

The greater part of this issue of ANARCHY is devoted to two men who have spent most of their lives in the liberation of the young: David Wills, who is about to begin another of his experiments, and A. S. Neill, who book Summerhill (an extract appeared in ANARCHY 11) has just been published in London, and is discussed here by Dachine Rainer.

Why are such men rare? Paul Reiwald asks himself this question and answered "Because we do not want them." And Howard Jones in Reluctant Rebels, notes that "It has been necessary for A. S. Neill, G. A. Lyward, W. David Wills, and other pioneers, to carry out their group experiments with children outside the official educational system. Wills, when running Hawkspur camp, a therapeutic community of unsettled adolescents, once approached the British Home Office for sponsorship and was told that this camp would not receive such official support until it was much more orderly."

The fact is, Wills writes, "that we are all offenders under the skin. We all have ungenerous, malicious, even murderous thoughts and impulses which we are careful to keep in check, but which nevertheless are there under the surface, as roaring lions seeking whom they may devour. These impulses are often stronger than we suspect, and we are frightened of them. When we see them 'escape' in other people, those people become for us symbols of our own unconscious impulses, and we want to stamp on them. 'Punish him', we cry, 'whip him, hang him'; and we feel a little better. Therefore, send not to know for whom the hangman's bell tolls; it tolls for thee. It is ourselves we want to punish."

Our society does not really want the liberators, because it does not want freedom and responsibility. It wants conformity and gets it, and it gets besides, the pathetically inadequate characters whose case histories appear in Wills' books, as well as people like Robert Allerton, who has formed, as Tony Parker puts it "a viable asocial pattern of his own." David Downes in ANARCHY's review of The Courage of His Convictions by Parker and Allerton, concludes that before we stand any chance of changing him we must change ourselves.

But our society gets too, the questioning, non-conforming characters who are the agents of social change, and among them we affectionately number Neill and Wills. "I have every sympathy," Wills writes in his little book Common Sense About Young Offenders "with those who, seeing the State as an evil, would like to do away with it and substitute some form of voluntary association. But in the meantime it is with us . . ."

In the meantime it is with us and this is the aspect of our theme which links it with the last two issues of ANARCHY, which were on Direct Action and Disobedience. For the State is not a thing, it is, in the words we quoted from Gustav Landauer, "a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently." Neill and Wills are exemplars of this different mode of human behaviour.

THE WORK OF DAVID WILLS



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A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST IDEAS

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the work of DAVID WILLS



ANTHONY WEAVER

THAT DAVID WILLS HAS RECENTLY LEFT Bodeham Manor in Herefordshire, the school he ran for maladjusted children, provides a moment to assess his work over the past 35 years. What have been the essentials of his method in the three places, Hawkspur, Barns, and Bodenham, with which his name is associated, what has been his influence, through them and through his books, outside?

As a young man he was on the staff at the Wallingford Farm Training Colony. Then he was a strict disciplinarian: indeed his toughness with his colleagues has remained, and it has enabled him to wage a continual struggle with the several Ministries concerned with child care. But he has had the humility and courage entirely to change his methods and has made explicit the futility of a discipline based upon fear, the more especially if it is intended to be therapeutic. Then he could walk into a rowdy room and command absolute silence by a mere glance. This had gradually been attained, despite being mobbed and stoned at one point, by superior physical strength and quite vicious cuffing. He himself in sheer panic at losing control, had ruled by fear.

One is reminded of the admission by Makarenko of the occasions when he used to patrol the Gorki Colony at night with a gun. Having thus established his authority he dispensed with the gun, but despite the veneration with which succeeding generations regarded him, his work of curing was to this extent vitiated. Notoriously Makarenko was lacking in psychological insight and depended almost exclusively upon the therapy of work. The value of this of course was understood by Homer Lane, independently and before him in time, and has been

ANTHONY WEAVER, as headteacher at Alresford (referred to in the article on clinical significance) was associated with Alex Bloom and with the Hawkspur psychiatrist, Dr. Franklin. He has described the work there in his book They Steal for Love. He reviewed Exceptional Children in ANARCHY 3, is joint secretary of the Fédération Internationale des Communautés d'Enfants and convenor for the Committee of 100 schools for non-violence.

followed in this country by Wills, Balbernie and Lennhoff. Outside the Soviet Union, Makarenko's influence in conjunction with that of Hermann Lietz and Gustav Wyneken in Germany and Poland at the beginning of the century has found its fullest expression in the "work basis" of Youth Aliyah in settling immigrant adolescents in children's villages and schools within the Kibbutzim in Israel.

From Wallington, Wills went to Woodbrook, the Quaker training college in Birmingham where he met Ruth who was to become his wife, and whence he gained a scholarship to go to the USA to take the course for psychiatric social workers. Though this is not a recognised qualification in Britain it did in fact become the prototype for the Mental Health training for PSWs this side of the Atlantic.

Temperamentally perhaps Wills was incapable of being a drill sergeant. Thus, Quaker that he is, early in 1935, he wrote an article in the *Friend* suggesting bolder experiment in the treatment of young offenders. And at this time Miss Ciceley Craven of the Howard League for Penal Reform put him in touch with a remarkable psychiatrist, Marjorie Franklin, who had just formed the Q Camps Committee with the same purpose in mind. Together she as part of the Treatment and Selection team in London*, he as Camp Chief in Essex, worked out another kind of discipline.

The purpose of Q Camps was to provide training in a free environment on sympathetic and individual lines, for young men who—mainly through environmental causes—presented difficulties in social adjustment or had been in unfortunate circumstances (whether or not they were actual law breakers).

In the summer of 1936 Q Camps Committee bought a 26 acre field near Great Bardfield in Essex. Wills, his team of helpers and the young men lived in tents while they set themselves about the task of cultivating the land and building themselves living quarters which they began to occupy by November. The element of pioneering thus implied was an essential ingredient in the method of treatment. In the *Hawkspur Experiment*, from which a long extract follows, Wills describes the four years of this work with pristine freshness, and reveals his famous "attitude" which later writing has only served to elaborate in different forms.

"Protagonists of the 'give him a bit of discipline' school argue" he says, "that discipline gives a chap time for reflection, makes him think a bit, makes him face up to things and so forth. It may give him the opportunity for all these things, but what it dismally fails to provide is the stimulus. Only freedom can do that, and the process is not a painless one. Those who believe in "making it hot" for the offender think they can do so by means of a rigid discipline. They would be surprised if they knew how many there are who simply love it. They will be even more surprised, and, I fear incredulous, when I tell them that by avoiding discipline of the

*With Dr. Norman Glaister of Grith Pioneers, and Dr. Denis Carroll of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, and Otto Shaw, educational psychologist, already headmaster of Redhill School for maladjusted boys, now at Maidstone.

authoritarian type we can make it much "hotter" for them—though that is of course a by-product, and not our aim. Under a system of rigid discipline Tom would simply have groused as he did at Hawkspur and would never have had the opportunity which our freedom gave him of beginning to learn that the fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves, *that we are unhappy*.

Two things contribute to the discomfort of the campers. One is that they come to us hating themselves, and displace their hatred onto the camp. The other is the very fact of being free, of having to discipline one's self, instead of being disciplined by others is a burden. So we have to temper the wind to the shorn lamb by providing just as much discipline as they need—and they create it themselves through the medium of the Camp Council. So now we see self government in a new light. It is not merely a privilege that is bestowed upon them because we superior mortals think the experience might be useful for them. It is an absolute necessity to enable them to set a term to the horrors of personal self-discipline which we have thrust upon them by refusing to be authoritarian. And as they control the machinery they can roughly suit it to their needs. Thus we have the man who is notoriously the untidiest, himself suggesting that there be a fine of one penny for untidy bunks.

But there is still more than all that in this freedom. Probably the most important aspect is one upon which I have not yet touched.

The youths who come to Hawkspur Camp are in some sense disordered. They are not whole. When I say they are not whole I do not mean they are not all there. I do not mean their minds are deranged (though we have had some of those). I mean that they are—if you like—socially sick. More accurately, they are emotionally deranged or disordered. In so far as they are sick, we have to get as complete a clinical picture as possible in order to know how to set about the cure. We get to know as much about their past history as we can. But the amount we are able to get is limited, and not always reliable. We must therefore rely in a large measure upon our own observation of the symptoms. What would you think of a doctor who tried to blind himself to the symptoms of his patient and then had the temerity to say that as he could see no symptoms there was nothing wrong with the patient? That is what we should be doing if we were to subject our members to an imposed discipline. By making it impossible for them to diverge from a certain pattern of behaviour we should make it impossible to see when and where, and with how much force, they would diverge under normal circumstances. It is possible for a person under discipline never to display a single symptom, and go out into the world again quite untouched. But in the freedom of Hawkspur we see them as they really are. Very often the symptom complained of in the lad's history does not show itself even at Hawkspur, where we usually bring out the worst in everybody, but others, usually more revealing, take their place. We must never lose sight of the fact that delinquency is not in itself the thing we are out to cure. The delinquency is only the symptom, and when the disease is cured, the symptom will disappear.

Let us take a few examples of boys who were sent to us with apparently the same symptom but in whom, in the freedom of the camp, totally different "diseases" were discovered and treated.

"Slosher" Hare stole from cigarette machines; Charley Horsfall stole from his employer; Hans Schmidt stole from his schoolfellows. All had the same outstanding symptom, and if we had known no more about them than that—how little should we have known. Actually we did know, even when they first came, a little more about them than that—we knew something of their backgrounds. Slosher had been brought up in a "home". Charley came from a highly respectable, religious, lower middle-class family with a nice house in the suburbs of a provincial town. Hans was a German Jew, whose mother was the widow of an impecunious professor. Well-meaning

friends had brought him over from Hitler's Germany and sent him to a well-known public school.

We watched them.

If he had had to stand to attention, or say "sir" every time he spoke to me, I should never have known that Hans was wearing a mask. Everyone who stands to attention wears a mask. Everyone who speaks to a "superior" wears a mask. But masks at Hawkspur are unusual. Hans had been dreadfully hurt and was ashamed to show any sign of it. At sixteen, he was, apparently, cold, sophisticated, and unapproachable. But you can't keep that up for long at Hawkspur, and when he found that I could talk to him about his misdemeanours with no hint of condemnation he began to thaw.

We continued to watch.

