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Carter & Co. — Back at the Old Stand

Nearly eight years ago, the **Lib. Forum** was founded, at the beginning of the first Nixon administration. One of the reasons for our birth was to combat rightist illusions about Nixon which permeated parts of the then embryonic libertarian movement. Now eight years of Republican rule are ended, and we are left, during this transition period, to examine the political signs and portents to try to discern the outlines of the new Carter regime. Such augury is all the more tempting because of the meteoric rise from nowhere of Jimmy Carter. So that everyone has been wondering: **who** is J. C. and **what** will his administration be like?

Well, we can stop wondering. We can put our uncertainties to rest: Carter will neither be a wild-eyed McGovernite leftist nor a southern war-monger. No, we are back at the old familiar stand, at the corporate liberalism and the centrist Democracy of the Johnson, and to some extent the Kennedy, administrations. For the Carter Cabinet has been chosen, and they are old Johnson-Kennedy warhorses, with a bit of admixture of Georgia cronies representing the corporate elite of Atlanta. And there is another key force, which will become clear as this article unfolds.

First, let us consider the appointment of good grey Cyrus Vance as Secretary of State. Vance is the living symbol of the Eastern Establishment, of the tight-knit foreign policy old-boy network known to the members themselves as "The Community." So "in" is Vance that the knowledgeable Marxist muckraker Alexander Cockburn predicted his accession to the post in the **Village Voice** last Feburary, long before anyone knew that Carter would gain the nomination.

Cyrus Vance was Deputy Secretary of Defense during the Johnson Administration, and as such supported Johnson's Vietnam War—as did Carter's new Secretary of Defense, Dr. Harold Brown, who was Secretary of Air in the Johnson Administration, and as such whooped it up for the massive bombing of North Vietnam. Does this mean another "Democrat war" in the near future? Perhaps, but probably not. For Vance and his Establishment allies seemed to have learned the lessons of Vietnam, at least as they extend to the perils of fighting a counter-guerrilla war in the Third World. At this press conference, Brown conceded that the Vietnam War was "catastrophic", and that he has learned that "we must become more cautious about such interventions."

Fortunately for the prospects of peace, Vance, Brown, and the "Community" are generally committed to the pro-peace **detente** line with the Soviet Union, which means a rough continuation of the Nixon-Ford-Kissinger foreign policy. Most important, both Vance and Brown have already expressed themselves strongly in favor of the SALT talks with Russia, which must mean an agreement to scrap or restrain the highly dangerous American development of the cruise missile. The danger of the cruise missile is that it would upset the current balance of "mutually assured destruction" in which both superpowers confine themselves to overwhelming second-nuclear-strike capability against each other; for the cruise missile might give the U. S. a first-strike capability that would scare the Russians silly and thereby heat up the cold war again in a provocative and menacing manner.

Already, Carter has been sending messages to Moscow to the effect that he is eager to conclude a SALT II agreement limiting strategic arms. Carter informed Brezhnev that he would move "aggressively to get the SALT talks off dead center"; moreover, in a meeting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Nov. 23, Carter expressed his view that it was the United States that has stalled the SALT talks since last winter, "because of a disagreement between the Defense and the State departments (presumably because of the hawk Rumsfield), and because of the fact that this was an election year." Carter also told Brezhnev that he shared the latter's desire for peace, nuclear disarmament, and a reduction in conventional arms. Cyrus Vance has also expressed his belief in a reduction in conventional arms and limits on military spending as a vice-chairman of the United Nations Association's American panel on conventional arms control.

So the prospects for peace, and therefore for a more libertarian foreign policy, look good for the new Administration. The key issue to watch was whether or not the leader of the American pro-war hawks, James Schlesinger, would be selected as Secretary of Defense. A furious struggle took place between the pro-peace liberal Democrats, including Anthony Lake, head of the Carter foreign policy transition team, and the conservative and Social Democrat hawks, the latter headed by AFL-CIO bosses George Meany and Lane Kirkland. The struggle took place over Schlesinger as possible Secretary of Defense. Schlesinger is not only the leading hawk, advocate of the cruise missile, and of ever-higher military spending, but he even went so far as to organize a pressure group designed to heat up the Cold War: the Committee on the Present Danger, including Kirkland, David Packard, Nixon's deputy secretary of defense, Henry Fowler, Johnson's secretary of the treasury, Paul Nitze, Eugene V. Rostow, Nixon's CIA Chief William Colby, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, and Generals Ridgeway, Lemnitzer, Goodpaster, and Taylor. Schlesinger made a deep personal impression on Carter (something that is apparently quite easy to do), but, fortunately, the centrist pro-peace forces finally won the upper hand. The final defeat of the drive for Schlesinger was signalled by comments made by former Johnson Defense Secretary Clark Clifford after a meeting with Carter on Dec. 9. Clifford told the press that Carter would choose a defense secretary and cabinet officials who would join with Cyrus Vance (the first cabinet member chosen) to carry out a

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policy of detente with Soviet Russia. Said Clifford: "I think there will be a general understanding that the country will maintain the necessary strength, but within that framework we will find a way to live at peace and with some equanimity with the Soviet Union."

It now looks as if Schlesinger will be energy czar in the new administration. This may have a two-fold use. In the first place, Schlesinger has a quasi-Friedmanite economics background (he began his career as professor of economics at the University of Virginia), and so he might serve to decontrol energy a bit, a field that sorely needs it. And secondly, as a member of the cabinet, he would have to keep his mouth shut about foreign and military policy, this robbing the hawks of their leading spokesman.

The other cabinet appoinments all spell out "corporate liberal", as well as Johnson and Kennedy. Secretary of Treasury Werner Michael Blumenthal, president of Bendix Corp., is a leading corporate liberal, and advocate of large-scale government spending. Rep. Brock Adams (D., Wash.), Secretary of Transportation, is a virtual tool of the railroad cartellists, consistently favoring cartellizing regulation and federal subsidies to the railroads and airlines. Secretary of HEW is purported to be Joseph Califano, a Johnson liberal. Rumored to be the new head of the CIA is Ted Sorensen (Kennedy). The Secretary of Labor was supposed to be Professor John T. Dunlop, the "first, second and last" choice of Meany and Kirkland, whose economic "conservatism" simply adds up to being a virtual tool of the construction unions; however, severe leftist pressure by pro-affirmative-action quota blacks and feminists blocked the appointment, which went instead to labor economist F. Ray Marshall. The black female appointee for head of HUD, Patricia Harris, a veteran Johnson Democrat, touches all bases by being the law partner of Sargent Shriver (Kennedy).

