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ANGER AND LEADERSHIP

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The primary response of any subordinated group, whether it be a lower class, or an ethnic group or a "racial" group, to a far more powerful group is fear. This fear, aroused by oppression, threats, rejection, or economic and social deprivations, is generalized so that all relationships of the subordinated group to the dominant group arouse a chronic anxiety in the subordinate, that is a learned anticipation of further rejection or deprivation. This fear and anxiety are realistic responses to the objective danger, power, and threat coming from the rejecting and oppressing group. The fear is adaptive since, within normal limits, it is a technique of survival.

But fear is a painful tension, accompanied by physical discomfort, by inner attacks upon the ego, in the form of shame and loss of self-respect, and by decreased ability to enjoy life. These painful emotions lead automatically, in most people, to a defense against the fear and shame; the defense takes the form of anger, the wish to hit back. Such anger is a counter-phobic reaction, that is to say, a defense against the fear.

This mechanism is well known to all of us. If a reckless driver almost hits and kills us, our first reaction after the reflex fear, is rage at the driver. All men in war are frightened, but their leaders try to stimulate the counterphobic reaction of anger, by emphasizing the hostility and brutality of the men facing them. In the case of severely oppressed groups, the defensive anger may not be shown openly;

it does not lead to counter-attack. It is inhibited, or displaced onto each other, or sublimated, or turned inward upon the individual himself.

Our concern in this essay is the ways in which leaders of groups may direct the defensive anger of the group, say Germans after the First World War, or Jews after the Second World War, or American Negroes during the civil rights movement. Initially our attention will be focused upon several motivational types of leaders, classified into three groups according to their handling of their own anger. But we must recognize from the start that the follower takes the leader as his model in handling anger, as in all other aspects of morality. The follower yields up his conscience and ideals to the leader, and, in a state of hero worship or hero-love, admires whatever the leader does. Thus, as in the case of Hitler, or Stalin, the followers abandoned their views on violence and murder, abdicated as rulers of themselves in terms of conscience, and identified with the murderous wishes of their heroes.

In the case of some types of civil rights leaders and some types of followers, both the leader and this type of follower may be chiefly masochistic. In this case, their basic drives mesh. Among great numbers of youth today, the anger over the state of the world, as they see it has converted into an emotional defense of alienation and chronic emotional depression, the most common defense against anger. The result is often masochistic forms of self-destruction, self-dampening, and self-sacrifice. A leader who himself is strongly masochistic affords these youth a masochistic ideal with which they can identify, thus avoiding the struggle of the ego for life and mastery of reality.

At first approach, one can recognize a range of drives propelling men to seek the position of a leader. They include the desire for mastery, for social status, for public admiration, as well as the drives of exhibitionism, cruelty, the lust for power, the desire for self-sacrifice and at least a score of other conscious and unconscious wishes. Initial order is brought into this diversity when one recognizes that one cannot actually function as a leader unless one has (1) a drive to power (the wish to direct others) and (2) a drive to bear the work and the anxiety which such responsibility for others entails. We shall therefore assume that each of the types of motivation for leadership, to be identified in this essay, includes, in its pattern, the desire for power and the desire, often compulsive, to work unusually hard and to bear unusually complex and heavy responsibilities.

No actual leader will conform precisely to a motivational type. These "types" are abstractions which emphasize the dominant drives in a motivational pattern, assuming that other drives are operant, but not regnant in that particular pattern of motivation.

For the purposes of this essay, the types of leadership-motivation will be limited to three. The first is organized principally around the drive to master and control other people, the lust for power. Among individuals of this type, the normal aggressive and destructive drives, present in all human beings from early childhood, have been intensified

