The reduction of intergroup hostility:

Research problems and hypotheses

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I. *Introduction*

It is a startling fact that almost the last area to be investigated empirically by the social sciences is the area of the constructive forces in human nature and society which make for the reduction of intergroup conflict. Research attention has focused upon the destructive tendencies in human conduct—upon antisocial action, hostility, distorted perceptions, irrational fears, authoritarian personality structure, and a wide variety of psychopathological disorders. Concern with positive forces has not reached the point of stimulating systematic investigation, perhaps because of the antinormative position of present-day scientists, most of whom feel inclined to leave such matters to philosophers and social reformers. Yet an adequate social science must study the social norms and ethical principles by which men live.

Naess has suggested that an analysis of ethical principles with respect to the psychological processes they implicate and the social conditions which maximize their effectiveness may be the most important next step for social science, from the point of view both of improving its theoretical adequacy and of contributing to the problem of social survival. His systematization of the ethical code of Mahatma Gandhi includes an explicit statement of testable hypotheses

(7). Most of these hypotheses take the form of predicting that certain types of social action will have the long-run effect of achieving the humanistic aims of a non-violent political movement while, at the same time, reducing the probability of hostile attacks from rival groups. Similar hypotheses can be extracted from the writings of John Dewey, William James, and other philosophers who have emphasized that the means one employs in a social struggle determine the ends that will ultimately be achieved. Additional hypotheses that may warrant reformulation and investigation probably can be extracted from writings on ethics by other modern philosophers such as B. Croce, L. T. Hobhouse, G. E. Moore, J. Royce, B. Russell, and A. E. Taylor.

Our main purpose in this paper is to examine some of the new and promising areas of research in the field of social psychology that are suggested by various ethical propositions concerning methods of reducing intergroup hostility and enhancing mutual adherence to a shared set of ethical norms. First, we shall call attention to some of the key variables that might be investigated and the types of research method that might be employed. Then we shall formulate a series of sample hypotheses that are offered for their suggestive value, illustrating some of the basic theoretical issues in contempo-

rary psychology to which a systematic research program on intergroup conflict could contribute a great deal of pertinent evidence.

II. Some Key Variables

A major set of problems requiring both theoretical analysis and rigorous empirical investigation is that of evaluating the social and psychological consequences of the positive ethical means employed by any social movement, organization, or group to achieve socially desirable goals in its struggle against rival groups. A large-scale program of research would be needed to determine under what conditions the various ethical means (independent variables) have the intended or unintended effects (dependent variables).

EXAMPLES OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

An excellent source of various ethical procedures that are illustrative of the means to be investigated is the analysis of the Gandhian ethical system prepared by Naess (7). Most of the normative propositions and hyoptheses which specify the forms of conduct that will achieve the ultimate ethical goals can be restated in terms of means-consequence relationships. As examples, we have selected eight norms, all of which are here formulated as procedures or policies of social struggle which are means for attaining the various humanitarian ends. Although loosely defined at present, these means can be readily translated into operational terms and investigated as independent variables in systematic research studies:

1. *Refraining* from any form of verbal or overt *violence* toward members of the rival group
2. Openly *admitting* to the rival group one's plans and intentions, including the considerations that determine the tactics one is employing in the current struggle as well as one's longer-range strategic objectives
3. *Refraining* from any action that will have the effect of *humiliating* the rival group

4. Making visible *sacrifices* for one's cause
5. Maintaining a consistent and persistent set of *positive activities* which are explicit (though partial) realizations of the group's objectives
6. Attempting to initiate direct personal *interaction* with members of the rival group, oriented toward engaging in *friendly verbal discussions* with them concerning the fundamental issues involved in the social struggle
7. Adopting a consistent attitude of *trust* toward the rival group and taking overt actions which demonstrate that one is, in fact, willing to act upon this attitude
8. Attempting to achieve a high degree of *empathy* with respect to the motives, affects, expectations, and attitudes of members of the rival group

Besides the foregoing list, many additional examples of positive means could be culled from Gandhi's ethical code (4), from Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct* (2), and from other ethical writings which also contain propositions concerning the positive and negative social consequences of using alternative ethical procedures.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

The effectiveness of the positive means can be assessed in relation to the following outcomes, which constitute the dependent variables to be investigated:

1. A reduction in the incidence and intensity of acts of violence
2. An increase in the willingness of the rival group to engage in arbitration and to overcome the obstacles that interfere with peaceful settlement of disputes
3. Favorable attitude changes among members of the rival group toward the group behaving according to ethical principles
4. Greater motivation on the part of group members to continue working toward the attainment of humanitarian and social welfare goals
5. Greater success of the group in achieving its specific humanitarian objectives
6. Favorable attitude changes among members of the group in the direction of greater commitment to peaceful settlement of disputes with all rival groups
7. Favorable attitude changes among spectators of the struggle (i.e., people who are unaffili-

ated with either of the contending groups) in the direction of being more attracted to the group using positive ethical means, placing greater reliance in their public communications, and thereby becoming more influenced in the direction of accepting their policies and objectives

In general, the predictions would be that the positive means such as those listed here would, singly or in combination, lead to favorable outcomes as specified by the seven dependent variables. But, in addition to these global predictions, a number of much more refined hypotheses would need to be tested in order to determine the intervening processes which mediate the predicted effects. In the course of investigating the social and psychological consequences of any one of the various means, it will probably turn out that there are a number of different component factors involved that must be separated and investigated as independent variables. For example, the policy of openly admitting one's intentions and plans to a rival group might give rise to three quite separate effects.

