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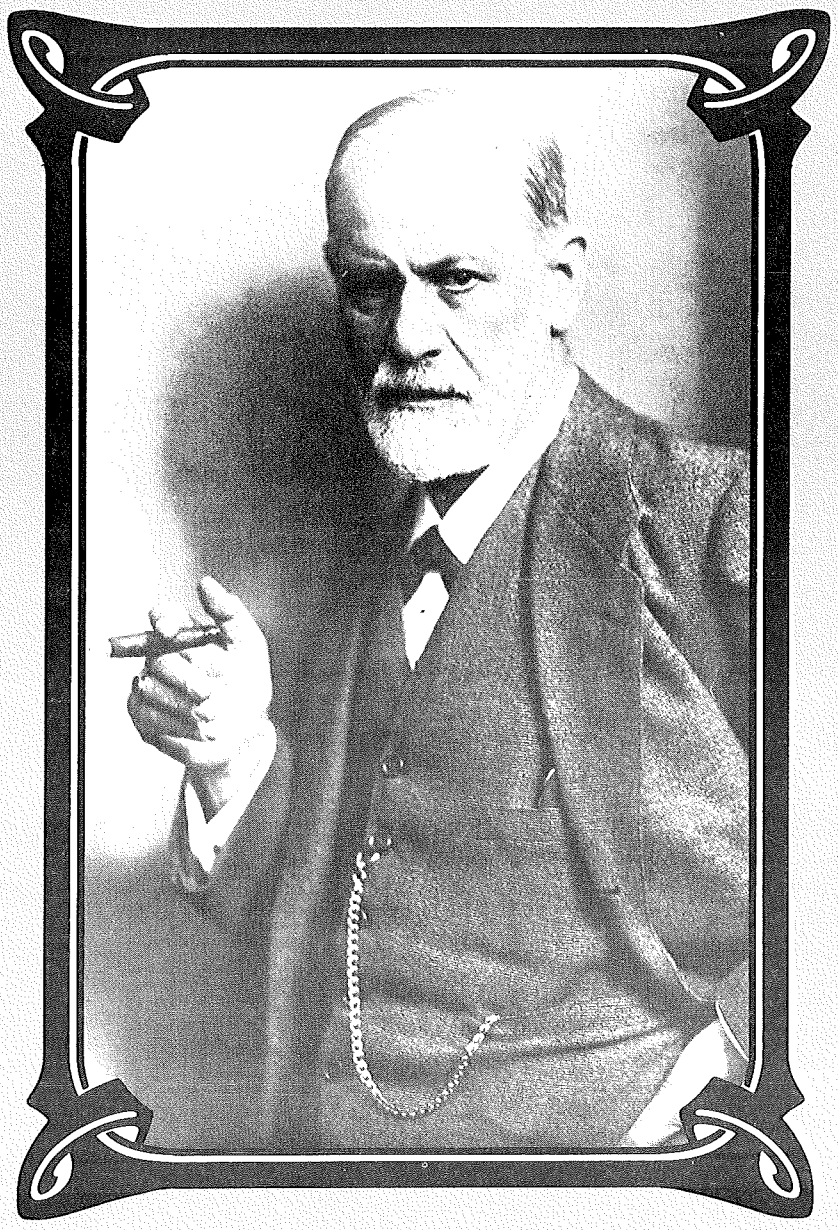
THE NEW REPUBLIC

August 25, 1979 Price One Dollar



Freud the Self-Made Hero

aren't often true and painful, only that their treatment here doesn't lift them out of movie familiarity.

But there is freshness, too. The script, written by Alan Alda who plays the leading role, is about a rising young senator, his handling of a nomination to the Supreme Court in a way that advances his career, the beginning of his presidential possibilities. The senatorial atmosphere and the Washington byplay seem authentic to a New York hick, but what's really interesting is that the film deals with political *life*. Almost all political pictures deal with elections, not with the work of the office in between elections. (Notable but forgotten exception: the English picture *No Love for Johnnie*, made with Peter Finch in 1960.) *Seduction* tries to show a senator's life, on the Senate floor, in private chambers, in restaurants, at parties. And it tries to deal with the maintenance of ethics and the molding of ambition. It manages to do this realistically yet uncynically.

