

Published online in *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 28(2):104-114, 2019

Wilhelm Reich revisited: the role of ideology in character analysis of the individual versus character analysis of the masses and the Holocaust

Henry Zvi Lothane

„Against the soul-destroying overestimation of the sex life—and on behalf of the nobility of the human soul—I offer to the flames the writings of one Sigmund Freud!“ (Battle cry of German students)

Abstract

One of the most controversial members of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society and Freud's intimate for many years, Reich is known not only for his seminal contributions to therapeutic and social psychoanalysis in his 1933 classic *Character-Analysis* but also for his notoriety as a discoverer of an energy he named orgone. This paper is devoted to Reich the psychoanalytic sociologist and reformer, with special prominence given to his other, now somewhat forgotten, 1933 book *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*.

Key words: Individual psychology, group or mass psychology, natural science, humanistic science, political science, freedom, responsibility, love, sexuality, totalitarianism, the Nazis, the Soviets, the Holocaust.

More than a century after his birth the interest in Wilhelm Reich's legacy is still strong. Whereas Reich's seminal 1933 book *Character-Analysis* (1949) is still a staple of psychoanalytic therapy (Lothane, 2009), much less known is Reich's anti-Nazi stance and the other 1933 book, *Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1970), the political, psychosocial, and psychoanalytic analysis of the Third Reich (=Empire) and its Nazi *genocide* of European Jewry and its *culturecide*, the destruction of East European Jewish culture. Recently Peglau (2013) asked whether Reich championed an “apolitical science” and, like Dahmer (1997) and Fallend & Nitzschke (2002) before, linked Reich with concerns of German psychoanalysts under the Nazis in 1933-1939: growing anti-Jewish persecution, widespread Jewish denial of the menace, forced emigration of Jewish psychoanalysts from Austria and Germany. As Peglau notes: Reich „remained for many years the only

psychoanalyst who publicly and explicitly challenged the Nazi regime“ (p. 506, my translations throughout).

The larger question is: what is science. Broadly, *scientia* means *episteme*, knowledge, versus *doxa*, opinion. Narrowly science means natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) and measurement while humanistic sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) study persons and their non-quantifiable activities: love, language, beauty, freedom and happiness helped by psychology, sociology, philosophy, politics and other neighboring disciplines. Any science—pure mathematics, technological sciences, and certainly social sciences—can be affected by ideology and politics so as to influence people to gain power, profit, prestige, and popularity. In 1933(a) Freud defined *weltanschauung* as an ideology: “an intellectual construction which solves all the problems of our existence uniformly on the basis of one overriding hypothesis” or theory (p. 158). Freud also told Einstein in 1933(b): “It may perhaps seem to you as though our theories are a kind of mythology...But does not every science come in the end to a kind of mythology, like this? Cannot the same be said to-day of your own Physics?” (p. 211). But theories are the stuff of various „secessionist movements‘...each of them takes hold of one fragment out of the wealth of themes in psycho-analysis and makes itself independent on the basis of that seizure—selecting the instinct for mastery...or ethical conflict, or the mother, or genitality and so on“ (p.154). As stressed by Mannheim (1952), it is not what an ideology *is* but what people *do* with it. From the perspective of dramatology, people engage in dramatic actions, interactions and enactments in the here-and-now (Lothane, 2009, 2014a) and afterwards, *nachträglich*, they recall the past event and create a narrative. Such narratives are both emotionally determined and means for ideological and political ends. The choice to remain Freudian or become neo-Freudian was scientific, personal, and political, consistent with Freud’s viewing psychoanalysis as a *Bewegung*, a movement, enmeshed in ideological wars fueled by a drive for power, malicious gossip and character assassination. Nowadays we are all neo-Freudian.

In 1921 Freud transitioned from individual to mass psychology:

The contrast between individual psychology and social or group psychology (*Massenpsychologie*), which at first glance may seem to be full of significance, loses a great deal of its sharpness when it is examined more closely. It is true that individual psychology is concerned with the individual man and explores the paths

by which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instinctual impulses; but only rarely and under certain exceptional conditions is individual psychology in a position to disregard the relations of the individual to otherp. “In the individual’s mental life someone else is invariably involved as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology...is at the same time social psychology as well (p. 69).

Freud cited predecessors Le Bon, McDougall, Tarde and Trotter. Citing Le Bon: “Isolated, a person may be a cultivated individual; in a crowd he is a barbarian -- that is a creature acting by instinct. He possesses the spontaneity, the violence, the ferocity, and also the enthusiasm and heroism of primitive beings” (Freud, pp. 9-12), Freud added: “in the group (*Masse*) the individual ... throws off the repressions of his unconscious impulses ... all that is evil in the human mind, [leading to] a disappearance of *conscience*...[with]a sense of *omnipotence*, the notion of impossibility disappears for the individual in a group” (pp. 74, 77; emphasis added). From McDougall: “Such a group is excessively emotional, impulsive, violent, fickle, inconsistent, irresolute and extreme in action ... extremely suggestible, careless in deliberation, hasty in judgment, easily swayed and led, lacking in self-consciousness, devoid of self respect and a sense of responsibility, and apt to be carried away by the consciousness of its own force, so it tends to produce all the manifestations we have learnt to expect of any irresponsible or absolute power” (Freud, p. 85).

Here Freud called conscience “the ‘ego ideal’, ... the moral conscience” (p. 109); and as part of the mass “the individual gives up his ego ideal and substitutes for it the group ideal as embodied in the leader...the need for a strong chief will often meet him half-way and invest him with a predominance to which he would otherwise perhaps have had no claim (p. 127). The “Commander-in-Chief -- loves all the individuals in the group with an equal love...a kind of elder brother, their substitute father...the similarity...[with] the family is invoked...the possibility of a *leading idea being substituted for the leader* and upon the relations between the two” (pp. 94-95; emphasis added).

Freud discussed mass psychology in 1930 (Lothane, 2012). By 1933 Reich utilized character-analysis in treating individuals and correcting the socio-sexual problems of the masses. In this and his anti-Nazi stance he was tragically misunderstood by psychoanalysts,

branded as paranoid or schizophrenic, cast out of the IPA, and finally destroyed in America.

