

**WHAT IS THE CULT
AWARENESS NETWORK
AND WHAT ROLE
DID IT PLAY IN WACO?**

Report prepared by

ROSS & GREEN

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INTRODUCTION

As a lobbying firm concerned with the preservation and expansion of democracy both at home and abroad, we are writing to draw your attention to the activities of the Cult Awareness Network (CAN).

The Cult Awareness Network describes itself as a "national non-profit organization founded to educate the public about the harmful effects of mind control as used by destructive cults." In fact, as the following evidence documents, CAN has played a major role in propagating an atmosphere of intolerance and violence against new, smaller, non-mainstream religions (as well as psychological movements and political groups); moreover, it has functioned as an indirect referral agency, facilitating "concerned" families getting in touch with individuals who can be hired to use coercion (including forcible abductions) to remove individuals from groups of which CAN disapproves.

The influence of the Cult Awareness Network was made clear by the role it played in influencing media coverage of the siege and subsequent massacre of the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas earlier this year, and the role CAN-associated "deprogrammers" played as advisors to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) and the FBI during the siege.

"DEPROGRAMMERS"

CAN, originally called the Citizens Freedom Foundation (CFF), was founded in 1974 by Ted Patrick, who, according to Gerald Arenberg, writing in *The Chief of Police* magazine, already had a "career of kidnapping young adults from young and little understood churches in exchange for handsome fees from distraught or overbearing parents" (Arenberg, 1993). Information from a number of sources indicates that over the past 19 years, persons within the CAN network have been involved in thousands of abductions or other coercive actions, which the perpetrators euphemistically call "deprogrammings." "Deprogrammers" charge between \$5,000 and \$20,000 for a kidnapping. The payment is usually made in cash, so there will be no record of the transaction (Blockson, 1992,p.2). According to the organization's own figures, reported at its national conference in Los Angeles last year, CAN-connected "deprogrammers" were involved in more than 1,800 "deprogrammings" in 1992 alone (Robertson, 1993, p.3).

On the record, CAN condemns forcible kidnappings and maintains that it receives no financial benefits from referring families to kidnappers. However, John Myles Sweeney, Jr., a former national director of CAN's predecessor, the Citizens Freedom Foundation, in a declaration dated March 17, 1992 charged:

Because of the large amount of money they make due to referrals received from CFF members, deprogrammers usually kick back money to the CFF member who gave the referral...The kickbacks would either be in cash or would be hidden in the form of a tax-deductible "donation" to the CFF (Sweeney, 1992,p.1).

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Former "deprogrammer" Johnathon Lee Nordquist has charged that in the mid eighties CAN, through Mary Krone, then CAN's director of information and referrals, paid for the living expenses of Nordquist and his partner. "All that I had to do... was make infrequent speeches at Cult Awareness Network affiliate meetings and receive phone call from people who wanted to hear negative propaganda about the Hare Krishna religion" (Nordquist, 1991, p. 24).

In addition, expense reports seized by the FBI and entered as evidence in a court case reveal that at least one "deprogrammer," convicted kidnapper Galen Kelly, was paid a regular retainer of \$1,500 a week in 1992 by the Cult Awareness Network (U.S. vs. Smith, Kelly, Point and Moore, 1992).

CAN operates its indirect referral system in a manner intended to avoid incurring criminal or civil liability from the activities of the "deprogrammers" in its network. Mark Blocksom, who worked as a "deprogrammer" from 1979 to 1989, reports:

The standard method by which I received referrals for involuntary deprogrammings was via phone call the "good ole boy" network (CFF, and later, CAN members or affiliates), who would then refer the caller to a non-CFF/non-CAN person (usually a family member of a prior successful case), who would then call me and arrange the deprogramming. This "cut out" system was created to insulate CFF/CAN from legal liabilities (Blocksom, 1992, pp. 1-2).

Blocksom also reports that he often consulted with CAN officials (including the current director, Cynthia Kissner) in the course of "deprogrammings" for the purpose of "obtaining additional assistance, or with obtaining written materials about a particular group" (Blocksom, 1992, p. 4). Former CFF

director Sweeney warns: "CAN still attempts to convince the public that it is not now, nor has it ever been, connected with deprogrammers. This is an absolute lie and should never be accepted as true" (Sweeney, 1992, p. 3).

A special report in 'The Chief of Police,' the official publication of the National Association of Chiefs of Police, notes that "During the 1970's and '80's, mercenary deprogrammers like Patrick kidnapped hundreds of adults from a wide spectrum of organizations including Catholic, Episcopal, Evangelical Christian, Mormon, Amish, political and even karate classes. While the deprogrammers celebrated their growing profits, for the victims, it was a story of terror" (Arenberg, 1993, p. 60).

The terror includes not only the abduction itself, for the "deprogramming" is not complete (and the victims are not released) until she or he agrees to leave their religion or political organization. According to former "deprogrammer" Mark Blocksom: "Some deprogrammers used techniques of sleep and food deprivation, humiliation, ridicule, deprivation of privacy, and in some cases, physical abuse and restraint to accomplish their goal of altering a person's religious views" (Blocksom, 1992, p. 2).

