

CHAPTER VIII: THE STRONG ARE STRONGER WITHOUT ALLIES

In the preceding chapter I mentioned the existence of a co-operative association between the German patriotic societies. Here I shall deal briefly with this question.

In speaking of a co-operative association we generally mean a group of societies which, for the purpose of facilitating their work, establish mutual relations for collaborating along certain lines, appointing a common board of management vested with a varying degree of authority with a view to undertaking concerted action.

This very fact shows that these were societies, associations and parties, whose aims and course of action were not too widely divergent, and it was asserted that this was invariably true.

The average citizen is pleased and reassured when he hears that these societies, by establishing a co-operative association, have at long last discovered a common platform on which they can stand united and have eliminated all causes of dissension.

Therewith a general conviction arises, to the effect that such a union is an immense gain in strength and that small groups which were weak as long as they stood alone have now suddenly become strong.

Yet this conviction is generally a mistaken one.

It will be interesting and, in my opinion, important for the better understanding of this question to try to get a clear notion of how it came about that so many of these associations, unions, etc., were formed when all of them declared that they had the same ends in view.

In itself it would be logical to expect that one aim should be fought for by a single association and it would be more sensible if there were not a number of associations fighting for the same aim.

In the beginning there was undoubtedly only one association which had this one fixed aim in view. Some men somewhere stated a definite fact, called for the solution of a definite problem, enunciated their aim and founded a

movement for the purpose of achieving that aim.

That is how an association or a party is founded, whose programme may be either the abolition of existing evils or the positive establishment of a certain order of things in the future.

Once such a movement has come into existence it may lay practical claim to certain priority rights.

The natural course of things would now be that all those who wish to fight for the same objective as this movement is striving for, should identify themselves with it and thus increase its strength, so that the common purpose in view may be the better served.

Especially men of superior intelligence must feel, one and all, that by joining the movement they are establishing precisely those conditions which are necessary for practical success in the common struggle.

Accordingly it is reasonable and, in a certain sense, honest—which honesty, as I shall show later, is an element of very great importance—that only one movement should be founded for the purpose of attaining one aim.

The fact that this does not happen must be attributed to two causes. The first may almost be described as tragic; the second as despicable, because it has its source in the weaknesses of human nature.

But, when all is said and done, I see in both causes only facts which go to strengthen our determination and our energy and which, by this intensification of human activity render possible the solution of the problem in question.

The tragic reason why it so often happens that the pursuit of one definite task is not left to one association alone is as follows: Generally speaking, every action carried out on a grand scale is the expression of a desire that has already existed for a long time in millions of human hearts, a longing which may have been nourished, in silence.

It may even happen that throughout the centuries many men have been yearning for the solution of a definite problem, because they have been suffering under an unendurable state of affairs, without hope of fulfilment of the universal longing.

Nations which are no longer capable of finding a heroic deliverance from such a sorrowful fate may be looked upon as effete.

But, on the other hand, nothing affords better proof of the vital forces of a people and the consequent guarantee of its right to exist than that one day, through a happy decree of Destiny, a man arises who is capable of liberating his people from some great oppression, or of wiping out some bitter distress, or of calming the national soul which had been tormented through its sense of insecurity, and thus fulfilling what had long been the universal yearning of the people.

An essential characteristic of what are called the great questions of the age is that thousands undertake the task of solving them and that many feel themselves called upon to fulfil this task; it may even be that Destiny herself puts forward many for selection, in order that, through the free play of events the strongest and most capable man shall ultimately be the victor and be entrusted with the task of solving the problem. Thus it may happen that for centuries many are discontent with the form in which their religious life expresses itself and yearn for a reformation.

So it may come about that through this impulse of the soul some dozens of men may arise who believe that, by virtue of their understanding and their knowledge, they are called upon to solve the religious difficulties of the day and accordingly present themselves as the prophets of a new doctrine or at least as declared adversaries of the accepted dogmas.

Here also it is certain that the laws of Nature will take their course, inasmuch as the strongest will be destined to fulfil the great mission, but usually the others are slow to acknowledge that only one man is called upon to fulfil the task.

On the contrary they all believe that they have an equal right to engage in the solution of the difficulties in question and that they are equally fitted for that task.

Their contemporary world is generally quite unable to decide which of them possesses the highest gifts and accordingly merits universal support.

Thus, in the course of centuries, and indeed often within the same epoch, different men establish different movements to achieve the same end.

At least the end is declared by the founders of the movements to be the

same, or may be looked upon as such by the bulk of the people.

The people nourish vague desires and have only general opinions, without having any precise notion of their own ideals and desires or of the question whether and how it is possible for these ideals and desires to be fulfilled.

The tragedy lies in the fact that many men struggle to reach the same objective by different roads, each one genuinely believing in his own mission and holding himself in duty bound to follow his own road without regard for the others.

These movements, parties, religious groups, etc., originate entirely independently of one another out of the general urge of the age, and all with a view to working towards the same goal.

It may seem a tragic thing, at least at first sight, that this should be so, because people are too often inclined to think that forces which are dispersed in different directions would attain their ends far more quickly and more surely if they were united in one common effort.

