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ABSTRACT

One of 52 theoretical papers on school crime and its relation to poverty, this chapter reports that there is a growing trend in this country to blame youth crime on parental overpermissiveness. Available data fail to support this and show that all types of crime, including school crime, develop within families and school systems emphasizing aversive and athoritarian discipline techniques. Also, racism and personal injustice are more common in an authoritarian atmosphere. Of all types of aversive behavior control, corporal punishment appears most apt to induce aggression. A theory relating delinquent agression to the severity of parental discipline is sketched out, and it is suggested that a national effort be made to discourage the use of corporal punishment as a socially acceptable child-rearing technique. Since corporal punishment tends to produce both fear and anger, its continued use in the school can only be counterproductive to the learning process. A joint effort should be made to train teachers in nonaversive but effective techniques of pupil control. In addition, individual teachers need the support of well-trained guidance personnel who are willing to enter homes and work with the behavioral problems at their source. (Author/MLF)

DELINQUENCY, CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, AND THE SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing trend in this country to blame youth crime on parental overpermissiveness. Available data fail to support this and show that all types of crime, including school crime, develop within families and school systems emphasizing aversive and authoritarian discipline techniques. Also, racism and personal injustice are more common in an authoritarian atmosphere. Of all types of aversive behavioral control, corporal punishment appears most apt to induce aggression. A theory relating delinquent aggression to the severity of parental discipline is sketched out, and it is suggested that a national effort be made to discourage the use of corporal punishment as a socially acceptable child-rearing technique. Since corporal punishment tends to produce both fear and anger, its continued use in the schools can only be counterproductive to the learning process. Fortunately, many who strongly advocate corporal punishment in the classroom have expressed a willingness to forgo its use if more teachers and staff could be trained in alternative methods of effectively handling the troublesome pupil. Therefore, a joint effort should be made thoroughly to train teachers in non-aversive but effective techniques of pupil control. In addition, individual teachers need the support of well-trained guidance personnel who are willing to enter homes and work with the behavioral problems at their source.

Introduction

School vandalism now costs our nation 500 million dollars a year. Incidents of violence are also on the rise in schools. The case of New York City shop teacher David Korbin, who lost six teeth and had his jaw broken by a burly 15 year-old student (Hand, 1975), is not atypical.

Many solutions to the problem are being offered, but the predominant theme appears to be a call for a return to "that old-fashioned discipline." Symptomatic of this conservative trend in education is the "back-to-basics" movement, which many people have linked with "...forced patriotism, paddling, preaching and puritanism" (Egerton, 1976). Articulating this attitude, a Black construction worker told a New York Daily News reporter, "When I was a kid and got punished at school, I got punished again when I got home. The teacher was always right, and you'd better believe it..." (Hand, 1975, p. 48). This angry parent concluded that too many children don't obey their teachers or their parents because they failed to receive the needed discipline. Although The New York Times has editorialized that "To blame parental permissiveness for school violence is too easy" ("Violent Schools," 1975, p. 28), it does not dispute this feeling that parental overpermissiveness may well contribute to the problem. When two young boys caused $50,000 damage to a school in a quiet, upper middle-class suburb of New York City, the angry townspeople blamed it on "the permissive

attitudes of the schools," the leniency of the courts, and the "sparing of the rod" (Faber, 1975).

Perhaps the rhetoric of overpermissiveness is not too surprising coming from religious fundamentalists (Schroeder, 1974), but it may well be a matter of concern when the larger public begins to espouse this theory. There is a growing fear of crime in the United States, and personal crimes tend to frighten people more than others, even though the risk of personal injury that we run each day from other sources is enormously greater (Brooks, 1974). It would seem that this fear, due in part to the sensationalizing of crime by the media, has resulted in a reversion to a growing antipermissiveness bias (see Welsh, 1976c).

During the 40s and 50s the progressive education movement of John Dewey and the almost venerated book on child care by Dr. Benjamin Spock (1945) exerted great influence in some strata of society. The actual impact on child-rearing attitudes and on education, however, was probably more illusion than substance. During the mid-50s, Doctor Goodwin Watson (1957) set out to compare the behavior of 50 elementary school children from "strict" middle-class homes with that of 50 children from "permissive" middle-class homes. An attempt was made to select children from homes that were judged to be "good" by community standards. To Watson's dismay, he was able to find only 34 children from "fairly permissive homes" and none from "extremely permissive homes."

When this group was compared to 47 children from "strict homes," the behavior ratings and psychological test data favored the permissively raised children. They tended to be more independent and more inclined to display initiative than did the strictly raised children and were more socialized and cooperative, more able to persist in the face of frustration, more inclined to express positive feelings toward others, and less inclined to express hostility. They were more likely to be highly creative,[1] imaginative, spontaneous, and original in their thinking and general behavior. Earlier, Radke (1946), who studied nursery- and kindergarten-age children from permissive and from strict homes, had come to a similar conclusion.

In spite of little experimental support for the antipermissiveness position, strong attacks against Spock's generally propermissiveness stand started to appear in the childcare literature. The embattled Doctor Spock took a much tougher line in his latest book (Spock, 1974). Permissiveness has now become a bad word, and people are becoming increasingly less permissive in their attitudes. In 1965, 38 percent of those interviewed in a Lewis Harris poll favored the death penalty, but, by 1977, 67 percent

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[1] Steinberg (1964) and Torrance (1963) show creativity to be essentially the opposite of authoritarianism, and creative individuals to function best in free, open environments.

supported it.[2] Among respondents to a 1968 Lewis Harris poll on child discipline, 86 percent agreed that the primary need of young people is strong discipline from their parents, 84 percent approved of spanking children, 49 percent approved of a schoolteacher hitting a student, and 8 percent even approved of a parent beating his or her child. Contrary to popular opinion, American parents are not permissive. They probably never have been, and if anything they are becoming less so.