1. Revealing material that is ordinarily kept secret may influence the rivals' attitude concerning the *moral status* of the acting group (e.g., they may become suspicious that something more important is being kept secret, or they may become much more respectful of the sincerity of the group).

2. Revealing tactical plans that will handicap the acting group may influence the rivals' attitudes concerning the *strength* of the acting group (e.g., admission of one's plans may be perceived as signs of weakness and ineptness in conducting the struggle or as signs of an exceptionally powerful movement that is capable of being successful without resorting to secrecy).

3. Predicting in advance the deprivations that will be inflicted upon the rivals may have the effect of increasing or decreasing the magnitude of frustration and the intensity of the aggressive impulses aroused when the deprivations subsequently materialized.

Thus investigating positive ethical means may lead to the discovery of a number of different mediating processes, some of which may tie in with broad sectors of theory and research in the human sciences.

Implicit in the foregoing discussion is the expectation that objective evaluations of the consequences of the positive ethical means will include careful investigation of the *unfavorable* outcomes as well as the favorable ones. Obviously, the research would have to be carried out in such a way as to detect readily any instance in which the outcome was the reverse of that specified in the foregoing list of favorable outcomes. In this connection it will be necessary to specify a number of additional dependent variables, representing other types of adverse outcomes. For example, a certain type of positive ethical means may prove to be extremely frustrating to the members who are committed to using it and incline some of them to become defensively *apathetic* and to *disaffiliate* themselves from the group. In some cases the intrapersonal conflicts engendered by prolonged suppression of aggressive impulses might conceivably engender a marked increase in *anxiety* or other *symptoms of emotional tension*. In the long run, consistent adherence to certain of the positive means might result in a marked change in the composition of the membership, with a preponderance of masochistic and other *deviant personalities* being attracted to it.

To detect such unfavorable consequences, the research investigator would need to be alert to any indications of unintended effects that arise in the course of carrying out empirical investigations. Comparisons of instances of favorable outcomes with those of unfavorable outcomes should provide valuable evidence concerning the conditions un-

der which the use of various positive means does and does not lead to the intended effects.

CONDITIONING FACTORS

One major set of conditions determining favorable versus unfavorable outcomes has to do with the *combination* of positive means that are employed by the group. For example, admission of one's own plans and refraining from violence may be interpreted as weakness and perceived as relatively ineffective unless accompanied by visible sacrifices for one's own cause and a program of persistent, clear activity demonstrating the group's objectives. Moreover, the use of one means, such as refraining from violence, may strengthen the commitment to the group goal, and this intervening psychological change may facilitate the effective execution of other means, such as making visible sacrifices for one's cause. Thus it will be necessary to study the independent variables in combination and in interaction as well as singly.

The nature of the group struggle is another conditioning factor in the operation of these variables. At least three dimensions of group struggle must be taken into account.

The first dimension is the degree of conflict of interest relative to the community of interest between competing groups. It is generally assumed that non-violent means and positive ethical practices are more applicable to factions within the same institution, since they have so much in common, than to rival nations, where the conflict of interest is high. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that the suicidal character of modern methods of violent group conflict has made this distinction less important, since the common interest in survival has become increasingly clear. In any case, it may be possible to discover auxiliary means of making common interests salient to rival nations

and thereby increasing the chances of success for limiting international clashes to non-violent conflicts.

A second dimension concerns the psychological closeness of the group conflict to the people involved. The dynamics of enmity between close personal associates and distant peoples may be different. The distance between competing nations makes their struggle less intense on a personalized basis than that between rival factions in the same political party. On the other hand, the more remote, the fewer the reality checks and hence the easier it is for autistic perception, projected fantasies, and hostile distortions to play their role.

A third related dimension has to do with the degree of institutionalization of the channels, or means, of conducting group and national competition and conflict. Violent means of resolving personal and group conflicts may be a direct reflection of the personal aggression of the protagonists, as in frontier community violence, which is an anticipation of legal institutions. But more commonly at the group level, practices have become institutionalized so that there is no one-to-one corerspondence between the warlike actions of a nation and the warlike character of its people (5). Most wars are probably fought not because the great majority want to fight but because they accept the legitimacy of the process which has led them into war. All these considerations suggest the need for taking into account the nature of the group struggle in studying the effectiveness of ethical forms of social action. In a final section some aspects of the institutionalization of aggression will be discussed.

