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The Population Increase and Biologic Organization

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For some years there has been a disquieting trend toward emphasis of laboratory and experimental research at the expense of clinical and practical medicine. Many students and young physicians with scientific ambitions but few qualifications for research would better serve their chosen profession by engaging in practical medicine. The need for them is urgent.

One reason for the ever-increasing demand for doctors throughout the world is the rapid increase in population. The present world population is about three billion; according to calculations by United Nations scientists, by the end of this century the figure will approach six billion unless unforeseen events should slow the growth process. The grave implications of this unprecedented population increase are self-evident; they are of a nutritional, social, political, economic and, most important, humanistic nature. Nevertheless, it has been and will remain the physician's task to preserve the health of the individual, including the feeble and the unfit, and thus to prolong the life span, even though in so doing he is contributing to the threatening increase of mankind. The medical profession has certain inflexible laws, and its object is to maintain the human being, that unique, incomprehensible, dualistic product of creation whose bodily existence is firmly rooted in this earth but who, at the peak of his artistic and scientific accomplishments, can reach divine heights.

Because of the rapid numerical growth of the human race, the individual is progressively threatened by the danger of losing his personality values and becoming a mere numerical entity. But this devaluated human being needs the devoted care of his doctor more than ever. The thought on interhuman relationships expressed by the Stoic philosopher Seneca almost 2000 years ago is eminently true of the modern doctor-patient relationship: "Homo sacra res homini"—man must be sacred to man.

The various etiologic explanations which have been advanced for this explosive population increase are beyond the scope of this discussion. Let us briefly consider the biologic basis. Are not fundamental disturbances at work upsetting those organizing mechanisms which preserve the balance of mankind? We are justified in accepting the existence of such an organizing power, since the multitude of cells comprising organs and organisms and even the individual cell are subject to controlling forces which we term "organization." A million cells bound to-

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irrational factor of organization endows.

Smithers, D. W.: An attack on cytologism.

Analogous to malignant neoplastic which ultimately will be checked; or will cell proliferation proceed unchecked (anaplastic carcinoma). The population increase has not yet reached this anaplastic stage. Mankind is divided into two opposing camps, both endowed with similar powers and morally afraid of each other. Possibly this segregation is in itself a regulatory phenomenon that will save the world from destruction.

Such considerations are hardly likely to relieve the feelings of insecurity aroused by the frightening population increase. Those and other feelings of insecurity (in the political sphere, for instance), as well as the justified doubts in the value of our so-called philosophy of negativism and nihilism, have shaken the harmony and balance of mankind and especially of our younger generation. The sum of their effects has produced a philosophy of negativism and nihilism in many countries, and many leaders of society believe that nothing is of value and one should do as one pleases (carpe diem). However, this tragic and shortsighted thinking should not affect the medical profession. We physicians are a constructive, anabolic community, so to speak. Our aims and ethics are firmly established and not subject to the prevalent spirit of the times.

An organization factor also bestows its specific character on human society as a whole. It involves the grave question of how to evaluate biological the rapid population increase. Is it in accord with a plan of nature toward an unknown goal, a growth movement in accord with a plan of nature toward an unknown goal, a growth movement?