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THE PRESENT OUTLOOK OF SOCIAL SCIENCE¹

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This paper is virtually a syllabus. It presents a conspectus of a piece of work which cannot be carried far by a single individual. Nevertheless the work is prompted by belief that the aim proposed, the method pursued, tentative results already obtained, and indications to which even these provisional conclusions point, are worth something as a contribution to knowledge, and to the formation of scientific and social purpose.

The study now to be indicated in outline is an inquiry into the methodology of the social sciences, not as it has been or might be developed abstractly, but as it has actually evolved in a single case, that case being regarded as to a certain degree necessarily typical of the logic of the social sciences in general. An important presupposition of the study is that we are far from having exhausted the instruction for present social theory which is to be obtained by study of the evolution of the social sciences.

The study concerns itself directly with the scientific experience of one people only—the Germans. It may be indicated by the question: “What does the evolution of the social sciences in Germany show about actual processes thus far experienced in gaining social sophistication?”

¹ Address delivered in outline before the American Sociological Society.

I will not defend, but I will explain, this choice of problem.

It is doubtless beyond question that, with the single exception of the ethical enlightenment contained in Christianity, the world has learned more in the field of social science since 1800 than it had learned before since Plato. This being the case, it is worth while to study the experience of the Germans in this field during the past century, in the first place, for the general reason that in their experience stages which everyone must somehow pass through in reaching intellectual maturity are more distinctly in evidence than in any other national experience. This is not to assert that the knowledge to be credited to the work of the nineteenth century within the field of the social sciences was all gained by Germans, or that it has been confined to Germany. On the other hand, the intellectual and moral crises in which the limitations of knowledge have become conscious, in which determination to remove the limitations has become deliberate, and in which pursuit of the resolve has arrived at larger outlook and deeper penetration—all these processes have been more visible and in the aggregate more systematically correlated among the Germans than anywhere else.

It may be that scholars among the English, the French, the Italians, and perhaps some of the other nations have actually passed from the eighteenth- to the twentieth-century plane of social enlightenment, on the purely intellectual side, by steps which were quite as independent and which would therefore be quite as instructive as the experience of the Germans. I venture no opinion upon that problem. I simply point out that the way-marks of the German progress are more easily detected and more variously attested. They are not as well preserved as we might wish, but, as compared with the memorabilia of other nations, they are as an intimate daily diary in contrast with those details of an ordinary life which would find place in public annals.

In other words, the Germans have put on record a relatively complete intellectual autobiography. Not because it is German, but because it is human, because it records the experience through which all men's minds have to find their way in order to arrive at our present stage of social sophistication, this German autobiography is the most voluminous introduction in existence to the

particular type of self-knowledge that is taking shape in the modern social sciences. It is a commonplace that we do not fully know what we know, until we know it as it was gradually discovered in the process of eliminating previous misconceptions or of filling gaps where there had been no conceptions. For this reason review of the thought-processes involved in the evolution of German social theories is invaluable.

More specifically, I find it worth while to study the progress of German knowledge in social science since 1800, second, because of the literal exhibit which this experience contains of advance in awareness that supposed facts which had satisfied might not even be facts, and if they were, they would not be sufficient; in awareness that previous solutions did not solve; that previous explanations did not explain; and that previous valuations did not convince. I find it worth while to study the expansion and deepening of German social science, not as the only textbook in which social science may be learned, but as the textbook in which the pragmatic process of learning social science is more explicitly exhibited than in any other available. Otherwise expressed, this German experience presents to us the plainest instance extant on a large scale of social science knowledge in the making. If this were the whole story, it would be reason enough for studying this German experience.

But there is a third reason for studying the nineteenth-century evolution of German social science, and in my rating it is far more important than either of the two just stated, namely, the history either does or does not furnish a series of confirmations of a cardinal theorem in social psychology: *Every social theory, and every type of social science is a function of practical problems which contemporary men are attempting to solve.* In other words, the thinkers of a generation are tackling in more abstract form the problems with which their whole society at the same time is busy in the concrete. The theories of scholars reflect the personal interest and the class bias of one or other of the groups that clash in the practical competitions of the same period. As these classes arrive at adjustments of their interests, as social institutions settle into arrangements accordingly, the corresponding theories become respectively orthodox and authoritative, or discredited and rejected. Domi-

nant dogmas in social science may accordingly be in effect the decrees of non-scientific men who have won social power by some kind of force not purely intellectual, and the dogmas may therefore have no better permanent right than that of might. The prevalent basic presumptions in the theory of economic distribution make a case in point, as I shall indicate later.

In other words, one of the reasons why social theories are not impartially objective is that in every age of the world social theory has been one of the weapons of the class conflict then waging. Whether with conscious or unconscious class bias, the thinkers have been trying to solve the social problems of their time by assuming as self-evident more or less of one or another partisan conception of life then trying conclusions in the arena of social struggle. Social theory has been an ally now of one party, now of another, in the constant social conflict, instead of being an impartial observer in the white light of dispassionate science.

We discover this vitiation of knowledge better in the past than in its manifestations in our own time. More precisely, if we make out this inexactness in our own time, the very perception is discounted by the possibility that our discovery is merely our own partisanship, bringing suspicion of improper bias against other partisans. We are much less liable to that charge when we point out the partisan preconceptions of men in the past, since there is less common interest between ourselves and partisans on either side of past conflicts than there is between ourselves and some living actors. We may therefore more conveniently learn the workings of men's minds when engaged on social problems in general, by analyzing their mode of dealing with stages of social theory which are now closed incidents.

The Germans are neither sinners above all others, in the matters just pointed out, nor are they exceptions to the rule. They have very strikingly illustrated the rule. Their experience, therefore, which as I have said is more plainly recorded than any other of equal scope, is the most instructive available evidence as to this ever-present human factor in knowledge processes.

In the fourth place, the actual growth of social science in Germany presents a specific case of the interdependence of different

phases of social theory, or, as it is more customary to express it, of the dependence of one social science upon all the others. In the United States the workers in the various social sciences have not yet very generally admitted this interdependence, and those who have admitted it have usually done so with such reserve that the perception has had much less than its full value as a working influence on their methods. The idea that no part of social science can progress very far at a time unless all parts of social science are advancing at the same time, and unless each part is keeping step with all the rest—this idea is still fighting for its life. Few scholars in the United States deny it outright, but few make it a part of their effective beliefs. A large part of the difference between dead scholarship and live scholarship in the social sciences of today consists in contrasted degrees of the vitality of this perception in different men's thinking. There is no clearer proof that objectivity and virility in social science depend upon actual evolution of social science as unified interpretation of a total human experience, than the nineteenth-century history of German social theory. I do not mean that many Germans made the generalization which I have stated, and acted consistently with it. I mean that the work which the narrowest German specialist did got its permanent rating in social science by serving or not serving to close some gap, or to improve some process, which had previously been defective throughout the range of the social sciences. This service as a subsidiary to social science in general is the final criterion of all presumed achievement in any division of social science.

The battle for the triumph of this perception is now on in the United States. The intellectual history of the next generation in our country will be a triumphal march or a disgraceful countermarch according as it succeeds or not in making this perception a commonplace in social science thinking. The line of advance in social science must follow a path to which this perception of the interconnection of all parts of human experience is one of the indexes. I am acquainted with no more immediately available equipment for this part of the impending struggle than familiarity with the facts in the case of German experience in the nineteenth century. That experience is all the more instructive because it was

not thought out in advance. In spite of all the attempts at classification and organization of the sciences, of which the Germans were so prolific, German social scientists exercised a degree of freedom in proposing their own problems and in selecting their own methods of work upon them, which left scarcely anything for the most extreme individualist to desire. Not because they wanted to, but because they had to in doing their best on the problems they had attacked, those free lances leaned one upon another and borrowed the one from the other, and co-operated with one another in proceeding from less to more knowledge of the social reality. We must, therefore, not make the mistake of treating this German experience as simply a solidarity, and therefore as only a single instance which could not serve as proof of a generalization. On the contrary, a multitude of independent German scholars, each following his own bent, sooner or later repeated, in some measure or other, the same experience. They found that each must be in turn historian, political philosopher, political scientist, political economist, moralist, etc., in order to satisfy his own conception of the procedure necessary to reach his results. This German experience then is not a single case, but hundreds of cumulative cases. Nineteenth-century German experience in the social sciences is a multitude of individual attempts to treat life analytically, resulting in as many conclusions that after all the last word about life must be synthetic.