With the hard-liners gaining momentum, the U. S. Supreme Court's October, 1975, and 1977 decisions to allow corporal punishment in the schools should not have been unexpected. Even though the National Education Association's Task Force on Corporal Punishment in Schools (NEA Task Force, 1972) had voted to phase out corporal punishment in the

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[2]Gary Gilmore, the first person to be executed in the United States following a 10-year moratorium on capital punishment, said just before his death:

> ...I could never understand why my father seemed to hate me. I just endured his beatings. Sometimes I wanted to kill him, and the first hate I felt was toward him. (Garrett, 1977)

His aunt, Ida Damico, recalled:

> Gary had a sad childhood. Bessie was quite mean, always beating and slapping him. Gary's father, Frank, was even meaner when he was drunk. (Eight Women, 1977)

During the course of counseling 20 violent prisoners in San Quentin, Hobart Banks found that every single one had been the victim of a severely punitive childhood (see Maurer, 1975a). Extensive news coverage indicates that all of the major assassins and would-be assassins of the past 15 years suffered similar backgrounds.

schools over a one-year period, beginning in 1972, the Court reasoned in 1975 that to outlaw corporal punishment "bucks a settled tradition of countenancing such punishment when reasonable." In April, 1977, they jolted the clinical community by ruling that a schoolchild is not entitled to the same protections afforded criminals under the Eighth Amendment, suggesting that any redress indicated was obtainable under existing laws. With the prestige of the highest court in the land behind school spankings, and with the climate of the community swinging toward the support of hard-line approaches to discipline, the NEA has little chance of changing the "settled tradition" of hitting children in the schools in the near future, especially now that John Ryor, this year's president of the NEA, has come out publicly in support of school corporal punishment (Pro and Con, 1977).

Our Anglo-American Heritage: The Student Must be Flogged

As Lloyd deMause (1974) points out, "The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have just begun to awaken" (p. 1). In ancient Greece, the schoolmaster used the birch rod as a means of correction. Homer was flogged, as was Horace (Scott, 1938, p. 95), and John Milton's wife complained that she hated to hear the cries of his nephews as he beat them. Beethoven whipped his pupils with a knitting needle, and Louis XIII was whipped upon awakening

for the previous day's transgressions (deMause, 1975).

The practice of whipping children in the home and at school is frequently justified by Solomon's dicta: "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son: but he that loves him, chastises him betimes," and "Withhold not correction from the child; for, if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die." The latter, unfortunately, is not always true, as those of us who work with child-abusing parents know. Western schools, particularly those of the 19th century, have a history of remarkable brutality. One 19-century German schoolmaster estimated that he had given 911,527 strokes with a stick, 124,000 lashes with a whip, 136,715 slaps with the hand, and 1,115,800 boxes on the ears (deMause, 1974, p. 41). The situation was not much better in England. At Eton, where the whippings were unusually severe, each boy's bill included a half-guinea charge for birch, whether the boy was flogged or not (Scott, 1938, p. 100). Even though England has made some progress in recent years, when more than 200 students in one of the 180 schools in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne rioted, a committee of teachers, community leaders, and the headmaster decided to deal with the problem by making the "standard strap" wider, longer, and heavier, and to use it on girls as well as on boys. The last attempt to ban corporal punishment in the English schools was in 1972, during the Conservative government, but it went nowhere (Coffey, 1976).

The students' lot was not measurably happier in the United States and its territories. The New England Primer echoed the English tradition of school floggings with the following:

F The Idle Fool
Is Whipt at school

J Job feels the Rod
Yet blesses GOD

The "settled tradition" the Supreme Court Justices were speaking about when they made their infamous 1975 school spanking ruling is well documented in children's literature. Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of the Little House on the Prairie series, tells us (1937) what it was like in the Dakota Territorial schools of the late 1800s:

> Laura did not know until later that the ruler was to punish anyone who fidgeted or whispered in school. Anyone who was so naughty had to walk up to Teacher's desk and hold out her hand while Teacher slapped it many times, hard, with the ruler. (p. 151).

Lois Lenski, who grew up in the Florida "cracker" country in the early 1900s, tells us that things could get a little rough at times in the country classroom. Lenski describes a confrontation between two roughnecks and a stick-wielding teacher. The teacher told the boys, "You'll do as I say!" and, as he raised a bamboo stick, books and slates went flying through the air, and the arms and legs of the teacher and the boys "...became so mixed up, it was impossible to tell which was which." The teacher was subsequently "beat up to jelly," by these two young toughs,

and the children were out of school for many weeks that year (1945, pp. 34-38).

Mark Twain, whose writings frequently mention the beatings he received in school, also seems to have harbored a desire to get even. Unlike Lenski's young toughs, Tom Sawyer (1875) and his friends showed more creativity by commissioning the sign painter's son to guild the hated schoolmaster's bald head while he dozed. Twain writes:

> Mr. Dobbin's lashings were very vigorous ones.... He seemed to take a vindictive pleasure in punishing the least shortcomings. The consequence was, that the smaller boys spent their days in terror and suffering and their nights in plotting revenge. They threw away no opportunity to do the master a mischief. (p. 169)

With the availability of handguns in the 20th century, the situation has become more dangerous. One of my own patients, a 27-year-old dropout who left school because he refused a paddling, described one of his teachers in Spartenburg, South Carolina. All of the children feared and hated him because "he'd whip you even if you didn't bring your homework in. He'd made this thing with a thick strap with a stick tied to it, and people hated that strap. Finally, some kids beat him up and put him in the hospital...and I guess it was probably for the whippings. After that, he brought a gun to school." Another of my patients remembers her father heading out the door with a loaded shotgun, fully intending to blow off the head of a kindergarten teacher who had dislodged a burn scab on my patient with a paddle. The man was subdued by school officials.

In a 1975 incident reported by the Associated Press, Lester Wilson, the assistant principal of an Altanta high school, was critically wounded and paralyzed by a gun-wielding 15-year-old boy. The enraged student shouted, "You are not going to whip me any more!" just before the shooting. Some schools have, indeed, become armed camps, with potentially lethal weapons being stockpiled on both sides.