and have organized the individual's pattern of interactions with other human beings. Such sadistic leaders are driven by their unquenchable thirst for proof that they are loved and admired. This type of leader exists in every kind of institution. We are quite familiar with the lust for power and for acclaim among politicians, with the attitude of some political leaders that other people are merely instruments to be controlled, used and discarded as the mastering, sadistic leader believes his personal advantage dictates. But the exploitative, sadistic leader also is very common in business, industry, in professional organizations, in school systems, in fact in all competitive, hierarchical systems, including religious institutions, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and all others. For in all institutions, from the family to the church and corporation, there are both places of power, and also some persons driven strongly by the desire for power and for mastery. Such sadistic leaders, like members of dominant social classes, find a thousand unconscious rationalizations of their desire for autocratic power over others. In academic life, among the self-styled "aristocracy of intellect," as also among the upper social classes everywhere, the defensive rationalization is that the vast majority of people are stupid and guided by their emotions, and therefore unable to develop leaders or to share in governing themselves. At their least destructive stage, these power-lustful, sadistic leaders assume the form of patriarchs; their dogma is "Father knows best!" They thrive upon the dependency feelings of nearly all human beings, since nearly all men wish to be protected and sheltered from the continual struggle and courage which life demands. Thus mankind, burdened with its feelings

of dependence upon some omniscient parent and its desire for a protector, usually falls under the power of a sadistic leader who is motivated both by the thirst for infinite love, and acclaim, and also by the exploitative, destructive drive to manipulate others so as to try to satisfy his infantile craving to be the center of all admiration and love.

The second of the three motivational types of leader considered here is (1) relatively objective about both himself and society, (2) driven chiefly by affiliative rather than destructive feelings toward others, and (3) controlled inwardly by principles, or ideals, or a conscience which the culture recognizes as its highest group goals. This type of motivation, like the others, is a pattern or configuration of drives. For instance, morality and ideals will not in themselves make such a leader. There are millions of highly conscientious and moral people, devoted to the highest principles of our society, who are emotionally punitive and sadistic, and who lack insight into their own irrational and destructive drives. But this second type of leader, and here one thinks of Adlai Stevenson, Lincoln, and the remarkable Negro slave, Frederick Douglass, is not in the grip of his own irrational wishes and unconscious conflicts; he is able to control both his sadistic and his self-destructive drives, and he is freed thereby for the fuller use of his rational and creative resources. He is not constantly acting out his own irrational, unsolved inner conflicts in his relations with other people, but is able to deal objectively both with his inner reality (his emotions) and with external social, political and status realities. His drive is not to master and use people in the effort to satisfy his own irrational drives, but to help them to identify and use their own

abilities more fully in the service of society and themselves. There are only a very few such leaders in any institution, because there are very few people possessing insight into themselves and into other people, and governed by objectivity, rather than passion and prejudice about society. Finally, this type of leader is not harried by irrational guilt - that is guilt over things he has not done, but only wished or thought; and he therefore is not self-punishing and self-destructive. He will stand up for himself, his abilities and his ideas, and fight for life and constructive action. One thinks again of Adlai Stevenson, the only powerful voice in our age speaking courageously for sanity, for world affiliation, for the survival of mankind through reason and the control of the sadistic and self-destructive drives. Neither the jeers of the sadists and destroyers, nor the underhand snide implications that he lacked a he-man relish for violence, nor the despair of the weak, caught in their own self-destructive anger and hatred while sitting under the continual threat of 300 or 800 hydrogen bombs could drive him either to despair or to retreat into the world-wide madness. He stood his ground; he stayed within the government so that he still could be heard, and he created in our foreign policy the only constructive force for sanity, for the survival of mankind, for international peace. He held his ground, he stood up for life against the supposed giants who believed in force and destruction. His ideas influenced a whole generation of mankind in all countries of the world, and these men will be heard sooner or later. He was a fighter who believed in life and in the right of this generation to have a chance to live.

Frederick Douglass, who never was allowed to live with his mother, and did not know his white father, lived his first 21 years as chattel property owned by near-psychotic white man. He saved himself from slavery, from a condition in which he, his mother and brothers and sisters were whipped and worked harder than horses or mules, and he fought his way to a position of international influence as an anti-slavery leader.

