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Leo Alexander

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THE MOLDING OF PERSONALITY UNDER DICTATORSHIP

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DESTRUCTIVE DRIVES IN THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF NAZISM

Leo Alexander

This article is the third article based on material emanating from the Nurnberg war crimes trials. The first, entitled "War Crimes and Their Motivation—The Socio-Psychological Structure of the SS and the Criminalization of a Society" appeared in volume 39, No. 3, September-October, 1948, pp. 298-326 of this JOURNAL. The second, entitled "Destructive and Self-Destructive Trends in Criminalized Society—A Study of Totalitarianism" appeared in volume 39, No. 5, January-February, 1949, pp. 553-564. The author was consultant to the Secretary of War of the United States on duty with the Office of the Chief of Counsel for War Crimes in Nurnberg, 1946-1947. He is at present Director of the Neurobiologic Unit of the Division of Psychiatric Research at the Boston State Hospital, instructor in Psychiatry, Tufts College Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, and holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Medical Reserve Corps of the United States Army.—EDITOR.

In an earlier article we have discussed the great importance which destructive drives had in forming the attitudes and actions of the SS and of Nazism as a whole, the SS being the representative activist group among the Nazis. We shall now discuss the important question of whether these destructive drives in themselves formed the main and fundamental motivation of Nazism and of its activist expression, or whether these destructive drives were merely superimposed over, or formed the superchargers of, other aims and goals. There was, of course, the one overall conscious aim and goal, which was to gain power and complete control, first over the German people, then over Europe, and finally over the world. ("Today Germany belongs to us, tomorrow, the world.") Coupled with this major aim was the decision and determination to destroy everything that stood in the way of the realization of that aim. It was in connection with the latter program and activities that the destructive drives which later engulfed the entire motivational sphere were for the first time openly released; but it must be realized that the desire to gain power and complete control is in itself already a basically destructive and aggressive attitude, which also plays an important role in early infantile sadism. (Early infantile sadism reveals the nature of these destructive drives in their primordial state, prior to their later repression and sublimation.)

Nazi doctrine or Nazi attitudes

Are there any other specific aims and goals which could be called characteristic of Nazism? It is most important to realize the fact that apart from the master plan of conquest of the

world and genocide of non-German peoples there were no other specific aims, ideas, and goals which could be called characteristic of Nazism. Especially there existed no specific other dogma, doctrine, or set of ideas except a certain Hegelianism implying a general worship of strength or what passed itself off as strength which, however, is more attitude than dogma and hence will be considered further below, when we speak about specific attitudes. The fact that no specific binding articles of faith existed in Nazism has been well illustrated in an unpublished article on the psychology of Nazi women by Dr. Wanda von Baeyer.²

In this paper Dr. von Baeyer points out that there were no specific articles of faith, the adherence to which would determine whether or not a particular woman was a Nazi. She gives three examples of ideas which are widely assumed to be Nazi articles of faith: 1) the belief that Jews are an inferior race, 2) the belief in the nobility of the Fuehrer, and 3) the belief that the place of woman is in the home. Dr. von Baeyer pointed out that especially among the Nazi fanatics, women as well as men, especially among those in or close to the SS, none of these articles would necessarily have to be believed and yet these people were thorough Nazis. To these people it was entirely irrelevant whether or not the Jews were inferior; as far as they were concerned they might just as well have been God's chosen people. For them the Jews were a convenient minority to be selected for what they called the "hardening experiment," and for the acquisition of "blood cement." If and when they would have run out of Jews, they might have selected other people to take their place, such as certain foreigners or even certain groups of Germans. As far as Hitler's nobility is concerned they likewise did not believe in it because they knew that Hitler not only had guilty knowledge of the atrocities, but actually had instigated, initiated, authorized, and sanctioned them; therefore, they did not believe in his pose of nobility. At the same time they felt that because of this pose he was a still too "bourgeois" figure for their taste and they would rather have seen him replaced by Himmler. As far as the dogma of "woman belonging in the home" was concerned, certain SS circles by no means agreed with this but felt that the German woman, as a Nordic "Val-kyrie," belonged right in the midst of battle at the side of her man. This was, of course, the idea shared by the active SS women, of which many were assigned as guards and in administrative positions to concentration camps.

² Baeyer, Wanda von *Zur Psychologie der Nazifrau, Vortrag fuer den Sueddeutschen Frauenarbeitskreis am 28.3.46*, (unpublished manuscript).

This extraordinary flexibility of all the accessory material which has been so frequently quoted as Nazi doctrine or Nazi articles of faith, including even the Fuehrer principle and the official Party doctrine about women, reveals that these accessory dogmas are not the determining element of Nazism. It becomes apparent that in addition to the overall aim, the mode of feeling and thinking is more decisive than any particular points of doctrine. A striking example is Robert Ley's testament. In this document (reported by Kelley³) Ley dropped anti-Semitism and Rosenberg's blood, soil, and race doctrine without ceasing for a moment to be a thorough Nazi, and the document remained as thoroughly Nazi as if the recantation of all these specific points had not occurred at all, or had no importance. The determining element of Nazism, apart from the fundamental aim and goal of complete domination for Germany (i.e., the own state) and genocide of all non-Germanic (i.e., foreign and therefore presumably hostile and worthless) peoples, are not any additional specific articles of doctrine or contents of thought, but rather certain specific attitudes or modes of thinking. The most important and basic element of this attitude, which the Nazis themselves called *Haltung*, is an intense hostility against spiritual and rational modes of thinking and behavior.

This Nazi hostility toward spiritual and rational attitudes is the same basic hostility to spirit, culture, intellect, and reason, which is inherent in the unconscious mind where this and other destructive drives are dormant. All these destructive drives are repressed and sublimated in the mature individual as long as he acknowledges guidance by spiritual and rational values. The disruption of spiritual values and the value of reason is therefore one of the prerequisites for release of primordial destructive drives in the adult individual. Spiritual values are the main force at the disposal of the superego, reason the main force at the disposal of the ego in controlling, repressing, and sublimating these aboriginal destructive drives of the lower biologic layers of the personality, the Id. It is therefore not surprising that the Nazis in their effort to release and utilize these drives made a concerted attack against these two inhibiting forces, spirituality and reason, which in the mature individual and in mature civilized societies prevent the eruption of the primeval destructive drives. The object of this attack was to blow the lid off and tap the main-springs of the destructive forces of the unconscious. The first open attack went against the reli-

³ Kelley, Douglas M., *Twenty-Two Cells in Nuremberg*, New York (Greenberg) 1947, I-X, 1-245.

gious-spiritual and humane ideals of the superego, which were derided as weaklings' and slaves' morality, and a new "strong man's religion," the SS religion with heathen trappings and Hegel's worship of the strong, was substituted. A distorted Darwinism and the euthanasia program for the incurably sick served as the entering wedge to destroy the taboo against killing embodied in one of the Ten Commandments, and to popularize a new superego notion that only the strong had a right to survive, that the State could decide who was to be considered strong, and that the State's aim justified the means.

