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# WHAT KIND OF REVOLUTION?

THE ease with which "revolution" is invoked today, as though there could be no doubt of its meaning, is doubtless evidence of a general rejection of the past, but used in this way the word speaks only to a similar feeling in others, not to any common comprehension. It is therefore a kind of "code" word, an identification rather than a communication. It suggests hardly more than the widely felt impression that great changes ought to and must take place, and one's willingness to be a part of them.

What is a revolution supposed to accomplish? An answer drawn from this ground of meaning would probably come down to saying that we expect it to make us *feel differently* about our lives. A revolution would replace moral disgust with enthusiasm, provide conditions of life that would make what we do, as we say, "meaningful." In the practical area, it would no doubt put an end to war, to exploitation, and establish justice and freedom.

These are very large orders. An unsanguine observer might say that such expectations imply a revolution is capable of putting wise therapists and practical magicians in charge of human affairs. More fundamentally, they imply the importance of thinking about the meaning of revolution, first in historical terms, and then in terms of some possible future. For this purpose, Hannah Arendt's book, *On Revolution* (Viking, 1963), would be a particularly useful text. Miss Arendt covers a great deal of ground, but basically her volume is a comparison between the French and American Revolutions. Why was one so bitter a failure, the other a comparative success? Both set out to establish conditions of freedom and justice. The United States came into being with a great Constitution, but France ended in the arms of Napoleon Bonaparte. Why? The heroes of the American Revolution were several—men like Washington, Jefferson, John Adams, Paine, and some others. The hero—or anti-hero—of the French Revolution was Robespierre, a brilliant theoretician. The American Revolution established law in terms of the compacts and agreements of men—the founders held to this principle from beginning to end. Robespierre resolved to go further. He became responsive, in the days of his supreme power, to the will of the downtrodden masses, represented by *sans-culottes* who now ruled the streets of Paris. He held this to be politics directly in the service of the people, yet it became an expression of the frenzy of the people.

What was the assumption involved? Simplifying, one could say that it amounted to policy based on the idea that politics could do the practical work of abolishing poverty and suffering. This meant that political acts could take the place of profound characterological reform and regeneration. It didn't work. Yet, oddly enough, the Revolution that did work, the American Revolution, did not address itself directly to social problems. It referred to the conditions of freedom and justice, spoke of principles such as life, liberty, and the *pursuit* of happiness, but did not promise the production of happiness itself. The Preamble to the Constitution declared concern for the General Welfare, but no guarantees were offered. So, as Miss Arendt says:

> It was the French and not the American Revolution that set the world on fire, and it was consequently from the course of the French Revolution, and not from the course of events in America or from the acts of the Founding Fathers, that our present use of the word "revolution" received its connotations and overtones everywhere, this country not excluded. The colonization of North America and the republican government of the United States constitute perhaps the greatest, certainly the boldest, enterprises of European mankind, yet this country has been hardly more than a hundred years in its history truly on its own, in splendid or not so splendid isolation from the mother continent. Since the end of the last century, it has been subject to the threefold onslaught of urbanization, industrialization, and, perhaps most important of all, mass immigration. Since then, theories and concepts, though unfortunately not always their underlying experiences, have migrated once more from the old to

> the new world, and the word "revolution," with its associations, is no exception to this rule. It is odd indeed to see that twentieth-century American even more than European learned opinion is often inclined to interpret the American Revolution in the light of the French Revolution, or to criticize it because it so obviously did not conform to the lessons learned from the latter. The sad truth of the matter is that the French Revolution, which ended in disaster, has made world history, while the American Revolution, so triumphantly successful, has remained an event of little more than local importance.

It is clear enough, as Miss Arendt shows, that the Russian Revolution was a continuation of the social intentions of the French Revolution. Management of the economy became the chief preoccupation of the Bolsheviks, with such earlier objectives as "power to the Soviets" and "worker councils" having to be set aside as leading, practically, to interference with the conduct of the affairs of the Soviet State.

The elimination of a significant role for the workers' councils came more from ignorance and misunderstanding than the ruthless application of violence, Miss Arendt says. While the councils were themselves a spontaneous emergence from the people and had the potentiality of a new form of government, this was not recognized by the revolutionary parties, nor did the councils understand the vast responsibilities for administration of government machinery in a modern society. Miss Arendt continues:

> The fatal mistake of the councils has always been that they themselves did not distinguish clearly between participation in public affairs and administration or management of things in the public interest. In the form of workers' councils, they have again and again tried to take over the management of the factories, and all these attempts have ended in dismal failure. . . . No doubt, managerial talent should not be lacking in people of working-class origins; the trouble was merely that the workers' councils certainly were the worst possible organs for its detection. For the men whom they trusted and chose from their own midst were selected according to political criteria, for their trustworthiness, their personal integrity, their capacity of judgment, often for their physical courage. The same men, entirely capable of acting in a political capacity, were bound to fail if entrusted with the management of a factory or other administrative duties. For the qualities of the statesman or the political man, and the qualities of the manager or administrator are not only not the same, they very seldom are to be found in the same individual; the one is supposed to know how to deal with men in a field of human relations, whose principle is freedom, and the other must know how to manage things and people in a sphere of life whose principle is necessity. The councils in the factories brought an element of action into the management of things, and this indeed could not but create chaos. It was precisely these foredoomed attempts that have earned the council system its bad name. But while it is true that they were incapable of organizing, or rather of rebuilding the economic system of the country, it is also true that the chief reason for their failure was not any lawlessness of the people, but their political qualities. Whereas, on the other hand, the reason why the party apparatuses, despite many shortcomings—corruption, incompetence and incredible wastefulness—eventually succeeded where the councils had failed lay precisely in their original oligarchic and even autocratic structure, which made them so utterly unreliable for all political purposes.

Curiously, in *The Liberation of Work* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), Folkert Wilken makes a similar analysis of the efforts of the labor unions to have a voice in the management of industrial enterprises in capitalistic countries. Political decisions are concerned with questions of freedom, justice, and human rights, while a broad spectrum of technical considerations is involved in the management of industry. All men are qualified to make broad political decisions, but the technical decisions require particular competence, and the issue in good management is not rights but cooperation. Power has no part in effective economic services. Yet power is the weapon of the trade unions, which they apply in order to secure reforms. As Wilken puts it:

> Their [the unions'] ideas are completely lacking in originality, especially as regards their idea of a new industrial-social order. But the real problematic nature of their policy lies in their attempts at breaking private monopolistic power in industry, by the power of the State and the organization of workers. With these weapons they mean to destroy, neutralize, or reform private power. They want the State to control private power by extensive nationalization. Also,

> they want the workers to intervene in industrial affairs, on every plane. It is clear that this *soi-disant* industrial-democratic policy is not *positively* founded on industry itself, but is only *negatively* provoked by the anti-social philosophy of the industrialists.
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> When political democracy was established by the French Revolution, it was said that "The power of the State comes from the people." If we transfer this maxim to the industrial field, it cannot be said that industrial power comes from the people. It is held either by the entrepreneurs, or by the workers, or by the State. Any one of these three powers is a *social impossibility*, according to the true nature of industry and economics. For in industry, it is *never* a question of power, but of productivity and social collaboration, so that a co-operative production of goods can be made to meet demand. Positions of power have no place in a system controlled by cooperation. Partial or total nationalization, and so-called industrial democracy are defensive measures against social irregularities and economic errors in industry, and the words "new order" cannot be applied to them.

What then would Folkert Wilken have people do? His book is not only critical and theoretical. It describes a number of industrial concerns which are in various stages of sharing ownership with their employees. These are practical efforts at social reform now going on within the matrix of capitalistic society, and while they are few in number, simply their existence and economic competence and progress demonstrate that another way of combining labor and capital is entirely practicable. Prof. Wilken regards these firms as an approach to more ideal social arrangements, which he describes in the following terms:

> To put an end to the individual abuse of industrial power an attack must be made on the foundations of such power. And this means that people must adopt a different conception of the nature of capital and the lawful ownership of it. Such an attitude, resulting in the neutralization of capital, would answer the deepest social longings of the worker. In his heart, he does not want the continual fight for higher wages, nor to work as little as possible. What he wants is a place in Society befitting his dignity as a free man. When the workers gain this place, they will give of their best, of their own free will. But if they have to work for a system in which a host of egotists pursue their own selfish interests, the workers' natural instinct for responsible cooperation becomes dormant. But this sense of responsibility, which alone can make a person really free, must be awakened and developed, if the workers are to take an *active* part in the establishment of true social reform in industry.

Would cooperative ownership in industry constitute a "revolution"? Well, it would certainly have a revolutionary effect on human attitudes, and might in the long run eliminate the habitual resort to power for the accomplishment of ends which are wholly outside the competence of power to obtain. But how could there be a "revolution" without the power to bring it about?

