

# Revolution and Evolution

## Part 3 of 3

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This morning I propose to continue with the subject “Evolution and Revolution.” We have had, so far, two tapes upon this subject, and I found that it has developed into a very complex picture concerning the general principle of governance in the field covered by the terms ‘politics’, ‘economics’, and ‘sociology’—including the religious field of interest. I shall proceed by giving first a brief abstract of the general presentment heretofore, and proceed from there.

We presented, first of all, the two conceptions of *evolution* and *revolution* as not two socially different or contrasting methods of bringing about change in a society, but rather as two complementary principles governing the development of all social forms. Revolution, we showed as being an orientation to the rotation of a wheel or circle, and evolution as indicated by a vector line indicating a directedness; and that the actual concrete process was a combination of these two which produced a complex resultant which could be represented by certain curves of which the principle and most valuable one appears to be the sine curve which oscillates symmetrically above a straight line as employed in coordinate geometry.

And then we introduced as another principle, the psychological factor in the form of the various type psychologies of individuals. It was recognized as a principle that not all men are organized upon the same kind of psychological principle, but rather that there is a variation in types. In other words, difference of class, caste, or type is a fact in nature. In our day, the difference is represented more in terms of psychological types than in the earlier conceptions of innate differences of class and caste. And what is implied here involves not simply a difference in the vertical sense of superior and inferior in degree of development, but also a difference in the horizontal sense where the relative stature of the different individuals may be the same, but the accentuation of psychological function is variable.

We then introduced the two poles that are at present in social development, namely, that between individualism and collectivism, and showed how these were connected with differences in psychological type. We showed how it can have a moderate or an extreme form: the moderate form being presented in the dichotomy between individualism and socialism; the extreme form between anarchism and communism. And we showed that these are not to be identified with an orientation to selfish self-interest on one side and an altruistic interest upon the other, but that there are individualistic orientations that are highly altruistic, namely, that of, for example, the Great Buddha, who was oriented to compassion; so that the difference is not a moral one essentially, but a psychological one; that both the individualist and the collectivist have a relative orientation to good and evil on the part of each, but there is a difference in the form of the positive and the negative sides. Then we pointed out that the issue is not between

capitalism and collectivism,<sup>1</sup> as is so commonly viewed today, but rather, as I have stated, between individualism and collectivism. We pointed out that our complex society, whether collectivistic or individualistic, is necessarily capitalistic in the sense that collection of resources for the securing of necessary tools is employed in both cases; and that capitalism inheres in the employment of the use of energy for the collecting of tools for later production on a more adequate basis; and that this principle is currently employed both by the collective societies and the more individualistic or free societies.

And then we noted also that in the collectivistic societies there was a tendency to unite under the political entity not only the political, military, and police powers, but also to incorporate in the same entity money power; whereas, in the more individualistic societies, the political, military power was exercised by one entity, whereas, the money power was exercised by another entity so that there was more or less of a balance or self corrective relationship there established and that the result would be that more freedom was retained than would be the case where all the power was exercised by one entity. The issue, it was noted, was also to be represented by the contrast of the two terms *freedom*, accentuated on one side, and *regimentation* upon the other, that those who are orientated to reason tended to value freedom more; whereas, those who were orientated to feeling tended towards regimentation because under regimentation there was an enhancement of security.

Now, we also noted the fact that in any large society there is a principle of selection involved in the choosing of the individuals who exert the actual management of the society, whether political or economic. And we contrasted, then, the principle of selection as applied in a democratic society in which large numbers directly selected the individuals that governed, on one side, and the principle of selection that exists in large corporations where the owners selected a board of directors who in turn selected the individuals who actually manage the corporation. And we then noted that there were psychological factors that entered into the picture relative to these different methods of selection. There is the fact of crowd psychology that is involved directly where large groups are involved, but hardly present when the group is sufficiently small. We also noted the fact that there was a tendency to select a different psychological type when the method of selection was that of the corporate form, on one hand, as contrasted to the direct selection by the electorate in the political form of selection as we know it in this country. We thus have a problem that belongs to psychology...with a sense of moral responsibility contrasting to a sense of selfishness, on the other hand, as is so often the popular view.<sup>2</sup> We brought out the point that the corporate means of selection tended to

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<sup>1</sup> In the audio recording, "Revolution and Evolution," part 2, Wolff referred to a distinction between capitalism and socialism in this context.

