THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUTHORITARIAN STATE APPARATUS FROM RATIONAL SOCIAL INTERRELATIONSHIPS*

By Wilhelm Reich, M.D.

The second world war has again confirmed what had been general knowledge: The political reactionary differs fundamentally from the true democrat in his attitude toward state power. This attitude permits an objective evaluation of the social character of a person, no matter to what political party he may belong. According to this criterion, there are true democrats among the Fascists and true Fascists among the party Democrats. Like character structure, this attitude toward state power permeates all political groups. Here, too, a black-and-white presentation, that is, a mechanical correlation of attitude and political party, is wrong and sociologically inadmissible.

The reactionary, typically, demands that the power of the state be above society; he demands the "idea of the state," which leads in a straight line to dictatorial absolutism, whether this be represented in state form by a royal, ministerial or openly fascist absolutism. The true democrat, who recognizes natural work democracy to be the natural basis of international and national cooperation, strives to make the authoritarian handling of the difficulties of social living superfluous by eliminating their social causes. This requires a thorough discussion of the development of the authoritarian state and its rational function. It is senseless and fruitless to fight an irrational social institution without asking oneself how it is possible that this institution, in spite of its irrationalism, manages to continue its existence, and even to appear necessary. We saw what made the Russian state apparatus necessary, and it was not difficult to see that, in spite of all its irrationalism, it had the rational function of keeping Russian society together and of leading it, after the masses had failed in their social task.

We will condemn as irrational the authoritarian strictness of a mother toward her neurotic child. We know that this strictness makes the child ill but we cannot overlook the fact—and this is the cardinal point in the fight against authoritarian education—that a child, once made neurotic and living in a neurotic family situation, can be made to do things, say, go to school, only by authoritarian means. That is, the mother's authoritarian strictness has also a rational aspect, even though limited and conditional. It is not fundamentally rational. We shall have to admit this conditional rational function if we are ever to convince the educator, who adheres to the authoritarian principle as a makeshift measure, that the authoritarian principle can be eliminated by the prevention of neurotic illness in the children.

The conditional rational function is also present in the authoritarian state, as painful as it is to admit this fact and as dangerous as this statement could become in the hands of a mystical dictator. He might say, "You see, even the work democrats, all for freedom as they are, admit the necessity and rationality of authoritarian leadership." But we know that what makes authoritarian leadership necessary is the irrational

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character structure of the human masses. This is the only way to a comprehension of dictatorship, and this comprehension is the only hope of ever eliminating it from human life. For by recognizing the irrationality in the structure of the masses we gain the social basis to fight it and with it dictatorship, a basis, furthermore, which is objective and not illusory. Strengthening of state power is always the result of disturbances in social living. This corresponds to the moralistic-authoritarian method of always tackling difficulties at the surface. It never removes the evil but merely pushes it into the background from which it later breaks out with all the more violence. If there is no other way of dealing with rape murders than the execution of the rape murderer, one takes recourse to execution. This is the authoritarian way. In work democracy, the problem is how one could prevent the development of rape murderers. Only when we understand the necessity of execution and simultaneously condemn it does the problem of prevention become clear. Clearly, the prevention of social evils is one of the principal means of bringing about the withering away of the authoritarian state. The moralistic authoritarian principle will continue to function to the extent to which it cannot be replaced by the methods of self-regulation. This applies to the state as well as to all fields of social living.

The authoritarian state is essentially, though not exclusively, a suppressive apparatus. It is, at the same time, a sum of social interrelationships which have become autonomous. Originally, the state was identical with society; in the course of thousands of years, it alienated itself more and more from society and became a power above and against society.

As long as there was a social organization which was not disrupted by serious inner conflicts, such as the clan society, there was no need for any special power to hold this social organism together. If, however, society is split up by all kinds of conflicts, it needs a power which prevents its disintegration. The splitting up of German society into many inimical political parties was an important factor in the rise of fascism. Its rapid rise shows clearly that the social unity promised by the idea of the state was more important to the German masses than their party ideology. This does not change the fact that political ideologies cannot eliminate the inner disintegration of society, be that ideology that of the authoritarian state or that of diverse parties. The Fascists were not alone in emphasizing the state; they only did so better and more vigorously than the social-democratic government, the Communists or the Liberais. And for just this reason fascism was victorious. It is the political disintegration of society, then, which creates the state idea, and conversely, the state idea which creates social disintegration. It is a vicious circle with no way out unless one goes to the roots of the disintegration as well as of the state idea and reduces both to a common denominator. As we already know, this common denominator is the irrational character structure of the masses. It was never comprehended by any of the political parties. It was one of the greatest errors in evaluating dictatorship to say that the dictator forces himself on society against its own will. In reality, every dictator in history was nothing but the accentuation of already existing state ideas which he had only to exaggerate in order to gain power.