We found him showing off. We found him at all points trying to show his superiority to other members of the camp. What, under "discipline", do you do with the swanker? You take him down a peg. Not so us—we all we could to give him something to swank about. This showing off helped us to interpret his background, and confirmed our suspicions. Tall, well built, handsome, he had been in Germany an object of contempt and worse because of his race. Then he came to England and lived among a lot of young gentlemen whose chief criterion of excellence seemed to be the amount of money a fellow could throw about. He had practically none. His crushed ego was crying out for approbation, after his experiences in Germany, and now it could be acquired by means of money. So he got the money. Then he was discovered and the last state was worse than the first. He sank to the depths of misery and shame, and was hurt so cruelly that he had to wear a mask to hide his pain and shame. All his efforts to secure approbation had brought him only lower than ever, but with a little sympathy he was ready to start again—one is pretty resilient at sixteen. Once he was ready to start again we had to put in his way opportunities for restoring his self-respect. As they came along, he took them with avidity. It worked. He has never looked back since. But we were only able to discover so much about him because we had no artificial barriers separating us. He "did as he liked," and we were able to get to know him.

Charley Horsfall and Sloser Hare were contemporaries at the camp—Hans had been much earlier. But like Hans they had both been pilferers—and we watched them, too. Hans never stole anything all the time he was with us, but Charley and Sloser did. Sloser, brought up in an orphanage, stole exotic ties and shirts from Adrian. Charley pilfered money all over the place, and always took pains to be found out. Sloser was a dreadful little bully. Charley, ten years older and nearly twice as big, was his chief victim. Sloser then was probably passing on what he had earlier received. A little enquiry proved this to be true—a bullying father, a mother no better than she should be, before he went to the "home". He had never been loved, and his stealing was probably the symbolical stealing of affection. A rough-and-ready diagnosis? Perhaps so. But one for which the appropriate medicine can never do anyone any harm. We gave it to Sloser, and it cured him.

Charley was a tougher nut to crack. He always saw to it, by some silly mistake or unconscious slip, that his pilferings were discovered. He took merciless beatings from little Sloser without a murmur. He was anxious to become an evangelist. What did all these symptoms point to? They pointed to a tremendous accretion of guilt feelings, crying out for punishment. He wanted to be an evangelist because he had identified himself with all the sinners who need to be saved—a very frequent kind of mental somersault. His silly mistakes leading to his thefts being discovered betokened a wish for punishment. But we never gave it to him. On the contrary I, a Quaker and a pacifist, even encouraged him to hit back when Sloser slobbered him. I even went so far as to encourage him to use bad language. Why? Because although I am not an authoritarian I did represent authority to Charley. And Authority told him there's nothing to feel guilty about in sticking up

for yourself; there's nothing very frightful, meriting eternal damnation, in using a few cuss words. Authority even went so far as to give him the money he stole from time to time, so that he could replace it before it could be discovered, and Authority—from whom he first got ideas about guilt—(though Authority then spoke through other lips) was now telling him that he really did not deserve all that punishment. All that, I admit, was mere scratching at the surface, and we needed also the help of the psychotherapist. But gradually—oh, very gradually—we were able to undermine the idea that Charley was a sinful creature who must continually seek punishment. When he began to use bad language freely, and with a sense of enjoyment, we were positively pleased, because it meant that he was no longer piling up future punishments for himself every time he committed some trifling offence.

It had been Charley's practice to procure punishment for himself by getting himself sacked from his jobs. He's been holding one down for nearly two years now, so we hope the trick is done.

Now—here were three pilferers. Three youths whose manifest symptom was the same. But they had three totally different "diseases". Only by watching for their other symptoms in an atmosphere in which they were quite free to display them could we find those other symptoms, relate them to what we knew of their history, make a diagnosis, and effect a cure."

As hinted at above, the Camp Council was the forerunner of the several forms of shared responsibility which Wills developed both at Barns and at Bodenham. It provided a means of maintaining a modicum of order which, releasing the adults from the role of authority figures, set them free to exert other influences. There were several occasions when shared responsibility broke down, and the consequent period of "anarchy" as Wills calls it, was eventually replaced by the boys themselves reconvening the Council in order to re-establish "law and order". Similar experiences are reported by A. S. Neill at Summerhill who nevertheless says that everybody is heartily glad when "anarchy" comes to an end on account of the discomfort and disorganisation. Yet they then look back to the interim as a sort of golden age when everybody did everything he should and everything went smoothly, for they love the feeling that they no longer have the responsibility of anything at all, and can sit back and watch things slide with no accretion of guilt. "One of the greatest difficulties about self government," says Wills, "is that in the main people do not care to accept responsibility unless they are very well rewarded." And it is clear that he advocates it as a therapeutic measure, not because it is an efficient method of administration.

This raises the question of what we mean by self-government and what are its positive educational benefits? Though there was a Citizens' Court at the Little Commonwealth, for similar reasons as those advocated by Wills, Homer Lane constantly pointed out that by self-government he meant self regulation which could be applied to a baby in his eating, in his playing with fire, or to an adolescent in his responsibility for his own studies or bread and butter work. Obviously this is not the same thing as the administration of a community—for many people's minds do not work in terms of committee procedures. Indeed Wills himself confesses that, after more than 30 years, the type of questions and the suggested solutions that arise at Children's Councils have been repeated so often that they have become utterly boring to him. George Lyward

(in *Problems of Child Development*), interestingly enough writes: "Children's committees and courts can be misleading. We mustn't imagine we are creating good democrats when we are merely training debaters and lawyers . . . It is as recurring opportunities of breaking up the institutional soil that self government should chiefly be welcomed and emulated."

Furthermore as A. T. Barron (Bunny of Hawkspur) has hazarded, Wills makes use of shared responsibility as a therapeutic tool which succeeds because it is a method that enables the children to verbalise their problems.

This is a most revealing suggestion. It shows Wills as a patient teacher who excels in the use of words himself. Two points follow from this. One is that as he is not a teacher by profession, and on account of the mis-handling that many children have received at their schools and their consequent distaste and oppositional attitude to them Wills has discounted the influence of *school* as being narrow (3 Rs only) and negative. Secondly, this in fact takes nothing away from the therapeutic effects of a good *teacher* of which Wills is a brilliant example—only he has chosen to practise his trade outside the walls of a classroom. Indeed he has often said that schools for Maladjusted Children should be under the Ministry of Health rather than of Education.

In *Throw Away Thy Rod* (p.130) Wills talks conventionally about the relatively dull round of the classroom where one does "sums" and similar things, while at the same time describing the enormous benefits to be derived from active pursuits like gardening, woodwork, clay modelling; and in the *Barns Experiment* the therapeutic consequences of oil painting which were taught by his first wife, Ruth.. Why are these activities not counted as school? And why no place for drama, from which the study of literature and history may follow, and of dancing in which some children find their most valid form of expression?

In the *Barns Experiment*, p.102, Wills adds:

"the rest of us had to teach the class for the short afternoon session. We gave them woodwork, poetry, painting, handiwork and what not—in short we undertook to keep them constructively occupied . . . the position in effect would be that the Citizens' Association would run its own little school . . . One or two of the older boys began to ask me for individual work in their weak subjects, so that when they left school they would at least be able to meet ordinary situations. Out of this arose a modified form of the sub-Dalton Plan by which there were weekly assignments in each subject, and freedom to arrange work according to individual needs. A balanced minimum of work was required and a weekly meeting of the group was held at which each week's work was considered."

To the present writer such extra-classroom activities lead from play to form the basis for art and comprise the very essence of education which it is the business of the teacher to teach albeit in a persuasive and enlightened manner. Neither Lane nor Neill understood this; and Wills, unwittingly it seems, has taught the power of words through his Council Meetings. Oddly enough the best teachers in L.E.A. schools do develop self government by their pupils in the

responsibility and interest they share in their own studies.

Wills admirably describes the qualities needed by a teacher and the contrary characteristics so often found:

"The kind of thing I have in mind" he says "involves a real affective relationship between the teacher and the child in his class. I mean liking—indeed loving—each individual child for himself alone and *letting him know it*. How many spinster teachers have become sour and withered for no reason than that they were afraid to do just that?"

. . . the fact is that people have forgotten what respect means—if they ever knew; and I think the time has come for a *re-cognition* of its real meaning . . . One does not need to be a profound etymologist to realise that to *look again* is to respect. A person we respect is one at whom we are willing to look again."

In passing he mentions Pestalozzi:

"You may remember he lived in the most primitive circumstances with the children in his care. He had an inadequate staff (numerically) and little money. He shared their life in every particular, and very little of his life could have been hidden from them. They saw him literally with his trousers down, and I fancy they had a great deal of genuine respect for him."

The mention of Pestalozzi, a child care worker trying to repair the ravages of the Napoleonic wars, and who himself acknowledges his debt to Rousseau—most of whose ideas are to be found in John Locke who died in England in 1704—at least suggests that Wills' principles are not *new*—as he himself is inclined to say—but have been forgotten or disregarded.

From the time of Alcuin of St. Peter's School at York in the 8th century, throughout the period of the rise of the Universities in medieval England, and during the 19th century the main provider of education has incontestably been the Church. In the past hundred years responsibility for this provision has been more and more taken over by the Government and the Local Education Authorities.

But the strands of enlightenment, the initiation of reforms, the values underlying a persuasive discipline throughout this time have been promoted outside the world of the Church, by small bands of thinkers and practitioners who have stuck to their independence and undeniably influenced the state system.

The justification for the continuance of fee-paying independent schools such as Bedales, Dartington, King Alfred, Frensham, Summerhill and the rest is that they also demonstrate this, whereas the LEA school does not. The independent school's autonomy in the special field we are considering—Lennhoff's Shotton Hall, Lyward's Finchden Manor, or the Dockar Drysdale's Mulberry Bush near Oxford—safeguards a vitality and individuality outside the tradition of Church and State. Thus it would seem to be shallow thinking on Wills' part to attribute some of the causes of present day delinquency rates, as he does in his latest book *Common Sense about Young Offenders* (Gollancz 1962) to the decline in religion and consequent looseness of marriage. To grasp the centuries old predicament of the Church and its falling away from Christianity we perhaps need only look at Tolstoy's readings from the Sermon on the Mount, to see that this is not a contemporary decline.

As for the family, along with much else, this has been shaken by the disruptions and uncertainties of the atomic age. But Bowlby and Aichhorn before him have conclusively shown *proneness to delinquency* and maladjustment to be an outcome of the quality of early relationships, and opportunities for self-assertion, no matter what the family's legal form. Readers of this journal moreover, have recently been reminded of that healthier society envisaged by Charles Fourier (ANARCHY 10) or of Paul Goodman's New Commune (ANARCHY 11), where the economic unit has ceased to be the monogamous family, and where children are valued, enjoyed and accepted whatever their parentage.

