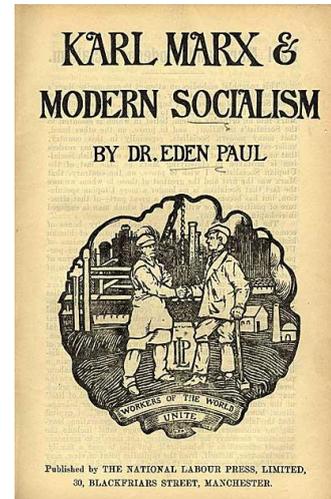


## People and Debates



Benjamin Kidd



Eden Paul pamphlet, 1921

## A) People

## 1) Benjamin Kidd (1858- 1916)

British sociologist. Born in County Clare, Ireland on 9 September 1858, son of constable in the Royal Irish Constabulary. Following a poor education, Benjamin Junior entered the Inland Revenue Department of the Civil Service in a minor capacity in 1877. He worked in obscurity there for seventeen years. He married Maud Emma Isabel Perry, of Weston-Super-Mare in 1887, and they had three sons. His spare time was devoted to study and in 1894 his first work was published. It was entitled *Social Evolution* and it brought him financial success and international fame. The success of his work allowed Benjamin to retire from the Civil Service and in 1898 he travelled extensively in America, Canada, and South Africa. During this period he was commissioned by *The Times* to write a series of articles afterwards published as *The Control of the Tropics*.

He died of heart disease, at Croydon on 2 October 1916.

(See *ODNB* and Obituary, *The Times*, 3 October 1916)

## Publications

## a) Some Early Articles

Essay on 'The Civil Service as a Profession' in *Nineteenth Century*, v 20 Oct 1886, 491-502.

8 essays on natural history in *Cornhill*, Longmans, 1885-1893

## b) Main Books

- \* *Social Evolution* (1894)
- \* *Control of the Tropics* (1898)
- \* *Principles of Western Civilization* (1902)
- \* *Individualism and After* (1908)
- \* *Two Principal Laws of Sociology* (1909)

## 2) Maurice Eden Paul (1865-1944)

Younger son of Charles Kegan Paul (1828-1902), liberal London publisher. Trained as a doctor at the London Hospital Medical College. Married divorcee Margaret Jessie Boag, a sister at the London Hospital, in 1890 while still a medical student. They lived in Japan for around four years in the mid-1890s. Their daughter Hester was born in Sendai on 28 Nov 1893. He acted as correspondent of the *Times* with the Japanese Northern Army during the Sino-Japanese War. In 1903 the couple seem to have separated, and the wife established a private nursing home in the Channel Islands.

Eden Paul returned to working in the London Hospital. He became a prominent member of the

Left of the International Socialist Movement, standing as a parliamentary candidate for the Independent Labour Party in 1911, and later joining the Communist Party of Great Britain. He married again to Cedar Paul before the First World War, and with her became a distinguished translator of radical books and pamphlets. They retired to the French Riviera in 1932, but continued to write and translate.

(See *ODNB* and Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eden\\_Paul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eden_Paul))

#### Publications

181 items on BL catalogue!!!!

##### a) Some Pamphlets and Books

*Socialism and Eugenics*, Manchester, National Labour Press 1911. Reprinted from the Independent Labour Party's *Labour Leader*.

*Socialism and Science*. Keighley: Wadsworth, [1909]. Reprinted from the *Socialist Review*, etc.

*The Sexual Life of the Child*. London: British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology, 1921.

*Karl Marx and Modern Socialism*, Manchester, National Labour Press 1921

*Chronos; or, the future of the family*. Kegan Paul & Co.: London, 1930.

##### b) Some Books and Pamphlets written with his second wife, Cedar Paul

*Creative Revolution: a study of communist ergatocracy*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1920.

*Communism*. London: Labour Publishing, 1921.

*Population and birth-control: a symposium*. New York: Critic and Guide, 1917.