There were five reasons for attacking Reich.

(1) *Too much sex*: Freud testily rejected Reich's 1926 manuscript of *Die Funktion des Orgasmus*: "That thick?" (Reich, 1942a, p. 140), forgetting his own Reich-like 1908 ideas: "all factors which impair sexual life, suppress its activity, or distort its aims [are] pathogenic factors in the psychoneurose...Our civilization is built up the suppression of instinct"(p. 186); „we know no better safeguard against the threat to to normal sexual life...than sexual satisfaction itself“ (p. 193). Freud's rejection triggered Reich's depression and reactivated his previous tuberculosis. Recovered Reich was 30 and sexually vigorous while Freud at 71 was sexually inactive since his forties. Freud's and elder Freudians' turn from sex to ego psychology made Reich's emphasis of Aktual-Neurosen and orgasm politically incorrect. Paul Federn, Reich's second analyst, defamed Reich, Freud defended him.

(2) *Sex and Marxism*. The second source of friction was Reich's philosophical Marxism and sexual reform. Freud continued to treat individual neuroses whereas Reich advocated treating of sexual mass neuroses. In 1942(a) Reich reminisced: "On December 12, 1929 I gave my talk on the prophylaxis of the neuroses in Freud's inner circle (S 165); The fight was against the increasing attempts to do away with the psychoanalytic theory of sex and to evade its social consequences"(p. 168). Freud was pessimistic in 1930: "The task here is that of shifting the instinctual aims...[coming] up against frustrations from the external world [by] sublimation of the instincts [with]...psychical and intellectual work" (p. 79).

In 1930 Reich's proposed an integration of Marx, Hegel, and Freud, a reprise "from a longer study of „dialectical materialism and psychoanalysis“ published in 1929 in Russian and German in the Soviet journal *Pod Znamenem* [under the banner of] *Marxisma* (p. 233). Reich intended „to show the dialectics of certain typical processes in human psychic life which according to our conception could not have been achieved without applying the psychoanalytic method“ (p. 235).

In 1933 (a) Freud wrote: "Karl Marx's investigations into the economic structure of society and into the influence of different economic systems upon every department of

human life have in our days acquired an undeniable authority (p.176)[it] struck me as strange...that the development of forms of society is a process of natural history, or that the changes in social stratification arise from one another in the manner of a dialectical process“ (p. 177), for „the strength of Marxism clearly lies not in not its view of history or its prophecies of the future [but] ...the decisive influence which the economic circumstances of men have on their intellectual, ethical, and artistic attitudes“ (p. 178). „If anyone [showed] in detail [how] these different factors inhibit and promoted one another...he would have supplemented Marxism so it was made into a genuine social science“ (p. 179). But Freud was mainly outraged by Reich’s *political* Marxism: between 1928 and 1933 Reich was a member progress of the Austrian Socialist and Communist Parties as sex hygiene activist (Fallend, 2002). After his trip to the Soviet Union in 1929, Reich still saw Lenin’s 1917 revolution as a new dawn for Russia and for mankind, a guarantee for democracy and sexual freedom for the masses. Reich became a scapegoat for other Marxist or left-leaning-*Linksfreudianer*, e.g., such leftists as Fenichel, Edith Jacobsohn, Annie Reich, and Erich Fromm (Fallend & Nitzschke 2002). Parenthetically, there were prominent American analysts, Arlow, Brenner, Rangell among others, who were members of the Communist Party (Richards, 2016).

(3) *An attack on the death instinct*: As described by Nitzschke: “19.12.1931 Reich lectured to psychoanalyst in Berlin on the „sexual economy of the masochistic character, refuting Freud’s death instinct and compulsion to repeat. When Reich subitted the text for publication, Freud demanded adding the: “Regarding the case of Dr. Reich the reader should be made aware that the author is a member of the Bolshevistic Party. It is well known that Bolshevism sets the same limits on scientific research as the Church. Obedience to the party demands that everything that contradicts its own salvation theory should be rejected“ (Nitzschke, 2002, pp. 122-123). The paper was published in 1932 without the footnote and with a rebuttal by Siegfried Bernfeld which Reich contested. On “1.1.1932 [Freud] wrote in his diary: „a protracted stomach attack—action against Reich“ (quoted by Peglau, p. 133). On Jan. 17, 1932 Freud wrote to Jeanne Lampl-de Groot: “I have begun the battle against the Bolshevistic aggressors Reich, Fenichel” (Roazen, 2001, p. 13).

In 1952 Reich told Kurt Eissler:

My criticism of the doctrine of the death instinct has nothing whatever to do with the Communist Party... The paper "The Masochistic Character" [Reich, 1932] is basically an analytic critique which is not one step removed from analytic empiricism... it was analytic empiricism that brought me to Marxism. After all, aside from individual psychological motives, the question why psychoanalysis deviated from its initial biological path could essentially be explained in sociological terms alone (Reich, 1967, P. 156-157).

Note Reich's avoiding any criticism of Freud.

(4) *The Sex-Pol movement*: In 1927 in Vienna Reich promoted sexual hygiene in clinics and public lectures, educating youth about contraception and abortion and offered same to German Communist Party (Fallend, 1988). Reich was appointed head of All-German Society for Proletarian Sexual-Politics (Boadella, 1974) whose first congress in Düsseldorf in 1931, Reich thought, harmonized with 1919 Soviet reforms. Like Freud's old guard, communist bosses opposed Reich's reforms and expelled him. The scientific underpinning of Sex-Pol was *sex-economy*, where economy meant *energy*: Freud hypothesized libido-energy and Reich discovered orgone, endorsed by co-workers Norwegian Raknes (1970) and German-Israeli Hoppe (1984).

