

Submission to the Select Committee on Violent Offending From: The New Zealand Psychological Society

Chairperson, Social Issues Committee:
David Thomas
Univeristy of Waikato

Introduction

1. In the public interest the New Zealand Psychological Society wishes to place before the Select Committee on Violent Offending its submissions concerning the known causes of violent offending and the effects of various penalties on violent offending. In these submissions emphasis is placed on using the results of scientific research and adequate statistical records, rather than attitudes and opinions, as a guide to dealing with the problem of violent offending. The Society believes that any social or legislative action is likely to be ineffective or socially harmful if it does not take into account the findings from research on violence and aggression.

2. The New Zealand Psychological Society considers that physical aggression and violence in the community, whether legal or illegal, to be socially harmful and that it is desirable to investigate ways in which such violence may be reduced. For the purposes of these submissions aggression and violence are taken to mean any behaviour or action which intends to physically harm or injure another person who does not consent to such harm or injury. While some forms of aggression, such as verbal aggression and suicide, are excluded by this definition, it is not because these forms of aggression are considered unimportant, but because deliberate physical injury to another person is currently of major concern to the community. However, consideration will be given to verbal aggression, where it is likely to lead to physical aggression.

3. In these submissions, an outline of the major types of violent offending in New Zealand, and evidence concerning changes in rates of violent offending has been given; the causes of violence and aggression are discussed; possible ways of preventing and reducing violence examined; and finally a number of recommendations concerning action on violent offending have been given.

Violent Offending in New Zealand

In 1971 Schumacher's monograph on Violent Offending was published, listing rates and

changes for the eight most common types of violent offences between 1956 and 1970. These offences were; common assault, aggravated assault, robbery, aggravated robbery, wounding with intent, assault by a male on a female, rape and attempted rape. In two of these offences, common assault and wounding with intent, there was a significant increase over the time period 1956 - 1968.

Later statistics (Department of Statistics, 1977) indicate that "offences against the person" reported to the police increased from 6,369 in 1969 to 10,671 in 1974. From these figures it is evident that there has been a substantial increase in violent offences reported to the police during the last few years. Police officers have also commented on the apparent increase in the amount of violence and the increase in the viciousness of attacks on people in recent years (Ford, 1978). However, there is no evidence available to determine to what extent the increase may be due to more effective police action in detecting acts of violence or to a greater likelihood that acts of violence will be reported to the police by the public. Certainly it is *not* possible to use the number of reports of specific cases of violence in newspapers and on television as an accurate indication of the extent of violence in the community, (e.g. Krupinski & Emmerson, 1977). Judging from the available evidence (Department of Statistics, 1977; Schumacher, 1971) there are grounds for assuming that some types of violence have increased in frequency during recent years. However, this comment needs to be seen in the context that only 5% of all offences reported to the police are of a violent nature and a person is six times more likely to be admitted to hospital as a result of a road accident than as a result of a violent assault (Gidlow, in Kerr, 1977). On the other hand the relatively lower risk to injury from violent assault compared to traffic accidents does not make such assault less serious when it does occur, and the social and personal costs of violent assault are sufficiently great to justify some form of social action. Also, there appear to be types of

violence which are prevalent and possibly increasing, which are less likely, for various reasons, to be reported to the police. Non-accidental injury to children (child abuse) is one example.

The Causes of Violence

1. The possible causes of violence are at least as varied as the types of violent acts committed and as with other social behaviours multiple causation of violent acts is the rule rather than the exception. In other words most acts of violence have no single cause but rather a variety of conditions exist which make violence more or less likely.

2. There has been a tendency in past research on violence to over-emphasize the part personality and individual characteristics play in determining violence and to ignore the very strong effect situational and environmental factors have in determining the likelihood of violence. For example studies which examine the personality differences between prisoners convicted of violent crimes and other prisoners, or non-prisoners, often conclude that the causes of violence lie in the early childhood experiences which determine the personality of the violent prisoner. However such research has been unable to show that all, or even most people having similar childhood experiences or personality characteristics have also committed crimes of violence. Thus, although family background may predispose some people to commit violent offences, by itself a particular type of family background does not inevitably lead to violent offending.

3. Another characteristic of violence and aggression which needs to be emphasized is that they are learned behaviours. There is no scientific evidence that specific forms of human aggressive behaviour are innate (e.g. Sipes, 1973). Like other behaviours such as language, aggressive behaviour is shaped by the learning environment of the individual. For example, cultural differences in the way in which aggression is expressed are as marked as language differences between cultural groups.