Corporal Punishment and Delinquency: Is There a Connection?

Early in my clinical career, I was alarmed to discover the inordinate number of juvenile delinquents who had been exposed to harsh parental treatment during their developmental years. Intrigued, I took the time to question my delinquent patients and their parents carefully and to tabulate the information regarding parental punishment practices. In addition to this first-hand data on delinquents, I have also started gathering data from a variety of sources in the community. To date I have surveyed PTA members, adult education students, laundromat patrons, and service club youths. Using the information obtained from the above studies and supporting data from the literature, I have constructed what I call my "belt theory" of juvenile delinquency (see Welsh, 1976a). The belt theory gets its name from my discovery that the recidivist male delinquent who has never been exposed to a belt, board, extension cord, or fist during his developmental years is virtually nonexistent.

One extensive study helped to convince me that corporal punishment could not easily be viewed as a harmless American tradition, to be tolerated and supported. This study involved 77 consecutive juvenile court referrals, 58 boys and 19 girls. Aggressiveness level was determined for each subject from the offense record provided by the juvenile court, and he or she was placed into one of three categories of aggressiveness. Severe Parental Punishment (SPP)[3] was found to be significantly related to delinquent aggression in the boys but not in the girls, although the trend was in the expected direction for the female sample. In fact, the only boys among the 58 who were not really considered delinquent were two male subjects who had not been exposed to SPP.

Do Blacks Have a Higher Crime Rate Because They are Poor?

For some time, I had been troubled by the fact that minority subjects, primarily Black males, have consistently higher crime rates than have whites. Even more disturbing were the data reported by Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin (1973), which found higher crime rates for high-SES, nonwhite delinquent males than for low-SES whites. Since I had long suspected that SPP was a better predictor of aggressive level than was socioeconomic class, the minority subjects

[3]Severe Parental Punishment (SPP) was defined as any type of physical discipline utilizing a weapon capable of inflicting physical injury. These included belts, boards, extension cords, fists and the like. They did not include open hands, switches and similar things.

in our sample were compared to the white subjects as to severity of discipline. As predicted, more of the minority subjects than of the white subjects were found to have been exposed to SPP. Our delinquent subjects were then separated into two SES levels: those whose parents were blue-collar workers or in the trades, and those who had parents in professional/managerial fields. The comparison between those subjects who had received SPP and those who had received only moderate to mild punishment was not significant. Clearly, within our sample of delinquents, SPP was related to minroity-group states but not to social class.

In another study, of 132 laundromat patrons, this relationship was quite apparent. We found that more minority (Black and Puerto Rican) subjects who had attended college (our measure of SES) were willing to use a strap on an eight-year-old child than were white subjects with no college training, although minority subjects who had some college background were less physically punitive than were those who had none. It would appear that the use of the strap on a child is a cultural phenomenon which can be attenuated by higher SES, but not eliminated in one generation. Perhaps this is why Dr. Spock's recommendations were admired but, if Goodson Watson's data is to be believed, not really followed by the majority of parents. It would seem that parents learn far more about child-rearing from their own

parents than they do from child-rearing manuals. My own clinical data seem to support this (see Welsh, 1975). I admit, however, that poverty may well be a significant source of frustration, driving the poor parent to beat his or her children harder and more often. In fact, it appears that relative poverty is more criminogenic than is abject poverty (see Chester, 1976), as predicted by longshoreman/philosopher Eric Hoffer in 1951.

In a study of 100 delinquents and their parents, still in progress, I ask the parents the Lewis Harris poll question, "Do you feel that a parent is ever justified in beating his or her child?" Approximately 80 percent of my Black and Puerto Rican subjects and approximately 40 percent of my white subjects are answering yes; this is in stark contrast to the 8 percent of the national sample that answered the Harris poll in the afirmative. In the same study, I have been using the TAT to determine the delinquents' feelings about corporal punishment. It is clear from this work that fear and anger are produced simultaneously when a child is spanked. I am hypothesizing that the young child is usually fearful of the parent, but that, as the child grows older, anger supplants the fear and the parent loses control. In fact, the paradigm is consistent with evidence of poor conditionability in delinquents and psychopaths. This will be discussed later in this paper.

Does the Literature Support the "Belt Theory"?

Learning theorists have long known that punishment is a highly complex means of control. In fact, the same punishment may act as a stimulus to accelerate or to retard performance of the same behavior, depending upon whether it is given in such a way as to produce responses that are compatible with or in conflict with the behavior in question (Fowler & Miller, 1963). In other instances, punishment may serve no useful purpose because its inhibiting effects tend to wear off (Skinner, 1938). Further, the timing of the punishment, the intensity of the noxious stimulus, and the opportunity for alternative response are among the host of conditions strongly affecting the type of response the punishment will elicit (Solomon, 1964; Church, 1963). Finally, it has been found that experimentally induced pain can produce violent aggressive attacks in a wide variety of species, including rats, pigeons, and monkeys (Ulrich, 1966; Azrin, 1964).

Although no investigator has been, or would be, foolish enough to investigate the relationship between corporal punishment and aggressiveness in children through laboratory experiment, there is ample evidence from field studies to indicate that the relationship is a strong one. Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) found that mothers who severely

punished aggressive behavior in their children had more aggressive children than did mothers who lightly punished aggressiveness. Eron, Walder, and Lefkowitz (1971) found that schoolchildren who were rated by their peers as the most aggressive in the classroom tended to have parents who frequently used corporal punishment. When samples of delinquent and criminal subjects are investigated, the findings are similar. Climent, Rollins, Ervin, and Plutchik (1973) found five nonmedical variables associated with violence, one of which was severe parental punishment. Even more convincing is the recent work of Langner, Gersten, and Eisenberg (1976), who found that punitive parenting (the use of a stick or belt, and the frequent withholding of privileges) was the most powerful derived predictor, and that the behavior it predicted best was antisocial conduct. The behavioristic psychologist A. Bandura in 1962 sketched out the learning principles underlying the behavior of Rusty, a delinquent youngster who had been raised on the strap. Bandura's work pointed out how pain-avoidance contingencies produced running-away behavior, and how his parents' attempts to suppress Rusty's aggressive behavior through severe punishment served only as a model for ways to counteraggress toward them.

