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NO EASY ANSWERS

CHANGE is plainly in the air, but what sort of change no one really knows. There are so many things going wrong that we have dozens of diagnoses and many theories of what we should do or start doing. At the same time we have a number of ideals that seem so right in their substance and inclination that no path of deliberated change could be the right one to take at the cost of those ideals. If we had to say what is the best thing to do in this time of multiple crises, we should answer by pointing to a number of individuals who are already doing what they believe is right to do for obvious reasons. They are not debating about it but doing it. We are thinking of men and women like John and Nancy Todd, co-founders of the New Alchemy Institute and of Ocean Arks International, of Wes and Dana Jackson of the Land Institute in Salina, Kansas, of John Jeavons of Ecology Action in Willits, Calif., and the farmer and writer, Wendell Berry, in Kentucky. These people are all working for a sustainable society in various ways, mostly through fundamental changes in the practice of agriculture. Fortunately, they are all articulate and explain what they are doing and why.

Yet there are many others around the country, writers and artists, book-sellers, men and women in business, who feel the need for change, recognize some of its requirements, and have already experienced in themselves subtle changes in attitude. We have an example of the latter in a paper prepared by a businessman for a conference of planners in which he tells about the changes he has himself gone through. Some of the things he says in this paper may be of interest to those who have similar feelings.

This man, Roy R. Anderson, is an actuary in a large and highly reputable insurance company. An actuary is one who does the major thinking for the company in planning its policies, and establishing its goals. When the company has problems, the actuaries are asked to solve them if they can. The solving of business problems, today, leads inquirers far beyond the problems of a particular business, especially those large enough to be perceptibly affected by widespread cultural trends. In his paper, from which we shall quote at some length, Mr. Anderson says:

> For about two decades, an increasing number of writers and speakers have been telling us that we are going through a period of unusual change. Two of the earliest of such books appeared in the late 1960s With titles that were appropriately descriptive: *An Age of Discontinuity* by Peter Drucker and *Future Shock* by Alvin Toffler. Since that time, there has been an increasing number of books by futurists that have been carrying messages of change.

What sort of change? Predictions vary greatly. Anderson says he belongs among those "who believe that the process of change we are going through is even deeper and more profound than that of a transition of the systems of society."

> We are going through a process of *transformation.* Moreover—and this is the seminal and critical point—this transformation is occurring not only to the *external* systems of our society, but also to the *internal*, personal systems of many of us as members of the human species. As the result of these personal transformations, we are changing the way we see things—what we believe and how we think about things—how we value things—and what we do about all that. To use a word that has come into common usage over the past two decades, we are in the process of changing our internal paradigms. . . . The nature of the process itself can't be precisely defined as comprising certain characteristics and not others. These observations about the fuzziness of our times can be made for many reasons, but the most fundamental factor is that each of us sees these things differently. We each live in our own world—our own reality—our own personal paradigm. Even our language fails us when we attempt to describe some of the things we have learned about the world we share. . . .
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> We can no longer analyze the dominant trends of the present and project them into the future with any degree of confidence. . . . Let's just consider a few of the names of 1986: Libya—Challenger—

> Chernobyl—Reykjavik—Boesky—Iran and the contras—Afganistan. Events such as these—and many others—do not foretell our future. Rather, they are evidence that we are in a period of crises. Our systems are becoming increasingly disfunctional. These events portend the demise of many of the systems of our society as we have known them.

Some futurists, Anderson says, use the metaphor of the caterpillar and the butterfly, wondering if we are on the verge of being transformed into something beautiful, but most agree that we are still in the "mush" stage of the caterpillar. . . . "With all of cur monitoring of events—and our analyses of trends—and our construction of forecasts and scenarios, we may be blinder to the realities of what is happening than we realize."

> The second thought is that the transformation to a new and better world may occur faster than we now deem possible. The third thought may seem even more strange to many. That is, that there is a "grand design" by which all living things are guided. From somewhere, all living things receive "signals"—and it is from these signals that butterflies are formed—that ants build ant hills—that salmon swim back to their sources—that our family of Cardinals makes its way back to our home in Madison each Spring.
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> I have come to accept all three of those thoughts. Perhaps especially the third one. The Sioux of the American Indians believe in a force—or signals from the Great Spirit—which they call "skan." All living things (and for them all things are alive) receive "signals" from skan, which determine their lives. Humans are different from all other living things in one critical respect. Humans have the precious right of choice. We get the signals—and it's up to us to do it right.

