

TWO

THE PATHOLOGY OF ENABLERS AND FOLLOWERS

Both history and the full range of social science tell us that the leader does not act nor can be blamed alone.

It is at the juncture between the psychology of the leader and the psychology of his enablers and followers that we find the sociology, economics, and political science that reveals how what happened with George W. Bush as president, and King George III earlier, has brought on disaster during our history and evolution.

At the core of the malady can usually be found how a particular clique selects the mix of charisma and pathology that best serves the pathology of the clique to function as the “front man” for their route to power.

In the case of G.W. Bush, in the cluster of his vice president, defense secretary, chief political advisor, those known as neoCons, and in the wider eruption and spread of the psychic pathogen we’ll examine in the next chapter, can be seen what happens next. We see the pathology widen from symptoms to that of a self-transcendent syndrome for which—as naming the thing is so essential to begin to define and remedy it—we must search for a new term to call it.

In *Escape from Freedom* in 1941, *An American Dilemma* in 1944, and *The Authoritarian Personality* in 1950, the remarkable psychosocial analyst Erich Fromm, the great Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal, and the

DAVID LOYE

Frankfurt School/UC-Berkeley team—which under the leadership of T.W.Adorno matched up the brain power of Jewish genius refugees from Hitler’s Germany with that of aroused West Coast American intellectuals—were among scores of leading Post-WWII social scientists who became the pioneers of a psychiatry of evolution. For they were the first to warn of what could happen if America failed to heed the findings and the lessons of an action-oriented progressive science.

And sure enough, like the wrong train arriving on schedule, during the last quarter of the 20th century the malady we’re probing came roaring out of the authoritarian past to seize America in defiance of all that originally made the American revolution the great leap forward for human evolution.

Based on the analysis of these pioneers—and their successors whom I was fortunate to know and work with—what led to the global devastation of World War II and other cases was a pattern roughly of the type Gunnar Myrdal wrote of in his classic study of racism in America.

In contrast to the progressive “virtuous cycle” others later wrote of, Myrdal, in exploring the symptoms, causes, and dynamics of the suppression and exploitation of blacks by whites, first identified a regressive “vicious cycle.”

In their study of fascism in both pre-World War II Germany and post-World War II America the Adorno group considerably expanded the picture of the devastating course of this form of social pathology.

First comes a fierce, fearful, and backward-driving backlash against the progressive science and progressive goals and periods of significant earlier evolutionary advance.

Advances, for example, such as the civil rights movement in America, the colonial independence movement elsewhere, the human rights movement that spawned the UN and all the other progressive movements that raised hope worldwide after World War II.

BANKROLLING EVOLUTION

But like the pressure mounting within a tectonic fault line, alongside the rise in hope also gathers the pathological counter-force that Fromm and Myrdal—as well as George Orwell in *1984*, Sinclair Lewis in *It Can't Happen Here*, and others we'll examine in chapter four—foresaw and warned of.

Revealed by the science in exile that grounds both the psychiatry and the management science of evolution this report proposes, it is the picture of how in America there gradually emerged the increasingly regressive and vicious backlash that goes back at least to the reaction to the New Deal years of Franklin Roosevelt. It is this backlash that after World War II once again picks up against the post-War rise of the progressive vision of a Great Society.

It is this muttering and rumbling movement of nay-saying antis and the snarling denial that swells until it seethes with everything from fire-breathing televangelists to bombs—if need be even to death, they proclaim—to resist progressive education, progressive science, the evolutionary advance of the civil rights, women's, environmental, and peace movements, and every other booster shot to planetary health and well-being.

Again an aroused generation of social scientists I was lucky enough to have as mentors warned of what could happen.

Of those with major insights I worked with or knew were the crusading anthropologist Ashley Montagu, earlier involved in Gunnar Myrdal's research for *An American Dilemma*. Psychologist Silvan Tomkins, a genius almost forgotten by now, whose studies of liberals and conservatives, positive and negative emotion, and countless other relevant insights contain a lost library of relevance to the construction of a psychiatry of evolution. Milton Rokeach, developer of the most profound cross-cultural measure and study of values, earlier a research assistant to Else Frenkel-Brunswick in the

DAVID LOYE

Authoritarian Personality study. Klaus Riegel, developer of a dialectical psychology that for all-too-brief-a-time raised the prospect for a historically-oriented activist psychology to provide therapy for the healing of nations.

Theirs and the relevant work of many others of that time and earlier I brought together in *The Healing of a Nation*—in which I probed 350 years of American history to see if a pattern could be discerned for how we are to heal what beyond racism has by now become this more pervasive sickness quite literally unto death.

While all of this work bears on the probe of the pathology of the enablers and followers of pathology in leadership, three works go to the problem at its core.

Milgram's Warning

Most jarring were the experiments of Stanley Milgram, which showed how easily supposedly intelligent and morally sensitive American majorities could be driven to commit atrocities through authoritarian command.

Milgram's laboratory was arranged like a radio studio, in which participants are separated by a sheet of glass.

