

Q77

In 1932, while the American psychologists were declaring their scepticism about man's inherent aggressiveness, a remarkable book was published in London, called The Social Life of Monkeys and Apes. It was the work of a young South African anatomist, Solly Zuckerman (now Sir Solly, with a long record of work as both scientist and scientific adviser to British Governments, particularly on defence matters). In 1929-30, Zuckerman had made a detailed study of a large colony of hamadryas baboons at the London Zoo in Regent's Park. The colony had been set up in 1925 by liberating about one hundred baboons on Monkey Hill, 'a large oval rock-work enclosure one hundred feet long and sixty feet wide.' Two more baboons were added somewhat later, and thirty-five more in 1927.

Zuckerman's account of this baboon colony was a pioneering contribution to the study of monkey

societies. His observations have been abundantly confirmed by later observers of zoo colonies; his descriptions were clear, objective and precise. Many features of monkey social behaviour in the zoo, studied in detail by later workers, were first recorded and correctly described in Zuckerman's book, which had a deservedly wide influence.

The colony of baboons on Monkey Hill was, of course an affluent society, supplied by the keepers with a regular abundance of food for all. The behaviour of the colony showed that an affluent society, monkey no less than human, can be anything but peaceful. The monkeys were arranged in a rank order of dominance status, in which high rank was secured by brute strength expressed in aggression, often quite unprovoked. Might was right, and brutal inequality prevailed between those of high and low rank. If a number of bananas was thrown to a group of adults and young, the most dominant animal 'crammed his cheek pouches full of fruit, keeping at his feet what he failed to push into his mouth', while his subordinates

2.

made no attempt to get any. When a small baboon was eating, it would 'stop and drop the food from its mouth in evident terror' on the approach of a more dominant individual. At every level of this society, the weaker went to the wall; monkey mothers would snatch food out of the hands of their own babies.

An atmosphere of tension pervaded the colony. Each monkey seemed 'to live in potential fear lest another animal stronger than itself will inhibit its activities'. Quarrelling was so frequent and widespread that the rule of the bigger bosses seemed to be a necessity, if only as a system of brutal repression; and indeed highly dominant monkeys would interfere (often indiscriminately) in the quarrels of their juniors. But in the hierarchy of rank, 'a state of balance is only temporary, and at any moment may be disturbed to a greater or lesser extent'. Violence was therefore a constantly recurring event, and any major disturbance of the equilibrium (such as the death from disease of a high-ranking boss) caused the society to collapse into an anarchic mob, capable of



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orgies of wholesale carnage. Just as there were no restraints on domination, so in the fighting no holds were barred. Females and young were the principal victims, being the weakest. Sometimes they were injured or killed accidentally in the course of battles raging around them; but Zuckerman saw one male bully twice deliberately attack a baby monkey, which 'was found dead that evening'. The autopsies at Regent's Park are a catalogue of slaughter; they read like a despatch from a war front. Disease, especially in winter, was a serious cause of death; but 8 out of 61 males died by violence, and many others had severe wounds which may have contributed to their deaths. The weaker suffered worse. Of 33 female deaths, 30 were the result of fights: 15 of these died in just over one month of particularly savage conflict. Autopsies were performed on 5 young monkeys born in the colony; all 5 had died of wounds. Such was the nature of life and death in an affluent society of monkeys.

It was a natural conclusion that violence is monkey nature, that monkeys, however well off, are inherently violent. The observations have been abundantly

3

domineering and aggressive. It was a wonder their societies survived at all. As we shall see, Zuckerman himself was too imaginative to suppose that the last word had been written about monkey societies. But, as often happens, the cautions scattered through his book seem to have gone unheeded, to judge from the writings of students of monkey behaviour for a long time afterwards. The notion of violent aggressiveness as an inherent quality of monkeys (or at least of baboons) was impressed upon a whole generation of scientists. By the fifties, when the crime returns from the affluent societies began to hit the headlines, the apparent results of Zuckerman's work may well have influenced a wider public, and helped to bring about the resurgence of the unconditional view of aggression. Alike in monkeys and man, it seemed, the improvement of living conditions is no guarantee against violence; aggressiveness is human nature, monkey nature, a fact of nature in the most fundamental sense. It was

against this gloomy setting that news began to filter through from the plains and forests where monkeys live in the wild, news of discoveries that cast a much-needed light on the nature of aggression and the causes of violence in monkeys and man.



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C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys & Man.
Macmillan, London 1968. p.44

... Even if they or their ancestors have chosen it, their urban environment, crowded with human beings and their buildings, does result in 'certain behavioural distortions, as we shall see. According to their investigators, 'they are essentially living in an unconfined zoo'. Phyllis Jay, who worked in India in 1958-60 on common langur monkeys, found a similar difference between urban and forest communities.

