

Prepared remarks by David W. Oaks, director, MindFreedom International for the 23 September 2006 conference in New York City "Open Minds: Cultural, Critical and Activist Perspectives on Psychiatry" by New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study.

"Unite for a Nonviolent Revolution in the Mental Health System: What 30 Years in the Mad Movement Have Taught Me"

How may we may all unite for a nonviolent revolution throughout the mental health system? I draw upon lessons from my 30 years of human rights activism in the social change movement affectionately known by some as *The Mad Movement*. Whatever our social change movement calls itself, our movement has always included not only psychiatric survivors and mental health consumers, but also advocates, attorneys, researchers, family members and friends, mental health professionals and workers, experienced and inexperienced, and the general public. All are valued leaders in our mad movement. If this includes you, thank you so very much for your work for human rights and alternatives in the mental health system.

I also thank the organizers of this free event, especially Bradley Lewis and New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study, for this opportunity. I appreciate that the organizers have invited a wide diversity of backgrounds and perspectives, and that all are welcome. I'm especially gratified that this organizing work bridges the activist and academic communities. Here is my perspective as a human rights activist on the state of the mad movement today.

There is a global emergency today in the mental health system.

That emergency is spreading internationally, everywhere, including poor and developing countries. This is a global emergency of fraud, force and fear manufactured and fueled by an enormously profitable mental health industry which by some measures is one of the most profitable in our planet's history. This is a global emergency that is traumatizing, damaging and even ending the lives of millions of people who are, by some measures, among the most powerless in our society.

This global emergency is a tsunami of human rights violations, with waves of unscientific and defaming psychiatric labels... of psychiatric drugging without adequate informed consent, advocacy and alternatives... of continued use of torture inside institutions such as restraints, aversive therapy, electroshock... of ongoing isolation, segregation, impoverishment and discrimination... of a criminal lack of choice and options for good housing, decent jobs, and humane alternatives to the traditional mental health system.

What has changed in 30 years? The warnings from our social change movement have unfortunately come true. Back then the monster of psychiatric oppression was mainly torturing and terrorizing our people inside the back wards of psychiatric institutions. Now that monster of psychiatric oppression has crawled over the institutional walls. Today it is found in our communities, in our neighborhoods, in our homes, in our schools.

Our home ought to be our castle. But here in New York State

today, we find the immoral unethical atrocity of thousands of citizens court ordered under what is mis-named as *Kendra's Law* to take powerful psychiatric drugs against their will, while living in their own homes out in the community. Some 42 states in the USA officially have such profoundly intrusive and deadly outpatient forced psychiatric drugging laws. The extremist psychiatrist E. Fuller Torrey, bankrolled by the millionaire Stanley family, is aiming to finish his job in the other eight states. We will continue to resist each step.

Not far from here at Columbia University, Laurie Flynn helps lead a massive "TeenScreen" program, one of many mental health screening programs that are now in the USA school system. It may seem like a good idea to find a troubled kid. But TeenScreen and other similar screening programs march thousands upon thousands more young people to the front door of the current mental health system without adequate advocacy, information or alternatives. Behind that front door young people often end up in the embrace of the psychiatric industry, putting more young people at risk of a lifetime of psychiatric drugs and discrimination. President Bush said he wishes to make such screenings "common practice." We will resist this from school districts to the Senate, which ought to finally agree with the House and pass the Child Medication Safety Act.

Thirty years ago, based on our experience and evidence, we warned that many psychiatric drugs could cause addiction, mental and emotional problems, brain damage and death. Today, mainstream medicine has confirmed many of these warnings.

Let me be clear that I am pro-choice on personal health care decisions including taking prescribed psychiatric drugs. I direct MindFreedom International, a nonprofit human rights organization. Many of our members make difficult choices every day to take psychiatric drugs despite fully knowing the hazards and alternatives. One lesson I've learned in 30 years is that our social change movement must avoid the blind alley of fighting over an individual's personal and private choices. I myself have made these agonizing choices and it was no one else's business. But let us also be clear that we must address the systematic, inherent and widespread human rights violations related to psychiatric drugging. When one approach so dominates, so controls and so bullies our society, government, health care system, and people with psychiatric labels, then this domination itself becomes a crisis, and must be addressed.

