

John A. Hobson

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Die Sociale Frage im Lichte der Philosophie. By DR. LUDWIG STEIN. (Stuttgart: 1897.)

ALTHOUGH Dr. Stein opens with a passing assent to the commonplace that "there is not a Social Question but Social Questions;" his lengthy volume presents the most convincing refutation of this sophism that has yet appeared. The author is fully conscious of the grave difficulties which have, in almost all countries, beset the rising science of Sociology, and the still graver difficulties which beset the application of such a science to the current problems of political and economic life, and the sense of strife sometimes induces over-emphasis and needless reiteration of crucial points. These, however, are trifling defects, in part attributable to the lecture-form retained throughout the volume; they do not seriously impair the sanity of judgment and the perspicuity of statement which are chief merits of Dr. Stein's important work.

The central purpose of the volume is to establish firmly the legitimacy and the importance of Sociology as distinguished from its tributary studies by proving and illustrating its competence to furnish the laws of an art of society needed to comprehend and to confront the Social Question. The common severance of the science from the art disappears in face of the formal statement of his subject matter. "Under what conditions must individuals and social groups, economically and intellectually advanced, so work and live together, that the social organisation may obtain an equipoise most satisfactory to all its members," (14) or more briefly it is "the forms and conditions of human life and work in a community" (29) that form the essence of the Social Question.

A preliminary survey of the ground contains a powerful pleading for a "philosophic" basis, and discusses the recent developments of scientific method in handling causation in social phenomena. An interesting account is rendered of the opposition that "Sociology," which Dr. Stein identifies with social philosophy, has encountered among the different European nations in its endeavour to assert its individuality. Its scant recognition and still scanted progress as a science in England since Mr. Spencer introduced it, receives notice, though Dr. Stein does not trace this neglect to its proper causes, a premature and excessive specialisation of the sciences relating to the growth of social institutions, and that craving for exactitude which by giving undue weight to quantitative estimates has impeded the recognition of the need of an organic science of society.

In the opening chapters some space is needlessly consumed by

detailed examination of the growth of the concepts, "Causality," "Continuity," and "Immanent Teleology" in social thinking. It may indeed be doubted whether one who, like Dr. Stein, vehemently rejects "metaphysics" and takes his stand upon "positive" science is justified in importing "teleology" into his service. The "philosophy" in the light of which Dr. Stein surveys "the Social Question" is concerned only with the highest generalisations of history, (693) and history can neither present nor properly suggest a telos.

The real service conferred by Dr. Stein consists in the masterly presentment of the comparative history of the social institutions, of their reflection in human thought, and of the causal interaction between these "objective" and "subjective" phenomena. To this task a most careful sifting of the evidence of specialist research is applied. A convenient division is made between "origins," "historical development," and "present standpoint" of social problems, which, though, like all such divisions, somewhat injurious to continuity, is justified by the needs of the expository method. The more "stable" institutions, family, property, society, and "the State," and the more "fluid" institutions, language, law, religion, industry, and art, ethics and philosophy receive orderly investigation as to origin. In these origins Dr. Stein detects the persistent assertion of a double tendency, making on the one hand for "universality" as illustrated by the widening of social, legal, linguistic, commercial areas, on the other hand for the self-assertion of the individual. The controversial tone adopted throughout the book leads Dr. Stein to over-emphasise the latter tendency in tracing the development of marriage, property and the State, and to summarise the movement as "a struggle for individuality." This is most strongly marked in the account he renders of the evolution of the Headman, and the part he plays in forming the habit of "property." But though the refutation of crude socialistic notions of history and psychology is much in evidence, it does not sensibly affect the severity of Dr. Stein's method of investigation or the moderation of his judgments. In his treatment of law, ethics, science, art, &c., the balance of the socialising and individualising forces is more rigorously kept, in just proportion as directly conscious factors begin to play a greater part in the growth of these institutions. His presentation of the struggle for existence among ideas and institutions in these departments is one of the most valuable portions of the book.

Part II. comprises an account of the movements of thought from the earliest times to the present day, making for a Social Philosophy, and Part III. gives the outlines of a positive theory of Social Philosophy. It is quite impossible to give in a few paragraphs any proper estimate of the qualities of this important body of thought. I can only say that Dr. Stein is a "full man," who has digested well his immense reading and uses it with singular skill. His criticism of modern social movements, and of their relations to political and

economic thinking is particularly lucid and well informed. Marxians will probably complain, and not wholly without reason, that his representation of Marx's doctrine of social causation is unsatisfactory. The truth is that a certain legitimate desire to emphasise the play of psychical forces has led Dr. Stein into a somewhat dramatic antithesis of "physiological" (economic) and "psychical" which, like every other dualism, is ultimately unphilosophical. To affirm that the "ideological" factors are often efficient causes of economic and political changes is no sufficient refutation of Marx's view of history.

