

***X25 – EXchanging Worldviews, 25:  
EXploring Prospects for Peace & Prosperity, 17:  
EXtricating Humanity from EXcruciating Problems by, 11:  
EXpediting Cultural Change via, 7:  
EXtinguishing Physical Violence***

Dear: In Chapter **X12**, entitled “EXposing Violence” and under the (sole) subtitle “EXploring Prospects for Peace and Prosperity”, I tried to show you some of the causes of physical violence, the morality of physical violence, and how ideologies (including religions) have been used by aggressors to “justify” their initiation of physical violence, including wars. Such ideologies (including Christianity during the Middle Ages, Imperialism during the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Nazism and Communism during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and Islam ever since the 7<sup>th</sup> Century and continuing to this day) have led to “cultures of violence”, in which warriors are lionized and physical prowess is praised more than mental competence.

In this chapter, my two prime goals are:

- 1) To at least outline the concept that, since the time during which Enlightenment Humanism began to spread widely (e.g., its adoption in the American Constitution), changes in Western culture (including decreasing influences of religions) have led to the indirect, welcome result of significant reductions in physical violence – at least between individuals, if not between groups, and
- 2) To at least outline direct methods by which physical violence might be reduced still further, especially the violence that’s so common in Muslim nations.

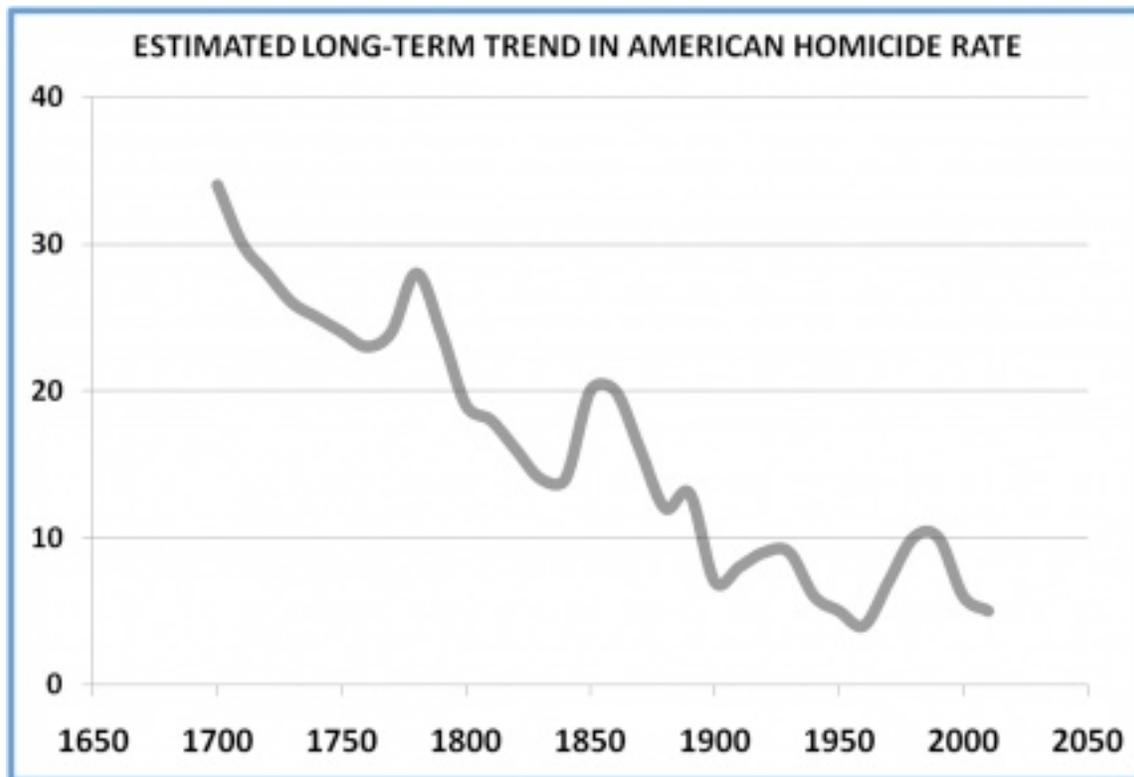
Stated differently, in this chapter I’ll try to show you both 1) how cultural changes can lead to changes in physical violence and 2) how changes in levels of physical violence can lead to changes in cultures.

I won’t attempt to provide you with a thorough review of the subject of physical violence not only because the subject is huge and my knowledge of it is relatively miniscule but also because “my assignment” was, not to try to solve all the problems in the world, but “simply” to respond to the question from a certain trouble-making grandchild about why I don’t believe in God. Therefore, what I plan to emphasize is showing you that another problem with belief in god (any god) is: it’s been used (and continues to be used) to promote physical violence.

## CULTURAL CHANGES CAUSING DECREASES IN VIOLENCE

Identifying cultural causes of observed decreases in physical violence between individuals in essentially all Western cultures is a huge topic, currently under extensive investigations. For a thorough review of the topic, I encourage you to read the excellent book by Harvard psychologist Stephen Pinker entitled *The Better Angels of Our Nature – Why Violence has Declined*. This 2011 book summarizes the subject area in 802 pages and contains approximately 2,000 references to relevant literature, mostly in the fields of history, sociology, and psychology.

Illustrative of the decrease in interpersonal physical violence in the West is the following schematic plot for the American homicide rate (one measure of the amount of physical violence) during the past three centuries. In this plot, the values on the ordinate (“y-axis”) are the number of homicides per 100,000 Americans per year.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Copied from the 16 June 2010 article by Claude Fischer (professor of sociology at Berkeley) entitled “A Crime Puzzle: Violent Crime Declines in America” posted at the Berkeley Blog at <http://blogs.berkeley.edu/2010/06/16/a-crime-puzzle-violent-crime-declines-in-america/>.

As you can quickly find if you investigate the matter yourself on the internet, many explanations (or, better, speculations) have been advanced to account for the observed decreases in interpersonal physical violence in Western countries, decreases that have been even more impressive in Europe than in the US. Unfortunately, though, and as common in the fields of history and sociology (and also, somewhat in psychology), it's difficult to test such speculations experimentally. Consequently, we're left with "plausible explanations" of causes, explanations with which the majority of sociologists and psychologists seem to agree and that conform to the historical data. Below, I'll briefly outline such explanations.

### 1. Reasons Why Individuals Initiate Physical Violence

First, Dear, realize that there are many sound reasons for initiating physical violence. For example, if someone threatens you with a knife, by all means initiate physical violence against him, e.g., shoot him!

In general, the prime (and obvious) sound reason why an individual initiates physical violence is to attempt to gain something he or she wants, i.e., physical violence can be a rational means to some end. Later in this chapter, I'll mention some important cases of those psychopaths for which violence, itself, seems to be the end, but for now, I'll focus on the majority of cases, in which violence is used as a means to some end.

To decrease physical violence initiated by "rational actors", an obvious procedure is to increase "the cost" of such violence. Thus, although in a tribal society (e.g., most Muslim countries) there may be no "cost" associated with your "defending your honor" (in fact, there would be a "cost" if you didn't "defend your honor" – you would "lose face"), yet in Western societies, if you struck someone who insulted you (rather than, for example, saying "you're entitled to your opinion" or "sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me"), then the "cost" of your initiating physical violence could be very steep (e.g., being ostracized by the community for being a "violent person", arrested for "assault and battery", sued for causing bodily harm, etc.). Therefore, for rational people who might consider using physical violence to achieve some end, the violence can potentially be reduced by sufficiently increasing the "cost" to anyone who would pursue some end *via* violence.

\* Go to other chapters *via*

Next, Dear, realize (as I've addressed in earlier chapters) that, in most countries and most circumstances, legal restrictions and remedies "simply" reflect (or should reflect!) the moral standards of the majority. Therefore, consider further the important "cost" in our country of your initiating physical violence, namely, you'd be ostracized for being "immoral". Yet, whereas I already addressed the morality of violence in Chapter X12 (e.g., the morality of using physical violence to stop some psychological violence or to obtain some food for a starving grandchild), I don't want to go into that topic again. Instead, I'll just observe: a person can rationally decide to initiate physical violence in pursuit of some goal, even when the rational evaluation includes assessments of the consequences of others describing the person's actions as immoral!

Therein, one can see another of the problems caused by religions. Thus, curtailing or extinguishing physical violence between rational individuals can be especially difficult when those initiating the violence abide by "moral principles" prescribed in some "holy book", which provides them with "license" to initiate physical violence. For example, some Christian fundamentalists, fixated on the Bible's Commandment "**Thou shalt not murder**", obviously concluded not only that doctors who performed abortions were murderers but also that they, the fundamentalists, would be, not murderers, but "executioners" if they killed such doctors. That is, religious fundamentalists can initiate such violence "rationally", even though their "rationality" is not only grievously wrong (based on the faulty premiss that any god communicated any moral commandments to anyone) but also both immoral (based on Humanist moral principles) and illegal (at least in most Western countries).

Similar idiocy is far more prevalent in most Muslim countries. Thus, Islam's "sacred scripture" (codified into laws called "*sharia*") provide "justification" for horrible treatment even of other Muslims, including "authority" for husband to beat their wives and for people to kill adulterers and homosexuals (by stoning), cut off limbs of criminals, etc. Further, *sharia* approves Muslims' subjugating non-Muslims (e.g., taking non-Muslim women as sex slaves) and killing "unbelievers" – in Islamic balderdash. Such brutality was the norm in most primitive cultures (including for the Hebrews when the Old Testament was written), but most Western people have moved on from their tribal pasts, while most Muslims are still mired in such barbarism – courtesy their clerics, whose knowledge rarely extends beyond the pages of their decrepit, "sacred scripture".

\* Go to other chapters *via*

In sum, then, one can already see how “the god idea” can horribly contribute to physical violence: when people accept the data-less concept that moral principles are from an all-powerful god, then whatever’s contained in a religion’s “holy book” can be (has been and still is) used to guide the actions of the religion’s followers. As Voltaire said:

Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.

And thus, as an example, if some damnable cleric can convince Muslims of the absurdities that the Koran is “Allah’s word”, that “Allah’s word” must be obeyed (to gain an eternity of bliss or else suffer an eternity of torture), and that Allah dictated that Muhammad is not to be insulted, that adulterers and homosexuals are to be stoned to death, and that unbelievers (in such balderdash) are to be killed, etc., then ignorant, fearful, greedy Muslim followers will engage in such atrocities.

To see some details in the case of Islam, Dear, have a look at the webpage sarcastically titled “The Religion of Peace”.<sup>2</sup> It shows that, as of the date of this writing, at least 18,888 acts of terrorism have been committed by Muslims since 9/11 (2001) – and these, only the acts of terrorism documented by this website. My “guesstimate” is that, on average, more than five people are killed or critically injured in each terrorist attack. Therefore, during the past ten years, more than 100,000 people (mostly Muslims) have been murdered or mutilated by such Muslim maniacs – who, in their opinions, were “morally” perpetrating violence, “for the glory of Allah”.

## 2. The Civilization Process

Most sociologists and psychologists seem to accept that the prime reason for the observed reduction in interpersonal violence in Western countries has simply been that, in our cultures, the cost charged to perpetrators of violence has increased. It’s commonly called “the Civilization Process”.

In his article<sup>3</sup> “Explaining Long Term Trends in Violent Crime”, Helmut Thome describes it as follows:

---

<sup>2</sup> At <http://www.thereligionofpeace.com/>.

<sup>3</sup> Copied from <http://chs.revues.org/index738.html>; Thome’s article was originally published in Vol. 5, No. 2, 2001 of *Crime, History & Societies*.

Elias [in his 1939 book published in German and its English version entitled *The Civilizing Process* published in 1982] and Durkheim [in his 1950 book published in French and its English version entitled *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* published in 1992], both of them, offer clearly focused analytical frameworks that (despite some conceptual shortcomings and outdated premises) help to identify among the complexly intertwined processes of social change (and the welter of social theories that seek to describe and explain them) those elements and components that might be most relevant for understanding long-term trends in violent crime. Both point to the crucial role of the state, Elias emphasizing its control over the means of violence, Durkheim its general regulatory capacity, in particular over the economy. Both portray the (democratic) state as being instrumental in the progressive development of a culture of non-violence which, as Durkheim points out, decisively rests upon the state's capacity to insure a sufficient degree of justice and equality. Only the state has the capacity to balance personal freedom and equality. Elias and Durkheim characterize «modernization» as an ongoing process of «individualization» which both interpret as normatively desirable.

Thus, most psychologists and sociologists (but not all – a point that I'll return to later in this chapter) attribute the observed decline in interpersonal physical violence in the West to both increased effectiveness of democratic governments in maintaining “law and order” and the consequences of “gentle commerce” (in which it literally “pays” to minimize violence).

In turn, as emphasized by Stephen Pinker in his article entitled A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE<sup>4</sup> and in his 2011 book *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*, the successes of democratic governments and “gentle commerce” (in reducing physical violence) have been traced to the spread of “Enlightenment Humanism”, with its emphasis on basic human rights of individuals. That is:

- 1) Courtesy Enlightenment Humanism, individualism and rights of individuals have seeped into the “moral consciousness” of the West, leading to perpetrators of physical violence being ostracized,
- 2) Governments (which claim a monopoly on violence!) have enacted laws that reflect Humanist “moral consciousness”, leading to arrests of perpetrators of violence, and
- 3) “We the people” have insured that legal avenues are open to sue those who perpetrate violence against us.

---

<sup>4</sup> Available at [http://www.edge.org/3rd\\_culture/pinker07/pinker07\\_index.html](http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/pinker07/pinker07_index.html).