##### c) Some of the many translations with Cedar Paul

Robert Michels, *Political Parties* (Italian, 1915)

Heinrich von Treitschke, *History of Germany in the 19th Century*. (7 vols; German, 1915-1919)

Rudolf Hilferding, *Boehm-Bawerk's Criticism of Marx*. (German, 1919)

Sigmund Freud, *A Young Girl's Diary*. (German, 1921)

Nikolai Bukharin and E. Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of communism*. (Russian, 1922)

Mathilde and Mathias Vaerting, *The Dominant Sex: A Study in The Sociology of Sex Differentiation*, (German, 1923)

Charles Baudouin, *Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics* (French, 1924)

Karl Marx, *Capital* (German 4<sup>th</sup> ed, 2 vols, 1930)

Magnus Hirschfeld, *Racism* (German, 1938).

#### B) The Debate about Kidd's Book

##### Benjamin Kidd, *Social Evolution*, London: Macmillan, [mid-Feb] 1894.

\* Reprinted extensively in UK to 1920. 9 copies of US editions in Waseda University Library.

\* Translations into German (1895), Swedish (1895), French (1896), Russian (1897), Italian (1898), **Japanese (1899)**, Chinese (1899), Czech (1900), Danish (1900), and Arabic (1913).

\* **Unsigned**. 'Books of the Week: Benjamin Kidd, *Social Evolution*', *Times*, 22 Feb 1894, 8a

\* T.H. Farrer, 'Kidd's *Social Evolution*', *Contemporary Review*, v 66, June 1894, 769-80.

\* G.D. Campbell, 'Kidd on *Social Evolution*', *Edinburgh Review*, v 179 April 1894, 479-511.

\* Francis Galton 'The Part of Religion in Human Evolution', *National Review*, v 23 Aug 1894, 755-63

\* Benjamin Kidd, Note on the above, *National Review*, v 23 Aug 1894, 763-65

\* **Benjamin Kidd**, 'Social Evolution: Reply to Criticisms', *Nineteenth Century*, v 37, Feb 1895, 226-40.

\* Herbert Spencer, 'What is Social Evolution?', *Nineteenth Century*, v44 Sep 1898, 348-58.

\* **Maurice Eden Paul**, 'Social Evolution in Japan', *Cornhill Magazine* NS v4 (May 1898) 657-74

## BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

The name of Mr. Benjamin Kidd, author of a very striking work on SOCIAL EVOLUTION (Macmillan and Co.) is, so far as we know, new to the literary world; but it is not often that a new and unknown writer makes his first appearance with a work so novel in conception, so fertile in suggestion, and, on the whole, so powerful in exposition as "Social Evolution" appears to us to be. Mr. Kidd may be described as the pioneer of a new method for the scientific study of society and its evolution. There is, of course, nothing new nowadays in the idea of evolution as such. Evolution is the dominant and characteristic category of the age. Nor is there anything specially new in the attempt to apply evolutionary methods and conceptions to the study of society and its history. The recognition of an analogy between man and the State, between the individual and the community, of which the individual forms a part, is almost as old as philosophy. On the face of it, therefore, Mr. Kidd might be thought to be only following a line of speculation in which he has had many predecessors, some of them among the greatest leaders of philosophy. But his methods are, nevertheless, as novel as his conclusions are unexpected. Most thinkers in dealing with the problem of society and its evolution have taken the individual man as the unit, and have regarded society as the aggregate of individual units. Mr. Kidd reverses this order. To him society is the organism to be studied and the individual man sinks into comparative insignificance as a mere component part. This method is manifestly borrowed from biology. We may regard a given organism as ultimately composed of individual cells; but the study of the organism as such is distinct from the study of the functions and characteristics of the individual cells. Similarly, Mr. Kidd regards the study of the social organism as distinct from, and, indeed, largely independent of, the study of individual man. When we ask what it is that makes the perfection of any given form of society we must, if we regard society as an organism, answer that it is the capacity of the organism to exist, to survive, to grow, to develop, to improve. For a given society or form of civilization to fail in the struggle for existence and to cease to exist is to manifest its imperfection, and this result, according to Mr. Kidd, is found on analysis to arise from the operation among the individual members of the society of certain forces and tendencies antagonistic or, at least, not conducive to the welfare and survival of society as a whole. If these forces operate in undue preponderance they destroy the social organism altogether, because the welfare of society as an organism is not necessarily identical with the welfare, subjectively conceived, of the individuals composing it. The social organism, for example, cannot survive unless the self-regarding tendencies of the individual are strictly subordinated to those altruistic tendencies which make for the preservation of the larger organism. The greatest happiness of the greatest number, if taken as the basis of society, must, according to Mr. Kidd, be held to include, not merely the greatest number of individuals existing here and now in any given society, but "the greatest number of