Then, of course, there is the inevitable quota of Georgia cronies of the President-elect. The point to be made here is that these cronies are not peanut farmer-populists, but leaders of the substantial Atlanta corporate community. Perhaps the most amusing appointment is Carter's old friend, the banker Bert Lance, as head of the Office of Management and Budget, for the press blandly reported that Carter is personally into Lance's bank for a loan of no less than $5 million! If Tricky Dick had made such an appointment, the legitimate cry of "corruption!" would have filled the land; but for the heavily pro-Carter media, no comment seemed necessary. Then, as Attorney-General, Judge Griffin Bell, partner of the top Atlanta law firm of King and Spalding, and partner at that firm of Charles Kirbo, Carter's oldest friend and chief counsellor. Why Bell's middle-of-the road record should be a source of shock and amazement to leftists and blacks is a bit of a wonder; what in the world did they expect? As it was, the blacks showed considerable clout in the Carter appointments: Mrs. Harris, Rep. Andrew Young at the UN, and the blocking of Dunlop. More clout indeed than Meany and the AFL-CIO, who lost out on Dunlop and Schlesinger.

Another corporate Atlanta appointment is the new Deputy Secretary of Defense, Charles Duncan, Jr., a multi-millionaire holder of Coca-Cola stock, and former President of that company. Coca-Cola, of course, is the leading corporation in Georgia.

But there is another crucial element which we have promised to unravel: an element that penetrates and stands behind such concepts as "corporate liberalism", the "Eastern Establishment", and "The Community." And that leitmotif is none other than the Rockefeller political—economic empire, headed by David Rockefeller, head of the Chase Manhattan Bank, and financial leader of the Rockefeller empire just as brother Nelson has been its political capo. Let us examine the threads.

The leading arm of David Rockefeller is the powerful, semi-secret group, the Trilateral Commission, founded by Rockefeller in 1973 to propose and coordinate policies for Western Europe, the United States, and Japan. The Commission was launched under the benign auspices of the more secret Bilderbergers, which have been meeting annually for thirty years, and which is headed by Dutch Prince Bernhard of Lockheed bribe fame. The fascinating point about the Trilateral Commission is that this organization of big businessmen, academics, union leaders, and politicians from the three regions contains a relatively small number of people, a few dozen from each region. And yet, the following prominent leaders, and prospective leaders, of the coming Carter administration are members of this exclusive Trilateral Commission:

Jimmy Carter himself, selected in 1973 as a rising politician of promise.
Vice-President Mondale, hand-picked by Carter.
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance.
Secretary of Defense Harold Brown.
National Security Adviser Prof. Zbigniew Brzezinski, of Columbia University. Brzezinski was, until recently, the executive direrctor of the Trilateral Commission.
Paul Warnke, former Johnson official, and a leading dove, mentioned for Secretary of Defense.
J. Paul Austin, head of Coca-Cola.
Robert Roosa, who had been mentioned for the Treasury post, partner of the powerful investment banking firm of Brown Brothers, Harriman, and executive director of the pro-collectivist Initiative Committee for National Economic Planning.
Anthony Lake, head of Carter's foreign policy transition team.
Henry Owen, formerly of State, now of the liberal think tank, the Brookings Institution.
Richard Cooper, economist from Yale, mentioned for a high post at State for economic affairs.

In additon to the Trilateral Commission, another influential arm of the Rockefellers is the Rockefeller Foundation. And we find that Cryus Vance is head of the executive committee of the Rockefeller Foundation, while W. Michael Blumenthal is also a member of the executive committee, as is also Mrs. Jane Cahill Pfeiffer, who was Carter's first choice for Secretary of Commerce.

To those interested in the old Rockefeller-Morgan rivalry that used to play such a large role in American politics, there is a fascinating embodiment of the Rockefeller-Morgan alliance (with the former taking the lead) which has been active since World War II. For it turns out that Cyrus Vance's father died when he was very young, and Cyrus was virtually brought up by his father's close friend and cousin, "Uncle" John W. Davis, Democratic candidate for the Presidency in 1924. A touching story no doubt, but made more interesting by the fact that John Davis was the lawyer for J.P. Morgan & Co.

And so we have it: a Rockefeller administration with a few Georgia corporate allies. Foreign policy has been shifted from Nelson Rockefeller's personal foreign affairs advisor, Henry Kissinger, to David Rockefeller's Cyrus Vance, Harold Brown, and Zbigniew Brzezinski. So we can cease our puzzlement about Jimmy Carter. Plains, schmains; the Republic is in familiar hands. ◘

Nobel Prize for Friedman

The granting of the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1976 to Milton Friedman, head of the Chicago School, is a happy portent; for this is the second Nobel prize to a free-market economist in the last three years (a 1974 prize having gone to F.A. Hayek, the living Dean of the "Austrian School".) Coming from a Swedish prize committee that had consistently given its awards to left-liberal Keynesians, this must mean that the recent general failure of intellectual nerve among the Keynesians has penetrated to the Swedish committee. For the Keynesians, arrogantly dominant in economics for the last forty years, have been increasingly rocked by a series of theoretical and empirical blows that have left them uncertain and confused. Surely, the Swedish committee is hedging its intellectual bets. The Keynesian paradigm is in disarray, and the time is becoming ripe for new paradigms to assert themselves. Among the competing paradigms, the Chicago and the Austrian schools are the free-market ones, with the latter much more rigorously so. The future course of the economics profession is brighter than it has been since the inauguration of the Keynesian Dark Age. ◘

Kropotkin's Ethics and the Public Good

by Williamson M. Evers

(Editor's Note: Oddly enough, even though the social philosophy of Communist Anarchism and its most distinguished theoretician, Prince Peter Kropotkin, have been around for a century, there has been little or no systematic critique of Kropotkin's ethical theory, from individualist anarchists, libertarians, or anyone else. Williamson Evers' article is of vital importance in finally providing us with that long-missing critique.)