This is, however, not so, for Nature herself decides according to the rules of her inexorable logic. She leaves these diverse groups to compete with one another and dispute the palm of victory in order, finally, to lead that movement to the final goal which has chosen the clearest, shortest and surest path.

How can the world decide which path is right or wrong, if the available forces are not given free play, if the final decision is not taken out of the hands of men who are convinced of their own infallibility and left to the infallible test of established success which is always the final confirmation of the justice of a course of action.

Therefore, if various groups are striving by various routes to reach the same goal, they will, inasmuch as they are aware that similar efforts are being made elsewhere, examine more critically their own method of procedure, simplify it if possible and, by exerting themselves to the utmost, try to reach that goal more quickly.

Through this rivalry the faculties of each individual protagonist are developed to a still higher pitch of perfection and the human race has frequently owed its progress to the lessons learned from former attempts which

have come to grief.

Thus it happens that in the initial dispersion of effort for which the individual is not consciously to blame and which appeared at first sight to be fraught with tragic consequences, we may recognise the means by which the best method is finally selected.

History shows that, as most people believe, the two parties by which a solution of the German problem might have been reached amid whose chief advocates were Austria and Prussia, the Habsburg and the Hohenzollern, should have been united from the outset.

In the opinion of these same people both parties should have decided to follow either one path or the other, but at that time, the path chosen would inevitably have been that of the rival who was then more important and Austria's aims would never have included the foundation of the German Reich.

A strong and united German Reich finally arose out of that which many millions of Germans deplored in their hearts as the last and most terrible manifestation of our fratricidal strife.

The truth is that the German Imperial Crown was secured on the battlefield of Koniggratz and not, as was commonly asserted afterwards, in the battles that were waged outside Paris.

Thus the foundation of the German Reich was not the consequence of any common will working along common lines, but it was rather the outcome of a deliberate, if sometimes unconscious, struggle for hegemony, in which Prussia finally was victorious.

Anybody who is not so blinded by party politics as to be unable to recognise the truth must perforce admit that the so-called wisdom of men would never have come to the same wise decision which the wisdom of Life itself, that is to say, the free play of forces, finally brought to realisation.

For in the German territories of two hundred years ago who would seriously have believed that Hohenzollern Prussia, and not Habsburg, would become the nucleus, the founder and the tutor of the new Reich?

And, on the other hand, who would deny to-day that Destiny thus acted with more insight than human wisdom. Who could now imagine a German Reich based on the foundations of an effete and degenerate dynasty?

The natural course of events, even though it took centuries of struggle, finally awarded the superior force the position which it was fitted to occupy.

This will always be so and will remain, as it always has been, an immutable law. It is, therefore, not a matter for regret if different men set out to attain the same objective by various means.

In this way the strongest and swiftest is recognised and will be the victor.

There is yet a second cause for the fact that often in the lives of nations several movements which show the same characteristics strive by different routes to reach what appears to be the same goal.

This second cause is not at all tragic, but merely deserves scorn.

It arises from a sad mixture of envy, jealousy, ambition and predatory instincts. Unfortunately these failings are often found united in single specimens of the human species.

The moment a man arises who profoundly understands the distress of his people and, having diagnosed the evil with perfect accuracy, takes measures to cure it; the moment he fixes his aim and chooses the means to reach it then paltry and pettifogging people become all attention and eagerly follow the doings of this man who has thus come before the public eye.

Just like sparrows who are apparently indifferent, but in reality keenly observant of the movements of their more fortunate companion with the morsel of bread, in order that they may snatch it from him if he should momentarily relax his hold, so it is also with the human species.

All that is needed is that one man should strike out on a new road and then a crowd of poltroons will prick up their ears and begin to hope that some trifling gain may lie at the end of that road.

The moment they think they have discovered where the reward is to be reaped they hasten to find another route by which to reach the goal more quickly.

As soon as a new movement is founded and has formulated a definite programme, people of that kind come forward and proclaim that they are fighting for the same cause.

This does not imply that they are honestly ready to join the ranks of such a movement and thus recognise its right of priority.

It implies rather that they intend to steal the programme and found a new party. In doing this they are shameless enough to assure the unthinking public that they had long intended to take the same line of action as the other had now taken and frequently succeed in thus placing themselves in a favourable light, instead of arousing the general disapprobation which they justly deserve.

For it is a piece of gross impudence to steal another's slogan and proclaim it as one's own, to steal the programme of another, and then to form a separate group as if all this had been created by the new founder of this group.

The impudence of such conduct is particularly obvious when the individuals who first caused dispersion and disruption by their new foundation are, the same who (as experience has shown) are most emphatic in proclaiming the necessity for union and unity the moment they find they cannot catch up with their adversary's advance.

It is to that kind of conduct that so-called '*völkisch* disintegration' is to be attributed.

Certainly in the years 1918–1919 the founding of a multitude of new groups, parties, etc., calling themselves '*völkisch*' was a natural phenomenon of the time, for which the founders were not responsible.

By 1920 the National Socialist German Labour Party had slowly crystallised from all these parties and had become supreme.

