

The root is social man.

The root is man. Certainly. But <sup>I</sup> man is a social being.

To live, to maintain himself as a living biological individual man has to eat. This is the basis of all philosophy and science of man. He has to take parts of the surrounding world, bearers of chemical energy, and assimilate them into his body; he has to seize them, he has to work. <sup>(This is why the root is man.)</sup>

~~But~~ Working and eating, however, is not a simple matter; ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> has grown <sup>into?</sup> a very complicated matter. It ~~includes~~ implies a system of production with all its ~~complicated~~ <sup>intricate</sup> relations, with its tools, machines, science, laws, social classes, ~~ideas,~~ <sup>ideas,</sup> politics. Feuerbach's thesis "man is what he eats" was ~~only~~ <sup>only</sup> a limited, partial truth. Marx corrected him by showing that ~~the~~ <sup>it, and condition</sup> basis of all eating ~~was~~ is a social system.

From the onset mankind lived in community, in herds, groups, tribes. ~~Only~~ Only as a social being man has been able to rise from animal state to manhood. His faculty of abstract thinking, — ~~that~~ supreme quality raising him to infinite possibilities of spiritual development and mastery over the world — could develop only in society. Abstract thinking is arguing with one self in words and names; hence is indissolubly linked to the faculty of speech. Speech could only develop in a community as a means of mutual understanding in common activities. Names were formed in connection with tools; <sup>the knowledge of</sup> tools <sup>when invented</sup> could only be ~~preserved~~ preserved and gradually ~~improved~~ <sup>improved</sup> in communities. All ~~his~~ qualities that distinguish man ~~are~~ <sup>their</sup> roots in human society; ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> entire spiritual being, not less than ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> material being, depends on social life; without the continual <sup>our</sup> intercourse of speech, work, ideas it could not exist. Robinson Crusoe on his island could only live by <sup>virtue of</sup> the capabilities he carried with him from the society, in which he had grown up.

There are differences, of course. The savage tribesman, in actions and feelings, was completely bound up with his community, <sup>he was</sup> hardly a personality; separated from it he was nothing. Individualism <sup>developed</sup> ~~developed~~ <sup>afterwards</sup> in the world of commodity production and separate enterprise. When the ties of common work were dissolved and the peasants, the artisans, the merchants took <sup>to</sup> their own ways, ~~with~~ the spirit of self-reliance and independence, <sup>stirring the passions and spiritual forces,</sup> rose mightily in the personalities. ~~But~~ Their social character retreats <sup>fighting</sup>

7 Social feelings pervaded him entirely and determined his dealings.

Because their origin was unknown, ~~mythified into~~ <sup>offspring of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>took the form of</sup> ~~ancient~~ <sup>because</sup> ethics, and  
 The inherited social feelings, now, ~~at the center of~~ <sup>something between</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>because</sup> ethics, and  
 the ~~antithesis~~ <sup>antithesis</sup> of community and competitive fight of all against all was  
 expressed in the doctrine of the two opposite trends <sup>in man, egotism and altruism.</sup> ~~innate~~ 21/2

to the background, hardly conscious in the proud self-assertion of the individual, <sup>only springing</sup>  
 forward <sup>only</sup> ~~up~~ <sup>up</sup> again, as the deeper basis of life, in times of emergency <sup>[This new character of man,</sup>  
~~Individualism sustains and hardens man.~~  
~~and~~ <sup>By this individualism the solitary Robinson could</sup>  
 build up <sup>a</sup> ~~mate~~ <sup>life of self-sufficiency,</sup> where the savage, cut off from his community, would  
 have <sup>perished</sup> ~~perished~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~by~~ <sup>grief and</sup> loneliness.