4. One of the major predisposing factors in determining violence is the past and present family environment of the individual. There is clear evidence that violent individuals are likely to come from families where parents frequently use physical punishment, believe in the effectiveness of physical punishment and have values and attitudes which condone or encourage physical aggression in some circumstances (Gil, 1970; McCord, McCord & Howard, 1961). Sometimes parents punish aggression shown by their children towards themselves but allow or encourage the child to "stick up for himself" and fight non-family members. In this situation the child learns that aggression is permissible if it is directed

towards an individual or member of an "out-group," outside the family. Where parents frequently use physical punishment they both provide a model for aggressive behaviour which the child learns to imitate, and show that initiating aggressive behaviour is justifiable in some situations (Scrutton, 1976; Thomas, 1972).

Certainly there is a great deal of information to show that adults who are characteristically aggressive usually experienced a great deal of physical punishment from their parents (Gunn, 1973; Owens & Straus, 1975).

Another family characteristic which is more common among aggressive individuals is a lack of warmth and affection in the family and the presence of coolness, hostility, rejection and ignoring behaviour by the parents towards the child (McCord et al., 1961). In such families the child is less likely to form close relationships with both family members and other people outside the family. Such individuals are more likely to hurt or injure other people without feeling remorse, guilt or empathy for the injured person. Acts of "senseless" violence where there is no provocation or strong feelings involved are likely to be committed by individuals of this type.

As mentioned earlier, the family background of individuals generally has a predisposing effect towards violence (or non-violence) only and other situational factors determine whether or not violence will actually occur. However, adolescents and young adults currently living with their parents may sometimes show aggressive behaviour as a direct consequence of family situations which encourage violence.

One further family characteristic which is relevant to sexual assault and rape by males is the degree to which such individuals come from families which are restrictive and punitive towards the discussion of sexual matters and values (Goldstein & Kant, 1973).

Also, rapists and other violent sexual offenders are less likely to be exposed to literature and other material of a sexual nature during childhood and adolescence, compared to both non-violent offenders and non-offenders, and are less likely to have discussed sexual matters with their parents (Goldstein & Kant, 1973).

5. Another predisposing factor leading to a greater likelihood of aggression is the degree to which violence is permitted or encouraged by other people with whom an individual has contact. Parents, friends, literature, films and television sometimes provide encouragement for aggressive behaviour in specific situations. For example, a group of people at a football match may clap and cheer if one player hits or roughly tackles another player; friends drinking together at the pub may encourage one member of their

group to hit or handle roughly someone who is verbally aggressive (insulting) or who takes a chair or glass being used by a group member. Such encouragement, approval or condoning of aggression leads to a greater likelihood of the encouraged individual showing further aggression in other situations (Goldstein & Arms, 1971; Paddock, 1975; Patterson & Cobb, 1961, p. 125; Sipes, 1973).

6. One of the most researched causes of aggression is the effect of film and television violence in leading to aggressive behaviour. There have been several hundred research reports published in this area and the great majority of these reports support the contention that watching physical violence in films or on television leads to a greater likelihood of aggressive behaviour among both child and adult viewers (Anderson, 1977; Goranson, 1975; Murray, 1973).

One of the most comprehensive reports on the effects of film violence on behaviour was that of the U.S. Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behaviour (1971). Although the summary volume of this report (Television and Growing Up; The Impact of Televised Violence) is stated in rather cautious terms, the five volumes of detailed research provide results which strongly suggest that television violence contributes to aggression in children and violence in society (Goranson, 1975).

One of the editors of the report commented that "the major implication of the results of this research program is the clear need for a reduction in the level of violence portrayed on television" (Murray, 1973). One study has examined the long-term effects of exposure to television violence, over a 10 year period (Eron et al, 1972). The researchers found a highly significant relationship between preference for viewing violent programmes at eight years and subsequent aggressive behaviour at 18 years even after allowing for level of aggression at 8 years of age. Subsequent research which has specifically examined the effects of movie violence on aggressive behaviour has strongly supported the earlier findings, based on television viewing, that watching violent films leads to an increase in aggressive behaviour among some children and adolescents (e.g. Leyens, et al, 1975; Meyer, 1972; Noble, 1973).

Another finding has been that children who have had a history of exposure to television violence show less physiological reaction to filmed violence than children with little previous exposure to violence (Cline, et al., 1973). This "desensitization" effect may be viewed as socially undesirable where people come to accept violence with little or no emotional reaction to it. As has been pointed out elsewhere, such people can easily be persuaded to commit violent acts on others

without feeling guilt or abhorrence towards the violence (Kelman, 1973).

