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SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

THERE is a woman principal of a ghetto school in Brooklyn, New York, who seems to have put her finger on some of the most difficult complexities of social affairs. The woman is Dr. Esther Rothman, a psychologist who runs the Livingston School for girls in Brooklyn, New York—girls who have been expelled from the ordinary New York schools for unruly behavior, insubordination, and worse offenses. The girls are not psychotic but they could become so. Most of them are black, but there are a few white girls and some Filipino girls in the school. What we know of Dr. Rothman and her school is from her book, *The Angel Inside Went Sour* (David McKay, 1971, and Bantam), which is something of a masterpiece on education, and not only "problem" education. Following is a passage about teachers:

> Unfortunately, many teachers are drawn to our school not primarily because they are concerned with the girls, but because they are seeking resolutions to their own severe internal conflicts. Any center of therapy, whether it is a hospital or a school, attracts many people on staff who are essentially seeking therapy for themselves. They, of course, cannot remain.

There may be more to this comment than is at first apparent. Revolve the kaleidoscope of thought at this level and you might turn up Camus' *Neither Victims nor Executioners*, come across the curious linkages between criminals and their hunters and prosecutors, and expose the community of interests which joins prisoners and prison guards.

An eminent psychiatrist said in conversation not long ago that, after a lifetime of practice, he at last felt able to see fewer patients. He explained that he was sure that the reason for this was that he no longer *needled* to carry a heavy schedule of patient interviews; that slowly he was becoming healed of this necessity. People are drawn to do the work they *need* to do, he said, adding that his need was not so great as it had been. Speaking of another distinguished man who gave up therapy in order to have time to write, he said that this man must have also outgrown the need to do therapy, and that this enabled him to do more good by writing.

In her book, Dr. Rothman speaks of the qualifications for teachers in her school. Only those who want to relate to others can be of use. But they need to know how. In one case a middle-aged woman, a visiting teacher hoping for permanent appointment, dressed like a hippie teen-ager. When Dr. Rothman asked her why she did this, she explained that the girls in the school were "too inhibited." Dr. Rothman replied:

> "Miss D.," I told her, "our girls are too uninhibited, that's exactly their problem. They need some restraint. That's exactly why they're here. Being totally uninhibited does not necessarily lead to happiness. It creates anxiety. At what point do your impulses carry you away? At what point do you stop? Drugs? Murder—?"
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> She thought I might be right.
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> "Look, Miss D.," I said, "it's the upper- and middle-class students, shirking middle-classness and the bounds of their parents values who relate to the hippie teacher. They want a way out of their society. Our girls have never really been in society in any meaningful way, and we have to help them there, and get them into jobs and professions. They have to play the middle-class role, they have to look the part."

Dr. Rothman's further comment is important:

> The question of the teacher's civil rights, of course, becomes involved in the issue. Do we have a right to say to a teacher *No, you can't wear a dress ten inches above your knees*, or *No, you can't wear slacks*? The teachers and I conferred and we all felt we were right to establish criteria of dress. We would expect and require a surgeon to wear a sterilized gown in surgery. Teaching is no less a delicate operation. . . . If this is an infringement on a teacher's

rights, then . . . it is an infringement that I am willing to make.

This is a time of rapid change and even, if the word has to be used, "revolution," but not all the groups in revolt are demanding the same thing. While the middle-class rebels are turning from the conventional rewards of middle-class society, looking for more utopian satisfactions in communes, in back-to-nature experiments, and in rejecting war, nationalism, and commercialism, the black movement began as an equal-rights movement, then split into both a black nationalist separatist movement and an equal rights movement (for quite comprehensible reasons). The student rebellion in Latin America is in behalf of a more democratic distribution of the benefits of education rather than an attack *on* education such as occurred in the United States. There is a sense in which all these movements represent a seeking for areas of experience and realization which have been denied to the seekers in the past. But they are not the same areas. For Mrs. Rothman's graduates, making a success in the square world of business and the professions seems to have meant balance, an integration of character, to say nothing of being a veritable miracle of not only education but also personal effort and resolve on the part of those students. A thoughtful man would hesitate a long time before he would say anything critical about the success they have achieved.

And yet, and yet . . . this is also a world that is going to have to change at every level. The question is, is it possible to have a world where different people are able to have their eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century revolutions all at the same time, and perhaps learn from one another while they are doing it?