Engels long ago pointed out the double function, rational and irrational, of the state:

The state is therefore by no means a power imposed on society from the outside; just as little is it “the reality of the moral idea,” “the image and reality of reason,” as Hegel asserted. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insolu-
ble contradiction with itself, that it is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, may not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power apparently standing above society becomes necessary, whose purpose is to moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of "order"; and this power arising out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly separating itself from it, is the state.

This sociological clarification of the state concept by the manufacturer and German sociologist Engels has invalidated all philosophies of the state which, in one way or another, go back to the abstract and metaphysical state idea of Plato. Engels' theory of the state does not reduce the state apparatus to higher values or nationalist mysticism, but gives a simple picture of the double nature of the state. In clarifying the social basis of the state apparatus and the contradiction between state and society, this theory gives the wise statesman of the caliber of, say, a Masaryk or a Roosevelt, as well as every working individual, the means of understanding the dissociation of society and the resulting necessity of a state apparatus, and, with that, the means of eliminating it.

Let us try to understand the double nature of the state by means of a simple illustration from its development: In the early beginnings of civilization, the social tasks of work and living together were simple. Correspondingly, the interpersonal relationships were simple. These facts can be studied in the still existing remains of this old simple civilization. Let us take the well-known organization of the Trobrianders. They have a natural economy, that is, a use economy and hardly any market economy. One clan, say, catches fish, another grows fruit. One has an excess of fish, the other of fruit; therefore, they exchange fish for fruit. Their production is very simple.

Besides the economic there is a definite familial interpersonal relationship. Since sexual pairing is exogamous, the Trobri-and youth of one clan establishes sexual relationships with another clan. If by a social interpersonal relationship we mean any relationship which serves the gratification of a basic biological need we have to assign the sexual relationships a full function on a par with the economic relationships. The more complex the needs become, and the more the division of labor progresses, the less is it possible for the individual working member of the society to fulfill his manifold duties. For example:

Let us transplant our Trobrianders to any region of Europe or Asia. Such an assumption is admissible, for all nations have originated from tribes, and the tribes from groups of clans. Similarly, market economy everywhere developed out of natural economy. Let us assume that in such a community of say, 200 or 300 people, the need arises of establishing contact with another small community. The need is still small, there is only one person among the 200 who wants to communicate with somebody in another community. He gets on his horse and rides to the other place to transmit his message. The need for social contact with other communities gradually grows. Up to now, every individual was his own postman; but now the rider is asked to take along a number of letters. The communities grow, and now hundreds of people in one community wish to correspond with hundreds of people in other communities. With the development of commerce, letter-writing has ceased to be a rare curiosity. The transmission of letters becomes a vitally necessary task which can no longer be managed in the old fashion. The transmission of letters has ceased. The community deliberates and decides to employ a "letter-carrier." It relieves one of its members of all other work, guarantees his living expenses and charges him with
the transportation of all letters for the community. This first letter-carrier is the human embodiment of the interpersonal relationship of writing and transmitting letters. In this manner, a social organ is established which as yet does nothing but carry out the demand of all the letter-writers. Our letter-carrier is a primitive type of social administrator, whose vitally necessary work is still strictly in the service of the social community.

Let us assume that the primitive communities develop into towns of, say, 50,000. One letter-carrier is no longer sufficient, but 100 are needed. These 100 letter-carriers need an administration of their own in the person of a chief letter-carrier. He comes from the ranks of the plain letter-carriers and is relieved of his job in order to take over the job of arranging the work of the 100 letter-carriers in the most advantageous manner. He does as yet not "supervise" or command. He is not distinguished from the community of letter-carriers. All he does is facilitate their work by arranging a time table and carrier routes. In order to simplify the whole procedure, he makes postage stamps.

In this manner, a simple, vitally necessary function of society has become autonomous. "The post" has become an apparatus of society, growing out of society for the purpose of better coordination; it does not yet assume the position of a power above society.

