

NEW RELIGIONS AND "DEPROGRAMMING":

WHO'S BRAINWASHING WHOM?

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on the "cult," which is solely responsible for any disapproved behavior. This is too tempting for some persons to resist, and it is from such persons that the anti-cult movement recruits its crusading ex-members.

It is well at this point to remember that during the Inquisition, under the pressure of interrogations, many women accused of being witches finally broke down and "admitted" that they indeed were witches. Some even admitted to having fornicated with the devil.⁵

Claims of "brainwashing" by some former members of new religions should, in other words, not be considered "neutral." Studies have shown that while many persons freely leave new religious movements because they no longer desire to continue, it is only those subjected to forced de-indoctrination who speak of "brainwashing," or "mind control."⁶ Such persons have indeed succumbed to Lifton's "mystical manipulation" at the hands of the parents and their allies.

The Demand for Purity

For those who practice ideological totalism, the world, Lifton writes, "is sharply divided into the pure and the unpure, into the absolutely good and the absolutely evil." As a result, "anything done to anyone in the name of this purity is ultimately moral." Hostile parents and their allies repeatedly have raised charges that "cults" are regularly guilty of deception, fraud and a host of other illegal activities, because, it is claimed, the "cult" feels it possesses such a higher mission. Such charges, to be taken seriously, should be directed not at