Cuba had an eighteenth-century revolution a few years ago, and might, if let alone or given sympathetic support, turn it into something better than those which occurred in the eighteenth century. Minority groups everywhere are struggling to achieve eighteenth-century revolutions. They want equality before the law and equal opportunity, which is what the eighteenth-century revolution was supposed to provide, but allowed only to members of the dominant race. Gandhi, you could say, tried to combine the revolution of the twentieth or twenty-first century with the eighteenth-century revolution, but extensive unity between the two causes lasted only as long as the actual struggle for Indian liberation. Yet the Gandhian idea of revolutionary change remains as the seed of great changes in the future—a revolutionary dream.

What all this shows—and is effectively illustrated in the microcosm of Dr. Rothman's school—is the futility of expecting a single rationalist scheme for an ideal social order to accommodate the diverse needs, desires, necessities of so many differing human groups. No one system will do, no common vision is broad enough, no universal generalization specific enough, to meet the problems that arise. Dr. Rothman was obliged to wage continual war with the New York Board of Education simply to obtain the means of applying common sense to the necessities of the pupils in her school.

The interesting thing about the girls in that school is that they were not just "bad" girls. Their behavior was bad—very bad—but they were also resourceful, bright, and in their way very determined. They seemed to Dr. Rothman to be fighting for their lives, and she saw her task as one of showing them better ways to fight.

She says in one place:

> They live with tragedy—our girls of the Livingston School—tragedy most of us stronger mortals, the professionals, could not transcend. I know one thing, I could not come to school, even now, as principal, much less as student, if my beloved sister were in the hospital having her arm amputated. Yet Andrea did. She came to school to go to her classes and to see her counselor and to talk and talk and talk.
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> No tears. They survive, and even laugh. What achievement! What colossal achievement for Pat to concentrate on math when just the night before, the

little boy with whom she baby-sat bled to death when a loose glass door unhinged and fell on him, piercing an artery in his neck. Two days later, Pat herself was stabbed in the back by an irate friend who claimed that Pat had stolen her boyfriend, in that same week, Shirley's mother died of cancer, Gloria's father was rushed to the hospital with nephritis, Constance's father collapsed on the job, Pauline was hospitalized with asthma Esther's six-month-old brother was rushed to the hospital with acute pneumonia while Esther's mother, refusing to release her baby from her arms, violently attacked her husband and the doctors, accusing them of trying to kill her baby. And except for Pat, who was physically incapable of attending, all the girls came to school.

Call them what you will—socially maladjusted, or emotionally disturbed, or delinquent, or neurotic, or psychopathic, or psychotic, or underprivileged, or troubled, or angry, or spoiled, or victims, or sick or culturally different, or behavior problems—the fact remains that they cannot be commonly processed and commonly labeled, for they have only three things in common: they are girls, they are adolescents, and they have been in, created, partaken of, and caused trouble in the public and private schools of New York City. One thing for certain. They are not the quiet types.

They are committed to rebellion against the facts of their lives, and beyond that, they fit no mold. They cannot be sieved to fit the perforations of an IBM card. They are inspiring examples of outrageous individualism. They dare to be different. They will not be stifled. This is the main reason they are at Livingston. They think divergently, see things differently from the way most people do, reconstruct their perceptions in a way that most people do not. They are truly creative. This does not mean that they are artists or talented in the conventional sense. Some girls are; many are not. Talent and artistry are rare. Creativity is not. We are all born with a potential and a capacity for creativity. Catastrophically, this potential is crushed out of most of us at an early age, first by our parents, later by our teachers. "What—you drew a red horse? Who ever heard of a red horse?" The five-year-old soon learns adults don't like it when he's different. Our girls, however continue to be creative because they have survived the conformity process, because they continue to diverge from the norm, despite all pressure to stop.

This is not to suggest that Dr. Rothman puts up with a great deal of nonsense, because she doesn't. Nor does she especially admire the way the "creativity" comes out, a lot of the time. But she works to give the girls more choices and better choices of what to do with their energy. And she battles the powers that be in order to help them as effectively as she can.

It took a talented, schooled, and determined woman to make this institution serve in this way. She is not at all satisfied with the measure of her success, of course, but there has been *some* success—enough to indicate the value of such efforts and the usefulness of an environment at least partially controlled in behalf of the needs of the students attending the school.

But what about the larger society? No one can control the arrangements of that society in this way, no one can provide the diversities of experience and afford the differences in goals except by means of a practical wisdom that is developed by a large number of the people who are involved.

