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John Hewetson
MUTUAL AID AND
SOCIAL EVOLUTION

Richard DeHaan
KROPOTKIN MARX
AND DEWEY

John Majoram: I WAS ONE
OF THE
UNATTACHED

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**Mutual Aid
and
Social Evolution**

JOHN HEWETSON

WHEN KROPOTKIN RETURNED TO FRANCE after his first visit to England in 1883, he was immediately charged with belonging to the International Working Men's Association (the First International), and with being concerned in the revolutionary demonstrations at Lyons. While he was imprisoned at Clairvaux, a large number of the most eminent scientists and men of letters in England signed a memorandum to the French Government in an endeavour to secure for him better prison conditions and the right to see his wife. But by no means all Kropotkin's colleagues in the world of science exhibited this sympathy. The most eminent of Darwin's followers, Thomas Henry Huxley, for example, positively refused to sign this memorandum, and stated that in his opinion, Kropotkin was too well off as he was. It is an open question whether Kropotkin knew of Huxley's attitude to him in this personal matter; but in later years, when the two men crossed swords on the question of mutual aid, he never showed the slightest trace of bitterness. On the contrary, he always praised Huxley's scientific eminence, and especially as a defender of Darwinism against clerical attacks.¹ This differing attitude in the two men has a certain significance when considered in the light of their social conceptions, for Huxley's view of the mechanism of evolution as being continuous mutual strife, was quickly seized upon by the philosophers of capitalism.

At the outset, Darwin's work dealt such a deadly blow to the theological view of creation, and elicited such bitter hostility in Church circles, that its more fundamental social implications were overshadowed. For the controversy which raged during the latter half of the nineteenth century between the theory of evolution and the Church

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ended many years ago in such a decisive victory for the scientists that the "Darwinian question" is often regarded as entirely settled. Yet the conflict over the exact manner in which Darwin's theory of Natural Selection is to be interpreted is still fought over, though with rather less heat, despite its ultimately more fundamental character. Darwin's theory of the mechanism of evolution has an important bearing on sociological questions, and its social implications were immediately recognised at the time.

Karl Marx, for example, when he published his *Critique of Political Economy* in 1859, considered it an extremely lucky chance that *The Origin of Species* should have appeared in the same year. "This wonderful work," he wrote, "makes my own absolutely impregnable. Darwin may not know it, but he belongs to the Social Revolution." At the same time, however, the liberal capitalists and their political philosophers, the Manchester school of *laissez-faire* economists, acclaimed it in support of *their* theories also. According to them, unlimited free competition of each against all was the best method of securing economic progress and prosperity, and it was this apparently ceaseless competition which they stressed in Darwin's work. As Kropotkin pointed out later, Darwin himself took no such narrow view of the "struggle for existence", although it became the basis of his follower Huxley's interpretation of natural selection.

The struggle of Religion *versus* Science threw the controversy regarding the social implications of Darwin's work into background. But it also seems to have cast the mantle of ecclesiastical obscurantism over the discussion, for we usually find that investigation of the facts of the matter is neglected in favour of dogmatic assertion and blind assumption. Capitalist and governmental prejudice have usurped the place of clerical mythology in obscuring the problem. Kropotkin's great work *Mutual Aid* goes far towards settling the question once and for all, and more recent investigations have only confirmed the position he put forward. But before considering it, it will be of interest to consider the historical background to the question at issue. We shall then see that it is one that has been debated by sociologists since the time of the French Revolution.

By a remarkable coincidence, both Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace, who reached the idea of evolution taking place through natural selection almost simultaneously, started on this train of thought from the same initial stimulus. In his *Naturalist's Voyage Round the World*, Darwin relates how the ideas of Malthus set him on the track of Natural Selection.

"... In October 1838, that is, fifteen months after I had begun my systematic enquiry, I happened to read for amusement 'Malthus on Population', and being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence which everywhere goes on, from long continued observation of the habits of plants and animals, it at once struck me that under these circumstances favourable variations would tend to be preserved, and unfavourable ones destroyed. The result of this would be the

formation of new species."

Similarly, Wallace describes how, when he was lying ill with fever in February 1858, twenty years later than Darwin, he was thinking about the "positive checks"—war, famine and disease—described by Malthus in his *Essay on Population*. Wallace felt that these "positive checks" must act even more powerfully on animals than upon men because of their greater rate of multiplication. Thus both men began to speculate about natural selection after reading Malthus' book.

The *Essay on Population* became almost a textbook of capitalist ideology. It was very convenient to think that poverty was due to an "inevitable" tendency for the population always to be greater than the available food supply, so that the poor were merely those on whom the "positive checks" were acting. Such a belief happily relieved the economic and social system of any blame for the prevalent human misery. But even in the latter half of the nineteenth century it was becoming apparent that the possibilities of production far outstripped the actual consumption of the working class who formed the vast majority of the human population. It was not the limits of world resources that made poverty inevitable, but the limitation of purchasing power which the wages system imposed on the mass of mankind. The history of the last twenty years have even more decisively cast Malthus' ideas on the scrap heap, for we have been compelled to witness the spectacle of the vast majority of human beings eking out a life of miserable poverty in the midst of a world of plenty. For years, while there has been widespread starvation, huge masses of foodstuffs have been dumped in the sea, burned in locomotives, and spread as manure on the fields. Food which is sorely needed to relieve famine has been fed instead to animals because it has been cheaper, more "economical" to do so. Such a spectacle makes nonsense of Malthus' idea that the world is always slightly overpopulated, with a resulting scarcity which makes poverty and starvation inevitable, and at the same time limits the growth of population. Yet apologists for the present system of society still put forward his exploded views.

Now Malthus himself wrote his book in an attempt to refute the ideas put forward by the anarchist, William Godwin, in 1793 in his great book *An Enquiry into the Nature of Political Justice*. Thus the whole controversy may be said to have originated in the work of the "father of anarchism".

Huxley developed Darwin's views to the extreme point of representing "the war of each against all" as a natural law, and thus carried Malthus' views to a logical conclusion. It was this conception which Kropotkin attacked in *Mutual Aid*. He entered the lists as a powerful supporter of the ideas advanced by Godwin almost a century before, and the evidence he adduced is so convincing in its cumulative effect that, for those who have read *Mutual Aid* and grasped its social implications, the controversy will appear settled.

We saw that Darwin's theory was acclaimed by the political economists of the Manchester School, and that these bourgeois econo-

mists had advanced Malthus' ideas in support of their theories. The characteristic feature of capitalist economy—mass poverty in the midst of potential, and even actual, plenty—has destroyed Malthus' case. In addition, work in anthropology has confirmed Kropotkin's refutation of Huxley's conceptions, and shown that the idea of individual competition as a "law of nature" is unsupported by facts. Yet in spite of all this, Kropotkin's ideas do not by any means hold the field today, although the bankruptcy of the ideology which he demolished is becoming ever more apparent.

The reason is not far to seek. Although competition between individual members of society is not a "law of nature", it is certainly a law of capitalism, and indeed of any class-divided society. However much they are at variance with the facts of nature, Huxley's and Malthus' views are very well suited to the cut-throat society which exists in all developed countries today. It is not surprising therefore that they are widely held. Under apparently inevitable conditions of adversity it is natural to make a virtue of necessity, and the oppressed worker, no less than his capitalist exploiter, tends to console himself with the reflection that the evils of society are part of the natural order of things. "There always has been poverty and oppression, and there always will be. It is the law of human nature." How often has one heard it said! The great value of Kropotkin's work for the present age lies in his demonstration that such a philosophy is very far from being a true reflection of the actual phenomena as observed in nature, and finds no confirmation in the facts. The "law" of each against all, so far from being the rule, is very much the exception in the long history of human society. On the contrary, it is the special characteristic of class-divided societies—that form of social organisation in which the many are ruled by the few. Poverty and struggle, wars and scarcity are universally found in governmental society; they are conspicuously absent from those societies which observe freedom and equality. In such societies, as in evolution generally, the law of Mutual Aid inherent in all social groups is allowed free development, and is the prerequisite of progress.

The question must now be considered in more detail. Thomas Henry Huxley had represented Darwinism as an unbridled competition of each against all which tended to weed out all individuals save those "best fitted to survive".

"... from the point of view of the moralist, the animal world is on about the same level as a gladiator's show. The creatures are fairly well treated, and set to fight; whereby the strongest, the swiftest, and the cunningest live to fight again another day. The spectator has no need to turn his thumb down, as no quarter is given..." And further on in the same paper he declares that what obtains among animals, is also true of primitive men. Significantly enough, in this connexion, he refers to the English philosopher Hobbes, whose book *Leviathan*, in defence of the highly centralised state, was written in the middle of the seventeenth century, in the years during which the English capitalist

class fought for the political supremacy which they wrested from the landowning aristocracy and the monarchy in the Revolution of 1642.

"... The weakest and stupidest went to the wall, while the toughest and shrewdest, those who were best fitted to cope with their circumstances, but not the best in another way, survived. Life was a continuous free fight, and beyond the limited and temporary relations of the family, the Hobbesian war of each against all was the normal state of existence."

It was to show that this conception was very far from corresponding with the facts of nature, in what we know of both animal and human life, that Kropotkin wrote the articles for *The Nineteenth Century* which he later collected together into his book *Mutual Aid*.

