

### MARK IN SOCIAL THEORY.

powers over dark forces greater than our own, persists perhaps as such a projection by those who feel a need for such protection in a life in which our hold of things is but a sliding one.

In connection with the science of the classical economists it is well to make another note as to their point of view. That school was occupied with examining the economic phenomena of their time, of their "historical present." As it is conventionally dated, the Industrial Revolution took effect within Adam Smith's active lifetime, and some of its more significant beginnings passed immediately under his eyes. Yet the Industrial Revolution does not lie within Adam Smith's "historical present." The new order of machine production was coming in, but handicraft was still pervasive and factory production and business enterprises in the bulk were also on a comparatively small-scale plan. The newer facts of economic life could not then be appraised at their proper significance as a later examination in the light of after events was able to do. Accordingly Adam Smith's examination of his "historical present" was actually an examination of the recent past, more so also, by token, that the theorizing upon his "historical present" was conducted with the habits of thought, preconceptions and standards formed in the recent past.

Let us look at this early modern science with Veblen again:

"Along with the habits of thought peculiar to the technology of handicraft, modern science also took over and assimilated much of the institutional preconceptions of the era of handicraft and petty trade. The 'natural laws,' with the formation of which this early modern science is occupied, are the rules governing natural 'uniformities of sequence'; and they punctiliously formulate the due procedure of any given cause creatively working out the achievement of a given effect, very much as the craft rules sagaciously specified the due routine for turning out a staple article of merchantable goods. But these 'natural laws' of science are also felt to have something of that integrity and prescriptive moral force that belongs to the principles of the system of 'natural rights' which the era of handicraft has contributed to the institutional scheme of later times. The natural laws were not only held to be true to fact, but were also felt to be right and good. They were looked upon as intrinsically meritorious and beneficent, and were held to carry a sanction of their own. This habit of uncritically imputing merit and equity to the 'natural laws' of science continued in force through much of the nineteenth century; very much as the habitual acceptance of the principles of 'natural rights' has held on by force of tradition long after the exigencies of experience out of which these 'rights' sprang ceased to shape men's habits of life. This traditional attitude of submissive approval toward the 'natural laws' of science has not yet been wholly lost, even among the scientists of the passing generation, many of whom have uncritically invested these laws with a rectitude and excellence; but so far, at least, has this animus progressed towards disuse that it is now chiefly a matter for expiation in the pulpit, the accredited vent for the exudation of effete matter from the cultural organism."

Are my critics also in that company? Still even at that, says Veblen elsewhere, those preconceptions resemble the later assumptions of economic theory, that what is "normal" is also right.

Here, at this point I have done with the classical school and the question now is: What did Marx draw from that school in respect of preconceptions and postulates that influenced him in his theoretical work?

For one thing his materialistic-Hegelian preconception of a self-realizing developmental trend in the process of things towards a goal found something of a like nature in the preconception of the classical school of a "benign order of nature and a meliorative trend" in events.

Secondly, the Marxian doctrine of the natural right of the laborer to the full product of his toil, belongs to the system of natural rights.

Third, the Marxian class-struggle proceeds on the lines of the hedonist calculus: self-interest as the motive governing individual conduct in the utilitarian theory appears in Marx's concept of the class-struggle as class interest; the struggle is a conflict of classes over the material means of life and is waged by the contending classes with a consciousness of the incompatible economic interests of one

class with the other. Class-consciousness arises from taking thought of these conflicting economic interests of the classes.

Here ends that part of this review of Marxian theory concerned with the two main intellectual and doctrinal schools of thought in Social theory, German Hegelianism and the English Utilitarians, which influenced Marx during the formative years of youth and the later years of his creative work in economic and political theory. Next issue, the Marxian theory of history, particularly that phase of it touching class-struggles.

### ANOTHER SLANT ON NEO-MARXISM.

(Continued from page 5.)

another group to buy more of us." Business as usual. "C."