Closely related to research on limiting conditions is another field of investigation comprising the study of psychological and social conditions which facilitate the willingness of group members to use the posi-

tive ethical principles referred to as the "independent variables." In other words, it is also necessary as part of a systematic program of research to consider the use of the positive means as *dependent* variables and to find out the predisposing factors which enable individuals and groups to limit themselves to positive ethical policies in their struggles with opposing groups.

III. *Methods and Techniques*

We envisage three phases for the development, refinement, and testing of hypotheses about the peaceful resolution of intergroup conflicts. They need not constitute a discrete temporal sequence, since there is much to be gained from an overlap in the timing of the phases.

The first phase would consist of the use of existing data at two levels: documentary evidence and primary-source data. The former would call for comparative case studies of *historical instances* of social and political struggles in which the given action policies were and were not employed—e.g., studies of various radical, pacifist, religious, and nationalist movements whose social effects can be appraised from available documentary evidence. Primary-source data could be drawn from *interview and questionnaire studies* bearing on industrial conflict situations and factional disputes within social movements, military organizations, political parties, and schools. Of particular relevance would be data on the correlates of different demands and practices on the part of supervisors, union officials, military officers, political leaders, and teachers. This stage of the investigation would furnish some preliminary testing of hypotheses but would serve mainly for the more precise formulation of significant variables and their interrelationships.

The second phase would consist of field studies of *current* and *developing instances* of social and political struggles in which the given action policies are and are not being employed—e.g., collecting systematic interview data in United States southern communities where Negro organizations are attempting to bring about desegregation. The emphasis here would be upon specifying the relevant types of data in advance, whereas in the first phase the studies would be limited by the data which happen to be available. Again this stage could contribute both to the testing and to the reformulation of hypotheses.

The final or experimental phase would consist of field and laboratory experiments. The second phase gives better control over the collection of relevant data than the first, but adequate control of the operative variables requires the use of experimental techniques.

Field experiments, which involve the use of controlled experimental techniques in natural settings, have the advantage that the necessary controls can be taken into account in advance of the investigation. They also have the merit of dealing with the full power of social variables as they occur in a real community setting. Such experiments could be devised, for example, in connection with the program of a social or political group in which alternative action policies are carried out in equivalent towns. (E.g., the co-operation might be obtained of a research-minded national organization which is currently engaging in a social or political struggle within many different communities throughout the country. Certain local chapters in one designated set of communities might be asked to use a given action policy, whereas other chapters in an equivalent set of communities might be asked to use a contrasting action policy. The effects could be ascertained by interviewing representative samples within the two sets of communities and by using be-

havioral indexes such as incidence of overt violence on the part of rival groups, increases or decreases in membership of the competing groups, etc.)

Laboratory experiments of the type employed in current research on group dynamics could investigate some of the variables of interest in contrived settings, but the manipulations would be relatively weak. The advantage of this method would be the possibility of isolating single variables and varying their strength fairly precisely, although within limited ranges. The most efficient use of this method would probably be to deal with very specific questions which might arise from field experiments about the properties of a given variable.

IV. *Sample Hypotheses and Problems*

This section will be devoted largely to presenting a series of hypotheses concerning the psychological processes which mediate the anticipated favorable and unfavorable effects of using various violent and non-violent procedures in intergroup conflicts. We shall present (1) some general propositions concerning the influence of instrumental actions on group goals and the role of leadership in using means consistent with the goals; (2) some of the major psychological changes that might account for the "corrupting" effects of using violent means; (3) a number of additional explanatory hypotheses bearing on the converse process—the "constructive" effects of abstaining from violence; and (4) hypotheses concerning the attitude changes produced by positive ethical means which involve consistently treating the members of opposing groups as potential allies.

A final section will consider the problem of the consequences of the institutionalization of violence.

INFLUENCE OF INSTRUMENTAL
ACTIONS ON GROUP GOALS

That individuals and groups can be involved in antisocial practices in the interests of desirable social goals and still maintain these goals in relatively pure fashion is a doctrine for which there is little psychological support. Once people act in a certain manner, they tend to develop beliefs and attitudes to make that behavior part of their value system. Thus psychologists have long talked about mechanisms becoming drives or instrumental activities becoming functionally autonomous (1). An important factor in the doctrine that the end justifies the means is the separation this imposes in fact between means and ends. John Dewey and other writers have emphasized that an expedient means chosen without regard for the goal sought will not be an intrinsic part of an integrated pattern of means-end activity. It becomes increasingly difficult for the person himself, as well as those who observe his actions, to identify the goal which he is seeking from the instrumental means he employs. When an individual devotes his major energies to using expedient means, he will tend to see the justification of his behavior not in what he actually does every day but in the great goal which lies somewhere beyond. And, of course, it is relatively easy to justify one's morality by goals which are remote and which permit little reality testing. Concrete everyday activities, however, do not permit easy rationalization when they have to be considered on their own merits. It may be just as important, therefore, for a group to tie its ethical standards to means as to ends, since the means can be checked and observed more readily than the goals.

