

RESEARCH INTO VIOLENT BEHAVIOR: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

HEARINGS
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TESTIMONY OF DR. DAVID G. GIL, BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Hearings on "Research Into Violent Behavior" before the Subcommittee on Domestic and International Scientific Planning, Analysis, and Cooperation (DISPAC) of the Committee on Science and Technology, U.S. House of Representatives. February 14, 1978.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for inviting me to testify before you. My name is David Gil. I am professor of social policy at the Heller Graduate School, Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass.

In your invitation you asked me to: (1) summarize past research I conducted on domestic violence; (2) describe my current work, including the connection between societal violence and household violence; (3) comment on major problems I see in government policy concerning research in this area; and (4) suggest ways in which to ameliorate these deficiencies. My comments will address these four points.

1. Past Research: Violence Against Children

In the late sixties, at the request of the Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of HEW, I undertook a series of nation-wide studies on physical abuse of children. These studies were the first systematic investigation of this destructive phenomenon on a nationwide scale. Findings and recommendations were published in my book Violence Against Children (Harvard University Press 1970). I discussed the findings in testimony before the Subcommittee on Children and Youth, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare of the U.S. Senate on March 26, 1973. Briefly, these findings were that violent behavior towards children does not result merely from psychological disturbances of perpetrators as is often assumed. Rather, it is a multi-dimensional phenomenon rooted in the complex fabric of our society and culture. The following were identified as the roots of child abuse in our society:

- our social philosophy and values which place material and economic development before human development, and which cause our institutions to treat humans as means or "factors" toward material and economic growth rather than as ends and masters of material and economic processes;
- our failure to define the rights of children, unambiguously as humans entitled to free and full development, to pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness, and to all the protections guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, including the inviolability of one's body and soul;
- our cultural sanction, and even encouragement, to use physical force and corporal punishment in child-rearing in the home, in schools, and in various child care settings; (the U.S. Supreme Court reinforced this cultural sanction last year);
- our historic acceptance of force and violence as proper means for dealing with conflicts on interpersonal, inter-group, and international levels, and our fascination with, and subtle glorification of, violent acts and aggressive behavior;
- multiple strains, stresses and frustrations in our everyday life, especially at our workplaces, due largely to competitive and hierarchical social dynamics, and to successes and failures within that context. Many related phenomena with which child abuse is associated, such as unemployment, poverty, discrimination, physical and mental ill-health, addictions, crime, etc. are all manifestations of this context.

2. Current Work: Societal Violence and Household Violence

The search for approaches to overcome domestic violence at its roots has led me in recent years into a systematic exploration of linkages among social values, social policies, societal institutions and violence. As a result of these studies I came to view violence as acts and conditions which obstruct the spontaneous unfolding of innate human potential, the inherent human drive toward development and self-actualization. Such acts and conditions occur on interpersonal, institutional, and societal levels. On the interpersonal level, individuals may act violently toward one another using physical

and psychological means. They may also establish conditions which deprive, exploit, and oppress others, and consequently obstruct their development. On the institutional level, organizations such as schools, hospitals, welfare agencies, and business enterprises, may through their policies and practices disregard developmental requirements of people and subject them consequently to conditions which inhibit the unfolding of their potential. Such policies and practices may be intentional or by default. Finally, on the societal level, legitimate institutional patterns and dynamics may result in poverty, discrimination, unemployment, illness, etc., which inevitably inhibit the development of some individuals and groups.

To distinguish collective from personal violence, I refer to conditions and acts obstructing development which originate on institutional and societal levels as "structural violence." Structural violence is usually a "normal," ongoing condition inherent in socially sanctioned practices, whereas personal violence involves usually acts which transcend formal, social sanctions. Personal and structural violence should not be viewed as separate phenomena, however. Rather, they should be understood as symptoms of the same social context, i.e., the same values, institutions, consciousness, and dynamics. Personal and structural violence always interact with and reinforce one another. Personal violence is usually "reactive violence" rooted in structural violence, since experiences which obstruct a person's development will often result in stress and frustration, and in an urge to retaliate by inflicting violence on others. Structural violence thus tends to breed reactive violence on the personal level, leading to chain reactions with successive victims becoming agents of violence. Chains of violent behavior and attitudes on the personal level will, in turn, feed back into collective attitudes which reinforce structural violence.

Families as Agents and Arenas of Violence

Families are agents of biological and social reproduction. Another important task of families is to restore emotional stability when their members experience psychological strains in formal settings of everyday life.

Social reproduction refers to processes through which children are prepared for adulthood. When personal violence and structural violence are normal aspects of adult life in a society, families along with other agents of socialization, such as schools, reading materials, TV, and radio, will teach these tendencies and capacities to children through "normal" child rearing and socialization practices, which include games, sports, cognitive learning, emotional milieu and relations, rewards, punishments, etc.

Restoration of emotional stability emerged as a necessary family function when people encountered emotionally unsettling experiences outside their homes, at places of work and in other formal settings of mass-societies, where humans are usually treated in an impersonal, dehumanizing, alienating manner. Families are now expected to compensate their members for these emotionally taxing experiences. They have become balance wheels or lightening rods for the stresses and strains of everyday life, normative settings for uninhibited discharge of feelings of hurt, insult, frustration, anger, and reactive violence, feelings which originate mostly outside the family, but can usually not be discharged at their places of origin. People tend to express and act out these feelings at home, rather than at their places of work or in other formal settings for several reasons. First, families are informal settings suited to emotional exchanges among members. Next, society in general, and law enforcement authorities in particular, tend to refrain from involvement in family tensions and conflicts. Risks of punitive sanctions are, therefore, limited. Finally, people tend to spend more time with their families than in formal settings, and time spent with the family tends to be less structured.

