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KONRAD LORENZ: A PRISONER OF WAR FOR THREE YEARS

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Complete insight into scientific concepts, and especially scientific schools, is impossible without an overview of the history of their origins, without knowledge of the originators of those concepts, and their personal histories and their aspirations. Konrad Lorenz, one of the founders of ethology, had a very complex personality. His contribution to world science is undoubtedly great, but at the same time, his idea that the laws of animal life are directly extrapolative to human society is fallacious.

The fact that Lorenz was a Soviet prisoner of war is not well documented outside of Russia, and in 1989–1990, we searched Soviet archives for information about that period of his life. With the assistance of Soviet archivists, and primarily L. L. Nosyreva, we found the Lorenz file, and unexpectedly, a manuscript of a book by Lorenz.

Lorenz was mobilized into the army on October 10, 1941. He served in a hospital at the rear in Poznan for two years. He was taken prisoner near Vitebsk on June 28, 1944, after having fought for several months in the 2nd Sanitary Company of the 206th Infantry Division. Prisoners were required to fill in questionnaires when captured. He completed two such questionnaires: one on February 14, 1945, in Kirov; the other on February 5, 1947, in a camp in Armenia. The answers to the questions do not seem to have been distorted: the questionnaire in the Kirov camp was completed by the senior sergeant, Toropov, with the assistance of the translator Kocherzhuk; in the Armenian camp, it was completed by the captain of the guard, Karapetyan. It should be noted that he answered these questions many months after he had been taken prisoner, and thus had time to become adapted to the situation and answer them calmly, after careful consideration.

In both questionnaires, Lorenz is given a patronymic in the Russian fashion, i.e., "Adolfovich" after his father's name "Adolf," although Lorenz's middle name was Zakharia (Zachary). He gave his nationality as Austrian and his native language as German. In both questionnaires his

personal signature is clear and begins with "Dr." In the Armenian questionnaire, there is a good photograph of prisoner of war (POW) Lorenz. His answer to the question of "special features" was: height, 183 cm; normal build; light-brown hair; oval face; long nose; grey eyes; in the Kirov questionnaire he describes his eyes as light-blue. He described a scar below his elbow.

He stated that he was born in Vienna in 1903, and gave the village of Altenberg as his family residence. He described his education in the following way: "5 years of public school; 8 years of gymnasium; 5 years of medical school; and 2 years of zoological study." Before he joined the Army, he was a professor of psychophysiology at the Koenigsberg University. He had no military training. When answering the first questionnaire, he said he was a believer (religious); after two years of imprisonment, he answered that he had no denomination. On the first questionnaire he reported that he was a "National Socialist"; on the second, that he was a "candidate of the National Socialist Party." Lorenz never disclaimed his membership in the National Socialist Party, and this modification in his answer is particularly interesting.

He described his social status as an official without property, but in answer to a later question, he indicated that he did own the house in Altenberg. He listed the following as his relatives: 80-year-old father, Adolph Lorenz, a "burgher" by origin and a physician by profession; his brother, Albert, 59 years old, a physician; his wife, Gebhart Margerite Richard, born in 1900; his son, Thomas; and his daughters, Agnes and Dagmar. He lists his son's age as 12 years and the younger daughter as one year old at the time of his mobilization in 1941.

He reported that he visited the following countries before he was imprisoned: America in 1922 for two months on a tour; France, Belgium, Holland, England and Italy: two weeks in each country. In the second questionnaire he adds: Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania and Greece.

His position in the army was that of junior doctor; his rank was junior lieutenant. To the question as to whether he surrendered on his own or was taken prisoner, Lorenz answered that he was taken prisoner. He had no military decorations.

The questionnaires give information about his transfer to various camps. Lorenz spent several months at first in two camps near the front; he then went to the Kirov camp, where he worked in a factory (from August, 1944, to November, 1945). Subsequently, he was taken to Armenia, a trip that took half a month. There he worked in three divisions of a labor camp. In 1947, he was transferred to a camp near Moscow, in a town in Krasnogorsk. This was a relatively privileged camp, where the POWs were anti-fascists, or volunteers who fought in the Hungarian or Romanian armies with the Soviet forces. It is likely that Lorenz was sent there on the basis of the good reference given him by the Armenian camp

authority (see below). Lorenz spent relatively little time in Krasnogorsk and in December, 1947, he was repatriated.

Bateson, in his obituary for Lorenz (1989), says that Lorenz survived in the Soviet camps because he ate flies and spiders. We do not know what he experienced in the camps near the front, but we have documents about the life of POWs in the labour camps. Although the life was hard, it was passable for most people. The camps were not "death camps." The authors of the documents, which are marked "top secret," did not believe that the information about those camps would be published. One can visualize the life of Lorenz in those camps: barracks with two to three layers of bunks, 250 to 500 people in each barrack, heated by a stove; the map of the camp shows one lavatory for 10 barracks, "with 20 holes." One can understand the mental and physical hardship of this existence for the "Professor of Psychophysiology." But, living conditions were very difficult for the entire country at that time.