Some of you have heard my personal story, so I will just sum it up. My recruiting room to this work was a solitary confinement cell in what is often voted one of the top psychiatric institutions in the world, McLean Hospital in Massachusetts. I was a working class kid from Chicago attending Harvard University on a Teamsters scholarship. I experienced severe and overwhelming mental and emotional challenges. At times I thought the CIA was making my teeth grow, that the TV and radio were personally talking to me, that others could read my thoughts, and much more. Five times in my sophomore, junior and senior years I ended up in a psychiatric institution. The first time they drove me to McLean through its beautiful forested grounds

I remember looking out, thinking, "I do need a break. I could rest here."

I did not find rest. I found trauma. I found coercion to take psychiatric drugs. I found that my human rights were gone. I was diagnosed as both schizophrenic and bipolar. More than once I was dragged into solitary confinement, held on a bare mattress by about a half dozen mental health workers and forcibly injected in my ass. As I spent the next few days in solitary confinement, one time I pounded my fist into the steel mesh screen on the window saying, "I want to change this." That was my recruitment. I later remember a psychiatrist sitting down with me and explaining that because of my genetic chemical imbalance my only choice was to take powerful neuroleptic psychiatric drugs the rest of my life. He was wrong.

In my senior year, 30 years ago this Fall, a Harvard social service agency called Phillips Brooks House, that places volunteers into the community, referred me to our movement, and I joined Mental Patients Liberation Front. With the peer support from this small group, with my new-found activism, and especially with the support of my family, I broke free of psychiatry. In my final lock-up, MPLF activists lobbied McLean and fed me legal information to get me out. The mental health system asked my family to get a court order to hold me. My family through my mother replied, "If our David wants to try freedom, we'll support him." In a few months I took my last psychiatric drugs, forever.

So let us try freedom today. What has changed in 30 years? There is some change for the better. Whether I am meeting with mental health officials in Eugene, Oregon, or Lane County, or Oregon, or with World Health Organization officials in Switzerland and Italy... I witness some positive effects of our movement.

I am at least hearing new words from the mental health system. I am sincerely glad. Today, I at least hear mental health system officials talk about the importance of empowerment, peer support, advocacy, trauma, alternatives, self-determination and recovery. I at least see some new faces at the table. Today, in city, county, national or international meetings about us, it is not unusual to see an individual with a psychiatric diagnosis at the table. Today, in many countries, it is possible to find community centers, advocacy programs, conferences, support groups that are run by psychiatric survivors, mental health consumers, dissident mental health professionals, advocates and other allies.

I am glad to witness these new words, faces and programs. But I also remember when I entered McLean's admitting room I was handed a nice brochure with nice words about advocacy, respect and human rights. A few minutes later I was on a ward, held down and forcibly drugged. I remember McLean had a clients council where we could speak out. But when I suggested that client council challenge the staff a few minutes later I was again forcibly drugged.

We want more than buzz words, tokenism and a few model

programs. We want a nonviolent revolution.

We know that for hundreds of years our society has had a war against people considered mentally and emotionally very different. We are discovering we have a mad history, the history of psychiatric survivors and allies speaking out individually and in groups over the centuries. Whenever we have had a chance, we spoke out about the need for liberty, empowerment, peer support, humane care.

Never forget. Last year, MindFreedom held a wonderful protest directly in front of the Washington, D.C. headquarters of PhARMA, the pharmaceutical industry's central organization. At the end a psychologist ally held up a huge 12 foot hypodermic needle, as many participants used ribbons to pull it down, showing the toppling of psychiatric domination. A number of us then went to the Holocaust Museum which then had a special exhibit called *Deadly Medicine*. And there we saw how people labeled with mental disabilities, especially young people, were the first group targeted for mass killing in Nazi Germany. Psychiatry developed the theory, practice and even the paperwork used in mass killing on us.