The associated strengthening and protection of human rights of individuals has weakened claims (in “traditional” or “religious” cultures) of the “rights” of collectives (such as tribes and religions). Unfortunately, however, claims of “rights” of such tribes and religions (and even the “rights” of God and Allah!) continue in many (backward) areas of the world, including America’s Bible Belt and most of the Muslim world, where physical violence (including homicide, physical subjugation of women, child abuse, etc.) continues at rates that were common in Europe during its Dark Ages.

As already mentioned, in addition to these changes in “moral consciousness” and associated laws, another reason (judged to have led to a reduction in physical violence) is the spread of “gentle commerce”. Thus, if you have gained a reputation for being a violent person, people will not want to do business with you – unless, of course, you run a criminal business (e.g., running a protection racket or selling drugs or other contraband).

Such suggestions for the cause of the general reduction in interpersonal physical violence in the West provide explanations, also, for why similar reductions haven’t occurred in specific regions of the West, including the slums of American cities and wherever organized crime is established (e.g., associated with the “drug cartels” in Mexico and Columbia). In such regions, where homicide rates can be ten and more times national averages, neither effective government policing nor “gentle commerce” prevail.

Another anomalous region is the southern states of the US (in “America’s Bible Belt”), where physical violence is about twice the rate in northern states. As described by Peter Richerson and Robert Boyd in their 2005 book *Culture is Essential*:<sup>5</sup>

The American South has long been more violent than the North. Colorful descriptions of duels, feuds, bushwhackings, and lynchings feature prominently in visitors’ accounts, newspaper articles, and autobiographies from the eighteenth century onward. Statistics bear out these impressions. For example, over the period 1865–1915, the homicide rate in the South was ten times the current rate for the whole United States, and twice the rate in our most violent cities. Modern homicide statistics tell the same story.

In their book, *Culture of Honor*, psychologists Richard Nisbett and Dov Cohen argue that the South is more violent than the North because southern people have culturally acquired beliefs about personal honor that are different from their northern

---

<sup>5</sup> Copied from <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/712842.html>.

counterparts. Southerners, they argue, believe more strongly than Northerners that a person's reputation is important and worth defending even at great cost. As a consequence, arguments and confrontations that lead to harsh words or minor scuffles in Amherst or Ann Arbor often escalate to lethal violence in Asheville or Austin...

Nisbett and Cohen support their hypothesis with an impressive range of evidence. Let's start with statistical patterns of violence. In the rural and small-town South, murder rates are elevated for arguments among friends and acquaintances, but not for killings committed in the course of other felonies. In other words, in the South men are more likely than Northerners to kill an acquaintance when an argument breaks out in a bar, but they are no more likely to kill the guy behind the counter when they knock off a liquor store. Thus, Southerners seem to be more violent than other Americans only in situations that involve personal honor. Competing hypotheses don't do so well: neither white per-capita income nor hot climate nor history of slavery explain this variation in homicide.

Differences in what people say about violence also support the "culture of honor" hypothesis. For example, Nisbett and Cohen asked people to read vignettes in which a man's honor was challenged – sometimes trivially (for example, by insults to his wife) and in other cases seriously (for example, by stealing his wife). Southern respondents were more likely than Northerners to say that violent responses were justified in all cases and that one would "not be much of a man" unless he responded violently to insults. In the case of more serious affronts, southern respondents were almost twice as likely to say that shooting the perpetrator was justified.

Interestingly, this difference in behavior is not just talk; it can also be observed under the controlled conditions of the psychology laboratory...

A similar "honor culture" is typical in American slums and among criminals, apparently because such is the "default culture" in the absence of an effective, democratic government. As already mentioned, a similar "honor culture" is even more prevalent in essentially all Muslim countries.

Further, it seems relevant to "my assignment" (to explain to a certain troublesome grandchild why I don't believe in God) to add that, similar to Muslims' finding "support" for their "honor system" in their "holy book" (i.e., the Koran), American Southerners (i.e., those in "the Bible Belt"!) find support for their backwardness within their "holy book" (i.e., the Bible). To me, this commonality suggests such backward people use "the god idea" to bolster their backwardness!

If that's a correct assessment, it suggests that one way to try to move such backward people at least into the Age of Enlightenment (which for the rest of us occurred in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century!) is to try to get them to realize:

There are no gods – and there never were any!

In any event, it seems clear that still another problem caused by the god idea is that it has contributed (and continues to contribute) to the initiation, continuation, and intensifying of physical violence. As Steven Pinker wrote on p. 677 of his book *The Better Angels of Our Nature*:

The theory that religion is a force for peace... does not fit the facts of history.

Pinker's assessment seems especially relevant in the case of intergroup violence (e.g., wars).

In the past, religion was commonly used as “an enabler” that political leaders used to “manipulate the masses”, claiming that some god wanted the people to do what the leader wanted. Thereby “the butcher Emperor” Constantine (and subsequent popes) expanded “the Christian Empire” and the madman Muhammad (and subsequent caliphs) expanded “the Muslim Empire”. However, as Genghis Khan (1162–1227), Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and other psychopaths demonstrated, religion isn't necessary: other (equally asinine) ideologies can also be used as “enablers” to manipulate followers into war. In his book, Pinker attempts to make the case that even wars have become less violent over the centuries, but I find his arguments to be unconvincing.<sup>6</sup> I'll leave it to you to reach your own conclusion.

## DIRECT METHODS TO DECREASE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

In the above, I tried to show some suggestions made by sociologists and psychologists about how cultural changes (specifically, those involved in what's called “the Civilizing Process”, including stronger democratic governments, protecting human rights and associated individualism, and promoting “gentle commerce”) have led to reductions in interpersonal physical violence. All those cultural changes, however, were pursued as ends in themselves; the resulting reduction in physical violence was an unforeseen consequence – albeit an important and welcome one!

---

<sup>6</sup> From the admittedly crude data for the casualties of wars (and other brutalities, such as the Muslim and the Christian slave trades), Pinker attempts to create a ranking of such brutalities by normalizing the data to what the casualties would have been if the population were the same as it is now. I find that step to be less than satisfactory; I think it would be more relevant and revealing to normalize, also, by the physical area in which the brutality occurred; it would be even better, I think, to compare percentages of invaded populations that were devastated by each case of intergroup brutality.

In contrast, in what follows I want to consider situations in which reducing physical violence is the primary goal and ask: what policies and procedures might be undertaken for the prime purpose of reducing physical violence? That such procedures (if they can be identified and undertaken) might cause substantial cultural change would then be an “unforeseen consequence” (again, albeit important and welcome); i.e., it’s expected that successful reductions in physical violence would lead to additional civilizing. Thus, the two processes (the Civilizing Process and reductions in physical violence) seem to be locked, not in a vicious, but in a virtuous circle.

At the outset of this inquiry, I should remind you not only that I’m a novice in such fields but also that, as Heraclitus saw, strife can’t be eliminated. At best, humans can attain “**an attunement of opposite tensions, like that of the bow and the lyre.**” Realize, also, that strife results from conflicts between desires (and will-powers or obstinacies!) of two or more parties. Such strife can lead to physical violence when at least one party concludes that desires can be achieved through physical violence and that winning through such violence doesn’t overwhelmingly conflict with other values.

Consistent with those ideas, four direct procedures to avoid the outbreak of physical violence would seem to be:

- 1) Install some policing power sufficient to suppress physical violence (using violence or the threat of violence!),
- 2) Have one or more parties adopt the strongly held value that physical violence should be avoided (almost no matter the cost and assuming that such a stance will placate the belligerent party),
- 3) Attempt some type of conflict resolution through negotiations (e.g., led by a “disinterested” third party), and
- 4) Worldwide, teach good-parenting skills.

In the rest of this chapter, I’ll provide some details – and concerns – about each of the four methods listed above.

### **1. Suppress Violence *via* Some Policing Power**

Suppressing violence by establishing and applying some policing power is the method used by all dictators, from violent patriarchs and tribal leaders to a huge number of damnable dictators, including Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, Tito of

\* Go to other chapters *via*

Yugoslavia, Saddam Hussein of Iraq, and the current dictators of Iran. Such cases have shown that, in brief, the method is worse than useless.

One of the inadequacies of the method is that it obviously contains its own nemesis. That is, whereas *nemesis* is the Greek word meaning ‘retribution’, then use of violence to suppress violence contains the “[inescapable or implacable agent of its own downfall](#).” But experience has shown that it’s even worse, in that dictators who have created police forces (ostensibly to enforce “law and order”) have almost always proceeded to use the same force to suppress any form of dissent, leading to brutal “police states”.

In the short term, using police violence to maintain law and order (e.g., minimizing physical violence between citizens) can be effective (e.g., suppressing physical violence between different ethnic and religious groups within Yugoslavia or within Iraq). In the longer term, however, the brutality of suppression of such violence by state police forces has, on the one hand, been unsurpassed, and on the other hand, when the dictator is finally overthrown, pent-up anger explodes (witness the 1990s war in the Balkans and the continuing violence among the Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds of Iraq).

## 2. Adopt Nonviolence as a Prime Value

A more promising method for directly decreasing physical violence between groups follows if one or more of the groups adopt – as a prime value – the concept that physical violence should be avoided. Of course, immediately it might be thought that such a value is already widespread (witness such saying as “nobody wants war”).

Historically and still currently, however, clearly a substantial number of people in the world actually place “avoidance of physical violence” (i.e., “nonviolence”) lower on their “value scale” than other values (such as justice, honor, security, etc.). Even Gandhi unfortunately said: “[I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence](#).” Would that he would have thought more about the meaning of ‘cowardice’ (i.e., that it’s a judgment made by others – in particular, by those who don’t realize the bravery required to choose nonviolence has a prime value).

Nonetheless, certainly nonviolence could be (and in my opinion, should be) moved higher on everyone’s list of values. As Gandhi also said:

\* Go to other chapters *via*

Life itself involves some kind of violence, and we have to choose the path of least violence.

But for many reasons (some of which I'll try to illustrate later in this chapter), commonly it's difficult to wisely choose "the path of least violence".

Still another reason why it can be difficult for individuals or groups to put nonviolence higher on their hierarchy of values is obvious from the question: **Why would anyone who is physically (or militarily) stronger – and is sane – relinquish such an advantage?** Such a move would seem to conflict with people's prime goals of promoting their dual survival goals (of themselves and their family). It would thus seem that school bullies, for example, would continue to utilize physical violence – and so will the US.

The situation is not entirely hopeless, however, because even bullies will abandon physical violence in exchange for something that they want even more, such as friends. That is, if bullies are ostracized for their behavior, and if, simultaneously, bullies are shown how they can avoid such ostracizing by "behaving", then even bullies can be stimulated to promote nonviolence to a higher priority on their hierarchy of values – provided, however, that they're not mentally ill (which, as I'll address later in this chapter, actually seems to be a major cause of much physical violence).

In fact, as I'll show you, some psychologists argue that all instances of physical violence (including all wars) are derived from demands for justice – including those cases in which the perpetrator of the violence misidentifies the agent of the alleged injustice. For example, most if not all Islamic terrorists apparently blame the "injustice" of their "humiliation" on "the West", rather than on their own, abusive, patriarchal, tribal, backward social systems, rigidly maintained in their Dark Ages by Islamic clerics.

Similarly, as I suggested in an earlier chapter and I'll soon show you more, some psychologists argue that many people choose physical violence in revenge for the abuse they experienced when they were children, again misidentifying the perpetrators of the injustice. For such cases (e.g., many violent Muslims) it seems to be essentially impossible to stimulate them place nonviolence higher on their hierarchy of values.

Further, psychologists have identified in case studies what they call psychotic individuals [what the rest of us call “mad” or “psychos”] who “enjoy” perpetrating physical violence. In fact, as I’ll begin to show you later in this chapter, the deeper one digs to try to understand the causes of violence, the harder the digging becomes.

### 3. Attempt Conflict Resolution

Attempts at conflict resolution commonly also have their own nemeses. For example, if conflicts are “resolved” by some “disinterested” third-party judge (be it a local-court judge or a global-court panel of judges), then such a resolution will commonly be effective only if it’s backed by threats of physical violence (by some “police force”, from local to global in scale); thus, the nemesis is again that nonviolence must be enforced with violence.

In general, the nemesis of all laws designed to avert physical violence is their enforcement with threats (and if necessary, acts) of violence. Similar is true for Gandhi’s and King’s methods of “nonviolent resistance”: such methods are effective only when the “powers that be” succumb to their fears of violence initiated by “an aroused majority”. Thus, although “peaceful settlement” of disputes *via* legal systems may forego overt violence, yet inherently and inescapably, such inhibitions of violence depend on violence.

A wonderful exception to such reliance on physical violence seems to have occurred in association with the women’s suffrage movement. In this case, fundamentally, women demonstrated that they have sufficiently “wily ways” to win without using or even threatening physical violence! Yet, before turning over to women the task of resolving all conflicts (although, in general, I’d be in favor of such a move – certainly they couldn’t do worse than men!), I’d point out that, in the women’s suffrage movement, women had a significant advantage: they were in the majority!

One way that’s recently been attempted to promote nonviolence, even in the absence of effective policing by a democratic government, is to try to convince the perpetrators that initiating such brutality leads to a never-ending cycle of violence (as is romanticized in America with the notorious feuds between “the Hatfields and McCoys”). A recent illustration deals with conflict resolution between street gangs in US cities. In this process, attempts have been made to mollify “gang honor” (in the “honor culture” of street gangs) without involvement of the police (i.e., without involvement of the government).

\* Go to other chapters *via*

For example, as described in a New York Time's article entitled "Blocking the Transmission of Violence",<sup>7</sup> Alex Kotlowitz describes progress extinguishing gang violence in Chicago by applying the medical doctor Gary Slutkin's idea that the spread of violence is similar to the spread of infectious diseases: "violent activity predicts the next violent activity, like HIV predicts the next HIV and TB predict the next TB." Slutkin not only attempts "to shift how we think about violence from a moral issue (good and bad people) to a public health one (healthful and unhealthful)" but also has assembled a team of experienced (mostly ex-convict) "interrupters" who go into the streets to try to stop the spread of the disease of violence through nonviolent conflict resolution.

