

# Political Problem

Part 2 of 2

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This tape will be a continuation of the discussion initiated in the last tape. As it will be remembered by those who are familiar with the preceding tape, we have introduced a discursive analysis of a key sentence in the Declaration of Independence. To bring this matter clearly before our present consciousness, I shall requote that sentence, namely, "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." In the preceding discussion we noted the fact that this was essentially a metaphysical statement, and that therefore the question of how valid the assumption made in the statement was, is one that deserves, and requires even, serious consideration. We noted certain points that stood out as involving assumptions that might even be very questionable. We noted particularly the statement that these truths were regarded as self-evident; second, we discussed the assumption that man was a creation; and third, we discussed at some length the question of equal or equality as applying to man. The discussion of the latter will be continued here. We noted that two notions introduced here are preeminently notions primary to mathematics, namely, the notion of self-evidence and of equal or equality.

After the delivery of the last tape, we had a discussion and one point was raised which deserves our serious attention. This was the point that the Founders of this government used the notion of self-evidence as one asserted only for the signers of the Constitution, in other words, not as a universal principle. Did the signers of the Declaration of Independence mean by the words, "We hold these Truths to be self-evident,..." mean only an assertion of a personal predilection held in common by the signers or did they mean an estimate of a truth that must be recognized by all men if they penetrated into the subject matter sufficiently? I cannot document an answer to this, but my impression from the material contained in the Declaration and from knowledge of the history of the time is that this was a statement of a universal truth and not merely the expression of private predilection. If it had been only private predilection, the only way they had to achieve a right to establish a government along these lines would be the right gained by conducting a successful war, an institution of a course of action and formulation by the principle of force rather than by the principle of logic. As I read the Declaration of Independence and the history of the time, I reached the conclusion that they meant this as a universally valid statement, that this was a statement of truth and of justice that applied to all men and was not merely the statement of the point of view of a few individuals. Whether or not they were in error, my impression is that they meant it as a universal principle and that it was grounded in insight and reason and not something simply which could be effectuated by force and justified alone by reason of the prosecution of a successful war. I read it as an effort to enthrone reason as a higher

principle than the principle of force and as universally valid. The present critique is based upon that assumption.

At this point I wish to make clear the fact that I hold the Founders, especially the best known of the Founders of this country, in high estimation and valuation. I regard their motivation as fundamentally sound, and I think that they constituted as a group a rare galaxy of able men actuated by lofty motivation. But despite all this, whenever anybody whatsoever advances any thesis, that thesis is open to critical evaluation and it may stand or fall as a result of that evaluation; but that in no way involves a criticism of the motivation or intent of the individuals that advanced the thesis. Above all personal valuation there is the question: is the thesis true? I may like the thesis and yet it may be untrue; and the question of whether a thesis is true or not far transcends the attitude of liking or disliking it. Truth may be in some respects uncomfortable in the light of our personal predilections, but, despite those predilections, our first obligation is to the determination of truth in the situation and not to our likes and dislikes.

I maintain that there is no God higher than truth. Beside truth there are other noble qualities such as compassion, justice, and goodness; but if compassion, justice, and goodness are founded upon a misconception or a falsity, these qualities will fail of a noble and righteous outcome. True compassion, true justice, and true goodness can only be founded upon a basis of truth. Therefore, the question of whether a thesis advanced in support of any cause is true or not is the most fundamental question of all. Build upon truth and all these other qualities will be added.

Let us return to the consideration of equality. We have found that equality can be understood in two senses as it is employed in mathematics. In the first case, it can mean a complete duplication of one entity with respect to another so that all entities whatsoever would be exact duplications of each other when they are said to be equal. In the second case, equality can mean that in some particular feature, such as that of cardinality, is equal in the case of two or more entities while other features are different in character. Empirically it is entirely evident that not all humans, and much less all creatures, are equal in the sense of being precise duplications of each other. There remains the possibility that all humans, and indeed all creatures, may be in some particular respect equal.

Now, there is a respect in which we can say that all men are equal because they are composed of the substance of which the cosmos is composed, but this equality would apply not only to all men but it would apply also to all creatures, animate and inanimate—from the rock, through the vegetable, the animal, into the human, and beyond the human. But that is no basis for determining who should vote in an election or not. Should we extend the suffrage because of this equality to all animals, vegetables, and rocks? Obviously this suggestion is absurd.

Again, we might say that all humans are equal in that biologically they all are based upon that substance which is called protoplasm, but this, in turn, would include both the animal and vegetable kingdoms. It would not define an equality peculiar to the human stage alone. The biological determination of what is man defines a certain range within the limits of a species, but involving a degree of variation within that species; and because of that variation, we would not have a true equality among all men.

