

# **Psychoanalysis and Government**

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1944-1945

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Adeane, Louis [a.k.a. Donald Potter] (1944). "Psychoanalysis and Government (Part I)." *Now 2*: 57-68.

--- (1945). "Psychoanalysis and Government (Part II)." *Now 3*: 21-29.

## ***DEFINITIONS.***

This essay will attempt to examine organised government in the light of psychoanalytic theory. The suggestions which will be put forward could be applied not only to the political institution of government, but to any authoritarian group whose existence is sanctioned by society : a religious autocracy, for instance, or the executive committee of a political party. The following definition by Malatesta indicates more precisely what is meant : "Government is the aggregate of the governors, and the governors ... are those who have the power to make laws, to regulate the relations between men, and to force obedience to these laws. They are those who ... judge and punish transgressors of the laws."\*

Most people have an extremely vague idea of what is meant by psychoanalysis. "Psychoanalysis means two things and two only. The first is the technique devised by Freud for investigating the human mind or the subjective aspect of our life. The second is the body of theory which has emerged from the data thus collected."\* (Chrichton-Miller.) Here we shall use the word in its second sense; but in the description "psychoanalysts" we include those who accept Freud's main contentions without subscribing to them all ; as, for example, Jung and Adler.

"Anarchy" we use as meaning the type of society thought desirable by anarchists, i.e., an organisation whose guiding purpose is the assurance of individual freedom. "Anarchism" refers to the theories concerning anarchy and the means of attaining it. [58]

## ***THE RELEVANCE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS.***

Psycho-analysts dealing with the separate individual, and anarchists dealing with the individual in his relation to his fellows, have a similar point of view and a similar purpose in mind.

Anarchists do not think of other people as being merely economic or political units, or as being no more than functions in some, collective "higher" endeavour. They regard human beings primarily as individuals, and they judge society by its ability to satisfy individual needs. Broadly speaking, they infer a community's political and economic structure from the mental and physical structure of the persons it includes, and social movements, such as coal strikes or changing techniques in painting or the rise of governments, they look upon as expressions of individual desire.

Like anarchism, psycho-analysis stresses the influence of environment upon the moulding of character while avoiding the mistake of assuming that men are made for, as well as by, their surroundings. Its method gives primary importance to the differentiated (as distinct for isolated) personality, and in consequence psycho-analysts tend to look outward from the man to the mass rather than inward from society to the individual. Thus they speak of "good" and "bad" environments, meaning suitable or not for the person under discussion, and never of "good" and "bad" people. On some issues, that of sexual morality, for instance, they have not hesitated to condemn society for its strictures on individual necessity. Further, by bringing seemingly unrelated forms

of behaviour into a coherent framework, psychoanalysis, more than any other system of psychology perhaps, sharpens our sense of the completeness and value of the human personality : as Jung says : its method "reaches far beyond the curative results that specifically concern the doctor. It leads in the end to ... the bringing into reality of the whole human being."\*

It does this by a procedure which is singularly like that advocated by anarchists in the social field. Its treatment is directed to the freeing of the individual from the coercion of the past ; it desires him to achieve an intelligent, self-critical revolution within the self. It does not discard tradition ; by putting it under conscious control it reintegrates it usefully into the personality. And by "tradition" it implies communal habits having their origin far back in the life of the race. The unconscious is the burying ground for primitive levels of collective emotion and action, levels which have been submerged in order to permit the growth of individualisation. In its task of releasing these impulses psychoanalysis facilitates fellowship between men, a commonalty which, now that we have developed self-awareness, need not be destructive or blind. Again psychoanalysis attacks the over-evaluation of subsidiary parts of the mind ; it desires inner balance, a free co-operation of internal psychic processes. Perhaps Aurel Kolnai offers the most apt summing-up of [59] the matter : "Psychoanalysis wishes to train human beings who shall be free and individually different, but who shall unremittingly advance toward co-operation; human beings united by organic solidarity."\*

With these facts in mind, we can expect to find in psychoanalysis many valuable supplements to anarchist theory. And we do discover that with regard to such subjects as revolution, propaganda, war, education, mutual aid — the list could be lengthened almost indefinitely — psychoanalysts have important suggestions to put forward. These are all social phenomena, and psychoanalysis studies individuals; but it cannot be emphasised too often that society is made up of individuals and that in order to understand it one must fully comprehend the single human being.

## **GOVERNMENT.**

The origin of modern man's support of government is to be found in his childhood, and the prototype of the government he will favour may be fairly accurately defined as his parents. The parents are the first rulers, the first gods, and the first intimations the child receives of society. ("The family ... may be considered to be the psychological agent of society." Fromm.\*) It should be remarked in passing that it is this fact which helps to account for the frequent confusion between the three in later life. People talk — and think — of "Britain" wanting whatever it is that some politician wants; both kings and societies ("the collective will of a great people," etc.) have been held to be divine. All governments foster the belief that their interests are identical with those of the governed, and that their existence is therefore justified and right. It is an easy fallacy to propagate, because unconsciously the feeling that a society, its government, and its ethical values are the same has always survived.

