

The Political Consequences of Child Abuse

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Although centuries of novels and autobiographies have dealt with the subject of child abuse in all its forms, society has been slow in recognizing the frequency with which this assault is committed. Only in the last twenty years has there been any real progress in this respect, and most of it is due to the efforts of a small number of researchers and above all to the media. Still underestimated and sometimes contested are the consequences very early abuse will have for the victims in their adult lives. The issues involved have been largely ignored, and there is correspondingly little mention of them in historical and anthropological studies. Thus sociologist Wolfgang Ivens is able to write an otherwise impressive work on forms of violence without making one single reference to the childhood dimension. He gives very considerable space to the willful infliction of suffering, calling it "mysterious," although it is readily explicable once we countenance the idea that the bodies of the executioners, torturers and the orchestrators of organized manhunts may have learned their fateful lessons very early and thus very effectively.

Also Goldhagen restricts himself to a phenomenological discussion of the people who volunteered to torture and humiliate others, without giving any consideration to their childhood. He does devote much attention to the emotions of the perpetrators, a subject hitherto largely ignored, but without the background of their early upbringing their behavior still remains mysterious. The reader seeks in vain for an explanation. What made respected members of society suddenly act like monsters? How could a former teacher like Klaus Barbie, and other men described by their daughters as kind, caring fathers, have innocent people tortured or indeed do the torturing themselves? Goldhagen does not address this question. He is obviously convinced that references to traditional anti-Semitism in Germany provide a satisfactory answer. They do not.

The hypothesis that German anti-Semitism was the real reason for the Holocaust has been rightly criticized by urging a comparison with the First World War. At that time anti-Semitism was just as strong in Germany but no organized genocide resulted. And why no Holocaust in the other anti-Semitic countries (Poland, Russia and other parts of Europe)? The argument that in the Weimar Republic unemployment and poverty caused immense general frustration that was discharged via the mass murder of the Jews is hardly convincing, given that Hitler was quickly successful in getting unemployment under control.

There must have been other factors at play which have hitherto been ignored, factors going some way to explaining why the Holocaust happened in Germany and why it happened at this particular time rather than another. In my view, one possible operative factor is the destructive child-rearing style practiced widely on infants around the turn of the century in Germany, a style I have no hesitation in referring to as a universal abuse of infants.

Of course children in other countries have been and still are mistreated in the name of upbringing or caregiving, but hardly already as babies and hardly with the systematic thoroughness characteristic of the Prussian pedagogy. In the two generations before Hitler's rise to power, the implementation of this method was brought to a high degree of perfection in Germany. With this foundation to build on, Hitler finally achieved what he wanted: "My ideal of education is hard. Whatever is weak must be hammered away. In the fortresses of my militant order a generation of young people will grow to strike fear into the heart of the world. Violent, masterful, unafraid, cruel youth is what I want. Young people must be all that. They must withstand pain. There must be nothing weak or tender about them. The free-magnificent predator must flash from their eyes again. I want them strong and beautiful...That way I can fashion things anew." This education program revolving on the extermination of everything life-giving was the forerunner of Hitler's plans for the extermination of an entire nation. Indeed it was the prerequisite for the ultimate success of his designs.

The numerous and widely-read tracts by Dr. Daniel Gottlieb Moritz Schreber, the inventor of the Schrebergärten (the German world for small allotments) are of major interest here. Some of them ran to as many as 40 editions, and their central concern was to instruct parents in the systematic upbringing of infants from the very first day of life. Many people motivated by what they thought to be the best of intentions complied with the advice given them by Schreber and other authors about how best to raise their children if they wanted to make them into model subjects of the German Reich. They did this without even remotely suspecting that they were exposing their children to a systematic form of torture with long-term effects. Germany sayings and catch-phrases like "Praise be to the things that make us tough" and "What doesn't kill us will strengthen us," still to be heard from educationists of the old school, probably originated in this period.

Morton Schatzman, who quotes highly enlightening passages from Schreber's writings, is of the opinion that here we are in the presence not of child-raising methods but of systematic instruction in child persecution. One of Schreber's convictions is that when babies cry they should be made to desist by the use of "physically perceptible admonitions," assuring his readers that "such a procedure is only necessary one, or at the most twice, and then one is master of the child for all time. From then on, one look, one single threatening gesture will suffice to subjugate the child." Above all, the newborn child should be drilled from the very first day to obey and to refrain from crying.