The central point of what has just been said is that repeated behavior of an antisocial character, though originally in the interests of altruistic social goals, will prob-

ably lead to the abandonment of those goals as directing forces for the individual. This proposition applies to the leaders as well as the followers within any group or organization.

Persons in positions of leadership, of course, play the major role in proposing and executing the ethical policies that are used in any social struggle and in inducing the rest of the membership to adopt them. The leaders of groups with humanitarian goals may be able to execute certain of their functions more effectively if they adopt expedient means on an opportunistic basis. But, in the long run, opportunistic leaders will probably be less effective in moving their followers toward achieving the ultimate objectives of their organization than leaders who insist upon using means that are perceived by the members as being consistent with humanitarian goals. This principle has been recognized by those political and social movements which attempt to maintain a fictitious divorce between their ideology and their opportunistic methods by assigning different people to the two functions. Such groups sometimes try to keep their ethical ideology "pure" by not invoking it for every opportunistic measure.

There are at least four different considerations which make it likely that the long-run losses will offset the short-run gains whenever the leader of an altruistic movement indorses expedient means that are not consistent with the group's ultimate objectives. (1) If leaders justify bad means for good ends, it will create perceptual ambiguity for their followers. Many followers are not steeped in the ideology of the movement, and it is difficult for them to distinguish in many instances the means from the end. (2) They will have less confidence in the sincerity of a leader who is not prepared to sacrifice for the cause. His espousing of expediency may be interpreted by

the members as indicating that he is taking the easy way and is not sufficiently devoted himself to take the harder route to his objectives. (3) To restore confidence, the leader is likely to resort to aggressive behavior toward his opponents, to impute to them an exaggerated evil intent, and even to advocate violence toward them. (4) Even a single opportunistic practice by a leader sets a precedent and makes subsequent opportunism easier for the leader and his followers to accept. Since the principle has already been compromised once, further compromise will do little additional harm.

Thus, on the one hand, confidence in the leader's sincerity is likely to be undermined by his use of opportunistic methods, and, on the other hand, the goals of the group become obscured for the members whenever their leaders succeed in inducing them to accept expedient means which are obviously inconsistent with the group's objectives. When the expedient means involve the use of violence against opposing groups, these tendencies will tend to be accentuated. We turn now to some additional hypotheses which specify the psychological changes that occur within any participant who engages in hostile actions against people who are opposing the program or ideology of his group.

"CORRUPTING" EFFECTS OF USING VIOLENT MEANS

Why and under what conditions would the use of violent means be expected to have extremely adverse effects on the individual participants in a social movement or organization? More specifically, what psychological changes within each participant might account for the following two consequences of the use of a violent means for the alleged purpose of attaining socially desirable goals: (*a*) an increase in the proba-

bility that such means will be used again in the future when similar, and perhaps even less demanding, occasions arise, and (b) a decrease in the probability that the group will work toward the achievement of socially desirable goals (i.e., violent means "corrupt" the ends)?

One obvious answer might be that a violent means will tend to corrupt the ends because it promotes counteraggression on the part of the group's opponents, and this creates a need to use more and more violence, ending up by engaging all the energies of the group in a violent struggle with the rivals instead of enabling positive actions to be taken toward the attainment of the long-run social goals. But even when we set aside the possibility of evoking counteraggression, there are at least three other psychological processes that may come into play, any one of which could have the effect of "corrupting" the members of a group that participates in the use of violent means:

1. Even when the violent means is socially sanctioned, the users may react with some degree of guilt (as a consequence of earlier moral training or as a consequence of generalization from non-sanctioned forms of violence). Guilt reactions may take the form of (a) high anticipation of being punished by the target group; (b) preoccupation with the question of whether or not the action was correct; and (c) affective disturbances, which may range from completely conscious feelings of guilt to vague feelings of uneasiness with no awareness of the source of the disturbance. One of the typical ways in which people attempt to reduce or counteract such guilt reactions is to attribute evil and immoral intentions to the target toward which their violence had been directed. Such attributions may enable a guilt-ridden person to justify the violent action to himself and to others; it may also involve a pro-

jection mechanism which operates as an unconscious technique for warding off guilt (3). The perception of the target as being extremely threatening and evil would have the double effect of (a) increasing the tendency to attack violently again in an effort to weaken the target, (b) decreasing one's willingness to work out compromises with the target group, and (c) altering the conception of humanitarian objectives in such a way as to exclude members of the target group.

