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Bertrand Russell considers *Time* magazine to be “scurrilous and utterly shameless in its willingness to distort.” **Ralph Ingersoll**: “In ethics, integrity, and responsibility, *Time* is a monumental failure.” **Irwin Shaw**: *Time* is “nastier than any other magazine of the day.” **Sloan Wilson**: “Any enemy of *Time* is a friend of mine.” **Igor Stravinsky**: “Every music column I have read in *Time* has been distorted and inaccurate.” **Tallulah Bankhead**: “Dirt is too clean a word for *Time*.” **Mary McCarthy**: “*Time*’s falsifications are numerous.” **Dwight Macdonald**: “The degree of credence one gives to *Time* is inverse to one’s degree of knowledge of the situation being reported on.” **David Merrick**: “There is not a single word of truth in *Time*.” **P. G. Wodehouse**: “*Time* is about the most inaccurate magazine in existence.” **Rockwell Kent**: *Time* “is inclined to value smartness above truth.” **Eugene Burdick**: *Time* employs “dishonest tactics.” **Conrad Aiken**: “*Time* slants its news.” **Howard Fast**: *Time* provides “distortions and inaccuracies by the bushel.” **James Gould Cozzens**: “My knowledge of inaccuracies in *Time* is first-hand.” **Walter Winchell**: “*Time*’s inaccuracies are a staple of my column.” **John Osborne**: “*Time* is a vicious, dehumanizing institution.” **Eric Bentley**: “More pervasive than *Time*’s outright errors is its misuse of truth.” **Vincent Price**: “Fortunately, most people read *Time* for laughs and not for facts.” **H. Allen Smith**: “*Time*’s inaccuracies are as numerous as the sands of the Sahara.” **Taylor Caldwell**: “I could write a whole book about *Time* inaccuracies.” **Sen. John McClellan**: “*Time* is prejudiced and unfair.”

The Fight Against Mental Health

By Alfred Auerback, M.D.

Throughout the country, a California psychiatrist reports, well-organized and well-financed groups have succeeded in hampering mental-health programs, calling them part of a plot to ship anti-Communists to "Siberia, U.S.A."

Mankind nearly always has been afraid of victims of mental illness, and down through the ages this fear has also been directed toward mental healers. This antagonism was compounded by Freud's stressing the sexual components of human behavior. Though psychoanalysis has won increasing acceptance, hostility still remains towards many of its concepts, along with some doubts as to its therapeutic effectiveness. Psychiatry, too, though a branch of medical science, still has not won complete acceptance. But despite some public and professional criticism psychiatry and mental-health activities have generally been accepted as legitimate undertakings that are continually seeking to perfect themselves.

In recent years, however, the mental-health movement has been the object of a form of attack reminiscent of the Salem witch-hunting days. In contrast to responsible criticism of deficiencies or methodology, it imputes deliberately evil intent to the mental-health program in general and to those engaged in the field. The attackers accuse mental-health associations and psychiatric groups of being subversive, even conspiratorial—the refrain is that the entire mental-health program is anti-American, established by agents of the Kremlin to take over the United States. The groups making these charges seem to be in large measure made up of rabble-rousers in-

involved in various right-wing activities over the years. Being well-financed and vociferous, they manage to create public turmoil far out of proportion to their actual numbers. They have become effective pressure groups both at the local level and before state legislative bodies. At times they have effectively blocked proposed mental-health programs, or brought about reduced appropriations for new or existing programs.

In September, 1961, an analysis was made of 166 samples of attack on psychiatry or on the mental-health movement gathered from 38 different communities in California. The major sources were letters to the editor (46), news stories and articles (41), leaflets and brochures (21), newspaper editorials (17), and newspaper columns (12). These items revealed a wide range of targets, including the California Department of Mental Hygiene, mental-health associations, the World Health Organization of the United Nations, commitment procedures in California, psychological testing in the schools, and psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers in general. A common thread running through all of them was the charge that the mental-health program was part of a Communist conspiracy or that it was set up to oppress anti-Communists. The theme was that prayer and time were all that was needed to alleviate the human misery and social problems created by mental illness. Typi-

cal statements found in these publications were "Mental hygiene is a subtle and diabolical plan of the enemy to transform a free and intelligent people into a cringing horde of zombies"; "Mental health programs are part of a Communist plot to control the people's minds"; and, "Do we want to become a regimented nation, brain-washed and brain-fed through a powerful army of psychiatrists?"

