

Roosevelt and recently prescribed by the likes of James MacGregor Burns, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., John Galbraith, and other horrified spectators of the Nixon White House. Though contemporary American political etiquette, liberal interest-group politics, the Nixon Administration, and the reputations of countless administrators and politicians are being disfigured, the worthies of the Ervin committee are no closer to knowing the truth today than they are to understanding the evil. And despite all their talk of a better tomorrow, not one participant in the Watergate pageant has suggested a philosophy of government to replace the amalgam of notions they have all so furiously fallen upon.

Of course no intelligent observer ex-

pects a better tomorrow; it is unthinkable that any man is going to advance any lasting improvement in a system of laws without first possessing some coherent philosophy of government, and what passes for a philosophy of government amongst the participants of the Watergate pageant is indistinguishable from the razzle-dazzle *réchauffé* of the public relations hack. If Watergate has proven nothing else, it has proven that the greatest democracy on earth is presently in the hands of public relations men, ambulance chasers, and porch climbers. If such a mob had descended on Philadelphia in 1785 to initiate our first American government, James Madison would have thrown in with the Redcoats, Patrick Henry would have

bound himself over to the benevolence of crazy George, and General Washington would have burned Philadelphia to the ground.

It is a spectacle of extraordinary excess. The media mullahs, the ritualistic liberals, the bright boys of the Nixonian Era and the Senate's sages are all sweating and groaning in an enormous Gordian knot of humanity, straining to destroy each other and doing a pretty formidable job of self-destruction. Watergate is one of those rare historical episodes where not one of the participants distinguishes himself, not even a vagrant wit. The state overflows with blood and gore. It is America's equivalent to the Cultural Revolution. □

Duke J. Armstrong

## A View of Child Development

In recent years the hue and cry has been raised for a national child development program by a plethora of liberal social workers and educators. The program would squarely put Washington into the business of raising the nation's children through federally funded and operated child care centers. If it is true, as we have so often been told, that the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world, it should give us pause to reflect on the prospect of a single hand in Washington rocking cradles across the country.

The program, so the advocates state, promises to solve a host of individual and social problems which plague contemporary American society—from juvenile delinquency through mental illness and tooth decay. Yet, lurking behind all these glittering promises lies a number of fundamental, philosophical issues raised by a massive federal program of this nature. And these issues have not been adequately discussed. Debate on the program has suffered from what columnist James J. Kilpatrick has described as the "Phenomenon of the Vanishing Threshold." That is, controversy over the program has centered not around the threshold question of whether or not the United States should have a national child development program, but rather on the routine bureaucratic questions such as how much it will cost, how it will be administered, what delivery system will be used, and whose children will use it. Somehow the threshold vanished leaving only methodology to argue. Considering the importance to future generations of the establishment of a child development program, this is a tragic omission. That a change of such massive proportions is contemplated points out the imminent need to debate that threshold question, to analyze the root assumptions behind the new child development concept, and to consider the grave legal and social implications for American society.

As their strategy, child development advocates chose the old-line liberal tac-

tic, successful since the 1930s, of *ex nihilo* manufacturing a right and then pressing the federal government to guarantee it (through expenditure of vast sums of money and use of legal sanctions). Thus in the last few years a new "inalienable right" has emerged from the copious and redundant child development rhetoric (Tom Jefferson negligently omitted it from the Declaration of Independence). Perhaps the most striking example (and never mind the infeasibility) comes from the final report of the Joint Commission on Mental Health of Children (Fall, 1969) wherein the Commission states that among other rights, the infant has the "right to continuous loving care." (Yes, and supposedly each American adult has the *right* to a happy married life. Should the federal government subsidize miracle computer dating and marriage programs?)\*

The sanctioning by the state of a vague "right to happiness" of this nature holds explosive legal implications. Who exactly possesses this right? May the parent assert it for the child against the government? May the child assert it against the parent and the government? May the government assert it for the child against the parent? These questions are of no small judicial concern in a free society. Yet, these questions have never been raised, much less answered, in the present controversy. No one seems concerned about the threat explicit in a program built on such an ambiguous foundation. Child development proponents have made only one thing perfectly clear: they desire to take a long stride down the path toward standardized federal programs governing the development of American children.

If the child care program were merely to be another in a long line of absurd social services dished out by HEW and doomed to a bureaucratic fate, one could perfunctorily remonstrate those responsible for the waste of federal revenues, and then proceed to ignore the monstrosity. The child development program is, however, of a very different kind from

all that has gone before. Over the course of the last forty years Americans have seen increasing government involvement in their lives. Washington has, to a greater or lesser extent, undertaken a role in determining how we are housed, how we are clothed, how we eat, how many cigarettes we consume, and so forth. But this is the first time it has set a hand to the task of determining what kind of people we are.

Granted, all government programs have an indirect effect upon the character of those subjected to them, yet this still marks an ominous beginning for the involvement of the U.S. government in drawing guidelines for the personalities of U.S. citizens. The concept advocates the turning of government from its proper bailiwick of regulation of the extrinsic conduct of its citizens to the regulation of their intrinsic nature. The social implications of such a program are manifest.

First is the obvious detrimental effect upon the family institution—the basic unit of social organization in society. The family group as a basic social institution is very nearly universal. It has survived, virtually intact, since antiquity in a myriad of societies as the basic living arrangement, with primary responsibility for meeting the requirements of its component members for food, shelter, recreation, and what we now must call child development.