Propositions Linking Violence and Families

The discussion, so far, has led to the following related, general propositions:

1. Violence is human-originated conditions and actions which obstruct human development throughout the life cycle.
2. Violence, as understood here, may be a result of societal dynamics--"structural violence," of acts of individuals--"personal violence," and of interactions between societal and individual dynamics.
3. Human development tends to be obstructed when inherent biological, psychological, and social needs are frustrated or oversatiated beyond a level of tolerance. (That level of tolerance varies among individuals and groups).
4. Whether, and to what extent, human needs are met in a particular society depends on its social policies concerning resource-management, work, production, and rights-distribution, and on the values and consciousness, which shape and are recreated by these policies. These policies and values determine the quality of life and of human relations in societies, and, hence, the scope and limits of human development and self-actualization.

5. When a society's normal institutional processes consistently frustrate human needs and, consequently, obstruct human development, energy thus blocked by "structural violence," will often erupt as reactive, personal violence among individuals and groups.

6. Individuals will frequently discharge violent feelings and impulses in the informal setting of their families, rather than in more formal societal settings where these feelings often originate.

7. Families will often endure discharges of displaced, personal violence from their members, as they are now settings for restoring the emotional balance of individuals who encounter unsettling experiences away from home, in the normal course of every-day life.

8. Personal violence discharged within families will often set in motion chain reactions of violence within and beyond families.

9. Families serve as unwitting agents of structural violence in societies in which personal violence and submission to structural violence are normal aspects of life. In such societies, families tend to stress hierarchical patterns, irrational, arbitrary authority, discipline, and punishment including corporal punishment--patterns and practices which transmit to children attitudes and capacities they will require as adults in societies permeated with structural violence.

It follows from these propositions, that if violence is to be overcome in a society and its families, obstructions to the unfolding of human potential need to be eliminated, and the institutional order needs to be transformed into a non-violent one in which all people can freely meet their intrinsic biological, social, and psychological needs, and which is, therefore, conducive to human self-actualization.

Many contemporary societies are, regrettably permeated with structural violence, and so is the existing international order. Since my experiences and studies of these issues are limited largely to the United States, I will examine here structural obstructions to human development in our country. To prevent misunderstandings, however, I hasten to note, that structural and personal violence are and have been prevalent in many societies whose institutional orders are similar to, and different from, that of the United States.

Structural Violence in the United States: An Institutional Analysis

To understand the scope for human development, and the dynamics of structural violence obstructing that scope, in particular societies,

one must examine the following key processes of human existence: management of resources, organization of work and production and distribution of rights; and one must inquire into the nature of dominant societal values.

Development and Control of Resources: A central feature of resource management in the United States is private ownership and control, by individuals and corporations, of most life-sustaining and life-enhancing, productive resources, including land, other natural resources, energy, human-created means of production, and human-generated knowledge, technology, and skills. Owners are relatively free from societal controls in the use of their resources. That use is directed, primarily, toward generating profits by producing goods and services for sale in markets, and investing parts of the profits in order to expand one's share in the ownership and control of society's productive resources. Thus a major objective of ownership is to use what one owns and controls in a continuous process of further accumulation and concentration of property. Meeting needs of people is not a direct objective of ownership and production but only an indirect, hypothetical consequence. Early economic theorists assumed that in "free markets," open competition among many self-interested, owner-producers would result in improvements of products and productivity, decline of prices and of the rate of profit, satisfaction of people's needs rather than merely of "effective demand," and stability and equilibrium of markets.

Actual developments in the United States did, however, not follow the theories of "classical" economists, nor the more refined theories of "neo-classical" economists. The dynamics of profit, acquisitiveness, accumulation, and concentration resulted in gradual elimination from major markets of many small owner-producers who failed in competition and whose resources were absorbed by the winners. Moreover, large segments of the population, including freed slaves, never owned sufficient amounts of productive resources, to participate on fair terms in market competition. At the present time, a significant majority of the population in the United States is property-less as far as control over productive resources is concerned, while a minority owns and controls almost all the productive resources. The majority depends consequently on the minority for access to, and use of, productive resources necessary for their survival. Oligopolies have, by now, effectively replaced whatever "free enterprise" existed in the past, in most important industries, and the economy is dominated by giant, national and multi-national corporations, the results of mergers and conglomerations, whose economic resources and corresponding political influence enable them to control markets, horizontally and vertically.

Products of modern corporations are continuously being modified, yet their quality is not being improved significantly, and wasteful obsolescence is often built into them, forcing repairs and replacements, and assuring continuous profits. Prices and profits tend to increase, and needs for goods and services of large segments of the population remain unmet, while many workers are unemployed and productive capacity remains under-utilized. These latter phenomena are compensated partly by massive, wasteful production for present and future, hot and cold wars, which are being fought to assure markets for economic expansion and steady sources for relatively cheap raw materials and labor. Yet in spite of compensatory tactics, the economy moves from crisis to crisis, rather than towards stability and equilibrium.

A further aspect of resource management which also results from the primacy of the profit motive, is an all-pervasive, exploitative attitude, reflected in widespread waste of human potential, materials, and energy, and in frequently irreversible damage to the biosphere, as direct and indirect consequences of patterns of production and consumption.

Summing up the discussion of resource management, one is forced to conclude that when decisions concerning resources and concerning types, quantities, and quality of products, are shaped largely by profit criteria, intrinsic human needs will not be met when meeting them is not profitable, and new, non-intrinsic needs will be stimulated by manipulative advertising when doing so is profitable. Also, while "effective demand" by wealthy population segments for luxury goods and services will be satisfied, genuine needs of poor population segments for essential goods and services will remain unmet--an important aspect of structural violence.

