

## Chapter VI

# The Increasing Preponderance of Organic Solidarity and its Consequences (cont.)

### I

Thus it is a law of history that mechanical solidarity, which at first is isolated, or almost so, should progressively lose ground, and organic solidarity gradually become preponderant. But when the way in which men are solidly linked to one another is modified, it is inevitable that the structure of societies should change. The shape of a body must needs be transformed, when the molecular affinities within are no longer the same. Consequently, if the foregoing proposition is accurate, there must be two social types, corresponding to these two kinds of solidarity.

If, by a process of thought, we attempt to constitute the ideal type of a society whose cohesion would result exclusively from resemblances, we would have to conceive of it as consisting of an absolutely homogeneous mass whose parts would not be distinguishable from one another and consequently not be arranged in any order in relation to one another. In short, the mass would be devoid of any definite form or articulation. This would be the real social protoplasm, the germ from which all social types would have emerged. The aggregate we have characterised in this way we propose to call a *horde*.

It is true that we have not yet observed, with complete authentication, societies that correspond in every respect to this description. Yet what gives us the right to postulate their existence is the fact that lower societies, those that in consequence are the most akin to this

primordial stage, are formed by a mere replication of aggregates of this kind. We find an almost wholly pure model of this social organisation among the Indians of North America. For example, each Iroquois tribe is made up of a number of incomplete societies (the most extensive includes eight of them) which present all the features we have just pointed out. Adults of both sexes are equal to one another. The sachems and chiefs at the head of each one of these groups, who form the council administering the common affairs of the tribe, enjoy no superior status. Kinship itself is not organised, for the term cannot be applied to the fact that the mass of the people is distributed in various generation layers. At the late stage when these peoples were observed there were certainly some special ties of obligation joining the child to his maternal relatives. But these relationships were confined to being very few in number and did not appreciably differ from those he maintained with the other members of society. In principle all individuals of the same age were linked to one another in the same degree of kinship.<sup>1</sup> In other cases we are even closer to the horde: Fison and Howitt describe Australian tribes that include only two such divisions.<sup>2</sup>

We shall give the term 'clan' to a horde that has ceased to be independent and has become an element in a more extensive group, and that of *segmentary societies based upon clans* to those peoples that have been constituted from an association of clans. We term such societies 'segmentary' to denote that they are formed from the replication of aggregates that are like one another, analogous to the rings of annelida worms. We also term this elementary aggregate a clan because this word aptly expresses its mixed nature, relating both to the family and to the body politic. It is a family in the sense that all the members who go to make it up consider themselves kin to one another, and indeed it is true that for the most part they share a blood relationship. The affinities produced by sharing a blood kinship are mainly what keeps them united. What is more, they sustain mutual relationships that might be termed domestic, since these are to be found elsewhere in societies whose family character is undisputed: I mean collective revenge, collective responsibility and, as soon as individual property makes an appearance, mutual heredity. Yet on the other hand it is not a family in the true sense of the word, for in order to form part of it, there is no need to have a clear-cut blood relationship with the other clan members. It is enough to exhibit some external criterion, which usually consists in

bearing the same name. Although this sign is esteemed to denote a common origin, such an official status really constitutes very ineffective proof, one that is very easy to copy. Thus the clan comprises a large number of strangers, which allows it to attain a size that the family proper never reaches: very often it numbers several thousand people. Moreover, it is the basic political unit; the clan chiefs are the sole authorities in society.<sup>3</sup>

Thus this organisation might also be termed politico-familial. Not only has the clan blood-kinship as its basis, but different clans within the same people very often consider themselves related to one another. Among the Iroquois, according to the circumstances they treat one another as brothers or cousins.<sup>4</sup> Among the Jews who, as we shall see, manifest the most characteristic features of the same social organisation, the ancestor of each one of the clans making up the tribe is deemed to have descended from the founder of the tribe, who is himself regarded as one of the sons of the father of the race. But this designation has one disadvantage as compared with the former one: it does not bring out what constitutes the real structure of these societies.

Yet, whatever term we assign to it, this organisation, just like that of the horde, whose extension it merely is, plainly does not possess any other solidarity save that which derives from similarities. This is because the society is made up of similar segments and these in turn comprise only homogeneous elements. Doubtless each clan has its own peculiar features and is consequently distinct from the others. But their solidarity is the weaker the more heterogeneous they are, and vice versa. For a segmentary organisation to be possible, the segments must both resemble one another (or else they would not be united) and yet be different from one another. Otherwise they would become so lost in one another as to vanish. Depending upon the society, these two opposing necessities are met in different proportions, but the social type remains the same.

This time we have emerged from the sphere of prehistory and conjecture. Not only is this social type far from hypothetical: it is almost the most widespread of all among lower societies. And we know that these are the most numerous. We have already seen that the type was general in America and Australia. Post reports that it is very common among the African negroes.<sup>5</sup> The Jews remained in this same state until a very late stage; the Kabyles have never got beyond it.<sup>6</sup> Thus Waitz, wishing to characterise generally the

structure of these peoples, whom he calls *Naturvölker*, depicts them as follows, where is to be found the general pattern of organisation we have just described:

As a general rule families live side by side in a state of great independence and develop gradually, so as to form small societies (*viz. clans*)<sup>7</sup> which have no definite constitution so long as internal struggles or an external danger – such as war – does not lead to one or several men distinguishing themselves from the mass of society and placing themselves at its head. Their influence, which relies solely on personal attributes, is extended and lasts only when confined within the bounds laid down by the trust and patience of others. Every adult remains in a state of complete independence *vis-à-vis* such a chieftain. This is why we see such peoples, lacking any other internal organisation, can only hold together through the action of external circumstances and through the habit of living their life in common.<sup>8</sup>