Leadership, in our society, requires using one's aggressive drives in culturally acceptable ways; middle-class culture uses the words "initiative" and "ambition" for such culturally approved aggression. Aggression may have a sadistic component, but it also has both self-preserving and self-enhancing components. To become a leader, one must assert both his abilities and his claims. This initiative, this putting oneself forward, requires a type of aggression, and therefore most of this essay will probe the various transformations of aggression in leadership.

It is sufficient to say here, with regard to Douglass as the second type of leader, that he was able either to mobilize or restrain his aggression in response to reality. He fought with his fists to save his life, when attacked by the slave driver, or by white workmen in the ship-yards in Baltimore. Whereas most slaves were supine or broken, he defended himself. For he was a realist above all else, and he had learned, as he wrote, "Such floggings are seldom repeated on the same persons by overseers. They prefer to whip those who are the most easily whipped. The doctrine that submission to violence is the best cure for violence did not hold good as between slaves/ <sup>and</sup> overseers. He was whipped oftener who was whipped easiest. ----- 'You can shoot me,' said a slave to Rigby Hopkins,

'but you can't whip me,' and the result was that he was neither whipped nor shot." Douglass, then, would fight for self-preservation, but he was not suicidal. He rejected John Brown's invitation to join him in self-annihilation at Harper's Ferry. He was realistic about the brutal system into which he was born. Knowing his value as property, he correctly gauged that he would not be killed if he defended himself against whipping. He stood up also to his own fears, constantly aroused by his owner's threats of terrible punishment if he tried to escape; after trying, being caught and beaten, he tried again and escaped. Douglas is a remarkable instance of the type of leader who, essentially a man of reason, nevertheless had powerfully aggressive and self-asserting drives, and thus was able to stand up against a very oppressive social system. Without his drive for self-preservation and self-assertion, he would not have become a free man, and later the most influential leader of the anti-slavery movement.

The third type of leadership-motivation, rooted in learned and often unconscious masochistic drives has been far more common among Negroes. Negro society, itself, reacting to the danger of physical and economic annihilation by the powerful white society, approved and institutionalized self-depreciating responses by Negroes. Self-subordination was learned in childhood, for most parents (but not those like Douglass) taught their children that self-defense, and self-assertion were suicidal in relationships with whites. "Stay in your place." "Never talk back to a white man." "Don't think you're as good as a white man." "Nought to nought, and figger to figger, All for the white man and nothing for the nigger." "The white man's still ahead and always will



be." These values, reinforced by fear and often by whippings (as in the case of the boy, Richard Wright) became a part of the moral code of the child. The warning voice of his father or mother, or both, punished him with self-blame and self-ridicule if he wished for or, insanely, actually tried to obtain the rights and privileges of a white man.

Thus a self-depreciation was taught the Negro child by his own society, as a means of self-preservation, it was thought. The social dogma, itself, however, could not have taught children to be masochistic, since masochism is an involuntary and unconscious drive. The social teaching that one could not be aggressive even in defending oneself against attack by whites, nor assertive of his human rights under both the Constitution and the Christian religion, certainly trained the Negro child to accept attack and contempt from whites, and thus rendered him more vulnerable to unconscious masochistic, self-punishing and self-depreciating drives from within himself. But self-subordination was not taught by the Negro-parent as morally justified; it was taught as justified by reality; it was consciously taught and learned as a survival technique, a defense against an immoral society. Therefore this teaching of the parents was not internalized as a part of the child's moral ideal nor of his conscience, because most parents, as well as the Negro church and the national dogmas of democracy, taught that the system of white oppression was unjust and immoral. To survive in the white man's economy and under his unjust system of legal administration, one must bow his head, swallow his indignation and anger, and pretend to like his oppressors. In fact, most Negroes, like all other subordi-

nate groups, were ambivalent about their oppressors. They both hated and wanted acceptance from whites; they both envied and admired them. There were not some Uncle Toms and some bad Negroes, but every Negro emotionally was both an Uncle Tom and a bad Negro, at the same time.