Prince Peter Kropotkin, the communist-anarchist theorist, sought to place his political and ethical doctrine on a scientific basis. Specifically, Kropotkin sought to develop an ethics that was in accord with the theory of evolution and with the findings of biological science. Most important for Kropotkin was freeing ethics from the sanction of religion.[1] But he also adhered to the methods of natural science in wanting to base ethical law on empirical data gained from observation of the life and activities of humans, rather than basing it, as he contended Kant had, solely on abstract reasoning.[2]

In Kropotkin's pamphlet on **Anarchist Morality**, he applauded the empiricist philosophers of the 18th-century Enlightenment for rejecting religious interpretations of human action and adopting an account that made the quest of pleasure and avoidance of pain the source of human motivation.[3] Kropotkin joined with Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and Chernischevsky in affirming that the desire for pleasure was the true motive of all human action.[4] Kropotkin not only maintained that in their conscious, deliberative acts, human beings always seek out pleasure; he saw this motive operating throughout the organic world. Recognition of this truth, Kropotkin argued, placed ethics on a materialistic, naturalistic basis. Furthermore, Kropotkin thought reliance on the findings of science and on evolutionary theory gave to ethics a philosophical certitude, in contrast to the uncertain intuitionalism on which transcendental philosophers like Kant relied.[6]

Yet it should be noted that in Kropotkin's final work **Ethics**, he wrote that Kant was correct to reject utility as a basis for ethics. Like Kant, Kropotkin pointed to the elevating character of morality.[7] In fact, Kropotkin came to argue that the Russian revolution had gone astray primarily because "the lofty social ideal" of the early Russian revolutionaries had been superseded by "teachings of economic materialism emanating from Germany."[8]

Kropotkin located the source of morality in a natural attribute of all animals: the instinct of sociability and mutual aid within a species. He described this instinct as having arisen via the transmission to subsequent generations of a habit developed in animals and humans to cope with the changing environment in which each species lived.[9] Biologists today would almost unanimously reject Kropotkin's Lamarckian notion of the heritability of acquired characteristics. But the instinct of sociability and mutual aid can be explained in terms of standard Darwinian natural selection. According to this view, mutual aid behavior contributes to the survival of a set of genes.[10]

The origin of moral sentiments then, according to Kropotkin, lies in the appearance of the instinct of mutual aid. From then on, moral sentiments can be said to be the product of a moral sense that operates like the sense of smell or touch.[11] Mutual aid becomes a permanent instinct, always present and developing in social animals (especially in humans) in the course of their evolution.[12]

In Kropotkin's pamphlet **Anarchist Morality**, he seemed to blend the instinct of mutual aid (aimed at preservation of the species) with the feeling of sympathy. He contended that Adam Smith had discovered the true origin of moral sentiments in sympathy.[13]

However, in Kropotkin's **Ethics**, he modified his stance after re-reading Kant. Kropotkin did not throw out sympathy as a support for morality. But sympathy no longer had the decisive role it had in the theories of the Scottish moralists and in Kropotkin's own earlier moral writings.In **Ethics**, Kropotkin agreed with Kant's demonstration that morality cannot be based solely on sympathy.[14]

Instead, Kropotkin distinguished between sympathy and mutual aid. He described sympathy and mutual aid as elements in the moral make-up of human beings. But he recognized that even for a person with a well-developed sympathetic character, there would arise situations in which his sympathies were at war with his other natural tendencies.[15]

In case such conflicts arose, what course was a moral person obligated to follow? Kropotkin said that obligation derives its force from the recognition by instinct and reason of the course to follow.[16] Whereas Kropotkin says that Kant leaves his readers completely ignorant of the origin of the sense of duty, Kropotkin is able to point to the mutual aid instinct as the driving force behind the sense of duty. As social life gets more and more complex, reason plays an ever more important role in moral decision-making. But, for Kropotkin, reason is always in harness with instinct.[17]

One of the dictates of reason is the human conception of justice.[18] A sense of justice only develops once the foundations have been laid by the institutionalization of mutual aid in human society and the internalization of mutual aid (via Lamarckian processes) in human nature. The basic core of the concept of justice, according to Kropotkin, is equal rights or equality of self-restraint.[19]

The sense of obligation to uphold justice stems not so much directly from instinct as from the rational recognition of necessity. Kropotkin adopts Hume's position that there are certain rules of action which are absolutely necessary, so long as one wishes to live in society.[20] Equal rights are necessary to social life.

But Kropotkin means by **justice** not simply political and civic equity, but also economic equality. Hence he applauds the appearance of egalitarian thinkers and philosophers at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century.[21]

Kropotkin never provides a full-blown defense of equality as a political goal. However we can discern some slight indications of four possible arguments about equality in Kropotkin's writings.

First, Kropotkin undertakes a criticism of religious morality of aspiration. Such morality begins by postulating human equality and brotherhood. But either natural inequalities or original sin make full equality unattainable.[22] It is still morally imperative that one share with the poor. But it is not possible to carry this to its logical conclusion. Such morality of aspiration rejects the rule of moral reasoning that **ought** implies **can**. One is left with a duty to be charitable that is based on reasoning that is acknowledged to be unsatisfactory by the proponents of the duty. Kropotkin is correct in pointing out the "deadly contradiction" here.[23] But he has not thereby established the possibility or desirability of equality.

As part of this discussion of charity, Kropotkin is arguing that mercy and beneficence are not enough.[24] Although he does not spell it out, Kropotkin is correct in saying that these sentiments are not enough to establish the justice of economic equality.

In a societal situation, mercy, charity, and generosity are dependent in practice (and dependent logically as concepts) upon the assignment of rights and entitlements. Mercy, for example, can only be the relinquishment to somebody of something to which one is justly entitled. One needs a rationally-defensible theory of justice in entitlements before one can say that some case is a case in which mercy could be exercised.