The arrangement of clans within society and thus the overall shape of the latter can, it is true, vary. Sometimes they are simply juxtaposed so as to form a kind of linear series: this is the case for many Indian tribes in North America.<sup>9</sup> In other instances – and this is the distinguishing mark of a higher organisation – each one is embedded within a larger group which, having been formed by the coming together of several clans, has its own life and special name. Each one of these groups in turn may be embedded with several other groups in an even more extensive aggregate, and it is from the successive series formed by the embedding process that results the unity of the whole society. Thus among the Kabyle the political unit is the clan, fixed in the form of a village (*djemmaa* or *thaddart*); several *djemmaa* form a tribe (*arch*'), and several tribes form the confederation (*thak'ebilt*), the highest form of political society known to the Kabyles. Likewise, among the Jews the clan is what translators somewhat inaccurately call the *family*, a huge society that included thousands of people descended, according to tradition, from a single ancestor.<sup>10</sup> A certain number of *families* made up of the tribe and the union of twelve tribes made up the whole of the Jewish people.

These societies are the home *par excellence* of mechanical solidarity, so much so that it is from this form of solidarity that they derive their main physiological characteristics.

We know that in them religion pervades the whole of social life. This is because social life is made up almost entirely of common beliefs and practices that draw from their unanimous acceptance a very special kind of intensity. Using the analysis of classical texts alone to go back to an era exactly similar to the one we are discussing, Fustel de Coulanges discovered that the primitive organisation of societies was of the family type and that, moreover, the constitution of the primitive family was based upon religion. Only he mistook cause for effect. After having postulated the religious idea, without tracing its derivation from anything, he deduced from it the social arrangements which he noted,<sup>11</sup> whilst, on the contrary, it is these arrangements that explain the power and nature of the religious idea. Since all such social masses were formed from homogeneous elements, that is to say, since the collective type is very highly developed in them whereas individual types are rudimentary, it was inevitable that the entire psychological life of society should assume a religious character.

From this also springs the notion of communism, which has often been noted among these peoples. In fact, communism is the necessary product of that special cohesion that swallows up the individual within the group, the part into the whole. In the end property is merely the extension of the idea of the person to things. Thus where the collective personality is the sole existing one, property itself is inevitably collective. It can only become individual when the individual, freeing himself from the mass of the people, has also become a personal, distinctive being, not only as an organism, but as a factor in social life.<sup>12</sup>

This type can even be modified without the nature of social solidarity suddenly changing on this account. Indeed not all primitive peoples display that lack of centralisation we have just observed. On the contrary, some of them are subject to an absolute power. The division of labour has therefore appeared in them. However, the link which in this case binds the individual to the chief is identical to that which joins things to persons. The relationships of the barbaric despot to his subjects, like those of the master to his slaves or the father of the Roman family to his descendants, are indistinguishable from those of the owner to the object he possesses. There is nothing about them which corresponds to that reciprocity which brings about the division of labour. It has been rightly stated that they are unilateral.<sup>13</sup> Thus the solidarity they

express remains mechanical. The difference lies entirely in the fact that it links the individual no longer directly to the group, but to the one who is its image. But the unity of the whole rules out as before any individuality in the parts.

If this first form of the division of labour, however important it may nevertheless be, has not the effect of making social solidarity more flexible, as might be expected, it is because of the special conditions in which it takes place. It is in fact a general law that the most pre-eminent organ in any society partakes of the nature of the collective entity that it represents. Thus where society possesses this religious character, one that is, so to speak, suprahuman, whose source, as we have shown, lies in the constitution of the common consciousness, it is necessarily transmitted to the chief who directs it and who in consequence finds himself very greatly elevated above all other men. Where individuals are merely dependants of the collective type, they quite naturally become dependent on the central authority that embodies them. Again, in the same way the undivided property right that the community exercised over things passes wholly to the superior personality constituted in this way. The peculiarly professional services that he renders therefore count for little in the extraordinary power with which he is invested. If, in these kinds of societies, the power that is directing has so much authority, it is not because, as has been said, these societies particularly need a more energetic leadership. But this authority is wholly a manifestation of the common consciousness, an authority that is vast, because the common consciousness itself is highly developed. Even if the common consciousness were weaker or only included a smaller section of social life, the need for some supreme regulating function would be no less. However, the rest of society would no longer be in the same state of inferiority *vis-à-vis* the one to whom that function has been entrusted. This is why solidarity remains mechanical so long as the division of labour has not developed further. It is in such conditions that it even attains its *maximum* energy: for the effect of the common consciousness is stronger when it is no longer exerted diffusely, but through the mediation of some clearly defined organ.

Thus there is a social structure of a determinate nature to which mechanical solidarity corresponds. What characterises it is that it comprises a system of homogeneous segments similar to one another.

## II

But the structure of societies where organic solidarity is preponderant is entirely different.

These are constituted, not by the replication of similar homogeneous elements, but by a system of different organs, each one of which has a special role and which themselves are formed from differentiated parts. The elements in society are not of the same nature, nor are they arranged in the same manner. They are neither placed together end-on, as are the rings of an annelida worm, nor embedded in one another, but co-ordinated and subordinated to one another around the same central organ, which exerts over the rest of the organism a moderating effect. This organ itself is no longer of the same character as outlined above, for, if the others depend upon it, in turn it depends upon them. Undoubtedly it still enjoys a special place and, one may say, a privileged one. But this is due to the nature of the role that it fulfils and not to some cause external to its functions or to some force imparted to it from outside. Thus it has nothing more than what is temporal and human about it; between the other organs and itself there is no longer any difference save in degree. Thus, with an animal, the priority of the nervous system over the other systems comes down to the right, if it may be so expressed, of receiving a choicer form of sustenance and of taking its share first. But it has need of the other organs, just as they have need of it.