2. Participating in any violent action may have the effect of weakening the internal superego controls which are the product of normal socialization. Superego controls are often based on exaggerated conceptions and partially unconscious fantasies about the possible consequences of performing the forbidden act. In psychotherapy a characteristic sequence of changes occurs when patients overcome anxiety or guilt reactions in the sexual sphere or in connection with socially aggressive behavior. After they have once "tested out" the new (non-inhibited) mode of action, they are left with less exaggerated conceptions and fantasies about the consequences of such behavior. Thus the inhibition tends to be gradually extinguished. The same sort of process seems to go on among combat soldiers whose inhibitions about killing the enemy begin to lessen after the first time they are induced to perform the disturbing act of shooting at enemy soldiers. A similar learning process may go on in connection with each instance of group-sanctioned violent action such that the person's automatic superego controls are lessened and he becomes capable of indulging in more and more extreme forms of violence.

3. Social contagion effects may occur within a group or organization such that when a highly respected leader or member of the group uses a violent means under

highly "justified" circumstances, other members of the group become less inhibited about engaging in similar acts of violence. This contagion may be partly the product of learning that the violent means is not disapproved, if it is used without criticism by the standard-bearers of morality within the group. Unconscious processes of identification may also facilitate the contagion effect. While, in the first instances, violence is applied by group leaders only after careful judgment, in subsequent instances the followers will be much more ready to indulge in violence without such a careful appraisal of whether or not it is justified. Thus the attitude may gradually develop that violent means are acceptable and even desirable, provided only that they are used in the service of the group's cause.

CONSTRUCTIVE EFFECTS OF ABSTAINING FROM VIOLENCE

The next question is the converse of the one just discussed: Why and under what conditions would *abstaining* from the use of sanctioned violent action be expected to have positive effects—e.g., decreasing the probability that violent means will be used in the future, increasing the probability that the group will work toward achieving its original humanitarian goals, and increasing members' adherence to the positive social objectives and moral standards which the group sponsors?

Some of the answers to this question may involve the same psychological mechanisms and social contagion effects specified in the preceding section. However, there may also be some processes that are of a different character, and for this reason we feel that the question of the constructive effects of non-violent action should be considered separately from the question of the "corrupting" effects of violent action. In the discussion which follows, we shall indicate

additional mechanisms that may come into play when members of a group adhere to a group decision to abstain from using violent means under conditions where such means are considered to be an acceptable or expected form of behavior.

In many persons, participation in sanctioned violence may serve as a means of reducing conscious and unconscious fears of being passively manipulated by others or of being exposed to damaging attacks and deprivations at the hands of one's rivals. To the extent that such fears are based on misconceptions or exaggerated fantasies about the magnitude of the danger, a given act of abstaining from sanctioned violence may involve a process of *emotional relearning* (similar to that referred to in the preceding section in connection with the lowering of superego control). In this instance, however, the process would be equivalent to that which goes on when a hyperaggressive patient undergoes psychotherapy. Sooner or later he tries out a passive, non-aggressive way of responding to the therapist and discovers that the dangers of passivity which he had so greatly feared do not actually materialize. Similarly, when the members of a group adhere to a group decision to behave in a conciliatory rather than a hostile way, their anticipations about the dangerous consequences of non-violence may be brought more into line with reality. If their fear of being passive is thereby reduced to some extent, they will no longer be so strongly motivated to engage in violence on future occasions when confronted with a choice between violent and non-violent means of struggle against their opponents.

Guilt mechanisms may also play an important role in the internalization of non-violent norms. Insofar as any act of violence (whether sanctioned or not) generates some degree of guilt, at least a slight degree of emotional tension would be experienced by

the average group member whenever he *anticipates* engaging in a future act of violence. A reduction in emotional tension might occur if, at the time when the group member is experiencing anticipatory guilt, a communication from a group leader or an expression of group consensus conveys the idea that the group's goals can be better achieved by abstaining from violence and by using an effective form of non-violent action instead. The decision to accept the recommendation would be reinforced by the *reduction of anticipatory guilt*. The reward value of the decision might be enhanced if the ideology of the group included the norm that violence is a morally inferior form of action which should be avoided as much as possible. Even if only lip service is given to this norm, the group member may experience a heightening of self-esteem in addition to guilt reduction if he anticipates that others in his group will approve of his decision to abstain from violence. If each act of abstention is rewarded in this way, a new attitude will gradually tend to develop such that the person becomes increasingly more predisposed to decide or vote in favor of non-violent means. Perhaps under these conditions, good moral "practice makes perfect."

ATTITUDE CHANGES PRODUCED BY TREATING OPPONENTS AS POTENTIAL ALLIES

Many of the positive ethical means to which we have referred involve more than merely abstaining from violence. Among the examples which we have cited are such means as displaying an attitude of trust toward the members of opposing groups, maintaining friendly personal interactions with them, and seeking to understand their motives and attitudes by deliberately empathizing with them. Although somewhat different rationales for the various positive

means have been put forth by their proponents, all of them seem to point in the general direction of replacing a hostile, competitive, antagonistic approach by a policy of treating opponents as potential friends or allies. The hypotheses which follow pertain to the use of any positive ethical means or combination of such means, provided that they are employed on the basis of adhering to this general policy.