Now, under civilization, conscious thinking entirely centers in ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> personality.  
 Philosophers proceed from the individual and <sup>have to</sup> ~~bring forward~~ <sup>bring forward</sup> complicated arguments to  
 demonstrate the existence of fellow-men. Political economy starts with Robinson's  
~~independent~~ <sup>for</sup> production-system; ~~and~~ <sup>took its origin from</sup> Rousseau society originated by the "social contract"  
 of free individuals. And Marx had to discover as a new heavily contested theory  
 what he expressed 1859 in the words: ~~It is not consciousness that determines~~  
~~reality, but~~ <sup>it is social reality that determines consciousness"</sup>

This new character of man, ~~and~~ <sup>once acquired,</sup> cannot be lost ~~any~~  
 more. Future society of organized world-production by the community of workers  
 can only exist as a blending of community-feeling and strong individualism.

Capitalism, to be sure, does its utmost to destroy the feeling of personality in  
 the working masses <sup>as inherited</sup> ~~carried along from by their~~ <sup>from their middle-class ancestors</sup> ~~by~~  
~~pressing~~ <sup>pressing</sup> them down ~~into~~ <sup>into</sup> spiritless toil and humiliating  
~~obedience,~~ <sup>obedience,</sup> ~~But~~ <sup>But</sup> ever again in <sup>rebellious</sup> ~~the fight~~ <sup>the fight</sup> against the  
 masters, ~~as~~ <sup>a fight</sup> ~~against~~ <sup>against</sup> bad working conditions,  
 the workers assert their individual ~~with~~ <sup>with</sup> free will, taking their lot in  
 the own hand. <sup>In their</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>class-fight</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>proletariat</sup> ~~at the same time~~ <sup>at the same time</sup> assure their individualism  
 and acquire the social qualities of solidarity <sup>and</sup> ~~devotion to the class.~~ <sup>devotion to the class.</sup> Only  
 by developing both <sup>they</sup> ~~can~~ <sup>rise to the</sup> ~~power~~ <sup>power</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> destroy capitalism.

Rebels and martyrs, driven <sup>by a social force,</sup> ~~on~~ <sup>by</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>(love for humanity</sup> ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> the deepest root  
 of their deeds, <sup>in their own consciousness</sup> ~~take~~ <sup>find</sup> their strength <sup>in</sup> ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> devotion to ~~their~~ <sup>their</sup> principle, their creed,  
 their God; ~~with~~ <sup>being</sup> ~~their~~ <sup>their</sup> conscience ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> their personal guide and judge.

II

then

over

It is a curious thing that a quotation from Marx (The root is man) is taken as a basis to refute Marxism. There must be something wrong. <sup>It is a</sup> ~~In looking~~ <sup>rather than</sup> ~~more~~ it appears <sup>that to be</sup> there is a double quid pro quo: Marx does not say what the isolated sentence seems to say, and Marxism is not identical with what here is called Marxism. In his sentence "The root to man is man himself" Marx attacks the idealistic philosophy of Hegel and the ~~the~~ <sup>to be</sup> Younghegelian school, who proclaimed the Absolute Idea or other deified abstractions (the root of world and society). In proclaiming man the root of all things social ~~the~~ <sup>Marx</sup> did not oppose individual ~~oppose~~ to community, but reality to abstract thought. Man as quoted here stands not against society; real man stands against <sup>the</sup> philosophical phantom. Marxism, on the other hand, is identified with the doctrine of socialist party-dominance over the State. It is more, and different. But ~~Marxism~~ <sup>a too deeper into a survey of</sup> ~~Marxism~~ must be postponed to another time, <sup>it has</sup> ~~in order to~~ <sup>draw</sup> ~~transfer~~ <sup>our attention</sup> ~~fix here~~ <sup>upon</sup> the practical question: the root of the new society.

We <sup>were</sup> ~~put~~ <sup>put</sup> our hopes upon the working masses; but we see them <sup>inactive,</sup> ~~submissive,~~ jogging along after their party- and union-leaders. On the other hand we see proud defiance of the powerful masters in the conscientious objectors against war service. Will we not have to turn our political expectations towards the latter, <sup>who</sup> ~~by their example raising a moral power,~~ <sup>instead of toward</sup> the former?