Today, people who have been brought up in anything even remotely approaching a humane way will hardly be able to imagine the rigor and tenacity with which Schreber himself implemented this program. Psychoanalyst Wilhelm G. Niederland quotes examples that cast light on the everyday practical conduct of child-rearing in those decades—for example, recipes for inculcating the "art of self-denial" into infants. "The method should be simple and effective: the child is placed on the lap of its nanny while the latter is eating or drinking whatever takes her fancy. However urgent the infant's oral needs may become in this situation, they must not be gratified."

Niederland quotes an account by Schreber from his own family life. A nanny eating pears while holding one of his children on her lap was unable to resist the temptation of giving the infant a slice. She was immediately dismissed. The news of this draconian measure quickly spread to all the other nannies in Leipzig, and from that time on, writes Schreber, he "never again encountered such insubordination, neither with that child nor with any of the others that came later."

Contrary to received opinion prevalent as recently as 15 years ago, the human brain at birth is not fully developed. The abilities a person's brain develops depend on experiences in the first three years of life. Studies on abandoned and severely

mistreated Romanian children revealed striking lesions in certain areas of the brain and marked emotional and cognitive insufficiencies in later life. According to very recent neurobiological findings, repeated traumatization leads to an increased release of stress hormones that attack the sensitive tissue of the brain and destroy existing neurons. Other studies of mistreated children have revealed that the areas of the brain responsible for the "management" of emotions are 20 to 30 percent smaller than in normal persons.

The children systematically subjected to obedience drill around the turn of the century were not only exposed to corporal "correction" but also to severe emotional deprivation. The upbringing manuals of the day described physical demonstrations of affection such as stroking, cuddling and kissing as indications of a doting, mollycoddling attitude. Parents were warned of the disastrous effects of spoiling their children, a form of indulgence entirely incompatible with the prevalent ideal of rigor and severity. As a result, infants suffered from the absence of direct loving contact with the parents. The best they could hope for was to find some kind of substitute from the servants, who in numerous cases used and exploited them as objects of pleasure, thus frequently adding to the children's emotional confusion.

Since the experiments conducted on monkeys by Dr. Harlow in the Fifties, we know that animals raised by artificial "robot" mothers later turned aggressive and showed no interest in their own offspring. New research on macaque monkeys revealed that they kill even members of their own species if they were brought up without appropriate care. John Bowlby's studies on the absence of early attachment in delinquents and René Spitz' descriptions of small children dying of hospitalism following emotional neglect during hospitalization under extremely hygienic conditions are indications that not only animal but also human babies require reassuring sensory contact with their parents if socialization is to take a normal course.

These findings presented by Bowlby and Spitz almost 40 years ago are corroborated by recent neurobiological research. The studies in question suggest that not only active battering but also the absence of loving physical contact between child and parent will cause certain areas of the brain, notably those responsible for the emotions, to remain underdeveloped. Hence the children "subjugated by looks" suffered emotional harm that was only to develop its full destructive potential in the next generation.

Present-day neurobiological research makes it easier for us to understand the way Nazis like Eichmann, Himmler, Höss and others functioned. The rigorous obedience training they underwent in earliest infancy stunted the development of such human capacities as compassion and pity for the sufferings of others. They were incapable of emotion in the face of misfortune, such feelings were alien to them. Their total emotional atrophy enabled the perpetrators of the most heinous crimes imaginable to function "normally" and to continue to impress their environment with their efficiency in the years after the war without the slightest remorse. Dr. Mengele could perform the most cruel experiments on Jewish children in Auschwitz and then live for 30 years like a "normal," well-adjusted man.

In the absence of positive factors, affection and helping witnesses, the only course open to the mistreated individual is the disavowal of personal suffering and the idealization of cruelty with all its devastating after-effects. Undergoing an exceedingly humiliating and cruel upbringing at the preverbal stage, usually without helping witnesses, may instill into the victim admiration of this cruelty if there is no one in the immediate vicinity of the child to query those methods and stand up for humane values. People subjected to mistreatment in childhood may go on insisting all their lives that beatings are harmless and corporal punishment is salutary although there is overwhelming, indeed conclusive

evidence to the contrary. Vice versa, a child protected, loved and cherished from the outset will thrive on that experience for a lifetime.