Organization of Work and Production: To understand the destructive consequences of the prevailing organization of work and production in the United States on human development, creativity and self-actualization, one needs to relate the current context to the original functions and meanings of work. Work evolved as a rational response to human needs, motivated by an innate drive to satisfy these needs. It became a condition of human survival, self-reliance, independence, and freedom. "Work" used to mean all mental and physical activities through which humans produce life-sustaining and enhancing goods and services from their environments, and it involved the integrated use of intellectual and physical capacities to conceive and design solutions to existential problems, and to try out, implement, and evaluate these solutions in the material world. It also involved the study and use by workers themselves of accumulated,

transferable human experience, knowledge, and skills relevant to their crafts. Being rooted in intrinsic human needs and drives, and being a central aspect of human existence, work is affected by, and affects, human emotions. Work has therefore, a significant psychological component and has evolved into a major constituent of human consciousness. Hence, it has implications for self-discovery, self-definition, self-expression, and self-actualization of humans, and for their relations to one another.

In a dynamic sense, work and production means to combine past and present human capacities with natural resources, in order to transform these resources into products needed by humans. To work requires, therefore, access to, and use of, natural and human-created, concrete and abstract resources, including past discoveries, inventions, science, technology, tools, and other material products. To think of work apart from this fundamental requirement of using resources, results, inevitably, in conceptual confusion. On this issue, an analysis of work in the United States intersects with the preceding analysis of resource control. That analysis revealed, that the majority of the population is legally prevented from engaging in self-directed work to pursue their survival and development as they do not have the right of access to, and use of, necessary productive resources, most of which are owned and controlled by a small minority. The propertyless majority of potential workers is thus dependent on securing employment from the minority, the owners of most productive resources, and on "selling" to the owners their physical and mental capacities. In exchange for selling their productive capacities in the "labor market," workers receive wages, equivalent in value to a mere fraction of the goods and services they produce, while the remainder is kept by the owners of productive resources as legitimate profits.

The propertyless majority is not merely prevented from working independently, but also lacks an effective right to employment. For the scope of available employment, as all other economic decisions, depends, primarily, on criteria of profit which is usually enhanced when a reserve pool of unemployed workers compete for scarce jobs. A surplus of workers in the market makes it easier for owners and managers to hold the line on wages and to assure discipline, submissiveness, and conformity in workplaces, in spite of the dehumanizing and alienating quality of most existing jobs.

The professional jargon of economists refers to workers as "factors of production employed by capital." There is no more revealing language to describe the antagonistic, exploitative, and alienating nature of the relationship between property owners and propertyless employees. The latter are considered and treated as means to the ends of the former, not as dignified subjects in their own rights, as self-reliant masters of their destiny and proud masters of production.

Work is now designed and subdivided into minute, repetitive operations, in a manner that denies workers democratic self-direction and the integrated use of their intellectual, emotional, and physical capacities, and transforms them from craftsmen into servants of machines. Whether they work with their hands or their heads, workers must always carry out someone else's instructions, since responsibilities for designing and monitoring products and work processes have been separated from persons doing the actual work. Hence, on the job, workers are not whole, fully developed and developing human beings. Only part of them is bought and used, a specific function. Employees are thus not only exploited in an economic sense by being deprived of a major share of the products; they are also oppressed psychologically, because of the dehumanizing dynamics of the prevailing organization of production which obstructs, i.e., violates, the unfolding of their capacities in the work context.

A further feature of the division of labor and organization of production in the United States is finely graded hierarchical structures which foster competition for advancement among members and segments of the workforce, inhibit solidarity among workers, and consequently protect the established order and its property and power relations. Consciousness shaped within these competitive, hierarchical contexts causes people to strive, selfishly, for upward mobility, and blinds them to the futility of these strivings in the aggregate. Human relations and experiences in competitive, hierarchical settings are deeply frustrating, since everyone is perceived as everyone else's potential adversary and ends up lonely and isolated: for oneself and by oneself. Selfish competition for entering the workforce in order to survive, and for advancing within it in order to improve one's lot has become also a major source of prejudice and discrimination on the basis of sex, age, race, ethnicity, religion, etc.

It is important to realize that the exploitative and alienating dynamics of work in the United States affect and trap nearly everyone in and outside the workforce, and not only economically deprived segments of the population. Unemployed and marginally employed workers, and workers who lack significant skills suffer objective economic hardships and social and psychological alienation, while steadily employed workers, be they technicians, professionals, academics, or administrators, may be less affected by objective, material deprivation, yet their social and psychological alienation is as real, if not more so, than that of the former group.

In summary, this discussion of work and production in the United States reveals that when workers are prevented from using productive resources freely, on their own responsibility, and under their own direction, and when labor is sub-divided into hierarchies of

largely meaningless "jobs," work loses its original, rational, potentially enriching and self-actualizing quality, and is transformed into forced and dehumanizing labor which obstructs human development. It is no longer aimed directly at the satisfaction of biological, psychological, and social needs of workers, but at securing wages, i.e., purchasing power in markets whose goods and services are produced and sold to generate profits, rather than to satisfy intrinsic human needs. Rational, productive behavior, rooted in a logic of human survival, development, and enhancement of the quality of life for all, has been replaced by essentially irrational, pseudo-productive activities, rooted in the internal logic of capitalist dynamics, according to which the perceived interests and profits of a minority are more important than the satisfaction of human needs and the unfolding of the inherent human potential of the entire population.

Socialization: Analysis of work and production needs to shed light also on the processes through which children are prepared for roles as citizens, workers, and "surplus people." Settings for these processes are schools and families. Schools, from nursery through graduate and professional, are formal mechanisms, and families are informal training grounds, for the reproduction of work-force and an unemployed labor reserve.