Again, if we consider the more important domain of the psychical capacities of man, we find, empirically, that these capacities are not equally developed, so that they are the same in all men. Some men are intellectually more competent than others; other men, and women, are more competent in the domain of aesthetic appreciation and production, as in the case of the artists; some are physically stronger than others; some have greater depths of insight than others; and so on through the list of all psychical qualities. To be sure, the original statement in the Declaration was to the effect that men were born equal, not that they remained equal; but is the potential the same? I will refer to a statement by Dr. Carl G. Jung that the psychical organization of the individual as represented in the discussion of psychological types was different even in infancy, that two or more children, or infants rather, exhibit difference in attitude and in the potential of the functions: one introverted, the other extraverted; one tending toward thought, one tending towards feeling; and so on. We thus find the presence of difference as an empiric determination. The question would arise, is any one of these functions inherently superior to the others? We cannot say that. We could have superiority in a specific quality in one case and of another quality in another case, and yet the ultimate sum could be identical. But this is an assumption that I find in no way justified from our empiric observation. Man as we know him in his multiplicity shows a multitude of differences.

I should like, now, to advance a counter doctrine. This doctrine is that all men, and indeed all creatures, are unique, are potentially unique and indispensable; that if any individual entity were to be destroyed the whole would suffer a loss; that if the part which any given individual plays in the whole were simply that of a cotter pin, nonetheless, it would be an indispensable and unique cotter pin; or again, if a given individual were to unfold his potential so that he became a star, it would be a unique and indispensable star. At any point in time, one individual might have unfolded the capacity to function as a cotter pin and another as a star; and between this, equality could not be predicated, but uniqueness and value could be predicated. On the other hand, if all creatures were merely equal, they would be no more than interchangeable parts, and, therefore, of little value; for if one interchangeable part is lost, there are millions of others to take its place. There would be no uniqueness and no special value.

The practical importance of this discussion of the subject of equality lies in this fact: that if it is assumed that all men are equal—whereas, in point of fact, they are different, both in a vertical and horizontal sense—then the laws that are instituted by men and enforced by men who function as the government can be such as to release the resources of certain types of individual and restrict the capacities of other types of individual, and with that, justice goes out the window. We have, then, placed every man through the torture of the Procrustean bed. Those who do not fit the bed are either pulled out to fit it or have their legs cut off so that they fit it, and only those who exactly fit the bed would profit by the legislation. The reference to the Procrustean bed is based upon the classical myth of Procrustes, who was a monster who had a castle on a line of travel, and travelers who arrived at his place for hospitality were welcomed and they were given a bed to sleep in. If they were shorter than the bed, Procrustes, who was a giant, pulled them out, lengthened them so that they fit the bed, and if they were longer than the bed, he cut off their legs so that they fit. And that has become a symbol of all cases of forced regimentation and compulsion to conformity. And this is the basic fact connected with

democracy that led Plato to despise it; and I, along with Plato, also despise it. To be sure, dictatorships and monarchies, as we have known them historically, are even worse.

The simple fact is that the problem of the organization of a truly just government has not yet been resolved. Suggestions have been given to us of which the *Republic* of Plato is perhaps the best known, but the facts in connection with this suggestion of Plato have not been well understood, for Bertrand Russell once even suggested that the idea of Plato was exemplified by the government of Soviet Russia, which implies that Bertrand Russell failed to see the essence of Plato's suggestion; for, those who were set aside and made to assume the responsibility of government in Plato's conception were the Illuminati, men who had reached a point where governmental position was no longer an object of personal ambition, but men who had found values far transcending that and who then, as a matter of duty, sheer obligation, would accept the onerous task of government—most emphatically, not as an office sought. What we see in the Marxist states, as exemplified by Russia and China, is more like the diametric opposite of the Platonic conception. Whereas Plato gave ultimate authority to the Illuminati, those who are oriented to the Light, the governments in these Marxist states are an expression of demonic rule, a principle of coercion and subjugation until the free spirit of man is completely crushed.

There are two other points to be considered in connection with the subject of the equality or inequality of men. One is this: that inequality is not to be understood exclusively in the vertical sense such as that of superior and inferior; it is also inequality in the horizontal sense where individuals who in the sum total have attained something like the same altitude, yet differ in their modes of expression and function. This would be illustrated by the difference between the sexes. We may assume that in the sum total of all the members of any species, including man, that in some essential sense the altitude of each sex, in the scale of evolution, is equal, whatever the variation in individual cases may be. The difference in this case would be called horizontal. The male and the female are not equal to each other, but we may say that they are of equal modulus, an expression derived from mathematics.

