

E.F.M. Durbin, and Bowlby, J. Personal Aggressiveness  
and War. New York: Columbia, 1939.

**Q 81**

p.7/8

The evidence taken from the observation of the behaviour of apes and children suggests that there are three clearly separable groups of simple causes for the outbreak of fighting and the exhibition of aggressiveness by individuals.

1. One of the most common causes of fighting among both children and apes was over the possession of external objects. The disputed ownership of any desired object - food, clothes, toys, females, and the affection of others - was sufficient ground for an appeal to force. On Monkey Hill disputes over females were responsible for the deaths of thirty out of thirty-three females. Two points are of particular interest to notice about these fights for possession.

E.E.M. Durbin, and J. Bowlby. Personal Aggressiveness  
and War. New York: Columbia, 1939. p. 9

Another cause of aggression closely allied to possessiveness is the tendency for children and apes greatly to resent the intrusion of a stranger into their group. A new child in the class may be laughed at, isolated and disliked, and even set upon and pinched and bullied. A new monkey may be poked and bitten to death. It is interesting to note that it is only strangeness within a similarity of species that is resented. Monkeys do not mind being joined by a goat or a rat. Children do not object when animals are introduced to the group. Indeed, such novelties are often welcomed. But when monkeys meet a new monkey, or children a strange child, aggression often occurs. This suggests strongly that the reason for the aggression is fundamentally possessiveness. The competition of the newcomers is feared. The present members of the group feel that there will be more rivals for the food or the attention of the adults.



E.F.M. Durbin, and J. Bowlby. Personal Aggressiveness and War. New York: Columbia, 1939. p.10

Finally, another common source of fighting among children is a failure or frustration in their own activity. A child will be prevented either by natural causes such as bad weather, or illness, or by the opposition of some adult, from doing something he wishes to do at a given moment - sail his boat or ride the bicycle. The child may also frustrate itself by failing through lack of skill or strength, to complete successfully some desired activity. Such a child will then in the ordinary sense become 'naughty.' He will be in a bad or surly temper. And, what is of interest from our point of view, the child will indulge in aggression - attacking and fighting other children or adults.

E.F.M. Durbin, and J. Bowlby. Personal Aggressiveness and War. New York: Columbia, 1939. p.12

Before we begin this task it is necessary to make one preliminary and simple observation about the nature of adult aggression in general. It is of first importance to realise that, as far as aggressiveness and fighting is concerned, there is no noticeable improvement in the behaviour of adults compared with that of the most savage animals and children. If anything, it is more ruthless. The recent history of Europe establishes this conclusion with horrible insistence..... No group of animals could be more aggressive or more ruthless in their aggression than the adult members of the human race.

E.F.M. Durbin, and J. Bowlby. Personal Aggressiveness and War. New York: Columbia, 1939. p.12

Are there then no differences between the aggression of more primitive beings and that of adult men? We suggest that there are only two differences. In the first place the aggression of adults is normally a group activity. Murder and assault are restricted to a small criminal minority. Adults kill and torture each other only when organised into political parties, or economic classes, or religious denominations, or nation states. A moral distinction is always made between the individual killing for himself and the same individual killing for some real or supposed group interest. In the second place, the adult powers of imagination and reason are brought to the service of the aggressive intention. Apes and children when they fight, simply fight. Men and women first construct towering systems of theology and religion, complex analyses of racial character and

class structure, or moralities of group life and virility before they kill one another.

E.F.M. Durbin, and J. Bowlby. Personal Aggressiveness and War. New York: Columbia, 1939  
p.13

We are therefore brought back to the question: What are the causes of aggressiveness in adult human beings? We would maintain that anthropology and psycho-analysis suggest a number of ways in which the powers of the human mind change and add to the causes of aggression. There appear to be at least three different mechanisms discernible in the material of these two sciences.

