

THE VIOLENT NATURE OF SYSTEM IDEOLOGY  
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.**THESIS** My thesis is stated in three propositions. 1) In modern industrialized nations, various organizational system ideologies, regardless of apparent differences have similar roots.

2) These system ideologies contain an aspect of violence which is inherent and legitimated in the organization.

3) The violence is both mentally destructive, and at times physically destructive to humans.

. The advent of capitalism about 1500 AD was momentous in human history. Emerging with capitalism was the social philosophy of liberalism, which expressed the values and beliefs of the middle class. The most radical aspect of the capitalist era was the transformation of an agrarian and commercial capitalist economy into an industrial capitalist economy. The logic underlying liberal society is that human beings, functioning individually, can achieve both a theoretical and a practical mastery of the natural and social universes (Rossides 1978 4).

. In western societies, there arose a confidence in the ability of humans to understand and control the forces of nature, including human nature, without either God or society. The confidence in the power of human reason to permeate all worldly phenomena reached its apex during the Enlightenment. From that time, thinking about mankind and society was increasingly future directed. "The Golden Age of the human race is not behind us but before us. It lies in the perfection of the social order. Our ancestors never saw it. Our children will one day arrive there. It is for us to clear the way" Saint-Simon 1964 13).

**CAPITALISM & LIBERALISM**

. The social development of capitalism can be divided in two phases, which political science terms early, and late liberalism. The first period, from the late Middle

Ages and climaxing in the late 18th and early 19th Centuries was based on Newtonian cosmology (Rossides 1978 5). Nature was being rethought in the light of Newtonian mechanics and the needs of a business civilization. Doctrines of natural rights in politics and of laissez faire economics were mainstream thoughts. Ideas of individual liberty, political-legal equality, private property, contract, profit, and the self-equilibrating exchange economy were being institutionalized in many western countries.

. The second period of liberalism emerged in the late 1800's with the onrush of industrialism, and it gradually replaced the doctrines of natural rights and laissez faire of early liberalism. Western societies now became more concerned with the stability, vitality and morality of industrial corporate capitalism. Liberal theorists believed that social harmony and progress had to be developed through institutional management. It was recognized that intelligent state action was necessary to counteract the ills and cleavages of economic and social life. In short, means of control were formed as devices to channel western society by separating all social functions and placing them in a value hierarchy. There was a movement from individual liberalism to corporate liberalism, elevating economic values over social values which is the root of contemporary organizational ideology.

. In western societies, the elevation of economics over other forms of human functions results in the emphasis on the monetary aspect of survival. Organizations in the United States now place the dollar at top priority, because without money, they see little chance for further existence or maintenance of power. Social systems were first designed with people in mind whether in corporations, government, religious, or military organizations. As the dollar became the

goal, people as the purported goal fell lower and lower in the list of priorities until they are no longer of consequence.

**BUREAUCRACY** The elevation of economics over other forms of human endeavor denotes the ideological character of bureaucratic organizations. By labelling the main intertests of bureaucracies, this becomes more clearly efficiency and progress. Efficiency, meaning economic efficiency is desired so the organization may operate to sustain its existence optimally. Progress as material growth is desired because without growth, the only alternative is assumed to be deterioration. Efficiency and progress are each seen as a moral dichotomy. The myth is that either there is efficiency or ineptness either progress or decadence. When these dichotomies are put to the people as a choice, the result is automatic. Efficiency and progress are hailed as the saviors of mankind.

. By the organizational definition bureaucracy is assumed to progress according to its efficiency. Weber (1956 126) noted the trend toward increasing bureaucracy as one of its central manifestations. For Marx, nationalization and centralization were the inevitable consequences of the rise of the industrial bourgeoisie. "Independent or loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class interest, one frontier, and one customs-tariff (Marx 1958 38).

. This is the nationalization of society, which "... not only .. indicates the central association of the emerging industrial order with the developing nation-state. It also suggests the movement of centralization that was taking place in all European societies, breaking down the insulation between .. regions and classes of society, and tending to a leveling .. in which all individuals became uniformly subject to a cen-

tralized state" (Kumar 1978 90).

. This becomes apparent as social systems increasingly become institutionalized and formalized. Bureaucracy slowly at first, then more rapidly replaces the individual's primary group and primary social relations. Social goals not relevant to the bureaucratic system are denied.

. It seems mandatory for large organized societies to develop and maintain a large bureaucratic structure to promote economic efficiency and power. "This is an important factor in the complex of forces of which the politically dominant classes avail themselves to secure their dominion" (Michels 1915 188). Bureaucratic systems in western society are often justified on the ground that without such a structure, chaos would result, leading to the death of millions, while nations would dissolve, and survivors would be forced to live in a feudal system. This would be regression instead of progress. From a social perspective, this statement translates to say that the world would no longer be economically and bureaucratically efficient.