Schools carry out their function mainly by shaping the consciousness and mind-sets of students within authoritarian, hierarchical structures which resemble, in many ways, the structures and dynamics of workplaces. Schools foster competitive dynamics and inculcate values, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies appropriate for adjustment to the prevailing reality of workplaces. Development of intellect, critical thought, talents, imagination, creativity, and individuality are usually minor objectives of schooling, since only small segments of the workforce are expected to use intellect and talents at work, and to be self-directing, imaginative and creative, while most workers are expected to be conforming organization-people, rather than independent, fully developed individuals.

Schools put emphasis on identifying the select few whom they channel into superior educational settings, e.g. elite colleges and universities. For the multitude of students, however, who are steered into average and below average educational tracks, schools serve essentially as holding patterns until as "graduates" or "drop-outs" they are ready to enter the various layers of mindless jobs of the existing work structure, the armed forces, or the pacified cadres of the unemployed. What schools do for most young people does not fit the euphemism "education." It is more appropriately described

as massive waste and destruction of human potential, or, in the terms used here, disguised violence. This is certainly not the conscious intent of teachers and others laboring hard in schools; but it is, nevertheless, the inevitable, aggregate outcome of schooling in the United States, as long as the established division of labor and the design of work do not require fully developed, creative, and self-directing human beings, but mainly conforming and mindless "factors of production."

It is often assumed, erroneously, that the selection process in schools is determined by objective, scientific measurements of human capacities, and that most students are guided into adult roles fitting their inherent potential. Yet, in spite of supposedly fair tests and guidance, the aggregate results of the student selection process seem biased in favor of students from socially and economically privileged strata. These aggregate results of the educational and occupational selection process seem to be mediated in the United States through experiences in families and schools in socially and occupationally homogeneous neighborhoods. Schools in different neighborhoods vary in style, expectations, and aspirations, and although they may have similar formal curricula, their subtle messages and their milieu will nevertheless vary significantly, and will reflect the dominant social reality of people living in their respective neighborhoods and communities. This aspect of homelife and schooling assures that the workforce is reproduced not only in its entirety, but that every layer is reproduced largely on its own social turf.

Families and schools interact and mutually reinforce their respective contributions to the process of social reproduction based on intergenerational continuity. As a result, children will end up within social, economic, and occupational ranges similar to those of their parents, although some individuals will transcend this general pattern and will thus reinforce the myths and illusions of democratic meritocracy, equal opportunity, and free mobility. The general pattern however has little to do with the actual distribution of innate capacities among children, nor does it reflect preferences of poor families and occupationally marginal workers and their children. Rather this pattern reflects powerful and durable dynamics which permeate societies stratified by wealth, occupation, and social prestige, dynamics which subtly force families and schools to play unwitting roles in reproducing a hierarchically structured workforce out of correspondingly structured social strata.

Distribution of Rights: The roots of rights are human needs, the more intense of which, such as needs for food and human relations, are natural in origin. However, which and whose needs will be satisfied out of a society's aggregate wealth, on what terms, when, and to what extent, depends always on societal choices. In short, rights are explicit or implicit societal sanctions, for satisfaction of specific human needs of certain individuals and groups, out of society's concrete and symbolic resources.

In the United States, biological, psychological, social, economic, civil and political rights tend to be linked directly or indirectly to the prevailing distribution of control over productive resources, and the organization of work and production. The overall result of these links among resources, work, and rights is that the majority of the population who do not own productive resources and who depend on employment provided by owners, tend to be relatively disadvantaged in the distribution of every kind of right.

Rights to material goods and services are distributed in the United States mainly through market mechanisms, which means that those who can afford the price have an effective right to purchase the goods and services they desire. Purchasing power, a function of wealth, earned and unearned income, and credit, is, therefore, a rough index of rights available to individuals and groups. This index is certainly valid for such items as food, housing, clothing, health care, transportation, education beyond publically provided schooling, recreation, etc., all of which are usually available for purchase, rather than as entitlements provided as public services. Only the most deprived segments of the population whose purchasing power falls below a defined level, are entitled to receive limited, and often inferior shares of these items from public welfare agencies.

Wealth, a major source of purchasing power, and hence of rights, tends to be highly concentrated. To illustrate, in the United States, in 1972, one percent of the population owned 56.5 percent of all corporate stock, and six percent owned 72.7 percent.* For the majority of the population, those without significant shares of wealth, money-income is consequently, the main, and frequently the only, source of purchasing power. Credit, another important factor of purchasing power, tends to be related to wealth and income, and need not be examined separately here.

* The New York Times, July 30, 1976.

Perhaps the most pervasive, taken for granted, yet least acknowledge aspect, of "making a living" in the United States by generating income and accumulating wealth is the selfish, competitive, manipulative-pragmatic, and thoroughly dehumanizing quality of these activities. To be sure, there are codes of civility and fairness which supposedly govern these processes, codes which are meant to soften and counter-balance the underlying dynamics of a jungle mentality. Yet these codes tend to be enforced primarily toward less powerful players in the competitive game of "making a living," while the more powerful actors possess, and often use, the means (money and lawyers), to get around the codes. For what matters in the end is the "bottomline," and arguments for decency, morality, and constraints tend to be considered utopian, unrealistic, impractical, old-fashioned, non-assertive, chicken-hearted, unmanly, etc.

For most people income means wages or salaries, specific rewards for holding specific jobs. Different jobs command different levels of rewards, differences which are often assumed to reflect different levels of specialization, preparation, effort, risks, difficulties, etc., but which upon analysis appear to be related largely to social power and the internal logic and dynamics of competition. Most people prefer better paying jobs and the wider scope of effective rights attached to such jobs. People will, therefore, compete ruthlessly, for scarce jobs, and for promotions to even scarcer, better paying jobs. As competition for jobs becomes a way of life, those involved in it, come to relate to one another antagonistically, as objects to be used for selfish ends and overcome in competition. Such relations among people are the general model for success in the "rational" drive for "better" jobs, larger incomes, and a broader scope of effective rights but they are also the general model for all violence. One can thus not avoid two related conclusions, (1) that latent, and often not so latent, inter-personal violence is an essential, though not sufficient, requirement for success in the competition for incomes and rights, and (2) that legitimate rights in competitively organized societies tend to be rooted in latent or manifest violence.

