

The Strange Sources of Violence for Children

by Don Phau

Parents and early-childhood teachers will be interested to learn that Israeli military intelligence figures created and marketed the number-one violent game among very young children, “Mighty Morphin Power Rangers.” That this same grouping owns “Christian” fundamentalist televangelist Pat Robertson’s TV show, and that Robertson in return praises their violent entertainment products, is not at all as strange as it may seem. And the fact that the creator of “Power Rangers,” etc. was inspired by the cultural legacy of Japanese fascist militarists of the 1930s and 1940s, completes the snapshot of child-targeted violence.

Over the past decade, Israeli military intelligence, aided by the Christian Right, has succeeded in the widespread marketing of ultra-violent “children’s entertainment” in the United States. The result was the creation of a multibillion-dollar media company, called Saban Entertainment. Their “market” now dominates children’s movies, video games, toys, comics, and books. The model used was that of cartoons first developed for World War II propaganda by the Japanese Imperial Army; under the general designation of “Anime,” this fascist-originated form of animation is now a dominant cultural product in the United States.

In 1993, a former Israeli citizen and military officer, Haim Saban, inspired after touring Japan, returned to the United States to spearhead an expansion of violence for children. In 1998, Saban bought out TV evangelist Pat Robertson’s “International Family Entertainment” cable-TV station for \$1.9 billion. The sole proviso was that amidst his violent children’s cartoons and programs, Saban would continue to run Robertson’s “700 Club.” Saban is now one of the richest men in the United States, and was the second largest Hollywood contributor to the Gore-Lieberman 2000 Presidential campaign. Hollywood is using the mass propaganda of Japanese animation, Anime, to turn the pre-teen generation into mindless and docile slaves.

Robertson’s and Saban’s TV networks were prizes, that Hollywood fought over. Before Saban purchased Robertson’s cable network, the Fox network of Rupert Murdoch merged with Saban’s company in 1997, making Saban the chairman of the Fox Family Channel. In July 2001, an even bigger fish, the newly merged Disney-ABC conglomerate, swallowed up the whole Fox-Saban-Robertson operation for over \$5 billion. Disney-ABC has now positioned itself to

increase the violent and pornographic Anime cartoons in the mass-media market.

The Role of Saban Entertainment

Cartoons based on Anime, such as “Pokémon,” have already captured the pre-teen audience. Parents are now spending millions of dollars for action figures based on Anime characters. There are also “Yogioh,” or “Yugioh,” cards, which millions of pre-teen boys trade, as their grandfathers once did with baseball cards; but Yogioh cards feature drawings of pistol- and machinegun-toting robots, monsters, and half-naked women. The national convenience store chain, 7-Eleven, sells Yogioh cards, from a small pack of five cards costing \$4, to a box for \$25.

Anime toys now lead the market. They range from the little Pokémon creatures to realistic-looking, large-breasted, scantily clad females, equipped with an array of guns, knives, swords, and battle axes. Nearly every video store now has entire sections devoted to Anime, containing films and video games of extreme violence and gore. Many contain explicit pornography. These games and videos are rated “M” for mature audiences, 17 or older, by the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB), which was set up on the initiative of Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.). But, the ESRB was really intended to provide Hollywood a cover for its violent “entertainment,” since any 12-year-old boy can rent an M-rated film or video game. Now, with Disney-ABC’s media buy-out, the plan is to increase the Anime audience, with the introduction of full-length feature movies.

Anime promoter Haim Saban emigrated to the United States from Israel at the age of 22. It was first through the creation of the violent TV children’s show “Mighty Morphin Power Rangers,” that Saban become rich. A website which tracked contributors to Al Gore’s 2000 Presidential campaign, describes him: “Haim Saban is the world’s leading supplier of television programming, feature films, home video music and consumer products for youth. However, he does not see his mission as one of educating children, or of improving them: [According to] Saban: ‘Children don’t watch television to be educated, and they never will. After several hours of school children are looking for a means of entertainment, and who better to fill that want but the media.’

“One of Haim Saban’s creations, the television series ‘Mighty Morphin Power Rangers,’ elicited worldwide protest from parents and teachers following an unprecedented outbreak of violence. One instance of this worldwide reaction was initiated in Ontario, [leading] to a review by the Canadian Broadcasting System Council (CBSC) which released its decision in October 1994: ‘When one removes the opening and closing credits and the commercials from the calculation of programming length, the dramatic action covers approximately 17 or 18 minutes of each program. Of the time, there are quite uniformly, three or four fighting sequences, which consume at least 4.5 to 6.5 minutes, which is to say between

25% to 35% of the running dramatic time. . . . Far from containing very little violence, the series appeared to convey considerable violent activity. . . . Not once in any episodes was there depicted any attempt to resolve conflict other than fighting.’