The crosscultural studies are equally impressive. Twelve investigators (see Whiting, 1963) carefully studied six cultures and found a strong relationship between punitive, restrictive child-rearing and cultural aggression. For

example, the Nyansongo of Africa used fear, threats, and physical punishment to socialize their children, and homocide, rape, and assault were common in their culture. In contrast, the Taira of Okinawa primarily used denial or withdrawal of love; their crime rate was low, and respect for the police, law, and order was high.

When Bolton (1973a) reported that hypoglycemia was probably the most significant factor contributing to the high level of aggression in the Qolla Indians of Peru, I wrote to him and he confirmed my suspicions that the Qolla were extremely aggressive parents (Bolton, 1973b). O'Hanlon (1975, pp. 206-244), himself an Irish Catholic, suggests that the extremely violent acts committed by members of the Irish Repulican Army in Northern Ireland are a natural product of the brutal child-rearing practices of the poor, tense, distressed, and unhappy Irish Catholic mothers and fathers.

Of growing interest is the work of those studying the physiological characteristics of violent or aggressive people. Moyer (1974) has gathered impressive evidence that the male of the species, whether hamster or human, is the more aggressive sex. The data strongly implicate the androgens. This is, of course, consistent with the crime statistics gathered over the years, where males dominate the scene. Nevertheless, Moyer (1975) freely admits that the aggressive threshold of an animal can be altered by external events, particularly stress.

In fact, he points out that possible inherited tendencies for hostility can be even more readily and intensely aroused if the organism is forced to live in a deprived, frustrating, and stressful environment (1975). I submit that the strap clearly qualifies as a cause of stress.

Another avenue of research which may be closely related to the corporal punishment issue, although this link has yet to be established, involves the conditionability of delinquents and psychopaths.[4] We know that adult psychopaths and delinquents condition poorly (Hare, 1965, 1968; Lykken, 1955, 1957; Franks, 1961), but the reason remains obscure. Eysenck (1964) has argued that the psychopath is a neurotic extrovert whose poor conditionability is probably an innate personality trait. The psychopath's impulsivity, insensitivity to others, lack of moral values, and failure to profit from past experience or to respond favorably to psychotherapy is well known to those of us who have worked with such subjects. However, Schachter and Latane (1964), Schlichter and Ratliff (1971) and Hare (1968) have all shown that the psychopath is particularly poor in learning pain-avoidance tasks, but learns adequately with reward. This suggests the possibility that the psychopath

[4]Most investigators differentiate between ordinary offenders psychopaths, generally using the definition of psychopath first suggested by Cleckley (1964) and later extended by Hare (1970). However, there is data to suggest that, at least at the cognitive level, the psychopath is probably at an extreme of continuum of emotional insensitivity (see Widom, 1976).

has either adapted to or discovered some way to ignore pain and punishment. In fact, Hare (1974) reports that physiological measures of autonomic reactivity suggest that the psychopath does not seem to have a normal anticipatory fear response. Hare suggests that the psychopath is unusually adept at modulating aversive cues which, in turn, reduces the emotional impact of a situation. Hare writes (1974):

> The picture of psychopathy that emerges, therefore, is of a disorder which there is ready activation of psychophysiological defense mechanisms when aversive stimulation is threatened or anticipated. (p. 9)

Lykken (1967) has also noticed this insensitivity, labeling the process "negative perception."

Our data are quite clear regarding the punitive childhoods of virtually all delinquents. Since a child, no matter how harshly treated, is forced to rely almost totally upon his or her parents for food, shelter, and whatever security they might provide, it would seem only adaptive for that child to learn to ignore the parental mistreatment.

In a different, but related, line of research, Widom (1976) reports that psychopaths consistenly report less emotional impact than do normals when asked to visualize a number of anxiety-producing or embarrassing situations. Again, the behavioral pattern of the psychopath is of an individual who emotionally perceives the world differently than do most of us. It is not surprising that psychopaths, with their blunted emotional response systems, tend to be

stimulus-seekers (Farley & Sewell, 1976). That such blunting can be produced by severe parenting is certainly possible.

How Corporal Punishment Affects the Schools

During a symposium/debate on school spanking I recently chaired at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association (Welsh, 1976b), several pertinent points were made, both pro and con. Dean Westmoreland, president of the North Carolina Association of Educators and a supporter of school corporal punishment, likened the teachers to buck privates on the front line, arguing:

> ....And like war, sometimes it can be hell.... The abolition of corporal punishment has not reduced violence in some of the schools in the North, no matter what you say. In fact, I believe that it has probably increased. (p.54)

Another supporter, Lansing Reinholz, superintendent of the Burlington, Vermont, public schools, remarked:

> Speak to any classroom teacher and ask him what he/she is there for, and he/she won't say he/she's there to discipline children; he/she will tell you everytime he/she's there to teach.... We're talking about the hard-core discipline problems in the school, year after year. ...(When) every single technique available to a classroom teacher and the principal has been used, what do you do with that kid now?...It's a hell of a lot better alternative to try corporal punishment than sending him/her out on the street..... He/she is not going to contribute anything to society once he/she is out of school. And, if the alternative is whacking him/her on the fanny once or twice and it helps, it's a hell of a lot better than sending him/her down the road. (p. 47)

Dr. Kenneth Newbold, superintendent of the North Carolina's Scotland County Schools, said:

> ...I think if other forms of discipline can be shown superior to corporal punishment, then I think rational thinking people would support it being outlawed. But, at this point in time, it is basically an effective deterrent. I do not want to see knives abolished because a surgeon happens to slip up and misuse that knife in an operation. I do not want to see food abolished because some people misuse food by the over-eating of food. Corporal punishment is a deterrent. (pp. 48-49)