In his 1961 report, *Television in the Lives of our Children*, Wilbur Schramm reports that aggression is higher in heavy T.V. viewers, that violence on T.V. may stimulate aggression in an already aggressive child, that when aggression in a real life situation is at a sufficient height the child remembers how aggressive acts were done on T.V., that old boys use of T.V. violence tends to be fairly realistic, and that when they have found on T.V. an effective way to do something, they may adopt it, and that they identify with a character working out his aggressions on T.V. and remember what he does. Zajonc, (1954) concluded "children will prefer to imitate a strong villain than a weak hero."

Bandura's studies of social imitation confirm the likelihood that children exposed to filmed violence may adopt it as appropriate behaviour (Bandura, et al, 1963).

In a sequence of studies Berkowitz et al (1963 & 1966) has shown that both children and adults show increased tendencies to act violently after viewing filmed violence, especially if they were aroused *before* such viewing. Since there are many irritations and frustrations in ordinary life which lead to such arousal, these findings are of some importance.

A New Zealand study which investigated the degree of aggression during periods of free play among 8 year old children after the children had viewed either a violent film or a non-violent "active" film showed that the latter increased the degree of activity but not the degree of aggression. However, viewing the violent film significantly increased the level of aggression during the play period and this effect was equally strong for boys and girls (Ling, 1976).

The large majority of the research evidence indicates that there is strong evidence of a causal relationship between amount of film violence viewed and subsequent aggressive or anti-social behaviour both among children and adults. Although not everyone who views film violence will become aggressive there is little doubt that viewing film violence leads to an increase in aggressive behaviour in some people.

Constant exposure to film violence probably has an inoculation or desensitization effect for many people, such that subsequent viewing of film violence creates less physiological and psychological reaction. Such desensitization may be regarded as socially undesirable where it increases the probability of "senseless" violence in the community.

Specific films may present novel and unique forms of aggressive behaviour providing models which are directly imitated by some people. The

increase in specific types of aggressive behaviour following the showing of "Kung Fu" and "Karate" films provide examples of this effect. Research evidence has shown that the more realistic film violence is, the more likely it is to lead to subsequent aggressive behaviour (e.g., Noble, 1973).

Donner (1976) reviewing the specific effects of particular film and television programmes in the U.S., provided the following examples.

Born Innocent, a made-for-TV movie, was shown in September 1974. It included a scene in which a girl is raped by her reformatory classmates with the end of a broomstick. The very next day four children raped a nine-year-old California girl and her eight-year-old playmate in an identical manner. The parents of the nine-year-old victim are suing NBC, the sponsors and the local affiliate for eleven million dollars.

Duplicating the scene of a show some young boys had seen the night before, they doused a drifter with alcohol and put a match to him, burning him alive.

In Baltimore within a week of the showing of *Hawaii Five-O* featuring a sniper dressed in Army fatigues who systematically shoots people crossing his line of fire, a disgruntled employee of Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company dressed in Army fatigues systematically cut down five of his fellow workers.

Another movie made for television, *The Doomsday Flight*, whose plot involves the possibility of a plane being blown up in midair unless ransom is paid, was shown in 1971. Immediately thereafter, telephone threats to airline offices increased twofold. In May, 1971 the film was rebroadcast. Within several days following the broadcast, Qantas paid approximately \$500,000 in ransom to protect 116 passengers aboard one of their flights to an individual following the movie's script. (Donner, 1976, p. 36).

A study analyzing the extent to which programmes shown on New Zealand television were violent (Ginpil, 1976) indicated that the average level of violence was nearly as high (7.3 violent episodes per hour) as the average U.S. television programmes (8 violent episodes per hour).

There is now little doubt that explicit film and television violence leads to increases in aggressive behaviour among some people in the community. One may draw a parallel with the evidence concerning the relationship between cigarette smoking and lung cancer. It is impossible to "prove" without any doubt that any particular case of lung cancer was caused by cigarette smoking and lung cancer has been found so consistently in a number of scientific studies that some governments insist

on a health warning being given on cigarette packets. Similarly it is not possible to "prove" that any particular aggressive behaviour was caused by viewing film or television violence but so many scientific studies, using a wide variety of methodologies and measurement techniques have found a significant association between viewing film or television violence and aggressive behaviour, that the community can only ignore this association at the cost of increasing violence in the community.

7. There are a large number of characteristics which may be called *situational* causes of aggression. These include the effects of drugs such as alcohol, the presence of weapons such as knives and guns and the degree of stress or arousal experienced by individuals at a particular time.