How is it possible for such an administrative social apparatus to become a suppressive power apparatus? It does not do so on the basis of its original function. True, the administrative apparatus maintains these social functions, but gradually it develops characteristics other than its vitally necessary activity. Let us assume that the conditions of authoritarian patriarchy have already developed in our community. For example, there are already privileged families which have developed from the original tribal chiefs. By the accumulation of dowries, they have developed a twofold power: first, the power of wealth, and second, the power of forbidding their own children sexual intercourse with the less well-to-do strata of society. These two power functions always go hand in hand in the development of economic and sexual slavery. The increasingly powerful authoritarian patriarch wishes to prevent other, weaker members of society from maintaining contact with other communities. He wishes to prevent his daughters from exchanging love letters with men of their choice; he has an interest in limiting them to certain well-to-do men. His interests of sexual and economic suppression now begin to utilize those social functions which originally were in the hands of the total society. On the basis of his growing influence, our patriarch will see to it that the post no longer transmits all letters, without discrimination, but excludes certain letters, such as love letters and certain business letters. In order to fulfil this novel function, the post assigns to one letter-carrier the function of postal censorship. The social administration of letter transportation thus acquires a second function which now sets it apart from the total society as an authoritarian apparatus. This is the first step in the development of an authoritarian state apparatus from a social administrative apparatus. True, the letter-carriers still transmit letters, but now they also poke their noses into them and begin to decree who is allowed to write letters and what may be written. To this, the social community reacts either with toleration or with protest. The first chasm in the social community has developed, whether one calls it "class difference" or whatnot. It is not a matter of words here, but of the distinction between vitally necessary social functions and functions which restrict freedom. Now, the way is open to any kind of arbitrary action. For example, the Jesuits may utilize the postal censorship for their own purposes, or the secret police
may use it to increase its power.

This simplified example applies to the whole complicated machinery of presentday society. It applies to our banking system, the police and school system, to the distribution of goods, and certainly to the international representation of society. We can gain an orientation in the social chaos if, in evaluating any given state function, we ask ourselves consistently: what in it corresponds to its original function of executing the demands of society, and what to the later acquired function of suppressing the freedom of the members of society? The police, originally, had the task of protecting the community from murder and robbery. To that extent, they still fulful a useful function of society. When the police, however, presumes to prohibit harmless games in private homes, or to tell people whether or not they may receive members of the other sex in their homes, etc., then we have the picture of a tyrannical authoritarian state power, a state power above society and against it.

The elimination of those functions of social administration which are above and against society is an inherent tendency of work democracy. The natural work-democratic process tolerates no administrative functions save those which serve the coherence of society and the facilitation of its vital functions. This makes it clear that one cannot be mechanistically “for” or “against” the “state.” One has to make the distinctions which we discussed above. It is clear also that the state apparatus must again become the executive organ of society if it operates in the fulfilment of its natural work functions in the interest of society as a whole. With that, however, it ceases to be “state apparatus,” and loses precisely those characteristics which alienate it from society, which put it above and against society and thus make it the germ cell of authoritarian dictatorships. This process represents the genuine “withering away of the state.” What withers away is only its irrational functions. The rational functions are vitally necessary and continue.

This distinction makes it possible to scrutinize every vitally necessary administrative function in time to determine whether it is beginning to assume a position above and against society, that is, turning into a new authoritarian state instrument. As long as it serves society it is part of it, is necessary and belongs in the realm of vitally necessary work. If, however, it presumes to be the master and tyrant of society, if it presumes autonomous power, the state apparatus becomes the deadly enemy of society and must be treated accordingly.

It goes without saying that none of the modern and complex social organisms could exist without an administrative apparatus. It is equally clear that the tendency to autonomous degeneration cannot be eradicated simply. Here is a vast field of study for the sociologist and social psychologist. But once the authoritarian state is abolished, the task remains of preventing a repetition of the authoritarian autonomy of administrations. Since this autonomy is the immediate result of the incapacity of the working masses to govern their own lives, it is clear that the problem of the authoritarian state cannot be handled without tackling the problem of human structure, and vice versa.

From this point, we arrive in a direct line to the question of so-called state capitalism, a phenomenon which was unknown in the 19th century and which has developed only since the first world war.

**THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF STATE CAPITALISM**

In Russia until about the end of the first world war and in the United States until the world economic crisis about 1930, the relationships between private capitalism and state were simple. To Lenin and his contemporaries, the “capitalist state” was simply the power instrument of the “class of private capitalists.” In Russian revolu-
tionary films, the simplicity of this relationship was represented somewhat like this:

The private owner of a factory tries to lower wages while the workers ask for an increase. The capitalist refuses to raise the wages, whereupon the workers strike. The capitalist telephones the commissioner of police and asks him to "establish order." The police commissioner here appears as the state instrument of the capitalist, thus demonstrating the fact that the state is a "state of capitalists": he sends the police, has the "ringleaders" arrested, the workers are without leadership, begin to starve and return to work. The capitalist has won out. The situation calls for better and stricter organization of the working class.

