

INHIBITING FATAL GROUP AND INSTITUTIONAL AGGRESSION

Leighton C. Whitaker

This chapter addresses group and institutional lethal aggression in terms of its dynamics and ways to inhibit it. Factors instrumental in facilitating or inhibiting this type of violence are elucidated from examples of both legal and illegal institutions, including professions, sports organizations, military institutions, deadly cults, and the militia movement.

The inhibition of violence is a grave topic emotionally laden with ethical, political, social, psychological, and spiritual issues, especially when it means inhibiting not just violent individuals but whole groups and institutions. It is at the heart of the fundamental question of social as well as personal rights and responsibilities. Often, this topic is addressed with considerable feeling but little light, as possibilities for understanding are short-circuited by the heat of impassioned reactions or are reacted to with a sense of helplessness. We will do well, therefore, to strive for a thorough understanding rather than a rush to judgment or a facile giving up. Thus, we will have to guard against a blind righteousness on the one hand and an unseeing apathy on the other.

The term "institution" is defined broadly here as any organization of group effort to benefit the group, others, or both. The very term evokes the notion of

inhibitions on the expression of individuals in favor of conformity to the group ethos. Membership in an institution, however, does not necessarily mean inhibitions against violence toward others outside of the group or even members within the group. In their pursuit of group conformity, institutions variously lure and pressure individual members to renounce certain personal behaviors and values for the sake of the group ethos. The members are thereby trained in the institution's particular ethnocentrism, a habitual disposition to judge foreign individuals or groups by the standards and practices of one's own culture or ethnic group. The tendency to become ingrown and intolerant of other people is, therefore, endemic to institutions as well as individuals.

The term "inhibition" is also defined broadly here. The most satisfactory definition this author has found is from *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (Gove, 1966) wherein the primary meaning of the term is "an act or an instance of formally forbidding or barring something from being done," while an important extension of the term is "a desirable restraint or check upon the free or spontaneous instincts or impulses of an individual effected through the operation of the human will guided or directed by

the social and cultural forces of the environment.” The primary meaning relates to an agent or force external to the individual that represses the individual. The further meaning, which is not even mentioned in some dictionaries, includes restraining forces that are internal to or within the individual.

External restraints are usually obvious, whereas internal restraints tend to be subtle, though certainly no less important. The latter include the conscience, in both its prohibiting and idealistic forms; we may choose not to be violent in order to avoid consequent feelings of guilt, because we are empathic with and love the potential victims of our violent tendencies, or both. We may also be inhibited because we fear retaliation and loss. Often, there are admixtures of external and internal inhibitions in any given instance and, over time, what was an external inhibition can be transformed into an internal inhibition and vice versa.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand better the ways in which the violence potentials of institutions may be inhibited, including from the inside of institutions and from inside the individual members. A series of realizations must be arrived at to achieve this purpose. First, all institutions, by their inherent nature, may tend to commit violence toward both outsiders and their own members. Second, this tendency to commit institutional violence toward both insiders and outsiders is greatest when “group centrality” is maximized so that there is little accountability to outsiders. Third, in order to be constructive toward insiders as well as outsiders, an institution must deliberately build in safeguards and inhibitions against its own institutionally inherent destructive tendency. Fourth, effective inhibitions against institutional violence can be incorporated in the design of new institutions, applied to the process of monitoring existing institutions, and used for intervention when egregious institutional violence is imminent or actual. Fifth and finally, the basis for any truly constructive society or group ethos must value nurturant partnerships more than violent dominator relationships.

Before suggesting specific ways to inhibit institutional violence, this chapter will emphasize developing a clear understanding of the context and workings of institutions in terms of their violence proclivities. Their structures and dynamics can be understood by explicating examples and deriving certain principles that, in combination, show us how institutional violence proclivities are facilitated or inhibited. We may learn thereby to inhibit institutional violence effectively in a variety of ways.

The Inherently Violent Tendency of Institutions

Most institutions have the potential for violence. In striving for group conformity, institutions require that their members make certain sacrifices “for the common good”, ostensibly for the good of the membership as a whole. So, the members are at some risk according to the kinds of sacrifices they must make. Outsiders are at risk, too, because the goals of any given institution may be against outsiders’ interests. It is not always true that “what is good for General Motors is good for the country” or the rest of the world. Thus, any institution may engender harm to both members and outsiders.

Because of their size and the synergy of inter-individual relationships, institutions have greater violence potentials than an individual acting alone. As will be illustrated and explained, individuals may, as members of a group or institution, commit atrocities which they would never commit as an individual acting alone. Often, therefore, inhibitions against institutional violence, to be effective, must be greater.

On close examination, no institution is totally free of harmful tendencies. Though most do not perpetrate lethal violence directly, it is evident that even the most respected institutions, when they pursue unenlightened group interests, may wittingly or unwittingly contribute to violence against outsiders. More subtly, the pursuit of “groupish self-interest”

can readily damage the membership as well by requiring harmful self-sacrifices, as will be illustrated. Furthermore, externally directed violence begets internally directed violence by modeling uncaring, violent relationships or through unconscious guilt which seeks relief by means of denial and projection or by punishing oneself.

If an institution increasingly proceeds to demand conformity and to disdain nonconformists, the "progressive group centrism" exerts more and more pressure on its members to deny individual and group responsibility except as it may serve what is perceived, expediently, as the group interest. But, even this "benefit of group allegiance" lessens as the group becomes more centric and authoritarian until it is only the leader who is deemed important. When the group ethos becomes really only the ethos of an authoritarian figure, no behavior is considered acceptable except slavish devotion to the wishes of the leader. Yet, even such devotion carries no assurance of safety or even survival, as when the leader demands the deaths of loved ones or even the members themselves.

Most clearly, it is extremely authoritarian-led groups which fit this model of progressive group centrism leading to a kind of "black hole" destruction of its members. Vivid examples readily come to mind: the Nazi progression from dominating and destroying outsiders to attempts on Hitler's life by insiders to his eventual suicide, and the so-called Jonestown massacre in Guyana where the leader and his followers, abhorring outside influences, committed suicide together.

Deikman (1990, p. 104) delineated the deadly course as follows:

"The more authoritarian the human social system, the more likely a separatist world view will arise because any anger or resentment stimulated in the follower by his or her submission to the leader requires displacement onto other persons — the outsider, the infidel, the non-believer. Feelings of rebellion toward the leader, which are defined by the group as evil, make the cult member anxious, even ready to

believe in Satanic possession, an apt metaphor to describe the sensation of being invaded by unwanted feelings and images."

Most groups do not become so authoritarian as to engage in progressive centrism or "black holeism" actively and continually to the point of lethal violence. This fact holds out hope for efforts to check or ameliorate institutional violence. What happens within as well as outside of institutions to inhibit the blinding, destroying extremity of group centrism? Why do some institutions "hold the line" or even become more constructive toward their members and non-members? Some answers can be found in how many of our common, everyday institutions both engage in violence and check their own violence proclivities. While these organized group cultures do exact some destructiveness, they also manage to retain a modicum of general social approval as society actively evaluates whether they are beneficial overall or, at least, not harmful to an unacceptable degree.

Inhibitions against institutional violence include external surveillance and controls, the rules and ethos of the institution itself, and the personal, internal inhibitions of the individual members. The risk of institutional violence is directly related to the presence or absence of three sources of inhibition — external, intra-institutional, and intra-individual — which dynamically affect one another. With this framework in mind, let us consider as examples some familiar institutions.

Examples of Mandated, Legally Limited, Institutional Aggression

The institutions to be reviewed illustrate the fact that many, if not most, institutions require that their members be willing and able to materially damage — physically or psychologically — persons construed to be opponents. An individual's failure to conform to this requirement will result in certain negative

consequences for the individual's standing in the institution, such as low ratings, exclusion, or death.

The Legal Profession

As traditionally conceived, the law serves the causes of fairness and justice. Like democratic government, which makes and enforces law, the law as a profession is designed to be an implementer of the principle of checks and balances, a principle intended to maximize fairness and justice. But, the lawful pursuit of justice is based on the adversary system which inherently guarantees deceit, and often more conflict and violence, adding to the conflict and violence which occurred originally to bring the matter to a court of justice. Attorney and ethicist Walt Bachman observed in *Law v. Life: What Lawyers Are Afraid To Say About the Legal Profession* (1995, p. 35):

"And behind it all, the cross-examining lawyer is motivated — indeed, ethically driven — not by a sense of justice, not by a desire for truth, not by fairness or decency, but always by the interests of the client. Flowing from the overriding imperative of zealous advocacy is the duty to attack and, if possible, destroy a harmful witness by any means permitted by law. A trial lawyer, as the executioner of this obligation, wields a fearsome power."

Not limiting himself to trial lawyers, Bachman (1995) asserted, "Law is the only learned profession in which one is ethically obligated to hurt people" (p. 36). "The lawyer's professional life is filled with aggressive, manipulative, half-truthful and other destructive behaviors" (p. 107). For example, "When the principle of free religious expression is challenged, a lawyer will come forth not only in its defense, but also to profess the freedom of religious cults to brainwash converts" (p. 89). Bachman emphasized that the harrowing pursuit of the ethical ideals of one's profession results not only in perpetrating violence on others but violence on attorneys themselves as the conflict between professional ethics and society-wide ethics takes its toll emotionally.