There is clear evidence that alcohol may lead to an increase in aggressive behaviour in some individuals. Schumacher (1971) comments that 56% of violent offenders were reported as having consumed an intoxicating amount of alcohol at the time the offences were committed. However it appears that alcohol by itself does not necessarily cause aggression, but that alcohol facilitates the expression of aggression in people who are frustrated, angry or under stress (e.g. Taylor et al, 1976a; Taylor & Gammon, 1975). Thus where alcohol is being consumed, situational factors such as overcrowding, poor ventilation, excessive heat, loud noise, poor furniture arrangement and close contact with strangers are more likely to lead to aggression, compared to situations where alcohol is not being consumed (e.g. Geen & O'Neal, 1969).

In some New Zealand drinking places the tables and chairs are placed so close together that it is virtually impossible to carry a full jug or glass back to one's seat without spilling it on other people. Also, many New Zealand hotels and taverns have large bars, sometimes holding 200 or more people, excessively loud music and poor ventilation, all of which increase the arousal level of drinkers, make frustration more likely, and thus lead to a greater likelihood of violence (Berkowitz, 1972; Schacter & Singer, 1962). Also, large bars create a situation where many people who are strangers come into contact with one another and do not allow the development of informal social controls which decrease the likelihood of aggression. Where people drinking together have some familiarity with other drinking groups in the same bar, aggression appears to be much less likely. But these informal social networks which control aggression are not likely to develop where the bar regularly contains more than about 50 — 60 people.

In contrast to alcohol another frequently used drug, marijuana, appears to *decrease* the likeli-

hood that aggressive behaviour will occur (Taylor et al, 1976b).

8. The use of weapons such as firearms and knives, occurs occasionally in violent offences in New Zealand. Due to the relatively restrictive firearm laws in New Zealand there are less incidents involving firearms than in countries such as the United States and Australia where firearms are more freely available.

The results of overseas studies show that the more readily weapons are available the more likely they are to be used in violent offences (Gunn, 1973). Also, the presence of weapons in the situation where the violent offence takes place increases the *severity* of the violence shown, compared to situations where no weapons are present (Berkowitz & LePage, 1967; Frodi, 1975). There is some evidence that violent offences involving firearms are increasing in New Zealand (Ford, 1978).

9. Social and physical stress is an important determinant of aggression in many situations. Sources of stress may include low socioeconomic status (low education, low job skills, low financial resources, low social status), physical stress such as overstimulation due to loud noise, excessive heat and other aversive physical characteristics, and social stress such as overcrowding, lack of close friendships or the experience of social discrimination. Social discrimination often takes the form of one person being verbally insulting or denying access to services such as employment, accommodation, recreation because of a person's sex, appearance or race. There is ample evidence that some forms of racial discrimination are relatively common in some parts of New Zealand (St. George, 1972).

These various kinds of stress act to increase physiological and emotional arousal which makes aggressive behaviour more likely (Berkowitz, 1972).

Some specific examples of stress increasing the likelihood of aggression are; hotel bars with large numbers of people present and extremely loud music being played, the occurrence of racial insults where physical retaliation may take place, and a period of economic hardship leading to higher rates of violent offending.

The Prevention of Violence

In this section possible means of decreasing or preventing the occurrence of violent offending will be examined. It is clear from the research that has been conducted on aggression and violence that there is no single way of preventing or reducing violence and that the only realistic approach to try to reduce violence is through the use of a number of techniques.

1. *Individual Treatment*

A variety of psychological and psychiatric treatments have been used with violent offenders in an endeavour to reduce the likelihood that a particular individual will reoffend. These treatments include behavioural techniques, psychotherapy, drug therapy, or brain surgery. As aggressive behaviour is *learned* behaviour, effective treatment must involve the individual in learning to reduce patterns of aggressive behaviour if the individual is to live in an adequate, non-aggressive way in the community. Neither drugs nor brain surgery necessarily involve relearning as a central part of the treatment and these forms of treatment are by themselves, usually incapable of adequately rehabilitating the individual into the community. In addition the involuntary destruction of brain tissue (psychosurgery) as a means of treating aggression is considered unethical by many people.