The child has many desires which clamour to be satisfied; unfortunately it is impossible to satisfy them all at one and the same time. Internal struggle is felt as pain, and so a new craving is added to the others : the longing for freedom from conflict. The child loves its parents because they satisfy many of its desires — they are identified with food, warmth, attention and protection. But it finds very quickly that some of its activities will be met by punishment, not pleasure. It

learns to associate certain actions with pain and anxiety ; others with a warm glow of approval and reward. It is taught that the pleasure-bringing activities are good ; the others are bad. And so conscience is born, a sense of right and wrong. Later the child will love other people, and each will add, together with the gratification of desire, a quota of disapproval, so that the original ethical system will be elaborated and widened. On the basis of these relationships the child will construct an ideal self by which to measure its real attainments; an ideal self which will [60] correspond with the ethical standards of those with whom it has been in contact. Thus, though the feelings of guilt and self- approval retain the same characteristics from person to person and from age to age, the things about which they are exercised do not. People have thought it right to burn their fellows at the stake or to rip them to pieces with machine-gun bullets ; others have felt justified in providing food-relief or refusing to fight. Broadly speaking, however, the ethical system adopted will be that of society as a whole, and the social structure will not begin to disintegrate until subsidiary systems assume the importance of the primary one.

It will be noticed that early in this process a significant change has taken place. Law, which was originally outside the child and part of the parents, has, now been introjected into the personality and is part of the child. Henceforth he will carry government about with him, inexorably judging his actions and meting out praise or blame. The change has been accomplished for several reasons ; one of them is that an internal discriminatory system, backed up by powerful pleasure-pain incentives, helps to give freedom from conflict ; it reinforces the reality-principle, which has from the first striven to achieve such an emancipation. It is obvious that during the performance of this task a new struggle has come into being ; a conflict between the judging process and the lawless instinctual wishes. At the expense of a great deal of energy, the condemned longings are repressed ; they may emerge into consciousness later, in a social or anti-social form according largely to the environment and training of the person involved; they may be canalised for revolutionary purposes. One result of the struggle is a shifting of emphasis regarding the kind of freedom demanded ; now the child has a strengthened desire for freedom from coercion.

Two types of government have so far been distinguished. The first is the external government of the parents; the second is the internal reign of the ego-ideal, which includes the judging faculty and the conscience. There are two further forms to be considered, which, like the second, arise from their prototypes. Perhaps it should be pointed out here that the later governments do not supersede the earlier; all four — and these can be subdivided further — can and do exist concurrently. Thus the child may, conscientiously condemn the parents, but he will not necessarily cease to obey them, and if he does, he will probably feel guilty for having done so. In some circumstances, however, one system may acquire sufficient emotional drive to destroy the others, and then we reach the stage previously mentioned where the breaking up of the social system becomes possible and is felt to be desirable. But the new society will still, in one or more of the four senses, be a governmental structure. The third kind of government is the one projected upon the outer world by the personality in its search for freedom from internal compulsion.

Projection is a mechanism which we use in [61] almost all our dealings with reality. In infancy we project our feelings upon chairs and tables and toys ; doors open terrifyingly. teddy bears protect us at night from the dark giant bear in the shadowy comer. Later we may identify the "bad" parts of ourselves with sections of society — the Jews or the negroes or the working class — so that, in conjunction with those of a similar outlook, we may suppress them all the more thoroughly. Similarly with the coercive law-giver within us ; the internal is externalised ; the ideal Government, by whose law people live and for which they die, is in being. Beneath this

shining fantasy and invariably confused with it, lurks the fourth type, government as it really is. For most men, the advantages of belief in these latter two forms of authority are tremendous. It is easier to deal with outer conflicts than inner; the externalised government sets out the laws so that all may read, distinguishes easily between the difficult degrees of lightness and wrongness. It is not imminent as conscience is, and may be considerably less coercive. It represses an externalised "evil", so that men can go on being wicked in comfort. Virtuously, conscientiously, men can applaud its ruthlessness and feel personally stronger as each tank rolls off the production line or each assassination plot is discovered and suppressed. If it makes a mistake, then men can blame it. (But though they blame, they will not immediately abandon, as every anti-authoritarian knows.) Weak men will support it because it performs the duties which they shirk. Strong men — strong-willed, honest, consistent — ruled by a harsh super-ego and an intolerable burden of unconscious guilt — may either support it or become part of it in reality : Gladstone, Peel, Canning, are examples taken from a period of expanding imperialism and increasing governmental assurance. Governments which not only dispense law but also control a nation's economics will have an oven greater appeal ; on the unconscious level they represent — in the persons of their leaders — not one but both parents ; they inherit the fused authority of the first and most powerful of all ruling cliques. It is not difficult to understand the psychological factors underlying the acceptance of the totalitarian state.

## ***THE GOVERNORS.***

"Government is the aggregate of the governors". As has just been hinted, when we come to the consideration of the third and fourth types of authority it is necessary to examine in some detail the fact of leadership.

All leaders govern, though the methods of a Y.M.C.A. group-leader may not be so explicit as those of a dictator or a party-politician ; there is no essential difference between the leader and the governor. It is often suggested that there is a difference in that the former expresses the desires of a group, whereas the latter impresses his own desires upon the group ; in the one case the group actively supports, and in the other passively submits. As will be implied in the following paragraphs, these attitudes are actually only the polarities of a single psychic complex, similar to and often identical with sado-masochism. "Active support" by a group is due to its identification with the leader; subjectively the followers *are* the leader, and when an external community or they themselves ("passive submission") are threatened, they obtain the vicarious satisfaction of governing. In extreme examples such as that of Nazism, the fact that governor and leader are indistinguishable is manifest ; in less obvious cases the fact is no less real. Leaders of any kind can find no sanction in anarchism.