I name a fifth reason for the importance of the study which I am reporting. Without assuming that the social science of the world is expressed at its best today in the social science of Germany, it is safe to say that elements of value in each of the social sciences which are also of value to every other social science are more vividly in evidence in Germany than anywhere else. If we are familiar, therefore, with the social sciences as they are at present developed in Germany, we are able greatly to abbreviate our necessary methodological inquiries. Instead of going over points of controversy which are necessary preliminaries to advanced thinking in social science, we are able to point to many concrete elements in the technique already adopted by German scholars which have only to be seen to be approved by everyone of sufficient training to be entitled to an opinion. At the same time, if we should attempt

to justify these same factors by formal argument, the great majority of social scientists in the United States would meet us with active or passive opposition. A large part of the strategy of constructive social science in the next few generations in the United States must consist in conscious and deliberate practice of the composite methods of research which have achieved prestige in Germany in place of methods of unreal abstraction. These composite methods may be adopted in practice long before scholars are willing to accept the general principles of social relations which are fundamental to the validity of these practices. To speak more concretely, no German scholar today of the first rank can be correctly represented by any label which designates a single one of the traditional academic divisions of knowledge. On the contrary, each of them practices the technique of each of the divisions of knowledge as it is demanded by the particular problem upon which he is engaged. More exactly, each one of them is psychologist, historian, political philosopher, political scientist, and sociologist, whenever his problems call for the technique or results of either of these divisions of labor. It would be invidious to select a few names in order to substantiate this proposition.

Assuming then this illustrative value of German experience, not because of specific doctrines which it has evolved, but because of inevitable tendencies in the logic of the social sciences which it has exemplified, it is first in order to make use of the work which has been done in reporting general German experience to get at the crises or problems in German society which German scholars, even the most abstract, were consciously or unconsciously attempting to control. It should go without saying that the minor crises incidental to these larger ones must be interpreted as the more immediate social environment of each particular theorist.

In the rough, then, I make out four cardinal problems which have presented the fundamental tests for German practical men and theorists alike since the middle of the eighteenth century. In a way each of them has been a factor in German life from the middle of the sixteenth century until the present moment. In another sense they have successively come into chief importance in the order in which I shall name them.

The first cardinal problem of the Germans was that of protecting the state against other states—the cameralistic problem. This task was more and more distinctly present to the German mind from 1555 to 1765, and we may say that it virtually dominated all other public problems until 1815.

The chronic condition of the European nations during the cameralistic period was war, and the primary task of government, especially in Germany, was creation of readiness for war. Under the circumstances, the most constant and pressing need of states was ready money. The men who elaborated either the theory or the practice of government for these German states had virtually to answer this question: "What program must a wise government adopt, in order first and foremost to be adequately supplied with ready money, and thus able to discharge the duties of the state in their various orders of importance?"¹

It came about that a big block of social theory was built up between 1555 and 1765, under stimulus of the distinct purpose to systematize programs of national conduct in such a way that the national governments might be as strong as possible in the military sense. Not only was there an extensive literature directly in the service of this purpose, but all the other literature within the field of social science in Germany was strongly affected by this dominating note of the military and incidentally the fiscal necessities of the German states. Involved in these cameralistic theories, and in the viewpoint of other types of social thinking not avowedly in the interest of this immediate civic purpose, were innumerable dogmas, presumptions, inferences, and impressions which were more than administrative in the technical sense. They were presuppositions in the fields of history, political philosophy, political science, political economy, ethics, and social philosophy. Accordingly, they were in some sort and degree attempts to occupy the ground later covered by each of those sciences. The point is that not merely those portions of cameralism which were direct attempts to formulate means to the fiscal and military end, and which were therefore rational adaptations of resources to that end, were shaped by consideration of that end; but that the same end was used as a criterion of other things, possibly more important than itself—things that might

¹ Small, *The Cameralists*, pp. 6-7.

show it to be a very temporary, local, and untenable end—in short that something merely incidental in the whole human process was allowed to take the place of arbiter over more important phases of the process, and thus to prejudice thought and action about the whole range of the social process. This sort of methodological fallacy was in possession of the ground until 1765, and to a considerable extent until 1815. The next great steps in social theory could not be taken until the grip of this fallacy could be weakened. Meanwhile, as a general proposition, all German thinking in social science was a more or less direct and conscious attempt to interpret and direct the conduct of the Germans, and to philosophize this interpretation and conduct, with reference to the dominating idea of strengthening the state for defense and aggression in conflict with other states. The point which I am now urging is that in principle this central fact of the cameralistic period is typical of all thinking. It is always a question, to be sure, in what degree the controlling public problem of a generation affects the specific thinking of a given scientist or school of scientists. The actuality of this relationship between the public problems and the specific scientific problem of all contemporaries is the main thing to be noted.

It is impossible in this paper to justify the conclusions which I have reached provisionally, about the controlling public problems in Germany after 1815. I venture, however, to indicate them in brief. It is probably unnecessary to mention that the mutterings of the French Revolution and then the Revolution itself set back the indicated course of German social science more than a generation. After the great problem of the cameralistic period had been temporarily solved, the problem next in order, and to a certain extent next in necessity, was how to protect the citizen against the state. As a rough general proposition, German public life and German social theory centered upon this problem from 1815 to 1850 as distinctly as it had revolved around the cameralistic problem during the previous period. Two special factors kept the citizen problem back and down for a length of time that would not have elapsed if the Germans had been a compact and detached group. These were, first, the local jealousies of the different quasi-

sovereign German states. These frictions were in the aggregate a more debilitating drain upon the material and moral resources of the Germans than the hostilities of alien nations. They helped to prolong the necessity of keeping every state in the condition of martial preparation, and this amounted to suppression of the civic problem because of the paramount urgency of the military problem. In other words, it prolonged the life of autocracy or the absorption of the citizen by the government. In the second place, the oncoming of the French Revolution obscured and postponed the civic problem. It made almost everybody in the upper classes, and even the majority in the lower, believe that the essential problem was to insure the state not only against the old foreign enemies, but further, against a new phase of domestic danger, that is revolutionists, who were held to be implacable enemies of all properly constituted government.

Added to these special factors, a third was the necessity of fighting against the Napoleonizing of all Europe. This accident in the situation kept the old problem of the cameralistic period to the fore to such an extent that, in the life-and-death struggle of nationalities against absorption in the Bonapartistic empire, absorption of the citizen by the government was made to seem a negligible evil so long as this more spectacular evil threatened. The orderly progress of social science in Germany was therefore arrested for a long time by necessary concentration upon the disturbing problems of revolution and Napoleonism.

The third period in nineteenth-century development in Germany was that dominated by the problem of protecting the majority of the citizens against the economically dominant class; namely from 1850 to 1871.

The fourth period, from 1871 to the present, has been occupied by the problem of committing Germany to a permanent policy of promoting human improvement.

Taking this general survey of public problems in Germany as its base of operations, the specific study which I am now sketching is an attempt to discover the most significant features in the course of the evolution of social science in Germany since the cameralistic period. I try to indicate the cardinal traits in this

development, or as I may say its methodological outcome, under four main propositions.