Method of indoctrination of German youth

A systematic propaganda campaign directed at the breakdown of superego values was directed at the entire population, including children. A ghastly example is a widely used school book on applied mathematics, on the high school level, entitled "Mathematics in the Service of National-Political Education."⁴ It was widely distributed and used, a new edition being printed annually. My attention was called to this and other similar books by the Dutch psychiatrist Dr. A. Groeneveld of Amsterdam. I found three copies of this book in Frankfurt a.M. among the remnants of a collection of Nazi school books stored in the attic of the *Ackermann-Schule*. One of these copies had come from the teachers' library of the *Herder-Schule*, one from the teachers' library of the *Schwanthaler-Schule*, one from the teachers' library of the *Helmholtz-Oberrealschule*.

The choice of problems in this mathematics-problem book indicates clearly that a number of these problems were designed to break down the taboo against mass killing, by formulating them in terms of mass killing. Let us look at a few samples. Two significant "mathematical" problems are on page 75 of this book:

"Problem 199. A 1000 kg poison gas bomb contains 70% of poison gas. How many bombs of this kind are needed for the gassing of an area of 2.2 square kilometers (town center of Berlin) if for 1 square kilometer

a) 10,000 kg of mustard gas

b) 20,000 kg of phosgene are necessary?

"How many planes would have to be in operation if every plane carried three bombs of this kind? At what intervals of time must the bombs be dropped if the planes have a speed of 50 meters per second and fly

⁴ Dorner, Adolf, *Mathematik im Dienste der Nationalpolitischen Erziehung, Ein Handbuch fuer Lehrer, herausgegeben in Auftrage des Reichsverbandes Deutscher mathematischer Gesellschaften und Vereine*. ("Mathematics in the Service of National-Political Education, A Handbook for Teachers, published by authorization of the Reichs-Union of mathematical societies and associations"). With the collaboration of: Ahrens, Christian; Degosang, Oskar; Ebner, Max; Graf, Ulrich; Lacman, Otto; Riebesell, Paul; Rothe, Rudolf; Timpe, Aloys. Frankfurt a.M. (Moritz Diesterweg) 1935, 2nd revised edition, 1-118; 1936, 3rd revised edition, 1-118.

in single-file echelon? How great must the distance be between two neighboring planes?

Solution: a) 57; b) 114 bombs.

a) 19; b) 38 planes; $13\frac{1}{3}$ seconds; distance between planes about a) 105, b) 52m.

"Problem 200. According to statements of the Draeger Works in Luebeck in the gassing of a city only 50% of the evaporated poison gas is effective. The atmosphere must be poisoned up to a height of 20 meters in a concentration of 45 mg/m³. How much phosgene is needed to poison a city of 50,000 inhabitants who live in an area of four square kilometers? How much phosgene would the population inhale with the air they breathe in ten minutes without protection against gas, if one person uses 30 litres of breathing air per minute? Compare this quantity with the quantity of the poison gas used.

Solution: 7.2 T; 675 g; 0.009%."

Thus, under the guise of mathematics, the revulsion of normal children against the spreading of death by poison gas was insidiously broken down. It is noteworthy that the first of these two problems tends, by comparison of the area to be gassed with the town center of Berlin, to produce a sense of anxiety and emergency, while the following problem is more openly aggressive. This is indeed the model of the system of Nazi propaganda. In this case it was effective indoctrination of German youth in terms of aggressive warfare and mass killing. Consideration of this book, which was published as early as 1935 (the quoted passages are from the 1935 edition but they are exactly identical in the edition of 1936), allows another important conclusion—namely, that more may be learned about the true intentions of a suspected aggressor nation by scrutinizing its school books than by weighing its official pronouncements.

The same mathematics problem book also made an attack against the normal and desirable compassion for the sick and crippled in terms of a distorted statement of the cost of their proper care and rehabilitation. Here are the terms (on page 42 of the same book) in which National Socialist Germany wanted its school children to think:

"Problem 94. In a province of the German Reich there are 4400 insane in state mental institutions, 4500 under the care of public welfare ("in offener Fuersorge"), 1600 in district mental institutions, 2000 in homes for epileptics etc., and 1500 persons in Welfare Training Homes. The State alone pays out at least 10 million RM per annum for the said institutions. (a) Therefore what does a patient cost the State on an average per annum?

"In the State mental institutions:

- I. 868 patients remained more than 10 years
- II. 260 patients more than 20 years
- III. 112 patients more than 25 years

"(b) What does a patient of Group I (II, III) cost the State during the whole period of his accommodation according to the minimum average figures stated in (a)? (Compare with problem 96)

"Problem 95. The construction of an insane asylum required six million RM. How many new housing units at 15,000 RM each could have been built for this sum?

"Problem 96. According to various calculations an insane person costs the State about 1500 RM per annum, a pupil in a school for the mentally deficient (Hilfsschueler) 300 RM, an elementary school pupil 100 RM, a pupil in secondary schools or colleges about 250 RM. Illustrate the amount graphically by stripes (rolls of coins).

"Problem 97. An insane person costs about four RM daily, a cripple five and a half RM, a criminal three and a half RM. In many cases a civil servant only has about four RM, an office employee barely three and a half RM, an unskilled laborer not even two RM per head in his family. (a) illustrate these figures graphically.

"According to cautious estimates there are in Germany 300,000 insane persons, epileptics, etc., under institutional care. (b) What is their total annual cost at a figure of four RM? (c) How many marriage-allowance loans at 1000 RM each, subject to renunciation of repayment (for each living born child of a marriage one-fourth of the original loan is written off) of the money later, could be paid out from this money yearly?"

Adults, of course, were indoctrinated similarly by means of an enormous barrage of speeches, lectures, motion pictures, pamphlets, and books too numerous to be quoted here.

Superego ideals and values

The taboo against promiscuity and disruption of family life was broken by the notion of the fountain of life (*Lebensborn*), which was to flow freely in the interest of the "State." Thus the religious-humane-cultural superego common to all civilized peoples was replaced by an exclusively tribal superego. The psychiatrist stands in amazement before the thoroughness and completeness with which this perversion of essential superego values was accomplished in adult people. Many of these had good intelligence, had the benefits of good family life and good religious and humane-cultural education throughout the decisive phases of their childhood which are regarded as so important for the formation of superego ideals. Yet not only did they undergo a complete change of their superego ideals in their adult life, sometimes even their late adult life, but after committing crimes in accordance with these new superego notions, most of them remained completely free from guilt feelings. There are only a few exceptions, such as, for instance, in the case of Hans Frank, the butcher of Poland, who was one of the very few who underwent a reconversion to his old superego values after apprehen-

sion and conviction. The rule among our accused and convicted war criminals was a remarkable absence of guilt feelings.