On one side of the glass, with electrodes on his body ostensibly hooked up to a shocking machine, sits the Learner, a volunteer who has agreed to follow instructions. On the other side of the glass sits the Teacher, another volunteer who has agreed to administer a shock to the other whenever the other makes a mistake.

Behind the Teacher, wearing a white coat like those of doctors to emphasize his authority, stands the Experimenter conducting the experiment.

BANKROLLING EVOLUTION

The Experimenter tells the volunteers this is an experiment to study ways of improving memory. The Teacher will read a series of words paired to other words (i.e., word pairs) to the Learner, and then will test the Learner to see how well he remembers the pairing. For each mistake the Teacher will first administer a mild electric shock to the Learner—but with repeated mistakes the Teacher must increase the shock until the Learner provides the right answer.

The shocks register their intensity on a dial the Teacher can see along with both seeing and hearing how the Lerner is responding to the shocks.

Unknown to the Teacher, in secret the Learner is actually an actor, with the shocks only registering on the dial the Teacher sees.

To these “shocks” the Learner responds with everything from a wince to the mildest, to pain with howling as the shock is increased, to beating on the glass and collapsing when the Teacher still further dials up to the highest level for the shocks.

When the Teacher begins to show distress and complain he’d rather not go on, the Experimenter forces him to go on with an escalating series of ostensible reasonable commands.

The shock literally felt round the world at the time of the experiment, 1961, and for a while afterward, was that under this situation of experimental “obedience to authority” a clear majority—65 percent—would continue the shocks until the supposed Learner collapsed!

“The extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority constitutes the chief finding of the study and the fact most urgently demanding explanation,” Milgram wrote at the time.

“Ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destructive process. Moreover, even when the destructive effects of their work become patently clear, and they are asked to carry out actions incompatible with fundamental

DAVID LOYE

standards of morality, relatively few people have the resources needed to resist authority.”

Here we see foreshadowed—as clear as glass—what came to be throughout America during the Bush years.

Asch's Warning

Earlier, in 1953, psychologist Solomon Asch conducted the famous “conformity” experiments that were paired with Milgram’s to try to arouse the sleepwalkers of our time to reality.

This time typically four out of five or six out of seven of the supposed volunteers were secretly working with the experimenter. All were told this was a test for accuracy of vision. Then all were shown a series of cards.

One card showed a simple line of a certain length.

The other card showed three lines of varying length, A, B, and C, of which one line matched the line on the test card.

One after another, participants were asked to report which line on the second card most nearly matched the line on the test card.

Unknown to the last man in line, previous to him everyone was secretly working with the experimenter. And one after another—while the last man sat there in increasing bewilderment—they gave a wrong answer.

Even though the right answer was obvious, *32 percent* or roughly one third of those tested in this situation went along with the group rather than go by the obvious evidence of their own eyes and minds.

On the surface, this finding for conformity may not sound as impressive as Milgram’s for obedience to authority. But as I explored with Asch in an interview for *Psychology Today*, there was as much reason for horror here because of the way Asch’s findings foreshadowed the regressive “red state” versus progressive “blue state” voting patterns during the Bush

BANKROLLING EVOLUTION

years.

Some of the participants always refused to conform to the majority. But at the opposite pole the Conformers wound up the experiment either believing the majority was right. Or, out of doubt and lack of confidence, believed their own perceptions were somehow distorted. Or they actually believed the majority was wrong—but they conformed because they didn't want to be seen as “different.”

The Warning Spreads

Also out of scores of studies during the 1950s and 1960s of the ingroup vs. outgroup mindset rose the picture of how— behind the racist, sexist, and other forms of prejudice that drive us apart and backward—lies that invariant signal of political and social pathology: the fearful, enemy-minded paranoia that alternates between driving and being exploited by the rightwing.

To these studies in 1978 I added *The Leadership Passion: A Psychology of Ideology*. A pioneering application of the systems scientific perspective of the great psychologist Kurt Lewin, this study applied new experiments and a wide-ranging analysis of variance to the main prior studies. Of great bearing on what over the next twenty years came to be in America was my expansion beyond earlier work into the study of the characteristics and the dynamics of liberals versus conservatives—and those who become leaders and those who become followers.

Within all this work the keystone earlier study was the Adorno group's in-depth detailing of the characteristics of the “authoritarian personality.”

DAVID LOYE

The Authoritarian Personality

Today this pivotal study for the grounding of a psychiatry of evolution is only an obscure item for college students to pass a test with—at best they're expected to cough up the fact the Adorno group developed an F test (F for fascism) for identifying the obvious authoritarian personality of monsters like Hitler, Idi Amin, or in “our time” Saddam Hussein.

As America was obviously not swamped from coast to coast with jack-booted Hitlerians, common sense told those who bothered then to think about the matter at all—as well as their counterparts today—that this was probably nothing more than another case of the screwy statistics of do gooders and pointy heads.

But what smacks one in the face today is this.