This social type relies upon principles so utterly different from the preceding type that it can only develop to the extent that the latter has vanished. Indeed individuals are distributed within it in groups that are no longer formed in terms of any ancestral relationship, but according to the special nature of the social activity to which they devote themselves. Their natural and necessary environment is no longer that in which they were born, but that of their profession. It is no longer blood relationship, whether real or fictitious, that determines the place of each one, but the functions he fulfils. Undoubtedly, when this new organisation begins to appear, it attempts to use the existing one and to assimilate it to itself. The way in which functions are distributed is therefore modelled as closely as possible upon the way in which society is already divided up. The segments, or at least groups of segments linked by particular affinities, become organs. Thus the clans which as an entity

constitute the tribe of the Levites, appropriate for themselves the priestly functions among the Jewish people. Generally it may be said that classes and castes have probably no other origin or nature: they spring from the mixing of the professional organisation, which is just emerging, with a pre-existent family organisation. But this mixed arrangement cannot last for long because, between the two elements that it takes upon itself to reconcile, there is an hostility that must in the end break out. Only a very rudimentary division of labour can fit into these rigid, well-defined moulds, which were not fashioned for it. The division of labour can only increase in so far as it frees itself from the frame that hedges it in. Once it has gone beyond a certain stage of development no longer is there any connection between the fixed number of segments and the ever-increasing number of functions that become specialised, nor between the hereditarily determined properties of the former and the new aptitudes that the latter demand.<sup>14</sup> Thus the social substance must enter into entirely new combinations in order to be organised on completely different foundations. Now the old structure, so long as it subsists, is hostile to this. This is why it must disappear.

The history of these two types indeed shows that the one has only made progress in the proportion to which the other has regressed.

Among the Iroquois, the social constitution based on clans exists in its pure state. The same is true of the Jews, as the Pentateuch shows us, except for the slight deviation that we have just pointed out. Thus the organised social type exists in neither, although we may perhaps perceive its first beginnings in Jewish society.

The same no longer holds good for the Franks of the Salic law: this time it appears with its own special characteristics, free from any compromise. In fact among this people we find, besides a regular, stable, central authority, a whole network of administrative and judicial functions. On the other hand, the existence of contract law, still, it is true, very little developed, bears witness to the fact that economic functions are themselves beginning to separate out and become organised. Thus the politico-family constitution is gravely undermined. Doubtless the last social molecule, the village, is indeed still merely a clan transformed. What proves this is the fact that among the inhabitants of a single village relationships of a clearly domestic nature exist, which are in any case characteristic of the clan. All the members of the village have the right to inherit

from one another, in the absence of any relatives proper.<sup>15</sup> A text to be found in the *Capita extravagantia legis salicae* (art. 9) informs us that even in the case of a murder committed in the village neighbours maintained their collective solidarity. Moreover, the village is a system much more hermetically closed to the outside world, concentrated in on itself, than would be a mere territorial constituency, because none can settle in it without the unanimous consent, expressly or tacitly given, of all the inhabitants.<sup>16</sup> But in this form the clan has lost some of its essential characteristics: not only has all memory of a common origin disappeared, but it has been almost completely divested of any political importance. The political unit is the *hundred*. 'The population,' declares Waitz, 'lives in the villages, but both people and land are spread out over the *hundred*, which for all matters of war and peace forms the unit which serves as a basis for all relationships.'<sup>17</sup>

In Rome this dual movement of progression and regression is continued. The Roman clan is the *gens*, and it is indeed certain that the *gens* was the basis for the ancient Roman constitution. But from the time of the foundation of the republic it ceased almost completely to be a public institution. It was no longer a definite territorial unit, like the Frankish village, nor a political unit. It is to be found neither in the territorial arrangement, nor in the structure of the people's assemblies. The *comitia curiata*, in which it used to play a social role,<sup>18</sup> are replaced either by the *comitia centuriata* or the *comitia tributa*, which were organised on entirely different principles. It is no longer more than a private association sustained by force of habit, yet one that is destined to disappear because it no longer corresponds to any facet of Roman life. But in addition, from the time of the Twelve Tables onwards, the division of labour was much more advanced in Rome than among earlier peoples, and its organised structure was more developed. Already to be found there are important corporations of public officials (senators, knights, the college of priests, etc.), trade guilds,<sup>19</sup> and at the same time the concept of the secular state begins to arise.

Thus the hierarchy that we have established is justified, according to other criteria of a less methodical nature, between the social types we have compared previously. If we were able to say that the Jews of the Pentateuch belong to a less exalted social type than do the Franks of the Salic law, and that the latter, in their turn, were below the Romans of the Twelve Tables, it is because, as a general

rule, the more visible and strong the segmentary organisation based on clans is with a people, the more does that people belong to a lower species. Indeed it cannot rise higher until it has gone beyond this first stage. For this same reason the Athenian city, whilst belonging to the same type as the Roman city, is nevertheless a more primitive form of it. This is because the politico-family type of organisation has disappeared from it much more slowly. It survived almost right up to the eve of its decadence.<sup>20</sup>

But it is far from true that the organised type subsists alone, in its pristine state, once the clan has disappeared. The organisation based upon clans is in fact only one species of a more extensive *genus*, the segmentary organisation. The distribution of society into similar compartments corresponds to needs that persist even in new societies where social life is established, needs that nevertheless produce their effects in another form. The mass of the population is no longer divided up according to blood relationships, whether real or fictitious, but according to land divisions. The segments are no longer family aggregates but territorial constituencies.