We interrupt here to remark that if the Sioux—and a lot of others—are right, and we have the power of choice, or free will, then, surely, we are supposed to get out of the messes we are in, ourselves, although getting some help from "skan" in finding our way. But we must surely *deserve* to get out, and where is the evidence of that!

Anderson wonders about the role of religion in all this, but notes in history the numerous wars "being fought in the names of religions of prophets who have taught peace—with the most violent of such wars often being between religions of the same prophet."

> Almost always, these wars have been supported by the religious hierarchies. As is the case with every other form of hierarchy in our culture, the religious hierarchies seem to place the highest priority on the survival of their own system. It is for these reasons that I am attracted to the spirituality of the American Indians, who live in constant contact with their deity. They profess no religion, they have no prophet or bible, and they have no priesthood.

Anderson now decides to provide a few lights for the reader on how it happened that these thoughts—so far afield from the insurance business—kept occurring to him. It is an interesting story.

> Back in 1970, I was chief actuary of Allstate Insurance Company. Actuaries are about as "left-brained" as you will find among the professions. I was asked to prepare a report on "The Insurance Business in the Year 2000." This led to my reading many books, such as those by Drucker and Toffler. . . . I learned of the myriad interrelated problems that confronted humankind. These were the problems subsequently identified in *Limits to Growth,* the report to the Club of Rome. . . . I prepared a report that had little to do with the insurance business—and much to do with the mess that the world was in.

Anderson's labors on his report about insurance in the year 2000 made him realize the greater importance of problems of civilization. But he still thought the really big companies—the multinationals—had a grip on things and were still in control. Then, as he relates, the gas shortages in 1973 made him realize that "the big corporations did not know what was going on," so he got clearance from his company to "go out and find out." A first step in this program was for him to become a member of the Trend Analysis Program (known as "TAP") of the Institute of Life Insurance.

> This remarkable operation was the first of its kind in the business world—and it has been the prototype for others. With a volunteer group of people from many Life Insurance companies, TAP monitored a number of avant garde publications as a type of radar system to discover unusual events and to prepare reports of significant trends.

Through TAP Anderson became acquainted with Willis Harman, who spoke at the 1975 Conference of TAP. Harman was an electrical engineer teaching at Stanford who had earlier discovered the reality of the subjective world and was then in process of articulating its implications. He called this way of looking at things the "New Copernican Revolution" in an article in *Stanford Today*, and in 1975 he was about to publish his *Incomplete Guide to the Future.* In his talk at the TAP conference he suggested that our society was approaching a period of transition by reason of "widespread political and social unrest, economic dislocations, loss of leadership and a loss of the faith of people in the institutions of society; etc." Anderson says:

> For me in the insurance business, the concept that our society was in the process of transition helped explain why the troubles of so many of the lines of insurance had become so endemic and intractable. Our lines of insurance were in trouble because the underlying social and economic systems they insure were themselves in trouble.

Anderson speaks of two papers he had prepared on health insurance and liability insurance, the troubles for which originate from the troubles of the systems of medicine and tort law. Then he says:

> In his talk at the TAP conference, Willis Harman also spoke of paranormal powers of the mind. Up to that point, I had swallowed whole the dominant belief of our Western culture that the scientific method is the only source of truth. To me, things such as ESP, pre-cognition and all such stuff were some form of mumbo-jumbo. However, it was clear that Willis Harman thought there was something to these things—and also that they were important to this whole business of the transformation of society. I knew that Bill was an engineer—but my instincts were to question and doubt. However, an important thought came to me. I realized that if I were to mistrust and refuse all evidence of paranormal powers of the mind, I would be prejudging the issue. There would be no point in thinking about such things—and if I didn't, I might be missing something important. So I decided to keep an open mind and to follow Bill's lead and see where it would lead me.
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> Almost immediately, I was given evidence of the existence of pre-cognition. Another speaker at the same conference was Gertrude Schmeidler, a professor of psychology at CUNY. She presented data she had been compiling for several decades on the ability of people to forecast events of the future. The tests were hardly earth-shaking in content—but the results were extremely significant. Students were given the assignment of forecasting the digits that would be run off on the following day in tabulations of randomly-generated numbers. The statistics that Gertrude Schmeidler had compiled were, for me, overwhelming! It gave hard, statistical evidence that people do have the power of pre-cognition.