Dr. Gertrude Williams, Diplomate in Clinical Psychology and Editor of the Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, summed up the position of herself and the other three anticorporal punishment advocates on the panel:

> ...Psychologists, pediatricians, surgeons, radiologists, and psychiatrists have documented injury to children who were beaten in the public schools.... And, the schools are not presenting an example of peacefulness to the new generation coming up. Corporal punishment is not discipline. It is a lack of discipline. Numerous studies indicate that it is the most inadequately trained teachers who use violence. Advocates of corporal punishment say they have no discipline problems in their schools, and I bet they don't. What you have in your North Carolina classroom isn't discipline or respect, but seething hatred, terror, helplessness, and, oh, so often, psychic numbing....
>
> Corporal punishment and child abuse are on the same continuum, namely, violence....
>
> Most abusive parents and teachers don't plan to abuse their children. They start out to "discipline" them physically, or use corporal punishment, and then the violence intensifies. ...No one starts out being an abuser. It just escalates....
>
> Outlawing corporal punishment, the (U. S. Supreme Court) says, "bucks a settled tradition of countenancing such punishment when reasonable." Get a load of that!... If a court can remove a child from his

parent because of battering, how can they hand that child over to the school for abuse?...

Now, the irrationalities: Violence against children by parents and teachers is discipline; violence against parents and teachers by children is assault. A teacher's lack of discipline is called discipline; a child who strikes a teacher creates disorder; a teacher who strikes a child creates order in the classroom. War is peace, peace is war, 1984; double-talk and violence are alive and well in this country. (pp. 56-60)

During the debate, it was painfully obvious to me that the procorporal punishment advocates were not acquainted with my own data. Whenever a patient is referred by the school for aggressive acting out, I am now sure that the child has a history of aggressive parenting. A 15-year-old boy referred to me recently after choking two pupils with a piece of rope was the product of a belt-wielding father who drinks excessively and continually accuses his fearful wife of infidelity. A 14-year-old boy, involved in setting fires in school, I found to have been repeatedly beaten up with the fists by his well-educated, professional father, who also batters his mother: A 13-year-old girl who broke the finger of a policeman during a school riot told me how her mother used to whip her with an extension cord until the mother was too exhausted to hit any more.

Two vandals were apprehended after inflicting $1,200 damage on a local elementary school; both were only 10 years of age. I suggested that the superintendent watch for signs of abuse on these youngsters, and, as predicted, the following day one of them shuffled into the classroom black and blue.

A number of other interesting trends have been suggested by our studies, although the following are generalizations and still tentative:

Girls are beaten less than boys, probably because they tend to elicit less parental aggression, but mothers tend to beat daughters, and fathers tend to beat sons.

The uptight, authoritarian father, with his sexual inhibitions, tends to shy away from hitting a girl in a dress, but not one in jeans. My guess is that recent changes in female dress habits may result in girls being increasingly exposed to brutalizing abuse by their fathers. This may contribute to the current rise in crimes committed by females. (Mothers seem never to have had these inhibitions about hitting their daughters.)

It seems that a girl has to be hit harder and longer before she becomes as aggressive as the average beaten boy... and frequently the more a girl is beaten the more passive she becomes, although she may try to escape by running away from her tormentors and thus end up in the juvenile court.

Puerto Ricans usually strap the legs; one Puerto Rican social worker feels that this may be because of beliefs about the sanctity of the body.

The primary tool of discipline in the United States (excluding the open hand) is the belt, followed by the fist, the extension cord, the wooden paddle, and then by various other tools; these tend to be used at random, and include

cat-o'-nine-tails, 2 x 4s, coathangers, bullwhips, belt buckles, lead pipes, and a whole host of weapons that I could scarcely have imagined prior to my studies. Mothers use a wider variety of disciplinary tools than fathers, and frequently use tools of the housewifely trade (spatulas, wooden spoons, and brooms); fathers usually limit their weapons to fists and belts.

School personnel appear to be hand-shy, and prefer paddles and straps. These are somehow viewed as more humane than the hand, and they certainly help the teacher to feel removed from the act of abuse. One school system I am familiar with has a supply of automobile fan belts. Large paddles, with air holes to cut down wind resistance, are a favorite, and the children often must make them in shop class.

Children in the lower grades are hit the most. Black schools with Black teachers utilize the most corporal punishment. When I find corporal punishment being used in a Northern school, the school usually has a high minority population. Schools in the Southeastern and Southwestern United States are the most supportive of the Supreme Court spanking rules. Possibly coincidentally, the FBI Uniform Crime Statistics for years have shown that the Deep South is the most violent section of this country. The state of North Carolina, whose teachers vigorously support the Supreme Court spanking rulings (an outgrowth of an incident

in that state), in 1973 led the nation in incidences of assault and was eighth in murder and tenth in all violent crime. It now has more people on death row than any other state. In fairness, however, I must point out that it was relatively low in overall crime.

Counseling the Aggressive Child and His Family

Children who exhibited aggressive behavior in the school, who have threatened other students or attempted to extort money from other children, or who have in some way acted out in the community clearly need help--but so do their parents. If the child is under 12, he is probably still getting strapped by mom and dad. My data indicate that, after that age, the child is usually "too big" to hit and the home has become a battleground.[5]

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[5]In a study (Welsh, 1976a) of 58 delinquent males (mean age 14.5 years) and 19 delinquent females (mean age 14.75 years), the mean age at which severe parental punishment terminated among those boys who had been but were no longer being hit was 12.37. Two boys had never been severely punished. However, 18 of the 58 boys were still being hit with belt, board, extension cord, fist, or the like. It was suggested recently that I analyze this data for the girls, on the ground that girls are physically less able to fight back. As was suspected, of the 19 girls in the sample, only 3 were no longer being severely punished, but 11 still were, and the remainder never had been. That is, 58 percent of the girls but only 31 percent of the boys were still being subjected to severe physical parenting at the time of my study, even though proportionately fewer girls than boys had been exposed to severe physical parenting during their lifetimes. Consistent with this is the occasional discovery, in my clinical practice, of a mentally retarded adult who is still being disciplined with a belt. Apparently in the home as in school, the more defenseless a person is, the longer that person is likely to be hit by his or her parents. The battered woman would seem to be another example of this pattern.