Like other socially accepted or at least tolerated institutions, the legal profession is systematically restricted externally by the extant body of law and other socially constructed inhibitions and within the institution by its own ethical standards. But, intra-individual inhibitions are complicated by pressures on the lawyer to abide by the ethic of advocacy for his or her client, even at the expense of abusing others. This admixture of inhibitions means that no lawyer is permitted to commit murder as such, though a lawyer might substantially cause loss of life. For instance, a defendant or witness becomes so distressed by a trial lawyer's harrowing tactics in court as to commit suicide, but the suicide is not considered to be a murder. Thus, what observers might view as a "murderous attack" is, legally, not a murder and, like other legally accepted institutions, the law profession is not allowed to commit murder *per se*. And neither would the law profession itself, given its own institutional ethics, condone murder *per se*.

While Bachman (1995) made a compelling case for the destructiveness of the lawyering institution, other authors have made a case for including their own professional institutions as inherently destructive. They would not agree, apparently, that the law is the only learned profession in which one is ethically obligated to hurt people.

The Profession of Journalism

Janet Malcolm, in speaking of her own profession in *The Journalist and the Murderer* (1990), likened the journalist's profession to that of the malevolent trial lawyer. She noted the "... ironic parallel between the methods of trial lawyers and of journalists" (p. 45). "Evidently, to be a good trial lawyer you have to be a good hater. A lawsuit is to ordinary life what war is to peacetime. In a lawsuit, everybody on the other side is bad. A trial transcript is a discourse in malevolence" (p. 63). But, she observed that, unlike the trial lawyer, whose adversary role is clear, the journalist

must pose from the very outset as a kind of friend, even a psychotherapist, leaving the question of how to justify the "murderous" act. Malcolm (1990, p. 3) stated:

"Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he does is morally indefensible. He is a kind of confidence man, preying on people's vanity, ignorance, or loneliness, gaining their trust and betraying them without remorse. Journalists justify their treachery in various ways according to their temperaments. The more pompous talk about freedom of speech and 'the public's right to know'; the least talented talk about Art; the seemliest talk about earning a living."

We are all familiar with a myriad of other institutions which even more clearly not only permit, but have as their essential reason for existence, the purposeful commission of violence, albeit violence shy of outright legally defined murder. Among such institutions, sports offer clear examples.

Sports

Sports may be defined generally as entertaining exercises in sublimated warfare that are characterized by competition and striving for dominance short of deliberate lethality. Deliberately lethal acts in sports are illegal.

Boxers are physically and mentally trained to hurt an opponent to the point that the opponent cannot continue. The preferred method is to induce a state of unconsciousness in the opponent, what is called a "knockout", a condition dependent on inducing insult to the brain, typically in amounts resulting in permanent brain damage. In the long and much-revered tradition of the pugilistic arts, a boxer is rated not merely according to wins and losses but also by the number and proportion of knockouts, or brain damaging results, he has achieved. To become a boxer-hero, one has to have done considerable damage to one's opponents and, almost always, have

tolerated considerable damage to one's own body and brain. None of the many boxing deaths in the history of boxing (an average of five per year in recent years) has ever resulted in a murder conviction though thousands of fans have knowingly and exultantly shouted "murder".

"Ultimate fighting", one of the names for a "new sport", continues to draw strenuous objections but is now legal in many states including New York (Barry, 1997), where the state legislature was strongly supportive. Its supporters claim that it not as dangerous as boxing because there have been no reported deaths so far, and that it is better to legalize it in order to establish some control. *Esquire, The Magazine for Men*, devoted eight pages to an article on "ultimate fighting" (Kriegel, 1996), second only to a 10-page article entitled "In Praise of Dangerous Women," referring to women who ruin men's lives.

The object of ultimate fighting is to cause pain and submission. A fighter does whatever he can to cause his opponent so much pain and injury that the opponent is rendered unconscious or gives up but, it is hoped, not before the typically vast audience has thoroughly enjoyed the brutality. Thus, according to Kriegel (1996, p. 94), a leading hero is "[a] purveyor of pain, he plays perfectly: His skill is nothing less than an American preoccupation. People just love to see the bad guy kick ass." The hero is avidly followed by "the best-looking chicks". Except for eye-gouging, biting, and throat kicking, no moves are off limits. A fighter can kick his opponent in the groin, knock his teeth out, or rip his lips off. This ostensibly new sport, which is at least as old as Roman gladiators, is appealing to both the fighters and audiences because of its extreme sado-masochism. Like all sado-masochism, which ostensibly is highly sexual, it shows a preference for violence over sexuality, as made clear by a statement by its biggest "ultimate fighter" hero: "I'd rather fight than fuck" (Kriegel, 1996, p. 98).

Football is a North American game that is inherently violent. While not explicitly designed to injure

opponents seriously or to kill them, many of its heroes are the really “hard hitters” who down their opponents with a vengeance that has often resulted in crippling injury or even death, though not murder charges. Football players’ much-valued toughness is associated with a willing personal acceptance of punishment and injury. Special recognition is given for “playing injured” provided the player does not handicap his team thereby. Fans as well as players zealously endorse not only “beating” the opposing team but may be especially pleased at their team members hitting opponents hard enough to force them out of the game.

A “Special NFL Classic Edition” of *Sports Illustrated* (1995) featured on the cover “The Toughest Quarterback Ever,” and a section called “Tough as Nails” glorified the most violent players. For example, a noted Hall of Famer, albeit not the very toughest or meanest, was quoted as saying (p. 20):

“... when we played, there was no such thing as dirty play. It was dirty if you got caught. I was looking to head butt someone on every play. I’d set guys up by throwing a few cross-body blocks, then throw a leg whip. And, at 6’9”, I could leg whip the crap out of you.’ This was a scary dude, on and off the field.”

All sports feature planned competition within the rules, but the rules may not be enforced. Just as football players can get away with “dirty play” when the rules are not rigorously enforced, so too do other kinds of athletes exceed the official limitations on violence. Often, it is the beyond-the-rules activity that is most attractive to the fans.

Professional ice hockey players engage in a great many extracurricular battles on the ice which have nothing to do with the game of ice hockey. Their brawls, resembling a cross between wrestling and boxing, often persist for a minute or more as the referees stand by and fans are stirred to greater enthusiasm. A young superfan told me that he and his friends enjoy their season tickets primarily because they can see so many of these brutal battles.

Baseball, the quintessential American game, involves a great many potentially injurious events over the course of a single game even when played within the rules. Players may bend the rules and “accidentally” injure one another — for example, by running for a base “with flying spikes”. And, though intimidation is part of the game, players are not killed. Players who are so skillful as to come *close* to harming opponents without actually harming them may get special recognition. For example, baseball pitchers make reputations on their abilities to intimidate but not physically harm opposing batters. “Sal the Barber” Maglie, pitcher for what was then known as the New York Giants, was less known for tonsorial skills as such than for his skill at “shaving” the faces of batters with his very close pitches. In *The Ultimate Baseball Book* (Okrent and Lewine, 1991, p. 281), a famous Dodger pitcher defined his occupation, thereby explaining how he had opposing batters dodging his pitches and striking out instead of hitting:

“Sandy Koufax — ‘Pitching,’ he said, ‘the art of instilling fear by making a man flinch.’ Yet his control was such that in 1966, Koufax set a National League record by pitching 323 innings without hitting a single batter.”

Examples of Illegal Violence in Legal Institutions

Thus far we have examined only examples of institutions bound simultaneously by law, ethically defined limits, and careful supervision by a governing body. What happens when otherwise high-minded, legally constituted institutions are effectively exempt from the law and even their own institutional rules? This situation illustrates the principle that *exemption from the law, due to lack of enforcement or secrecy, serves to enhance violence proclivities.*

Colleges and Universities

Institutions of higher education have long failed, in relation to their students, to enforce laws, policies,

and rules applicable to people outside of their campuses. They have been especially lax with regard to students' use of alcohol and other drugs and in relation to activities of fraternities. For example, state laws against underage drinking tend to be merely communicated to students rather than enforced. Because these "theoretical inhibitions" are not really enforced, they are not "real" rules. Much of campus violence, including virtually all instances of date rape, occurs under the influence of alcohol (Rivinus and Larimer, 1993). In the absence of enforcement of the existing laws, policies, and rules by colleges and universities or by local police, there is institutional sanction for, rather than against, this and other forms of campus violence.

John Silber, the president of Boston University, observed in a *New York Times* op-ed piece entitled "Students Should Not Be Above the Law" (1996): "But today colleges and universities tend to circumvent the courts and bury serious criminal cases in their own judicial systems." What happens when effective exemption from the law is compounded by secrecy rather than openness? College fraternities, which by their nature are secretive, provide an example.

Matthews (Crothers and Matthews, 1996, p. 50) reported that, "The fraternity initiation remains the most secret of campus rituals — and the most debauched." She and photographer C. Taylor Crothers documented many hazing rituals at a conservative, selective, well-endowed East Coast university where students were joining one of the ten largest North American fraternities. The fraternity's national headquarters said that the organization's purpose was to develop social responsibility and that hazing is officially condemned. Nevertheless, "new members of an all-fraternity drinking club entertain hundreds of students and alumni by drinking up to a case of beer apiece, chased by a fifth of vodka, tequila, or 40-proof 'Mad Dog' wine, followed by raw trout or Vienna sausage." Of course, such practices result in serious injury and even death. Matthews quoted a

fraternity rush chairman: "Hazing is very educational about human nature. ...[T]he nicest, politest, most churchgoing people turn out to be so mean and angry. And cruel, if you give them a little power."