One thinks, for example, of the artificialities of the consumption patterns and the acquisitive goals which have been identified as symbols of the American way of life and which worked such hardships against the large groups who were shut out of those patterns for one reason or another—the Blacks because of race and their historical past, the American Indians because they preferred their own way of life, which could not survive the aggressive displacement which the westward expansion of the white population imposed on them by force. This expansion was celebrated in the nineteenth century by impressive phrases such as "Manifest Destiny," which bore overtones of both the divine will and the laws of nature. Toned down and rationalized by businessmen of influence and the aristocratic statesmen of the early years of this country, this idea became the explicit mission of the United States. Woodrow Wilson, for one, had long believed that America's material power would become the vehicle of her influence, and he believed, as Sondra Herman observes, that self-government was a peculiarly Anglo-American gift,

eventually to be developed among other peoples of the world under American tutelage. American power would be beneficent for such reasons, and American skill would show the way to all. Competition was health both at home and abroad, and the world, too, could be a vast competitive market, governed, as America was governed, by a league of nations or a world court with all peoples united under the rule of law. Wars were the work of greedy politicians and followed from popular response to jingoistic appeals.

Conscientious men could believe all this in good faith during the first twenty years of this century. But has it been believable during the first twenty years of the second half of the twentieth century?

One could say, however, that, believable or not, these doctrines, with some added compulsions such as fear of Communism, have shaped the policies of the United States during the two decades which recently came to a close.

The fallacy is plain enough. It is that a single scheme of the organization and expression of the energies of men, because it has been appealing to one powerful group, is suitable for imposition on all the populations of the world.

Another aspect of the "single scheme," the promise of scientific progress, bringing a life made easier for all by the spread of modern technology, has failed to achieve its goal. Today the gap between the rich and the poor nations widens, and at the same time the inability of the underdeveloped nations to "catch up" with the advanced industrial powers is clearly recognized by the ecology-minded economists, who also point out that additional pollution from more industrialism will drench the planet with intolerable poisons. Even the present rate of "growth" of countries such as the United States threatens to exhaust the food and fuel resources of a large part of the world.

In September, 1919, Woodrow Wilson said in a speech in Kansas City:

> I can fancy those men of the first generation that so thoughtfully set this great Government up, the generation of Washington and Hamilton and Jefferson and the Adamses—I can fancy their looking on with a sort of enraptured amazement that the American spirit should have made conquest of the world.

That was only fifty-three years ago. How would that same first generation of Americans look upon the present and the way in which this "conquest of the world" has turned out?

What made the change? It seems obvious that hunger for power and a blind devotion to ideology are the prime causes. The ideology of the men of the polity during the first twenty years of this century did not work, did not prove out in practice, but today the men of the polity, with little or nothing to justify their claims, are still trying to make it work; and earning the distrust if not the hatred of the rest of the world as a result. There is no proper prescription for the use of American power, today, unless we say simply that the resources of the nation could easily be turned to feeding and binding up the wounds of those who have been torn by American might, and so, after a time, earn a trust that would have greater strength for good than anything we have ever done in the past.

At home, we would do well to become a nation of improvisers, somewhat in the fashion of Dr. Rothman at her Brooklyn school of unruly and misbehaving children. She improvised positive things for the adolescent girls to do, by which they gained self-respect. She got the girls jobs, and they began to reorganize themselves when they realized they could do the jobs. Her school was a kind of nursing operation for adolescents—the kind of nursing that Gandhi said would have to be undertaken by people who wanted to help the Indian villagers.

Spoiled children, neglected children, coddled children, unloved children—they all need nursing, even if this does not mean indulgence and easy treatment. Nursing is a way of being with people

with understanding, helping them to stand on their own feet.

The life of community in the United States is very nearly a lost art. It needs nursing back to life. A great many good things, once known to Americans, need nursing back to life; and there are some attitudes and activities, never known to Americans, that need to be developed in American society. Most of all, what is wanted is recognition that a good society is a combination of many ways of life. Communes and private people ought to be able to live side by side, and serve each other; and cities should be as interested in preserving and assisting rural areas as adults are interested in caring for their own children. Cities, after all, survive by infusions of new blood from the country.

Americans, who are said to be a practical race of people, should forget entirely about ideological arguments. Arthur Morgan once said to H. G. Wells, who insisted that America must choose between individualism and socialism, that America had already put into practice nearly every sort of social organization. Post offices and fire departments, he said, are communistic, since they serve everyone alike from public funds; "Probably half of all state and local taxes in America are levied for communistic purposes."