The Huxleyan views which the capitalists took to themselves were obviously at variance with the teachings of anarchism; yet Kropotkin did not write *Mutual Aid* simply in order to vindicate anarchist ideas in a merely controversial way. He never allowed his anarchism to lead him into making a partial selection from the facts for the sake of making out a "case". In his introduction to *Mutual Aid*, he describes the observations which he made during his explorations in Siberia with Poliakoff:

"We were both under the fresh impression of the *Origin of Species*, but we vainly looked for the keen competition between animals of the same species which the reading of Darwin's works had led us to expect, even after taking into account the remarks of the third chapter."

Kropotkin pointed out that it is by no means always the longest teeth and the sharpest claws that ensure survival of a species among animals. On the contrary, the most successful are those in which the individuals, so far from competing with each other, eliminate this competition altogether, and instead combine among themselves for the purpose of securing food, for defence against their enemies, or for safeguarding the young during the breeding season. He showed that many species even of predatory animals, such as certain eagles, combined for the purpose of hunting for food. Other animals, on the other hand, whose members are individually poorly equipped for attack or defence, defeat their more powerful enemies by combining together in groups. This tendency to form groups for social purposes he called Mutual Aid, and he demonstrated that the operation of this principle was a much more potent influence in securing survival than mutual struggle. Kropotkin's book is really a development and amplification of the view put forward by the Russian biologist, Kessler, whom he quotes in his first section:

"I obviously do not deny the struggle for existence, but I maintain that the progressive development of the animal kingdom, and especially of mankind, is favoured much more by mutual support than by mutual struggle. . . . All organic beings have two essential needs: that of nutrition, and that of propagating the species. The former brings them to a struggle and to mutual extermination, while the needs

of maintaining the species bring them to approach one another and to support one another. But I am inclined to think that in the evolution of the organic world—in the progressive modification of organic beings—mutual support among individuals plays a much more important part than their mutual struggle.’”

A recent writer has pointed out the same principle in regard to the actual history of human society:

“The early members of the human family . . . the fossil hominids that are often termed palaeoanthropic, were not our direct evolutionary ancestors; in the pedigree of *Homo Sapiens* they represent the side branches of the main stem. And yet their bodies were better equipped than ours for certain physical functions such as fighting. The canine teeth of Eoanthropus, or Piltdown Man, for instance, were formidable weapons.”²

How, then, did *Homo Sapiens* manage to survive whilst the cave bear and the sabre-toothed tiger disappeared? These animals were well enough equipped for the “war of each against all”; but they had only themselves to rely on. Men lived in societies and practiced mutual support. They used mutual defence, and learned to implement their individual physical equipment by means of tools. As Professor Gordon Childe says, “In a sense the possibility of making artificial substitutes for bodily defences is a consequence of their absence”.

It is clear that the idea that mutual aid is a powerful factor in securing evolutionary survival must imply that men have always lived in societies, for if they had been solitary they could never have lived on in conditions which rendered better equipped animals extinct. To have survived at all they must always have been social creatures. Kropotkin devoted a considerable amount of his book to showing that living in societies is widespread among animals and is by no means a purely human acquirement. The work of Lewis Morgan (best known nowadays through Frederick Engels’ book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, which is based on Morgan’s book *Ancient Society*) had already shown that social groupings in *tribes* can universally be traced as preceding societies in which *families* are the predominant grouping. Among others whose researches established this precedence of tribes over families was Elie Reclus,³ the brother of the geographer Elisée Reclus. It was his scientific researches in anthropology which led him to his anarchist convictions.

This question of the tribe and the family is important because it is commonly believed that in primitive times men roamed about in small mutually hostile groups held together by no more than “family ties”. Children are still taught by ignorant teachers that men have “progressed” from a condition of primitive savagery in which internecine strife was the rule to a condition of nation societies in which “peace” (!) is the blessed condition of the human race. It is needless to point out how convenient such a conception is to the philosophy of capitalism and also of gradualist reformers. Although such a teaching is not at

all in conformance with the facts of observation and research, and would have rendered the survival of man impossible if it had been the actual condition of primitive men, it nonetheless holds the field today. In order to accept capitalist society it is necessary to regard nature as Huxley did, with the “Hobbesian war of each against all” as the “normal condition of existence”.

The dissemination of this entirely false and politically biased view is due in no small measure to certain popular scientific writers, who have taken upon themselves the task of providing capitalist philosophy with a certain “scientific” sanction. Thus H. G. Wells in his popular and very widely read *Short History of the World*⁴ makes the statement that “True” (Cro-Magnon) men “ousted the Neanderthal man by competing successfully for the same food; they probably made war upon their grisly predecessors and killed them off.” (p 31.)

In this short passage, Wells implies three propositions for which there is no evidence at all. (1) That true men ousted Neanderthal men by successful competition for the same food supply. The assumption therefore is that the food supply was limited and could not sustain the existing population. This is Malthus’ idea once more. (2) That true men made war on Neanderthal men. (3) That Neanderthal men were “grisly”, that is, presumably, savage and addicted to horrible practices. Now there is no evidence whatever to support any of these loose assumptions. In all of them lies implicit the idea of internal strife, for which observation provides no vestige of proof. Indeed, it is evident, that the assumption that men did fight among themselves is the basis for Wells’ picture of prehistoric human life. This conception appears again later on when he declares:

“Probably the earliest human societies, in the opening stages of the true human story, were small family groups. Just as flocks and herds of the earlier mammals arose out of families which had remained together and multiplied, so did the earliest tribes. But before this could happen a certain restraint upon the primitive egotisms of the individual had to be established.”

We have seen that this runs counter to the facts regarding the social development of tribes and families. Wells’ last sentence is significant because this argument has been made the justification of governmentalism and coercive authority. Kropotkin demolished this viewpoint in his book, and his arguments will be cited later.

Wells goes on to speak of the fear and jealousy and respect inspired by the “old Man” who ruled over the family according to these unfounded assumptions. A similar view of early society was taken by Sigmund Freud in his book *Totem and Taboo*, in which he also speaks of the “primal horde” dominated by an “old Man” as though there were solid evidence for such a conception.⁵ This book, one of the most widely read of his works, has been vigorously attacked by anthropologists.

Morgan, among many others, had already shown at the time when Kropotkin wrote that the monogamous family grew up only gradually out of group marriage in which sexual affairs were wholly communistic.

and promiscuous; family organisation was thus a later rather than an earlier development of man's social life.

Since Kropotkin wrote *Mutual Aid*, many primitive tribes in all parts of the world have been studied, and a great deal of information bearing on the subject of social organisation has been derived from them. It is necessary, however, in order to avoid confusion, to make a distinction between truly primitive societies which have never known agriculture, and those "savage" cultures which prove to be degenerated remnants of more advanced cultures of the past. The former are the modern representatives of the "ancient hunters" of the stone age, before the discovery of agriculture. It is these latter who are misrepresented by the Huxleys, the H. G. Wells's and other unconscious ideologists of capitalism as savage hordes addicted to grisly practices.

Primitive food-gatherers have been observed in widely differing parts of the world, by various observers ranging from travellers and missionaries to anthropologists and ethnologists. In spite of this, the accounts of these primitive societies are surprisingly uniform. Everywhere they are found to be characterised by sociability, mutual trust, and absence of violence and strife within the group. Thus the African pygmies never steal or kill, no such act having occurred within the memory of their oldest member (Van den Bergh). Another writer speaks of the Mambuti Pygmies of the Congo in similar terms. They never kill or steal among themselves, are very gentle and hospitable, show great courage in hunting, and have no social aspirations. The Kalahari Bushmen were exterminated by the Dutch; yet they are described as being entirely free from cruelty and vindictiveness, upright and faithful in their dealings, kindly and lighthearted and careless of the morrow. They were as innocent of tribal organisation, chieftainship or central authority as of criminality in their deeds (Dornan).

The Veddahs of Ceylon are "as peaceable as it is possible to be. They are proverbially truthful and honest" (Bailey). The Semang of Malaya have no form of government. "Freedom, but not licence, is the principle of the Semang group, and the characteristic of each individual." They eat in common and share all their food; drunkenness and theft are absolutely unknown (Schebesta). The Negritos of the Philippine Islands are wholly pacific, any member of any other tribe being welcomed in each others' homes. To the question of a missionary (Vanoverbergh) as to whether they would allow Negritos from further off to hunt in their forests, the answer was, "Yes, we cannot forbid them. If they like to come here and hunt in our forests, they are allowed to do so—why not?"

Similarly, Eskimos cannot understand the profession of soldiering, and have no words for murder or theft. Their practices, however, become more like "civilised" man's in the districts where their territories come in contact with the white man, and where they have learned to trade with them. It was the same with the North American Indian. Verrill declares that the usually accepted ideas about their cruelty are quite erroneous, and where degradation has occurred he attributes it to the influence of white men. Not even primitive men were prepared

to be massacred by the extermination policy of early colonisers without putting up some resistance! Verrill notes, "I have seen Indians change the site selected for their camp in order not to disturb a nesting bird." And H. J. Massingham comments: "We might almost call such delicacy an act of imaginative piety and it is a singular comment upon civilised attitudes of mind that such an act would be regarded as purely childish." It is worth remembering that it was the character of the Red Indian which so profoundly influenced the French humanitarian thinkers of the eighteenth century and their conception of the "noble savage", so often ridiculed today by the ignorant.

As a final example in this necessarily brief selection, I will quote what two observers say of the Punan of Borneo, a people who have no social classes and no private property, everything being communal. The Punan himself "is a likeable person, rich in good qualities and innocent of vices. He never slays or attacks men of other tribes wantonly. But he will defend himself and his family pluckily if he is attacked and has no choice of flight. Fighting between Punan whether of the same or different communities is very rare. . . .

