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WAR, DELINQUENCY AND POWER
Alex Comfort and Ronald Sampson   PRICE:£1.50

WAR, DELINQUENCY AND POWER takes as its starting point war as a 'psychopathological entity' - an act of group delinquency in which 'it would be unrealistic to minimise the role of governments.' Alex Comfort shows how war provides for political leaders 'a distortion of reality in which abnormal impulses may pass as normal, and irrational ideas receive unquestioning acceptance.' Ronald Sampson takes up that unquestioning acceptance in considering the obedience which maintains in power the so-called 'great', and concludes that 'no power, whatever its religious or political content, is good power. What is good is the absence of power, which makes possible the growth of love.'

WAR
DELINQUENCY
AND POWER

Alex Comfort and Ronald Sampson

STUDIES IN NONVIOLENCE
PEACE   PLEDGE   UNION

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War and Delinquency
The Sociology of War
Alex Comfort

The Will to Power
From Reason of State to Reason of the Heart
Ronald Sampson

STUDIES IN NONVIOLENCE
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INTRODUCTION

There was a time when war was accepted as a normal incident of ongoing international society. In the early 19th century Karl von Clausewitz wrote: *'War is nothing more than the continuation of policy by other means'*, and even in the early 20th century Friedrich von Bernhardi was saying: *'The inevitableness, the idealism and the blessing of war, as an indisputable and stimulating base of development, must be repeatedly emphasised.'*

After two world wars, involving the deaths of millions, the disablement and displacement of millions more, and the ruination of whole towns and tracts of countryside, few would continue to press the positive virtues of war. It is still, however, widely accepted as inevitable, as is shown by the fighting of more than 120 wars since 1945, amongst which the Falklands war brought home to Britain the chauvinist euphoria to which war, despite all its merciless misery, can still give rise.

The tradition of pacifism - the belief that there are other and far more effective ways than war of resolving human conflict - has long questioned its inevitability and normalcy. A point frequently made by pacifists is that war leads to ordinary people killing or maiming other ordinary people with whom they have no personal quarrel and whom in other circumstances they might well find interesting companions.

It is from this standpoint of pacifism that the authors of the two essays in this pamphlet consider the social mechanisms of war. Alex Comfort and Ronald Sampson show in different but complementary ways that war is, to use Comfort's term, a

'psychopathalogical entity'. Alex Comfort stresses the nature of war as an act of group delinquency, in which *it would be unrealistic to minimise the role of governments*, and provides as apt comment on the part played by leaders such as Margaret Thatcher and Leopoldo Galtieri in the Falklands conflict: 'War, consciously or unconsciously, is for them a suspension of difficulties...it provides a distortion of reality in which abnormal impulses may pass as normal, and irrational ideas receive unquestioning acceptance.' The 'Gotcha!' phenomenon.

How irrational ideas come to be accepted is taken up by Ronald Sampson in looking at group myths in the sociology of war. He examines the myth of the 'great man' - so defined to include Hitler as well as Churchill - who is said to shape history. The *great man*, however, *can be elevated to his "greatness" only by the active support of those who put him there and by obedience keep him there.* In a series of examples, including the Nazi onslaught against the Jews, he shows how 'just as the scramble for power produces the rulers, the one or the few at the pinnacle of the pyramid, so it must also produce a pariah group, the despised or rejected at the base.' *It is the collusion of 'ordinary people'* with the leaders against a scapegoat minority that provides the active support and obedience to maintain the leaders in power. The will to power - to dominate, or share in the domination of others - is, as Ronald Sampson quotes Trevor Huddleston: *an insatiable hunger. It is never satisfied, for it is never certain of itself. It can never rest, for it never knows its own final end or purpose.*

It is that will to power, Ronald Sampson argues, which results in war and bloodshed, because *no power, whatever its religious or political content, is good power. What is good is the absence of power, which makes possible the growth of love.*
Bill Hetherington

WAR AND DELINQUENCY
The Sociology of War

War is by far the most important type of group-deliquency in contemporary societies. It is both an institution and a psychopathological entity, but at the present time it has come to assume a permanence in urban centralised cultures which cuts across its institutional history. As a pattern of sustained aggression and resistance against a foreign execrated group it has assumed a permanent place in ways of life and techniques of government in these cultures. It has come to fulfil the definition which a French cartoonist attributed to the Prussian military catechism:

What is peace?
Peace is the period of preparation for war.

Warlike cultures have always existed within historical times, but their attacks on their neighbours were largely dictated by short-term advantage, such as spoil, empire, or the gratification of national pride. From the standpoint of the individual, within a particular cultural tradition, *individual aggressiveness stems from early interactions, associated with either personal-social or cultural conditioning, and the institutions of war may offer a person an outlet for aggressive motives built up in the early years.*[1]

While these elements still influence national aggressiveness, they have been supplemented, if not superseded, by the importance which centralised living gives to war as a means of government. To the individual whose incentives have been gradually pared away by delegation, and who can no longer compete for leadership or proficiency in a circumscribed group, aimlessness and lack of status are continual anxieties. Describing the source of psychosomatic disease in modern England, Halliday[2] relates the growth of anxiety to *increasing separation from outward roots in earth: increasing disregard of biological patterns; increasing frustration of manipulative creativity; increasing rapidity of change in society; increasing stan-*

dardisation and repression of individual expression; decreasing sense of aim and direction.' And continues: *'Only, perhaps, in wartime, and under inspiring leadership did the masses regain some sense of purpose and direction.'*