The explanation of this phenomenon is twofold. First, it may be that the decisive importance of childhood and youth in the formation of essential superego values may have been overrated by psychiatrists in a society in which allegiance to these values in normal adult life was taken too much for granted because of the stability, religiousness, legality, and security of 19th Century and early 20th Century society. It may be that the lesson learned in youth has to be continually re-learned in adult life in order to be durable, and that the ideals acquired in youth must be continually striven for again, in order to remain valid and desirable.

On the other hand, however, it must be admitted that probably much more of the old tribal superego has remained alive in Germany than was obviously noticeable on the surface, that it always remained co-existent with and was never significantly or thoroughly replaced by the religious and humane-cultural superego which other civilizations accepted more whole-heartedly. Not only did the myths of Wotan and Loki, and the heathen symbolisms and celebrations of the summer solstices remain more alive in Germany than comparable vestigial myths and practices in other countries, but also the heathen notions that went with them, of Valhalla and the heroic death of the gods, remained alive as well. It is probable that for these reasons the shift of superego values toward the exclusively tribal ones was easier in Germany than it would have been in other nations. Be that as it may, it is definite that this regression of superego ideals from the religious-humane to the tribal constituted the most important step in the Nazification of Germany; and it is obvious that the opposite step would be the most important one in the de-Nazification of Germany. It is, however, the step which none of the existing political parties in Germany have yet been willing or able to take wholeheartedly. In this connection it is important to realize that the insidious recent additional open shift of superego values toward the tribal in Germany began even as early as 1925. George Soldan, Counsel of Archives and member of the *Reichs-Archives* (major in the German army reserve corps), wrote a book entitled "Man and the Battle of the Future"⁵ which was published in 1925. One of the many revealing passages in this book is contained in Chapter 12, entitled "Turning Point of the Art of War." The following quotation is from page 94. Soldan says:

⁵ Soldan, George, *Der Mensch und die Schlacht der Zukunft*, Oldenburg i.O. (Gerhard Stalling) 1925.

In the same way the really surprising success of psychological war—or to name it more correctly, the war of lies—will only be an incentive to prepare and carry it out still more intensively. War today means more than ever before, battle for survival. The modern battle for survival among nations does not know any binding agreements or paragraphs, and also does not know any morality. Chivalry in war belongs to the times past when only armies did the fighting. It is unthinkable in times when nations battle for their life. And although today after the terrible experiences of the last war, nations surround themselves with a heavenly halo of noble humanity at conventions and in solemn covenants . . . The coming war will make all that worthless shreds of paper such as the World War has done with similar agreements.

The next, more insidious attack went against all modes of rational thinking and behavior, and indeed against reason itself. Reason and logic were decried as cold intellectualism, reasonableness as weakness. Teachers and educators conspired in the general campaign against logical thinking. Nazi school books are full of non sequiturs, almost as if to train children in illogical thinking. An example is a school book which contains the sentence, "Hitler was born near a quietly running mountain stream; therefore he became our great leader." This conclusion does not follow any law of logic that we know of; in fact, these two statements have nothing to do with each other in terms of cause and effect. There have been plenty of great leaders who have not been born beside quietly running mountain streams and plenty of people who were born, lived, and died beside quietly running mountain streams without ever concerning themselves with the duties and burdens of leadership.

Somehow the school child and everybody else in Nazi Germany were deliberately trained not to allow themselves to think logically, and only thus is it understandable that such statements as Goering's previously quoted blatantly illogical thanatolatrous statement, "With every German pilot killed our Luftwaffe becomes stronger," were accepted without contradiction.

Destructive trends

With moral, or superego, values perverted and reason discredited, the stage was set for the direct and uncontrolled release and the conscious encouragement of the complete unleashing of instinctual drives. This encouragement was given in the form of seduction. The more subtle form of this seduction was a peculiar cult and a glorification of the pleasurable satisfactions derived from the release of instinctual energy which was established. An interesting example of this pattern is the letter of application for membership in the SS, which Oswald Pohl, later the man in charge of all concentration camps, sent to Himmler

as early as 24 May 1933 (Doc. No. NO-1222). Pohl is the man who increased the number of concentration camps in Germany from six to 186, for which accomplishment Himmler commended him with the words, "all that, we owe to you, my dear Pohl" (*das haben wir alles Ihnen zu verdanken, lieber Pohl*). Pohl concluded this early letter as follows:

I may emphasize again in confirmation of our conversation in the casino garden on Monday, that my enthusiasm for your plan does not come from personal motives or material greed. You know yourself that in the navy I have an absolutely secure lifetime position which with all the trimmings and its splendid external aspects is considered desirable by many people. However, in my occupational activity I do not find that full satisfaction of my soul, and not that vent through which I could give air to my creative urge and to my working rage. I will and can work till the breakdown. If you can still use such a guy, then I accept even the change to a not yet so certain future, such as I would see it undoubtedly ahead of me with you. I am gladly ready for an oral conference and beg you to determine the time for it. I greet you, Heil Hitler! Pohl, Navy Senior Paymaster.

It is revealing to find in this letter not only thinly veiled aggressiveness in its overcompensating denial of personal ambition and greed, but even self-destructiveness in its reference to "the breakdown" and in its open-eyed realization of his "not yet so certain future" with Himmler.

It is obvious, however, that the self-destructive aspects of this release of destructive energy remained entirely unconscious. Among the devices to keep these self-destructive aspects unconscious was a peculiar verbiage which the SS developed for the purpose of hiding its destructive trends, especially the self-destructive ones. This SS lingo developed on the background of a general German trend for "word worship" which made a fetish of euphemisms not always to deceive outsiders only, but also in an effort to rationalize their basic aims away, in the same manner as neurotics do, although it is difficult to be sure that these camouflaged words were not simply the characteristic "hidden language" of the rogue. Such words as *Sonderaktion* (special action) for spectacular mass atrocities, *Sonderbehandlung* (special treatment) for scientific killing of a more or less clandestine nature were obviously intended for outsiders only, and were always clearly understood in their true meaning by members of the inner circle, later even by everyone else. But such SS words as, for instance, *Fuehrer selbstausslese* (self-selection of leaders) tended to deceive even insiders. I tested the reaction to this word in a number of inner-circle SS men. At one point during the conversation I investigated their reaction to what this word really stood for in that I asked them whether it

was a good thing if, among the leaders of a society, strong and violent contests developed which led to the complete elimination of a certain number of them for the benefit of certain others among them. This is, of course, what *Fuehrerselbstauslese* really amounted to. The answer was invariably that this was a bad thing indeed, which unfortunately prevailed too much in Germany especially in high Party circles, and that this may have been a contributing factor in the defeat ("breakdown") of Germany. After changing the subject for a time, I then popped my question about *Fuehrerselbstauslese*. The reaction to this was invariably the opposite. This was a splendid thing, which alone could insure the selection of the best and strongest leader personalities.