Just as in the case of using violent means, *social contagion* effects may occur when positive ethical means are used. But the factors which facilitate the contagion may be somewhat different. Because hostility and violent aggressive action is a very elementary impulsive form of reaction to people who interfere with the attainment of important group objectives, many persons may remain unaware of alternative ways of dealing with opponents and of overcoming the frustrations engendered by their opposition. Thus, whenever violent group action is regarded as the socially accepted mode of response to this type of frustration, many members of the group may gain sudden enlightenment if a respected leader or subgroup calls attention to the possibility of using an alternative approach. If the group decides to try out the proposed alternatives, even if its success remains ambiguous, those members of the group who have a relatively low need for aggression may also learn that the new means is less energy-consuming and less disagreeable than the traditional means. In this way, a process of acculturation may take place whereby a social technique evolved through the intelligence and ingenuity of others comes to be adopted by people who had formerly accepted, more or less unthinkingly, a general policy of dealing with opponents in a hostile manner.

Other psychological changes may also mediate the effects of adopting, on a tentative basis, the use of positive ethical means.

Whenever a member of a group accepts a group decision to use an *unconventional* friendly approach to rivals, he is likely to feel it necessary to justify the fact that he is deviating from the expected course of action (e.g., "Why am I willing to allow these people to provoke us so much without our hating and punishing them?"). The need for such justification may sometimes arise from exposure to cross-pressures resulting from conflicting (pro-hostility) norms held by other groups with which one is affiliated. Or the need for justifying may come from internalized standards—e.g., awareness that one is deviating from the ego ideal associated with sex role ("Am I a sissy?"). In any case, the need to justify the policy of treating opponents as potential allies would motivate the person (*a*) to take account of the positive attitudes and human qualities of the rivals; (*b*) to minimize the hostile intentions of the rivals; and (*c*) to predict that the friendly positive approach will be more successful than an antagonistic approach would be. Thus the effort to justify an act of friendly treatment may lead to cognitive restructurings and a shift in motivational pressures, which could contribute to two types of attitude change: (1) reduced hostility toward the rival group and (2) more favorable evaluations of the desirability of using positive means in general.

Nor are the beneficial effects of non-violence confined to the members of the group pursuing this policy. As group members take into consideration the positive attitudes of members of the out-group and stop reacting toward them as if they were deadly enemies, the out-group itself is under less pressure to be defensively aggressive. Thus the opponents may be influenced to engage in fewer acts of provocative hostility, and, in the long-run, some of their leaders and part of the membership may even become motivated to live up to the other group's view of them as potential allies.

SOME FURTHER CONSEQUENCES AND CAUSES OF INSTITUTIONALIZED AGGRESSION

In the preceding discussion we have considered in some detail the psychological mechanisms which may account for the corrupting effects of violence and the constructive effects of abstaining from violence. In this section attention will be given to further consequences of the operation of these basic mechanisms and to supplementary social-psychological processes which make institutionalized aggression the persistent problem of organized society. Though our major concern is with socially sanctioned aggression, it is important for theoretical reasons to differentiate between personal hostility and institutionalized forms of aggression with respect to both causes and effects. The recipient and the initiator of social aggression may be affected differentially if the violence is a sanctioned institutional practice or if it is the release of personal aggression. The two violent actions may be alike in physical character, but they are not necessarily perceived, experienced, or reacted to as the same. Personal aggression may be felt by the recipient as more of an attack upon his ego than the institutional action; it may lead to personalized resentment, more immediate resort to counteraggression, and perhaps less long-term effect. Institutionalization may leave the individual no easily identifiable target of a personal nature for counteraggression; it may confront the individual with sufficient force that he has no way of striking back. It may lead to displaced aggression against a convenient scapegoat, to intropunitiveness, to apathetic acceptance, or to repressed hostility. These consequences can occur in response to personal acts of aggression, but

they are less likely to occur where the personal target is easily identifiable and where countermeasures are within the grasp of the individual.

Our major problem today is not protection against the hostile elements among us as individuals capable of violence. Our major problem is with institutionalized forms of violence, as in conflicts between organized groups and nations. Such institutionalized aggression is accentuated by the presence of hostile people in certain situations, but the correlation between the amount and intensity of group conflict and the amount of latent hostility would not be high save under very special conditions. There are situations, however, in which the interaction of the two—personal hostility and institutional aggression—is of far-reaching significance, as in the opportunities which institutional channels may offer for the expression of latent hostility.

There are three psychological dangers in the institutionalization of violence which are worthy of special investigation: (1) the release of latent hostilities under conditions of social sanction of violence, (2) the apathetic condoning of any institutionally approved practice, and (3) the perpetuation and intensification of institutional violence.

