

Preface

In America today, an increasing number of people from both sides of the political spectrum are becoming politicized. They are searching for solutions through politics to the enormous personal and social problems confronting their lives. As a result, politics, which traditionally is involved with the science of government, has turned into socio-politics—a secular solution to humanity's problems that to a large extent has replaced organized religion, which was used for the same purpose in the past.

Yet, people are as clueless as ever about the underlying source of their difficulties and how best to govern themselves. Time and again, history has shown that politics and political solutions are not the answer. Many a good social idea and rational social endeavor have been shipwrecked on the shoals of politics, by becoming politicized. In fact, experience has repeatedly shown that political solutions have not only been of no use in the long run but have also often backfired and made social conditions worse than they were. Think of the communist revolutions of the twentieth century, the Soviet Union, China and Cuba, the revolution in Iran, Wilson's dream of the League of Nations, or Roosevelt's idea of the United Nations. *Every one of these great social endeavors was initiated by people with the best intentions. By being politicized, every one of them ended with social conditions worse than they were before.* Despite these failures, people still tenaciously cling to the illusions that politics provide. No matter how many times political attempts fail, people learn little or nothing from past experience. Nothing changes except for the cast of characters on the political stage.

Even worse is that when people seek political solutions in this way, the original rational function of politics, which deals with the structure, organization and administration of the state, becomes distorted. Political thought degenerates from possibly being a true source of knowledge to what we have today: a confused mixture of rational and irrational human ideas and drives. This hodgepodge is today erroneously called “political science.”

Many of the questions raised in this book are never asked because the answers to them lie outside the framework of conventional thinking. Some of these questions are: What is the origin of people’s different views of the same social situation, which lead to the ideologies of the political Left and the Right? Why do people continue to hold hope for political solutions and why do these invariably fail? The basis for these unasked and unanswered questions is that people look at their problems in a fundamentally flawed way, *as if they originate from outside themselves*. Therefore, people’s thinking about themselves in general and about social problems in particular is off base and has largely been responsible for the social disasters that have marked so much of human history. This defect in thinking has become increasingly destructive in the past several centuries, especially since man has had to take responsibility for his own destiny.

Because people typically attribute extrinsic causes or other people for their personal and social problems, *they never look inward*. Thus, the political and social solutions as they have been formulated throughout the ages have always been a manifestation of people’s universal tendency to externalize their *internally* generated social problems and to seek outside solutions to solve them. This is an example of the pervasive, destructive tendency of humanity: *the evasion of the essential*.

Ironically, this tendency to evade is the hardest thing for people to understand or even to acknowledge. Why is this so? This book will explore the answers to this question and will demonstrate how it was not until the late nineteenth century—with the groundbreaking work of Sigmund Freud and, later, Wilhelm Reich, his student and colleague—that humanity first had the tools and concepts to understand themselves. Their work revealed how people have always defended themselves cognitively and emotionally and how this evasion has adversely impacted every aspect of their lives.

It will be shown that this evasion functions as a powerful defense. From earliest childhood, people's emotional and physical survival have been conditioned through the process of what Reich termed “armoring”—the development of an emotional and physical shield, defensive rigidity in the character and the musculature, that enables an individual to adapt to unnatural ways of thinking and behaving. Armor is passed down from one generation to the next through destructive childrearing practices. Taking a close look at these defensive ways of living therefore threatens people's acquired means of survival in the harsh, armored world they must live in.

As will be demonstrated, armor occurs in individuals and in society as a whole. With the social transformation during the 1960s from an authoritarian to an anti-authoritarian society, there has been a dramatic shift in the individual pattern of armor and therefore in the ways that people have kept themselves from looking inward. In the past authoritarian era, people simply avoided looking at what was within. In today's anti-authoritarian social order people have become far more sophisticated. They have adopted every possible means of distracting themselves from looking inward by taking an “anything/everything goes” attitude. Social boundaries no longer exist. Everyone is equal. No one can be special and no one can be in

charge. Standards of decency and acceptable social behavior have descended to the lowest possible level and mediocrity is the rule in culture and the arts. This anti-authoritarian attitude is, ironically, more effective than simple repression and, as a result, people today are even more removed than ever from being in touch with themselves. Moreover, with today's widespread breakthrough of social destructiveness, the result of the social transformation and the intense social pressure to appear "normal" in our politically correct society, it is more difficult than ever for people to look at themselves and their protective, defensive ways of living. They are thus more vulnerable to manipulation by power-hungry politicians.

To make matters worse, whenever a scientist comes along who has the insight and courage to uncover the origin of humanity's troubles he is either openly attacked, subjected to ridicule and scorn, or ignored altogether. This reaction not to look inward is more the rule today than it has ever been. It often results in dreadful social tragedies—outbreaks of a human disease called "the emotional plague." It is capable, at times, of causing worldwide havoc that will be discussed later.