Binjamin Wilkomirski, the author of a harrowing and intensely illuminating book about his childhood in the concentration camps, once confided to me in a personal encounter some observations made with the eyes of an imprisoned but extremely wide-awake child on the behavior of the female camp guards. He said that it had taken him 50 years to inquire who those "blokawas" really were, those women who had so openly and unreservedly relished the job of tormenting and humiliating Jewish children and subjecting them to every conceivable variety of mental and physical cruelty.

To his astonishment, perusal of the trial records revealed that most of them were young women between 19 and 21 who had formerly had quite ordinary jobs as seamstresses or sales clerks and whose biographies contained nothing in any way unusual. During the trial they unanimously claimed that they had not been aware that Jewish children were human beings. The conclusion that immediately suggests itself is that ultimately propaganda and manipulation are sufficient to transform people into sadistic executioners and mass murderers.

This is not an opinion I share. On the contrary. It is my belief that only men and women who had experienced mental and physical cruelty in the first weeks and months of life and had been shown no love at all could possibly have let themselves be made into Hitler's willing executioners. As Goldhagen's archive material shows, they needed next to no ideological indoctrination because their bodies knew exactly what they wanted to do as soon as they were allowed to follow their inclinations. And as the Jews, young or old, had been declared non-persons, there was nothing to stop them indulging those inclinations. But no amount of indoctrination alone, at school or wherever, will unleash hatred in a person who has no preconditions in that direction. It is well known that there were also Germans, like Karl Jaspers, Hermann Hesse or Thomas Mann, who immediately recognized the declaration that Jews were non-persons as an alarm signal and the rallying cry of untrammelled barbarism.

For people like the "blokawas," exposed to emotional confusion in their early childhood, the declaration was a highly convenient expedient. All they needed to do was refuse the children water to wash themselves and that gave them sufficient reason to hate them for being dirty and coal-black. They could toss lumps of sugar to starving children and then despise them for the alacrity with which they scrambled to pick them up. Those young women could turn the children into precisely what they needed to feel powerful and could thus vent on their victims the old, unconscious rage slumbering within them.

However brutally these people were brought up, they showed no immediate signs of the harm done to them. On the contrary. Many of them grew up into seemingly well-adjusted young people. But sooner or later, usually one generation later, when the tormented children had themselves become parents, the former victims did the same with their children as had been done to them, with no feelings of guilt. It was the only thing they knew, after they had repressed and denied their own pain.

Studying child abuse confronts us with the astonishing fact that parents will inflict the same punishment or neglect on their children as they experienced themselves in their early lives. But as adults they have no recollection of what they went through. In the case of sexual assault on children, it is quite usual for the perpetrators to have no conscious knowledge of their own early life-history or at the least to be cut off from the attendant feelings aroused by those experiences. It is not until they are in therapy—always supposing they are given any—that it transpires that they have been reenacting what they went through as children.

The sole explanation I can advance for this fact is that information on the cruelty suffered in childhood remains stored in the brain in the form of unconscious memories. For a child, conscious experience of such treatment is impossible. If children are not to break down completely under the pain and the fear, they must repress that knowledge. But the unconscious memories drive them to reproduce those repressed scenes over and over again in the attempt (and with the false hope) to liberate themselves of the fears that cruelty and abuse have left with them. The victims create situations in which they can assume the active role in order to master the feeling of helplessness and escape the unconscious anxieties.

But this liberation is a specious one because the effects of the past don't change as long as they remain unnoticed. Over and over again the perpetrator will go in search of new victims. As long as one projects hatred and fear onto scapegoats, there is no way of coming to terms with those feelings. Not until the cause has been recognized and the natural reaction to wrongdoing understood can the blind hatred wreaked on innocent victims be dissipated. The function it performs, that of masking the truth, is no longer necessary. Sex criminals who have worked through their lives in therapy may no longer run the risk of a destructive reenactment of their traumas.

What is hatred? As I see it, it is a possible consequence of the rage and despair that cannot be consciously felt by a child which has been neglected and mistreated even before he or she has learned to speak. As long as the anger directed at a parent or other first caregiver remains unconscious or disavowed, it cannot be dissipated. It can only be taken out on oneself or stand-ins, on scapegoats such as one's own children or alleged enemies. Sympathetic observation of the cries of an infant brings home forcibly to the onlooker how intense the feelings involved must be. The hatred can finally work as a life-saving defense against the life-threatening powerlessness.

