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# Brainwashing, Conditioning, and *DDD* (Debility, Dependency, and Dread)<sup>1</sup>

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Few aspects of Communism have been more puzzling and disturbing to the Western world than the widely publicized collaboration, conversion, and self-denunciation in individuals—communist and noncommunist, innocent and guilty alike—who have suffered Communist imprisonment. Such behavior in persons whose intelligence, integrity, or patriotism can scarcely be doubted has suggested to many a mysterious power or knowledge that enables Communists to manipulate the thoughts and actions of others in a manner ordinarily reserved to characters in the more lurid sorts of science fiction. Accordingly, such terms as “brainwashing,” “thought control,” “menticide,” and so on, have been applied to the process or product of this manipulation. To lend some degree of scientific respectability to such concepts, attempts have been made (e.g., 12, 16) to relate them to the psychiatric implications of Pavlovian conditioning procedures.

While these speculations have an undeniable romantic appeal, more sober analyses (1, 2, 7) of factors influencing the behavior of prisoners under Communist control indicate that they are neither mysterious nor indicative of any unusual amount of psychiatric sophistication on the part of Communists. Indeed, considering the extraordinary degree of control the Communists maintain over the physical and social environments of their prisoners, it is rather surprising that their efforts to indoctrinate and convert have not been more successful. Contrary to the views of some writers in popular media, the record indicates that most American prisoners in Korea, for instance, showed remarkable “sales resistance,” even under profound duress.

It is a fact that the Communist Chinese in Korea achieved considerable

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success in stimulating cooperative behavior in a large number of United Nations prisoners of war through a combination of threats, propaganda, group pressures, and group manipulation. By Segal's criteria, 15 per cent of American army prisoners cooperated unduly. And if it can be considered that it was every man's duty to exercise active resistance to the enemy and his propaganda during the period of captivity, then fully 95 per cent failed to meet the most stringent criteria for commendable behavior (18, 28, p. 80). Nevertheless, the Chinese induced only 21 American prisoners to remain under Communism (13), and it is doubtful whether all these were truly "converted." Most authorities agree that despite occasional lapses the vast majority of American prisoners of war performed well and honorably. As the Secretary of Defense's advisory committee on POW's has reported, "the record seems fine indeed" (30).

In the light of these findings, a complete analysis would concentrate more heavily on the factors that enabled the large majority of POW's to resist in some degree. However, it is not with these phenomena that the present discussion is primarily concerned. Rather, we wish to discuss the basis for the success of techniques whereby false confessions, self-denunciations, and participation in propaganda activities were brought about. The Communists made special efforts to elicit these behaviors in flying personnel, particularly with regard to confessions of participation in bacteriological warfare. After their world-wide propaganda campaign went into high gear with accusations of "germ warfare" in Korea, beginning on February 21, 1952, a vigorous policy of coercive pressure was applied to a large number of American flying personnel captured during the Korean conflict. As a result, a number of flyers from the Air Force and Marine Corps signed false confessions of bacteriological warfare and participated to various extents in enemy propaganda activities. A detailed account of these events may be found elsewhere (24, 28).

The objective intensity of noxious stimulation, injury, disease, malnutrition, deprivation, sleeplessness, fatigue, isolation, and threat suffered by many prisoners for a greater or lesser period was extreme. There were few, if any, who were not subjected to some of these conditions. Accounts of observations and experiments related to these various types of stress are now appearing in the literature in increasing numbers (e.g., 11, 29). The present discussion is concerned with the theoretical analysis of the psychological states and processes resulting from such objective conditions of stress.

#### DDD

Although the specific components of these states vary in intensity and pattern, in the case of the prisoner of war they contain at least three important elements: debility, dependency, and dread. They refer to the fact

that individuals subjected to the kinds of environmental conditions listed above have reduced viability, are helplessly dependent on their captors for the satisfaction of many basic needs, and experience the emotional and motivational reactions of intense fear and anxiety. These components are separable, but it is evident that they also interact. Consequently it seems appropriate as well as convenient to conceive of these states and processes as though they were an entity or syndrome including debility, dependency, and dread, to be referred to as *DDD*. Among the POW's pressured by the Chinese Communists, the *DDD* syndrome in its full-blown form constituted a state of discomfort that was well-nigh intolerable.

