Introduction

[normal person]
The topics of the title of this book have appeared in my work in other contexts.

These concern observations based on a lifetime's experience, almost entirely in the UK. It had never occurred to me that these random observations on political and social behaviour could be collected together, and combined with my mathematical interests to give a precisely defined description of these social processes.

It appears that they can, and the surprising thing is that nobody has done it before, at least to the comprehensive and exact way described in this book. These ideas are theoretical, but their appearance in the external world is obvious, and the subject of much social comment, satire and programmes of reform, both as ethical modifications and violent, or possibly nonviolent, revolution.

I hope the mild humour of some of the remarks may make the work attractive to the reader. Those aware that I am able to go into technical detail may feel the reverse.

The fact that attractive and repulsive features are combined together could mean that the general reader might feel able to continue when otherwise he or she would give up.

The readers of technical books are sometimes exhorted to ignore the technical bits, but the authors do not realise that their average reader cannot distinguish between a technical and a nontechnical argument, and so they try to plough through all the way, and come to the quick conclusion that they cannot continue any further.

To reduce this possibility, I have retained technical bits which contain jokes in the text, but otherwise have separated out technical descriptions with the caption [trainee geniuses]. I then have the additional task of producing a book which makes sense both ways.

These topics have heretofore been available in University courses, often in an elementary way. Most notably Machiavelli's *The Prince* is an example.

That work discusses I believe in a limited way the subjects developed in this book. They provide instruments for deception and control in a hierarchical system so that the system and the grip from above is maintained.

It may surprise the reader that I have never read this work. My concern has been, on becoming aware of these techniques, that I might become corrupted by them myself, and this has always been a contingent possibility.

Then why address these issues again? It seems to me, that taking the view in reverse, that the widespread understanding of these principles to maintain a system which I believe is fundamentally evil, might lead, despite the inevitable use at the lower level, to the knowledge of what is being done, and from it, in terms of a collective response, an effective rebuff to their use.

It may be said, that on the realisation of the exposure of these principles, the current system might collapse. But rather, even if that were so, it would lead, so to speak, to an arms race in deceptive processes, with measure and countermeasure.

Two fundamental ideas confront me.

The first is that widespread understanding of these processes would result in a natural way to the resistance against the current system, and the combination of all these realisations together might mean, under possibly coordinated, but otherwise distributed response, to the situation where the current system could no longer cope and would collapse.

The second is that the theoretical ideas presented in this work seem to be at their maximum. Clearly they can be developed in detail further. For myself, this complete description of methods of deception and autocratic control lead to the idea that they cannot be extended.

We see throughout history that ideas of limitation eventually do not hold. I think the presentation here, nevertheless, is sufficient for the moment.