We remember. Never again. Deaths continue in the mental health system. I particularly remember the autopsy report of Bobby Jackson, a child in foster care so heavily drugged he died. Studies show our life spans are on the average 15 years shorter. Some mental health researchers suspect that the hazards of the psychiatric drugs play a role.

Yet, how is it I can go to a government-funded mental health conference on self-determination or empowerment or advocacy or recovery... And this conference may be three days long in a luxurious hotel with participants and speakers flown in at great expense.... How is it that I seldom hear anything about the central role of the psychiatric drug industry today in severe and overwhelming human rights violations?

At today's event we welcome and unite activists and academics, advocates and mental health professionals, family members and the public. Today we are speaking out about the domination of the psychiatric drug industry. No one can stop us.

Let me use neuroleptic drugs as an example, the drugs typically given in forced psychiatry. Thirty years ago psychiatric survivors and our allies warned about the dangers of the neuroleptic psychiatric drugs. Our movement even testified in congress about this.

Neuroleptics are also known as *antipsychotics*. They include dozens of drugs from Thorazine, Haldol, Mellaril and Navane -- all of which I was given -- to newer atypical drugs such as Clozapine, Risperdal, Zyprexa, Seroquel and Abilify. We warned that all these drugs may cause brain damage. In the last few years, mainstream science has used modern research methods, MRI scans, CT scans, animal studies and autopsies to link high-dose long-term neuroleptics

to structural brain change. Even the hateful web site of E. Fuller Torrey's Treatment Advocacy Center that viciously calls for even more forced psychiatric drugging has a page admitting that these drugs are linked to structural brain change. The debate is over.

Let me emphasize the kind of brain damage we are talking about. We are talking about the fact that after taking long-term high-dosage neuroleptics the front of the brain -- our frontal lobes, the higher part of our brain -- can actually shrink so much this is visible in brain scans. We are talking about actual less gray matter. We are talking about swelling in other parts of the brain. And these change are of course often linked to even worse mental and emotional problems, and can make it even more difficult to quit the neuroleptics.

I know that a few sow doubt and spew smokescreens about neuroleptic-induced structural brain change. Some argue that other studies show that the brains of young people who never had neuroleptics are sometimes different, too. Let me emphatically say that the studies I am referring to cut through those smokescreens. For instance, there are long-term studies of structural brain change showing the changes are dose related, that the more neuroleptics, the bigger the structural brain change. Some of these brain changes can be replicated in animal studies. The medical profession at the very least acknowledges that this issue is a serious concern that is worth researching and discussing.

But while I can read about these concerns about neuroleptic brain changes in the medical literature, I do not hear about neuroleptic brain damage in other places. I do not hear about neuroleptic brain damage at mental health system conferences. I almost never read about it in informed consent materials for neuroleptics, when such material even exists. I almost never read about neuroleptic brain damage in mainstream media as they debate whether or not we ought to be forcibly drugged against our will. I almost never hear legislators or judges address neuroleptic brain damage before they create and enforce the laws that allow us to be forcibly drugged in our own homes.

Yes, I know neuroleptics are also associated with many other problems, such as diabetes and weight gain and so much more. Yes I know there are studies questioning neuroleptic effectiveness. But structural higher level brain damage is what places neuroleptics in the same ball park as psychosurgery, as lobotomy. There is a reason almost everyone is against forced psychosurgery -- because nearly everyone knows forced lobotomy is so intrusive and irreversible that it steps over the line of our core values. Long-term high-dosage forced neuroleptics step over that same line.