It is not surprising that Wills, who in the years before 1936 was Warden of a settlement in Wales under the Worcestershire education authority, and then housemaster in a Borstal, should be able to distinguish clearly between the assumptions of the Approved Schools and Local Authority Home on the one hand, and the independent school for maladjusted children on the other. He shows in chapter II of *Throw Away Thy Rod* that both, fortuitously, receive the same type of child (delinquent or maladjusted: what is the difference?) but that the Approved Schools are inhibited from making a therapeutic approach by the nature of their origins and tradition—though some individuals in them struggle valiantly towards it.

Extraordinarily clear evidence of this has just been given in R. H. Ward's book *The Hidden Boy* (Cassell 1962) about the Cotswold Approved School, founded by C. A. Joyce twenty years ago. By the Magistrates and Home Office officials, Joyce is supposed to be exceedingly progressive. Listen to this discussion:

Ward: Would it be true to say that you use corporal punishment more now than you used to?

Joyce: I still use it only for the offences for which I used to use it. But there are more of those offences; there's more violence from the other side. Here, of course, I'm going straight into boiling water with the people who say you can't cure force by the use of force . .

Ward: It's a question of boys using violence, here in this school, and of you answering them with it.

Joyce: I don't like violence in any form, on my side or theirs. But the fact remains that I will not have violence on theirs, and I have to say to them, 'Now we are no longer discussing something; I am telling you categorically that I just will not have it, and that, if necessary, I will restrain you physically from using it! Dickens said that those who cannot be persuaded by reason must be compelled by force, and I agree with that. I have to whether I like it or not.

Ward: Isn't it a matter of being realistic—regrettable though the realism of human existence may sometimes be. Of course reason with a chap, if reason will touch him at a particular moment; of course love him, if love will touch him at a particular moment—and if you can love him. But if you're sure that you've nothing with which to touch him but a force superior to his own, then there is nothing else you can do but use that force. It's a pity, but there it is. It won't cure anything I'd say, or prevent a future recurrence. But it's a temporary relief.

Joyce: I'd put it this way too. As a Headmaster or Prison Governor . . . I'm prepared to give you an absolute guarantee that I will not use force on you unless you start it. So, you see the responsibility is yours.

Ward: And that in fact is the line you take here?

Joyce: Yes, except that, when you're dealing with boys the question of deterrence does sometimes enter into things other than violence on their part.

Ward: And corporal punishment is used as a deterrent. For what sort of things?

Joyce: When the nesting season began, a thrush built her nest in the willow tree by our stream. All the boys knew it was there and many of us, as we passed, used to go and take a quiet look at the bird while she was sitting. Then an egg disappeared. I said to the boys, 'Please will you leave the thrush's nest alone; one egg has gone. I hope she won't desert, but if any more are taken, she may.' Almost immediately after Hall, where I'd been talking, the boy who'd taken the first egg went and took another. I was very angry and said 'I asked you to leave the nest alone. Now leave it alone, or else I'll take a hand in the matter'. Within two hours the boy took another egg. 'Right', I said, 'You bend over that chair', and I beat him. When it was over I asked him if he wanted to say anything, and he said 'It's all your fault'. 'All my fault? Why?' 'You should have done this the first time', he said 'then it wouldn't have happened again because I'd have known you meant it'. That story at least illustrates my reluctance to use corporal punishment, without first a request and then an order; and that in this case neither of those was effective.

Ward: That's an awfully interesting story. There are several things I want to know. First there must have been a particularly powerful element of defiance in the boy to go at once and take another egg—and on two occasions—mustn't there? Then he must have known a lot about himself to say you should have beaten him at once if you wanted to stop him. And would the same course of events have arisen with another boy?

Joyce: I don't think he did it because he was specially defiant. He did it, and went on doing it, because he was banking on the fact that, if I caught him, I'd only jaw. And that partly answers the point about him being knowledgeable about himself. I think it was rather that he was piqued that he'd misunderstood the Old Man when he'd assumed that all he'd do was talk.

Ward: Rather like Hitler on another occasion perhaps.

Joyce: As to whether it would have been the same with another boy, I'd want to know the other boy first.

Ward: I might have known you'd say that.

Joyce: One boy you could talk to very firmly after he'd taken the first egg, and that would be enough. Another you could break down completely by saying 'This poor mother thrush, having lost her offspring, which you can't possibly replace—' and so on. But for this chap his own diagnosis was right. I ought to have been severe the first time, or at any rate, the second. In fact I ought to have known him better. As for other instances of using corporal punishment for offences other than violent ones, I sometimes use it for a persistent absconder. Not because he is a persistent absconder but because a stage may be reached at which you have to say, I've tried every other weapon in my armoury—chatting, advising, pleading, showing you the trouble and worry it is to your mother and a whole lot of other people—but apparently they make no impression. You leave me no option but to beat you. Perhaps that won't

work either, but I can't ignore the fact that so far it hasn't been tried.'

Ward: Does beating sometimes not work?

Joyce: Oh, yes. Then you have to fall back on solitary confinement.

The reader will perhaps not need the present writer to comment upon Joyce's "absolute guarantee", nor his attitude that *because he can think of nothing else* there must be some value in beating; nor his total exclusion of the possibility of regarding the "defiant" birdnesting as symptomatic, nor as a matter to be dealt with by the other boys as part of their own education, nor that thus to punish will either merely change the symptom, or drive it underground to flower again in a more virulent form.

The significance of Wills' method is to be found not merely in the doing away with punishment but in the alternative basis for a persuasive discipline that he laboriously builds up. For this is an example of non-violence in action and provides the beginning of an answer to those who ask how society can be protected from the "criminal", or from a fascist group that threatens to seize power, without resort to police and armed forces.

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Clinical aspects of the work of David Wills



by a **CONSULTANT PSYCHIATRIST**

THE WEALTH OF MATERIAL OF CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE contained in Mr. Wills' work, and in his writings describing it, is too extensive for me to attempt to give here a comprehensive survey. My bias therefore has tended towards selecting some of the less obvious points. This means that some matters of major significance that are stressed in his writings receive less attention here than their importance merits, or only one or two aspects are mentioned. Examples of topics to which this applies are: shared responsibility, staff discussions, the elimination of punishments from staff authority, after-care, social work with families, the school curriculum including creative achievements and other activities (art, drama, poetry, nature lore, woodwork). These last may be a vehicle for sublimating instinctive impulses or for displacing anti-social impulses on to constructive ends.

2. The most significant fact, to my mind, about Mr. Wills' work with maladjusted young men and pre-adolescent and adolescent children is that it has continued as a consistent and balanced body of thought, developed and tried out in practice for over 25 years with varying groups, and that it has been found workable.

3. Treatment of emotionally disturbed aberrant persons by a sojourn in a therapeutically planned environment is a form of treatment of immense importance and worthy of serious study.

4. As a balanced whole it incorporates components mutually inter-dependent. Isolated chips of "good ideas" from this whole, sometimes culled by would-be followers and introduced where they do not harmonize, have led to misconceptions. It is as if an attractive piece of a harmonious coloured mosaic were removed and inserted into another colour scheme with which it clashed. As the art critic Eric Newton suggests in another connection, it is the full orchestration which gives

The writer is a consultant psychiatrist who has for many years been interested in pioneering ventures with maladjusted youth and in delinquency.

beauty. In spite of occasional misapprehension, Mr. Wills' ideas, where understood, have had a wide influence for good.

5. The most important ingredients of this planned therapeutic environment are the human beings among whom the child is sojourning, on whom he depends and with whom he gradually establishes relationships. (The work has been carried out with young men from 16½ to 30 as well as with children, but for convenience I refer to the patient as "child".)

The grown-ups comprising staff are of paramount importance. Especially is this so of the man or woman who is Warden and is, therefore, chief parent imago and the central object of transference and of identification for the children. But the principles they follow and methods they use are only a little less important. Human nature consists, in its complex diversity, of a larger component of feeling, affects and emotion than of reason and intellect. It is essential to success that the atmosphere be infused with and animated by a spirit of love emanating from the staff, concern for people, sympathy and respect for each child as a unique person. Efforts were made to understand on a deep level the causes of anti-social actions, stealing, bullying, timidity, personal unhappiness, and other symptoms. This was combined with warm, tender feelings, and it was also an aim that empathy be associated with enough detachment to avoid sentimentality and to conserve the adult's own mental health. He must be able to change from partial identification to the position of an interested and responsible observer. But I must resist the temptation to enter more deeply into the contentious realm of staff problems.

Besides warm feeling, this work requires knowledge and intelligence, and has benefited by the fruits of years of experience possessed by the Warden, and his ideational standpoint and faith. There needs also to be a significant ingredient of that uncommon commodity paradoxically called "common sense", and a sense of humour. The régime remained flexible and was used subject to spontaneity and intuition.

6. David Wills started his work of principal of therapeutically oriented residential centres for maladjusted persons more than 25 years ago. He was already an experienced, trained, and qualified social worker, who had specialised in problems of delinquency, and was the Warden of an educational settlement, so that his experience of training students is still longer. There is as yet no recognised training or qualification intended specifically for the profession of Warden-Principal of a residential institution for maladjusted children.

Since the work of Homer Lane, who came from America to England in 1912, and the classic work of Aichhorn in Vienna there have been established a number of comparable residential centres for the maladjusted with a "progressive" therapeutic outlook. Each has its own special character and a comparative study would be valuable.

The late Alexander Bloom established and ran, as headmaster, for the last ten years of his life, a day school where the interpretation of "progressive methods" were so closely similar to David Wills' inter-

pretation that it is quite strange to remember that they were at no time associated. This school was St. George-in-the-East secondary modern school, Stepney, under the LCC. It is in a cosmopolitan and reputedly rough neighbourhood. I mention this school in support of the contention that closely similar methods are workable in many fields and under different leaders.