Some behavioural treatments appear to have some success in reducing aggressive behaviour (Fredericksen et al, 1976; Repp & Deitz, 1974). Treatment programmes aimed at the reduction and control of aggressive behaviour must take into account differences between individuals in the causes of aggressive behaviour, and the determinants of aggression must be carefully analysed in each individual's case. In addition treatment programmes should include procedures that aim at establishing more socially appropriate, but still effective, behaviours that can replace aggressive outbursts. For example, verbally aggressive persons could be trained to be assertive rather than aggressive when standing up for their rights; sexually aggressive persons could be trained in procedures that would enable them to approach, attract, and maintain relationships with appropriate sex partners; physically aggressive persons could be taught more appropriate verbal, social, and interpersonal skills to enable them to handle difficult situations in which they might previously have behaved aggressively, and, simultaneously, expose them to aversive consequences for aggressive displays.

The beginnings of a behavioural technology relating to the analysis and modification of aggressive human behaviours are available. They indicate a need for more extensive and thorough research into the causes and cures of a whole variety of forms of aggressive behaviour — child abuse, wife-beating, assaults on the police and citizens, sexual assaults on women and children, gang violence. Simple, or equally violent solutions, might seem attractive to some. Explanations and cures are unlikely to come without research, research costs money and takes time, and New Zealand offers little in the way of funds and resources to researchers in the social sciences.

Until the incentives for the relevant research are provided, we will have to continue to deal with the problem of aggressive behaviour in a sub-optimal fashion.

Consideration also needs to be given to further provision of psychologists offering treatment in prisons, detention centres and on referral by magistrates and various organizations. While individual treatment may not be appropriate for all people convicted of a violent offence (Monahan & Cummings, 1975), there would appear to be a need for some extensive availability of individual treatment.

2. Penalties

While penalties are designed to exact retributions for offences committed, there appear to be only two characteristics of penalties which relate to the prevention of violence; the degree to which knowledge of the penalty deters potential offenders from actually committing a violent offence, and the degree to which imprisonment may prevent habitual violent offenders from reoffending.

One of the issues currently being debated in New Zealand is whether capital punishment (the death penalty) should be reintroduced for violent offences such as murder. There is ample evidence that capital punishment does not deter murder (Barber & Wilson, 1968; Bedau, 1964) and some evidence that countries having capital punishment tend to have *higher* homicide rates (Howard League, 1949). Many countries have abolished capital punishment, in most cases after official inquiries into the effectiveness of capital punishment in deterring murder. The experience in these countries has been that murder rates have not changed or have decreased after capital punishment has been abolished. (Sutherland & Cressey, 1960). Thus there is no evidence at all to support the view that capital punishment has a deterrent effect on violent offending and the use of the death penalty may decrease the respect for life in the community.

A related proposal is that prison sentences should be made longer for certain types of violent offences so that the length of time in prison serves as a deterrent effect.

Again there is no evidence that length of prison sentence as such has a deterrent effect on potential violent offenders and lengthening prison sentences, without regard to the characteristics of a particular offence, removes the discretionary power of magistrates to vary the sentence in accord with the circumstances of the offence. Also, there is the possibility that arbitrarily imposed long prison sentences may make rehabilitation of the offender less likely.

One situation where longer prison sentences may be justified is where the offender has a

history of violent offending of a serious nature and the offences have generally involved pre-meditated violence. In such cases, where there is little likelihood of rehabilitation, a longer prison sentence may be justified because of the high risk of reoffending. However, such individuals probably constitute a small proportion of the total number of violent offenders.

3. Changes in the Community

One of the changes which is suggested by the evidence on the causes of violence is the reduction of violence and aggression on films and television. In particular decreasing the portrayal of novel, realistic, extremely vicious and easily imitated forms of violence would be highly desirable. Also the high level of violence on childrens television programmes, particularly in cartoons is undesirable.

Although it would not be practical or necessarily desirable to remove all forms of violence from films and television it will be necessary to drastically decrease the amount of violence presently shown on these media in New Zealand if the likelihood of violent offending is to be reduced.

The present laws restricting the use of firearms in New Zealand have probably had a marked effect in reducing the number of deaths due to firearms. However the increasing use of firearms in cases of violent offending suggests that some investigation into the current availability of firearms may be desirable. It would appear that the use of the special armed offenders squads is much more desirable than any proposal to arm police as a routine procedure. There is evidence to suggest that police routinely carrying firearms are more likely to use violence and more likely to show unjustifiable violence than police who are not armed (Frodi 1975; Harrison & Pepitone, 1972).

A number of cities in New Zealand have experienced a decrease in the number of offences committed by teenagers when a youth centre or community centre was made available (McDavitt, 1977, p. 2). Although violent offending is only a small proportion of teenage crime, the further development of community and recreational facilities may help lessen the incidence of violent offending among teenagers.

