

On Political Ethology and Backwardness in Vital Fields of Knowledge. How Progressives have been Outrun

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Theme: [History](#)

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One century ago, progressives often knew more than managers on capitalism—and much more on socialism. They had real means of expression and action : labour press was extensively read, and strike was an efficient weapon. Besides, they participated widely in a common view of things : many followed favourable discoveries in all fields, and hoped for more. The privileged had no alternative but to throw the peoples against one another, in order to get them back to the atrocious exhaustion which is the requirement of any oppressive system.

But the world war was only the first part of the reactionary reply to the slow human awakening. Using treacherous scientists, the power maniacs thought more and more clearly of stupefying minds, perverting the applications of science, and so controlling vicious technical refinements. Horrified, led astray or lazy, progressives lost their lead and accumulated delay. The present state of the world speaks loud enough about the threats this situation entails for the human “race”.

Most dramatic is the ignorance, of course carefully maintained, in matters of human behaviour, human ethology and especially political ethology. By clearly putting the human element back into its animal heritage, by refusing the repression that makes our animality uncscious, one becomes capable of true explanations and thus action in two types of movements of considerable historical weight : on one hand, the wild alteration of natural drives into power perversions—the plagues of the dominant— ; on the other hand, the frequent weaknesses of reason vis-à-vis the pulses in general human behaviour—the plagues of the dominated—. So it is necessary to understand first how unconscious mechanisms work against ethological knowledge.

By their very nature, these repressions favour the animal part of human beings and thus are made incredibly dreadful : the more one has animal reactions (power obsessions or fanatical fury), the less one admits it. The corresponding chains of reactions are eventually aggregated to psyche by social hazards or complexes, all the more efficiently because “human pride” (the illusion of free will) is violently hit by the learning of irrational, affective priorities. This is particularly verified in the most primitive and animal reactions, predominant in massive historical movements : no long research is necessary to see the barbarisms in history, and it is quite easy to explain them by the heaviness of evolutions just as blind as the biological ones. Now too often among progressives—who yet know the price of looking for an equilibrium through reason and truth—the perception of animality in human affairs is experienced as an intolerable insult : this is clearly not the best way to escape barbarism.

As for reactionaries and their ideological expressions and censorships, the (partial) refusal of ethology is simply part of their general obscurantist will : for knowledge, in its deepest processes, is carrier of democratic pressure and can but oppose privileged and privileges. BUT as in many other fields, this obscurantism ceases as soon as technical uses and abuses are concerned : CIA and MI6 are very remarkable in ethological techniques—just as industrial and military armies are very remarkable in electronic, perhaps even physical, techniques—. This does not benefit democracy.

In this political context it becomes possible to analyse the savage transform of pulses, from their pure and practically irreducible nature, into complex and elaborated drives (“instincts”), such as the obsession of power and domination, even domination at any price with its sadistic effects. But simple, common intuition can lead to serious mistakes. Thus, in his very remarkable and not so well-known book on “Obedience to authority”, Milgram writes : “By aggression we mean the impulse or action to harm another organism”. That would be a disastrous ethological aberration (yet the work—still fundamental now—on what is called “aggression” in ethological science was more than ten years old at the time Milgram was writing) ; and the English-German label “Aggression” itself is dramatically dangerous. Perhaps some lines are needed here to unravel these matters.

What has become “aggression”, in the vocabulary of scientific literature about behaviour, is fundamentally neutral as all basic impulses are—a motor without direction—. At the start it is

the tendency or drive of an individual to move any congener away from one's field of activity, as widely as possible.

But of course, the meeting of fellows of the species can lead to confrontation and generally does : all the more energetically since the field of activity is at first ill-defined. This explains a very unhappy consequence : the affective load of the now established word mixes up very unfortunately the real pulse (which might be called simple expansivity) and what often results after confrontation (pulses and actions, to make things still worse). By itself, ethological aggression is not a tendency to harm, but only to move away. This becomes particularly obvious in the species where pair formation goes through the initial confrontation of male and female : then, sometimes long processes of inhibition are needed, in order to allow the final living close together—which might go through occasional rough patches.

In short : first, the ethological, essential reality of the essential pulse is to move away, not hurt—it is the latest that has appeared in evolution, the richest, the strongest, and by far the most intense especially in the human species— ; next, it is directed to fellows of the same species (inextricably other and like, root and food for intensity as well as conflict). So, just because of its considerable power, the expansive pulse must be repressed in all social constructions, while it is at the same time a very powerful factor of social life.

The whole human drama lies there : for repressions are thus built in the most complete unconsciousness and incoherence, in the most aberrant directions at all possible terms, giving the most vicious perversions and the most insane barbarisms : in one word, history—even progressives of our time should accept that wars and slaveries took and are taking place, that this did not wait for capitalism, and that this is absolutely not rational.