This is the question which Gandhi set out to answer a long time ago. Too often, the Gandhian idea of nonviolence has been interpreted in the West as no more than a "moral" means of reaching power, yet for Gandhi it was not this at all. While an excellent book on Gandhi's methods is titled *The Power of Non-Violence* (by Richard Gregg), these methods, which he began to work out in South Africa and developed further during India's struggle for freedom from British rule, were not a way of seeking power but of becoming *free* of it. After India attained independence, Gandhi returned to work which involved no relation to power. That is, although he could have had any government post he wanted, he chose to work in an entirely different way. This was of course for him nothing new. He had much earlier named it the "Constructive Program" and had been working along these lines for many years. As Joan Bondurant says in her paper, "The Nonconventional Political Leader in India":

> Gandhi had taken two objectives as his major goals. The first was *swaraj*—political independence—and this he worked towards with the technique of *satyagraha*. The second was *sarvodaya*, an ideal social order based upon nonviolence and envisaged in terms of harmonious, casteless, classless society with equal opportunity for all. With the objective of *swaraj* attained, the character of political action necessarily changed. Conventional modes were adopted and conventional institutions were further developed for the democratic governing of a people. The pressures were transformed and so, too, were the channels for dealing with them. The time for revolution appeared to have passed. There remained, in the Gandhian view, the second goal to

> be attained—the establishment of a *sarvodaya* order of society. The devoted band of constructive workers who, after Gandhi's death, chose to work outside the organized political life of the country, quietly promoted the Gandhian *sarvodaya* program in relative isolation.

It was this program which Vinoba gave further concrete embodiment in 1951, when he inaugurated *bhoodan yajna* or the gift of land sacrifice as a means of obtaining land for the landless peasants of India. Little by little, this movement has grown in influence, becoming the *gramdan* movement, or the gift of the village. Vinoba was soon joined by Jayaprakash Narayan, who had been a socialist leader. Narayan has since the early 1950's been part of the post-Gandhian effort to restore the vitality of India's villages and to re-establish the old *panchayat* sort of government (by elders), using, as well, all modern knowledge that applies. It is well known to many Indians, if not to Westerners, that before India was occupied by invaders, she was known for her wealth rather than for her poverty. Famine was practically nonexistent. Did not Columbus set sail to find a Western route to the "Wealth of Indies"? The Gandhians hold that the decay of the village life and economy has been the cause of India's poverty and suffering. They work unceasingly, as Gandhi did, for a regeneration of the villages. This, incidentally, is the original meaning of "revolution," according to Hannah Arendt. It once meant simply a "return," a restoration of the original or foundation good. Like Gandhi, Vinoba seeks no help from political power in the work of restoring the villages. At any rate, he will not take part in politics, and his colleagues and followers also remain independent of government. Explaining the freedom they obtain in this way, Vinoba has said:

> I am sure were we to occupy the position and shoulder the responsibility which they do [government officials], we would act in much the same manner as they. Whoever occupies office and wields governmental authority must needs think in a narrow, cramped and set circle. There can be no freedom of thinking for him. He finds himself, as it were, under an obligation to think and act as the world seems to be doing.

A contributor to the journal, *Sarvodaya*, has remarked:

> Gandhiji was the greatest statesman India has ever known. Our politicians of today all learnt politics at his feet. But Gandhiji did not touch the ruling machinery even with a pair of tongs. If law could bring grist to the mill of the people he would have certainly accepted office. Law cannot be instrumental in changing socio-economic values or outlook towards life. That is impossible without a basic change at the root.

This, indeed, may be the change that is in the air—that makes everyone speak of "revolution" without having any precise sense of what the word means. Nothing less than "change at the root" can bring about the fulfillments that men know instinctively are necessary. On the other hand, for this to happen without the exercise of power—well, it seems quite impossible. Yet the wisest of men have been convinced that no basic change is ever brought about by power, either.

So, there will have to be demonstrations. Not demonstrations of power, but demonstrations of what can be done without it. Actually, it shouldn't be so terribly difficult to persuade ourselves of the ruling principles of a non-violent life. After all, it was only a few years ago that eminent men were announcing publicly that the epoch of achievement by military means came to a final end with the discovery or invention of nuclear power— a *reductio ad absurdum* of the use of power for political means. Intelligence, cooperation, a change of heart, a putting aside of all the inadequate substitutes, based on power, for getting what human beings really want—why, save for the grip of habit and the specter of fear, should these things be regarded as difficult?

# *REVIEW*
## RELIGION AND THE SUPERNORMAL

THE day may come when men of sober intelligence, schooled in the learning and the science of their time, will be able to consider seriously the possibility of magical powers, and the whole range of what is now ambiguously termed "the occult," without loss of balance or feelings of being threatened, but that time, quite plainly, is not yet. One has only to inspect a metropolitan newsstand—jammed as they all are with the "popular literature" of the present—observe the trend in movie and television entertainment, and take into account the gradual rise to respectability of every sort of investigation of the weird, the miraculous, the ghostly and sorcerous, to realize that what we speak of conventionally as "knowledge" is far too circumscribed to give any sort of order to this enormous field of interest. As a result, what scholars term "mass culture" is totally out of control. Few if any factors of taste, moral discrimination or publishing responsibility govern such publications. There are, of course, historical reasons for exclusion of these areas from the attention of the world of science and learning, but they are not good enough. They are not good enough because, when you examine the explanations given for the neglect of what may be called the "supernormal" or the "inexplicable," you find that, boiled down, they amount to an admission that current conceptions of "reality" afford no means of dealing with such matters. The solution has been simply to declare them impossible and unworthy, therefore, of any notice at all.