Then the great municipal water supplies are a form of state socialism. The government-controlled irrigation systems are socialistic. "America is not afraid of communism and America is not afraid of socialism, except as some people hold them up as terrible menaces. America also believes in democracy; we elect officers to represent us in government."

Autocracy is practiced in large universities, and there is regard for academic freedom in these places—more, sometimes, in private institutions which are self-perpetuating autocracies than in the supposedly more democratic state universities. America does not fear autocracy when it has a social purpose.

Businesses are industrial despotisms, which sometimes practice social-mindedness and sound economics. Dr. Morgan concluded his argument:

> In my opinion America has a philosophy of government—a philosophy which is skeptical of abstract theory, and of abstract reasoning, a preference for trying out life in various ways, and for guiding our policies by the results. This philosophy represents a certain modesty and humility in the American mind. We do not presume to answer the riddle of the social universe all at once. We are willing to feel our way tentatively in the faint morning twilight of human society, and to decide our course a few steps at a time.

This passage, which seems a little tender-minded today, was written in 1936. But in principle and ideally, Dr. Morgan is right. And this disregard of ideological claims, of system-made requirements, must now be made to give way to a variety of human necessities, so that many different forms of enterprise will find hospitality in the over-all society. Ingenuity, resourcefulness, some daring, and originality have been at the root of American achievement. Some of these achievements have gone sour and turned destructive, and are feared by everyone. It is natural for the young to refuse to participate in them; and the most intensely American of the young are the most adamant in their refusal. This is one of the few signs of health in America at the present time. The work carried on by Dr. Rothman in her Brooklyn school is another sign of health. Looking for signs of health and providing them scope for further development could become a prime activity for reconstructing America.

REVIEW
IN SPITE OF THE POLITICAL PROCESS

LATELY we have been giving attention to soil conservation in terms of individual farming practice, by reviewing Louis Bromfield's *Pleasant Valley* and *Malabar Farm.* Mr. Bromfield went at the job of reclaiming ruined Ohio farmland with an intensity and determination which made his books on this subject fascinating even to readers who will never plow a field or cast a seed. There was so much pleasure for him in reconstructive agriculture that it overflows to his readers, who cannot help but identify with this sort of joyous natural piety. Bromfield's books are certainly a fine example of one of the best uses of the writer's art.

The subject of conservation has other dimensions. There is for example the historical side and the public aspect. Picking up a book noticed in MANAS in 1949, *Breaking New Ground,* by Gifford Pinchot, we were made to realize that there was absolutely no public awareness of the need for any sort of conservation among the people of the United States a hundred years ago. There were one or two lonely voices, but no audience. It is literally true that the American people thought that the resources of their continent would last forever.

When Gifford Pinchot, later to be the first U.S. Forester, graduated from Yale in 1889, he was asked to speak at the Commencement ceremony. He followed Mark Twain and some other speakers. On an impulse, he threw away his prepared address and announced his determination to enter the profession of Forestry, speaking of its great importance to the United States.

But where would he learn about forestry? There were courses to be had in silviculture, on how to plant trees, but nothing was available on forest management, and the term "conservation" was hardly known in those days. He learned that the English practiced forestry in India and sought advice from Sir Dietrich Brandis, founder of Forestry in British India, whom he visited at his home in Bonn. Brandis befriended the young man and planned his education for him. First he sent him to the French Forest School in Nancy; after that, Pinchot visited and studied the Sihlwald, in Zurich, which "had been under regular forest management since before Columbus discovered America." He kept in constant touch with Dr. Brandis and one summer went with him on a tour of Swiss and German forests. But the Europeans could not teach him all he needed to know. Brandis, for example, served an autocratic government, but the American people were not like the obedient Germans. The problem of persuading politicians and the public would remain, no matter how much Gifford Pinchot knew about conservation and forest management. As he says:

> When I got home at the end of 1890 the situation, if I had known it, was enough to discourage Sisyphus himself. Mercifully the worst of it was hidden from me. The widest opportunity for Forestry on this round earth was here, and the clear promise of the greatest returns in national safety and well-being. But there was no Forestry. Instead of it the most rapid and extensive forest destruction ever known was in full swing.
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> That gigantic and lamentable massacre of trees had a reason behind it, of course. Without wood, and plenty of it, the people of the United States could never have reached the pinnacle of comfort, progress, and power they occupied before this century began.
>
> The Nation was obsessed, when I got home, by a fury of development. The American Colossus was fiercely intent on appropriating and exploiting the riches of the richest of all continents—grasping with both hands, reaping where he had not sown, wasting what he thought would last forever. New railroads were opening new territory. The exploiters were pushing farther and farther into the wilderness. The man who could get his hands on the biggest slice of natural resources was the best citizen. Wealth and virtue were supposed to trot in double harness.