*Debility* was induced by semi-starvation, fatigue, and disease. Chronic physical pain was a common feature. Loss of energy and inability to resist minor abuse, combined with the lack of proper facilities for the maintenance of personal hygiene, led to inanition and a sense of terrible weariness and weakness.

*Dependency*, produced by the prolonged deprivation of many of the factors, such as sleep and food, needed to maintain sanity and life itself, was made more poignant by occasional unpredictable brief respites, reminding the prisoner that it was possible for the captor to relieve the misery if he wished. If an individual was placed in prolonged isolation, as was so often the case with flyers pressed to confess to the bacteriological warfare charges, the deprivation of ordinary social stimulation and relations markedly strengthened the dependency. Although we shall not dwell on this aspect of the situation, the effectiveness of Communist methods was undoubtedly greatly enhanced by their control of the means for satisfying nuclear social needs for recognition, status, communication, and so on. The captors' condemnation and misunderstanding of American social values, in connection with the withdrawal of accustomed social supports, e.g., reliable sources of information and communication with others as a means of testing reality and of appraising moral standards, played a significant part in the dependency relationship (2, 7, 10, 17).

*Dread* is the most expressive term to indicate the chronic fear the Communists attempted to induce. Fear of death, fear of pain, fear of nonrepatriation, fear of deformity or permanent disability through neglect or inadequate medical treatment, fear of Communist violence against loved ones at home, and even fear of one's own inability to satisfy the demands of insatiable interrogators—these and many other nagging despairs constituted the final component of the *DDD* syndrome (2).

The interrelations of these factors, carefully contrived and nurtured by the Communists, were of great importance in determining the total effect of *DDD*. Although there were some individuals who acceded to the demands of their captors fairly early in the game, it is clear that the Chinese realized the importance of preparing the resistant prisoner, through *DDD*, for the

long, drawn-out process designed to bring about the desired goal—complete compliance.

Before considering in greater detail the specific mechanisms underlying the role of *DDD* in accomplishing this aim, three prefatory comments are in order. First, the present analysis lays no claim to comprehensiveness. It deals with only a few aspects of *DDD* occurring under certain conditions. We believe these aspects to be important, but they are not all that is important. In this connection, the present paper may be considered as an elaboration of portions of the comprehensive discussion of Communist “thought reform” by Hinkle and Wolff (7). It is gratifying that our conclusions, arrived at independently and on somewhat more theoretical grounds, are essentially in agreement with theirs.

Second, our use of the terminology of learning theory, broadly conceived, and our use of concepts derived from conditioning, does not imply that we consider learning theory uniquely competent to explain the effects of *DDD*. On the other hand, we do consider factors influencing behavior in *DDD* to have something in common with factors affecting behavior in learning situations generally, and, therefore, that it may be worth while attempting to analyze some aspects of behavior associated with *DDD* in terms of principles of classical and instrumental conditioning. But, as an eminent conditioning theorist has recently noted (20), the view that principles derived from conditioning might apply to more complex behavior does not at all imply that complex behavior can be explained solely in terms of the variables affecting conditioning. In this instance, it is particularly doubtful that the procedures used to influence the behavior of prisoners under Communism derived from the methods of Pavlov, or that the prisoners’ reactions are generally understandable in purely Pavlovian terms. On the contrary, to the extent that such concepts apply at all, selective or instrumental (Thorndikean) learning was a more prominent feature than classical (Pavlovian) conditioning. Certainly, only limited aspects of the behavior of prisoners under Communism bear any resemblance to the generalized inhibitory or excitatory states characterizing some of Pavlov’s dogs (14).