Why is there such silence in our own movement events? I believe one reason is that we have learned from decades of political infighting and division in our movement that we need to unify. Activists wonder, "Wow can we unify to break the silence about the power psychiatric drug industry, when some of us choose to take

prescribed psychiatric drugs, and others do not?" And unfortunately, too many activists also wonder, "How we will get our next government grant if we challenge the psychiatric drug industry?"

Let me give one example about how we can talk about the psychiatric drug industry domination in a unifying way. In MindFreedom International, some wonderful leaders thought about this, and came up with a hunger strike which we held three years ago. Several dozen people, including a core group of six in California that I joined, fasted with this demand, among others: We asked the psychiatric industry to prove its claims of a *chemical imbalance*. Where is the evidence of this medical model? Here in New York City we have the headquarters of Pfizer, Inc. Every day Pfizer tells the public that their product Zoloft "fixes" a chemical imbalance. We asked, where is it? Show us the chemical imbalance. Prove it!

This hunger strike led to international media attention. It also led to a debate between our scientific panel, which was composed of mental health professionals and researchers, versus the American Psychiatric Association. We had a back and forth you may view at our web site www.MindFreedom.org. The APA had no proof. No studies. No citations. We charge the mental health industry with fraud.

If your personal belief system is that spirituality or counseling or nutrition helps your well being, you are welcome to that belief. If the

mental health system pushes just one type of prayer or one type of counseling or one type of food, if it mainly suppresses all other options, we would ask, "By what right? By what special evidence do you justify the domination by this one model?" Asking does not make us anti-spirituality, anti-counseling, anti-nutrition, or anti-psychiatry. Asking makes us pro-freedom.

This debate may seem theoretical. It is real. This Spring I had the opportunity to give a workshop in Istanbul, Turkey to a room full of the most oppressed psychiatric survivors I have met. Individual after individual had reported to Mental Disability Rights International, which conducted an investigation, that they had experienced forced electroshock against their will.

The world has been told they must be like the West, they must be modern and scientific. In the mental health field that means the medical model. Drugs are expensive. Electricity is everywhere. So if a poor developing country wants a western mental health system, that can mean more electroshock, often without anesthesia. That is electricity through the brain with eyes wide open, fully aware.

This is not as much a medical model as it is a *domination model* with a mantra of *label, label, label, drug, drug, drug, shock, shock, shock*. The domination model is globalizing as never before. The World Bank and World Health Organization and other large organizations are promoting multi-billion dollar campaigns to bring western style mental health to hundreds of millions of people in poor

developing countries. This Western export is missing something. The export has labels, drugs and shock. But this export hardly includes any of the advocates, alternatives, troublemakers, and activists that also exist in the West.

The globalization of psychiatry is a chemical crusade by faith-based pharmaceutical fundamentalists. This crusade is everywhere. Here in the USA, more and more prisoners are given psychiatric labels, and go to mental health courts. We witness the merger of the mental health industry and the prison industry. We witness the emergence of a huge chemical prison industry. We say that one hundred percent of prisoners deserve safe, humane, voluntary services. Zero deserve to be pushed onto psychiatric drugs.

Science has not discovered a chemical balance in the brain. But our movement discovered a power imbalance between one of the richest and most influential industries, and some of the poorest and most marginalized people. Those of us who have been on the receiving end of a power imbalance, like any oppressed people, know what that can do. Psychiatrists like Sally Satel at the American Enterprise Institute, a voice for organized wealth, have apparently not experienced our end of the power imbalance -- the sharp end of the needle. We know power imbalance acts like the mute button on your tv's remote... muting out the sound of feelings, thoughts, and dreams.

In my thirty years I've seen what can unmute the mute button:

the power of peer mutual support. I do not just mean peer support between psychiatric survivors, but peer support between everyone -- between advocates and mental health workers and family members. My friend the late Loren Mosher and his Soteria House showed that effective peer support is not just between those with labels. Peer support is between human beings, labeled or not. We must unite this engine of peer support with the engine of activism. It is peer support that has sustained me. It sustains our movement. It can sustain you.