E.F.M. Durbin, and J. Bowlby. Personal Aggressiveness and War. New York: Columbia, 1939. p13//

14

The first and most obvious of these is the cause of war revealed so very plainly by the study of primitive inter-group conflict. It consists in the universal tendency to attribute all events in the world to the deliberate activity of human or para-human will. All happenings, whether natural and inevitable, or human and voluntary, are attributed to the will of some being either human or anthropomorphically divine. If a thunderstorm occurs, or a hurricane visits a village, or a man is killed by a tiger, the evil is attributed either to the magic of a neighbouring tribe or the ill-will of demons and gods. In the same way, good fortune, however natural, is attributed to the deliberate intention of some other being. This universal tendency in the human mind is termed animism.

It is certain that this imaginative tendency on

the part of human beings leads to war. It is obvious why it should. If evil is attributed to the direct malice of neighbouring and opposing groups, the only possible protection against further evil lies in the destruction of the source of ill-will. It is, however, of great importance whether the supposed enemy is human or supernatural. If it is spiritual the natural reply will be placatory sacrifices or the harmless ritual of beating or burning or making war upon the evil spirit. The evidence discussed in the Appendix to this article shows many amusing examples of ritual warfare against the spirits undertaken by primitive peoples after some natural disaster. But if the supposed author of evil is not supernatural but human the results are neither harmless nor amusing. If the typhoon is attributed to the magic of neighbouring peoples or of dissident minorities within the tribe, then the destruction of the enemy, root and branch, is the only safe course.

E.F.M. Durbin and J. Bowlby. Personal Aggressiveness and War. New York: Columbia, 1939 p.16

That the primary causes of aggression (and of peaceful co-operation) are identical with those of children and apes. The character of the id - or complex of instinctive impulses - does not change materially as the individual grows older. The same sources of satisfaction -- food, warmth, love, society - are desired and the same sources of conflict - desire for exclusive possession of the sources of satisfaction, or aggression arising from a sense of frustration - are present. But in the life of most children there is a controlling or warping influence present in a varying degree, that of authority. The child is denied for various reasons - good or bad - an open and uninterrupted access to the means of its satisfaction. It is denied the breast or bottle, the toy or the company of adults at the time or to the extent that it wishes. The evidence seems

~~overwhelming that such frustration leads to a violent reaction of fear, hatred, and aggression..... This original resentment and the aggression to which it leads we would call simple aggression.~~

E.F.M. Durbin and J. Bowlby. Personal Aggressiveness and War. New York: Columbia, 1939.  
p.17/18

The overwhelming fact established by the evidence is that aggression, however deeply hidden or disguised, does not disappear. It appears later and in other forms. It is not destroyed. It is safe to conclude from the evidence that it cannot be destroyed. Whether we conceive simple aggression stimulated by frustration as a quantity of energy that has to be released somewhere, or whether we imagine that a secret and unconscious character is formed that is aggressive although the superficial character is peaceful, or whether we simply suppose that a certain kind of character is formed, peaceful in certain directions and aggressive in others - is a matter of comparative indifference and mainly of terminology. The fundamental fact is that the punishment of simple aggression results in the appearance of aggression in



other forms. The boy, instead of striking his father whom he fears, strikes a smaller boy whom he does not fear. Disguised aggression has made the boy into a bully. The girl who dares not scream at her mother grows up to hate other women. Again a character has been formed by a simple aggressiveness that has been controlled but not destroyed. And in the same way revolutionaries who hate ordered government, nationalists who hate foreign peoples, individuals who hate bankers, Jews, or their political opponents, may be exhibiting characteristics that have been formed by the suppression of simple aggression in their childhood education. These aggressive aspects of adult character and the aggressiveness to which they lead we call transformed aggression. It is the displaced and unrecognized fruit of suppressed simple aggression.