Finally, we should beware of the “psychologist’s error.” Although some of the behavior of prisoners under Communism may be susceptible to analysis in terms of learning and conditioning principles, it does not follow that the application of these principles by Communist captors was deliberate and self-conscious. Animal trainers and side-show barkers are often extremely competent manipulators of behavior; this does not mean they are comparative or social psychologists.

#### *DDD*, SELF-PERCEPTION, AND THINKING

By providing a radically changed context *DDD* might be expected to produce new responses that actively compete or interfere with wanted

behavior. It may also produce a condition of markedly reduced responsiveness, not unlike the generalized inhibitory states described by Pavlov (14) and Liddell (8), due to the reduced or monotonous stimulation associated with isolation and confinement, or to reduced energy, or to the frustration of previously successful techniques for achieving goals. Whenever individuals show extremely selective responsiveness to only a few situational elements, or become generally unresponsive, there is a disruption of the orderliness, i.e., sequence and arrangement of experienced events, the process underlying time spanning and long-term perspective. By disorganizing the perception of those experiential continuities constituting the self-concept and impoverishing the basis for judging self-consistency, *DDD* affects one's habitual ways of looking at and dealing with oneself.

This effect, which has elsewhere been related to the collapse of certain ego functions (22), bears an interesting resemblance to some aspects of the postlobotomy syndrome. The latter, too, is characterized by apathy and the disturbance of the self-concept or self-regarding tendency (15). The frequency and degree of flattened affect and self-deprecation in the confessions of prisoners under Communism have probably been overestimated, but to the extent they have occurred, the observed behavior has much in common with that of some brain-damaged individuals.

Closely related to the foregoing consequence of *DDD* is a disturbance of association and a concreteness of thinking similar to that sometimes seen in schizophrenia. The retention of recent experiences and habit patterns may be impaired, with consequent regression, i.e., primitivization, in language, thought, and those integrative and mediating symbolic processes essential to reasoning and foresight. Conditioning performance in human subjects is impaired by some kinds of symbolic activity, and conversely, the impoverishment of thinking may increase susceptibility to arbitrary and unsubtle training procedures (cf. 3) leading to relatively automatic and uncritical imitative responses. This susceptibility may be further enhanced by anxiety and emotionality (5, 21, 23).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> These assumptions do not imply a negative correlation between intelligence and conditioning in normal subjects, nor better conditioning in feeble-minded or brain-damaged subjects than in normal individuals. The empirical evidence does not support any such views. The suggested effect of impoverished thinking relates only to that produced by debility, isolation, and such factors. One may speculate, in this connection, on the relation between this putative effect of *DDD* and the kinds of hypersuggestibility and automatism reported among primitive peoples suffering from prolonged physical stress and privation. Whether these symptoms result from some state of hyperconditionability is a moot question. Arctic hysteria and *latah*, for instance, are presumably dissociative and therefore hysteroid in nature (25), and the relation between hysteria and conditioning is as yet uncertain (4, 5, 6). Thus it is not possible at present to identify the effects of *DDD* with any particular psychiatric state.

## REINFORCEMENT OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

On the assumption that conditioning principles apply in part to the behavior of prisoners of war, it is important to analyze further the nature of the conditioned stimuli and the responses elicited by them. Careful consideration would seem to indicate that the situation contains features both of selective or instrumental learning and of classical conditioning (20). The instrumental (i.e., Thorndikean rather than Pavlovian) aspect is emphasized by the fact that an individual must acquire a particular set of responses in order to bring about a reinforcing state of affairs. It is our thesis that an alleviation in the state of *DDD* provides the reinforcement for much of the behavior desired by the enemy. In other words, *DDD* does not, in and of itself, produce the desired behavior. *DDD* merely provides the occasion for the selective reinforcement of certain modes of response.