I. *German social science in the nineteenth century has become historical.*

On the whole, we may describe the general mental attitude of scholars throughout the world, as well as of the multitude, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, as in a vague way conscious of the past, and respectful toward the past. While the past simply as past, however, always constituted a certain background in the consciousness of thinkers, they felt themselves on the other hand largely free to reconstruct this past, to give it a content and a meaning according as their own fancy or interest or a dominant authority might suggest. In other words, the rôle of the past in the thinking of men at the end of the eighteenth century was the rôle of the vicious circle: that is, men constructed a past to suit themselves, with little or no sense of liability to conform their construction to actual facts. Then having built up their fictitious past they used it as an authority to establish belief and control conduct. In this sense then they had hardly made the beginnings of finding themselves in the real world.¹

This attitude of unreality, of unguineness, of non-objectivity, with reference to the portion of human experience that was in the past, was an effect of many things and a cause of many other things that are important variants in social science. Without attempting to schedule these causes or effects, we may note that this condition of imperfect connection with reality on the part of scholars indicated in a still higher degree a similar condition on the part of men in general. This amounted to a state of maladjustment with all the processes of life, which was in itself an arrested development. In order that the thinking process in particular and the life-processes in general might develop, the time had come for a notable extension of human ability to look straight at human experience as it had been, to recognize it in its actual character, and to learn from it just those things which were involved in the record as thus intelligently and dispassionately read. The pace-makers in this

¹ Illustrations of this attitude may be cited in the case of Schröder, Small, *The Cameralists*, pp. 137-39; and Justi, *ibid.*, pp. 294-95 and 310-11.

pursuit of reality within the social realm were undoubtedly the historians.¹

In order to become responsible, reliable, and competent, in their part of the human process, it was necessary for scholars in the social sciences to detect all sorts of wishes-father-to-the-thought, all sorts of subjectively created substitutes for reality, all sorts of interested assignments of value to reality, and to recognize literal occurrences and actual connections between occurrences in the moral world. So far as discipline to this end was gained in and through the social sciences at all, work in the field of history was the most illuminating experience, and the historians consequently became for a time the most efficient preceptors of other social scientists. They thus indirectly contributed to increase of objectivity in social thinking in general. For reasons indicated above, historical study during the Napoleonic period was stimulated less by the purpose to grapple with the new problem of the enfranchisement of the citizen, than with the old problem of the security of the state. Nevertheless, the discipline of candid interrogation of the past, to find in the past its own reality rather than a reflection of the assumptions of the thinker, was the elementary thing, even though the lessons searched for in the past were applied more to a closed or closing incident than to the coming issue. Men could not form the habit of facing the past objectively without acquiring some increment of ability to face the present objectively. In this way the awakening of the critical historical spirit schoolmastered Europe in the realistic attitude toward all thought and conduct.

When I say that the work of vitalizing the social sciences was led by the historians, I mean at first no more than this: A few historians were the first of the German thinkers to descend from the clouds of confusion created by social upheavals in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and to apply themselves profitably to a

¹The whole question of the interactions between the physical and the social sciences in this approach to reality may be waived here, not because it is irrelevant, if we were discussing all the factors of the early nineteenth-century movement in Germany or elsewhere; but because we are starting with the phenomena in the social sciences as we find them at a particular time. In pursuing the study it is of course necessary to investigate all the influences that shape the phenomena of social science from this time on. These factors have to be followed out into a detail which this paper cannot indicate.

field of real knowledge of human affairs. As it turned out, this program of the historians amounted to the laying of a foundation course in the structure of social science. It was probably the most efficient preparation within the social sciences themselves for what we know now as the "process conception of life." It taught men to think human experience as growth, as a succession of consequences following by some sort of physical or moral necessity from particular antecedents. It taught men that they must find a part at least of the explanation of every social situation or occurrence in the previous sequence of situations and occurrences in which the phenomenon to be explained is a late term. Merely for suggestive purposes, we may refer roughly to Savigny as illustrating this idea through use of Roman law; to Eichhorn as impressing the same lesson with growth of German legal institutions as the material, and as laying a stronger basis of historicity in relating German legal growth more vitally with the external experience of the Germans; to Niebuhr as setting a new pace in higher criticism of the archeological and literary remains of history; and to Ranke as enlarging conceptions of the sort of documentation necessary in order to make civic history authentic.

It is of course impossible in such a sketch as this to discuss the technique of any division of social science. We are concerned at present merely with cardinal factors in methodology. I must therefore emphasize a peculiar limitation in the method of the early nineteenth-century historians. In brief, while they contributed to realism in social science by emphasizing causal connections between chronologically earlier and later phenomena, they conspicuously lacked ability to interpret contemporary situations in terms of cause and effect, of means and end. Their attempts to do this ended with interpretation of the present as an effect of the past. They were panic-stricken when they found other men thinking of controlling the present with a view to causing the future.

Each of the historians whom I have named was a case in point. Let Eichhorn stand for all. He wanted to help solve the public problems of Germany at his own time, particularly to pave the way for reduction of the chaos of legal conditions into order, by resolving the nebulous past of German constitutional and legal

history into an intelligible process; that is, he wanted to do just what the faculties of the leading American law schools today pride themselves upon doing. They pursue the method of explaining all law by going back to its genesis, and of trying to discover the occasions and processes of its growth. This is a deliberate and conscious substitute for the method of treating each particular rule of law as having an absolute value within a system of logical constructions abstracted from all concrete circumstances in which parts or the whole of the system may have arisen. The thing which at last made this whole historical method revolutionary was utterly beyond the prevision of the so-called "historical school of jurists," Eichhorn and Savigny in particular. They rang the changes on the propositions "All law has its roots in the past"; "All law is a growth"; "All law is to be explained by the circumstances of its history." The initial effect of this attitude was a tremendous liberalizing of the minds of jurists who had to teach either public or private law. It made them treat it less as a rigidly formal affair, operating and to be operated with mechanical relentlessness. It taught them to consider law as in some measure elastic with the thrust and pull of circumstances. Compared with our present notions of the adaptability of law to changing conditions, the modifications in German legal conceptions at this time were microscopic. On the other hand, the change was considerable, when compared with the earlier attitude of German legalists. The same effect is easily traced in the minds of men dealing with other divisions of social science, and the effect has been cumulative up to the present time.

On the other hand, these men who did so much with the clue of historical growth were at their wits' end when the idea was carried over to the conditions of their own time with any thought of planning a continuance of the process of growth. Hard as it is for us to understand how it was possible so to handicap the idea at just the point where it promised to be most efficient, the truth is that these earlier interpreters of legal institutions in terms of growth seemed able to entertain the idea in full only with reference to the past. The moment they were asked to follow out the implications of the idea, in the way of making their own time an incubator

of more growth, they were frightened. The same phenomenon occurred later in the case of the historical economists. But this is the important matter now to be noted: These historians builded better than they knew. Growth is not a mere historical category. It is also proleptic. The idea of social growth, whether derived from the experiences of everyday men, or from the reflections of scholars, is dynamic. As a general proposition, the academic men who were historically minded, whether with respect to law or economics, wanted to use the past as a means of reconciling the world unto the present, or at most as a means of procuring a more orderly arrangement and smoother working of the institutions which the past had handed down to the present. But the dynamics in the idea of historical growth were not exhausted in that lame and impotent conclusion. The fashioning of the idea of historical growth into a tool of science set afoot the mischief of calculated social propagation. Men reasoned for a long time, more subconsciously than consciously: "If growth is the program of history what about the growth of our own moment? Every period of the past has been the present to the men who lived in it. Those men of the past had to be men of action in their own time and place, or growth would have halted with them. How should we act, in view of the circumstances of our own time, in such a way that the process of growth which we have discovered in the past may be continuous through us and beyond us?"