To begin with, this book provides a historical overview of *how* political thinkers have attempted to understand political events and political thought throughout the ages. Subsequent chapters serve as a background to orient the reader to a new perspective regarding the present state of social affairs. Despite what the title suggests and in order to arrive at a genuine scientific understanding of politics, this book is not only about politics. It is also about the origin of human thought and the way people think politically and otherwise. Why social conditions in twenty-first century America are the way they are and why they continue to degenerate is then explored. This material goes beyond traditional ways of thinking about politics because it deals with the

biological origins of politics and political thinking. This book will demonstrate how underlying disturbances in the biological functioning of the human animal are manifested symptomatically in the social pathologies of everyday, including political, life. Until recently, the underlying emotional source of social pathology had not been fully identified. Surface social manifestations, not the biological forces driving people to act irrationally, are most often the focus of the news media, politicians, psychologists, and political scientists.

With tragic consequences, the traditional ways of thinking used by psychologists and sociologists do not allow for an understanding of the source of pathological social behavior. They also prevent an opportunity to arrive at a rational solution to social problems and, as a result, social problems continue to fester. What is worse, people's efforts at improving social conditions become entangled in the futile, endless ideological conflicts between the political Left and the Right. These political battles, erroneously believed to be a natural part of the democratic process, are, themselves, a highly destructive, irrational human behavior.

This book provides a natural scientific approach to an understanding of social and political phenomena by presenting material from the deeper, more inclusive biomedical perspective, one that originates from the biological realm and is by its very nature non-ideological. For the first time in the history of human thought, based on recently discovered knowledge of biological functions of individual and social life, it is possible to place the study of politics on a natural scientific basis and to arrive at a genuine *science of politics*. Fundamentally, first and foremost, human beings are biological animals. Their psychosocial behavior and its political manifestations arise at a later stage of human development from these biological functions, which this book will explain.

Relevant scientific material gathered over many decades of clinical and field study is presented here in a manner that is comprehensible to the layperson. It is a distillation and an expansion of material on politics presented in an earlier work, *The Emotional Plague: The Root of Human Evil* (Konia 2008).

The “emotional plague” is a term coined by Wilhelm Reich to describe a consequence of human armor. It is defined as the destructive behavior of armored individuals toward one another. This destructive behavior occurs in every area of social life, including the family, the workplace, politics, and anywhere human beings associate. Yet, the emotional plague has never been recognized as a symptom of people’s sick emotional life until fairly recently.

It will be shown that the real source of man’s political and social problems resides in his *biologically rooted, distorted ways of reasoning and feeling. This is why political solutions cannot work.* The book is, therefore, also partly about how people think in general and how political thinkers, in particular, in their efforts to understand social phenomena, have thought throughout the ages. A brief introduction to this subject is presented in Chapter I.

As stated earlier, people have consistently avoided looking at the ways that they think because this can lead directly to an investigation of the origin of thought itself. This, in turn, leads to the study of people’s emotional and sensory functioning, areas that, until recently, have been consistently off-limits to natural science, for good reason.

We will show that people’s thought processes are directly related to the different ways they view the world and that they correspond to specific configurations in individual character structure. These views generally fall into two categories, the thought processes of the political

Left and the Right. It will be shown that these forms of thinking, the product of distorted worldviews, are essentially ideological in that they are partial and one-sided.

A major premise of this book is that the reason people do not see and think clearly about personal and social issues because there is a physical “something” in the way, blocking their senses. This is an emotionally rooted perceptual disturbance that prevents them from seeing the world accurately, without distortion. This “something,” which is called armor, is a biological condition consisting of rigidity of the person’s character (character armor) and chronic spasms of the physical musculature (muscular armor). The function of armor is to protect the person from experiencing and expressing frightening, uncomfortable, or painful emotions and sensations. Armor can be temporary (reversible) or permanent (chronic).

Once in place, however, armor also functions to safeguard the individual’s survival in armored society. This is the life-protective function of armor and the reason that it must be preserved at all cost. Since armor occurs in both individuals and in society as a whole, this dual protective function applies in both systems. If, for any reason, armor is removed abruptly in either one, existence is threatened. The catastrophic results of a partial breakdown of social armor in today’s society are explored later.

Although for the most part protective, the perceptual distortions produced by armor explain why humans are the only species capable of cruelty and inflicting harm on others solely for the sake of being destructive. The most damaging effect of armor is therefore the blocking of the accurate perception of people’s inner and outer worlds since it prevents them from seeing things and thinking about them clearly, without distortion.

