El grupo paranoide

Chapter 13

Centrality

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In the previous chapter I have developed the *superiority complex*, which causes the IGP to believe, feel, and behave as someone who is *above* others. But the IGP also believes himself to be *at the center* of the society surrounding him, of humanity, and even of creation.

> Paranoia
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> On certain occasions he is capable of finding the direct intervention of Providence in his destiny. Through changes in the weather, the peculiar twinkling of the stars, the flight of birds, the clothing of the people he encounters, the scrap of paper he finds on the road, it becomes clearly apparent that God protects him in a special way and sends him signs regarding his behavior which he understands immediately and follows scrupulously with confident joy. As a consequence of these experiences, an extensive network of mysterious relationships develops, at the center of which is the patient (13).

> Paranoia
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> [...] he becomes a chosen instrument of Heaven, the center of the world (13).

So it is, so great is his importance, that the course of events may depend on what he does or fails to do, or on his presence or absence.

> Sokagakkai
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> Faith also takes precedence over the usual secular criteria of causality: natural, political, and social. An earthquake in the prefecture of Niigata was attributed to the number of heretics in the area; the derailment of a train in the zone of Tsurumi was caused by the existence of a heretical temple in the vicinity. The dictates of simplicity produce political explanations that may contribute to the separation of Gakkai members from secular reality. The success in the 1965 elections was attributed to the vigorous prayer of the believers; in general, electoral successes are nothing 'more than the victories of faith' (20).

> Sectarian groups. Children of God
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> Love is changing the world! More than 8,000 of us are spreading the message of God's love in approximately 80 countries across all continents! (16).

Occupying this prominent position, the IGP is convinced that *everyone knows him*.

> Paranoia. Aimée Case

> Everyone knows my story approximately! (14).

> Sectarian groups. TFP
> Plinio Correa de Oliveira needs no introduction. For more than 30 years the Spanish-speaking public has been familiarizing itself with his thought... (4).

> Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA
> It crossed my mind that if these were the same lunatics who had killed Marcus Foster, it would be safer for me not to admit that I knew who they were. So I repeated that I knew nothing about them, which seemed to agitate him enormously. He wondered how I could be so stupid, where I could have been sheltering to know nothing about the SLA. He told me directly that the SLA had killed Marcus Foster with cyanide bullets. He was proud of it (7).

Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA.

"[...] 'Haven't you heard of the Symbionese Liberation Army?'

> 'No,' I whispered
> 'The S-L-A,' he said clearly. 'The Symbionese Liberation Army. Everyone knows the SLA' (7).

Everyone knows it, given that, due to its exceptionality, the IGP does not go unnoticed.

> Delusional infestation of dermatozoic type. Clinical case
> [...] when someone is beside her, she thinks they will notice she is infected... (1).

> Sectarian groups. TFP
> The followers of TFP believe of themselves that when they walk down the street they are 'tearing through, breaking the atmosphere': people stare, are surprised, do not remain indifferent. There is no need to conceal anything, one must button one's shirt up to the last button, wear the insignia. It is not acceptable to 'dissolve' among the people on the street (17).

Or, in any case, it must not go unnoticed. The indifference of one's surroundings proves intolerable.

> Nazism

> We must break through the wall of anonymity. Berliners can insult us, denigrate us, beat us, as long as they talk about us. Today we are 600, but in six years there will be 600,000 of our people." He kept his word. The battle began" (Goebbels, cited in 21).

The exceptionality of the IGP not only prevents it from remaining in gray anonymity, but also ensures that, for or against, no one fails to take sides.

> Erotomania
> Almost universal sympathy aroused by the ongoing romance (2).

> Sectarian groups. The Patriarch
> We are the most important in quality and quantity in Europe, by virtue of our dynamism, concealed by the media, supported by the greatest scientists, rejected by the left and certain psychiatrists, welcomed favorably by democrats, republicans, centrists, etc... (18).

The contrast between reality and the perception of it is absolute, and the absurd conclusions reached by the AP escape being considered delusional, once again, solely and exclusively because those who hold them are not an individual but a group.

> Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA
> While I listened to Cin's exhortations in the small restroom I finally became clearly convinced that what he was saying was something more than mere rhetoric or propaganda. He truly believed. He honestly thought that the SLA was a large, growing, and formidable army, and not merely three men and six women. He was convinced that the poor were supporting their crusade in ever-increasing numbers. He truly believed that the government (whether city, state, or federal was never entirely clear) would soon declare martial law to contain or restrict revolutionary violence, and as a consequence of this, Blacks and the poor would rise up in armed protest. He truly believed that growing oppression would unleash popular revolution. And he truly believed that the United Symbionese Nation would ultimately be born and that he, Cinque, would be the father and founder of the new nation (**7**).

Sometimes it is History itself that allows us to understand the importance of the paranoid contagion group, which is situated at the epicenter of one of the transitions between the great historical cycles, marking the beginning of one of them.

Sectarian groups. Moonies

On Monday we were stimulated to an unprecedented emotional level. The centerpiece of Mr. Miller's day's lectures was entitled: 'The History of Restoration'. It purported to be a precise and tightly structuredscriptof God's methods for leading humanity onto the path of His original intention. 'It is a scientifically proven fact that there exists a pattern marking the recurring cycles in history', declared Mr. Miller. Over hours and hours of lecture, it became clear that all these cycles pointed to an incredible conclusion: God had sent His second Messiah to Earth between the years 1917 and 1930 (6).