A number of former "deprogrammers" and CAN officials have reported, in sworn affidavits, that some of the CAN-affiliated "deprogrammers" have had sex with individuals they held captive (Nordquist, 1991, p. 63; Sweeney, 1992, p. 2). Dr. Lowell Streiker, the former executive director of the Freedom Counseling Center in Burlingame, California, reports that "deprogrammer" Cliff Daniels "...said that he used the 'sex thing' as a testing board to see whether the girl was completely out of the cult. If she consented, then he knew that she was completely out. If she did not consent, then he knew that he had more work to do" (Streiker, 1992, p. 3).

What is remarkable, given the large number of abductions that allegedly have been carried out by CAN-associated "deprogrammers," is how few prosecutions--and even fewer convictions--have resulted from their activities. This virtual immunity from legal liability has resulted in a high level of arrogance among "deprogrammers." U.S. Attorney Lawrence Leiser, who successfully prosecuted Galen Kelly, told the Times Herald Record in Middletown, New York: "Mr. Kelly thinks he has the right to go out, because someone pays him, and kidnap someone. That's incredible, and he'd been doing it for 10 or 15 years. He admitted on the stand that he has abducted 30 to 40 people" (Hall, 1993).

This ability to get away with breaking the law has to do with the success CAN has had in demonizing non-mainstream religions and political organizations, as well as the policy employed by "deprogrammers" of involving family members in the kidnapping process, which tends to inhibit the victim's willingness to press charges. As former "deprogrammer" Blocksom says:

I have been arrested at least five times for kidnapping-related charges. I have never even gone to trial in even one of these cases, due largely to the fact that it was my policy to get

the family directly involved in the actual kidnapping. This would make it much harder for the target to want to pursue criminal prosecution, since it would mean they would also have to prosecute a family member (Blocksom, 1992, p. 3).

Despite these precautions, the last year has seen a few cracks in the wall of virtual immunity which has surrounded CAN-associated "deprogrammers." On May 27, 1993 Galen Kelly- chief of security at the CAN convention in November 1990--was convicted for kidnapping a Washington, D.C. woman in May 1992 (he is still awaiting sentencing). Another well known "deprogrammer," Randall Burkey, was convicted on similar charges in Madison, Wisconsin earlier this year. Other CAN- connected "deprogrammers" who have recently faced criminal charges are Joseph Szimhart and Mary Alice Chrnalogar who were charged with kidnapping a 39-year-old mother of four in Boise, Idaho (Robertson, 1993, p. 3), while Rick Ross, who acted as an advisor to ATF in Waco and has boasted of more than 200 "deprogrammings," was arrested at the end of June on charges of kidnapping an illegal imprisonment of a Kirkland, Washington teenager in 1991 (Holt, 1993).

PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHIATRISTS

A handful of psychologists, psychiatrists and sociologists, some of whom serve on CAN's board of advisors, provide pseudo-scientific cover for these activities. They give talks at CAN events, write articles, mostly in their own publication, Cultic Studies Journal, and provide quotes to the media when a "cult expert" is needed. Many of these individuals also earn money testifying as "expert witnesses" in kidnapping cases, litigation in which disaffected ex-members are suing their former group or group leaders, and conservatorship cases in which parents are seeking legal and financial control of grown children who have joined so-called "cults."

Among these individuals, the two most high-profile are psychiatrist Louis Jolyon "Jolly" West, chairman of the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at UCLA's School of Medicine, and Margaret Singer, a clinical psychologist with a private practice in Berkeley, California and a former adjunct professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of California at Berkeley.

West currently serves on the advisory board of CAN and a similar group called the American Family Foundation. He has been a keynote speaker at CAN conferences for more than 15 years. In a 1983 speech to a CFF convention, West called for the development of a "medical model" for the elimination of what he considered "fake" religions.

A good approach if you were interested in curing a cancer is to find a chemical that kills the malignant cells and spares those that are healthy. What would be the effect of a device or technique which, when applied by society to any organization calling itself religious, would

have no untoward effect upon bona fide religions, but would be deadly to the fakes? ...Malignant cells or fake religions wouldn't survive it. Healthy cells or bona fide religions and altruistic organizations would not be harmed (West, 1983).

While West today purports to be repulsed by the "mind control" and "brain washing" supposedly practiced by some of the new religions ("cults"), in the 1950s and '60s he was involved, through the CIA-funded Geschickter Fund for Medical Research, in experiments employing LSD as a means of mind control. During these experiments the CIA used ethnic and racial minorities as human guinea pigs. At the Lexington, Kentucky federal prison, for example, African Americans were singled out and used as test subjects for various mind control experiments (Citizens Commission on Human Rights, 1985).

Questioned about his relationship with CIA "mind control" expert Dr. Sydney Gottlieb, in 1977 West told the New York Times: "As far as the Geschickter Fund was concerned, what Dr. Gottlieb told me was that he was an employee of the CIA and that they had an interest in this problem [the area of LSD research], which I could see they did and possibly should have at that time" (Horrock, 1977).

After the riots in Watts in 1965, West, then head of the Neuropsychiatric Institute (NPI) at UCLA, was an outspoken proponent of the view that violence was tied to genetic factors, and that those most prone to violence were young Black urban males. West and his associates at NPI recommended that some violent offenders could be treated by psychosurgery and chemical castration through the use of cyproterone acetate (West, 1972).