Then, after a summary of the public agencies concerned with forests or trees, he concluded:

> To sum it all up, when I came home not a single acre of Government, state, or private timberland was

> under systematic forest management anywhere on the most richly timbered of all continents. The American people had no understanding either of what Forestry was or of the bitter need for it.

Later, by telling about the efforts of Carl Schurz to control this rape of the forests, Pinchot gave some idea of the task of public education which lay ahead:

> In an address before the American and Pennsylvania Forestry Associations in Philadelphia, October 15, 1889, Carl Schurz, Secretary of the Interior under President Hayes, gave a true picture of the times. After declaring that the destruction of the forests would be the murder of our future prosperity, he described "a public opinion, looking with indifference on this wanton, barbarous, disgraceful vandalism; a spendthrift people recklessly wasting its heritage; a Government careless of the future and unmindful of a pressing duty." And he added: "But I found myself standing almost solitary and alone. Deaf was Congress, and deaf the people seemed to be."
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> This he said on almost the very day I sailed for Europe to study Forestry.

In a foreword on the difficulty of obtaining true history from a study of "documents," Pinchot speaks of how often documents conceal instead of reveal the facts of the past, remarking, "About many parts of the story of Forestry in America from 1885 to 1910, I am the only living witness." This was written in 1946, when the author was advanced in age. Earlier in this foreword he speaks of how misleading it may be to rely on the impressions gained from the printed word:

> It is easy enough, by running your eye across the literature of the generations, to find quotable references to the value of the forest in America and the importance of protecting it. And it is equally easy to draw the conclusion that these isolated appeals sprang from or represented a widespread interest in the forest—a general concern which, at least in my opinion, until the early days of the present century wasn't there at all.
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> Take for example, George P. Marsh's epoch-making book, *Man and Nature*, afterward called *The Earth as Modified by Human Action*, published in 1864. Unquestionably it started a few people thinking. But did it indicate any general public interest in Forestry at the time of the Civil War?

This could hardly be the case, when the encyclopedias of the time had no entries such as Forestry, and no article about forests, except for something on Arboriculture.

Breaking New Ground (Harcourt, Brace) is a book of 500 pages, filled with the events of Pinchot's career, telling of the formation of the U.S. Forest Service in 1905, within the Department of Agriculture. He had to become something of a politician, or a dedicated bureaucrat, to accomplish all that he did. And when he had been instrumental in obtaining some public control over forest management, his fertile mind turned to wider responsibilities. In 1907 he had this inspiration:

> Suddenly the idea flashed through my head that there was a unity in this complication—that the relation of one resource to another was not the end of the story. Here were no longer a lot of different, independent and often antagonistic questions, each on its own separate little island, as we have been in the habit of thinking. In place of them, here was one single question with many parts. Seen in this new light, all these separate questions fitted into and made up the one great central problem of the use of the earth for the good of man.

But the pioneers who came before Gifford Pinchot, although they may have been uninfluential at the time, were by no means unimportant. Other books are needed to fill out the picture, and no better place to begin could be found than the volume by George P. Marsh, to which Pinchot refers. We have had the book for years in the MANAS library, without, it should be confessed, realizing its historical importance, but enjoying it for its fascinating contents. Marsh was a career diplomat and spent all his time free from ambassadorial duties studying the effects of human action on the earth. His book is an encyclopedia of earth science. He read in practically all the European languages and drew on the totality of European literature for his sources. When his name began to crop up in the dedications of current works on ecology, we

realized what a treasure we had acquired, so many years ago, in some second-hand bookstore. The title alone—*The Earth as Modified by Human Action*—was enough of an attraction at that time. Another book, really indispensable for the historical picture of conservation, is Stewart Udall's *The Quiet Crisis* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965). Mr. Udall supplies biographical data on the chief figures of the conservation movement, starting with Thomas Jefferson. Two who came before Pinchot ought to be looked up in their own work—Marsh and John Wesley Powell. Marsh was the thinker and writer—his work is seminal. Then Powell, in 1878, submitted his report on "Lands of the Arid Region of the United States." Major Powell was both explorer and scientist. To him we owe the creation of the U. S. Geological Survey, undertaking basic research in behalf of all the people. And it was Powell who, with several others, in 1873 had organized the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