Herbert Read, in discussing this matter, says of the "expressive" leader : " It is this second kind of leader, and only this kind of leader, who has a place in a community of free people. And who is the leader who expresses the thoughts, feelings and desires of the people — who but the poet and artist?" \* Perhaps by examining this suggestion our own definition can be clarified. The artist differs in many important respects from the governor-leader; he does more than express the feelings and thoughts and desires of the people ; he refines and elaborates, he interprets creatively. He displaces his need to impress from people to things. Within the context of past and present he comprehends the future. The leader, however, derives his driving power from a past he

cannot escape. He is capable only of destruction, never of creation. In large and highly specialised groups like the modern national state, the technical business of government is carried on by a bureaucracy — the Civil Service in this country — and the political leader acts as its representative. In less complex communities the two functions are fused. But from the point of view of the led this is not a very evident distinction : behind the governor they see the bureaucracy : like the parents, the two are the omniscient They. This makes it very easy for a powerful leader to take over the bureaucracy and destroy its neutrality, for it is he who is seen the most clearly and it is he who is followed. Similarly, economic control may be taken over with the approval of the group. In the same way as the idea of government is modelled on the child's ideas concerning its parents, so the ideal leader is built out of the early relationship with the father. As with government also, there are three intervening stages of development, roughly corresponding with those we have already traced in the preceding section. The third and fourth types are the two aspects of leadership — the fantasy projection and the objective human beings whose shabby inadequacy it clothes. The points of difference in development and the original emotional tangle upon which a Hitler or a Stalin may depend, need elucidation. The infant, of course, develops its ambivalent love-hate attitude first in relation to the mother, who gratifies or frustrates [63] its desires for food and warmth and protection; when the father enters the field of consciousness he comes usually as the tyrant (we are adopting the primitive viewpoint of the child), the one who punishes, frequently in accordance with the requests of the mother. Consequently a good deal of hatred is displaced upon him from the latter, and this tends to stabilise the mother-relationship. Love as well as anger is felt for the father, not only because he gives pleasure, but because he is the beloved of the mother, with whom the infant has identified itself. He is in addition, however, a rival for her love and attention, so that while hating, the child would like to step into his shoes, to be the governor himself. Thus it is natural for him to wish for the father's death ; the guilt felt because of this is the root of submission to leadership. In making such a reparation the child (and unconsciously the adult) is not only punishing himself as his conscience demands, but also placating his mother and establishing an even firmer love relationship with her : that is, *by submitting to the father he takes over the function of the father. The father, in impressing his authority over the child, simultaneously expresses the child's own desires.* The end-result in a normal process is the complete repression of the death-wish, leaving the individual conscious only of love and a desire for submission. The frequent striving to be like one's father is a compromise between unconscious reparation (keep the father alive, eternal) and an unconscious death-wish (steal from the father his position and power) ; a compromise which satisfies both sides and the conscience.

Let us briefly compare this picture of the subjective world of the infant with the fantasy picture later projected upon the real world by the adult. Here the leader is the father of his people; he acts as the executive of the group, punishing on behalf of the group and therefore justified in punishing. Leaders come and go; the group (mother-country, motherland, source of food and life and warmth) remains. The leader is masculine, the group feminine ; the leader protects ("Peace in our time") or is subtly threatening ("Blood, toil, tears and sweat"). The group loves the leader and imitates him; by following him the individual can become one with the group. Everybody has wanted to be the leader ; the leader speaks for the group and the individual.

Jung says that "As the father represents the collective consciousness, the traditional mind, so the mother represents the collective unconscious. . . ."\* The femininity of a group as compared with its leader explains why, in a sense, the group is always a little ahead of its government. The government represents yesterday's public opinion, not to-day's. In this connection also it is

interesting that Germany should be infused with homosexuality. (Karl Abraham estimated that in post-war Berlin three to four per cent, of the population was *openly* homosexual.)\* [64]

What stages of development intervene between the childhood and adult fantasies? There is, firstly, the introjection of the father-image into the personality, where it becomes part of the ego-ideal, carrying with it the sadistic impulses. If these impulses are unusually strong, the inner struggle between ego-ideal and instinct is felt to be intolerable, so that an externalisation of the whole system becomes imperative. In any case a partial externalisation will take place and the socially modified fantasy will be projected upon reality. The importance of the father-worship in this connection is, that it gives greater precision and drive to the projection of government. There is a fusion of government and leadership. Nevertheless there is a difference between them : broadly speaking, the former is concerned with the problems of right and wrong, good and evil ; though the latter has a share in the ethical system which will emerge, it need not be a very great share ; government is diffused with the ideals derived from the mother, of gentleness and kindness, and as we have seen, it has greater depth and stability than leadership. Consequently, given critical awareness, the idea of authority can be displaced fairly easily to the abstract ideals of justice, truth and so on, whereas the idea of leadership cannot. The significance of this will be made clear in our conclusion.

The first person upon whom leadership will be projected is the father. Later in life others will be chosen, school teachers, club personalities, political leaders, etc., and a part-externalisation be established. If the internal complex is comparatively weak, it may be satisfied with this. A culture which strengthens the desire, however, will automatically compel its groups to expand competitively, for there is no permanent satisfaction in the sado-masochistic process once it is roused to activity. We will concern ourselves with this point in the next section.

The ties which bind the group to the leader bind also the leader to the group. The leader is not irresponsible or concerned with private ambitions unrelated to group aspiration ; the more tyrannical he is, the more dependent is he on those he tyrannises. From his own point of view, he is sincere. Despots often talk of the benefits which their policy will bring, and it is obvious that they believe what they say. (Napoleon and Hitler are good examples.) The leader, at any rate, thinks himself an instrument of the people's will. It may be objected that the "impression-expression" characteristic of leadership is only one characteristic, † or that too much emphasis has been placed on its sado-masochistic element. The reply would

†F. C. Bartlett, for instance, categorises leaders as the dominant, the persuasive, and the institutional. But this does not weaken our analysis here, though the last of his subdivisions is interesting from the point of view of the revolutionary.

Having abstracted the concept of the Governors and examined it, we can replace and henceforth include it in the term Government.