Nazism

... because on August 1st a Revolution broke out which, through upheavals and struggles (of which the World War was but the obligatory beginning), has been bringing forth a new world that puts an end, after one hundred and fifty years of existence, to the world created by the great French Revolution, by virtue of that eternal law whereby all things are born and pass away, a law within which we ourselves are no more than an oscillation" (Strasser, cited in 9).

Or one sees oneself as nothing less than fighting the decisive battle in the clash of civilizations, or in the struggle between humanity's great ideologies, or in the eternal combat between Good and Evil.

Nazism

... He did not distort the truth but rather underscored the situation at the front in plain terms. Goebbels declared that the struggle on the Eastern front was a battle between Western civilization and Bolshevism. Two thousand years of Western culture were at stake. The situation was extraordinarily critical and total war the only solution (19).

Sectarian groups. TFP

The TFP has the honor of receiving the impact of each of these offensives, gallantly resisting and consolidating itself as the great ideological barrier against the establishment of communism (3).

Nazism

> ... The fruitless struggle against *Judaism* has been going on for 2,000 years. But fortunately, since 1933, we have managed to find the appropriate means and ways for the definitive separation between Jewish communities and the German people (21).

Small and even numerically insignificant groups are convinced that they have played an essential and decisive role in the great events of History…

> Sectarian groups. TFP
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> The TFP thus created, against Catholic leftism, a healthy climate of distrust, of withdrawal, if not outright opposition, without which the ecclesiastics committed to the revolutionary cause would have long since dragged the nation with the largest Catholic population on earth toward the socialist precipice (3).

(…) or they are certain that they are going to play one.

> Sokagakkai
>
> The NSA feels that America's destiny is bound to its own [...] America can only fulfill the Declaration of Independence through devotion to the Lotus Sutra. In 200 more years of American history, this time with the presence and influence of the NSA, we will see these things come to pass (10).

> Sokagakkai
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> Previously, the NSA had done everything possible to awaken the patriotic fervor of its members and observers during the bicentennial celebrations of 1976 in the United States. Parades, conferences, and demonstrations were held by the NSA across the United States. The central theme was the great advancement of democracy in America over the past two hundred years. An interesting essay, 'NSA, Rekindling the American Spirit', by an NSA journalist, Gary Curtis, describes in a fascinating way how the NSA has combined its own doctrines with its interpretation of American history in an effort to lay the foundation for a Buddhist revolution in the United States. The underlying theme is that the American Revolution was the precursor to the Buddhist Revolution that is to follow. The founding fathers of America, like Shakyamuni in India, created a new social system, which was effective for a time, but has now declined. Since American society has entered a 'mappo-like age,' a Buddhist revolution is needed to lead the United States into an era of 'true democracy' (15).

> Sokagakkai
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> In the fourth phase, that is, between 2101 and 2150, it may be expected that an indestructible foundation of lasting world peace will have been laid. If this is achieved, we can trust that in the fifth phase — that is, by the end of the 22nd century — the second chapter of our movement leading to the propagation of our creed in all parts of the world will be completed. It may well be that the second chapter of this great movement begins in the year 2253, the millennium of the founding of Nichiren Shoshu, or in 2279, the millennium of the inscription of the Dai-Gohonzon. I realize that I am referring to times very far in the future and that none of us will be here to know what comes to pass (12).

On other occasions, links are invented between distant events that were central in the history of humanity and the present of the group itself. Thus, for example, in the crucial month of October 1914, in which Jesus sat upon the throne, the ancient Davidic monarchy was restored in the person of Jesus. In this way, Jehovah's Witnesses trace an imaginary yet solid thread of continuity between the subjects of the ancient Jewish kingdom and the new subjects of the reinstated Kingdom — themselves.

Or the IGP sees itself as the fulfillment of some ancient prophecy.

> Sectarian groups. TFP
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> The future existence of the TFP would have already been predicted in the manuscripts of the Qum Ram, but the Jews have managed to conceal it (17).

Convinced of standing right at the center of the stage of such great events, playing the role of protagonist, the militant *feels like a protagonist*, a sensation that more than makes up for all the sacrifices.

> Sectarian groups. Moonies
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> Being so close to the 'Messiah' was tremendously stimulating. I felt incredibly fortunate to be part of this movement and took myself very seriously because of the spiritual repercussions of everything I did. I thought that every action I carried out had a great historical impact (6).

> Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA
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> When we settled in Oakdale, resuming our daily routine of military training, exercises, and marathon discussions, a new intensity crept into our lives, a combination of revolutionary

> zeal and sheer paranoia. We were running out of time. We were mesmerized by Cinque's certainty that we were then in May and that the revolution was sure to begin that summer, within a matter of months. He insisted that we had to train harder to prepare ourselves for the leadership roles each of us would have to assume when the struggle began in the streets. Cin spoke to us every day about the revolution. It was spreading across America, starting in California and flooding the country, like a giant wave (7).

The sense of protagonism is also enjoyed by the paranoiac, whether they be the inventor, the reformer, the mystic, or the one who believes himself to be the victim of the most far-fetched persecutions.

> Sectarian-Leninist splinter group. SLA
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> Nothing could stop it [the revolution], except the pigs discovering us and killing us. Cin insisted that they knew it just as well as we did, and that is why the police were going around with helicopters searching for the SLA throughout the city (7).

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