

# Arent Fox

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## ATTACHMENT B

### FOUR DEFINITIONS OF "TOTALIST" OR "DESTRUCTIVE" GROUP

A. Outgrowth of conference sponsored by American Family Foundation, UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute, Johnson Foundation; *see* West & Langone (1986), "Cultism: a conference for scholars and policy makers." *Cultic Studies Journal*, 3, 117 at 119-120.:

**Cult (totalist type):** a group or movement exhibiting a great or excessive devotion or dedication to some person, idea, or thing and employing unethically manipulative techniques of persuasion and control (e.g., isolation from former friends and family, debilitation, use of special methods to heighten suggestibility and subservience, powerful group pressures, information management, suspension of individuality or critical judgment, promotion of total dependency on the group and fear of leaving it, etc.), designed to advance the goals of the group's leaders to the actual or possible detriment of members, their families, or the community.

B. New definition relating A., above, to work of Singer & Ofshe; *see* Langone (ed.), **RECOVERY FROM CULTS: HELP FOR VICTIMS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL ABUSE** (Norton in press) at 21.:

**A cult is a group or movement that a) exhibits great or excessive devotion or dedication to some person, idea, or thing, (b) uses a thought-reform program to persuade, control, and socialize members (i.e., to integrate them into the group's unique pattern of relationships, beliefs, values, and practices), c) systematically induces states of psychological dependency in members, d) exploits members to advance the leadership's goals, and e) tends to cause psychological harm to members, their families, and the community.**

C. "CAN At A Glance: What is a Destructive Cult" (1990 Brochure):

**A destructive cult is a closed system whose followers have been unethically and deceptively recruited through the use of manipulative techniques of thought reform or mind control. The system is imposed without the informed consent of the recruit and is designed to alter personality and behavior.**

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D. Pennsylvania Medical Society, used in July 1992 survey; see *Pennsylvania Medicine* (Feb. 1993), 96(2), 26.:

**A group which violates the rights of its members, harms them through abusive techniques of mind control, and distinguishes itself from a normal social or religious group by subjecting its members to physical, mental or financial deprivation or deception to keep them in the group.**

E. Landa, *Children and Cults: A Practical Guide*, 29 J. FAM. L. 591, 593 (1990-91) [footnotes omitted]:

**A cult is an organization whose stated mission is religious, political, philosophical or psychotherapeutic, with a covert mission to accumulate wealth and/or power to benefit its leadership. Although all cults may appear to be based on some variation of religion, not all cults are religious. However, "the cults which have the greatest potential for creating health problems for their members are usually religious in nature."**