In the late sixties Powell, who had lost an arm at the battle of Shiloh in the Civil War, organized a scientific expedition to run the rapids of the Colorado, an adventure on which he reported in detail in *Exploration of the Colorado River.* For the next seven or eight years he studied the relation of land and water in the desert areas of the West, presenting his conclusions in "a broad conservation plan for the settlement of arid country—a plan which included Jeffersonian political and social institutions adapted to the special conditions of the West." Different land and water laws were needed, he said, for the dry country where irrigation was required to make the land inhabitable or profitable. The plan was intelligent, detailed, and complete, but met with a cold reception. Had it been adopted, there probably would have been no dust bowls and the development of the West would have been much more peaceful and constructive in result.

Other figures in Udall's book provide leads to further good reading—Carl Schurz and John Muir, for example. The vision of the common good, of the public interest, is the major inspiration of all these remarkable men. At a time like the present, this conception of public service could stand some renewal and re-embodiment.

COMMENTARY
ON SOCIAL CRITICISM

IT is difficult, but not impossible, to maintain a close connection between the criticism that is offered of confining institutions and the human attitudes which are always the best protection against the misuse of social instruments. Ivan Illich shows this connection (see Frontiers) when he speaks of the self-control and personal responsibility which are the foundation of health for human beings.

Basically, then, his criticism of health insurance and of the arguments in its favor is that they tend to persuade people that there are purchasable substitutes for individual decision and self-regulated bodily care. He contends that the health of the nation is *not* primarily dependent upon the passage of health insurance legislation, and that advocacy of it on this basis amounts to a dangerous deception. The issue, then, is not whether or not the people of the country are to be made "healthy," but how they are to be influenced to think about health.

Lots of conscientious medical men are aware of the truth of such matters, and they do what they can to inspire individual responsibility for health, but the grain of popular opinion already tends in another direction. How many people take their ailing bodies—and lately their troubled minds and emotions—to a professional man, expecting to get a good repair job done, more or less in the way that a mechanic is able to fix a machine or replace a worn or broken part?

It seems obvious that a society or civilization based on habits of individual responsibility would have little need for attacks on institutions. For the trouble does not really lie in the institutions, since the faults of institutions are only a reflection of weaknesses in human attitudes. With enough change in attitudes, most institutions would change, too. Unless they have hardened in really unchangeable ways, institutions can always be adapted to the needs of human beings.

An example of this sort of adaptation is provided by what Dr. Rothman has done with the Livingston School in Brooklyn. She turned this institution into a remarkably flexible educational tool. The only really bad institution is one that has become too brittle to change.

Why, then, the big attack on institutions? For Dr. Illich, we think, it is mainly a means of calling attention to the drastic need for change in human attitudes. Who would have heard him if he spoke of "attitudes" alone?

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

most of the good books on education seem to be accomplished in the way of improvement; but a that they tell about the stubborn liveliness and this stop coming out? Probably not for a long even though it gets pretty discouraging to read are needed to make it absolutely plain that cities and communities are what need changing; as themselves. James Herndon doesn't quite say this *The Way it* but he

> What to do? You can read suggestions for intelligent men. I suppose I could add mine. But significant change in the way we educate our last thing we may soon expect—and so I have thought readers, the way it is.

The

Spozed To Be,

to notice that the sheer bigness and inflexibility of problems. Herndon, for example, could find seventh grade class in English. As he put it:

> High to find material for slow-reading kids to read. always books for little kids not only are these always they are also too childish in subject matter. It's been aren't necessarily slow in other ways, aren't less certainly aren't interested in the things first-graders

School books which are printed for hundreds commonplace for the reason that they must be of interest. They are certainly written without available to James Herndon "acknowledged Negroes or of a real lower class of any sort." The children in Herndon's class had never had:

> to a picture of some people camping beside a lake in a
>
> Look at them crazy people, Roy roared out. was some disbelief at this shocking circumstance, and Indians, that why they live in that tent! But didn't have the right clothes. Even 7B was upset by kid their age might go all over town by himself and and watch the planes take off—they thought that

Yet there were curious compensations:

> common, ordinary American experience taken for for once. For 7H wasn't bored by these childish reading about or about or and many of only problem being how to remain undetected while

He discovered that some of the seventh- library and hide them under other volumes, or