So it is possible to measure the aberration and then the despair of a researcher of Milgram's class—this is just as true for another scout in political thought at great depths : Orwell ; his unavoidable ethological ignorance is the source of the considerable errors and of the final abdication in 1984—. On the contrary, the rational control of expansivity-aggression in the ethological sense is at the beginning of our species' chances of survival. Only the problem has become of terrifying urgency, in the customary complete indifference of nature to what is most human : for the will-to-power is henceforth freed, from all external inhibitions that existed as long as work and workers were a necessary condition for production and survival. Not long ago the workers' counter-power, strike, was a factor of equilibrium and a resource against privileges. "One knows"—as a matter of fact : many more people ought to know to-day—what could be done against this factor of stability, by automation such as the worst psychopaths of domination enslaved it to their vices.

Three other fields appear here, that cannot be thoroughly examined presently, but where unconciousness and ignorance often pass all tolerable bounds—especially among people who call themselves progressive.

1) First physics. One should analyse the conditions in which Einstein was put aside by dragons such as Bohr and von Neumann or Wigner, very special advisers to the US president for sciences and above all techniques. One should remind how von Neumann was Paul Nitze's master and the architect of Soviet Union's ruin by the arms race, and at the same time the organizer of the critically militarized computer science. One should show how these people and their like could eliminate the spirit of the experimental method and its fundamentally anti-scholastic move since Galileo, thus allowing the recruitment of rotten research workers enslaved to power concentration through machines of production and death, robots and missiles controlled by very few, and without which the Empire would not exist : this is how democracy could be eliminated—contrary to any human value.

One should explain how Bohr could lean on the most resolute reactionaries in order to impose a strictly anti-scientific "interpretation" of quantum mechanics, how this opened wide the doors of anti-popular selection and of the "sense of the sacred", and what a booster this was for the most terrible renewals of fanaticisms as well as to the sickly parapsychology, through the delirium of "measurement by awareness of the observer". All this operated against the scientific and humanistic requirements that Einstein always upheld, in the line of Galileo and the Enlightenment : notably the fact that the universe (often even in history, in the very human adventure) does not care a damn for human existence and human suffering.

2) Then the toppling over of economics, with the synthesis not only of gangs of bankers and manufacturers but of pure mafiosi, violent traffickers with their extreme vicious aggression, under the label of finance—political profit, power profit way beyond economic profit—. It is necessary to bring out the ties of this toppling over to ethology, as well as to automata hold and kept by shareholders (often a few of them), against the interest of workers or what is left of them, and still more against human crowds.

3) Lastly the most sumptuous scholastic present ever made to reaction since Aristotle : Hegelian dialectics and its supposed "gifts" of "understanding"—very special ones indeed, absolutely opposite to any science or democracy, but most favourable to a clergy renamed "members of the party" or bureaucracy—. Now the Hegelian lineages have stayed with dangling arms in front of successive cyclones, of scientific discoveries for more than a century and historical upheavals for more than a generation : but more fundamentally and

perennially, it is impossible to come to agreement in practice on the basis of dialectics, and the history of this Word of power is the history of its endless scissions and dictatorships, according to the fight or provisional victory of such or such leaders—the corresponding experiments, although useless, have alas been indefinitely repeated—. This is how these new religious lineages succeeded in paralyzing progressive people, whilst the first condition of humanistic political action is to rally and unite people in order to rally and unite forces, by common science, away from any and every prophet.

But ethology is enough, at least for some, to take the measure of the dramatic backwardness in matters of knowledge. CIA, MI6 and mainstream media ignobly manipulate the learnings of human behaviour. If only a few progressives eventually resolve to appropriate this knowledge (not only the know-how) for the action among beings and peoples, very soon much less time will be lost in details of studies about recurrent financial crises or the general devastation of the planet : for these are only consequences of the essential illness. Then it will be possible to fight coherently and efficiently according to

the extreme urgency underlying all contemporary human issue : the enormous psychopathy of the power maniacs and its popular contagion in fanaticisms and totalitarianisms.

From there it is laughable enough to hear the question of “what to do”. The progressive answer to the delay in common knowledge has always been to circulate essential knowledge, by all means and as widely as possible. Sites on the Net are something, but not enough. We need progressive schools—for political grown-ups—. Of course, among thousands of instances there is already much to say about a certain incitement to war on the ground of threats by weapons of mass destruction, then after the war has indeed taken place the confession that these weapons never existed ; or about incitement to racial hatred under religious pretexts ; and so on, and so on.

But it is immensely preferable to explain and make clear that special cases like these are only elements of the general manipulation of behaviour, through the media and (many) other means : ethology is meant for this explanation and clarification. It is by stabbing to the heart, the principle of the manipulation, that revolt can be aroused and oriented widely enough : for the time being it smoulders without reaching consciousness and hence the necessary common will and unity. If social movements stop at the level of employment and salary claims (absolutely necessary but secondary), they will not help to get away from the obsessions imposed by the money system.

Against us of course we shall have all the established, dominant and bogus-opponents : it has always been so. The hypocrite who say they want “concrete”, the religious of theological and dialectical Words, all those worried in fact by their will-to-power and parade, will oppose awareness by all villainies and all violences, all kinds of cheating and all kinds of spying. But the banning of science teaching cannot yet be official.

Don't wait till this happens.

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