I should add, too, that almost always, chances for resolution of conflicts are improved if they're constrained to stay as "local" as possible. Thus, if possible, families shouldn't become involved in disputes between husband and wife, teams shouldn't become involved in disputes between players, the police shouldn't become involved in disputes between street gangs, states shouldn't become involved in disputes between cities, and so on. Of course, if resolutions can't be found, then appropriate "authorities" may be needed to try to constrain resulting violence.

In general, chances for conflict resolution also diminish when some version of "family honor" is involved (where "the family" can be anything from someone's immediate family to a street gang, and from one's tribe to one's nation or religious affiliation). In such cases of "honor", as I outlined in the previous chapter, individualism is suppressed, communalism dominates, and even the death of an individual protecting "honor" (e.g., as "a martyr for the Jihad") is interpreted as a victory. Conflict resolution in such cases is extremely difficult, which is one of many reasons why the Israeli-Palestinian problem is so intractable.

Two key ingredients for successful conflict resolution are to help each side achieve its broader goals and to try to build trust that such help is real, not just promises. To see what I mean, consider another example.

---

<sup>7</sup> At [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/04/magazine/04health-t.html?\\_r=1&ref=magazine&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/04/magazine/04health-t.html?_r=1&ref=magazine&oref=slogin).

Your grandmother and I recently watched a documentary on the Sundance Channel dealing with a dam being built in India that will flood the land of thousands of farmers, who for generations have lived simple lives on their land, producing little beyond their own basic needs. The confrontations between their goals and those of supporters of the dam have been continuing for about a decade. The vast majority of Indians (living in cities) appear to want the dam (for the electricity it will generate and for the more productive farming that's promised for other areas when they're irrigated). It's one of surely millions of cases of the majority claiming: "You can't stop progress."

The Indian government promised the displaced farmers either money for their land or replacement farmland, but the simple farmers have little or no experience with money (those who took the money soon were destitute) and those who were tempted to accept the offer of other land concluded that it was relatively poor farmland. After peaceful demonstrations (following Gandhi's lead) and after six years of deliberations on their case by the Indian Supreme Court, the simple farmers are losing their land (and, they state, they are prepared to lose their lives) as the lake level behind the dam continues to rise – as have tempers. In total, it's just one more example (no doubt of millions of cases) of failed conflict resolution.

In most cases, more effective "conflict resolution" (than either involving judges or "nonviolent" resistance) is to stifle strife before it "gets out of hand" – by building interactions cooperatively.

I'll add that, in building cooperatives, women again generally seem to excel over men. In this chapter, though, I won't go into details about such methods; instead, in a later X-chapter (dealing with "EXperimental Cooperatives"), I'll address some possibilities for building peace initiatives with the special help of communication tools, e.g., using the internet to help build worldwide peace initiatives. Here, I'll just note: communications are usually of fundamental importance to building such cooperatives and my experience has been that women's communication skills are usually better than men's.

In all such cases, what must be done – from the first conception of any such project – is to incorporate in the project's design every interested person or group (viz., every "stakeholder") who will be influenced by the proposed project. Every stakeholder must be given ample opportunity (and, as appropriate, assistance) not only to describe the proposed project's impact

\* Go to other chapters *via*

on their goals but also (and more importantly) to describe their goals. That the project will impact each stakeholder is obvious (by definition of ‘stakeholder’); the key not only to finding resolutions to all conflict but also to building a stronger society is to find ways to assist all stakeholders to achieve their “true goals”.

If stakeholders see that their “true goals” are their own and their families’ survival (or better, their “thrival”), then usually, chances are vastly improved to find ways to help them attain such goals. In the case of the flooding of the Indian farmers, for example, they could have been offered a sufficient percentage of the revenue from the dam’s operation (selling electricity and water for irrigation) to provide the farmers a steady, sustenance income (just as their land would have provided them) – if not “in perpetuity”, then at least until the parents die and until their children had been educated to the full extent of their capabilities.

As another example, if the Jewish people in the late 1800s who wanted to return to live in the traditional homeland of the Jews had approached the Arabs living there with proposals that also would have helped the Arabs to progress beyond their backward, feudal ways, then there would have been a much better chance for the establishment of a homeland for those Jews (commonly called Zionists), where they would have been both welcome and safe. Instead, the Zionists generally bypassed the Arab stakeholders (instead, purchasing land from absentee land “owners” in Turkey), and the result of that and their many additional errors<sup>8</sup> is the current Israeli-Palestinian mess, which can appropriately described as the epitome of how to screw things up.

But in many cases (and in particular, in those cases that I’m supposed to be addressing as a part of my assignment from a certain trouble-making grandchild), it’s essentially impossible to assist the stakeholders to achieve their goals – if they’re living in a dream world of religious delusions. In the case of the Indian farmers, for example, if they claim that their gods live with them on their land or that their own “eternal life in paradise” will be jeopardized if the land is flooded, then the impasse is insurmountable, unless the farmers will “get real.” If people won’t base their decisions on evidence, then it’s essentially impossible to deal with them, except with threats (and

---

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., the report at <http://www.cactus48.com/truth.html> entitled *The Origin of the Palestine-Israel Conflict*. Importantly, its title adds: “Published by Jews for Justice in the Middle East”.

applications) of violence. In some cases, one of their leaders (e.g., a cleric) might be able to delude the people into “thinking” that their god does approve (or their gods do approve) of the project (e.g., that their gods will also move with the people to unflooded land), but otherwise, it’s essentially impossible to deal with such “people”, except (unfortunately) to treat them as animals.

Similar intractable problems arise in seeking conflict resolutions when dealing with essentially all religious fundamentalists. Thus, as a dramatic and damnable example, if both Palestinian Arabs and Israelis recognized that their prime goal is the “thrival” of themselves and their families, then progress could be made towards cleaning up the Palestinian-Israeli mess.

But, so long as there are “nut cases” on both sides (one side making the data-less claim that Yahweh gave the land to them, and the other side making the data-less claim that Allah gave the land to them), then no resolution to the conflict will be attained except through violence. In the Mid-East, problems are exacerbated by coupling religious delusions with primitive views of “family honor” (which, in turn, is promoted by fundamentalist clerics of both Muslim and Jewish religions).

In my view, therefore, no resolution of “the Palestinian Problem” is possible except through education: so long as such people “believe” in silly ideas about the existence of any god(s), even without a shred of evidence supporting such primitive speculations, so long as they refuse to become educated, then they’ll continue to kill each other, basically over nothing but childish delusions.

Further, it’s not clear if any method of conflict resolution would be productive when dealing with fundamentalist Muslims (whatever the specific conflict, from their reactions to caricature of Muhammad to their suicide/murders associated with “the Palestinian Problem”). A major cause for skepticism is derived from cultural differences between so many Muslims (perhaps the majority of Muslims) and most Westerners (including even Western criminals).

This difference was recently explained well by psychologist Nicolai Sennels, with his explanation based on his extensive experiences with ~250, young (12–17) men incarcerated in Danish prisons, of whom ~150 were Muslims.

In his article<sup>9</sup> entitled “Report from the therapy room: Why are Muslims more violent and criminal”, Sennels relays:

One very big difference between Muslims and Westerners concerns their views of anger. In our Western culture, anger is generally seen as a sign of weakness and lack of control and good style. Whoever experienced the embarrassment of expressing strong anger during, for example, family dinners or at work knows that it often takes time and a conscious effort to regain one’s lost respect. We in general see it as childish and immature if people use threats and aggressive behavior to mark their dislikes and have things their way. Instead, we see peoples’ ability to use logical arguments, to compromise, to see the situation from our opponent’s side and their knowledge of the facts, and to remain calm when challenged as clear signs of strength and authenticity.

My Muslim clients saw these normal Western social tools for negotiation during social conflicts as signs of weakness. They saw the lack of readiness to use threats and engage in a physical fight as a sign of fear. I spent countless hours working with the inmates’ problematic relationship to violence. Most of the Danish clients knew that anger is a “bad feeling” and that in the end there is no excuse for using threats and violence when frustrated. This view was simply part of what they were raised to think by their parents and friends and the culture they were brought up in (though they did not always manage to follow that rule in their daily life).

Practicing Anger Management therapy with Muslim clients does not just involve reminding them of good style and the benefits of handling conflicts and frustrations peacefully: The term “cultural conversion” would be the best expression. It turned out that my Muslim clients saw the use of aggression as an accepted and even often expected behavior in conflicts. If a person does not become aggressive when criticized or insecure, it is seen as a sign of weakness and lack of ability to defend oneself and one’s honor. In Muslim culture it is expected that one is willing to sacrifice one’s personal safety to protect one’s group or whatever one represents. If a member of the group is not able to do so, there will immediately be sown doubts as to whether that member can be trusted as a useful defender of the family, ethnic group, religion, territory, etc.

The aggressiveness among Muslim men does not show itself only in the therapy room and crime statistics when comparing Muslim and non-Muslim offenders. In a recent study conducted by the Criminal Research Institute of Lower Saxony in Germany, scientists interviewed 45,000 teenagers of both Muslim and non-Muslim origin, and their conclusion was clear: “Boys growing up in religious Muslim families are more likely to be violent”.

---

<sup>9</sup> Available at <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2012/04/nicolai-sennels-report-from-the-therapy-room-why-are-muslims-more-violent-and-criminal.html> - more.

These psychological insights should be used on a wider scale. One important example is that Western diplomacy and foreign policy must take such cultural differences into account. There is no doubt that when we meet extreme Islamic governments and organizations with suggestions of compromise and dialogue, the average Muslim voters on their streets expect their Islamic leaders to exploit such Western weaknesses to the maximum. We Westerners see aggressiveness in people and regimes as a sign of insecurity, and therefore meet such situations with soft compassion and respect. Such measures often work within our own cultural circles, but can have harmful long-term effects on our efforts to produce respect and maybe even a necessary amount of fear among hostile Muslim societies and organizations. This strategic psychological reminder concerns both big politics and when dealing with anti-social individuals raised in a Muslim setting.

All of which then leads me to the fourth way listed to potentially reduce physical violence directly, i.e.,

#### **4. Worldwide, Teach Good-Parenting Skills.**

Violent cultures, such as most Muslim cultures, are almost invariably created by violent, child-rearing practices, i.e., child abuse. In an earlier chapter (X21, with the short title “EXorcising Child Abuse”), I reviewed some data and opinions about the ubiquity of child abuse and some of its consequences, including potentials for victims of child abuse to engage in various psychotic activities (including extremes of physical violence) when they become adults. I also showed you deMause’s recommendations for promoting good-parenting skills. In that chapter, my emphasis was “just” on “exorcising” child abuse – because it should be done! In the remainder of this chapter, my emphasis will be on reviewing suggestions that, if child abuse is exorcised, then potentially, all physical violence will be reduced. Stated differently, my goal is to review suggestions that the best way to decrease physical violence throughout the world may be to teach good-parenting skills, worldwide.

First off, however, I should point out that, if one attempts to try to understand why some people (psychopaths) seem to “enjoy” physical violence, why some people choose violence when “disinterested” observers can easily discern nonviolent means by which the people would seem to be able to pursue their objectives, why some societies (especially Muslim societies) seem to have adopted and continue to promote a “culture of violence”, then one encounters fundamental and unanswered questions in the fields of at least anthropology, history, psychology, sociology, and human physiology – all fields about which I know essentially nothing. To start to provide you with some examples of assessments by those who are more

\* Go to other chapters *via*

competent, consider the following quotation<sup>10</sup> from the **Preface** to Lloyd deMause's book *The Emotional Life of Nations*, which I quoted extensively in Chapter **X21**:

*The purpose of this book is to reveal for the first time how the ultimate cause of all wars and human misery is the parental holocaust of children throughout history – an untold story of how literally billions of innocent, helpless children have been routinely killed, bound, battered, mutilated, raped, and tortured, and then as adults have inflicted upon others the nightmares they themselves experienced.*

*Most of what you will read here will be new, upsetting, and difficult to believe, despite the extensive historical, anthropological, clinical, and neurobiological evidence I will present. But after you read it I think you will be able to understand for the first time why what Kierkegaard called “the slaughterbench of history” happened, where we are today in the evolution of humanity, and what we can do tomorrow to bring about a peaceful, happier world. [Italics added]*

Now, Dear, if you think it's “far fetched” to suggest that child abuse has led to interpersonal and group violence, including wars and similar brutalities (slavery, enforced famine, “ethnic cleansing”, etc.), then please consider two concepts. One is the failure of many attempts to understand such brutalities. For example, consider the following quotation (with references omitted) from Stephen Pinker's 2011 book already referenced:

On top of that singularly destructive ideology [Communism] were the catastrophic decisions of a few men who took the stage at particular moments in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. I have already mentioned that many historians have joined the chorus “No Hitler, no Holocaust”. But Hitler was not the only tyrant whose obsessions killed tens of millions. The historian Robert Conquest, an authority on Stalin's politicides, concluded that “the nature of the whole Purge depends in the last analysis on the personal and political drives of Stalin.” As for China, it is inconceivable that the record-setting famine of the Great Leap Forward would have occurred but for Mao's hare-brained schemes, and the historian Harry Harding noted of the country's subsequent politicide that “the principal responsibility for the Cultural Revolution – a movement that affected tens of millions of Chinese – rests with one man. Without a Mao, there could not have been a Cultural Revolution.” With such a small number of data points causing such a large share of the devastation, we will never really know how to explain the most calamitous events of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The ideologies prepared the ground and attracted the men, the absence of democracy gave them the opportunity, but tens of millions of deaths ultimately depended on the decisions of just three individuals.