There could be no better proof of the sterling honesty of certain individual founders than the fact that many of them decided, in a way that calls for admiration, to sacrifice their manifestly less successful movements to the stronger movement, by joining it unconditionally and dissolving their own.

This is especially true in regard to Julius Streicher, who was at that time the protagonist of the German Socialist Party in Nürnberg.

The National Socialist German Labour Party had been founded with similar aims in view, but quite independently of the other.

As I have already said, Streicher, then a teacher in Nürnberg, was the chief protagonist of the German Socialist Party. He had a sacred conviction of

the mission and future of his own movement.

As soon, however, as he recognised the superior strength and steadier growth of the National Socialist Party, he gave up his work in the German Socialist Party and called upon his followers to fall into line with the National Socialist German Labour Party, which had emerged victorious from the mutual contest, and carry on the fight for the common cause within its ranks. The decision was personally a difficult one for him, but it showed a profound sense of honour.

When that first period of the Movement was over, there remained no further dispersion of forces, for their honest intentions had led the men of that day to the same honourable, straightforward and just conclusion.

What we now call the '*völkisch* disintegration' owes its existence exclusively to the second of the two causes which I have mentioned.

Ambitious men who, at first, had no ideas of their own, and still less any 'conception of aims to be pursued, felt themselves 'called upon' exactly at that moment in which the success of the National Socialist German Labour Party became unquestionable.

Programmes suddenly appeared which were mere transcripts of ours. Ideas were proclaimed which had been filched from us. Aims were enunciated on behalf of which we had been fighting for several years, and a course of action chosen which the National Socialists had for a long time followed.

All kinds of means were resorted to for the purpose of trying to convince the public that, although the National Socialist German Labour Party had now been in existence for a long time it was found necessary to establish these new parties, but the more noble the motives put forward, the more insincere the phraseology.

In reality there was only one dominant motive, namely, the personal ambition of the founders, who wished to play a part in which their own pigmy talents could contribute nothing except the grass effrontery of appropriating the ideas of others, a mode of conduct which in ordinary life is looked upon as thieving.

At that time there was not an idea or concept launched by other people which these political kleptomaniacs did not seize upon at once for the purpose of applying it for their own ends.

Those who did all this were the same people who subsequently, with tears in their eyes, profoundly deplored ‘*völkisch* disintegration’ and spoke unceasingly about the ‘necessity for unity.’

In doing this they nurtured the secret hope that they might be able to cry down the others, who would tire of hearing these loud-mouthed accusations and would end up by abandoning in favour of the thieves, not only the ideas already stolen by the latter, but the movements which had been founded for the execution of these ideas.

When that did not occur and the new enterprises, thanks to the poor mentality of their promoters, did not show the favourable results which had been promised beforehand, then they became more modest in their pretensions and were happy if they could find refuge in one of the so-called ‘co-operative associations.’

At that period everything which could not stand on its own feet joined one of those cooperative associations, probably in the belief that eight cripples arm-in-arm equalled one gladiator.

If among all these cripples there was one who was sound of limb he had to use all his strength to sustain the others and thus he himself was, in the long run, crippled.

We ought to look upon the question of joining these co-operative associations as a tactical problem, but, in coming to a decision, we must never forget the fundamental principle that through the formation of a co-operative association, societies which are weak in themselves can never be made strong, whereas it can and does not infrequently happen that a strong society or party loses in strength by joining a coalition of weaker ones.

It is a mistake to believe that a factor of strength will result from the coalition of weak groups, because experience shows that in any form and under any conditions the majority is representative of the stupid and cowardly elements.

Hence, a multiplicity of societies or parties is, as soon as it comes under the control of a board of management consisting of several persons elected by the parties, the victim of weakness and cowardice.

Through such a coalition the free play of forces is paralysed, the struggle for the-selection of the best is abolished and therewith the necessary and final

victory of the healthier and stronger elements is impeded.

Coalitions of that kind are inimical to the process of natural development, because for the most part they hinder rather than advance the solution of the problem which is the object of the struggle.

It may happen that, from considerations of a purely tactical kind, the leaders of a movement which looks ahead will enter into a coalition with other, movements for the treatment of special questions and may also act in common with them, but this can be only for a short and limited period.

Such a coalition must not be permanent, if the movement does not wish to renounce its liberating mission, because if it should become indissolubly tied up in such a combination it would lose the capacity and the right to allow its own forces to work freely in following out a natural development, in order to overcome rivals and attain its own objective.

It must never be forgotten that nothing really great in this world has ever been achieved through coalitions, but that such achievements have always been due to the triumph of the individual.

Successes achieved through coalitions, owing to the very nature of their source carry in them from the very start the germs of future disintegration and the possibility of losing what has already been achieved.

The great revolutions which have taken place in human thought and have transformed the aspect of the world would have been inconceivable and impossible except as the titanic struggles waged by individual elements. They could never have been the work of coalitions.

Above all things, the *völkisch* State will never be created by the compromising attitude of co-operative associations but only by the iron determination of a single movement which has struggled and triumphed over all the others.