1. *The release of latent hostilities under conditions of the sanctioning of violence.—* In Western society the antisocial nature of acts of aggression is communicated to children very early in the socialization process. Aggressive acts toward others are repeatedly censured and punished. If there is lack of understanding by parent and child in this process and continued frustration of the child, there may be repression, but retention, of the hostility. As a result, the adult will be burdened with strong latent hostility which comes into continual conflict with his superego standards. These standards are reinforced by perception of the social norms of the group which proscribes personal acts of violence. The presence of others and the presence of authority represent the stimulus situation which inhibits the aggressions of the individual. But, then, a curious reversal occurs. In certain contexts acts of violence are legitimized and sanctioned by groups and institutions. In times of war almost all sources of authority within each nation assert that it is noble and proper to kill for one's country. The social support for the antisocial action generally has three elements: the justification of a moral purpose, the justification of legitimacy, and the justification that others approve. Since the traditional inhibitor of violence has been the social environment, violence can assume intense and bizarre forms when the inhibitor is transformed into the facilitator. This is the classic theory of crowd behavior (6). But whereas in the crowd the social support is limited and temporary, in organized groups the support is more extensive and continuing. Thus within the areas where aggression is socially sanctioned, individuals can resolve their conflicts by indulging their worst impulses and by attaining social recognition and reward for so doing.

One danger in the social sanctioning of violence is that the release of hostility will go far beyond the bounds of what is sanctioned. Supposedly appropriate force is invoked on an objective and impersonal basis to accomplish the group's purpose. In practice, however, the way is open for abuses of various sorts. To the extent that latent hostility does exist in the members of the group and their leaders, there will be a tendency to push beyond the necessary force to accomplish the group goal because leaders directly and followers vicariously enjoy the opportunity to release repressed impulses. An extreme illustration would be

the use of terror by the German Nazis to maintain power for the Nazi party, which was then pushed to the point of attempts to exterminate entire groups and alleged races. The classic argument against the use of corporal punishment in the schools is the possibility of sadism when the punisher can use aggression disguised as socially approved and necessary discipline. In a preceding section it was indicated that the use of violence leads to further violence through weakening the internal superego controls. The inhibition against the expression of aggression becomes extinguished. This is especially true in the area of institutional aggression, where social support makes it easy to violate the basic social prohibitions. Such social support makes it possible to rationalize away guilt feelings and makes similar violence easier in the future.

We are really dealing in these examples with an interaction of institutional and personal aggression. Our contention is that people may perceive and react differently to personal, as against institutional, violence. The former is more identifiable and leads to more personalized resentment, since it is felt to be a direct attack upon the self. The latter induces in its victims more displacement and more generalized hostility. Frequently, however, in the case of sanctioned violence which permits the expression of latent hostility we have a pattern combining both types of aggression. The chances are that this combination will be perceived by its victims as the most unjust of all aggression. There is a tendency to personalize actions which are in any way injurious to the self. In this instance, however, the afflicted individual is right, since there is personal animus in his punisher. But, unlike purely personal aggression, there is no recourse to any form of counteraggression, since the punishment is legal and

proper. Moreover, the victim has limited opportunity for even verbally blowing off steam against his opponent. The result is often intense generalized hatred. Where the situation becomes completely intolerable, it may result in identification with the aggressor.

This combination of institutional violence and personal aggression is one reason why group conflicts become intensified over time and become difficult of solution, even when there is a good objective basis for solution. The scars left by a strike in which both company and union have used force are of this character. The company guards given free rein to their destructive impulses may have abused their power in a manner which the strikers never forget. And the strong-arm squad of the union may have acted similarly toward strike breakers. Both sides feel that the other side has taken advantage of a group struggle to perpetuate a personal outrage. Some of the bitterest memories of World War II are not of massive destruction by heavy artillery and bombers but the use of the cloak of military necessity for the expression of personal sadism.

2. *The apathetic condoning of institutional practices.*—Another danger lies in the passive acceptance of any violence perpetrated by one's own group or even by a rival group if it has some legal sanction. This is a different response from vicarious indulgence in one's own impulses toward violence and has not received adequate attention. Since the act of force is institutionally sanctioned, it is perceived by many as an objective event. There is no sense of personal outrage, even if the action is directed at deviant group members. This passive acceptance of violence sanctioned by the group, which would otherwise be regarded as basically wrong, is often the result of a compartmentalization in thinking and attitude. It is related to psychological factors mentioned

in our previous discussion of the means-end problem, which also involves a compartmentalization such that the individual is not compelled to face up to consequences of his behavior. When this compartmentalization is carried to an extreme, it means that there is one morality for the individual and a completely different morality for the group. Since the group standard can be justified by very remote goals, any action which the group leaders suggest must be accepted. When the German people passively accepted the violence perpetrated in Nazi concentration camps, it was probably not because of their higher level of latent hostility or sadism but because of their compartmentalization of morality. What was legal and sanctioned by the authorities was right, whether or not it was consistent with their own personal standards of morality.