<sup>2</sup> There is a short gap in this audio recording, but the missing text can be filled in by referring to the above recording. It is as follows:

I hope I have made clear the fact that the difference between a collectivistic orientation and an individualistic orientation is not in the form of a strong moral sense, in one case, and the absence of a moral sense in the other, but rather it is a difference in the psychological orientation. It does, however, involve a difference in approach to the moral problem, and this is a point of considerable importance. In the collectivistic orientation, morality is conceived as the dictum of the collectivity, which is then imposed upon all individuals, or all members of the society. It is a case where the individual, in seeking to

bring into a position of command a rational thinking type; whereas, the popular form of selection that applied to the political entity, as we know it here, tended to bring into command individuals who are more oriented to the principle of feeling, in the sense of emotionality; and this leads to consequences which we need to take into serious consideration.

This is what we have developed so far. Now we shall proceed into an evaluation as to which type of individual should be in the supreme positions in governance—the individuals, on one hand, who are more feeling or emotion oriented, or those who are more thinking oriented or reason oriented.

Let us consider next certain complications which grow out of the psychology of the crowd. The pioneer in the field of crowd psychology was Le Bon, who did his work many years ago.<sup>3</sup> We are concerned only with certain of his determinations. These are that when people come together in large numbers, they seem to come under a psychological influence that is collective, something that is the result of many human beings coming together; and that the effect of this is that the average individual in the crowd has his rational factors depressed and the emotional factors are accentuated. The result being that a crowd is, or tends to be, rationally irresponsible and is subject to contagion in terms of feeling. It can be manipulated, by those who have the appropriate power, either in a direction of violent and criminal action, or even in the direction, with the proper influence, of great self-immolation, of great self-sacrifice. It can be operated both ways; but the rational intelligence of the individual in a crowd is below that of the average individual in that crowd taken by himself. In fact, highly intelligent individuals under the influence of crowd psychology can behave in a way that is entirely contrary to their normal attitude as individuals. In fact, it takes a peculiar kind of self-control to resist this kind of influence. So much is this a case, that the person who wishes to keep his judgment clear and cool should avoid the coming into contact with a crowd situation. This means that where you have the psychological crowd, which while it is usually based upon close association of a large number of individuals, is also capable of manifesting

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determine what is the right course for him, would not deal with the moral problem as an individual directly, but, rather, would seek what the collective judgment in the situation was, and then would regard conformance with that judgment as good and non-conformance as immoral or evil. Many lawyers have this orientation to morality—but not all. Those who do have this orientation would say there is no difference between legal conduct and morally good conduct. Goodness is conformity with the law. There is the opposed position which grows out of individual morality particularly, namely, to the effect that morality grows out of a philosophic approach to the problem of what is good conduct and what is bad conduct directly. It is thus viewed as primarily a philosophical problem or a spiritual problem, and the individualist would turn to the philosopher or to the spiritual leader—men like Buddha, Shankara, and Christ, or men like Plato and Immanuel Kant—to get the necessary aid for working out a resolution of a problem of conduct. One is something determined by the collectivity in its collective action which is then dictated by the collectivity to the individual. In the other case, we have individual reflection upon the problem and the working out of some solution. The difference, then, is a difference of approach to a moral problem, but not the difference of a moral orientation in one case, and an absence of a moral orientation in the other case. This point should be stressed, as there is a good deal of confusion with respect to this problem.

<sup>3</sup> Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd* (Atlanta, Ga.: Cherokee Publishing Co., 1982).

with an electorate which is physically separated, individual from individual, but come under a collective psychological influence. This means that you have a great increase of irresponsibility and of affect even in either a positive or negative direction.

Now, there are individuals who have the capacity to manipulate crowds. They can do it by the appropriate use of the word. Hitler, for example, is an instance of one who had this capacity in extraordinary degree. Men who have this capacity can play with crowds to produce results which they seek, and yet be, themselves, unaffected by it; they can remain coolly calculating. Now, the kind of word that is effective with the crowd is that of the orator—the employment of ideas that happen to have a strong affect value, arousing prejudice, on one hand, or self-immolation, upon the other; but, there is in this situation an absence of cool judgment, except on the part of the few strong individuals who know what is going on and can insulate themselves from this crowd influence. The mathematical, scientific mind is completely helpless in the manipulating of such collective entities. The political orator, who is successful, is a man who has the capacity to influence, in major degree, the emotions of the crowd. Now, the crowd need not be, as Le Bon pointed out, a body of people in physical juxtaposition; electoral masses, even though separated physically, he noted, can be essentially thinking or motivated as a crowd is motivated. In handling a crowd, irrelevant factors may be used in major degree: the waving of the hand, the shaking of many hands, the kissing of babies, the putting on of the paraphernalia belonging normally to Indian chiefs—all of which is totally irrelevant as to political, economic, or other issues that are being considered—can have an enormous effect in manipulating the will of the individual elector.