---

<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.psychohistory.com/index.html>.

Second, Dear, beyond Pinker's "professionally safe" but publicly useless suggestion that "we will never really know...", consider the suggestions about causes in the following article by Alice Miller.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Political Consequences of Child Abuse** **by Alice Miller**

An animal will respond to attack with "fight or flight." Neither course is open to an infant exposed to aggression from immediate family members. Thus the natural reaction remains spent up, sometimes for decades, until it can be taken out on a weaker object. Then the repressed emotions are unleashed against minorities. The targets vary from country to country. But the reasons for that hatred are probably identical the world over.

We know that as a boy Hitler was tormented, humiliated and mocked by his father, without the slightest protection from his mother. We also know that he denied his true feelings toward his father. The real sources of his hatred thus become obvious. I had gone in search of the true motives not only for Hitler's mental make-up but also that of many other dictators. In all of them I identified the effects of hatred of a parent that remained unconscious not only because hating one's father was strictly prohibited but also because it was in the interests of the child's self-preservation to maintain the illusion of having a good father. Only in the form of a deflection onto others was hatred permitted, and then it could flow freely. Hitler would hardly have found so much support if the "caregiving" patterns he had been exposed to and their detrimental after-effects had not been so widespread in Germany and Austria.

But Hitler's specific problems with the Jews can in fact be traced back to the period before his birth. In her youth, his paternal grandmother had been employed in a Jewish merchant's household in Graz. After her return home to the Austrian village of Braunau, she gave birth to a son, Alois, later to become Hitler's father, and received child-support payments from the family in Graz for 14 years. This story, which is recounted in many biographies of Hitler, represented a dilemma for the Hitler family. They had an interest in denying that the young woman had been left with child either by the Jewish merchant or his son. On the other hand, it was impossible to assert that a Jew would pay alimony for so long without good reason. Such generosity on the part of a Jew would have been inconceivable for the inhabitants of an Austrian village. Thus the Hitler family was faced with the insoluble dilemma of devising a version that would serve to nullify their "disgrace."

---

<sup>11</sup> The article was originally published in *The Journal of Psychohistory* 26 (2) Fall 1998; it's copied here from [http://www.psychohistory.com/htm/06\\_politic.html](http://www.psychohistory.com/htm/06_politic.html); it includes: "Alice Miller is a Swiss psychotherapist and author of such books as *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child*, *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence*, *Banished Knowledge: Facing Childhood Injuries*, and *Breaking Down the Wall of Silence*. The article was written as the Distinguished Lecture for the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual International Psychohistorical Association Convention in New York City, and contains parts of her upcoming book, *Paths of Life*."

For Alois Hitler the suspicion that he might be of Jewish descent was insufferable in the context of the anti-Jewish environment he grew up in. All the plaudits he earned himself as a customs officer were insufficient to liberate him from the latent rage at the disgrace and humiliation visited on him through no fault of his own. The only thing he could do with impunity was to take out this rage on his son Adolf.

According to the reports of his daughter of his former marriage, Angela, he beat his son mercilessly every day. In an attempt to exorcise his childhood fears, his son nurtured the maniac delusion that it was up to him to free not only himself of Jewish blood but also all Germany and later the whole world. Right up to his death in the bunker, Hitler remained a victim of this delusion because all his life his fear of his half-Jewish father had remained locked in his unconscious mind.

I have set out these ideas in greater detail in my book, *For Your Own Good*. Many people have told me that they found them highly unsettling and in no way sufficient to explain Hitler's actions. Not all his actions, perhaps, but certainly his delusions. And those delusions are at the very least the foundation of his actions. I can certainly picture the boy Hitler swearing vengeance on "the Jews," those monstrous fantasy-figures of an already diseased imagination. Consciously, he probably thought he could have led a happy life if "the Jew" had not plunged his grandmother into the disgrace that he and his family had to live with. And it was this that in his eyes served to excuse the batterings he received from his father, who after all was himself a victim of the evil and omnipotent Jew. In the mind of an angry, seriously confused child, it is only a short step... to the idea that all Jews should be exterminated.

Not only Jews. In the household of Hitler's family lived for years the very unpredictable schizophrenic aunt Johanna, whose behavior is reported to be very frightening to the child. As an adult, Hitler ordered to kill every handicapped and psychotic person to free Germany society from this burden. Germany seemed for him to symbolize the innocent child who had to be saved. Consequently, Hitler wanted to protect his nation from the dangers he himself had had to face. Absurd? Not at all. For an unconscious mind, this kind of symbolization might sound very normal and logical.

Besides the sources of his fears connected with father and aunt, there was his early relationship with his very intimidated mother who lived in constant fear of her husband's violent outbursts and beatings. She called him "Uncle Alois" and endured patiently his humiliating treatment without any protest. Adolf's mother had lost the first three children due to an illness, and Adolf was her first child to survive infancy. We can easily imagine that the milk he drank from his mother was in a way "poisoned" by her own fear. He drank her milk together with her fears, but was of course unable to understand nor to integrate them. These irrational fears – that an outside[r], watching his speeches on videos can easily recognize – stayed unrecognized and unconscious to Hitler until the end of his life. Stored up in his body, they drove him constantly to new destructive actions, in his endless attempt to find an outcome.

In the lives of all the tyrants I examined, I found without exception paranoid trains of thought bound up with their biographies in early childhood and the repression of the experiences they had been through. Mao had been regularly whipped by his father and later sent 30 million people to their deaths, but he hardly ever admitted the full extent of the rage he must have felt toward his own father, a very severe teacher who had tried through beatings to “make a man” out of his son. Stalin caused millions to suffer and die because even at the height of his power his actions were determined by unconscious infantile fear of powerlessness. Apparently his father, a poor cobbler from Georgia, attempted to drown his frustration with liquor and whipped his son almost every day. His mother displayed psychotic traits, was completely incapable of defending her son, and was usually away from home either praying in church or running the priest’s household. Stalin idealized his parents right up to the end of his life and was constantly haunted by the fear of dangers that had long since ceased to exist but were still present in his deranged mind.

The same might be true of many other tyrants. The groups of people they singled out for persecution and the rationalization mechanisms they employed were different in each case, but the fundamental reason behind it was probably identical. They often drew on ideologies to disguise the truth and their own paranoia. And the masses chimed in enthusiastically because they were unaware of the real motives, including those operative in their own biographies. The infantile revenge fantasies of individuals would be of no account if society did not regularly show such naive alacrity in helping to make them come true.

As deMause suggests in his book, however, apparently there’s much more to war than people following a deranged leader: people need to have reasons to follow the leader – even if “normal people” would consider such “reasons” to be “crazy”. To see what he means, Dear, consider the following (long!) quotation from his book, from which (as in earlier chapters) I’ve again omitted his references.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Emotional Life of Nations*

by Lloyd deMause

#### **Chapter 6: War as Righteous Rape and Purification**

*“War! It meant a purification, a liberation... and an extraordinary sense of hope.” (Thomas Mann)*

Happy people don’t start wars. They don’t need “purifying” or “liberation,” and their everyday lives are already full of hope and meaning, so they don’t need a war to save them from anything.

What sort of strange emotional disorder is it that war cleanses, liberates, and saves people from? And how can killing, raping and torturing people be acts that purify

---

<sup>12</sup> Available at [http://www.psychohistory.com/htm/eln06\\_war.html](http://www.psychohistory.com/htm/eln06_war.html).

and restore hope in life? Obviously war is a serious psychopathological condition, a recurring human behavior pattern whose motives and causes have yet to be examined on any but the most superficial levels of analysis.

#### STANDARD THEORIES OF CAUSATION OF WAR

All standard theories of war deny that it is an emotional disorder at all. War, unlike individual violence, is usually seen solely as a response to events *outside* the individual. Nations that start wars are not considered emotionally disturbed – they are either considered as rational or they are “evil,” a religious category. Although homicide and suicide are now studied as clinical disorders, war, unfortunately, is not.

Most historians of war have given up in advance any attempt to understand its causes, claiming “it is simply not the historian’s business to give explanations.” Genocide, in particular, appears outside the universe of research into motivations, since if one tries to understand Holocaust perpetrators, one is said to “give up one’s right to blame them.” At best, historians avoid the psychodynamics of the perpetrators of wars entirely, saying, “Leave motivation to the psychologists.”

The standard explanations given for war by political scientists and anthropologists equally avoid clinical understanding. Instead, they break down war causes into three general categories:

**1. Instincts and Other Tautologies:** The most popular cause of war is that it is a result of a human instinct for destruction. From Clausewitz’s “instinctive hostility” and Freud’s “instinct for hatred and aggression” down to biologists’ statements that war is “macho male sexual selection” that “accelerates cultural evolution,” none of them notice that simply assuming an instinct for war without any neurobiological, genetic evidence at all is wholly tautological, saying no more than “the group’s desire for war is caused by the individual’s desire for war.” Since tribes and states spend more of their time at peace than at war, one must also then posit an “instinct for peace,” which, through group cooperation, should favor survival even more. One can proliferate tautological instincts at will, but only evidence counts. Unfortunately, all tests for the heritability for violence have failed completely.

The best study of instinct theories concludes: “Human warfare, and indeed killing, are too rare to be the product of a drive that needs to be satisfied. There is no drive or instinct that builds up, gives rise to aggression, is satiated upon release, and then builds up again... Furthermore, humans also have a genetic inheritance shared with fellow primates for peacemaking, and that propensity must also be factored into the equation.”

Tautological explanations proliferate in the field of war studies. Historians are particularly prone to claiming that the reason a lot of people do something is because they all are just following each other, a perfect tautology. War is often said, for instance, to be caused by “ideology” or by “the culture of militarism” of

this or that state or by “a marked tendency for the military to prepare offensive military plans.” But saying war is caused by an arms race is about as meaningful as saying homicide is caused by someone buying a gun. What one expects when asking for the motivation for homicide is not how the perpetrator got the weapon but the internal development of his psyche plus the events leading up to the violent act. Besides, empirically most states start wars without an arms buildup. Germany in 1913-1914, for instance, spent less on her military than France and Russia, yet began WWI because she felt insecure with a smaller army than other countries and felt paranoid about being attacked.

Yet another common tautological reason for wars is that they are “preventive.” Bismarck put that reason in its place when he was urged to start a preventive war by saying it was “as irrational as committing suicide because one was afraid to die.” America even today continues to have a “first strike nuclear deterrence” preventive war policy that is based on the causing of 600 million deaths as “acceptable.” Just as meaningless are all the theories of war being caused by “lack of collective security,” or “the anarchic nature of the state system” or similar systems theories. The lack of instruments to prevent wars is a symptom not a cause; presumably if one could discover the underlying causes of war and reduce their power, states would then set up international systems of settling differences and of providing collective security. As Holsti puts it, “To argue that we have war because of systems structures is analogous to an argument that we have automobile accidents because we have highways.” One must not reify groups; only individuals have motives.

**2. Greed as a Motive for War:** War is usually claimed [by social scientists] to be purely plunder... “War is defined as stealing en masse what other men own.” Yet we would never accept greed as a real motive from a man who murders his family after taking out life insurance on them, nor would we accept the excuse of greed from a man who raped and murdered women and then took some of their jewelry. Even thieves turn out to have deeper motives than greed. As James Gilligan, a prison psychiatrist who has spent his life analyzing the lives of criminals, puts it, “Some people think armed robbers commit their crimes in order to get money. But when you sit down and talk with people who repeatedly commit such crimes, what you hear is, ‘I never got so much respect before in my life as I did when I first pointed a gun at somebody’.”

That anyone should imagine that hundreds of millions of people can enthusiastically engage in mutual mass butchery over minor pieces of territory is so patently ludicrous that it is a wonder anyone could ever have taken it seriously; yet, this [is] what historians and political scientists still ask us to believe. The entire “rational decisions” school of war theorists, all of whom claim utility as the ultimate motive for war, run up against the extensive empirical research done on hundreds of wars in recent years that consistently shows that wars are destructive not rational, that wars cost even winners more than they gain, that those who begin wars usually lose them, and that leaders who go to war historically never

actually calculate before they do so whether the gains will exceed the costs. Zinnes summarizes the results of all this testing of war as a rational activity motivated by materialistic gain as follows: “After thirty years of empirical research, in which we have devoted an enormous amount of time to collecting, measuring, and summarizing observations about nation-state behavior, we cannot find any patterns” that show any relationship at all between war frequency and economics, population density, or any other material condition of states. Otterbein even shows that cross-culturally there is “no influence on war of economic or ecological factors”; even tribal warfare destroys far more than it gains, and tribes rarely even pretend they are going to war to gain territory. Rummel concurs, finding from his huge historical database that a country’s propensity to go to war is unrelated to its economic development, its technological abilities, or even its military capabilities.

The costs of wars have repeatedly been demonstrated to be far in excess of any gains that could be hoped for. In Vietnam, it cost America hundreds of thousands of dollars to kill each enemy soldier; the world even today spends trillions of dollars a year to fight wars and maintain military forces, far in excess of anything that could be gained by war. In fact, wars are so self-destructive that when a nation goes to war the people must at some level realize that they are engaging on a truly suicidal venture. Often, a careful examination of the actual historical decision process reveals explicitly suicidal imagery. As just one example from many, when Tojo called together the Japanese leadership to decide whether or not to attack Pearl Harbor, he went around the table and asked each minister to tell what he thought would happen if they attacked the US. Each one forecast decisive defeat. It was so obvious that an attack would be suicidal for Japan that Tojo ended up saying, “There are times when we must have the courage to do extraordinary things – like jumping, with eyes closed, off the veranda of the Kiyomizu Temple.” The Kiyomizu Temple was well known to all present as the place in Kyoto where people committed suicide.