In discussing this question we must keep in mind that it is not sufficient that the ruling power <sup>should</sup> retreats a step, if it <sup>retains</sup> keeps its power ~~to~~ to attack (another time); it must be beaten, disabled, <sup>seriously</sup> ~~seriously~~ weakened, at last destroyed. <sup>How</sup> ~~So~~ much the deeds of moral courage of the single rebel may be admired <sup>if</sup> ~~if~~ they remain <sup>some</sup> few isolated cases their social effect is slight. <sup>Only in</sup> ~~in~~ the context of massal movements, when by strong <sup>social</sup> tensions they rouse <sup>wide-spread</sup> emulation, they will be fertile. When individual ~~acts~~ acts of rebellion are part of a class fight their <sup>social</sup> effect can be enormous. The history of <sup>every</sup> ~~each~~ revolution is full of examples.

If State power considered them really dangerous, it could easily crush them.

Not <sup>all</sup> ~~every~~ <sup>movements</sup> ~~movements~~ of a <sup>great many</sup> ~~people~~ are important. It depends on their class-character <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ them, what social power <sup>they</sup> ~~can~~ <sup>can</sup> bring <sup>forth</sup> ~~up~~. ~~What~~ In modern

capitalism the working class has the immediate disposal of the entire big production and ~~transport~~ <sup>and traffic</sup> apparatus. If these masses of exploited servants of capital rebel, they have the <sup>possibility</sup> ~~power~~ to seriously shatter and finally annihilate capitalism. We do not see any other power that can do <sup>so</sup> that.

peace-abiding?

Macdonald ~~is~~ rightly ~~stated~~ <sup>(p. 212)</sup> points out that only a new principle, <sup>something</sup> ~~on~~ a different <sup>warlike</sup> plane, can cope with State power. Trying to replace the old masters by new and <sup>peaceable</sup> better masters does not, <sup>what</sup> ~~change~~ <sup>may be</sup> ~~however~~ <sup>it is called</sup> ~~the~~ system of a tyranny <sup>dominating</sup> ~~the~~ body and mind of mankind. <sup>But</sup> ~~when~~ <sup>however</sup> the conscientious objector puts <sup>forward</sup> the right of free personality over against State power, <sup>he does no more than</sup> ~~this is only~~ the negative side of such a new principle; <sup>he only</sup> ~~challenges~~ <sup>He only exposes</sup> and ~~defies~~ authority; the positive <sup>existent</sup> ~~side~~ <sup>side</sup> is lacking. <sup>What is that positive side?</sup> Society cannot exist without organisation. In the present times, after the capitalist period of independent personal business, planned economy is needed, and it will come, inevitably, under whatever form. Monopolist-capitalism, technocracy, managerialism, State capitalism, they all mean organisation from above, by constraint, by dictatorship, <sup>the few</sup> ~~suppressing~~ <sup>leaders</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>down</sup> ~~personalities~~ of the many. Against them the working class <sup>has to establish</sup> ~~can only perform its~~ <sup>revolution</sup> by organisation from within, from below, <sup>as a</sup> ~~well-planned~~ well-planned collaboration of free individuals, <sup>collectively</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the instrument of their</sup> ~~organisation being~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~master of their production apparatus,~~ <sup>workers' councils.</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>workers</sup> ~~only way~~ <sup>through a</sup> ~~they can~~ <sup>revolution.</sup> ~~win freedom,~~ <sup>A mass of obedient followers shouting the slogans of their party leaders can not</sup> ~~destroying~~ <sup>do that.</sup> capitalist and State power. It demands a new spirit of self-assertion, of independent thinking, of bold rebelliousness, <sup>to be</sup> ~~combined~~ <sup>with</sup> the class-solidarity proper to <sup>every</sup> ~~working-class~~ fight. The chief blame <sup>that can be</sup> ~~to put~~ upon present-day socialist and communist party movements is that by trying to educate the working <sup>class</sup> ~~into~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~submissive~~ <sup>its</sup> ~~subjects~~ <sup>future</sup> to new authority they stop up the fountain-well ~~of~~ <sup>its</sup> ~~future~~ <sup>force.</sup>

Geschreven naar aanleids van Dwight Macdonald's stukken in Politics, getiteld The root is man, 1  
The Root is Social Man. } en strekkende de individuele dinstweigers  
I. } als belangrijkste strijdmiddel tegen de oorlog te  
Maar dit sluit werd geweigerd. } proletarier 21/5

The root is man. Certainly. But man is a social being.