“The result was that two major Canadian stations pulled the show from their program schedules.”

“Mighty Morphin Power Rangers” has been rated for the past decade the number-one show among children ages 2-11 in the United States. A study by California State University in 1993 concluded, “that children who watch the Show were prone to more violent acts than children who did not. In fact, those who did watch the Show were observed in seven times as many acts of aggression, most of which mimicked the Show’s karate kicks.”

Despite the evidence that Haim Saban’s creation was affecting millions of children this way, when Pat Robertson and Saban merged their networks, “Diamond Pat” said: “We are very enthusiastic about the merger of International Family Network with Fox Kids Worldwide. This transaction soundly demonstrates the stockholder value created by our efforts to provide exciting meaningful entertainment that can be enjoyed by the whole family.”

Saban remarked, “The Robertsons have built a tremendous business. . . . We look forward to working with them to strengthen and expand.”

Saban’s success was aided by his many connections to his homeland. In 1997, he produced “Turbo: A Power Rangers Movie,” whose production staff credits read like an Israeli Defense Forces roster. They include: the producer, a pilot in the Israeli Air Force for seven years; the senior vice president of production, a long-time member of the Israeli Army; the screenwriter, director of photography, and production designer are all former Israeli citizens.

Anime and Saban

The Power Rangers have been used to condition the U.S. audience to the violence of Japanese Anime cartoons. The original model for the “Power Rangers” came from a trip Saban took to Japan in 1992, when he was introduced to a “Sentai” series called the Zyurangers. Sentai, according to a Power Rangers website, are “a team of super-heroes who use their various martial arts skills, along with machines and weapons, to battle the forces of evil.” Saban simply repackaged the Japanese show, and released it as the Power Rangers on American TV in August 1993. Nielsen, the TV rating agency, has called the Power Rangers the most popular children’s show of the 1990s. According to the NYP Group, which tracks toy sales, Power Rangers action figures were the number-one selling toy in the last two years, well ahead of others, such as Pokémon and Star Wars toys.

On Sept. 3, 2002 the first Anime convention, called “Anime Expo New York,” was attended by thousands of youth in that city. The *New York Times* reported on the convention



"Anime" animation characters, selected as caricatures of sex and violence; and junior high school girls imitating the characters at an "Anime convention." From pre-school "Power Rangers" up, these are the dominant animation video, cartoon, and toy figures in the U.S. market; they all stem from a cartoon technique begun by the fascist Japanese military command in World War II.



attendees: " 'We're rabid and hyper-obsessed,' said Hannah Fine, 16, of Jackson Heights, Queens, who went to the convention dressed as her favorite Anime character, Nicholas D. Wolfwood, a crime fighter who carries a giant weapon-filled cross. . . . She, too, was not alone. Role playing was a common sight at the convention, which also included a four-hour costume competition on Sunday night. Among the characters roaming the hotel were people dressed as bikini-clad girls, slick-haired samurais and numerous women wearing kitten and bunny ears. . . . Jamel Collins, 19, from Staten Island, said the animated shows had a simpler appeal. 'I'm just in it for the blood and gore,' he said with a laugh, 'Anything with a robot shooting other robots, I'm there.' "

A review of ten half-hour Sunday morning ABC-TV cartoon programs reveals that all but one have Japanese Anime origins. But it is not only Disney-ABC channel; Anime ap-

pears on many other stations as well. Saturday morning is a time that millions of children look forward to watching their favorite cartoon shows. The children who watched Pokémon two years ago when they were six, have graduated to "Dragonball Z." Below is a typical *TV Guide* description of one of the "Dragonball Z" cartoon shows. The description doesn't tell of the animated violence, but it does give the reader an insight into the utopian, racist beliefs of the show's creators:

"Frieza is the most powerful and evil being in the Universe with no rival even close to his strength. Upon learning about the legendary Namekian Dragon Balls, Frieza is consumed with a desire to summon the eternal Dragon and wish for immortality. Then he could rule the universe, unrivaled forever. Understanding the capacity of the Saiyans as fighters and their uncanny ability to gain strength after recovery from injuries, Frieza knew this one race might one day challenge his pre-eminence. Thus he eliminated their planet and all but a handful of Saiyans who happened to be away at the time."

Then there's Master Roshi. "An ancient and wise master of martial arts," he inhabits a "deserted island with only a turtle for a companion." And soldiers: "Goku is the hero of "Dragonball Z." He is a peaceful, good natured, trusting, and protective soul. He is also the most powerful warrior on Earth."