The performances are better than the script because they are *un*spottily good. Alda, still a better actor than writer, is humorous and moving as hotshot politician, as loving husband and father, as succumbing lover. Melvyn Douglas rumbles authoritatively as an ancient senator whose symptom of senility is lapsing into French. Barbara Harris, though oddly wigged, has her own velvet-eyed charm as Alda's wife. She persuades although she has the corniest part, including a tantrum near the end that has to do with movies not with the character previously set forth. And the Other Woman is played by Meryl Streep, who could bring new truth to *Stella Dallas*. (That is not a suggestion, please.) Here Streep is a smart Louisiana labor lawyer, raised in a political family, rich and funny and sexy. To compare this performance only with her work in *The Deer Hunter* and *Manhattan* is to see that a) she has a stunning talent; b) she has a vivid personality; and c) there is no need to suspend critical judgment of her acting just because it takes place on film and because her film personality is a part of her effect.

Streep is especially lucky here to be photographed by Adam Holender, who did *Midnight Cowboy*, among others, and who lights her just a bit better than was done even in the two films cited above. Her beauty is not "easy" for the camera: it's there, but it has to be revealed. Holender succeeds. And the director Jerry Schatzberg, who flopped all over the lot in *The Panic in Needle Park* and *Scarecrow*, gets a grip on himself here. There's a bit too much popping in and out of long shots (in some measure due to the editor), but Schatzberg handles ribald scenes with restraint and restrained scenes with intensity. The sequence in which Alda and Streep first kiss—a sequence interrupted by a call from Alda's wife, then resumed and concluded—is well directed by Schatzberg: and well played by the two actors.

Remember the world's oldest riddle: Is the glass half empty or half full? Well, is *Seduction* more than it seems to be at times or less than it seems to be at times? The answer is an unequivocal yes.

The myth of the hero in the psychoanalytic movement.

Freud as Conquistador

by Frank J. Sulloway

Few scientific figures are as shrouded in legend as Freud. How and why has this legend become so well developed? And what does the Freud legend tell us about the man and his psychoanalytic movement?

Above all, the traditional account of Freud's achievements has acquired its mythological proportions at the expense of historical context. Indeed, historical "decontextualization" is a prerequisite for good myths, which invariably seek to deny history. This denial process has followed two main tendencies in psychoanalytic history—namely, the extreme reluctance of Freud and his loyal followers to acknowledge the biological roots of psychoanalysis, thus transforming Freud into a crypto-biologist; and the creation and elaboration of the "myth of the hero" in the psychoanalytic movement. Virtually all the major legends and misconceptions of traditional Freud scholarship have sprung from either of these tendencies.

In this essay I shall explore the second of these sources of distortion in psychoanalytic history—the myth of the hero. It is my contention that the expedient denial and refashioning of history has been an indispensable part of the psychoanalytic revolution. Perhaps more remarkable still is the degree to which this whole process of historical censorship, distortion, embellishment, and propaganda has been effected with the cooperation of psychoanalysts who would instantly proclaim such phenomena as "neurotic" if they spotted them in anyone else.

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I

Freud's entire life followed an heroic path so closely as to suggest his conscious (or unconscious) living out of heroic expectations. A perusal of his childhood, as well as of his Jewish family background, shows that this heroic pattern was indeed ingrained in Freud at an early age, and that he cultivated it as an effective life-strategy in later years.

As is typical of heroes, both in myth and in actuality, the reasons for Freud's high expectations of himself date from events connected with his birth. Freud was born with a caul, a circumstance that people over the centuries have taken as a portent of later fame. Also at the time, an old peasant woman announced to the proud mother that with her firstborn child she had just delivered an important man into the world. These prophecies, in which Freud's mother evidently placed great faith, were frequently repeated to young Freud. Yet another prediction was made when he

Three Major Myths of Psychoanalysis

The Myth of the 'Timid' Breuer

One of the most colorful stories of traditional psychoanalytic history seeks to explain why Josef Breuer, who treated the famous patient Anna O. and discovered the "cathartic" method of therapy, should subsequently have broken with Freud and psychoanalysis.