By maintaining that its practices must be secret, an institution has free rein to engage in violent behavior. Then, even an institution supposedly governed by a superordinate entity, such as when a fraternity is governed both by its national organization and its college or university, can commit violence. The example of college fraternities illustrates that non-enforcement of the rules and secrecy allow and thereby foster institutional violence.

The Military

Military institutions in the U.S. clearly prepare for and engage in lethal aggression. Whereas sports may be thought of as sublimated warfare, the military is explicitly and usually legally devoted to actual warfare. Yet, most military institutions are mandated only to defend their countries and are restricted to "gentlemanly conduct", the rules of the Geneva Convention, and the like. They are not supposed to engage in exploitation and cruelty. Ostensibly, the military does not encourage cruelty, though some militaries, such as the Nazis, are trained to be cruel in order to reduce resistance and to break the will of the enemy. In any case, the dangerous business of training people to be violent can readily lend itself to even blatant forms of cruelty, particularly if rules against cruelty are not enforced and practices are carried out secretly.

Critics complain about episodes of cruelty in the U.S. military, as though it is not integral to the legally and socially mandated mission of military institutions to train their members to injure and kill. Public outrage ensues when it is discovered that a particular military training facility is a culture of abuse and is even violent toward the students it is designed to teach and protect. Thus, a *New York Times* editorial

("The Citadel's Culture of Abuse", 1997) said: "It is a sad commentary on campus morality that it took the presence of women to expose deviant conduct that victimizes male students as well. The Citadel's hazing tradition teaches young men that brutalizing others and denigrating women is what it takes to be a military officer." But, this tradition is inherent to all institutions pledged to train its members in violence. "Hazing" is, of course, a euphemism; the practice is more accurately termed "training in cruelty".

Institutional inculcation of cruelty requires systematically training members to abide their own suffering as well as that of others. Eisler (1996, p. 96) noted: "It is instructive in this connection that the training of the Nazi S.S. officers who manned the mass extermination camps is said to have included the raising of puppies, which they were then ordered to feed, play with, and care for in every way — and then kill with no signs of emotion." Whether called hazing or training in cruelty or simply obedience training, all institutions that have as at least one of their purposes the infliction of pain engage systematically, officially or non-officially, in fostering callousness to their own and others' pain. As Eisler put it, "... once empathy and love are in any context habitually suppressed, this tends to result in what psychologists call blunted affect — a reduced and highly compartmentalized capacity to respond to feelings (affect) other than anger, contempt, and similar 'hard' emotions."

On Thursday, January 30, 1997, the television program "Headline News" showed an amateur videotape of 1991 and 1993 U.S. Marine Corps hazings marking the completion of paratrooper training. Officially, upon completion of that training, Marines are awarded their "wings" in the form of a medal that is supposed to be pinned onto the Marine's uniform. In the videotape, however, each of the many medal recipients wore only a t-shirt and stood still while another Marine pinned the medal into his chest, making sure to maximize the pain by punching the medal in and rubbing the already inserted medal back

and forth to further increase the wound and the pain. The recipients were shown grimacing and screaming in pain.

The Marine Corps officially proscribed this hazing practice of "blood winging" or "gold winging", which means smashing the medal into the chest, but recognized that the hazing was going on in previous years and is continuing now. A quite similar hazing of a Navy submariner eventuated in a sailor's suicide after he was pressured to reveal the names of his tormentors or be court-martialed, as reported on the 6:30 p.m. news on February 12, 1997 (National Broadcasting Company, NBC). Clearly, the official training in the military lends itself to such behavior which, therefore, must be vigilantly guarded against. In his comments on the hazing, Army General John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said (Ruane, 1997): "People get very charged up in this business. We demand people who are tough and who can stand up to adversity." But, of course, the legally authorized training itself is readily conducive to cruel behavior.

Anti-Government Extremists, Terrorists, and Deadly Cults

"There is no cruelty like the cruelty of the righteous."
(Arthur Deikman, *The Wrong Way Home*, 1990, p.106)

Having illustrated the propensities for and limitations against institutional violence in legally constituted and thus socially allowable institutions, let us examine institutions that simultaneously exempt themselves from the law, have no accountability whatsoever to anyone but themselves, are highly secretive, have as their purpose the commission of violence, demand that members commit even lethal violence to gain rank, and provide members with a sense of great righteousness for doing so. Anti-government extremists, terrorist groups, and deadly cults are three overlapping kinds of institutions that fit these criteria. It

is important to understand their range of attributes, the differences among them, and their essential similarities.

This chapter will focus on two at least superficially quite dissimilar examples — the Patriot or militia movement in the U.S. and the Aum Doomsday Cult in Japan. The Patriots consist largely of economically and educationally poor white individuals, while Aum draws considerable wealth and its members tend to be especially well educated in the formal academic sense.

In light of the principles previously articulated and the institutional characteristics of the Patriot and Aum groups, we will be able to grasp why they commit even lethal violence. But, we will also ask why these groups are not more deadly than they are. What inhibits them in the absence of outside governance? Because they require violent behavior, act as though exempt from the law, are secretive, and are motivated by “righteousness”, what is to stop them? To answer this question, we must examine their natures closely, asking along the way what causes such violent institutions to form, how they maintain themselves, how they can resist the inhibitions that society promotes, and how their members can avoid becoming conscious-stricken. What already considered or new extra-group, intra-group, and intra-individual inhibitions are or can be effective?

The Anti-Government Extremist Patriots

This seemingly loosely organized collection of anti-government extremists functions in an institutional manner that strongly encourages violence, albeit sometimes in the name of “protection” for themselves and perhaps others outside the group. The U.S. groups commonly label themselves “Patriots” (Southern Poverty Law Center, 1996, p. 6). They are overwhelmingly white and Christian, are predominantly male, and are “... a potpourri of the American right, from members of the Christian Coalition to the Ku

Klux Klan — people united by their hatred of the federal government.”

Floyd Cochran (1996) is a former youth recruiter and national spokesman for the white supremacist movement Aryan Nations. Since leaving the movement, he has been making presentations as “acts of atonement” designed to unseat the movement. He characterized Aryan Nations members as poor in education and literacy and stated that they spread their hate messages through the Internet, radio, and comic books. He gave talks and showed a videotape on November 6, 1996, at Delaware County Community College in Pennsylvania, during which he noted that 14- to 25-year-olds have been joining the movement in great numbers and stated that, as a young man, “I joined a hate group because it made me someone.” He and other recruiters used public relations techniques, such as friendly socialization, and they focused on rural, all-white areas where people are quite isolated. Cochran was able to use the media to propagandize: “My bigotry became palatable to the media who would just repeat what I said.” He estimated that there are 3500 “skinheads” (young neo-Nazis) and 51 hate groups in Pennsylvania alone but said that the groups “do not mass in numbers because of their paranoia.”

The movement’s deadly aims are obfuscated by their methods for developing a following. Members approach potential recruits with friendliness and recourse to the Bible. They proclaim that their racist orientation is called for in the Bible and that what they do is in the name of God and Christianity. These messages provide justification for hating and make the movement acceptable. The videotape shown by Cochran featured young male neo-Nazi members exulting in their strident messages such as: “God is hate.” ... “I love my race to the point I kill.” ... “Whatever is destroying our race must be eliminated.” ... “The Bible says the Jews are descendants of Satan.”

Having had ample time now for considerable thinking, the former evangelist for the Aryan Nations

has said that ignoring the groups will not work and neither will combating them with violence, because they truly are like the hydra that grows two heads when one is cut off. He strongly recommended countering them with a vigorous, multi-faceted educational approach. Cochran has felt that such groups exist because of what is not taught in society, and that people are not sufficiently challenged to think. He urged that the clergy should emphasize correct quoting and interpretation of the Bible to counter the false versions and that stereotypes should be countered with the reality of human diversity. Cochran also suggested that other states should emulate Georgia's anti-masking law. In summary, he said that economic difficulties, poor education, and lack of information play key roles in recruitment susceptibility.

The Patriot movement followers may number as many as 5 million nationwide, according to Dees (1996). This figure may include anyone who is supportive of the Patriots. The hard-core Patriots, however, who may number anywhere from 15,000 to 250,000, could be enough, given sufficient secrecy and the right equipment, to overthrow a nation violently, even the U.S.

The hard-core Patriots appear to have a kind of group paranoia which stirs them to prepare to do what they fear the government is going to do to them. Helped by radical white supremacists, this anti-government alliance proposes that extreme action is necessary and, because the government is armed, they, too, must be armed. Accusing the government itself of unlawful activity that is destructive to its citizens and their rights, they react with unlawful activity themselves, including terrorist forms of violence. Though most citizens disapprove of their tactics, in part, they are able to gather sympathizers because not only they, but many other people, perceive the government as too restrictive of individual rights. The very notion of the government inhibiting them inspires more fear, hatred, and preparation because they are united by hatred of the government.

Dees (1996), the chief trial counsel for the Southern Poverty Law Center and its Militia Task Force, has emphasized the relentlessness of the Patriots' loathing of the federal government. Inhibiting anti-government extremists is especially difficult, as the Patriots' image of the "hydra" suggests that each act of inhibition or suppression may inspire a counter-reaction more severe than anything that preceded it.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (1996, p. 45) made 14 recommendations for limiting the power and dangerousness of the Patriots. The first nine suggest legal and regulatory procedures. The next four suggest preventive actions by government employees, journalists, clergy, and schools. The last recommendation, which states that, "Charges of government misconduct must be investigated promptly and thoroughly," raised the issue of how government can and does inspire aggression against it and the citizens it represents.