Alex Bloom firmly asserted that his work was a balanced unity and not just a collection of unrelated good ideas. It was co-educational and seen to be infused with a spirit of affection and informal friendliness between staff and children, springing from the attitude of the headmaster. There were no punishments, no rewards and no competition. (The LCC were not let off expenditure on "prizes", but these consisted of a present of a pile of books, given not to individual children, but to each class at the annual school party.) There was "shared responsibility" and each child has an individual time table (which Mr. Wills also advocates), vital "centres of interest" methods and a world outlook, with astonishing achievements in art, drama, poetry and towards the attainment of what Bloom called "a harmonious atmosphere in which right personal relations may come about through the experience of living". The "psychiatric oversight" (in Mr. Wills' sense) within the school was established until the Local Authority intervened and decreed that where advice was needed the child should be sent out to a child guidance clinic. While Alex Bloom's plan was functioning, the psychiatrist watched classes containing children who were afterwards to be interviewed, when invited by the class teacher to do so, and visited once a week. Mr. Bloom could not select children for his school. Besides children of the locality he was asked to take some from outside who were specially difficult. These included a number of backward readers, and opponents of his methods criticised the non-reading as if it were a result of the teaching at St. George's, which seems unfair as they were not admitted until about 11 years old.

7. Mr. Wills is the only person, so far as I remember, who has tried out under his own leadership and on broadly consistent lines several different types of residential centre. I think this testing out has a very valuable side, although it may not have been intended. The first experiment was Hawkspur Camp, which existed before the war, for socially maladjusted young men. The second was Barns, a wartime hostel and school for pre-adolescent and adolescent evacuated maladjusted schoolboys. The third was Bodenham Manor, a postwar co-educational home, which, like the last, incorporated its own school under qualified teachers. This was for maladjusted girls and boys of approximately the same age and type as the last. Mr. Wills has written a book about each of these experiments and careful records were kept. He is preparing to undertake a fourth experiment.

8. Mr. Wills writes "Psychiatric oversight is in my opinion essential to any school for maladjusted children, and there are different ways of providing it." In order to fit into the very positive environmental therapy provided, with its complex relationships to people and things,

its free activities and creative outlets, I think it is essential that the psychiatrists (there should be at least two) visit the centre and become an integral part of the team. They should familiarise themselves with the children and staff among their surroundings, and make themselves acquainted with the régime. It is important that the psychiatrists should be in general agreement with the basic lines of planned environmental therapy in use. If the children from a residential centre of the kind Mr. Wills established are sent elsewhere for specialist psychiatric help, there is likely to be a conflict of influence and transferences in the child's mind. The psychiatrists, moreover, will be hampered by incomplete realisation of the collateral treatment their patients are receiving. A less positive type of environment with a more purely supporting technique would seem to supply a better background for children who are to visit an outside clinic for some form of intensive psychotherapy. Some wardens are qualified psychotherapists and themselves give treatment. This does not apply in Mr. Wills' case. The functions of the visiting psychiatrists should include examining children applying for admission (carried out outside the institution). After a child has been admitted, there should be periodic consultations between the psychiatrists and the Warden, staff discussions, and some individual treatment of children when indicated. The psychiatrists besides being asked to give their opinions on unfavourable manifestations, need also to be interested in the *manner* in which children get better.

9. I think it was a good thing that the term "maladjusted" was not defined clinically in the Education Act of 1944. Its ambiguity increases its usefulness as a designation for a child, not covered by another classification and likely to benefit from residence at a special school such as those founded by David Wills. Under this classification the Ministry of Health, through one of its Child Guidance Clinics, can ask the Ministry of Education to pay for recommended treatment, on the ground that while he is maladjusted he needs other than ordinary schooling.

Mr. Wills quotes Dr. Portia Holman's apt description of a maladjusted child as one who is deficient in the capacity to form relationships. Two other distinctive traits may be mentioned as present, viz. emotional immaturity in relation to age and intelligence, and a poor sense of reality. These children's grasp of occurrences in the world around is liable to be distorted by conflicting feelings and impulses and by their imaginations. They are slow to trust others, feeling that that have been let down. In a free atmosphere, where pretence can be given up without fear of ridicule, a child often passes through a period of helpful temporary regression to behaviour, especially in play, more appropriate to one younger in years. In favourable cases he emerges from this more able to accept his true stage of maturity. The foregoing must be distinguished from the kind of pathological regression that is of serious portent.

In connection with the classification "maladjusted" I venture to

quote from something I wrote many years ago: "Children have a right to happiness, to security and freedom from fear, to feel themselves loved and to be able to give out love, to feel wanted, to mix in friendship with their fellows and with adults, to play and to work also, to use their intellects and their imaginations in acquiring knowledge and in creative activities . . ." David Wills puts the aim concisely in the phrase, "the wholeness and happiness of human beings." A maladjusted child has often suffered the deprivation of a normal home life, but not always. We may find one child among healthy brothers and sisters, from a quite good home and loving parents, is more sensitive and vulnerable to comparatively slight psychic happenings and therefore becomes maladjusted. On the other hand most children are wonderfully resilient and many "deprived" children, when put in the way of satisfying their needs, retain the capacity to blossom out gradually. The psychic injury that a maladjusted child has suffered, on the other hand, has gone deeper. It needs skilled treatment and re-education to free him from the inner hindrances that hamper him from absorbing the love and satisfactions that may now be offered.

Much as we try to keep technical terms from the children, some are sure to reach them. A group of boys and girls at Alresford Place once asked me what "maladjustment" meant. I told them that it meant "not fitting in", and that they had not fitted in very well at home and at school before coming. A boy replied, "well, I fit in all right here, and I don't want to leave." It was a short step to explain that we hoped that by fitting in there they would learn to fit in at more places after they left.

10. "Every child is different" is quoted from Miss Eileen Young-husband's presidential address to the Association of Workers for Maladjusted Children. It might be an unwritten motto for the staffs and committees of every school for maladjusted children, and a reminder to keep one's mind from being blunted by apparent similarities. Mr. Wills stresses this uniqueness, and approaches the hostel and school community as being made up of a number of people trying to learn the art of living together while preserving their individual distinctiveness.

Symptoms, including offences, were considered by David Wills as problems of the personality, and the more one knows about the person and the cause of his actions, the better one is able to help.

11. A significant part of Mr. Wills' work is his attitude to punishment. He has come to the conclusion that it is not an educative, or even very effective method of obtaining conforming behaviour, where that is desired—and he probably desires it less, and leaves more to unfettered choice than is done in most institutions. He has devoted a good deal of space to the subject in his books and has written a pamphlet on the theme of eliminating the authority of the staff to punish (see section 5, re Alex Bloom). Here I confine my comments to mild penalties that are not intrinsically harmful. Corporal punishment and penalties which are psychically humiliating or severe are so obviously out of place in work of this kind that I do not propose to give space to discussing them, although Mr. Wills takes up the cudgels

on the subject with great effect.

The kind of mild punishment which is not unthinkable in such a community might include repair and restitution, moderately unpleasant deprivation, or penalties which are only unpleasant by their overtones as tokens of disapproval. That kind of penalty (or "sanction") is indeed from time to time given after discussion as a decision of the "meeting" of children and staff that Wills describes under the heading "shared responsibility". It has a different impact on the children to staff authority.

Eliminating punishing from the sphere of staff duties (though staff remain responsible for supervision) in the case of maladjusted adolescents, is a good example of the interdependence of the component instruments of treatment on each other, referred to in section 4 of this article. Used with sympathetic discretion and in conjunction with other components of the whole conception of treatment, applied with full awareness of what is involved, it can be very valuable. By this means the young people are helped to face up to the implications of their actions on others; it enables the staff more freely to see occurrences in relation to the general stage of development, and so on, and it gives a better relationship between staff and child. Members of staff, however, should be aware that in depriving the child of punishment, given them by those they most respect, for acts judged to be wrongful, they are depriving him of a support and a customary mode of escape from guilt feelings ("wiping the slate clean") and perhaps even of a means of obtaining coveted attention. This deprivation must be replaced by something better. If we eschew punishing in a "substitute home" we must put in place of what we take away, the support and prop of love, sympathetic understanding and intimacy and a genuine interest in the child, and kindly encouragement if guilt feelings are too strong. Most of us can think of examples of intense anxiety caused when this is not realised. In my own experience I remember a state of hysterical anxiety being increased when the person in charge refused to punish destructive anti-social behaviour on Principle (with a very large capital P) but was unfortunately not able to make close contact with those children (as he had with others elsewhere) and get them to feel he cared for them.

12. In giving scope and encouragement to natural tendencies towards mental health, Mr. Wills rightly emphasises the phenomena of transference. Maladjusted children, as already mentioned (section 8) are likely to be weak in capacity to form genuine relationships, in their reality sense, and in emotional maturity. Their first gropings to form relationships with others are of a kind psychologists call "transference". This means that feelings of affection (and negative feelings too) felt in early life for parents and so on, are carried over on to present day people. It is by wise and gentle handling of transference that treatment is possible. If there is no capacity at all to form transferences (which can occur) I doubt if a favourable outcome from treatment by a therapeutically planned environment is possible. Even with intensive psychotherapy it is difficult. The whole subject of transference is

profound and complex and would take us into the deeper layers of the study of mental processes . . . Early objects of attachment as a vehicle for the love and trust of a child who is recovering, may be an adult ("his adult" as Wills call it) or a child friend, or an animal, or just the place itself. Through this he is helped to emerge from illness to health and to achieve inner freedom.

The way these phenomena are made use of by a psychotherapist in individual treatment and their use of environmental therapy differ. The substitute parents (and supplementary parents) in the hostel-school are men and women the children see and know as friends in everyday life, sharing their interests and occupations. Children (and grown-ups too) model themselves on those they admire, which is sometimes called "identification". Gradually relationships which start—and always partly remain—as transferences, merge into something more concrete. Grown up companions and comrades of the child's own age come to be seen and accepted with their real strengths and weaknesses and the veil from the past wears thin . . . In successful cases the whole environment of the centre is found to offer security, interest and satisfactions and the once maladjusted child has been led by transference and temporary regression through phantasy and identification to enjoying the warmth of reality, and thus from adolescence to maturity.

13. Mr. Wills is frank in self-criticism. The saying that "no one is perfect" is a platitude only for a rather mature adult. It is not a platitude, nor even credible for most children. In infancy parents seem perfect in their eyes, and when they cease to seem so the children have a great longing to find the lost perfection. Adolescence is the time of hero-worship and woe betide anyone who disparages the hero of the moment! Obviously there are faults which render a person unsuitable for work with maladjusted children. Obviously, too, sensible staff do not show their worst side in front of the children. But a mask of spurious impeccability can be very frightening and pedestals are not well thought of where Mr. Wills is in charge. In section 12, on transference, I have tried to show how awareness of inevitable weaknesses in respected adults can even be helpful.

14. Mr. Wills is scornful of puerile exercises in "discipline" for discipline's sake, and of régimes comprising a lot of orders and rules. Such a régime is unlikely to lead to self control, initiative and reasonable conduct when the "discipline" is no longer available. Instead Mr. Wills provides training through the impersonal discipline of experiencing the demands of natural forces. Woodwork succeeds best if it follows the laws of the material, and gardening the laws of growth.