The big city and the large, convenient administrative group impose solitariness, and reduce the variety of social activities which the individual can undertake for and in himself, at least as much as they increase the total scope of experience. The amateur musician who could compete with friends cannot compete with the lumped resources and talent of professional entertainment. Something analogous takes place in social dominance-patterns. War is the only surviving national activity in which the opportunity to shine is combined with a full indulgence of aggressive behaviour and a pressing invitation to the individual to participate. Almost all other communal activities take place through a chain of delegation so long that its end is lost to the sight of the individual - only in war are one's effort and one's capacity appreciated: no delegation interposes between the soldier and the enemy, or between the civilian public and its appointed tasks of 'staying put' or 'going to it'. The sense of purpose and unity which war artificially creates is, for urban cultures, a drug of addiction. Regarded with fear, it may be accepted with relief and seen in retrospect with regret. It provides a personal experience both of emotional release and of social cohesion which may outweigh its horrors. Huge operations are conducted by god-like and infallible leaders, for objects expressed in perpetually repeated and readily understood stereotypes. Emotion and excitement based on physical fear and physical aggression are kept at a high pitch - the violence of the film, the gladiatorial show and the suicide motor race, standard addictions of asocial cultures which provide a more limited release for aggressive desires, cannot compete with the violence of war. Problems can be shelved and replaced by action or by appropriate gestures. The atmosphere of the nursery, with its securities and insecurities, of being in the hands of those who know best, is recreated. The genuine fear and hatred of war under these conditions cannot disguise its satisfactions. The citizen is placed in the same situation toward forbidden acts of aggression as the child who is suddenly given the run of the forbidden room, or the repressed adolescent who suddenly gets access to sexual satisfaction. After such an orgy, return to reality is as painful as continuance in danger.

This ambivalence makes the threat of war and the promise of war two of the most important political forces of our age. They react with equal force on the legislators. War, consciously or unconsciously, is for them a suspension of difficulties and of conflicts - so long as it continues, demands and agitations cease to be dangerous, confidence and solidarity can be maintained, opposition can be identified with the enemy, and the dramatic aspect of public actions is increased beyond all peacetime precedent. It provides a distortion of reality in which abnormal impulses may pass as normal, and irrational ideas achieve unquestioning acceptance. It simplifies power and administration to a series of undisputed attitudes.

It is essentially the socially maladjusted civilian who is happiest in wartime - problems are shelved, difficulties of personal relationships are superseded: the criminal can be redeemed by enlisting delinquency on the popular side: the paranoiac is at grips with an enemy whom others also recognise and revile. The adjusted individual finds life entirely disorganised, the family broken up, liberty curtailed and protests regarded as treasonable. War is essentially the playground of the psychopath in society. The intermediate majority experience both aspects of war, and in societies like our own, which traditionally condemn personal violence, guilt as a reaction to war is widespread. The majority of participants accept the over-simplified version of the issues, often after severe mental struggle, because they see no alternative - they fail, however, to accept the institution or its implications. The public which acclaims victories cannot be allowed to see over-realistic films of commando training, or its morale will suffer. A fiction of controlled, discriminate violence has to be maintained, and is readily destroyed. The wartime government is always perplexed by the difficulty of assuring, in democratic orders, that resolution or exhilaration does not turn to disgust, and in totalitarian orders, that the emotions aroused do not recoil in aggressive resistance to the arousers. The democratic war administration has to lead a horse to the battle without allowing it to smell too much blood - the dictator has to ensure that the lynch mob does not lynch the instigators as well as, or instead of, the victims.

Revolutionary movements subsist by projecting social evils, including war, upon the ruling group - given a change of institutions, war will vanish. Governments may employ the same methods - war is identified with Hitler or Napoleon, or with a nation or group, and the defeat of this enemy is the road to permanent peace. Sociology has rightly stressed the function of war as a meeting-point for aggressive impulses in society as a whole, and the importance of stereotypy, projection, group myths, hostility to foreigners, and individual aggressiveness. While the war-orientation of modern societies is unquestionably the outcome of such factors, it would be unrealistic to minimise the role of governments. In fact, few if any of the more disastrously delinquent acts of nations in recent years are, in the final analysis, the result of spontaneous upsurgings of public aggression. The attitude of the centralised society towards war is always ambivalent, but the manifestations of warlike tendencies are predominantly under the control of governments. Neither the German extermination of Jews, nor the Allied massacre of enemy civilian populations, which have been cited as the two most widespread and serious group-delinquent manifestations of the Second World War, were spontaneous. In the case of the Jews, spontaneous feeling was inflamed, intensified, and artificially maintained by a legislative group: in the case of the policy of indiscriminate bombardment, intensive propaganda failed to still all public doubts of its necessity and morality.[3] Elaborate public rationalisation of both actions took place through official channels of information. Public sentiment against

war is and was traditionally strong in Britain and America, and was by no means absent in Germany. Elaborate trickery was in many instances required to reconcile public opinion to participation - allegations have been made that the Pearl Harbour incident was manipulated in this manner, and the change in American public opinion between 1940 and 1941 was unquestionably due in part to active governmental pressure. A marked exception was the forcing of war upon the British Government in 1939 by a spontaneous public reaction, which had as its origin widespread suspicion of complicity between British right wing thought and the Nazi ideology.

If contemporary wars were in substance, as well as in background, the direct expression of aggressions projected from the urban public as a whole, we should not expect to find any such elaborate rationalisations as Hitler, or we ourselves, employed, except as a means of allaying the guilt of those who offer them. While the revolutionary overestimates the role of scheming diplomats, the sociologist may readily underrate the part played by governments, and individuals within them. The replacement of Hitler by another less paranoid leader, even an exponent of the same ideology, might have produced a marked change in the pattern of history. In assessing the causation of war, it is impossible to overlook the part played by conscious choice, by economic activities such as those of armament firms and financial 'lobbies' and the deliberate use of war as a means of government by diversion.

With the exception of such activities as looting or the sacking of occupied territories, wartime delinquencies and 'war crimes' do, in fact, originate more commonly in specific individual delinquency among the ruling groups than in crowd behaviour. Crowd manifestations such as those of the early days of the Franco-Prussian War have been relatively uncommon, even in totalitarian countries, without deliberate stage management. Their main consequences have been limited delinquency such as the ill-treatment of prisoners, lynchings, or simple civil crime. Abundant evidence exists that a large part of the fighting and civilian populations retain intact the majority of their civilised attitudes towards fellow human beings in any instance where there is direct contact.[4] In the case of the Japanese, much of the barbarity exhibited toward prisoners belonged to a cultural tradition wholly unlike that of Western Europe, and was no greater than the barbarity of discipline existing within the military group itself. The most reprehensible acts of the Second World War were almost all committed either upon superior orders, or by elite enforcement bodies, selected by institutional rulers, and indoctrinated to perform them. In some cases, the authority derives from a leader of the crowd-exponent type, and the psychology of such actions closely resembles that which has been studied in the peacetime lynch-mob. In others, delinquency is the planned execution of a pattern of individual fantasy.