To live, to maintain himself as a living biological individual man has to eat. This is the basis of all philosophy and science of man. He has to take parts of the surrounding world, bearers of chemical energy, and assimilate them into his body; he has to seize them, he has to work. This is why the root is man.

Working and eating, however, is not a simple matter; it has grown into a very complicated matter. It implies a system of production with all its intricate relations, with its tools, machines, science, laws, social classes, ideas, politics. Feuerbach's thesis "man is what he eats" was a limited, partial truth only. Marx corrected him by <sup>ow</sup> showing that the basis and condition of all eating is a social system.

From the onset mankind lived in community, in herds, groups, tribes. Only as a social being man has been able to rise from animal state to manhood. His faculty of abstract thinking — that supreme quality raising him to infinite possibilities of spiritual development and mastery over the world — could develop only in society. Abstract thinking is arguing with one self in words and names, hence is indissolvably linked to the faculty of speech. Speech could only develop in a community as a means of mutual understanding in common activities. Names were formed in connection with tools; the knowledge of tools, when invented, could only be preserved and gradually ameliorated in communities. All qualities that distinguish man have their root in human society; the entire spiritual being, not less than the material being, depends on social life; without the continual intercourse of speech, work, ideas, it could not exist. Robinson Crusoe on his island could only live by virtue of the capabilities he carried with him from the society in which he had grown up.

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There are differences, of course. The savage tribesman, in actions and feelings, was completely bound up with his community, he was hardly a personality; separated from it he was nothing. Social feelings pervaded him entirely and determined his dealings. Individualism developed afterwards in the world of commodity-production and separate enterprise. When the ties of common work were dissolved and the peasants, the artisans, the merchants took to their own ways, the spirit of self-reliance and independence, stirring the passions and spiritual forces, rose mightily in the fighting personalities. Their social character retreats into the background, hardly conscious in the proud self-assertion of the individual, coming forward only, as the deeper basis of life, in times of emergency. The inherited social feelings, now, because their origin was unknown, mystified into something heaven-born, took the form of ethics; and the antithesis of community and competitive fight of all against all was expressed in the doctrine of the two opposite trends innate in man, egotism and altruism. Rebels and martyrs, driven by a social force, love for humanity as the deepest root of their deeds, in their own consciousness find their strength in devotion to their conviction, their principle, their creed, their God; their conscience being their personal guide and judge. Individualism sustains and hardens man. By this individualism the solitary Robinson could build up a life of self-sufficiency, where the savage, cut off from his community, would have perished ~~stricken through~~ <sup>grief.</sup> / stricken through loneliness.

Now, under civilisation, conscious thinking entirely centres in personality. Philosophers proceed from the individual and have to bring forward complicated arguments to demonstrate the existence of fellow-men. Political economy starts with Robinson's production-system; for Rousseau society took its origin from the "social contract" of independent free individuals. And Marx had to discover as a new heavily contested theory what he expressed 1859 in the words: "it is social

reality that determines consciousness".

3  
21/4

This new character of man, once acquired, cannot be lost any more. Future society of organised world-production by the community of workers can only exist as a blending of community-feeling and strong individualism. Capitalism, to be sure, does its utmost to destroy the feelings of personality in the working masses — as inherited from their middle class ancestors — by pressing them down to spiritless toil and humiliating obedience. But ever again in rebellion against the masters, ~~the~~ a fight of offended self-respect as well as a fight against bad working conditions, the workers assert their individual free will, taking their lot in their own hand. In their class fight the proletarians at the same time assure their individualism and acquire the social qualities of solidarity and devotion to the class. Only by developing both can they rise to the power necessary to destroy capitalism.