(5) *Reich as enemy of the people*: Reich next trouble was the renegeing by the IPA press to publish *Character-Analysis*: he financed it himself. Furthermore, from now on Reich was tracked by the Gestapo as a communist and his books were banned; to avoid imprisonment, he fled to Denmark. By 1934 Reich also became persona non grata for Freud, too: his anti-Nazism was seen as jeopardizing negotiations between Freud, daughter Anna, Ernest Jones, and Felix Boehm to "save" psychoanalysis by making it Jew-free and the DPG acceptable to the German Institute for Psychological Research and Psychotherapy, the so-called Göring Institute, and the Nazi conformity policies, of which Reich was himself a victim (Brecht et al. 1985; Dahmer, 1997; Lockett, 1994, 2002; Lockett & Bernhardt, 2000; Lothane, 2001a, 2001b, 2003; Nitzschke, 1997, 1999, 2003). Thus the scandal over Reich's Marxist politics and his 1933 campaign against National-Socialism was actually more an intramural IPA concern than a threat to the Nazi-Regime and its plan to expel all the Jewish doctors (Eckart, 2000). Freud urged Felix Boehm to rid him of Harald Schultz-Hencke for his neo-Freudianism and of Reich for his politics.

According to Nitzschke, “Psychoanalysis as a whole was never persecuted by the Nazis,..Essential parts of psychoanalysis as *therapy* were tolerated and utilized“(Peglau, p. 502); „most psychoanalytic publications were not banned...aspects of Freud’s theories were were explicitly and positively assessed and Freudian terminology employed“ (Peglau, p. 503). This tolerance was also evident in entries „Freud, Sigmund” (p. 192) and “Psychoanalyse” (p. 518) in the nazified Schmidt’s dictionary (1934), but with this reservation: “Psychoanalysis as a whole is increasingly contested as something „alien,“ as „mechanistic-materialistic thinking, even as certain Freud’s are recognized as progressive“ (p. 519).

Nothing could be more antithetical to psychoanalysis than the ideology of Italian Fascism and German National-Socialism inspired by Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*. In Mussolini’s fascism, “the individual...is obligated to serve the whole with...his thoughts and feelings. The freedom of the individual is completely absorbed in the sovereign power of the state concentrated in the dictatorship of the ‚Duce‘ [leader] and his subordinates“ (Schmidt, pp. 178-179). National-Sozialism is „Adolf Hitler’s German national politics based on a new and yet ancient and firmly established weltanschung of the value of blood...on the certitude of the creative soul, the strongly fashioned character, a specific mentality conjoined with a specific race form... The Roman[-Catholic]-Jewish weltanschung is replaced by a nordic-western faith, as the innermost feature of Germanic mankind, of the nordic race“ (Rosenberg). Based on its fundamental premiss National-Socialism is an enemy of Semitism, the physical-psychological mixing of races, of liberalism, democratism, individualism parlamentarism, marxism pacifism, intellectualism, and rationalism“ (p. 431). Also relevant is defining „völkisch (national) world view: no more educating the spirit, no more humanism, no more culture as the supreme value and life’s goal but training of the will, formation of character, vindication of action in the service of the folkish-historical becoming“ (p. 706). Since nation implies a mass psyche, Schmidt defined mass psychology as „scientific investigation of the psychological behavior of masses. Especially conspicuous manifestations of the mass psyche are mass suggestion and mass psychosis...See Le Bon [1895]; Freud, *Massenpsychologie und Ichanalyse*, 1921” (pp. 392-393).

Reich elaborated Freud's mass psychology in three editions of *The Mass psychology of fascism*: 1933, 1934, composed in Germany and Denmark; 1942(b), rewritten in Maine; 1970, English translation of 1942. In the 1933 „Preface“ Reich wrote that the book was a call to German working-class youth to reverse the „harsh defeat of the German working class,“ to counteract the organized “hourly warlike transformation of its youth“ and to secure the „victory of international socialism“ (p. 4). The book „was written in the course of the growth of the reactionary tide in Germany from 1930 to 1933. Its purpose is to offer the young and developing sex-political movement a certain theoretical foundation“ (p.10), „not with polite phrases...not with appeals, but by arousing genuine revolutionary excitement...with real democratic workers‘ organizations creating space for initiative and conviction for fighting troops“ (pp. 5-6). to overcome „the subjective conviction of the many millions of Hitler supporters regarding the socialist mission of National-Socialism, in spite of the very cruelty and suffering it brought upon Germany, is a powerful asset for a socialist future“ (p. 6). One fights fire with fire, enthusiam with enthusiasm: the conviction of the „mortal enemy“ (p. 7) is capable “of filling the masses with a deeper conviction...that the fighting will of youth is indeed on our side; the will of youth for the joy of life will be the most powerful energy of the revolution“ (p. 8). Thus a scientist may not remain „unpolitical“ – he must become political and socially committed, as Reich himself was all his life.

The definitive 1970 edition of The Mass Psychology of Fascism

In the Preface and Chapter IX Reich used Fascism and National-Socialism interchangeably as the organized political expression of the average “man’s character...*the basic emotional attitude of the suppressed man of our authoritarian machine civilization and its mechanistic-mystical conception of life. It is the mechanistic-mystical character of the modern man that produces fascism, and not vice versa*” (Preface, p. xiii). “As a political movement, fascism...is borne and championed by masses of people...the toiling masses should be just as clear about their responsibility for fascism...The fascist racial theory...is not a product of fascism. On the contrary: it is fascism that is a product of racial hatred and is its politically organized expression. It follows from this that there is a German, Italian, Spanish, Anglo-Saxon, Jewish, and Arabian fascism. *Race ideology is a pure biopathic expression of the character structure of the orgastically impotent man*” (p. xiv). “The word

fascism is not a word of abuse any more than the word capitalism is. It is a concept denoting a very definite kind of mass leadership and mass influence; authoritarian, one party system, hence totalitarian, a system in which power takes priority over objective interests, and facts are distorted for political purposes. Hence there are “fascist Jews” just as there are “fascist Democrats” (p, 214). Reich analysis of the the leader/led ideological interaction (Lothane, 2006) gives pause for thought as prescient of the current world-wide resurgence of polarizing ideologies and violence of neo-Nazism and populism, anti-Semitism and racism.