The role of *DDD* in the reinforcement process depends on the fact that it is not constant. Instead, it may be assumed to fluctuate in time, partly as a result of spontaneous psychophysiological processes, and partly as a result of deliberate manipulations designed to maintain its intermittent nature (2), thus preventing its fall to a baseline of permanent depression and hopelessness. Those individuals who were reduced to complete apathy undoubtedly represented failures from the point of view of their Communist captors.

At the risk of considerable oversimplification, one may conceive of two consequences of the occasional mitigation of *DDD*. First is the conditioning of the "expectancy" that *DDD* will be alleviated. (This constitutes the actual classically conditioned anticipatory goal response.) Relief, whether due to spontaneous factors or deliberate manipulations, is intermittent, temporary, and unpredictable. Far from weakening the expectancy of relief, however, this tends to maintain the expectancy and renders it less susceptible to extinction. In nontechnical terms, this process serves to keep hope alive, permitting some degree of adaptive behavior, and inhibiting self-destructive tendencies, which would frustrate the enemy's purpose.

This aspect of the learning process throws some light on the frequent practice in Communist prisons of having prisoners "punish themselves." Thus, a captive might be instructed to stand or kneel in a certain position until he should decide to cooperate. This emphasis on the self-inflicted nature of the prisoner's punishment, and his ability to mitigate his condition "voluntarily," is clearly calculated to increase the intensity of expectancies of the possibility of relief. At the same time, it is evident that the prisoner's belief that he actually exercises control is delusory, so far

as the objective facts are concerned, since the captor may select any behavior he chooses as the condition for relieving a prisoner's distress.

The alleviation of *DDD* at the time of occurrence of the desired behavior leads to the second consequence—the learning of instrumental acts. This is not so difficult to arrange as one might suppose and is certainly not the result of any mysterious power of the manipulator. Very often, the desired behavior is verbal in nature. Verbal behavior is in a general way already strongly conditioned to *DDD* in all human adults. One learns from infancy to use verbal behavior as a means of relieving or avoiding many of the components of *DDD*. And, as the foregoing discussion indicates, the aperiodic and unpredictable nature of the selective reward of particular language responses may be one of its chief strengths. If one may extrapolate from the results of numerous laboratory experiments, this is the very procedure calculated to produce the maximum number of responses and also to make them highly resistant to extinction, even in the absence of rewards (19).

The nature of the rewards used needs no elaboration. Relief of hunger, fatigue, isolation, or pain, even temporarily, serves as an automatic reward. Even the verbal and empty promise of alleviation of *DDD* leads to appropriate anticipatory goal responses, keeping hope alive. Paradoxically, interrogation, harangues, threats, and contumely may also have a rewarding aspect, so great is the acquired reinforcement value of social communication and speech under conditions of isolation, dependency, and physical debility.

Since the habits of social communication associated with *DDD* are initially strong, and are further strengthened by selective reinforcement, it is not strange that prisoners often show considerable social responsiveness in the presence of their captors. Despite the impoverishment of the self-concept and primitivization of thinking referred to earlier, prisoners could enjoy in some degree a much needed social relationship in the interrogation and indoctrination situations. It may be hypothesized that some prisoners became the victims of the very socialization process that under ordinary circumstances is regarded as a desirable and, indeed, essential aspect of civilized living. It is of interest in this connection to record the finding of Lifton, who explicitly noted among a group of repatriated prisoners who had most aggressively resisted collaboration with the Communists, a large portion of individuals with significant antisocial tendencies (9). We do not suggest that collaboration and confession by prisoners under Communism are signs of desirable social attitudes. We do suggest that socialization training facilitates the tendency to engage in social communication, even with a recognized enemy, particularly under conditions in which the behavior is reinforced by the satisfaction of power-



ful drives while at the same time interfering or inhibitory tendencies are markedly reduced.