"Public opinion and tradition seem to be the sole and sufficient sanctions of conduct among these Arcadian bands of wanderers. . . . Harmony and mutual help are the rule within the family circle, as well as throughout the larger community . . . each shares with all members of the group whatever food, whether vegetable or animal, he may procure by skill or good fortune."

They are described as being "rich in imagination" and possessing "a fine sense of pictorial art and craftsmanship". Elliot Smith speaks of them as "exempt from the exasperations and the greed which civilisation creates" and "the very antithesis of what is usually understood by the term savage".⁶

It becomes apparent therefore that natural man, unhampered by social institutions and inequality, is neither savage nor quarrelsome, but lives in harmony and freedom with his fellows. These modern observations, derived from many sources and widely separated parts of the world, provide no confirmation whatever for the capitalistic conception of "the Hobbesian war of each against all". On the contrary they strengthen at every point the arguments put forward by Kropotkin with so much charm and skill in his great book.

It remains to discuss the bearing of the mutual aid controversy on the theoretical basis of anarchist sociology on the one hand, and authoritarian ideas advanced by both capitalists, fascists and socialists on the other.

Kropotkin sums up the evidence regarding mutual aid in animal life in these words:

"Happily enough, competition is not the rule either in the animal world or in mankind. It is limited among animals to exceptional periods, and natural selection finds better fields for its activity. Better conditions are created by the *elimination* of competition by means of mutual aid and mutual support. In the great struggle for life—for the

greatest possible fullness and intensity of life with the least waste of energy—natural selection continually seeks out the ways precisely for avoiding competition as much as possible. The ants combine in nests and nations; they pile up their stores, they rear their cattle—and thus avoid competition, and natural selection picks out of the ants' family the species which know best how to avoid competition, with its unavoidably deleterious consequences. Most of our birds slowly move southwards as winter comes, or gather in numberless societies and undertake long journeys—and thus avoid competition. Many rodents fall asleep when the time comes that competition should set in; while other rodents store food for the winter, and gather in large villages for obtaining the necessary protection when at work. The reindeer, when the lichens are dry in the interior of the continent, migrate towards the sea. Buffaloes cross an immense continent in order to find plenty of food. And the beavers, when they grow numerous on a river, divide into two parties, and go, the old ones down the river, and the young ones up the river—and avoid competition. And when animals can neither fall asleep, nor migrate, nor lay in stores, nor themselves grow their food like the ants, they do what the titmouse does, and what Wallace (*Darwinism*, Chapter 5) has so charmingly described: they resort to new kinds of food—and thus, again, avoid competition.”

In regard to mutual aid among men, Kropotkin cites an exceedingly interesting passage from Darwin. “Darwin was quite right,” he says, “when he saw in man’s social qualities the chief factor for his evolution, and Darwin’s vulgarisers are entirely wrong when they maintain the contrary.”

“The small strength and speed of man (he wrote), his want of natural weapons, etc., are more than counterbalanced, firstly, by his intellectual faculties (which, he remarked on another page, have been chiefly or even exclusively gained for the benefit of the community); and secondly, by his social qualities, which led him to give and receive aid from his fellow men. (*Descent of Man*, 2nd Ed., pp 63-64.)”

Modern observations have only confirmed the formidable mass of evidence which Kropotkin brought together in *Mutual Aid*. Sociability has a pre-human origin, and mutual aid lies at the root of all social institutions.

“Sociability and need for mutual aid and support are such inherent parts of human nature that at no time of history can we discover men living in small isolated families, fighting each other for the means of subsistence. On the contrary, modern research . . . proves that since the very beginning of their pre-historic life men used to agglomerate into *gentes*, clans, or tribes, maintained by the ideas of common descent and by worship of common ancestors. For thousands of years this organisation has kept men together, even though there was no authority to impose it.”⁸

Yet this evidence for the universality of the mutual aid tendency is tacitly ignored by all opponents of anarchism, whether capitalist, fascist or socialist. Let us again quote Kropotkin himself:

“ . . . though a good deal of warfare goes on between different classes of animals, or different species, or even different tribes of the same species, peace and mutual support are the rule within the tribe or species; and those species which best know how to combine, and to avoid competition, have the best chance of survival and of further progressive development. They prosper, while the unsociable species decay.

“It is evident that it would be quite contrary to all we know of nature if men were an exception to so general a rule: if a creature so defenceless as man was at his beginnings should have found his protection and his way to progress, not in mutual support, like other animals, but in reckless competition for personal advantages, with no regard for the interests of the species. To a mind accustomed to the idea of unity in nature, such a proposition appears utterly indefensible. And yet, improbable and unphilosophical as it is, it has never found a lack of supporters. There always were writers who took a pessimistic view of mankind. They knew it, more or less superficially, through their own limited experience; they knew of history what the annalists, always watchful of wars, cruelty, and oppression, told of it and little more besides; and they concluded that mankind is nothing but a loose aggregation of beings, always ready to fight with each other, and only prevented from doing so by the intervention of some authority.”⁹

That such views should be held by capitalists and supporters of capitalist society is not surprising. In order to justify support for a social and economic order based on competition, strife and tyranny, it is necessary to elevate competition, as the Manchester School of *laissez faire* did, into a positive virtue making for “progress”. Acceptance of the principle of mutual aid demands the rejection of capitalist society and *vice versa*.

But the implications of mutual aid are also ignored by socialists. Wells, for example, already implies the justification of government and the State by his remark—already quoted—that before social forms could develop “a certain restraint upon the primitive egotisms of the individual had to be established”. Wells may not be very acceptable as a socialist apologist, but his views in this particular do not differ from those of other socialists, especially the followers of Marx. In defending their conceptions of the State against the critical attacks of the anarchists, these people declare that authority and power to enforce it are necessary to protect society from the anti-social inclinations of the individual. And they add that “you must have authority where a division of labour exists, otherwise everyone would do as they liked”. The assumption behind all these arguments is that “doing what one likes” is of necessity anti-social, and that social behaviour must be imposed on men by an authority outside of themselves, to wit, the State. Such a premise makes the erection of a central coercive authority a logical necessity.

But to assume that “doing what one likes” is necessarily to engage in anti-social behaviour is to ignore the whole evidence on which the

conception of mutual aid is based, and to deny its universality in human society and throughout the societies of animals. In effect, such an assumption destroys the whole basis of socialism itself. If authority and restraint are necessary, how are we to explain that in the primitive societies which exist today without recourse to authority or government, "freedom but not licence is the principle of the group and the characteristic of the individual"? How explain that "public opinion and tradition are the sole and sufficient sanctions of conduct" in these societies? The history of governmental and class society is at most only 7,000 years old, whereas the primitive communist society has existed since modern man himself appeared on the earth—at the very lowest estimate, for 70,000 years. The social principle of mutual aid has existed in animal societies for a far longer period still. As Kropotkin, and more recent investigators have shown, men with their weak physical equipment, would never have survived at all in the struggle for existence but for the practice of that mutual aid and mutual support. Yet this social principle which is inherent in man, and has been the main factor in his evolution and survival is calmly ignored, and even denied, by socialist theory.¹⁰

Like the capitalists with their economic theories of the necessity for competition, the socialists ignore the lessons of *Mutual Aid* because it destroys the premises on which their theories of the necessity for authority and government are based. These people are content to construct their social and political theories—especially political—in the intellectual cosiness of the study or in the Reading Room of the British Museum. Kropotkin, by contrast, was before everything else an observer of what actually happens in life, a realist who never permitted his theories to lose touch with the facts of human life. His study of animal life demonstrated quite clearly that the social instinct has a pre-human origin. So far from requiring a coercive authority to compel them to act for the common good, men behave in a social way because it is their nature to do so, because sociableness is an instinct which they have inherited from their remotest evolutionary ancestors. It is necessary to stress once again that without their inherent tendency to mutual aid they could never have survived at all in the evolutionary struggle for existence, much less developed the social arts and institutions which distinguish them from other animals.

In the middle chapters of *Mutual Aid*, Kropotkin shows how mutual support was not only the dominating feature of animal societies and primitive human communities, but also of the highly developed city communes of the Middle Ages. The central authority embodied in the National State is a development only of the last three or four hundred years of our epoch (though similar institutions have existed before in other eras also). Even so, the principle of mutual aid still survives as the motive force in all the vital institutions of society, despite all the State's attacks on local initiative. However ruthlessly governments attempt to eradicate mutual combination and support among workers, they can never succeed in uprooting it altogether, for it provides the cement which binds society together and gives it

whatever degree of cohesion it may possess.

"In short, neither the crushing powers of the centralised State, nor the teachings of mutual hatred and pitiless struggle which came, adorned with the attributes of science, from obliging philosophers and sociologists, could weed out the feelings of human solidarity, deeply lodged in men's understanding and heart, because it has been nurtured by all our preceding evolution."¹¹

The socialists therefore who wish to set up an authority to compel men to be social are ignoring the historical fact that men cannot help being social, and that the authority they wish to set up in the shape of the socialist state can only act as a disruptive and anti-social force. Government by authority can only function on the eternal state principle of "Divide and Rule"; it can never act as a cohesive force. Nor is the imposition of such a force from outside necessary to compel men to act according to their nature—that is, in a social manner. Authority simply hinders men from giving free expression to their inherent social tendencies.