In spite of these rationalizations, conscious destructive thinking in regard to all interhuman problems gained more and more prevalence among all those who became "infected" with Nazi ideology. A today-disaffected Nazi, one of our defendants in the dock of the medical case, who had joined the Party in 1938, told me that it was a tragic mistake to let the war run as long as it did. He felt, and he stated that his friends felt too, that this was to a large measure the fault of Dr. Morel, Hitler's personal physician. After all, he knew what was going on in the mind of the Fuehrer, that his thinking was becoming distorted since 1942, and under these circumstances it would have been "his damned duty and obligation to kill him" (*er haette die verdammte Pflicht und Schuldigkeit gehabt ihn umzulegen*); although, of course, he and his friends realized that Morel was not an executioner but a physician. "To be sure, he should have made his influence felt at certain key points. He should have said, 'This and that is the case. You can no longer count on reasonable leadership.' That was his duty and obligation." But if that was to no avail he would have had the moral and ethical duty to kill him with a lethal injection. I then asked this defendant what would have happened to Morel if it had been discovered. He answered: "Well, if it had leaked out, he probably would have been condemned to death. But that is difficult to say for sure because one really did not see through these conditions there at the top." (*Ja, waehrscheinlich, wenn es herausgekommen waere, haette man ihn abgeurteilt. Es ist schwer zu sagen, weil man diese Verhaeltnisse dort an der Spitze zu wenig uebersieht.*)

It is characteristic for the depth to which the destructive pattern has taken root that for this man and his circle of medical friends, the only cure for the ills of a destructive dictatorship

was seen in a new medical-biologic-scientific super-dictator who would scientifically destroy the dictator at the right moment for this new phase of destruction. And what then?

Genocide and geno-suicide

Indeed, the destructive pattern of thinking has taken root so firmly that certain disillusioned Nazis who had been thinking in terms of genocide of other people up to the time of defeat are now thinking, in absolute logical consequence, in terms of geno-suicide of the German nation. A characteristic example is another defendant in the dock of Nazi physicians who had been a fairly ardent Party member since 1937. He now felt that the result of the war had shown conclusively that the Germans are not superior to other nations—"not in the least." He thought it was for that reason that Germany's attempt to Germanize the world, to create a world order in the German sense, failed. It was a question of Germany or the rest of the world. For this reason Germany should now "accept the verdict of history" and should cease to exist as a national and cultural unit. He continued:

I am convinced that that is today the best solution. If you ask for my political ideals, I tell you that it would be senseless to maintain a German viewpoint (*Weltanschauung*) in the face of these two great groups of powers. I am today of the opinion that it is best that fate has made this decision. Those in the East have no choice, they must orient themselves toward the East, and in the face of these masses it will not be possible to maintain a viewpoint or a literature of our own; and those in the West also cannot maintain themselves in the face of the Anglo-American point of view (*Auffassung*); and personally I am thoroughly ready to dissolve myself into the Anglo-American ("*und persoenlich bin ich durchaus bereit, ins Englisch-Amerikanische aufzugehen*"). We have now had such a decidedly negative selection of our population in these two wars that it has become completely hopeless to rebuild a nationally limited culture out of these ruins. That would be a completely false idea.

A geno-suicidal mood of this type has indeed become rather characteristic among former Nazi activists in consequential adherence to the basically destructive trend of Nazism. I would not consider it too difficult at all to sell a former SS activist the idea that the German problem should be solved within one year by shooting every German on his birthday, and to create for this purpose a *Reichsgeburtstagsabschussammelstelle* patterned after the various *Sammelstellen* (collection points) for annihilation purposes which the SS had established all over occupied Europe. The only reason I have not made this psychological experiment is the fear that such a preposterous suggestion,

copied after the old but deadly-serious SS pattern, would be taken seriously by these people.

Training for genocide

All this disastrous propagation of destructive thinking was a means of preparatory seduction to destructive activity, which was early combined with more direct seduction to destructive physical activity calculated to let the novices taste the primitive satisfactions obtained from regression to infantile-sadistic patterns and to keep that taste alive in the initiated. It was for this reason that the training and indoctrination centers of the SS were always attached to concentration camps. I know of one case in which at the beginning of this "brutalization course," (*Brutalisierungskurs*) as the SS themselves called it, the beginning was made by a "hardening experiment" toward animals. The young SS woman who told the story stated that at one point during her training she and every other member of her group of novices were given a young puppy for a pet. After a few weeks, time enough for each to grow fond of her pet, they were suddenly given an order for each of them to kill her dog with her own knife; those who could not do it were supposed to be dismissed from SS training. They all complied, since none wanted to leave in disgrace. It was on this basis that people like Thea Binz and others were quite systematically conditioned to sadistic patterns.

In this process of seduction (people can more easily be seduced to lower levels of emotional expression than educated to higher ones) the use of group and mass sanction played a contributing role. Especially during the process of initiation, the Nazis always saw to it that the worst atrocities, the so-called *Sonderaktionen* (special actions), were always committed by groups. Photographs and films, which the Nazis themselves rejoiced in taking on such occasions and which have found their way into our hands, usually show groups participating in these atrocities, although displaying varying degrees of initiative.

The individuals who, once they were in the SS or similar formations, did not succumb to this "group polarization" were few. In his book Kogon⁶ tells the story of an SS man who told him that once during one such *Sonderaktion* he had scruples about shooting a little girl and hesitated for a few moments; his officer then yelled at him that if he did not shoot he would be shot himself; so he fired the shot. Since then he had not been able to get the face of the little girl, breaking down under his

⁶ Kogon, Eugen, *Der SS-Staat (Das System Der Deutschen Konzentrationslager)*, verlag Karl Alber, Munich, 1946, I-XXIII, 1-339.

shot, out of his mind. He gradually developed a reactive depression and ultimately killed himself while still serving as a guard at Buchenwald concentration camp where he had been transferred some time before his suicide. This man had remnants of his pre-SS superego left—obviously a defect of the indoctrination given him by his SS instructors.

But the overall result that, apart from such "exceptions caused by human weakness," Himmler and his followers—that is, all Germans thoroughly infected with Nazism—could derive strength and joy not only from the act of killing but also from gazing upon heaps of 100, 500, or 1000 freshly killed corpses (as Himmler so eloquently expressed it) either with frank enjoyment or tinged with a veneer of rationalization, was the combined result of indoctrination, seduction, and sanction—or, expressed in Pavlovian terms, conditioning.