## II.

It is a curious thing that a quotation from Marx ("the root is man"), is taken as a basis to refute Marxism. There must be something wrong. On a nearer view there appears to be a double quidproquo: Marx does not say what the isolated sentence seems to say, and Marxism is not identical with what here is called Marxism. In his sentence "The root to man is man himself" Marx attacks the idealistic philosophy of Hegel and the Young-Hegelian school, who proclaimed the Absolute Idea or other deified abstractions to be the root of world and society. In proclaiming man the root of all things social Marx did not oppose individual to community, but reality to abstract thought. Man as quoted here stands not ever against society; real man stands ever against the philosophical phantom. <sup>1)</sup> Marxism, on the other hand, is identified with the doctrine of socialist party-dominance over the State. It is more, and different. But a deeper survey of Marxism must be

postponed to another time, ~~if here we are~~ to <sup>fix here</sup> turn <sup>upon</sup> our attention to the practical question: the root of the new society.

We were putting our hopes upon the working masses; but we see them inactive, submissive, joggling along after their party- and union-leaders. On the other hand we see proud defiance of the powerful masters in the conscientious objectors against war service. Will we not have to turn our political expectations toward the latter, who by their example raise a moral power, instead of toward the former?

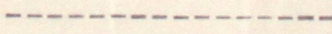
In discussing this question we must keep in mind that it is not sufficient that the ruling power should retreat a step, if it retains its power <sup>(another time)</sup> to attack; it must be beaten, disabled, seriously weakened, at last destroyed. However much the deeds of moral courage of the single rebel may be admired: if they remain some few isolated cases their social effect is slight. If State power considered them really dangerous it could easily crush them. Only in the context of massal movements, when by strong social tensions they rouse wide-spread emulation, will they be fertile. When individual acts of rebellion are part of a class fight, their social effect can be enormous. The history of every revolution is full of examples.

Not all movements of resistance of a great many people are important. It depends on their class-character, what social power they can bring forth. In modern capitalism the working class has the immediate disposal of the entire big production and traffic apparatus. If these masses of exploited servants of capital rebel they have the possibility to seriously shatter and finally annihilate capitalism. We do not see any other power that can do <sup>so</sup> ~~that~~.

Mackdonald rightly points out (p. 212) that only a new principle, something on a different plane, can cope with State power. Trying to replace the old warlike masters by new and better, peaceable masters does not, whatever it may be called, change the system of a tyranny dominating body and mind of mankind. But when the conscientious objector puts forward the right of free personality over against



State power, he does no more than challenge and defy authority. He only exposes the negative side of such a new principle; the positive side is lacking. What is that positive side? Society cannot exist without organisation. In the present times, after the capitalist period of independent personal business, planned economy is needed, and it will come, inevitably, under whatever form. Monopolist-capitalism, technocracy, managerialism, State capitalism, they all mean organisation ~~imposed~~ from above, by constraint, by dictatorship, the few pressing down the personalities of the many. Against them the working class has to establish organisation from within, from below, as a well planned collaboration of free individuals, collectively master of <sup>their</sup> production apparatus, the instrument of their organisation <sup>being</sup> the workers' councils. This is the new principle in its positive contents. In this way only can the workers win freedom, through a revolution destroying capitalist and State power. A mass of obedient followers shouting the slogans of their party leaders cannot do that. It demands a new spirit of self-assertion, of independent thinking, of bold rebelliousness, that <sup>must</sup> ~~can~~ be combined with the class-solidarity proper to any working-class fight. The chief blame that can be put upon present-day socialist and communist party-movements is that ~~that~~ by trying to educate the working class into submissive subjects to new authority they stop ~~block~~ up the fountain-well of its future force.



1) An analogous case is a line (sometimes quoted from Pope) <sup>to</sup> expressing that mankind should be studied by studying single man. What Pope meant appears when the preceding line is added:  
 "Know then thyself; presume not God to scan;  
 the proper study of mankind is Man".

The Root is Man