West's advocacy of chemical castration--this time on prisoners and "appropriate non-Institutionalized clinical subjects" (Restak, 1975)--surfaced again when he proposed the establishment of a Center for the Study and Reduction of Violence; based on the premise that violence is caused primarily by genetic or chemical factors, the Center would conduct various chemical and biosurgical experiments. In many respects the Center prefigured the Youth Violence Initiative recently proposed by the National Institute of Mental Health.

Nearly all of the studies West had in mind for the Center involved women, minority groups--of the two high schools he proposed for violence studies, one was in a Black community and one in a Chicano area (West 1972)--prisoners or others who couldn't defend themselves, such as autistic children and the mentally retarded. Examples of the treatments proposed by West at this time included psychosurgery, "curing" hyperactive children with unproven drugs, and implanting electronic monitoring or homing devices into the brain (California State Senate Health and Welfare Committee Transcript, 1973). Funding for the Center was opposed in a series of protests in California in 1974; they succeeded not only in stopping the Center, but in getting federal and state funds for the NPI reduced. In 1989 West resigned as director of the Neuropsychiatric Institute after the LA Weekly published

an expose of financial wrongdoings in relation to research grants he and his staff had obtained from the National Institute of Mental Health (Shae, 1988).

The principle psychologist identified with CAN is Margaret Singer. Unlike West, who is a fixture of the academic psychology establishment, Singer has never held a full-time, tenure-track position; in the words of her attorney Michael Flomenhaft, she "derives a substantial portion of her income from consultancies and work as an expert witness based on specialized knowledge in the area of social influence" (Singer vs. APA, 1992).

Singer is suing the American Psychological Association for \$125 million, claiming that the Association's refusal to endorse her views on so-called mind-control and "brainwashing" have caused "injury to her business and professional reputation" and caused her "mental anguish and distress" (Singer vs. APA, 1992).

The Singer suit (which she filed with Berkeley sociologist Richard Ofshe in August of 1992) is instructive both in revealing where CAN-associated psychologists and psychiatrists stand in relation to the psychological mainstream, and in clarifying how sharply psychological professionals differ over concepts such as "cults," "brainwashing" and "coercive persuasion," which CAN uses to rationalize its activities.

Singer's suit was filed under provisions of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO). In it she contends that the APA and several of its leaders and members have engaged in a "pattern of racketeering activity" designed to ruin her career as an "expert witness." The only concrete evidence offered to prove the alleged harm to her career is a ruling by a judge disqualifying Singer as an expert witness in a case in which an ex-adherent of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness was suing the organization for "false imprisonment" despite the plaintiff's admission that she was never physically restrained, confined or threatened by the Society for Krishna Consciousness and despite further admission on the stand that she adopted Krishna Consciousness following a genuine religious conversion.

In disqualifying Singer, who was called in to testify that the plaintiff had been a victim of "brainwashing," Judge Jensen explained:

Although the record before the Court is replete with declarations, affidavits and letters from reputable psychologists and sociologists who concur with the thought reform theories propounded by Dr. Singer and Dr. Ofshe, the government has submitted an equal number of declarations, affidavits and letters from reputable psychologists and sociologists who disagree with their theories...A more significant barometer of prevailing views within the scientific community is provided by professional organizations such as the American

Psychological Association ("APA") and the American Sociological Association ("ASA"). The evidence before the Court, which is detailed below, shows that neither the APA nor the ASA has endorsed the views of Dr. Singer and Dr. Ofshe on thought reform...At best, the evidence establishes that psychiatrists, psychologists and sociologists disagree as to whether or not there is agreement regarding the Singer-Ofshe thesis. The Court therefore excludes defendants' proffered testimony (U.S. vs. Fishman, 1989).

While Singer's testimony had been accepted at numerous trials before and since, the Jensen ruling has been used as a precedent in subsequent cases in which Singer and other CAN allies were called in as expert witnesses.

The dispute between Singer and the APA leadership goes back at least seven years. In 1986, at Singer's initiative, the APA's Board of Social And Ethical Responsibility for Psychology (BSERP) set up a Task Force on Deceptive and Indirect Methods of Persuasion and Control which was headed up by Singer. The 69-page report produced by the Task Force openly attempted to make CAN's definitions of "cults," "brainwashing," etc. official APA usage. The APA's rejection of the report, dated May 1987, read in part:

BSERP...is unable to accept the report of the Task Force. In general, the report lacks the scientific rigor and evenhanded critical approach necessary for APA imprimatur. The report was carefully reviewed by two external experts and two members of the Board. They independently agreed on the significant deficiencies in the report...The Board cautions the Task Force members against using their past appointment to imply BSERP or APA support or approval of the positions advocated in the report. BSERP requests that Task Force members not distribute or publicize the report without indicating that the report was unacceptable to the Board. Finally, after much consideration, BSERP does not believe that we have sufficient information available to guide us in taking a position on this issue (BSERP, 1987).

At dispute in the Task Force report--and within the psychological community before and since--are the underlying concepts justifying CAN's activities. The term "brainwashing," for example, was coined by Edward Hunter, a CIA propagandist who worked under cover as a journalist (Marks, 1991). In the early fifties Hunter used the term to explain communist influence over American POWs in Korea and western civilian prisoners in Communist China (Hunter, 1953). Hunter defines the result of "brainwashing" as changing "a mind radically so that its owner becomes a living puppet--a human robot"

(Hunter, 1956, p. 309).