1. We are not for a moment suggesting either (a) that logical and objective cases cannot be argued in favour of revolutions, wars, and

2.

persecutions, or (b) that the positive valuation of such things as justice, liberty, and other social values may not reasonably involve a hatred of their opposites. We are only suggesting that the repression of simple aggression may result in these forms of hatred. The objective cases of these schools of thought are in every case different in kind from the personal and subjective elements in their supporters' view of them.

E.F.M. Durbin and J. Bowlby. Personal Aggressiveness and War. New York: Columbia, 1939.  
p.19.

It is to reduce anxiety and guilt to a minimum and to resolve the conflict of ambivalence that the major psychological mechanisms are developed. These are of two kinds - displacement and projection: both of them are frequently used for the expression of transformed aggression.



E.F.M. Durbin and J. Bowlby. Personal Aggressiveness  
and War. New York: Columbia, 1939.

p.21

From our present point of view the importance of this mechanism can scarcely be exaggerated. Adult aggression, as we have seen, is normally carried out in group activity. Political parties make civil war. Churches make religious war. States make international war. These various kinds of groups can attract absolute loyalty and canalize torrents of hatred and murder - through the mechanism of displacement. Individuals can throw themselves into the life and work of groups because they find a solution to their own conflicts in them. The stores of explosive violence in the human atom are released by and expressed in group organization. The power of the group for aggression is derived partly from the sensible and objective judgments of men, but chiefly in our view, by their power to



~~attract to themselves the displaced hatred and destructiveness of their members. Displacement, though not the ultimate cause, is a direct channel of the ultimate causes of war.~~

E.F.M. Durbin and J. Bowlby. Personal Aggressiveness and War. New York: Columbia, 1939.  
p.24

It is particularly common among the revolutionary opponents of an existing order. Communists exaggerate enormously the degree and deliberateness of capitalist repression. National Socialists in opposition exaggerated absurdly the oppressions of das System. Both parties, all the while, intending to create a far more repressive system themselves. This projection of internal moral censorship, while of great interest in explaining many of the phenomena of political life, is not of central importance in understanding the causes of international war. Displacement and the projection of impulse are the great channels of transformed aggression. The projection of the super-ego is chiefly a cause of revolution and civil war.

1. The projection of the super-ego is a reason for





hating and attacking any form of government. If, therefore, the League of Nations or any collective security system became strong there would then arise, if our theory be true, aggressive revolutionary minorities within the collective system. This is an important point made by Dr. Glover. We shall discuss its political significance in the later sections of this part of the article.

E.F.M. Durbin and J. Bowlby. Personal Aggressiveness and War. New York: Columbia, 1939. p.24/5

We have now completed our survey of the causes of aggression in human beings. We have suggested that there is no substantial difference in behaviour, that adults are just as cruel - or more so - just as aggressive, just as destructive as any group of animals or monkeys. The only difference in our view is one of psychological and intellectual mechanism. The causes of simple aggression - possessiveness, strangeness, frustration - are common to adults and simpler creatures. But a repressive discipline drives the simple aggression underground - to speak in metaphors - and it appears in disguised forms. These transformations are chiefly those of displacement and projection. These mechanisms have as their immediate motive the reduction of anxiety and the resolution of the conflicts of ambivalence and guilt. They result in the typical form of adult

aggressiveness - aggressive personal relations of all kinds - but above all in group aggression: party conflict, civil war, wars of religion, and international war. The group life gives sanction to personal aggressiveness. The mobilization of transformed aggression gives destructive power to groups. Aggression takes on its social form. And to justify it - to explain the group aggression to the outside world and to the group itself in terms that make it morally acceptable to the members of the group - great structures of intellectual reasoning - theories of history and religion and race - are built up. The impulses are rationalized. The hatred is justified. And it is typical of the complexity of human affairs that something in these theories is always true. But most is false, most of it a mere justification of hatred, a sickening and hypocritical defence of cruelty. This is particularly true of the political persecutions of dictatorships. We must now try to apply the conclusions of this evidence to the theory of the causes of war.