As Ernest Jones reported in his biography of Freud, Breuer had apparently become aware of his patient's unhealthy attachment to him and decided to cut short the therapy one day—only to be called back that same evening to discover that his patient had suffered a severe relapse and was in the throes of an hysterical childbirth. The meaning of this "phantom pregnancy" was all too clear to Breuer, Jones recounts. Deeply disturbed, Breuer hypnotized his patient, "fled the house in a cold sweat," and the very next day departed Vienna for Venice on a second honeymoon with his wife—an occasion for rapprochement between his jealous spouse and himself that led to the conception of a daughter. Although Freud later explained to Breuer, Jones adds, the general "transference" nature of such an attachment, Breuer's subsequent cooperation in their two joint publications was ensured only with the strict understanding that "the theme of sexuality was to be kept in the background."

In spite of the manifest sincerity with which Freud, Ernest Jones, and most subsequent biographers of Freud have insisted upon this dramatic scenario of Breuer's rift with Freud, it is largely a myth. In fact, Breuer was quite outspoken on the importance that he believed should be accorded to the sexual factor in hysteria as well as in other nervous disorders. In his "theoretical" contribution to *Studies on Hysteria*, he even cited the argument about the marriage bed as the source of most neurotic complaints that Freud, 30 years later, alleged was a purely private remark subsequently "disavowed" by Breuer. "I do not think I am exaggerating," Breuer wrote, "when I assert that *the great majority of severe neuroses in women have their origin in the marriage bed.*" Breuer appended a footnote in which he deplored his medical colleagues' customary silence on sexuality, "one of the most important of all the pathogenic factors."

Nor did Anna O.'s phantom pregnancy cause Breuer to react to Freud's later discoveries in quite the way Freud himself was later to suppose. In 1895 both Breuer *and* Freud earnestly believed the Anna O. case to be nonsexual—and nondefensive—in nature on account of her remarkable efforts to cure herself by recalling the origins of each of her symptoms. Breuer, for his own part, simply failed to connect his patient's growing personal attachment to him, as suddenly revealed at the termination of treatment, with the causes of her illness. At any event, even the delicate problem of Anna O.'s misunderstood transference relationship with Breuer did not stop him from openly supporting the sexual etiology of hysteria in subsequent cases whenever sexuality proved itself more obviously linked to the initial outbreak of the illness. As Breuer summed up his position in 1907, "I confess that plunging into sexuality in theory and practice is not to my taste. But what have my taste and feeling about what is seemly and what is unseemly to do with the question of what is true?"

As for Breuer's break with Freud, it was actually precipitated by Freud's fanatical attempts to reduce hysteria and other neuroses to purely biological causes. Rather than admit his own fanaticism on this subject or Breuer's reasoned reserve, Freud attributed Breuer's criticisms to a personal repression of sexual matters. Thus, Josef Breuer, who in many important respects was both the first psychoanalyst and one of the most sympathetic Viennese supporters of Freud's psychoanalytic discoveries in the 1890s, also became, in time, the first major victim of psychoanalytically reconstructed history.

Fliess and Infantile Sexuality

No figure has been victimized by as many myths and misconceptions in the service of the psychoanalytic cause as Wilhelm Fliess, a Berlin physician and biologist, whose friendship with Freud spanned the 15 critical years from 1887 to 1902 in which psychoanalysis took form. According to Ernest Jones and other psychoanalyst-historians, Fliess was a baneful pseudoscientist whom Freud tolerated as a "listener" owing to his "isolation" during his heroic self-analysis. The self-analysis in turn is said to have led to Freud's revolutionary discovery of infantile sexuality, an insight that finally freed him from his need of Fliess. What the Freudians omitted to report in their historical account is that Fliess was a pioneer in the field of infantile sexuality; his own ideas on this subject appeared in an 1897 monograph nine months before Freud's self-analysis.

was 11 or 12. The family was sitting one evening at a restaurant in the Prater, a famous Viennese park, when their attention was attracted by a man who, for a small fee, was improvising verse on any chosen subject. Freud was sent to fetch the poet, who began by dedicating a few lines to his young emissary, declaring that the boy would grow up to be a cabinet minister. At that time the liberal *Bürger* ("Middle-class") Ministry included a number of Jews, whose names and portraits were all well known to Jewish schoolboys. Freud was so impressed by this prediction that he decided to study law. Only at the last moment before entering the university did he change to medicine.