the members of generations yet unborn or unthought of, to whose interests the existing individuals are absolutely indifferent." To a principle so formulated, which is essential to the welfare and survival of the social organism, the reason of individual man affords, according to Mr. Kidd, no sanction whatever. Social progress is only achieved, first, by competition, intense, unceasing, uncompromising, and inevitable, between the several forms of social organism, more or less well fitted to survive; and, secondly, by the rigid subordination of the individuals of each organism—subject, however, to similar conditions of competition within the organism—to the higher laws which, often in spite of the individual and his interests subjectively conceived, make for the survival of the fitter or the fittest organism. Here we have, apparently, a devastating and bewildering antinomy, and it must be acknowledged that by the heedless or hasty reader Mr. Kidd's book will be found to be full of such apparent antinomies. But Mr. Kidd resolves this particular antinomy by an analysis of the function of religion in the social organism. The subordination of the individual to the higher welfare of the social organism has, as we have seen, no sanction in the reason of the individual, and yet it is a necessary condition of social welfare and survival. It is the function of religion to effect this subordination, which it does by means of supernatural and ultra-rational sanctions. Such sanctions are differently conceived in different forms of society, but they all present the common characteristic of being supernatural and ultra-rational. Rational religion, according to this view of the matter, becomes a contradiction in terms, but in the resolution of this second antinomy Mr. Kidd is not, perhaps, so cogent or so successful. As with the former, having thus provided himself with a new instrument for the study of social evolution, Mr. Kidd proceeds to apply it historically and analytically in a series of brilliant and most suggestive chapters, devoted first to a historical survey of Western civilization, next to a criticism, searching in analysis, but full of ethical and social sympathy of modern Socialism—which he regards as sociologically impossible and impracticable, but politically a potent engine for securing that universal equality of opportunity which is one of the prime conditions of social welfare and survival, and finally to the establishment of the unexpected thesis that "human evolution is not primarily intellectual," but rather ethical and social. A chapter of Concluding Remarks, in which the argument is summed up and the advent of the new Democracy is hailed as the crowning result of the long social evolution of Western Europe, brings this remarkable volume to a close. In the foregoing imperfect summary we have perhaps done it less than justice by giving a merely vicarious and so far irresponsible exposition of the views and arguments of its author. But it is not a book to be judged and estimated off-hand. Its arguments and conclusions are certainly full of novelty, originality, and ingenuity, but, after all, they will stand or fall in the long run not by these qualities but by their intrinsic weight and importance. In the meantime we do not hesitate to say that "Social Evolution" is a book which no serious thinker should neglect and no reader can study without recognizing it as the work of a singularly penetrating and original mind.

**From Benjamin Kidd, *Social Evolution*, London: Macmillan, [mid-Feb] 1894, ch. 1**

We live at a time when science counts nothing insignificant. She has recognised that every organ and every rudimentary organ has its utilitarian history. Every phase and attribute of life has its meaning in her eyes; nothing has come into existence by chance. What then are these religious systems which fill such a commanding place in man's life and history? What is their meaning and function in social development? To ask these questions is to find that a strange silence has fallen upon science. . . . These religions of man form one of the most striking and persistent of the phenomena of life when encountered under its highest forms, namely, in human society. Yet, strange to say, science seems to have taken up, and to have maintained, down to the present time, the extraordinary position that her only concern with them is to declare (often, it must be confessed, with the heat and bitterness of a partisan) that they are without any foundation in reason.