Since Kropotkin does not wish to develop a theory of entitlements more elaborate than the (incompatible) notions that everyone is entitled to equal shares and that everyone is entitled to his needs, Kropotkin does not dwell on charity or compassion.[24a] (Proudhon, who unlike Kropotkin is an individualist-anarchist, stresses charity and generosity and shows that communism is essentially opposed to them.)[25] When Kropotkin criticizes Herbert Spencer, Kropotkin does so not on the basis that Spencer opposes charity (which in fact Spencer considers a second-order duty). Kropotkin contends that thefts by the powerful and economic exploitation by the

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capitalists have taken from the poor what is due to them. Like Spencer, Kropotkin sees the validity of separating that which is rightfully due to people from that which may be given them out of beneficence. They simply disagree about what is due.

In a second discussion of equality, Kropotkin contends that we ourselves would want to be expropriated, if in some case we took material goods that fell like manna from heaven and used such goods for material gain:

> We ourselves should ask to be dispossessed, if...we seized upon an inheritance, did it fall from on high, to use it for the exploitation of others.[27]

The problem with Kropotkin's account is that goods do not fall like manna from heaven.[28] Instead goods have a history of relationships to human beings. Goods do not arrive magically on the scene. Instead goods were originally taken under someone's control somehow and then, perhaps, transferred to others. Whether justice was adhered to in the original acquisition and in the subsequent exchange is something that deserves critical examination. But one cannot pretend that the case of the falling of economic goods from on high is a usual case. Hence it seems extravagant to argue from a case in which goods have no history of attachments to human beings (the case of goods falling from on high) to the usual case in which goods have a long history of attachments to human beings.

The notion of windfall gains which may be what Kropotkin is appealing to, is as misleading as the idea of goods falling from heaven. If an apple falls out of a farmer's tree, it is still the farmer's. To take what may be Kropotkin's example, if a gift (or an inheritance, which is a kind of gift) is unexpected, that does not make it illegitimate. If the giver was entitled to the goods and then transferred them, there is no reason to be found in the gift's unexpectedness for dispossessing the recipient.

Perhaps the decisive point for Kropotkin is that the goods are to be used for the exploitation of others. Since Kropotkin's notion of exploitation seems to rely on a neo-Ricardian labor theory of value, any claims that exploitation is taking place depend on the very questionable validity of that value theory.[29]

In a third discussion of equality, Kropotkin argues that the goods and services that we enjoy today are the product both of past generations and of present-day collective labor. Hence, according to Kropotkin, it is wrong that individuals benefit personally from what are in fact not their own creations.[30]

But there is nothing immoral about benefitting personally from things which one does not create. If one benefits personally from something one has been given as a gift (or even benefits personally from something one sees somewhere), one may be benefitting from something one has not created oneself, but there is nothing inherently immoral about it.

Things made in the past are either gifts or items received in just exchanges or stolen goods or items taken via fraudulent exchanges. In cases of theft or fraud, there should be rectification. There is no other special problem about products made in the past.

In general Kropotkin believes that he has found a major flaw in the justification of property rights and economic inequality. What Kropotkin is focusing on is the somewhat muddled notion that one is entitled to the fruits of one's labor. In more refined natural-rights liberal theory, one owns one's own personal capacity to labor, one's own energy. If one owns an article and transforms it further using labor on it, well, one still owns it. In addition, a prospective employee may make a contract in which an employer agrees to transfer money to the employee on the condition that the employee do certain work. In this case, the employee is working on articles that belong to the employer. What the employee is entitled to is not the transformed article that he worked on. That still belongs to the employer. The employee is entitled to the wage or salary that was contractually agreed upon. (It should be noted that the theory that one has a just claim to any article one works on seems to leave out service workers, like teachers, who do not work on physical products.) Labor contracts are made every day without the parties worrying about Kropotkin's false problem of an indistinguishably collective product.[31] The parties simply make a conditional contract: wages are transferred to the employee, if work is done for the employer.

In Kropotkin's fourth commentary on equality, he says that communist anarchists will not "tolerate" persons using their natural assets and attributes (physical strength, mental acuity, beauty, and so forth) in any way that other persons would find annoying or upsetting to have such attributes used.[32] The idea of not tolerating persons' making use of their own lives, bodies, and minds in ways they prefer implies either that some persons have rightful control over others or that all persons have rightful control over all persons.

Since Kropotkin is a self-proclaimed communist, we can assume that he rejects slaveholding, in which some persons own others. Since he is a self-proclaimed anarchist, we can assume that he rejects the state by which some people control others, or in effect own them. But the pure communist alternative in which by right all decisions about all acts of or pertaining to any person are made by all persons, is impossible to conceive of and impossible to put into practice.

Inevitably, decision-making power is delegated to others or others claim it has been delegated to them. What Michels called the "iron law of oligarchy" takes over in the life of organized activity in the communist society.[33] The core of the political state has then been reintroduced in the anarchist commune, and some persons again control others, or in effect own them.

The only other conceivable alternative is that of natural-rights liberalism, in which persons own themselves in the sense that women are said by feminists to own their own bodies.[34] Persons are entitled to their natural assets and attributes. These assets and attributes are not something that was stolen from someone else or obtained through some other illegitimate process.[35]

Kropotkin himself stated that the most important criterion in the evaluation of all modern ethical systems is the presence or absence of fetters on individual initiative. He explicitly ruled out fettering individual initiative for the welfare of the society or the species.[36] It seems at least likely that Kropotkin's prohibition on communist grounds of persons making use of their natural assets in ways that others find upsetting will not survive scrutiny according to Kropotkin's own standards for judging ethical systems.