It might be said that these are problems case, but there are other objections to textbooks

written for enormous audiences of middle-class children. A little more than a year ago we quoted here a letter to the *New York Review of Books* written by Virginia Kidd, who teaches speech in the California State College in Sacramento, in which she spoke of the stereotyped behavior of the children described in books for first-graders in the California schools—more than 375,000 of them. What is the common denominator which all American children can be expected to find familiar, and is therefore practically the theme of the first-grade readers? The consumption of goods—going to the store and buying things. Miss Kidd says:

> Janet and Mark are inveterate consumers. American business would be proud of them. The value of acquiring objects is illustrated in each of the pre-primers, but it is the primer *Around the Corner* that most exactly demonstrates the value.
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> On page 29, Janet and Mark find a dime and reach one of the emotional climaxes of the book by quarreling over it. Mother, rather than reprimanding them, divides it, giving each a nickel. Janet's instant comment is: "Now we can get something." They leave immediately.
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> On page 67, Janet expresses a desire to do something exciting. Mother's solution is to buy T-shirts and earrings. . . .

The common lot is apparently very common indeed:

> Janet is never a potential artist, senator, scientist. Mark never will be an actor, professor, gourmet. . . . Mother's chief occupation, it is clear from the pictures, is washing dishes, cooking, sewing, ironing, and wearing aprons. . . . Daddy's chief occupation is coming home. Daddy is never seen wiping away Janet's tears or helping Mark clean his room; he plays ball with Mark. Mother never goes to work or drives the car; she helps Janet make a cake.

Books like this promise confinement in another sort of ghetto—the dull monotone of conventional life and acquisitive affluence. Except for the gloss of possessions and the better health of middle class children, such schools only repeat the deprivations of the ghetto at another level.

How can influences like this, which are everywhere, be overcome? Basically, they are overcome only by changing the tone and preoccupation of community life. With this would go reduction in the size of the schools. Finally, they would be overcome by finding resourceful and imaginative teachers. But unless there are changes in the community itself, good teachers can only contribute a holding action. This is really what Herbert Kohl accomplished, as he tells about his teaching in a New York ghetto school in *36 Children.* In order to interest the children in a reading lesson, he would begin by using the sports page of the daily papers. The Patterson-Liston fight was what they talked about among themselves, and with the report of the fight as a start, he was able to lead them into Patterson's book, *Victory Over Myself.* A New York *Times* analysis of the qualities of the two fighters helped to get the children involved. They also wanted to know how much the two men got for fighting, and this brought consideration of the percentages of the gate.

Kohl used the street slang of the children for a series of sessions on vocabulary. As he tells it:

> Charles jumped out of his desk and spoke for the first time during the year.
>
> 'You mean the way we talk—you know, with words like *cool* and *dig* and *sound*—may be all right?"
>
> "Uh huh. Language is alive, it s always changing, only sometimes it changes so slowly that we can't tell."
>
> Neomia caught on.
>
> "Mr. Kohl, is that why our reader sounds so old-fashioned?"
>
> And Ralph.
>
> "Mr. Kohl, when I called Michael psyches, was I creating something new?"

This interchange came after a long discussion, triggered when Ralph had scornfully shouted to another boy, "What's the matter, psyches, going to pieces again?"

Kohl picked up the slang word *psyches,* led the class back through its derivations to the root, *psyche,* and then, with the class intensely interested, put the word on the board in Greek characters, and told the children the story of Cupid and Psyche. When he had done, one girl said:

> "Mr. Kohl, they told the story and said things about the mind at the same time. What do you call that?"
>
> *"Myth* is what the Greeks called it."

It can be done. Children can be interested, helped to make discoveries, and hungers of the mind aroused in them. But it takes teachers who are free of routine, who choose or invent their own texts, and through sheer ingenuity generate the field of a micro-counter-culture in which the children can come alive.

So we need books like *The Way it Spozed To Be* and *36 Children* to show the way it is and how changes can begin to come about.

FRONTIERS

Health Is Not a Commodity

ALL through Ivan Illich's work there is an underlying theme which inevitably comes to the surface, although it does not attract the attention which his iconoclastic campaigns have been able to generate. Illich is mainly concerned with the development and restoration of the self-reliance and competence of individuals. This is his essential humanism, and his attack on the schools has been his way of dramatizing the anti-human effects of social institutions which work against individual capacity, resourcefulness, and responsibility as a result of assumptions about the nature of man which lead to the view that people can and must be manipulated for their own good. Illich's view is that a human being *cannot* be manipulated for his own good, since manipulation destroys his humanness. And the facts of history will show, he argues, that the manipulation which has become common practice through large public educational systems and other social institutions eventually has the effect of serving the interests, not of the people, but of the manipulators.

