

The "Associative" Principle

ITS INFLUENCE ON THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE IN NATURE AND IN SOCIETY

Society is anterior to man, that is to say, that man, as we know him is a product of society, and that all the material and intellectual characteristics that distinguish mankind are the result of associated life, making due allowance, of course, for such advantages as he may derive from his physical structure.

This concept, it will be observed, excludes the notion of any "Social Contract," tacit or explicit, by means of which society was formed in order to secure the advantages of sociality and co-operative effort. This for several reasons, among which may be mentioned: Firstly, it is not probable, in most respects, not possible that these advantages could have been appreciated before they were experienced. Secondly, experience shows that mankind, in the mass is moved to action not so much by the desirability of any particular objective as by expediency; that is to say, that man does not do what he would but what he must. In the third place, Science has shown that the process of development brings about changes and variations which are perpetuated, should they prove favorable, by the very fact of the advantages they confer. This, of course, amounts to a statement of the law of the "survival of the fittest," of the struggle for existence. It is, however, my intention to show that there is another factor, just as powerful in its action, and possibly more comprehensive in its sweep, operative in the development of man and society. This factor, sociality, has had the effect of alleviating and ennobling the struggle for existence. In short, it is as much a fact of nature as struggle.

What then are the advantages that man derives from living in Society? These are, roughly speaking, three in number:

1. Mutual protection.
2. Social intercourse.
3. Co-operation and division of labor.

These I shall treat separately.

The first, mutual protection, is the most obvious and, possibly, the first in time. It has been a powerful factor in the perpetuation and development of many species not individually well-equipped by nature to survive. This is especially true of man, who is particularly ill-equipped by nature for either offence or defence, not to speak of the long period that must elapse before he attains maturity. Moreover, the security thus attained gives opportunity for physical and mental development and the accumulation of wealth.

To the second factor, social intercourse, man owes his sense of solidarity, his tendency to altruism and self-sacrifice, which, though often obscured by circumstances and the exigencies of life are yet distinguishing features of mankind, all pessimists and misanthropes to the contrary notwithstanding. Add to these the use of speech, the art of writing, the interchange of ideas, music, painting and the decorative arts generally.

It will be noticed that, in the third factor, we have two elements bracketed together. This is done because, as a moment's consideration will show, they are, in reality, merely two aspects of one and the same thing. Whoever says division of labor, says co-operation. Incidentally, however, it may be noted that, inasmuch as co-operation can be conceived as existing without specialization, it will be seen that co-operation is the permanent, the abiding principle. Now then in view of the fact that bourgeois writers and scientists are prone, for obvious reasons, to emphasize the competitive factors in evolution, I propose to deal at some length with this particular concept which has been as powerfully and continuously operative in the development of organized life and society as any other.

As everyone knows, Pooh-Bah traced his ances-

try to the "primordial, protoplasmic globule" and this is true, not only of the Japanese dignitary, but of every living organism; a process which is repeated, or better, epitomized in the life history of each living being. Let us take a look at this remote ancestor of ours, or rather, at its living representative, some simple unit animal such as the Amoeba. This speck of protoplasm moves, feels, digests, absorbs, breathes and excretes. All these processes occur within the compass of a unit mass of living matter—a single cell. The protoplasm, an exceedingly complex chemical substance, of which it is composed undergoes the process of metabolism, that is to say, of assimilation and decomposition. Under favorable circumstances its income will be greater than its expenditure and the cell grows. There is, however, a limit to the growth of a single cell. This occurs when the rate of assimilation of the constantly increasing mass of protoplasm becomes equal to the highest possible rate of absorption. Now, absorption can only take place through the surfaces and the ratio of surface to volume diminishes very rapidly with increase in size. [For those of a mathematical turn of mind I may mention that the volume of a sphere, for instance, increases as the cube of the diameter, while the surface only increases as the square of the diameter.] When in single-celled animals this limit is reached so that starvation begins, then division of the cell takes place. By division, the ratio of volume to surface and therefore of assimilation to absorption is lowered and