**3. Stress Theories of War:** Even those theories of war that allow that it is wholly irrational end up blaming economic stress as the cause of the irrationality. “Hard times make people feel threatened and frustrated,” so they go to war from the emotional stress of economic downturns. Most leaders who try to promote peace cite the stress theory: “By eliminating the economic dissatisfaction that breeds war we might have a chance for lasting peace” (Sumner Hull) or “Freedom from fear is eternally linked with freedom from want” (Franklin Roosevelt). Marxist theorists in particular believe wars break out because of capitalist economic downturns. In particular, most theorists believe WWII was caused by stresses of the economic Depression.

The problem with these stress theories is that empirically wars usually occur during economic upswings, not during depressions. Wars not only occur far more frequently after prosperous periods, but are longer and bigger after prosperity, “six to twenty times bigger as indicated by battle fatalities.” Macfie finds “the

outbreak of wars has avoided years of heaviest unemployment... excessive expansions are required to germinate the seeds of war.” In Europe since 1815, no great-power wars have been started during a depression. WWI broke out after 40 years of growth of real incomes for workers (80 percent higher for Germans), and even WWII broke out several years after Germany had regained and surpassed pre-Depression levels of production – the supposed cause, economic distress, having disappeared by 1939. Wars are in fact prosperity-reducing rituals. They are responses to what we have earlier termed *growth panic* – responses to progress and prosperity, not to depletion. What is depleted when nations decide to go to war is their emotional not their economic resources.

By examining only the sociogenic and not the psychogenic sources of war, major theorists to date have been disappointed by the total lack of results of their research. David Singer concludes that the study of war has failed to “achieve any significant theoretical breakthrough” and is saddened by the fact that no one has found any “compelling explanation” for war. Bruce Bueno de Mesquita admits that “we know little more about the general sources of international conflict today than was known to Thucydides... {perhaps} scientific explanations of such conflicts are not possible.” Such extreme pessimism is understandable. Clausewitz’s *dicta* that war is an extension of political policy has been fully discredited, and all the usual reasons for wars – for territory, for revenge, to obtain sacrificial prisoners, to obtain *coups*, as God’s will, to stop dominoes from falling – turn out to be only rationalizations. But the failure to find valid motives for wars only applies to sociogenic theories, ones that carefully avoid the psychological model of human violence that has proved so fruitful in the study of the causes of homicide and suicide. We will first turn to the results of the recent clinical studies of individual violence before we propose our psychogenic theory of war.

#### THE CLINICAL STUDY OF HUMAN VIOLENCE

Because those societies which have the harshest child-rearing practices have been shown to produce low-esteem adults who have the highest incidence of murder, suicide, and war, the study of human violence can most fruitfully begin with examining the findings of clinicians who have closely interviewed murderers and determined their motives.

Most of what we usually believe about interpersonal violence is unconfirmed by statistics. Homicide is not regularly higher in big cities; cross-cultural studies find there is “no significant associations between community size and homicide or assault.” Nor do men assault their spouses more often than women do; studies in various countries show “wives hit their husbands at least as often as husbands hit their wives,” although men do more damage with their assaults. When war is counted as violence, men constitute at least 75 percent of the victims of lethal physical violence in the United States, and die from two to five times as often from personal violence as women do world-wide. Mothers are not more often gentle while fathers mainly do the hitting of children; in fact, American mothers today abuse their children nearly twice as much as fathers.

Both statistically and clinically, researchers have found violent adults have only one thing in common: poor childrearing. Studies of homicidal youths, for instance, found 90 percent could be documented as coming from severely emotional, physical or sexually abusive families. James Gilligan summarizes his decades of interviewing murderers:

In the course of my work with the most violent men in maximum-security settings, not a day goes by that I do not hear reports – often confirmed by independent sources – of how these men were victimized during childhood. Physical violence, neglect, abandonment, rejection, sexual exploitation, and violation occurred on a scale so extreme, so bizarre, and so frequent that one cannot fail to see that the men who occupy the extreme end of the continuum of violent behavior in adulthood occupied an extreme end of the continuum of violent child abuse earlier in life... As children, these men were shot, axed, scalded, beaten, strangled, tortured, drugged, starved, suffocated, set on fire, thrown out of windows, raped, or prostituted by mothers who were their ‘pimps’...

The cause of adult violence, says Gilligan, is a “collapse of self-esteem” triggered by an incident in which the murderer imagines himself or herself to be humiliated and shamed, resorting in what he calls a “logic of shame, a form of magical thinking that says, ‘If I kill this person in this way, I will kill shame – I will be able to protect myself from being exposed and vulnerable to and potentially overwhelmed by the feeling of shame’.” Gilligan points out that shame is at the root of mass violence too, pointing out that “Hitler came to power on the campaign promise to undo ‘the shame of Versailles’ – and clearly that promise, and the sensitivity to shame from which it derived its power, struck a responsive chord in the German people as a whole.” Though criminologists report that in homicides “the most common altercation was of relatively trivial origin: insult, curse, jostling, etc.”, these shaming events turn childhood traumas into current rage, what Katz terms “righteously enraged slaughter,” producing a “tremendous rush [that is] almost orgasmic” for the murderer as they *avenge all their past hurts and humiliations*. “All violence,” says Gilligan, “is an attempt to achieve justice.” As we shall shortly see, this includes mass violence as well, which also involves imagining one achieves justice through violent, righteous vengeance for earlier wrongs.

#### THE NEUROBIOLOGY OF VIOLENCE

People start wars when something changes in their brains, neurotransmitters, hormones and cellular neuropeptide systems. This “something” is the result of a developmental process that begins before birth and is turned into a capacity for violence during childhood. Contrary to the views of Freud and Piaget, children are actually quite empathic toward others from birth if treated well. Neonates cry in response to the crying of another baby; “even 6-month-olds... responded to distressed peers with actions such as leaning toward, gesturing toward, touching or otherwise contacting the peer.” Babies who are treated well can be quite generous with their

love, gently touching and patting other babies and even their mothers when they notice they look sad.

But the majority of children throughout history – particularly boys, who are physically and emotionally abused more than girls – feel so helpless and afraid that they grow up in what has been called a “culture of cruelty,” where they graduated from violent families to form gangs and try to dominate and hurt each other in order to be perpetrators rather than victims, thereby preparing themselves for cooperating in the violence of war. In one study, for instance, Lewis and Pincus report “a significantly greater proportion of very violent children demonstrated... paranoid symptomology [and] believed that someone was going to hurt them... constantly feeling the need to carry weapons such as guns and metal pipes for their own protection...” The more violent children, Lewis reports, “had been physically abused by mothers, fathers, stepparents, other relatives and ‘friends’ of the family. The degree of abuse to which they were subjected was often extraordinary. One parent broke her son’s legs with a broom; another broke his fingers and his sister’s arm; another chained and burned his son; and yet another threw his son downstairs... Several children witnessed their fathers, stepfathers, or mothers’ boyfriends slash their mothers with knives. They saw their siblings tortured with cigarette butts, chained to beds, and thrown into walls.” Severe neglect and emotional abuse have been shown to be equivalent to and often worse than physical abuse in producing lasting traumatic effects upon children.

The neurobiological affects of trauma upon children have been extensively studied. As we have discussed earlier, serotonin levels are reduced by trauma, and are found in reduced levels in adult antisocial personalities, because the lower level of their inhibiting ability allows less control over impulsivity and therefore higher rates of violence. External stress also increases corticosterone production, decreasing the effectiveness of the hippocampal system which evaluates the emotional meaning of incoming stimuli. Psychopathic personalities have been found to be “actually slower to respond emotionally than the rest of us... Even when they’re just sitting around, antisocial individuals are more low-key than the average person” because their noradrenergic behavioral inhibition systems were crippled due to excessive early neglect, traumas and over control by caretakers. Very early maternal neglect in particular produces an undersized orbitofrontal cortex – the brain region behind the eyes that allows one to reflect on one’s emotions and to empathize with the feelings of others – resulting in such a diminished self and such a low capacity for empathy that the baby grows up literally unable to feel guilt about hurting others. Thus swaddled babies abandoned to cribs in dark rooms – as most children were in history – who totally miss the mother’s gaze and loving interaction in their early years are programmed for later impulse disorders, psychopathic personalities, and the need for killing in war, simply because they never have developed what today we consider “normal-sized” orbitofrontal cortexes through sustained eye contact and mutual play with the mother. As Shore puts it:

The orbitofrontal cortex functionally mediates the capacity to empathize with the feelings of others and to reflect on internal emotional states, one's own and others'... The socioaffective stimulation produced by the mother's face facilitates the experience-dependent growth... children deprived of early visual sensory stimulation... frequently show impairments in representational and affective functions that are responsible for severe emotional problems.

Lesions of the orbitofrontal cortex produce unregulated aggression and dramatic mood state alterations in both humans and other animals because “unmodulated rage represents a hyperactivation of the... dopaminergic system [and] impulsive acting out episodes [of] narcissistic rage.” Children neglected and abused in early months “manifest pathological self-importance, or narcissism, displayed as... grandiosity, recklessness... insecurity and emotional shallowness [plus] the inability to feel ordinary human empathy and affection for others and the perpetrating of repeated antisocial acts.” Thus the slow evolution of childrearing results in a slow historical increase in size in the average orbitofrontal cortex and more balanced serotonin, dopamine and other hormonal levels, resulting in a steady reduction of grandiosity, paranoia and uncontrolled rage and a diminishing historical rates of infanticide, homicide, suicide and war deaths.

#### DISSOCIATION OF THE TWO BRAINS

One of the most important findings of Athens from his lifetime of interviewing of violent criminals is that before they kill they consult “phantom communities” who approve of their violent acts as revenges for past humiliations. These phantom communities are, of course, identical to the “social alters” [that is, Dear, “alter-egos”] I have discussed previously, where dissociated violent selves and internalized harmful caretakers are kept and engaged in dialogues that influence our deepest emotions and approve of our most violent behavior. Athens determined that violence didn't just follow trauma; it required a further “belligerency stage of violentization” during which the brutalized subject resolves in consultation with his inner phantoms, his alters, that he or she has had enough, that violence is sometimes necessary if one isn't to remain a victim one's whole life and that he or she will now use physical violence for those who unduly provoke or humiliate him or her. These alters are often actual inner voices telling the criminal what to do, so that

their decisions to act violently followed from a dialogue with their phantom communities – the “voices” were their phantom companions coming in exceptionally loud and clear... Lewis... corroborated Athens's finding that the self incorporates phantom companions when she examined Arthur Shawcross, the Rochester, New York, so-called serial killer who murdered prostitutes. “Arthur Shawcross also experienced dissociative states,” Lewis reports. “At these times he would hear his mother in his head, berating him and the women he was seeing. No one was good enough for Arty. They should die.”

These dissociated social alters, it turns out, are concentrated in only one side of the brain, in one hemisphere, a different one in each of us. Frederic Schiffer explains

how his studies of dual-brain psychology led him to ask his psychiatric patients to look through special glasses, one pair of which had only the left side of the left eye uncovered (reaching only the right hemisphere), the other only the right side of the right eye (reaching only the left hemisphere), so that the patient would transmit information only to one half of the brain at a time. He found that one hemisphere looked at the world with extreme anxiety and the other saw things more maturely:

One patient, a Vietnam veteran, whom I had diagnosed with a severe post-traumatic stress disorder, looked out of one side and developed an expression of intense apprehension as he looked at a large plant in my office. “It looks like the jungle,” he said with some alarm. I asked him to look out the other side, and he said, “No, it’s a nice-looking plant.”

Schiffer finds he can help patients by having them analyze the emotional attitudes of the traumatized hemisphere, since “the troubled side is often like a traumatized person who hasn’t been able to move beyond the trauma, even when removed from it, because he continues to expect retraumatization.” Schiffer and others have done extensive work on dual-brain psychology, including putting one hemisphere to sleep with sodium amytal and finding the patient well-adjusted and pleasant, while putting the other side to sleep made him belligerent. He also showed that children who were admitted to hospitals after abuse more often showed abnormalities in brain waves of their left hemisphere and that PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] patients felt more distress in their left hemispheres. Schiffer concludes:

Traumatic memories are likely closely related to a lower brain center called the amygdala... in each hemisphere which is inhibited by a high-level cortical center, the orbital frontal lobe in that same hemisphere... Both the orbital frontal cortex and the hippocampus tend to try to calm the amygdala... We have too little information to do more than speculate about why the left brain may be more involved in the traumatic experiences of abused patients... Patients who have strong reactions to the glasses apparently have two distinct parts of their mind – one that sees the world as threatening and one that sees it as much less so... frequently I have asked a troubled part of a person to stop attacking the other part of him, and suddenly the person feels remarkable relief.

These alters which still live in the past, seeing the world as threatening and abusive, constitute, as Schiffer says, two separate minds, one frightened and angry, the other denying the concerns of its partner. When the more grown-up hemisphere moves into new freedom and new behavior, the traumatized hemisphere reexperiences the fear and helplessness it stores from early childhood and produces the “growth panic” I have found lies at the root of war and other violence. This struggle between the hemispheres is not always unconscious; more often it is simply dissociated, with one hemisphere being unaware of the feelings with which the other hemisphere is filled. When Rudolph Höss, SS Kommandant at Auschwitz, says, “I have never personally mistreated a prisoner, or even killed one. I have also never tolerated mistreatment on the part of my subordinates,” he is not being disingenuous. The nontraumatized half

of his brain sincerely believes he and his subordinates never mistreated a Jew as they were beating and torturing and murdering them by the hundreds of thousands. His social alter in his traumatized hemisphere was fully in control and cut off all meaning of what he was doing, which to his non-traumatized hemisphere appeared as normal. He had two brains which he was forced to keep separate; as he put it, “Many a night as I stood out there on the railroad platforms, at the gas chambers, or at the burnings, I was forced to think of my wife and children without connecting them to what was taking place.”