Role of Women

I have pointed out above that one of the main sources of sanction was the group, in particular the participating group. But a particularly sinister type of sanction came from a surprisingly large circle of ostensibly non-participating women, especially women close to SS and other activist circles, although not themselves enrolled in the SS or other activist organizations. Dr. von Baeyer⁷ has described this type of woman and her sociopsychological role with great clarity. She points out that the majority of real Nazi men, including the majority of active SS men, preferred to remain among themselves with their politically camouflaged sadism. Their women were to play a role quite different from that of the active SS valkyries who were in the minority. This role was the following:

In the Nazi system of the rule of the instincts, the woman represents the ostensible, the acquiescent moral facade. Of the German woman one expected that she was able to develop an eminently strange kind of "real" National Socialist conviction. The vast majority of "the initiated and active SS men evidently demanded from their women an additional particular kind of ideological justification which consisted in their not being concerned with anything that happened. In the turmoil of the Nazi propaganda fireworks, women experienced the pleasure of destructiveness and the methods of displacement. But the truly genuine Nazi men did not want to see their wives carried away by this flood. Certainly not because they wanted them to retain their critical faculties, but in order that they would succumb to National Socialism in a different, conscious manner. Such women evidently knew a lot, sanctioned it, and still remained quite passive. They were quasi the mental depositories, who were, so to speak, neutral and innocent and did not draw

⁷ Baeyer, Wanda von, *The Emotional Psychology of the German Woman under the Nazis*, an unpublished manuscript.

conclusions, but in whose consciences or in whose sanction the men found a place for their spiritual ablution outside themselves. These women obviously relieved their menfolk of their conflicts of conscience by the sanction which they, the non-participants, granted to their men. Possibly the wives of military commanders particularly had to play this role. The man may, for instance, have had so and so many people shot as hostages and may then have felt purified 'through the love of his wife.' Such descriptions of moral cleavages have been mentioned before in German literature. In a coarsened and partly primitive, partly magic sense this is what the SS expected their wives to be. Outwardly these women could be recognized by their uniform style of living; as regards dress, home, the education of their children, they were tinged in a 'Nordic', or at least 'folkloristic' manner. Today they shine especially by virtue of a completely blank political questionnaire and impress by their extensive collections of peasant art which simulate a cultural background. Inwardly they are, because previously without any displacement and without any personal responsibility, now completely without any feeling of guilt. And they represent a kind of refuge for the thoroughly unmasked National Socialism. I fear that they are its most dangerous residue. A movement which is in actual fact merely destructive needs a special reservation where specific specimens are kept who can assert until the end that something constructive was intended and that the final goal had been good."

Dr. von Baeyer's allusion to similar settings in German literature brings to mind the fact that no lesser man than Goethe contributed to the preservation of the old Germanic heathen notion that a sinful man can be purified and forgiven by a woman's love, rather than by true repentance and by divine and spiritual grace. Wagner, of course, reiterated this motif with more obviously heathen trappings.

Summary

In summary, we found that there was a widespread release of destructive drives and destructive activity in the German people under the Nazi regime caused by the combined effects of: 1) Indoctrination with anti-spirituality, resulting in a shift of super-ego values away from the religious-spiritual-humane toward the exclusively tribal (the *Deutschland ueber alles* doctrine). 2) Indoctrination with anti-rationalism, resulting in the discrediting and abandonment of reason as the main instrument for decision by individuals. 3) Seduction, resulting in pleasurable release of repressed instinctual drives. 4) Sanction—namely, group sanction and sanction by the not actively participating larger part of the female population, resulting in pleasurable absence of guilt feelings.

Result of social, cultural, and political conditioning

Observation of the Germans during the Nazi regime indicated that they represented a group in which instinctual destructive

drives can be more easily released than in most other population groups under comparable conditions of indoctrination and seduction by propaganda. The Third Reich was not the first period in German history during which this trait manifested itself; legalized torture, for example, was practiced more extensively and for a much longer period in Germany than in most other countries, the medieval torture chamber in Regensburg, for instance, having remained in active use until 1806. I wish to emphasize at this point that I do not consider this trait at all as a biological or racial characteristic, but as the result of social, cultural, and political conditioning. I am therefore using the word "Germans" or "German people" in this connection as a term denoting members of a specific social, cultural, national, traditional unit, the German State or community, and not as a term denoting descendants of a particular racial or familial ancestral strain.

The fact that this trait is not a racial or basic biological characteristic is attested to by two sets of facts. First, those population groups of German racial extraction who never became really incorporated into the German Reich, such as, for instance, the citizens of the German part of Switzerland, and those people of German racial origin who left Germany and settled elsewhere, for instance in the United States or Canada, as well as their descendants, do not show this trait. Second, the instinctual destructive drives themselves, with which we are dealing here, are by no means more strongly developed in the Germans than in other people. In other words, the German is not a biologically more ferocious human animal than others, but rather on the contrary; when it comes to the qualities of rugged combat stamina and fierce, cool courage—which are most closely related to the basically biological—he is far outdistanced by the citizens of many other nations, for instance the Yugoslav, or the Englishman, to name only two of the many.

In this connection it is important to emphasize that the specific destructive activity of the German occupying forces did not manifest itself so much during the heat of combat, but rather afterwards. The early periods of any German invasion usually were the relatively "best" ones for the unfortunate occupied countries. The systematic destructiveness of the German invaders was not fully released until increasing control, domination of resources, and disarmament of the opponent lessened the fear of retaliation. This does not indicate a natural overflow of excess ferocity but a more complicated process which has to do with the higher levels of integration, the psychic control mechanisms rather than with the instinctual drives themselves. It is

indeed in these control mechanisms rather than in the instinctual drives themselves that we have to look for the reason for this disastrous German trait. It is when we examine these psychic control mechanisms that we find the greatest degree of difference between members of the German cultural sphere and those of other, especially Western, cultural groups.

First of all, social-philosophic *Weltanschauung*, in other words superego notions, have a greater guiding value to the German than to members of other cultural groups. This trait of course has its asset sides. If the superego values which are believed in are good, for instance religious, spiritual, and humane, then the particular German has a greater chance of becoming a saint than do members of other groups. The only trouble with predominantly superego-determined guidance of the personality is that the superego, even at best, is the least deeply anchored part of the personality, therefore the least stable and reliable, unless continually reinforced by external social-moral forces, of which the most important are religion, law, and public opinion. The superego structure is therefore in peril whenever these established guiding forces weaken, or are being undermined, shifted, or perverted, and becomes itself open to undermining, shift, and perversion, even in adult life—a fact which is probably more important than we have been aware of heretofore.