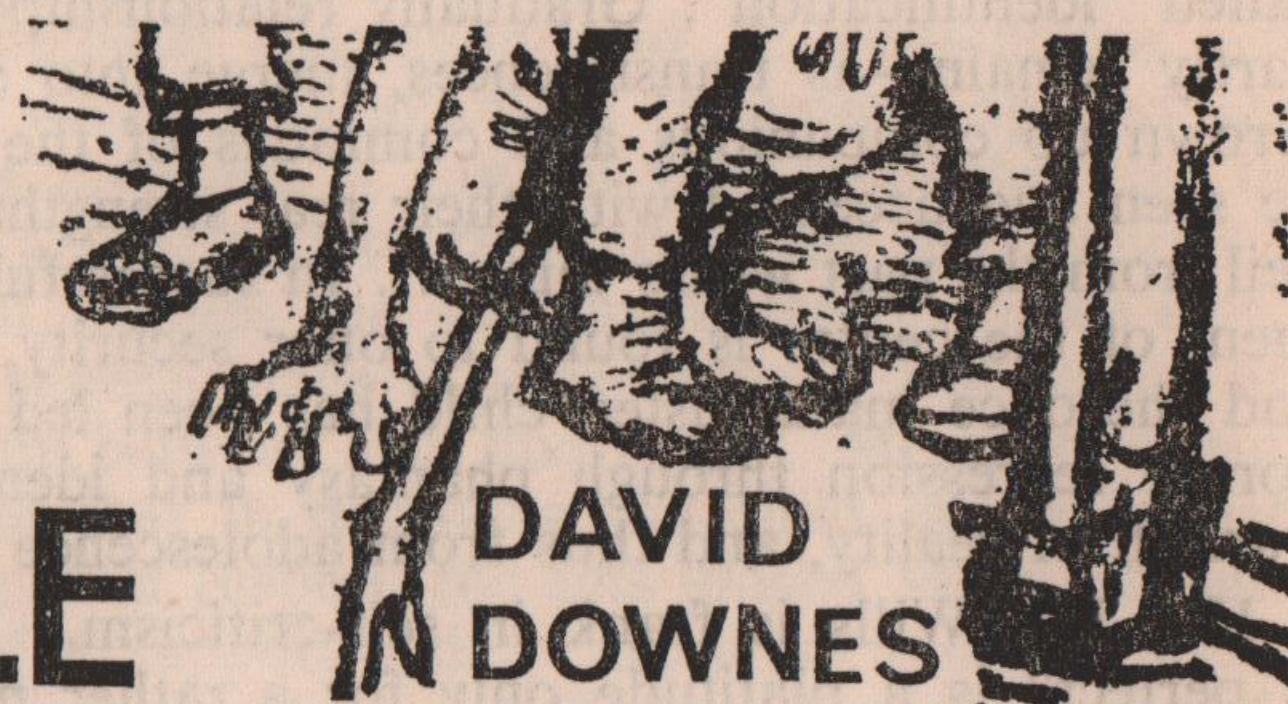
15. "Shared responsibility" or, as Dr. Herman Mannheim called it "inmate participation" (in community management) is an adaptation of a practice widely used since the end of the last century in the more enlightened educational establishments for normal young people. Authority is shared between children and staff, not delegated as in the prefect systems, and Mr. Wills manages to include all staff, domestic, teaching, and out-of-school educators, without social distinction. The

form of government is not rigid but changed from time to time and the sphere of responsibility is limited in range but genuine within the limits. The aims are both therapeutic and educational, and it is intended for children over ten. Little children are not burdened with it.

16. I have confined this essay to suggesting some pointers to the internal significance of David Wills' work, for a clinician, and have left it to others to describe the work and its influence.

Finally I would like to express my appreciation of the editor's liberality in allowing freedom of expression to some-one who is uncommitted in relation to the special views advocated by this journal and, indeed, not fully conversant with the nature of these views.

down in the JUNGLE



BEFORE THE LATE 1950's, the criminal in literature was very much a stereotype. In English fiction particularly, the criminal is treated as a different *species* of human being: two fairly representative examples are Kyle—the killer with the hare-lip in Graham Greene's "A Gun For Sale"—and Fortescue, the psychopathic sex-murderer of James Barlow's "The Protagonists". There were endless variations (there still are) but the theme was always the same: the criminal is *in essence* a different type of person. Fiction lagged decades behind the findings of criminologists, and our antiquated *idées fixes* about the criminal are constantly reinforced by the 'thriller', TV melodrama and souped-up journalism. Two years ago, Colin MacInnes' "Mr. Love and Justice" and Alan Sillitoe's "Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner" completely blasted the current notions of criminality and justice. In effect, they devalued the rhetoric of the 'thriller', and replaced it with the struggle to comprehend the life-view of the criminal. Their rightness in doing so has never been in doubt artistically, but empirically they still needed vindicating. The publication of *The Courage of His Convictions*, by Tony Parker and Robert Allerton (Hutchinson 16s.) should prove that they are.

The self-scrutiny to which 'Robert Allerton' subjects himself—with the aid of Tony Parker—makes previous 'old lag' confessions look

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like the memoirs of faithful family retainers. But if his coherence is exceptional, his way of life is representative. Its most immediate value is criminological, and lies in the first-hand descriptions of the life and career of a professional criminal. The only precedents are American (that I know of): Clifford Shaw's "Natural History of a Delinquent Career" and "The Jackroller" (published in the early 1930's) and Edwin Sutherland's "The Professional Thief" (1937). But Parker has none of the theoretical interests of Shaw and Sutherland: he concentrates on keeping the flood-gates open. In fact, he rejects theories at the outset as a concession to the complex personal testimony to follow. Parker's aim throughout is to elicit self-portraiture, not give a theory of art.

But the book is much more than a criminal case-history. It is that least of all. It has poetry and humour—the child huddled in the blitzed pub waiting for the bombs to the 'bird' who painted one breast green and the other one red—and the tension of debate between the criminal and the 'straight' world. From this debate springs the main quality of the book, which is to spell out the content of the professional culture, the values behind deviance. And, behind it all, lies Allerton's personal credo, that we've got it all wrong in the 'straight' world. We dedicate our lives to an ever-expanding, regulated affluence, and spend it on the consumption of—what?—boredom. The price of conformity is too high: not only is suburban life dull and pointless, it is bought at the expense of acquiescence in all the flaws of the social system. It ignores the kind of question every criminal career implicitly answers. Why should they get away with it, the grabbing landlords, the take-over experts, the legatees of wealth acquired *via* ancestral pillage? Or—if they get away with it, why shouldn't we? When Parker asks: "But it's fortunate not everybody uses your methods, isn't it, or else we'd all be living in the jungle?", Allerton replies: "But we *are* living in a jungle . . . That's all it is, a question of method. Lots of people take money off others, but they use other ways of doing it. Some are considered respectable . . ."

The social verdict is implacable: the system is wrong. Given this—to 'Allerton'—two reactions were possible. Either conform—and accept your ascribed status and that "there'd always be somebody higher up than me who had the right to tell me what to do"—or revolt, live against society, and accept its sanctions as occupational hazards. "(My father) was good and kind and honest . . . but all it got him was poverty. He was a socialist . . . and he was always talking about changing the system which brought richness to some and poverty to many. He believed it could be done by education and political activity . . . I was too impatient for that. I believed the system was wrong, too, but I knew it wouldn't ever be changed by our sort. I didn't want to wait two hundred years for the day when everyone had fair shares," and "As a child, to me poverty was a crime: the nastiest crime in the world. Imagine the foulest most repugnant deed you can think of, and then change the image to poverty. That was what it

meant to me . . . ” But poverty is not enough to alienate: it is the context of poverty that matters. Allerton grows up in Stepney, a stone’s throw from the City, where the real robbers operate. His reaction to the laughter of a group of City workers at the hole in his pants is a classic instance of the way class conflicts operate: the difference between Spitalfields and Bishopsgate is that between two worlds. Back in Spitalfields, “I could relax . . . because there I was among my own people again, who were as poor as I was, whose fun was good-natured fun . . . without any malice in it at all.”

In his review of “The Courage of his Convictions”, (*New Statesman*, 16.3.62) Colin MacInnes feels compelled to pose the question: “Is Robert Allerton an ‘admirable’ man? The answer must still be no, but only provided all those of us who are not criminal in fact can understand our criminality; can know how much we conform through prudence and not through virtue; can realise how our instinct to judge criminals is related to our own fear of being judged.” A related question is how far are Allerton’s assumptions about society valid? If the profit-motive is the instinct that really makes our society cohere, what is wrong (apart from his use of violence, which he himself deplures) with the criminal pushing this ethic to its logical conclusion? If the Law is an instrument devoid of moral content, devised to protect other people’s poverty, what is wrong with opting out of a system that is felt to have nothing to do with you? The eighteenth century notion of ‘social contract’ would leave Allerton cold. Society preceded him, he thinks it is basically still a system repressing the many for the sake of the few, he is not even alienated from it: he never came to terms with it in the first place. He has been at the receiving end of all its institutional hells: Hostels, Army, Prison. He hated them all: for example, “I ended up in a Colchester glasshouse, doing a spot of refined army punishment, like running on the spot, in the full heat of August, in full service marching order; buttoned-up overcoats, helmets, packs, rifles, the lot. I don’t know what this is supposed to do for you except fill you with black hatred for the bastards who put you through it.” Deterrence, far from deterring him, merely sharpened his wits: “Being beaten was a reason for not being caught; never a reason for not stealing.” Crime, for Allerton, is one way, the only way, out: out from under, out from the crushed subservience of the suburb and the grinding poverty of the slum. He does not think himself admirable, however. There is no easy cant about his rejection of conventional society, no glib talk about ‘suckers’ and ‘squares’. He genuinely feels—and conveys—that if the ‘straight’ world is essentially ‘bent’, you run risks by breaking its rules but your conscience is clear.