Another desirable development would be an increase in the availability of psychological services through the Education Department. Although it is not always possible to predict whether specific teenagers are likely to be violent offenders, the availability of counselling and individual treatment for disturbed children may help reduce the incidence of violence.

There is a clear need for the development of a high degree of social disapproval in the commun-

ity for violent and aggressive behaviour. Studies comparing violent and non-violent communities have shown that social disapproval of violence has an important effect in making violence less likely (Paddock, 1975). Social disapproval of direct physical violence at sports meetings, in the mass media, and in discussions of child rearing and discipline is necessary if the degree of perceived social support for violence is to be reduced. Research indicates that if those in positions of authority or power can legitimately use physical violence, then it is very easy for any person to justify using aggression for their particular purposes (Kahn, 1972; Kelman, 1973).

4. *Police Training and Operations*

Recent research on the effect of police training and policies concerning modes of operation suggests that specialized training in intervention in domestic disputes, for example, reduces both the incidence of injuries received by police officers as well as injuries received by the disputants (Bard, 1971).

As the number of assaults on police in New Zealand appears to be increasing, specialized training involving knowledge of human relationships situational causes of aggression and means of decreasing aggressive behaviour (Bard, 1971; Toch, 1970) may help reduce the number of injuries to police officers.

The work of special groups having police involvement, such as the "J Teams" appears to be successful in helping to prevent various types of offending including violent offending, and any action which helps to foster closer links between the police and various groups in the community is likely to lead more successful prevention of all types of offending. Development of the J Team approach to other urban centres and to specific areas of offending would be highly desirable.

5. *Research on Violence and Aggression*

While there is a growing body of overseas research on aggression and violent offending and ways in which violence may be reduced, this research is not readily available outside specialist journals and sometimes is not directly applicable to New Zealand because of differences in cultural patterns, laws and social characteristics between New Zealand and the country in which the research was carried out. It is evident that a need exists for an organization to systematically evaluate and communicate overseas research findings to interested groups in New Zealand, to establish specific areas and priorities for research on violent offending in New Zealand, and to investigate ways in which such research could be funded.

While such an organization or committee might

be specifically concerned with violent offending, its terms of reference could be broader and include other types of offending which required further research on preventative and remedial techniques. Such a research committee would need to have a strong orientation towards applied research on practical solutions to violent offending in terms of both the prevention and treatment of violence, and also to have broad representation from both social scientists (such as psychologists, sociologists and criminologists) and professional groups directly concerned with violent offending, such as the Police Department, Justice Department, and Psychological Services. This committee could be modelled along the lines of existing groups such as the committee on energy research, although the question as to whether the Government funded such research directly or whether funding was obtained from other sources would need to be further investigated. The establishment of a Social Science Research Council, as has been suggested previously, might also clarify the question of research funding. A research committee on violent offending would be able to receive information, concerning particular areas in which research was required, from community organizations and individuals and also disseminate research findings to interested groups and organizations. It is clear from the findings of overseas studies on violent offending in particular and offending in general, that, unless policy decisions and legislation in this area are guided by accurate and relevant information concerning the determinants of violent offending and the effects of specific preventative measures, and not on uninformed opinions and prejudices, such decisions and legislation will be ineffective or socially harmful.

Recommendations

The New Zealand Psychological society wishes to place the following recommendations before the Select Committee on Violent Offending as a starting point for consideration of policy decisions and social action. In a brief submission of this type it is not possible to go into the full detail of relevant information which is required to support detailed and comprehensive recommendations, but the society wishes to make clear its professional interest in the area of violent offending and its desire for further consultation with the Select Committee and other groups involved in this area.

1. In view of their proven ineffectiveness in preventing violent and other types of offending, it is recommended that penalties involving physical punishment, such as flogging and capital punishment, are not used in any form, as penalties for violent offending.