These attacks offer no constructive suggestions. They do not even evidence concern for the problem of psychiatric illness or for those afflicted. They use mental illness and the mentally ill as tools for purposes that have no relation to mental illness. The issues are never discussed; they are deliberately dodged by attributing "evil motives" to mental-health workers.

The anti-mental health movement is actually an outcropping of the opposition to all scientific progress. Nearly every major advance in the public-health field during the past century has been violently opposed. Pasteurization of milk, chlorination of water, and immunization against smallpox, diphtheria, and other infectious diseases have evoked strong opposition wherever introduced. There are still pockets of opposition to smallpox vaccination and to Salk vaccine. Antagonism to fluoridation of water has mounted in recent years to the point where 14,000 communities are deprived of this caries preventive.

The first significant public denunciation of the mental-health movement came in 1955 from a group of some 100 housewives in Burbank, California, who called themselves the American Public Relations Forum, Inc. They were studying legislative bills with the announced purpose of exposing subversion. They pounced on a proposed community mental-health services bill. When the bill was defeated, this group claimed credit for a "victory for Americanism." Reintroduction of the California Community Mental Health Services bill in 1957 again brought this group into the fray, but despite its obstreperous opposition the bill passed the Legislature. During the bill's stormy legislative course repeated claims were made that it was Communist-inspired. And despite the fact that the bill was drafted by the California Medical Association,

many physicians in that State *still* oppose it on those baseless charges even today.

In 1956 a Congressional subcommittee held hearings on a bill providing for the hospitalization and care of the mentally ill of Alaska. During the hearings a motley crew harangued in opposition to the bill. A clever phrase, "Siberia, U.S.A.," was coined by a Mrs. Burkeland of Van Nuys, California. During the hearings the phrase was worked into such statements as, "This legislation will place any resident of the United States at the mercy of any person with whom they might have a disagreement, causing a charge of 'mental illness' to be placed against them with immediate deportation to 'Siberia, U.S.A.'" Again: "It is entirely within the realm of possibility that we may be establishing in Alaska our own version of the Siberian slave camps run by the Russian government." Soon "Siberia, U.S.A." was being printed all over the country in right-wing publications, including those of well-known rabble-rousers and of groups with high-sounding American names. During the Congressional hearings, several witnesses switched from "patriotism" to bigotry. They indicated that the mental-health movement was a Jewish plot. One witness testified that 100% of all psychiatric therapy was Jewish and that about 80% of the psychiatrists in the United States were Jewish.

The importance of these Congressional hearings to the anti-mental health forces lies in the fact that the verbatim text of the hearings was printed by the U.S. Government Printing Office, and in some cases later read into the Congressional Record. As a result, the wild statements made at that time have been repeated across the country countless times, with citations from the Congressional Record and with the implication of governmental approval.

Today, whenever mental-health work is being attacked the phrases used are identical with those first appearing in 1955-58. Years after Alaska has built its mental hospital, the phrase "Siberia, U.S.A." is still in use. Words like "Communist-inspired," "anti-religious," and "conspiracy" are still seen frequently, and no new labels have evolved.

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tion, the American Psychiatric Association, and the National Association for Mental Health supported the Alaska Mental Health Bill, one nationwide group of physicians—the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons—opposed it. In circularizing its 10,000 physician members, the Association repeatedly made mention of the bill's "horrendous provisions." (The Association's Congressional adviser quit in disgust when it refused to retract its stand.) Over the years, many physicians exposed to this propaganda have continued to repeat the clichés and frequently have led the attack on mental-health activities. Often this thinking has colored the deliberations of state and county medical societies. In ten or more states, physicians or physicians' wives have played prominent roles in these attacks, at times winning the official or unofficial support of the medical societies. Perhaps the most striking example occurred in the San Fernando Valley near Los Angeles, where a professional propagandist, after attacking "The Mental Health Racket," was given a *letter of commendation* by the district medical society. Only after forceful argument by the society's outraged members, including the psychiatrists, was this commendation revoked.

On August 15, 1958, an article entitled "Mental Health—a Marxist Weapon" appeared in the *Economic Council Letter* 437. According to this right-wing publication, "mental health" is an inaccurate label for what is really a skillful attempt by Communist propagandists to bring about conformity to the Marxist ideology. According to this publication, "non-conformists" would be in actual peril of being judged insane. The contents of the article have been reproduced in countless other "anti-Communist" publications and have been repeated ad infinitum and ad nauseam.