There is documentary evidence relating most of the calculated and indiscriminate war crimes to the invention and planning of individual psychopaths in office. The role of group projection and stereotypy is greatest in producing acquiescence at the lower

levels of the chain of command. In some instances, the effective lack of hand-to-hand contact assists this process - few regular fighting men would have accepted an order to massacre civilians in detail, by means involving contact, but many were capable of acquiescence in forms of indiscriminate war which did not destroy the stereotype or upset the security of the rationalisation.[5] In other cases, acquiescence was limited to non-participant consent, while the actual deeds were performed in private by the selected elite, part of whose function was to perpetuate public acquiescence by terrorism.

In our own society, the soldier and the public commonly take the view that the element of personal risk amounts to an atonement for specific delinquency. It is only after five or six years that one can criticise, say, indiscriminate air bombardment, without evoking violent hostility from those who point to the heroism and the severe losses of the air forces concerned. If the extermination of the Jews by the Gestapo had involved any element of personal risk at all comparable with the hazards of action, it is doubtful whether any marked public indignation could have been aroused. English reaction, especially among bombed civilians, was far greater and more hostile when attacks were carried out by pilotless flying bombs than when orthodox bombs were dropped by vulnerable air crews. Primitive expiatory ideas of this kind play a notable part in maintaining acquiescence in democratic countries. Individual pacifists have been known to abandon deep-seated rational or unconsciously motivated attitudes in order to share the hazards of a war which they disapproved - others deliberately courted punishment or discomfort to maintain their self-respect in the company of serving soldiers. The extreme apprehension which the atomic bomb has produced in Britain and America is almost certainly due to some such expiatory sentiment, rationalised as a fear of physical consequences. There appears to be a difference in kind between the reaction of the Russians, whom the bomb may have been intended to intimidate, and that of its makers, whom it has succeeded in intimidating beyond all reason.

During the Second World War psychiatry as a science was brought into direct contact with these problems, since it was invoked as a deliberate weapon to select military personnel, to advise on morale, and to devise means of demoralising the enemy. *The military psychologist is not obligated to theorise about causes of war. He is one element in society's cutting edge concerned with the most effective prosecution of the war, and must operate on the assumption that war is, or will be, a fait accompli...In the conduct of psychological warfare, the psychologist need not attempt to cultivate new distrusts...:instead, he merely selects existing fears and purposes. In any nation he has only to fan certain flames and smother others to make the fire burn where he wants it.'* [6]

Psychiatry is practised by human beings, who share in the attitudes of their time - it has also a rational discipline of its own. It was, in general, considerably more at ease

in demoralising the enemy by exposing their irrationalities than in co-operating with the group policy. The question of standards of normality became acute - the degree of cultural acceptance of war as an institution is to some extent reflected in the tendency of German military medicine to study the total personality of the officer candidate, while that of American psychiatry was to select specific aptitudes. Whether psychological methods were ever applied consciously to the selection of extermination squads or prison camp guards is not known - aptitude selection in these groups seems to have taken place within the structure of the Nazi party. In general, the traits of the good officer in either army, despite the allegations of pacifists, were closely similar to those of the social leader in other categories of life. Civilian armies lack the intense group psychopathic traits of wartime civilian populations - they make up a community of shared danger, where status is determined by simple rules, and where much of the isolation and stress of centralised civilian life is broken down. The last war produced many examples of what have been termed 'paraprimitive' groups, based on comradeship and common undertaking, in which normal differences of rank were obscured. The sense of responsibility which the officer felt for the lives of his men is something conspicuously lacking in civilian political hierarchies. Few if any political leaders could write with sincerity:

Because to love is terrrible, we prefer the freedom of our crimes...[7]

A feature of this tendency, reflected again and again in the growth of private languages and common phraseology, is the increased splitting-off of the civilian soldier from the civilian. The soldier sees himself as alternately defender, scapegoat, and victim of the home public and the home administration. Total war, by imposing a less violent contrast between groups than that between England in the First World War and the trenches of Flanders, has slightly reduced this tendency, but it retains a good deal of political importance in creating a discontented block vote, and in determining change of government at the end of hostilities.

There is nothing in the study of the modern civilian army to suggest that it is primarily either a delinquent or a brutalised group at the social level. The most serious effects of military service appear to be on sexual and family attitudes, the damage being reflected rather in the next generation than in those who undergo it, although these too experience serious difficulty in adjustment. Commanders of such armies have in general experienced more difficulty in preventing fraternisation than in preventing outbursts of individually prompted aggression. Highly politicised armies may be regarded as belonging to the enforcement-elite, but they, too, readily lose some, at least, of their stereotypes when actually in contact with enemy populations. A sustained hostile occupation of relatively unaggressive territory presents serious administrative difficulties to the high command. It rapidly produces assimilation,

sexual encounters, bridging of the gap between victor and vanquished, and loss of fighting spirit. Francs-tireurs and resistance movements, while they undermine immediate morale by creating tension and confusion, may, to this extent, actually facilitate the psychological task of the occupying power.

It will be seen from these considerations that the aggressive energies of frustrated civilisations and persons are responsible for wartime delinquency far more by enabling psychopaths to secure office and obedience than through direct outbursts of violence. *'La terreur d'aujourdhui a ses bureaux'* ('Today's terror has its own administration')[8], and the individual citizen contributes to it chiefly by obedience and lack of conscious or effective protest. Social obedience and conformity are, in general, rather less prominent in centralised urban than in primitive or in civilised rural communities. The urban community retains and conforms to its own mores, but these are neither so well knit nor so univerally respected as in other types of society: those which concern social and political attitudes have been widely modified by rapid change in living, and are increasingly external to the individual. The primitive human tends in general to conform actively - the civilised urban citizen combines an acquiescent attitude towards the executive with an apathy towards public standards, which expresses itself either in cynicism or in a conviction that 'they' (the legislative group and its executive fringe) cannot be effectively resisted by one's own efforts. Obedience towards the law at the same time lacks the active features we find in societies where law and mores coincide. The delinquent is less and less regarded with personal animosity - the non-conforming individual, even when grossly criminal, has a tinge of heroism considerably stronger than in any previous period of English history when a domestic government was in office: under a foreign or a predominantly class government, such sympathy with Robin Hood-like figures was present, but it very seldom extended so widely among classes who had something to lose from public disorder. The individual cannot test the leadership qualities of rulers - since the executive protects them from comparisons - so treats them increasingly along the characteristic lines of thought which we find reserved for out-groups: in hostile or friendly stereotypes, as an alien 'they' upon whom the individual is dependent for elementary needs, but for whom no moral respect need be entertained.