Moreover, it was through a slow process of evolution that the passage from one state to another took place when the memory of the common origin had faded. When the domestic relationships that sprang from it, but as we have seen often outlive it, have themselves vanished, the clan has no longer any consciousness of itself save as a group of individuals who occupy the same parcel of territory. It becomes the village proper. Thus all those peoples who have passed beyond the stage of the clan are made up from territorial districts (the mark, the commune, etc.) which, just as the Roman *gens* had become implicated in the *curia*, are inserted in other districts of the same kind, but larger in size, termed in one place *hundred*, elsewhere *Kreis* or *arrondissement*, which in turn are often swallowed up in other entities, even more extensive (county, province, *département*) which unite to form a society.<sup>21</sup> This process of insertion can moreover be more or less an hermetical sealing-off. Likewise the links that join together the most general kind of districts can either be very close, as with the centralised countries of present-day Europe, or more relaxed, as in simple confederations. But the principle behind the structure remains the same, and this is why mechanical solidarity persists even in the highest societies.

Nevertheless, in the same way as mechanical solidarity is no longer preponderant, the arrangement in the form of segments is no

longer, as previously, the sole anatomical structure or even the essential structure of society. Firstly, the territorial divisions have necessarily something artificial about them. The ties that arise from living together have not their source so deeply in men's hearts as those arising from blood-relationship. Thus they have a much weaker power of resistance. When one is born into a clan, one cannot change anything more, so to speak, than one's relatives. The same reasons do not prevent one's changing one's town or province. Doubtless, geographical distribution corresponds roughly to a certain moral distribution of the population. For example, each province, each territorial division, has its own special morality and customs, a life peculiarly its own. Thus it exerts over individuals imbued with its spirit an attraction that tends to keep them on the spot and, moreover, to repel others. But within a single country such differences cannot be very numerous or clear-cut. The segments are therefore more open to one another. Indeed, from the Middle Ages onwards 'after the formation of towns, foreign artisans travelled as freely and as far and wide as did goods'.<sup>22</sup> Segmentary organisation had lost its contours.

It is increasingly losing them as societies develop. It is indeed a general law that the partial aggregates that make up a more extensive aggregate see their individuality as growing less and less distinctive. At the same time as the family organisation, local religions have disappeared for ever, yet local customs continue to exist. Gradually these merge into one another and unify, at the same time as dialects and patois dissolve into a single national language and regional administration loses its autonomy. In this fact a simple consequence of the law of imitation has been discerned.<sup>23</sup> However, it seems as if it is rather a levelling-out analogous to that which occurs between two liquids which intermingle together. The partitions that separate the various cells of social life, being less thick, are breached more often. Their permeability increases the more they are penetrated. Consequently they lose their consistency and gradually collapse, and to the same extent environments become mingled together. Now local diversity can only be maintained in so far as a diversity of environments subsists. Territorial divisions are therefore less and less based upon the nature of things, and consequently lose their significance. One might almost say that a people is the more advanced the more superficial its character.

On the other hand, as segmentary organisation vanishes organ-

isation by professions covers it ever more completely with its network. It is true that at the beginning it establishes itself only within the boundaries of the more simple segments, without extending beyond. Every town, with its immediate neighbourhood, forms a group within which work is divided up, but that strives to be self-sufficient. 'The town,' states Schmoller, 'becomes as far as possible the ecclesiastical, political and military centre of the surrounding villages. It aspires to develop every kind of industry to supply the countryside, just as it seeks to concentrate commerce and transport in its area.'<sup>24</sup> At the same time within the town inhabitants are grouped according to their occupation; each trade guild is like a town, living a life of its own.<sup>25</sup> This is the state in which the cities of antiquity remained until a comparatively late era, and from which Christian societies sprang. But the latter went beyond this stage very early on. From the fourteenth century onwards division of labour develops between regions: 'Each town had originally as many cloth-merchants as necessary. But the manufacturers of grey cloth in Basle succumbed already before 1362 in the face of competition from the Alsatians; at Strasburg, Frankfurt and Leipzig the weaving of wool was ruined about 1500. . . . The character of industrial universality of towns of former times was irrevocably destroyed.'

Since then the movement has continued unceasingly to spread:

In the capital are concentrated today, more than in former times, the active forces of the central government, the arts, literature and large-scale credit operations. In the large ports are concentrated more than before all exports and imports. Hundreds of small commercial centres dealing in corn and cattle are prospering and growing in size. Whereas each town had once its ramparts and moat, now a few great fortresses are entrusted with the task of protecting the whole country. Like the capital, the chief towns in the provinces are growing because of the concentration of provincial administration, provincial institutions, collections and schools. The mentally deranged and the sick of a certain category, who were once scattered around the area, are gathered up together, for a whole province or *département*, in a single place. The different towns tend increasingly to develop certain specializations, so that today we distinguish between university towns, civil service towns, factory towns, commercial towns, watering-

places, and rentier towns. At certain spots or in certain areas are concentrated the large-scale industries: machine construction, spinning, cloth manufacture, tanning, blast furnaces, the sugar industry, all working for the whole country. Special schools have been established for them, the population of industrial workers adapts to them, the construction of machines is concentrated in them, whilst communications and the organisation of credit adapt themselves also to the special circumstances.<sup>26</sup>