He uses statistical and other arguments to make a case for the abolition of schools and for the establishment of other means of education. There is natural resistance to these arguments. Practically everyone can remember at least one school teacher who is regarded with affection and respect. Illich might say that such teachers also need to be freed from schools, and to be allowed to accomplish much more for their pupils in less artificial and compromising relationships. To understand what he means, it is necessary to read his books and the various working papers issued by the Center for Intercultural Documentation, in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where he works.

Recently, Dr. Illich has proposed another major reform, this time in the thinking about health, how it is obtained and maintained, and the relation of the professional practice of medicine to human well-being. In a paper prepared last year, a basis for discussion, "The Illusion of Unlimited Health Insurance," he said:

> Health no more than education or national security can ever be delivered as if it were a commodity. Health can no more be the output of an industry than can independence, awareness and responsibility can be the output of schools. Production and delivery of special tools enter only marginally into what any sane man would call "health." Institutional planning and professional production in fact have a marginal place only in one of the four factors which determine the health of society.

Somewhat condensed, these factors are:

> (1) Above all a man's or a woman's health is a matter of personal responsibility, decision and self-activation. It might very well depend on the joyful austerity which motivates people to choose a walk rather than a ride; or it might be based in the ability to tend one's breast rather than squeeze a bottle; to be master of one's food, drink, sex, car or drug rather than be their slaves. In this sense each one is above all responsible for his health, responsible for the face which he makes at the age of forty. I doubt that anyone can assume this task unless he is willing to learn how to face death.
>
> (2) Each one is also responsible for the well-being of his fellow. He cannot shift the responsibility for personal care to others. Neither political activism, nor tax, charity or scientific contributions are a substitute for openness to intimacy when another is sick. Day-by-day healing happens in caring intercourse which takes place within the family, the commune, the neighborhood, and with lovers and friends.
>
> A trained nurse is at her best as a temporary assistant to the wife, the child, the friend whom the sick person wants near when he suffers or when he is about to die. A nation which relies on tradespeople for health care is as sad as one which would rely for love on brothels.
>
> (3) A healthy environment is the third condition. Just as over-production of physical goods poisons both the consumer and the innocent majority which is excluded from the enjoyment of industrial output, so does the over-production of services destroy the social environment. Just as poisoning and mutagenesis can permanently alter the environment and make it unfit for the human body, so can over-

> dependence on services destroy a society by denying man the opportunity to be undetermined and free. . .
>
> (4) As a fourth factor, health depends on the level of therapeutic technology and discipline available and spread in a society. It depends on some means used to stay healthy, such as calisthenics, yoga, psychotherapy, ritual or vaccines; and it depends on others which people need in a crisis to restore their health. Recent technological advances have greatly simplified the tools for diagnosis for *most common ailments*—especially those from which recovery is usually possible—as distinct from *mortal sickness.* Science has made the choice of effective remedies a routine. Professional experience has assembled the data to clarify the risks implicit in remedies, and it has also lowered the price of valuable drugs and implements so that all such health tools could be made available literally for all men. The range of lay therapy among consenting adults has been immensely expanded.

This article is mainly an appeal for the restoration of responsibility for health to the individual, and for a general realization that by no other means can people hope to be healthy. Health is not a commodity; neither is it a purchasable service. Illich contends that political demands for universal health insurance create very misleading illusions concerning the nature of health, by equating it with the services of medical specialists. He concludes by saying:

> . . . by focusing attention on the rights of the health consumer to treatment by professional monopolists and their para-medical handmaidens, we deepen the sense that all people are born clients of doctors and also to other tradesmen of services: that they are born deficient until saved by intangible consumption.
>
> Before the Reformation all people were considered born in sin until washed by the baptism of the Church. After the enlightenment, we discoverer that people were born stupid until educated (and later on socialized) by the school. Now we are about to "educate" people to the fact that they cannot be healthy unless they have access to physical and psychological treatment to "Health."

Whatever the appearance, this is not an attack on doctors, as other papers make clear. Under examination and criticism is a basic flaw in the technological society, which emerges as a tendency to render ordinary people helpless and dependent upon the services of high-priced specialists.