Government Facilitation of Anti-Government Extremists

No government can afford to be merely an inhibitor or repressor of its citizens. Its citizens must feel that they are nurtured and served in return for the self-sacrifices required in any organizational endeavor. Thus, highly repressive governments tend to be overthrown, albeit often in favor of equally or more repressive governments. For instance, the Russian revolution of 1917 seems inevitable in retrospect because czarist rule was blatantly out of touch with and negligent of its starving citizens, who felt they had to revolt or die. Of course, czarist tyranny was immediately replaced by communist tyranny.

A wise government will ensure that its nurturance of and sensitivity to its citizens' needs take precedence over its inhibitory and regulatory actions, just as parents should make sure that their love of their children is paramount, with discipline guiding, rather than stifling, them. The identifying characteristic of

a totalitarian government is its intolerance of individual freedom. Even a democratic government, however, can begin to behave in such an inhibitory manner as to cause a loss of freedom that is indistinguishable from a clearly authoritarian or totalitarian government.

Such is the text of Howard's book, *The Death of Common Sense* (1994), in which he showed how the U.S., by wrapping itself in ever more laws and regulations, has tended to strangle not only the actions of its citizens but their ability to develop judgment and common sense. He noted that the number of federal agencies doubled from 1960 to 1980; that federal statutes and formal rules now total about 1 million words; that our tax law now has 36,000 pages; that the greater the number of regulations, the more loopholes can be found by lawyers to subvert their intent; and that, therefore, "[a] culture of resistance sets in" (p. 49). Citizens react negatively to the enmeshment of their bread-and-butter institutions — schools, hospitals, and workplaces — in regulatory law. For example, "Hospitals now spend on the order of 25 percent of their budget on administration, mainly to comply with these procedural requirements. ...Forty percent of all doctors say they would not choose the profession again, the main reason being the hassle factor — the growing levels of paperwork" (Howard, 1994, pp. 93, 94). Of course, people with less income and less education than doctors or lawyers are injured far more because they have fewer resources with which to cope.

The growing gap in income between richest and poorest (Holmes, 1996) increases the aggravation. As of 1996, the U.S. had more children in poverty than any other industrialized nation. A large portion of the most violence-ready followers of the Patriot movement, such as the Aryan Nation, tend to be low income and, therefore, are especially affected. They tend to blame their troubles on cheap laborers from other countries and are against the United Nations as a symbol of a potential one-world government. Another possible source of their employment problems

is that, by and large, they have been left behind in our rapidly escalating high technology society.

As Howard (1994, p. 154) observed, "The injuries are mounting, and Americans are building up a reservoir of hatred. Just listen to the radio talk shows." Government is increasingly seen as the enemy, especially when its protective functions are perceived as being simultaneously restrictive of freedom and wasteful of taxpayers' money — for example, in 1994, when it was discovered that the Defense Department was spending more on procedures for travel reimbursement (\$2.2 billion) than on travel (\$2 billion) (Howard, 1994). Quite significantly, as Dees (1996, p. 69) explained, the militia movement, which crystallized in 1992, was formed by people who "felt frustrated by too many regulations, threatened by a one-world economy, and frightened by a government that had gotten too big and too powerful."

Similarly, in 1995, NBC began a series of programs called "The Fleecing of America" which showed one government project after another that produced nothing or close to it, all at taxpayer expense. On June 4, 1996, NBC anchorman and narrator Tom Brokaw announced that, so far, their investigators calculated that these projects had cost \$58.2 billion. As of this writing, the "Fleecing of America" series about wasteful government spending has continued.

In light of these developments, such anti-government institutions as the Patriots may be seen as representing merely an extreme version of disenchantment with the U.S. government, albeit a version that may readily lapse into paranoia and violence rather than non-violent protest and reform. As in all cases of possible paranoid ideation and behavior, it is important to ferret out any basis in objective reality. Paranoid phenomena, which will be discussed more fully later in this chapter, often have some basis in reality, although not nearly enough to explain the phenomena fully.

Like many other citizens, the Patriots resent being regulated minutely, taxed deeply, and subjected

to wasteful spending of their hard-earned money. The author makes these observations not as excuses for the Patriots' violence but as a basis for understanding and helping to re-direct their efforts. Ironically, the paranoia of the bigoted Patriots is remarkably similar to the "paranoia" of which blacks were accused in the 1960s (Whitaker, 1970, 1972a) when racial tensions erupted into violence as this disenfranchised population grew so frustrated with a government they saw, often correctly, as far more restrictive and unjust than nurturing (Higginbotham, 1996). Like the current Patriots, blacks did not trust the government, were prepared to be violent, and were determined to own rather than serve in others' institutions (Whitaker, 1972b).

Part of the solution is to improve our government through democratic means, making it more sensitive and empathic, thereby lessening the motivation to act violently and showing the viability of peaceful reform. Having less to rebel against in our society might lessen the rebellion, at least by reducing the reality basis for group paranoia. In order for people to trust institutions, the institutions must provide meaningful, empowered belonging (Deikman and Whitaker, 1979).

Dees is widely known for his stand against the militia movement, whose members have often made threats on his life. But, like all those who realize they have to understand "the enemy" to defeat or at least change that enemy, he is also empathic. Having studied events at Ruby Ridge (near Naples, ID), the Waco (TX) Branch Davidian tragedy, and the Oklahoma City bombing, he has shown an understanding of where its members are coming from. He presented the following hypothetical defense of Timothy McVeigh, who was convicted of the Oklahoma City bombing, as McVeigh's best chance to avoid the death penalty (Dees, 1996, p. 167):

"The jury would learn about McVeigh's obsession with his hero in The Turner Diaries who blew up a federal building; his valiant service in the Desert Storm campaign; his anguish at seeing American soldiers serving under United

Nations command in Somalia; his fears that his country's values will be lost to a godless one-world government; his outrage that FBI agents would murder innocent women and children; his anger at corrupt, overpaid politicians."

While empathy for murderous people might appear odious indeed, it provides both a realistic understanding of motivation and practical ways of inhibiting them. For one thing, it leads to a clear realization that military training, i.e., training to harm and destroy as well as to protect, can readily be transferred to causes unintended by the trainers. Historically, civil wars and overthrows of governments have usually involved people using government training and tactics that were designed originally to defend the government to war against the government. The old adage seems to hold: Those who live by the sword die by the sword. Our government should emphasize nurturance and negotiation more than training in destruction.

Institutional training in paraethical and lethal violence is dangerous for all concerned, including the government or other institutions that conduct such training. All that need happen is that the trainees become disenchanted with their trainers, such as the government, and ache, like Hitler did, to use that training against the trainers. Currently, as Dees (1996, p. 213) has noted, a clandestine group called the Special Forces Underground, formed in 1992, has as its goal forcing the federal government "back into its constitutional prison." This group relies mostly on active duty military personnel and ex-service members who have had covert operations training. Furthermore, there are periodic reports of active duty soldiers linked to white supremacist groups killing black citizens; for example, a white paratrooper was charged with shooting and killing a black couple in Fayetteville, NC, in December 1996 ("Soldier tells of...", 1997).

The Aum Doomsday Cult

Aum, a cult originating in Japan, is in many ways the exact opposite of the Patriot movement. Whereas the

Patriots are loosely configured to the point of being without an apparent leader, Aum is tightly organized and clearly headed by an absolute leader. The Patriots are virtually all white, Aum virtually all Asian. The Patriots are poor in formal education and financial resources, while Aum members tend to be very highly educated in the natural sciences and have immense financial resources. Aum's five "commandos" who led the massive nerve gas (sarin) strike in the Tokyo subway system on March 20, 1995, were a cardiovascular surgeon, a graduate student in particle physics, an applied physics graduate, an applied physicist who graduated at the top of his class, and an electronics engineer. Aum "... is the story of the ultimate cult: a wired, high-tech, designer-drug, billion-dollar army of New Age zealots, under the leadership of a blind and bearded madman, armed with weapons of mass destruction" (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, pp. 2, 3).

These apparently gross differences between the Patriots and Aum, however, are rather superficial compared to the similarities in their core identities and ideologies. Though the Patriots claim to be leaderless and state that they realize that fostering anti-government sentiments is more acceptable in public than preaching racism and Aryan superiority, some of the most violently inclined, including Timothy McVeigh, have been known admirers of Hitler (Cochran, 1996; Dees, 1996). Thus, it is highly probable that the Patriot movement, particularly the Aryan Nation, is more identified ideologically with Hitler than would appear from what they offer for public consumption. Some members who resemble Hitler in stridency, righteousness, and bigotry have been ideologic leaders of the movement. But, knowing that blatant bigotry turns most people off and not wishing to lose potential recruits, even these leaders often downplay their bigotry in public in favor of culling animosity toward the government. Both the Patriots and Aum are authoritarian to the core.

Furthermore, both institutions preach impending doom. Aum's leader, Shoko Asahara, links his au-

thority to Lord Shiva, the Destroyer who reigns over the Hindu pantheon of gods. Thus, members of Aum, like the Patriots, predict a doom they themselves appear to be implementing. Aum, too, engages avidly in actions that would wreak havoc even on nonmembers, all in the name of what Aum calls the supreme authority or the supreme truth.