Robert Lifton, in *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* (1961), one of the pioneering scholarly works in the field, writes:

Behind this web of semantic (and more than semantic) confusion lies an image of "brainwashing" as an all-powerful, irresistible, unfathomable, and magical method of achieving total control over the human mind. It is of course none of these things and this loose usage makes the word a rallying point for fear, resentment, urges toward submission, justification for failure, irresponsible accusation, and for a wide gamut of emotional extremism. One may justly conclude that the term has a far from precise meaning and a questionable usefulness (Lifton, 1961, p.4)

Singer maintains that the theory of "brainwashing" upon which her "expert witness" career depends is based on studies conducted on repatriated prisoners after the Korean War, as well as the Russian purge trials of the 1930s and the "revolutionary universities" of the People's Republic of China.

However, examination of the facts by mainstream scholars contradict her arguments. A total of 7,190 American servicemen were captured during the Korean War. Of that number only 21 declined to return to the United States. Of those who returned only 14 were ever court-martialed on the grounds of "going-over" to the enemy and only 11 convictions were obtained. Thus Singer's contention that communist "brainwashing" succeeded on a large scale just doesn't hold up (Secretary of Defense's Advisory Committee on Prisoners of War, 1955, pp. 78-81).

Furthermore, of the POWs who did make pro-communist statements during the war, most had not changed their ideological framework, i.e., "converted" to communism at all; they were speaking in the shadow of incarceration and physical maltreatment, rather than as the result of any sort of exotic psychotechnology. Thus Lunde and Wilson conclude in "Brainwashing as a Defense to Criminal Liability: Patty Hearst Revisited:"

[T]he much-ballyhooed Communist program of 'brainwashing' was really more an intensive indoctrination program in combination with very heavy-handed techniques of undermining the social structure of the prisoner group, thereby eliciting collaboration that in most cases was not based on ideological change of any sort (Lunde and Wilson, 1977, p. 348).

Finally, the handful of Americans who actually did go over to the communist side during the Korean War have been shown to have already been predisposed to communist politics when they were drafted (Schein, 1961, pp. 104-110;

Lifton, 1961, pp. 117-132, 207-222).

Unlike Singer and other CAN "expert witnesses," the overwhelming majority of scholars have rejected the attempt to extend the experiences of Korean POWs to the practices of new religious movements. ("absurd to compare this [recruiting practice of new religions] to the fear of death in prisoners held by the Chinese and North Koreans" (James, 1986, pp. 241, 254); the comparison "cannot be taken seriously" (Barker, 1984, p. 134); the "model of the Chinese prisoner of war camp...is highly deficient since members of the religious movements are not abducted or physically detained" (Saliba, 1987); a "far-fetched comparison" (Anthony and Robbins, 1990, p. 263).)

Although the term "brainwashing" has never been accepted within the scientific community, it has become commonplace in the media and is the basis of a number of other concepts of significance to CAN. For example the term "deprogramming" clearly implies that human minds can be "programmed" like computers (or robots) in the first place-- an assumption questioned in much research (James, 1986; Saliba, 1987; Anthony and Robbins, 1990; Reich, 1976).

Moreover, the very existence of "cults" defined (vaguely) by Singer and other CAN supporters as groups which organize through "deception" and which practice "brainwashing" and "mind control" on their members, is disputed by the majority of scholars, many of whom point out that the "coercive processes" that Singer and others attribute to "cult" organizations could be applied equally to college fraternities, Catholic orders, self-help organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous, the armed services, psychoanalytic training institutions, mental hospitals and conventional childrearing practices (Lifton, 1961, pp. 141, 435-436, 451; Schein, 1961, pp. 202, 260-261, 270-276, 281-283).

What Singer's arguments come down to is that the only conceivable way that a sane person might choose to believe in or adhere to religious and/or political views outside the perimeters of the mainstream is if they are "deceived." And from this it follows that deceived or "brainwashed" people are incapable of making sane, responsible judgments and should therefore have their civil and Constitutional rights revoked.

But "deception" is a hopelessly subjective term. Perception and deception are two sides of the same coin. As Judge T.S. Ellis III declared on December 31, 1992 in regard to an unsuccessful kidnapping prosecution brought against CAN-associated "deprogrammer" Galen Kelly, "One man's cult is another man's community, however wacky you or I may think that is" (U.S. vs. Smith, Kelly, Point and Moore, 1992).

Who among us in a democratic society would dare to impose his or her perception as the only true one?

THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

The threat to religious freedom inherent in the pseudo scientific theories

and language of West, Singer and other CAN-associated psychologists, psychiatrists and sociologists is evident. That they have been used to rationalize criminal activity is equally evident. As early as 1974 the National Council of Churches warned of CFF's danger to religious liberty:

[R]eligious liberty is one of the most precious rights of humankind, which is grossly violated by forcible abduction and protracted efforts to change a person's religious commitments by duress. Kidnapping for ransom is a heinous crime indeed, but kidnapping to compel religious deconversion is equally criminal (Arenberg, 1993, p. 60).