Acquiescence in delinquent policies is in part a reflection of this sense of impotence. The individual is addressed as an individual, and in isolation, by the entire sales and enforcement organisation. Unless overwhelmingly menaced by the proposed policy, and even when so menaced, the individual lacks the personal and cultural energy to differ. In wartime, part of this acquiescence is the acceptance of the official interpretation of the war: the citizen both agrees to acquiesce, and agrees to blame the public enemy for what has occurred. Once this has taken place, often after a particular event which fixes the projection against the enemy, the stimulus-effect of war becomes apparent - the group-feeling of the nation, the sense of purpose and

leadership, the release of crisis-anxiety in actual war, all tend to make rejection of the commitment more and more difficult. [9] It may persist through hardship and even despite certain defeat: the acquiescence once secured gains force with the progress of events. How far it can be presumed upon by the legislators will depend on the extent to which the war situation has been created before actual hostilities begin: Nazi Germany secured it by the entire repertoire of political tyranny, to the point at which even tacit disapproval of delinquent actions was minimal, before the outbreak of the Second World War. In Britain, the public which accepted the atomic bomb in 1945 would have been less likely to accept it in 1940, and would have withheld its support from any form of indiscriminate warfare in 1935 by a large majority.

(1) **Kimball Young**, *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1946), p.340.

(2) **J.Halliday**, *Lancet*, 10 August 1946.

(3) A Gallup Poll in May 1941 showed only a 53%-38% majority in favour of indiscriminate bombing as a reprisal - these figures showed a strong positive correlation between experience of air raids and disapproval of reprisals. (Reported, *News Chronicle*, 2 May 1941.)

(4) Impressive evidence on this point is provided by the quotations collected by Catlin, et al. (G.Catlin, V.Brittain and S.Hodges, *Above All Nations* (Gollancz, London, 1945)).

(5) **A.T.Harris**, *Bomber Offensive* (Collins, London, 1947).

(6) **G.L.Fahey and M.M.Mintz** in *J.S.Gray's Psychology in Human Affairs* (McGraw Hill, New York, 1946).

(7) **F.T.Prince**, *Soldiers Bathing*.

(8) **Albert Camus.**

(9) 'Most men...came to accept military life with reservations. Others found adjustment impossible, and, in spite of preinduction psychiatric examination, demonstrated traits of maladjustment necessitating their release, or, if they revolted too belligerently, commitment to a penal institution or mental hospital.' - **G.L.Fahey and M.M.Mintz** (1946) op.cit.

THE WILL TO POWER

From Reason of State to Reason of the Heart

I do not need to enlarge upon the proneness of human beings to fall under the spell of myths - beliefs which, however illusory, succeed in evoking a powerful response in the consciousness of large numbers swayed by a common impulse. The tale of human history is littered with the whited bones of the victims of such myths. My present purpose is to draw attention to one such myth alive today.

The 20th of April 1989 was the centenary of the birth of Adolf Hitler. '*Whatever else may be said*,' wrote an American journalist in *The Washington Post* [1], '*Hitler's career testifies to two lasting truths. One is that great men - including those whose magnitude lies in their evildoing - do, in fact, shape history. That is a hard truth for our age, with its egalitarian prejudices.*" The writer continued, '*What we need - and will only get if mankind is 'lucky' - is competing titans of more benevolent vision and spirit to arise to battle the evildoer and, after much bloodshed, manage the restoration of civility. That,*" he concluded, '*was the accomplishment of Churchill and Roosevelt, themselves comparable testimony to the Great Man theory of history.*'

Despite the contradictions within such a belief, this particular myth has been so instilled into Western thought with paralysing repetitiveness by the all-powerful media since 1945, that it still constitutes a main obstacle to the building of a world sane and safe enough for our children to live in. The myth is built on the premise that Hitler, though evil, was a great man; that the 'competing titans of more benevolent vision' were Roosevelt, responsible with Truman for Hiroshima's annihilation, and Churchill, responsible for the obliteration of Dresden; while the other 'competing titan', Josef

Stalin, Hitler's only rival in mass murder, is conveniently overlooked. This appears not in the avowedly reactionary Press, but in liberalism's most eminent organs. Nor is the author a contemporary of Machiavelli or even of Carlyle. He is writing after the holocausts of two world wars, the nuclear arms race, the ongoing legacy of nuclear power, the threat of a rampant industrialism to our global home, and the near total collapse of traditional European religious values, all of them no less attributable to our 'luck' in producing in every generation 'testimony to the Great Man theory of history'.

What is a great man? As we consult the historical record, it is difficult not to succumb to despair in reading of the endless barbarities inflicted by human beings - be they great men or no - on those weaker than themselves. What observation could be more inept than the supposition that 'luck' is necessary to ensure our deliverance from our sufferings by the arrival of a benevolent great man? Can any thinking person still be ignorant of Lord Acton's dictum, *'All power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely'*, or his aphorism, *'Great men are almost always bad men'*? Even more pertinent is Tolstoy's summation of the status of Napoleon in history: *'For us there is no greatness where there is not simplicity or goodness or justice.'*

The 'great man' can only be elevated to his 'greatness' by the active support or acquiescence of those who put him there and by their obedience keep him there. In his person he represents the violation of the principle of equality by all involved, the rulers and executioners, and also to some degree those who obey. 1989 was not only the centenary of Adolf Hitler; it was also the bicentenary of the French Revolution, whose enormous world-wide influence arose from its success in placing equality irremovably in the centre of the political stage. Unfortunately, this achievement was grossly disfigured by the victims' resort to cruel violence in their turn - violence which produced two more 'great men', the tyrants Robespierre and Napoleon. Nevertheless, the sowing of the seeds of equality, the principle of which lies at the heart of the great religions of the world, had immense significance for the poor and oppressed everywhere. Those who advocate inequality - none more so than the 'free-market' enthusiasts of the moment - quite logically also advocate freedom to compete for greater wealth and power for themselves. This competition results - as it must - in a hierarchical society in which those at the top of the pyramid, the 'great men' of history, then develop - again, quite logically - the Machiavellian theory that any measures, including immoral ones, are justified to protect their unjust and therefore always precarious position. Thus is born Reason of State: the doctrine that Might is Right.