Both institutions maintain that they are serving a spiritual good, a cleansing action that would make a holy re-creation possible. The idea is that first we must destroy, and that the process will require supreme sacrifices. The holy figures in these cases are Hitler and Asahara, who himself has venerated Hitler. This observation leads to yet another similarity.

Both institutions carry out recruitment, training, and the mandating of sacrifices by engaging in bold lies. According to Kaplan (1992, p. 676), Hitler claimed that "the great masses of the people ... will more easily fall victims to a big lie than a small one." Asahara has engaged in big lies, also. He has pretended to be able to levitate, read minds, see the future, hear the voice of God, and more. Asahara even repackaged his dirty bath water as "miracle pond" and sold it for nearly \$800 per quart (Kaplan and Marshall, 1996, pp. 18, 19): "Believers who donated over \$2000 to the Shambalization Plan Fund received the best prize, two gallons of Asahara's dirty bath water."

Aum's recruitment tactics involve Aum members pretending to have no affiliation with the group, but then leading on potential recruits (Whitaker, 1996). Like most duplicitous cults, Aum also convinces members to give up large amounts of money to the cult as protection from doom. The message common to the Patriots and Aum, and myriad other deadly cults, is that only devout members would survive the certain advent of doomsday. Both of these institutions are totally devoid of humor about themselves; they are deadly serious. People who are severely paranoid are strikingly devoid of a sense of humor. We might say that they take themselves far too seriously.

The natural progression of such a cult follows the same general pattern regardless of its initial constitution. The differences in the initial characteristics of cult members and the society in which they emerge — for example, the differences between the Patriots and Aum — recede in significance. Their progressively greater secrecy, lying, unaccountability, repression of dissent, and urging of violent behavior in the name of religion result in their having to exert more and more control against (1) the threat that members will begin to question and think for themselves, and (2) attempts by those external to the cult to redress its wrongs. Such a cult, therefore, engages more and more in paraethical and lethal practices against both members and outsiders. As the practices of high pressure indoctrinations become inadequate in the face of growing skepticism both inside and outside of the cult, outright punishments must be introduced, and when even harsh punishments are not enough to suppress dissent, then atrocities, including murders, must be committed.

In the case of Aum, initial appeals to alienated youth have to be girded by stripping them of their possessions, isolating them from their families and outside society, and separating them as much as possible from their identities as individuals. Members were made to endure extreme hardships in hypnosis-inducing circumstances featuring extreme isolation, sleep and food deprivation, and ceaselessly strident propagandizing. Later, members were made to submit to what was acknowledged as “brainwashing” by means of drugs and cranial electrical shocking devices. Members were told that their paths to higher spiritual enlightenment would be facilitated by these devices which would reduce brain activity, as measured by electroencephalography, to the almost nonexistent level of their supreme master himself. Asahara falsely claimed to have achieved that low level himself. If a member was still questioning and wanting to leave the cult, that member had to be murdered without a trace of the body left for would-be investigators to discover. At the insistence of their leader, Aum

members also murdered an attorney who was investigating them, together with the attorney’s wife and children (Whitaker, 1996).

The Art and Science of Inculcating Violent Behavior

Violent behavior can be induced quickly and fairly readily in most people who are subjected to strong authoritarian pressure that suggests they would be right in submitting. Social psychologist Solomon Asch (1952) demonstrated in a classic series of experiments that even the pressure of a group of six students (who were Asch’s confederates) could induce a given individual to override his or her own visual perception of lengths of lines in favor of conforming to the group’s clearly incorrect judgment. As Eisler (1996, p. 388) has pointed out, “What has not received even a fraction of the attention paid to that finding is what Asch’s experiments demonstrated about dissent: that when just *one* of Asch’s six confederates disagreed with the answers of the majority, the rate of conformity declined to a mere 5 percent!” Clearly, an individual would-be dissenter can be greatly encouraged to dissent if supported by even one other individual in an otherwise unified group pressure situation. But, when there is no one supporting the would-be dissenter in such a situation, even quite “normal” people may perform egregious forms of aggression.

Studies by Stanley Milgram (1974) strongly suggested that most apparently normal people could be induced to administer what they believed to be severe shock to an apparently hapless experimental “subject” as instructed by a white-coated experimenter and his assistant. Of the real subjects, who thought they were teaching memory tasks to the “subject”, 90% actually pressed the switches that indicated the most extreme pain, despite hearing the subject screaming in apparent pain, if they were at a physical distance from the subject. As one of Milgram’s subjects

said, "You really begin to forget that there's a guy out there, even though you can hear him. For a long time I just concentrated on pressing the switches and reading the words" (p. 38). Thus, the combination of an authoritarian leader and distance from the victim, which serves to dehumanize the victim, can induce ordinary people to inflict pain and suffering on innocent persons.

Like all deadly cults, the Aryan Nation and Aum rely on these two techniques — authoritarian leadership and distance from the victims — and on certain additional conditions and techniques because highly reliable training in violent behavior must not rely merely on inducements of a temporary sort, but on thorough inculcation which is effected by frequent repetitions and admonitions which can be optimally effective with especially vulnerable subjects. Thus, among the conditions necessary are voids in the nurturance and education of young potential recruits and the ability to structure the environment in ways favorable to hypnotic forms of transformation.

The Aryan Nation or, more broadly, the Patriots have tended to recruit especially poorly educated youths whose ignorance greatly facilitates bigotry and suggestibility. Though Aum has recruited many youths who were exceptionally well educated in the physical sciences, like others in Japan's school systems they lacked much schooling in anything else. Other conditions were also important. Kaplan and Marshall (1996, p. 289) put the matter succinctly: "It would be easy to dismiss Aum as a peculiarly Japanese case, and indeed there are conditions in Japan that shaped the cult's unique character. The strait-jacket schools and workplaces, the absentee fathers and alienated youth no doubt helped fuel Shoko Asahara's rise to power. But ... ineffective and bungling police, fanatic sects, and disaffected scientists are hardly limited to the Japanese."

Like other youths lured into cults, Aum inculcates them in a "religion" that promises to fill their spiritual voids with supreme truth while requiring that they submit to an absolutely authoritarian leader

who is to be their god. Their old straitjackets are replaced by even more constricting garments. Asahara declared himself to be the divine leader of a completely non-violent religion. As stated by Kaplan and Marshall (1996, p. 23):

"Inside the growing communes, though, Asahara or his disciples would beat followers for the smallest act of disobedience. This was termed 'karma disposal', the dumping of spiritual baggage that holds one back in this life or the next. 'I often pick on my disciples,' Asahara freely admitted. 'It's not because I am a sadist. It is because I have to rid them of negative karma.' Asahara's theory of karma was simple: pleasure bad, pain good."

A similar progression characterized the Nazi movement as it was largely freed from societal inhibitions thanks to enabling by economic distress together with widespread bigotry not only in Germany but in other countries where there were ample sympathizers. Currently, the Patriots are aware that their bigotry is relatively unpopular in the larger society so they must be careful to emphasize only the government as the enemy of the people. But, with fewer inhibitions emanating from society, the Patriot movement could quickly become even more openly bigoted and destructive.

Reality vs. Paranoia

Frequently, various cults, hate groups, terrorists, and the like are dismissed as being simply "paranoid" or, in less restrained terminology, they are called "crazies", but we have seen that the matter is far more complex. A considerable foundation of pervasive social and personal conditions underlies and supports lethal group and institutional aggression. We must take into account the supportive structure for lethal institutional aggression, which is schematized in Table 2.1, if we are to understand and effectively inhibit it. The apparent paranoia of these groups is largely shared and supported in various forms by a vast number of other persons and groups.

TABLE 2.1
**SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURE FOR
 LETHAL INSTITUTIONAL
 AGGRESSION**

Terrorists
 Hate groups
 Authoritarian institutions
 Excessively regulating government
 Societally pervasive dominator mentality
 Failure to educate for partnership relationships

Was Asahara's claim that Aum's development of weaponry is only for purposes of self-defense or the Patriots claim that they must arm for self-defense merely the propaganda of con artists, or are such claims believed by the "liars" themselves? The answer depends on understanding all of the contributions to these claims. As we have seen, sometimes there is a partial reality base to claims of persecution. And sometimes, leaders knowingly lie while members are inculcated to believe. Typically, however, both the leaders and members of deadly cults share at least some genuinely paranoid proclivities, albeit proclivities shared, to a lesser degree, by a vast supportive structure in the larger society. To survive, massive myths must have massive support.

While the paranoia of the militia, terrorist groups, and deadly cult institutions has some grounding in truly oppressive conditions — such as difficult economic straits in Hitler's pre-Nazi Germany and in a large segment of today's U.S. or the alienation of Japanese youth — the paranoia also has a genuinely morbid or irrational aspect. When such institutions portray certain outsiders as the sole cause of their difficulties, their claims are at most grounded in only partial truths. Their slogans falsely suggest that they would be fine "if only we could get rid of the Xs or

the Ys or the Zs!" (fill in Jews, blacks, Catholics, homosexuals, the mentally ill, any non-believers, people with genetic defects, or the federal government). Ultimately, this kind of failure to admit or to discover factual truth leads to the extermination of anyone who is different. Inevitably, its success would result in a biological genetic disaster as well as a psychogenetic disaster, because extreme inbreeding weakens and eventually destroys the hereditary line, both physically and psychologically. In reality, it is not the destruction of variety among or within species but the natural diversity of humankind as well as all animal and plant life which gives the greatest promise of survival. If disobeyed, this natural law, which favors diversity, also destroys the "in-group".

