

(Cash's observations on this topic still apparently have some validity.) This identification is exploited by the more active racists, while the active native-born integrationists draw on the equally strong regional heritage of religion and courtesy and emphasize these.

This is a very rich book, and no review is really going to do it justice. One way of defining the parts of a social situation and seeing how they "fall into place" or relate to one another is through description. While *Children of Crisis* is by no means either a complete description or explanation of the interacting variables at work in these stress situations, it

is very enlightening, sensitizing and above all, in spite of the kindness and humanity of the author, which permeate the book's pages, it is an objective work. It can in some respects, perhaps, be compared with Theodore Abel's *The Nazi Movement* in which case histories are combined with social situations and pressures to illuminate the processes which create a successful social movement. Coles' book is even better. Everyone concerned with the current American scene should read it. I am eagerly looking forward to Volume II.

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*Dialectical Society: An Analysis of the Sociology of Georges Gurvitch.*  
By PHILLIP BOSSERMAN. Boston: Porter Sargent Publishers, 1968.  
316 pp. \$7.95.

UNTIL HIS DEATH in 1965, Georges Gurvitch occupied the Emile Durkheim chair in sociology at the Sorbonne, the most prestigious position to which a French sociologist can aspire. In the Foreword to Bosserman's volume, P. A. Sorokin contends ". . . Gurvitch has contributed as much as any other single scholar in this century to the field of sociology." Yet, American sociologists have not given Gurvitch's work the attention it deserves. Gurvitch himself suggests that this is because most sociologists tend to regard him as a philosopher who has entered sociology through the wrong door. Bosserman's explanation is less comforting to the sociological establishment. He presents a disturbing list of reasons why most American sociologists ". . . fail to take him seriously or even attempt to deal with him honestly." First, Gurvitch's language is admittedly difficult and his closely reasoned but highly elevated works require a background in the classics and in philosophy which very few American sociologists possess. Second, Gurvitch has had a

tendency to be hypercritical of the American school and his vitriolic attacks upon certain prominent theorists have offended the powers that be. Third, Gurvitch's emphasis upon problems of a global magnitude and his philosophical terminology has made him suspect to American empiricists who have committed themselves to microsociology and the radical separation of sociology and philosophy. Finally, Gurvitch is a generalist who requires a Gestalt approach in the theoretical as well as the empirical sense, thus he cannot be content with the intermediate or partial theories which are the *modus operandi* of contemporary American sociology.

However, Bosserman is convinced that we can no longer afford to ignore Gurvitch. In the Introduction to his book, Bosserman reiterates the now familiar charge that over-specialization within American sociology has sanctioned a kind of scholarly myopia whereby facts and new methods for their collection are vigorously pursued while theory and explanation are neglected. The critical question,

"why?" remains unanswered. Indeed, it is no longer asked. Bosserman argues that if sociology is to confront the significant issues of our time, it must at least attempt to explain why modern man and society are what they are today. He believes this task requires a generalist who possesses the philosopher's sensitivity to the place of values, the relationships prevailing among seemingly disparate facts, and the observer's relation to his data, as well as the historian's understanding of the past. Bosserman describes Gurvitch as such a generalist.

Thus, in this work, Bosserman acts as an apologist for the sociology of Georges Gurvitch. He assumes a formidable role since Gurvitch's theory has been fifty years in the making and is to be found, in numerous states of revision, distributed throughout the more than thirty volumes which he authored. Yet, Bosserman manages to put together a generally coherent and informative book which should go a long way toward remedying the information gap which he so vigorously deplors.

Since Bosserman is concerned with Gurvitch the generalist, he elects to concentrate primarily upon an exposition and analysis of Gurvitch's macrosociology or horizontal view of sociology, his study of social groupings. The concept of "total social phenomena," derived from Mauss, is a basic feature of Gurvitch's macrosociology. It refers to the wholeness, the totality, the complexity of social reality. Gurvitch uses this idea to illustrate the inadequacy of simplistic, unilateral views of social dynamics. He contends that a "depth sociology" is required to deal with the revolutionary, irrational, fluctuating characteristics of modern nations or societies. Within Gurvitch's depth sociology, the dialectical process assumes a twofold significance. Gurvitch not only regards it as the basic method for sociological analysis but he also

imputes a dialectical character to real social movements. That is, the dialectic is not only a form of logic but the fundamental process of social dynamics. Gurvitch does not consider his own dialectical system as a mere extension of the tradition of Hegel and Marx. He maintains that his scheme is derived empirically since it is inspired by the images of reality which have emerged from the discoveries of modern physics. Bohr's Principle of Complementarity is particularly influential. Thus, the dialectical process elaborated by Gurvitch involves five "operational forms": complementarity, mutual implication, ambiguity, polarization, and reciprocity of perspectives.