Now, in simple societies, such as those we had when there was a very limited technology, where hand labor was the main factor in producing a living, and battle was by instruments that were essentially merely extensions of the arm, such as the spear and the club, manipulation of the crowd could become a factor of importance. This would be on the level of tribal governments; and a tribe could be induced to sacrifice itself in battle with another tribe and thus gain more territory for itself and survive at the price of the non-survival or enslavement of the defeated tribe. But in our case, we are dealing with an advanced technology based upon a highly sophisticated science; and here we're dealing with factors that can be controlled and manipulated only by the minds which understand the principles involved. The mathematical, scientific, technological mind is the only master of the machine. The political mind, the poet's mind, the orator's mind is not a master of the machine. The latter can manipulate the emotional human being but cannot control the machine; only this technical, mathematical, scientific, technological mind can master this machine. But, we today are in a position of a monumental dependence upon this technological machine. Our capacity to produce food itself, in quantities that are sufficient to support present population, is dependent upon the mastery of this technological machine. The result is that if the kind of mind that can manipulate the crowd is in the dominant position, it remains true that while it can manage the crowd, it cannot manage the machine. The machine can be managed only by the mind that knows the laws governing the machine; and it is a cool, non-emotional mind, and no other mind can handle it. Under this condition, it is dangerous for the more emotional type of thinking to govern the society because the machine may become a monster that could destroy that society. Remember here I'm using 'the machine' as a symbol of our total complex technology bearing upon all things, inorganic matter and life principles as well.

If you cannot move within the limits that are essential with respect to that machine, the society can destroy itself. This brings us into a situation where the only safety lies in high intelligence in the field of command which is capable of understanding the machine and not only understanding mass man. If the type of mind which is capable of manipulating mass mind is dominant, we may take such action that will lead to our own destruction.

Now, one thing I would like to note here is that the kind of mind that can manage, that understands money, is closer to the mathematical, scientific mind that is master of the machine; whereas, the essentially emotional, political mind is not in that position. If we look at the problems that we are facing now in our present day, there are certain solutions that could be worked out by the mathematical, scientific mind which, however, have little chance of gaining a powerful position in the society. The political kind of mind is dominant, is not a master of the machine, and is in danger of wrecking our society.

Now, this enables us to see why both Plato and Spengler noted that democratic forms of government break down and eventuate in dictatorial forms of government, because the situation becomes so complex and essentially technical that the representatives of the popular mind cannot handle it. It produces a situation that is fraught with very considerable danger. If the cool, mathematical, scientific mind is not in sufficient control, this humanity could be destroyed by the atom bomb itself. Cool thinking can control the atom bomb, but emotion dominated thinking cannot; and it is emotion dominated thinking that manipulates the electorate. This is a very grave situation; one for us to think about seriously.

Let us look further at the question of the type of mind and character which tends to survive in the political situation. This was the question faced by Machiavelli when he made his studies that eventuated in the volume called *The Prince*. A more recent statement has been presented by Raymond Moley in his book *27 Masters of Politics*. Raymond Moley was a professor of politics in Columbia University, but had a position in government as the head of the first brain trust under the administration of F.D. Roosevelt. He knew his subject as a scientist would know it, not as a practicing politician; but he was more capable, in general, of interpreting the politician *per se* than the politician would be himself, and he has put into a nutshell a statement of what the qualities of the man who succeeds in politics tend to be by reason of a principle of selection. I will quote from his book beginning on p. 42:

I have been asked many times by those who know of my long association with Roosevelt: "Is he"—or was he—"sincere?"

When time permitted, I always answered that sincerity, as a quality known to the generality of people, is not fairly applicable to a politician. Or to put it another way, in a category of virtues appropriate to a politician, sincerity occupies a less exalted place than it does among the qualities of a novelist, a teacher or a scientist. And that is in no way damning the politician, for he may exalt virtues such as kindness, understanding and public service far beyond those who sniff at his lack of sincerity.

Perhaps a fairly simple explanation of my meaning can be conveyed by a classical parable written in Plato's *Republic*.

A character in that dialogue describes an underground cave with its mouth open toward the light and, within, a wall facing the light. Inside the cave, and looking toward the wall, are human beings chained so that they cannot turn. From childhood they have seen only the wall and the reflections cast thereupon.

Behind them and toward the mouth of the cave is a fire. Between the imprisoned human beings and the fire men pass with “statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials.”