Significantly, the one thing that ever disturbs Allerton is “kindness; that gets under my skin a bit sometimes, it perturbs me . . . I’m not making a plea for more kindness in dealing with criminals. It’s quite immaterial to me what method you try—but I think it’s probably better for you, it does you less harm, to be kind.” But he hates charity-kindness for much the same reason he hated himself for stealing off

his mother as a child: it brought falsity into a human relationship. Apart from that, he has never stolen from the poor, except in their capacity as lackeys, carrying somebody else’s money around. He has the arrogance of a latter-day Robin Hood: “A lot of other people don’t ‘work’ for their living . . . Quite a large proportion of the ‘upper classes’, for instance . . . I can steal from people like that without the faintest compunction at all, in fact I’m delighted to do it . . . ” And how many of us, ostensibly in the ‘straight’ world, feel a sense of retribution when we read of thieves knocking off some load of furs and jewellery in a Mayfair apartment? The Establishment image of the ‘criminal’—a thug coshing an old lady for her few life-savings—is well aimed. Nobody would lift a finger to stop a thief lifting Lady Muck’s necklace. In fact, if criminals were really smart, they would unionise themselves and blackleg any mug who stole from people with less than two thousand a year. They’d still make a living and would improve their public relations. They might even increase their trend towards respectability. A few more Frank Normans and Robert Allertons, and every good glossy will have its resident criminal, reviewing ‘jobs’ done every month. Alan Brien (*Spectator*, 30.3.62) suggests that Allerton’s future is one of script conferences and fiction. But this runs counter to Allerton’s own expressed views. Crime for him is much more than a way of making money: it is a guarantee of his integrity, and of his freedom—for two-thirds of his life—from all forms of authority.

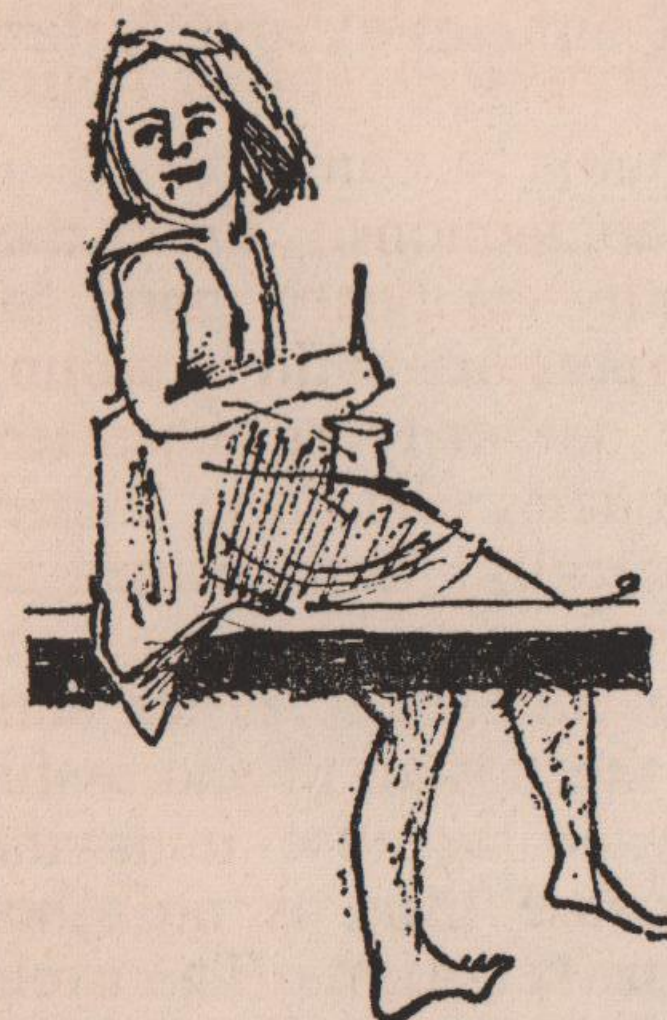
These are the qualities which—in time, and under increasing pressures towards conformity—could well lead dwindling numbers of radicals to idealise the criminal. Crime as a form of social protest, admittedly the most negative kind, is easily intellectualised into real revolt. The process would be similar to that by which many Left-wing intellectuals fell in love with Arthur Seaton, not so much because they would like all the working classes to be like Arthur Seaton, but because they’d like to be Arthur Seaton themselves.

The trouble is that crime, far from undermining the *status quo* which has—by now—institutionalised the criminal role, merely serves to prop it up more securely. At once the victims and the villains of the social system, professional criminals are also thorough-going conformists as far as its ends are concerned. Yet Allerton—and this is where he is the atypical criminal—is basically a radical, not simply a deviant. Probably because he witnessed his father knocking his Socialist head against a brick wall for life, Allerton believes—with passionate intensity—in the here and now. He is unorthodox in that, although completely selfish, he retains the values passed on to him in childhood. His attitude towards the large-scale legalised money-makers is not “good luck, mate. You’re on a game you can’t get nicked for,” it’s “You hypocrites, you’re worse than I am (because you screw more people) but you dare to represent law and order and the good society.” His despatch of the ‘straight’ world is not for its being ‘straight’, but for its grovelling in front of the rich and the powerful, its willingness

to be pushed around, its acquiescence in the code by which, as Orwell puts it, "Good and evil have no meaning any longer except as failure and success."

These are some of the reasons why Allerton remained a criminal. Why he became one he himself cannot say. He rejects clearcut environmental arguments, but the fact remains that he grew up in a section of society where access to a criminal career was no more expedient than to a conventional one. Stepney of the Thirties and early Forties was nothing if not a place where the criminal could both learn and practise his trade. In his neighbourhood, Allerton's father was the exception: "'Prison' was basic in any child's vocabulary . . . The idea of a child being taunted by his schoolmates, for instance, because his father was in jail, would have been ludicrous." In such a community, the big step is not from complete lawfulness to small-time peccadilloes, but from the latter to serious crime. Significantly, Allerton's crimes as an adolescent were always utilitarian, never malicious or negativistic (except when he steals savings coupons from a hated Aunt). And, once he was caught, and despite the sympathy of Basil Henriques, the judicial apparatus whirled him away to the provincial universities of crime, the Approved Schools. The critical moment of his life came on release. He had a good job as a technician lined up. Instead, he got call-up papers, and was drafted to post-war Germany. Three years and several glasshouses later, he was discharged, but this time he never considered any alternative. He went straight into crime.

Since then, he has been unrepentant. An army of social workers, called in after the damage was done, have 'analysed' and 'advised' him. Allerton refused to be adjusted to a maladjusted society. With the ruthless perception of the non-combatant, he reveals—and reviles—the motives of the 'do-gooders'. They are either 'One up for themselves'—"Look, I've saved a criminal,"—or "One up for the System". They do a good job wiping society's nose, but nothing about the catarrh. The tragedy is that Allerton knows how he'll end up—"pinching suitcases at Liverpool Street Station"—and accepts it. He gives himself up for lost, but then he gave the rest of us up years ago. There are exceptions—Danilo Dolci, Schweitzer and the man who taught him biology in prison—but in Allerton's Hobbesian world, criminals remain the only people who sense what life's about. All the rest are legal crooks or dull suburbanites: ". . . the telly in the corner, lace curtains, a plaster dog in the window . . ." a world where nothing ever happens, kept intact by illusions about incorruptible police, monogamy and a safe job, a clearing in the jungle which stretches above and below. As Tony Parker says: "The problem he ('Allerton') presents, that of the unreformed and unrepentant criminal who is so much at odds with society that he has formed a viable asocial pattern of his own, is one scarcely yet touched." I don't think we can touch it, not unless we're prepared to touch a lot of other things first. The fact that most of us aren't is the surest guarantee that 'Robert Allertons' will be with us for a long time to come.



Do we want happy children?

asks DACHINE RAINER

BEFORE ONE HAS CHILDREN one has altogether splendid theories about them. Afterwards, if one is to have extraordinary children, it is because one has discarded the theories. Let us take happiness. For most people this comes to mean adjustment, and when parents say they want their children to be happy it means that they want them to "learn how to get along in the world".

Such parental behaviour ranges from extremes and overt coercion to hidden persuasion. He'll do what's good for him, it stipulates, what will *ultimately* make him happy—that is, adjusted—and I, not the child, know what's best. This is one kind of irresponsibility by which one may avoid the rigours of treating a child as though he's human. At the other extreme is: "He can do as he likes. He's a bright kid, I don't want to influence him, to confine him in any way." This is another kind of indifference to the child as an individual, a being slowly maturing, intensely dependent on a loving, interpersonal relationship. (Any discussion about happiness concerns the concept of freedom, and it is this that must enter into an adequate exposition of *Summerhill*,¹ A. S. Neill's extraordinary testament to human liberty.)

We will begin with the two extremes, juxtaposing against these our idea of happiness.² The first is, of course, more prevalent. Parents, whatever their theories or self-justification may be for the authoritarian method of child-raising, use it primarily *because that is the way they were brought up*. . . . One cannot overestimate tradition in child rearing. Despite superficial differences of fashion, generation after generation recapitulates its own childhood. More than any other factor, this

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makes the prognosis for the edified behaviour of humans at some future time exceedingly doubtful.

Parents bring to what they privately or publicly come to see as their onerous task a set of mutually exclusive convictions. First, that it is good for the child to be directed. Secondly, that it is good for the parent; particularly, it is *convenient* since parents are entirely willing to abrogate their own authority to the greater authority of the state; by sending a child to school they rid themselves for at least the greater part of the day of a personality who has generally been formed at home to co-exist in conflict with himself and others.

Finally, the parent is authoritarian because concern is easier than love and the parent can make any edict under the not-at-all successful aegis of concern, while schools are authoritarian because it is the nature of institutions to be so, particularly because there is no other way to confine a large mass of restless, unwilling scholars. The cycle thus established, with parents and school in cahoots—that is, with no authority on the side of the child—is known to every parent with a difficult “problem”: the more deprived he is of love and understanding and the assurance that adults are on his side in considering him a human being, the more unlike one he becomes. The authoritarian methodology remains the best for producing adults who will perpetuate our disastrous *status quo*.

I know from Neill as well as from my own experience that by treating a child at the earliest possible moment, barely out of infancy,³ as though he or she were human, long before her behaviour or psyche warranted such a distinction, that she rises to the bait and becomes so easily and quickly. (I find, Harry Stack Sullivan and Neill to the contrary notwithstanding, that the very young child is not totally ego-centric but is capable of disinterested behaviour and even of love. This does not happen often, for the child is, before all else, a mimic and must be exposed to genuine manifestations of love—of himself and of others—before he can experience it. And how many children are? For how many in his adult world are truly capable of loving?