Doubtless to a certain extent this professional organisation attempts to adapt itself to the one that existed before it, as it had originally done for the organisation of the family. This is what emerges from the very description given above. Moreover, it is a very general fact that new institutions are shaped initially in the mould of previous institutions. The territorial regions therefore tend to be specialised in relation to their complexion, organs and different mechanisms, just as was the clan in former times. But just like the latter, they are really incapable of maintaining this role. In fact a town always includes either different organs or parts of organs. Conversely there are hardly any organs that are wholly included within the limits of a particular district, whatever its size. Almost always the district extends beyond them. Likewise, although fairly frequently those organs which are most closely linked to one another tend to draw together, yet in general their physical proximity reflects only very imperfectly the degree of closeness of their relationships. Some are very distant, although depending directly upon one another. Others are physically very close, although their relationships are indirect and distant. The way in which men are grouped together as a result of the division of labour is thus very different from the way the spatial distribution of the population occurs. The professional environment no more coincides with the territorial environment than it does with the family environment. It is a new framework that is substituted for the others. Thus the substitution is only possible to the extent that the others have vanished.

If therefore this social type is nowhere to be observed in a state of absolute purity, likewise nowhere is organic solidarity to be met with in isolation. But at least it frees itself increasingly from any amalgam, just as it becomes increasingly preponderant. Such predominance is all the more rapid and complete because at the

very moment when its structure becomes more prominent, the other becomes more indistinct. The segment formed by the clan, so well-defined, is replaced by the territorial district. At least originally, the latter corresponded, although in somewhat vague and approximate fashion, to the real and moral division of the population. But it gradually loses this character, to become no more than an arbitrary combination, one that is a mere convention. As these barriers are lowered, they are covered over by systems of organs which are more and more developed. If therefore social evolution remains subject to the effect of the same determining causes – and we shall see later that this is the sole feasible hypothesis – we may predict that this dual movement will continue in the same direction, and the day will come when the whole of our social and political organisation will have an exclusively, or almost exclusively, professional basis.

Moreover, the studies that follow will establish<sup>27</sup> that this professional organisation is not even today all that it is destined to become; that abnormal causes have prevented it from reaching the stage of development that our present social state requires. From this we may judge the importance that it is destined to assume in the future.

### III

The same law governs biological development.

Nowadays we know that the lower animals are made up of similar segments, arranged either in irregular masses or in a linear series. Even at the very lowest point on the scale these elements are not only similar to one another but are even homogeneous in composition. They are usually given the name of *colonies*. But this expression – which incidentally is not without ambiguity – does not signify that these associations are not individual organisms. For ‘every colony whose members are made up of continuous tissues is in reality an individual’.<sup>28</sup> Indeed what is characteristic of the individuality of any kind of aggregate is the existence of operations carried out in common by all its parts. Between the members of a colony there is pooling of nutriments and an inability to move save by movements of the whole, so long as the colony is not split up. There is something more: the egg, having emerged from one of the

segments that are associated together, reproduces not this segment, but the whole colony of which it formed part: 'Between these colonies of polyps and the higher animal forms, from this viewpoint there is no difference.'<sup>29</sup> Moreover, what makes any radical separation impossible is the fact that there are no organisms at all, however 'centralised' they may be, which to a varying degree do not present the structure of a colony. We find traces of this even in the vertebrates, in the constitution of their skeleton and their urogenital mechanism, etc. Above all their embryonic development gives indisputable proof that they are nothing more than modified colonies.<sup>30</sup>

Thus there exists in the animal world an individuality 'which is produced outside any combination of organs'.<sup>31</sup> Now this is identical to that of societies that we have termed segmentary. Not only is the structural plan clearly the same, but solidarity is of the same kind. Indeed, since the parts that make up an animal colony are mechanically intertwined with one another, they can only act as a whole, at least so long as they remain joined together. Their activity is collective. In a community of polyps, as each stomach communicates with the others, one individual unit cannot eat unless all the others do so as well. It is, states Perrier, communism in the fullest sense of the word.<sup>32</sup> A member of the colony, particularly when floating, cannot contract without also causing the polyps to which it is joined to move as well, and the movement is passed from each succeeding member to the next.<sup>33</sup> In a worm each ring depends rigidly upon the others – this despite the fact that it can detach itself from them without danger to itself.

But just as the segmentary type vanishes as we advance up the scale of social evolution, the colony type disappears as we move higher up in the scale of organisms. Already started with the annelida, although it is still very visible, it becomes almost imperceptible with the molluscs, and in the end only scientific analysis can succeed in discovering traces of it in vertebrates. We need not point out the analogies that exist between the type that replaces the preceding one and that of organic societies. In both cases, the structure, like the solidarity, derives from the division of labour. Each part of the animal, once it has become an organ, has its own sphere of action, in which it moves independently, without impinging upon the others. Yet from another viewpoint these parts depend much more closely upon one another than in a colony, since

they cannot separate from one another without perishing. Finally, in organic as in social evolution, the division of labour begins by using the framework of segmentary organisation, but only eventually to free itself and to develop in an autonomous way. If in fact the organ is sometimes only a transformed segment, this is, however, the exception.<sup>34</sup>

To sum up: we have distinguished between two types of solidarity. We have just discerned that there exist two social types that correspond to them. Just as the first kinds of solidarity develop in inverse relationship to one another, with the two corresponding social types one regresses regularly as the other progresses, and the latter is the one that is defined by the social division of labour. Besides the fact that it confirms the preceding results, this result ends up by demonstrating to us all the importance of the division of labour. Just as it is this which, for the most part, gives cohesion to the societies in which we live, it is also this that determines the characteristics which go to make up their structure and everything leads us to predict that in the future its role, from this viewpoint, can only increase.