The most important deficiencies of the members of the German social-cultural system, however, lie in that part of the personality whose function it is to deal rationally with reality in a responsible and relevant manner—that is, the ego. A good deal of work has been done with reference to the ego structure of people bred and integrated into the German social-cultural system, especially by Brickner, who clearly pointed out that one of the outstanding features of the German culture is a resentment of and a denial of reality, which he compared to the attitude of the paranoid individual in reference to reality. A readiness to fanatical and even delusional thinking is indeed very striking to everyone who comes in contact with people in Germany, not only among the defendants of the recent trials and other prisoners but also in the population at large.

Fried⁸ has pointed out that after the last war a delusional distortion of the events which led to the losing of that war sprang up very rapidly in Germany in that a real delusion soon manifested itself that Germany had not lost that war at all. This is indeed one of the difficulties in appraising the true mental state of such people as Hess and other borderline cases. One of their

⁸ Fried, H. E., *The Guilt of the German Army*, New York, Macmillan, 3rd edition, 1943, XI and 426 pp.

predominant delusions, namely that Germany actually had not lost this war either—she was the victim of some trickery or misunderstanding—is found among a surprisingly wide circle of people even within sight of the ruins of some of Germany's large cities. With all this paranoid pattern among members of the German cultural sphere is also associated a certain sense of mission, which would be an asset if it could be had without the other mental-emotional trends of paranoid coloring.

Denial of responsibility

Linked with this denial of reality is a widespread anti-rationalism obviously originating as a spontaneous defense but worked up into a policy designed to crush any attempt at exercise of the basic ego functions which would be hostile to the deep-seated aversion to reality. With this unrealistic and anti-rational attitude goes an unwillingness and inability to accept personal responsibility. The defense "but this has been ordered by the highest authorities of the State" is the exasperated answer to all attempts of even the most tactful methods of throwing the ball of responsibility to any individual in Germany no matter how important a part in the hierarchy of the Third Reich he may have played. General Jodl's famous remark when one of the prosecutors on the stand accused him that on his order so-and-so many civilians were murdered was an exasperated retort, classic both in its denial of reality and in its refusal of responsibility, when he said, *aber die wurden ja nicht ermordet; die wurden seelenmaessig betreut und standrechtlich erschossen*, ("but they were not murdered at all; they received ministrations to their souls and then they were shot according to martial law,").

With these three traits, namely, an aversion to reality, anti-rationalism, and denial of responsibility, goes a fourth one, probably a consequence of the other three—namely, a disinterest in the relevant aspects of life with a preference for certain irrelevant ones. This trait, of course, in a very quiet and well-ordered society may have certain assets in that it may account for a rather large number of people who have devoted their life and great energy to rather odd and out-of-the-way sciences and arts which later contributed some usefulness to human progress, sometimes more, frequently not so much as the owners of these traits fancied in their ivory towers. Again, the cultivation of such accomplishments would have been quite as well possible if the owners of these traits had not so completely secluded themselves from actual life as they chose to do. The trait, however, goes further than that and is more widespread. In the classical pattern of German life and its meaning to the individual, the

pursuit of happiness, and happiness and success in the ability to provide security, health, and happiness for one's family appear relatively insignificant; it all has to add up to a contribution for the greater power and glory of Germany. In other words, it has to refer to something outside the relevant sphere of the own personality, family circle, and immediate community to be really satisfying.

This inability to obtain sufficient satisfactions from the relevant, personality-near stimuli and the need for stimuli from spheres outside the ego has always been a characteristic trait of the German personality. When these stimuli come from the superego and when the superego ideals are good, then all for the best. Then you have a personality, as I have stated above, more likely to become a saint than members of other cultural spheres. But when the superego ideals become undermined, shifted, or perverted, and when under these circumstances combined with a system of seduction and sanction, the lower Id portion of the personality is also allowed to share in the leadership—and in view of the weakness of the ego structure, it must whenever the superego lead lessens or becomes disrupted—then this same personality is more likely to become a devil than would a member of any other cultural group.

In other words, we have here the result of a social and cultural molding of the German personality in which somehow the ego part of the personality has been insufficiently developed or has been crushed by educational, social, or other forces. What we have left is a weak ego with a vastly overdeveloped but of necessity unstable superego which is superimposed over this weak ego and over a probably normal Id portion of the personality. The emptiness of the ego sphere is the most striking finding which differentiates members of the German cultural group from members of other cultural groups. With this weakness of the ego, of course, goes the need to receive the main motivational stimuli from spheres of the personality other than the ego—that is, from both the superego and the Id. A number of nonpsychiatric authors have sensed this peculiarity. Santayana has formulated it most succinctly when he spoke of the need of the Germans for “irrelevant excitement.” With this he very aptly described the need for stimuli from other spheres than the relevant problems of personal life and immediate interpersonal relations.

Utilizing need for “irrelevant excitement”

One of the most sinister traits of the Hitler regime was that it utilized this craving for irrelevant excitement by these per-

sonalities with weak ego in its system of seduction described above. It was apparently a function of the more spectacular atrocities in concentration camps, especially in Auschwitz, to provide this type of excitement. The most spectacular of the mass atrocities were called *Sonderaktionen* (special actions). One of these, which was practiced particularly in Auschwitz, was the burning of live prisoners, especially children, in pits measuring 20 by 40 to 50 meters, on piles of gasoline-soaked wood. This has been described by a number of witnesses, including some Dutch and Polish witnesses. One of these, Mr. Jerzy Bielski, a former prisoner who had been assigned as an electrician at the extermination plant in Auschwitz, testified before the military tribunal.⁹ He testified also that numerous SS men and German civilians, including "visiting firemen" of officers' rank, came to witness these atrocities. He recalled SS Captain Sommer and SS Lieutenant Colonel Eirenschmalz, both of the economic and administrative main office of the SS, as frequent visitors to Auschwitz. When the witness identified Sommer, Sommer muttered a curse; but Eirenschmalz, when the witness approached him with an obvious sign of recognition, rose in the dock and said, "I am the other one."

The reaction of the SS to the ghastly shows offered and eagerly visited at Auschwitz was a peculiar mixture of enjoyment and detachment. The enjoyment in most cases was of an infantile sadistic sort not actually connected with any sexual sadism. In the main these atrocities provided a feast of that irrelevant excitement of which Santayana speaks—of a peculiar impersonal and unreal sort which of course entails complete coldness and pitilessness of which only people without proper ego functions could be capable.