The key issue in Chapter I was the „cleavage,“ or „schism,“ or „split“ amongst the workers prior to 1933:

the economic crisis of 1929-33 was of such magnitude...[that]according to expectations [it] was supposed to entail a development to the Left in the ideology of the masses [but instead] had led to an extreme development to the Right in the ideology of the proletarian strata of the population” (pp. 7-8) [and the middle class] in the direction of barbarism [that] the anticipated second World War...against the unarmed masses of the large industrial centers...carried out by...war technicians’ (p. 9). It was precisely the wretched masses who helped to put fascism extreme political reaction, into power” (p. 10), with Hitler’s as its leader and dictator. Reich solved the riddle with mass psychology: the *immediate* socio-economic explanation [falls short of answering] the most essential question...the workers’...social responsibility...[of] what it is that *inhibits the development of this consciousness of responsibility*” (p. 20, his italics).

Mass psychology remedied the Marxists’ failure „to take into account the character structure of the masses and the social effect of mysticism (p. 5, his italics) [and rejecting] facts such as „drive,“ „need,“ or „inner process,“ as being „idealistic“—as well as „the social function of sexual repression...[i.e.] „irrational *mass* psychological phenomena“ (pp. 24-25; his italics), corrected by sex-economy. Finally Reich underscores the repressive function of „authoritarian patriarchy“ aided by „sex-negating religion“ (p. 29). of which „the result is conservatism, fear of freedom...When sexuality is prevented from attaining natural gratification,...it seeks various forms of substitute gratification. Thus natural aggression is distorted into brutal sadism, which constitutes an essential part of the mass psychological basis of those imperialistic wars that are instigated by a few“ (p. 31).

In Chapter II, „The authoritarian ideology of the family in the mass psychology of fascism,“ Reich discussed how „great man inflames the masses...in rally speeches

conspicuous for their skillfulness in operating upon on *emotions* of the individuals in the masses and of *avoiding relevant arguments as much as possible* [as outlined] in *Mein Kampf*“ (p. 34). Le Bon (1897), cited by Freud (1921), saw the “collective mind” as “presenting very clearly defined characteristics...an organized crowd, or...a psychological crowd...forms a single being, and is subjected to the *law of the mental unity of crowds*” (p. 2; his italics); “Crowds are everywhere distinguished by feminine characteristics” (p. 20).

And so thought Hitler (1941):

The psyche of the great masses is not receptive to half measures or weakness. Like a woman, whose psychic feeling is influenced less by abstract reasoning than by an indefinable, sentimental longing for complementary strength, who will submit to the strong man rather than dominate the weakling, thus the masses love the ruler rather than the suppliant, and inwardly they are far more satisfied by a doctrine which tolerates no rival than by the grant of liberal freedom; they often feel at a loss what to do with it, and even easily feel themselves deserted. They neither realize the impudence with which they are spiritually terrorized, nor the outrageous curtailment of their human liberties, for in no way does the delusion of this doctrine dawn on them. Thus they see only the inconsiderate force, the brutality and the aim of its manifestations to which they finally always submit (p.56).

The great mass of a people consists neither of professors nor of diplomats. The small abstract knowledge it possesses directs its sentiments rather to the world of feeling. In this is rooted either its negative or positive attitude...It is more difficult to undermine faith than knowledge, love succumbs to change less than to respect, hatred is more durable than aversion, and at all times the driving force of the most important changes in this world has been found less in a scientific knowledge animating the masses, but rather in a fanaticism dominating them and in a hysteria which drove them forward. He who would win the great masses must know the key which opens the door to their hearts. Its name is not objectivity, that is, weakness, but will power and strength (pp. 467-468).

Reich attributed „Hitler’s success...[and]his mass psychological effect [to] his *ideology [bearing] a resemblance to the average structure of a broad category of individuals*...*Only when the structure of the führer’s personality is in harmony with [their] personality can a ‘führer‘ make history*“ (p. 35; his italics); „it was man’s authoritarian freedom-fearing structure that enabled his propaganda to take root...[even as] he held the masses, with whose help he wanted to carry out his imperialism, in complete contempt” (p. 40). An “identification with authority, a firm, state, nation etc. which can be formulated ‘I

am the state, the authority, the firm, the nation, a psychic reality and is one of the best illustrations of an ideology that becomes a material force” (p. 47).

Reich underscored „the patriarchal sexual morality“ enabling a “far-reaching sexual suppression and repression“ (p. 48) of normal infantile and adolescent sexuality. The family becomes the microcosm of society. On the one hand, the „political and economic position of the father is reflected in the patriarchal relationship to the remainder of the family“ and is „reproduces the subservient attitude toward authority in his children, particularly his sons“ (p. 53). On the other hand, „the strictest suppression of the women and the children“ (p. 53) is combined with the mother cult as a foundation of family such that „the tie to the mother...[and the] *subjective emotional core* [of] the notions of *homeland and nation are notions of mother and family*“ (p. 57; italics Reich’s). As a result, „the affective anchoring of these structures by means of unconscious anxiety, their concealment by character traits that appear completely asexual, are responsible for the fact that these deep layers of the personality cannot be reached with rational arguments alone“ (p. 55).

In Chapter III Reich described, with quotes from *Mein Kampf*, Hitler’s race theory as a method of „[improving] the Germanic race genetically and [protecting] it against racial interbreeding“ (p. 75) or bastardization. The ‘intermixing of Aryan blood‘ with ‘inferior‘ peoples, ‘a defilement of the blood‘, always results in the degeneration of the founders of civilization“ (p. 76). „‘Blood poisoning,‘ ‘Jewish world plague,‘ ...begins with ‘fight of the blood‘ and ends with the bloody terror against the ‘Jewish materialism‘ of Marx and the *genocide of the Jews*“ (pp. 83-84).

Moreover, „a no less terrible poisoning...[is] syphilis; the cause lies, primarily, in our prostitution of love...This Jewification of our spiritual life and mammonization of our mating instinct will...destroy our entire offspring“ (p. 81). And Reich concludes: „The irrational fear of syphilis constitutes of the major sources of National Socialism’s political views and anti-Semitism“ (p. 82); “Blood poisoning,” “Jewish world plague,” are all part and parcel of the same line that begins with “fight of the blood” and ends the bloody terror against the “Jewish materialism” of Marx and the genocide of the Jews” (pp. 83-84). These racial ideas are shared by the leader and the masses with their “strong authoritarian tie to

the führer-ideal or the nation...as well as...the voluntary acceptance of slavish submission” (p. 80) (Lothane, 1997).