The following are among the bases upon which an individual personality may develop a paranoid condition (Whitaker, 1992, p. 7):

"Common to schizophrenic, bigoted, and paranoid conditions are extreme problems with self-esteem or self-worth. Paranoid and bigoted orientations are ways to raise oneself, no matter how irrationally, from a condition of devastatingly low self-esteem. Schizophrenic persons differ from groups of bigoted people in that they have not established a consensus or communion with others with whom they can share their beliefs; they are unable to convince others of the correctness of their beliefs. Schizophrenic persons are exceedingly individual, or idiosyncratic."

The paranoid form of morbidity manifest in scapegoating would be called a paranoid psychosis were it not so fully shared in common with other scapegoaters. Clinical psychology and psychiatry have no adequate clinical terms for group paranoid disorders, with the small exception of *folie a deux* (literally, "madness of two"), which means that two people may share the same delusional beliefs. But, as Erich Fromm noted in *The Sane Society* (1955, 1990, p. 15), "Just as there is a 'folie a deux' there is a folie a millions."

How can we further distinguish, for the practical purpose of knowing whether or what kind of

intervention is advisable, genuinely morbid paranoid group phenomena from other group movements that are more rationally grounded? What is the difference, if any, between the current Patriot movement and the American Revolution, for example? A key difference is that between autonomy and domination strivings.

The revolutionaries who created the U.S. aimed to be free of English domination but had no evident aim to conquer England or to cleanse the world, as it were, of English citizens. They were content to gain their freedom from what they perceived as English oppression. In sharp contrast, the Nazi movement aimed not simply to establish or fortify German independence or autonomy but to conquer the world and to "cleanse" the world of its seemingly innumerable "inferior" peoples. Insofar as the members of the Patriot, Aum, or other aggressive group movements strive not merely to establish their own independence but to dominate and destroy others to assert their superiority and to eradicate the "inferiors", they are acting out a form of paranoid ideology — "If it were not for the inferiors, whom we must dominate and destroy, we would be recognized as the superiors," for example, as racially superior.

Even people who would individually be perceived as quite normal may become very destructive if they are subjected sufficiently to the conditions and training that make for blind obedience. Because there is a vast number of individuals who have the rather common tendency to engage in unwarranted blaming of others for their problems, it is not difficult to understand the making of deadly cults. While paranoid proclivities make vulnerable recruits, however, being schizophrenic does not.

Paranoid schizophrenic persons show a greater idiosyncrasy than can be tolerated in group paranoia. Persons who are schizophrenic are so idiosyncratic or distinctively different from others, including other schizophrenic persons, that idiosyncrasy is a hallmark of schizophrenic disorders (Whitaker, 1992). Thus, if a schizophrenic patient is confronted with another person who has the same delusion, some-

thing gives. For example, in the case of two women who thought they were the Virgin Mary, one concluded that she was not the Virgin Mary but must be Mary Magdalene, thus preserving each woman's claim to individual distinction. Group identity and cohesion are not staples with persons who are schizophrenic, but individuals who are paranoid, though not paranoid schizophrenic, are more likely to band together, provided they can agree on a common enemy.

The extreme cohesiveness of Aum, whose members shared patently absurd beliefs inculcated by their leader, surely suggests a highly consensual "folie a group" to use Fromm's concept. Members of the militia and Patriot groups appear to be a strongly united force only in terms of having the government as their common enemy, but many are united also in their belief that minorities, homosexuals, whites who enjoy and support black culture, etc. are also common enemies. Similarly, but in their more advanced phase, Aum members believe that they have to rid the world of all outsiders in order to cleanse it, to make a clean start in preparation for a new world order. Given this kind of thinking, but not a pervasive kind of thought disorder, these extremists would not be called schizophrenic, but they might meet the criteria for a paranoid disorder if we had such a designation for a group.

The structure of the militia movement allows and even promotes extreme individuation within the bounds of the single-faceted scapegoating group identity. *Leaderless Resistance* (Beam, 1992) is the title of the most popular militia operations manual other than *The Turner Diaries* (Pierce, writing under the pseudonym of Andrew MacDonald, 1978, 1980). Leaderlessness serves the strategic purpose of making it difficult, if not impossible, for the government to focus its detection, surveillance, and anti-terrorist work on any overall organization. Instead, there is a movement consisting mostly of "cells" as small as a few members each. Members of a cell can claim, with some evidence, that they are basically unrelated

to any other group or cell that the government challenges. This strategy happens also to lend itself to a kind of “paranoid” freedom of ideation and expression that suits highly idiosyncratic individuals who detest authority of any kind, whether it be irrational (authoritarian) or rational and democratically determined, but this apparent “leaderlessness” could quickly give way to clearer centralization of authority.

Given the strategic and psychological characteristics of “leaderless” cells, what would it take to unite such groups into an even more destructive, massively united movement? One decisive condition would be many, if not most or all, cells perceiving a new “clear” and massive injustice on the part of the government. Ruby Ridge and Waco have provided considerable grist for the milling of a united movement, because many people besides militia members could question the need for the “harsh” government tactics that were employed. In the case of the Oklahoma City bombing, clearly the worst terroristic attack in the history of our country, the bombing has been touted by extreme members as a government plot.

A second decisive condition is that militia members’ insistence on individualism or resistance to becoming more massively united is lessened if they find other scapegoats in common. Dees (1996, p. 200) noted that “of the 441 militia and 368 Patriot groups that existed between 1994 and 1996, 137 had ties to the racist right — to groups like the Aryan Nations and the Ku Klux Klan. Of all the militias, these groups and the types of members they attract are the most dangerous.”

Both the Aryan Nation and Aum fit the paranoid pattern which comprises two synergistically interacting dynamics which can be captured in the assertions “I would be very great if I were not so very persecuted” and “I am persecuted because of my great qualities.” Grandiose and persecutory delusions go hand in hand to form an explanation which simultaneously serves to boost self-esteem and to vent hostility. As exemplified by *The Turner Diaries*, the paranoid process engenders a grand pseudocommunity

in which everything that exists fits into the underlying delusional system.

Youths who become alienated through lack of nurturance and social success must somehow raise their self-esteem and avoid feeling inferior. It is then but an easy step to feeling oppressed and seeking redress in a “family” that elevates their self-esteem by identifying them with supremacist groups like the Aryan Nation and Aum.

Having become members, they are then strongly bonded with supposedly only superior people. The group’s unifying mission — to cleanse the country and eventually dominate the world — satisfies their powerful need to turn the tables on the innumerable “inferior” beings who have contaminated or would contaminate them. If fully adopted, this mindset fits the paranoid pattern: the now-denied sense of inferiority, unworthiness, and vengeance is projected onto other people. When acted out, this mindset means behaving in the oppressive, hostile manner they attribute to their “persecutors”. If the available supply of persecutors dwindles and resentment toward the leader and other members increases, intra-group violence will increase as members doubt one another. To paraphrase an old saying, “Sometimes I think only me and thee are acceptable and sometimes I doubt thee.” Ultimately, paranoid group movements tend to evolve into a “black hole” mentality wherein the members find each other unacceptable and may even commit lethal violence within the group.

A Blueprint for Inhibiting Institutional Violence

Many methods can be effective for inhibiting group and institutional lethal aggression. No one method is likely to be very effective by itself but certain combinations may be very effective. As noted previously, we can categorize inhibitions as coming from three sources — extra-institutional, intra-institutional, and intra-individual. Table 2.2 shows examples of

TABLE 2.2
**SOURCES AND EXAMPLES OF
INHIBITIONS AGAINST INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE**

Extra-institutional

Enacting laws against the forming of militias whose intent is the violent overthrow of the U.S., wearing masks in public, or using telephones, the mails, or Internet for hate messages. (Banning masks or clothing used for disguise may be unconstitutional.)

Conducting surveillance, such as by electronic devices to monitor telephone calls, meetings, and other communications initiated by or among suspects.

Conducting searches, in conformity with search-and-seizure laws; for example, having police look for materials and resources that could be used to commit violent acts.

Educating for democratic living, such as teaching empathy, tolerance, compassion, and personal responsibility at home, in schools, and in society generally.

Intra-institutional

Developing democratic processes, such as free and open elections, allowing dissent, and actively reviewing complaints and suggestions.

Encouraging extra-institutional relationships; for example, involvement with family, friends, and other groups in the broader community.

Actively cultivating diversity to enrich the institution ethnically, by encouraging a broad variety of personal viewpoints and opinions.

Taking stands against bigotry, both within and outside of the institution, through education, formal protests, and reaching out to help oppressed people.

Intra-individual

Examining one's own tendencies to project and displace hostility vs. accepting personal responsibility and contributing to democracy.

Checking with others outside to see what they would think of the workings of one's institution or group and what changes they suggest.

Taking periodic leaves of absence from the institution in order to look more objectively at it and to belong elsewhere for awhile as a broadening experience.

Participating actively in democratic processes by becoming well-informed, voting, and reaching out to educate and help others to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

inhibitions that can be effected within each of these categories.

The following blueprint suggests both potentially effective inhibitions and their limitations, beginning with the most simply reactive and, therefore, probably the least effective, and progressing to the level

of potentially more effective solutions. The less-effective solutions are included here because they may be partially effective in some circumstances where harm is imminent and are sure to be included in any politically acceptable program of intervention and thus are important to take into account.