In contending that justice is equal rights, that justice is necessary to social life, and that equity includes economic equality, Kropotkin was discussing what one was morally obliged to do. But like Spencer, Kropotkin distinguished between moral duty and supererogatory acts.[37]

While maintaining that recognition of equal rights is a duty and a necessity, Kropotkin also maintained that "if each man practiced merely the equity of a trader, taking care all day long not to give others anything more than he was receiving from them, society would die of it."[38]

Packed away in this assertion of Kropotkin's are two notions which deserve to be brought out and examined closely. First of all, Kropotkin assumes that in trade, equivalents are exchanged. But since the Marginalist Revolution of the late 19th century, economists have rejected objective value theories in favor of a subjective one in which each party to an exchange trades because he believes he will get something more valuable to him in return. In terms of each party's own preferences, inequivalents are being exchanged.

Secondly, Kropotkin seems to be saying here that if all persons in a society traded with each other nonfraudulently, this would destroy society. Over the long run, nonfraudulent trade will lead to the suicide of society.

Let us try to spell out what Kropotkin may mean. According to Kropotkin's objective theory of value, traders are exchanging only equivalents. Hence, no gain in welfare comes from trading. According to Kropotkin, society can make progress only when some persons magnanimously devote themselves to discovering new ideas, inventing new techniques, or helping others above and beyond the call of duty. If only honest trade occurs, society will die, for in the face of challenges from a changing environment, society can succeed, progress, and develop only through acts of selfsacrifice. However, Kropotkin never shows satisfactorily why economic development and the handling of new

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challenges cannot be accomplished in the marketplace, as they seem to have been historically.

We have seen that Kropotkin's account of what constitutes the public good depends heavily on what the supposed instinct of sociability and mutual aid tells us, on the moral duty to institute equality across the board, and on the desirability of making sacrifices to meet the needs of or bring improvements to others. There are problems with each of these elements.

Kropotkin has trouble distinguishing between the role of reason and the role of instinct in ethical discourse. Also he tells us to look to instinct as the basis of obligation and for answers to what seem to be ethical dilemmas. In fact, the voice of instinct is not unambiguous on ethical questions. If it were crystal clear and compelling, we would not have the ethical problems we do.

Furthermore, Kropotkin's ideas about man's natural inclinations toward socially compatible and mutually co-operative behavior can support more than one ethical system. For example, **laissez-faire** liberals have made use of the same notions.

Modern-day classical liberal Ludwig von Mises writes:

> The core of liberal social theory is the theory of the division of labor....Society is the union of human beings for the better exploitation of the natural conditions of existence; in its very conception it abolishes the struggle between human beings and substitutes the mutual aid which provides the essential motive of all members united in an organism. Within the limits of society there is no struggle, only peace. Every struggle suspends, in effect, the social community. Society, as a whole, as organism, does fight a struggle for existence against forces inimical to it. But inside, as far as society has absorbed individuals completely, there is only collaboration. For society is nothing but collaboration....The only theory which explains how peace is possible between individuals and how society grows out of individuals is the liberal social theory of the division of labor.[39]

Another modern-day classical liberal Murray N. Rothbard writes:

> The free market...is precisely the diametric opposite of the "jungle" society. The jungle is characterized by the war of all against all. One man gains only at the expense of another, by seizure of the latter's property. With all on a subsistence level, there is a true struggle for survival, with the stronger force crushing the weaker. In a free market, on the other hand, one man gains only through serving another, though he may also retire into self-sufficient production at a primitive level if he so desires.
>
> It is precisely through the peaceful cooperation of the market that all men gain through the development of the division of labor and capital investment. To apply the principle of the "survival of the fittest" to both the jungle and the market is to ignore the basic question: Fitness for what? The "fit" in the jungle are those most adept at the exercise of brute force. The "fit" on the market are those most adept in the service of society...
>
> The free market...transmutes the jungle's destructive competition for meagre subsistence into a peaceful co-operative competition in the service of one's self **and** others. In the jungle, some gain only at the expense of others. On the market, everyone gains. It is the market—the contractual society—that wrests order out of chaos, that subdues nature and **eradicates** the jungle, that permits the "weak" to live productively, or out of gifts from production, in a regal style compared to the life of the "strong" in the jungle.[40]

Not only are there alternative notions of what socially co-operative behavior is in man, but, as we have seen, there are major difficulties with Kropotkin's sketchy discussion of equality. At times Kropotkin seems to believe that superabundance and the abolition of economic scarcity will solve the problem of remuneration of labor.[41] But prices have not yet fallen to zero so we know that resources are still scarce.[42]

Kropotkin wanted to build a stateless society on equality of possessions, mutual service, and a morality of increased self-sacrifice. But it can be argued that Kropotkin failed to be clear about the concepts he used and failed to avoid self-contradiction in his theory of communist-anarchism.

What can be said about the institutions of Kropotkin's communist society? Kropotkin proposed a society of small-scale territorial communes. Yet Kropotkin's goal of across-the-board equality may easily be undermined by separate decision-making in each township on distribution of goods.[43] Communes will be in different locations and find themselves with different assets. Do they have a property right, in some sense, to these assets? Kropotkin himself accepts temporary inequality between town and country after the revolution.[44] What is the proper territorial size for communes? What is the proper population size for communes? We receive no answer from Kropotkin.

We can only guess from Kropotkin's admiration for the medieval city-states that he has something like them in mind when he talks about free communes.[45] But these medieval cities had governments. The guilds that Kropotkin admired and that dominated the commercial life of these cities were adjuncts of the governmental apparatus.[46]

Surely there is at least some danger that Kropotkin's free communes will follow the iron law of oligarchy. The utopian dream of participatory decision-making by consensus seems unlikely to survive the harsh realities of organizational life. In short order, the commune, which has expropriated all land, factories, dwellings, food, and clothing, will be run in practice by a few persons.

This situation in which social ownership of all capital and goods is combined with oligarchical rule will turn the free communes into communist states. The illegitimacy of private property makes it very costly to secede and makes independent life outside a commune well nigh impossible. Perhaps at the point of transformation of free communes into communist states, the communist-anarchists will harken to the prophetic words of Proudhon's critique of communism:

> Private associations are sternly prohibited, in spite of the likes and dislikes of different natures, because to tolerate them would be to introduce small communities within the large one, and consequently private property; the strong work for the weak, although this ought to be left to benevolence, and not enforced, advised, or enjoined; the industrious work for the lazy, although this is unjust; the clever work for the foolish, although this is absurd; and finally, man—casting aside his personality, his spontaneity, his genius, and his affections—humbly annihilates himself at the feet of the majestic and inflexible Commune![47]

Appendix on the Libertarian Notion of the Public Good

Contemporary natural-rights liberals would begin any discussion of the public good with prior consideration of the highest good for man. The highest good (**summum bonum**) is an end which all men share in common. This end is leading a truly happy life. Real happiness can be a goal common to Robinson Crusoe shipwrecked on a desert island and to an inhabitant of London.