#### POWER & VIOLENCE

. Bureaucracy is a man-made construct, but is very real in its consequences for people. Power resides in this abstraction. It has the backing of the rule makers and the rule followers. Power entails the means of acquiring legitimacy. "Might creates its own legitimation and is not merely willingly 'exchanged' for it. Legitimacy .. may be born of a tacit alliance and trade-off between the criminal and his victim. The victim conceals his impotence by acknowledging the legitimacy of the claims made on him, while the criminal conceals his brutality by forcing his victim to acknowledge the legitimacy of his claims" (Gouldner 1970 293). Concepts of legitimacy and their justifications are based on the assumption that if a state is to exist, the dominated must obey the authority claimed by the powers that be. Weber

names three "pure" types of authority: traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational (1954-99). Though these three types exist in complex combinations, we are interested mainly in domination by legality. As Weber notes, regardless of the type of authority, "...obedience is determined by highly robust motives of fear and hope - fear of the vengeance of magical powers or of the power holder; and hope for reward in this world or in the beyond - and by interests of the most varied sort" (1956-79). In the case of the rational bureaucracy this hierarchical system will maintain itself mainly through fear. Fear is a component of the non-rational part of man, which means that man is dominated in both the rational-logical and in the non-rational-emotional sphere.

. The ideology in the bureaucratic process contains various methods by which the power elite try to shape the beliefs, attitudes, and opinions of the people. The power elite grows at the expense of destroying local society and its strata (Mills 1956-71). In this process the power elite tries to create, disseminate, and reinforce a set of attitudes and values that assure everyone that this is "the best of all possible worlds." "Free and open discussion are claimed to be the hallmark of the process, but past experience shows that its leaders will utilize deceit and violence in order to combat individuals or organizations which espouse attitudes and opinions that threaten the power and privileges of the ruling class" (Domhoff 1979-169). Ideological processes are necessary because public opinion does not automatically agree with the opinions of the power elite.

. This ideological process of bureaucracies turns two-way social processes into one-way nonsocial processes of control, and becomes a kind of mind control. The power elite purchase techniques of social control by advertizing, and technology. The masses are forced to adjust, usually as a result of

psychic manipulation, which is violence with respect to mind. The psychological and social leveling effect reduces individual thinking ability and generates individual passivity, as it destroys creativity and other human qualities. An appropriate slogan for bureaucracies is: "Without regard to persons."

. This leveling effect indicates that violence goes beyond the physical, observable stage. Destruction of human lives and private property can be defined as violence, and so may other events which are not readily seen. The narrowing of a person's human-ness, creation of fear, or the destruction of an individual's ability to interact comfortably among his peers may be deemed violent, in that certain tools, such as mass media, are used to create psychic confusion by transmitting conflicting values and knowledge. The mind has been manipulated by replacing social and personal values with commodity values and external values. Social knowledge is destroyed or weakened by this transmission of externally directed knowledge, and a sort of mind control in a process of mental violence has occurred.

. The significance of this distinction between physical violence and mental violence is important to an analysis of the ideology of bureaucratic systems. In bureaucratic systems, there has been a shift from the physical violence of the past to a more covert violence of mind shaping and mind control. The systems support an ideology of non-violence, and there is an "apparent" reduction in physical violence in this century according to the media, but this is merely a ploy to distract one from the increasing mental destruction. This ploy indicates the techniques used to force the minds of the masses to accept whatever is directed at them.

. Violence forces a reductionism and a dehumanization of people. This may be accomplished in one of three ways. 1) Buy individuals with offers of material gain. 2)

Convert people through propagan-  
da or other influences. 3) Force  
people to accept the bureaucratic  
ideology. Thus, violence is the  
undergirding force behind the  
myths of efficiency and progress.

. Studies of individual and organ-  
izational ideological interplay at  
this level are scarce by reason of  
the system ideologies. This raises  
problems regarding the basis of  
social order, individual egoism,  
political structures, and bureau-  
cratic organizations. These prob-  
lems are of legitimate theoretical  
concern at the social psychologic-  
al level and at the cultural socio-  
logical level.

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JONES & HARVEY:

(Continued from page 134 )

relation, the situation still is am-  
biguous. Except to listeners and  
followers, the band constitutes an  
ambivalent frame of reference for  
patrons, while the presence of  
varied patron types constitutes an  
ambivalent frame of reference for  
the band. Keynoting is a trial  
and error process in which the  
band tries for a common denomina-  
tor of tempo, volume, lyrical con-  
tent, style, and technical compe-  
tence, which will redirect diverse  
focus among crowd members toward  
one focal point, reducing ambiva-  
lence.

. Ambivalence is resolved when  
highly diverse patron focus is re-  
directed toward one focal point -  
the band. The audience becomes  
an emergent reference group for  
those crowd members experiencing  
ambivalence. Audience over time  
becomes a patron type when pre-  
disposed to be entertained. As  
the audience expands, it becomes  
more normative in character, elic-  
iting conformity from some remain-  
ing patrons, and excluding non-  
conforming others. The result is  
the legitimation of the band and  
the maintenance of on-stage focus.

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