Repression

The most common governmental reactions to unlawful violent behavior are repressive. Essentially, repression means trying to identify and deactivate those suspected of wrongdoing. In the case of anti-government militants, the federal government and the state governments (albeit under federal control) would be authorized to undertake surveillance methods that may be useful to identify and convict the wrongdoers. At the extreme, we would allow the government unlimited development and use of intelligence equipment, including covert auditory and visual recording devices, weapons and other intimidation methods, prosecutions, incarcerations, and punishments. In short, we would declare all-out war on the "outlaws". We would become as thoroughly militarized "as necessary" to eradicate the "bad elements" in our society. In this extreme version, certain costs and dangers of repressive tactics become quite clear.

Such all-out repression would destroy the democracy we seek to protect. Our society would then become that which its anti-government militants say we now are. Effectively, we would give truth to the lie.

The U.S. Constitution, which is at the heart of our democracy, would be only a relic. We would have destroyed ourselves, thereby saving anti-government militants the effort and assuring them of victory.

The common-sense reaction to this danger of self-destruction is to lessen the repression and to practice it in a more moderate fashion. Recognition that some repression is probably necessary, especially in the short run, should be coupled with the realization that it is a dangerous tool. Any repressive effort tends to inspire more militant rhetoric and action as well as to inhibit unlawful forms of protest. Many people who are already militant would increase their efforts, and many presently non-militant citizens, seeing their government practice harsh repression, would conclude that the government is indeed becoming like the militants suggested it is, and thereby become more militant themselves. The net

effect could easily be more, rather than less, unlawful militancy. Historically, we have instructive examples from our government's attempts in the 1960s to repress black militant dissidents and from our conduct of the Vietnam war.

Inevitably, the use of repressive measures is a tricky business. Paradoxically, the use of repression in a democratic society must be coupled with strong inhibitions against its use. Any increases in our repressive tactics against anti-government militants would have to be matched by increases in surveillance and prosecution of government agents exceeding limits on their powers. The checks and balances characteristic of a democratic government would have to be further mobilized. As a consequence, the "repressive solution" means expense not only in terms of direct expenditures for the repressive measures themselves but also expenditures to fund vigilant and inhibitory actions against these measures. By analogy, it is as if we were to drive faster while applying the brakes harder at the same time, thereby surely generating more friction and compromising our forward progress.

In conclusion, while repression may be necessary, especially in the short run, to save lives, it is hardly a first-rate solution. Rather, it is a dangerous, costly, and potentially quite divisive solution which, if carried to the extreme, would guarantee destruction of our democracy. Those who would regard repressive medicine as a cure in itself should be advised: "This medicine must be used sparingly, as excessive use may cause more harm than the disease it is intended to cure." And in further service of truth in packaging, the warning should say, "Our only guarantee is that symptoms will persist or worsen if nothing is done except to use this medicine."

Negotiation

Though unappealing to "macho" mentalities, negotiation has a long and successful history of resolving disputes if used early enough in the conflict process.

Its success depends considerably on ascertaining early signs of conflict as well as bringing an open mind, empathy, and goodwill to the negotiating table. Respect for opponents has a way of easing discussion and engaging them unless it is clear that an aggressor is already absolutely determined to dominate, as occurred when Hitler was not inclined at all toward sincere, peaceful negotiation and British Prime Minister Chamberlain misread him. Typically, negotiation does not work when matters have already gone very far, but when adversaries can be brought to the negotiating table early in the hostilities, it is possible to generate feelings of empathy and respect for one another.

Negotiators would do well to regard their "adversaries" as at least potentially constructive people with whom talking could be helpful. Carl Rogers, the psychologist whose principles of counseling extended far into other areas of discourse, posited an especially important principle for viewing interpersonal conflicts in need of peaceful resolution. As stated by Kirshenbaum (1995, p. 39):

"[Rogers] ... acknowledged the powerful destructive forces within people but saw no evidence to suggest that they were primary. He saw negative and positive impulses existing side by side within the individual. ...[H]e saw that when the therapist could provide the conditions of congruence, empathy, and unconditional positive regard, this helped the individual to accept both the positive and negative feelings within himself. Once the individual could understand and accept all parts of himself and his inner experience more fully, that person tended to choose more constructive courses of action."

The use of empathy in negotiation is a method for facilitating intra-group and intra-individual inhibitions against violence. It is much more difficult to behave violently toward people if you get to know them as fellow human beings and are in a position to become able to "feel for them". And, when one shows empathy, it tends to beget empathy in others, too. Ultimately the sense of empathy may carry the day.

The reverse is also true. Perceived lack of empathy readily facilitates "negative" behavior including violence and rebellion.

Intra-Individual Inhibitions Against Violence

Leaders attract followers in many ways. On balance, the leader must be perceived as benefiting the followers in order for the followers not to leave. Even extreme forms of coercion and total lack of support for dissent cannot guarantee that a leader will keep followers if the followers are made thoroughly miserable by the leader. Two examples are offered here.

An older student, returning to study at the university he had left several years before, told his story about joining and then leaving a very large religious cult that demanded major personal sacrifices. He had achieved a high position of financial responsibility in the cult and attained a close personal relationship with the leader, but his years of hard work and devotion to the cause, which delayed his education and greatly restricted his freedom, were not enough for the leader. The leader demanded that he submit to an arranged marriage to be formally performed together with many others. Even this further sacrifice of his personal freedom was not enough for him to leave the cult. His own family of origin had been fraught with conflict and turmoil, and he greatly valued his place in his "new family", especially because he had such a close relationship with the "father". So he went through with the marriage, hoping that with time and his own dutiful efforts the marriage would become tolerable and thus confirm the far-seeing wisdom of the cult's leader. A couple of years passed during which he was thoroughly miserable with his arranged marriage and could not find grounds for compatibility. Finally, he left the marriage and the cult, albeit not without severe regrets for his relatively wasted years and the loss of his "father".

Cochran, the aforementioned national spokesman for the Aryan Nation, said he left the movement

after a sacrifice they demanded got him thinking. As a prominent member of the Aryan Nation, he had avidly pursued his role as propaganda minister, recruiting many youths to the movement by giving them "just cause" for attacking minorities and others who were "racially inferior". As in Hitler's Nazi movement, the Aryan Nation was also dedicated to rooting out any "genetically inferior" members of their own "race" so as to make it "pure".

This theoretically satisfactory approach to racial purity foundered badly when Cochran was told that his own son, who had a cleft palate (and therefore was imperfect) would have to be "sacrificed" (killed) for the cause. Cochran not only then left the Aryan Nation but began to see that his former dedication had supported and furthered atrocities by that organization. He went from a sense of righteousness to a sense of having committed the most egregious sins. Whatever previous sense of guilt and inhibition that was kept at bay while he was a member was unleashed and became a tremendous, continual dedication to what he called "atonement". Everywhere he could, he made presentations to unmask the propaganda he had previously so fervently preached. The experience of having the cult's violence turned on his own flesh and blood served as a wake-up call. The movement had gone too far; it had threatened to kill someone precious to him.

These case examples illustrate that the "black hole-ism" tendency of deadly cults inevitably begins to destroy or lose their members through death or desertion. This phenomenon of progressive pressure to conform partially explains why authoritarian groups and institutions do not commit lethal aggression more often than they do.

Typically, when people are willing to become violent in a war against the government, there is, as previously emphasized, at least some reality basis for their inclinations. They feel, and often are, disenfranchised. Seldom are they the happy owners of highly successful and legal enterprises, nor are the majority well educated. Cochran, the former propaganda min-

ister of the Aryan Nation, who possessed only a GED himself, claimed that he was appointed to his major spokesman role only because he was so rare in his ability to speak a simple sentence "without having to consult a dictionary." He emphasized that the vast majority of his fellow members were not only poorly educated in the academic sense but lived in very isolated places where there were few voices of any kind, let alone dissenting voices. And because people who are very ready to join a paranoid cult have paranoid tendencies themselves, one can imagine the difficulty of getting through to these people any message that would cause them to stop echoing the party line and reflect on other possibilities. Receiving strong group emotional support for blaming "inferiors" is highly attractive. These considerations lead to recommending certain steps designed to make possible peaceful resolution.

Suggested ways to relate to potentially violent anti-government activists include the following:

1. *Take their complaints very seriously.* Draw them out by listening with a ready ear. Empathize as much as possible with their own subjective feelings as well as any facts that they present which may support their claims. A sympathetic ear will engender some constructive relatedness that can help the militant person(s) get out of the black hole of their paranoid community. This approach does not mean humoring people, i.e., speaking or acting as though the listener is convinced that the complaints are valid in the sense of proven facts. It does mean, however, listening with an open mind and being attentive to what may well be at least some substance to the complaints.
2. *Encourage and cooperate with factual investigations.* Ralph Nader-like studies will tend to make legitimate complaints clear and believable instead of quickly judged "paranoid delusions". During the Denver Model Cities hearings in the 1960s with citizens from poor areas of the city (Whitaker, 1970), some citizens complained that a supermarket chain charged higher prices in the ghetto than in a wealthy neighborhood. A city councilman scoffed, saying, "How could the chain charge more in a poor area

where people can't afford to pay as much?" As an advisor, the author suggested that the offended citizens conduct an objective study, which they carried out meticulously. They were then able to show that, indeed, their claim was entirely justified. The "paranoid" complaints of the black, Chicano, and poor white citizens then received more serious and sympathetic attention.