All that this accomplishes, in the long run, is to make conventional authority look narrow, stuffy, static, and without either the capacity or the willingness to take cognizance of the elements of the mysterious and the wonderful in human life. There is, however, a basic psychological error in the assumption that authority, in order to maintain the respect of the people, must give the impression of having "everything taped"—of knowing exactly what is worth investigating and what is not. Since no man of imagination or even of common sense will pretend to have everything taped, conventional authority eventually loses its hold on all but the dull, the timid and conforming, and this cannot help but weaken the basis of cultural unity. Only the most vulgar of common denominators remain, and these slowly gain acceptability in quarters where they ought to be resisted, simply from the default of higher standards. After a time a great many people begin to realize that the invisible but very real structures of taste and discrimination which support the community of civilized men are in danger of collapsing altogether.

This process, which we have described in a few words, may occupy many years before it reaches the point where the consciousness of what is happening becomes definite, and then, unfortunately, the cultural decline has so much momentum that corrective steps are confronted by barriers of lethargy and established abuse. Yet these steps are being attempted right now, and some of them are given attention in a paper by J. Schoneberg Setzer, "Parapsychology: Religion's Basic Science," which appeared in the Winter 1970 issue of *Religion in Life*. Dr. Setzer begins:

> Dr. J. B. Rhine, the father of American parapsychology, has frequently asserted that "parapsychology is to religion what physics is to engineering and what biology is to medicine." However, despite the growing impressiveness of the results of professional parapsychological research, and despite a rising tide of popular interest in psychic matters that seems to indicate a significant deficiency in the offerings of organized religion, Mother Ecclesia continues on her way, unheeding and increasingly troubled.
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> She does not perceive that the contemporary crisis of faith with respect to the existence of God and the death-defying human spirit has arisen chiefly because few churchmen seem to understand clearly the type of religious authority that really can be meaningful in our contemporary culture. And the irony of this situation is that it is probably only the ignored field of parapsychology which can assist

> Mother Church through the basic crisis of religious authority that is increasingly weakening the faith of her members.

Dr. Setzer's discussion of the potentials of serious psychic research for religious thought is orderly, yet provocative, and we shall return to what he says. Here it seems important to suggest that a really dramatic instance of the supernormal, instead of serving the interests of "Mother Church," might rather hasten the breakup of every sort of orthodoxy. And if a really extraordinary wonder were performed, or produced, such as to overwhelm all skepticism, would that really help the human race to find a way to the truth and the light? One suspects that those who look to psychic research for help in the restoration of religious conviction are after more moderate and manageable doses of supernormal phenomena.

Yet there are many ways to look at these things. A wonder-worker would have no difficulty at all in attracting an enormous following, were his demonstrations sufficiently impressive. Almost anything he said would be believed. Is that really desirable? Even if he taught only "truth," could it be grasped by mere "followers"? On the other hand, thoughtful persons might conclude from evidence of some remarkable psychic ability that there are potentialities in human beings which are as yet undeveloped in the vast majority. This *might* be desirable. But could not the misuse of psychic powers become even more dangerous than the misuse of physical powers? What are the priorities in matters of this sort?

One will say, of course, that psychic capacities ought never to be used except in beneficent ways. This can be admitted at once, yet if we go back to the newsstand and look at the material in some of the magazines, it becomes plain that merely the *claim* of psychic capacities is now the basis for numerous apparently profitable and hardly responsible undertakings. How, then, could anyone use psychic research for the restoration of religious belief—supposing that it will really serve this end—yet at the same time guard against the possibility of opening a veritable Pandora's box of evils?

It is clear, however, that Dr. Setzer means to stress what can be called the philosophical implications of scientific psychic research, such as that pursued by J. B. Rhine. As he says, "parapsychology has done its chief task, as far as the church is concerned, if it has helped to unhorse an absolutistic, closed-minded mechanistic philosophy, and has made the continued existence of spirit after death—and by ramification the existence of ultimate spirit, God—live options for the average educated man." Still, he has further possibilities in mind:

> There are, of course, aspects of psychic research which indicate that when techniques and instruments are improved, and when historical methodology will be granted acceptance as well, that a more personalistic area of parapsychology may demonstrate even more fully the high probability of the spirit-dimension hypothesis. The research that has already been carried out since the 1880s in the areas of spirit communication, spiritual healing, precognition, and reincarnation is quite impressive, even to the cautious investigator.