And if the dangerous implications of applying CAN's credo to the political arena were not already obvious, CAN's executive director, Cynthia Kisser, made them explicit in an article entitled "Nation needs to address cults' ever-present evils," written originally for the Los Angeles Daily News and reprinted in a number of papers around the country during the Waco siege. In it Kisser warned: "Cults also hurt society when their members undermine the democratic process by voting in solid blocks [sic] or by providing free volunteer labor to campaigns in return for favors from candidates" (Kisser, 1993). To most people this would serve as a model description of healthy participation by an interest group or party in a representative democracy. But apparently to CAN only groups of which it approves should be allowed to vote in "blocks" and volunteer for political campaigns. When groups CAN doesn't like ("cults") participate in electoral politics, it "undermines the democratic process."

Frighteningly, the FBI appears to share this way of thinking. In 1988 and again in 1991 the Bureau launched investigations of the New Alliance Party (NAP), a left-wing electoral party, rationalizing this harassment by labeling NAP a "political/cult organization" (New Alliance Party vs. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1993).

Founded in 1979 and based primarily in communities of color in our country's inner cities, over the last 14 years NAP has run candidates for local, state and federal office in every state and received millions of votes. In 1988 NAP's presidential candidate, Dr. Lenora Fulani, became the first woman and the first African American presidential candidate in U.S. history to be on the ballot in 40 states. In both campaigns Fulani qualified for and received federal primary matching funds.

The 1988 investigation, sparked by a Phoenix, Arizona "informant of un known reliability," included at least 24 field offices and the national headquarters, all of which devoted federal resources to compiling dossiers on NAP. The investigation generated numerous communications from the FBI to law enforcement officials around the country warning them, without cause, that NAP members--who at the time were actively campaigning in the 1988 presidential campaign--should be considered "armed and dangerous" (New Alliance Party vs. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1993).

The 1991 investigation was launched solely on the basis of protected First Amendment activities and despite the fact that the FBI itself had concluded that NAP had broken no laws. As with the earlier investigation, it was buttressed with propaganda from a private organization with its own political agenda, in this case the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith. The 1991 FBI files on NAP contain an ADL "report" attacking NAP and labeling the independent party "part Marxist sect, part therapy cult" (FBI Airtel, July 24, 1991).

In addition, since the distribution of PRA's cult-baiting pamphlet in 1987, publications hostile to NAP's politics-- including the Village Voice, the Boston Phoenix, the New York Post, and various publications of the Communist Party of the United States--have published articles which explicitly or implicitly apply the "cult" label to NAP. In turn, some of these articles, or references to them, have been incorporated into the FBI files (FBI Airtel, May 1, 1988).

On June 24, 1993 Representative Don Edwards (D-CA), chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights of the House Judiciary Committee set a letter to William Sessions protesting the FBI investigations of NAP:

I am writing about the FBI's interest in the New Alliance Party (NAP). This is the second time that the FBI's handling of a NAP matter has raised questions about the focus and management your terrorist program. The FBI's treatment of NAP in recent years evidences a lack of perspective on world and national events and a continuing focus on First Amendment activities instead of criminal conduct...The NAP documents raise something more troubling [than wasteful carelessness] and that is that the FBI continues to treat ideology as an indicator of a predisposition to crime...I must request that the Bureau cease basing investigative action on this type of predicate (Edwards, 1993).

Responding to an investigation of the ADL by the San Francisco district attorney--which indicates that the ADL's "fact-finding" division was part of an information-trading operation which included local police departments, the FBI and foreign governments (most notably, the apartheid regime in South Africa)--Edwards told the San Francisco Examiner that he planned to investigate "whether the FBI was using private surrogates to collect the information it cannot collect directly" (Opatrny and Winokur, 1993).

Within a month of the Waco massacre, NAP, Fulani and two members of the NAP National Committee (Dr. Fred Newman and Dr. Rafael Mendez) filed suit in federal court against the FBI, then-FBI director William Sessions, James Fox, the acting director of the Bureau's New York Division, and Attorney General Janet Reno. The lawsuit charges that the FBI's description of a political organization as a "cult"--or the use of such a description to justify investigative activities, the use of force, criminal prosecution or

governmental regulation--violates the First, Fourth and Fifth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution, which respectively guarantee the right to freedom of speech and association, freedom of assembly and due process (New Alliance Party vs. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1993).

Pointing out that the term "cult" does "not appear in any federal statute or regulation, or in the Federal Rules of Evidence, as a predicate for declaring a person legally incompetent, depriving a person of parental rights, or subjecting a person to psychological warfare and the use of deadly force by federal law enforcement authorities," the suit challenges the appropriateness of the FBI's use of the label as a rationale for investigation (New Alliance Party vs. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1993, p. 12).

Furthermore, the suit points out:

The actions taken by the defendants [the FBI, et al] against the Branch Davidian group in Waco, Texas in February-April 1993, and the defendants' explanations, justifications, and internal investigation and analyses of their actions, demonstrate that [they] have created and are further evolving a modus operandi of practices under which the defendants do not give full recognition and respect to the constitutional and civil rights of individuals whom defendants label as being associated with "cults." Classifying NAP as a "political cult" rather than acknowledging NAP as a political party, is a means of evading the high degree of constitutional scrutiny to which governmental interference with political activity must be subjected (New Alliance Party vs. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1993, p. 2).