When the school refers a child for counseling, emphasis should be on family counseling, rather than on individual treatment. The procedure should be one aimed at developing a positive relationship between parent and child. This relationship has usually deteriorated to an extremely hostile level by the time of the referral. Effort has to be directed toward the building of a feeling of trust between the child and the parents. Above all, the parent who exhibits authoritarian attitudes (usually one parent, sometimes both) needs to learn how to express hurt and upset at the child's misbehavior, rather than reacting with anger and retaliation. He or she must be shown that this change in attitude reduces the anger in the child which fuels aggression: Parents who have a positive relationship with their child maintain control essentially through the child's desire to please them and to keep their love. The parent who attempts to control the child through threats and coercion challenges the child to see how much he or she can get away with. The truly brutal parent causes the child to feel of little personal value, consistent with the parental message seemingly conveyed. Such a child may try to embarrass the parents or get even with them by deliberate self-inflicted harm. Many years of punishment, as the conditionability studies have indicated, may reduce a child to a remarkable degree of insensitivity to punishment and an inability to learn from it.

If the child is young, and is still being hit, screamed at, and threatened, the parent needs to be told rather directly to stop. But the parent should never be left hanging nor made to feel guilty. The counselor should be aware of the fact that punitive parents have learned this behavior from their own parents (see Welsh, 1975) and that they assume that what was good for them is good for their children. After all, most overdisciplined children do not become delinquents. When the beaten child suddenly stops getting the strap, he or she will generally exhibit a pressure-cooker effect which will subside in approximately two or three weeks. The parent must be told this in advance, or the parent will return to the old, punitive behavior pattern and reject all of the counselor's advice. Stopping the punishment is frequently difficult, especially if a grandparent is around urging the mother or father to hit the kid more and to "stop being a permissive parent." A careful program built on positive reinforcement should be sketched out for the parent, and the parent must be given liberal positive reinforcement by the counselor for the improvement he or she makes. The guidance department of the school can be very helpful in supporting some of the measures instituted in the home, and the therapist should be a person who is comfortable working with the school.

Is the Tough Ghetto School a Special Case for Using Corporal Punishment?

Foster (1974), who taught in the worst and toughest ghetto schools in New York City, still believes that corporal punishment is not the answer. Foster has experienced personally the many games and teacher-testing devices which are used by streetwise, working-class and welfare-class youngsters and which clearly interfere with the learning process. He points out that the white, middle-class teacher may take on the job with idealism and warmhearted optimism, but is ill-equipped to deal with the children of the inner-city school. In contrast to the teacher's protected childhood, the tough streetcorner kid has experienced the home life typical of very poor families, where discipline is harsh, where ridicule is frequent, and where punishment is based simply upon whether the behavior bothers the parents. As Foster puts it:

> He was controlled largely physically and there was limited verbal communication within the family. There was little acceptance of him as an individual. He was most often reared through authoritarian methods. His mother usually ran the house, and when the father was home, he was primarily a punitive figure. (p. 239)

With low self-esteem and a sense of defeat, the ghetto boy learns he must outhustle or outaggress the other guy, all the time. Every day he faces another test of his machismo and toughness.

Foster believes that despite their protests to the contrary, many teachers are afraid of their students. A teacher's

fear emboldens the child, causing even more acting out. Foster is convinced that as many as 80 percent of teachers who remain in the inner-city schools fixate on discipline, staying constantly on guard, never trusting, never expressing any positive feelings, and subjecting their students to meaningless busywork.

Foster has described a number of techniques for keeping one's cool, but stresses that the ghetto teacher can only succeed by conveying to the students, without hurting them emotionally or physically, that teachers are mature adults who demand to be treated as such. He admits that he has not completely solved the problem of dealing with the student who habitually tests the teacher under the implacable laws of the street. He has found that a physical encounter (e.g., squeezing a pressure point on the arm that is blocking the teacher from entering a classroom) may sometimes be necessary to earn the respect of a particularly difficult youngster, but that, on the other hand, some of the most "feminine," frail, unassuming teachers are the most successful with an angry, macho youth. One rule of thumb appears to be common to the teacher in a tough ghetto school and the therapist working with violent offenders: learn not to be threatened, and be calmly respectful.

What are the Alternatives to Punishment in the Schools?

Perhaps the leading proponent of nonpunitive school discipline today is Dr. William Glasser, a psychiatrist turned educator, whose technique for dealing with behavior problems in the schools has gained national recognition (see Glasser, 1969, 1971). Glasser's disciplinary philosophy consists of seven steps:

1. The teacher gets personally involved with students.
2. He or she deals only with the present, and avoids bringing up past indiscretions.
3. He or she works toward getting the student to make a value judgment about the behavior.
4. He or she works toward getting the student to make a plan to change that behavior.
5. The student, now with a plan, makes a commitment to change, sometimes with a handshake but preferably in writing.
6. The teacher never inflicts punishment on the student. He or she keeps dealing with the student positively until there is a change in behavior, and the teacher never runs out of alternatives.

Glasser believes that school violence and crime result when young people are failing in important areas of their lives. He feels that the seemingly bright youngster with a good home background can survive even the most meaningless

school tasks, but that the inner-city child, who may be equally bright, is defeated by them. He is convinced that the whole punitive structure of the schools needs to be reworked (Youth in Rebellion, 1970).

Glasser has taken a firm stand against corporal punishment by school personnel, arguing that it will keep people in line only if it is done hard enough but that "...it sure won't encourage many kids to do much learning" (Murphy, 1973). Further, he points out that the ones who get punished are the losers, not the children heading for Harvard, observing, "The losers are being kept in line in school because the community doesn't want them out of school and on the streets" (Murphy, 1973).