As a rule the men who have done most to develop the idea and to trace the actual processes of growth in the past have balked at this inference. They have taken refuge in some conception of impersonal forces producing change, even if they consented to entertain the idea that the institutions of their own time were eventually to undergo change in a series that should continue the changes involved in the growth of the past. These men have felt that the safety of society demanded stout resistance to any conceptions of past growth which would constitute sanctions for going about the improvement of social institutions in the same matter-of-fact manner in which one would plan to bring unimproved land under cultivation, or to remodel an old house, or to incorporate inventions into old machinery, or to introduce labor-saving methods

into old industrial processes. In short, ever since the historical law of growth has been recognized, men in every generation who have made it the means of enlightening themselves and their neighbors about the past have fought with all their might against permitting this element of growth to do all it could toward enlightening themselves and their fellows about the present. This is among the constant exhibits in the psychology of transition. The past retains the balance of power in the minds of all but the irresponsibly visionary advance agents of the future. This is one of the reasons why so much of the social progress of recent times has had to be stated, while it was going on, not in terms of the future, but in formulas reaffirming the past.

But this is growing into a digression. The point is that we find every one of these historical scholars presently setting himself against application of the very conclusions from their scholarship which, from our standpoint, it seems to have been unavoidable for them to draw. The psychology of their position, as of the cautious element in every passage of social transition, amounts to this: first, belief in a general principle, the continuous operation of which would produce readjustments of the contemporary situation—in this case, the universality of social growth; second, disbelief that the particular measures proposed by way of social modification are authentic operations of that principle. In the rough, every historian, and to a certain extent every other scholar who has had a place in the ranks of accredited social scientists in Germany during the past century has, sooner or later, and in a lesser or higher degree, illustrated both phases of this generalization.

In particular these path-breaking German historians reached strong convictions about that feature of human experience which they referred to in terms of "growth." To that extent they made splendid use of a category which has since been widened into the view which we now indicate by the phrase "the process conception of life." In their use of the concept "growth," however, they were relatively clear in their perception of the longitudinal phase of human experience, so to speak, and relatively dim in their vision of its lateral aspect. They thought of social growth chiefly as succession, as continuity, as persistence. Their attention rested much

less on growth in its structural aspects, that is, upon stages of temporary equilibrium of forces, upon correlations of adjustments, upon interdependence of activities in process of adaptation. This "growth" concept of the early historians thus visualized human experience principally as a process of sequences within relatively narrow grooves of causation, and in a vague and uncertain degree, if at all, as a process of unfolding in all contents and dimensions. How much the historians ever contributed at first hand to enlargement of the "growth" concept in these respects, I am not prepared to say. It is by no means certain that Droysen and Treitschke and Mommsen, for example, were in advance of Eichhorn, except in technique. It would be difficult to show that they were better acquainted than he with the whole range of factors co-operating in the social process. It is certain at all events that we can trace the reinforcement of the "growth" concept more easily through the work of other divisions of social science. This will appear under the next main proposition.

II. *German social science in the nineteenth century has become functional.*

Not to venture on detailed discussion of the functional concept at this point, it is enough to say that social science throughout the nineteenth century has on the whole tended away from methods which first divided the moral world up into blocks, then sorted those blocks of social stuff into categories, and finally separated the sheep from the goat categories by judgments of good and bad. On the other hand, the social sciences, of course including psychology, have tended to substitute methods which look after the work done by the different factors in the apparent social processes, and to pronounce that work good or bad according as it tends to promote or to retard the purposes which appeal to reflective criticism as on the whole in the line of the constructive movement first of the group primarily concerned and ultimately of humanity as a whole.

It would be rank falsification of the facts to make developments in the large outlook of German social science synchronous with the stages in the public problem which I have indicated. This clarification of scientific vision was a by-product of specialized experi-

ence in all the activities of life. Within this whole, the academic activities took on the effects of the common experience with their own particular variations in a tempo different from that in which German life at large evolved.

Thus it would be easy to support the special plea that German publicists in the eighteenth century and even later were accustomed to think in terms of what was known a century afterward as the "organic concept." Passages galore might be cited in which German writers before 1900 expound human relations with variations of the category "organism." Eichhorn in 1834 explained more distinctly than he had expressed it in his first volume in 1808 that his purpose from the start had been to set forth German history as "organic."¹ The technical difference between the category "organism" previous to 1850, and indeed for the most part long after Schäffle's *Bau und Leben* began to appear in 1875, and the rôle of the same idea since that time is that in the former period it was used in the most obvious popular sense, while in the latter it was elaborated and criticized and deliberately employed for what it was worth as a tool of analysis. The phases of social science which centered around the "organic" concept two or three decades ago have in consequence been merged into results that came mostly from quite different antecedents. Men who were almost diametrically opposed to one another while the "organic" concept was under discussion are now of one mind in the essential matter of interpreting life functionally. For reasons which I will exhibit a little more specifically in a moment, the precise combinations of intellectual processes by which this result came about—whether in Germany or in other parts of the world—may never be conclusively demonstrated. It is certain, however, that three distinct scientific factors, each in its way stimulated by instinct of responsibility within the principal social problems of their time, co-operated among the Germans in developing that type of intelligence which has come to visualize life under the aspect of function. For convenience, we may call these cardinal factors (1) the economic, (2) the political, and (3) the sociological. Until very recently these factors, especially the first two, have ostensibly maintained

¹ *Deutsche Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte*, ed. 1834, Vol. IV, Preface.

most exclusively separate existence. The amusing reality is that there was always between them an unsystematized and unconfessed co-operation quite inconsistent with the presumption of separateness. It is only in recent times that the three factors have become so intelligently differentiated that they are aware of the necessity of co-operation, and that they are consciously moving toward consensus as to methods of co-operation.

Returning to the beginnings of this second phase of development, one of the naïve presuppositions of eighteenth-century German publicists, and one which was well-nigh universal and decisive, was the presumption that civic power, the state, sovereignty, was primordial in human experience, and that all other phases of community life were in some sort emanations from this "center and source." The spell of this superstition is by no means wholly broken yet, in Germany or elsewhere. Even men who use a thought-apparatus which in principle excludes such illusions still occasionally revert to it. The idea that the state was an instrument of control, invented by early types of interest, inherited and transformed to suit later types of interest, and always in principle a projection of human purposes and subsidiary to human purposes, had never for a moment held the respectful attention of orthodox scholars before the end of the Napoleonic period. On the contrary, until after the beginning of the nineteenth century, all the phases of social science which had been differentiated were virtually celebrants or acolytes or parasites of a ritual of civic sovereignty to which all other human activities were supposed to be subordinate and tributary. At the same time, in spite of the fact which is among the elementary data of social science today, that social structure is chiefly functional in its origin, theorists as well as practical men have always tended to settle back into the belief that social structures of their own day are somehow predestined to permanency to such a degree that they may not be hailed before any tribunal to answer for their functional efficiency. Thus in the eighteenth century there was a state of mind which largely determined the thinking of the nineteenth, to the effect that economic as well as civic institutions were in principle as they must remain forever. Yet in the eighteenth century the physio-

crats in France and the tendency culminating in Adam Smith in Scotland began to analyze the processes of life in a way which made for precisely opposite judgments so far as the state was concerned. That is, the tendency of the new publicistic philosophy was toward the conclusion that the state and political activities in general not only depend upon economic activities, but that the former are likely to be interlopers and disturbers within the field of the latter. It was not observed at this time that, with the development of post-economic interests, the state ceases to be a tool of economic interests exclusively, and becomes the instrument of evolving purposes.¹ If here and there that aspect of the case had been noted, it did not become influential.

The idea of the autocracy of economic factors in life has taken many shapes. It has been more or less absolute in its claims. In each and all of its variations it has served during the nineteenth century as a counter-thesis, challenging the political interpretation of experience, and proposing alternative versions of what was, is, and is to be, in human affairs.

Between this immemorial illusion of the state as clue to human experience, on the one hand, and the later conceit of economic activity as master-key to human experience on the other, the nineteenth century is memorable for revival in peculiar form of a belief which has never, within recorded times, been wholly without its witnesses; namely, that the ultimate interpretation of human experience is human experience. Among men who have accepted the necessary implications of their finiteness, and are docile enough to confine their efforts after knowledge within the bounds of the knowable, the conviction has spread that the outmost reach of our knowledge of anything is knowledge of the way in which that particular aspect of experience merges into the whole of all men's experience.

