

'We're getting the city ready for much worse'

A leading New York psychiatrist said last week during the strike that New York City has undergone a "series of psychological shocks" that is forcing the city's population to accept "a sense of limits."

The psychiatrist, who reportedly treats many of the New York-based elite, said that "things like the city's transit strike can alter people's consciousness." He noted that New York has had a series of shocks, starting with the Northeast power blackout in 1965. "Then you had a transit strike (1966), you had problems with the Lindsay administration which created a whole series of disasters and confrontations," said the psychiatrist. "Then you had the great fiscal crisis that brought the population to the edge of disaster and then let people hang on the brink. This made people totally aware of economic disaster and prepared them for the tough times ahead. Now you have the transit strike. You have had a period of shocks. Each builds the psychological tension. Then you have a release and build up the tension again. The mind is changed by all this and that is how you develop a sense of limits."

The strike, said the psychiatrist, has created a theological consciousness. "That is what the sharing is all about. We have changed man from an urbanized, isolated intellectual being into a communal animal... This has been accomplished by a little shared tragedy,

over time. It is a unifying experience, like a mass drug experience of sorts."

"Koch," he said, "is a lightning rod... a psychological focal point. He focuses the emotional force... He has adjusted well to his role—forcing people to face harsh reality."

But the New York City transit strike is embedded in a much larger psychological issue, he said. "It is much bigger than people here realize... You have to take the long view. History is a horrible thing. It is one awful development after another. The constant is that man survives in spite of himself, in spite of all the pain and suffering. Look at Barbara Tuchman's book, *The Distant Mirror*. The 14th century was a mess. One perpetual crisis. It is like the book has a special message for today, not that we will have a Black Plague, but that we are entering a period of prolonged crisis. It is a period of sacrifice, of retrenchment.

"You think that the strike is a psychological problem. America is going to undergo a tremendous psychological overhaul. Americans are going to have to give and I don't mean giving up some oil or a Sunday drive. I'm talking about the psychology of accepting reductions or elimination of civil rights, of parts of the Constitution, because that is what the future demands. Of putting an end to this garbage that everyone has an equal chance.

"Quite frankly, I'm talking about deciding which people are going to live and die. This is what Tuchman really means. These are the questions of the future. How will Americans handle this? This requires a new psychology of accepting limits—like here in New York. This period of crisis will last for maybe 200 years."

inner circle reported that "Koch sees himself as a salesman of austerity. He was deadly serious when he spoke about New York becoming like Peking. He really believes that stuff."

Koch, running a city in which homosexuality, drugs and perverse entertainments have multiplied dramatically since he took office, is generally acknowledged to be a very peculiar mayor, and the perfect tool for FEMA. He returned from a recent visit to the Chinese capitol of Peking even more peculiar, and whenever he visited the Brooklyn Bridge to watch bicyclists and roller skaters flooding across to the downtown business section, he thought he was back in China, said police sources.

As FEMA continued running the strike into its sec-

ond week, it fell to the governor's office to pick up warning signals that real trouble was brewing among the population. Said one source, "Koch and his political advisors (FEMA) wanted the strike to teach New York and the unions a lesson," and wanted it to continue in order to "acclimatize" New Yorkers for a dramatic round of deep new austerity cutbacks in city services. The cuts were going to be deep enough to "provoke riots," according to one MTA source. People in the Governor's office "started getting damn angry at Koch and his obstinacy." If the strike went on a little longer, riots would have started, especially in some ghetto areas paralyzed by the transit lockout. "Then all bets are off," said a source near to Governor Hugh Carey.