The foregoing conclusions are reinforced when one examines the history of wealth accumulation, the most potent source of rights. In the United States, the roots of this accumulation are complex processes of large-scale appropriations and expropriations of land and other resources. Without systematic, forceful expropriations which began in colonial times, a small minority could never have achieved the present levels of accumulation and concentration of wealth. This was not a voluntary process, as far as its victims are concerned, but was accompanied by overt and covert force and violence, until its results were eventually rationalized, sanctified, and legitimated ex-post-facto. Once legitimated, accumulation through

expropriation changed from a lawless, violent process into lawful, violent conditions or structures. To maintain the status-quo, continue the process of accumulation, and provide it with an appearance of legitimacy, two complementary processes were gradually perfected: (1) a system of socialization-indoctrination, to shape people's consciousness and assure "voluntary" adjustment to the structural violence of the established order, and (2) a constant presence of latent, potential force and violence, often referred to euphemistically, as a system of law-enforcement and criminal justice, to enforce compliance when socialization proves inadequate.

Violence was not only essential to initiate, defend, and maintain the process of accumulation of wealth. As indicated in the analysis of work and production, structural violence is also an essential aspect of preparing and controlling a workforce and a labor reserve pool which together assure the continuation of the accumulation process. Once more, it is inconceivable for humans to lend themselves voluntarily to the prevailing, dehumanizing and exploitative work processes, which are the norm in the United States. This paradox is explained by the fact that submission to the prevailing context of work is the lesser of two evils. The only available alternative for most people is unemployment, lack of income and purchasing power, and a severe reduction of the scope of rights. What is celebrated as "free" labor is thus in reality a sophisticated variation on slavery, assured by the lack of viable alternatives. One is led to the same conclusion as before: the ongoing process of accumulating wealth through the "voluntary" work of forced labor depends on the presence of structural violence and potentially overt violence; were this violence removed, people would not voluntarily participate in the process of wealth accumulation for a minority, but would take control of their own lives and of society's resources, and would redesign production in accordance with their real human needs.

Having concluded that in the United States, the drive for effective rights through income from jobs and through accumulation of wealth involves a dehumanizing mentality and overt and covert violence, it is now necessary to note some results of this drive. The lop-sidedness of wealth distribution requires no further discussion, but some comments concerning the distribution of income are indicated.

Whatever yardsticks one chooses to describe the distribution of income, several facts stand out clearly. Incomes of large segments of the population fall below government defined levels of poverty and adequacy, which means levels precluding the purchase of adequate food, housing, and clothing, health care and education, transportation

and recreation, etc. In 1975, 26 million people, about one in eight persons or over 12 percent of the United States population, were classified by the government as "poor." Their incomes were about one-third of the Low Budget defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. During the same year, about thirty percent of the population lived in households with incomes below the Low Urban Family Budget of \$9,588. In many of these families, one or more persons were employed full time, yet in spite of this, incomes did not exceed poverty or marginal levels. President Roosevelt noted in 1932 that "one-third of the nation were ill-fed, ill-clad, and ill-housed," which, based on the foregoing sketch seems to be an ongoing condition in the United States in spite, or perhaps due to, a plethora of welfare-state programs.

Income levels, purchasing power, and scope of rights were probably worst for the unemployed and their families, about eight million or 7.5 percent of the workforce throughout 1976 and 1977 by official count, and for additional millions who are no longer counted in the workforce, and who must exist on meager support from welfare agencies. To round out this sketch of income insufficiency as a measure of rights deprivation, one needs to note that the figures quoted here, refer to the total U.S. population. When one examines the situation of certain minority groups, the incidence of income insufficiency and of deprivation of rights is significantly higher.

It seems hardly necessary to note that individuals of all ages, whose rights to material necessities are as limited as reflected in this sketch, are likely to experience obstructions of varying intensity to the free unfolding of their innate human potential: they are constantly confronting structural violence which undermines their bodies, minds, and souls.

Economic and biological rights, i.e., rights to material goods and services are fundamental in terms of human survival and development. Yet social, psychological, civil and political rights are not less important in existential-humanistic terms. These rights, though less concrete and more symbolic, are nevertheless as real as economic rights, and being deprived of them is likely to have equally destructive consequences for the unfolding of human potential.

Social recognition, human dignity, and social prestige tend to accrue in the United States to individuals and groups who possess material wealth, and to those who receive relatively large incomes related to knowledge and skills, such as professionals, académicians, administrators, some skilled crafts people, political leaders, athletes, artists, etc. The multitude of propertyless, low-skilled

and unskilled, workers and unemployed on the other hand, receive relatively little or no recognition, dignity, prestige, and income. Social relations, intercourse, and participation tend to be stratified by wealth and prestige. Those who are wealthy and prestigious associate with one another and avoid social intercourse with those who are materially and socially less advantaged or deprived. Less advantaged groups tend to follow the same patterns of social relations, participation, and segregation, stratum by stratum. These tendencies are reflected in residential patterns, social clubs, schools, and even religious congregations, all of which tend to be segregated by economic and social criteria. Racial segregation is merely one aspect of social and economic segregation, yet frequently, the only form of segregation addressed by public policy. The result of these dynamics of social relations, participation, and segregation is a deeply divided society, not just by skin-color, as noted by a Presidential Commission on Civil Disorders in 1967, but along multiple, social and economic lines.