What actually occurred in the social sciences in Germany, after the battle of Waterloo permitted resumption of the main course of life, was both practical and theoretical attention to the

¹ Oppenheimer is now attempting to correct the generalization known as the "economic interpretation of history," by finding the place which "political" interests have always had in social control.—*Jahrbuch des oeffentlichen Rechts*, Bd. VI (1912), pp. 128 f.

social situation which Germans confronted after the Napoleonic period. This situation presented itself to Germans of practice and theory alike under two chief aspects, namely, first the economic and second the political. Under each of these aspects specific problems of immediate importance pressed for solution. The thesis which does most to disclose the treasures of instruction to be uncovered in the period then beginning is this: *The theoretical and practical experience forced upon Germans by their situation compelled them to an inspection of social cause and effect which at last resulted in scientific and practical objectivity in a plane at right angles with the plane of historical objectivity.*

This result was slow and through intermediate steps which have not yet been distinctly traced; but certain groups of processes are evident. On the one hand, the economic element in cameralism was so prominent that tradition up to the present time has treated that element as paramount. In fact, as I have pointed out, the political element in cameralism was principal, and the economic factor tributary. During the cameralistic period, however, pragmatic treatment of economic activities was unconsciously paving the way for economic science as we now understand the phrase. In particular, those divisions of cameralistic technique which worked out inventories and population rolls and tax lists were precursors of statistical methods and statistical science. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, under the preceptorship of Rau, the Germans were actually enrolled in the school of Adam Smith for generalized study of economic phenomena. In the minds of practical men and theorists alike, the immediately stimulating problem was: "How may the Germans become economically prosperous?" The big methodological fact about what followed was this: In the course of the century, German economic thought tried out in turn the classical, the historical, the "Austrian," and the socio-political ways of approaching economic generalizations. Whatever the specific conclusions, the universal result was uniformity of attempt to settle economic problems by valid reference of effects to their causes, by candid recognition that economic situations are reflections of contemporary as well as antecedent conditions. Translated into methodological terms,

this means, as I have said, that all the German economists had come to think of economic cause and effect not only under the aspect of before and after, but also under the aspect of coexisting action and reaction: or in a word *functionally*.

This common factor in German economic method is as general today, in spite of particular appearances to the contrary, as a certain common attitude among several million American voters who divided themselves among the parties in the recent national election. The members of this divided group voted in principle together; only in the application of the principle were they separate. Each subdivision of the group convinced itself that the man of its preference was the only candidate who was really born under the constellation of progress. There is much more unanimity among German economists today on the principle that economic relations must be judged at last by their workings than among the actually advancing element among American voters today as to who and what is progressive.

Meanwhile the second great factor in nineteenth-century German experience made its characteristic contribution to this functional preconception. I have designated it as the political factor. As I am now thinking of this influence it included all the activities of the plain people, of statesmen and their subordinates, and of academic theorists, with the status of public and private law as their center of attention. In some aspects it might better be called the juridical factor. Here the problem of interpretation on the practical side has to do with the whole process of social liberation along the lines foreshadowed in the Stein-Hardenberg reforms, in the struggles for constitutionalism, in the realization of imperial unity in 1871, and in the subsequent elaboration of the imperial code. On the theoretical side it has to do with a wide gamut of actors. They range from the brood of petifogging legalists, the men whose horizon was bounded by precedent and formula applied not even after the spirit but mechanically after the letter, through such intelligent systematizers of the law as Hugo, such historically minded searchers for the sources of the law as Savigny, to the abstract extreme of philosophy of law as represented by Hegel; and the scale then runs to the gradual develop-

ment of an objective philosophy of law as typified by Jellinek.¹ The force of external events, much more than developments from within, inexorably transformed this juridical element in German social science. Little by little the more far-seeing theorists on the political side were compelled to think of political institutions as machineries devised by men to serve developing human purposes. Expressed from the other side, they were forced to give up the illusion that political institutions are unalterable reflections of absolute principles. The most vital idea associated with this incipient functional conception of civic institutions was again the implication that they must be judged by their works.

I do not assert that German political science today has explicitly adopted abstract formulas of the functional character of life in general, and of civic institutions in particular, which would satisfy the sociologists. My claim is that the current literature of German political science is cast in a mold which in a marked degree presupposes, and to a certain extent expresses, the functional conception. As a typical case, I would refer again to Jellinek's volume just cited, and particularly to chap. iv, "The Relationship between Civic Theory and the Totality of the Sciences."

We must glance now at the third theoretical factor effective in this period. For want of a better name I have called it the sociological factor. I mean by it the phase of social science particularly represented by this society. It has fought its way into academic recognition during the past twenty-five years, in spite of inveterate prejudice that it was unheard of, and not desirable to be heard of, in the scientific world. If the historical training of the present generation of social scientists had been more complete they could not have made the former claim; and if their methodological knowledge had been more broad they would have been ashamed to make the latter. In a word the sociological factor in social science is the effort to visualize all the phases of human experience in their functional relations with one another, and to promote inquiry into all divisions of human experience with adequate attention to the interdependence of their functions. Whether this factor in social science is desirable or not, it is irrepressible unless we set arbitrary

¹ *Allgemeine Staatslehre*, Vol. I, 1900.

bounds to the working of our minds. Instead of being a parvenue of recent date, the sociological approach to the interpretation of experience was very pronounced in such men as Gerhard in 1713,¹ and Zincke in 1751.² At the middle of the nineteenth century a number of German scholars, who were sociologists in everything but name, projected reconsideration of human experience along lines which testified to relatively advanced insight into the functional nature of society.³ That the sociological factor did not develop rapidly until later is not because it is a superfluity in science, but because it had to overcome the inertia of scientists.

Not all that is obvious, still less all that is discoverable, from the historical and functional centers of attention, was to be brought to light by casual and semiconscious reference. The task demanded someone's specialized labor until a new rendering of experience becomes possible in terms of the new elements verified from the changed points of view. With more or less consciousness of their task, men whose successors adopted the name "sociologist" enlisted to develop a method and a technique appropriate to these new emphases. Whether or not it is proper to speak of their work as a distinct science is a needless question. It is true that their work was as inevitable in the progress of the social sciences as the work of the evidence-collectors and critics who had gone before. It is a work which must necessarily revolutionize previous results in social science, and it is already revolutionizing them as visibly as the objective conception of historicity revolutionized the homiletical type of history which came over from the eighteenth century into the nineteenth. In particular, it is no longer possible for gentlemen who call themselves by some sectarian scientific name to be taken seriously by completely conscious scholars when they assume that the traditions of their scientific sect are authority enough for the selections of objects of attention which they please to make. We now know that the interests of a conventionalized type of workers cannot say the final word about the objects of attention which are worthy of scientific notice. The whole movement of human experience, in so far as that movement has revealed its meaning up to the

¹ Cf. Small, *The Cameralists*, pp. 175 f.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 250 f.

³ Cf. *Amer. Jour. Sociol.*, September, 1912, pp. 201 f.

present time, must be the arbiter of values when we choose to center our attention upon details within the movement. If we are to be veracious, we may not exercise an arbitrary choice about the items which we shall put in evidence when we are trying to reconstruct the processes that have actually occurred in human experience. In the long run the factors that function most meaningfully in the objective processes of life must figure in corresponding proportion in scientific interpretation of life. If individuals elect to resign the work of serious interpretation, and to seek their own private amusement through dilettantish trifling with the materials or the technique of knowledge, or if they prefer to cater to the entertainment of the public by fanciful and arbitrary construction of some of those materials into forms detached from the whole reality, they are exercising the same legal rights which permit vaudeville performers to pursue their avocations. If they aim to have a part in the work of interpreting human experience as it actually has been, and is, and is to be, their own tastes may no more dictate their objects of attention than those of a biologist when he is attempting to run down the antecedents of a mysterious disease, or when he is attempting to devise means for promoting eugenics. The decision as to program in either case must be rendered finally not by types of acquired tastes, developed in the investigator by a conventional training, but regardless of the preferences of the individual or of his scientific caste, the problems which he must tackle are questions of the kind and degree of work done in the process in question by the several factors which have co-operated for its results. In short, human experience is growing more and more articulate, and it more distinctly utters its protest against misrepresentation through versions which dismember the whole and then present the dismembered parts as the reality.