Well, perhaps so. Yet it is sometimes the case that those who see a plank of hope in a new way to apply scientific method have a tendency to overlook important qualifications. Turning, for example, to the musings of William James on psychical phenomena, after twenty-five years of "dabbling" in the field, investigating mediums, one finds him declaring *"the presence,* in the midst of all the humbug, *of really supernormal knowledge,"* but just how this finding contributes to the strengthening of religion is not so easy to see. There is also the conclusion of C. E. M. Joad, the British philosopher, who remarked after a cycle of personal investigation of Spiritualistic communications that "if ghosts have souls, they certainly have no brains." He then added: "The view that those of us who survive undergo a softening of our cerebral tissues seems to me a gloomy one."

In short, from the viewpoint of religious conviction, it may be important to question the desirability of relying much on reports of what "other people" have said or done, whether in this life or the next, in respect to gaining a deeper understanding of the inner nature of human beings and their potentialities. Relying on reports by others, it is true, has long been the conventional way of "getting knowledge" about the world around us. You look it up in some book or report of experiments by qualified scientists. But we are not now concerned with the world around us, the inquiry being directed to the world inside us. Other methods may be more appropriate. There is also the broader question of the already urgent problems of a society which has relied upon experts and regarded higher education as little more than the training of experts, for far too long a time.

These are far-reaching issues, and to raise them is not to say that nothing can be learned from parapsychology or from the earnest researchers who are intent upon showing that there is more to heaven and earth than just atoms and the void. It remains to ask, then, how much we can safely extrapolate in the interest of religion from the findings of psychic research, regarding it as a branch of science. Here, one thing seems clear enough. This method of supporting religion will do little to arrest the wave of popular inquiry—every day more extravagant—into the "occult." This area is hardly the territory of science, today, but has become more of an enterprise in journalism. For example, *"Here, Mr. Splitfoot"* (Viking, 1971) by Robert Somerlott is a new book which takes its title from the words of Kate Fox, a little girl who lived in Hydesville, New York, near Rochester, and who in 1848 launched the Spiritualist movement on a career of endless and confusing vicissitudes. Kate was producing "spirit" rappings, and was instructing the "Devil," whom she believed she had encountered, to follow her instructions. "Do as I do," she said, snapping her fingers to obtain answering raps. This volume is a lighthearted account of a great many phases of what the author terms "modern occultism," but its instructiveness, despite the writer's apparent attempt at impartial reporting, is low. The fact is that no way of understanding or measuring these things is provided in the resources of modern intellectuality—a fact that is probably irrelevant to journalist-writers, since the demand for such books is large and growing, and the publication of them will doubtless go on and on. It is as though no one had ever really understood supernormal occurrences or written about them intelligibly and usefully, in the past. Yet light on these happenings can be found in odd and obscure volumes, showing, for one thing, that the Neoplatonic thinkers were by no means ignorant of the forces which have play in Spiritualistic phenomena, and there were others with like understanding. But these are not volumes to which journalists commonly resort to glean their sensational material. Actually, if the churches should allow themselves to be drawn into such currents of psychic adventuring, losing sight of the philosophic values which are important for Dr. Setzer, it seems certain that, instead of finding their authority strengthened, they would soon be split into dozens or even hundreds of cults and sects. And there is further caution in the fairly demonstrable fact that a taste for the psychic runs most easily downhill.

# *COMMENTARY*
## WHAT OPENS MINDS?

BECAUSE most current definitions of "reality" do in fact derive, either directly or indirectly, from a "closed-minded mechanistic philosophy" (see Review), it naturally seems desirable to find a way to shake the foundations of this assumption. And since "psychical phenomena" do have some shock value, being, at least by hypothesis, noticeable intrusions into this world of hard fact of forces from "another plane," the idea that psychical research can be an instrument of liberation from materialism may have strong appeal. The phenomena, if they are measurable, can be made into a bludgeon that will beat down materialism. Even materialists will be forced to see the light!

Obviously, Materialism is now held to be a bad thing. But there was a time when it was regarded as a splendid new weapon for fighting the good fight—emancipating the human mind. Forty-five years ago Bertrand Russell wrote in his Introduction to Frederick Lange's *History of Materialism* (Harcourt, Brace, 1925):

> Historically, we may regard materialism as a system of dogma set up to combat orthodox dogma. As a rule, the materialistic dogma has not been set up by men who loved dogma, but by men who felt that nothing less definite would enable them to fight the dogmas they disliked. They were in the position of men who raise armies to enforce peace.