## ***THE EXTENSION OF GOVERNMENT.***

Now that we have outlined the psychological processes which underlie the structure of government, it is necessary to illumine a little more clearly the factors which make for its growth and expansion. These factors are the same as those which have already been discussed, namely, individual desires ; but desires whose outlet has been unduly restricted so that they demand ever more forcible representation to the fantasies and realities of leadership and authority. The



restricting agency may be economic breakdown or the impact of an invading group or a narrowing tradition or a hundred other things, but it will almost certainly be what is usually called "external." When the individual meets with insuperable obstacles in the path of his development, there is a danger of regression to an earlier phase: the problem will be artificially simplified and carried back to a point in personal evolution where it can be overcome — apparently — by more primitive modes of action. In society to-day we see such a regression taking place in face of a collapsing economic structure ; not one, but millions of individuals are retreating to a distorted version of the primitive primal horde, to unrestrained violence and power. Society is like a great wave curling back from the rocks of unemployment and hunger and insecurity to fall amongst the toy soldiers on the hearthrug and the childhood oaths of obedience in the coalshed.

A community which permits on the one hand only a de-sexualised conception of love and on the other encourages sadomasochism (education, films, war, mechanisation) is one which will inevitably become more and more authoritarian. The sadomasochistic components of group-formation can remain fairly stable up to a point ; if repression becomes too strong, however — masochism on the part of the group — the individuals concerned feel an intenser desire for domination. Further repression within the group is impossible and so it becomes aggressive, dynamic ; it expands. Its sadistic drive demands a weak opponent, and accordingly the neighbouring groups are seen as weak (the "decadent" democracies or the "cowardly" Italians). This is one reason for the failure of appeasement. There are few social groups today who do not strive with a greater or lesser degree of subtlety to forcibly widen their boundaries so that they may eventually include all the "love"-objects available. [66] In this connection it should be remembered that sado-masochism is closely allied to homosexuality. Consider the homosexual background to modern Germany or militant Sparta.

A third factor is a decline in family feeling. A decrease in the security and importance of the family robs the individual of many of the socially useful forms of submission and domination. Accordingly, he seeks an alternative unit, the State.

Finally, we must recognise the desire, as strong as the need for freedom, for solidarity with one's fellows. Reference has already been made to the rise of individualisation from the pre-selfconscious collectivity — repeated in the individual identification with the mother and surrounding objects. The impulses which are usually called "social instincts" have a specific contact here and must be satisfied. A free, individual man is a lonely man unless he can somehow achieve a spontaneous, creative fellowship. If he cannot do so, if society while offering "freedom" also crushes spontaneity and treats men as isolated units, then there is a danger that he will renounce his liberty in favour of subservience to a group and its government, where he can enjoy for a short time an illusory solidarity. A community without purpose, meaning or security, though it may make the individual "free" also makes him a slave. The words of Erich Fromm, who has dealt at length with this last factor in government\* are especially relevant here : "... man, the more he gains freedom in the sense of emerging from the original oneness of man and nature and the more he becomes an 'individual,' has no choice but to unite himself with the world in the spontaneity of love and productive work or else to seek a kind of security by such ties with the world as destroy his freedom and the integrity of his individual self."\*

## ***THE COLLAPSE OF GOVERNMENT.***

We see then that men accept government because they want to be free from internal conflict and coercion. They will support government only so long as it succeeds in satisfying this desire. To recapitulate, the "government" in question is a fusion of two different things, the human beings who actually rule, and the subjective idea of Authority which the individual displaces (in part) from his childhood conception of the parents and superimposes via projection upon the objective reality. This reality is to-day a political one. In seeking freedom over the last three decades, whole societies have enslaved themselves either to an omnipotent, all-seeing Leader or to a committee of smaller Leaders, which, equipped with all the devices of applied science, effectively suppresses any liberty which may remain. Previous theological systems have been even more efficient. It is reassuring to reflect that their rule did not last, and that this was due to the contradictions inherent in government [67] itself, contradictions which are even now hastening the disintegration of political authority.

For in order to survive for more than a very short space of time, the objective, fourth-type government must live up to the standards expected of the third. In the long run this is impossible ; in the short run expedients can be adopted whose operation exposes further contradictions and lays the government open to even more disastrous consequences. The whole history of government is a record of its attempts to solve this problem, or, having failed, to divert the people's anger to some other object. The expedient usually put into practice is the erection of a facade corresponding to the fantasy picture of Authority. When this facade manifestly fails any longer to deceive, it can be changed, the change being accompanied by a tremendous bustle of whitewash and scaffolding — a general election or a "revolution" — in which the dissatisfaction of the governed can be temporarily assuaged. In the democracies this altering mirage is a succession of leaders ; in other countries the switchover is superficially — to a different kind of government, a dictatorship. (A good example is the de Rivera coup d'etat in Spain. The most stable of all authoritarian systems, the Roman Catholic Church, placed its façade unassailably in Heaven.) A dictatorship becomes necessary when the line of lesser governors has become a little too thin to support the burden of public belief any longer. The results of this expedient are to increase the amount of external conflict and compulsion to a degree no longer controllable either by the government or the governed. This is contradiction number two. And as a flood of terrorism, political murder, famine and war rises to swamp more and more of the individuals concerned, the third contradiction emerges : the second-type government is roused to revolt. People begin to re-apply ethics to the external world, to talk uneasily of the individual's social responsibility; secondary systems of right and wrong, accompanied by appropriate political ideologies, come into prominence, and the governmental structure faces collapse. At this point persecution of rebellious groups will only serve to strengthen them ; they will move into a position of overt sado-masochism which will not be abandoned until the object is (temporarily) eliminated.

