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“WHAT! NO PICTURES?”

SMITH ELY JELLIFFE, M.D.¹

“What! No Pictures? No camera man here? No one here to take pictures?” These if we are to accept the accuracy of the daily press were almost the final words of Giuseppe Zangara just before his execution.

“No pictures? Capitalists, Lousy bunch! Crooks!” Thus were the spoken, broken phrases of an egotist and would be regicide as outstanding evidence—though fragmentary—of an exhibitionistic type of paranoid psychopath who but for the intervention of a woman’s arm, might have made a momentous change in the economic history of this country.

The pathologist reports on the brain on autopsy, “perfectly normal on gross examination.” This means little for the probable type of illness involved. Nor is it likely that a promised microscopical study will show much more, except as to bolster up negative evidence.

A long distance general impression about this man from the mental viewpoint may be hazarded, however. Such a summary must be based on the general circumstances and the very insufficient details, as reported in the daily press. It therefore can pretend to be but a general opinion founded on empirical experience with the regicide type of individual.

There is such a kind, or rather more correctly expressed, a grouping of this kind, the members of which though varying considerably in the form of their behavior, nevertheless are driven by a similar set of principles. The drive is essentially self love, colossal egotism and sadistic envy and hatred to those who have achieved that which such individuals have failed to acquire. History is replete with examples.

All of these motives appear in the phrases quoted. “No pictures” to spread the mirror of their self-loved-face around the world! Here appears the egregious egotism which in more technical phrases is a colossal exhibitionism. Here is the reappearance of “Jack the Giant Killer” of the nursery in its most virulent and malignant form.

“Capitalists—all capitalists,” is but the expression of the envy and hatred of the unsuccessful that animates so many of the incompetent when confronted by the image of one who has appealed to

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the highest strivings in a mass reaction hoping for its strong and successful hero. Everything that President Roosevelt stood for as an image of power, of honor, and of intelligent capacity to lead a harassed citizenry out of its wilderness of doubt, distress and despair, found its opposite in a withering hatred in the depths of his assailant.

"Lousy"—shades of the trenches! of filthy warfare—mud—hatred—hostility—killing—all meet in this epithet. An epithet which has attained a widespread slapstick burlesque humorous release for many tried individuals, but which combined with other expletives and overt acts affords a glimpse into a distorted emotionally sick individual of a specific patterning.

And what far flung inferences may be drawn from the final expletive—"Crooks"?

It must be emphasized that it is the combination of act of arm, and revolver, of thought, feeling, and of tongue that must be considered as a whole which entitles one to discuss these aspects of the situation. To take any one by itself would be ridiculous.

Crooks! Here spoke the wish—as a projection to others—of the envious, greedy, criminal unconscious of the speaker.

So much for this particular bit of evidence. It is apparently tenuous and slight yet filled with dynamic significance.

The physicians called in conference stated this man was "sane," ergo responsible, and the state executed him. This means, if the physicians were correct and according to the test of "insanity" in the state of Florida—for every state has its "tests" for this legal situation—that he was not suffering from such mental disorder as not to know the nature and quality of his act or to know that it was wrong.

Three additional bits of evidence may be adduced, however, to add to the picture. These facts to be spoken of belong to the individual. They are a part of his personality. The accent here put upon them may not be justified from the standpoint of rigorous logical thinking but as the entire body of acts and facts are brought together they fit into the motley mosaic which makes up the personality of the paranoid individual. They also may be said to afford a glimpse at conflicting forces in the personality which viewed from a certain angle may be of great significance.

These additional facts, and had we the entire history of the individual, such minor clues might seem trivial, are: (1) that Zangara's mother died when he was 2 years of age; (2) he suffered from a chronic disease of his gall bladder, and (3) he died—was

executed, or in the special thought that lies behind this item, brought about his own death (unconsciously) in his 33rd year. "I am 33 years old," he stated at his trial, March 9, 1933.

The bearing of these facts opens up a line of inferences which lacking the precision of a deep psychiatric analysis must be left to the field of intuition rather than to that of logic. Only a careful inquiry by one thoroughly acquainted with all of the modern advances in psychopathology, as well as a full command of the Italian language, could weld all of the facts into such a consistent unity as to satisfy a strict psychopathological science. As already intimated all of this necessary background is lacking and hence the accent here on the empirical intuitional mode of approach.

To discuss thoroughly what may happen to any boy or girl who loses the parent of the same or opposite sex at the age of two years would take one far afield. One thing however is certain. It tends to distort the early pattern of family adjustment. In the case of a boy who loses his mother at that early age the tendency is to exaggerate certain aspects of the father-son relationship. Inasmuch as biologically the male can never take the place of the female, a psychical barrier becomes reinforced, and an infantile father hostility becomes loaded. This as is well known in psychopathology offers a clue to an understanding, if such an infantile pattern fails to succumb to later developments of judgment and reason, why such an individual retains a hostility to Father (God—King—Ruler—or superior individual) and especially if such father image has succeeded in attaining preeminence in the face of suffering and trial.