The mid-century sociological movement in Germany was not independent of similar movements, those in France and England especially, but it will prove to be peculiarly significant when it is explained in its special relations to the economic and political factors in German experience of which I have spoken. It was a direct consequence of the economic and political discussions of the first half of the century, and of the insight which those discussions had

given into the functional character of life. The questions "What is the state?" "What is society?" were spontaneous testimonies that the traditional theories about government had ceased to be conclusive, and that men were demanding objective examination of human relations, in place of reasonings from conventionalities.

In short, this sociological phase in the development of German social science was a direct resultant of the interworkings of the economic and political factors in German theory and practice. There has been no adequate investigation of the interrelations between these factors. Von Mohl, in 1855, stereotyped a fashion of treating the economic and the political factors in social science as segregated things.¹ German economists, political scientists, and historians have thus far been content to let that tradition stand in the place of thorough examination of the actual interactions between the economic and juridical factors.² The almost insuperable difficulties in the way of interpreting the course of German social science from 1815 to 1871 will not be surmounted until intimate co-operation can be arranged between scholars with the necessary legal equipment on the one hand, and men with adequate economic apparatus on the other. All the problems of political reform in Germany during this period involve a maze of legal institutions, imperial, ecclesiastical, territorial, compared with which our American system of federal and state jurisdictions is simplicity itself. At the same time, the economic and cultural interests of the Germans clamored for relief from hampering institutions. The more the legal institutions on the one hand and the economic institutions on the other were taken for granted as divine ordinations by the vested interests and their spokesmen, the more immanent was the sociological alternative. The sociological factor in social science is merely objectivity become conscious and comprehensive.

Foremost among the traits of social science as we think of it today is accordingly its federal unity. It is already archaic to

¹ *Geschichte und Literatur der Staatswissenschaften.*

² The tradition is represented by the arbitrary and misleading division of territory between Roscher and Bluntschli in the two books, *National Oekonomie in Deutschland*, and *Geschichte des allgemeinen Staatsrechts und der Politik*. Cf. Small, *The Cameralists*, pp. xii f.

think of social science as represented in fact by the terms which are convenient indexes to its different divisions of labor. Social science is the whole extant body of approximate knowledge and the whole technical equipment for criticizing, increasing, and using knowledge of human experience. The most fundamental of the achievements of nineteenth-century scholarship is this perception, not yet very generally recognized of course, that valid social science cannot be many but it must be one. Obvious as the conclusion is to those who have reached it, other scholars see no meaning in it, and some still jealously deny it. We cannot justly evaluate even the specialization which signalized the last half of the nineteenth century until we survey and appraise it as correlated specialization. The chief synthetic achievement of social science may be formulated in the principle: *The last attainable interpretation of human experience is not to be found in abstractions from experience, but in composition of abstractions into a reflection of the totality of experience.*

In other words, we have behind us a century miscellaneous with attempts all over the world to find reality piecemeal. They have proved as futile as attempts would be to finance modern states by independent expeditions to find hidden treasure. In knowledge as in finance we have found it necessary to organize resources. We have learned that attempts to reach the last word in explanation of human relations in terms of abstracted fragments of human activity are foregone failures. The only interpretation that bears criticism, and that commends itself in the long run as a credible reflex of experience in its full meaning, is an interpretation in which every conceivable method of inquiry into parts or aspects of experience has been brought under requisition, and the results of all these segments or methods of investigation are assembled and co-ordinated so as to form a coherent report. Nineteenth-century scholarship gravitated toward this conclusion in spite of desperate resistance of specialists against the irresistible.

III. *German social science in the nineteenth century has become moral.*

By this I mean that German social science has deliberately and expressly repudiated that pseudo-science which virtually ended in impersonal treatment of institutions, or in a philosophy

of wealth as an end in itself, and it has passed into a philosophy of human obligation within a career which is assumed to be a task of promoting human well-being in all its dimensions. Here, in contrast with the case in England, the economists took the lead. The influences that were behind the change run back through all the public problems to which this paper has referred; but the adoption of a creed and a program was almost as dramatically abrupt as Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus. I am inclined to regard Adolph Wagner as the John the Baptist of this new dispensation. His address to the church congress in Berlin, October 12, 1871, was his wilderness call to repentance.¹ Within the inner court of the citadel of Prussian traditionalism, and in the assembly of its high priests, he sounded the signal for the new era. The keynote of his message was in the declaration: "The science of national economy is in the midst of a great crisis."² "Therefore, ethical principles must again come into force. In economic relationships between persons, the relation of man to man must come to its own."³

Wagner states the ultimate aim of "national reform" as follows:⁴

Such elevation of the lower classes has in view immediately the improvement of their material or industrial situation. This properly counts as a prerequisite, as an intellectual and moral influence. Whoever wants these must want the conditions of them. Improvement of the material conditions means richer satisfaction of the industrial needs that are making themselves felt . . . or in other words, command of a greater quantity, and, if possible, a better quality, of economic goods.

At a meeting which resulted in the organization of the Verein für Sozialpolitik the following year, Schmoller, as presiding officer, voiced the spirit of the movement in this way:

The prevalent view in the present congress is the historical view that the state is a part of the stream of becoming. For that reason its functions will vary from narrow to broad according to the circumstances of civilization. The state must always rank, however, as the most tremendous institution for the education of the human race. It is desirable, therefore, that the state shall be strong enough to predominate over the different interests within its field. It must exercise just protection over the weak, and should elevate the lower classes.

¹ *Rede über die sociale Frage.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Other propositions in Schmoller's address have since become familiar to all who have studied his writings of this period. For example:

We do not propose a program of leveling downward in the socialistic sense but there should be social gradations up which every man is at liberty to climb. We should not preserve the present social ladder, from which the middle rungs have been knocked out. . . . The ideal which should guide the individual, the state, and society, is the inclusion of a progressively enlarging ratio of the people in participation in all the higher goods of civilization. To realize this ideal, which is democratic in the best sense of the term, must be our present endeavor, as it seems to be the goal of human history in general.¹

These last sentences were taken up by Treitschke, the self-appointed spokesman of conventionalism. With correct instinct he treated them as the symbol of the new movement, but he failed in his attempt to discredit the movement as a betrayal of the higher cultural interests of Germany to "materialism" and "socialism." The Verein has included among its members practically all the German economists of eminence in the last generation. More than any other private organization it has represented the social creed of German scholars, and the social policy of the German state.

Twenty years later (September 23, 1901) Professor Brentano, as chairman of the session, spoke as follows of the founding of the Verein:²

The men whose meeting at Halle in the early summer of 1872 led to the formation of the Verein were all of the academic type. This fact was necessarily decisive both for their judgment about the contemporary economic tendencies in politics and life and for their aims, as well as for the ways and means by which they sought to reach the aims.

Up to that time only two ways of considering the world of material goods had come into application. These were the standpoints, first of technique, and second of thrift [*Wirtschaftlichkeit*]. The aim of the first is to realize a thought as completely as possible in matter [*Stoff*]. The supreme aim of the second is to gain the largest possible surplus over the expended costs. The human being engaged in economic life was not wholly ignored, to be sure, but he was considered only incidentally. At the same time, the prevailing opinion saw

¹ *Verhandlungen der Eisenacher Versammlung*, Leipzig, 1877. Cf. *Aufruf zur Gründung eines Vereins für Sozialpolitik; Schriften*, II, Anlage II.