McIntire (1975), a behaviorist, insists that for most parents punishment is a dangerous practice more related to the frustrations and mood of the parent than to the behavior of the child. His four alternatives to corporal punishment are:

1. Ignoring bad behavior, then praising good behavior.

2. Using time-out procedures: placing the child in a room for a short period of time until the behavior is under control.

3. The Response cost approach: the child is required to do something that "costs" more, in terms of energy or inconvenience, than does the unwanted behavior, e.g., the parent might show little anger at a refusal to go to school,

but immediately put the child to work cleaning the house during the time school is in session.

4. Overcorrection: a situation is arranged where the child suffers the consequences of the misbehavior; e.g., the child might be asked to practice an unwanted behavior, such as handclapping following excessive handclapping in class, until fatigued.

All of the above procedures can be used by the teacher in place of the frequently destructive punishment techniques. They may require more thinking and planning, but the outcome is usually more rewarding than is that of punishment. Overcorrection can be dramatically effective, and I have used this procedure in the treatment of juvenile fire-setting behavior (Welsh, 1971). Unfortunately, this technique is useful only with very young children.

Perhaps of most importance is that parents and teachers learn the difference between withholding rewards and taking away privileges. The behavior controller who wants to maintain a good relationship with the clients should always think positively.[6] There is a big difference between saying to a class, "If you don't get your work done you are going to miss recess," and telling them, "When you get your work done, you can go to recess." The first approach is

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[6]An excellent summary of alternatives to corporal punishment and other aversive procedures in the schools is available in the September, 1973, issue of Scholastic Teacher, Jr./Sr. High School Teachers edition, pp. 21-27.

authoritarian and threatening. The second is positive, makes the reward contingent upon the desired act, and places the responsibility on the children. Parents who maintain a distrustful, tight control over their children well into their teen years should not expect particularly adult, responsible behavior from them when they move out of the parents' home and into lives of their own. The most such parents should expect is conformity to the demands of others; at worst, openly antisocial behavior.

Do the Schools Cause Violence?

Since the prime shaper of human behavior is the home, it is highly doubtful that the schools directly contribute to our high rate of violent crime in a major way. In fact, over the short run, a greater factor in the high rate of homicide and other violent crimes is probably the easy availability of firearms (Munford, Kazer, Feldman, & Stivers, 1976). This does not mean that the schools do not have a major responsibility for setting good examples for our children, and for actively avoiding the exacerbation of situations already near the flash point. When a school principal uses the strap, the student is demeaned. In addition, the principal serves as an aggressive model for many people in the community, especially for the poor and the unsophisticated who may be overly impressed by professional status. As one uneducated Black mother put it,

"Sure I beats my kids; if the principal in our school thought that beating was good for chillúns, beatins must be good for them. He's got a whole lotta education; he oughta know."

Since our data show that authoritarian and punitive attitudes in parents provide fuel that feeds antisocial conduct, it seems particularly unwise to use threats and physical punishment on aggressive children; yet this is the very group of youngsters in our society who are the most punished of all. In fact, the majority of one particularly troubling group of students, the potential dropouts, suffer from budding character disorders according to Liehter, Rapien, Seibert, and Sklansky (1962). They implore the schools to stop threatening these youngsters. Pointing out that the threats seldom work. They show that the fearful child feels worthless and ineffectual and the rebellious child feels challenged and goaded by threats. Further, since the threats are seldom carried out with any consistency, they serve to undermine respect for school authority among the threatened youngsters and observing classmates (Liehtem et al., 1962, p. 175).

Woodman (1976) in presenting the observations of William Maynard, a Seattle high school principal, reported that schools with rigid structures and strict enforcement of rules regarding dress, attendance, and behavior tend to have degrees of racial tension and high suspension and dropout rates. This is consistent with the findings Liehter, et al. (1962)

showing that a rather positive shift in attitudes may occur when the angry dropout leaves school; apparently the school can be very aversive and frustrating for an angry, impulsive youth already primed for violence by intrafamily punishment and conflict. When such a student comes up against the authoritarianism of the "rule-by-force" administrator,[7] neither party is likely to win.

Although it would appear that the home is the primary source of a child's anger, at least one study suggests a strong link between school vandalism and school discipline. A Portland, Oregon, community survey, completed in 1975, and including 12 school districts, found a high correlation between the use of corporal punishment in a school district and the cost of vandalism in that district (Maurer, 1975b).

In addition to corporal punishment, other punitive practices engaged in by the schools seem destructive or, at best, counterproductive. Levine and Graziano (1972) have surveyed the literature on nonpromotion back as far as 1908. They estimate that as many as 20 percent of all children in the lower grades are held back, although there is no evidence that this practice accomplishes any of it stated goals and much evidence that it may be terribly destructive emotionally. The practice of suspending a child for nonattendance is, of

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[7] Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson, and Sanford (1950) found that, as a rule, the authoritarian person had been subjected to harsh parental discipline during his or her own childhood. Such individuals are often so rigid in their attitudes that a Board of Education wishing to liberalize its schools' disciplinary policies might find itself stymied unless a few administrators are changed as well.

course, irrational, often working as reinforcement for school avoidance. Probably even worse is the common practice of repeatedly calling the distraught mother of an aggressive child, which often results in the child getting a beating when he or she next walks in the door. The only alternative to these practices is a positive school discipline code, free from vindictiveness and punishment.

The School as a Part of the Community, and What it Might Do

School crime is clearly a reflection of the crime problem affecting all of society and is, from our own data, due primarily to factors existing in the home. While poverty, alcoholism, broken homes, and racism all contribute to crime, I contend that they do so only to the extent that these factors impel parents to physically[8] and psychologically batter their children. Parents who respect the humanity and the rights of their children do not produce delinquents. Alcohol is a well-known releaser of aggression, and parents (mostly fathers) are frequently supportive and kindly when sober, but ornery and paranoid when drunk. Broken homes are sometimes a barometer of parental aggression, since angry people often find it impossible to live with each other. Racism is often rampant in families where children are brutalized, and poverty frustrates angry parents, inducing them to hit

[8]See Maurer, 1974, for an exhaustive bibliography and discussion of the corporal punishment issue.

their children harder and more often than they normally would (Adorno et al., 1950).