The public good is, according to natural-rights liberals, that which all men have as an end while they live in the company of others.[48] The highest good is happiness (Aristotle's **eudaemonia**); in society, the primary public good is liberty. Liberty is below happiness in the hierarchy of values. But when one is living amongst other human beings, liberty is necessary to the achievement of happiness. Without liberty one cannot live virtuously, one cannot strive for the highest good. Natural-rights liberal Tibor Machan writes:

> In so far as political liberty is something which is a **universal** condition (if it were to exist), it does seem to be common to all those within a social organization or community. Political liberty is the absence of interference with one's efforts to lead one's life in peace. It is not being free of interference when one is himself attacking others or otherwise violating their human rights to life, liberty, and

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property. Thus the claim really amounts to holding up freedom from aggression as something that is of value, benefit, and interest to every person, even to one who would rather not enjoy it....

But, then, no one is claiming that political liberty is recognized as a universal, common, collective good; if it were so, the political systems throughout the world would be very different. The point is simply that, **in fact**, the appropriate condition of social existence is political liberty: it is something which can be secured for **everyone** without discrimination and all people have an implicit stake in it for purposes of running their lives. While bread and butter, or Cadillacs, or golf courses, or men's clubs are not good for everyone—since not all people are interested in them or talented or situated so as to make use of them—political liberty is the condition which permits each member of society to pursue his own interests to the best of his will and ability. Political liberty is a real possibility because people can refrain from interfering with another's life. It is the fact that people are ultimately free to choose their way of living (within physical limits) that makes political liberty more than just an empty ideal. It makes possible, when legally instituted, the flourishing of each man as a self-responsible being; this in turn renders it of value to everyone without exception.[49]

Other supposed public goods, such as conservation, simply do not have the universal character that liberty has.[50]

The only institutional arrangement which is appropriate to liberty is property in one's own will, body, life, and honestly-acquired material goods. One's liberty is based on one's self-ownership and on property rights. Thus liberal James Tyrrell argued in the 17th century that there was no reason to believe that "a man either could, or ought to neglect his own preservation and true happiness." The policy which Tyrrell then deemed necessary was the institution of property rights: "The constitution of a distinct property in things, in the labor of persons (was) the chief and necessary medium to the common good."[51]

With the institution of property rights securing liberty, all attacks upon the public good manifest themselves as attacks on particular individual's rights. Society is simply a relationship among persons. Society **per se** does not have an interest or a good. Relationships cannot possess interests.[52] Only persons (including persons in relationships) can possess interests, goods or rights. Liberty is the primary and overriding public good. No one can legitimately attempt to advance any other possible public or private good by violating liberty and property rights. Force can legitimately be used to defend liberty.

Hobbes argued that the public interest was best served by a monarch whose private interest lay in securing the public interest.[53] Individualist-anarchists, whose anarchism is derived from the natural-rights liberal tradition, argue that private law enforcement agencies have the unity of interest that Hobbes thought the king would have.

In brief, once the requisite critical mass of persons accepts libertarian ideas of justice, individual rights will be defended against those who would violate them. Persons will make use of the division of labor in protecting rights. Private law enforcement agencies will arise. These private agencies gain customers in proportion to their reputation for upholding the public good of liberty. Furthermore, there is a more direct link between the income of private law enforcement agencies and their performance than there is between the income of dynastic monarchs and their performance. Finally, kings may well gain from war against other kings, but private agencies are subject to the discipline of the market where violence and turmoil are considered bad business. Violence breaks up the socially cooperative network of market transactions. Thus private enforcement of public law is led as if by an invisible hand to strive for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

While this sketch by no means exhausts what could be said about the libertarian notion of the public good, it shows that there is available an approach to the public good which allows for the individual initiative that Kropotkin wants to preserve without falling prey to the contradictions in Kropotkin's communistanarchism. ■

FOOTNOTES

1. Kropotkin, **Ethics: Origin and Development** (New York: Tudor Publishing, 1947), pp. 26-27, 333; Kropotkin, **Revolutionary Pamphlets** (New York: Dover, 1970), pp. 83-84.
2. **Ethics**, p. 214.
3. **Revolutionary Pamphlets**, p. 84.
4. **Revolutionary Pamphlets**, p. 84.
5. **Ethics**, p. 88.
6. **Ethics**, p. 20.
7. **Ethics**, p. 218.
8. Kropotkin, **Selected Writings on Anarchism and Revolution** (Cambridge, Mass.: M. I. T. Press, 1970). p. 39-40; see also pp. 338-339.
9. **Revolutionary Pamphlets**, p. 96. **Ethics**, p. 164.
10. See Arthur Caplan, "Ethics, Evolution, and the Milk of Human Kindness: A Review of the Reviews of E. O. Wilson's 'Sociobiology'," **Hastings Center Report**, vol. 6, no. 2 (April 1976), pp. 20-25.
11. **Revolutionary Pamphlets**, p. 98.
12. **Ethics**, p. 15 and 219.
13. **Revolutionary Pamphlets**, p. 94; Adam Smith, **Theory of Moral Sentiments** (New Rochelle, N. Y.: Arlington), pp. 5-24, 33-44, 52-65. See also Mandeville, **Fable of the Bees** (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin, 1970), pp. 264ff; Rousseau, **First and Second Discourses** (New York: St. Martin's, 1964), pp. 130ff; Spencer, **Social Statics** (New York: Appleton, 1878), pp. 114ff; Hume, **Treatise of Human Nature** (London: Oxford University Press, 1888), pp. 575-581; Hobbes, "Human Nature," in **English Works**, ed. by Molesworth (London: 1839-1854), vol. 4, p. 44; Nicholas Rescher, **Unselfishness** (1976).
14. **Ethics**, p. 218.
15. **Ethics**, pp. 218-219.
16. **Ethics**, p. 175.
17. **Ethics**, p. 234. See also p. 252.
18. **Ethics**, p. 146.
19. **Ethics**, p. 30. See also p. 221.
20. **Ethics**, p. 24 and p. 200.
21. **Ethics**, p. 266.
22. **Ethics**, pp. 26-27.
23. **Ethics**, p. 26.
24. **Ethics**, pp. 26, 218, 320.