There are some analogies between the condition of an individual under such circumstances and that of a hypnotized subject. The hypnotized subject also tends to respond automatically, especially to verbal stimuli, to be greatly influenced by the attitude of the hypnotist, and to be highly selective in his social responsiveness. Furthermore, there is general agreement regarding the susceptibility of most normal individuals to hypnosis, except in the case of strong deliberate resistance. Under conditions of *DDD*, the possibility of resistance over a very long period may be vanishingly small. As soon as resistance appears, the intensity of *DDD* can be increased, thus at one and the same time punishing resistance and increasing the influence of the reward when relief occurs. It must be remembered that the strengthening effects of rewards—in this instance the alleviation of an intensely unpleasant emotional state—are fundamentally automatic. They occur because of the kind of nervous system we have, and not in any essential way because of the mediation of conscious thought processes.

#### RETENTION OF PRISON EXPERIENCES AND BEHAVIOR

What is the aftermath of such experiences? The evidence clearly indicates that, except in the case of organic brain damage such as might result from avitaminosis, the behavior of the typical returnee from Communist prisons is "normal," in the special and important sense that he behaves in a manner that would be predicted on the basis of ordinary laws of behavior. There is not the slightest evidence for the necessity of postulating new or unknown factors or conditions. This does not mean the experience of imprisonment leaves no trace. Such a circumstance would in itself be abnormal, i.e., inconsistent with the known principles of behavior. In terms of normative criteria, many ex-prisoners are more than ordinarily anxious, defensive, dependent, suspicious, insecure. Pressed to explain any possibly discreditable acts, they often exhibit a very considerable degree of hesitancy, vagueness, paramnesia, and rationalization. In a word, they behave exactly as one would expect of any individual required to explain and defend his behavior, many determinants of which he is not aware.

Most returnees remember a great deal of what occurred during their imprisonment. They do not remember everything and may be unable to give a very clear account of their own behavior. Some behavior may appear as strange and inexplicable to the person concerned as to anyone else. The explanation of whatever impairment of memory occurs may be found in the laws of forgetting, deriving from both clinic and laboratory. There is no need to expatiate here on the role of repression in forgetting when the material to be recalled elicits anxiety and guilt. But it may be useful to

note briefly some of the factors that would influence retention even in the absence of these emotions.

In an earlier section, it was pointed out that the state of *DDD* produces responses that actively compete with ordinary responses to environmental stimuli. By the same process, the comforting and familiar stimuli of home and friends are associated with a wholly different set of responses from those produced by *DDD*. The changed context may actively inhibit recall of the prison experiences. This phenomenon is nothing more than the familiar psychological explanation of forgetting in terms of associative interference.

Among the most important of these competing responses are the affective ones. The returnee simply does not feel as he did as a prisoner. He may be able to talk about how he felt, although this too offers difficulties because our terminology for describing emotional states is woefully inadequate and vague (3), but he does not currently respond affectively in the same way. Similarly, the familiar stimuli of home reinstate different verbal responses, both overt and implicit, that affect recall. The returnee feels different, talks differently, and thinks differently than he did in the former context. Since, like all of us, he is unaware of many of the cues to his former behavior (as well as his current behavior), it is as useless to ask him to explain his earlier reactions as it is to ask a person why he once disliked olives or is for the moment unable to recall the name of an old acquaintance.

The particular reactions and attitudes constituting patriotism, bravery, loyalty, and so on, depend on the appearance of particular cues, symbolic or other. Such qualities are tendencies to respond positively or negatively, in varying degrees and combinations, in the presence of certain combinations of cues. From this point of view, unwonted reactions occurring under *DDD* do not represent a different attitude; rather, the habitual attitude does not appear because the appropriate cues have been removed. Back home in the presence of adequate cues, the returnee tends to act and feel as he did prior to imprisonment.

Finally, one must consider the effect on retention of the adequacy of the original impression. Occasionally the returnee does not remember much because he did not observe much. The impoverished stimulation, impaired responsiveness, reduced symbolic activity, and disorganization of time-spanning characteristic of *DDD* reduce the clarity and strength of impressions at the time of the original experience, and thus decrease ability to recall.

