

THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ANIMALS AND SOCIALISM

(Title by the Editorial Board)

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Our visit to the zoological gardens was not intended to review the specimens of life that are generally classed as 'inferior'.

We did not go either to reassure ourselves that, us humans, are above the backwardness of the 'inferiors'.

We went to educate ourselves for the task that consists in helping to harmonise the human being, the animal, and life, as part of nature and the cosmos. Humanity already strives towards this aim.

Apart from some texts by Marx and Engels, few Marxist writings deal with the relationship between humanity and the animals. We say 'humanity' here, but it is not exact. In this context, 'humanity' is the ruling class. The ruling class drills its own concepts into humanity. In our behaviour towards the animals, what you see is the power relations of the humans towards each other.

Marx and Engels¹ were the first to investigate those concerns. Engels' book on *The Origins of the family, private property and the State* (1884) remains the most complete study on the function of class. It is short but complete.

The power relations you observe in our treatment of the animals are those already existing in capitalist society. The way the animals are treated typifies the capitalist norms of power. These norms have little concern for the animal, particularly when the animal can no longer be exploited.

We do not have the time to study this in greater depth, but we know that in Socialism, humanity will appreciate the animals for what they are. It may be that humanity will continue to use animals for a while, but people will want to find alternatives.

In Socialism, humanity will want to organise and support life in every way. It will defend every form of life, because every form of life is a link with the cosmos. Isn't our natural environment bathing in the cosmos?

¹ Marx (1818-1883). Engels (1820-1895).

In Socialism, relations will no longer need power. We will no longer need to get something back from our relationship with the animals. Our relationship with the animals will be based on the appreciation of our common origins. The animal stayed at a given stage of development and we developed further. So what?

Like us, the animals come from the empirical stages in the development of nature – nature, not of the cosmos. It is important to study this. Our love for the animals is a source of harmony in our lives. It may be that we will have to carry on killing animals for some time; in due course, humanity will be making an experience of life so rich that even wild animals will stop being wild.

In Socialism, humanity will win the animals, incorporating them. More animals will become tame. Others will become extinct in a way comparable to today. The rhinos and giraffes are not likely to come back, but new species will emerge. Extinction is but one aspect of the many combinations in the organisation of life on Earth. Life on Earth was organised in thousands of ways, through thousands of reasons, all determined by the surrounding cosmos and by nature on Earth.

Harmony wants brute force replaced by knowledge and intelligence:

It is questionable whether the fly has a great future, but the elephant is an intelligent creature and it gets along with people. The affinity between the elephant and the human being is a sign of common roots. The human being yearns after harmony with nature.

Harmony with nature needs knowledge and intelligence to replace brute force. Brute force is what we have today. The animals should not be in zoos. By making them captive, we feel a sense of superiority over them. Is it to gloat, or to justify ourselves, that we deem the animal to be 'wild', and not ourselves? Capitalism shows penned animals under a banner that says: "We are superior to the animals". And not far behind, another banner says: "Beware of the company of beasts that do not respect the law". The law being the ruling law, the capitalist law, the law of property.

Humanity has developed a keen interest in all matters to do with its common origins and relationship with the animals. Darwin laid the ground, and some knowledge was acquired since. In society at large, the origins of the animals are not often considered. The scientists who look into the cellular basis of life are not expected to link their studies with the ways life became organised. Capitalism cannot do this objectively and dialectically. It would indict itself if it did.

The capitalists do not look for evidence where their power might be questioned. Behind their constant insinuation that "the human being is more powerful than the animal", this is what they mean. Their narratives on the Palaeolithic and Neolithic² periods leave huge blanks. They show human progress without the principles behind its evolution; they do not deal with the evolution of the historic stages; and they keep changing their estimates about the duration of past ages³. The value of what they say is very relative. It will be entirely down to us, in the end, to explain, demonstrate and organise everything for the elimination of all the forms of oppression, imposition and exploitation.

The human being of today emerged from the empirical development of previous hominids⁴. There is intelligence also in the animals. The lion and the elephant are intelligent. The bear also, and so is the monkey. Some of these are domesticated. We will analyse this further, at a later date, because we cannot do it now. We will do it as part of the study of human society - not of palaeontology - and on the basis of science.

Capitalism is the bane of human knowledge:

We recognise the role of Darwin, but we condemn private property for having left these matters fall to neglect and empiricism. We denounce the capitalist class for not wanting to look beyond the protection of its power to exploit, to make war, to develop atomic weapons and to threaten planet Earth. Capitalism stands in the way of the intelligent and thorough investigation of the cosmos. We condemn capitalism for each of those things.

Had Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Demosthenes and Democritus⁵ been able to change society, now we would be in an entirely different historic era. It did not happen because private property blocked the way. Private property has been the bane of human knowledge. In spite of all this however, we feel a deep sense of harmony for being part of the continuing struggle for human progress. We have made it our task to help root out all the hurdles in the way of progress.

² **Palaeolithic** period of history: 2.6 million years ago to 10,000 BCE. Sophisticated stone tools. Homo 'Habilis'. **Neolithic**: 4,500 years ago to 2,000 BCE. 'New Stone Age'. Beginning of technology.

³ Capitalism always underestimates **evolutionary times**, because it does not really assimilate the theory of evolution. Editorial.

⁴ According to Wikipedia, the designation '**Homo Sapiens**' (modern man) includes extinct types of primitive hominids like Cro-Magnon and Homo Neanderthal.