Thirty years ago our movement was small and almost entirely self-funded with no money from the government. Today, the vast majority of activity in our field is in some way funded by the government and mental health industry. We at MindFreedom are independently funded. But we do not denounce our friends who are system funded. What I've learned is that war between the independent movement and the system-funded movement is self-destructive. But I've also learned we need both approaches. Ask yourself, "What would the environmental movement be like if it were almost entirely funded by the oil industry and the government?" System funded groups need to respect the independent movement, and that respect would start by acknowledging its existence.

Heroes in the psychiatric survivor movement have shown us that peer support, also known as community organizing, right here in New York, such as Ted Chabasinski, Howie the Harp, Judi Chamberlin, Celia Brown and so many more. New York has been home to heroic groups like Project Release and Mental Patients

Liberation Alliance and International Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology and National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy and so many more. You can't all be listed. You heroes prove mutual support is unstoppable and inexhaustible.

We call for mutual support to resist court-ordered forced drugging of people in their homes out in the community. MindFreedom itself does not own an underground railroad. But we have proudly helped a number of individuals create underground railroads for themselves to evade and escape their involuntary outpatient psychiatric drugging. MindFreedom has a campaign to ask a few communities to create *landing zones*, that is, a town with enough support, housing and advocacy to assist those escaping outpatient forced drugging by leaving their county or state. They need a safe place to land, a new psychiatric sanctuary movement.

Thirty years ago our movement mainly focused on force and fraud in the mental health system. What has changed is that today the mental health system harms the human rights of most people through fear, fear that there is no alternative to the traditional mental health system. Psychiatry and the drug industry have, over the decades, choked out choice and other options in the mental health system. This is the richest nation in the history of the planet. Families in crisis deserve more than just a bag of pill bottles and a court order.

Choice in mental health care is not just a good idea. It is a human right. Why does a young person who shows signs of what is

called schizophrenia have to live in Finland to find government-supported non-drug alternatives? This is not just about money. World Health Organization studies show that the best recovery rates are in the poorest countries with the least psychiatrists. MindFreedom will hold a conference near New York City in July 2007 on a campaign to increase choice in mental health care.

One of the main changes in 30 years, is that this crisis is no longer about a distant minority. This crisis is about your family, your neighbor, your co-worker. It is a majoritarian crisis. Over the decades, the general public slowly became more comfortable addressing challenging issues like land use planning, energy policy, public transportation, and more. When it comes to mental health, well-meaning citizens tend to have a one-word position: "more," more funding, more resources, more tough laws. Democracy must learn to get hands on with the issue of mental and emotional well being.

One way to choice is voice. The public and decision-makers must hear our voices loud and clear. There are so many examples of how to do this it would be hard to list. It seems there are more authors and speakers and artists who are questioning the mental health system than ever. There are newsletters, conferences, web sites, e-mail lists and more. There are universities and academic researchers, including participatory research influenced by psychiatric survivors. (Though no university I know of has a movement archive.)

For several years, MindFreedom and World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry have had teams of psychiatric survivors in meetings inside the United Nations headquarters here in New York City, resulting in a proposed international treaty on disability rights.

I especially enjoy hearing about some of the creative protests and cultural events that educate the public. For example, there is a Mad Pride movement to celebrate all of humanity's uniqueness and freedom with cultural and protest events. Mad Pride!

This year there were lots of Mad Pride events in about seven countries. I loved hearing about the Bed Push that has been held for two years in England. In a Bed Push, activists take a hospital bed on wheels and strap in a mannequin in four point restraints. The activists wear costumes, including patient pajamas, and hold props like huge hypodermic needles. And they literally push this bed from city to city, for 50 miles. This small group of activists looks like they had a blast and has educated the local people they meet.

The largest reported Mad Pride event was when MindFreedom Ghana in Accra held a 200 person street march, along with a symposium, tv and radio events. There ought to be concerted international effort to supply the support and technical assistance needed to empower emerging voices in developing nations.