C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968: p.48/9

In Carpenter's field study of wild gibbons in Thailand although he was 'much interested in pugnacious activities' and constantly on the watch for them during three months of daily observation, he saw 'no actual fights', either within or between bands. During a total of more than eighteen months of observation of the howlers on Barro Colorado, studying behaviour within and between bands, Carpenter only once saw a clash which appeared to result in wounds; Southwick, who studied the same howlers during two seasons eight years apart, writes: 'I have never seen a direct fight between two howling monkeys.' Among wild red spider monkeys, Carpenter observed 'few instances of fighting', always of 'short duration'.

C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.49

A.J. Hadow made observations on thirty-nine bands of wild African redbtail monkeys in Uganda; neither he nor two other observers of redbtails 'have ever witnessed fighting', during 'many years of field experience'. In redbtail individuals collected in the wild, scars were rare and, if present, indicated only slight injury. Rarity of signs of injury is itself a useful guide.



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C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.49/50

Except under special stresses we shall describe later, serious fighting is rarely reported among Japanese monkeys, even in the open zoos. In the wild, more than one band is sometimes found in one of the isolated pockets of forest. S. Kawamura and K. Tokude studied an area near Tokyo where several bands were present, and saw no fighting between them. Paul E. Simonds made 'intensive observations' for six months on two bands of bonnet macaque monkeys (related to rhesus and Japanese monkeys), occupying neighbouring rows of banyan trees in a farm area in southern Mysore State, India. No fighting occurred between the bands. Serious fighting did occur frequently within the band he was mainly studying; but these monkeys (like the urban rhesus monkeys) were found to be more crowded than the bands in a forest near by. Only a brief observation was made on one of these fully wild bands; it appeared to be much more peaceful.

C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.50

In Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh States, India, Phyllis Jay carried out more than 850 hours of close observation of common langurs. She reports that 'fighting is very seldom observed' between males, and that wounds are rare. In females, fighting was not only rare but apparently never serious: 'no adult female was visibly wounded in such fighting.' In six months' study of colobus monkeys (related to langurs) in Tanzania, W. Ullrich saw no fighting between bands, and very little sign of aggression within bands.

C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.50

Wild cynocephalus baboons in Kenya and southern Africa have been the object of 2000 hours of observation by K.R.L. Hall and Irven DeVore. According to Hall, fighting within bands is 'extremely rare' (in southern Africa, he saw only one fight between adult males in a whole season of observation); and fighting between bands has never been recorded. Kummer's very detailed account of wild hamadryas baboons is specially telling, for he observed the very species studied by Zuckerman at Regent's Park. Kummer reports that even mild quarrels take up less than 1 per cent of the time wild hamadryas baboons spend in social behaviour. He tells us in a letter that, though fights did occur in the wild, they 'never resulted in serious wounds', in marked contrast to fights among captive hamadryas studied by Zuckerman and by Kummer himself.



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C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.51

On the borders of the Congo, George Schaller succeeded in making 466 hours of observation of the shy mountain gorillas; after endless patience on his part, they were even prepared to join him on the branch of a tree where he sat. His conclusion is simple and comprehensive: 'I have not witnessed serious aggressive contacts between gorillas'.

C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.51

During 300 hours of observation of chimpanzees (no mean feat in the rain forest of Budongo) the Reynoldses saw '17 quarrels involving actual fighting or displays of threat or anger, and none of these lasted more than a few seconds'. The field record is probably held by Jane Goodall, who clocked up over 3000 hours of observation on her chimpanzees at close quarters. She saw seventy-three brief episodes of tension, and one fight: 'no signs of injury were visible after the encounter'.

C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.53

What is quite certain is that any such inherent differences, if they exist, are completely outweighed by the difference between any monkey species in the wild and any other monkey species in the zoo (or in conditions approaching those of the zoo). Chimpanzees in the wild generally impress people as the most peaceful species imaginable, and our catalogue might seem to bear this out. But chimpanzees in the zoo can be much more aggressive than baboons in the wild. Caroline Loizos, who, together with Gilbert Manley, has recently been observing chimpanzees at Regent's Park, tells us she has seen a whole group cowering in corners under the tyranny of a brutally domineering male, who was not above deliberately attacking mothers with infants; threats and disputes were frequent, and a fight occurred in which one female viciously wounded another before anyone could intervene.



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- After this chapter was written, T.E. Rowell reported on some unusual bands of cynocephalus (olive baboons in Uganda which, unlike most baboons, spent 60 per cent of their time in forested country. Fighting and even threat were 'extremely rare - in contrast to a caged group of the same species.'

C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.53

For all practical purposes, therefore, intense aggressiveness is not an innate feature of individuals appearing in some monkey species and not in others.¹

On the contrary, all monkeys are peaceful in some conditions, and violently aggressive in others.

Violence is a property of mammalian societies exposed to stress.