The suit, which is scheduled to be heard before Judge Constance Baker Motley in September 1993 in U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York, points to the chilling effect that the increasing use of the "cult" label can have on the development of new and minority political parties and organizations:

In the current climate, which defendants have helped to create, giving a group the status of "cult" has a stigmatizing and injurious effect on the group... in the same way as government labeling of groups as "subversive," "totalitarian," "radical," "Black nationalist," "communist sympathizing" has impaired constitutionally protected speech and association. By giving United States Government imprimatur to an alleged status--"cult"--the defendants are facilitating actions both by

private persons and by government officials that impair the exercise of constitutional rights (New Alliance Party vs. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1993, pp. 14-15).

Although the investigation of the New Alliance Party is, at this point, the best known case of CAN language and concepts being applied to a political organization, the emergence of this new psychological/political category has implications that go well beyond the specifics of the NAP case to fundamental constitutional issues of free association.

CAN's ability to influence, if only indirectly, the policies and thinking of a federal agency is hinted at in the NAP investigations. Its ability to influence government policy and media coverage is made all the more clear in the events surrounding the siege and massacre at Waco.

WACO

A key link in the chain of events which led to the FBI massacre of nearly 90 people--including 24 children, 17 of them under the age of 10--outside Waco, Texas on April 19, 1993 began over a year earlier when Rick Ross, a CAN-affiliated "deprogrammer," allegedly began targeting the Branch Davidian sect for potential kidnappings, to be paid for by relatives of members of the group (Robertson, 1993, p. 1).

Ross has boasted of committing more than 200 "deprogrammings" and has a criminal record stretching back to 1975, when he was convicted of robbing diamonds estimated at \$500,000 from a Phoenix, Arizona jewelry store (The State of Arizona vs. Ricky Alan Ross, 1975). Ross has been praised by CAN executive director Cynthia Kissler as being "among the half dozen best deprogrammers in the country" (Kissler, Ross promotional material).

David Block, a Branch Davidian for five years, was, according to a sworn affidavit by Samuel Russell (an earlier CAN target), "deprogrammed" by Ross, Adeline Bova and CAN national spokesperson Priscilla Coates in Coates' home in Glendale, California in the summer of 1992. During the "deprogramming" Block "furnished Ross with information about the Branch Davidian sect, including details of their stored weapons" (Russell, 1993). Ross himself bragged on "Up to the Minute" on public television that long before the raid he had "consulted with ATF agents on the Waco sect and told them about the guns in the compound" (Robertson, 1993, p. 2). Attorney Linda Thompson of the American Justice Foundation, who represents some of the survivors of the massacre, maintains that "a CAN advisor to the BATF [presumably Ross] was providing disinformation for 30 days before the assault" (Thompson, 1993, p. 1). In the affidavits submitted to obtain a search warrant, ATF agents used language associated with CAN, calling the residents of the Mt. Carmel Center "a religious cult commune" (Aguilera, 1993).

On February 27, 1993, the day before the initial ATF assault on Mt. Carmel, the Waco Tribune-Herald began a seven-part series on the Branch Davidians

entitled "The Sinful Messiah." According to its authors, Mark England and Darlene McCormick, the piece was the result of an eight-month investigation and interviews with "more than ten" former members of the group. At least some of these sources were supplied by CAN. English and McCormick quote a man "deprogrammed" by Ross "who had been with Howell [Koresh] for at least five years"--most likely David Block. The fourth installment in the series, published the day after the shootout, included a sidebar entitled "Experts: Branch Davidians dangerous, destructive cult." It quotes Ross as declaring,

"The group is without doubt, without any doubt whatsoever, a highly destructive, manipulative cult...I would liken the group to Jim Jones." Coates calls the Branch Davidians "unsafe or destructive." And both say that they believe David Koresh practices "mind control."

It is clear from the article, which was written before the ATF staged its raid, that Ross had been agitating for the government to move against the group. England and McCormick report in the sidebar to part four:

Ross said he believes Howell [Koresh] is prone to violence...Speaking out and exposing Howell might bring in the authorities or in some way help those "being held in that compound through a kind of psychological, emotional slavery and servitude," he said. Ross said authorities need to understand that Howell is fully capable of violence. "You could say that it is a very dangerous group," Ross said (England and McCormick, 1993).

Dr. James Wood, a professor of religion at Baylor University in Waco and a resident of the city since 1955, told a reporter from the National Alliance Newsweekly, "Before February I had never heard of them [the Branch Davidians] being referred to as a cult." A check by the Tribune-Herald's librarian confirmed that before the English-McCormick series, the Branch Davidian sect--which had been in Waco since the mid-1930s--had previously been referred to in the Tribune-Herald as a "religious group," not as a "cult."

On "Nightline" with Ted Koppel, broadcast on April 19 (the day of the massacre), Balenda Ganem, the mother of a Davidian survivor, put forward the claim that CAN was making "proposals" to the FBI throughout the siege:

These proposals came from Cult Awareness professionals all over the country. They came in the form of faxes to the White House, to Janet Reno, to William Sessions. They came in the form of registered letters. They came in the form of live television interviews, books being distributed from the Cult Awareness Network, from Cult Awareness professionals, a

team of them ("Nightline" transcript, April 19, 1993).

During the House Judiciary Committee hearing on "Events Surrounding the Branch Davidian Cult Standoff in Waco, Texas" held on April 28 of this year [1993], both Attorney General Janet Reno and FBI Director William Sessions said in their prepared statements that the FBI had consulted "cult experts" in the course of the siege (Reno, 1993; Sessions, 1993). When questioned by Representative William Hughes about whether the Bureau had consulted with the Cult Awareness Network, neither official responded directly. When asked the same question by a reporter from the National Alliance, however, an FBI spokesperson answered in the affirmative.