Amidst all these expectations concerning Freud's impending fame—expectations that were greatly reinforced by the extreme pride and love that his mother extended to her favorite child—it is no wonder that he felt destined for greatness. The entire family revolved around his well-being. (When Freud found that a sister's piano practicing was disturbing his studies, both the piano lessons and the piano had to go.) Freud later acknowledged the considerable psychological benefits of his favored position within his family when he commented that "people who know that they are preferred or favoured by their mother give evidence in their lives of a peculiar self-reliance and an unshakeable optimism which often seem like heroic attributes and bring actual success to their possessors."

Freud's youthful ambitions were not limited to those of a would-be cabinet minister. His principal boyhood heroes were Hannibal, the Semitic general who crossed the Alps with his Carthaginian forces and outwitted the Roman legions; Cromwell, who allowed the Jews to return to England; and Napoleon, also an emancipator of the Jews.

Fliess believed that all life was regulated by two rhythms—a 23-day male cycle and a 28-day female cycle. This theory of vital periodicity implied the necessary existence of spontaneous infantile sexuality. The mother's two sexual periods were transmitted to the child in earliest embryonic life and were supposed to determine the sex of the offspring and to regulate its further maturation and overall vital activities until its death.

It was to show that his two periodic rhythms were biochemically *sexual* in nature that Fliess was drawn to the problem of infantile sexuality. Indeed, his pansexualist unification of biorhythms, sexual chemistry, and a theory of the entire human life cycle seemed to contradict contemporary scientific belief that sexual phenomena do not exist before puberty. And so it was that Fliess seized eagerly upon the little-recognized evidence for spontaneous infantile sexuality, and particularly for the periodicity of its manifestations, as a major corroboration of his overall system.

Thus, when Sigmund Freud later wrote in *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* that one of "the most unexpected" findings of all his psychoanalytic researches had been the discovery that "sexual life does not begin only at puberty, but starts with plain manifestations soon after birth," he was in fact echoing one of Wilhelm Fliess's equally pioneering insights.

Contrary to the consensus of most Freud scholars, it is irrelevant to the assessment of Wilhelm Fliess's influence upon Freud that Fliess's scientific ideas eventually proved to be "pathological" (incorrect) science *in hindsight*. What matters historically is that Freud (as well as many of his scientific contemporaries) not only defended the truth and the importance of Fliess's discoveries but also was inspired by his ideas to think in new and fruitful ways about sexuality and its role in human development.

The 'Hostile Reception' Myth

In denying Freud's numerous debts to biology, Freud and his movement found themselves in need of an alternative historical scenario for Freud's discoveries. The story of Freud's famous self-analysis supplied much of that alternative scenario by reinforcing the myth of Freud's absolute originality. The latter myth in turn demanded the myth of Freud's "hostile" and outraged reception by an unprepared world.

At first, so goes this traditional story, Freud's more creative discoveries, such as his theory of dreams, were "simply ignored." We are told by Ernest Jones, for instance, that *The Interpretation of Dreams* had yet to be reviewed by a scientific periodical as late as 18 months after its publication. This traditional historical scenario of isolation and rejection has served as a congenial model for most subsequent Freud biographers.

If we turn to the actual historical record, we find that the initial reception of Freud's theories was quite different indeed from this traditional account. In contrast to the picture painted by Freud, Jones, and Freud's biographers more generally, Freud's two books on dreams received at least 30 separate reviews. Nor were these reviews predominantly hostile. The very first notice to appear in the December 1899 issue of *Die Gegenwart* (Berlin) described *The Interpretation of Dreams* as an "epoch-making" work.