The objects thus carried are reflected upon the wall—the fire supplies the light. The human beings see the shadows, never the substance. And by manipulation of the objects, those who carry them determine what the enchained human beings conceive to be the reality—the truth.

Roughly translated into the terms of political behavior, the human beings are the public. The carriers of the objects are the politicians, considering not the substance of what they carry but the effect produced upon those who see the shadows.

The politician creates illusions. His words must be selected not because they are the most forceful or descriptive in conveying exact facts and situations, but because they will produce in the minds of hearers or readers the reaction desired by the speaker or writer. What therefore, does sincerity, as we talk this virtue to our children, have to do with the calculations of a politician?

Ultimately, the considerations of a politician are not based upon truth or fact; they are based upon what the public will conceive to be truth or fact.

This produces what is called a “political mind.” It is an adaptation enforced by the necessities of environment and survival, just as is the fur of a polar bear or the coloration of a ground-hog. A sort of natural selection operates in the political environment which promotes the survival and success of minds capable of what some may call dissimulation and others call insincerity.

The classical definition of a political mind has been provided by Bernard Hart in his great work on psychology. He said:

“When a party politician is called upon to consider a new measure, his verdict is largely determined by certain constant systems of ideas and trends of thought, constituting what is generally known as ‘party bias.’ We should describe these systems in our newly acquired terminology as his ‘political complex.’ The complex causes him to take up an attitude toward the proposed measure which is quite independent of any absolute merits which the latter may possess. If we argue with our politician, we shall find that the complex will reinforce in his mind those arguments which support the view of his party, while it will infallibly prevent him from realizing the force of the arguments propounded by the opposite side. Now, it should be observed that the individual himself is probably quite unaware of this

mechanism in his mind. He fondly imagines that his opinion is formed solely by the logical pros and cons of the measure before him. We see, in fact, that not only is his thinking determined by a complex of whose action he is unconscious, but that he believes his thoughts to be the result of other causes which are in reality insufficient and illusory. This latter process of self-deception, in which the individual conceals the real foundation of his thought by a series of adventitious props, is termed ‘rationalization.’”

The author goes on to say:

If this be shocking to those unacquainted of the life of politics I hasten to assure them that the public has developed immunities which measurably serve as a sort of protection.

I realize that Roosevelt himself would and Mrs. Roosevelt probably will deny the foregoing evaluation. That, however, would be a logical extension of my argument. For no real politician would wish his words and judgments to be known as political. To eschew political motives is the first rule of politics.

Frederick the Great wrote a discourse refuting Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. Someone said that Machiavelli, had he been alive, would have heartily approved Frederick’s action in writing the book, because a first consideration in a Prince must be to repudiate the methods by which he actually rules.

To quarrel with this interpretation of a politician, his habits of mind and his motives is to quarrel with human life, and, I may add, with politics as we know it. This suffices to explain the contrast between Roosevelt’s words and actions and the verities and results written in the record.<sup>4</sup>

What is defined here is virtually the perfect negation of intellectual integrity or honesty. From the standpoint of the mathematical, scientific mind, this appears as the very essence of corruption. In fact, a corruption so profound that the incidental events represented by Watergate and large campaign contributions seems trivial in contrast. In fact, one might imagine that such monetary corruptions might afford a case of one negative overcoming another negative, a corruption of one kind being overcome by a corruption of another kind.

Now, it must be pointed out that this statement of Raymond Moley does not mean that every man who aspires to enter into the political field has this Machiavellian corruption. What it says is that only the men that are thus corrupt survive, and the honest idealists lose out most of the time. To be sure, there may be men of such stature that they do survive in the political field because of what they are as a result of their work in other fields, but on average it is this Machiavellian type that succeeds in surviving in the political field. The perfect example of the politician in this Machiavellian sense is Pontius

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<sup>4</sup> Raymond Moley, *27 Masters of Politics* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1949), 42-44.

Pilot. He had satisfied himself, when Christ was brought before him, that there was no fault in this man; and therefore, if he had been a man of intellectual integrity and honor, he would have freed the Christ. But considerations of expediency dictated that he should order Christ's crucifixion. This is a perfect example of the action of the political mind. Nothing could be further from the standards that govern in the mathematical, scientific, technological mind. The problems of management of the technological machine cannot be handled by a Machiavellian attitude. They can be handled only by solid, competent thought and actual mastery of the laws which govern.

Now, what I am leading to is this point: that in a society where the survival of the society depends upon the competent mastery of the machine, it is dangerous to have in the seat of power the Machiavellian type of mind which thinks in essentially a false sense, who thinks in terms of how he can manipulate the voter, not in terms of what is true fact or what is true truth.