Well, as we now know, armies do not enforce peace; instead, they make war inevitable. A somewhat similar conclusion may finally be reached with respect to psychical research as a weapon against mechanistic habits of thought. What if the vulgar fascinations of psychic phenomena wholly overshadow the "spiritual" lessons that are intended? Is there no such thing as a materialism of the *psyche?*

The spiritual traditions of the East are filled with reminders of the indifference of sages and great teachers to the display of magical powers. This is not a question, of course, as to whether such powers are "real," but only of the importance to be attached to them. There is also the fact that, except among those who have a Western education, Easterners are not inclined to deny the reality of transcendental existence or consciousness, nor of what are spoken of as "yogi" powers. Wandering *fakirs* have kept belief in such powers alive throughout the ages, in the East.

So there may be some justification for thinking that the impact of psychic discoveries on everyday attitudes in the West will have a good effect. Yet even here the time has obviously arrived for caution. Those who have investigated what is found out through mediums readily admit that "there is no theory which covers more than a few atoms of the phenomena to be explained." Quite possibly, old philosophical sources may throw light on the meaning of psychical phenomena than today's endless "experimentation." As a contributor to the *Proceedings* of the London Society for Psychical Research remarked years ago: "The student who adopts Plotinus' far-reaching theory of the nature of man's psychical constitution, with its immense range and organic structure, will find that it throws new light on many current problems."

# CHILDREN
## . . . and Ourselves
### NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLHOUSE

THAT the circumstances of the Oruaiti School in north New Zealand were ideal for an educational undertaking does not subtract in the least from the achievement of Elwyn Richardson, who taught in this country primary school for twelve years, but it helps to explain why his book, *In the Early World* (Pantheon), is so rewarding for its readers. The jacket says that Mr. Richardson was going to Auckland Teachers' College in 1947, so the twelve years must have been mainly in the 1950's. He went to that sparsely settled part of New Zealand because of a personal independence and an interest in molluscs—which include slugs, snails, mussels, clams, oysters, whelks, limpets, cuttlefishes, and like lowly creatures abounding in the region. He also had botanical interests, so it is plain that he was from the start a teacher with a natural enthusiasm for firsthand investigation of the world of living things. The sea was not far off, a swamp bordered the school, and, as a photograph shows, the countryside is wooded with low rolling hills. Dairy farming was the chief local activity and the background of many of the children.

This is a book that makes you want to go to New Zealand to see what has happened to the children Mr. Richardson taught! It also makes you wonder what kind of world would make it possible for the young to continue in lives so begun.

An excellent foreword by John Melser states:

> The school at Oruaiti consisted of a square wooden room built in 1889, roofed with red-painted corrugated iron, gable-ended, weather-boarded, and with three high double-hung windows on each of its sides. Behind this building and a little to one side was a grey pre-fab which formed the senior classroom. To go into this room, even without the children, was to be dazzled by a riot of colours, shapes, and textures. Drums, pots, mobiles dangling from the ceiling, masks, painting printing gear, a small electric kiln—all the disorder of a dozen simultaneous workshops was pent up in this small room. . . .
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> When Elwyn Richardson went to Oruaiti this lay in the future. Then, there was only one building, a small paved yard terminated by a grove of trees, grass and sheds leading away to banks sloping down into a swamp on one side and up to the hill on the other. . . .
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> The children were not chosen in any way. Many of them came from homes from which the radio, the gramophone, and magazines were excluded; they seldom met with other families except for religious purposes, they saw no films, and often the only reading in the household was biblical. Other families were gregarious, and the children were influenced by radio, films, and so on, as far as these were available in a small rural community. The influence of books was small. In this account we can trace step by step the children's increasing awareness of the world around them and their increasing desire to express subtleties adequately and vividly, going hand in hand with the glad recognition of high achievement in the expression of others.

It does not seem too much to say that Mr. Richardson made the most of every opportunity before him. What strikes the urban reader is the richness of the opportunities, for one like Elwyn Richardson, who could recognize them.