In the light of such blatant contradictions between the actual historical facts and the traditional account of Freud's reception, one is naturally curious to understand what could have initiated such a myth. Although Freud indeed complained genuinely in his letters to Fliess, bemoaning the unappreciative and inadequate reception given to his book on dreams, he was both incompletely aware of the actual attention given it (especially outside Vienna) and peculiarly jaundiced toward even the most favorable reviews that came to his attention. Thus he considered that first review in *Die Gegenwart* to be "empty" and "inadequate," although he still managed to "forgive it" on account of "the one word 'epoch-making.'" Several months later, Freud reported to Fliess that the *Umschau* had carried "a short, friendly and uncomprehending review." That was the notice by Oppenheimer concluding that Freud's theories were "very ingenious and the whole book very much worth reading." Similarly, Freud was "astonished to find a really friendly *feuilleton* article in a newspaper, the *Wiener Fremdenblatt*," a statement that follows Freud's despondent claim that "not a leaf has stirred to show that the interpretation of dreams meant anything to anyone."

All of this is not to say that Freud and his theories met with no significant opposition whatsoever, for they did indeed, especially as the psychoanalytic movement gained organized momentum. The point I wish to make here is that strong opposition was not the initial reaction to Freud's theories; nor was any opposition premised upon the purported triumvirate of sexual prudery, hostility to innovation, and anti-Semitism that dominates the traditional historical scenario on this subject.

In his role as a neurologist and later as a psychoanalyst, Freud continued to live out these heroic identifications with great warriors and leaders of the downtrodden. Declining to envision himself as a brilliant thinker in the mold of Newton, Galileo, or Goethe, Freud instead emphasized his affinity with men of boldness and courage. "For I am actually not at all a man of science," he once told his friend Fliess, "not an observer, not an experimenter, not a thinker. I am by temperament nothing but a *conquistador*, an adventurer, if you wish to translate this term—with all the inquisitiveness, daring, and tenacity characteristic of such a man."

It is partly through this series of hero-identifications that one must seek to understand Freud's repeated references to his isolation throughout life. As a hero, Freud thrived on opposition and the feelings of isolation that such opposition entailed. These conditions were actually important to his creative work as well as to his conviction that he was fulfilling an heroic destiny. To Fliess, Freud spoke openly of his "zest for martyrdom." In a similar vein, Frederick J. Hacker has contrasted Freud "the non-joiner" with "the gregarious Vienna of his day. . . . It seems as if Freud almost insisted on his isolation, from which he suffered so bitterly. . . . More and more, he remained aloof. . . ." Although in accordance with the established myth, we usually think of Freud's years of "splendid isolation" as ending some five or six years after the turn of the century, Freud never stopped feeling isolated, no matter how famous he became.

Freud's highly ambivalent attitude toward autobiographical history grew out of his personal hero-complex. Twice, in 1885 and 1907, he ruthlessly blotted out the past by destroying most of his personal papers. As he revealed to

legitimate and the illegitimate must be made as unambiguous as possible. Two common forms of nihilation are employed toward this end: a sharp contrast is introduced between preconversion existence and the world of the initiate, and a reinterpretation of past events and individuals is often required so that they harmonize with the present reality. Often discrepant events or persons are replaced by substitutes that serve the new dogma's purposes more effectively. Yet the rewriting of history that nihilation always entails need not be wholly premeditated; "invented" versions of history may be introduced quite unintentionally out of a desire to bring the past into line with the present.

So successful has the process of nihilation been in psychoanalytic history that even Freud's own disciples were long at a loss to imagine any other derivation for his discoveries than a sort of intellectual "spontaneous generation." "Strangely enough," Erik Erikson confessed in the late 1950s, "we students [of Freud] knew little of his beginnings, nothing of that mysterious self-analysis which he alluded to in his writings. We knew people whom Freud had introduced into psychoanalysis, but psychoanalysis itself had, to all appearances, sprung from his head like Athena from the head of Zeus." As a strategic tool in this nihilation process, the story of Freud's "mysterious self-analysis," to take just one example, grew in importance with the years, serving as a key mechanism in the denial of history.