1. Some people have suggested that man is inherently and unconditionally more aggressive than monkeys. This idea is based on a number of misconceptions, which are discussed in Appendix One. Zuckerman's observations, and many others, show that monkeys and human beings can be equally aggressive when their societies are under stress.

C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.54

In approaching this problem, we now have an important clue. It is not shortage of food that causes violence to rage in the affluent monkey colonies of the zoo. There must be important stresses other than food shortage, and these, we may expect, are afflicting the well-fed, affluent societies of man, provoking the rising rates of violent crime, which appeared so mysterious at first sight. What are these other stresses, and how in detail does stress of any kind act to produce violence? These are the questions we shall try to answer, or at least begin to answer, in the remaining chapters of this book.

C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.64.

The underlying constitution of these societies is a subtle one, reminiscent of the later Roman Republic, where only men could hold office, but women ran political parties and helped to decide which men could hold office. The typical Japanese monkey society has the usual male establishment, but ultimate control often rests with an unofficial female electorate.



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C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.69

At any given time, however, each of these monkey bands has a definite membership, and defends its territory against other bands. Yet, as our catalogue showed (pp.48ff.) serious fighting between bands is virtually unknown in the wild. When two bands meet, numbers usually decide the issue without violence, the smaller band giving way. Thus large bands have large territories, which is a fair way of dividing the assets of the whole species.



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C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.69/70

There is another kind of monkey society which does not involve closed bands at all, the curious 'open' society of the chimpanzees. Both Jane Goodall and the Reynoldses often saw parties of chimps moving about together - all-male, all-adult, mothers and young, or all sexes and ages together. But these parties were temporary assemblages, and any given individual in a party might be in a different party, or travelling alone, the next time he or she was observed. 'The only group', writes Jane Goodall, 'that is stable over a period of months is a mother with her infant and older offspring.' Vernon Reynolds had the impression that one loose band, constantly forming and reforming into different parties, may generally occupy a given forest area of six to eight square miles. Mothers with their infants generally stayed near the middle of this area, but males, not so encumbered, were free to roam as far as they liked into the range of another loose band:

'there were no boundaries at all where small bands of chimpanzees did not cross over, meet and mingle.' Reynolds points out that the chimps' food is sometimes widely dispersed, and sometimes concentrated at isolated clumps of special fruit-trees, ripening at a particular time. The loose organisation is ideally suited for feeding in such surroundings. When food is scarce and scattered, chimps wander far, alone or in small, shifting parties. When a given clump of fruit-trees is in season, the first chimps to find it set up a great hooting which brings their friends from all around. Though the society is so loose, it is complex and has many of the familiar features - status differences, grooming friendships, and so on. It is just extremely flexible. Even when chimps from different ranges meet at a feeding-spot, there is no conflict. But everybody is then a little nervous, and the tensions are expressed in a tremendously noisy party - the chimpanzee 'carnival'. They swing about the trees, run along branches, jump to the ground and back up the trees, come up to each other



2.

and part again, stamp and beat the branches, while some of them drum with their hands on the buttress-roots of ironwood trees: the sound is that of a big bass drum, and carries for up to two miles. The first of these beat sessions watched by the Reynoldses lasted for fifty-five minutes: 'all we could do was stand in awe and say unscientific things like "Good heavens, look at that one!"' The chimpanzee carnivals were first described (with the picturesque but probably mythical addition of drum-sticks) by a missionary called Thomas Savage in 1844; nobody believed him until the modern field workers reported their findings about 120 years later.

C. Russell & W.M.S. Russell. Violence, Monkeys and Man. Macmillan, London 1968. p.71/2

An interesting laboratory experiment has been made by the American psychologists Harry and Margaret Harlow. They observed baby rhesus monkeys playing together for twenty minutes a day in a large and commodious play-room. At first the young monkeys explored and handled everything in the room, living or inanimate. Then they began to romp and wrestle with each other. Next they played games of chasing each other, and finally they evolved elaborate games including both wrestling and chasing. All this was entirely in fun.

By the time they had reached this stage of elaborate play, the young monkeys had developed friendly relations and special friendships. Without any real aggression, they had formed some idea of their relative strength, agility and resource, and so they had the basis of rank hierarchy. Finally, they had become adept at dodging and evasion. It was only

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after all this that fighting tendencies appeared, ~~and so the monkeys~~ at once formed a hierarchy to control it, without any serious injuries in the process. 'The monkeys had gained skills of evasion;; .. during the more relaxed and carefree stages of infant-infant affection.' Although a rank hierarchy was now firmly established, 'firm affectional bonds, formed earlier, remained'. On the other hand, rhesus monkeys, reared for some time in total isolation from each other and their mothers, and then put together, fought long and fiercely; but the fighting never resulted in a stable hierarchy. Violence is neither necessary nor sufficient even for forming the monkey hierarchy itself.



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