Whatever advisory role CAN played with the ATF (and perhaps the FBI), there is no question that CAN spokespersons (usually referred to as "national cult experts") were given ready access to the media throughout the siege. Marcia R. Rudlin, director of the International Cult Education Program of the CAN-allied American Family Foundation, gave 130 interviews between March 10 and May 13, 1993, and as the AFF's publication, *The Cult Observer*, notes: "The listing [of interviews] could be multiplied many times to account for the hundreds of interviews given by AFF-associated professionals during the same period" (American Family Foundation, 1993).

Kisser, in her March 13 article "Nation needs to address cults' ever-present evil," called on the government to spend money on fighting the cults. "If we can educate about the dangers of drugs, AIDS and gangs," she wrote, "we can provide important information about cults...[C]ults violate constitutional rights, destroy the family and exploit the weak" (Kisser, 1993).

On April 8, 11 days before the fatal attack, CAN president Patricia Ryan told the *Houston Chronicle* that "Officials should use whatever means necessary to arrest Koresh, including lethal force." In that same article Kisser warned that talking with Koresh was similar to talking to an insane person. "People who are in a closed system, the cult leaders, think differently than you and I" (Keeton and Pinkerton, 1993).

This is not the first time that CAN-associated "deprogrammers" have apparently instigated violent law enforcement moves against a small religious group. In 1982 Priscilla Coates, then the director of CFF, and "deprogrammer" Galen Kelly helped set the stage for a similar raid on the Northeast Kingdom Community at Island Pond in northern Vermont (UPI, November 28, 1982). The supposed intent of that raid--authorized by Vermont's attorney general and later called an illegal "fishing expedition" by a state judge--was to rescue nearly 100 children, most of them African American, from the compound of the small Christian commune whose adult members were allegedly committing child abuse. In the days that followed, the state determined that the only abuse to have occurred was the raid itself. All the children were subsequently returned (Robertson, 1993, pp. 2-3).

As is well known, things did not work out as well for the children of the Branch Davidians. The gas which the FBI pumped into the buildings at Mt. Carmel for six hours before the compound erupted into flame was O-chloro

benzalmalononitrile (CS), the manufacture, production, possession, and use of which were banned during the Chemical Weapons Convention in Paris in January of this year [1993]. More than 100 nations, including the United States, endorsed the ban, which is awaiting ratification.

Benjamin C. Garrett, executive director of the Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute in Alexandria, Virginia, describes what effect it had on the Branch Davidians trapped inside the building. "It would have panicked the children. Their eyes would have involuntarily shut. Their skin would have been burning. They would have been gasping for air and coughing wildly...Eventually, they would have been overcome with vomiting in a final hell. It would not have been pretty" (Seper, 1993).

Ironically, the justification given by Attorney General Janet Reno for approving the pumping of CS gas into the compound was the charge of child abuse first supplied by Rick Ross' victims. On the afternoon of the fire Reno said, "We had information...that babies were being beaten." That evening she told talk show host Larry King, "We were concerned for the children because there had been reports of sexual abuse of the children." The next day President Bill Clinton echoed this rationale, saying the group's children "were being abused significantly, as well as being forced to live in unsanitary and unsafe conditions." (The president failed to mention the fact that the unsanitary and unsafe conditions were a result of the ATF/FBI siege, nor did he explain how killing the children was the best way to end their alleged abuse.)

At the same time that Reno and Clinton were echoing CAN allegations of child abuse, FBI director William Sessions said his agency had "no contemporaneous evidence of child abuse in the compound." After a nine-week study of the 21 children released from the compound in the early stages of the 51-day siege, the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services concluded, "None of the allegations [of child abuse] could be verified. The children denied being abused in any way by any adults in the compound...Examinations of the children produced no indication of current or previous injuries." In response to this announcement by Texas officials, CAN spokesperson Priscilla Coates told the Washington Post, "I know how these types of groups work and children are always abused" (Niebuhr and Thomas, 1993). Within a week or so after the massacre references to child abuse by the Branch Davidians had all but disappeared from the press.

Before the ashes of Mt. Carmel had settled, CAN was busy putting its spin on the massacre. The night of April 19 Louis "Jolly" West was a guest on PBS's "MacNeil/Lehrer Hour," where he said of the FBI: "They knew they were dealing with a psychopath. Nobody is more dangerous or unpredictable than a psychopath in a trap" (West, 1993). That same night Kisser was the "expert" guest on an ABC News special hosted by Peter Jennings, during which she alleged that there are over 2,000 "cults" in America and warned of more violence to come.

A similar "warning" came three days later when William Goldberg, a CAN affiliated psychiatric social worker in private practice in River Edge, New Jersey, was the guest on "Informed Sources" on WNET-TV, New York City's PBS

affiliate. Over footage of surviving Branch Davidians, host Maria Hinojosa spoke of "several hundred destructive cults here in our own metropolitan area," but only specified one such "cult"--the New Alliance Party. Later in the show, after Goldberg identified NAP as a "political cult," Hinojosa claimed to have information that NAP members had been engaged in weapons training and asked, "Could something like what happened in Waco happen here in New York?" (Friedman, 1993).