In Chapter VI, the „Organized Mysticism as an International Anti-Sexual Organization“ is correlated with masses being sexually repressed, emotio-driven, and mysticism-prone, especially in young people:

We showed earlier that nationalistic sentiments are a direct continuation of the sentiments of the authoritarian family. But mystical feelings are also a source of nationalistic ideology. Hence, patriarchal family attitudes *and* a mystical frame of mind are the basic psychological elements of fascism and imperialist nationalism in the masses. In short, it is psychologically confirmed on a mass basis that a mystical upbringing becomes the foundation of fascism when a social catastrophe sets the masses in motion (p. 131; his italics).

Furthermore,

The sentimentalism and religious mysticism... are intimately related to... sadistic cruelty... The cohesion of sadistic brutality and mystical sentiments is usually to be met with wherever the normal capacity to experience orgasm is disturbed. And this is true of a mass murderer of our time as it was of the inquisitor of the Middle Ages or the brutality and mysticism of Philip II of Spain (p. 137).

While the theory that Nazi mass mysticism and disordered sexuality can be correlated with brutality and violence has some merit, it is possible that some Nazis were orgasmically potent and quite capable of acts of violent cruelty. An example of mysticism as “a fountainhead of mechanical sadism in Hitlerism” (Reich, 1970, p. 344) was henchman Himmler whose ancestor-mystique had its roots in the 19th and 20th century occultism (Webb, 1976; Goodrick-Clarke, 1981); little is known about his sexuality. By contrast, Reich did not say write enough on the role of aggression, hatred, rage, and revenge in brutal violence yet chastised „Erich Fromm for [disregarding] completely the sexual problem of masses of people and its relationship to fear of freedom and craving of authority“ (p. 219).

Hitler and the masses were independently criticized by two other German writers: Konrad Heiden (1901-1966, New York) in 1933 and Hermann Rauschning (1887-1982, Oregon) in 1938, the Nazi chief of Danzig, in 1938. Heiden underscored the role of the Nazi elites, the bureaucrats and the military, the SS and the Gestapo, the foundation of the Nazi terror state. Rauschning warned that “Hitler is a revolutionary. a hypnotically

fascinating and conceited mass leader“ (p. 59), „conscioulsy and methodically deified by the masses and the entire power appartus (p. 60), in order „to dismantle all ethical values and the social order“ (p. 61), to be achieved by “the apparatus of harsh disciplining: concentration camps, terror tactics of the police, intimidation by the Party, refined methods of spreading fear, breaking the moral character and independence, the inventiveness of destruction” (p. 70). Rauschnig also condemned Nazi anti-Semitic policies: “the disenfranchisement and destruction of the German Jewry, the methodical letting loose of the brutal mass destructive instincts, preparation for the coming revolutionary upheaval” (p. 148). Two more authors warned against the Nazi threat to European ideals of democracy and humanism: Kolnai (1938) and Vergin (1932).

Anti-Semitism and racism were written into the Nazi constitution (Huber, 1937).

According to the

Principle formulated in Point 4 of the National-Socialist Party Program, ‘a citizen can only be a member of the nation (*Volk*). A member of the nation can only be a person of German blood, irrespective of religion. No Jew can be a member of the nation.’ This requirement is implemented in the Reich Citizenship Law of September 15, 1935 (p. 71). This ordinance also defines who qualifies as a citizen of German or related blood. Thus a Jew cannot be a Reich citizen“ (p. 72. All Jewish civil servants are to be retired as of December 31 1935 (p. 73). According to the voter law of March u 1936 the Jews have no right to vote (p. 90). The Law of Protection of German Blood and German Honor of September 15 1935 fundamental to the new Völkisch Order, prohibits marriage between Jews and German or blood-related citizens (p. 220).

In the added Chapter IX, “The Masses and the State,” updated in 1944, Reich reviewed the history and ideology of the Weimar Republic between the two world wars, the Russian Revolution, Leninism and Stalinism, and developments in Europe and the United States. He also told the story of his disillusionment with Soviet communism already in 1929, at the height of his romancing Marxism: “The prediction in 1929 that Soviet democracy would deteriorate into a totalitarian dictatorship was based on the fact that the sexual revolution in the Soviet Union was not only checked but almost intentionally suppressed. *Sexual suppression serves...to mechanize and enslave the masses*” (p. 215, italics Reich’s). Whereas Reich first praised the Soviets for having promulgated, already during the 1917 revolution, such progressive ideas as legal equality of men and women, sexual freedom, ease of secular divorce, abortion and children born out of wedlock,

decriminalization of homosexuality, and a total rejection of religion, he also warned that “they got stuck in legal formalism...*No program advocating freedom has any chance of success unless also effected in man’s present biopathic sexual structure*”(p. 249; his italics). For a profound political analysis of totalitarianism see Arendt (1951).