The social revolution which will bring a harmonious and developed social life to men is seen therefore to imply a struggle to destroy all forms of coercive authority, and so to set men free to develop their innate social tendencies. In every revolution of the past, the workers and peasants have thrown off their class oppressors, and have then immediately set about the task of organising their lives on a basis of free agreement among themselves. The necessity for an authority to "restrain the primitive egotisms of the individual" is simply illusory, and a product of capitalist ideology.

The institutions set up by the Spanish workers and peasants in 1936 were free collectives imposed by no authority, but built by the free co-operation of the workers themselves after they had overthrown the coercive power of the State. But when the counter-revolution ushered in by the socialists and "communists" established the State power once more, it immediately set about destroying these free institutions of the workers, and in consequence destroyed the backbone of the struggle against fascist tyranny.

Thus the study of primitive societies in which no government exists, and of the short-lived revolutionary societies of our own day, both confirm Kropotkin's teachings as profoundly realistic, and at the same time condemn all ideas of authority as having no basis in nature, and being absolutely reactionary in effect. The struggle for freedom is the struggle against government for the purpose of allowing free development to man's nature. Anarchists are ready to do without all forms of authority because the study of men and of life shows that men do not need such restraints. As Kropotkin said: "We are not afraid to say 'Do what you will; act as you will'; because we are persuaded that the great majority of mankind, in proportion to their degree of enlightenment, and the completeness with which they free themselves from existing fetters, will behave and act always in a direction useful to society; just as we are persuaded beforehand that a child will one

day walk on its two feet, and not on all fours, simply because it is born of parents belonging to the genus *homo*."¹²

The principle of mutual aid which is seen throughout nature and in all human societies is ignored by all authoritarian theorists, whether capitalist, fascist, or socialist; but it is fundamental to anarchism. The great value of Kropotkin's book was his demonstration that freedom of scope for this principle was the essential prerequisite for human happiness and progress. He showed that anarchism is the most realistic and practical method of all, because it is in line with the tendencies which have operated throughout the whole length of human history, and have their roots in nature itself. It is the schemes to bring about the social revolution by means of coercive authority which are illusory and Utopian, and ultimately prove reactionary in effect.

¹ In *Modern Science and Anarchism*, for instance, Kropotkin speaks of his opponent as "Darwin's courageous, learned and intelligent apostle, Huxley"; in *Mutual Aid* he refers to him as being "certainly considered as one of the ablest exponents of the theory of evolution". Nowhere does he speak of him with rancour.

² V. Gordon Childe: *Man Makes Himself*. 1936.

³ See Elie Reclus: *Primitive Folk*.

⁴ Circulated in large cheap editions both by the Rationalist and Socialist publishing organisations, and also as a Penguin.

⁵ Freud took his ideas about the "primitive horde" from a highly speculative book *Primal Law* by J. J. Atkinson, published in 1903.

⁶ For a fuller account of primitive food-gathering communities, see Elliot Smith, *Human History* 1930.

⁷ Kropotkin: *Mutual Aid*, pp 72-73.

⁸ *Ibid*, p 129.

⁹ *Ibid*, pp 74-75.

¹⁰ One sometimes hears the "transitional state" (after the overthrow of capitalism) defended by socialists on the grounds that "years and even centuries of capitalist conditioning will have to be guarded against". But this represents a wholehearted acceptance of Lamarck's theory that acquired characteristics are inherited—a view that in its general form, was completely discredited by Darwin's work. As in the case of Malthus, a theory discarded by science is here kept alive to save political ideologies; this time, however, by the socialists!

¹¹ *Mutual Aid*, p 229.

¹² Kropotkin: *Anarchist Morality*, p 24.

Kropotkin, Marx and Dewey

RICHARD DeHAAN

PETER KROPOTKIN AND KARL MARX are both nineteenth-century political philosophers in whose ideas people are still interested. Does it make sense to interest ourselves in these ideas in the Atomic Age? Can they be of any conceivable use in our political thinking after the interposition of many new and modern social philosophies? In the light of my two dominant personal biases, anarchism and Deweyism, I shall attempt to treat these questions as dispassionately as is practicable.

The important thing for us moderns to ask about Kropotkin is, How about his famous instincts? Logically prior to Kropotkin's assertion of the existence of co-operative instincts, is the question of the existence of instincts, and prior to that, of course, is the question of existence. What does it mean to say that instincts exist? Is it different than saying that anything-in-general exists? What would it mean to deny Kropotkin's thesis, to say that instincts don't exist? (1) How would these three things be done? (2) What implications would that have?

From the standpoint of Dewey's philosophy, Marxism shares with anarchism the opprobrium of ontologism and—consequently—outdatedness. Accordingly, I shall consider Marxism from the same point-of-view as outlined above for anarchism, but in somewhat less detail, due to the obviousness of its relation to Dewey's ideas. Finally, I hope to come up with some basis for an alternative political philosophy which would accord with the truly radical philosophy of Dewey.

To narrow the area of prejudgment as much as possible, I shall not consider anarchism and Marxism as mutually exclusive. Bakunin was, after all—despite his personal difficulties with Marx—the most Marxist of all the anarchists. And Lenin, according to Max Nomad, was little more than a Bakunin in Marxist trappings.¹ Certainly there was much interaction between the two schools of thought; their divergence perhaps became decisive following the publication of Lenin's *State and Revolution* in August, 1917.

RICHARD DeHAAN's article was serialised in *FREEDOM* in 1953 and it had been the intention of the editors to reprint it together with the Hewetson essay.

II

Montagu F. Ashley-Montagu, after earning his living from his watered-down versions of Kropotkin's ideas for years, has at last seen fit to acknowledge his debt to his victim. His book, *Darwin, Competition and Co-operation*,² is dedicated "To The Memory of Peter Kropotkin, 1842-1921, Author of *Mutual Aid*." For whatever it might be worth, Ashley-Montagu has this to say about Kropotkin's current importance:

Kropotkin's book [*Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*] is now a classic—which means that few people read it and that it is probably out of print. Yet no book in the whole realm of evolutionary theory is more readable or more important, for it is *Mutual Aid* which provided the first thoroughly documented demonstration of the importance of co-operation as a factor in evolution. Kropotkin's book, one may be sure, is destined for a revival, and the influence it has already had is likely to increase many-fold with the years. Since the publication in book form of *Mutual Aid* an increasing number of books and studies have been published along similar lines.³

My prejudices are such that I am not able to consider such bourgeois reformists as Ashley-Montagu and Warder Allee as exponents of Kropotkin's philosophy. How it is possible to deduce apologetics for capitalism from that thoroughly revolutionary philosophy is beyond my ken! However, science, like the working class, has no fatherland; experimental evidence both for and against Kropotkin's propositions (Allee has found both) must stand on its own feet, without reference to its implications. Allee himself habitually makes a sharp distinction between "The Biological Evidence" for Kropotkin's theories and "Some Implications" of it.⁴

On the other hand, the theories should perhaps be referred to as a "Kropotkin-type" philosophy, because Kropotkin's own writings leave vast areas undeveloped. For example, he was influenced by Darwin and Kessler before him, and complemented by Allee and Read after his death. Accordingly, I shall from time to time use the symbol, "Kropotkin", to stand for the whole of co-operative-evolutionary philosophy, excluding the reformist attempts to distort its application to politics.

Kropotkin's era was one of boundless optimism, the exaltation of science, atheism and rationalism. Speaking in his *Memoirs* of his student days (1859-61), he said: "It was a time of scientific revival, and the current which carried minds towards natural science was irresistible."⁵ He remarked with approval:

... the thinkers of the eighteenth century did not change their method when they passed from the stars and physical bodies to the world of chemical reactions, or from the physical and chemical world to the life of plants and animals, to Man and to the development of economical and political forms of human society, and finally, to the evolution of the moral sense, the religions, and so on. . . . And consequently they endeavoured to explain the whole of the universe and all its phenomena in the same way, as naturalists.⁶

He was a thorough believer in what Dewey calls an "archetypal antecedent reality" and in a mechanistic universal causation:

We can already read the book of Nature, which comprises that of the development of both inorganic and organic life and of mankind, without resorting to a Creator, or to a mystical vital force, or to an immortal soul; and without consulting the trilogy of Hegel, or hiding our ignorance behind any metaphysical symbols whatever, endowed with a real existence by the writer. *Mechanical** phenomena, becoming more and more complicated as we pass from physics to the facts of life, are sufficient to explain Nature and all the intellectual and social organic life on our planet.⁷

He also believed in the existence of natural laws and was a thoroughgoing reductionist:

... the naturalist . . . continues his patient study of the phenomena of life, of intelligence, and of emotions and passions, in order to prove that they may all be reduced to physical and chemical phenomena. He endeavours to discover their natural laws.⁹

He felt that the "inductive-deductive method" of the time was the only possible method for the study of the social sciences:

But there is one point on which without doubt Anarchism is absolutely in the right. It is when it considers the study of the social institutions as a chapter of natural science; when it parts for ever with metaphysics; and when it takes for its method of reasoning the method that has served to build up all modern science and natural philosophy . . . to verify our conclusions is only possible by the *scientific inductive-deductive method*, on which every science is built, and by means of which every scientific conception of the Universe has been developed.¹⁰

This is all thoroughly objectionable from a Deweyan point-of-view. There is no denying it, Kropotkin is hopelessly nineteenth-century. But a careful reading of *Modern Science and Anarchism*—his principal work on methodology—will reveal that he isn't quite as hopeless as the foregoing quotations indicate.