At about the same time there appeared a booklet entitled *Brainwashing—A Synthesis of a Russian Textbook on Psychopolitics*, its 64 pages purporting to hold the text of a talk given by Lavrenti Beria, former head of the Soviet Secret Police, to American students attending classes in "psychopolitics" at Lenin University. It contained some of the most bald-faced lies ever

directed against the psychiatric profession. The book has had a tremendous circulation and has been cited at great length. Quotes crop up in publications of the Daughters of the American Revolution and in brochures such as "Lifelines," "Common Sense," "Freedom Builders of America," and "Freedom Forum." In each it is stated unequivocally that under the "false name of 'mental health'" a Communist master plan is being put into operation in hundreds of American cities, and that mental-health groups are being used to further the goal of Communist conquest of the mind. A sampling of this treatise on "brainwashing" must be quoted to indicate the source of phraseology now in frequent use:

Psychopolitics is a branch of geopolitics concerned with mental healing. It is used to produce chaos in the fields of mental healing. It is designed to have every doctor and psychiatrist act as an unwitting agent of the communist doctrine. Through it you achieve dominion over the minds and bodies of the nation. Institutions for the insane provide the means of holding a million persons without any civil rights or any hope of freedom. By use of electric shock or brain surgery you can keep these people so they will never again draw a sane breath. By making readily available drugs of all kinds, by giving the teenager alcohol, by praising his wildness, by stimulating him with sex literature, the psychopolitical operator (psychiatrist) can create the necessary attitudes of chaos, idleness and worthlessness in the teenager. The psychiatrist has no interest in cures, hence the greater the number of insane in hospitals, the greater the number of people under his domination and the greater will become the size of his hospitals. Exercises in sexual attack on patients can be practiced by the psychiatrist to demonstrate the inability of the patient to withstand him while indoctrinating the lust for further sexual activities on the part of the patient. If a psychiatric ward could be established in every general hospital in every city in the nation, it is certain that at one time or another leading citizens of the nation could come under the ministrations of the psychopolitical operator. The attraction of the field of mental healing to many people is that it provides unlimited sexual opportunities and the possibility of complete dominion over the minds and bodies of patients, the possibility of complete lawlessness without detection.

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Though these statements are ludicrous, the fact remains that millions of Americans are being exposed to them over and over again. In addi-

tion to thousands of pamphlets and brochures repeating them, there are many radio and television stations across the United States that routinely broadcast this philosophy, although in a more subtle manner.

Generally, psychiatrists assume that educated people pay no attention to such views. This is not the case. In the February, 1962 issue of *Reader's Digest*, an article entitled "The Tragedy of Sane People Who Get 'Put Away'" indicated that thousands of sane men and women are being "railroaded" into mental hospitals every year. The article further stated, "Only when all men are secure from unjust imprisonment can each of us feel truly free." State hospitals were regarded as terribly bad places, and to be hospitalized in one was considered comparable to being put in prison. It is too early to measure the damage done by this article, but its repercussions will be with us for years.

The influence of the anti-mental health movement is spreading across the United States. It has had an especially profound impact in the southern part of California. In at least a dozen communities there, mental-health activities have been attacked by these groups, and in some cases they have successfully eliminated entire mental-health programs. Psychiatrists are being vilified by *other* physicians as "amoral," "fools," "knaves," "quacks," and "traitors." Occasionally the local press has joined the fray against mental-health programs, in combination with one or more vociferous physicians. Mental-health associations have come under such violent fire that leading citizens have resigned from them as the result of intimidation or the fear of being labeled pro-Communist. Many others have been persuaded by the Big Lie that the model Draft Act—prepared by Federal agencies as a guide for states to provide quick help to the mentally ill through commitment procedures that protect their constitutional rights—is in reality a measure to railroad political dissenters into mental hospitals. As a result, states now attempting to pass mental-health legislation invariably meet accusations of "railroading." An interesting derivative of the anti-mental health movement is to be seen in the Community Mental Health Act

passed in Utah in 1961:

It shall be a felony to give psychiatric treatment, non-vocational mental health counselling, case finding testing, psychoanalysis, drugs, shock treatment, lobotomy, or surgery to any individual for the purpose of changing his concept of, belief about, or faith in God.

* * *

During January, 1963, the writer requested information from the district branches of the American Psychiatric Association about anti-mental health tendencies in their states. A curious pattern developed. In most states the psychiatric society either knew of no anti-mental health trends or was aware of only isolated instances. But a little later there was often a follow-up letter in which it was reported, with considerable surprise, that anti-mental health activities *were* under way in that state!

