CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL THEORY

General Editor: ANTHONY GIDDENS

This series aims to create a forum for debate between different theoretical and philosophical traditions in the social sciences. As well as covering broad schools of thought, the series will also concentrate upon the work of particular thinkers whose ideas have had a major impact on social science (these books appear under the sub-series title of 'Theoretical Traditions in the Social Sciences'). The series is not limited to abstract theoretical discussion – it will also include more substantive works on contemporary capitalism, the state, politics and other subject areas.

Published titles

Tony Bilton, Kevin Bonnett, Philip Jones, Ken Sheard, Michelle Stanworth and Andrew Webster, *Introductory Sociology*
Simon Clarke, *Marx, Marginalism and Modern Sociology*
Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (ed. Steven Lukes, trans. W. D. Halls)
Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*
Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory*
Anthony Giddens, *Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory*
Anthony Giddens and David Held (eds), *Classes, Power and Conflict*
Jorge Larraín, *Marxism and Ideology*
Ali Rattansi, *Marx and the Division of Labour*
Gerry Rose, *Deciphering Sociological Research*
John Scott, *The Upper Classes: Property and Privilege in Britain*
Steve Taylor, *Durkheim and the Study of Suicide*
John B. Thompson and David Held (eds), *Habermas: Critical Debates*
John Urry, *The Anatomy of Capitalist Societies*

Forthcoming titles

Martin Albrow, *Weber and the Construction of Social Theory*
Clive Ashworth, Chris Dandeker and Terry Johnson, *Theoretical Sociology*
David Brown and Michael Harrison, *Industrial Sociology*
Emile Dewkheim, *The Division of Lalow in Society* (trans. W. D. Halls)
Boris Frankel, *Beyond the State*
Anthony Giddens, *Between Capitalism and Socialism*
David Held, *Bureaucracy, Democracy and Socialism*
Geoffrey Ingham, *Capitalism Divided*
Claus Offe, *Structural Problems of the Capitalist State*
Ali Rattansi and Dominic Strinati, *Marx and the Sociology of Class*
Michelle Stanworth, *Gender and Class*
John B. Thompson, *Language and Ideology*

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL THEORY

General Editor: ANTHONY GIDDENS

Theoretical Traditions in the Social Sciences

This new series introduces the work of major figures in social science to students beyond their immediate specialisms.

Published titles

Barry Barnes, *T. S. Kuhn and Social Science*

Julian Roberts, *Walter Benjamin*

Dennis Smith, *Barrington Moore: Violence, Morality and Political Change*

Forthcoming titles

Ted Benton, *Althusser and the Althusserians*

David Bloor, *Wittgenstein and Social Science*

Chris Bryant, *Positivism in Social Theory*

John Forrester, *Jacques Lacan*

John Heritage, *Garfinkel and Ethnomethodology*

Athar Hussain, *Foucault*

Bob Jessop, *Nicos Poulantzas*

James Schmidt, *Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Social Theory*

Robin Williams, *Erving Goffman*

Barrington Moore

Violence, morality and political change

Dennis Smith

*Department of Sociology and Social History
University of Aston in Birmingham*

M

© Dennis Smith 1983

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1983 978-0-333-30620-8

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without permission.

First published 1983 by

THE MACMILLAN PRESS LTD

London and Basingstoke

Companies and representatives throughout the world

ISBN 978-0-333-30622-2

ISBN 978-1-349-17020-3 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-17020-3

Typeset in Great Britain by

FURLONGER PHOTOTEXT LIMITED, BOURNEMOUTH

The paperback edition of this book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	vii
PART I DICTATORSHIP AND DEMOCRACY	
1 Origins and Destinations	3
The social and intellectual background	4
<i>Social Origins</i> : the argument	8
The democratic route	10
The Asian cases	15
Theoretical implications	19
<i>Social Origins</i> : the critical response	25
PART 2 KNOWLEDGE AND VALUES	
2 Certainty and Choice	33
The Enlightenment	34
A revised agenda	39
Science and morality	42
Practical objectives	49
3 Freedom and Necessity	53
Constants and variables	54
Functionalism and evolutionism	58
Reason and anger	62
Misery and happiness	66
Unresolved dilemmas	74
PART III REVOLUTION AND RECIPROCITY	
4 Politics and Power	79
The dilemma of power	81
Lord and peasant	87
Causes and consequences	92
Tradition and style	97
Strengths and weaknesses	100

5	Terror and Justice	108
	‘The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come’	108
	Predatory democracy	112
	Social bases of obedience and revolt	117
	The making of the German working class	122
	Anglo–German comparisons	124
	Historical alternatives	128
	A theory of injustice	132
	Social contract	134
	The discovery of injustice	138
	Summary and critique	142
 PART IV CONCLUSION		
6	History and Truth	149
	Barrington Moore and E. P. Thompson	151
	Narrative history and comparative sociology	156
	Ideology and emancipation	166
	 <i>Notes</i>	 174
	<i>Bibliography</i>	179
	<i>Index</i>	187

Preface

This study is divided into four parts. In the first part an account of the text of *Social Origins* will be followed by, on the one hand, an analysis of the political and intellectual context in which it appeared and, on the other hand, a survey of reviews. In the second part attention will be paid to the development of Moore's theoretical approach. His essays in *Political Power and Social Theory* and *Reflections on the Causes of Human Misery* will be particularly relevant. In the third part the major political and historical studies will be analysed. *Soviet Politics* and *Social Origins* will be discussed first. Subsequently an examination of *Terror and Progress USSR* and two essays on 'predatory democracy' will be carried out, followed by an analysis of *Injustice*. In the fourth part Moore's approach to historical analysis and political theory will be contrasted with those of a number of his contemporaries. Finally, Moore's work will be related to the concerns of critical theory and the project of 'restructuring' social and political theory espoused by Richard Bernstein. Throughout this present book my objective will be to elicit Moore's approach to the question he regards as central: how may historical knowledge be used by men and women in order to comprehend and master their destiny within the limits of their moral and rational development and the stage of evolution reached by the societies and the global order to which they belong?

Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* first showed me the potential of an approach to the study of societies which is comparative, historical, literate and humane. Returning to that book and also finding my way around the larger corpus of work of which it is a part, I have encountered not only the historian and the sociologist but also the moralist and the political theorist. I have had no difficulty in accepting the verdict on Moore given by Peter Nettl fifteen years ago:

He is a radical of great and austere scholarship who takes nothing for granted and will use the devil himself if he advances understanding. Though he treats those he criticizes with courtesy and respect he is bound to no tradition and accepts *a priori*

no disciplinary hierarchy into which he feels he must fit. A loner. (Nettl, 1967, pp.435–6)

I am grateful to John Winckler for his encouragement as publisher and also to Tony Giddens and Jonathan Wiener for their detailed comments on the manuscript. Past and present colleagues have been kind enough to endure trial runs of various parts of the argument, especially Colin Bell and Val Riddell. Once again I have drawn upon the tolerance and good humour of Penelope, Susannah, Edward and Tanya.

July 1982

DENNIS SMITH