III

Anarchism cannot be judged solely in terms of its methodological conceptions, or even of the experimental results of its exponents. This philosophy is grounded primarily in mass action, not in scientific results of experiments designed to establish propositions stemming from observations of that mass action. The first words of this book, for example, contain two important qualifications:

Anarchy does not draw its origin from any scientific researches, or from any system of philosophy. . . . We must not forget either that scientific men are but ordinary men, and that the majority of them belong to the leisured class, and consequently share the prejudices of this class; most of them are even in the pay of the State. It is, therefore, quite evident that Anarchy does not come from universities. Like Socialism in general, and like all other social movements, Anarchism originated among the people, and it will preserve its vitality and creative force so long only as it remains a movement of the people.¹¹

Is this faith in grass-roots action justified? Kropotkin meets some of the accusations against him of "Utopianism" and at the same time

* It would have been better to say "kinetic", but this expression is less known.⁸

hits upon something very close to Dewey's "growth" in his "vitality" (for which concept Kropotkin himself was indebted to J. M. Guyau):

The question put by Anarchism might be expressed in the following way: "Which social forms best guarantee in such and such societies, and in humanity at large, the greatest sum of happiness, and therefore the greatest sum of vitality?" . . . The desire to help [my emphasis here—R.J.D.H.] evolution in this direction determines the social, scientific, and artistic activity of the Anarchist. And this activity, in its turn, precisely on account of its falling in with the development of society in this direction, becomes a source of increased vitality, vigour, sense of oneness with mankind and its best vital forces.¹²

In the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article he also addresses himself to the question of utopianism. Speaking of himself, he says: "It was Kropotkin's aim to prove that communism—at least partial—has more chances of being established than collectivism."¹³ Again:

Taken in its usual current sense, therefore, the word "Utopia" ought to be limited to those conceptions only which are based on merely theoretical reasonings as to what is *desirable* from the writer's point of view, but not on what is *already developing* in human agglomerations . . . it cannot be applied to a conception of society which is based, as Anarchism is, on an analysis of *tendencies of an evolution that is already going on in society*, and on *inductions* therefrom as to the future—those tendencies which have been, as we saw, from thousands of years the mainspring for the growth of sociable habits and customs, known in science under the name of Customary Law, and which affirm themselves more and more definitely in modern society.¹⁴

This brings us face to face with the controversial theory of instincts, to which I will proceed as soon as note is taken of one more qualification, indicative of the "modernizations" in Kropotkin's philosophy: ". . . the *conditional* character of all so-called natural 'laws'. In fact, every natural law always means this:—'If such and such conditions are at work, the result will be this and that.'¹⁵

IV

Kropotkin claims that anarchism, unlike other varieties of socialism, does not seek after an abstract set of desiderata, but exploits tendencies already at work in society. It is commonly assumed that these "tendencies" are instincts. But in the *Britannica* article, he follows this statement immediately with a listing of them: "The progress of modern technics, which wonderfully simplifies the production of all the necessities of life; the growing spirit of independence and the rapid spread of free initiative and free understanding in all branches of activity—including those which formerly were considered as the proper attribution of Church and State—are steadily reinforcing the no-government tendency."¹⁶ Still, there is no denying that Kropotkin's is an instinct-theory, or at least involves instincts. Ashley-Montagu, in an unwonted show of brilliance, notes that Kropotkin did not entitle his book *Mutual Aid: The Factor of Evolution*, but *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*.¹⁷

What did Kropotkin mean by "tendencies"? Whatever he meant,

it is certain that he didn't mean instincts in the derogatory sense with which some modern psychologists use that term. He seldom uses any other word but "tendency":

The mutual-aid tendency in man has so remote an origin, and is so deeply interwoven with all the past evolution of the human race, that it has been maintained by mankind up to the present time, notwithstanding all vicissitudes of history. It was chiefly evolved during periods of peace and prosperity; but when even the greatest calamities befell men . . . the same tendency continued to live in the villages and among the poorer classes in the towns; it still kept them together, and in the long run it reacted even upon those ruling, fighting, and devastating minorities which dismissed it as sentimental nonsense. And whenever mankind had to work out a new social organization, adapted to a new phase of development, its constructive genius always drew the elements and the inspiration for the new departure from the same ever-living tendency.¹⁸

The natural and social calamities pass away. . . . All this is certainly a part of our existence. But the nucleus of mutual-support institutions, habits, and customs remains alive with the millions; it keeps them together; and they prefer to cling to their customs, beliefs and traditions rather than to accept the teachings of a war of each against all, which are offered to them under the title of science, but are no science at all.¹⁹ In the practice of mutual aid, which we can retrace to the earliest beginnings of evolution, we thus find the positive and undoubted origin of our ethical conceptions; and we can affirm that in the ethical progress of man, mutual support—not mutual struggle—has had the leading part. In its wide extension, even at the present time, we also see the best guarantee of a still loftier evolution of our race.²⁰

Allee uses terms like "drive", "principle" and "evolutionary force", in applying Kropotkin's "co-operative tendencies" to man. While recognizing the dangers inherent in generalizing from the unconscious forces at work in the lower species to the conscious morality of man, he still doesn't shirk the task:

There seems to be no inherent biological reason why man cannot learn to extend the principle of co-operation into the field of international relations to as great an extent as he has already done in his more personal affairs. In addition to the unconscious evolutionary forces that play on man as well as on other animals, he has to some extent the opportunity of consciously directing his own social evolution. Unlike ants or chickens or fishes, man is not bound over to form castles or peck orders or schools, or to wait for a reshuffling of hereditary genes before he can discontinue behaviour that tends towards the destruction of his species.²¹

Kropotkin's well-known motto is, "Without equality, no justice; without justice, no morality." The last words he ever wrote develop this thesis (and make us long for "what might have been"; he had intended to devote the second volume of his *Ethics* to "the bases of realistic ethics, and its aims."²²): "The fact is, that while the mode of life is determined by the history of the development of a given society, conscience, on the other hand, as I shall endeavour to prove, has a much deeper origin,—namely in the consciousness of equity, which physiologically develops in man as in all social animals . . ."²³ Kropotkin could—and did—go on from here, making no more adventurous statements about consciousness than this, basing his development largely on Chapter IV of *The Descent of Man*, and he would not get into

methodological trouble with Dewey.

"But," says Herbert Read, "Biology is not enough; we are self-conscious animals and we need a science of consciousness; it is called ontology. There is, that is to say, a science of existence which we call *biology*; there is a science of essence which we call *ontology*."²⁴ This embroidery is not necessary to Kropotkin's theory; in fact, it appears to hamper even Read's own theory. I shall consider later some of the Kropotkin-type philosophies which involve ontologism, but here it should suffice to note that equity, justice and morality—considered as aspects of evolution—have no demonstrably necessary dependence upon an immutable reality.

The reason Kropotkin's "co-operative instincts" do not involve ontology is this: the existence of these tendencies is nothing more nor less than an hypothesis. Natural laws are not imbedded in reality; they are human constructs to help us understand nature. Kropotkin would be the first to admit this. It is a way of looking at evolution. Given such and such phenomena, what causes them? True, Kropotkin's anecdotal and semi-anthropomorphic method of observation don't help do away with the idea of ontologism, but this method is not essential to the theory, as Allee has shown.

Tinbergen, a comparative psychologist, discusses this (*supra*) causation in innate behaviour. He cites workers who have taken "directiveness"—teleology—for causation, and others who have attributed the effects to subjective phenomena like emotions. While not denying the existence of either of these, he claims that neither presents causes because they do not admit of scientific observation, whereas ethology ("the objective study of behaviour") does, and truly studies causation insofar as it can be studied.²⁵ Furthermore, both the teleology of McDougall and the subjective phenomena of Bierens deHaan lead to ontologism, whereas Tinbergen's ethology does not. Tinbergen's position is that it is idle to either claim or deny the existence of something which can't be observed objectively.

However, it is not necessary to know the precise cause of this behaviour (the "tendencies", aptitudes, predispositions, etc., observed by Kropotkin) to establish that it is to some large extent unlearned. Further, prenatal or very early (and inevitable) learning can be regarded for all practical purposes as instinctual. Thus, whether instincts exist *qua* observable becomes largely a matter of definition.

"Learning and many other higher processes are secondary modifications of innate mechanisms," says Tinbergen.²⁶ Only this "learning and other higher processes," plus that which we know to be reflexive, are amendable by direct, deliberate human action, *i.e.*, can be changed by any action short of large-scale revision of the environment. That body of behaviour which remains—call it instinct or what you will—is our "given", or, as Dewey would have it, our "taken". We "take" this behaviour and subject it to Kropotkin's hypothesis: If X is operative, then it is the sole necessary and sufficient cause of Y; phenomena Y are observable; therefore X is operative, and—some would say—"exists" (*i.e.*, X if and only if Y). Our "ought"—the "evolutionary

imperative"—proceeds primarily from the satisfactory answer to this problem of residual behaviour.