As a result of absorbing the results of such investigations, Anderson began to think in a different way about the powers and potentialities of the human mind. Terms such as Mind, Spirit, Soul, began to take on a degree of meaning for him. He began to think about the biases locked up in language and its numerous confinements. And on the positive side he remarked in one place:

> I'll add yet one more factor that I believe serves to mold our mental models. As the result of my experiences, I have come to believe in reincarnation—that is, that each of us is a unique mind/spirit/soul that lives throughout eternity. We have lived before—live now—and will live again. Each time we are born (and I sense that we choose when and to whom to be born), we bring with us our "knowledge" from prior lifetimes. How much of this we put to good use will depend on the experiences we undergo—and the choices we make. Each culture does a very thorough job of re-programming its members into accepting the dominant "consensus of reality" of that culture—beginning at the time of birth.

There is a lot more in this paper of some twenty-five pages—on the books Anderson has been reading and the numerous currents of thought he has been investigating. At the end he tells about two conversations he had with friends who are doing similar sorts of research. In the first conversation he told his friend about the conclusion he had reached—that while most planners still think they can project economic systems into the future by mechanical means, he had become convinced that the real task is perceiving the realities of the present. As he explained, "That's far harder than it seems, because we are all locked into our own world-views, and we

often can't see the significance of what's under our noses."

> It had been the practice of my friend to prepare three alternative scenarios for his management. These were essentially economic scenarios, with much supporting economic data. However, they were more than the usual "high," "middle" and "low" versions. Each of the three reflected significantly different assumptions of what would be going on in the major systems of the world. In response to my comments, there was a short silence from the other end. [The conversation was by phone.] He then replied that he had come to essentially the same conclusion—the realization that he should no longer think in terms of trying to portray alternative versions of the future. Rather, he should think of his scenarios as being alternative pictures of the present. Moreover, none of his three scenarios contained any numbers.
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> The other call came to me on the afternoon of New Year's Eve. This friend consults with several major foreign multi-national corporations. He was in the process of constructing alternative economic scenarios for presentation to his clients, early in 1987—much as my other friend had been doing. He, too, asked me what I was up to, and what I thought was going on these days.

This friend, Anderson says, probably called him because he knew of Anderson's antipathy for giving too much weight to conventional economic theory, and his preference to look behind political and social happenings. In any event, this was in general his reply:

> Political tensions have continued to increase—in the Middle East—and in Central America. Because of both Reykjavik and the Iran/hostages/contra affairs, relationships between the U.S. and its allies—have become even more cloudy. Challenger and Chernobyl have shown the world that the scientists can't handle their own monsters. The world is again suffering from a lack of strong and effective global leaders. Terrorism continues to expand—in type and definition—in severity—and by geography. Both AIDS and the drug problem continue to grow at a frightening pace. The lawyers continue to mess up the economy and the lives of people with their greedy tort system. Boesky and his ilk have shown us the damage that can be caused by the predators of Wall Street. The concentration of the leaders of the business world has become focused on self-preservation, both of their corporations and of their own managements. The major goal of much of American business is that of producing short-term profits—at the cost of long-term growth. Meanwhile, the paper-shufflers of Wall Street have been making enormous profits—at the same time that American businesses have been losing their worldwide competitive positions and their markets. Meanwhile American workers have been losing jobs. American farmers have been losing farms. . . .
>
> I could have said more—such as by commenting on the increasingly fragile international banking and financial systems—and the possible birth of the protectionism among nations that helped to bring on the depression of the 30s. However, I was sure that my friend was thoroughly up to date on international economic affairs . . .
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> He said that he had come to the conclusion that the major message that he should give to his clients was not in economic terms at all. He agreed with points that I had made. However, the force that he believes has become the dominant one in determining the future of our society is that of personal values—and, in particular, in the erosion of standards of morality—and, in this area, the deteriorating moral values of young people. I don't think I fully share his pessimism on this issue—or that I place the same priority on it. However, what is important is the importance he now places on issues of a non-economic nature—and with this I am in agreement.

But how are businessmen going to respond to such counsels? As Anderson's friend put it:

> But my friend posed one more crucial question: how do you present this issue to clients who are expecting scenarios in economic terms—and who are accustomed to making their decisions in such terms?

There is no easy answer to this question. Yet the question is rapidly becoming the only one worth thinking about. Roy Anderson's paper is his story of finding this out. And, of course, each man's and each woman's way of finding this out is different. That is why we printed extracts from what he said. If you found them interesting and useful, you might write him and tell him so, at 35 Bartlett Drive, Madison, Conn. 05443.