We have examined the group technique of social self-subordination, and said that it encouraged the expression of deep-rooted masochistic drives in many individuals. The techniques of social self-subordination were first, clowning, making the white man laugh at you and thus disarming his hostility; second, deference, tipping the hat, touching the forelock (on the plantations), dropping the eyes, getting off the road or pavement when a white person passed, using honorific terms of address toward whites, and a hundred other modes of self-subordination; third, not attempting to compete with whites for land, for jobs, or for women; fourth, "stupidity," scratching the head, feigning ignorance, using the mask of stolidity, and fifth, embracing openly a stance of humility, and therefore of religion, the one area of behavior in which the white man granted the Negro preeminence, since a humble Negro was everywhere regarded as a good Negro. The humble Negro accepted oppression; he internalized the values of the system by subordinating himself.

Now, to some Negroes, as to some people of every group, being subjected to punishment, and contempt is satisfying to their basic drives of self-contempt and self-punishment. These are masochistic persons, who for reasons in their early life have lacerating feelings of guilt, unworthiness, and a desire to be punished. Masochism is one way, the most self-destructive way for transforming anger and resentment. When one is derogated or attacked, there are four major processes for handling

anger. The first way is to express one's anger directly by verbal or physical counter-attack upon the attacker. This course was too dangerous for the Negro when the attacker or oppressor was a white. The other three mechanisms are largely unconscious in the sense that the individual does not realize the motive for his action. The first substitute for direct expression of anger against the attacker is displacement of one's anger from the true cause to a less dangerous substitute. One may displace his anger at his boss, which is too dangerous to express, and express it in unrealistic rage at one's wife when one gets home. The Negro lower class, as Dollard pointed out, displaces its anger from its real cause, the white boss, to other lower-class Negroes, who are far less dangerous. A second transformation of anger is sublimation, a process in which both the target and the form of the anger are transformed. Thus, one's anger may be expressed in a painting, even an abstract painting, in music, in typewriting (by the blows of the fingers against the keys), by playing the piano vigorously, and in a hundred other ways. Finally, owing to chronic guilt and a drive for self-punishment, a constant feeling of unworthiness, one may turn his anger from the real source, and turn it inward against himself. Anger is one of the most powerful human drives. It cannot be obliterated; it must find some outlet. The masochist takes it out upon himself; physically, in psychosomatic attacks upon his heart, or skin or stomach; emotionally in self-punishing guilt and anxiety; overtly by self-defeating and self-destructive behavior. Both sadism and masochism are present in childhood in all persons; the wish to attack and master and the wish to be hit or mastered are both forms of aggressive drives. The

aggressive drive may take the sadistic form, the ultimate expression of which is physical attack upon another; or it may take the substitute masochistic form, the ultimate expression of which is physical attack upon oneself. As the life and death drives always are mingled, so sadist and masochistic drives interact in the same person. But "the true masochist" as Freud wrote, can be distinguished because he "always holds out his cheek wherever he sees a chance of receiving a blow." They are "maimers of themselves," self-depreciators, self-abasers.

Most of the leaders of the civil rights movement in the deep South have been middle-class Negroes, with some college and even graduate and professional training. Like most leaders of revolutions, they have been precisely those who felt the sting of oppression most keenly, those who, in spite of education, training, and intellectual skills, found themselves still barred from participation in the economic, political, educational, and cultural opportunities that were available to whites.

The civil rights movement is not a revolution against the government or the economic system of the United States. Instead, it is a conscious effort to use the power of the federal government and of the capitalistic economic system to break up the vestigial caste system developed by the southern agricultural and feudalistic society. The new civil rights leaders wish to use the technique of active public protest and demonstration, without riots, to force the federal government and labor and industry to include Negroes among those with the opportunity to compete, as citizens, for the goals of a capitalistic and constitutional democracy. Like the labor movement with its use

of the strike, the civil rights movement uses mass demonstration and the boycott to open the routes of upward occupational mobility for a depressed and exploited group. Although it is not a revolt against the federal government, the Constitution, or the economic system, the recent civil rights movement is a revolt against the color-caste system in its most obviously undemocratic forms and methods of subordination.