Kogon relates in his book "The SS State" that when Auschwitz was evacuated because of the advance of the Russian armies, the SS men transferred from Auschwitz to Buchenwald rather nostalgically expressed how tame they found Buchenwald by comparison and how much they missed the "strong experiencing" (*das starke Erleben*) which Auschwitz had offered them. Most revealing of this reaction is the diary of Professor Doctor, Doctor Hans Hermann Kremer.¹⁰

Diary notes on mass atrocities and preoccupation with food

In 1941 Professor Kremer went on active duty as medical officer in the Waffen SS. He has left a diary which includes

⁹ Court transcript, Court No. 2, Case 4, pp. 388, 389.

¹⁰ Ph.D., Berlin, 1914; M.D., Berlin, 1919; Associate Professor at the University of Münster in Westphalia.

entries made during his tour of duty in Auschwitz from 30 August 1942 to 18 November 1942. This diary (Doc. No. NO-3408) is a ghastly document void of anything but the most primitive instinctual expressions consisting of accounts of primitive sadistic enjoyment of mass atrocities, of the simple oral gratifications of eating—with enumerations of all the dishes consumed, of accounts of his own pseudo-scientific atrocities (consisting of the removal of vital organs from living prisoners)—with its satisfactions of the curiosity reflex achieved without strings tied to it and in primitive infantile fashion, and last but not least, of the greedy primitive satisfactions of collecting and shipping all kinds of valuable items—with the appraisal value recorded for each parcel—to his home in faraway Munster. The spectacular mass atrocities, of which he attended 14, the numerous simple executions, inflictions of punishment, his own pseudo-scientific atrocities, and the enjoyment of food and wine are all related in the same vein, showing a peculiar mixture of detachment and of the eager excitement of a child attending a party.

The following entries are quoted:

“3 September 1942—

First time present at a *Sonderaktion* (special action) at 3 hours in the morning. Compared with this the Inferno by Dante seems to me as a comedy. Auschwitz is not called for nothing the “camp of extermination.”

5 September 1942—

This afternoon present at a *Sonderaktion* (special action) from the female concentration camp (*Muselmaenner*): The most horrible of horrors. Hschf. Thilo, doctor of the troops, is right when he told me this morning that we are at *anus mundi*. In the evening at approximately 8:00 hours again present at a *Sonderaktion* from the Netherlands. Men all want to take part in these actions because of the special rations they get then, consisting of a fifth part of liter of schnapps, 5 cigarettes, 100 g. sausage and bread. Today and tomorrow on duty.

6 September 1942—

Today, Sunday, excellent lunch: tomato soup, half a hen with potatoes and red cabbage (20 g. fat), sweets and marvelous vanilla ice . . . in the evening at 8:00 hours outside for a *Sonderaktion*.

9 September 1942—

This morning I got the most pleasant news from my lawyer Prof. Dr. Hallerman in Munster that I got divorced from my wife on the first of this month (Note: I see colors again, a black curtain is drawn back from my life!). Later on, present as doctor at a corporal punishment of eight prisoners and an execution by shooting with small calibre rifles. Got soapflakes and two pieces of soap. At lunch time I was riding a bicycle outside the SS station when a civilian accosted me like a would-be-murderer, runs beside me and asks me if I was Regierungsrat Klemm from Breslau, to whom I had an unbelievable resemblance. He was

together with this gentleman in the first world war. How many doubles have I got in this world? In the evening present at a *Sonderaktion*, fourth time.

10 September 1942—

In the morning present at a *Sonderaktion* (5th time).

20 September 1942—

Listened to a concert of the prisoners' band this afternoon in bright sunshine. Bandmaster: conductor of the *Warschauer Staatsoper*. 80 musicians. For lunch we had pork, for dinner baked tench.

23 September 1942—

Last night present at the 6th and 7th *Sonderaktion*. In the morning *Obergruppenfuehrer* Pohl arrived with his staff in the house of the *Waffen SS*. The guard outside the door was the first who gave me the salute with the rifle. In the evening at 20:00 hours, dinner with *Obergruppenfuehrer* Pohl in the leader house, a real banquet. We had baked pike, as much as we wanted, good coffee, excellent ale and rolls.

27 September 1942—

Sunday afternoon, 16:00-20:00 hours, comradely meeting (*Kameradschaftsabend*) in the community house with dinner, free beer and cigarettes. The Commander Hoess made a speech, musical show and theatre.

30 September 1942—

Last night present at the 8th *Sonderaktion*.

3 October 1942—

Today we fixed living material of human liver, spleen and pancreas, in addition to this, lice fixed in alcohol from people suffering from typhus. Whole streets in Auschwitz are suffering from typhoid fever. Therefore I got the first injection against typhoid fever today.

6 October 1942—

Ostuf. Entress had an accident with his motorcycle; made a bandage. The Commander Hoess fell from his horse. Ostuf. Wirths not yet back.

7 October 1942—

Present at the 9th *Sonderaktion* (foreigners and emaciated females [*Muselweiber*]). Wirths came back.

9 October 1942—

Sent a parcel with 9 pounds of soft soap, 200 M. worth, to Munster. Rainy weather.

10 October 1942—

Taken out living material of liver, spleen, and pancreas and fixed it. Heated my room first time. Still cases of typhus and typhoid fever. Quarantine goes on.

11 October 1942—

For lunch we had today, Sunday, a hare, a big leg, with plain dumplings and red cabbage for 1.25 RM.

12 October 1942—

Inoculation against typhoid; after that, in the evening, fever. In spite of that, present at a *Sonderaktion* during the night (1600 persons from

the Netherlands). Terrible scene outside the last bunker (*Hoessler!*). That was the 10th *Sonderaktion*.

13 October 1942—

Present at an infliction of punishment and the execution of seven Polish civilians.

14 October 1942—

Inquiries made at the office of chancellor in Munster for the beginning of the winter term.

15 October 1942—

Living, fresh material of liver, spleen, and pancreas taken out from an icteric.

16 October 1942—

Today I sent the second parcel, 300 RM worth, to Mrs. Wizemann to save it for me (soap, soapflakes, prepared foodstuffs). Had taken a photograph of a syndactyle Jew in the camp. (Father and uncle have the same disease).

17 October 1942—

Present at an infliction of punishment and 11 executions. Taken out living, fresh material of liver, spleen, and pancreas after injection of pilocarpin.

18 October 1942—

In wet cold weather present at the 11th *Sonderaktion* (Netherlanders) on Sunday morning. Shocking scenes with three women, who beseech us for the naked life.

24 October 1942—

Six women of the Budger rebellion "inoculated off"¹¹ (Kless).

31 October 1942—

Marvellous weather since about a fortnight. Every day we go sunbathing in the garden of the house of the Waffen SS. Even the clear nights are rather mild. Asked for 5 days' leave at the SS hospital in Prague.

1 November 1942—

At 1300 hours left Auschwitz for Prague.