² *Schriften*, XCVIII, 2 f. Because the statement is such a significant historical document, it seems worth while to present a substantially complete translation.

in the state not an independent personality, with a life of its own, but merely a sum of individuals; and according to the conception of the majority the purpose of the state was accomplished when it established the conditions under which the individuals were in a position to realize the largest possible profit.

This conception was widely prevalent in theory, and it led theorists to a complete change of economic doctrine from the clue of the endeavor of the individual to secure the largest possible profits. This theory controlled the press and parliaments. That proposition in the celebrated petition of the Manchester Board of Trade, which completely identified the interests of the whole community with the interests of the great managers of business in getting the largest possible profits, that proposition which gave the meaning to the campaign slogan "Manchesterism," characterized also the decisive viewpoint in the public opinion of Germany.

We should have been bad professors if we had not protested against this conception. The whole spiritual tradition of Germany was in contradiction with it. It would have amounted to the abdication of the universities if we had kept silent. A theory which took as its point of departure the acquisitive egoism of mankind could not but lead to doctrines which only partially coincided with reality. A policy which aimed at the largest possible profits, and not at the welfare of the human beings engaged in human activities, disregarded the fact that wealth is not an end in itself, but that it merely has the function of providing the preconditions for the attainment of the moral purposes of mankind. In view of these moral ends, our vocation was, in the field of theory, direct observation of all the phenomena of life, and of all the forces engaged in it; in politics, assertion that the paramount aim is not the greatest profits of operation, but the highest possible physical and moral well-being of men. For that very reason, because we made the situation of men carrying on the economic processes, not the gaining of the greatest amount of profits, the focus of our reflections and efforts, we called our organization the "Union for social politics."¹ Not as though we were disposed to neglect increase of national wealth; on the contrary we took this for granted. The material well-being of Germany was quite as fundamental in our view as it was in that of the Manchesterites. It was in our opinion the necessary presupposition of the bodily and moral well-being of the German people, and especially of the power of the German Empire and of its component states. Nevertheless, in our perspective this factor fell into the secondary rank in the sense that we regarded as the paramount purpose the well-being of men, and the power of our Fatherland. In case of conflict between this supreme end and the accumulation of wealth, the latter must give way to the former. It was, however, a matter of course that such a view must assign to the state a different rôle in economic life from that which belonged to it under the then prevailing conception. We did not necessarily, as a matter of principle, demand the intervention of

¹ Verein für Sozialpolitik.

the state in economic matters wherever it had previously been excluded. Our very ethical viewpoint made state intervention seem as undesirable in many cases as it appeared to those whom we were at that time opposing. Yet not only our conception of the state as an independent personality above and beside the individuals that belong to it, but not less our subordination of the economic viewpoint to the ethical and the political, made us champions of state intervention where, without it, purely economic interests would have triumphed over more important ethical and political interests.

I see among you gentlemen many youthful faces, and it is doubtless not easy for those among you who were not in the struggles of that time to realize what a difficult position we had in confronting the opposing views which then controlled public opinion. At first, as is usually the case, we were despised and we were often fought by means that were anything but scientific. Yet presently the effects of our attitude began to appear. At first they impressed themselves more in a negative than a positive way. Conscious that a hostile critic was on the watch in its rear, the ruling opinion no longer betrayed its former arrogance. It was not a long time before the number of our associates began to grow. At last the whole society gave evidence of being controlled by our views. Even the familiar by-phenomena of all triumphant tendencies began to appear. Our views were reflected in a multitude of more or less dubious and distorted mirrors. Even those against whose undertow we had set ourselves tried in many ways to appropriate our views, and in the caricature of them with which they often fight us today our starting-point and our aims are often misrepresented beyond recognition.

This is particularly the case where those who formerly, for the sake of their special interests, disfavored every sort of state intervention, today demand state intervention for their special interest, and try to brand as a Manchesterist everyone who, in the interest of the whole, opposes this favoritism. As though the essence of Manchesterism consisted in ruling out state intervention, and not in the spirit in which state intervention was either opposed or demanded! The same Manchester Board of Trade whose petition for the elevation of its particular interests above the interests of the totality had in its time evoked the term "Manchesterism" acted later in quite a Manchesterian fashion when, in the interest of the exportation of its cotton products, it demanded that the state should introduce bimetalism; and you may be sure that, if it ever became expedient for its particular interests, it would appear pleading for re-introduction of protective tariffs. This would not, however, be a contradiction of its old Manchesterian temper, but simply a new exercise of the same. One does not prove that he is not a Manchesterist by demanding protecting tariffs, nor does he who rejects them give proof thereby of his Manchesterism. It is the *temper* which determines the moral value of the transaction, not the negative or positive measures in which, according to circumstances, the temper is expressed. He who demands state

intervention in his own interests, may for that reason be quite as Manchesteristic as the Manchester Board of Trade when it made its original protest against state intervention; and he who opposes state intervention may thereby demonstrate that he is *not* a Manchesterist.

But it was not in its adulterations alone that our conception suffered the fate of all triumphing tendencies. So long as the problem is to dislodge a common opponent from his controlling position, it is in the nature of the case that tendencies which have nothing else in common but antagonism to the prevailing tendency will march in step with one another. In the midst of the common struggle, that which differentiates these co-operating tendencies often does not rise into consciousness, or does so at most in a highly inarticulate expression. When once the victory is gained, that which divides the co-operating forces naturally makes itself more and more felt.

I have already said that social polity fixes its attention primarily upon the condition of the laboring human beings, and considers the largest possible accession of wealth only in so far as it is the precondition of the bodily and moral well-being of men. This permits two sorts of socio-political tendencies.

The one starts from the classes which at the time set the standards, and finds its vocation principally in assuring and increasing the well-being of those classes, because those classes see in the welfare of their own kind a vitalizing of the welfare of the whole. Consequently, this tendency shows itself in promotion of technical and economic progress only when the leading position of these classes would not thereby be threatened. The tendency tries to prevent all other progress, or at least to arrest it and to neutralize its effects.

The other tendency does not consider the prosperity of the whole as linked with the permanent preponderance of the temporarily ruling classes. It sees in the whole something vital which renews its youth incessantly, through the emergence of new classes and forces. In its view this whole has prospect of permanent prosperity only in so far as such constant outgrowth of new forces and assimilation of the same with the Fatherland occurs. It consequently welcomes all real technical and economic advances, and seeks to realize the greatest possible well-being of men and the prosperity of the whole, within the condition created by these advances. Not as though the tendency were unsympathetic toward the hardships which social and industrial changes bring to the previously ruling classes. The tendency attempts, however, to mitigate these ills, and to remove them, not by seeking artificially to maintain untenable conditions, but by trying to facilitate the transition into new and wholesome conditions; and it welcomes the elements newly coming to the front as the bearers of the future weal of the nation.

Both tendencies are represented within our organization, for the Verein für Sozialpolitik is not a political organization in the sense that it would exclude or suppress all those who have not taken oath to support a particular program. All shades among those who discern the task of social politics in promotion of

the well-being of men, and in assuring the greatest possible prosperity of the whole, are represented in our membership. Our union is a scientific organization, and its objective is not the triumph of some one partisan opinion, but the truth. The speaking proof of this is furnished by our publications and our proceedings. Up to date our Verein has published ninety-seven volumes, and in order to afford a firm basis of discussion of the questions to which it gave its attention, it has always tried in an unpartisan spirit to draw into co-operation the most competent representatives of every socio-political tendency. Upon the questions which we shall discuss in this session we have already published four volumes on the housing question, and four on commercial policy. Merely a glance at the table of contents will show that we have tried to get a fair representation of all views on the subjects. In like manner, it has always been our policy to secure similar diversity of representation in our oral discussions. The contrasts of views which will doubtless appear in the present proceedings should show that in this respect at least we have been successful.