Origins of Anime

Anime was created as a propaganda weapon by the censors of the Japanese Imperial military in 1943. Japan had savagely invaded China, with the mass killing and torture of the Chinese people. The "Rape of Nanking" is one well-known example. In 1943, the Japanese government assembled a team of animators and produced a 74-minute cartoon entitled "Momotanos Gods Blessed Sea Warriors." The cartoon was, according to historian Fred Patten, "a juvenile adventure showing the Imperial Navy as brave, cute anthropomorphic animal sailors resolutely liberating Indonesia and Malaysia from the buffoonish foreign devil (with horns), from allied occupiers."

The promotion of Anime has enabled a Tokyo-based toy



A previous version of the "Anime" method, the ubiquitous Pokémon game for hooking very young children into violent play.

company, Bandai, to become the third-largest toy maker in the world. Bandai, founded in 1950, first produced small toy cars and planes and, in 1951, the first Bandai metal toy, the American B-26 bomber. Bandai was on the ground floor in creating violent video games. In 1970 it entered the U.S. market as the licensee of Nintendo, now one of the three major producers of video games. By 1999 Bandai America built an "action figure empire," joining with Fox TV in spreading Anime violence through the "Fox Kids and the Cartoon Network." Bandai now has an agreement with U.S. toy giant Mattel as well as Steven Spielberg's movie and entertainment company Dreamworks.

Bandai's corporate web page states: "Bandai Co. Ltd. of Tokyo is comprised of 53 subsidiaries in 18 countries. In addition to toys and children's entertainment, Bandai's global interests include video game software, multi-media, music and full-length feature films, vending machines, trading cards, candies and licensed apparel. Bandai Co. Ltd is traded on the Nikkei Exchange in Japan with a #1 ranking."

The U.S. company that gave us Mickey Mouse and his friends, Walt Disney, which every baby boomer grew up with, has this Fall launched a campaign to promote Anime. Disney released in September 2002 a film called "Spirited Away," by the leading Japanese Anime cartoonist, Hayao Miyazaki. Miyazaki, whose father owned a company which manufactured wings for the Japanese fighter plane the "Zero," was

born in 1941, four years before the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The bombing and Japan's defeat in World War II had a lasting effect on the young boy. Miyazaki's works show a deep hatred of science, technology, and mankind in general.

A book on the history of Anime by Susan J. Napier describes the plot of "Nausicaa of the Wind Valley," Miyazaki's first full-length Anime film: "In 'Nausicaa of the Wind Valley,' technology was the symbol of destruction. The story takes place in a world that is devastated by a catastrophic event called the 'Seven Days of Fire.' All civilization has been destroyed by the Giant God, Fire, in the Seven Days of Fire. Nausicaa, princess of a small nation called Wind Valley, tries to stop the nations fighting and destroying each other with war and weapons. As well, to save the only means that the world could be saved from the spread of the Fukai, a thick and growing jungle of plants and spores that are poisonous to humans. . . . The Fukai become a metaphor for the downfall of mankind due its creations. In the animated movie, Miyazaki showed the stupidity of human nature."

Zepp-LaRouche warned in a February 2001 address that the violence portrayed in the Anime cartoon, Pokémon, would destroy the new generation if not stopped. She said: "Now as everybody knows, the minds of children are completely impressionable, because children learn primarily through imitation and through play. But what is there to imitate? Aggression. And what is completely lacking? Love, compassion, joy, beauty. The play is completely mechanistic. It is exactly what Norbert Wiener poses as a task in his book *Cybernetics*: that one has to find a neurological mechanism, matching the theory of John Locke about the association of thought [with] sensuous experience. Now in Pokémon, there is no discovery, there is no hypothesis, no creativity, no soul, no cognition. Pokémon is the dream-eater which sucks the soul out of the child and turns it into a potential killing machine."

In a 1999 policy statement on the "Definition of the New Violence," Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche pointed out, though not by name, the role of Anime. LaRouche wrote: "The standpoint of comparison used to aid in conceptualizing the common characteristics of the 'New Violence,' is the Utopian programs, such as H.G. Wells' *The Open Conspiracy*; Wells-Russell protégé Aldous Huxley's utopian 'New Age' models; the 1931 and 1951 models set forth by Bertrand Russell; and *Clockwork Orange*, as points of intellectual reference. What is specifically new, is the adaptation of the mythos of the Samurai warrior, and related 'martial arts' mythology, combined with lunatic legacies such as *Dungeons and Dragons* and Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, to the childish mad-killer pornography of cinematic cartoons and Nintendo-style games."

Helga Zepp-LaRouche has called for a UN protocol banning violent video games. It is such a resolution, not one condoning the war in Iraq, that should be passed by the UN.