2. That more detailed guidelines be established to determine the likelihood of violent offenders reoffending and that the use of longer prison sentences be investigated as a means of reducing the risk of violent offenders committing further acts of violence.
3. That further development of specific treatment programmes for individual violent offenders be encouraged and that such programmes are used, where appropriate, to help rehabilitate violent offenders in prisons and detention centres.
4. That ways of decreasing the amount of violence shown in films and on television be investigated, and that novel, vicious, explicit and unusual forms of violence be reduced as much as possible.
5. That violence portrayed on children's television programmes or during hours when many children are watching television be reduced as far as possible.
6. That violence in hotels and taverns be the subject of specific research investigation and that the possibility of funding such research from taxes on alcohol or contributions from breweries be investigated.
7. That in police training and operations, a special emphasis be placed on techniques of reducing or averting violence. The successful experience of overseas police training programmes involving knowledge of counselling and human relationships may be relevant to the training of police in New Zealand (e.g. Bard, 1971; Toch, 1970).
8. That programmes of parent education which emphasise the dangers of frequent use of physical punishment, alternative disciplinary techniques to physical punishment, and the importance of anti-violence values, be developed and disseminated to appropriate groups and organizations.
9. That specific information programmes for dissemination through the mass media be developed, which emphasise the types of situations often leading to violence, ways in which violent behaviour can be avoided or decreased, and the importance of anti-violent values. Such programmes may be sponsored as brief advertisements on television and radio, and in newspapers and magazines by interested companies, or community organizations may be interested in developing programmes of this type as a community service.
10. That emphasis be given to the development of community facilities such as youth centres, community halls and recreational facilities, particularly for teenagers and young adults.
11. That a permanent committee on violent offending be established by Government with

the role of monitoring rates of violent offending, making recommendations concerning research priorities in the area of violent offending, disseminating information concerning funding for research on violent offending, and making recommendations to Government concerning ways of reducing violent offending. At least 50% of the membership of such a committee should be composed of social scientists having some familiarity with research techniques and literature relevant to violent offending.

12. In view of evidence of a relationship between lack of sex education and likelihood of sexual assault by males (Goldstein & Kant, 1971), it is recommended that sex education and human relationships programmes be included in the school curriculum for both preadolescent and adolescent children.

References

- Andison, F. S. T.V. violence and viewer aggression: A cumulation of study results 1956 — 1976. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 1977, 41, 314 — 331.
- Bandura, A. & Walters, R. *Social learning and personality development*. London: Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1963.
- Barber, R. & Wilson, P. Deterrent aspect of capital punishment and its effect on conviction rates: The Queensland experience. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 1968, 1, 100 — 108.
- Bard, M. The study and modification of intra-familial violence. In J. L. Singer (Ed). *The control of aggression and violence* N.Y.: Academic Press, 1971.
- Bedau, H. *The death penalty in America*, Chicago: Aldine Press, 1964.
- Berkowitz, L., Corwin, R. & Heironimus, M. Film violence and subsequent aggressive tendencies. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1963, 27, 217 — 229.
- Berkowitz, L. & Green, R. Film violence and cue properties of available targets. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1966, 3, 525 — 530.
- Berkowitz, L. & Le Page, A. Weapons as aggression — eliciting stimuli. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1967, 7, 202 — 207.
- Berkowitz, L. Frustrations, comparisons, and other sources of emotion arousal as contributors to social unrest. *Journal of Social Issues*, 1972, 28, 77 — 91.
- Cline, V. B., Croft, R. & Courier, S. The desensitization of children to television violence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1973, 27, 360 — 365.
- Department of Statistics. *Justice Statistics, 1975*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1977.
- Donner, L. Violence in the media. In D. Madden & J. Lion (Eds) *Rage, hate, assault and other forms of violence*. N.Y.: Spectrum Publications, 1976.
- Eron, L. D., Huesmann, L., Lefkowitz, M. & Walder, L. Does television violence cause aggression? *American Psychologist* 1972, 27, 253 — 263.
- Ford, G. Crime Prevention Officer, Hamilton Police, Personal Communication, March, 1978.

