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I must take sharp issue with Waldemar Kaempffert, science editor of the New York Times, on his unqualified statement that "The social, political and economic problems of our critical period cannot be understood or solved unless we understand social, political and economic trends." Modern social thinking has been bedeviled by the trendists, the statistically minded economists who, baffled on the field of concept, lean too heavily on the over-simplifications of graphs or charts.

The occasion of Dr. Kaempffert's statement is publication of "Modern Man in the Making" by Otto Neurath (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., \$2.95). In a sense the Kaempffert comment is a summary of Dr. Neurath's book; and for this reason, it is not inappropriate to single it out, instead of the volume itself, for criticism. If trends, such as those the author adduces in an unusually graphic presentation, really are basic in the analysis of economic or social laws, then truly Neurath has given us "a remarkable, a unique book"; if they are not so, "Man in the Making" is merely an artistic exercise in draftsmanship.

"Trends," continues Kaempffert, "suggest change, evolution both in man's way of thinking and in man's environment. Upon the natural environment man has imposed an artificial one of his own. That artificial environment has had profound effects upon him—changed his community life, given him powers beyond those with which he is naturally endowed."

How in the name of reason man, being a creature of nature, can give himself powers beyond those naturally a part of him, is something for which Dr. Kaempffert will have to account. Nature is not merely "the birds, the bees and the flowers"; it is the sum and substance of those eternal and universal laws which govern the universe in all its multitudinous facets of both organic and inorganic life. A city of skyscrapers inhabited by "civilized" beings or a village of reed huts inhabited by "savage" aborigines is no more artificial than are bee hives

or ant hills. Man simply is possessed, through the grace of nature, of more intricate means of subsistence than the so-called lower animals; and within or among the race of man there exist innumerable degrees to which he exercises these

means. Everything that man does, however complicated it may be, or however far removed from the nature we refer to in the colloquial sense, is natural.

This, I submit, is a central point in the approach to social problems. The "make-it-up-as-you-go-along" economists, who imagine that laws of society can be tailor-made to fit "changing" conditions or a "newly developed artificial situation," are doomed to failure. Society is a natural organism, ruled by laws as eternal as the laws of chemistry or biology, and society's fate depends upon the proper observance of those laws, to the same extent that an individual's fate depends so much upon his observance of the laws of hygiene and physiology.

Kaempffert would try to assure us that "the trend of society reveals a process of social adaption to the artificial environment." I should be very much interested to learn precisely what he means by this. As far as I can see, "social adaption" is pretty much the same today as it was in the "dear, dead days beyond recall." Modern society has wars, tyranny, brutality, profound aspirations, great and good philosophers, examples of unselfish sacrifice, dictatorships and would-be democracies, to name just a few of the broadest characteristics. But all these char-

acteristics describe equally as well any number of old societies. The difference between today and yesterday is a difference of degree, not of kind.

What then is the point of "Modern Man in the Making"? Dr. Neurath says it is "to trace the origin of 'modern men' and depict their behavior and achievements, without presenting any social or economic theory." "But," he continues, "no attempt has been made to define the term 'modern.'" In other words the purpose of the book is to portray inductively something which has no definite deductive concept. It is this

indefiniteness which gives the volume its disjointed character. Graphic "isotypes" on "Automobiles per 200 Population," "Horse Power Used in Manufacturing Industries," "Horse Power Used in Agriculture," "Home and Factory Weaving in England," "Working Hours in Manufacturing Trades," "Suicides," "Birth Rates," etc. follow each other page after page. To what do they all add up? Dr. Neurath says that "men capable of judging themselves and their institutions scientifically should also be capable of widening the sphere of peaceful cooperation; for the historical record shows clearly enough that the trend has been in that direction . . ."

To my mind the record, written contemporaneously in a way that even illiterate persons can see, shows clearly enough that the trend is toward vicious and uncompromising non-cooperation; that is, if wars and revolutions mean anything.

There is one trend the author overlooked—the trend to the land. The higher man builds the farther and deeper he must dig for his materials; the more man concentrates in cities, the wider afield he must go for his subsistence, his pleasures, and the exercising of his need for ever increasing exchanges. In war or peace, in cooperation or in antagonism, man trends inevitably toward the land. There is no place else for him to trend.

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