At the beginning, he tried to interest the children in plant life and plant collecting. This didn't work very well, But in their journeys through the hilly scrub country, Richardson noticed grey deposits streaking the stream beds. So, instead of plants, they began collecting clay. "I drew the children's attention to the clays and discussed the qualities and beauties of these and the red ochreous earths that we found on the exposed ridges." After various explorations they picked a seam of clay that seemed better than others and carted several loads back to the school. At the beginning, nobody knew much about clay or pottery—for making pots was the plan—but they all found out together:

> If we had not had the experience of collecting other inferior clays and mixing them to workable consistency, we might have discarded this clay. Instead we chopped it up with a spade, watered it, and

> worked the mass with feet and hands into a clay of good quality. We had some clay to begin our pottery, but we thought we would make a survey of most clay deposits in the valley and then we would test the clays and see if one was better than another.
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> The children brought in a great number of samples. If they became over-enthusiastic about any one clay because it was more plastic than another only because it had been collected and maintained in a wetter condition, I drew their attention to the fact. I led them to see that we had to consider each sample in its working condition.
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> This led to methods of sampling. The children often found their enthusiasm running away with them when they visited the next deposit that they felt must be the best that could be found. As exaggerations crept in I taught more and more scientific method, so that we could ensure that the best clay was discovered. The important thing about all this study was that we were learning from each other about the material and our valley. We were also learning about the clay by experiments that involved growing judgment. The teaching was reflected in later studies of temperature in the air, in the shade, and in the river. When we began a study of the river the children devised methods of sampling the water which were quite scientific.

Well, all this was only preparatory to making pots, but it was an essential part of learning how to do anything well. The other parts came later and received the same sort of close attention—attention to natural growth, not with a lot of management, but enough. Little by little, they all learned together, watching one another, studying coiling techniques, deciding how large a pot could be, and under what conditions they could be made larger.

The clay wasn't especially good and they had serious cracking problems during the drying period. They conducted systematic experiments to test different ways of storing and drying. The stove produced cracks, and so did the sun. Finally, they learned that pots which were frequently turned and kept in a dark store room cupboard did not crack. Developing decorations for the pots was another big step. They went back to the ridges for red earths and made slip out of these materials, using it to draw on the clay. Richardson found the children to be natural designers:

> I have always been amazed at the child's intuitive ability to get the feeling of a particular form or surface by a few experimental strokes of the brush in the air above the pot.
>
> It seems that if he hasn't any particular idea in mind the area "dictates" its own needs. The artist then, without hesitation, is able to apply the first stroke of the design. He reconsiders this and is able to add further strokes which "demand" other wide or narrow lines or forms. The child seems to know intuitively what the needs of a given form are, and he knows when the design is complete. I have noticed how certain children, usually those who have been denied such satisfaction as these, will at first over-decorate a pot to the point of spoiling it, but if they are allowed repeated satisfaction from the craft they soon work with skill and taste.

As you read this book, you begin to see the enormous importance of starting from scratch, the way Richardson and these children did. First they found the clay. Then they found, or tried to find, *good* clay. Then they learned how to work it. Then they learned how to work it *well.* Then they figured out how to decorate it. The development of taste, daring, and the passage from the more literal to abstract designs were all stages in the evolution of the work with pots. And when the next step came—the firing—they started from scratch there, too. First they collected brick from various places. They built a small bottle kiln and put in all the pots that were dry enough to be fired. Then:

> The hopes of every child and the success of the whole idea rested on the next day's work, and the three small fires that would be lit at dawn the next day. I had little idea how to fire a kiln but I knew that the firing had to be slow at first until the water had been driven off the pots. I felt sure that we would have considerable losses and had prepared the children for this.

Well, they fired all day and went home exhausted. Next morning, when it was still pretty hot, the kiln was opened:

> Hands wrapped in handkerchiefs threw bricks away, and soon we saw the heap of pottery covered

> with ash, with here and there a pot showing through. They were burnt to a good light biscuit with the red slip decorations a dark rich red and not one piece was "dunted," chipped, or "clap banged." We dug in the hot ashes, and for an hour or so we looked over every piece and discussed the exciting results.
>
> The empty shelves were refilled with fired pottery, and they have been refilled and emptied many, many times since. The pots have been better, the firings have been just as perfect, but this discovery of the firing process made the beginning of pottery a wonderful experience. Every heart was full.

This account barely gets the reader into the book, which is about many more things than pottery—about various crafts, about mathematics, about writing poetry and storytelling, and throughout all about the development of self-reliance, mutual appreciation, a sure æsthetic sense, and sharpened critical capacities. All of these things came about gradually and naturally. As we said, the circumstances of this school provided great opportunities, and Mr. Richardson saw and used them all.