In the light of all these factors, whose pejorative influence on retention is well known by students of human learning, it is clearly to be expected that the recall of returnees would be something less than complete and wholly accurate as regards their actual prison experiences and behavior.

RESISTANCE TO EFFECTS OF *DDD*

Despite our opinion that the most undesirable effects of *DDD* are not necessarily permanent, or, given appropriate social conditions after repatriation, even particularly long-lived, the general picture of *DDD* presented in the foregoing discussion is rather gloomy. This is in part because we have emphasized its stressful aspects rather than the considerable resources most persons can muster to oppose them. The many environmental, social, and motivational variables that produce resistance to these effects have not been discussed, but their potency should certainly not be underestimated. As we have observed earlier, the resistance of American prisoners under Communism, in the face of the objective circumstances detailed above, was in most instances notable, and in some nothing less than heroic (2, 24, 28).

It is evident that there are great individual differences in susceptibility to *DDD* even under conditions in which the level of *DDD* itself could reasonably be regarded as constant, i.e., not a differential factor. To state the point somewhat differently, there are unquestionably a number of variables, whose values differ from person to person, affecting the degree of resistance to the effects of *DDD*. The question may then be raised whether the potency of these variables might not be increased in any given individual. We believe they can.

The statement, "Every man has his breaking point," contains a germ of truth, but like other bromides, is liable to misinterpretation. It does not mean the "breaking point" is fixed for any given individual, so that nothing can affect it. Such a view is scientifically indefensible, if not meaningless, since it implies that some kinds of behavior are unlawful, i.e., not affected by variations in any kinds of antecedent conditions. Furthermore, the term "breaking point" is itself misleading. Susceptibility to *DDD* or any other stressful condition is not an all-or-none affair. We are discussing behavior, and behavior varies in degree and in kind. It may be possible to define "breaking" in the manner that one defines a right or wrong response in arithmetic, but it should be recognized that such a definition would be arbitrary at best and of doubtful conceptual significance. As Biderman has pointed out, a prisoner's physical and moral strength may be sapped by Communist coercive methods to a degree that resistance appears insignificant. But, however feeble his performance, motivation to resist usually persists and shows itself as circumstances permit (2).

It is not the purpose of the present discussion to consider all the possible personal or social variables of which resistance to the effects of *DDD* may be a function, or indeed to consider any of them in detail. We mention two, not because they are necessarily of particular importance, but because they throw further light on the nature of the *DDD* state. First, there is

the factor of physical health. Other things equal, there is probably a negative relation between degree of physical health and vigor on the one hand and susceptibility to *DDD* on the other. Debility can be postponed longer, dependency fought against, and the self-concept maintained more easily if bodily well-being obtains. Second, there is the factor of initial or chronic anxiety. No matter what anxiety is due to, the higher the anxiety level, the greater is the possibility of rewarding behavior by its momentary reduction. Contrariwise, a low level of initial anxiety should retard the growth of the "dread" component of *DDD*, and at least indirectly affect some of its antecedents, e.g., the reactivity to pain (27).

Thus, techniques for promoting health and decreasing anxiety in those who may become prisoners are probably of great importance. Nevertheless, one should not expect factors such as these to block the effects of *DDD* indefinitely. Physical health, for instance, may be of utmost value over the short haul, e.g., during early interrogation. But on a long-term basis it may be relatively insignificant. Health can be broken down by a determined and informed enemy in a very short time. And although a healthy individual can better resist the effects of debilitating variables, there is no evidence that, once illness and physical debility occur, previously healthy individuals can tolerate this condition better than those who might have become habituated to it. In some cases, indeed, the reverse might obtain.

A somewhat similar reservation may be expressed concerning procedures calculated to reduce initial anxiety, i.e., training individuals to be generally nonanxious. The fear component of *DDD*, unlike neurotic anxiety or neurotic fears (phobias), is quite realistic for the most part. Realistic fears are not easily extinguishable and, if they were, the desirability of extinguishing such fears is not altogether certain. For instance, fear of punishment for displaying hostility toward one's captors is adaptive. Wolf and Ripley (26) quote one prisoner of the Japanese in World War II in this regard: "I had to make a conscious effort not to resent things because I realized that my bones are brittle."