In America, state and capitalism were in a similar relationship, at least in the eyes of the sociologist who took the side of the workers. The tremendous social changes of the 20s, however, made things less simple. Out of the system of private capitalism, social structures developed which were generally termed "state-capitalistic." Russia had replaced the private capitalist by the unlimited power of the state. No matter what terms were applied, it was clear that in the correct sociological terms of Marx state capitalism had taken the place of private capitalism. The concept of capitalism is not determined by the existence of individual capitalists but by the existence of market economy and wage labor.

As a result of the world economic crisis of 1929 to 1933, social processes which tended in the direction of state capitalism also set in in Germany and America. The state as an organization above society began to assume an autonomy toward the system of private capitalist enterprise; in part it took over functions which previously had been left to the private capitalist, as seen, for example, in the substitution of social security for private charity; in part, it limited the previously uncon-
had promised private capitalism salvation from the revolution, every movement could only become contradictory, incomprehensible and sterile. This explains a great deal of the compulsion which forced the German state apparatus into imperialist war. For within German society there was no rational possibility of bringing about order. The establishment of quiet by way of the police club and the pistol can hardly be called a “solution of social problems.” The “unification of the nation,” in an illusory manner, had succeeded. We have learned to ascribe to processes which are based on illusions an equal if not greater efficacy than to hard reality. One has only to think of the effect of the church hierarchy for thousands of years. Even though not one single actual problem of social living was solved, the illusory unification of the state gave the impression of an achievement. Subsequently, the untenability of such a state solution became clear enough. Society was torn apart more than ever, but, nevertheless, the illusory unification had been sufficient to save German society from formal disintegration for a period of ten years. The factual solution of this problem of disruption was left to other, more fundamental processes.

The function of the state of holding together a disrupted society remains the same whether this state calls itself capitalist or proletarian. What we have to keep in mind is the original intention: The fascist authoritarian state openly adheres to the state idea and with that to the unalterable slave nature of the masses. The proletarian state of Lenin, on the other hand, had the intention of increasingly undermining itself and of establishing self-government. In either case, however, the core of the matter is “state control of production and consumption.”

If we remind ourselves of the common denominator, the incapacity of the working masses for social self-government, we understand better the logic of the development from private capitalism to state capitalism:

In Russia, the working masses were able to overthrow the old Tsarist state apparatus and to substitute a state apparatus from their own ranks. But they were incapable of progressing to self-government and of assuming responsibility themselves.

In other countries, the formally highly organized working masses were incapable of furthering self-government, ideologically proclaimed as it was, through their own organizations and incapable of really assuming it. For this reason, the state apparatus was forced to take over more and more functions which really belonged to the masses. It assumed them in their place, as it were, as for example in Scandinavia and the United States.

As basically different as the state control of social production and consumption may have become in Russia, Germany, Scandinavia or the United States, there is still a common denominator: the incapacity of the masses for social self-government. From this common basis of a state-capitalistic development follows logically and simply the danger of authoritarian dictatorships. It is left to chance whether a state official is a democratic or an authoritarian representative of the state. Seen from the standpoint of the structure and ideology of the working masses, there is not a single concrete guarantee that state capitalism does not develop into dictatorship. Just for this reason is the emphasis on the role of human character structure and the shifting of the responsibility from man to the processes of love, work and knowledge of such decisive significance in the struggle for true democracy and social self-regulation.

As painful as the fact may be, we are confronted with a human structure as it has developed in thousands of years of mechanistic civilization which expresses itself in social helplessness and a longing for a Führer. The German and the Russian
state apparatus originated in old despotisms. Thus the characterological serfdom of the masses was extremely pronounced in Germany and Russia. In either case, the revolution, with the unerring aim of irrational logic, led to new despotism. In contrast, the American state apparatus originated from groups of people who had escaped European or Asiatic despotism by fleeing to a young country free of oppressing traditions. Only thus can we understand that up to now no totalitarian state apparatus could develop in America, while in Europe every revolution carried out with the slogan of freedom inevitably led to despotism. This is true of Robespierre as well as of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. The dictators of Europe, who base their power on millions, all come from the suppressed strata. This tragic fact contains more material for social study than the comparatively simple facts of despotism under a Tsar or a Kaiser Wilhelm. The founders of the American revolution had to build their democracy from scratch on foreign soil. The people who achieved this had all been rebels against English despotism. The Russian revolutionaries, on the other hand, had to take over the totality of all the Russians. The Americans could make a fresh start, the Russians were weighed down by all the old things. Whether the Americans will be able to resist the forces of irrationalism or whether they will succumb to them remains to be seen.