⁵ **Plato** (around 424 BCE): philosopher, writer, founder of the Academy. **Socrates** (around 470 BCE): philosopher, teacher of thought method like logic, taught Plato. **Aristotle** (around 384 BCE): philosopher, scientist, writer on physics, biology, zoology, metaphysics, music, logic, rhetoric, politics and government. **Demosthenes** (around 384 BCE): statesman and orator. **Democritus** (around 460 BCE): formulated an atomic theory of the universe.

The Workers States are not responsible for their own shortcomings. The limitations of the Workers States come from private property, that is to say, from the way they were organised *before* they became Workers States. The struggle goes on in the Workers States: They must overcome bureaucracy, and confront capitalism now on its last legs. The responsibility for every failure in the Workers States is to be laid at the door of private property.

Private property separated the human beings from nature. It kept them continually at each other's throat. And it broke the harmony of Greek development. The Greeks grasped some of this and sought to have it reversed. Lucretius⁶ wrote about it. Of course no human development can happen without a corresponding system of production. We know this, but it does not stop us making an assessment of private property. This is how history has been.

The Greeks could not know all this, but we do. It is hard for the people of today to bear the disharmony between nature, our human past and our human aims. People turn to the animals in want for harmony, less in search of common ancestries than to integrate all the fruit of nature in the human quest for progress.

We already communicate a lot with animals. Not so much with the fish, but a little more with the shark and a lot with the dolphin. We cannot do more because the elements and the structures standing in the way still need removing. When the intelligence of communist society is established, it will beam outwards in all directions, and towards all the animals.

The capitalist class mocks the thought of human harmony:

The humans have developed an intelligence superior to that of the animals, certainly. They developed qualities, means and forms that the animals did not. This is so, but human intelligence is a product of social life, and no single human being could have done it. Our intelligence is not the point however. The point is to develop objective love and harmonious relations with all that exists.

It is not easy to feel love for reptiles, but there are reptiles that can obey you. This means that there is a common origin in the brain formation, which diversified afterwards under particular genetic and organic conditions. Humanity longs for the harmony that unites all the forms of life, as part of the organisation of nature in the interests of all.

⁶ **Lucretius** (99 BCE to 55 BCE): Roman philosopher and poet of the Late Republican Rome, very influenced by Greece. Wrote a book of Verses called "*On the nature of the Universe*". He saw the universe as guided by 'fortuna', and not by divine intervention. He influenced Virgil, Horace and others.

Less and less importance is given today to the animals because these play diminishing roles in production. It is not that capitalism has learnt to respect them, but that their labour is no longer economic. The capitalist class discards the animals because it no longer needs them. As a class, it cannot develop any sense of harmony with them any more than it does for all the rest of life, nature, the cosmos, or even itself! Such is private property.

The development of the large capitalist countries took place through the use of slavery. The ruling classes of Portugal, France, North America, Britain and Germany all took part. Harmony between the human beings and nature was not going to be for them! They only allowed for the 'harmony' required by capital accumulation, and from then on, their only concern would be appropriation, competition and war. These people laugh at the thought of human harmony.

Private property in the means of production meant private property dominating science and the technology of production. This basically truncated the development of science; it stopped the development of entire countries, starting with the colonised peoples, Black people, Mixed Race and the Indigenous populations, and many more.

Capitalism does not want to investigate these matters. Even after Darwin, anthropological and zoological science stayed very limited. One of the best anthropologies is that of Lewis H Morgan⁷ who gave the principles for a history of the human relations. After him, there remained to study the principles that link the human being, the animals, nature and the universe. It was not, and it is not in the interests of capitalism to do that. It is the Soviet Union that started along those lines.

The task is to eliminate every form of egotism:

In the history of the organisation of intelligence after the Greeks, the salient period is that of the Renaissance. Private property that curtailed the Greeks, curtailed the Renaissance too. It is true that the Renaissance was able to go farther than the Greeks in some major ways; but from our position of hindsight today - 2,000 years after the Greeks - we verify that private property has been the bane of the progress of history.

Per force this led to science being partial: Science aimed at stopping the

⁷ Lewis H Morgan (1818-1881): American ethnologist, founder of scientific anthropology. Wrote a book "Ancient Society". Debated with contemporaries whether evolution was a progressive, linear and uniform process. Question still unresolved today, due fear and contempt for dialectical materialism. Editorial.

necessary organisation of humanity. Science used to stop the objective capacity of humanity to think as a humankind. This was motivated, and still is, by the compulsion of the ruling class to keep everything for itself - the use of nature included, the use of the animals, the use of the human beings.

With this visit to the zoo, we sought to be preoccupied with the question of where humanity comes from; and this, in order to know better where humanity is going.

The obstacle in the way of knowing better is private property. For humanity to know where it comes from and where it goes to, it must end private property.

People are increasingly interested in this subject. There is a general acceptance that humanity is going to the cosmos. People see well beyond the Earth already. They see the Earth as part of the cosmos.

Our concern for the animals does not try to make an empirical defence of the animals, but a harmonious appraisal of what conduct to have, as human beings, towards them and everything that exists.

We seek harmony with the animals, hence with nature, as a means to contact the origins and birth of life. We seek this harmony because it poses the elimination of all egotism, appropriation, imposition and arrogance.

With the end of capitalism, it is not just private property that comes down, but all the forms of utilisation of nature and life for individual and class gains. We deem our preoccupation to be eminently just and fair. The Greeks were interested in all this. They could not develop this thought to the full, but they had this concern.

What we know today about the universe is very insufficient.

The foresight, the intuition and the desire to understand the movement of the world are expressions of humanity's deeper grasp that it is part of the movement of the universe. In itself, this gives a great sense of unity. Not unity on Earth with the ruling class. No, the unity of the cosmos.

The preoccupation for such things is growing. Soon it will captivate humanity.

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