This dissociation into traumatized alters occurs more in groups because one feels more *helpless* and more *depersonalized* in large groups (particularly in the largest groups, nations) and therefore more fearful. When we think of acting in society or even of what it is like to speak in front of a large group, one feels more open to attack, to humiliation, and one can more easily switch into the traumatized hemisphere. Our first line of defense when in a social trance is to cling to a “strong” leader or a “strong” subgroup, merge our alters with them and join in various group activities, often violent ones, to defend ourselves. Thus it makes sense that Freud, Le Bon and others define the inevitable characteristics of a group as invincibility, grandiosity, irresponsibility, impulsiveness, suggestibility and fearfulness, all qualities of the neglectful and traumatic figures stored in our social alters. Without the laterality of the brain, neither politics nor religion can exist, as they do not in other animals who do not have divided selves. (In fact, the only other animals who do sometimes go to war and murder each other senselessly are chimps and dolphins, both of which are large-brained, lateralized creatures with the beginnings of the ability for self-recognition.) It is only because humans have radically lateralized hemispheres with larger impulse inhibitors – orbitalfrontal cortexes and hippocampuses – that they are able to go to war with one hemisphere and build Leagues of Nations with the other.

The lower the childrearing mode, the more divided are the hemispheres. New Guinea natives can be warm and friendly while in their more mature hemisphere and suddenly switch into their social alters in the other hemisphere and kill you because they think you are bewitching them. The lower the childrearing mode, the more traumatic the early experiences, and the more divided the hemispheres. In tribal societies, switching into warrior alters is a simple process: “The man or boy leaves his former self behind and becomes something entirely different, perhaps even taking a new name... [as, Dear, did the Ancient Hebrews and as Americans do when they become Muslims – and even as Mormons do, gaining a “secret name” when they marry] the change usually accomplished through ritual drumming, dancing, fasting and sexual abstinence... into a new, warriorlike mode of being, denoted by special body paint, masks and headdresses.” In modern societies, with a wide range of childrearing modes, “only 2 per cent of recruits kill easily, so the rest must be brought to do so by careful military training” featuring new traumatic experiences.

The split mind begins to form with early trauma, even perinatally. Fredrick Leboyer, author of *Birth Without Violence*, once told me that babies born with his non-

traumatic techniques not only were far more calm and happy after birth but “less one-handed,” less brain-lateralized. The two halves of the brain are even sometimes recognized in political imagery. Hitler, for instance, often spoke of a strange “kinship” between the Aryan and Jew (the two sides of his brain): “Has it not struck you how the Jew is the exact opposite of the German in every single respect, and yet is as closely akin to him as a blood brother?... so closely allied and yet so utterly dissimilar.” This split mind is responsible for what is termed “the banality of evil”; one side is banal (Winnicott’s “False Self”), the other side evil (the “Bad Boy” alter). It accounts for how nations can joyfully choose violent leaders to take them to suicidal wars, and yet one part of their mind can be wholly unaware of what is happening. For example, the following is William L. Shirer’s description of sitting in the Berlin *Sportpalast* watching Hitler shouting and shrieking that “he will go to war this Saturday. Curious audience, the fifteen thousand party *Bonzen*, packed into the hall. They applauded his words with the usual enthusiasm. Yet there was no war fever. The crowd was *good-natured*, as if it didn’t realize what his words meant.” The dual brain also explains how “ordinary Germans” – extremely traumatized by “ordinary German childrearing” around 1900 – could have, during the Holocaust, “humiliated, beat, and tortured defenseless people and then shot them in the back of the neck without the slightest hesitation [and then dissociate and] pose before their living or dead victims, laughing into the camera {and} write home that these snapshots and extermination anecdotes would someday be ‘extremely interesting to our children’.”

#### EARLY MOTHER-CHILD INTERACTIONS AS THE SOURCE OF HUMAN VIOLENCE

The primary sources of violent political behaviors are the concrete mother-child interactions of one generation earlier – how mainly the mother responded to, cared for, and conveyed her feelings and fears to her fetus, infant, and young child. We have already described in Chapter 3 [of deMause’s book] how going to war is preceded by flashbacks to intrauterine, perinatal traumas, and group-fantasies of the need for national rebirth. Here we will begin to examine the sources of human violence in early mother-child interactions.

Videotape recordings of children’s relationships with their mothers in the pre-verbal period “have been shown to remain essentially the same over time and to be duplicated with other ‘substitute’ mother figures. A child who has a warm, affectionate relationship with the mother will relate to others in a warm, affectionate manner, whereas a child with a guarded, distant relationship will relate to others in a guarded, distant manner.” This maternal relationship is eventually restaged in international relations in a concrete manner, being acted out in “the sandbox of history” with nations playing the emotional roles of the mothers and children from early life.

Mothers in history who because of their own life experiences see their children as harmful and aggressive have historically mainly treated them in ways that have made them grow up as violent adults, by routinely inflicting upon them murder,

abandonment, neglect, binding, enemas, domination, beatings, sexual assaults, and emotional abuses that are later restaged in wars and political behavior. Necessity was not the main source of these cruelties toward children – wealthy parents were historically even more overtly rejecting, giving their children to others at birth for years for what they expected would be abusive caretaking. Fathers have until recently usually only worsened this early traumatic upbringing, since historically the father has almost always been mostly absent from the child's early life – most fathers in history spending their days in the fields or factories and their nights in the taverns (see Chapter 7). When home, fathers have lent little support to mothers in caretaking and emotional nurturance, requiring that his wife “mother” him rather than his children.

Growing up, Mahler found, is built upon basic maternal care, since “differentiation is from the mother, not from the father.” Therefore, women not men have until recently for better or worse been the main sources of care, neglect, and abuse throughout history. As St. Augustine put it, “Give me other mothers and I will give you another world.” His words have been confirmed by recent clinical studies. What Erikson said about girls has been found to be true of all children: “By the time a girl developmentally turns to the father, she has normally learned the nature of an object relationship once and for all from her mother.” In short, *mothers are major actors in childhood history* – they are perpetrators and not just victims, as the theory of patriarchy holds.

Most of the extremely abusive historical childrearing practices which are detailed in the next three chapters of [deMause's] book are routine reactions to the child's daily needs and growth process, wherein immature mothers expect their children to give them the love they missed as a child and therefore experience the child's independence as rejection. As one battering mother said, “I have never felt really loved all my life. When the baby was born, I thought he would love me, but when he cried all the time, it meant he didn't love me, so I hit him.” Surveys show mothers in most cultures report initial feelings of “indifference” toward their newborn. In fact, childbirth often triggers post-partum depression and feelings of emptiness, because it means the mother must give up her own hopes to receive the care she missed from her own mother. The moment the infant needs something or turns away from her to explore the world, it triggers her own memories of maternal rejection. When the infant cries, the immature mother hears her mother, her father, her siblings, and her spouse screaming at her. She then “accuses the infant of being unaffectionate, unrewarding and selfish... as not interested in me.” All growth and individuation by the child is therefore experienced as rejection.

This is why social progress, prosperity, and new political freedoms are so anxiety-producing. “When the mother cannot tolerate the child's being a separate person with her own personality and needs, and demands instead that the child mirror her, separation becomes heavily tinged with basic terror for the child.” Children first experience “growth panic” anxieties because their mother rejects, humiliates, or punishes them for their needs and for their individuation. As adults, they then turn to

paranoid and violent political behavior during periods of growth and individuation because society threatens to reproduce this intolerable early maternal rejection, shame, or punishment. Because these maternal interactions are so early, they are primarily nonverbal, which means that politics has a dominantly nonverbal quality that can only be studied by research into illustrations rather than words – group-fantasies shown in cartoons, magazine covers, and TV images. This is why I often watch the nightly news on TV with the sound off.

It is likely that the centrality of mothers in bringing up children is even responsible for the fact that men are more violent than women and universally fight wars. Testosterone is not the cause, as is usually imagined, since (1) testosterone levels are actually *lower* in the most aggressive boys, (2) “testosterone is present in boys and girls in roughly the same amounts before the age of ten”, and (3) although “all normal boys experience a huge surge of testosterone in early adolescence, [they] do not all display increased aggression...[so] testosterone does not cause aggression.” Evidence is beginning to accumulate that it is differential treatment of boys, especially by mothers, that is responsible for their higher rates of violence in later life. Boys in every culture are physically punished more often and with greater severity than girls; boys are more often used sexually by their mothers in their early years than girls; boys are given less nurturance, are ignored more often, are spoken to less, and are coached to be more violent than girls; boys are subject to over control by humiliation and shame more often than girls; and boys are more harshly disciplined for the same actions by parents and teachers. Mothers also see their boys as “just like his dad,” and take revenge against them for their husband’s actions – after all, Medea killed her sons, not her daughters, to hurt Jason for his infidelity. Thus although boys begin life with no more aggression than girls, they grow up to be more violent simply because they are less trusted and more feared by their earliest caretakers.

Although the battlegrounds may change, wars – whether between mother and child or between nations – are inevitably about the basic feelings of infancy: trust, security, approval, domination, envy, rage, threats, shame, and independence. Since having a child revives in mothers long-dormant wishes for the closeness that they missed from their own mothers, mothers often envy the child each of the needs they are asked to satisfy, thinking, “I never got that; why should my child?” Even today psychologists find many mothers reject their infants in many ways because they “fear bodily damage due to the child’s aggressiveness.” But before the nineteenth century mothers throughout history were so immature that they thought their infants were so full of violence that they would “scratch their eyes out, tear their ears off, or break their legs” if they didn’t tie them up in endless bandages, “so as to resemble billets of wood... so the flesh was compressed almost to gangrene.” Therefore, through most of history, early mother-child interactions (which most “good-enough mothers” today are capable of – centering around mutual gazing, babbling and smiling) were all missing, because mothers tightly bound their babies up at birth and stuck them in another room, severely neglected for their first year of their lives. International affairs have not throughout history been much negotiated in a secure and peaceful manner because infantile life was not very secure nor peaceful.

Sociologists and historians have avoided looking for the family sources of wars and social violence. Whenever a group produces murderers, the mother-child relationship must be abusive and neglectful. Yet this elementary truth has not even begun to be considered in historical research; just stating that poor mothering lies behind wars seems blasphemous. Instead, the grossest sort of idealizations of historical mothering proliferate. When, for instance, studies of the sources of the extreme violence of the Mafia turn to depictions of Sicilian mother-child relations they inevitably come to resemble the happy, loving families out of *The Godfather*. Yet it is only when an Italian psychoanalyst, Silvia di Lorenzo, writes a book on *La Grande Madre Mafia* that her descriptions of typical Sicilian mother-child interactions begin to give us an accurate picture of the maternal origins of Mafia violence:

If a boy of theirs commits a slight fault, they do not resort to simple blows, but they pursue him on a public street and bite him on the face, the ears, and the arms until they draw blood. In those moments even a beautiful woman is transformed in physiognomy, she becomes purplish-red, with blood-shot eyes, with gnashing teeth, and trembling convulsions, and only the hastening of others, who with difficulty tear away the victim, put an end to such savage scenes.

Thus the conditions of early mothering have profound affects on adult human violence. It is not surprising that Ember and Ember found in their cross-cultural studies that where the mother sleeps closer to the baby than to the father and uses the baby as a substitute spouse – usually sexually – there is more homicide and war. Every childrearing practice in history is restaged in adult political behavior. Children whose mothers swaddled them and were “not there” emotionally could not as adults maintain object consistency and grew up paranoid, imagining “enemies” everywhere. Children whose mothers regularly did not feed them in a timely fashion experienced the world as malevolently withholding. Children whose mothers rejected them with depressive silence experienced peaceful international periods as threatening. Children whose mothers dominated them and who were engulfing often choose totalitarian political leaders. Children whose mothers were so needy they describe their children as “born selfish and demanding” and or who saw them as “angry since birth” experienced other nations as demanding too much or as angry “bad babies.” Children whose mothers used them as antidepressants chose manic, often violent leaders to counter their own depression. And mothers who ridiculed and humiliated their children whenever their activities didn’t coincide with her own were experienced in the international sphere as poison containers of intolerable ridicule and shame – as in “the shame of Versailles.”

It is not surprising, then, that violent, authoritarian political behavior has been statistically correlated with rejecting, punitive parenting. As Godwin puts it, society is an “exopsychic structure” where adults restage the “parental purification system” of childhood by “cleansing bad, frustrating and abusive aspects of the parent-child relationship” in the political arena. In Chapter 3 I [deMause] have dealt extensively with the evidence showing that war and social violence are preceded by rebirth

group-fantasies of cleansing and purification of “sins.” It is only the elimination of the most abusive and neglectful historical parenting practices in some nations that have allowed them to set up trusting, non-violent rules of political interactions and have permitted them to achieve more or less cooperative democratic societies and to avoid fighting wars with other democracies. Obviously international peace will not prevail until most parents around the world trust rather than fear their children.

#### THE PSYCHOGENIC THEORY OF WAR

War, then, is the act of restaging early traumas for the purpose of maternal revenge and self purification. Wars are clinical emotional disorders, periodic shared psychotic episodes of delusional organized butchery intended – like homicide – to turn a severe “collapse of self esteem” into “a rage to achieve justice.” Wars are both homicidal and suicidal – every German in 1939 who cheered Hitler on as he promised to start an unwinnable world war against overwhelming opposing nations knew deep down they were committing suicide. Like all homicides and suicides, wars are reactions to our failed search for love, magical gestures designed to ensure love through projection into enemies, by “knocking the Terrifying Mommy off her pedestal” and by “killing the Bad Boy self.” As Kernberg puts it, violence occurs only when “the world seems to be split between those who side with the traumatizing object and those who support the patient’s wishes for a revengeful campaign against the traumatizing object.” Thus the early crisis in maternal love, which had been internalized during childhood in Terrifying Mommy and Bad Boy alters, is resolved by acting out on the historical stage the revenge against the Terrifying Mommy and by the wiping out of the Bad Boy self.