Getting our voices out to the public is an antidote to discrimination. The psychopharmaceutical complex and the military

industrial complex share the same trick: frightening the public about our safety and security, and claiming only they have the only fix. We have been falsely portrayed as having an inherent tendency toward violence. This stereotype has been fed by incidents of violence by people labeled with psychiatric disabilities. Getting our voices and faces out to the public is one step toward our rehumanization.

We can learn from our roots. Back in about 1970 our mad movement did not just spring out of thin air, or from a government grant. People with psychiatric labels have rebelled for centuries. That's why there were locks on the doors. But there was something about the sunlight, soil, air and water of the culture in about 1970 that made it seem obvious and natural for psychiatric survivors and dissident mental health professionals to unite internationally, yes, even before the Internet.

Our movement was inspired and nurtured by other social change movements, especially the civil rights movement. As the great psychiatric survivor hero Leonard Roy Frank has told our movement many times, we must revisit the lessons from Martin Luther King, Jr. and one of the sources of MLK's inspiration, Gandhi, about the power of nonviolent action. I am not a pacifist, but I feel we must learn from other social change movements, including the civil rights movement, about the proper of nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience in our movement.

One simple step MindFreedom has taken is to publicly reaffirm

our dedication to nonviolence in our activism, with each other and with our opponents, especially with our opponents.

When I speak about a movement for nonviolent revolution, I am not only speaking about a nonviolent revolution in mental health, I am speaking about a global nonviolent revolution for social and ecological justice for all. Thirty years ago, that's what we meant when we talked about "The Movement." Call me crazy, but I believe that the Mad Movement plays a role in helping this great global nonviolent revolution emerge, as it must emerge.

Remember, MLK said the movement was more than black and white, it was about justice for all, and reconciliation for all in a beloved community. Are we ready for his beloved community?

Many times in his speeches, in a variety of ways, MLK referred to psychology and said, "Human salvation lies in the hands of the creatively maladjusted." In a speech on September 1, 1967 in front of the American Psychological Association, MLK said, "Thus, it may well be that our world is in dire need of a new organization, The International Association for the Advancement of Creative Maladjustment." That would be IAACM. According to my google research, no one has actually formed his group. IAACM today only means International Association of Air Cleaner Manufacturers.

I agree with MLK. And it makes sense that the mad pride movement ought to finally help make his dream a reality. Shall we

form IAACM here by acclamation? I look forward to actions building to the 40th anniversary of his remarks on September 1, 2007.

Another reason the public has such trouble with our issue, is that our issue really is about everyone. Among people with different colors, racism caused problems. Among different genders, sexism caused problems. But consider how humans often define ourselves. Humans tend to call ourselves *the thinking animal*, supposedly the only animal with a conscious mind. Imagine, then, what a chasm of segregation there is between those considered rational thinkers and those considered without rational thought.

This is an immense chasm. Our movement began by connecting to other movements, and so we must do so again. For me personally, one of the most rewarding connections is the environmental movement. If you have not seen the film *Inconvenient Truth* by Al Gore, about the greenhouse effect, I encourage you to see it. If the survival of humanity were based on continuing the practice of psychiatry dictating to us what is normal or not, there may possibly be an argument for psychiatric oppression. But the jury is back. It turns out that AI has very strong evidence that what is called 'normality' is ruining the very fabric of the whole planet's ecology.

The psychiatric experts have an intimidating weapon. They argue that because the mind is so complex, only experts have any insight into its workings. Let us challenge this. The cutting edge of science, such as in the intersection of neuroscience and complexity

theory, admits it knows very little about the mind. Based on the little they know, they hypothesize that the mind cannot be reduced to a machine. The mind apparently emerges from dynamic feedback on the edge between chaos and order.

In other words, we are more complex than a chemical balance. In fact, the only absolutely chemical balance may be death.