The studies at my disposal already in 1980 and referred to in my book *For Your Own Good* confirmed my conjecture that, both in Nazi Germany and among the professional American soldiers who voluntarily served in Vietnam, brutally-raised children figured prominently among the most vindictive war criminals. Further confirmation was brought by study of the childhood biographies of those exceptional people who in times of terror had the courage to rescue others from extermination.

Why were there people brave enough to risk their lives to save Jews from Nazi Persecution? Much scientific inquiry has been expended on this question. The usual answers revolve around religious or moral values such as Christian charity or a sense of responsibility instilled in them by parents, teachers and other caregivers. But there is no doubt that the active supporters of the extermination and the passive hangers-on had usually also been given a religious upbringing. So this can hardly furnish a sufficient explanation.

I was convinced that there must have been some special factor in the childhood of the rescuers, in the prevailing atmosphere of their childhood, that made it so fundamentally different from what the war criminals had experienced, but at first I couldn't prove my hypothesis. For years I sought in vain for a book that would give this subject adequate coverage. Finally, thanks to Lloyd deMause's help, I found an empirical study by the Oliners, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*, based on interviews with more than 400 witnesses of those dark days. It confirmed my hypothesis. The study concluded that the only factor distinguishing the rescuers from the persecutors and hangers-on was the way they had been brought up by their parents.

Almost all rescuers interviewed reported that their parents had attempted to discipline them with arguments rather than punishment. They were only rarely subjected to corporal punishment, and if they were it was invariably in connection with some

misdeed and never because their parents had felt the need to discharge some uncontrollable and inexplicable feeling of rage on them. One man recalled that he had once been spanked for taking smaller children out onto a frozen lake and endangering their lives. Another reported that his father had only ever hit him once and apologized afterwards. Many of the statements might be paraphrased thus: "My mother always tried to explain what was wrong about whatever it was I had done. My father also spent a lot of time talking to me. I was impressed by what he had to say."

What a different picture we get from the reports of the persecutors and hangers-on: "When my father was drunk he took the whip to me. I never knew what I was being beaten for. Often it was for something I had done months before. And when mother was in a temper she tore into anyone who got in her way, including me."

Unlike such uncontrolled affective discharges subjectively felt to be justified, explaining what the parent feels is wrong is synonymous with trust in the otherwise good intentions of the child. Such a course is motivated by respect and faith in the child's ability to develop and change its behavior for the better.

People given early affection and support are quick to emulate the sympathetic and autonomous natures of their parents. Common to all the rescuers were self-confidence, the ability to take immediate decisions and the capacity for empathy and compassion with others. Seventy percent of them said that it only took them a matter of minutes to decide they wanted to intervene. Eighty percent said they did not consult anyone else. "I had to do it, I could never have stood idle and watched injustice being done."

This attitude, prized in all cultures as "noble," is not something instilled in children with fine words. If the behavior actually displayed by caretakers is such as to contradict their own words, if children are spanked in the name of lofty ideals, as is still the custom in some parochial schools, then those elevated sentiments are doomed to go unheard or even to provoke rage and violence. The children may end up aping those high-minded phrases and mouthing them in later life, but they will never put them into practice because they have no example to emulate.

Martin Luther, for example, was an intelligent and educated man, but he hated all Jews and he encouraged parents to beat their children. He was no perverted sadist like Hitler's executioners. But 400 years before Hitler he was disseminating this kind of destructive counsel. According to Eric Ericson's biography, his mother beat him severely before he was treated this way by his father and his teacher. He believed this punishment had "done him good" and was therefore justified. The conviction stored in his body that if parents do it then it must be right to torment someone weaker than yourself left a much more lasting impression on him than the divine commandments and the Christian exhortations to love your neighbor and be compassionate toward the weak.

Similar cases are discussed by Philip Greven in his highly informative book, *Spare the Child*. He quotes various American men and women of the church recommending cruel beatings for infants in the first few months of life as a way of ensuring that the lesson thus learnt remains indelibly impressed on them for the rest of their lives. Unfortunately they were only too right. These terrible destructive texts which have misled so many parents are the conclusive proof of the long-lasting effect of beating. They could only have been written by people who were exposed to merciless beatings as children and later glorified what they had been through. Fortunately, these books were not published in 40 editions in the USA.

An animal will respond to attack with "fight or flight." Neither course is open to an infant exposed to aggression from immediate family members. Thus the natural reaction remains spent up, sometimes for decades, until it can be taken out on a weaker object.