I would like to emphasize the fact that it is not a question here of blaming anybody, but merely of describing developments as they take place on the basis of certain given conditions.

These circumstances may also explain why in the United States the attempts to maintain the old democratic ideals and to progress toward true self-government were so much more vigorous than elsewhere. True, there were many failures and inhibitions caused by tradition; nevertheless, the attempts at true democracy had found their place in America, and not in Russia. It is to be hoped that American democracy will realize thoroughly, and in time, that fascism is not a matter of nationality or party and that it will succeed in mastering the tendency to dictatorship in the people themselves.

Let us summarize briefly the connections between mass structure and state form:

The influence of the character structure of the masses determines the state form, no matter whether it expresses itself by passivity or by activity. It is the mass structure which tolerates and actively supports imperialism, which can overthrow despotisms without being able to prevent new despotisms. It is the mass structure which furthers and supports true democratic endeavors when the state operates in that direction. It releases national revolutionary movements when the true international democratic freedom movement fails. It takes refuge in the illusory unity of family, nation and state when democracy fails; but it also carries on the process of love, work and knowledge. Only this mass structure is capable of implanting in itself the true democratic tendencies of a state administration, by taking over, piece by piece, the administration "above it" and by learning to execute its function through its own work organizations. It does not matter whether the change from state administration to self-government takes place rapidly or gradually; it is better, for everyone concerned, if it takes place organically and without bloodshed. This is possible only if the representatives of the state above society are fully aware of the fact that they are nothing but ex-
Executive organs of working human society; that they are *make-shift* executive organs, necessitated by the ignorance and misery in which millions of people live; that, strictly speaking, their task is that of good educators, whose aim it is to make independent adults of children. A society striving for true democracy should never lose sight of the principle that it is the task of the state to make itself progressively unnecessary, just as an educator becomes unnecessary after having done his job with the child. Only then will bloodshed become unnecessary; only to the extent to which the state clearly makes itself superfluous is *organic* work-democratic development possible; on the other hand, to the extent to which the state tends to perpetuate itself, forgetting its educational task, it provokes human society to remind it that it owes its existence to an emergency and that it has to disappear with that emergency. The responsibility—in the good sense of the word—rests with the state as well as the masses. The state must not only further the strongest longings for freedom in the working masses, it has also the task of adding to it the *capacity for freedom*. If it fails to do so, if it suppresses the longing for freedom or even misuses it and obstructs the tendency toward self-government, it proves its fascist character. Then it must be held accountable for all the damages and perils caused by its dereliction of duty.
Projeto Arte Org
Redescobrindo e reinterpretando W. Reich

Caro Leitor
Infelizmente, no que se refere a orgonomia, seguir os passos de Wilhelm Reich e de sua equipe de investigadores é uma questão bastante difícil, polêmica e contraditória, cheia de diferentes interpretações que mais confundem do que ajudam. Por isto, nós decidimos trabalhar com o material bibliográfico presente nos microfilmes (Wilhelm Reich Collected Works Microfilms) em forma de PDF, disponibilizados por Eva Reich que já se encontra circulado pela internet, e que abarca o desenvolvimento da orgonomia de 1941 a 1957.

Dividimos este “material” de acordo com as revistas publicadas pelo instituto de orgonomia do qual o Reich era o diretor.
01- International Journal of Sex Economy and Orgone Research (1942-1945).
02- Orgone Energy Bulletin (1949-1953)
03- CORE Cosmic Orgone Engineering (1954-1956)

E logo dividimos estas revistas de acordo com seus artigos, apresentando-os de forma separada (em PDF), o que facilita a organizá-los por assunto ou temas. Assim, cada qual pode seguir o rumo de suas leituras de acordo com os temas de seu interesse. Todo o material estará disponível em inglês na nuvem e poderá ser acessado a partir de nossas páginas Web.

Sendo que nosso intuito aqui é simplesmente divulgar a orgonomia, e as questões que a ela se refere, de acordo com o próprio Reich e seus colaboradores diretos relativos e restritos ao tempo e momento do próprio Reich. Quanto ao caminho e as postulações de cada um destes colaboradores depois da morte de Reich, já é uma questão que extrapola nossas possibilidades e nossos interesses. Sendo que aqui somente podemos ser responsáveis por nós mesmos e com muitas restrições.

Alguns destes artigos, de acordo com nossas possibilidades e interesse, já estamos traduzindo. Não somos tradutores especializados e, portanto, pedimos a sua compreensão para possíveis erros que venham a encontrar.
Em nome da comunidade Arte Org.

Textos sobre a praga emocional e sociedade.
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