There is a further point to be noted. This is that the first-type authority is usually supported, both materially and emotionally, by the fourth. A weakening of the one may damage the prestige of the other. In some circumstances this fact may be of great importance ; such a situation will be noticed in the next section.

There is no solution to the problem faced by the fourth-type authority. Government in the objective sense will not work because it is bound to conflict with the subjective — but not less real — systems of authority set up by the individual. It will not work because man has now

outgrown his identification with the herd; he demands [68] freedom as an individual. It will not work because it draws its support from a mental process which is now itself inappropriate to fully developed thinking and action. Projection "... is one of the oldest of mental mechanisms, it serves a useful purpose in emergencies, but its retention as an adult mechanism is one of the greatest dangers to existing civilisation." \* When individuals learn to understand and accommodate the tendencies of the unconscious, they will no longer be misled by the tactics of governments, and external authority will finally lose its power.

\* Quotations from :

Definitions

- (1) Malatesta "Anarchy" p. 5.
- (2) Crichton-Miller "Psychoanalysis and its Derivatives" p. i.

Relevance of Psychoanalysis

- (1) Jung "Modern Man in Search of a Soul" p. 31.
- (2) Aurel Kolnai "Psychoanalysis and Sociology"

Government

- (1) Erich Fromm "The Fear of Freedom" p. 245.

The Governors

- (1) Herbert Read "The Politics of the Unpolitical."
- (2) Jung "The Integration of the Personality" p. 113.
- (3) Quoted in Peter Nathan's "Psychology of Fascism."

Extension of Government

- (1) Fromm "Fear of Freedom" p. 118.

Collapse of Government

- (1) Glover "War, Sadism and Pacifism" p. 27.

# Psychoanalysis and Government (Part II)

## *GOVERNMENT IN PRACTICE: GERMANY.*

Hitherto the problem of government has been treated from a merely theoretical standpoint. It is time to examine the reality and see whether our hypotheses, derived from facts known about the individual, do actually make more understandable the movement of society and its governments. Such a survey must necessarily be inadequate, and every point considered should be regarded as being only the approach to a ramification which cannot be pursued here. The case of post-war Germany is well-adapted to our purpose, for a glance at its historical context will show it to be not an isolated phenomenon but the epitome of modern social development.

Previous to the first world war the governments of Europe were principally concerned with external aggression, the acquisition of colonies abroad. The governments in question were not yet even politically representative of the people they purported to rule; in fact they were the leaders of a minority group within each of their borders. For the average person; the State, symbolised by coronets and carriages, directly affected only a small part of life, where it stood for security and a righteous respectability; [22] since it had not yet turned its whole attention inward to the society it was supposed to symbolise its pretensions were still accepted. The fundamental social unit was the family, and larger groups were subsidiary to the nation as a whole — governments even judged the disputes between these groups in an apparently neutral way. Not only had the individuals in society not displaced their allegiance from the many external authorities to the single one, but — for internal problems were as yet unaccentuated by external frustration — they had not yet projected these problems with any unusual force upon the objective world. Society had not yet reached the phase of which Mussolini could say: "The State becomes the conscience and will of the people." (1)

For the comparatively restricted groups who were intimately bound up with government, the overseas colonising was of considerable psychological — as well as economic — importance. It provided an outlet for a stream of potential discontents whose disaffection would have immediately threatened the group-structure and therefore the State. The channel hardened into a basis for a group way of life, a miniature society preoccupied with the Army or planter or merchant career; in the pre-war decade the disciples of this way of life joined (in Germany) the Navy League or some similar militarist organisation. In England its influence contributed to education, particularly the training of those who later became public figures. The public outside these ruling-class groups were prepared for the future by a mass of popular fiction which became almost saga-history.

The relatively stable state of affairs was rapidly being undermined by economic and other social changes. Imperialism was reaching its climax; it is unnecessary to retrace the familiar outlines of the process or dwell upon its psychological results at home. A factor which is usually underestimated was the closing of those fields for the otherwise frustrated which have been mentioned above, a factor especially important after the war for the Germans, whose colonies were

confiscated and whose middle-class, which had taken over the ideology of the previous generation's upper class, was simultaneously threatened by events nearer home. The strength of the cry for lebensraum, economically unjustifiable except for minority interests, becomes explicable when the psychological necessities of these groups are taken into account. Far more important was the fall in the birthrate and the rise in the expectation of life, which for most European communities meant that the older age groups were moving into a strengthened position of dominance and the younger, hampered in development by an increased economic burden, becoming more tightly bound to infantile behaviour patterns and therefore to dependence on the old. Taking the standpoint of the young, and referring the position to our previous terms, we can see the first-type authority, and therefore the second, gaining power and depth; consequently we may expect, a generation later, an increased drive in favour of strong external government and appropriate changes in the objective casting of society. If in addition external events show the first type to be more than usually inadequate, then the over-evaluated second will react all the more violently; while displaying a contempt for whatever form of objective authority is associated with the first, it will demand the setting up of a government even harsher than the [23] one it despises. In Europe the process has been repeated in political terms twice, ending in each case with war. The deepened ferocity of the second pendulum swing is due to the intervention of the 1929-33 depression, which brought to Germany's middle class the disillusionment with the first-type authority mentioned above. In other countries the process was slower but no less sure.

In all the combatant countries the psychological concomitants of the first world war were the destruction of the security and prestige of the family and a weakening of the individual's ties with sectional, political and religious groups. Lonely, insecure, lacking means of expression, the ordinary man transferred his instinctive desires to the all-accommodating national unit and there achieved a distorted satisfaction. Government grew strong, and when the war ended it not only preserved many of the new material positions it had won, but also its hold on men's minds. Thus though the national groups had apparently fallen apart and the energies of their members been absorbed in subsidiary interests, the functioning of the latter was now clearly seen in a national-unit context, so that the extension of a subsidiary group might threaten a government while strengthening Government itself. Consequently society found itself moving toward centralisation; authoritarian politics — the disciplined party and the dominated Trade Union — trod heavily on to the European stage, It is possible now to narrow our survey to Germany itself.

