

# Political Studies

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Butterworths

is shrewd on 'shamateurism' and commercial sponsorship. Finally, Hargreaves recalls some of the major themes in his book, *Sport, Power and Culture*. Altogether, this is a most valuable work in a developing area of study.

CHRISTOPHER HILL, *University of York*

John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain* (Oxford, Polity Press, 1986), xii + 258 pp., £25.00 ISBN 0 7456 0153 7.

Hargreaves barely mentions enjoyment. His argument is that sport should not be seen as part of leisure, in which the individual is free; that is an ideological notion. Instead, it is intimately linked to power, and for at least two centuries 'dominant groups' have used sport to control the working class, and to separate its 'respectable' members from the rest.

The 19th-century control 'movement' consisted of evangelical clergymen, factory and land owners and state officials, and spanned organizations as diverse as the Lord's Day Observance Society and the RSPCA. Nowadays Thatcherite authoritarianism enlists the respectable working class to fight for law and order against football hooligans. Thus the latter become 'ultimately supportive of the social order' (p. 113). Physical education, too, assists the rulers, because it '... literally makes more of the pupil visible to the gaze of authority and, therefore, more available for control' (p. 169). Unfortunately, the respectable children seem not to mind. Nor have their working-class elders seen the importance of sport in the class struggle.

Much of Hargreaves's material, for example on the commercialization of sport, is extremely interesting, though he seems not to have interviewed any practitioners, and makes a few mistakes about, for example, gambling, horseracing and foxhunting. But the biggest disappointments are that he disapproves of everything, yet refuses to offer solutions. Such self-denial will not convince policy-makers of the value of academic writing on sport.

CHRISTOPHER HILL, *University of York*

Ernest Gellner, *Relativism and the Social Sciences* (edited by J. Agassi and I. C. Jarvie) (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), viii + 200 pp., £22.50 ISBN 0 521 26530 4.

This book deals with empiricism, the understanding of the modern world and the differences between natural and social sciences. It has seven chapters, five of them previously published in different books or journals. Readers concerned with politics will probably find Chapters 1 ('Positivism against Hegelianism'), 3 ('Relativism and universals') and 4 ('The scientific status of social sciences') to be the most interesting. Gellner uses an incisive combination of philosophical, anthropological, and sociological approaches. The book has brilliancy and humour. Gellner's argumentation seems a keen intellectual tool cleverly used, especially when criticizing and expounding on problems; although this reviewer finds a parallel constructive ability to be missing. Yet *Relativism* . . . does not make light reading, and most non-philosophically trained readers would perhaps feel more comfortable with shorter sentences and less use of devices such as slashes and parentheses in which the book abounds, several of them containing more than 75 words and, in one case, even including a smaller parenthesis.

From a rather political perspective this reviewer feels somewhat puzzled because reality is not the first matter of concern. After reading 'Relativism and universals' one would almost be tempted to think the world to be not much more than a creation of empiricist methods—it obviously reminds us of certain positivist critiques of other writers (see p. 185). Gellner persuasively praises natural sciences and positivism ('In defence of positivism', p. 55 ff., well deserves reading), but people having a prudent or commonsense mentality, as often happens among those interested in politics, will perhaps wonder if the 'granular vision' he favours is of much use for understanding deep political problems, not always translatable into separable 'grains'. Thus we are left in some

perplexity because Gellner is explicitly aware of both the mentioned difference between kinds of sciences and the fact that positivism and 'granularity' are not equally suitable for social and human sciences.

A.-C. PEREIRA-MENAUT, *University of Navarre*

Roger King, *The State in Modern Society: New Directions in Political Sociology* (London, Macmillan, 1986), xix + 266 pp., £25.00 ISBN 0 333 36606 9, £7.95 pbk ISBN 0 333 36607 7.  
Robert E. Dowe and John A. Hughes, *Political Sociology* (2nd edition) (Chichester, John Wiley, 1986), xi + 398 pp., £26.50 ISBN 0 471 91023 6, £9.95 pbk ISBN 0 471 91204 4.

The doxology of early political science, post-war sociology and classical Marxist movements shared a similar ambition to make the state 'wither away'. Political scientists, systems theorists and functionalists, more or less politely, wished to dissolve the state into 'government' or 'policy', while the Marxists, more or less violently, wished to smash it into oblivion. *English* writers, more parochially, thought that states were things inhabited by rather unfortunate foreigners. The blindness, romanticism and parochialism of such outlooks no longer command intellectual respect. These two books make clear that the state is not only alive and well both in the real world and in political sociology, but also that the state is an indispensable feature of our industrialized existence and our social and political theories. In fact, as Roger King's subtitle all but suggests, it is only the theories of the state which can provide a unifying framework for political sociology. Otherwise the subject lives out its existence in an interdepartmental limbo gathering the leftovers from sociology and political science. Bob Dowe and John Hughes's revision of their textbook displays substantive agreement with King. They have excised most of what they nicely describe as the first edition's *geriatric sociology*, updated much of the remaining material and significantly added a new chapter on the modern state.

These are useful textbooks. King first analyses the substance of what passed for political sociology *circa* the mid-1960s. He follows this up by surveying the historical sociology literature on the development of the modern state and then Marxist and sociological theories about its characteristics. Chapters follow on contemporary ideologies, corporatism, power, urban politics and the state's international relations (by Graham Gibbs—an excellent introductory précis). The merits of King's text include clarity, controlled exposition and an eye for the important ideas in a body of argument. But it has two defects. First, while each chapter is internally coherent the book lacks overall shape. The rival theories are not sufficiently compared and evaluated and the choice of topics is guided more by the author's interests than theoretical rigour. Second, King and Gibbs's relative emphasis on the salience of neo- and post-Marxist ideas, while deliberate, will seem misplaced to many. Modern elite theorists like Eric Nordlinger and a range of public choice and new right authors have frequently given better 'new directions' to political sociology and the study of the modern state. However, these defects take nothing away from the book's pedagogical value. Dowe and Hughes's text is a very considerable update and improvement on the first edition which is to the authors' credit. It is also due to the fact that they now have a richer theoretical and empirical literature to survey. However, anyone aspiring to be political sociology's equivalent of Samuelson in the art of textbook writing should follow his example in at least one particular. All data and references should be as contemporary as possible to aid student comprehension. Dowe and Hughes' text is still replete with 1960s data, 1960s arguments and references to 1960s British politics. The 1960s by most accounts were good years but most contemporary students were born in that decade. The authors (or more probably the publishers) are also at fault for a style of revision in which confusingly presents the reader with two sets of footnotes at the end of each chapter. But carping criticisms aside, Dowe and Hughes's revised text, like King's, shows that political sociology is pedagogically respectable and is currently revitalized through a focus upon theories of the state.

BRENDAN O'LEARY, *London School of Economics and Political Science*