The pursuit of individual identity, self-expression, and self-actualization is less tied to wealth and income than other social and psychological rights, although a minimum level of economic security seems essential before individuals develop a sense of individuality, and self-worth, and are motivated to search for self-expression and self-actualization. Yet the issue of individuality, self-expression, and self-actualization defies simple, material solutions. In the United States, it seems, that wealthy and privileged individuals do not attain satisfaction of these innate human needs to a significantly larger extent than poor persons and persons with adequate incomes. One is therefore, forced to conclude that the right to become an individual in the fullest sense, to explore, unfold, and express one's innate potential, and actualize oneself, has been sacrificed to materialistic ends, and is now effectively lost for nearly everyone. The inherently violent dynamics of competition, acquisition, domination, exploitation, and dehumanization seem to preclude the pursuit of individuality and self-actualization for everyone trapped in these dynamics, be they agents or victims of violence.

Civil rights, individual liberties, and due process are in theory distributed equally in the United States, yet in reality it is more difficult for economically and socially disadvantaged individuals and groups to know, claim, and exercise these rights than it is for more privileged ones. Moreover, prevailing competitive dynamics among multiply divided, antagonistic groups tend to result in biased attitudes and discriminatory practices which interfere with the exercise of civil rights of economically and socially deprived,

and discriminated against groups. Actual practices concerning civil rights in the United States reveal that these rights are not separable from the economic and social context as is often assumed erroneously, and that true equality of liberty depends on equality of economic, social and political rights. As for political rights, such as access to information relevant to one's existence, participation in decisions affecting one's life, and sharing responsibilities for public affairs, these too tend to be distributed in the United States in association with economic power and social rights. Similarly to civil rights, political rights are in theory distributed equally in a democracy, yet the same forces and processes which interfere with the exercise of equal civil rights, result also in a skewed distribution of political rights and power.

Values: The dominant values in the United States, which shape, and are reinforced by, policies and practices concerning resources, work, production, and rights, seem rooted in an early, unsophisticated view of human existence, according to which individuals ought to take care of their own needs and the needs of their kin. This, not unreasonable, concept of social reality led logically to attitudes, practices, and values of self-centeredness and acquisitiveness which seemed conducive to meeting the needs and ends of the self in sparsely populated environments. It also led to an attitude of suspicion toward others, especially strangers, who came to be regarded as potential threats to the self's security, as adversaries against whom one had to compete in the constant drive for life-sustaining and life-enhancing resources, and against whom one had to defend one's acquisitions and possessions. Implicit in these emerging attitudes and practices was a perception of the lives of others as less important or of lesser worth than one's own life and the lives of one's kin. This perception became the source of socially structured inequalities among people, and of the notion that others could and should be used as means for the ends of the self, rather than treated as equals, and that they can and ought to be dominated to assure their availability to serve the ends of the self.

Over many centuries and millennia, these simple, internally logical notions, and practices and experiences derived from them, as well as reinforcing them, resulted in the currently dominant value paradigm of selfishness, inequality, domination, competition, and acquisitiveness. No doubt, one can discern in the United States also a paradigm of alternative values, namely, equality, liberty, regard for the needs of others, cooperation, and sharing. However, this alternative paradigm, which derives from more sophisticated, initial,

existential assumptions, plays, for the time being, a minor role only in shaping policies, institutions, attitudes, behaviors, and human relations. Given the dominance of the former paradigm, people tend to be concerned primarily with their own needs and development. The inevitable, paradoxical result is a progressive deterioration of everyone's scope for needs-satisfaction, development, and self-actualization, an unintended consequence of competitive struggles for survival and success of all against all, and of uncritical conformity to the internal logic of the dominant paradigm. Thus in a tragic twist of fate, the individualistic pursuit of well-being seems to have turned into a certain course toward collective insanity and suicide.

A Paradigmatic Revolution Toward a Non-Violent Society

The foregoing examination of institutional patterns and values in the United States reveals that structural violence and its multi-faceted consequences are now inevitable, normal byproducts of the established way of life. Earlier I noted compelling links between structural violence and household violence, and I argued that the latter cannot be eliminated unless the former is overcome. This proposition leads to the crucial question whether, and how, structural violence can be overcome--the issue of "primary prevention."

Reason seems to suggest, and a critical study of history reveals, that human existence can be, and has often been, organized in a manner conducive to the unfolding of everyone's innate potential, which means free from structural violence. Non-violent, cooperative and egalitarian societies of varying sizes have existed throughout humankind's history as constant counterpoints to the major themes of force, violence, domination, and exploitation, and have demonstrated their feasibility and viability in various parts of the globe, among diverse peoples, and at different stages of cultural, scientific, and technological development.

Humans in such societies think of themselves as integrated into nature rather than apart from it and masters over it. They have an abiding respect for life, including human life, and they hold waste and destruction of life and of natural resources to a minimum. They consider one another of equal intrinsic worth in spite of individual differences. Hence they regard everyone's biological, social, and psychological needs of equal importance, and they treat everyone as entitled to equal rights and liberties in every sphere of life, and also subject to equal responsibilities and constraints,

the latter necessitated by scarcities of resources and by equal entitlements for all. They value individuality, self-reliance and self-direction, as well as cooperation and mutual aid in collective pursuits of survival and improvements in the quality of life. They perceive no inevitable conflicts of genuine, human interest among individuals, and between individuals and collectivities, as theirs is not a zero-sum mentality of scarcity, but a plus-sum mentality of sufficiency created by cooperation and sharing. They reject selfishness, competition, domination, and exploitation in mutual relations. Their humanistic, egalitarian, democratic philosophy of life and society seems rooted in an idea of Protagoras, an early Greek philosopher, (480-410 B.C.): "Humans are the measure of all things."