Just how is this evolutionary imperative manifested? How does one go about basing ethics on biology? We have already seen what Kropotkin would have us do (*supra*, particularly p 5—"help evolution"). Allee basically agrees with him:

Widely dispersed knowledge concerning the important rôle of basic co-operative processes among living beings may lead to the acceptance of co-operation as a guiding principle both in social theory and as a basis for human behaviour. Such a development when it occurs will alter the course of human history.²⁷

Tinbergen helps to clarify this conception of instinct: "The manifold forms of co-ordination between individuals, toward which congregation is usually but the first step, are based upon highly specialised behaviour patterns." Ecology thus becomes the most important adjunct of sociology. Behaviour is an essential element in the equipment serving this (ecological) end.²⁸

Allee, a confessed admirer of Kropotkin, is more cautious than this in the extension of his findings about the lower species to man:

All that can be found is a gradual development of social attributes, suggesting, as has been emphasized throughout this book, a substratum of social tendencies that extends throughout the entire animal kingdom. From this substratum social life rises by the operation of different mechanisms and with various forms of expression until it reaches its present climax in vertebrates and insects. Always it is based on phases of mass physiology and social biology which taken alone seem to be social by implication only.²⁹

It is thus tolerably well established that instincts in some sense "exist", and that co-operative behaviour has been a significant factor in evolution. If it can be established in addition that co-operation is the rule and not the exception and/or that anti-social behaviour is the exception and not the rule, so much the better. But the important thing is to ground ethics on the evolutionary *process*, and not on some abstract, static set of desiderata.

V

It now remains to summarize what kinds of questions these about instincts are, and to see how they fit into Dewey's philosophy.

To say that instincts exist is to affirm that certain tendencies, etc., appear to manifest themselves in evolution, and that it is fruitful in the explanation of given (or "taken") phenomena to assume that the antecedents likewise exist. This is not the same as to say that anything-in-general exists, but merely that an hypothesis has some claim to existence; this is only what Dewey calls "the existential matrix of enquiry"—it is not existential quantification. Kropotkin's "tendencies" form an hypothesis in the same sense as does Darwin's evolution. Both probably require patching-up, but this is no reason to—on the one hand—discard the hypothesis or—on the other—to believe that the concept of "instincts" or "evolution" is somehow a copy of nature. To say that

co-operative instincts exist is to say that "instincts" of a certain character—this character testable by evolutionary survival—have manifested themselves a significant number of times. To say that instincts don't exist is simply to deprive ourselves of a method which has proven useful. The Deweyan scientist doesn't say that instincts "exist"—in this hypothetical sense—eternally; as soon as the concept becomes useless, we are free to discard it. Dewey formulates this in a highly tentative fashion:

One must add the rashness of the prophet to the stubbornness of the partisan to venture a systematic exposition of the influence upon philosophy of the Darwinian method. At best, we can inquire as to its general bearing—the effect upon mental temper and complexion, upon that body of half-conscious, half-instinctive intellectual aversions and preferences which determine, after all, our more deliberate intellectual enterprises.³⁰ Philosophy forswears inquiry after absolute origins and absolute finalities in order to explore specific values and the specific conditions that generate them.³¹

Furthermore, if the existence of Kropotkin's co-operative tendencies is hypothesized, and people are to carry on inquiry and action on the basis of this hypothesis, it is necessary to acknowledge certain connections between the pattern of inquiry and our own pattern of life. Dewey outlines this "existential matrix of inquiry" as follows:

1. Environmental conditions and energies are inherent in inquiry as a special mode of organic behaviour . . . 2. The structure and course of life-behaviour has a definite pattern, spatial and temporal. This pattern definitely foreshadows the general pattern of inquiry . . . *a.* There is no inquiry that does not involve the making of *some* change in environing conditions . . . *b.* The pattern is serial or sequential . . . *c.* The serially connected processes and operations by means of which a consummatory close is brought into being are, by description, intermediate and instrumental . . . *d.* The basic importance of the serial relation in logic is rooted in the conditions of life itself . . . *e.* From the postulate of naturalistic continuity, with its prime corollary that inquiry is a development out of organic-environmental integration and interaction, something follows regarding the relation of psychology and logic . . . The assumptions of "mentalistic" psychology have no place in logical theory . . . the recognition of a natural continuity of inquiry with organic behaviour [is needed].³²

The fact that these biological conditions are "inherent in" the conditions of inquiry doesn't mean that the two interact; quite the contrary. The conventional notion of interaction implies two or more entities given prior to, and outside of inquiry.

Here is an example of this method applied to the sorts of things in which we are interested here:

The underlying philosophy and psychology of earlier liberalism led to a conception of individuality as something ready-made, already possessed, and needing only the removal of certain legal restrictions to come into full play. It was not conceived as a moving thing, something that is attained only by continuous growth. Because of this failure, the dependence in fact of individuals upon social conditions was made little of.³³

Kropotkin perhaps had more faith in the liberating influence of "the removal of certain legal restrictions" than does Dewey, but the

method of the Kropotkin-type philosophy doesn't necessarily contradict that of Dewey. For instance, I think that the following example from Darwin falls within the confines of Dewey's method and at the same time makes Kropotkin's point: Darwin quotes with approval Cuvier's comparison of instinct with human habit. Among many statements by Darwin on this topic are: "Man is impelled by the same *general* wish [as are the lower animals] to aid his fellows; but has few or no *special* instincts."³⁴ (My emphasis.) Habit—by Dewey's own claim—certainly doesn't involve ontologism. ". . . The first foundation or origin of the moral sense lies in the social instincts, including sympathy; and these instincts no doubt were primarily gained, as in the case of the lower animals, through natural selection."³⁵ These quotations seem to me to indicate—within the confines of Dewey's philosophy—the continuity of causes of innate behaviour through the lower species to man, as well as pointing the way to the grounding of ethics in evolution.

One final caution from the pen of Dewey:

In the first place, it is unscientific to try to restrict original activities to a definite number of sharply demarcated classes of instincts. When we assume that our clefts and bunches represent fixed separations and collections *in rerum natura*, we obstruct rather than aid our transactions with things . . . Our thought is hard where facts are mobile; bunched and chunky where events are fluid, dissolving.³⁶

This is something against which Kropotkin-type philosophies must be constantly on guard. If they stick with Darwin's "general" as against "special" instincts (*supra*), though, they may still be methodological Deweyans.

VI

So much for the philosophy of Kropotkin. Now, how are these ideas used in our own time? In recent years, perhaps their most important application in things physical has been in the fields of the psychology of group dynamics and that of the biological approach to sociology. And regardless of whether most important, the work in these fields spells out for us the current attitudes toward inquiry. Kropotkin's notions of vitality, unified growth, integration of heterogeneous life patterns, and others, are found—in a more-or-less altered form—in much work being carried on today. This is particularly apparent in the various theories drawing their inspiration from the non-directive approach to psychology. Accordingly, I shall consider a few instances of the recent work in these fields to see to what extent Dewey's admonitions to Kropotkin—outlined above—are being observed.

Trigant Burrow is a group psychologist who has done considerable theoretical and practical work on the need for unity in life and what he calls "the return to the organismic basis of life."³⁷ He is interested in the bases of consciousness, which he calls the preconscious, foundations in human biology, but this foundation comes to play quite a larger part in his scheme than bases are supposed to. The theory appears to me to resolve into several fundamental dualisms, the primary

one being between symbols outside, and the "real" man within. This demarcation is known as the system of symbolic affects vs. that of integral feelings. He is not interested in inquiry but "adjustment".

Quite out of the realm of conventional academic theory is the "Peckham Experiment"—The Pioneer Health Centre, at Peckham, in South London. This heartening work, described by Drs. Pearse and Crocker,³⁸ was dedicated to the proposition of preserving health rather than treating illness, this in an atmosphere of the utmost freedom. Their results are nearly unbelievable, and the question naturally arises whether this was due to, or in spite of, their philosophy. Both Pearse and Crocker are biologists, and have violently disclaimed being anarchists; certainly they would with equal vigour disclaim being philosophers. Nevertheless, their statement of orientation is summed up like this:

Before beginning to build, it is necessary to know what bricks are to be used, or, in modern terms, what must be the *unit* of construction. Times and fashions change and with them the units of material construction. So, too, with the constructs of Society; man changes his institutions, his customs and the external circumstances of his life and, in a manner, his life with them. But Nature's laws are abiding. In the realms of Matter and Energy about which man has come to know so much, he accepts Nature's units of construction and works in obedience to her laws. In the realm of Living, he has yet to recognize the unit with which Nature works; and to learn to use that unit. If man is to venture on the rebuilding of Society, he must take nothing for granted. The first question therefore is—With what *unit* does Nature build in the living world?³⁹

And the answer is, "the family". Note the very Kropotkin-like faith in natural laws and the application of the methods of physical sciences to the social sciences. The ontologism is well-rooted: man can change the periphery of his life, but he can't change its heart, the unit of Nature's building, the family.