However, Reich’s portrait of Lenin surprises by his omitting the hidden authoritarian aspect of political Leninism. While he liberated the Russian from the czarist oppression, Lenin camouflaged his real dictatorship with such slogans as dictatorship of the proletariat and the withering of the state, Reich remained completely oblivious of Lenin acting as a “red terror” dictator in a campaign of mass killings, torture, and systematic political repression conducted by the Bolshevik CheKa, the Emergency Committee, the secret police for combating counter-revolution, speculation and sabotage, of which the chief and executioner was the Polish aristocrat turned communist Felix Dzierżyński, known as the infamous „Iron Felix,“ who ordered untold number of people tortured or killed for any expression of opposition to the Soviet state. Reich’s naiveté can be understood as a proselytizing for social activism, as a means to maintain an ongoing contact with the masses for whom he wanted a better future, thus as an opportunity to be in touch with great numbers of young people whose poverty and sexual misery he sought to alleviate. Reich also rhapsodized about Lenin’s 1923 “New Economic Policy” (NEP), a return to bourgeois economy, as showing “insight and openness” when actually it was Lenin’s opportunism, as he had stated himself: “The economy imposed upon communism by the war has confronted us with unforeseen difficulties. We have to go back a step...we are giving private enterprise a bit of freedom—we have no other choice—but we know exactly what we are doing” (p. 261). Similarly, following the outbreak of WW II Stalin would relax his hostility to the Russian Orthodox Church in order to get popular support for his war effort. After Lenin’s death in 1924 Stalin began to consolidate his power with the help of Jewish comrades Lev Kamenev, Grigory Zinoviev and Leon Trotsky. Following the murder of Sergei Kirov, Stalin launched massive purges against patriots viewed as enemies of the state, his erstwhile helpers Kamenev and Zinoviev were tried and imprisoned in a Siberian Gulag and then convicted in a show trial and executed. This was also the fate of two of Sabina Spielrein’s brothers, active in the revolution, who were exiled and executed in 1937 (Lothane, 2016c). Stalin went on to build a secret state police spying on the population and

on many European countries and the USA and had Jew Leon Trotsky murdered in Mexico in 1940.

Reich added four more chapters. In X “Biosocial Function of Work” he said: “*The relationship between the worker’s sexual life and the performance of his work is of decisive importance...[for] the safeguarding...the most important precondition of pleasurable work*” (p. 295; his italics). In XI “Give Responsibility to Vitally Necessary Work!” Reich pleaded for “a *possible* future regulation of human society” Reich pleaded for “work-democratic “politics [as] distinguished by this fact that *it rejects all politics and demagogism*. Masses of working men will not be relieved of their social responsibility. They will be burdened with it. Work-democrats have no ambitions to be political führers. ...This democracy is borne by the functions of love, work, and knowledge...It fights mysticism and the idea of a totalitarian state, not through political attitudes but through practical functioning in life” (pp. 314-315; his italics). In XII “The Biologic Miscalculations in the Human Struggle for Freedom” Reich diagnosed that “*As a result of thousands of years of social and educational distortion, masses of people have become biologically rigid and incapable of freedom. They are not capable of peaceful coexistence*” (p. 319). “The fascist plague...*the race theory is mystical view of life. Man’s natural happiness in love and security in life will be the doom of this view*” (p. 323; his italics). “Dictatorial power and truth do not go together” (p. 327). In XIII “On Natural Work-Democracy” the book ended as follows:

With Hitler, politics reached its highest stage of development. We know what its fruits were, and we know how the world reacted to them. In short, it is my belief that, with its unparalleled catastrophes, the twentieth century marks the beginning of a new social era, free of politics. Of course, it is impossible to foresee how much of a role politics itself will still play in the uprooting of the political *emotional plague*, and how much of the role will be played by the consciously organized functions of love, work, and knowledge (pp. 354-355; italics added).

Nemo propheta in patria: no man is a prophet in his own land. There has been no comprehensive German biography of Reich comparable to books by Boadella (1974), Wilson (1981), and Sharaf (1983), as there has been no full-scale German biography of Schreber (Lothane, 2004). Life, seen as an itinerary from birth to death, is an unbroken chain of crises and dramas: of Reich the man, psychoanalyst, scientist, politician, and

visionary, who loved, strove, and suffered. Reich's happy childhood in a prosperous ranch amidst bucolic nature was first shattered by the catastrophic family drama in which he played the fateful part of an adolescent Oedipus, discovering his mother adultery, telling his father, and indirectly causing the suicide of a mother he loved and the death of a father he feared. The second was the cataclysm of WW I that shattered European societies, nations, and cultures. As remembered by his daughter Lore Reich (2003), he was a difficult person to live with but endowed with a vitality that enabled him to rise again from every life crisis, to gather new friends, and develop new projects to work on. He was sensitive, domineering, jealous and suspicious to a paranoid degree, as recalled by his third wife, Ilse Ollendorff. But he was not hostile or persecuting towards others.

His professional itinerary as psychoanalyst began in 1920 when as a 23-year-old medical student he read a long paper on the "Libidinal Conflicts and Delusions in Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*" (Reich, 1975) whereupon he was admitted as a guest member to the Vienna Psychoanalytic Association. It was a profound and sophisticated analysis, inspired by Freud's ideas: about the relationship between "poetic and psychotic phenomena" (p. 4), based on Freud's Schreber analysis and his paper on narcissism, "with the assistance of experiences based on dreams, fantasies, neuroses and psychoses" (p. 9); connecting these experiences with Peer's "life as a prophet" (p. 15) and Oedipal attachments and guilt (pp. 24, 35). A touching self-portrait emerges in his 1988 autobiography, starting with his childhood and ending in 1922. On January 1922 Reich recorded:

The discussion of "*Peer Gynt*" in the Psychoanalytic Society was an extreme blow to my faith, a blow which I experienced all the more acutely due to my injured narcissism. They were not opponents but doubters! Now that I have begun to *think*, I discover that another person might have arrived at essentially different results. "Is there an unconscious?" I asked Otto [Fenichel]. His reply: "in a psychoanalytic sense, yes; in a philosophical sense, no!...How shall I find my way through? ...Ideas actually emerge of which I knew nothing beforehand; therefore, there must be an unconscious!

But these new ideas are only perceivable after they emerge. I postulate an unconscious (Reich, 1988, p. 155).

Reich's analysis of Ibsen dramaturgy and life offers a glimpse into his soul and the seed of his future *Massenpsychologie*: "Ibsen was an *intellectual revolutionary* who had been taught a lesson by physical hardships. As such, he did not see salvation in material revolution alone. He strove for awareness, self-identity, and spiritual maturity (p. 57; his italics):

Perhaps Ibsen, who was shaken by the upheavals in his era, made the same observation we make...mankind has not yet reached the stage of the mature man who is "himself" (the ideal leadership type)...remain[ing] in the infantile stage of needing protection and being entirely open to suggestion. ...From this viewpoint, socialistic progress (the attaining of spiritual individuality, immanent in the concept of a material community), means becoming human, maturing phylogenetically, and having the capability to take on total responsibility, the lack of which accounts for the propensity for reaction that we see in the masses (p. 58).