To overcome structural violence in the United States and in similarly organized societies, prevailing policies concerning resources, work, production, and rights, need to be adjusted to the foregoing humanistic, egalitarian, libertarian, democratic, cooperative, and collective values. For these values, but not their opposites, seem to be compatible with the unfolding of everyone's inherent potential, and institutions shaped by these values are, therefore, likely to be conducive to free and full individual development. I am sketching below some concrete implications which follow from this preposition, to indicate the direction in which we need to move should we chose to overcome structural violence, rather than force people to adjust to it.

1. Productive resources, be they concrete such as land, raw-materials, energy, and tools, or non-concrete such as knowledge and skills, should be liberated from prevailing, private controls and made accessible for use by all people. That use should be geared, rationally, toward meeting the needs of all humans, everywhere, those living now, and those yet to be born, with everyone's lifelong needs constituting a flexibly equal claim against the aggregate of resources. Criteria will have to be developed for priorities related to needs of different urgency, and for balancing current and future needs against requirements of conservation. Obviously also, waste, destruction and irrational uses of resources will have to be eliminated. Allocation decisions are difficult in any social context, but in a humanistic-egalitarian society these decisions can be made within a rational frame of reference, undistorted by narrow, selfish interests of powerful minority groups.

It is important to stress that, contrary to widespread assumptions, control over resources and their allocation must not be centralized and bureaucratized, to assure equal access and equal rights to needs-satisfaction. On the contrary, centralization and bureaucratization may themselves be serious obstacles to equal access and to

equal rights to needs-satisfaction, since they involve hierarchically organized structures which tend to obstruct free and full development of individuals. The principle of free access to, and egalitarian use of, resources should therefore, be implemented in a decentralized manner, involving democratic coordination and cooperation among self-directing, equally entitled, relatively small communities of producers and consumers. This means that each community should cooperatively use and control local resources, and should exchange its surplus with neighboring and distant communities on egalitarian, non-exploitative terms, so that the needs of people living in differently endowed localities can be met.

2. Work and production will have to be redesigned thoroughly to overcome the dehumanizing quality and consequences of the prevailing modes of production and subdivision of labor which are shaped primarily by profit considerations rather than by humanistic and egalitarian objectives. This means that work and production should once more become rational undertakings geared toward everyone's needs-satisfaction through the processes and products of work. Workers themselves should design, direct, and execute their work and should be thoroughly knowledgeable concerning all aspects of their work, so that they can become proud masters of their crafts, rather than merely "factors of production." Their work should not be a means toward the ends of others, but a means to sustain their own existence and enhance the quality of their lives. Given such a redesigned context of production, workers will spontaneously develop a genuine work-ethic and work motivation, in place of the prevailing forced work-ethic which is motivated largely by fears of unemployment and starvation.

Unnecessary, unproductive, and wasteful work such as advertising, banking, insurance, real estate deals, military enterprises, etc., should be eliminated gradually, so that only work necessary for human well-being and enjoyment of life will be carried out, and individuals engaging in such necessary, productive work, will be regarded with respect for their contributions to the common good. People should be able to choose freely the kind of work they want to engage in. This would require that essential work not chosen voluntarily by enough people because of undesirable, intrinsic qualities should be carried out by everyone on a rotating basis. Similarly, work preferred by too many people should also be shared by rotation among all individuals selecting it. Life-long learning will be required and enjoyed by all to keep up with developments in one's work, and to attain satisfactory mastery.

People will tend to cooperate at work when they will no longer be forced to compete for jobs and promotions, and when everyone will have effective rights and responsibilities to participate in production as

designer, decision maker, and executor. Coördination among workers and work groups should be achieved horizontally and cooperatively, rather than through vertical direction and supervision. Talents and competence of individuals should be acknowledged, and guidance from competent individuals should be sought and accepted. However, talents and competence should not become a basis for privilege, nor should knowledge and skills be monopolized. Rather, they should circulate freely, so that everyone could acquire them. Science and technology should be pursued vigorously, and disseminated widely among the population, so that workers should be able to apply scientific insights towards improvements of products and production processes.

Education and preparation for adulthood and work, in schools and at home, will be geared to everyone's full development, when a transformed mode of production will require and make use of the integrated intellectual, physical, and emotional capacities of every individual. Also, socialization at home and in the schools, will no longer need to be authoritarian competitive, and punitive, when the context of work will be democratic, cooperative, and rewarding. Finally, schools will no longer be used as holding patterns for young people: they will not be needed to disguise the real scope of unemployment.

3. Economic, social, psychological, civil, and political rights should be distributed equally as universal entitlements, rather than through markets, where larger incomes, wealth, and economic power command larger shares of all kinds of rights. The distribution of rights should thus be separated from the specific roles of people in the social division of labor, and should be based instead on people's individual needs.

It should be noted though, that, contrary to widespread misconceptions, equality of rights does not mean mathematical equality, sameness, conformity, and uniformity. Rather, it means an equal right to develop and actualize oneself, and hence, to be unique and different. An egalitarian distribution of goods and services and other rights should, therefore, involve flexibility in order to allow for differences of innate and emerging needs among individuals.

Equality of political rights should be implemented through open access to all relevant information, which requires, by implication, elimination of all secrecy concerning public affairs, and through participation in all decisions affecting one's life--direct participation in open meetings of one's community, and indirect participation on trans-local levels through a network of assemblies representing genuinely democratic communities, rather than anonymous individuals. Service on representative and administrative bodies should be rotated and should not entitle those engaged in it to privileged circumstances of living.

They should act as servants of their communities, executors of democratically evolved decisions, and not masters over people. It may be assumed that, given access to all relevant information and effective rights to participate in economic and political life, most people will develop capacities and skills to represent their communities in trans-local political assemblies, and to bring to the work on coordinating levels a perspective that integrates local and trans-local interests.