The attitude of the victorious powers had prolonged artificially the national-unit consciousness mentioned above. In consequence the economic crash which followed had a similar effect on the middle classes to that of the war. They saw their class frustration in terms of national frustration, and blamed, even more than the working class or the possessing class, the Versailles Treaty. Simultaneously, however, the slump caused a further decline in the value of those national symbols which were rooted emotionally in the past, i.e. the idea of the monarchy. Adults with families, that first-type authority which had drawn so much of its support from the third and fourth, now weakened as they weakened, and the younger generation found it easy to disregard them. With equal readiness, it seemed, they could ignore the claims of the ego-ideal which had been moulded upon the first-type standards; actually these claims were sucked into the idealistic under-current of fascism. Thus the way was opened for a group which would combine a retaliatory nationalism with a hatred for the past and the old; which would threaten both the hereditary and the monopolistic owning class, and which would permit an initial lawlessness for the individual within a framework of ascetic devotion to an externalised ideal. The last condi-

tion was the basis for the two previous ones, and reflected amongst other things the difference between the real and imagined strengths of the second-type authority. Hitler rose to power by offering to satisfy, for his class, the distorted desires by which he himself was driven.

The position for the working class had been rather different. The tendency to submerge their separate aims in the war's collective effort had been less marked than that of the middle class, for their political activity had made them more conscious of themselves as a group existing within, but distinct from, the nation. The fall of the monarchy was already a desirable event for them; they came out of the war without any particular bitterness against the Allies but with their separatist feelings intensified by the apparent successes of the workers abroad. The depression strengthened this tendency: whereas the middle classes identified themselves with Germany, and their frustration with national defeat, the workers inclined rather to project their problems in terms of the future of the international working class, and to place the responsibility for their difficulties upon the capitalist owners. These difficulties, it should be pointed out, were not as overwhelming for them as for the bourgeoisie, which had been used to a higher living standard, and more important, an emotional oasis for security. Comparatively considered, the workers were less a prey to a sense of individual helplessness and the disintegration of family life, though the almost unbroken series of political defeats which had followed the revolution urged them also towards support of a powerful group which would if necessary override parliamentary methods in order to expropriate the possessing class and set up a worker's state.

On the whole, therefore, the middle class was psychologically the most dynamic in Germany. Its depression into the working class weakened the latter as a group and strengthened its own influence in the working class political organisations. These, while receiving new energy, received also an increased bias towards the authoritarian aspect of their programme. During the years preceding the Hindenburg election the left-wing's internationalism was diluted also by the Nazi threat at home, the group-cathexes of its members being forced to contract to overcome the immediate danger. Through these years of street-fighting, assassination, and private torture, the sado-masochism of each side was being widened and deepened. By 1933 the essential psychological issue, that of authority, was being faced in a similar way by 'both communist and fascist; both were united in hatred of the social-democrats, both desired a "strong" government in power. On many secondary issues they differed only in their slogans. When one remembers also the tendency, referred to in section three of this essay, to identify the group in power with society as a whole, it is not surprising that the Left crumpled so readily before the Nazi attack.

It is unnecessary to pursue the history of German totalitarianism further; its characteristics are already familiar enough. The necessity felt by authoritarian groups in general to persecute others explains most of its atrocities and its pogroms; this necessity has already been dealt with. Its attitude to women is to some extent peculiar to the German between-wars period. But by setting its manifestations against the theoretical framework outlined in this essay, it will be seen that large-scale torture, minority persecution, the sacrifice of the individual to the group, and the other reversals of civilised behaviour are symptoms not merely of fascism, but of Government as such. They are inherent in the tension between ruler and ruled. In essence the following quotations could have emerged from not only modern Germany, but any authoritarian group in society:

"Like an illumination it comes over them that the divinity they are seeking lies in their people, hidden somewhere deep in their blood and their destiny." (2)

"You, our Feuhrer, walk among your people as their Redeemer." (3)

(Note the masochistic reference to something greater than the ego and overpowering it— blood, divinity, destiny. The guilt implicit in [25] the idea of redemption. The mutual awe of ruler and ruled. The divinity of people and leader.)

”Leader is the opposite of magistrate: who leads does not determine the objective arbitrarily, by himself; that is done by the led. The led are the people. But the Leader knows the goal and knows the direction . . . who carries the spirit in him, who knows the direction, that person is the Leader.” (4)

(The mutual ties of leader and led: the two aspects of leadership, impressive-expressive.)

”Like a woman . . . who will submit to the strong man rather than dominate the weakling, thus the masses like the ruler rather than the suppliant. . . .” (5)

(The group as feminine. The sadistic attitude implied.)

Such quotations could be multiplied endlessly. What is important, however, is their coincidence with the neurotic attitudes which distinguish authoritarianism, that submission to Government which is characteristic of the ordinary man everywhere in western civilisation today.

### ***GOVERNMENT IN PRACTICE: THE MANAGERIAL STATE.***

Having satisfactorily related the rise of German fascism to the theoretical considerations previously advanced, it will be profitable to turn our attention to the parallel extension of government in Britain. Upon the earlier phases of this development it is unnecessary to dwell; as in the case of Germany, economic insecurity and the threat of neighbouring states, plus American ”cultural” penetration, were rapidly undermining the personality of the individual and increasing its dependence on the group long before the war. The stress of the latter has carried the process to a stage almost indistinguishable from that existing under dictatorships elsewhere. Simultaneously the economic basis for totalitarianism is swiftly coming into being, and plans for its efficient functioning and control, together with appropriate systems of education and technical training, are already prepared. Our attempt here is to estimate the depth of these social currents and indicate the kind of leadership which is most likely to give them expression in the future.