This will be enough for the present, as I do not wish to encroach on "vested interests" as regards space. Next time I shall deal with the revolutionary myth in Marxism.

### THE BRITISH ELECTIONS

For a more accurate study of the strange results which the ambiguity of the Liberal attitude has brought about, we must await the full returns. For our own part we shall be guided rather by the total vote, than by the chance distribution of seats. The measure of our success or disappointment will be the number of ne wadhers whom we have attracted to our ranks throughout the country. We have some losses to deplore which will be felt in the House. Miss Bondfield has paid heavily for her absence in Canada; in Bradford the swinging of the Liberal vote to the Tory side has defeated Mr. Leach, and deprived us of the ripe wisdom and serene courage of Fred Jowett; in London we have to regret especially the defeat of Herbert Morrison, and the failure of Ernest Hunter after a most encouraging fight. Dr. Salter, on the other hand, returns, and Mr. Dalton will bring a welcome reinforcement to our debating strength. Mr. Lees-Smith has been sorely missed in the House, and his return is most welcome, as is also the success of Miss Ellen Wilkinson and Ben Riley. Mr. Mosley has failed by the narrowest margin in his gallant effort, but among the new facts of this election is the certainty that Birmingham can be won for Labor.

Only when we have before us the final figures of the total vote which each Party has polled, can we answer decidedly the question whether Labour has in a measure succeeded in realizing the objects which Mr. MacDonald had in view when he took office. Has there been a gain in confidence and in prestige? It is probable that the result would have been much more favourable if the election had come in August. We have undoubtedly paid heavily for the unlucky handling of the Campbell affair and the Zinovieff letter. We contrived to give the impression of a lack of candour. Our explanations came tardily, and when they came, they failed to remove the suspicion that something discreditable was being concealed. As we look back on these crowded weeks, the doubt increases whether we did wisely to refuse an inquiry into the Campbell affair. There was no truth whatever in the suspicion which our opponents fostered, that "extremists" were dominating the Government. The plain fact is that it would be difficult to name a single Member in our Party who would have approved a prosecution in the Campbell case. The Party was equally solid in its support of the Russian Treaty, and all of us would have regarded the failure to complete it as a disaster. When the heat and weariness of this struggle have passed we shall have to review at leisure the record of these nine months, but our tests will not be those which our opponents use. The shortcomings which have injured us were to our thinking rather temperamental than intellectual. In ability and in devoted work our Front Bench did not fall short. Its leadership, however, too often lacked frankness in the House. It was too ready to treat proper questions as insults. It thought too often in terms of conspiracies and plots, and gave undue weight to electioneering tactics. It somehow failed, when the contest

came, under the stress of excitement and overwork, to raise the issue to the level of reasoned debate.

Two great achievements stand out from this brief period of testing. Mr. MacDonald leaves behind him a superb record by his work for peace and restoration of Europe. When the noise and rancour of this election have faded, hundreds of thousands of those who voted against him will regret his departure from the Foreign Office. The greater gain is that the working masses, at all events in the crowded industrial centres, have won for the first time a new sense of their own power, a new belief in their capacity to govern, and a new resolve to shape our social structure according to their own ideals. Confidence we have indeed won, not, perhaps, among the hesitating voters of the middle class; we have won it where above all we value it, among the workers. It has come to us in spite of the handicap of our impotence in the House; it will grow with our own fidelity to our Socialist creed. The years of opposition which lie before us must be years of constructive and educational work. The tactics of a minority, balanced uneasily between two rival parties, need trouble us no longer. Our single aim must now be to attain at the next election a majority for a Socialist programme. We must carry our message week by week with unflagging will into the villages of rural England. We must help the town workers, who are with us already in sympathy, to understand what Socialism means in morals and in economics. So far from compromising or trimming, we have to restate Socialism in its most challenging and comprehensive form. We have lost office. We have gained the right to be ourselves.—The New Leader.

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