[2007], 8-11) attribution was made to Festinger's concept of cognitive dissonance, wherein Bush would restructure the events in Iraq to fit his belief systems. I have since concluded that this represented only part of Bush's problems. Along with previous observations, I believe now Bush has a very weak, if not shattered, ego. I previously used this concept to describe General George Brinton McClellan, a Union general during the Civil War (Robert Pois and Philip Langer, "Command Failure in War: Psychology and Leadership," [2004], Bloomington, IN: The Indiana University Press, chap. 3). Basically, in the process of trying to win, he could not afford to share in any personal blame for failure. In any losing situation, he was not personally at fault. He was the perpetual victim of forces back in Washington. In a similar manner, Bush uses bombast to cover uncertainty. There is a history for this type of behavior.

Early on, we know that Bush's business successes were greatly assisted by family ties. In addition, he found himself defending the skies of Texas during the Vietnam War. Even in the Texas Air National Guard there is considerable controversy over whether or not he even finished his tour. It is instructive to note how strong individuals such as Cheney and Rumsfeld have dominated him. His free use of "signings" is an attempt to avoid compromise and controversy regarding legislation. The veto successes are based on Republican use of the filibuster in the Senate. They share responsibility with him. More recently he has turned over Iraqi military decisions to the commanders in the field, which is the equivalent of turning von Clausewitz's dictum regarding politics and war on its head. If General Petraeus had proved wrong, well, he thought the military should have had to make the decision.

By the time he leaves office in January, there will not be anything resembling a military definition of victory in Iraq. But in terms of his needs, Bush has in his mind the best of all worlds. He listened to Petraeus, and Al-Maliki did not. Still, it is true he will also be leaving with a resurgence of fighting in Afghanistan, as the regrouped Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces take the offensive. So, in addition to the lack of any clear-cut victory in Iraq, the threat of terrorism has not been overcome. This represents the second failure of the Iraqi conflict.

Afghanistan is now home to forces intent on doing us no good. As casualties in Afghanistan mount relative to Iraq, Bush can now accede to a military demand for greater troop strength, without acknowledging that in the end Iraq was a distraction. It is interesting to see how the two wars were kept apart as separate conflicts by this administration.

Since I do not believe Bush is completely divorced from any sense of reality, he is well aware that his legacy is a tarnished failure. He also knows the terrorist threat was not lessened. In the months remaining we will not see any political direction, which he can attribute to the need to support McCain's presidential campaigning. The irony is that McCain has to tie together the failure in Iraq and the resurgence of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan as Democratic responsibilities. Bush, I presume, will simply accept this as a political necessity. In the end, he exits not with a bang but a whimper.

Sincerely yours,

Philip Langer

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An Unconvincing Psychological Theory

Dear Editor,

Recently, I read *The Emotional Plague: The Root of Human Evil* (Princeton, NJ: A.C.O. Press, 2008*)* in which Charles Konia argues that "all efforts at human betterment have failed" (7) because of a failure to accept Wilhelm Reich's theories about "the function of the orgasm in humans and an understanding of the laws governing orgone energy functions in nature" (p 447). As many of our readers know, this is not a new argument. Reich's work has been well known in psychoanalytic circles since the 1940s and it was well presented in Elsworth Baker's *Man in the Trap* (1967). However, for those unfamiliar with the issues involved, I will discuss it briefly below.

Few have found the evidence for Reich's theories convincing. Unfortunately, Charles Konia simply asserts the validity of Reich's theories without offering case studies or other evidence to support them. There are no references to biographies of political leaders or to other psychohistorical work. Instead, the author offers a greatly expanded version of Elsworth Baker's chapter on "socio-political charac-

ter types." The argument is that the left is mired in intellectual defenses (or "armoring") while the right is mired in mystical ones. The solution is for everyone to get in touch with their sex drive and have better orgasms.

Osama bin Laden, we are told, suffers from "orgiastic impotence" despite having sexual relations with many women (13). The solution is for him, and everyone else, to have "regular and complete pleasurable discharge of energy with *involuntary convulsions* of the body's total musculature, accompanied by a *temporary suspension of consciousness*, and followed by total relaxation and a tender, grateful attitude toward one's partner" (13). The problem with this argument is that we have no evidence about bin-Laden's sex life other than the fact that he has several wives. Nor does Konia offer any evidence that this kind of sexual experience has changed anyone's political beliefs.

At one point, Konia argues that the social movements of the 1960s were "fueled by unfulfilled sexual longing which could not be satisfied" (xxvi). Later in the book, they are attributed to "the collapse of Germany following its unconditional and humiliating defeat in the First World War" (220). But the 1960s were a time of sexual liberation thanks to birth control pills and there is no reason to believe that sexual frustration increased in the 1960s as compared to the 1950s. Furthermore, the West German economy was booming.

Many of the author's other opinions are similarly unconvincing. He asserts that smoking does not cause cancer; it is caused by a predisposition to cancer. "Cancer, atherosclerotic heart disease, diabetes, obesity and the myriad autoimmune diseases… each involves an underlying sexual disturbance that has, at its basis, disturbed bioenergetic pulsation." (400). He states that gun control is useless since criminals will always find guns and that liberals are blind to reality when they criticize "President Bush's intuitive, clear-sighted characterization of North Korea, Iraq and Iran as an `Axis of Evil'" (437). He also states that homosexuality is "a symptom that arises from an underlying disturbance in the orgasm function" (285).

The link between these idiosyncratic opinions and Reich's theories is unconvincing, as is Konia's attribution of Islamic terrorism to sexual frustration and the promise of virgins in the afterlife. This is not a new observation, and it fails to explain why Islamist movements have emerged at this point in time. Sexual repression in Islamic societies is nothing new.

This reviewer wonders why Charles Konia. A psychiatrist certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, is so devoted to defending the ideas of Wilhelm Reich. The answer becomes apparent when I realized that he is certified in medical orgonomy by the American Board of Medical Orgonomy and that he practices medical orgone therapy in Easton, Pennsylvania.

Finally, Konia argues that "all efforts at human betterment have failed" because of a failure to adopt Reich's sexual theories. But many efforts at human betterment have not failed. Slavery has been abolished, infant mortality is down, life expectancy is up, workers have unions, women and racial minorities have much improved opportunities, the rights of homosexuals are acknowledged, and witches are no longer burned at the stake. Although not universal, these improvements are real in many countries, and they owe very little—if anything—to Reich's theories about orgone energy.

Sincerely yours,

Ted Goertzel

Ted Goertzel, PhD, *is Professor of Sociology at Rutgers University in Camden, N.J. His many publications include Turncoats and True Believers: The Dynamics of Political Belief and Disillusionment; Linus Pauling: A Life in Science and Politics; and Fernando Henrique Cardoso: Reinventing Democracy in Brazil. Dr. Goertzel may be contacted at tedgoertzel@gmail.com.* ❑

Learning Psychohistory in the U.S.A.

Dear Editor,

Learning psychohistory under Professor David Beisel at Rockland Community College of the State University of New York was one of my greatest academic experiences because it gave me hope for a better world. When I arrived from Tokyo in 2003 as an international student to the United States, I was surprised to see flags everywhere and armed soldiers who seemed to be on every corner of New York City. This brought to mind the worries of many people in my homeland about my going abroad at this time of terrorism and the war in Afghanistan. When I actually stood on the ground of New York City, I realized