Twenty-two years later Reich (1942) reminisced: "He who deviates from the well-trodden path may easily become a Peer Gynt, a dreamer, a lunatic [who] wanted to divulge a great secret to me[...about] an individual who gets out of step with the marching column of the human herd. He is not understood. They laugh at him when he is weak; they try to destroy him when he is strong...When I met Freud I grasped his meaning, I felt an outsider...out of line with official science and traditional thinking" (p. 21). Like Peer Gynt, Reich was a dreamer and a prophet.

According to prophet Hosea "The prophet a fool, the spiritual man is mad" (9:7). However, the prophet, the poet, and the psychotic are in this world but not of it: they dream the truth and, according to Reich, see more than the "Babbitts, the practical man, [who] does not cogitate about life, who does one's duty and keeps one's mouth shut" (p. 24-25). Reich, too, was a dreamer and a prophet. Ethical prophecy was a Hebraic tradition: teaching morals to humankind, as expressed by Isaiah: „ For from Zion shall go forth the law And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem“ (2:3). Marx, Freud and Reich, I submit, were either consciously or unconsciously influenced by these Hebraic ideas and also by Christianity, which added the idea of redemption through martyrdom and sacrifice: they dreamt of being saviors of suffering humanity.

The complete Reich tragic complex also contains the story of fleeing persecution in Austria, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, to finally find a haven in America, the promised land of freedom. Following initial success from 1939 to 1951, including fathering a son Peter, Reich was harassed once again by journalist Mildred Edie Brady. Preceded by a 1946 calumny of Reich by Frederic Wertham, in the left-leaning *New Republic*, as a “psychofascist and Reich’s *Massenpsychologie* as “fascist sermons,” Brady published two attacks on Reich in 1947: “The New Cult of Sex and Anarchy” and “The Strange Case of Wilhelm Reich.” Brady’s venom led in popular and professional caricatures of Reich as organizing group sex orgies or peddling the orgone box as an aphrodisiac and a fake treatment for cancer, and criminal investigation was launched by the Food and Drug Administration. Reich was tried, sent to prison and ordered to have the orgone accumulators destroyed and all his journals and books burned, including *Charakteranalyse*. Freud reacted to his book burning in 1933 with biting irony: “What progress we are making. In the Middle Ages they would have burned me. Now they are content with burning my books” (Clark, 1980, p. 489); that a book burning should have happened in democratic USA in 1956 was a monstrous scandal. The protest by the Union of Civil Liberties and press releases by intellectuals were not printed in newspapers. When in the final days of his life in prison Reich talked of UFO’s he was not clinically insane, as stated by the psychiatrists who examined him. Rather, he was having daydreams and fantasies to soothe the pain of the last supreme trauma, the disgrace of trial and imprisonment: both broke his heart. With hope and energy steadily ebbing, he died of heart failure in his sleep, which Jews call *mitat neshika*, death by a kiss, how Moses dies in an old rabbinic legend.

Like Christ, with whom Reich identified, he was crucified, too, a prophet who died as martyr for his beliefs.

References

- Arendt, H. (1951). *The origins of totalitarianism. New Edition*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc, 1966.
- Boadella, D. (1974[1973]). *Wilhelm Reich The evolution of his work*. Chicago: Regnery.
- Brecht, K., et al (n.d.). "Here life goes on in a most peculiar way..." *Psychoanalysis before and after 1933*. Hamburg: Kellner.
- Dahmer, H. (1997). Psychoanalytiker in Deutschland 1933-1951. In: Fallend & Nitzschke, 2002.
- Eckart, W.U. (2000). Verunglimpft, vertrieben, vernichtet: Rassisch und politisch verfolgte Ärztinnen und Ärzte in Deutschland 1933–1945 (defamed, expelled, annihilated: politically and racially persecuted Jewish men and women doctors). *Deutsche medizinische. Wochenschrift*, 125:709- 710.
- Fallend, K. (1988). *Wilhelm Reich in Wien. Psychoanalyse und Politik*. Wien/Salzburg: Geyer-Edition.
- Fallend, K. & Nitzschke, B. (2002 [1997]). *Der „Fall“ Wilhelm Reich Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Psychoanalyse und Politik* (the „case“ WR Papers on the relation between psychoanalysis and politics). Giessen: Psychosozial-Verlag.
- Freud, S. (1908). „Civilized“ sexual morality and modern nervous illness. SE:9:143-167.
- Freud, S. (1914). On the history of the psycho-analytic movement. SE 14:7-66.
- Freud, S. (1920). *Beyond the pleasure principle*. SE 18.
- Freud, S. (1921). *Group psychology and analysis of the ego*. SE 18.
- Freud, S. (1930). Civilization and its discontent. SE SE 21.
- Freud, S. (1933a). New introductory lectures on psycho-analysis. SE 22.
- Freud, S. (1933b). Why war? SE 22:203-215.
- Goodrick-Clarke, N. (1992). *The occult roots of Nazism*. New York: New York University Press.
- Heiden, K. (1933[1932]). *Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus/ Die Karriere einer Idee*. (history of National-Socialism/Success of an idea). Berlin: Rowohlt.
- Hirschfeld, M. (1934[1930]). *The sexual history of the World War*. New York: Panurge Press.
- Hoppe, W. (1984). *Wilhelm Reich und andere grosse Männer der Wissenschaft im Kampf mit dem Irrationalismus* (WR and other great men of science in the fight against irrationalism). München: Verlag Kurt Nane Jürgensen.
- Kolnai, A. (1938). *The war against the West*. New York: The Viking Press.
- Huber, E. R. (1937). *Vervassung* (constitution). Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt.
- Le Bon, G.(1897[1895]). *The crowd A study of the popular mind*. London: T. Fisher Unwin.
- Lockett, R. (2002 [1985]). *Erinnern und Durcharbeiten* (remembering and working through). Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag.