The real service which Dr. Stein has rendered consists in tracing through all the chief channels of social history the two great streams of tendency which appear in the Social Question as the antagonistic forces of the Individual and of Society. That the progressive solution of the Social Question consists in some reconciliation of these apparent conflicts is a commonplace: to this commonplace Dr. Stein gives closer meaning and actuality. As his grasp of the law of "continuity" forbids him to entertain "catastrophic" notions of a revolution, or any such revivals of past order as animate the Catholic Socialists, so his keen apprehension of the growing relative importance of psychic factors in developed societies forbids him to find salvation through the direct agency of the centralised and arbitrary power of the State. That the State is destined to a gradual and a considerable increase of direct and indirect control over industry he does not deny. How far State Socialism ultimately tends to go it is not easy to discover. Although he powerfully enforces the anti-social character of "capitalistic collectivism," as expressed in the rings, trusts, syndicates, &c., of modern industrialism, he does not seem to contemplate the "taking over" of these industries as a natural and necessary process. Again, though the growth of absentee landlordism and of land-mortgages leads him to a passing suggestion (581) that land-nationalisation is ripening in Germany and elsewhere, he does not include the ownership or direct control of land in his list of practicable State enterprises. Mines and all dangerous trades, such as matches and powder, typography (587), insurance in all its branches, water-power, and all future inventions of industrial importance, are, in his judgment, right subjects of State monopoly. In other industries which tend to eliminate effective competition and to breed excessive profits, he would establish State competition, so as to enable society to control prices and secure proper conditions of labour without direct prohibition of private enterprise: the feasibility of such co-existence of public and private business he illustrates and endorses. His refusal to sanction further direct State administration is due, partly, to a sound conviction of the difficulties involved in attacking vested interests of the living, partly to a belief that other kinds of "socialism," involving important psychical modifications, must precede any powerful development of State functions. But, while repudiating most of the Socialistic claims to "nationalisation of the instruments of production," Dr. Stein is

carried a long way by his endorsement of a policy of "socialisation of law" (Recht). "By socialisation of law we understand the legal protection of the economically weak; the conscious subordination of the interests of individuals to those of a larger common whole, generally speaking, the State, but finally, the whole of humanity" (607). This "socialisation of law" he regards as a most important movement of the age, not merely in its direct economic and political bearings, but in the social education it affords. The right to life and to economic subsistence by labour he bases upon "the compulsion to be born" (616); this "right," comprising a guarantee of "physical and intellectual integrity," involves a right to labour for a livelihood, which Dr. Stein regards it as a first duty of the State to secure for all. This minimum subsistence is to be achieved partly by State employment, partly by the influence directly exercised by State industry in maintaining decent conditions of work and wage in private industry, partly by remission of taxation and participation in public wealth. As a counter policy and a modification of the great economic power remaining in the hands of private capitalists, Dr. Stein would seek to enforce a "maximum" of wealth by means of progressive taxation of (1) income, (2) property, (3) inheritance. It is only fair to add that the legal expression of these "rights" is not to be attained as a mechanical achievement of politicians, but rather as the natural expression of changes in the "view of life" induced by social education. Without the gradual revolution of the "Weltanschauung," the recognition and enforcement of this new social order in external life is impossible, and the efforts of social reformers must be primarily directed to the "ideological factors," by means of which this new "Weltanschauung" is to be attained. The concluding chapters of his work are devoted to a subtle, and sometimes an eloquent, analysis of the changes in modern religion, ethics, art, science, and education, which thus contain the seeds of the new order.

The generality and vagueness of this account of a great work should not induce those who read it to impute these qualities to Dr. Stein's book, which is forcible and perspicuous in its reasoning, and richly endowed with detailed evidence in support of his positions. Though sterner "sociologists" may cavil at his insistence that it is the business of the "science" of sociology to furnish "imperatives" to social conduct, and may insist upon a more rigorous severance of science and art, while practical statesmen may deny the feasibility of his proposed reforms, no one can read his book without admiration of the magnificent intellectual equipment of its author, and his thorough competence to investigate the wide field which he has traversed. I think, also, that English readers will be compelled to admit that he has established the validity and utility of Sociology, even if they do not admit the of unconscious and conscious "teleology" which he detects in the processes of social development.

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