Both in the Montgomery bus strike and in the college-student sit-ins, the most basic change in the caste system was what its leaders term a "confrontation." Confrontation is an epochal change in the color-caste system. Instead of bowing his head before the segregation and intimidation by which the caste system survives, the Negro demonstrator confronted the representatives of white power and proclaimed that Negroes do not accept, and will no longer submit to, the color-caste system. It took Negroes, except for a few slave revolts, more than three hundred years to confront the caste system and to stop pretending to whites that they liked or accepted it.

In Montgomery, in Birmingham, in Selma, and in a dozen towns and cities in other states in the South, the situation reached the point where many Negroes, especially young men and women, felt as James Baldwin did about Harlem. "I was icily determined - more determined, really, than I then knew - never to make my peace with the ghetto but to die and go to Hell before I would accept my 'place' in this republic. -- And yet, of course, at the same time, I was being spat on and defined and described and limited, and could have been polished off with no effort whatever."

The passive-resistance student organizations, are willing to be

spat upon in order to mobilize public opinion and to maneuver the federal government into protecting them, thus bringing the federal power into opposition to the power of the state and city or county.

Today (1967) these techniques, which implemented the strategy of confrontation, and had a marked effect, both in abolishing segregation in public places and in enfranchising a minority of southern Negroes from 1959 through 1965, have become much less effective. First, there has been a political move toward the right, toward reaction. Secondly, owing to the better economic position of Negroes in northern cities and their overwhelming support of one political party, there has been little involvement of the masses of northern Negroes in protest, and no support by middle-class Negroes. Yet, as Watts and the riots in Cleveland and Chicago in 1965-1966 proved, explosive anger and disillusionment exist everywhere in the Negro slums of the northern cities.

In the final analysis, the basic problem the Negro masses and of Negro leaders is how to transform and direct this anger into constructive reform, into action to help remedy the social and economic cause of the anger. There always has been a lot of anger toward whites on the part of Negroes, resulting from their being systematically subordinated on the job, in housing, by the police, and in every other type of relationship. But this anger always had to be inhibited, since the white society was all-powerful, or so it seemed. The average Negro therefore suppressed his anger so strongly and so long that, in many cases, it was hidden from himself. But the protest movement of the last six years, in spite of its non-violent and passive-resistance techniques, expressed the anger through public confrontation. Now whites know that Negroes do not like or enjoy

the economic, social and educational discrimination which is still systematically directed against them.

The last pages of this essay will consider, therefore, the manner in which the three motivational types of leader described above handle the basic anger and counter-aggression which the system of white mastery and attack arouse. Let us start with the type of leader who is aggressive in a reality-oriented way, who also has his own personal anger under control, who also is affiliative in his relations with others rather than destructive and exploitative, and who is controlled inwardly by his adherence to the ideals of our culture's morality and political system. Two such men, about whom there would be the greatest consensus among both whites and Negroes during the last fifty years, would be A. Philip Randolph and Walter White. Randolph, a man of great courage, determination and self-control, transformed his anger and indignation into the organization of labor unions and into the development of the technique of the civil rights protest and march. Walter White, a successful novelist and like Randolph a man of great courage, who investigated scores of lynchings by interviewing the lynchers, converted his indignation and anger into aggressive diplomacy with the most powerful men in government and finance, and into the most vigorous use of legal redress through the N.A.A.C.P. Randolph used the plan of a "march on Washington" during World War II to get President Roosevelt to sign the national F.E.P.C. executive order, but he never called such a march. Even after Roosevelt signed the order, however, Randolph kept active his plan for a march on Washington, so that the President would not be tempted to change his mind. White, through his remarkable diplomatic and affiliative

talent (he had friends within all branches of the power structure) probably was the most effective of the Negro leaders until his death. He was a tenacious fighter and sophisticated negotiator, winning over more people of power to the Negro's defense than any other man. Although he was willing scores of times to make on-the-spot investigations of lynchings in Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and Mississippi, he nevertheless had a healthy sense for survival, and withdrew the N.A.A.C.P. from the Scottsboro case, when the Communist Party took it over for party propaganda.