2 November 1942—

After breakfast I sent off the third parcel containing high boots and applesauce to Munster, worth 300 RM. . . . Went to the *Fuehrerheim* where we had an excellent single-course dinner at 17:30 hours, with ample amounts of meat.

5 November 1942—

In the morning sent the fourth parcel to Mrs. Wizemann, worth 300 RM. Contents were handbag, fountain pen, spectacles, high boots, writing paper, uniform shirts, etc. . . . In the club, where I had one liter of a wonderful Bulgarian red wine, which made me feel in the real mood. I did not go to bed before 12:00 hours.

¹¹ *Abgeimpft*, an SS slang term, similar to *Abgespritzt* (injected off), meaning "killed by a lethal injection."

6 November 1942—

The nurse woke me up at 06:00 hours. I took the express to Maehrisch-Ostrau at 08:10 hours. In Prerau I changed to the express train Vienna-Krakow, and hardly had I entered a second-class compartment when a major general joined me with whom I was alone for almost the entire remainder of the trip, and who told me about his front-line experiences and in parting pressed my hand. Duration of trip from Prague to Auschwitz more than 9 hours. Upon arrival I immediately went into the *Fuehrerheim*, where I had a really good meal again and ate myself full (*wo ich mich mal wieder so richtig rundherum satt ass*).

8 November 1942—

Took part in two *Sonderaktionen* last night in rainy weather (12th and 13th). In the morning I saw *Stschaf*. Kitt in the sick quarters, who is a pupil of mine from Essen. In the afternoon another *Sonderaktion* which was the 14th I took part in. In the evening we had a nice time in the leaders' club (*Fuehrerheim*), invited by *Hstuf*. Wirths. We had Bulgarian red wine and Croatian plum-schnapps.

13 November 1942—

Living, fresh material of liver, spleen, and pancreas taken from a Jewish prisoner of 18 years of age, who was very atrophic. First we took a photo of him. Liver and spleen fixed as usual in Carnoy and pancreas in Zenker (prisoner No. 68030).

14 November 1942—

Today, Saturday, there was a variety show on in the hall (perfectly grand). Special gayety was caused by the dancing dogs, the two midget cocks who crowed on command, the packaged human being, and the cyclists' group.

15 November 1942—

In the morning present at an infliction of punishment.

16 November 1942—

Sent a parcel with soft soap (about 12 pounds) of 300 RM value, to Mia and Gretchen.

17 November 1942—

Sent my small trunk to Mrs. Wizemann. Fifth parcel worth 300 RM, weight 14 kg. Contents: 2 bottles of brandy, vitamins and tonics, razor blades, washing and shaving soap, thermometer, nail-tongs, bottles with iodine, etc. *Stabsscharfuehrer* Ontl talks till I give him a coupon for a pair of breeches.

18 November 1942—

Left for Prague."

In many other respects, too, Professor Kremer's diary is an extraordinary document. While during his time in Auschwitz he was absorbed with atrocities, eating, and acquiring valuables, in other parts of his diary he occasionally digresses into philosophical domains which again illustrate the classical traits of the above-described German ego disturbance. Once after seeing a motion picture which must have depicted some of the real

satisfactions of life which were so meaningless to him and his ilk he consoled himself with the following entry: "Life passes by, but work remains eternal," and then, "One can do only one thing; it is either love or work. Both at the same time are impossible."

It is amazing how in this diary all these aspects of ego disturbance which the German social-cultural environment has brought about is so classically expressed. Life is meaningless, but the impersonal is the thing that counts. The paranoid distortion of reality, denial of responsibility, and irrelevancy and the anti-rational lack of logic which is in these two sentences goes through the entire book. As a most striking illustration of all these and other consequences of the insufficiency of the ego, Professor Kremer's diary is an extraordinary document indeed. It is monumental enough to be made the subject of a doctor's thesis in psychiatry or sociology, or both. There may be people outside of Germany who may remember this strange specimen of humanity while the environment in which he was fully to blossom, namely, Nazi Germany, did not yet exist, because in 1926 as a yet unknown person, probably hardly distinguishable from the average run of human beings, he spent a period of postgraduate work in Holland.

Ego disturbance fundamental in German social-psychological structure

I am of the opinion that the fundamental disturbance in the social-psychological structure in Germany is an ego disturbance. Where does it come from? We know especially from our experiences in military psychiatry that anxiety is one of the most important ego-disrupting forces and we have learned about its interrelationship with aggressiveness; aggressiveness generates anxiety and anxiety in turn generates aggressiveness. We have to examine to what extent anxiety is a more commonly predominant feeling in Germany, in children as well as in adults, than elsewhere.

A certain undertone of anxiety is indeed prevalent in Germany, a fact which has been brought out in German literature for centuries. Expression of a peculiar longing and craving are more frequent in German literature than in the literature of other countries. There is no doubt that something in the German social structure is conducive to group anxiety. It is interesting to travel through the German countryside and see all the farm houses closely grouped together in the tightly packed villages almost as densely packed as city slums, with wide fields in be-

tween where no independent farm houses make their appearance. Does this anxiety relate to historical circumstances, to geographical circumstances, or is it fundamentally based on the structure of the German family, the paramount position of the father in relation to the children? We do not know. However, I do feel that this is an important point to be investigated.

There is no doubt in my mind that the German anxiety, the German aggressiveness, and the German thwarting of the ego development start in early childhood. It is most likely that the family structure is the most important factor in bringing this about. However there are historical events too that may contribute. Dr. von Baeyer has pointed out to me that the old rule in Germany: "Whose region you inhabit, his religion you follow," (*cuius regio eius religio*) which was made German law in the 17th Century, had an early influence in militating against freedom of conscience.

What are the practical measures which we can take in reforming the social-psychological situation in Germany? First of all, further studies are needed. I hope that in these considerations I have indicated a few leads for further research. But already we have learned enough to know that most of all mature guidance on the part of the free, maturer nations is needed and for that purpose it is necessary that we maintain our own maturity. Maturity is a level hard to maintain. Regression is all too easy and pleasurable, and the danger is that our German patient may again forsake development of his ego in order to submit once more to another ephemeral neo-superego with a new orgy of release of instinctive destructiveness.

Role of psychiatry

But in spite of the magnitude and extent of the problem we should not allow ourselves to become discouraged. All constructive, forward-looking forces are needed in this task, and we, as psychiatrists, will have to do our share. I think that we psychiatrists have made a fairly hopeful start as potential contributors to social health. Lifting our eyes from the individual mental patient in front of us, we have proceeded to contribute helpful understanding to family relationships, especially to the child-parent relationship, then to the teacher-child relationship, then to the schools in general, to the courts, and most recently to armies at war in terms of morale. It is now time that we make every effort to contribute helpful understanding to national and international politics.