24a. On the difference between equal shares and distribution according to needs, see Hugo Adam Bedau, "Egalitarianism and the Idea of Equality," in J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman, eds., **Nomos IX: Equality** (New York; Atherton, 1967), pp. 11-12. At times, Kropotkin seems to believe that distribution according to needs would receive unanimous approval. See **Selected Writings**, p. 185. This unrealistic assumption allows him to neglect a detailed defense of this mode of distribution.

25. Proudhon, **What is Property?** (New York, Dover, 1970), p. 261.
26. **Ethics**, p. 320.
27. **Revolutionary Pamphlets**, p. 100.
28. Robert Nozick, **Anarchy, State, and Utopia** (New York: Basic Books, 1974), pp. 198, 219.
29. Nozick, pp. 253-262; George J. Stigler, "Ricardo and the 93 Per Cent Labor Theory of Value," **American Economic Review**, vol. 48 (June 1958); Eugene von Boehm-Bawerk, **Karl Marx and the Close of his System** (New York: Kelley, 1949); Eugene von Boehm-Bawerk, "The Exploitation Theory," in **Capital and Interest** (S. Holland, Ill.: Libertarian Press, 1959), vol. 1, pp. 241-321; Alfred Zauberman, "Revisionism in Soviet Economics," in Leopold Labedz, ed., **Revisionism: Essays in the History of Marxist Ideas** (New York:

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From the Old Curmudgeon

Trivial Libertarian Controversy of the Month Dept.

In a recent issue of the **Libertarian Review**, Walter Grinder took some healthy swipes at the profession of philosophy, especially as that profession is often exercised in the libertarian movement. The burden of his charge was that philosophers are addicted to trivial nit-picking and semantic word-play, rather than focussing on real world issues. Humorless as always, Tibor Machan then rushed in to defend the honor of philosophy and to accuse Grinder—rather ludicrously—of being "anti-intellectual." But there is an important point here, a point inherent in the sociology of the philosophy profession itself. All academic disciplines suffer from excesses of Ph. D-manship and the requirements of "publish or perish." But the discipline of philosophy is in the worst shape of all. In contrast to other specific sciences or to history, there can be little genuine innovation in philosophy from one decade, or even century, to the next. Philosophy deals with eternal problems through rational discourse, and it cannot come up with new electronic gizmos every year or so. Moreover, genuine philosophy is only refined common sense, which is in no greater supply now than in ancient Greece. So there is nothing much new that philosophers can legitimately say; but yet, in contrast to previous centuries, philosophers are now invariably academics who must publish continually to get promoted and win brownie points in the profession. How can mere common sense fill the academic journals? As a result, the temptation is almost irresistible for the academic philosopher to abandon common sense posthaste, to write impenetrable jargon for its own sake, to nit-pick **ad infinitum**, and to fill the air with dazzling paradoxes and affronts to mere common sense. Unfortunately, libertarian philosophers have been at least as prone to these fallacious methodologies as any of their colleagues. Hence, the justice of the Grinder jibe.

There is no more striking example of the tendency of libertarian philosophers to pay rapt attention to worthless trivia than a discussion that fills the letters column of the November-December 1976 **Libertarian Review**. In the previous issue of LR, Roy A. Childs, Jr. had given short shrift to a privately published pamphlet by one Michael Emerling attempting to refute some tapes by one John Kiefer purporting to derive Christianity, or at least theism, from Objectivism. The main burden of Childs' critics is that he dealt with the Emerling tome too brusquely, dismissing it without due attention to its sources, its wording, etc. The trouble is that Childs' critics seem to have little appreciation of the problem of judgments of **importance**, judgments which necessarily

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Praeger, 1962), pp. 268-280; Philip H. Wicksteed, **The Alphabet of Economic Science** (New York: Kelley & Millman, 1955), pp. 116-124; M. M. Bober, **Karl Marx's Interpretation of History**, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 182-199.

