

FINAL CHOICES

I. Authoritarianism the Only Humanistic Social Option

One man or an elite giving authoritative arbitrary absolutes.

- A. Society is sole absolute in absence of other absolutes.
- B. But society has to be led by an elite: John Kenneth Galbraith, Robert Theobald.
- C. Daniel Bell's prophecy of technocratic elite.
- D. Bell's warning of cultural contradiction: no absolute ethic to accompany absolute power.

II. Nature of the New Authoritarianism

- A. Do not think of the model of Hitler and Stalin.
- B. Probably a manipulative, authoritarian elite.

III. Possible Forms of Manipulation

- A. Review from Episode Six: Koestler—chemical agents; Krantz—birth control in world's drinking supply; Clark—political leaders should take anti-aggression pills; Lee—psychological tests for public officials; Skinner—reinforcers to modify behavior.
- B. Genetic condition: Francis Crick.
 - 1. He advocates:
 - a) That some group of people is to decide who should be the parents of the next generation and who should be born.
 - b) That some group of people should determine what kind of people they want in the future and will set out genetically to make them.
 - 2. Once Man is no longer seen as made in God's image, there is no reason not to "tinker" with Man genetically.
- C. The mass media.
 - 1. TV conditions by selective editing. Illustration: simulated riot filmed in San Jose.
 - 2. No collusion needed if views of elite and newsmakers coincide. Media not monolithic, but total control not needed to achieve manipulation.

IV Authoritarianism in Government. Illustration: United States

- A. The dilemma of people who speak out for civil liberties but are also committed to the government's having a responsibility to solve every problem.
- B. Christian freedoms without Christian base produce chaos.
- C. In the United States an authoritarian, manipulating government could come from the administrative (executive) side, the legislature, or from the courts functioning on variable, sociological law.

V. Threat of Authoritarianism

- A. Leftist or Rightist authoritarianism are only two roads to the same end.
- B. With the loss of Christian consensus, no reason for young or old committed to apathy not to give in if promised personal peace and affluence.
- C. Roman bridge simile: humanist values collapse under pressure.
- D. Some overwhelming pressures which progressively tend to prepare modern people to accept a manipulative, authoritarian government:
 - 1. Economic breakdown.
 - a) Spiral of inflation leads to economic recession.
 - b) Fear of economic breakdown swamps concern for liberty.
 - 2. Random violence and political terrorism. Fear can be so great than any compromise is worth security.
 - 3. Threat of War between the West and expansionist Communist Block. Fear of war opens the way for many to accept authoritarianism as lesser evil.
 - 4. World food shortage and change in world distribution of wealth and goods.
 - a) Threat of lower living standards alters basic attitudes.
 - b) Authoritarianism more likely to be accepted in a descending spiral of prosperity and a country's place of power.
- E. As in the days of Caesar Augustus (Episode One), authoritarianism is most easily accepted if it is brought in while seeming to keep the outward forms of constitutionality.

VI. Two Alternatives to Chaos:

Either authoritarianism—or society's affirming once again the original source of freedom, God's revelation in the Bible, and His revelation through Christ.

- A. Reconsidering the second alternative.
 - 1. Nonpragmatic nature of biblical Christianity.
 - a) Christianity not a superior utilitarianism to mend society; Christianity is truth that gives a unity to all of knowledge and all of life.
 - b) Stems from the infinite-personal God who exists and who was the Maker of the heavens and the earth.

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- c) The acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord, living under the absolutes which the Bible gives.
 - d) Christians have a responsibility to influence society across its whole spectrum and the entire spectrum of life.
 - e) Christians can influence consensus without being a majority.
2. The message of Paul to the Greek and Roman world applied.
- a) Classical-humanist answers insufficient.
 - b) World is guilty of suppressing God's truth and living accordingly. The universe and its form and the manliness of Man speak the same truth that the Bible gives in greater detail.
 - c) Biblical Christianity is a message that people can return to God on the basis of Christ's work alone, but it also gives the base for form and freedom in society.
 - d) It is this which can give us a hope for the future.
 - e) It is either this or an imposed order.
- B. A reminder about presuppositions.
- 1. People act out their thoughts, whether they know it or not.
 - 2. All depends on the world view one accepts and lives upon.

Questions

- 1. The theory of human biological manipulation, granted its premises, is entirely consistent. Outline these premises and the way in which various programs of manipulation are derived from them.
- 2. In a world moving steadily towards authoritarian regimes, does the relative slowness of Western democracies to lose their freedoms increase or decrease the likelihood of the West's political survival? Give reasons.
- 3. Can you think of ways in which you and your church's attitudes to society betray the utilitarian approach to the world? Does this approach reflect ignorance about the Truth and guilt about our failure to live it? What is the alternative approach and what does it reflect?

Key Events and Persons

Paul's speech in Athens: c. A.D. 53

Paul's Epistle to the Romans: c. A.D. 60

J.K. Galbraith: 1908-

Francis Crick: 1916-

Daniel Bell: 1919-

The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: 1973

Robert Theobald: 1929-

Further Study

As an exercise, you might find it valuable to collect clippings which deal with the subjects discussed and see what attitudes are betrayed by the authors. To pool such clippings in a group for the purpose of joint examination would be very illuminating.

Daniel Boorstin, *The Image* (1961).

Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda* (1965).

Francis Crick, *Of Molecules and Men* (1967).

Francis Crick, *Origins of the Genetic Code* (1968).

Gordon R. Taylor, *The Biological Time-Bomb* (1969).

Daniel Bell, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society* (1973).

E.M.B. Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (1970).

Francis A. Schaeffer, *Death in the City* (1969).

Nevil Shute, *On the Beach* (1952).

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Communism: A Legacy of Terror* (1975).

Richard M. Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences* (1965.)