
HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO REVOLUTION AND CLASS BEHAVIOR AS
RELATED TO THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE
OF GERMANY

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ABSTRACT

Since the historical sociologist uses historical data to construct typical generalizations usable in the understanding and prediction of social phenomena in varied circumstances, valid research in this field should result in types which can be used for analyzing contemporary events. In this paper the writer is attempting to demonstrate the usefulness of constructed types in analyzing the possibilities of revolutionary behavior in Germany. The analysis is restricted to one class in Germany, the peasantry, and is concerned only with their economic motivation. On the basis of a study of the Russian and German peasant behavior during the revolutions of 1917 and 1918, a type of peasant mentality was constructed which revealed the orientation of economic motivation around the securing and retention of land; a conservative peasantry being in possession of land, and a revolutionary peasantry being landless. Applying these types to the contemporary German peasant, we discover that the measures taken by the Nazis in securing the peasant's position in the social structure preclude any possibility of economic revolt. If Germany should win the war the peasant would still be secure; if Germany should lose the war or be stalemated, the peasantry might revolt for peace, but would again serve as a barrier to a sweeping radical revolution. This is merely an example of the way in which the findings of the historical sociologist might help in winning the war and peace.