Secondly, there is the question as to how difference in stature in the essential sense or in an absolute sense can be determined if such exists. We have noted heretofore that there is as an empiric fact, differences in the abilities of men with respect to certain qualities, such as those who are intellectually superior, those who are superior in the aesthetic domain, in the domain of administration or management, in the domain of general strength, in the domain of character, and so on; but this is a comparison in terms of qualities not with respect to absolute stature. There is a criterion for measure of superior and inferior in terms of absolute stature that has been suggested by Dr. Carl G. Jung. His statement is this: that he is superior with respect to others who is most completely conscious and least dominated by unconscious determinants. This is a large subject which would take us into the depths of analytic psychology, but it brings up an important point. We, as human beings, and in fact we could make this statement concerning all creatures, are in part conditioned by what are known as unconscious determinants in the psychical sense. The whole method of conditioning animal creatures in training is based upon this principle. One is conditioned by drives which are autonomous, so far as we can determine; but as man evolves, he becomes more and more

capable to bring these drives under the control of his conscious will; and in the most highly evolved individual this conscious control would tend to become complete. And I would suggest that part of the meaning of the Buddha, the full Buddha, as contrasted to ordinary men is that conscious control has become complete, and the automatic functioning of autonomous elements no longer dominates in any domain of the psychic being. This suggestion, I think, is very valuable, and I would regard it as essentially valid. He who is most conscious, most master of all of the elements in his psychic being, and is least conditioned by affect, inclination, prejudice, predilection, and so forth, that he is most superior as contrasted to those who are more conditioned by the autonomous determinants in their psychical nature.

There is a point that I should like to make in passing, and that is this: that it is a mistake to imagine that Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence, was exclusively oriented to the *demos* portion of the human whole. Both his letters and his life reveal the fact that there was in humanity an authentic *aristoi* and that he believed that the *aristoi* should be sought out to handle the affairs of government. But he was opposed to the false *aristoi*, or aristocracy, that was based alone upon birth in one chosen class. He championed the *aristoi* of a merit and ability, and in this I stand in complete agreement with him.

Let us pass now to the final portion of the critical sentence, the portion which says, "...they are endowed [by their Creator] with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." These qualities or rights may be viewed in two ways: one is that they are rights guaranteed by nature; and second, that they represent an ideal to be striven for and to be guarded by the forms and rules imposed by government. On the question as to whether they are rights inherent in nature, which seems to have been the position taken by the signers of the Declaration of Independence, I find this very questionable indeed. As I look upon nature, I find no such rights recognized in the kingdoms below man. We find, continually, the carnivora among animals denying the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness on the part of the herbivora. Nature does not guarantee any of this in the kingdoms below man, nor in the earliest manifestations of primitive man. It always seems to be a struggle to survive and advance. What does seem to be guaranteed by nature is the right to strive with all the resources that are available to the individual and the group. And so the herbivora strive to avoid capture and frustration by the carnivora to the best of their ability, but nature does not guarantee to them, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They can only strive for it. The ability to strive is all that nature guarantees. So, I do not find this as a group of rights instituted and established by nature; but as an ideal to achieve in the affairs of mankind, I view it as one of the most noble objectives ever proposed by the mind of man. I view it as an objective for which one is justified in putting forth all effort and, if necessary, sacrificing his life in order that it may be achieved. But here man would be going beyond nature; he would be building upon nature a new ideal, a something more lofty, a something that implies the birth of a real morality. It is a transcendence of nature, not a something provided by nature itself. Transcending nature is one of the principle tasks which lies before man; nay, more, I would say it is the great task of man. And by transcending nature, man lifts nature, for as it has been said, nature unaided fails. But the though the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is an unquestionably lofty ideal, it is not an absolute and unconditional group of rights. It does not give to any

individual the right to trespass upon the equal rights of others, and therefore it has this conditioning. But within the limits of this restriction, I would view the rights as unconditioned.

Now, there is an important point connected with particularly the right to liberty as contrasted or as lifted up along with the assertion that all men are equal, or are created equal, and that is this: that if the emphasis is placed upon equality in legislation and general practice—whereas, in fact, men are not equal in their abilities and valuations—then there is a principle of coercion brought to bear that limits the liberty. It has been said that the two primary cornerstones of American theory of government have been the conception of equality and the conception of liberty, but as we watch and as we note the history of the country, there has been a tendency to emphasize one or the other. When the principle of equality is emphasized, then liberty is negated because it denies the differences in stature that men really have. As we have watched the history in this country, we note that there has been a movement tending to emphasize equality and along with it a stultification of liberty. With a sum total of more than 1,300,000 laws, many times contradictory, liberty has been greatly stultified. In my own estimation, the really noble principle is the principle of the emphasis of liberty. That to the maximum possible degree, compatible with the liberty of others, liberty should be emphasized, and this point of view is implicit in the dictum of Thomas Jefferson himself when he said, “That government governs best which governs least.” But that is a far cry from the condition we find now reigning today.