Now, to any one who has caught the spirit of Darwinian science, it is evident that this is not the question at issue at all. The question of real importance is not whether any section of persons, however learned, is of opinion that these beliefs are without any foundation in reason, but whether religious systems have a function to perform in the evolution of society. If they have, and one which at all corresponds in magnitude to the scale on which we find the phenomena existing, then nothing can be more certain than that evolution will follow its course independent of our opinions, and that these systems will continue to the end, and must be expected to play as great a part in the future as they have done in the past.

**From T.H. Farrer, 'Kidd's *Social Evolution*', *Contemporary Review*, v 66, June 1894**

But let us not be ungrateful to Mr. Kidd's book. If his theories are at fault—if it is not true that reason and religion are necessarily at war, or that the function of reason is essentially selfish and materialistic, whilst the function of religion is to further the progress of society; if it is false that the interests of the social organism are at variance with the interests of the men and women who compose it; if, in short, Mr. Kidd has not solved the puzzle of human existence; let us thankfully acknowledge that he has touched subjects of the deepest interest, and has touched them in an interesting way; that he has called fresh attention to the influence which different religions, and especially the Christian religion, have had on the development of mankind; that he has stimulated inquiry in this fruitful field of research; that he has emphasised the value of character as compared with intellect, and the importance to character of man's relation to the Inscrutable and the Unknown; and finally, that he has given us a view of the progress and aims of modern society which, if not so complete as he supposes, contains elements which are true and important, and which are all the more valuable because his views are animated by a spirit of humanity and of reconciliation.

**From G.D. Campbell, 'Kidd on Social Evolution', *Edinburgh Review*, v 179 April 1894**

We see no help for the difficulties of the world in this philosophy considered as a whole. But we are deeply indebted to Mr. Kidd for not a few of its separate parts. We cannot put the pieces together into any consistent, or even into any coherent, system. But there is much that is most valuable in his argument for religion against secularism—in his argument for an independent morality against utilitarianism—in his argument for individual freedom against socialism. Above all we thank him for the testimony he gives to the influence which Christianity alone has had among the religions of the world, in breathing into human society the redeeming influences of charity, benevolence, and love. This pre-eminence in results can only be due to a corresponding pre-eminence in revealing objective truth. We forgive him for the conventional cover which he deems it necessary to throw over these old and familiar ideas by adopting the modern jargon of calling them altruism. Above all we thank him for that conception of Christianity which points to the personal life and teaching of Christ as the seat and centre of all power. We have been of necessity compelled to dwell chiefly on those other parts of his book from which we differ profoundly, and we are not sure that we have done full justice to all its separate parts. But with this reserve — which we make with sincere anxiety—we must record our opinion against Mr. Kidd's view of social evolution as one which is essentially crude, unsatisfactory, ill-digested, and in many ways open to the most serious objection as dangerous and deceptive.

**Benjamin Kidd, 'Social Evolution: Reply to Criticisms', *Nineteenth Century*, v 37, Feb 1895**

We have, therefore, reached a position in which it is possible to formulate a group of statements which, if correct, constitute nothing more or less than a series of fundamental principles of history. . . :--

1. *All religion is essentially ultra-rational. No form of belief is capable of functioning as a religion in the evolution of society which does not provide sanctions for conduct outside of, and superior to, reason.*

2. *The social system founded on a form of religious belief forms an organic growth which is the seat of a series of historical phenomena unfolding themselves in obedience to laws that may be enunciated.*

3. *The process at work in human society is always developing two inherently antagonistic but complementary tendencies; namely, (1) the tendency requiring the increasing subordination of the individual to society, and (2) the rationalistic tendency leading the individual at the same time to question, with increasing insistence, the authority of the claims requiring him to submit to a process of social order in which he has absolutely no interest, and which is operating largely in the interests of unborn generations. In a healthy and progressive society, the fundamental principle of its existence is, that the second tendency must be continually subordinated to the first. But the intellect has no power to effect this subordination.*

4. *The problem with which every progressive society stands continually confronted is: How to retain the highest operative ultra-rational sanction for those onerous conditions of life which are essential to its progress; and at one and the same time to allow the freest play to those intellectual forces which, while tending to come into conflict with this sanction, contribute nevertheless to raise to the highest degree of social efficiency the whole of the members.*