Gurvitch's critics have long faulted him for his love of taxonomy. Yet, his dialectical sociology would have little meaning if it were to be considered apart from his classificatory systems. Consequently, the bulk of Bosserman's exposition consists of a summary of Gurvitch's elaborate codification of social reality. A brief opening chapter outlines the notion of total social phenomena and indicates the purpose of the book. The second chapter on Gurvitch's "background and life" is actually devoted primarily to a recapitulation of his juridical studies in which we receive an early glimpse of his fondness for definition. In Chapter Three, Bosserman reviews Gurvitch's criticisms of contemporary and historical sociology and outlines Gurvitch's preference for a typological sociology which abandons the search for absolute laws. The next chapter consists of a detailed examination of Gurvitch's conception of the total social phenomena, the method for its study, the methodological assumptions involved in what he calls the "vertical view" of social reality, and an analysis of each of the ten "depth levels" of social reality (from the superficial, observable manifestations of social organization to the least accessible and more spontaneous aspects

of collective interaction). In Chapters Five and Six, Gurvitch's "horizontal view" of social reality is explored: his fifteen criteria for classifying organized social groups are outlined, the six major and four auxiliary components of his definition of social class are listed, his criticisms of the meanings assigned to the concept of social structure by the Institutionalists and the Functionalists are reviewed, the five elements of his own definition of social structure are considered, the eight criteria for establishing types of global structures are presented, and ten of his types of global structures are analyzed in detail with reference to these eight criteria. It is in Chapter Seven that Bosserman deals specifically with Gurvitch's dialectical method—here, he considers Gurvitch's views on the nature of and rules for explanation in sociology and summarizes the findings of a piece of empirical research which actually employs Gurvitch's dialectical method. In the next chapter, Bosserman presents a critical evaluation of Gurvitch's sociology: the objections which other writers have raised to Gurvitch's theory are considered and Bosserman's own reservations are recorded but this section is primarily concerned with demonstrating the value of Gurvitch's work to contemporary sociology. Bosserman concludes with a two-page adulatory chapter. There are two appendices. The first consists of a chart tracing the intellectual heritage of Gurvitch. In the second, Gurvitch's eight types of social time are listed and briefly outlined. An extensive bibliography is included.

There is one criticism that must be leveled against the book and it is serious indeed. This is Bosserman's

failure to mention, let alone confront, the devastating criticism of Gurvitch's sociology contained in Sorokin's *Sociological Theories of Today* (1966). Since Bosserman attempts to defend Gurvitch against his other American critics and does so most handily, this omission is particularly puzzling. For, it is Sorokin who, among other things, points out the logical impurity of Gurvitch's depth levels, asserts that only three forms of the dialectic are really distinguished in Gurvitch's work, and demonstrates the inadequacy of ascribing a dialectical character to social reality. Bosserman is especially vehement in his tirade against those critics who have failed to do their homework and thereby proceed on the basis of incomplete information. But Sorokin is one of the few critics of Gurvitch whose knowledge of Gurvitch's system equals Bosserman's. The fact that Bosserman has chosen to write the book he has is clear testimony that he does not regard Gurvitch as a straw man. Similarly, no reader of that book can regard its author as any straw man! Thus, if Sorokin can be refuted, even in part, it is Bosserman who can—and, in the judgment of this reviewer, who should—do it. Yet, in spite of the fact that Sorokin has written the foreword to Bosserman's work and that foreword mentions his own volume, Sorokin is not mentioned in Bosserman's text and *Sociological Theories of Today* is inaccurately cited in his bibliography under the heading of "Book Reviews." One can only speculate as to whether, in this instance, Bosserman himself has done his homework.

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