The training analysis soon became a more everyday means of reinforcing this historical nihilation. Edward Glover, after 16 years as director of research at the London Institute of Psycho-Analysis, had the following critical words to say about the indoctrinating influence of training analyses:

> *It is scarcely to be expected that a student who has spent some years under the artificial and sometimes hothouse conditions of a training analysis and whose professional career depends on overcoming 'resistance' to the satisfaction of his training analyst, can be in a favourable position to defend his scientific integrity against his analyst's theory and practice. And the longer he remains in training analysis, the less likely he is to do so. For according to his analyst the candidate's objections to interpretations rate as 'resistances.' In short there is a tendency inherent in the training situation to perpetuate error.*

Thus between the parable of Freud's self-analytic path to discovery and the more everyday influences of training analysis, several generations of psychoanalysts have successfully learned to overcome "conscious" doubts about psychoanalytic propositions and to accept Freud's theories as the sole source of psychological truth.

One last principle from our politics-of-knowledge trichotomy remains to be considered. Great revolutionary movements need not only legitimating and nihilating procedures but also therapeutic ones, which help to keep the new order pure by placing the whole burden of blame for deviance upon those who defect. The notorious "repression-resistance" argument is psychoanalysts' most effective propaganda mechanism. Indeed, the protective function of therapeutics was intimately bound up with the whole conception of Freudian "therapy." Had not Freud himself explicitly instructed his followers to treat all their scientific critics as they would an unanalyzed patient offering "resistance"? On the eve of his break with Freud, Jung spoke bitterly of just such propaganda pressures, now being directed against himself, when he complained to Freud that far too many psychoanalysts were misusing psychoanalysis "for the purpose of devaluing others. . . . Anything that might make them think is written off as a complex. This protective function of [psychoanalysis] badly . . . [needs] unmasking." But Jung and other dissidents were expecting too much when they sought exemption from a polemical technique that they themselves had advantageously applied—with great relish—to Freud's nonanalytic critics.

* * * *

With its characteristic emphasis upon Freud's absolute originality, his lonely years of intellectual isolation, and his hostile reception by the scientific world, the psychoanalytic movement's myth of the hero has made ample use of the three general principles I have just reviewed. By legitimating the special and hard-wrought nature of psychoanalytic truth; by nihilating the achievements and credibility of Freud's critics; and by offering a built-in therapy to explain defections from the movement—this powerful ideological machinery, together with the commanding hero myth that lies behind it, has inspired and sustained countless students of Freud's teachings. There is, in fact, no other theory in the history of scientific thought that can rival psychoanalysis for such an elaborate system of self-

AN AFTERWARDS

She would plunge all poets in the ninth circle
And fix them, tooth in skull, tonguing for brain;
For backbiting in life she'd make their hell
A rabid egotistical daisy-chain.

Unyielding, spurred, ambitious, unblunted,
Lockjawed, mantrapped, each a fastened badger
Jockeying for position, hasped and mounted
Like Ugolino on Archbishop Roger.

And when she'd make her circuit of the ice,
Aided and abetted by Virgil's wife,
I would cry out, 'My sweet, who wears the bays
In our green land above, whose is the life

Most dedicated and exemplary?'
And she: 'I have closed my widowed ears
To the sulphurous news of poets and poetry.
Why could you not have, oftener, in our years

Unclenched, and come down laughing from your room
And walked the twilight with me and your children—
Like that one evening of elder bloom
And hay, when the wild roses were fading?'

And (as some maker gaffs me in the neck)
'You weren't the worst. You aspired to a kind,
Indifferent, faults-on-both-sides tact.
You left us first, and then those books, behind.'

Seamus Heaney

reinforcing defenses.

The myth of the hero and the myth of Freud as pure psychologist stand as the two great pillars around which traditional psychoanalytic history has long cultivated its inspiring image of Freud. Through legitimation, nihilation, and therapeutics, the psychoanalytic movement has sought to control the future by controlling (and recasting) the myth-laden past.