#### **1. War as Righteous Rape – Revenge Against the Terrifying Mommy:**

Enemy nations in wars are often pictured as women [see Chapter 3 of his book], witches, even placental beasts. When they are seen as women, enemies are there to be pushed around, not eliminated, since even when raging against a bad mommy the hurt child knows he needs her desperately. This is why Hitler kept hoping to manipulate Mother England into being friendly. And it’s why he didn’t destroy Paris when he marched into La Belle France. Nations to the west of Germany were mainly seen as mommies to be revenged against, to be “knocked off their pedestals” but not to be eliminated. “France... was not marked for subjugation but rather for a secondary role in the Nazi scheme [and] Hitler was always keen on reaching some settlement with the British... [therefore] the German army fighting in the west was given strict orders to conduct itself according to the rules of war.” The same group-fantasy of *war as righteous rape* was voiced by Germans in 1914, when they imagined that “only if we are able to hurt England badly will she really leave us unmolested, perhaps even become a ‘friend’.”

#### **2. War as Purification – Killing Off the Bad Boy Self:**

Enemy nations are also imagined as Bad Boys, disobedient, disgusting, violent, sexual – everything one was accused of as a child by one’s caretakers. If the Bad Boy self can be killed off entirely, “finally mommy will love me.” This is why Hitler vowed to wipe out the “bad” nations to the east and settle “good Germans” in their

place. Poles, Russians, Jews, every nation east of Germany were projected with Bad Boy imagery: “Slavs were considered subhumans, to be either murdered... or starved to death.” Moscow, Hitler promised, would be leveled and turned into a reservoir, and Jews would be totally eliminated. In addition, WWII would be a suicidal mission for millions of Germans, thus killing off the “Bad Boy” part of themselves, the most vital, growing, independent self. Then the “good German” self that remained would be *purified* and would finally be loved by mommy, the Motherland.

It is not surprising that in early societies, bloodthirsty War Goddesses ruled over battlefields, since wars are all about resolving the crisis between Terrifying Mommies and Bad Boys. Leaders are delegated the task of being sacrificial priests. Even simple societies go to war to win the love of mommy; in the Yanomamo war ritual myth, the culture hero Child of Water goes to war and slays enemies to “end chaos” and “do what his mother desires and thereby win her approval.” The role of the father in war is quite different: it is to provide the violence needed to rape and revenge the Terrifying Mommy and to punish and wipe out the Bad Baby. Hitler carried a dog whip everywhere he went, the same whip he and millions of German children were beaten with by their fathers. Oddly enough, nations don’t go to war as revenge against bad fathers – the drama is earlier than that. Even though children are terribly frightened by their father’s violence in the family, the goal in starting wars isn’t finally to take revenge against the father, but to “kill the shame,” to purify the self, and to force mother to love you – to organize men into Fatherlands so they can conquer Motherlands.

Nations switch into their dissociated traumatized hemispheres after periods of peace and prosperity because the individuation challenges of social progress means separating from mommy, a dangerous act in adulthood if it was not allowed by the mother in childhood. Ralph Waldo Emerson, among others, noticed the growth panic that went along with prosperity and progress when he wondered in his journal why Americans felt such a “strange melancholy in the midst of abundance.” Increases in freedom and prosperity for people who have been abused as children lead first to fears of separation and then to a clinging to the early abusive mommy, even to merging with her. But to merge with a mommy means losing one’s masculinity – it means becoming a woman – therefore long periods of peace mean castration. Thus Kant’s dicta that wars are necessary because “prolonged peace favors... effeminacy” parallels Machiavelli’s claim that war exists to purge nations of *effeminato*, the “daily accretion of poisonous matter [caused by women’s] conspiracy to ‘poison’... manhood” and John Adams’ query to Jefferson, “Will you tell me how to prevent luxury from producing effeminacy, intoxication, extravagance, vice and folly?” In fact, in groups where they do not have effective war rituals available when people experience severe ego disintegration, people often “go *amok*” – a dissociative state where people suddenly kill people in wild, uncontrolled sprees, as often occurs in the otherwise placid Balinese. Even chimpanzees “go *amok*” when given food supplies by humans and “engage in episodes of apparently unprovoked explosive... behavior... as though they had entered an ASC [Alternate State of Consciousness]... to discharge an inner state of tension... similar to human dissociative behaviors...”

Prosperity appears to be anxiety-producing even in non-human primates, switching them into their more violent, dissociated hemispheres. Chimpanzees who are not artificially fed by anthropologists live in “peaceful, open groups without signs of any dominance hierarchy, enforced territoriality, or single leaders.”

Prosperity leads to starting wars most often in societies where the economic advances of a minority, a more advanced psychoclass, outrun the childrearing evolution of the majority, producing in the less advanced psychoclasses extreme anxieties about changes that require individuation. Thus the most destructive wars have occurred in the twentieth century when there is a rapid “leap into modernity” by nations whose average childrearing lagged badly behind their social and economic progress – so that they tried to run modern capitalist systems with crippled human capital – while the most peaceful periods (for instance, Europe’s “century of peace” from 1815 to 1914) occurred while the childrearing of most Western European nations was most rapidly evolving and could keep up with the individuation challenges of modernity.

Now, Dear, I want to add some comments. One is that I of course apologize for quoting so much of deMause’s book. But on the one hand, I wanted to increase the probability that you’d read some of it (in fact, I recommend that you read his entire book – although, as I warned you before, be careful: some of it is very upsetting, even for me), and on the other hand, I’ve quoted so much because there’s “no way” in this lifetime that I’d be able to comprehend so much about the subject as deMause has – let alone convey the ideas so well.

Next, in case your initial reaction to deMause’s analysis is that it seems be stunningly sweeping and important – and then immediately, if you want to know if his ideas are generally correct, then you’ll need to determine that by yourself. I don’t know – but below, I’ll show you some assessments.

First, though, reconsider what deMause did: he’s proposed a hypothesis derived by analyzing a huge quantity of historical, anthropological, psychological, sociological, and neurobiological data. Thereby, he’s managed to ensnare himself in multiple bear traps, simultaneously! Specifically, each one of those “scientific” fields needs the word ‘scientific’ put in quotation marks not only because each is rife with untested hypotheses (which the proponents like to call “theories”) but also because it’s so difficult (and in many cases unethical) to perform experiments to test the hypotheses. As a result, it’s common that whose “theory” prevails depends on “who can tell the best story” (and write the biggest book with the most references!), and you can expect, as a minimum, major (and sometimes

\* Go to other chapters *via*

rather nasty) arguments in such fields – because, just as with religious dogma, new data are unavailable to settle arguments.

As an example of such problems, earlier in this chapter I made multiple references to Stephen Pinker's important new book *The Better Angels of Our Nature*. In his huge book with its ~2,000 reference, Pinker gives only three references to deMause: one referencing deMause's assessment of infanticide, another quoting a single paragraph of his description of child abuse in medieval Europe, and the third quoting another paragraph from his description of an SS camp commander during the flogging of prisoners. Those three references to deMause's work suggest that Pinker was aware of deMause's primary hypothesis (that the root cause of physical violence in adults is child abuse), but I found nothing in Pinker's book acknowledging deMause's primary thesis.

Yet, Pinker did dismiss another hypothesis with the statement (p. 12): “**Any hypothesis that comes out of left field to explain a massive social trend with a single overlooked event will almost certainly turn out to be wrong.**” To me, that says (translated): “**Don't rock the boat; we psychologists and sociologists know what we're talking about.**” In particular, in the final two chapters of his book, Pinker attributes the primary cause of reduction in violence to be ‘reason’, writing:

There is a reason that I made reason the last of the better angels of our nature [which he claims are to be credited with the observed reductions in physical violence]. Once a society has a degree of civilization in place, it is reason that offers the greatest hope for further reducing violence. The other angels have been with us for as long as we have been human, but during most of our long existence they have been unable to prevent war, slavery, despotism, institutionalized sadism, and the oppression of women. As important as they are, [the other “better angels”] empathy, self-control, and the moral sense have too few degrees of freedom, and too restricted a range of application to explain the advances of recent decades and centuries... [p. 668]

Throughout the book we have seen the beneficial consequences of an application of reason to human affairs. At various times in history superstitious killings, such as in human sacrifice, witch hunts, blood libels, inquisitions, and ethnic scapegoating, fell away as the factual assumptions on which they rested crumbled under the scrutiny of a more intellectually sophisticated populace... Carefully reasoned briefs against slavery, despotism, torture, religious persecution, cruelty to animals, harshness to children, violence against women, frivolous wars, and the persecution of homosexuals were not just hot air but entered into the decisions of the people and institutions who attended to the arguments and implemented reforms... [p. 690]

To me, such statements (and there are many more in Pinker's book that are similar) sound too cerebral – too intellectual. Maybe Goethe went too far when he had his character Faust say “**Feeling is all**” (“*Gefühl ist alles*”) and maybe Hume was incorrect or didn't explain himself adequately when he wrote “**Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them**”, but in either case, I expect that Pinker's idea (which he points out was earlier suggested by Peter Singer, a professor of bioethics at Princeton), that the observed reduction of physical violence is the result of “**the application of reason to human affairs**”, is not so accurate or inclusive as deMause's idea, that physical violence is primarily an outlet of passions derived from child abuse.

Stated differently, if deMause is correct, then the primary “Civilizing Process” (which has led to observed reductions in physical violence) is, not a strong central government (e.g., Stalin's?!) or “gentle commerce” (in what, armaments?!), but more “humane” child rearing, leading to happier mothers and more hopeful daughters – and more civilized young men.

As for direct criticism of deMause's hypothesis, I found relatively little of it on the internet. One example is contained in a brief essay by Marc Comtois entitled *Introduction to Historical Methods*, quoted below.<sup>13</sup>

Psychohistory attempts to apply the Freudian (and other) methods of psychoanalysis to historical study. The inherent problem within the field is that there are roughly 15 generally recognized methodologies of clinical analysis, and the question of which to apply when is a genuinely critical question. Nonetheless, psychohistory is a good tool for dealing with motive as it seeks to determine the real, often unstated, reason of the actions of historical entities. Louis Namier did a famous psychobiography of the House of Commons, and Fawn Brodie's psychobiography of Thomas Jefferson also is a notable work in the field. Brodie's work showed that man's inner life affects all and that to illuminate it takes technique as well as empathy and nuance.

Psychohistory is a bold discipline that believes in the science of clinical evidence. It also lends itself to narrative and has helped revive the historical biography. Social psychology (integration of the South in the 1950s) and abnormal psychology (Hitler) also add dimensions to the field.

The primary problem of psychohistory is that its practitioners often must resort to post-mortem psychoanalysis of their subject, something that neither Freud nor other

---

<sup>13</sup> Copied from <http://users.ids.net/~marcom/historint/hi-methodnotes.html>; the revised text is at [http://cliopolitical.blogspot.com/2005/08/introduction-to-historical\\_112482482753969170.html](http://cliopolitical.blogspot.com/2005/08/introduction-to-historical_112482482753969170.html).

psychological schools had in mind when developing and expanding upon the theory. Additionally, more recently, psychohistory has fallen into disfavor in many circles as it has become, for some, too closely identified with one of the self-described founders of the discipline, Lloyd DeMause. DeMause, who actually claims to have invented the discipline, has championed psychohistory as the paradigm for studying historical motivation and seems to discount the ability of other historians to accurately interpret historical motivation. DeMause's theories and positions do not speak for the entire field, despite his assertions found on the Internet.

The final paragraph, in the above quotation, certainly doesn't flatter deMause. I should add, however, that in the revision to his essay (which is at the same website, already referenced), the author (Comtois) made two significant changes. One was to add the comment "Erik Erikson's book *Young Man Luther* was probably the first example of this approach" and the second modification was to entirely eliminate the last paragraph of the above, i.e., criticizing deMause!

Probably of more significance is the following praise<sup>14</sup> of deMause's work from two well-known practitioners in the field: Erich Fromm (whose writings I have admired for decades) and Erick Erikson (e.g., referenced above and whom you know through your use of his phrase "identity crisis").

Psychohistory fuses lessons learned from both the study of psychology and of historic fact, to create a science that can explain aspects of both individual and group behavior. Writing of Lloyd deMause's work Erich Fromm wrote "Just magnificent – an extremely important contribution to the knowledge of man," and Erik Erikson wrote "I am tremendously impressed with your genuine approach."

So, does the fact that two experts praise deMause settle it? Of course the answer is: Of course not! Yet, Dear, notice at least the following three points.

- 1) For additional praise of deMause's ideas see his brief biography.<sup>15</sup>
- 2) For the most part, deMause's analysis seems sound and it's certainly supported by analysis of specific data sets by other authors, e.g., in his Chapter 6, alone (quoted above and from which I removed his references), he cites 519 references!

---

<sup>14</sup> Copied from [http://www.disastercenter.com/Greatest\\_disaster.html](http://www.disastercenter.com/Greatest_disaster.html).

<sup>15</sup> See <http://www.psychohistory.com/htm/bio.html>.

- 3) In any field of inquiry, the only way to determine if any hypothesis is sound is to test its predictions; therefore, the next step in deMause's study is to perform experiments.