30. **Ethics**, p. 306.
31. On supposed joint social products from which no individual's contribution can be disentangled, see Murray N. Rothbard, **Power and Market**, (Menlo Park, Calif.: Institute for Humane Studies, 1970), pp. 183-184; Nozick, pp. 187-188.
32. **Revolutionary Pamphlets**, p. 99.
33. Michels, **Political Parties** (New York: Dover, 1959).
34. Murray N. Rothbard, "Justice and Property Rights," in **Egalitarianism as a Revolt against Nature** (Washington, D. C.: Libertarian Review, 1974), pp. 58-60. For a similar division into three exclusive alternatives, see Brian Barry's discussion of the law on assaults, in "The Public Interest," in Anthony Quinton, ed., **Political Philosophy** (London: Oxford University, 1967), pp. 118-119.
35. Nozick, p. 225; Rothbard, **Power and Market**, p. 187.
36. **Ethics**, p. 27.
37. **Ethics**, pp. 102, 176-177, 278-279.
38. **Revolutionary Pamphlets**, p. 106.
39. Mises, **Socialism** (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1951), pp. 316, 318.
40. Rothbard, **Power and Market**, p. 168.
41. **Revolutionary Pamphlets**, p. 172. Compare **Selected Writings**, pp. 183-184.
42. Rothbard, "Anarcho-Communism," in **Egalitarianism**, p. 123.
43. **Selected Writings**, p. 187.
44. **Selected Writings**, p. 204.
45. **Selected Writings**, pp. 211-264.
46. **Selected Writings**, p. 239. Compare Ronda Larmour, "A Merchant Guild of Sixteenth-Century France: The Grocers of Paris," **Economic History Review**, 2nd ser., vol. 20, no. 3 (1967), pp. 467-481; Charles Gross, **The Gild Merchant** (1890; London: Oxford University Press, 1964), chap. 3; Sylvia L. Thrupp, "The Gilds," in M. M. Postan, ed., **The Cambridge Economic History of Europe** (London: Cambridge University Press, 1963), vol. 3, pp. 232, 233, 242; M. M. Postan, **The Medieval Economy and Society** (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin, 1975), pp. 241-242; Abbott Payson Usher, **An Introduction to the Industrial History of England** (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1920), pp. 78-79, 173.
47. Proudhon, pp. 260-261. Proudhon is talking about state communism here, but if all communist societies necessarily generate governmental rule, then Proudhon's description applies to Kropotkin's communism too.
48. For a similar view, see C. W. Cassinelli, "Some Reflections on the Concept of the Public Interest," **Ethics**, vol. 69, no. 1 (October 1958), pp. 49-50.
49. Tibor R. Machan, "Some Considerations of the Common Good," **Journal of Human Relations** (Fall 1970), pp. 989-990.
50. See Edwin G. Dolan, **TANSTAAFL** (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), pp. 85-96.
51. J. A. W. Gunn, **Politics and the Public Interest in the Seventeenth Century** (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 289. Kropotkin writes, "When (Locke) attempted to define justice, he quite needlessly limited this conception, reducing it to the conception of property: 'Where there is no property there is no injustice, is a proposition as certain as any demonstration in Euclid.' " **Ethics**, p. 167.
52. Cassinelli, p. 50; Benjamin R. Tucker, quoted in James J. Martin, **Men Against the State** (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Ralph Myles, 1970), p. 214.
53. Hobbes, **Leviathan** (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, n.d.), pp. 122-123. ◻

Curmudgeon — (Continued From Page 7)

govern how much time, energy, and printed space one should devote to any particular book. For not every book is worth a sober and detailed critique. I can think of few subjects of less intrinsic importance than the burning question of whether Christianity can be derived from objectivist premises—a question of approximately the same moment as the philosophic problem of how many John Galts can dance on the head of a pin. Rather than criticize Childs for devoting only 400 words to a review of this mighty question, one can raise the more transcendent issue of why this claptrap was reviewed at all. Grinder vindicated!

Sleeping on the Couch.

The New York Times (Dec. 17) carries a story from the annual meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association. It seems that there is a growing problem of patients falling asleep on the psycho-analytic couch. To orthodox psychoanalysts, practiced in jargon-filled smear and one-upmanship over their harassed clients, the "meaning" of this event is clear: the patient is "resisting" the great truths that the analyst is about to unearth. (The theory of "resistance" is a superb example of a question-begging non-falsifiable method for always putting the onus of failure on the poor patient.) The typical patient's defense that he was "tired and bored" was quickly dismissed by the psychotherapeutic gurus. A couple of heretical analysts, however, conceded that falling asleep can mean that the patient had not "gotten enough sleep the night before"; moreover, one added that "what happens more often is that the analyst falls asleep." Added another: "The one thing I've never heard of is both of them falling asleep."

Well, why not? Think of the charming image this conjures up: both parties, the patient and his intrepid analyst, snoozing away in peaceful contentment in that office. For a moment one might be tempted to think that, at last, both analyst and "analysand" are even—Steven, all power-ploys forgotten: until we realize that the two are not fully at par. For while both snooze on, a lot of the Long Green is being transferred from the bank account of the patient to that of his "therapist." But, after all, isn't this simply casting aside the veil of what really goes on, of "letting it all hang out"? In that immortal phrase of "Deep Throat" in the Watergate saga, "keep your eye on the money."

As a matter of fact, I have an excellent suggestion which will both increase the "productivity" and the income of the analyst, while saving both the time and trouble of coming to the office and the couch. Why not skip the office visits altogether and just have the "patients" mail their checks regularly to their analysts? Analysts will be even richer, and patients will be able to brag about lifelong analysis by their famous therapists indeed, far more could now be therapized by the big shots. And the bother of schlepping down to the office would be eliminated. Of course, there is another thing that the patients could do: save their money, and send some of it to the Libertarian Party. Maybe, if common sense should ever make a comeback. ◘

New Libertarian Scholarly Journal!

Libertarian scholarship and advances in libertarian theory have been proceeding apace in recent years, but there has long been a grievous lack of any scholarly libertarian journal which can serve as an outlet for longer articles on libertarianism. No scholarly discipline can really develop without such a journal, but now that grave defect will soon be remedied. The new **Journal of Libertarian Studies**, a scholarly quarterly edited by Murray N. Rothbard, will come off the presses in January or early Feburary. How can you afford to be without the journal which will bring you the latest developments in libertarianism?

Here are some of the highlights of articles already in press for the first two issues:

A path-breaking work by Williamson Evers, "Toward a Reformulation of the Law of Contracts", which sets forth the correct, libertarian "transfer-title" theory of what contracts should be enforceable under libertarian law, as contrasted to the conventional "expectations" and "promise" theories.

Four articles amounting to a devastating critique of Robert Nozick's anti-anarchist section of his **Anarchy, State, and Utopia**: by Randy E. Barnett, Roy A. Childs, Jr. John T. Sanders, and Murray N. Rothbard.

The first published article of a new analysis by Walter Grinder and John Hagel, integrating Austrian analysis and libertarian class theory.

The best and most thorough presentation yet written of the "anarchist" nature of medieval Ireland, by Joseph R. Peden: "Property Rights in Medieval Ireland: Celtic Law versus Church and State".

Two important critiques of mathematical economics, published for the first time in English: one by the late Ludwig von Mises, and a second by the Misesian political theorist Bruno Leoni and mathematician Eugenio Frola.

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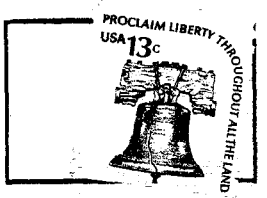

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