Although all of society should develop an attitude condemning corporal punishment, as Langner recommended (see Trotter, 1976) after finding that punitive parenting was the best of his derived measures for predicting antisocial behavior, the schools can make at least a beginning.

The following would seem to be some of the priorities for a community/school program to deal with acting-out youth:

1. The schools must become more humane. This means that the practice of corporal punishment must end. The 1972 NEA plan for the abolition of corporal punishment in the nation's schools should be instituted.

2. Schools should move toward more positive approaches to discipline, those which emphasize values and the rights of others rather than authoritarian control. The "force" approach is self-defeating. Children learn responsible behavior much faster when they are given responsibility and trust than they do when threatened or oppressed. In even the "toughest" school, there are many alternatives to corporal punishment. In fact, even the staunchest advocates of corporal punishment avoid striking the larger and more menacing students.

3. Training-for-parenthood programs should be instituted more widely in the schools. Much relevant material is available through HEW.

4. An adequate number of well-trained school guidance personnel should be available in the schools, as should staff trained to go into problem homes. Long waiting lists for service should be discouraged. A school system can save on guidance personnel by developing good working relationships with outside mental health clinics and with private practitioners. The schools do not have to be all things to all people, but neither should they shirk their responsibilities for their students' mental health.

5. Police need to be better trained. Studies show (see Locke & Smith, 1970) that police who have attended college are less authoritarian in their attitudes than those who have not. Officers should know better than to tell parents of delinquents to go home and beat their kids, or to roar up, clubs drawn, to a small-scale schoolyard fight, thereby fanning it into a full-scale riot, as has happened recently.

6. Many professionals, including policemen, teachers, school administrators, social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists, need training to recognize and accept the relationship between severe parenting and aggressive behavior in children. Reacting to a comment of mine regarding the relationship between delinquency and severe parenting reported by a nationally syndicated columnist, Sergeant Lester Wilson, Supervisor of the St. Louis County Police Department's Bureau of Juvenile Affairs, reported that the child of what he describes as a "superpermissive mother" had been picked

up for burglary. The child had been left alone in the polygraph room and "...damn near destroyed the polygraph....His mother comes in and she says, 'Are you sure he did it?' " (Wilks, 1977). What Sergeant Wisdom did not see was the beating that child probably received when he got home. Beatings, like sex, occur behind closed doors. Many of the most punitive parents of my most aggressive delinquent patients are the neighborhood good guys, the people who can always be counted on to volunteer for lofty community causes, the ones about whom others reflexively say, "He would never beat his kids." They are the proverbial straight-arrow types. The abusing parents of delinquent children are usually not bad people--only misguided. I have told psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, dentists, college professors, and millionaires to stop using the strap on their children, even before they had admitted doing so, and I have seldom been wrong.

Dealing with crime is a community problem, but preventing crime is a parental responsibility.

The school, which is part of the community but which functions at times in loco parentis, must therefore accept a dual responsibility. At the least, it should never contribute to the problem by hitting children or crushing their self-esteem. Ideally, it can be a positive model that systematically rewards all good behavior and sets an example of reasoned, nonviolent ways to deal with those who habitually misbehave.

Summary

This paper has attempted briefly to sketch out the historical roots of corporal punishment in the United States, how it became a part of our school tradition, and why, despite the overwhelming evidence that it is a practice inimical to the more positive goals of education, it persists in millions of homes and in thousands of schools. Using the data on juvenile delinquents which I have gathered over an eight-year period and the data of others, I have tried to show that the corporal punishment practices of parents are highly related to the aggression level of their children. Further, corporal punishment may well produce a person who is not only angry, but physiologically turned off to emotionally arousing stimuli, making it difficult for that person to anticipate and thus avoid punishment situations.

From my own studies, which gave rise to my "belt theory" of juvenile delinquency, and from the work of others, I am led to the following conclusions:

1. The level of reported aggressive behavior, particularly in males, is a function of the severity of their corporal punishment histories.

2. Severity of corporal punishment in the home is more important than socioeconomic class as a precursor to delinquency.

3. Corporal punishment produces both fear and anger; when the fear is habituated, the anger is left in the forefront.

4. The more aggressive a culture, the more probable that corporal punishment will be the chief socialization technique.

5. Since this effect of corporal punishment is no respector of groups, race, or social class, so-called normal parents will produce aggressive children proportional to their use of corporal punishment and its severity.

6. Parents of delinquents are, contrary to popular opinion, "hard-liners" on discipline rather than overpermissive. They are, however, often neglectful; permissiveness and neglect are not the same.

7. The well-documented differences in conditionability between delinquents and normals are probably due to the habituation of fear, which reduces the delinquent's ability to rely on anticipatory fear responses and to avoid potentially delinquent situations. It is speculated that this process of habituation, or "negative perception," is due primarily to the delinquent's early exposure to severe parenting.

8. The use of corporal punishment in the schools is at the very least demeaning, and school avoidance, school vandalism, and tragedy have resulted from its use.

9. Poverty appears to be a major feature of the families of delinquents. However, poverty probably produces crime indirectly, apparently engendering severe frustration which acts as a catalyst for aggressive parenting. The aggressive parenting itself appears to be the primary

environmental factor fueling delinquent aggression. Evidence suggests that the disproportionately high crime rate among Blacks and Puerto Ricans is related to learned parental disciplinary practices, and not to any inborn aggressive propensities.

10. School crime is primarily a result of factors existing in the home, but school policies and practices can exacerbate the problem and can cause an angry youth to direct his or her aggression toward the educational establishment.

11. Alternatives to corporal punishment exist. These do not demean students, and they provide a school atmosphere far more conducive to learning.

The above propositions must be investigated further, but the weight of existing evidence indicates that corporal punishment should be banished, once and for all, from the educational system of the United States.

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