#### IV

The law we have established in the last two chapters in one characteristic, but in one characteristic alone, may have reminded us of the one that dominates the sociology of Spencer. Like him, we have stated that the place of the individual in society, from being originally nothing at all, has grown with civilisation. But this indisputable fact has presented itself in a completely different light than to the English philosopher, so much so that in the end our conclusions are in contradiction to his, more than echoing them.

Firstly, according to him, this absorption of the individual into the group is allegedly the result of a constraint and an artificial organisation necessitated by the state of warfare that is endemic in lower societies. Indeed it is especially in war that union is necessary for success. A group cannot defend itself against another group or subdue it save on condition that it acts as one unit. Thus all individual forces must be clustered together in a concentration that cannot be broken up. Now the only means of ensuring this concentration uninterruptedly is to institute a very powerful authority



to which individuals are subjected absolutely. It is necessary that 'As the soldier's will is so suspended that he becomes in everything the agent of his officer's will; so is the will of the citizen in all transactions, private and public, overruled by that of the government.'<sup>35</sup> It therefore is an organised despotism that could annihilate the individual and, since this organisation is essentially a military one, it is by militarism that Spencer defines this kind of society.

We have seen, on the contrary, that this effacement of the individual has its origin in a social type characterised by a complete absence of any centralisation. It is the product of a state of homogeneity that is the distinguishing mark of primitive societies. If the individual is not distinct from the group, it is because the individual consciousness is almost indistinct from the collective consciousness. Spencer, and other sociologists with him, seem to have interpreted these facts of the remote past by means of very modern ideas. The very pronounced sentiment that each one of us today possesses of our own individuality has caused them to believe that personal rights could not be restricted to such a degree save by an organisation that exercised coercion. We cling so much to these rights that it seemed to them that man could not have abandoned them of his own free will. In fact, if in lower societies so little place is allowed for the individual personality, it is not that it has been constricted or suppressed artificially, it is quite simply because at that moment in history *it did not exist*.

Moreover, Spencer recognises himself that among these societies many possess a constitution that is so little military and authoritarian that he himself terms them democratic.<sup>36</sup> But he seeks to view them as the first prelude to those societies of the future which he calls industrial. Yet to do so he must fail to acknowledge one fact: in these societies, just as in those that are subject to despotic government, the individual has no sphere of action that is peculiarly his own, as is proved by the general institution of communism. Likewise traditions, prejudices and collective customs of every kind weigh down upon him no less heavily than would a constituted authority. Therefore they cannot be treated as democratic unless one twists the usual meaning of the word. Moreover, if they were really marked by the precocious individualism attributed to them, we would arrive at the strange conclusion that social evolution has attempted, from the very outset, to produce the most perfect types, since 'no governmental force exists at first save that of

the common will expressed by the assembled horde'.<sup>37</sup> Is therefore history circular in its motion and is progress only a step backwards?

In a general way one can easily understand that individuals can be subjected only to a collective despotism, for the members of a society can only be dominated by a force that is superior to themselves, and there is only one of these that possesses this quality: that of the group. Any personality, however powerful it might be, could do nothing alone against a whole society. The latter cannot therefore be enslaved in spite of itself. This is why, as we have seen, the strength of authoritarian governments does not spring from themselves, but derives from the very constitution of society. If, moreover, individualism was to such an extent congenial in humanity, one cannot see how primitive tribes were able so easily to subject themselves to the despotic authority of a chief, wherever it was necessary to do so. Ideas, customs, institutions themselves ought to have risen up against so radical a transformation. On the other hand, all is explained once we have fully realised the nature of these societies, for then this change is no longer so profound as it appears. Individuals, instead of subordinating themselves to the group, subordinated themselves to the one who represented it. As collective authority, when it was diffused, was absolute, the authority of the chief, which was only a way of organising collective authority, naturally assumed the same character.

Far from being able to date the effacement of the individual from the institution of some despotic power, we ought on the contrary to see in it the first step taken along the road to individualism. In fact, the chiefs are the first individual personalities who have risen from the mass of society. Their exceptional position, which makes them unrivalled, imparts to them a distinctive presence and in consequence confers an individuality upon them. Dominating society, they are no longer constrained to follow its every movement. Doubtless it is from the group that they draw their strength. Yet once their strength is organised, it becomes autonomous and renders them capable of personal action. Thus a source for initiative is opened up which until then did not exist. Henceforth there is someone who can engender something new, and even depart from collective customs. The balance is upset.<sup>38</sup>

If we have insisted upon this point it is in order to establish two important propositions.

In the first place, each time that we find ourselves faced with a

mechanism of government endowed with great authority we must seek the reason not in the particular situation of those governing, but in the nature of the societies that they govern. We must observe what are the common beliefs, the common sentiments that, in embodying themselves in a person or a family, have bestowed such power. As for the personal superiority of the chief, in this process it plays only a secondary role. It explains why the strength of the collectivity, not without intensity, is concentrated in these hands rather than in those of another. As soon as this force, instead of remaining diffused, is obliged to delegate, this can only be to the benefit of those individuals who have manifested their superiority in other ways. But if this superiority denotes the direction in which the current is moving, it does not create that current. If the father of the family, in Rome, enjoys absolute power, it is not because he is the oldest, the wisest or the most experienced, but because, through the circumstances in which the Roman family finds itself, he embodies the old family communism. Despotism, at least when it is neither a pathological phenomenon nor one of decadence, is nothing more than transformed communism.