These comments on alternative values and policies concerning resources, work, production, and rights are not a detailed blueprint for humanistic, egalitarian, libertarian, democratic, non-violent societies, but merely a demonstration that such societies are not beyond the realm of reason and human possibilities, and that they are not "unrealistic" and "utopian" as is often claimed. I also wish to note that there is no single correct model for such societies, and that different human groups would have to develop their own models, fitting their individualities, by working together guided by the paradigm of alternative values.

No one can claim with certainty that paradigmatic shifts in values and institutions are not possible, since human nature and natural conditions of human habitats do not preclude such paradigmatic shifts. There is also nothing inherently inevitable about presently dominant values and institutions, nor is there anything unnatural about the radical alternatives sketched here. One is therefore led to suspect that claims concerning the impossibility of paradigmatic shifts toward humanistic, egalitarian, libertarian, democratic, and non-violent societies, reflect either ignorance or vested interests in the maintenance of the prevailing paradigm. Labelling alternative paradigms "unrealistic" and "utopian" seems to be a defensive maneuver on behalf of the dominant paradigm, as it tends to discourage people from exploring alternatives systematically before forming an opinion about their feasibility and viability. After all, who would want to waste scarce time on unrealistic and utopian projects?

If indeed, humanistic, egalitarian, libertarian, democratic, non-violent societies are not beyond the range of human possibilities, as I have argued here, then people who value the free unfolding of human potential, and who want to eliminate violence from our lives, ought to participate actively in political and philosophical movements which struggle for the emergence of such societies, in order to overcome structural violence at its roots, and to eliminate thus its "normal" consequences and symptoms, including the destructive phenomenon of household violence. In short, primary prevention of violence requires a political-philosophical process, rather than merely professional, technical, and administrative measures.

3. Major Problems in Research on Violence

My familiarity with government sponsored research on violence is limited. Hence the following observations are tentative. They are based on published research reports and conversations with researchers and government officials.

Conceptions of violence and hypotheses concerning its dynamics from which current research questions are derived tend to be symptom-oriented rather than source-oriented, descriptive rather than analytic, and fragmentary rather than comprehensive or holistic. This means that various types of violence are studied in isolation as if they were discrete phenomena, unrelated to one another and to the societal context in which all types are rooted. A recent illustration of this tendency is separate research efforts and service programs focused on violence against children and spouses.

Scholars, philosophers, and historians of science have known for a long time that one's answers can be no better than one's questions, and that the range of possible findings and answers resulting from scientific endeavors is usually determined by the manner in which research topics are defined, hypotheses are stated, and questions are formulated. Hence the value of current research on violence, and the probability of deriving from it significant findings and effective recommendations for overcoming violence, depends on the validity of the conceptions and hypotheses underlying that research. If my impressions are correct, and if indeed the conceptions, hypotheses, and foci of current research on violence are mainly symptom-oriented, descriptive, and fragmentary, then the yield to be expected from that research is insignificant and probably not worth the efforts and resources invested in it.

The symptom-oriented and fragmentary approach is not unique to research on violence. We tend to approach most social problems as if they were separate entities to be studied and dealt with in separate settings, and we create separate research and service bureaucracies for each problem. The futility and frustrating results of this approach to problems rooted in the fabric of society are well known: the problems tend to persist while the bureaucracies which study and treat them keep growing.

Another shortcoming of many research projects on violence is the tendency to disregard its multi-dimensional dynamics and to design investigations around single dimensions such as psychological, biological-genetic, etc. Such designs lead inevitably to misleading findings which reflect the academic discipline of investigators rather

than the nature of phenomena under study. This design problem too is not unique to research on violence. Uni-dimensionality is intrinsic to the prevailing departmental organization of universities, to the division of labor of the "knowledge industry," and to the resulting vested interests and myopic perspectives of competing segments within that industry. The most frequently explored dimensions in studies of violence and of social problems in general in the United States are attributes of individuals. This tendency has system-maintaining consequences as it reinforces the prevailing notion that social problems including violence result from attributes of individuals rather than from societal forces and reactions of individuals to these forces--a clear instance of blaming victims and absolving society.

One more shortcoming related to the foregoing tendencies and to the basic conceptions and hypotheses of researchers, is treating the prevailing societal context as a "constant," rather than as a cluster of "variables" when designing demonstration projects aimed at reducing and preventing the incidence of violence. Demonstration projects involve the design of experimental settings in which selected variables are modified systematically in order to achieve desired outcomes. The success of demonstration research depends, obviously, on the validity of the chosen experimental variables in terms of hypothesized outcomes. Current demonstration projects aimed at preventing violence tend to use individual rather than societal factors as experimental variables. Based on the conception of violence I have presented here, I suggest that such projects are unlikely to reduce violence significantly, unless societal factors are used as experimental variables, and are modified in accordance with hypothesized requirements of optimum human development.

4. Suggestions to Ameliorate Deficiencies in Research on Violence

Based on the foregoing critique I would suggest that research and demonstration projects should be derived from clearly articulated conceptions and hypotheses concerning the sources and dynamics of violence, and should explore processes of interaction between structural and personal violence, rather than fragments isolated from that context. This requires that research should be multi-disciplinary in order to transcend the single dimensions of separate academic disciplines, none of which can adequately interpret and deal with the multi-dimensional reality of violence. Finally, researchers should

overcome the tendency to view the prevailing social order as constant and should experimentally modify societal variables in directions expected to eliminate structural violence and to enhance conditions for the free and full unfolding of everyone's inherent potential. Such experiments, I submit, are likely to reveal effective approaches to primary prevention of personal violence and other destructive reactions to structural violence such as crime, addictions, alienation, suicide, mental and physical ill-health, etc.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you again for the opportunity to present to you my views on societal and domestic violence, and on research aimed at overcoming violence.

END