Yet great as the contrasts are that prevail among us, one thing is common to us all. However we may differ in opinion about the policy that should be adopted, that is, about that which the interest of the whole indicates, each of us has as his standard the interest of the Fatherland. May our proceedings of this year be a blessing to the German Empire, and to all its inhabitants!

German social science is frankly and positively searching into the past, present, and future of men as moral beings; and it is unashamed.

IV. *German social science has always been socially instrumental.*

Probably no one, from Herodotus to the war correspondents in the Balkans, has ever blocked out a piece of work on any level of social reporting, without some fragment of consciousness that there would be an element of social service in the enterprise. On the other hand, the motives of "knowledge for its own sake," at one extreme, and dilettantish desire to amuse or to be amused at the other, represent a gamut of essentially individualistic tempers in which reflection upon human affairs has often been pursued. These tempers are in contrast with the spirit of agency which gives tone to German social science. Largely perhaps because of the peculiar relation of most academic Germans to the state, the traditions and ideals of German scholarship have always been in a notable degree traditions and ideals of public service.

I tried to make it clear in the beginning that I find German experience worth studying not because of what I discover in it

that is peculiar to the Germans. If that were all, these German provincialisms would be worth studying merely as cases in social pathology. On the contrary I find historical study of German social science profitable because German experience so vividly exhibits some of the tendencies and results which are most vital in the social science of the world.

In connection with the last trait of German social science which I named, I venture to indulge in an old-fashioned hortatory conclusion.

When I think of the enormous aggregate of public service performed by American social scientists, in excess of the requirements of their positions, I am inclined to believe that, in spite of the absence of the same *esprit de corps* which stimulates German scholars, we compare favorably with them in our average tale of voluntary work.

On the other hand, I am impressed by the extent of our detachment from the biggest tasks which confront our nation. American social scientists are not making social science count as it might in shaping thought and action upon the most central problems of our life. When we look beneath superficial details in our latest presidential campaign, it is evident that two main questions are pressing for answers. The one is primarily political. The other is primarily economic. The former amounts to this: Shall we move in the direction toward more or less government of, for, and by the people? The other question may be reduced to its lowest terms in this form: To what extent is our industrial system rational? It is depressing to observe the degree in which exponents of the positive and the negative attitude alike support their position on both these questions upon grounds which belong essentially to the eighteenth century. The searchlight of social science, from the high outlook which our generation has gained, would dispel much of the haze which surrounds these problems, especially when they are treated with the thought-apparatus of a hundred years ago. Neither the conventional nor the revolutionary doctrines of the eighteenth century express the indications of the human lot which are visible from the present outlook of social science. No such monstrosity ever existed or can exist as the individual of eighteenth-

century theory. Governments have been oppressive, but government is as normal a function of human life as breathing. Government is rudimentary in the degree in which it is control of some by others, and it is evolved in the degree in which it is control of each by the justly correlated interests of all. Correlation of social interests is just in the degree in which each interest is as free as every other to exert its full functional value in settling the terms of control by the whole. Extension of the area of participation in social control is not anarchy, but advance in human realization. Representative government must at last represent not some of the interests but all the interests of the governed. If these rudiments of social science can have sufficient publicity, the only permanent cleavage that will remain on the political question is between self-seeking and unfaith in human destiny on the one hand, and normal human beings on the other.

But the economic question is not so simple. It is not a problem of ways and means. It calls in question the entire economic basis of modern society.

There is a crucial passage in *The Wealth of Nations* which apparently reduces to this sophism: *Land*, labor, and *capital* are the factors of production; the factors of production are the rightful parties in distribution; therefore: *landlord*, laborer, and *capitalist* are the rightful parties in distribution.¹ Opinions may always differ as to whether Adam Smith was actually guilty of this stultifying *non-sequitur*. At all events, the economic system of the civilized world rests upon presumptions fairly expressed by the false syllogism which Adam Smith's language seems to imply. The three terms in the major premise are economic; two of the three terms in the conclusion are not necessarily economic at all. They may be and in practice they often are legal and legal only. The title of many landlords and of many capitalists to an income rests, not upon their functioning as economic factors, but solely on their privileged status under our laws of property. In such cases the law turns out to have introduced a dual system of justice. Justice to the laborer consists in assigning him a share in the product

¹ Cf. Bax ed., I, chap. xi, pp. 262-63. I have discussed the passage: "Adam Smith and Modern Sociology," pp. 149 f.

of industry, provided he works. Justice to the absentee landlord or capitalist consists in assuring him a share in the produce of industry whether he works or not! With this dubious ethical sanction as our social premise, we adhere to derived economic judgments which impeach our intelligence if not our morals. For instance: in the *Boston Sunday Herald* of August 25, 1912, more than a page is occupied by an alleged interview with Mr. George W. Perkins, who expounds what he understands by "Progressivism." It is a strange medley of benevolent sentiments, timely opinions about industrial and political details, and archaic implications about social principles. Mr. Perkins is represented as saying:

Take the Steel Corporation, for instance. Mr. Carnegie, as the head of the steel industry in his day, made millions a year for himself. Judge Gary, a leading man of the steel industry in his day, carries a far greater responsibility than Mr. Carnegie ever did, and does it for a profit to himself that probably amounts to only a fraction of what Mr. Carnegie realized. The difference is going to an ever-widening circle of stockholders.

Without holding Mr. Perkins responsible for the reporting, the paragraph and the context as they stand call upon the reader to believe that we should be well along on our way toward the millennium, after we had so reformed our industries that the active factors would receive proportionally less of the product, while the passive factors would receive proportionally more, provided only that these absentee elements were sufficiently dispersed. By parity of reasoning, the way to cure cancer would be to make it general!

Academic social scientists in the United States appear to have only a languid interest in probing the industrial situation below the level of distribution.¹ Our consciences and our intellects were anesthetized for a couple of decades by Herbert Spencer's assurance that the change from status to contract had achieved a permanent basis for human relations. Meanwhile we have seen that under present legal conditions the régime of contract not only establishes another régime of status, but it is status more repugnant to modern ideas of social function than earlier types of status were to the moral standards then accepted. Most of the recent demands

¹ Even Sombart, in Germany, hardly more than hints at inferences which might be drawn from the history of capitalism, about principles of reconstruction. Cf. *Das moderne Kapitalismus*.

by various types of agitators for economic reform have accordingly spent their strength in challenging the justice of our distributive system and in proposing substitutes. Beneath these relatively superficial matters, however, is the antecedent question which has scarcely been formulated, namely: Whether capitalism, as we now know it, is compatible with *social solvency*. With the actual labor capacity of human beings limited, and with cumulative charges upon the product of labor to satisfy the legal claims of capital, all the western nations have arrived at a "high cost of living" which should act as a block signal. This incidental "high cost of living" should turn attention to the problem: How fast and how far can our practice of accelerated capitalization go, before it will overtake the capacity of productive operations to carry the increasing burden? In other words, does our capitalism, after a certain stage, involve something analogous with the Malthusian formula of population, namely: increase of productivity with the coefficient x ; increase of capital charges with the coefficient $x+y$?

The question challenges not economists alone. Our present knowledge that the *latifundia* system undermined the strength of Rome came through the combined work of our whole apparatus of social science. The most vital task of our period is confirmation or removal of the suspicion that the capitalism of our era is a social fallacy as patent and as fatal as the Roman *latifundia*. The task will not be finished without the co-operation of all our social sciences from the historical, functional, moral, and instrumental standpoints. The indicated function of social science is to be the chief organ of social self-examination. The changed outlook of the social sciences since the eighteenth century discredits the social science which is content to let eighteenth-century social interpretations stand unimpeached by twentieth-century conditions. We are in danger of mistaking capitalism mitigated by patriarchalism for capitalism corrected in principle. In no period of history has it been possible for social scientists to perform more fundamentally constructive public service than present conditions throughout the world demand. To seize the opportunity, we must learn how to relegate both surface phenomena and esoteric subtleties to their proportional place, and we must concentrate our forces upon radical problems.