Some states have serious problems arising as a consequence of anti-mental health activity. In Washington, anti-mental health forces precipitated a legislative probe of the State hospital system. At least one legislator who strongly supported the State mental-health program was defeated for re-election on this issue, and other sympathetic legislators have been threatened with similar fates.

A graphic expression of anti-mental health trends is found in Texas. There a number of well-intentioned, overpatriotic organizations, convinced that anything related to mental health is subversive, have conducted a running campaign against all mental-health activities. There have been telephone campaigns and even full-page advertisements in the papers attacking mental-health work.

No doubt some of the individuals involved in the anti-mental health movement have paranoid personalities, but this does not encompass the heterogenous group. To understand these individuals the best references are the discussions of ethnocentrism in *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno, T. W., *et al.*, 1950), the article "Psychodynamics of Group Opposition to Health Programs" (Marmor, Judd, *et al.*, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 1960), and the book *Mental Hospitals at Work* (Jones and Sidebotham, 1961).

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The ethnocentric individual feels threatened by groups to which he does not have a sense of belonging. Where he cannot identify, he must oppose. He believes that "in" groups to which he belongs are superior to the "out" groups. The ethnocentrists are nationalistic in thinking and strongly opposed to internationalism in every form. Favoring an authoritarian ideology, they are opposed to any philosophy that stimulates critical evaluation or scientific inquiry. Psychiatry, which directs the individual to study his own motivations and to look critically both at himself and at his environment, is antithetical to the orientation of ethnocentrism.

Marmor and his associates point out that the same individuals and organizations that fight water fluoridation can be found opposing mental-health measures and compulsory vaccination. To such individuals, purity is equated with security and health with wholeness. They are equally concerned with *pure* foods, *pure* morals, and *pure* races. They are excessively preoccupied with fears of sexual attack, bodily poisoning, or ideational contamination. Safety lies in what is old and familiar; the new and unfamiliar are threatening. New habits, new foods, new drugs, or new ideas are all viewed with suspicion and apprehension.

The fanaticism of the anti-mental health partisan, to quote Eric Hoffer, "prevents an appeal to his reason or moral sense. He fears compromise and cannot be persuaded to qualify the certitude and righteousness of his holy cause" (*The True Believer*, 1958).

Much of the strong emotional attitude expressed by anti-mental health partisans reflects their own unconscious anxieties. As Jones and Sidebotham write,

Hostility and aggression spring from fear. Fear of being mentally ill, of losing one's rational judgment and independence of action, is so universal a human emotion that few of us escape it altogether although we may disguise it in a number of ways. In an age which is too compassionate to release that fear, as earlier generations have done, in persecution of the mentally sick themselves, aggression tends to be switched to the therapist, or to the institution in which he works.

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The anti-mental health movement also reflects

a large degree of conscious opportunism on the part of various self-seeking and self-serving individuals and groups. One of them summarized their philosophy as follows:

When you are espousing a right-wing cause you are apt to attract a fairly sizable lunatic fringe which has to be dealt with kindly if for no other reason than to keep them from going over to the enemy. This is just simple realism. There isn't any use denying it, a great many people who are on our side aren't there because of any sound and sincere belief in our principles, but rather because they conceive our side of the argument to be the one that is to their personal and often pecuniary advantage. Nonetheless, when you are in a war you have to take what allies you can find.

* * *

The increasing virulence and power of the anti-mental health groups no longer permit us to ignore them as ridiculous clowns. What can be done to combat them?

Already psychiatrists in San Fernando Valley have published a booklet, *The Doctor Speaks Up*, in which the false statements and misrepresentations of the anti-mental health propagandists were exposed. The Southern California Psychiatric Society has followed suit. The National Association for Mental Health has published a booklet called *The Facts . . . a Reply to Anti-Mental Health Critics*.

Unfortunately, any direct attack on these groups or on the individuals involved *after* the fact is fruitless; because of the insidious nature of their activities, then it can only be a defensive response. Mental-health groups must *anticipate* these situations and be prepared to respond immediately. All too often, they are unprepared, inept, or too late.

But perhaps the single most important need at this time is that all parties interested in the mental-health field recognize the nature and alarming scope of the anti-mental health movement. The fact is that all indications are that in the coming years these well-organized, well-financed attacks on psychiatry and psychoanalysis will mount—especially as psychiatry and psychoanalysis take on an increasingly important role in elucidating (and eventually alleviating) the ills of society. Now is the time to make preparations for the bitter struggle ahead.