In the second place, we see from the above how false is the theory that places egoism as the point of departure for humanity and makes altruism, on the other hand, a recent phenomenon.

What imparts authority to this hypothesis for certain minds is that it appears to be a logical consequence of Darwinian principles. In the name of the dogma of competition to survive, and of natural selection, there is depicted for us in the gloomiest colours that primitive humanity for whom hunger and thirst, both moreover largely unassuaged, were allegedly the sole passions. They were the dark ages, when men seemingly had no other thought or preoccupation than to quarrel amongst one another over their piteous food. In order to react against the retrospective reveries of eighteenth-century philosophy, and also against certain religious doctrines, and to show more strikingly that paradise lost is not behind us and that there is nothing that we ought to regret about our past, it was held necessary to make it appear sombre and systematically to denigrate it. There is nothing more unscientific than this inverted prejudice. If the hypotheses of Darwin are usable in moral matters, it is still with more reservations and moderation than in the other sciences. In fact they remove the essential element of moral life, viz., the moderating influence that society exerts over its

members, which tempers and neutralises the brutal effect of the struggle for existence and of selection. Everywhere that societies exist there is altruism, because there is solidarity.

Thus we find altruism at the very dawn of humanity and even in a form that exceeds all bounds, for the hardships that the savage imposes upon himself in order to obey the religious tradition, the abnegation with which he offers up his life as soon as society demands its sacrifice, the irresistible impulsion that drives the widow in India to follow her husband in death, the Gaul not to survive the chief of his clan, the ancient Celt to rid his fellows of a useless mouth to feed by bringing about his own voluntary end – is all that not altruism? Shall we treat these practices as superstitions? No matter, provide that they attest an ability to give oneself. And, moreover, where do superstitions begin and end? We would find ourselves extremely embarrassed to give a reply and to provide a scientific definition for the fact. Is it not also superstition, that attachment we feel towards the places where we have lived, for people with whom we have had a lasting relationship? And yet this power to attach ourselves to something, is it not the mark of a healthy moral constitution? Precisely speaking, the whole life of the sensibility is made up only of superstitions, since it precedes and rules the judgement, rather than depends upon it.

Scientifically conduct is egotistical in so far as it is determined by sentiments and representations that are wholly personal to ourselves. If therefore we recall to what extent in lower societies the consciousness of the individual is assailed by the collective consciousness, we shall be even tempted to believe that it is something wholly other than itself, that it is made up entirely of altruism, as Condillac would say. Yet this conclusion would be an exaggeration, for there is a sphere of psychological life which, no matter how developed the collective type may be, varies from one person to another and belongs by right to each individual. It is that part which is made up of representations, feelings and tendencies that relate to the organism and states of the organism; it is the world of internal and external sensations and those movements directly linked to them. This primal basis of all individuality is inalienable and does not depend upon the social condition. Thus we should not state that altruism is born of egoism, for such a derivation would only be possible if it were a creation *ex nihilo*. But strictly speaking these two springs of behaviour have been present from the very beginning

in every human consciousness, for there cannot be one that does not reflect both the things that relate to the individual alone, and things that are not personal to him.

All that can be said is that with the savage that lower part of ourselves represents a more considerable proportion of the total human being, because his being is lesser in extent, the higher reaches of psychological life in him being less developed. Thus it has relatively more importance and in consequence more power over the will. Yet, on the other hand, for everything that goes beyond this domain of physical needs, the primitive consciousness, according to the strongly couched expression of Espinas, is absolutely and entirely outside of itself. For the civilised person the very opposite is true; egoism insinuates itself even to the very centre of the higher representations. Each one of us has his own opinions, beliefs and aspirations, and clings to them. He even comes to be involved in altruism, because it so happens that we have a way of being altruistic that depends upon our personal character, our cast of mind, from which we refuse to depart. Doubtless we should not conclude that the share of egoism has increased for the whole of life, for we must take into account the fact that the whole of consciousness has been extended. It is nevertheless the case that individualism has developed, in terms of absolute value, by penetrating areas that in the beginning were closed to it.

Yet this individualism, the fruit of historical development, is not, however, the one that Spencer described. The societies that he terms industrial no more represent organised societies than military societies resemble segmentary societies based on the family. We shall see this in the next chapter.

#### Notes

1. L. H. Morgan, *Ancient Society* (London, 1877) pp. 62–122.
2. *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*. This state has moreover been the one through which passed at the outset the societies of American Indians (cf. Morgan, *Ancient Society*).
3. If, in its pure state, as we at least believe, the clan forms an undivided, conglomerate family, later individual families, distinct from one another, appear against this background, which was originally homogeneous. But their appearance does not change the essential characteristics of the social organisation we are describing. This is why

we have no need to dwell upon them. The clan remains the political unit and, since these families are similar and equal among one another, society continues to be made up of similar, homogeneous segments, although within the primitive segments there begin to appear the shapes of fresh segmentations, which however are of the same kind.

4. Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 90.
5. Post, *Afrikanische Jurisprudenz*, vol. I.
6. Cf. Hanoteau and Letourneux, *La Kabylie et les coutumes kabyles*, vol. II; and Masqueray, *Formation des cités chez les populations sédentaires d'Algérie* (Paris, 1886) ch. 5.
7. Waitz erroneously presents the clan as deriving from the family. It is the opposite that is the truth. Moreover, although this description is important because of the authority of the author, it is somewhat lacking in precision.
8. Waitz, *Anthropologie*, vol. I, p. 359.
9. Cf. Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 153 ff.
10. Thus the tribe of Reuben, which in all included four *families*, counted, according to the book of Numbers (26:7), more than 43,000 adults over the age of twenty. (Cf. Numbers 3:15 ff.; Joshua 7:14.) Cf. Munck, *Palestine*, pp. 116, 125, 191.
11. 'We have set out the history of a belief. It is established: human society is constituted. It is modified: society goes through a series of revolutions. It disappears: society changes its aspect.' (*La Cité antique*, end.)
12. Spencer has already stated that social evolution, moreover like universal evolution, began by a phase of more or less perfect homogeneity. But this proposition, as he understands it, in no way resembles the one we have just developed. For Spencer, in fact, a society that might be perfectly homogeneous would not really be a society. What is homogeneous is unstable by nature, and society is essentially a coherent whole. The social role of homogeneity is entirely secondary; it can trace out a path for later co-operation (*Principles of Sociology* (London, 1855), vol. II, pp. 311–21) but it is not a specific source of social life. At certain times Spencer seems to see in the societies we have just described only an ephemeral juxtaposition of individuals who are independent, a nullity as regards social life (*ibid.*). On the contrary, we have just seen that societies have a very strong collective life, although it is *sui generis*, which is manifested not by exchanges and contracts, but by a great abundance of beliefs and common practices. These aggregates are coherent, not only although they are homogeneous, but to the extent that they are homogeneous. The community they embody is not only by no means too weak, but we may say that it exists on its own. Moreover, the societies are of a definite type, which springs from their homogeneity. They therefore cannot be treated as a negligible quantity.
13. Cf. Tarde, *Lois de l'imitation*, pp. 404–12.

14. The reasons will be seen below (cf. Book II, Chapter IV).
15. Cf. Glasson, *Le droit de succession dans les lois barbares*, p. 19. It is true that the fact is disputed by Fustel de Coulanges, however categorical the text on which Glasson relies may appear to be.
16. Cf. the title in the Salic law headed *De Migrantibus*.
17. Waitz, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, 2nd edn, vol. II, p. 317.
18. In these *comitia* the vote took place by *curia*, viz. by groups of *gentes*. One text appears even to state that within each *curia* the voting was by *gentes*. (Aulus Gellus, vol. XV, pp. 27 and 4.)
19. Cf. Marquardt, *Privatleben der Römer*, vol. II, p. 4.
20. Up to Clisthenes. Two centuries later Athens lost its independence. Moreover, even after Clisthenes, the Athenian clan, the *γένοζ*, whilst it had lost all political character, preserved a moderately strong organisation. (G. Gilbert, *Handbuch der Griechischen Staatsalterthümer* (Leipzig, 1881).)
21. We do not mean that these territorial districts were a mere reproduction of former family arrangements. This new mode of grouping, on the other hand, resulted at least in part from new causes that disturbed the old way. The main cause was the formation of towns, which became centres for the concentration of population (cf. *infra*, Book II, Chapter II, § I). Yet, whatever the origins of this arrangement, it is a segmentary one.
22. Schmoller, 'La division du travail étudiée au point de vue historique', *Revue d'économie politique* (1890) p. 145.
23. Cf. Tarde, *Lois de l'imitation*, *passim*.
24. Schmoller, 'La division du travail', p. 144.
25. Cf. Levasseur, *Les classes ouvrières en France jusqu'à la Révolution*, vol. I, p. 195.
26. Schmoller, 'La division du travail', pp. 145–8.
27. Cf. *infra*, Book I, Chapter VII, § II, and Book III, Chapter I.
28. Perrier, *Le Transformisme*, p. 159.
29. Perrier, *Colonies animales*, p. 778.
30. *Ibid.*, book II, chs 5, 6 and 7.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 779.
32. Perrier, *Le Transformisme*, p. 167.
33. Perrier, *Colonies animales*, p. 771.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 763 ff.
35. Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, vol. I, p. 584.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 585–6.
37. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 321.
38. Here is to be found a confirmation of the proposition already enunciated earlier (p. 76), which shows governmental power to be an emanation of the life inhering in the collective consciousness.

## Chapter VII

# Organic Solidarity and Contractual Solidarity

It is true that in the industrial societies of Spencer, just as in organised societies, social harmony derives essentially from the division of labour.<sup>1</sup> Its characteristic feature is that it consists of a co-operation that is automatically produced by the fact that each person follows his own interest. It is enough for every individual to devote himself to one special function to discover that inevitably he is solidly linked to other people. Is not this the distinguishing mark of organised societies?

But if Spencer quite rightly pointed out what was, in the higher forms of society, the principal cause of social solidarity, he was mistaken about the way in which this cause produces its effect and, in consequence, about the nature of the latter.

Indeed, for him, industrial solidarity, as he terms it, displays the two following characteristics:

Since it is spontaneous, there is no need for any coercive apparatus either to produce it or to maintain it. Society has therefore no need to interfere in order to effect a harmony that is established of its own accord. 'Each man may maintain himself by labour, may exchange his products for the products of others, may give aid and receive payment, may enter into this or that combination for carrying on an undertaking, small or great, without the direction of society as a whole.'<sup>2</sup>

The sphere of social action would therefore continue to grow increasingly smaller, for it would no longer have any purpose save to prevent individuals from encroaching upon one another and from doing one another mutual harm, that is, that it would no longer be a regulating mechanism save in a negative way.

In these conditions the sole link remaining between men would