In general, people as group members will condone actions by group representatives which they will not approve of for themselves as individuals. In time the punishments used against individual members by the group will tend to be brought into line with the punishments approved of by members in their personal lives. Brutal forms of physical punishment tend to be dropped from public institutions after they are no longer approved of in interpersonal relations. But in the area of group actions in relation to other groups we permit types of behavior that we do not countenance among individuals. Though such a dual set of standards can be defended, the danger is that the justification comes to rest not on practice and its consequences but on a social myth which asserts the unquestioned prerogative of the institution qua institution. The corrupting effect of such condoning of institutional aggression can be seen in war and postwar periods when encroachments are made on individual and civil liberties. Self-seeking politicians under some cloak of

governmental authority can carry such threats to an extreme and still secure the acquiescence of many people, since such institutional attacks against our enemies, external and internal, are assumed to be their legitimate function.

3. *The perpetuation and intensification of institutional violence.*—Personal aggression, lacking institutional supports, is sporadic and variable. When violence becomes an accepted part of the practice of an organization, it not only is perpetuated but tends to grow much like other parts of the organization. This perpetuation and intensification of institutional aggression comes about in three ways: (*a*) the setting-up of specialized roles, (*b*) role adaptation, or the effects of taking roles upon personalities, and (*c*) role selection, or the tendency toward a fit between unusual roles and personality types.

a) By creating special roles, organizational structures do not rely upon chance factors for the performance of various functions but make such performance the systematic work of trained experts. In addition to the motivation intrinsic to the role, the institution enlists a variety of organization motivations such as monetary rewards, promotion or upgrading, group acceptance, etc. Moreover, in any sector of an organization people occupying given roles tend to make their role functions as important as possible, partly because of self-interest in their careers, partly for the encouragement of morale, and partly because of the psychological prominence of their own tasks compared to others they know less about. The armed forces or the FBI is like any other part of a bureaucratic structure in seeking bigger appropriations and more personnel.

b) In the earlier discussion of the effects of instrumental actions upon group goals it was pointed out that such actions affect the

value system of the individual. Role behavior, like any other form of behavior, leads to its rationalization. Personal values are brought into line with the individual's action. What he does, he may do as his job, but after a time he sees this as necessary, important, and desirable. Even in those cases where the role is not originally congenial to the personality pattern of its occupant, remaining in the role results in modification of the personality. To be a member of a combat force and to hold pacifist values produces intense internal conflict. If the individual cannot readily escape from the behavioral demands of a role, he will tend to accept the rationalization provided by the organization in order to dull the sharp edges of the conflict. In time, this acceptance undermines old values and builds up a new value system. Thus role adaptation means not only carrying out the required behavior but justifying it as a desirable course of action. Every occupational and professional group develops an ideology which is supportive of its practices to the extent of occasional idealization of its functions. In the same fashion the military, police, and custodial vocations develop values consonant with their behavior.

c) There is a tendency toward a fit between unusual institutional roles and basic personality patterns. The general notion of the fit between bureaucratic roles and personality has probably been overdone, but there is a good deal of truth in the thesis when we are dealing with unusual roles which call for atypical patterns of motivation and behavior. The censor of pornographic literature may sometimes be suspected of enjoying his duty. When an institution permits violence as part of its function, people will be attracted to this role who derive satisfactions from the nature of the work. Thus there is a self-selection process for brutal roles. In the police forces

of some American cities, among prison guards, and in the strong-arm squads of some labor unions there will be individuals who gravitate to and remain in these roles (when there are equally well-paid positions open to them elsewhere) who are of a special personality type. Before the professionalization of American police forces there were many cities in which it was not always easy to distinguish between the member of the third-degree squad and the criminal he was bringing to justice.

Institutional support for roles of violence can be a corrupting factor within an organization far more than is generally realized. Even though not all roles of violence are filled by persons with strong needs to discharge sadistic or hostile impulses, such personalities can readily dominate their part of the organization. Less congenial personalities for these roles will tend to drop out over time. The more brutal individuals will remain and, through their continuity in the organization and their greater motivation, will set the pattern of accepted practice. Moreover, their mutual reinforcement of one another may intensify brutal practices and perpetuate them. The history of some concentration camps illustrates this trend. Brutal practices in prisons and among police forces have been difficult to uproot because it would mean the wholesale dismissal of large groups of people—those guilty of flagrant violations and those who are virtual accomplices in such violations.

V. *Summary*

The purpose of this paper was to show the applicability of the research methods of behavioral science to problems of group conflict and interpersonal hostility. The particular frame of reference employed is that of social psychology. Applications from the concepts and techniques of this field are made to certain aspects of the use of vio-

lence and of constructive methods in achieving group goals. A section on methods, moreover, outlines both a general strategy for research investigation and the more specific techniques called for at the tactical level. Some of the normative propositions from Arne Naess's analysis of the Gandhian ethical system are examined as the basis for empirical studies. Particular attention is given to the effects of the use of violence and of abstaining from violence in terms of the psychological processes involved. The concluding part of the paper discusses factors making for the perpetuation and intensification of institutionalized aggression.

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