REVIEW
STUDIES OF COMPASSION

THERE is a sense in which Nancy Macdonald's book, *Homage to the Spanish Exiles* (Human Sciences Press, New York, N.Y., 1987, $19.95), is entirely anecdotal, which makes for both confusion and strength. But the strength is far more important than the confusion. The only "order" you can find in the book is the heroic courage and devotion to principle of the exiles and the equally impressive determination of the people, here and abroad, who did what they could to help them.

Our own interest in Nancy Macdonald's work in behalf of the Spanish refugees in France from Franco—after he had destroyed the Spanish Republic—began when the tiny group which started MANAS in 1948 read in *politics* (a monthly magazine founded by Dwight Macdonald in 1944) about *politics* Packages Abroad. This announcement in *politics* for October, 1945, began—"Here Is What You Can Do"—

> We have collected from our own files and from friends of the magazine, the addresses of a number of families abroad who desperately need food and clothing this winter. These people are fighters for the ideals the readers of *politics* believe in. Some of them have been returned from years of imprisonment in German concentration and even death camps, all of them have suffered and struggled for OUR cause. They are Socialists, Trotskyists, Anarchists, Leftists of every shade. They are French, Italian, Dutch, German, etc.
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> There is no point in sending them money, since money will buy little in Europe today. (It costs $20 to get a pair of shoes resoled in France.) Food, clothing, soap, needles and thread—is what is needed.

politics readers responded magnificently, many of the contributors of food and clothes packages expressing gratitude to *politics* for the names and addresses of needy people with whom they enjoyed corresponding as well. By a month after the first announcement appeared, over a hundred readers had begun to send packages. By December new offers to send packages were coming in at the rate of ten a day. Meanwhile names of the needy kept pouring in from France. By February, 1946, Nancy, who had undertaken to run PPA (*politics* Packages Abroad), had four hundred people on her lists. The mailing of packages went on, and by 1952 Nancy realized that of all the Europeans, the Spanish Refugees seemed almost forgotten and most urgently in need of help. So, at the end of the year, she and Dwight got out a letter proposing the formation of SRA—Spanish Refugee Aid, and the organization was formed. James T. Farrell was the chairman and Nancy did the practical work. Farrell was succeeded by Mary McCarthy, she by Hannah Arendt, then Dwight Macdonald until his death in December, 1982.

As to the success of the work of Spanish Refugee Aid, Nancy writes:

> SRA's goal for its first year was to collect $25,000. In 32 years we raised over $5 million. We managed to raise in 1953-1954 $19,000 in cash and almost another $4,000 in clothing and "goods in kind"—hearing aids, typewriters, and other useful equipment.
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> Much of the money was given by individuals in small amounts. We first mailed out 5,500 appeals signed by Casals. Renee Peterson, who had been a fund-raiser for the International Rescue Committee, suggested that we mail 500 from Prades, France. We did this, with no notable response. She also explained how to exchange lists with other organizations whose donors might be interested in our cause (Spanish, musical, libertarian humanitarian), and how to approach foundations and give benefits. Besides appeals sent in the name of Casals (and later of his widow Marta Casals Istomin), we sent them from our Honorary Chairmen, Salvador de Madariaga and Alexander Calder.

One year, letters were sent in the name of Albert Camus. Calder gave 32 sets of lithographs over a period of years, amounting in cash value to over $500,000.

The bulk of this book is made up of interviews with the refugees, men and women that Nancy met and talked to on her visits to France

and sometimes to Spain. She recorded what they said and later arranged for translations. She says:

> By 1952 there were still 160,000 Spanish political exiles in France—13 years after the end of the Civil War. There continued to be more Spanish refugees in France than any other national group of exiles. Many had migrated, mostly to Mexico and Latin America, and a few to various other countries. But by 1952 only a very few were going back, and those mostly to die. Those with life still before them chose to live it and to raise their children in free France.
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> The 6 years of misery endured by Spanish refugees during WW II can only be grasped in the context of the French concentration camps. Here almost all the exiles whom we were later to help, had been held. Euphemistically, the camps were called reception internment or lodging centers.

France, it must be remembered, was now very poor, and had been occupied by the Nazi forces. Nancy Macdonald found out about what these people had endured—and many of them still enduring—and brought relief to these victims of Franco. Her book is unforgettable. It simply tells the truth—an intimate study of both incredible cruelty and inhumanity on the one hand, and a rather wonderful compassion on the other.