However, Lorenz, being a doctor, was assigned to look after patients in sick quarters, which were probably warmer and cleaner. A considerable portion of the POWs were assigned to "rehabilitation teams." The POWs spent on the average of 26 days in rehabilitation teams, where they were provided with extra food and rest. In the Kirov camp, up to half of the camp population was in such teams for several months running. According to the reports, this large number of prisoners requiring rehabilitation was the result of long periods of encirclement and incessant combat. Normally, only 20% of the prisoners were disabled. The primary cause of disability was the inadequate diet: 2,105 kilocalories per man per day during the worst time of the war. Beginning in 1945, the food quota was increased, and the POW received per day the following: 600 g of brown bread; 90 g of groats; 30 g of fish; 15 g of lard; 15 g of oil; 17 g of sugar; 600 g of potatoes, etc. In the rehabilitation camps, the meat quota was increased to 150 g, sugar to 30 g, and they also received 300 g of milk.

The clothing allowance was also scanty: 2 pairs of undergarments; a field coat; a tunic and wide trousers; boots, shoes or sandals. A mess dish for each 10 persons was issued to soldiers; officers were given a belt, a basin, and a tea kettle for 10 officers.

The file for Lorenz's stay in the Armenian camp contains the following "reference for prisoner of war Lorenz, Konrad Adolf," issued in September, 1947:

> Prisoner of war Lorenz is characterized positively. He is disciplined, a conscientious worker, developed politically, actively participating in anti-fascist work, and is trusted and enjoys authority among other POWs. The lectures and reports that he delivered were enjoyed by the POWs.
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> Prisoner of war Lorenz has visited various states, including . . . He is a broad-minded person in terms of theoretical problems, and is

correctly oriented in politics. Lorenz is a propagandist of the camp division, being involved in mass propaganda work among POWs of the German and Austrian nationalities. He has a command of French and English.

We have no evidence compromising K. A. Lorenz.

In the course of searching the archives, a striking discovery was made: two typed, single-spaced copies of a manuscript in German, one being 211 pages long, and the other, 222. The difference between the two paginations results from the fact that the second copy has a detailed table of contents. The title of the book is *Einfuhrung in die Vergleichende Verhaltensforschung.* There is a quotation from C. O. Whitman at the beginning of the book: "Instincts and organs should be studied from the common viewpoint of their phyletic origin." This book was apparently started as early as the period of his stay in Armenia, and finished and filed in the camp at Krasnogorsk, where Lorenz had the opportunity to type the manuscript. His book, *The Foundations of Ethology,* written in 1981, essentially repeats and enlarges upon the concepts in the manuscript that remained in Russia. Interestingly, his POW experience is present in this later book. When discussing the role of learning, Lorenz cites the example of the ibexes living in quarries in the mountains of Armenia who were not shy of explosions. Apparently, he was remembering his Armenian experience when he worked at the construction site of the Sevan hydroelectric power station.

About fifteen years ago, during a scientific meeting, one of us (V. E. Sokolov) invited Lorenz to visit the USSR. At that time, ethology was actively developing in the USSR, and Lorenz's books were being published. The arrival of Lorenz in the USSR would have undoubtedly aroused great interest among scientists and animal lovers; the latter's interest in animal behaviour essentially sustains the popularity of ethology. Lorenz rejected the invitation. "I have already been in the USSR," he said with a somewhat sad smile.

The fact that he was a member of the Nazi Party, and had been a prisoner in the USSR is well known. This played an important role in the development of ethology, in the USSR; this was used by the opponents of his "non-Pavlovian" approach to the study of animal behaviour. This history also repelled a number of Americans working in the area of comparative psychology. In addition, Lorenz's prewar political sympathies coincided with his speculations about the effects of domestication. Bateson comments on this in the obituary he wrote (1989): "When the Nazis came to power, Lorenz had swum with the tide and in 1940 shockingly wrote an article that dogged him for the rest of his life. He detested the effects of domestication on animal species and he thought (without any evidence) that humans were becoming victims of their own self-domestication. His wish to rid humanity of the impurity matched only

too well the appalling Nazi ideology. . . . After the war, in which Lorenz was to discover with horror the full scale of what the Nazis were really up to, he would have preferred this publication to have been forgotten."

Numerous ethologists regard Lorenz as an opposite to Niko Tinbergen, who participated in the Resistance movement and spent years in a Nazi concentration camp. The two scientists were placed on opposite sides of the barricades by the war and politics, but both of them won the Nobel Prize in 1975 for "investigation into social behaviour of animals." They are both gone now, having died within a short time of each other (Tinbergen on November 21, 1988, and Lorenz on February 27, 1989). The time has come now to objectively analyze their achievements, philosophical and political views, and their life histories.

REFERENCE

Bateson, P. (1989). Obituary of Konrad Lorenz. *Human Ethology Newsletter, 5,* 3–4.