Another contemporary who interests himself in these concepts is Richard Woltereck, a German biologist with considerable philosophic leanings. He is a confirmed monist, but there is what he calls "polar tensions" involved in the fusion of this monism.⁴⁰ Freedom—spontaneity and autoplasmicity—constitute an embryo in unconscious man; they develop into *human* freedom.⁴¹

Boldly these three exceptions remain the tested reality, that one flood of events surrounds anything at all substantially real: material and non-material, abiotic, organic, psychic, unconscious and conscious happenings. That all-included and absorbed human understanding, understood by the connection, is Nature—reality: cosmic, physical, chemistry, biology, finally physical reality. The psychic activity of man is also part of this one stream—"Nature"—although in special forms: science, techniques, culture, politics, history and art. They are—in the last analysis—produced not differently from the way the bird produces his song and his nest, or the tree its blossoms and fruit. Also, the dawning of consciousness—conscious thinking and acting—are natural processes in the animal kingdom—similar to conditioned reflexes, instinctive acts, and affects.⁴²

Flitting among all these people is Herbert Read; it becomes a real quandary to decide whether to take more seriously Sir Herbert's flirta-

tion with a rigid monism or his marriage to Bergsonian dualism. (In the latter case, this amounts to taking anarchism at least back to Sorel; and in the former, the incorporation into anarchism of most of the bad points of Marx without any of the good.) At any rate, none of these lines of thought bode well for poor Kropotkin. These learned gentlemen would hang his philosophy with metaphysical trappings and plague it with creeping ontologism, thus adding to his already-numerous difficulties in dealing with the modern world. Thus far, anarchism has managed to evade mystical metaphysics fairly successfully. It has no gods; it would be absurd on the face of it to refer to someone as a "Kropotkinist" or a "Bakuninist". As James Guillaume said: "We are not Idealists; we are very sincere and very positive Materialists. There has never been in the International, to our knowledge, but one metaphysician, but one 'abstractor of quintessence': it is the author of *Das Kapital*."⁴³

VII⁴⁴

The dialectical method seeks to accommodate itself to [the] fundamental features of reality. It must take them as the starting point and basis of its own procedure. If reality is ever-changing, concrete, full of novelty, fluent as a river, torn by oppositional forces, then dialectics, which strives to be a true reflection of reality in logical terms, must share the same characteristics.⁴⁵ All scientific investigation proceeds upon the basis that things are connected with each other in definite ways, that their changes exhibit a certain uniformity, regularity and lawfulness—and that therefore their interrelations, transitions into one another and laws of development can be ascertained *and explained* [my emphasis]. There have been sceptical and religious thinkers who denied that the world was rational . . . The science of logic must take as its starting point the unity of the subjective processes of thought with the processes of the external world. Nature cannot be unreasonable or reason contrary to nature . . . The material basis of this law lies in the actual interdependence of all things and in their reciprocal interactions.⁴⁶

It is not necessary to spell out the whole of Marxist ontologism, or what Max Eastman calls its "wish-fulfilling metaphysic". Eastman also points out how Marx subscribes thoroughly to the "spectator theory of knowledge".⁴⁷ Equally as well known as these unsavoury details of Marxism are the attempts by Eastman, James Burnham, Sidney Hook and others to amputate the dialectic from Marxism.⁴⁸ The subsequent political evolution of these gentlemen indicates how fraught with danger is Marxist "revisionism". Dewey's criticism of Greek logic would appear to apply equally as well to the attempts to meliorate the dialectic:

The more adequate that logic was in its own day, the less fitted is it to form the framework of present logical theory.⁴⁹ [The revision] is a marked advance. But up to a certain point [it] has increased confusion in logical theory as a whole, since no consistency of theory can be attained as long as the theory of antecedent subjects given ready-made to predication is retained.⁵⁰

My personal differences with Marxism stem from an extreme pragmatism, more so perhaps than Dewey's but still differing considerably from that of Eastman. The important thing is, *what is the dialectic used for?* Eastman's idea is that it is used as a surrogate for the

mysticism of the church.⁵¹ This is probably true, but it is related as material to efficient cause in this notion of Burnham which appears to me to hit the nail precisely on the head:

The doctrine of "class truth" is the road of Plato's Philosopher-Kings, of prophets and Popes and Stalins. For all of them, also, a man must be among the anointed to know the truth. It leads in a human direction diametrically opposite to that of socialism, of a truly *human* society.⁵²

Dewey himself did not raise the objection so strongly on this point; he opposed ontologism because it did not accord with modern methods of inquiry. But it is clear that if there is something "really real", and if it is at all knowable, then some people are going to know, others won't know, and the knowers will have the responsibility of interpreting The Word to the unknowing. It is the encouragement of thinking habits similar to these which has constituted a major force for the perversion of past revolutions. Nomad sees the contrast as between the intelligent and the uneducated, but this assumes that universal education would bring in its wake true democracy, which supposition doesn't bode well to prove out. It is the introduction of "crimethink", mysterious and authoritarian symbols and sanctions, superstitious hold-overs from our animistic past, which provide the royal road to power for those anointed few. Nomad is, however, quite correct in approving Sebastien Fauré's analysis of the principles of politics: "First—to get power by all means, even the vilest; and, second, to keep that power by all means, even the vilest". He is also not far wrong when he quotes the Abbé Siéyès as noting the inevitable transition from the slogan, "Save the revolution," to that of "Save the revolutionists".⁵³

Dewey's opposition to all of this is, of course, evident. Note should just be taken of two of his specific objections:

Particularly unacceptable to me in the ideology of official Communism is its monistic and one-way philosophy of history . . . The thesis that all societies must exhibit a uniform, even if uneven, social development . . . can be accepted only by those who are either ignorant of history or who are so steeped in dogma that they cannot look at a fact without changing it to suit their special purposes. From this monistic philosophy of history, there follows a uniform political practice and a uniform theory of revolutionary strategy and tactics.⁵⁴

Finally, in his critique of Trotsky's *Their Morals and Ours*, Dewey had this to say:

The belief that a law of history determines the particular way in which the struggle is to be carried on certainly seems to tend toward a fanatical and even mystical devotion to use of certain ways of conducting the class struggle to the exclusion of all other ways of conducting it . . . Orthodox Marxism shares with orthodox religionism and with traditional idealism the belief that human ends are interwoven into the very texture and structure of existence—a conception inherited presumably from its Hegelian origin.⁵⁵

A further consequence of Marxian ontologism—and probably the most serious one from the political point-of-view—is this: By applying outmoded physical science concepts to the social sciences, Marxists talk about "the nature of capitalism", "the essence of October", "in-

ternal contradictions in the very heart of bourgeois democracy", etc. Thus, such well-intentioned people as the Trotskyists (Social Workers' Party variety) are forced into saying that Russia is in essence a workers' state, but that it has been distorted by bureaucratic Stalinism (*i.e.*, it has had affixed to it attributes which do not accord with its nature). They become prisoners of their own "objective reality". The superstitious compulsion to imbue a mental construct with reality and plenitude necessarily leads to ineffectuality in dealing with the problems of everyday life. Marx's popularity in this respect may be attributed to this fact: "Commonsense" and folk psychology arrive at—on this level—precisely the same conclusion as does Marx by reason of his "scientism". Neither Marx—descended from Plato and Aristotle—nor the man in the street—descended from the Athenian man in the street—can live without the assurance that "things are real".

VIII

To sum up, then: We have discussed the conditions surrounding the enunciation of Kropotkin's philosophy, and the extent to which it is adaptable for modern use. It may, but does not have to assume an ontology. By a reconsideration of the concept "instinct", it was seen that Kropotkin is not on the level of some of his contemporaries who ascribed the phenomenon of people wanting to make money, *e.g.*, to a money-making instinct. We discussed some of the ways of thinking about and observing these "tendencies". The problem of what Kropotkin's questions mean was discussed, and also some of the implications of his answers to those questions. It became evident that Dewey would accept Kropotkin's treatment of these questions as Kropotkin himself thought about them—allowing for the disadvantages of living in the nineteenth century—but could not accept several prominent modifications of them. Finally, we saw—as was already well known—that Dewey couldn't possibly accept the Marxist formulations, and some of the implications which the Marxist approach to these questions of existence have.

We tend to take Dewey's "problems" in too narrow a sense. This is the perpetual shortcoming of the liberal-reformist philosophy espoused by Dewey himself. The *central* problems of our age are those which have the most gravely anti-social consequences. Wars become more frequent and more destructive, as does the boom-and-bust economic cycle. We have achieved success unapproached by the lower species in killing each other and making our fellow humans miserable. From an evolutionary point-of-view, this is bad—not only bad, but "worst"—and thus *is* the central problem. Reformism deals with the periphery of this problem. It attacks—often with great efficacy—issues of social security, race relations, unemployment compensation, etc., and says that it is working gradually toward the same thing that radicals want to achieve by revolution. But it doesn't attack, and specifically skirts the problem. Precisely because of its peripheral approach, reformism *can't* consider the intimate relationship between an economic

system based on exploitation, authoritarian state machinery, power relationships of men over men and the omnipresent theatre of war, and can do nothing about it.

Reformism holds in common with Marxism what Dewey calls eschatological beliefs. This wish-fulfilling millennialism consists in this: the Marxist belief that on the day after the revolution, everything is going to be different, the "essence" of society will be altered, the world will be transformed into at least a potential "heaven-on-earth" (per Lenin, 1905); the reformist belief that on the day after a majority of socialists are elected to Parliament the same sort of millennium will occur. In either case, the words "revolution" and "reform" are used in a magical sense. There is always the better life just over the horizon. Thoroughgoing pragmatists, on the other (*i.e.* third) hand, put their faith in no millennia or panaceas, but solve each problem in accordance with the conditions accompanying its arising. To do this in our times, however, as I have shown, it is necessary to adopt a revolutionary attitude. Eschatology always has led and apparently always will lead only to "pie in the sky".

If a person is going to be a radical and a Deweyan at the same time, then, it would appear that he can follow only one path: he must be a friend to all left-radicalism, constantly re-evaluating his methods and ideals, without prejudice as between schools of thought except for a never-ending vigilance against authoritarianism and elite-theories. He can thus agree with Lenin and Trotsky—honestly and not merely verbally—that that is moral and permissible which *really* leads to the liberation of mankind. Dewey is for the Permanent Revolution.