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We have for attention a book that we can't possibly review—too much research and calculation has gone into it—but we are pleased to take note of the *Pyramid Odyssey* by William R. Fix, published by Mercury Media in paperback at $12.95, P.O. Box 54, Wake, Virginia 23176. It is really a book on how people make up their minds and the changes that take place in this process. The author writes about the great Pyramid of Gizeh in Egypt and about two smaller pyramids in that area. He has read all the pyramid literature that seems of importance, goes over the measurements, makes some corrections and draws a few new conclusions. He says in his first chapter:

> The Great Pyramid has fascinated men for thousands of years. It is mentioned in documents going back thirty-five centuries and has inspired hundreds of books and a myriad of articles, theories, speculations and comments. It commands the interest of millions and the fascination of the Pyramid is reaching extraordinary proportions. It is almost as if, by some universal instinct, men expect a great light to come from Gizeh—a light which will reveal the secrets of its origin and purpose.
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> This is a travelogue of an odyssey through fields of ignorance and knowledge surrounding the Seventh Wonder of the World and from there into the depths of the past and to the brink of the future. Although we will explore recent scientific discoveries about the Pyramid, this is not a scientific document in the sense that our journey will not be confined to the boundaries of a particular discipline. We will freely trespass into areas long shunned by the academic community.

Fix shows that the builders of the Pyramid were able, using simple arithmetic, to define the circumference of the earth and to provide "a very accurate image of the size and shape of our planet, including the flattening at the poles and the equatorial bulge, which were not rediscovered until the eighteenth century of our era." He also shows that there are various reasons for rejecting the idea that the Great Pyramid was constructed as a tomb. One of the good things about this author is that he seems entirely free of the modern conceit that we in our time know more and are smarter than the ancient Egyptians. For example, he begins an early chapter by pointing out that "we do not know how" the Great Pyramid was built. As he puts it:

> Simple arithmetic shows that either the Pyramid took an incredibly long time to build and/or that it must have been built by a very technologically advanced society. But the mystery doesn't end there. There is strong archaeological evidence that the casing blocks were put in place from above.

While the guides available to conduct tourists and visitors around and inside the pyramid to this day explain that it was a tomb, a researcher friend told Fix: "Of course you know, *no* original burial has *ever* been found in *any* pyramid in Egypt."

Fortunately, this book is lavishly illustrated with photographs. Even so, it is hard for the

reader to realize how *big* the Pyramid is. As Fix says:

> The Pyramid originally covered an area of 13.11 acres. Some of its stones weigh 70 tons—as much as a railroad locomotive. The total Pyramid weighs about six million tons. There is more stone in the Great Pyramid than in all the churches, chapels and cathedrals built in England since the time of Christ. If all the stone in the Pyramid were sawed into blocks one foot on an edge and these were laid end to end, they would stretch two thirds of the way around the equator. . . . The Great Pyramid alone contains enough material to build thirty Empire State Buildings.

The attractive thing about this book is the spirit of the writer. He is not a true believer, but he has an open and inquiring mind and he is not shackled in his thinking by preconception. In some passages toward the end of the book he says things that give the reader confidence in his good judgment—such as "that the more we know, . . . the more we study the history and nature of man, the more it seems that what is apparently fantasy at one time becomes reality at another, and when we look into the distant past or the future it becomes increasingly difficult to separate the fantastic from what we call 'real'."

COMMENTARY
THE BIELER BOOK

BACK in 1974 (Feb. 13), in Review, we quoted from a well known and respected teacher of preventive medicine, Dr. Herbert Ratner, on two paradoxes in American medical practice, of which he said:

> One is that though the United States is the best place in the world to have a serious illness (because with our technical talents we have developed a high level of competency in handling complicated serious illnesses), it is one of the worst countries in the world in which to have a non-serious illness.

Asked why this should be, he said:

> Because as actionists, we feel more comfortable doing something and having something done to us, we impose our life-saving drugs and techniques, intended for serious ailments, on minor, even trivial illnesses—illnesses that are self-limiting and that, except for occasional symptomatic relief, do better without interference from the physician. It is generally recognized that America is the most overmedicated, most over-operated, and most over-inoculated country in the world. It is also the most anxiety-ridden country with regard to health.