Chronic armor also interferes with the natural expression of emotion. It is the origin of all forms of disturbed human behavior. The discovery of character and muscular armor showed that all people are chronically armored in varying ways and degrees and therefore that society, in general, is emotionally disturbed.

The majority of ordinary people keep their emotional troubles to themselves. A few involve others in their sickness. These individuals displace their own personal emotional problems onto external conditions or onto others. They view and think about social issues not as they actually are but from the perspective of their particular character structure. As a result, they need to mold their environment to fit their particular worldview. Thus, differences in people's character structure give rise to differences in the sociopolitical ideologies of the Left and the Right. The distorting displacement of one's personal problems outward is the reason that people's attempts to know themselves and their society are bound to come into conflict and are always doomed to fail.

The reasons for this failure led to the discovery of sociopolitical characterology, which will be further explored here. From the vantage point of identifying the differences in people's sociopolitical character, a pathway was opened to make sense of people's social and political behavior through the ages. This knowledge has the potential to promote genuine social improvement.

The effect of armor on people's thinking is limited to two basic kinds of irrational thought: mechanistic and mystical. They correspond in a general way to the political ideology of the Left and the Right. Those who think ideologically to the Left of the socio-political spectrum think mechanistically. Essentially, they view human beings as if they are no different than machines,

and they have no trouble recognizing the limitations of the political Right. They believe that wars are a thing of the past and that all ideological differences can be settled through peaceful negotiation, by people “putting their heads together.”

Those who think ideologically to the Right think mystically. They assume there is some “higher,” mysterious purpose governing people and they recognize the limitations of the political Left. They believe that wars are inevitable and part of the human condition. No one, however, ever asks why wars are inevitable or what is it about the human condition that makes them happen?

For the first time in human history, it is possible to answer these questions, beyond the superficial. To do so, it is not sufficient to see the limitations of either the Left and the Right worldviews. These one-sided views of the world must be examined and seen to be examples of the limitations in people’s disturbed thinking in matters of politics and society. One must, therefore, recognize the flaws in the ways of thinking of *both* the Left and the Right. These divergent directions in thinking are components of a unified and mutually exclusive system of thought characteristic of armored humans that we will call “mechanistic mysticism.”

In today’s era of mechanization, people’s thinking has increasingly erred in the direction of viewing all of nature, including the human being and society, as if it is some sort of machine. Machines, however, are a part of nature and not the other way around. Thus, people today have adopted the thinking from a narrower, less inclusive realm of functioning (machines and machine technology) and applied it to the wider, more inclusive realm of natural functions. This error in thinking, typically used by those on the political Left, has resulted in disastrous consequences for humanity. *Mechanistic thinking is perfectly rational only when applied to machines and confined*

to that domain. Mechanistic thinking cannot be used rationally in the natural sciences, including sociology and politics.

In contrast, those on the political Right tend to err on the side of mystical thinking. Their rational function is to oppose the destructive social policies of the Left. However, they do so by offering “tried and true” solutions to social problems from the past, which in the current state of social disintegration is not enough. This limitation on the part of the Right allows the Left to keep pressing on relentlessly to impose its mechanistic, highly destructive political agenda on the public.

Some will object to the tone of this book by saying that its conclusions are too dogmatic or doctrinaire and that they should be presented in a more even-handed, balanced manner. This book should be read not as literature but as a textbook on sociopolitics. One would never write a treatise on the surgical treatment of trauma cases in a “balanced” manner, for example, by taking into consideration the personal feelings and attitudes of the physician or the patient and the circumstances of the traumatic event. As with all the natural sciences, things have to be seen for what they are and addressed accordingly. People have to start thinking about social and political matters in the same clinical way that physicians think about medical and surgical conditions. They cannot be viewed simply as if they are matters of personal opinion or moral judgment.

People are becoming increasingly skeptical that the politics of the Left and the Right can provide real solutions to society’s problems. However, because they have nothing to replace it with, they must return to politics for answers. The reader who can step out of the prevailing mechanistic-mystical worldview represented by the political Left and the Right will enter into an entirely different system of thinking, one that provides an unparalleled understanding of the

natural world we live in and the way chronically armored humans function socially and politically.

This view of nature employs functional thinking—*thinking the way nature functions*. It has the potential of taking humanity out of its trapped existence and providing a way that is neither to the Left nor to the Right but forward into healthier, more productive thinking and living. The application of the knowledge derived from this new way of thinking will finally provide a means of arriving at a genuine science of politics, one that is in sharp contrast to the “political science” of today and one that can prevent America’s decline into socialism.

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We will show that people's thought processes are directly related to the different ways they view the world and that they correspond to specific configurations in individual character structure. These views generally fall into two categories, the thought processes of the political Left and the Right. It will be shown that these forms of thinking, the product of distorted worldviews, are essentially ideological in that they are partial and one-sided.

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