NOTES :

- ¹ Max Nomad, *pseud.*, *Apostles of Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1939) *passim*, particularly pp 208-210. Nomad's real name is Max Podolsky.
- ² (New York: Henry Schuman, 1952).
- ³ *Ibid.*, pp 42-43.
- ⁴ *E.g.* in Warder C. Allee, "Where Angels Fear to Tread: A Contribution from General Sociology to Human Ethics", *Science*, XCVII (June, 1943) 517-525.
- ⁵ (Prince) Peter Alekseyevich Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899) p 115.
- ⁶ Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism* (London: Freedom Press, 1912) p 9.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p 16.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p 38.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p 39.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 92-93.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p 1.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p 41.
- ¹³ Entry, "Anarchism", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, I (Chicago, London, Ontario: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952) 877.
- ¹⁴ *Modern Science and Anarchism*, *op. cit.*, p 46.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p 77.
- ¹⁶ *Britannica*, *op. cit.*, p 873.
- ¹⁷ *Darwin*, *op. cit.*, p 42.
- ¹⁸ *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (New York: McClure Phillips and Company, 1902) p 223.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 260-261.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p 300.
- ²¹ Warder C. Allee, *Co-operation Among Animals* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1951) p 201.
- ²² Kropotkin, *Ethics: Origin and Development* (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1947) N. Lebedev's "Introduction", p ix.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p 338. The manuscript ends with these words.
- ²⁴ Herbert Read, *Existentialism, Marxism and Anarchism* (London: Freedom Press, 1949) p 17.
- ²⁵ N. Tinbergen, *The Study of Instinct* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951) pp 3-5.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p 6.
- ²⁷ *Co-operation Among Animals*, *op. cit.*, pp 212-213.
- ²⁸ Tinbergen, *op. cit.*, p 13.
- ²⁹ *The Social Life of Animals* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1938) p 275.
- ³⁰ John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1910) p 9.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p 13.
- ³² Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1949) pp 33-36.
- ³³ Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1935) p 39.
- ³⁴ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (pp 1-386) and *The Descent of Man* (pp 387-924) (New York: The Modern Library, n.d.) p 913.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p 914.
- ³⁶ Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: The Modern Library, 1930) p 131.

- ³⁷ Triggant Burrow, *The Biology of Human Conflict* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937) *passim*, particularly pp 405-410. This is a thoroughly fascinating book, but the ordinary unilingual Anglo-American is disadvantaged by the fact that it is written entirely in Burrowese.
- ³⁸ Innes H. Pearse and Lucy H. Crocker, *The Peckham Experiment* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1947).
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p 9.
- ⁴⁰ Richard Woltereck, *Ontologie des Lebendigen* (Ferdinand Enke Verlag Stuttgart, 1940) p 89. All paraphrases and quotations represent my own attempts at translation from the German of Woltereck.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, *passim*, n.b. p 32.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, pp 2-3.
- ⁴³ James Guillaume, *L'Internationale* (Paris: Société Nouvelle de Librairie et d'Édition, 1907) Vol II, p 290. This passage trans. K. J. Kenafick.
- ⁴⁴ In the transition to the consideration of Marxism, it would be instructive to consider Kautsky, who began from nearly the same premises as did Kropotkin, paralleled his development for a good portion of the way, and then ended up diametrically opposite to him. However, this would entail at least one other paper.
- ⁴⁵ William F. Warde, *An Introduction to the Logic of Marxism* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1953) p 38.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p 43.
- ⁴⁷ Max Eastman, *Marxism, Is It Science?* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1940) pp 19-20.
- ⁴⁸ Hook's attempts to make a Deweyan out of Marx are particularly unfortunate, principally because they fall exactly into the proscription of Kropotkin: "But the question as to which of us is right, and which wrong, cannot be settled by means of Byzantine commentaries as to what or such a writer intended to say, or by talking about what agrees with the 'trilogy' of Hegel; most certainly not by continuing to use the dialectic method." (*Modern Science and Anarchism*, *op. cit.*, p 79.)
- ⁴⁹ Dewey, *Logic*, *op. cit.*, p 82.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p 91.
- ⁵¹ Max Eastman, *Marx, Lenin and the Science of Revolution* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1926) *passim*. Similar ideas, but phrased in a somewhat more reactionary idiom, are found in his later book, *Marxism, Is It Science?*, *op. cit.* His move to the right was so rapid in those days that he found it necessary to rush into print before this book was published a notice stating: "I have to warn the reader that the following chapters were written while I still believed in that system of revolutionary engineering perfected by Lenin." (p 215.)
- ⁵² James Burnham, "Science and Style", in Leon Trotsky, *In Defense of Marxism* (New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1942) p 198. It would appear that Burnham has fallen victim to his own predictions, if one is to judge from his despicable antics of recent years.
- ⁵³ *Apostles of Revolution*, *op. cit.*, "Introduction", pp 3-11.
- ⁵⁴ Dewey, "Why I Am Not a Communist", in *The Meaning of Marx*, ed. Sidney Hook (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1934) pp 54-55.
- ⁵⁵ Dewey, "Means and Ends", in *New International*, IV (August, 1938) 233.

I was one of the unattached

JOHN MARJORAM

PETER WILLIS CONCLUDES HIS REVIEW of *The Unattached* in ANARCHY 51 by saying, "I think the report, with its quaint mixture of priggishness and enlightenment, might give some of the right people something to think about." Perhaps 'right people' should have been enclosed in inverted commas; either these right people, the Youth Service and the NAYC, do give some thought to the book and become 'changed people' by making themselves redundant or they take no notice, remaining 'right people', and prove themselves inadequate to deal with the problems of the 'unattached'. I make these remarks as one of the unattached described in the survey; it was only after the survey had been completed that I learned, through an innocent remark made by a local authority employee, that the purpose of one of our friends being in 'Midford' was to study young people not attending youth clubs. Initially I should like to say of the worker that I believe him to be a good man rather than a good establishment-attached man. (In the survey he said of me, "I believe Peter to be a good man rather than a good Communist"; for at least through discussion and whilst flipping through his books and finding early copies of ANARCHY I began to question the authoritarian nature of Marxian Communism and eventually accepted, although I dislike labels, the concepts of Anarcho-communism.)

Living in a town with a population of 20,000 you pretty soon make contact with any new face which appears on the scene, especially a guy with a beard and an attractive looking wife—said he was writing a book about country life—we couldn't quite make out where his money came from but we thought he had a private income which didn't unduly worry us. The worker came to Midford at a time when a group of us, relics of a Youth Hostel club, used to go camping or have earnest conversations. These conversations were facilitated partly by the fact that I had a small terraced house where people used to live while passing through, staying for a week or a month or two. We then started going round to this writer's flat continuing our earnest conversations about life; one of the things I find most nauseating about the published part of the Midford worker's report (it must be remembered that all three workers kept a day-to-day diary, extracts from which were published), is that he writes of our discussions, "Almost anything can happen on a Tuesday evening, but as I am particularly interested in two possibilities, there are two items which occur with increasing frequency. One is discussion which is either intellectually stimulating or slanting towards some aspect of social training. The second is a mild form of group therapy. As I have a nucleus who talk fairly freely I can usually keep track of where the discussion is going and look after

the refereeing at the same time. This is a matter of rewarding X for making her first contribution ever, stopping B and C ganging up on A and cutting him to pieces, remembering to smile at M who gets nervous if looked at too intently, and so on." This comment, apart from being an over-simplified analysis, seems to prostitute not only the crowd who went round to the flat but also the worker himself, whose success with people was not due to giving out psychological smiles, but to his spontaneous personality. Speaking of the jazz club members in a nearby town, also unattached, the worker remarks that they were sexually promiscuous; what Kinsey would have made of this remark is quite clear, still it makes the reader think that these young people do it more often than they do. For added sensation you can read about my friend Lefty; he "experimented with Marijuana" (had half a stick once), was an atheist and believed in free love. Needless to say the book made no reference to the fact that Lefty went to prison because he cared about humanity being annihilated by those who know best for him. This "knowing best" would be the basis of my criticism of the survey. The workers start from the premise that they know best, and that the objective of the survey, "being attached" is the desirable end: to fit us to society. The tragedy seems to be that the workers lose track of the implications of being attached, for at the end of the book they make one lamentable comment about the role of the workers: "In any case, to have tried to dictate or deprive the unattached of the right to self-determination would have been of little value in helping them either to come to terms with themselves or to develop a sense of responsibility for their own affairs." Being "attached" for the majority in society means being attached in a subservient position at work, whether private or state-controlled; being attached to a system where to compete rather than to co-operate is the commendable thing to do. For the young it means belonging to a youth club where everything is planned for them, run by people who, more often than not, are satisfying their own needs, like police or prison officers, to dominate others. Oh yes, we're attached all right; we're so attached that we're virtually slaves.

The present resentment, apathy and mistrust seem to be healthy signs, although I suspect that to change society, we, including the young, must direct our resentment into positive channels. How to bring about the transition seems to me to be the problem we should be tackling constantly. I am not suggesting that we all have the ideas and the ability to instigate social change, but the thing is that in any given society a proportion will have these attributes. This is why I feel that young people are quite capable of arranging their own lives without an adult having to give the lead. In any gathering of young people there will always be a number of practical, of idealistic, and of nondescript, people. The essential thing seems to be that they all participate according to their own capacity: and so they are all attached. Attachment, after all is only worthwhile when it is mutually agreed on. It is simply the basis of friendship, I should have thought.

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