



Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe*. by Henri Pirenne: *Life on the English Manor: A Study of Peasant Conditions, 1150-1400*. by H. S. Bennett: *Complaint and Reform in England, 1436-1714*. *Fifty Writings of the Time on Politics, Religion, Society, and Education*. by W. H. Dunham and Stanley Pargellis

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processes, social morphology, socio-cultural dynamics, and other indubitably sociological contributions of the Hellenic writers. The history of social thought and of sociological theory must henceforth include far more along these lines than has previously been customary.

Schickling's little study of the Aristotelian assumption that "The whole is prior to the part" is much less enlightening. Primarily concerned with justifying the Thomistic interpretation of Aristotle, Schickling goes on to compare this with the interpretation offered by Othmar Spann, the "universalist" who has drawn the most extreme conclusions from Aristotle's pronouncement. The upshot of the comparison is that the axiom is both ethical and existential in character: (1) man is dependent on society for the realization of his ethical capacities; and (2) man becomes truly human only in association with others. Schickling definitely rejects Spann's absorption of the individual in the totality, and this rejection is essentially correct. It seems, however, that Schickling goes too far in maintaining that, although man is not autarchic, he is truly man even when association is at a minimum. This runs counter to all of modern sociology and social psychology, and must be regarded as a Scholastic attempt to salvage the idea of the immutable soul.

Spann's "universalism" of course issues in a variant of organismic theory. It is not the crude biologism of the late nineteenth century, but its consequences may be equally devastating. Fischer's little brochure is an excellent cathartic for the mental costiveness that over-indulgence in Spann may engender, although it cannot be said that it works while you sleep. Fischer's conclusion is that organismic theories of whatever kind, biologicistic or "spiritualistic," are untenable. We already possess an excellent refutation or organicism in Coker's Columbia thesis, *Organismic Theories of the State*, and so far as this country is concerned, Fischer is carrying coals to Newcastle. In the German-speaking lands his utterances should be heeded, but probably will not be.

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Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe. By HENRI PIRENNE, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., First American edition 1937. Pp. ix+243. \$2.00.

Life on the English Manor: A Study of Peasant Conditions, 1150-1400. By H. S. BENNETT. New York: The Macmillan Co.; Cambridge: The University Press, 1937. Pp. xviii+364. \$4.50.

Complaint and Reform in England, 1436-1714. Fifty Writings of the Time on Politics, Religion, Society, and Education. By W. H. DUNHAM and STANLEY PARGELLIS. New York: Oxford University Press, 1938. Pp. xxxv+925. \$4.00.

In many ways these three books are about as different as they could be, and yet they all deal with man's efforts to get a living and to work out his social salvation. The first work is a translation from the French of Pirenne's

contribution to *Histoire du Moyen Age*, the other two authors being G. Cohen and H. Focillon. This work appeared in 1933. It would be difficult to find a more masterly summary of the economic history of medieval Europe, especially of the Netherlands, France, Germany, and Italy. England and the Scandinavian countries, as well as Spain and Russia, are relatively neglected. Pirenne emphasizes, as in his other works, not the barbaric invasions but the later Islamic conquests. To him the Age of Charlemagne was not a period of advance but of retrogression; town life gave way to manorial economy. Later, slowly, there grew up around monasteries and castles little groups of traders and artisans who created out of their suburbs an economic town which became the cradle of much of western culture. Little emphasis is put upon the part played by the Jews or the capital investments of urban landlords in foreign commerce. Indeed, in the formulation of opinion, we seem to see Pirenne's hostility to Teutonic views, especially those of Sombart, burning with a dull glow. How far his ideas and conclusions took their origin in mere hostility, however, is another matter. No deeper basis than personal and national prejudice has been observed to have constituted the chief foundation for many a scholar's judgments. The beginner will get much from a study of this imperfect masterpiece, the mature scholar even more.

Bennett's *Life on the English Manor* is a volume in the *Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought* edited by the veteran G. G. Coulton, of Cambridge. It is a high-class summary for popular use but somewhat more. It is not, however, a work of great erudition or brilliant generalization but it is helpful to the beginner. The author has used not simply good secondary sources but primary materials in both printed and manuscript form. The central point of interest is the peasant trying to get a living. The author sees the persistent and egregious waste involved in the coöperation of the manorial village. He is impressed with the inefficiency of the whole manorial productive system as he sees in his mind's eye one foul field after another lie before him in an artistic pattern of hopeless dilapidation.

Bennett does not confine his attention to the cultivation of the soil. He has chapters on the Church, the Peasant's Year, the Manor Court, Everyday Life, Merrie England, and the Road to Freedom. Somehow, although the whole round of community life is presented, it does not hold together very well. Something is lacking, perhaps it is the cement of ritual and magic that run through work, play, and worship. If Mr. Bennett had added anthropology to his folklore and history and baked them together, he would have served us a more acceptable meal. Nevertheless, the author is on a new and promising track in economic history when he turns from the institutional and legal point of view to the functional.

The social historian and the historical sociologist will appreciate even more the third book under review, particularly if he is eager to weave together the non-material and the material. Few scholars would have made the precise choice of these Yale editors, but none could deny that the present volume contains a cross section of the civilization of sixteenth and seventeenth century England. Nearly all the items in *Complaint and Reform*

are in prose, though the first and most important is in verse. Only a few are by well-known (though secondary) authors. Several are anonymous, including acts of parliament. A useful chronology has been added.

As the social point of view grows, we delve more deeply into the average mentality and performance. This is the road to social reality and the processes of social change. All the great figures of the time—Erasmus, More, Calvin, Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, and Newton—have been omitted. We must therefore regard this work as supplementary to other and better known sources. Nevertheless, the volume provides an excellent set of readings for a course in Tudor and Stuart England.

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Who Were the Eleven Million? By DAVID LAWRENCE. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1937. Pp. 79. \$1.00.

Germany: The Last Four Years. By "GERMANICUS." Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1937. Pp. vii+116. \$1.75.

Dictators and Democracies. By CALVIN B. HOOVER. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1937. Pp. xi+110. \$1.50.

These three sets of essays are typical of the many recent critical treatises on collectivism.

Lawrence is concerned about the sanction given the New Deal in the 1936 election. He analyzes Roosevelt's 11,000,000 majority in an effort to prove that it was purchased by the new policy of federal relief. His problem is how to overturn this vote. He submits a formula which turns the essay into a definite bit of political propaganda.

The second book, a reprinting of articles from *The Banker* (London), attempts to picture the true economic and military status of Nazi Germany. The writers, anonymous German economists, militarists, and industrialists, have used official figures to calculate the budget the Nazis never publish. In four years, armaments have cost Rm. 31,100,000,000, aggregating for 1936-37 alone, Rm. 12,600,000,000 out of a total budget of Rm. 18,845,500,000. One result is a floating debt of Rm. 16,000,000,000. Nazi defence economies, *Wehrwirtschaft*, in conjunction with the military, subordinates everything to war ends, creates fear, and is used internationally for political and economic blackmail. Much state economic control, despite Nazi principles, has led to extensive socialism with more threatened, especially in agriculture, which has failed. The drive for autarchy has accentuated the ills induced by militarization, fleeced foreign creditors and left Germany isolated. The conclusion is reached that Nazi policy has created "a considerable international nuisance value" which must eventually be discontinued in disillusioned Germany.

The work is careful and convincing.

Hoover attempts to prove that Russian, German, and Italian "totalitarianisms" are fundamentally the same and at variance with democracy. He finds the three spring from the same causes, having similar circum-