From quantum theory to string theory, scientists are discovering that reality may be far, far weirder than generally thought... that none of us has an absolute grip on reality... in fact that it may be impossible to absolutely grip reality. We are all in the same mad boat.

One cannot dominate and control complex systems like the mind. But one can have amazing influence on a complex system, in what is known as the butterfly effect. As scientist Edward Lorenz, after modeling climate changes on his computer, asked, "Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wings in Brazil set off a Tornado in Texas?"

In other words, very simple and seemingly small actions may have long term unpredictable and immense effects.

Today, we have a society at war with its environment, with its poor, with each other. We have a globe in overwhelmingly extreme distress, but locked into passivity, as in a trance state. We, the movement for a nonviolent revolution in the field of mental and emotional well being, have a role to play here. We can educate

citizens about the crucial power mutual support plays in unmuting the mute button, breaking the trance state, and reviving despairing human spirits. We can explain that unique and unusual thoughts, feelings, behavior, passions, beliefs, are not all necessarily inherently bad. In fact, for society to change, a first person must have a different vision, a creative maladjustment, an unshared belief... And an 'unshared belief' is in the official definition of *psychiatric delusion*.

In the brilliant best seller *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, physician Jared Diamond finds that some cultures self-destruct, while others seem to learn to think as a group in a variety of ways and make the changes required to survive. "Creative maladjustment" is one of the sources of that change. All creative maladjustment is not good. However, perhaps all changes for good involve creative maladjustment.

What is your creative maladjustment? How can your creative maladjustment work in a spirit of mutual cooperation with others? In other words, what is your role in the nonviolent global revolution?

Let us begin again with basic core principles about mutual support, free minds, empowerment, self-determination, human rights... and recognize that as we have always said we can have an enormous butterfly effect. How can a movement choose to succeed? We can choose to unite despite all obstacles and chasms, despite all arguments and grudges, despite all anger and divisions.

For hundreds of years the mental health system has dominated, controlled and even killed. What is different now in the mental health field is that there are thousands of individuals and groups, who are active, mobilizing, informed and potentially open to a nonviolent revolution.

One thing that has changed in 30 years is that now as never before we have a movement that is creating its own media through print, radio, Internet, photography, web sites. We have people exploring and promoting all kinds of humane and effective alternatives to the mental health system. There are advocacy and activist groups in so many areas of the world. As never before, we have access to and friends in important international social change movements, especially on disability and human rights.

So yes, there is a global emergency of human rights violations in the mental health system. Yes, there is an overwhelming power imbalance. But there is also still an international movement with experienced leaders and groups and allies. And remember, we include psychiatric survivors. Our people have experienced labels and drugs and solitary and shock, and have still kept organizing and speaking out. Our people have experienced discrimination and homelessness and poverty, and have still kept the spirit of resistance alive. The mad movement has taken on the most powerful mind control apparatus of the richest empire in history, and by using the powerful engine of mutual support and the human spirit we have not given up. We will never, ever, ever give up. Who is the mad

movement? The mad movement is composed of human beings for social and ecological justice who cannot be stopped, who will not be stopped.

One of our nonviolent weapons is the mysterious mind itself. Five hundred years ago, peasant rebels sang an anthem of the free mind, a song that the Nazis would one day ban.

The title is Die Gedanken sind frei, which in German means "Thoughts are free." I will end with a few lines for a global nonviolent revolution for freedom.

Die Gedanken sind frei
My thoughts freely flower,
Die Gedanken sind frei
My thoughts give me power.
No scholar can map them,
No hunter can trap them,
No one can deny:
Die Gedanken sind frei!

I think as I please
And this gives me pleasure,
My conscience decrees,
This right I must treasure;
My thoughts will not cater
To duke or dictator,
No one can deny--
Die Gedanken sind frei!

And if tyrants take me
And throw me in prison
My thoughts will burst free,
Like blossoms in season.
Foundations will crumble,
The structure will tumble,
Free people will cry:
Die Gedanken sind frei!

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