This does not mean that a child's discretion is always of the first order or that his or her ability at making decisions is flawless; but now, at the age of nine, my daughter's is frequently as adequate as mine, occasionally superior, and very seldom wanting. Yet I have checked or advised or directed her hardly at all. We concur, with a singular absence of conflict. One must never hesitate to say no! when freedom is turned to license—by which I mean interference with the freedom of others—or when the health of a very young child is endangered. For me, these two situations have almost never arisen, and obedience

and defection to my few edicts is unquestioning—but only because these are few. It is amazing how many libertarian parents are afraid to cross their children; it may be that they feel too uncertain of their love, as donor and as recipient, to risk withdrawing approval.

Neither approach is to be confused with that of parents who try to convince their children that they exist in a state of absolute freedom. Fromm, in his brilliant preface to *Summerhill*, makes the distinction between “*overt authority and anonymous authority*.”⁴ With anonymous authority comes the incalculable of deception. The child learns to manoeuvre and manipulate as he is manipulated. Evasion becomes the child's weapon, a weapon he cannot discard as an adult. (In the USA Negro featherbedding, politically expedient, has such a tradition. To some extent, all the lower classes practice such subterfuge, for the adult world into which they grow is invariably a hostile one.) It makes for self-deception as well as for the deception of others and eventually creates a schizoid cleavage between the head and the heart. A child can, for example, be indoctrinated into “good manners”; but this is no more than etiquette. He is formal and insincere. True manners are based on a genuine regard for others. Like Neill, I believe in open differences when necessary. But one should pull rank, stand on the ceremony of years as infrequently as possible. How many of us mature with increasing years?

Of course no one, particularly no child who has been given a great deal of freedom, is ever satisfied that he has enough. Enough is an absolute quantity. Thus, when during the discussion at the dinner table, subsequent to our reading *Summerhill*, I permitted myself in an unguarded moment a sigh of self-congratulation and said, “I've somehow brought Thérèse up in Neill's tradition, with a great deal of freedom”, there was a weighty pause while several pair of adult eyes turned toward my daughter. “I should say not,” she said airily. “Freedom!” Everyone laughed. “But I manage mother fairly well,” she conceded.

Fresh in our memories was a pair of pink ballet shoes which she badly wanted and for which there was no money. She accepted this (there is very little she wants of which she is deprived, since, fortunately, she limits her wants)—although she understands the meaning of money, that is, our singular lack of it, no more than I. But it did make me think of Neill's rueful observation: “Really, any man or woman who tries to give children freedom should be a millionaire . . .” He doesn't altogether mean it, of course; (and certainly this is no reflection of a belief in the accumulation of material goods, Neill is very much against buying presents as a substitute for love, or as bribes).

Nevertheless, there is some sad truth in the jest. Neill finds it unfortunate that the natural destructiveness of children should be interfered with because one cannot afford to replace the objects. I had always imagined that destructiveness exists as an outlet for hostility

1. *Summerhill. A Radical Approach to Child Rearing*, by A. S. Neill (London: Gollancz, 25s.)
2. Neill, after forty dedicated years as headmaster of *Summerhill*, the most remarkable experiment in education, defines a happy child as one whose capacity to grow has not been interfered with.
3. Neill's is the soundest exposition on the handling of infants I know; he makes Spock and Gesell seem silly.

4. I know a middle-aged man who, despite continuing evidence to the contrary, is convinced to this day that he was brought up freely. If the parent is clever, the technique is very persuasive and utterly destructive.

and as an indication of futile rage. Perhaps among small boys living in close community, as at Summerhill, there is a kind of healthy violence. It may have something to do with a natural resentment against private property. Generations of small boys in the country break windows of temporarily empty houses and commit small acts of vandalism with no apparent motive. When they're ignored, except for a reprimand, they outgrow it; if they're persecuted by the law, serious consequences ensue.

Although destructiveness is outside my experience, I do find that a lack of money creates problems. On the trivial side, I have not been as gracious as I'd wish about permitting my child to dress as attractively as we'd like, or, when she was younger, to get as dirty as she pleased—because I did all my own laundry and until recently, under very primitive conditions. One thinks twice about ironing a little girl's party dress with a flat-iron heated on a kerosene stove, particularly when one has other than a domestic vocation.

Partially related to economics, is the problem of time. If one has scruples against sharing the custody of one's offspring with the state and does not send a child to school, one must be prepared patiently to give up more of one's time than is convenient. I have been seduced for hours and hours and days and years from my own life, from its own inner needs whether these be the performance of chores, or the pursuit of pleasures—of love, of entertainment . . . Most serious has been the substantial curtailment of my artistic output.

There is a conflict between the needs of childhood and the needs of an adult. It would be dishonest to pretend that money could play no part in the alleviation of the worst aspects of this. Money can buy space and privacy; it can sometimes secure a few hours of satisfactory assistance. Yet what is most on the side of the adult is his unstinting giving at a very early age, for the contented child reciprocates by playing alone for hours at a time. Children are generous and understanding. A happy child is more sensitive to the needs of others than most adults.

Yet, the victor in all ways remains time. It snatches the child from his childhood all too soon and moves the adult at too brisk a pace through his life, swerving him from his intentions. Whatever his theories may have been, he will discover that to have a good interpersonal relationship with a child, that is, one in which the child's more-than-material needs do not go uncared for and in which the child is not shunted off elsewhere, is a fearfully demanding and time-consuming affair. However, when I think of how much one loses and juxtapose against that the loss of a childhood, I apply myself willingly.

Neill of course has a vocation. Parents seldom do. There is something to be said for the existence of community, where there is the possibility of finding a dedicated person. (I know of only one individual who can compare with Neill in patience, wisdom and humour in dealing with children: Mary D. Smith, who runs a small nursery in Woodstock, N.Y. She is not given to expounding theories but she

loves children and is willing to accord them their rights. Interestingly enough, she herself is the product of a remarkable upbringing in which she never had to endure the benefits of formal schooling. Again, tradition. Her results in *The Children's School*, like those in Summerhill, are perfectly astounding, all the more so since many of the children come from rather deplorable backgrounds.)

Since it is or should be abundantly plain that a lack of freedom is demonstrably bad (Neill is entirely convinced on this, as Homer Lane was decades ago), we will examine the other half of the question: what of an excess of freedom? I dismiss, in passing, the desirability of formal schooling. Too many educators have pointed out the failings of the school system for me to add more. I consider it a gravely irresponsible act to submit a young child to the American public school system.

Parents don't realise how unimportant learning is, particularly learning by coercion. Neill makes the point that young children take to very little, if any. It is imperative, on the other hand, that their play and fantasy life be fully explored. If it is not, it is likely to express itself in perverted forms in later life. There is nothing so serious as deprivation. If a child lacks his childhood, and no child has time for one, and presently lacks the inclination in the factory-like work day of the school system, he will miss its benefits and fail to mature into adulthood. His thwarted play instincts will forever seek outlets. (Anyone who has ever had to cope with the fantasy life of an adult will know that this is the most serious way in which a parent can maim her child).

On the other hand, if one allows the child to set the tempo of his learning, as Neill does (attendance at class is not compulsory) the results are impressive. They find their level, pursue their interests, and their knowledge of any particular subject becomes as complete as they desire. This has been my experience too. My daughter, for example, prefers dancing to spelling. Isn't this natural? Curiously she prefers arithmetic to reading. On the other hand, her comprehension when read to is unusual. I don't care that she can't rattle off the states of the union, which I could do when I was nine, but can no longer—so much learning is simply time-consuming and a waste—for she can give you a pretty good synopsis of Goncharov's masterpiece *Oblomov*, which is being read aloud at home in the evenings.

But even if one grants that learning is unimportant, parents persist, school fits the child for the real world. Precisely. We don't want to turn our children into "adjusted" people. We don't want to see them accepting social discipline—not *this* society's discipline, with its grubby conformism and its military state. We want something better. We are interested in the happiness that comes from self-discipline. This can never be imposed. It implies an individual capable of "the minority gesture of dissent". We must give our children an opportunity to find the means of remaining human in an anti-human world.

But, parents insist, they learn to get on with others in school. Nonsense. What they learn in school, as Lewis Mumford made plain decades ago, is punctuality and obedience. Unreasoning obedience, under threat of reprisals. They learn the rules of war, particularly the child-adult war. As for getting along, it is the happy child who will get along rather than the discontented, stupified one. (Although my daughter has never been coralled with her peers, mothers are known to ask for her as a playmate for their children when they can't get along after hours with their schoolfellows). Built into the concept of learning to adjust is the further notion, a Calvinistic notion, of endurance.

Now for the other aspect of freedom. Can one give them too much? And is this the way in which one spoils a child? Let us take the first question first; they are not necessarily connected: I do not believe in absolute freedom for a child any more than I do for myself or for any adult I live with. Total freedom is simply not a tenable state this side of Utopia. People, generally, have to dress themselves, cook their food, wash up, cut firewood, acquire a little money somehow . . . They are not free to abstain from eating or to stay up indefinitely. Their bodies curtail the liberties of their psyches from the instant of birth.

Class society makes for some exceptions. Oblomov never had to dress himself in his entire life. He had a servant for all the ordinary acts most of us have to perform for ourselves. (I noticed that my daughter as any child might, found this situation amusing and faintly pathetic, not enviable). And, in fact, the resulting excess of indolence, of mental and physical sloth—of freedom, as a few people might insist—killed him.

We permit the child, in exchange for the joy and companionship his presence brings us, considerable liberty from chores for a number of years. If we require of him only what he offers, we may be pleasantly surprised. On the other hand, we may not. We may be surprised only into a need for further patience. It is more than likely, that if the child, modelling himself on others, exists in a loving and co-operative environment, he will presently wish to contribute something to it.

Sometimes it is necessary to limit a child's freedom when it conflicts with the freedom of others; sometimes not. It depends on the ability of other adults or children to indulge a situation that is antithetical to one's wishes. There is probably not an American parent with a teen-age child who has not been surfeited with popular culture. I was in a condition of folk song shock before my step-daughter outgrew the worst symptoms of the addiction. However, when I work, I require absolute silence and I get it . . . generally. When I want to listen to Mozart I do, and the children listen or not as their inclinations dictate.

There is a tendency for children to be overbearing only because their energy exceeds ours and because their capacity for disappoint-

ment is still, happily, in a primitive condition. It is permissible to cramp their boisterousness, but not too often. What matters, as Neill puts it, is the total relationship with the child. If that is good, if the child is convinced of your love and attention, you can do almost anything without injuring him.

Do you allow him to injure you? Of course. Within limits. It is ridiculous, is it not, to pretend that one does not pay something for what one gets? Providing a happy childhood is no more costly in dedicated attention for a parent than inflicting an unhappy one. And, like Americans say, it pays off.

