated with the names of Marx or Parsons, or in terms of some similar notion of correspondence between social institutions or interchange between them. After all, the direct influence of technical innovation on society is well documented, even if unsatisfactory 'lag' concepts are regularly introduced to account for the time-interval between the development of a new technical process and its eventual social impact.<sup>13</sup> The *direct* influence of mass attitude change on social behaviour is equally well documented, even if apart from Mannheim few sociologists have apparently recognised that the generation concept which it entails raises considerable sociological problems.<sup>14</sup> Nothing is to be gained by denying that many social changes are not intended or even anticipated; nor by refusing to explain them as the consequence of other kinds of change in human circumstances, which were intended although their possible outcome socially was not expected. A satisfactory explanation in sociological terms might well be devised along functionalist lines for such events, and it is a matter of empirical investigation whether the ideas associated with Marx or Parsons or some other sociologist whose conceptions are different again from theirs will prove to be the most viable in the long run. This problem is not at issue here. What is argued, however, is that the kind of social innovation which is introduced into a society by a social movement is best not explained in these terms, although since it is often accompanied by unintended and unanticipated consequences in addition to the deliberately contrived results, some 'correspondence' or 'interchange analysis might still prove useful as an adjunct to an

<sup>13</sup> H. Hart, 'The Hypothesis of Cultural Lag: A Present Day View', in Francis R. Allen *et al.*, *Technology and Social Change* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957) pp. 417-34. Parsons himself subscribed to an unsophisticated cultural-lag notion in *The Social System*, pp. 505-20.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Mannheim, 'The Problem of Generations', in his *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952) pp. 276-320.

action framework. At this level, that is to say, the question is how the social changes introduced by social movements are related to other kinds of social change produced by, say, economic and technical innovations on the one hand, and inter-generational changes in value-orientations on the other.

An example will perhaps make the issues clear. The early industrial employers, who built 'factory villages' alongside remote country streams, did not set out to create settlements in which bourgeois values for the working class would reign supreme, but were obliged to become social engineers, so to speak, in order to feed, clothe and discipline the 'hands' which the new techniques of power-based production demanded. Their managerial expertise resulted in new social forms at work and in the community, but for most of them the provision of such 'public' services seems to have been seen as a necessary evil, consequent upon successful business practice designed to increase their profits in using the new production techniques. A few of them, it is true, regarded their situation as a challenge and an opportunity deliberately to improve their employees' welfare and way of life through model housing, the supply of medical care, and the education of their children; but for the most part these new ventures in social organisation were less innovations in the deliberate sense than adjustments to the factory requirements of machines driven by water, and later by steam power, in relatively isolated parts of the country.

Robert Owen, of course, combined all these managerial practices to produce a new view of society<sup>15</sup> which, if it did not prove an immediately viable social innovation, nevertheless set other men's minds to work on how best to adapt them along self-help lines. This quality of imaginative construction, applied to socially concrete situations, which characterises social engineering, is in principle no different from the kind of constructive imagination which mechanical, civil and electrical engineers bring to bear on the concrete situations which confront them, and indeed which confronted them in Owen's day. Of course, there was a difference in value-orientation involved. Owen

<sup>15</sup> Sidney Pollard, *The Genesis of Modern Management* (London: Arnold, 1965) chap. 5; A. J. Robertson, 'Robert Owen, Cotton Spinner: New Lanark, 1800-1825', in Sidney Pollard and John Salt (eds.), *Robert Owen: Prophet of the Poor* (London: Macmillan, 1971).

wanted to persuade his fellow-men to create a new social order, whereas most other textile employers were interested solely in more efficient ways of producing goods and valued the profits which their sale would bring; in so far as they concentrated on the problems of their expertise, the engineers of his day were not concerned to put their talents to the task of creating a new moral world, the Co-operative Commonwealth. The achievement motivation of these men, so to speak, was directed towards different goals from Owen's. The industrial engineers worked side by side with the 'classical' managers who were economic entrepreneurs whose endeavours had social implications; the Owenite organiser was a sort of social entrepreneur who saw the possibility of using managerial skills directly for socially constructive purposes. In terms of hypotheses to explain change, that is to say, economic and technical innovations *alter the conditions* of man's existence so that social innovation becomes possible, while value-orientation change ensures that enough people will adopt such innovations to make them actual, although the particular form a specific social change will take depends upon neither of these but is a consequence of the kind of practical imagination which some innovators bring to bear on this task; and it is no more possible for the sociologist to predict what this imagination will actually produce than it is for any other scientist to predict the particular form that inventions in his field will take. We may be convinced that at some future point in time a man of greater imagination or genius than ours will solve some problem that is baffling us at the moment, but speculations as to the specific nature of this solution and its consequences have more in common with science fiction than with scientific prediction.