# *FRONTIERS*

## More on Reich's "Greening"

IN the months since a Frontiers article (MANAS, Nov. 18, 1970) first called attention to Charles Reich's *The Greening of America*, it has become the most talked-about book published in recent years, and probably the one most reviewed. Of the reviews we saw, few had much importance. It was obvious that economists didn't like the book and responded with ridicule. Lately we came across two critical evaluations that seem intelligent and just. So, for their general usefulness, we quote from both. One is by Todd Gitlin, appearing in *Psychology Today* for February. Todd Gitlin graduated from Harvard in 1963 and served as president of Students for a Democratic Society during 1963-64. In his discussion of the Reich book, he begins by calling it a presentation of ideas "whose time has come." Actually, Reich did not claim to say anything "new," but that it was "everybody's book." Gitlin suggests that it has crystallized the thinking of a large number of people:

> In the '50's, *The Lonely Crowd, The Organization Man, The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit, The Hidden Persuaders* were such books. The '60's have seen a scatter of such books and films, one example is James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time*, which helped convince the readers of *The New Yorker* that the struggle of the blacks was real, intimate, and would not go away. And now we have the apotheosis of the youth revolution in *The Greening of America* which has provoked no fewer than eight articles in *The New York Times*, column after column in *Time* and *Newsweek*, and fervent public responses from such luminaries as Stewart Alsop ("a bag of scary mush," "profoundly anti-intellectual," "obvious fascist overtones"), John Kenneth Galbraith ( "enormously lucid and important"), and Herbert Marcuse ("the Establishment version of the great rebellion"). Add to this response the condensed version in *The New Yorker* and we have not merely a book but a public event.

One critic observed that the *New Yorker* improved Reich's text considerably by editing, and this may be true (we didn't read the book, but only the *New Yorker* version). However, no one but Mr. Reich is responsible for the brilliance of his criticism of the status quo, or what he terms Consciousness II, generalized under the heading of the Corporate State. As Gitlin says:

> Reich does not simply portray the structural fusion of corporation and state in 20th-Century America; beautifully he evokes the impoverishment of the souls who live in and under it. It is familiar territory, but it can't hurt to cover it again because it is the territory we live in. Reich is particularly good when he uses his background as a constitutional lawyer to decode the uses of law as guarantor of the *status quo;* for example, his point that the Bill of Rights doesn't keep those of us who inhabited constitutionally unrecognized organizations that is to say, almost all of us—from being quieted.

The other reviewer we recommend—Emile Capouya, in the *Nation* for Jan. 18—generally agrees on the excellence of Reich's criticism, calling the analysis of Consciousness I and II "a shrewd enough condensation of our experience, designed to point up just those activities and expectations we must abandon if we are to survive." He adds:

> In other words, the author of *The Greening of America* is dealing in essentials, and at this stage of his argument criticism of details is beside the point. In order to feel the import of his contentions we need a faculty akin to the aesthetic sense—the ability to recognize the meaning of our experience when it is presented to us in a metaphor. Without that ability we can no more understand our own history than a person who is tone-deaf can organize the sounds of a musical composition into the experience of music.

Where Reich falls down, according to both these reviewers, is in his failure to apply the same critical skill to the champions of Consciousness III, and in what seems to them far too much reliance on the romantic aspects of the revolt of youth, which he celebrates in an extremely selective way. Gitlin wonders:

> It may also be that Reich's hymn is more suited to the Yale students to whom he dedicates his book. Maybe within those hallowed walls there are no speed-freaks, no gang rapes, no graduates of reform school and prison, no Mafiosi. But they are

> everywhere else, and they have been at least since 1967 when the Haight-Ashbury already was beginning to decay into a ghetto. There is truth in Reich's myth of Consciousness III, but the truth is bittersweet.

Emile Caponya makes similar comment, but both reviewers are grateful to Reich for what he has done well. Capouya concludes:

> And yet, while condemning Reich's ecstatic community as descriptively inaccurate and prescriptively irrelevant, it is important to recognize the symptomatic significance of this portion of the book. As the author himself suggests again and again, the necessary first step is to turn from the body of this death. That seems to me to be what his book, and the people it speaks for, are trying hard to do.

And Gitlin, equally skeptical of the somewhat "magical" way Reich expects the Great Change to come about—he calls it "the myth of the painless revolution"—ends by saying:

> Myths are contrary and often self-fulfilling, the truth has a way of rumbling out of half-truth and taking command. As the myth about the new life of Consciousness III spreads, more young people join it—even children of the working classes. As Consciousness III spreads, it has a chance to combat some of its pathologies, to take the initiative and to assume the form of its own mythology. . . . it might even help tear down the barriers of class and age. One radical student said that *The Greening of America* gave him the hope to go on. Hope comes in odd bottles, and if it is hope that springs out of innocence there is a chance, just a chance, that it might acquire knowledge and yet remain hope.

It should be added that Reich strikes a "beyond politics" note that neither Gitlin nor Capouya treats sympathetically. Capouya calls this "inoffensive anarchism" and Gitlin is unable to praise a vision in which children "become the next ruling class to the sound of music and the fragrance of flowers!" It is all too simple; and it surely is, when put this way. Yet Reich has already admitted that "The new generation doesn't know how to work or how to create a structure of society that will work or that will reflect its own values." There is a sense in which he is simply asking for help.