We are accustomed to such myths, mystiques, and cults of personality in major social and political movements; but their manifestation in the objective world of science is more surprising. Since the evolution of myth has been particularly pronounced in the history of the psychoanalytic movement, we may well ask whether psychoanalysis is perhaps unique among the sciences in having sought so strenuously to shroud its origins in myth. Still, psychoanalysis may have exceptional features in this respect, but it is hardly exceptional within science for the general *trend* of its myths. Like psychoanalysts, all scientists hold a theory, however unspoken and implicit, about the proper route to scientific discovery; and that theory mythologizes the memory of every great achievement in science. In more ways than we acknowledge, myth rules history with an iron grip, dictating the preservation of mythical fact and the destruction of antimyth long before the historian can even begin to reverse this relentless process. Mankind, it would seem, will not tolerate the critical assaults upon its heroes and the charitable reassessments of its villains that mythless history requires.

How the Soviet Union is Governed
by Jerry F. Hough and Merle Fainsod

(Harvard University Press; $18.50)

Why can't the Russians be like us? This lament recurs in practically everything written in America in the last two generations to explain the Soviet Union, whether to bemoan the Leviathan despotism of the Kremlin or to glean some traces of familiarity that might link Soviet life with our own. And mortal peril hangs on the answer: if the differences between our systems are irreparable, then how can we avert the menace of mutual annihilation?

One of the most outstanding expositions of a generation ago on the political chasm between us and the Russians was the renowned text by the late Merle Fainsod of Harvard, *How Russia is Ruled*, first published just after Stalin died in 1953 and updated a decade later. Fainsod spelled out with meticulous scholarship what a generation of subsequent observers would designate as the totalitarian model of political life in the Soviet Union, with its monolithic Communist party, pervasive controls, and all-powerful leader at the top.

With the passage of time and substantial changes both in the Soviet government and in Western interpretations of it, Harvard University Press turned for a revision of the Fainsod work to Professor Jerry Hough of the University of North Carolina, a former Fainsod student who had already established his own substantial reputation as a researcher on Soviet politics (*The Soviet Prefects*, 1969, and *The Soviet Union and Social Science Theory*, 1977). Hough's product, however, is far more than a rewrite; it is a new book, which takes Fainsod's work as a point of departure, even referencing and quoting him, but moves far afield to achieve what is no longer a textbook but a brilliant and exhaustive new statement of the nature of politics in Russia. It embodies, in fact, the most substantial critique to date of the totalitarian model exemplified by Fainsod.

The term totalitarianism was adopted in the 1930s by beleaguered intellectual defenders of constitutionalism to convey the commonality of evil they perceived in the political systems of fascism, nazism, and communism. German and Italian apologists occasionally flaunted the expression, while the Soviets consistently rejected it (and even now rarely allow it so much as to appear in print). It was made common academic currency by Hannah Arendt in her *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), a work of tremendous impact even though it badly misstated the nature of the Soviet regime by using analytical premises drawn from Germany. (Arendt saw the totalitarian dictatorship striving to smash natural social organisms and "atomize" the individual, whereas Soviet totalitarianism has been more concerned to ensnare and mobilize the individual in a complex network of organizations all presumed to reflect the will of the leader.) Arendt was followed by Carl Friedrich's and Zbigniew Brzezinski's *Totalitarian Government and Autocracy* (1956), which accurately reflected Soviet reality, but a reality that was by then already out of date: their thesis of totalitarianism's drive to transform society, drawn from the Stalin Revolution of the 1930s, had been rendered obsolete by late Stalinist rigidity and post-Stalin pragmatism. Nevertheless, the basic premises of the totalitarian model remained so convincing that its challengers were confined to a few adherents of the so-called "conflict model" of factional politics, until the fall of Khrushchev demonstrated that the supreme leader had in fact lost power to some broader group or institution. This startling event opened the gates to a variety of new interpretations, usually seeking some dispersed power base in the various Soviet bureaucracies according