Then the repressed emotions are unleashed against minorities. The targets vary from country to country. But the reasons for that hatred are probably identical the world over.

We know that as a boy Hitler was tormented, humiliated and mocked by his father, without the slightest protection from his mother. We also know that he denied his true feelings toward his father. The real sources of his hatred thus become obvious. I had gone in search of the true motives not only for Hitler's mental make-up but also that of many other dictators. In all of them I identified the effects of hatred of a parent that remained unconscious not only because hating one's father was strictly prohibited but also because it was in the interests of the child's self-preservation to maintain the illusion of having a good father. Only in the form of a deflection onto others was hatred permitted, and then it could flow freely. Hitler would hardly have found so much support if the "caregiving" patterns he had been exposed to and their detrimental after-effects had not been so widespread in Germany and Austria.

But Hitler's specific problems with the Jews can in fact be traced back to the period before his birth. In her youth, his paternal grandmother had been employed in a Jewish merchant's household in Graz. After her return home to the Austrian village of Braunau, she gave birth to a son, Alois, later to become Hitler's father, and received child-support payments from the family in Graz for 14 years. This story, which is recounted in many biographies of Hitler, represented a dilemma for the Hitler family. They had an interest in denying that the young woman had been left with child either by the Jewish merchant or his son. On the other hand, it was impossible to assert that a Jew would pay alimony for so long without good reason. Such generosity on the part of a Jew would have been inconceivable for the inhabitants of an Austrian village. Thus the Hitler family was faced with the insoluble dilemma of devising a version that would serve to nullify their "disgrace."

For Alois Hitler the suspicion that he might be of Jewish descent was insufferable in the context of the anti-Jewish environment he grew up in. All the plaudits he earned himself as a customs officer were insufficient to liberate him from the latent rage at the disgrace and humiliation visited on him through no fault of his own. The only thing he could do with impunity was to take out this rage on his son Adolf. According to the reports of his daughter of his former marriage, Angela, he beat his son mercilessly every day. In an attempt to exorcise his childhood fears, his son nurtured the maniac delusion that it was up to him to free not only himself of Jewish blood but also all Germany and later the whole world. Right up to his death in the bunker, Hitler remained a victim of this delusion because all his life his fear of his half-Jewish father had remained locked in his unconscious mind.

I have set out these ideas in greater detail in my book, *For Your Own Good*. Many people have told me that they found them highly unsettling and in no way sufficient to explain Hitler's actions. Not all his actions, perhaps, but certainly his delusions. And those delusions are at the very least the foundation of his actions. I can certainly picture the boy Hitler swearing vengeance on "the Jews," those monstrous fantasy-figures of an already diseased imagination. Consciously, he probably thought he could have led a happy life if "the Jew" had not plunged his grandmother into the disgrace that he and his family had to live with. And it was this that in his eyes served to excuse the batterings he received from his father, who after all was himself a victim of the evil and omnipotent Jew. In the mind of an angry, seriously confused child, it is only a short step from there to the idea that all Jews should be exterminated.

Not only Jews. In the household of Hitler's family lived for years the very unpredictable schizophrenic aunt Johanna whose behavior is reported to be very frightening to the child. As an adult, Hitler ordered to kill every handicapped and psychotic person to free Germany society from this burden. Germany seemed for him to symbolize the innocent

child who had to be saved. Consequently, Hitler wanted to protect his nation from the dangers he himself had had to face. Absurd? Not at all. For an unconscious mind, this kind of symbolization might sound very normal and logical.

Besides the sources of his fears connected with father and aunt, there was his early relationship with his very intimidated mother who lived in constant fear of her husband's violent outbursts and beatings. She called him "Uncle Alois" and endured patiently his humiliating treatment without any protest. Adolf's mother had lost the first three children due to an illness, and Adolf was her first child to survive infancy. We can easily imagine that the milk he drank from his mother was in a way "poisoned" by her own fear. He drank her milk together with her fears, but was of course unable to understand nor to integrate them. These irrational fears that an outside, watching his speeches on videos can easily recognize, stayed unrecognized and unconscious to Hitler until the end of his life. Stored up in his body, they drove him constantly to new destructive actions, in his endless attempt to find an outcome.