While originally inspired by Hitler and what happened in Germany, *this massive 986 page study was exclusively of Americans.*

What emerges out of the Adorno study—plus all the other post-WW II studies of *hypothetically average* Americans—is this composite picture bearing on our time.

A substantial number of us fit the profile for a “democratic personality.” *But an even greater number of Americans fit the profile for the “authoritarian personality.”*

Taken as a whole, seen fresh from the battered and bloody perspective of our time, these studies hammer across the fact there were and are two kinds of people who, by nature, nurture, or otherwise, are infected with the “authoritarian personality.” The problem is not just the leaders on whom we focus so readily to get ourselves off the hook—the Hitlers, Stalins, or in “our time” the dark doppelganger of Vice President Cheney in the Bush years. The other side to the “authoritarian personality” is the pathology of the followers who, whether jack-booted or merely voting the New Masters

BANKROLLING EVOLUTION

in and cheering them on, are ready to submit and unquestioningly do as they are told.

In other words, for the success of every authoritarian or dominator there have to be numbers ranging from one to many millions ready to blindly submit to domination

For the hammer there has to be a nail. For the top there has to be a down. For the predator there has to be prey. For the con man there has to be the sucker. Likewise, for the dominating authoritarian there have to be anywhere from one to many millions—as could be seen in Hitler’s Germany as well as in both Republican party conventions and among obedient and conforming House and Senate Democrats in “our time”—joyfully and even ecstatically ready to submit and do as one is told.

The Rise and Spread of Disaster

For a time within the lives of millions of us still living today this sickness seemed comfortably confined to outright dictatorships, or in democracies to the so-called “lunatic fringe.” But then came what had happened in Germany. Driven by what decades of political psychologists have identified as the pathological personal power needs of both rightist leaders and their mass of enablers and followers came the new rise of the survival-of-the-fittest, selfishness *uber alles* economics in America that earlier prevailed during the Robber Baron years, only by light years greater today.

Claiming the scientific support of neoDarwinian biology—as well as the new sophistication of its late 20th century sociological and psychological varieties—came the disarmingly folksy, all-out, knife-edged greed for wealth and power for which political scientist Bertram Gross coined the term “friendly fascism.”

DAVID LOYE

Incredibly, ironically, it became an epidemic that spread until it could be said that regressive, supposedly Christian America became the mirror image of regressive Islam bent on claiming the planet for itself through the terrorism of global holy war.

How was it that a majority of Americans could not merely temporarily give in but over seven years of mounting disaster persist in supporting this madness?

Here was this forgotten band of social scientists who had warned of the rise of an American “authoritarian personality”—of a “regressive vicious cycle,” of “conformity” and “obedience to authority” pressures, of alternation for governance between “Right” and “Left,” of the characteristics of “liberal” versus “conservative” periods of history, of “high synergy” versus “low synergy” societies; later of “power with” versus “power over” approaches to management, and the impact of the “dominator model” versus the “partnership model” on all aspects of our lives.

Here also were all those who behind the scenes probed and wrote extensively of the psychiatric impact of “narcissistic personality disorder” and “borderline personality disorder” as factors of concern.

One after another these studies had expanded the earlier focus on Hitler and what happened in Germany to uncover this horrifying similarity of mind and behavioral readiness lying at the ready, waiting for the command, within not merely thousands but *millions* of supposedly reasonably well-educated Americans. This is the essential point we need to realize today.

The studies of the Adorno group, Solomon Asch, Stanley Milgram and scores of others were not studies of “weirdos,” the riff raff, or so-called lower orders.

These were studies of young men with nation-wide counterparts in America today. Back in that time they were studies of the “boy next door.”

BANKROLLING EVOLUTION

The family farm's college bound "young 'un." The "whipper-snapper" who could practically run the hardware store by himself.

They were studies of the young men who became the parents, teachers, coaches, ministers, favorite uncles, and voices and lords of the media, of the American husbands, bread-winners, neighbors, reporters, and voters of the Bush years.

They also became the politicians, whose fathering, mentoring, and counseling of a majority of the occupants of Congress, of both parties, both House and Senate, and of the Supreme Court—all of whom in their role of enablers and followers, and in failure in their sworn duty to the Constitutional requirement of impeachment— was the astonishment of the Bush years.

Had progressive science been more than a systems-functional peripheralized or sandbox activity for an America run by "the grown ups," the Asch and the Milgram experiments showing how easily even well-educated majorities in America could be persuaded to knuckle under to authority—and even support obvious lies and behavioral atrocities—should have been enough to launch a psychiatry and management science of evolution and the healing of the nation.

Is it not by now evident beyond question that we'll be saddled with an unbalanced society, politics, economics, religion, world—and the election of an unbalanced leadership—as long as our lives are grounded in an unbalanced education based on an unbalanced science.

In all realism can we really hope for escape from the misery of the past, again increasing in the present, as long as we remain the captives of a science and a social mindset cocked by the so-called Powers That Be to either exclude or swiftly put behind us the disruptive but crucially creative heritage of progressive science we've examined—to which we'll return in Part II.