two animals in place of one. This is immediately germane to the main argument. I have introduced these facts on account of their peculiar significance in that they explain the phenomena of growth and reproduction in terms of economics. Multiplying in this way the cells form colonies, become ever more complex as evolution proceeds. In these organisms which have reached the gastrula stage, or in such as the common hydra we find considerable differentiation in the cells: the outer ones are protective, nervous and muscular, the inner ones digestive and assimilative. Here, therefore, we have division of labor. As evolution proceeds we get animals more highly organized and find the cells of which they are built up still more specialized. Some are predominantly nervous, others contractile, others digestive, supporting, protective and so on. The range of activity of the several cells is narrowed, and the cells at the same time specialized in form and structure. Aggregates of cells in which the same function predominates form the tissues of the body, such as muscular, nervous, glandular or connective tissue which again go to form special organs such as brain, heart, liver, kidneys and whatnot. This process culminates in the production of an organism such as the body of a man which is a veritable city of cells, each retaining its own individual life, growing and multiplying, but differentiated and specialized for some specific function yet all co-operating and contributing in their totality to the life and well-being of the complete organism.

Next week we shall observe the operation of this principle in society.

GEORDIE.

LONDON, England, (Saturday.)—Replying to French invitation to send delegates to attend a conference in Paris today to arrange for a 24-hour general strike in England, France and Italy against intervention in Russia, the British Labor Party has informed organizers of the conference that the notice was too short to enable them to do so, adding that a general strike can not be called in Great Britain without a ballot of the trade unions.

TO A FOIL'D EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONAIRE.

By Walt. Whitman.

The battle rages with many a loud alarm and frequent advance and retreat.
The infidel triumphs, or supposes he triumphs,
The prison, scaffold, garrote, handcuffs, iron neck-lace and lead balls do their work,
The named and unnamed heroes pass to other spheres.
The great speakers and writers are exiled, they lie sick in distant lands,
The cause is asleep, the strongest throats are choked with their own blood,
The young men droop their eyelashes toward the ground when they meet;
But for all this Liberty has not gone out of the place, nor the infidel enter'd into full possession.

When liberty goes out of a place it is not the first to go, nor the second or third to go,
It waits for all the rest to go, it is the last.

When there are no more memories of heroes and martyrs
And when all life and all the souls of men and women are discharged from any part of the earth,
Then only shall liberty or the idea of liberty be discharged from that part of the earth,
And the infidel come into full possession.

Then courage European revolter, revoltress!
For till all ceases neither must you cease.

Did we think victory great?
So it is—but now it seems to me, when it cannot be help'd that defeat is great,

THE SOVIETS JUDGED BY AN AMERICAN.

The Journal des Debats publishes the following article sent to the Chicago Daily News by their Russian correspondent:—

Moscow, May 19.—There is no disorder neither in Petrograd nor in Moscow. There is no chaos in Soviet Russia. Never since its establishment has the Soviet Government been more firmly established than now. Never in the history of modern Russia has a Government had as much real authority as the existing Soviet regime.

In penetrating into Soviet Russia one is struck by the fact that whatever Bolshevism is it is not chaos. After having been some time within the frontiers of the Communist Republic, one is surprised, for the situation is just the opposite to what the American people imagine. There is no disorder. There is, in fact, too much order. One is safer in the streets of Petrograd or Moscow than in New York or Chicago. Imagine to yourself what would happen to one ignorant of Chicago if he passed the night in its streets! Imagine what would happen if the police were withdrawn from the town! Moscow has not one policeman, and owing to the shortage of fuel is unlighted, and in face of this one can walk in full security in the streets even after midnight.

The correspondent goes on to say that the recent successes of Kolchak have only strengthened the Bolsheviks by assuring them of the support of the majority of the nation. Whether this is agreeable or not to the rest of the world, the American people must understand it. The dictatorship of the proletariat signifies not anarchy, not chaos, but the most perfect order.

There is not in Petrograd or Moscow any thieving or drunkenness, nor any fighting. The theatres and operas are crowded. In spite of exorbitant prices, the people are well clothed and shod.

Nevertheless, the food question in Petrograd and Moscow is serious. Will America reach out a helping hand to a starving people?