

Society Makes People Sick. “What is Truth, What is a Lie”?

"Mutual Aid" Makes Them Healthy – And Survive

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Introduction to the topic

Prince Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), Russian political scientist, human geographer and philosopher, observed both nature and natural beings and related his findings to human beings. In his scientific work “Mutual Aid in the Animal and Human World”, he writes that in the animal kingdom not only the “struggle for survival” but also the principle of “mutual aid” is effective and that those living beings who implement this principle survive longer (1).

Scientific depth psychology is based on these findings. According to this, man is a naturally social being who is oriented towards the community of his fellow human beings and has a tendency towards good. There is no need to be afraid of this human being.

Dear fellow citizens, in the last few days I have had experiences that have led to a change in thinking. In personal contact with old friends, it became more apparent to me than before that politicians, in the name of society, with their “urgently necessary” political decisions and their media-political manipulations, as well as the permanent constant sprinkling of the population with admonitions and warnings, not only greatly unsettle and irritate the citizens, but also make them ill.

A dear neighbour, whom my wife and I had not seen for a long time, became so emaciated that we were shocked. Only after a while did she tell us, ashamed, that in the middle of the month there was no money left from her small old-age pension for a nutritious meal.

An old friend who had been offered a full professorship in a distant foreign country replied to the question whether he had forgotten his old friends back home that this was not the case, but that he no longer knew “where his head would be” because his wife, whom he had to leave behind in the homeland together with the children, was seriously ill. Furthermore, a good friend, who suddenly had to vacate her fashion shop after several decades, could no longer find the reverse gear in her car, completely confused.

Last but not least, I came across the publication of a scientific medical society, the “Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychiatrie, Psychotherapie, Psychosomatik und Nervenheilkunde e. V. (DGPPN). Under the heading “Basic data on mental illnesses in Germany”, it says, based on a snapshot from January 2023:

“In Germany, about 27.9 percent of the adult population is affected by a mental illness every year. This corresponds to around 17.8 million affected persons, (...). The most common disorders include anxiety disorders (15.4 per cent), followed by affective disorders (9.8 per cent, unipolar depression alone 8.2 per cent) and disorders caused by alcohol or drug use (5.7 per cent).” (2)

Unfortunately, many colleagues try to reconcile insecure counselling seekers with the respective existing society instead of also including the social and cultural problem in the therapeutic process. They would then learn that their individual problems are not only rooted in their personal history, but rather in an inhumane society and culture.

But “mutual aid” turns out to be an “invitation” and an “offer” as a way to “help” one’s fellow human beings – and, by helping them, to become healthy oneself. In this situation, the people who are offered support learn that those who help them also have problems that are not entirely different from their own.

Everywhere it comes down to a sense of community, a feeling of belonging, of being together. The gift of evolution consists in the moral awareness of the individual, in the insight into the responsibility of all towards all.

On the importance of enlightenment

The future of our culture still depends on whether there will be enough enlightened people who are capable of removing from the broad masses of people those prejudices which are the ideological background of the catastrophes of humanity. More than ever, we are dependent on “free spirits” to teach us what is truth and what is a lie.

In this, intellectuals have a great responsibility, because their duty would be to think for other people. However, some among them fear that as intellectuals they would remain among themselves, speaking only to each other and not reaching the mass of the population at all.

Therefore, it would be important for all “enlighteners”, in addition to enlightenment, to sit down with fellow human beings, to listen to them calmly and to try to empathise with their problems.

Or as Alfred Adler, the founder of individual psychology, put it:

“See with another’s eyes, hear with another’s ears, feel with another’s heart.” (3)

Together, one usually finds a human (psychological) way out of the labyrinth of fears about the future. And this is especially true when the offer of help is a friendly invitation and an informal offer of how to manage the present situation satisfactorily and thereby live better.

Even before my “rethinking”, I had made the appeal with a quote from Bertolt Brecht: “When injustice becomes right, resistance becomes a duty”. For reasons of conscience, refuse to obey the state. Politicians are only the visible pawns of the real rulers of the

world.”

I had started the article by saying, “Time is out of joint (Shakespeare). But those who are aware of the danger of neo-fascism, the danger of the “pharmaceutical crime of the century” (CHD) and the threat of world war will readily agree with Bertolt Brecht’s injunction and that of the German regime critic Wolfgang Borchert in his 1947 manifesto “Then there is only one thing: Say NO!”.

But the admiration of great role models who refused to obey the state for reasons of conscience and with their selfless actions not only protected law and freedom in their own countries is not enough to change the very worrying situation in the world: Each of us must take action ourselves.”

Since the planned article was again a call to action to fellow human beings who were already burdened with problems, I refrained from this idea after my “rethinking”.

Peter Kropotkin

Finally, a psychological statement by the humanist-minded Russian anarchist and revolutionary Prince Peter Kropotkin:

“A man to whom the ability to identify with his surroundings is inbred, a man who is himself conscious of his heart, of his will, places his faculties freely at the service of others, without expecting any reward for them in this or any other world. Above all, he possesses the ability to understand the feelings of others, to experience them. This is enough. He shares joys and sorrows with others. He helps them to bear the difficult times of their lives. He feels his strength and generously uses up his abilities to love others, to inspire others, to awaken in them the belief in a better future and to inspire them to fight for this future. Whatever misfortune reaches him, he takes it not as suffering but as the fulfilment of his life, which he does not wish to exchange for a dutiful vegetation; he may prefer dangers to a life devoid of struggle and content.” (4)

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Notes

(1) Kropotkin, Peter (1908). Mutual aid in the animal and human world. Leipzig

(2)

<https://de.rt.com/meinung/164099-studie-rund-ein-drittel-der-erwachsenen-deutschen-psychisch-erkrankt/>

(3) Adler, Alfred (1928). Brief Remarks on Reason, Intelligence and Feeble-mindedness. In: International Journal of Individual Psychology No. 6. pp. 267-273, p. 267.

(4) Quoted from: Grasenack, Moritz (ed.). (2005). The Liberetarian Psychotherapy of Friedrich Liebling. An introduction to his large group therapy based on verbatim transcripts of therapy sessions. Lich / Hesse, p. 45

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