A word or two about social engineering is called for here. In his attack on historicism, Popper contrasted 'piecemeal' social technology with 'holistic' or 'utopian' programmes of social reform, designed for remodelling the whole of society according to a definite plan or blueprint. Such a distinction between tinkering with social systems and changing them utterly is a commonplace in the documentation of social movements and is often believed to distinguish reformist from revolutionary, norm-oriented from value-oriented, movements. Yet utopian programmes of social reform are characteristic of all kinds of social millenarianism

rather than of social movements as such, in the sense of that term as used in this study. The more adequate contrast, therefore, is between social movements which undertake large-scale social engineering and those which confine themselves to small-scale changes. Thus, although some of its participants regularly endow it with millenarian qualities, a modern revolutionary social movement always seems to proceed during and after the revolution, as well as before, in a typically piecemeal fashion, zig-zagging from a failure with one attempt at social reconstruction to an alternative which is expected to succeed.<sup>10</sup> The capacity of revolutionary innovators to learn from their mistakes and to try again with something different is what distinguishes them from millenarian prophets inspired by the belief in the omnipotence of desire.

Moreover, inasmuch as they eventually succeed – as succeed they must, for otherwise in the definition of this study they would not be social movements – the rule-of-thumb procedures which they employ, like the innovators in self-help and ‘cause’ pressure-group movements, may be correctly regarded as a proto-scientific, or pre-scientific, social technology. The examination of such movements, therefore, should be of special interest to the sociologist as providing examples of ‘uncontrolled’ experiments by which to test hypotheses about social change; but he will not be able to use them in this way if he thinks of them as epiphenomena, since in that case there will always be a tendency to believe that what they have apparently succeeded in achieving was no different from what would have occurred without their intervention. Too close a reliance on the correspondence or the boundary-interchange conception of society is likely to result in the emergence of social movements being regarded as a reaction to symptoms of stress in a system, which has otherwise been held together successfully by the power of the ruling class to coerce wherever persuasion has failed, or by the pervasiveness of the dominant value-pattern, or by some other functionalist mechanism preferred by those who eschew Marxism and Parsonianism alike. Of course, it is not denied that the impetus to many so-

<sup>10</sup> Karl R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961) pp. 64–70. For a detailed account of large-scale reorganisations on a piecemeal basis, see Edward H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, vol. II (London: Macmillan, 1952).



called social movements, fellowships in adversity, and organisations of protest at circumstances of a desperate or frustrating nature has been provided by dissatisfaction with the *status quo* and a desire to change it, brought to greater intensity by stress, such as that regarded as crucial by functionalist notions of social change. Nor is it contended that such intensified discontent has provided an *extra* motivating agent for social inventiveness, advocacy and adoption, along the lines suggested here, but to ignore the element of deliberate constructiveness in social affairs, as *itself creating* dissatisfaction with things as they are, is to ignore the human capacity for artifice from motives of simple curiosity and the desire to make a discovery or to build something no one has ever succeeded in building before.

On the other hand, the sociologist of social movements must beware lest he claim too much for them. In particular, he must take care not to confuse the events which actually occur in a society with those consequences which might logically be held to have occurred, had a movement's programme of social change actually been implemented by a government or a people. There must be evidence, that is to say, that its programme of innovations has been *adopted*. For example, the feminist movement has long campaigned for the emancipation of women. Some of its activities, such as the pressure on Parliament to change the law of property ownership, can be traced directly to the work of identifiable Members of Parliament influenced by identifiable feminists, but other changes in the status of women in society which occurred at about the same time lack such a clear cause-effect sequence ([2] pp. 551-2), and for such changes hypotheses rather like the functionalist seem much more appropriate than the bland assumption that emancipation occurred because the feminists worked for it. A sociology of social movements thus requires a rather more intensive concern for the detailed course of events than has customarily been used by sociologists in this connection so far, and it also requires a rather more flexible and sophisticated framework of analysis than they used, since it calls for the examination of these data about fairly large numbers of people over a relatively long time-span in the light of hypotheses about the relationship between unintended and intended consequences of social action. Most work on social movements has

either been largely conceptual or descriptively historical, which is why it has been almost useless for the compilation of this study. Yet the importance of the topic is such that a fresh attack on the problems which it raises should be made soon. This present attempt to highlight the issues has been made to alert sociologists to the possibilities and the promise which research in this field can offer.

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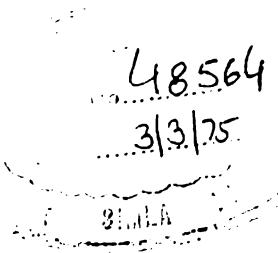
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