This was quoted in introduction to review of a book which came to the attention of the reviewer through a personal illness which a physician helped overcome by applying the methods suggested in the book—which is *Food Is Your Best Medicine,* by Henry G. Bieler. There seemed so much good sense in this book that the reviewer praised it highly. A few weeks later, however, we received a letter from an orthodox M.D. who objected to the review on the ground that Bieler's method of treatment went beyond the limits of established medical knowledge. He diagnosed various human ills as toxemia, or poisoning by food or medicine, and he felt that the evidence for this diagnosis was plain enough. His patients trusted his judgment and most of them got well. Medical orthodoxy did not agree on grounds of insufficient proof of toxicity. Yet the patients agreed and recovered, following Bieler's advice.

Why do we speak of this now? Because a paperback (Ballantine) edition of Bieler's book recently reached our desk and we started reading it again, regaining a sense of the importance of what Bieler says. He explains in his introduction:

> I discarded drugs partly because I began to re-examine an old, medical truism that nature does the real healing, utilizing the natural defenses of the body. . . .
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> Briefly stated, my position is: improper foods cause disease; proper foods cure disease.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
ON STUDYING

FROM time to time we are overtaken by a sense of futility in looking for "good material" for this department. It is so hard to find. But then, something good turns up and we are greatly relieved. The "something good" that we have at the moment is the last chapter of the first book of a new publisher in England—Green Books, whose name gives some idea of the nature of the undertaking. The address is Ford House, Hartland, Biddeford, Devon EX 39 6EE, U.K. The title of the book is *New Renaissance,* the author Maurice Ash, an economist who has written books on planning and education, and was for years Chairman of the Town and Country Planning Association. His new book is made up of essays, largely based on the experience of various enterprises in Britain and therefore not easy for American readers to understand, as well as quite abstract. Yet there are valuable passages which make it worth reading. We'll be quoting from them a little later.

First we'd like to speak of the difficulty of finding good material. The difficulty lies in the fact that while great educational ideas may be developed by unusual teachers, when they are embodied in systems they become "institutionalized," as we say, and are devitalized. There seems no way in which this can be avoided. It is the same as defining an insight of genius. A precisely defined insight is almost sure to be a devitalized insight destroyed by the bureaucratic mind. That kind of definition is an unimaginative substitute for the genius that bureaucrats do not possess and which they later make up for by claiming authority. Authoritarians make rules, and rules—too many of them—throttle originality, as John Holt proved again and again in his books on education and in articles about the values of home schooling. Schools have to have rules—the bigger the schools, the more rules, and the more rules the less spontaneity and the less education. The father or mother who may be almost illiterate yet loves and understands the needs of a child soon learns from experience how best to teach their own child—as a reading of how they work and what they discover, which they describe in the paper Holt started ten years ago, in letters, makes plain. The paper is *Growth Without Schooling,* six issues a year, $20, the address 729 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

Articles and books about schools are usually, although not always, about organizations. Some times they are about the blocks and hazards which organizations put in the way of teaching, as though these difficulties were an inherent problem of education, which of course they are not. Now and then comes along a book by a teacher who knows intuitively what teaching is and what it is not, which we delight in reviewing. But we get very few of these. Then there are books by such writers as Ortega—but alas there has been but one Ortega—who taught all his life and understood the human situation in the same way that Plato understood it. The best brief discussion of education we know is Ortega's first chapter (lesson) of *Some Lessons in Metaphysics* (Norton, 1960) which was titled in Spanish "On Studying and the Student" and often quoted from here. Ortega taught this course at the University of Madrid during 1932-33. Toward the end of the first lesson he said:

> If a whole generation should cease to study, nine-tenths of the human race then alive would die a violent death. The number of men now living can continue to subsist only by virtue of the superior techniques of making good use of the planet that the sciences make possible. Techniques can be taught, mechanically. But techniques live on knowing, and if this cannot be taught, an hour will come in which the techniques too will crumble.
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> So one must study. This, I repeat, is one of man's needs, but it is an external, mediate necessity like moving to the right as the traffic officer directs when I need to go walking. But between the two external necessities studying and moving to the right—there is an essential difference which is the thing that converts study into a substantive problem. In order for traffic to function perfectly, it is not necessary that I feel an intimate need to go to the right; it is enough that I do, in fact, move in that direction, that I accept the need for this, that I pretend to feel it. But it is not the same with study; in order for me truly to understand a science, it is not enough

> for me to pretend the need for it within myself; or, what is the same thing, it is not enough that I have the will to accept it; in short, it is not enough that I study. It is also necessary that I should genuinely feel the need of this, that I be spontaneously and truly preoccupied with its questions; only then will I understand the answers it gives or tries to give. . . . The solution to so crude a two-horned problem may be inferred from what I have said; it does not consist of decreeing that one not study, but of a deep reform of that human activity called studying and, hence, of the student's being. In order to achieve this, one must turn teaching completely around and say that primarily and fundamentally teaching is only the teaching of a need for the science and not the teaching of the science itself whose need the student does not feel.