Such a belief when acted upon gives rise to evil, in that it engenders false hero worship combined with injurious self-abasement and the exculpation of responsiblity, which is shifted by subject citizens on to the shoulders of scapegoats. In a word, it is highly undemocratic. People can live together in this way - but not for long. Just as competition - the scramble for power - produces the rulers, the one or the few at the pinnacle of the pyramid, so it must also produce a pariah group of some kind, the

despised or rejected, at the base. Indeed, this group, provided it submits and is passively resigned to its fate, is vital to the precarious stability of the whole. It acts as a kind of lightning conductor for all the higher groups as they jostle for position and power - seething with envy, fear of falling, status anxiety, frustration, ambition, greed, arrogance, resentment - who can at any rate unite in thanking their lucky stars that they are not as others are, viz people of the pariah group. The difficulty remains, however, of shedding their feelings of guilt over their privileged and unjust position. The commonest and certainly the easiest way of escaping that is by persuading themselves that the victims have deserved their fate; hence the near universality of the well-known phenomenon of blaming the victim. In order to put flesh on the skeleton of theory, I shall attempt briefly to illustrate my argument from three very different groups: first, the English landless poor, among whom I myself grew up; second, the groups whose identity derives from the colour attributed to them; and third, the victims of notoriously hideous persecution by the Gentiles of Europe, the Jews, who now in their turn are persecuting the Arabs of Palestine.

I grew up among the working class of South West Lancashire, once, although no longer, the industrial workshop of the world. If, as children, we were admonished, one of the most dire threats commonly in use was the rhetorical question: 'Do you want to end your days in the workhouse?' - so great was the fear still evoked by the mere name of that notorious Poor Law institution. The workhouse was the Establishment's answer to what was diagnosed as 'the pauper problem'. In the 14th century the bubonic plague - the Black Death - so denuded the number of workers that many landowners found it more profitable to convert from arable to sheep farming, which benefited not least the owners of the Church lands, whose wealth was to constitute an irresistible temptation to that rapacious and cruel tyrant, Henry VIII. The monasteries were suppressed, and Church lands confiscated and redistributed to cement the loyalty of the wealthier barons. The predictable result was an increase in migrant workers and beggars. But the social dislocation and suffering of peasants and craftsmen by the agricultural revolution of the 16th century was as nothing compared with that occasioned by the scale of land enclosures associated with the approach of the industrial revolution of the 18th century. Vast numbers were deprived of all access to the land and of their rights of tillage under feudalism. The labourers' families, unable to compete with the new machines in spinning and weaving, found themselves herded together as 'hands' in the new urban factories. The methods used to effect this vast upheaval and its concomitant destruction of a centuries-old way of life were fraud, intimidation, violence and a barbaric penal system.

In order to keep costs to a minimum, to 'keep the rates down' - an objective always dear to the possessing classes - they sought to enforce a distinction between the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving' poor, between those loyally subservient to their masters and those with self-respect and courage to resist exploitation. The mediaeval

principle, laborare est orare (to work is to pray), became a cruel parody of the harshness of agrarian poverty. Learned academics propounded the theory of the invisible regulatory hand of unimpeded market forces, and the logical impossibility of improving the lot of the worker by intervention in those market forces, either by government legislation or by workers' combination, as the earliest attempts at trade union organisation were known.

At last the simple common sense of the farmer and traveller, William Cobbett, cut through all the hypocritical cant about Nature's iron-law of wages with the simple question: *'What is a pauper?'* and he answered himself: *'A pauper is a very poor man.'* *'What causes poverty?'* he asked, and *'What is the connection between poverty and riches?'* And he answered imperishably: *'The great corrective of the insolence of riches is to be found in tracing them back to their source; ie to the labour of the poor. This is the source of all riches; for, if the labourer received at all times, the full value of his labour, no profit could arise from it to any other person. All the profit would remain with himself, and no one would be puffed up into riches.'*

Even to the present day, however, the shadow of the principle of 'less eligibility' still haunts English Poor Law. For the workhouse, so dreaded by the poor, rendered charity despicable, brought canting religion into contempt, separated the sexes lest they bred on the rates, and doled out a gruel so thin that Dickens' Oliver Twist, asking for more, is never likely to be forgotten.

The second and extreme form of the pariah group, further than which man's institutionalised inhumanity to man cannot go, is that of chattel slavery, in which one person is legally permitted to own another. Guilt here, unconscious or no, is so enormous that abuse of the victim goes to extreme lengths: 'idle', 'feckless', 'lying', 'dirty', 'thieving', 'stupid', etc. Slavery was officially abolished in the USA in 1865, and the civil rights struggle of the 20th century has completely transformed the status of the Negro; yet inevitably something of its evil legacy still persists. I recall an educated middle-class English woman in Charlottesville, Virginia, casually telling me: *Niggers smell* . Pursuing Cobbett's simple but stubborn logic, we may pose the question: *'What is a coloured person?'* (Of course, all persons are coloured, and no formula is acceptable. Does 'member of an ethnic group' really remove the sting of pejorative discrimination?)

Throughout the world the vast majority of such people are very poor, and those areas where colour prejudice has played a crucial role in determining the degree of exploitation coincide very largely with the areas of European imperial rule in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The rulers of Europe, having completed the subjugation of their own peoples with the Renaissance and the subsequent scientific revolution, turned their attention to the sphere of colonial conquest. With the aid of the new knowledge, the invention of the ship's compass, advances in the manufacture and application to war of gunpowder, and the wealth of the Spanish silver mines, overseas

domination rapidly extended the forces of imperialism to Asia and Latin America. Racial prejudice, cruelty and hatred born of rivalry and greed were aggravated by the guilt engendered from the new possibilities of exploitation. Unacknowledged unconscious guilt, self-hatred and hatred of one's victims give rise to the oldest forms of rationalisation and self-deception, intimately associated with the false religious belief that seeks to justify the ordering of human relations on the basis of inequality.