In the lives of all the tyrants I examined, I found without exception paranoid trains of thought bound up with their biographies in early childhood and the repression of the experiences they had been through. Mao had been regularly whipped by his father and later sent 30 million people to their deaths, but he hardly ever admitted the full extent of the rage he must have felt toward his own father, a very severe teacher who had tried through beatings to "make a man" out of his son. Stalin caused millions to suffer and die because even at the height of his power his actions were determined by unconscious infantile fear of powerlessness. Apparently his father, a poor cobbler from Georgia, attempted to drown his frustration with liquor and whipped his son almost every day. His mother displayed psychotic traits, was completely incapable of defending her son and was usually away from home either praying in church or running the priest's household. Stalin idealized his parents right up to the end of his life and was constantly haunted by the fear of dangers that had long since ceased to exist but were still present in his deranged mind. The same might be true of many other tyrants. The groups of people they singled out for persecution and the rationalization mechanisms they employed were different in each case, but the fundamental reason behind it was probably identical. They often drew on ideologies to disguise the truth and their own paranoia. And the masses chimed in enthusiastically because they were unaware of the real motives, including those operative in their own biographies. The infantile revenge fantasies of individuals would be of no account if society did not regularly show such naive alacrity in helping to make them come true.

Naturally, my references to Schreber and his methods are not sufficient to explain the history of the Holocaust. Countless books have been written about it, but the enormity of those crimes still defies comprehension. Much more research needs to be done before we can even start to truly understand. Given what we know today, attempting to build an explanation around any one single factor would result in crass over-simplification. It leaves too many other things out of account. Also, such a monocausal explanation might lead to an exoneration of the perpetrators, relieving them of their responsibility by declaring them sick. No upbringing, however cruel, is a license for murder. But blaming the whole thing on a defective genetic blueprint is just as unsatisfactory. Why should there have been so many people born 30 or 40 years before the Holocaust in Germany with such a fateful genetic disposition? I do not know of any gene researcher who would have tried to answer this question.

My references to the systematic humiliation of children around the turn of the century and the torture small infants were exposed to (tragically never recognized as such by the parents) seem to me, however, to be an important element within the complex concatenation of causes. Unfortunately it has yet to be given the attention it deserves. The reasons for this neglect are probably closely connected with the general taboo that

has been imposed on the subject of childhood. But for quite hard-headed pragmatic reasons, notably a concern for the future, it is important to break with this taboo and venture onto this largely unexplored territory.

The total neglect or trivialization of the childhood factor operative in the context of violence and the way it evolves in early infancy sometimes leads to explanations that are not only unconvincing and abortive but actively deflect attention away from the genuine roots of violence. The abstract term "anti-Semitism" contains an infinite number of meanings and frequently only serves to blur the complicated psychological processes involved, processes that need to be identified and called by name. Only in this way can we hope to change anything.

In my view, a close comparison of parenting methods today and in the past can bring about such a change. It can open up new vistas and encourage the formation of new and healthier structures in raising children. Many new enlightening books on parent-child relations are instances of concrete help for parents in incorporating the information at our disposal into the practice of childrearing. Parents who are able to integrate this new information are likely to find it easier to respect, encourage, understand and love their children and to learn from them.

But working toward a better, more aware future cannot be done in isolation from the ongoing attempt to understand our history in all its facets, for us as individuals and as society. The work started by Lloyd deMause and continued by him and other psychohistorians is to my knowledge the first systematic research in this direction. The history of childrearing might be more illuminating than many others in illustrating the dangers for society at large attendant on willful ignorance about child development. The ongoing research on babies from birth to three might be helpful for eventually overcoming this ignorance. It may enable some historians to raise more frequently the question raised for the first time by Lloyd deMause: what does it feel like to be an abused infant, without any enlightened witness? Unfortunately, the early childhood of people who recently mercilessly killed in Rwanda has not yet become an issue for psychological or sociological investigation. But should empathic psychohistorians once become interested in finding out and describing the atmosphere of the first years of the killer's life, they could probably be able to explain some of the events that still seem inexplicable.

Alice Miller is a Swiss psychotherapist and author of such books as *The Drama of the Gifted Child*, *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child*, *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence*, *Banished Knowledge: Facing Childhood Injuries* and *Breaking Down the Wall of Silence*. This article was written as the Distinguished Lecture for the 21st Annual International Psychohistorical Association Convention in New York City, and contains parts of her upcoming book, *Paths of Life*.