On the other hand, certain anticipatory fears may be modified through training procedures. Alleviation of unrealistic fears of the unknown (through accurate indoctrination regarding enemy methods) undoubtedly improves the ability of the individual to deal with those fears that are realistic. It may make it possible for him to admit his fear to himself, as a reasonable and expected reaction, thus modifying its influence as a covert force toward compliance. Furthermore, an expectation of the probable psychophysiological effects of stress may rob them of some of their "shock" value. Finally, a certain amount of transfer may be expected from stressful training experiences in which adaptive modalities have been learned, thus permitting the prisoner to conceptualize his current stressful experience

in terms of previous (and at least partly successful) transactions under stress.

Still, it would be foolish to disregard the fact that some of the elements of *DDD* represent a pathological organic state, some consequences of which are probably innately determined. To the extent this is true, one cannot expect to achieve a great degree of prophylactic success in regard to the effects of *DDD*, any more than one can reasonably expect at the present state of knowledge to prevent some of the undesirable consequences of lobotomy.

Though many of the behavioral consequences of *DDD* are not innately determined, the conditioning of certain types of responses desired by the enemy may eventually occur, even in the face of superlative resistance. One of the conclusions that may legitimately be drawn from the present analysis of the circumstances of imprisonment under Communism is that, if a prisoner's state of *DDD* reaches a truly extreme degree of severity (and it cannot now be predicted whose ability to resist will be the most effective in combating *DDD*), and *if he lives*, he probably cannot be expected to resist indefinitely. This prediction does not require the assumption that Communists have mysterious powers, or that their prisoners are subjected to some strange process of "brainwashing" negating the effects of their previous training and attitudes. It is based, rather, on the assumption that under the physical, social, and emotional conditions of extreme *DDD*, some degree of ultimate compliance may be considered a natural consequence of the operation of ordinary principles of human behavior.

#### SUMMARY

Although the behavior of some prisoners under Communism, including collaboration, conversion, and self-denunciation, appears to suggest that Communists are able to "brainwash" their prisoners in a mysterious way, a consideration of the physical, emotional, and social conditions of the prisoner in conjunction with the ordinary principles of human behavior reveals that such behavior may be readily explained. The state of the prisoner may be described in terms of the concepts of debility, dependency, and dread (*DDD*), and some of the behavioral principles explaining the effects of the *DDD* state derive from learning and conditioning phenomena.

It is assumed that *DDD* operates in part to produce a generalized state of hyporesponsiveness, disrupting time-spanning processes and disorganizing the self-concept. Another consequence of *DDD* is the impairment of symbolic processes, perhaps rendering the prisoner susceptible to relatively simple conditioning techniques. The intermittent nature of *DDD* leads both to the expectancy of relief (i.e., hope) and to the reinforcement of

specific kinds of verbal behavior. The latter effect is facilitated by the fact that social communication is already strongly conditioned to cues such as those produced by *DDD*, as a result of normal socialization training.

The typical prisoner returnee exhibits no extraordinary peculiarities of memory. The degree of forgetting of prison experiences is such as would be expected as a result of the inhibition of anxiety-producing thoughts (repression), change of situational context during recall, and the inadequacies of original impressions during imprisonment.

Resistance to the undesirable consequences of *DDD* is a matter of degree and may be modified by such factors as physical health and level of initial anxiety. Nevertheless, factors such as these cannot reasonably be expected to provide more than temporary respite. Through various defenses, a prisoner may postpone the development of extreme *DDD* for a long time, perhaps indefinitely. But if a prisoner's state of *DDD* is extreme, and if he lives, he probably cannot resist indefinitely. Far from furnishing proof of the operation of some unnatural process of "brainwashing," this eventuality is a predictable consequence of the operation of laws of normal human behavior.

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