The truth is that the will to domination, if not met with an appropriate therapeutic response, knows no limits, is without finite resting place and will feed upon itself as it spreads. Bishop Trevor Huddleston [2], writing of the destruction of Sophiatown, Johannesburg, by the South African government, gives eloquent expression to this analysis:

You have been moved to Meadowlands today. Where will you be moved to tomorrow? When white Johannesburg once more creeps up to your doorstep and you in turn become a threat to its peace and its security, what will happen? Where does the process stop? It never stops in South Africa. There is no rest, no permanance, no future you can be sure of: for domination is an insatiable hunger. It is never satisfied, for it is never certain of itself. It can never rest, for it never knows its own final end or purpose.

This is a succinct definition of false religious belief: its lack of a true eschatological base. And therefore it is not surprising that sooner or later the consequences are seen in violent and cruel convulsions, whether it be the massacre at Sharpeville, the great European wars of our time, or the great Revolutions of France or Russia, the models of so many others. Some are of the Left, some of the Right, some are 'liberatory', some are repressive, but all in common set the example of yet more bloodshed and hatred, generating undying bitterness and indignation. The time to take preventative action is clearly when the seeds are being sown. Sometimes provocation is naked and callousness seemingly beyond shaming. I was once sent the following advertisement, from the *New York Times* [3] It was apparently routine; I never heard of any public protest. It ran across three columns: *'No other plant site in the world can match Puerto Rico's incentives for profit. In Puerto Rico industrialists enjoy the unique advantage of paying no taxes, federal or local, on corporate income..."eager, productive workers" have a productivity level among the world's highest. As against the US mainland average of $3.36, they return an average of $4.03 in value for every dollar of wages earned. And there are even greater 'advantages'. These most productive of workers are also among the worst paid. "On the US mainland you have to contend with an average industrial hourly wage of $5.02. Compare that with the Puerto Rican average of $2.69..."'* So far from causing embarrassment or shame, these facts are trumpeted forth joyously to the many who presumably have ears to hear.

Finally, I come to the case of the Nazis' special victims, those marked down for pitiless, systematic extermination to the last child, woman and man, the Jews. This group through its long history was made up in large majority of the very poor, but at the same time its contributions in the realm of the arts, both creative and healing, in science and religion, even occasionally in wealth and political power, exceeded that of any other group of comparable size. The anti-semitism which suddenly erupted in central Europe about 1880 and which was to lead to such horrifying consequences in the 20th century, has never been fully understood. At first people attributed it to an atavistic resurrection of the hatred of the Jew in the Middle Ages; racists insisted it was part of the ancient conflict between Europe and Asia, Europeans fearing for the 'purity' of the Aryan race. But Jews have been Europeans for over a millenium, while European morals have been ineradicably semitised, so to speak, by Christianity. Most probably the explanation lies in the emancipation of the Jews in the events of 1848, which may well have acted as a disturbance of the lightning conductor at the bottom.

In 1862 Wilhelm Marr, an obscure Hamburg journalist, published Der Sieg des Judenthums uber das Germanthum (The Conquest of Germany by the Jews), a sensational pamphlet which enjoyed only an evanescent literary excitement. But in 1879 political agitation spread with sudden fury over the whole of Germany, the secret source of which was Prince Bismarck himself. In Russia the assassination in 1881 of Alexander II by a tiny group of Nihilist intellectuals was followed by a fury of autocratic reaction, leading to scenes of mob ferocity against the Jews unparalleled since the massacres following the Black Death. In May 1882, the May Laws were directly instigated by the Tsar himself, creating fresh ghettos within the Jewish settlement. These laws were pitilessly applied under the influence of Pobedonostsev, procurator of the Holy Synod, who twenty years later succeeded in excommunicating Tolstoy himself. In France, too, the venomous hysteria aroused by the Dreyfus case at the turn of the century testified to the morbid pathology of the climate of anti-semite opinion. Of course, anti-semitism was not the only factor symptomatic of morbidity. My point is that already in the years preceding 1914 ample evidence exists that the European continent as a whole was beginning to lose control, or even much understanding, of the conflicts seething below the cultural and political surface.

When the First World War erupted, the indiscriminate wholesale massacre of human beings, in which for four years the mesmerised public of all the combatants acquiesced, set an appalling example of human degeneracy with effects corruptive of humanity world-wide. But it was in Germany, which had suffered the humiliation of military defeat, that it remained for a further twist of torment to be added to the already explosive inherited tensions. The immense human losses, the economic depression, galloping inflation, mass unemployment, the closing of the safety valve of emigration to the USA by the McCarran Act, the embittered nationalism - all these proved to be the seed-bed of Nazism. The hatreds and fears engendered demanded a clearly

distinguishable group as a lightning conductor whereby the frustrations and venom, the envy and need for scapegoats, of the groups just above the weakest and most persecuted could find release. Since pigmentation was not available as a ready-made device for this purpose, the Nazi demagogues found in the traditional 'Christian' scapegoat, the Jews, an effective substitute. In the absence of a yellow face, the insulted and injured were forced to wear a yellow patch, the star of David.

Heinrich Mann from Lubeck may not be among the greatest of European novelists[4] but I know of no one who has more sharply diagnosed the social psychology of political reaction, with insight merciless yet without bitterness, than Mann in his novel, *Der Untertan*[5] published early in 1914. Buck, a liberal survivor of the 1848 revolt, a veteran campaigner, describes the special type of person represented by Dr Hessling, the paper manufacturer. There are in all periods many thousands such; but what renders him a peculiarly novel type is *'his bragging manner, the pugnacity of a would-be personality, the determination to have his own way, cost what it may, even or perhaps especially when it is others who have to pay the price; those who think differently, he calls the countries' enemies, though they may be two thirds of the nation...A romantic prostration before a master, who lends to his subjects just enough of his power to hold down still smaller men.'* When Hessling had been a lower third schoolboy, he had once abandoned his usual careful prudence to bully one weaker than himself (a pariah in fact) to the plaudits of the crowd of onlookers: *'Wie wohl man sich fuhlte bei geteilter Verantwortlichkeit und einem Schuldbeweusstsein, das kollektiv war!'* (How good one feels about shared responsibility and a collective guilt-consciousness!)