The society with which we are dealing is bound together by the usual group-ties. There is general agreement on the basic psychological issues, an agreement manifested by the common beliefs in victory, national unity, no disarmament after the war, planning, increased production, etc. It has a common leader in Mr. Churchill, whose determination, virility, and energy are carefully emphasised by propaganda. Its unity and strength of purpose (”collective will” would be too allusive a phrase) is continually insisted upon. Since the beginning of the war it has had various small groups at home whom it could’ persecute, ranging from the conscientious objectors to Mosley. It has ritual occasions, religious and otherwise. (Two very striking tendencies in the popular dance tune have been the fusion of religious and military sentiment — ”Praise the Lord,” and ”Target for Tonight” — and the emergence of nursery refrains as in ”Jingle Jangle Jingle” and ”Johnny Zero”. Since dance music appeals to an overwhelming majority of the young, its influence in moulding and canalising group emotion is tremendous.) The group is of course wider than the political attitudes included in it, but its quintessential tendencies are expressed politically by its Conservative and reactionary wing. [26]

Within this general group is a distinguishable body which includes the Trade Union outlook and the emotional drive of the Communist Party, has its own leaders in the persons of Bevin and

Morrison, and is responsible for most of the emphasis on planning and production. Almost outside the society altogether move the uneasy little collections of people whose influence, political or otherwise, is only effective if it is aligned with some fairly strong trend already existing in the general group. The attitude of the latter toward these satellites is usually one of hostility.

By briefly examining the beliefs listed above we may detect the emotional drives of which they are the expression. The urge to victory has had several vicissitudes, and is strongly associated with over-evaluated images of a powerful, fascinating, and at the time of the Blitz, terrifying nature. The slogan Victory, and the "V" sign, has almost a magical, as well as a directly sexual significance. Its emotional undertones derive from the sadistic foundations of authoritarianism, and only its superficial manifestations are likely to disappear. Already these emotions have been widened to include a conscripted and vigilant future, indicating a temporarily weakened second-type authority. It should be remarked in general that the paucity of war-aims is not so much a sign of ruling class bankruptcy as an indication of group strength; "national unity" is an accurate phrase.

The emphasis on planning is a reaction from the feeling of insecurity, which in turn is closely bound to the masochistic element in the totalitarian structure. It reflects also the general pessimism regarding the future. Since this pessimism will probably be justified by a post-war trade slump, the drive towards the planned, regimented, and stable society will almost certainly "be continued. The other contribution of the Left, "increased production", has no such firm foundation. It is in itself a neat displacement of personal virility on to the group, and points to a sharing of the leader's masculine role and a lagging behind the government. (Compare with the feminine masochism of the Blitz period, when the group was enormously in advance of the government over nearly every social issue.) It is extremely unlikely that this position will be sustained, though it is of importance for our survey here.

To sum up, we may expect an immediate future whose values will be these of totalitarianism, whose dynamic will (be aggressive, whose preparedness is for militarism. It will be a planned society, with probably a ritualistic outlet for the inevitable revolt of the second-type authority. It will, early in its development, find a compromise between the present production drive and the factors operating against it — probably the compromise of mechanisation. The old authority-symbols (royalty, etc.) which have already lost most of their power, will degenerate to the entertainment level. We may assume further that since Russia has now become a subsidiary authority-symbol for most individuals, parallel in its overwhelming power to "national unity", there will be a political swing to the Left; such a swing, by weakening the reactionary element in the group structure, would also help canalise the rebellion of the individual conscience mentioned above.

This outline of tomorrow's psychological tendencies is endorsed by what we may expect of economic development. Planning and a large degree of public ownership will be essential if industrial disorganisation and trade depression are not to follow the war. The recovery of "export markets, and the restoring of a pre-war living standard, necessitate mechanisation; the enormous wartime output of machine tools also points in this direction. In his book, "The Managerial Revolution", Mr. James Burnham has advanced the thesis that a new type of society is in formation, and a new type of ruling class is rising to a position of power. He gives as examples of this new society Russia, Germany and Italy; the ruling class he means is that of the managers, who have been described as "production managers, operating executives, superintendents, administrative engineers, and in Government as commissars, bureau heads and administrators generally." (1) He says little about the psychology of such societies, contenting himself with the following descrip-



tion: "In place of the individual, stress turns to the 'state', the people, the folk, the race. In place of gold, labour and work. In place of private enterprise, 'socialism' or 'collectivism'. In place of 'freedom' and 'free initiative', planning. Less talk about 'rights' and 'natural rights', more about 'duties', and 'order' and 'discipline'. Less about 'opportunities', and more about 'jobs'. In addition, in these early decades of managerial society, more of the positive elements that were once part of capitalist ideology in its rising youth, but have left it in old age: destiny, the future, sacrifice, power. . . ." (2) It is obvious, that this fits almost exactly our suggestions in this section. By turning to a Fabian Research Series pamphlet, "Management in Transition" by Austin Albu, a more precise description of the managerial class in this country may be gained: "The salaries of these officials vary from five figures down to the smaller hundreds, and their authority varies over as many individuals. By class origin they vary also — some having come from the ranks of the artisans and some from universities, or direct from middle class business families; their class loyalty, however, is predominantly with the employers." (3) During the war, the writer says, this class "has come much more directly into the service of the State, responsible to Government departments and with its actions open to public examination." (4) He goes on to point out how the managers are tending now to co-operate with the Trade Unions and to swing Leftward in their social outlook, and he gives a list of institutions, including the Ministry of Labour, whose business it is to train this class for its duties. The Orthodox Marxist would claim that the managers, since they are not identified with a new mode of production, are not a class.