It should be emphasized that this trend is never without an opposite set of forces in the personality. This set of opposite forces often shows itself in the form of illness on the part of the individual. "Zangara" states he had no mother—only a stepmother, and six sisters. "Since he was six years old he had 'stomach trouble'." Although the six sisters were not born when he was six years old, yet the craving for sympathy from the lost mother and the hostility to the remarrying father tends to bring about just this kind of conflict in the child's psyche. He is too small in comparison with the father to hurt him, but the impulses to do so are there. They become directed towards himself and through suffering he can get a kind of attention he craves. Here is a nucleus for the development of the gall bladder disease—hypothetically and even more speculatively—for the death at 33 (Christ martyrdom) which terminated his career March 20, 1933.

As to a reason for placing the gall bladder disease in the place here suggested it may be said that in much of the medicine of the past, even as far back as the days of the Father of Medicine, Hippocrates, the "body as a whole" was constantly kept in mind. With the epoch making and valuable discoveries of bacteriology and the type of medicine which arose through the teachings of Virchow, the accent began to be placed upon individual organs of the body. There resulted a distorted view of the functioning of the body as a whole, which has received its worst development in ultra specialism. For some two or more decades the cry has been back to Hippocrates. In enlightened quarters a healthier balance is being struck between a disease of an organ as causing the individual to be ill, and the illness of the individual as expressed through a disturbance in a special organ or group of related organ functions; in the Zangara case the gastro-intestinal canal and more specifically the gall bladder.

If space permitted it might be of interest to cull from the days of Homer, of Moses, down to the present the significant intuitive ideas as to what the bile (gall bladder) has represented in the folk's psyche. That it was "bitter" must have been learned even by the lower animals. "Black bile" played a large part in the ideas of ancient medicine; indeed "biliousness" and misery, discontent and hostility are easily related by everybody. Zangara's bitterness overwhelmed him. The gall bladder was unable to carry the burden.

A modern writer's phrase seems pertinent to this issue.

"I had been chewing the bitter cud of remembrance, so bitter that it engendered the gall which, in the end, jaundiced my vision of things that were past and things as they then existed; a gall that envenomed my emotions and tinctured my will, half paralyzing it.

"And what was the product of all this? A venomous hatred, a futile revenge inspired by hate, a loathing of life as it had envisaged itself to me, a disgust with the kind of (activity) that was demanded in the (social group)."

Waller, *Windmill in the Dunes*, Little, Brown, 1931.

The concept then that the gall bladder disease found on autopsy, is a register, hypothetically at least, of a conflict in Zangara's personality between his "idealistic" (Christ-like) tendencies to reform the world (unexpressed) and his realistic (Jehovah) tendencies to destroy the "Capitalists" (expressed). Here King (Father) and Money (nourishment) become strangely compounded in the recesses

of the psyche. When at the classical period (28-33) the struggle bursts through, the regicide paranoiac steps forth with bitterness in his soul and murder in his body.

There is much evidence gathered in recent years to indicate that this juxtaposition of ideas is not too hypothetical. Reference may be made to the work of Lewis¹ for those interested in following out the teachings of the newer constitutional pathology as supplementing the older Virchow organ pathology.

This brings one to the most speculative of the facts here brought into the rough outlining of this man's personality. This is his unwitting choice of his martyrdom. Although he failed to destroy the object of his hostility—i. e., the father surrogate, nevertheless he brought about his own death through the death of Mayor Cermak—an individual may it be pointed out here as one who had surmounted the purely economic situations as may be surmised as not unlike those of Zangara. The psychological ones are not known.

It is a significant fact that in much disease, especially mental disease, there are powerful antagonistic impulses involved. There is always a struggle between the ethical forces which have been incorporated in the culture of a race, and the hostile forces of the individual seeking for gratification of his pleasures and needs. In the large, one sees religion (conscience) and the sense of guilt as outstanding phenomena as expressive of the first set of tendencies. The need for punishment is closely related. Just what the intimate liaison may be in any particular individual between the animal drive for self satisfaction at the expense of all others and the restraining forces of the tribal mores is always a matter for detailed study.

At all events as one reflects upon that aspect of religion which is called Christianity, and in many another, the element of solution by martyrdom at the age of 33 stands out as a significant suggestion. That Zangara should have reached his goal at this particular point in his life's progress has its more than purely speculative aspects which from lack of more accurate data cannot be elaborated to advantage.

The "sanity"—"insanity" issue is a strictly sociological—legal one. Medicine primarily is interested in dis-ease, i. e., illness. Law is a social device. "Insanity" is a legal concept, not a medical one. There is little doubt that Zangara was mentally ill and that he was of the class of "paranoid" individuals. Because such individuals rarely bring their mental illness into the open until comparatively

¹Nervous and Mental Disease Monograph Series. No. 35. Washington, D. C.

late in life—(classically 28-33) and then like the eruption of a boil in one grand burst, it is quite understandable how an extremely sick individual, mentally, can get by.

It is but a matter of policy as to how to deal with such individuals. For the more malignant types, as here for instance, society puts them out of the way: like rattlesnakes or copperheads. Sometimes for the less malignant types they are shut up in mental hospitals after the legal procedure has put a certain status—a label on them—"Insane."

It would be presumptuous to state a definite opinion in the present case from the few accurate facts that the careful inquiry suggested would require.

From the few statements made, acts performed, constitutional disorders found and psychological factors indicated it would seem that the practical issues have been met in accordance with sound principles of ethics and of law.