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Niko Yahiel

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SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

**A Sociological Analysis of Contemporary Social
Processes
and Their Interrelationship with Science**

by

NIKO YAHIEL



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INTRODUCTION

The main idea which runs through all three parts of the present treatise is to bring home the need of intensifying the interaction of sociological knowledge and social practice, or resolutely increasing the role of the practical functions of sociological science in the various spheres of the life of society, and in society as an overall system.

The objective necessity of an ever closer continuous interaction of sociology and practice needs to be better realized in the interest of both practice and sociology. This requirement stems from the new tasks of the further building of the mature socialist society in the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

Experience confirms that the closer the interaction of sociological knowledge and social practice, the more reliable the scientific basis for the making and implementation of political, economic and other managerial decisions, of the materialization of a social action adequate to meet the public needs. The opposite is also true. The more complete and effective the role of sociological knowledge in solving the problems of social practice, the more that knowledge is developed and enriched, the more convincingly the academic and social significance of sociology is revealed.

We are far from the desire to suggest any kind of exclusiveness of sociological knowledge. The latter undoubtedly has its specificity and its definite place and importance in the system of scientific knowledge and in social practice. *It can reveal its possibilities only in combination with the cognitive possibilities of the other academic disciplines, first and foremost with dialectical materialist philosophy as the most general methodological basis of social science.*

The book here offered to the attention of readers has three main specific characteristics.

Firstly, it considers from the sociological standpoint some fundamental problems that have arisen in the process of building the new society in Bulgaria. Similar problems have been faced by other countries as well. We do not think, of course, that the concerns of this book exhaust the most significant social problems of modern development, nor that we have been able to illuminate them with exhaustive thoroughness. Our desire has been to show, through an analysis of concrete problems, that *Bulgarian sociological thought should continue to develop in content and scope not only*

on the level of theory and method, but on the concrete level as well, by embarking on a much more persistent and purposeful investigation of modern social processes.

Secondly, the unifying link of the range of social problems here considered is *science*, its place and growing functions in the solution of these problems. Inasmuch as sociology is of fundamental significance in our present-day socio-economic development, its premises have served to analyse some of the *inherent problems of science in Bulgaria* which are most directly related to the implementation of the course of intensification of scientific activities, to map out some of the main directions for raising the level of its research efforts to identify the factors (extrinsic and primarily intrinsic to science) on which its efficiency depends.

Thirdly, the choice of social processes singled out for examination in this treatise is prompted by the belief that the intensification of socio-economic development and its growth in efficiency (conceived in a broad sense, the accent being placed not only and not so much on the effort invested to obtain a given result, as on its quality, utility, its social and individual value) is at present a particularly important problem, on the resolution of which the improvement of the life conditions and the prospects of the socialist personality depend to a considerable degree.

Owing to the above-listed specificities of the approach thus adopted to the selection and examination of problems, the analysis transcends the bounds of the sociology of science and embarks on the premises of general sociology.

The present treatise has no ambitions to offer a solution to all the questions it raises. We shall feel content if this analysis of some social problems convinces the reader of *the need of raising even more resolutely the scientific and public importance of sociology, of making it more open and more sensitive to the social problems of the day*; and also if it bears out the claim that the solution of most of these problems requires the collective efforts of sociologists with varying areas of specialization, besides inter-disciplinary research.

We shall consider our duty to *the sociology of science* done if we have succeeded in outlining some basic problems of science in Bulgaria on the basis of a realistic assessment of its present state, in helping the sociologists of science find their place in the solution of these problems, and in proposing certain theoretical points of departure for the study of these problems.

The first part of the treatise considers in general theoretical outline some more significant aspects and problems of the interrelationship of sociological knowledge and social practice (political practice in particular). The second part is devoted to some topical and interrelated problems such as the scientific and technical revolution, the intellectualization of social practice, the intensification of socio-economic development, the efficiency of science,

and the essence of the multiplier approach. The third part studies some key problems of science as a social institution, on the solution of which depends its fruitful participation in the realization and materialization of the social tasks of the construction of a developed socialist society.

1 March 1982

The Author