Mann had understood that if an aspirant to leadership could represent for the multitude his own and their frustration, self-hatred and need for a scapegoat, the less ashamed would they themselves feel and the more popular the leader would be: violent, domineering, fawning, vain, bullying, according to circumstance. *'Then it may transpire that a new type may spread across the land, one who may see in harshness and oppression not the sad transition to humane conditions, but the meaning of life itself. Weak and peaceable by nature, he struggles to be a man of iron, because he imagines Bismarck was such a one!'* In 1914 Margaret Thatcher was not even conceived, but a perceptive and prophetic artist like Mann could catch the 'iron lady' to a T.

Mann's theme of the menace of the would-be fuhrer-untertan also anticipates the dramatic masterpiece and parable of Max Frisch, Andorra.[6] Indeed, the slogan, *'lieber tot als untertan'* (better dead than underdog) parrotted four times altogether by the soldier as he bullies and threatens the young apprentice in Andorra, echoes eerily the fascism parodied by Mann and linked in anticipation with the 'better dead than red' of the extreme American Right. The slogan, heavy with menace, is far from mindless; it is doubly false. Those who repeat such catch-phrases are the last people to risk their

lives selflessly, themselves the classical embodiment of the servile untertan in the presence of Power whom they profess to despise. Mann's image of Hesslinger picking himself up out of the muddy puddle to stand obsequiously erect before his revered Kaiser on horseback - the Emperor who called on his soldiers to shoot their own fathers if he so commanded them - should live as long as Dickens' satirical figures live.

Mann's brilliant insights and great courage - he left himself only hours to spare before escaping from the Third Reich - were not his only qualities. He was heir to and indebted to the sociologist, Marx, and the psychologist, Freud. The foremost cultural innovation of post-Renaissance Europe was the application of scientific method to problems hitherto defined in purely religious, political or economic terms. This resulted in the birth of sociology in the eighteenth century and of psychology, more especially psychoanalysis, at the end of the nineteenth. From these twin developments there were to emerge the most important cultural critiques of Europe's capitalist-dominated industrial world outlook. The authors of this two-pronged cultural onslaught were of course Marx and Freud - both German Jews. Usually ethnic origins of scholars and thinkers are largely irrelevant; but it is ironic and, I think, highly significant that two of the most influential thinkers of our time came from Europe's most persecuted group, whose very existence symbolises and draws attention to 'Christian' Europe's deepest shame.

Sigmund Freud grew up in Bohemia in the second half of the 19th century. When he was 12 years old his father, whom he deeply respected, told him how he was walking along the pavement in his home town, when a passer-by shouted at him: '*Jew, get off the pavement*'' and knocked his hat off. '*And what did you do?*''asked the boy. '*I stepped into the gutter and picked up my cap,*'' was the terse reply. The young Sigmund had had a good classical education - he identified emotionally with Hamilcar who made his son, Hannibal, swear to avenge himself on the Romans whose imperial humiliations were deeply resented. And, in fact, Freud's father never did regain the place he had previously held in his son's esteem.

The father of Karl Marx, although descended from a long line of Rabbis, was himself a successful Rhineland lawyer with a good secular education and an enthusiast of the Enlightenment; but he found himself deprived of his livelihood by the anti-Jewish laws of 1816. Nothing daunted, he converted to Lutheranism and kept his position. Of an accommodating nature and politically reticent, he did, however, once speak out in favour of moderate reform against the repressive laws of Frederick William III. This was enough to attract the attention of the Prussian police, however, and Heinrich at once retracted all that he had said. Karl was then sixteen years old - again, an impressionable age, and it would seem that the boy, at least unconsciously, must have borne an emotional scar akin to that of the young Freud.

It was certainly no accident that Marx and Freud, both heirs to a socially and legally inferior status arising from discrimination against a religion - itself the source of the

Christianity at any rate professed by Europeans - turned out to be the most original, influential and damaging critics of that culture. From the outset their immense energies were directed towards understanding and diagnosing their profound alienation from an inherited culture seen to be warped and self-contradictory. Both reacted strongly to injustice, against which they revolted at great personal cost. Both were intensely secular, hostile to all forms of sacerdotalism, atheistic; neither was intellectually inclined easily to tolerate or forgive; both had a strong will to power. And both left Western culture as a whole bearing permanent marks of their damaging critiques. The very fierceness of the rejection by so many of dialectical materialism and of psycho-analysis testifies to their enduring critical efficacy.

Marx was right to turn his back on Hegel's raucous nationalism, but in invoking by his materialist dialectic a perpetual class war to be resolved only by a workers' dictatorship, his proclaimed goal of equality in a classless society receded ever further into a blood-stained future. If only the gentle Heinrich von Kleist had not been unjustly and unkindly rebuffed by Goethe and tragically neglected by his generation, Marx might conceivably have learned his mistake from a reading of Michael Kohlhaas. For Kleist, like the great artist he was, demonstrated conclusively that the struggle to obtain justice through force corrupts by its very nature the victim as it has already corrupted the oppressor. The sword of righteousness defeats itself and, following by that desperate path, we are left ultimately without hope.