- Frederickson, L. W., Jenkins, J. O., Foy, D. W. & Eisler, R. M. Social skills training to modify abusive verbal outbursts in adults. *Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis* 1976, 9, 117 — 125.
- Frodi, A. The effect of exposure to weapons on aggressive behaviour from a cross-cultural perspective. *International Journal of Psychology*, 1975, 10, 283 — 292.
- Geen, R. G. & O'Neal, E. C. Activation of cue-elicited aggression by general arousal. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1969, 11, 289 — 292.
- Gil, D. *Violence against children: Physical child abuse in the U.S.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.
- Ginpil, S. Violent and dangerous acts on New Zealand television. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*. 1976, 11, 152 — 157.
- Goldstein, J. H. & Arms, R. L. Effects of observing athletic contests on hostility. *Sociometry* 1971, 34, 83 — 90.
- Goldstein, M. & Kant, H. *Pornography and sexual deviance*. L. A.: University of California Press, 1973.
- Goranson, R. E. The impact of Televised violence. *Contemporary Psychology*, 1975, 20, 291 — 293.
- Gunn, J. *Violence in human society* Newton: David Charles, 1973.
- Harrison, M., & Pepitone, A. Contrast effect in the use of punishment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1972, 23, 398 — 404.
- Howard League, *Capital punishment: An inquiry*. New Zealand Howard League for Penal Reform, Wellington, 1949.
- Kahn, R. L. The justification of violence: Social problems and solutions *Journal of Social Issues*. 1972, 28, 155 — 175.
- Kelman, H. C. Violence without moral restraint: Reflections on the dehumanization of victims and victimizers. *Journal of Social Issues*, 1973, 29, 25 — 26.
- Kerr, M. *Violence: The community and the administrator*. Wellington: N.Z. Institute of Public Administration, 1977.
- Krupinski, J. & Emmerson, R. Violence: Occurrence and reporting. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 1977, 10, 244 — 252.
- Leyens, J., Carmino, L., Parke, R., & Berkowitz, L. Effects of movie violence on aggression in a field setting as a function of group dominance and cohesion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1975, 32, 346 — 360.
- Ling, P. T.V. Violence and Aggressive behaviour among Maori and European children, Psychology Research Series. No. 6., University of Waikato, 1977.
- McCord, W., McCord, J. & Howard, A. Familial correlates of aggression in nondelinquent male children. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 1961, 62, 79 — 93.
- McDavitt, T. *Youth centres in New Zealand*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1977.
- Meyer, T. P. Effects of viewing justified and unjustified real film violence on aggressive behaviour. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1972, 23, 21 — 29.
- Monahan, J. & Cummings, L. Social policy implications of the inability to predict violence. *Journal of Social Issues*, 1975, 31, 153 — 164.
- Murray, J. P. Television and violence: Implications of the Surgeon General's Research Program. *American Psychologist* 1973, 28, 472 — 478.
- Noble, G. Effect of different forms of filmed aggression on children's constructive and destructive play. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1973, 26, 54 — 59.
- Owens, D. J. & Straus, M. A. The social structure of violence in childhood and approval of violence as an adult. *Aggressive Behavior* 1975, 1, 193 — 211.
- Paddock, J. Studies on antiviolent and "normal" communities. *Aggressive Behavior*, 1975, 1, 217 — 233.
- Patterson, G. R. & Cobb, J. A. A dyadic analysis of "aggressive" behaviours. In J. P. Hill (Ed) *Minnesota Symposia on Child Psychology* Vol. 5. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota, 1971.
- Repp, A. C. & Deitz, S. M. Reducing aggressive and self-injurious behaviour of institutionalized retarded children through reinforcement of other behaviours. *Journal of applied Behaviour Analysis*. 1974, 7, 313 — 325.
- St. George, R. Racial intolerance in New Zealand: A review of studies in G. Vaughan (Ed) *Racial Issues in New Zealand*. Auckland: Akarana Press, 1972.
- Schacter, S. & Singer, J. E. Cognitive, social and physiological determinants of emotional state. *Psychological Review* 1962, 69, 379 — 399.
- Schumacher, M. *Violent offending in New Zealand*. Justice Department Research Series No. 2. Wellington: Government Printer, 1971.
- Schramm, W., Lyle, J., & Parker, R. *Television in the lives of our children*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961.
- Scratton, J. Violence in the family. In D. J. Madden & J. Lion (Eds) *Rage, Hate, Assault and other forms of violence*. N. Y.: Spectrum, 1976.
- Sipes, R. G. War, sports and aggression: An empirical test of two rival theories. *American Anthropologist* 1973, 75, 64 — 86.
- Sutherland, E. H. & Cressey, D. R. *Principles of criminology* (6th ed.) Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1960.
- Taylor, S. P. & Gammon, C. B. Effects of type and dose of alcohol on human physical aggression. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1975, 32, 169 — 175.
- Taylor, S. P., Gammon, C. B. & Capasso, D. R. Aggression as a function of the interaction of alcohol and threat. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1976, 34, 938 — 941(a).
- Taylor, S. P., Vardaris, R. M., Rawtich, A. B., Gammon, C. B. Cranston, J. W. & Lubetkin, A. I. The effects of alcohol and delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol on human physical aggression. *Aggressive Behavior*, 1976, 2, 153 — 161(b).
- Thomas, D. R. Authoritarianism, child rearing and ethnocentrism. Unpublished PhD. thesis. University of Queensland, 1972.
- Toch, H. Change through participation (and vice versa). *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 1970, 7, 198 — 206.
- U.S. Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, U.S. Public Health Service. *Television and Growing up: The impact of televised violence*. Rockville, M. D.: U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare, 1971.
- Zajonc, R. Some effects of the "space" serials. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1954, 18, 367 — 374.