- Lockot, R. (1994). *Reinigung der Psychoanalyse (1933—1945)* (sanitizing psychoanalysis). Tübingen: edition diskord.
- Lockot, R. & Bernhardt, H. (2000). *Mit ohne Freud Zur Geschichte der Psychoanalyse in Ostdeutschland* (with or without Freud history of psychoanalysis in East Germany). Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag.
- Lothane, Z. (1997). Omnipotence, or the delusional aspect of ideology, in relation to love, power, and group dynamics. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 57:25-46. Also in: Ellman, C., & Reppen, J., eds. *Omnipotent Fantasies and the Vulnerable Self*. Northvale, NJ: Aronson
- Lothane, Z. (2001a). Introduction: Psychiatry, psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in the Third Reich. In: Special Issue, Lothane, Z. Ed., Special Issue *Psychiatry, psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in the Third Reich*. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 88:143-153.
- Lothane, Z. (2001b). The deal with the devil to “save” psychoanalysis in Nazi Germany. Special Issue *Psychiatry, psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in the Third Reich*. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 88:197-224.
- Lothane, Z. (2003). Power politics and psychoanalysis—an introduction. Special Issue 2-3, *Psychoanalysis and the Third Reich*, Zvi Lothane, Guest Editor. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 12:85-97.
- Lothane, Z. (1992). *In defense of Schreber Soul murder and Psychiatry*. Hillsdale, NJ/London: The Analytic Press.
- Lothane, Z. (2006). Mass psychology of the led and the leaders/Masses and mobs, democracy and demagogues/or how prejudice of the leader becomes mass paranoia. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 15:183-192.
- Lothane, Z. (2009). Dramatology in life, disorder, and psychoanalytic therapy: a further contribution to interpersonal psychoanalysis. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 18(3):135-148.
- Lothane, Z. (2012). Freud’s *Civilization and its Discontents* and related works: a reappraisal. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 32(6):524-542.
- Lothane, H.Z. (2014a). Emotional reality: A further contribution to dramatology. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 25(4):191-203.
- Lothane, H.Z. (2014b). How NOT to think about evil: a response to Richard J. Bernstein, Ph.D. *Issues in Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 36:1-20.
- Lothane, H. Z. (2014b). Evil is what evil does: how to think about evil? *Not* like Richard J. Bernstein. *Issues in Psychoanalytic Psychology*,
- Mannheim, K. (1952). *Ideology and utopia*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. Original German edition 1929.
- Nitzschke, B. (1999). Psychoanalysis during National Socialism; present-day consequences of a historical controversy in the “case” of Wilhelm Reich (translated and with an introduction by Zvi Lothane). *Psychoanalytic Review*, 86:349-366.
- Nitzschke, B. (2003). Psychoanalysis in National Socialism Banned or brought into conformity? Break or continuity? In: Lothane, Z., ed.: „Psychoanalysis in the Third Reich.” *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 12:98-108.
- Peglau, A. (2013). *Unpolitische Wissenschaft? Wilhelm Reich und die Psychoanalyse im Nationalsozialismus* (apolitical science? WR and psychoanalysis under Nazis). Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag.

- Raknes, O. (1970). *Wilhelm Reich and orgonomy*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Rauschnig, H. (1938). *Die Revolution des Nihilismus. Kulisse und Wirklichkeit im Dritten Reich* (revolution of nihilism/Behind the scenes and in reality in the Third Reich). Zürich: Europa Verlag.
- Reich, W. (1930). Die Dialektik im Seelischen (dialectics in psyche). In: *Almanach der Psychoanalyse*, Wien: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, pp. 233-251.
- Reich, W. (1932). Der masochistische Charakter. *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, 18:303-351.
- Reich, W. (1949[1933]). *Character-analysis*. Third enlarged edition. New York: Orgone Institute Press.
- Reich, W. (1933). *Massenpsychologie des Faschismus. Zur Sexualökonomie der politischen Reaktion und zur proletarischen Sexualpolitik* (mass psychology of fascism/Towards a sexual economy of the political reaction to proletarian sexual politics). Kopenhagen-Prag-Zürich: Verlag für Sexualpolitik. Reprint:Frankfurt:Junius Druck&Verlag.
- Reich, W. (1942a). *The function of the orgasm / Sex-economic problems of biological energy*. New York: Orgone Institute Press
- Reich, W. (1942-1944b). *Die Massenpsychologie des Faschismus* (typescript). Vorwort zur III. korrigierten und erweiterten Auflage (preface to III. corrected and enlarged edition). Distributed for the Wilhelm Reich Trust Fund by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc. Copyright by Mary Boyd Higgins, 1969.
- Reich, W. (1967). *Reich speaks of Freud*. Higgins, M. & Raphael, C.M., eds. New York: Noonday Press.
- Reich, W. (1970[1969]). *The mass psychology of fascism*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, reprint 1980.
- Reich, W. (1975). Libidinal conflicts and delusions in Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. In: Reich, W., *Early writings* Volume One. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, pp. 3-64.
- Reich, W. (1988). *Passion of youth. An autobiography, 1897-1922*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux.
- Reich Rubin, L. (2003). Wilhelm Reich and Anna Freud: His expulsion from psychoanalysis. In: Lothane, Z., ed.: „Psychoanalysis in the Third Reich.“ *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 12:109-117.
- Roazen, P. (2001). The exclusion of Erich Fromm from the IPA. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 37(1):5-42.
- Richards, A. (2016). The Left and Far Left in American psychoanalysis: Psychoanalysis as a subversive discipline. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 52:111-129.
- Schmidt, H. (1934). *Philosophisches Wörterbuch* (philosophical dictionary). Ninth edition. Leipzig: Kröner.
- Sharaf, M. (1983). *Fury on earth A biography of Wilhelm Reich*. New York: St. Martin's Press/Marek.
- Shirer, W. L. (1960). *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Vergin, F. (1932). Subconscious Europe. London: Jonathan Cape. Original *Das unbewusste Europa Psychoanalyse der europäischen Politik*. Wien: Hess & Co. Verlag, 1931.
- Webb, J. (1976). *The occult establishment*. La Salle, IL: Open Court.

Word count: 7975 + 104 abstract and key words.

Henry Lothane MD
1435 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10128

Schreber@lothane.com