Freud, although like Marx claiming to be scientific in method, concerns himself primarily with the inner person rather than external conditions. His revolution is a silent one of the spirit, eschewing all force or even political commitment. Psychoanalysis advocates glasnost, openness, non-concealment. It is not afraid to confront the pain of responding to the invitation to lay all one's cards on the table. It adopts the injunction, thought to emanate from the gods, inscribed in the temple of Delphi: Know thyself! It agrees with St John of the Gospels that the truth will of itself make you free. It is at the same time ruthless in its exposure of the arts of self-deception to which a warped, self-pitying ego will resort to protect its self-esteem. A curious paradox remains unresolved, however, at the heart of the Freudian diagnosis. The inner dynamics of repression and resistance, whereby the patient's ego protects his or her vanity and moral weakness, necessitates a lengthy and painful re-education. This is the task of reason, yet reason unaided by love (evoked in the transference stage of therapy) is not adequate to its task. It is to the power of love that Freud appeals to enable the patient to get free from the original subservient dependency 'love' of the child for the parent, and to attain the spontaneous, autonomous love of the mature adult. And yet with Freud this process of liberation remains esoteric and elitist. He had no confidence that the power of love might prove strong enough to overcome the instinctual predisposition to aggression in the common run of humanity. Freud's values derive from his metaphysical positivism, if not ethically entirely neutral, yet leaving the 'cured' patient

more likely than not still in bondage to the materialist values of the culture out of which illness emerged, still without the courage and determination to reject and resist materialism. Freud, like Marx, remains to the end a child of the Enlightenment. If he is not as explicitly coercive as Marx is, Freud's philosophy has severe metaphysical limitations, offering us no grounds for hope. The vision that humanity could and must turn its sword into a ploughshare, was not his.

This essay began by reference to the theory notoriously associated with the name of Machiavelli, who, in contrast to traditional church teaching that all alike were equally morally responsible, their duties and rights being correlative, taught that those in office and possessed of power were thereby exempt from moral obligations mandatory upon their subjects: the interest of the State transcended all other interests - salus populi suprema lex (the welfare of the people is the highest law). The will to power, with its concomitant aids of duplicity, hypocrisy, cunning, deceit, though by no means novel, found itself licensed to run free - and this was something new. Boundless energies were unleashed, and new undreamt-of power was made available through the untrammelled inquisitiveness of experimental science; Europe was set to devote itself for four succeeding centuries to the accumulation of wealth and power. Backed by such wealth, armed with a certificate of immunity from the traditional checks on naked power, represented by the Gelasian theory of the two swords, the secular and the spiritual, the secular rulers knew no limits to their ever expanding dominion. Their very names constitute a litany of dazzling brilliance to the millions who worshipped and, at the same time, suffered under the consequences of unbridled power: Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell, who in the name of reform dispossessed the monasteries, hanged the abbots and plundered the Church lands; Louis XIV, Richelieu, Frederick the 'Great', Napoleon, Bismarck, Hitler, Franco, Stalin, and thus it continued in a variety of forms.

And, finally, as a postscript, comes the analysis that, our fate being determined by 'great men', it only remains for us to learn to discriminate between the good great men and the bad great men and hope that we will be 'lucky' enough to be rescued by the good ones from the evil consequences of the bad ones.

Even in this godless century we can surely do better than that. For have we not still ears wherewith to hear?

And Jesus *'saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.'* [7]

No one could make it clearer than that. Or consider the following dialogue between Tolstoy and a Rabbi as they were together bent over the fifth chapter of St Matthew's

Gospel. On almost every sentence the Rabbi commented that it was not original, that it was to be found either in the Old Testament or in the Talmud. Then they came to the 39th verse:

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Tolstoy asked if there was any comparable verse in the Jewish canon, the Old Testament or the Talmud, and received the answer: *'No, it is not there. But tell me whether the Christians fulfil this law.'*

From the beginning of the world - if it had a beginning - bad people have ruled over good people. Short of the realisation of the kingdom of God on earth, nothing can alter that inexorable fact. But through our pretending that it is otherwise, that there is even virtue in itself in the will to power over others, and that those imbued with that urge to dominate are actually entitled thereby to our respect, admiration and obedience, we have come very close to permitting the forces of evil to destroy us all. The hour is late, but then the hour is always late; and it is still not too late to change the balance between the forces of good and evil by ourselves speaking and honouring the truth. For there are no other means by which the forces of power can be driven back than the unity and strength of the capacity to give selfless love. Few have stated and lived this truth more clearly than Dean Richard Church (1815-1890), who very reluctantly left his living in a small country parish close to where I live, to become the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, and who subsequently refused Gladstone's offer of the Archbishopric of Canterbury. To find a parallel refusal of such glittering preferment would not be easy. Dean Church spoke his truth thus:

What are all reforms, remedies, restorations, victories of truth, but protests of a minority - efforts, clogged and incomplete, of the good and brave, just enough in their own day to stop instant ruin, the appointed means to save what is to be saved, but in themselves failure? Good men work and suffer, and bad men enjoy their labours and spoil them; a step is made in advance - evil rolled back and kept in check for a while, only to return perhaps the stronger. But thus, and thus only, is truth passed on and the world preserved from utter corruption.

In the five centuries that have elapsed since the Renaissance we have seen some progress, it is true, but that little has been far outweighed by the drastic regress attributable to an enormous increase in the technical abilities of rulers to manipulate and mislead public opinion in the interests of their own abjectly tolerated power. It is my belief that posterity will certainly not see the European wars of the 20th century - not even the second one - as a simple struggle between good and evil. Total power is a total evil; but no power, whatever its religious or political content, is good power. What is good is the absence of power, which makes possible the growth of love. The

European wars of our time, which caused so much unnecessary human agony, were the cumulative result of western humanity having lost its true spiritual way as exemplified by the murdered German pacifist, Hans Paasch, by the young Austrian third order Franciscan, Franz Jagerstatter, by Sophie and Hans Scholl, barely more than children but beloved for evermore.

(1) **Edwin M Yoder Jr.** Reprinted in *Guardian Weekly* (7 May 1989).

(2) *Naught for Your Comfort* (Collins, 1956).

(3) 12 May 1976.

(4) He was the brother of Thomas Mann.

(5) The Subject, in the sense of a person of low status.

(6) 1961.

(7) **Mark** X, 42-44.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

War and Delinquency is part of a chapter entitled *'War and the Corps D'Elite'* in *Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State*, published by Routledge and Kegan Paul in 1950. Alex Comfort wrote frequently for the Peace Pledge Union in the 1940s, before pursuing an academic career in the USA. He has recently returned to Britain. *The Will to Power* was originally read as a paper at a conference in September 1989 in Ascora, Switzerland, organised by the European section of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. Ronald Sampson is the author of *Tolstoy on the Causes of War,* No.15 in the SIN series, and of the pacifist minor classic, *Society Without the State.* Both are available from the Peace Pledge Union.