Do you injure your child by a little extra attention, indulgence, understanding? How can you? Don't adults benefit when they are the recipients of compassion and love? Given the human condition, is it not imperative that our major concern be to wrest as *much* happiness as we can for a child?

I am often entertained by the question: don't you think adults evade their responsibility by giving a child freedom to make decisions? That question is invariably asked by parents who are willing to absent themselves from a major part of responsibility by shipping the child off to school in the winter, to camp in the summer.

Nevertheless, I answer sometimes: "Do anything you please. I'm busy." You can only say that if your child is likely to be safely and contentedly engaged. (If he is an arsonist, be careful). Have adults no rights to occasional irresponsibilities when generally they undertake a consistently interested attitude to their children?

But I have avoided the full implications of the question. Yes, when one insists that the child make decisions it should be apparent he is unable or unwilling to cope with, that is carrying freedom into another domain altogether, into its opposite: coercion. We are then forcing the child into an unreal maturity, one that perhaps we are not in possession of ourselves. Child-rearing is a matter of proportion, of balance, of playing it by ear. Libertarian parents who avail themselves of total abstention from responsibility—and I have met a few—generally lack foresight; they are unrelated to a concept of time. They are unaware that they have evolved, as indeed many have not, to the position where certain causal phenomena are abundantly plain to them, where they would not be to a child: You may not stay up late because you will be overtired and cross tomorrow; a parent may so remind a very young child of the existence of future time. Not to do so may indicate indifference . . . or what is worse, a fear that the child will not tolerate any suggestion; this is not infrequently disguised by an adult as a belief in a child's rights to self-determination. One cannot expect to be rigid about it. No one enjoys absolute liberty, nor should they. Aristotle applies here, as elsewhere. What may appear as the granting of freedom might be a defence of benevolent despotism, a defence of adult insecurity.

Partly, children are appendages. They live with us, where we do, on our bounty. These are arbitrary restrictions. They cannot

dictate these terms. They must accept them even if they have, as children often do, quite other preferences. A twelve-year-old boy I know is in quite a fury because his parents have settled in the country. He prefers, he says bitterly, "the concrete pavements of New York".

It is when one interferes with a child's liberty *for his own good* rather than to protect the rights of others, that we must beware. More likely than not, the child knows what is good for him better than we do. We may voice an opinion; we seldom—not *never*—dare lay down a law.

But in accommodating oneself to the needs and wishes of a child, whenever possible, does one run the risk of over-indulgence, of "spoiling"? "*It was the crosses that spoiled me*," says Lear. I know from the bitterest personal experience, as child and adult, where the basic material and spiritual needs went unheeded, uncared for, that struggles against an unfeeling and impersonal adversary—and a child never truly understands *why* he is crossed—fit one *only* for unhappiness and not for adjustment to future happiness. One tends to create the neurotic situations in which one can remain unhappy if that is what one is accustomed to, and, what is ever worse, one continues struggling even should the causes for unhappiness be alleviated, or removed altogether. A happy child has a chance of becoming a happy adult. One who is theoretically being reconciled to the wretchedness of the world has no chance whatever.

A few speculations! Do we want happy children? (We know we don't want unhappy adults because they make a mess of the world. But what do happy adults make?) I ask this not at all frivolously but because no one seems to understand the origins of the artist and because I think art, produced by unhappy people or not, is the single greatest activity of man. There have been anarchists who claim that in a utopian society the free flowering of the personality will make artists of everyone. I think this is some kind of democratic myth. These years, as we endure a superfluity of "artists", I am inclined to think this a fallacious, easy kind of optimism.

The artist is a unique individual. He has always been so—popular misconceptions about folk art notwithstanding—and it is unlikely that fulfilment in childhood is the qualification for his existence. On the contrary, it almost seems as though the artist needs adversity, a dissociation from his time, a sense that it *is* out of joint. Auden once remarked that the sole obligation a parent has is to make certain his child grows up to be as neurotic as possible. This may be a romantic notion about how artists are produced but it has not been discredited. With it comes the tangential question: Are happy people complaisant or rebellious? If the former is the case, is there enough in the way of natural obstacles to challenge an individual's talents to the point of artistic productivity?

Neill, like others, has no ready answer to this. Considering his remarkable achievements, it would be only an ingrate who asks the question; and, further, would expect an answer from his method. His

happy children do seem to make a mark for themselves as adults, at least in the performing arts. Nevertheless, the question of the artist goes, as always, unanswered.

I have one complaint. However, it is not a major one. It pertains to Neill's rationalism and relatedly, to his attitude towards sex. Most behaviour occurs in realms far murkier than the methodology of Freud allows. Neill tends to explain away problems among children and adults by a more dedicated adherence to Freudian doctrine than is altogether warranted. This is not an uncommon failing among radicals. Anarchists and liberals have been known to attribute the most bizarre dilemmas to a perversion of sexual energy. I do not wish to imply an underestimation of sex. It is very nice—or very nasty. But sexual freedom is not the universal panacea. Love is another matter.

What Neill has to say about sex and love is extremely sound: "If the term *free love* has a sinister meaning, it is because it describes sex that is neurotic. Promiscuous sex—the direct result of repression—is always unhappy and shameful. Among a free people, free love would not exist . . . promiscuity . . . leads to variety, but seldom to fulfilment and almost never to happiness."

Faulty channelling of children's sexuality does not explain all their problems, nor is mankind disturbed exclusively owing to sexual repression. Our species is more complicated. It has the most subtle and invidious sources for irrational behaviour. For example, I know two girls attached to a father, the older intensely, the younger more naively worshipful. This is not because he is part of their oedipal development—the most obvious interpretation—but for a complex of factors revolving around the character of the father: inflexible, quixotic, unyielding in his image of himself. That is something for a child to cling to, to admire, to be fascinated by. Although this narcissist father precludes a reciprocal relationship—with anyone, when this image is abetted by other significant people in the child's radius—mother, aunts, grandmothers—it is unlikely that any separation can ever occur happily between child and father. At a certain age it will become apparent that the love and longing has been lavished onesidedly and that only as long as the child conforms—adapts herself to the perpetuation of the myth of her father, the pseudo-relationship will come to grief. It is all *irrational* enough—power, self-aggrandisement, vanity—but are the certain sources of these and all man's other psychological ailments invariably sexual repression?

I believe many radical parents fall into similar situations. (A power drive is a dangerous mechanism whether it is power for committing good or evil; individuals fall before it). One has only to consider the colossal egotism of the saint, and to a lesser extent, of the more ordinary radical, to observe that there is a greater defection from parental ideology among *their* children than is the case among the children of squares. Scratch the child of almost any self-satisfied radical and you'll find a square. It is very hard to love a hero as

much as he is accustomed to love himself. When a child rejects such a parent it is unfortunate that she discards his ideology too.

This, ultimately, becomes the real problem. How to keep our children happy—in a tradition we have arbitrarily selected as the only possible one? How much of ourselves, assuming ourselves to be worthy of any emulation whatsoever, how much that we have made of ourselves by the conscious repudiation of what is injurious in ourselves to our fellow humans, can we transmit to our children? And are we willing to pay the price for doing it?

Postscript

The above was written upon the earlier United States publication of *Summerhill*, for an American radical magazine which would not, although the author is a contributor thereto, have it. It requires a postscript; resident now in London, circumstances made it necessary to send our daughter to school.

I decided against Summerhill for two reasons. The first is personal: my daughter has an ungovernable passion for ballet and attends the Junior Associates classes of the Royal Ballet twice a week. Consequently she must live in London.

The second reason is general and ideological. Despite the singular accomplishments of Neill's school, I fail to be persuaded in favour of any boarding school. I know it is archaic to believe in the family, but I do. Except in extreme situations, a child is best off with his parents. (Sometimes, but rarely, a proxy parent will do; I have known what it is like to love another child as deeply as my own. But I cannot imagine maintaining such intense and individual feelings towards a group of children). There is something about the arrangement of family life, however haphazard or confining, that is more natural—if not invariably more beneficial—for individuals in our society, than is a large assortment of unrelated individuals. I am convinced that a relationship with one devoted parent—although I have sadly learned that such a relationship with two is more than twice preferable—is still to be desired over against the best boarding school. I do believe that Summerhill must surely be one of the very best.

For these reasons, my daughter began, in a local London County Council school, the day after her tenth birthday. (I consider twelve a far kinder age to subject a child to this experience). Nevertheless, she was uncomplaining and even moderately pleased, but her pleasure decreases as the novelty wears off and *ennui* sets in. She goes with the understanding that she is free to stay at home whenever she has anything more interesting to do than attend school. Her aptitude for a more formal academic training now, poor as such training is likely to be, is more considerable than it would have been in her earlier years. The thing she mainly suffers from, as we all did in varying degrees, is boredom. This is hardly a possible condition for any of Summerhill's students.

Tony Gibson

YOUTH FOR FREEDOM : FREEDOM FOR YOUTH

This challenging pamphlet, by a research psychologist with many years of teaching experience behind him, is sub-titled "A consideration of the factors influencing the development of a free and socially effective youth". It begins with some reflections on the significance of education, and the second chapter, on "The Revolt in the School" describes the work of three progressive schools: the Burgess Hill School of ten years ago, Neill's Summerhill, and St. George-in-the-East Secondary School in the period of Alex Bloom's headship. The third chapter discusses the nature of the young child, the fourth is on "The Child Rebel" and the brilliant final chapter is on the Adolescent. The author concludes that

"Young people sense that there is a conspiracy of age against youth, and they are right. Too much is preached about the responsibilities which adolescents must learn to accept, responsibilities which involve going like cattle into the military corral, sweating as underpaid apprentices, grinding at studies to make themselves more efficient units of production, denying their lusty sexuality when it is at its height, dutifully fulfilling the vicarious ambitions of their parents. We are not going to preach social revolution as another *duty* which the young generation have got to shoulder. Our message to the young is entirely one of encouragement, of realizing the value of their own aspirations, of spurning the burdens that authority would place upon them and the shoddy rewards cynically offered in return for the sacrifice of their own natures. Emotionally frustrated boys and girls turn to idealism all too easily, but it is idealism of an impractical and sentimental kind. A youth who burns to sacrifice himself to a revolutionary cause may be as mentally sick as the one who burns to lay down his life for his king. It is no great task to capture the frustrated emotionalism of adolescence with bands and banners and songs, but such mysticism is useless for truly revolutionary ends. Youth, disturbed in its natural harmony, is too willing to sacrifice, to *give*, we must show it how to *take*."

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