But as Shakespeare said, “**There's the rub.**” In the fields of anthropology, archeology, and history it's difficult (if not impossible) to perform experiments to test hypotheses, since (for example and in spite of myths to the contrary) history has a way of refusing to repeat itself. And in the fields of psychology and sociology, there's the even-more-stringent restriction that, unless a society is run by a dictator, people are notoriously uncooperative when others plan to perform experiments on them! But in the case of deMause's hypothesis, surely exceptions can be made.

To see what I mean, look again at deMause's principal hypothesis – and furthermore, look at his recommendations and his outline of a method by which his hypothesis could be tested. These are included in the following concluding paragraphs of his book.<sup>16</sup>

It is difficult to describe what kind of world might be made by individuated personalities, as the first helping mode parents – where both mother and father unconditionally love their children and help them achieve their own goals and own real selves from birth – have only been around for a few decades in the most advanced societies. As I watch my own children and some of their helping psychoclass friends grow up and establish their productive lives, I see them as very different from my own socializing psychoclass peers. They are far more empathic and therefore more concerned about others than we ever were, and this has made them far more activist in their lives in trying to make a difference and change the world for the better, mostly involving themselves in local activities rather than global political changes. They lack all need for nationalism, wars, and other grandiose projects, and the organizations they start are genuinely non-authoritarian. There is no question that if the world could treat children with helping-mode parenting, wars and all the other self-destructive social conditions we still suffer from in the twenty-first century will be cured, simply because the world will be filled with individuated personalities who are empathic toward others and who are not self-destructive. A world that loves and trusts its children and encourages them to develop their unique selves will be a world of very different institutions, a world without wars, jails and other domination group-fantasies.

The main problem is that the evolution of childrearing has so far been a slow, uneven historical process, depending greatly upon increasing the support given innovative mothers and their hopeful daughters. Unfortunately, in a world where our destructive technology has far outrun our childrearing progress – where a single submarine can now carry a sufficient number of nuclear warheads to destroy most of the world with

---

<sup>16</sup> At [http://www.psychohistory.com/htm/el09\\_psychesociety.html](http://www.psychohistory.com/htm/el09_psychesociety.html).

the push of a button – we do not have the luxury of just waiting for childrearing to evolve. If we do, we will certainly blow ourselves up long before child abuse disappears enough to make us want to disarm. What we need now is *some way for the more advanced psychoclasses to teach childrearing to the less evolved parents*, a way to end child abuse and neglect quickly enough to avoid the global holocaust that is awaiting us.

#### ENDING CHILD ABUSE BY INVESTING IN THE REAL WEALTH OF NATIONS

Ever since the earliest psychohistorical studies were published linking child abuse to war and social violence, one physician-psychohistorian, Robert McFarland, concluded that it must be possible to end child abuse in his community by starting a new institution, Community Parenting Centers, and with every means possible *teach good parenting* to [the parents of] every new baby born in his city, Boulder, Colorado. It seemed ridiculous to McFarland that the entire world depends upon good parenting, while parenting was the only subject never taught in schools or anywhere else in the world. For the past two decades, therefore, McFarland has run The Parenting Place in several counties of Boulder, reaching out to visit every baby born in the areas and giving substantial support to all mothers and fathers – holding parenting discussion groups, baby massage courses, single mothers assistance, showing them how to bring up children without hitting them, how to foster their independence, etc. The wide range of activities of The Parenting Place can be seen in two articles in *The Journal of Psychohistory*. Over half the families choose to be visited weekly in their homes for parenting instructions. Since no new mother or father *wants* to reject and abuse their babies, what McFarland found was that providing this help and hope for parents allowed their underlying affection to replace the abuse and neglect that comes from fear and despair – so that his statistics from local police and hospital records now show a real decrease in child abuse reports.

What is most astonishing is that McFarland found that Parenting Centers costs are far lower than what is saved in the later costs of abuse to the community. That the small budget for the Centers is offset many times over by the costs to the communities of later social services and criminal behavior is a not unexpected finding, given that sociologists have calculated that “the costs to society of career criminal behavior, drug use, and high-school dropouts for a single youth is \$1.7 to \$2.3 million.” With the world spending trillions of dollars a year preparing for war and additional trillions for jails, establishing Parenting Centers in every community on earth for just a small part of this cost would soon provide an enormous saving to mankind – *an immediate saving*, even before the actual savings from the huge destructiveness of wars is realized. McFarland calculates that every community on earth (he is even starting a Parenting Center in Tajikistan in a sister city to Boulder) can be supported by a small “children’s tax” of one-tenth of one percent increase in the sales tax.

Only by starting now on a vast worldwide program to end child neglect and abuse and raise all of our precious children with respect can we avoid the likely coming global

holocaust. Only by reducing dissociation to a minimum through empathic parenting can we avoid inflicting the self-destructive power we now have available to us. This is the single most important finding of the new science of psychohistory. Free universal training centers for parents may be a radical new notion, but so once was the idea of free universal schools for children. Our task is clear and our resources sufficient to make our world safe for the first time in our long, violent history. All it takes now is the will to begin.

I conclude that it doesn't really matter if deMause's hypothesis is correct! That is, even if his "grandiose" idea that ending child abuse will lead to "a world without wars, jails, and other domination group-fantasies", surely no harm will come if child abuse is ended!

As far as I'm concerned, child abuse must stop: children's bones shouldn't be broken and their flesh burned by their parents, children shouldn't be used by adults to fulfill their sexual fantasies, children shouldn't be sold into prostitution or other forced labor, and so on, on and on. Nor should children be mentally abused, with ideas about ghosts and gods and threats of eternal punishment in Hell. All of it should stop. And if deMause is right, if the result of giving every child in the world the love and encouragement every child deserves is the end of physical violence including wars, then so much the better!

Methods to test deMause's hypothesis seem clear and costs seem relatively small. The "experiments" should start at small scales, be designed by statisticians, psychologists, and sociologists, and should expand only when data from earlier experiments are thoroughly evaluated. The basic idea for such experiments would be "simply" to apply MacFarland's Boulder, Colorado experiences (and the Swedish "No Spank" experience) at other locations, but with better statistical analyses of the data, including comparisons of data from "test locations" (e.g., Boulder and Sweden) with data from nearby "control locations" (e.g., Fort Collins and Norway, respectively). In the US, perhaps the first experiments should start with children and parents at two different sets of K-12 schools within the same school district, then move on to different school districts and cities within the same state, and then move on to different states. In each case, care should be taken to monitor, also, the "life history" of children whose parents refused to participate in the "good-parenting experiments", for religious or other reasons.

Yet, even if deMause is correct, it would obviously take at least a generation (and probably at least 50 years, until the “better bred” children become national leaders) for loving child-care to result in significantly diminished large-scale violence, such as the violence that has been occurring for at least the past 60 years in the former land of the Canaanites, subsequently called Palestine, and now appropriately called “the Israeli-Palestinian mess”. But, Dear, if you can see how to clean-up the Israeli-Palestinian mess in a time period shorter than the ~50 years needed for deMause’s hypothesis to be tested, then I essentially guarantee that you’ll be awarded a Nobel Peace Prize. When I was president of our high school’s UN club, more than 50 years ago, we sought solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian mess. We couldn’t identify one; I still can’t.

Ideologically, each side is led by its own set of con-artist clerics who have brainwashed their followers into “believing” that the creator of the universe supports them (and therefore, their clerics). Each set of clerics has indoctrinated their followers in such nonsense by using incessant propaganda, forced on the people since childhood. Thus, the Zionists “believe” that Yahweh gave the land to them, and the Islamists “believe” that Allah gave the land to them. In reality, though, each group has been sold a bill of goods by their con-artist clerics.

Realize, Dear, that in spite of what anyone thinks, yet in reality, nobody owns any land: if there’s any ownership involved, land owns people! People come and go; the land goes on. People adopt contracts and other conventions for how land can be temporarily used, but again, no one owns any land – at most, people own some (temporary) social contract specifying how some land can be used. Furthermore, social contracts for land use (especially the poor farmland of the Middle East) should no longer be of much significance.

In contrast, ten thousand and more years ago, during the hunter-gatherer phase of human development, such contracts were critical: another tribe taking game from your hunting area would mean war; the invaders were taking meat from your family. Five thousand years ago, after the agricultural revolution, again such contracts were critical: someone crazing his sheep on your cereal crop would mean war; the invaders were taking bread from your family. Since the industrial revolution and now during the information age, however, contracts for how land is used are almost

irrelevant: if you develop a faster computer chip or similar, then you'll have the means to buy meat from Argentina and wheat from Canada.

The above analysis, however, is appropriate only for developed nations, and although Israel may now be a modern nation in which land for food production is relatively unimportant, the Palestinian Arabs (in general) are still in the agricultural era, courtesy their backward clerics. Furthermore, although it's correct that land, itself, doesn't have the significance that it did in earlier eras, what's now at least as significant as it was in earlier times (if not more so) is the power to define "the laws of the land". For example, given the horrors that have been perpetrated against the poor Jewish people during the past 2,000 years, they understandably seek to control an area where they have the power to define their own social contract.

Realize, also, that all life claims the right to exist. If you meet a rattlesnake in the desert, Dear, it'll claim its right to exist just as stubbornly as you claim yours. A fundamental interpersonal moral principle is to grant all people the equal right to claim their own existence; some Buddhists recognize that equal right for all life. The Nazis claimed and, following the Quran, many Muslims still claim that Jews don't have the right to exist; understandably, Jews disagreed and still disagree; therefore, they've taken control of a (pathetically little) area where they do their best to ensure that they will continue to exist. One can question the wisdom of the Jewish people choosing a homeland filled with so many rattlesnakes, but those who choose to question their right to exist do so at their own peril.

Thus, in the case of what was once Canaanite land, two groups (the Zionists and Arabs) are seeking to be the one group that controls the "social order", vying for the reins of power to define social contracts, incidentally defining land usage, predominantly defining the rules by which the people will live, and preeminently for the Jews, claiming their right to exist. In this case, conflict resolution seems essentially impossible, given that the desired social orders and the levels of developments of the two groups are so disparate and given that the Muslim's "holy book" states that Jews don't have the right to exist, whereas the Jews disagree. At present, separation of the two groups seems to be the only possible solution – a separation that the Muslims, in their present and near-term state of development won't accept (or even, are not mentally capable of accepting); therefore, they'll react with violence. Understandably, the Jews will retaliate in kind.

Thereby, maybe deMause is right: maybe the only solution is for children to be reared knowing love, and therefore able to adopt to change and with the predisposition to avoid violence. If he's right, maybe the option that should be pursued is to ensure that all children born in the area (whether Muslim or Jew, but especially Muslim children) learn from their mother the meaning of 'love', opening the possibility (when the children become adults) for them to be mature enough to welcome change. Certainly transformation is needed, certainly there's need for the people to smarten up, but in the near term, the chances of their changing and smartening up seem slim, since both sides are rife with programmed automatons and since parents on both sides indoctrinate their children in the same religious balderdash in which they were indoctrinated.

Therefore, Dear, my assessment is that the only way to clean up the Israeli-Palestinian mess is to promote change, with the prime goal of transforming all theists in the region to Humanists, and thereby, to exterminate both the Zionists and the Islamists – not exterminate the people, but instead, exterminate their ignorances, i.e., exterminate the god meme, replacing clerical methods with the scientific method, so all people hold their beliefs only as strongly as relevant evidence warrants. When the people are willing to accept change (and maybe, as deMause concluded, that will require new, loving, child-rearing practices), when the people see all humans as members of the same human family, when the people realize that they have the power to rule (power that they were hoodwinked into giving to the clerics and their fictitious gods), then I expect that it'll be relatively easy to settle relatively insignificant social contracts, defining how the relatively poor land will be temporarily used and with everyone accepting that all people have equal rights to claim their own existences.

To get there from here, however, will be a long, hard struggle, requiring enormous political change. At present, Israel is a thorn in the sides of all Muslim rulers: they see (and they don't want their people to see) how a quasi-democratic, quasi-scientific, quasi-modern society can succeed in the Middle East. [I added all those "quasi-s", because a backward religious group in Israel still has substantial power.] If Muslims had an opportunity to think about consequences to themselves of having governments in their countries similar to Israel's *versus* being ruled by theocrats (e.g., in Iran), autocrats (e.g., in Egypt and Syria), or collusions of the two (e.g., in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan...), then concerned most about their own "thrival", Muslims would almost certainly choose to change to democratic systems.

Most concerned about their own “thrival”, however, Muslim rulers (including clerics) understandably resist such change and use all propaganda apparatus at their disposal to vilify the Jews. In the resulting propaganda campaign, the rulers use the Arab Palestinians as pawns: the goal of the rulers is not “justice for the Palestinians” but maintenance of the *status quo* (with them still in power). Conveniently for the rulers, Islam provides abundant support for such vilification of the Jews, and as a result, the poor Muslim people, bombarded by propaganda from their rulers and clerics, essentially never get an opportunity to think for themselves.

To extricate the Muslims and Jews from such a “godly mess”, once again the key is almost certainly education, starting with the free-flow of information in “the Muslim world” and teaching children the essence of critical- (or scientific-) thinking. But as I already tried to address in earlier chapters, the impediments to creating such “open societies” are massive, starting with the barriers erected by all clerics and dictatorial rulers to maintain their own power, keeping the people scientifically illiterate. Slowly, however, modern communications are eroding such barriers. Step by slow step, clerical power is diminishing, and if nuclear or biological war can be avoided, then within your lifetime, peace may yet breakout in the Middle East.

In later **X**-chapters (dealing with EXperimental and EXtraterritorial Cooperatives), I’ll include comments on possible new governing schemes for the Middle East. Before getting to that, however, I want to return to possible methods for solving the difficult task of exterminating the god meme. In most of the remaining **X**-chapters, I’ll offer some suggestions about how that might be accomplished. Before turning to those topics, though, you should get some exercise.