We have endeavoured to show that the psychological tendencies existing today will demand expression tomorrow, and we have suggested that the managers will be identified with these new modes of expression. Their class-ideology exists already; their class-consciousness is coming into being now. They will be as ruthless as any previous ruling class in its acquisition, not necessarily of wealth, but of power. "A subtle danger exists in the very nature of the methods that the good manager must use. If he uses his personality and psychological knowledge and experience to lead and direct the activities of those over whom he has authority he may find that his powers of persuasion and mass appeal are as forceful weapons of coercion as fear of the sack. . . ." (5)

But this very ruthlessness of the rulers, this very unity of the ruled, only [28] makes louder the protest of the internal government, intensifies the struggle of the individual against the authoritarian group. "The quest for freedom is not a metaphysical force and cannot be explained by natural law; it is the necessary result of the process of individuation and the growth of culture. The authoritarian systems cannot do away with the basic conditions that make for the quest for freedom; neither can they exterminate the quest for freedom that springs from those conditions." (6) History is on the side of anarchism.

## ***CONSTRUCTIVE ANARCHISM.***

Many of the problems which have been skirted in this essay — the problem of freewill is obviously the most important — cannot be dealt with here. But we are now in a position to bring together those lines of thought which were abandoned earlier and to contribute them to the anarchist discussion of government and society.

We have seen that government is not merely an objective force which is imposed on men from without; on the contrary, men impose government on themselves; it exists within them and they establish it in the external world. A desirable organisation of society would be one in which

not merely the institutions of authority were absent, but in which there were alternative outlets for those psychological factors making for their support. support. The attack on government is therefore a double-pronged attack; it must be accomplished both within and without the individual. External authority, as we have shown, is forever collapsing. Though advances towards anarchy may be made at other times, it will not be completely achieved until the fall of the outer government coincides with the weakening of the government within.

The weakening of the subjective authority may best be accomplished at its source - the child. The child's position within the family is of the utmost importance in this context, for upon it depends the future of an anarchist society. A culture which substituted a sympathy tempered with knowledge for the pity mingled with sentimentality which is the current adult attitude towards infancy would be desirable; further, it is probable that children who are allowed to mix with others at an early age, as in the creches of the Jewish Collectives in Palestine, are less inclined towards domination and submission in later life. In these creches the infants are cared for by their own parents, who take it in turns to work there. Thus the source of authority, for the child, becomes diffused until it includes all adults and ultimately the whole society; to prevent social opinion becoming too dominant, however, nursery life would have to be complemented by family life; we have already remarked that for the adult the latter is a safety valve for many impulses which might otherwise be expended functionally - instead of creatively - in a larger group. Creches of this description could only be workable in a decentralised community with perhaps the commune as a unit. "Collective parentage" is of course a feature of many peaceable primitive societies.

The projection of the subjective authority is dangerous because it imputes superhuman powers to other men or to natural processes. If the idea of authority is displaced, however, to ideals, to the abstractions concerned with social living and complete individuality, then its emotional [29] drive can serve a useful purpose. History has shown how easy it is for this displacement to take place; ordinary life presents examples of the successful dissociation of the abstraction and the men representing it at a particular time.

Reference has been made to the position of the artist in society. If, as the work of Jung suggests, the attachment to authority proceeds not merely from childhood but also from the collective unconscious, then the artist's function as mythmaker and interpreter becomes pre-eminently important. Divorced from instituted authority and become part of the common life, his work will, like an abstract ideal, serve in part as a magnet attracting and patterning the iron filings of otherwise dangerous impulses.

The most important theme suggested here is concerned with individuality. Men are no longer merely parts of the group. Consequently anarchism must deal with two kinds of freedom : freedom for the individual in society, and freedom for the individual as a separate unit. The authoritarian State provides the first by robbing men of the second. Only anarchy can offer them both.

". . . is there a state of positive freedom in which the individual exists as an independent self and yet is not isolated but united with the world, with other men, and nature?

"We believe that there is a positive answer, that the process of growing freedom does not constitute a vicious circle, and that man can be free and yet not alone, critical and yet not filled with doubts, independent and yet an integral part of mankind. This freedom man can attain by the realisation of his self, by being himself. . . . We believe that the realisation of the self is accomplished not only by an act of thinking, but also by the realisation of man's total personality, by the active expression of his emotional and intellectual potentialities. These potentialities are

present in everybody: they become real only to the extent to which they are expressed. In other words, *positive freedom consists in the spontaneous activity of the total, integrated personality.*" (1)

Government in Practice

(1) Mussolini "Il Fascismo." Quoted G. D. H. Cole "Guide to Modern Politics," p. 175.

(2) Hitler "Zwischenspiel." Quoted "Germany puts the Clock Back." p. 202.

(3) Hitler Youth member. Quoted "Germany puts the Clock Back." p. 249.

(4) Duetsches Kulturrecht, Hamburg, 1936, p. 5. Quoted "Spirit and Structure of German Fascism," Chap. 3.

(5) Hitler "Mein Kampf," p. 56.

(6) Fromm "Fear of Freedom," p. 206.

Constructive Anarchism

(1) Fromm "Fear of Freedom," p. 222.

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1944-1945

Now 2 (1944): 57-68; Now 3 (1945): 21-29.

Apologies, here, for the presence of that homophobic discourse (identifying homosexuality with fascism) which can be found in much early/mid 20th century psychoanalytic theory.

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