In the Glendale [California] News-Press, Priscilla Coates warned Americans against "second guessing" the FBI's actions, explaining, "As a society I don't know that we've had that much contact with sociopaths, and sociopaths are unpredictable" (Yarborough, 1993).

At the same time CAN worked to position itself as the best defense against the "cult" threat. In an interview with the Houston Post a few days after the attack, Patricia Ryan urged the federal government to make more use of CAN's "expertise," arguing that Washington has failed to study "cults," educate citizens about their danger or coordinate law enforcement strategy to prosecute their crimes (Witham, 1993).

Meanwhile, CAN was attempting to move in on the lucrative business of "deprogramming" Branch Davidian survivors. On April 23 Brett Bates, and "exit counselor" for the Texas chapter of the Cult Awareness Network, began meeting with the families of survivors, seeking contracts to "deprogram" them. he was quoted in the New York Daily News: "Before they become productive members of the prosecution, they have to realize they were victims of mind control. They have to realize that this is not David Koresh, the Messiah. This was someone who led a cultic group and burned down a building with women and children." Bates told the Daily News that he thought the Branch Davidians, locked in jail and mourning the deaths of their husbands, wives, children and friends would be a "unique challenge" (Hackett and Sennott, 1993).

The day after the debacle President Clinton, denying all responsibility for the deaths and echoing CAN's line on "cults," said, "There is, unfortunately, a rise in this sort of fanaticism all across the world, and we may have to confront it again...I hope very much that others who will be tempted to join cults and to become involved with people like David Koresh will be deterred by [these] horrible scenes" (Witham, 1993).

The response from the religious and civil libertarian communities to the government violence at Waco was swift, but sorely undercovered in the media.

In a letter to Jack Brooks, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, dated April 27, 1993, Laura Murphy Lee, director of the Washington, D.C. office of the American Civil Liberties Union, cautioned against any "new government authority to investigate unpopular or unusual religious groups, without reasonable suspicion that criminal laws have been violated, in violation of the Constitutional guarantee of the free exercise of religion." The confrontation in Waco, she warned, "raises the specter of

unconstitutional surveillance of religious or political groups that was widespread during the COINTELPRO-type investigations which occurred through the mid-1970's" (Lee, 1993).

During a hearing on the events at Waco held by the House Judiciary Committee on April 28, 1993, Rep. John Conyers (D- MI) told Attorney General Reno:

The root cause of this problem was it was considered a military operation and it wasn't. This is a profound disgrace to law enforcement in the U.S.A. and you did the right thing by offering to resign...I would like you to know that there is at least one member of Congress that is not going to rationalize the death of two dozen children...that decision that was jointly made by these agencies bears extreme criticism (Conyers, 1993).

On April 20 Joseph Bettis, a Methodist minister and professor of religious studies at Western Washington University, wrote to Attorney General Reno:

From the beginning, members of the Cult Awareness Network have been involved in this tragedy. This organization is widely known for its use of fear to foster religious bigotry. The reliance of federal agents on information supplied by these people, as well as the whole record of federal activity deserves your careful investigation and public disclosure...As long as the home and church of the Branch Davidians is not protected from invasion by the government, none of our homes, churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, or shrines is safe..."Cult bashing" must end, and you must take the lead (Bettis, 1993).

On April 23 Larry Shinn, vice president for academic affairs at Bucknell University, wrote to Congressman Don Edwards, chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights of the House Judiciary Committee: "[M]edia, legal institutions, and law-makers too often rely on the word of self-styled cult experts like C.A.N. (Cult Awareness Network) whose overly negative agenda often slides into a purely anti-religious attack" (Shinn, 1993).

Dean M. Kelley, counselor on religious liberty to the National Council of Churches, issued a statement which concluded, in part:

[W]e are confronted with the prospect of a vast military assault worthy of the Keystone Kops directed against a relatively small and thus far unaggressive religious band whose chief offense

appears to have been acting like a "cult," whatever that is (beyond a religious outfit that we don't understand and don't approve of). The anti-cult harpies have suggested an ingenious rationale for this intervention: it was designed to "rescue" the "hostages" held "captive" by Koresh through..."mind control" (Kelley, 1993).

The association of World Academics for Religious Education issued a statement which argued: "Had the ATF and the FBI consulted and followed the advice of mainstream academic experts, the Waco tragedy could have been avoided" (AWARE, 1993).

In early May a broad range of mainstream religious and civil libertarian organizations issued a statement which read in part:

We are shocked and saddened by the recent events in Waco...Under the religious liberty provisions of the First Amendment, the government has no business declaring what is orthodox or heretical, or what is a true or false religion. It should steer clear of inflammatory and misleading labels. History teaches that today's "cults" may be tomorrow's mainstream religions.

The statement was signed by American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.; American Civil Liberties Union, Washington Office; American Conference on Religious Movements; Americans United for Separation of Church and State; Association of Christian Schools; International Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; Church of Scientology International; Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy; Episcopal Church; First Liberty Institute; General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists; Greater Grace World Outreach; National Association of Evangelicals; National Council of Churches of Christ; Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Washington Office; and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

CONCLUSION

We urge you to inform yourselves, your constituents and your readers of the activities and influence of the Cult Awareness Network. Attached you will find a bibliography, and a list of experts on the constitutional, legal, psychological, and religious implications of the activities of the Cult Awareness Network.