3. *Where interest is shown, provide factual information related to the complaints.* When people experience a ready ear, they often respond with a ready ear. For instance, in the case of the Denver Model Cities citizen participation project, the Denver Black Panthers took on progressively more constructive and well-informed roles. And though some might have carried a gun and seemed ready for violent confrontation, they did vastly more studying and proposing peaceful projects than they espoused violence. The very governments, city and federal alike, that have been labeled enemies became far more welcome as the processes outlined above were sensitively and sincerely implemented. Although a massive change in the presidency and executive branch of the U.S. dashed most of the funding prospects (Whitaker, 1972a), the spirit of constructive involvement persevered. Several former black militants became important members of city government, and an education strategy begun by a former failed college student became the vehicle for many successful Chicano college graduates.
4. *Educate.* If we would inhibit evil, we must educate people to be good, and not simply try to repress evil. As Eisler (1996, p. 382) has suggested, "... on the human level a far more useful way of looking at evil is as the absence of those qualities that make us uniquely human: our enormous capacity for consciousness, choice, and most important, empathy and love." Traditionally, education has been defined as a formal academic process in which values as such are not taught. The mere mention of teaching values in the public school system is objected to on the grounds that it violates separation of church from state, but there is no need to select or use any religion to teach the values of a democratic society interested in survival.

The core values necessary for a democratic society to survive and to be constructive in the world are

respect for and empathy with other living beings and our natural heritage. Yet, our schools in the U.S., let alone educational institutions in more authoritarian countries, do too little to prepare us for peaceful means of resolving conflicts. We should be especially careful not to emphasize the physical sciences at the expense of a liberal education. A broad education can teach respect for oneself and others through a wide array of subjects including the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Narrowly restricted education facilitates narrow mindedness, a crucial component of bigotry-motivated human violence.

A truthful education will also inhibit violence. What is most wrong with our gigantic violence entertainment industry is that it does not portray violence honestly. As Eisler (1996) emphasized, it eroticizes violence, even though, inherently, real violence is exactly the opposite of sexual pleasure. Furthermore, as McWilliams noted (1993), the violence entertainment industry sanitizes violence though real violence is the opposite of sanitary. Consider here, for example, that favorite hate cult oxymoron "ethnic cleansing". McWilliams proposed a solution (1993, p. 590):

"All of this sanitized violence only makes real violence a more acceptable solution to problems. It's not that violence is shown, and that causes violence; it's that violence is shown as the solution to problems; that causes violence. 'A single death is a tragedy; a million deaths is a statistic,' said Joseph Stalin (who should know). If, however, the way in which each of these million died and the suffering they went through had to be viewed one at a time in great detail, perhaps it would no longer be a statistic, and perhaps such tragedies would happen less often."

Harold Pagliaro (1996) provided an excellent illustration of front-line combat in war, a group and institutional endeavor that otherwise is almost always shown as eroticized and sanitized entertainment in movies, television, and children's games. His book *Naked Heart* is as freeing as only the truth can be.

Truthful, realistic education in human relations is what is most needed in school curricula and in society at large. In its absence, we will continue to have a predominantly dominator mentality that adversely affects not only male-female relationships but all relationships involving positions of power; otherwise, most of our institutions will continue to stress domination of others.

If we continue in serious pursuit of stereotypic masculine ideals of domination, inevitably we will promote, rather than inhibit, fatal group and institutional aggression. But, if we trade in the male stereotype model of domination which masquerades as the ultimate power, we can have a far more powerful model, the power to nurture and safeguard not only our lives and rights but those of others. Eisler's (1996) partnership model emphasizes nurturance, nonviolent conflict resolution, a more egalitarian social structure, mutual respect and freedom of choice in sexuality, empathy and unconditional love, pleasure bonding, and the enhancement of giving, nurturing, and illuminating life as the highest power. If we select the partnership model over the presently preeminent dominator model, we can certainly inhibit personal, group, and institutional lethal aggression.

Summary

This chapter proposes principles and methods useful for inhibiting group and institutional lethal aggression. It documents that all institutions have the potential for violence, as illustrated by various legally and societally approved professions such as law and journalism, by sports, by colleges and universities, and by the military. In the process, the relative effectiveness of their particular extra-institutional, intra-institutional, and intra-individual inhibitions is noted. This review and commentary is then used to contrast those institutions with anti-government extremists, terrorists, and deadly cults, using the anti-government

Patriots in the United States and Aum in Japan as examples of the latter.

The Patriots and Aum appear to be very different in many ways but have certain characteristics which in combination define a cult — dependence on a leader, compliance with the group, avoidance of dissent, and devaluation of the outsider. The more authoritarian the leadership and the more coercive the conformity, the more likely it is that hostilities will be projected onto and acted out against outsiders, but members suffer losses themselves, including training in cruelty that requires becoming insensitive to their own emotions and desires. Ultimately, as such groups become more ingrown and intolerant, members tend to turn on one another.

The readiness of such groups to attack the government arises in part from justified concerns such as feeling uncared for and not listened to while being stringently regulated and taxed by a government seen as wasteful and negligent of their needs, but the members tend also to share paranoid proclivities as well as the all too human susceptibility to authoritarian leadership that promises to save them from some kind of doomsday. A cult's own vengeful brand of religion is used to compensate for feelings of persecution and low self-esteem while freeing members from inhibitions against committing violence. The people most likely to be recruited are alienated youths who find a "family" in the cult.

The author's blueprint for inhibiting institutional violence includes, but notes the considerable dangers of, repressive methods. Negotiation, if conducted early enough, can be very useful. Intra-individual inhibitions against violence, which are usually held in check by group pressures to conform, can be unleashed by even one dissenter, or by an individual's increasing sense of oppression, as illustrated by case examples. What is most fundamentally needed is early education in human relations and democratic living, with greater emphasis on partnership than dominator models.

Annotated Bibliography

1. Dees, Morris (1996) *Gathering Storm: America's Militia Threat*. New York: Harper Collins. As chief trial counsel for the Southern Poverty Law Center and its Militia Task Force and an award-winning author, Dees knows what militias are about and conveys his knowledge well. His years of investigative research enable him in this book to give richly detailed accounts of the militia movement both from the outside and the inside. The resultant picture is persuasive. The reader comes to understand that what we read in the newspapers or see on television is merely the tip of the iceberg. The movement's motivational impetus becomes clear in terms of its scapegoating nature and strong resemblance to the Nazi movement which has largely been reborn as a purer than thou "patriotism".
2. Deikman, Arthur J. (1990) *The Wrong Way Home: Uncovering the Patterns of Cult Behavior in American Society*. Boston: Beacon Press. The author, a psychiatrist especially well known for his research on states of consciousness, shows clearly that cult behavior — dependence on a leader, compliance with the group, avoiding dissent, and devaluing the outsider — pervades the "normal" institutions on which we are dependent. He makes understandable the deadly extremes of authoritarianism that militia and terrorist cults fanatically pursue. Deikman's outstanding ability to illuminate the vicissitudes of dependency dynamics that underlie cult behavior is reminiscent of Erich Fromm's brilliant book, *Escape from Freedom*, that related the tragic lure of Hitler's Nazi ideology to its facilitation by social institutions in the pre-World War II era. Like Fromm, Deikman found that "[t]he structure of cults is basically authoritarian; obedience and hierarchical power tend to take precedence over truth and conscience when they conflict, which they often do" (see p. 73).
3. Eisler, Riane (1996) *Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers. This 405-page book is at once a powerful condemnation of violence in all its ubiquity and iniquity and a correspondingly powerful appreciation of love and nurture. It is astonishingly sane. For that reason, the reader is made acutely aware that much of what we blithely accept as normal turns out to be the insanity of everyday life, all the more destructive for its banality. Eisler's highly readable text brims with sophisticated scholarly analyses that have immediate practical applications in every sphere of life. She shows that "... if we are to construct a society where sex will be linked not with violence and domination but with the truly erotic — with the life-and-pleasure-giving powers within us and around us in the world — we need to fully extricate ourselves from all that has for so long unconsciously bound us to painful and unhealthy myths and realities" (see p. 200).
4. Pagliaro, Harold (1996) *Naked Heart: A Soldier's Journey to the Front*. Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press. A distinguished professor of English literature gives an eloquent but literally and figuratively down-to-earth personal account of his actual World War II front-line experiences as an 18-year-old infantryman. Presented in the humane context of his family experiences and values, the contrast is powerfully instructive. On the one hand, he is brought up to love and to revere life, and on the other he is forcibly trained to kill under the dictum of "kill or be killed!" A premonitory dream at age 14 depicted "exploding artillery shells that broke across the skies, lighting them in deep shadowed blazes of fire and shaking them with thunder. I remember the dream, as intense as hallucination, the live painting of a world gone mad" (see p. 3). The dream and reality become isomorphic, leaving no doubt that war is indeed a hellish nightmare utterly different from its vapid idealization.

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About the Author

Leighton C. Whitaker, Ph.D., ABPP, is in private practice, is Adjunct Clinical Professor at Widener University’s Institute for Graduate Clinical Psychology, and is the editor of the *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*. His 70 professional publications address a wide variety of clinical and social subjects and include the *Whitaker Index of Schizophrenic Thinking* (Western Psychological Services, 1980) and *Schizophrenic Disorders* (Plenum Press, 1992). His previous positions include Associate Professor and Director of Adult Psychology for the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Professor and Director of the University of Massachusetts Mental Health Services, and Director of Swarthmore College Psychological Services. He has done forensic work for many years and has been a consultant to the U.S. Department of Labor’s Job Corps. His work with youth has been featured on television and in newspapers.

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