This is where Ortega comes out—we should teach, not "knowledge," but the hunger for it! All important knowledge the student will teach to himself, once he has a real desire for it. There cannot be any meaningful reform in education until this is generally understood and accepted. We need to know, in short, more about human beings. And we need to know, as Rousseau put it, that "Childhood has its own ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling." Maurice Ash quotes this, in his last chapter, and he also quotes from Rousseau that "they"—doubtless school administrators—"are always looking for the man in the child, without considering what he is before he becomes a man." To break educators of these terrible habits, it will be necessary to change the entire social world, not just a few administrators. Meanwhile, the materialism of the age has drained the meaning from our common life. Ash says:

> In fact, the accusation that lies against the quantitative knowledge by which our schools have become dominated—just as our civilization is dominated—is that it has brought us to a formless Age, a way of life that is fragmented and meaningless. No wonder "Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold," or that the authority of the teacher's certitudes is falling into contempt!

Ash goes on:

> Schools, in this scenario, should not really be necessary. As it is, however, they are an admission of society's failure: they are the surrogates of community. We do not have a society in which schools could be dispensed with, because we have lost (or all but lost) the communities a child would need in order for the knowledge he acquires to be made meaningful. (Conversely, we have a growing store of meaningless knowledge.) . . .
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> That world does not any more exist in which to be a person is also compatible with, say, altruism. To be a "person," today, is almost tantamount to being egocentric. Conversely, to not be Selfish in a materialistic society is nearly suicidal: to give of "oneself" in a world of quantitative values stretches credulity. This rot has attacked the roots of progressive education also. What it means, surely if paradoxically, is that we are entering one of those phases in history where whatsoever is meaningful has to be recreated. . . .
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> The hope should . . . be that schools might be the catalysts of change: of change, that is, in their surrounding communities—or what should become their surrounding communities—such that between school and community there would come to be no perceptible difference. . . . But of course, this presumes huge social changes, and the reversal of trends towards the large and impersonal in scale going back over more than two hundred years.

Now comes the final paragraph of Maurice Ash, with which we also conclude:

> Yet it is not impossible. Between the hierarchical society of orthodox education and the anarchical society (so unnerving to some) of the true progressive school—in which Martin Buber's "I—Thou" word necessarily obtains, in all its forlorn nobility—there must surely be another course. It is one that can only be made possible, however, in a community whose members themselves take responsibility for its children. For where this happens knowledge will have meaning and children will no more be manipulated than the community would manipulate itself. (Perhaps the Kibbutz would repay more study?) The duality of our life would be inescapably present in such circumstances: the child would both grow as a child, for he would be known personally by his teachers, and he would acquire knowledge of the world. Pace Rousseau, he would become both man and citizen. But neither component would be enshrined in a principle, or institutionalized, to the exclusion of the other. The community, if it is to have any reality, would not allow this. It is not, in the end, education that must change society, but society education, because education has no separate existence.

FRONTIERS

Diverse Potentialities

WE see, Thoreau remarks, in one of his last essays in 1862, just what we are looking for. The interests with which we have loaded the mind construct the perspective of our sight. "Objects," he says in Autumnal Hints, "are concealed from our view, not so much because they are out of the course of our visual ray as because we do not bring our minds and eyes to bear on them; for there is no power to see in the eye itself, any more than in any other jelly." So it is with many of the critics of the 1980s, who look back upon the late 60s and seventies and remember the Vietnam war, what Tom Wolfe labeled the "Me Decade," and what Christopher Lasch called *The Culture of Narcissism*—all accurately enough. But then, after a time, other writers take a further look and see very different things. Such a book is Arthur Stein's *Seeds of the Seventies* (University Press of New England, published for University of Rhode Island, 1985), in which the author found much more promising signs. He says in his Introduction:

> What emerges is a wide diversity of individuals, groups, and movements actively engaged in innovative socially and politically concerned activities. Many of these people and organizations speak of social justice and a more peaceful world order. Some seek to build alternative institutional forms, while others work at a variety of traditional occupations within existing societal structures. Some say they are primarily engaged in "working on themselves" and becoming more "centered," in the belief that a person can best be a social reformer by first re-forming himself or herself. Most would not want to be placed in any one category. They do not belong to a common movement as such. They do, though, share an aspiration to build more integrated lives for themselves and to contribute to positive developments in their communities. . . . Together they constitute an antithesis to the "Me-Decade" stereotype. . . .
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> I join those who deplore expressions of American chauvinism. Yet this nation, which has the megapower to precipitate the destruction of humankind, also has great potential for doing good and exerting positive leadership. Virtually all the world's racial, religious, ethnic, and cultural traditions are found somewhere in America. In this sense the United States is a microcosm of the world's people and all have an interest in the success of the American democratic experiment. . . . Every nation, and indeed each person, has a unique role to play in response to the life-threatening challenges of our age—not only to survive, but to develop a planetary consciousness more worthy of the name *homo* sapiens. In this context what happens here in the United States has major repercussions throughout the world.

The book, in short, is a modest encyclopedia of the "good things" happening in our time, starting, say, with Helen and Scott Nearing, going on to Wendell Berry, and then gives attention to many good people and groups we may never have heard of. This is an informative and heartening book

Here we want to tell about one good thing happening in California that Stein doesn't happen to include in his book, although most of the individuals and groups he writes about have been noticed in these pages. We have in mind a small booklet by John Jeavons, titled *The Complete 21-Bed Biointensive Mini Farm*—No. 14 in Ecology Action's Self-Teaching Mini-Series, available at $2 from Ecology Action, 5798 Ridgewood Road, Willits, Calif. 95490. Jeavons was a Yale graduate and a systems analyst for large firms when, living in Palo Alto, he learned about prospective food shortages throughout the world. He became interested in how people could take care of their food requirements by growing their own. He studied with Alan Chadwick, learning from him the techniques of Biodynamic/French Intensive Gardening, obtained the use of some land in Palo Alto, and began to teach others how to use the method. He wanted to teach teachers, not just people, because he felt there was great need for this knowledge to be spread. He also wrote books which have had a wide sale to people who needed to start from scratch. The books and the Mini-series of pamphlets were the teaching instruments used by those unable to come to Palo

Alto, or to the larger experimental garden later acquired by Ecology Action in Willits, California.

The motivation for his work is well put at the beginning of the mini-pamphlet (No. 14) that we have at hand. Each day, Jeavons begins by saying, "there is less earth, water, forest, plant and animal diversity for each of us to share and enjoy." Everywhere are growing deserts, deforestation, dry wells and hungry people.

> If each of us on the Earth had a lifestyle like yours and mine, the world would require five times the resources it now possesses to satisfy us!
>
> What humanity needs is not richer lives for all people like those we ourselves live, but better lives with more quality created from less. This means an abundance we can all appreciate as we create a life of wholeness and beauty from the planet around us. The time to begin is now.
>
> Each of us now needs to become a universal world person, responsible for his or her own part of the biosphere, for our own backyard mini-farm microcosm of the earth in its own small ecosystem.
>
> By the year 2000, one estimate indicates that in the Third World (where 80% of the world's population will live) there may be as little as 2,100 square feet, about 1/20 of an acre, of arable land left for each man, woman and child. Yet it now takes an average of 30,000 square feet to feed a person in these countries by the actual agricultural techniques being practiced. If more "advanced" farming practices could be afforded, it would still take 5,000 to 10,000 square feet to feed one person in these countries.
>
> Why not design a learning, living, teaching model which would have the potential of allowing an individual eventually to grow *all* of his or her compost (soil fertility), diet and income crops in such a 2,100-square-foot area? (Or a larger, but still relatively small growing area in short-growing-season climates, in poor soils, and while you are building up your skills.) This 21-bed growing area would require two to four hours per day of personal time after the beds are established. It could be divided into 3 sections of 7 biointensive growing beds, each bed composed of 100 square feet of planted area. There would be one section of compost crops, one of diet crops, and one of income-producing crops. This unit could be used as homesites, by students in college agro-ecology programs, and at mini-ag stations around the world.

It is actually impossible to "review" a publication like this one. You can't really understand it except on the land, carrying out the instructions. But if you get and read the literature, you are likely to be fired up and become a missionary, which is what happened to Jeavons. From an intellectual point of view, this is the best formula for sustainable health—and sustainable everything else that we know of.