Both Randolph and White had definite goals and specific techniques for attaining their civil rights goals. They were not driven by a diffused or irrational anger. Both men were masters of the strategy of protest, and realistic analysts of American white society and government. Each kept the pressure on continually; in White's case, the pressure was aggressive diplomatic negotiation and legal suits; in the case of Randolph, it was the strike and the threat of the mass demonstration. They both were fearless and incorruptible.

Although the boycott had been used by the New Negro Alliance, founded by Professor John A. Davis, as early as 1933 in Washington, D.C., neither Randolph nor White understood the potential of the boycott, the sit-in, the sit-down and civil disobedience. But White through the Crisis magazine and Randolph in the Messenger's pages both expressed the anger and indignation of Negroes toward white oppression, and for many years by their studies of lynchings and of economic exploitation of Negroes appealed to America's reason and law. Their techniques will not be so effective today, but their reality-orientation, their understanding of



the power structure, their standing up even to the President in defense of the oppressed, their realistic direction of their anger into social and economic reform, and their moral example of adherence to the ideals of reasonableness, mutual education, affiliation and respect for other human beings set a standard for both white and Negro leaders in civil rights work. It is this example of adherence to the basic moral ideals of our society which is crucial in affiliative leadership, and distinguishes such leaders from the sadist, power-obsessed murdering leader such as Hitler and Stalin. Since the followers in a mass movement yield their moral values and conscience to the leader, just as a person under hypnosis cedes his to the hypnotizer, according to Freud, a leader with no control over his own hate and anger, or no control over his own masochistic, self-lacerating drives will lead his followers into the same violence, or the same self-destruction which he seeks. The followers identify with the leader; they give up their inner control upon both their self-destructive and outwardly destructive anger, and accept the leader's code as their own.

The reality-oriented leader asserts his goals and moves aggressively to attain them, but he is not filled with rage. He is not "God's angry man," and he does not lash out with blind sadism or suicidal masochism. He is out to win, not to pull down the pillars of the temple and bury himself and his followers, as well as opponents. He is not for self-immolation under the tanks in Hungary, nor under the AFL tractors in Cleveland. He is for running by organizations, by realistic strategy, by patience, fortitude, and using the power he has. It may be the power of the vote, or of marches and demonstrations, or of the boycott, or of the federal government and constitution. He uses every technique and all techniques that lead to a gain rather than a self-defeat. He is for life, rather than death; for creating broader alignment and unity rather than destroying; for non-violence rather than violence, except in self-defense; for competing rather than withdrawing. And in an oppressed society, which has only a few trained people, he is for joining forces with all leaders who can help him and his group. He is not for envy and rivalry between leaders, but for using all their most effective skills in a common effort.

Their revolt against oppression and exploitation is a healthy form of self-preservation and initiative. Initiative and self-assertion are healthy ego syntonic drives. In our society the drive to compete, and the use of political and economic aggression are healthy expressions of a normal effort to gain one's share of the good things in America. Such initiative and self-assertion are not to be confused with blind anger. Such anger, moreover is ineffective, whether it leads to the destruction of others or of oneself. It is the rage of a child who thinks he is omnipotent in his wishes. He thinks his rage will sweep the field before him; but reality is not changed by rage. Reality remains in the form of

ten to one odds, and the tanks and the National Guard as the infuriated whites at the University of Mississippi had to learn.

The angry man is a victim of his own irrational eye-rolling rage. Such a person is likely to be in the grip of old irrational anger, whose sources he does not know. He is marching and leading to the beat of another drum. One proof that the real source of his anger is outside the field of reality, is that the more powerful he grows, the more angry he becomes.

On the other hand, it is essential to realize that anger, in itself, must not be equated with attack, or violence. There is no reason to feel guilty because one is angry. For anger, in itself, will not break any bones nor pull the heavens down upon us. The trouble with anger as a leadership-drive is that it is ineffective; the anger is the leader's personal problem; it can blind him or torture him, or give him illusions of omnipotence, but it cannot solve objective problems of leadership. These require realistic and cool aggression, or if you prefer the word, initiative.