Proponents of the child care program argue that they wish only to supplement the family institution and not supplant it. Yet their actions belie another motive. They propose more than mere advice and counsel; they propose the creation of a force paramount to the family and advocate direct federal involvement in the growth and training of American infants through providing a full panoply of services. The entire concept builds upon the basic and false postulate that banks of computers and batteries of trained technicians and "experts" can somehow substitute for the traditional family institution. To tamper with that

institution (of such hardihood and proven worth) is to invite social chaos—to rend the delicate fabric which weaves a society together. Child development advocates propose to wreak just such havoc with American society.

A second social implication of child care programs is the substantial effect they will have upon the children involved. Healthy human development is related to many interwoven factors—biological, social, emotional, and intellectual—and is largely shaped by the events which occur from the time of conception until the age of two. It is in these early years that the child is the most flexible (and the most vulnerable to programming). By the age of two the infant is very actively looking for models, and help in dealing with aggressive feelings such as hurting, hostility, as well as violent ways of creating movement in other people. One need hardly subscribe to the doctrine that a child is nothing more than a product of his environment to concede that any individual or program in prolonged contact with the child during his first formative years will be a substantial factor determining the type of adult that child becomes.

Proponents of child care centers argue that, yes, indeed, the program will have a substantial effect upon the infant—and it will be a positive one. With a young, flexible child, needed remedial services will prove faster and easier. Mistakes parents would have made can be avoided with a host of trained psychiatrists, dietitians, pediatricians, educators, and the like.

But such communal and sterile child rearing could have devastating effects upon the infant. Research indicates that early entrance to school does result in lower achievement throughout the grades when compared with the achievement of later entrants with similar abilities. (See Joseph W. Halliwell, "Reviewing the Reviews on Entrance

Age and School Success," in *Reading in Educational Psychology*, Victor H. and Rachel P. Noll, eds., 2nd ed. [New York: Macmillan, 1968], p.65.) There is simply no good substitute for a mother's presence. The finest and most elaborate day care center in the world can not begin to compete in this regard with even the average mother. As Dr. Raskin, director of the Children's Orthopedic Hospital Psychiatry Service in Seattle, Washington, stated: "Give a child two or three years of love, and he's going to make it in life. It is the erratic early years that cause future problems." A child's self-control, learning abilities, and cooperation are by-products of the emotional stability that come from being loved and needed. Child care personnel can never provide that essential component in the child's life. And the cold, mechanical efficiency of child development centers will serve but to fold, spindle, and mutilate the lives of thousands of American children.

A third social implication is the effect of "growing" thousands of individual children from thousands of individual families under identical hothouse conditions. A progressive society relies upon its varied components. Any tendency to reduce human variety reduces the amount of experimentation in the conduct of human affairs, which in turn slows progress and decreases the interest that life holds. Child care advocates argue that each center will remain locally controlled by community policy-making boards made up of parents and neighbors and thus each will be unique. Yet they ignore the painful lesson recent history teaches us: vast federal programs have an instinctive tendency toward uniformity. The executive branch in carrying out an ambitious new program created by the Congress finds it necessary to set guidelines, draw up directives, and write statutes in order to deal with this vast new grant of power. An awesome bureaucratic machinery inevitably arises, crushing any lingering

elements of creativity or uniqueness or eccentricity. No one will stop the standardization of a chain of child care centers from coast to coast.

Even on the local level, necessity dictates that participating parents will rely heavily upon the judgment of the "experts" who administer the program. Their recommendation will stand as the rule. Meetings of the community policy-making board will become little more than wrangles over trivial financial matters such as whether or not to install a new sink in the kitchen. And all the while the machine will grind on, stamping out its products from a common mold and programming them with identical data.

Assuredly the concept of child development holds serious legal and social implications for the future of a free society in this country. Indeed, within the concept is the culmination of two of the most disturbing trends of twentieth century America: the achievement of a totally equalitarian society where each member harks from a common background, holds the same ideas, and has identical thinking patterns; and, the complete and final submission to the imperatives of a science-centered age where every aspect of human life is monitored and controlled by specialists, technicians, and computers. Hopefully it shall not be America's destiny to discover that brave new world.

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\*Since writing this parenthetical remark I have been apprised of a proposed program of divorce insurance, to be taken out immediately before or after marriage. The idea attempts to governmentally "insure" a happy married life—or, more precisely, to "insure" against an unhappy divorced life. Thus, ironically enough, my remark (which I intended as purely absurd and rhetorical) is actually being considered by certain feminists, lawyers, and legislators.

Peter Hughes

## Wall No Barrier to Memories...

*August 13, 1973, marks the twelfth anniversary of the construction of the Berlin Wall. It stands as a monument to the Cold War.*

"The times they are a-changing," go the words of a Bob Dylan song. And indeed they are. It is said that we are in the midst of an era of entente, detente, and cooperation among the world's major powers, a period which is expected to bear the threshold of a new era.

What indications do we have that there is more hospitable sentiment between the powers of East and West? Well, for one thing, when East German refugees recently attempted to scale the Berlin Wall and escape to the West, there was an uproar of public opinion

in West Berlin over the "alleged" shootings. East Germany's Pankow regime promptly responded by putting the "criminals" (those attempting to escape) on national television to refute the insidious capitalistic slurs. Not to let events stand with that, they then expelled one of the "criminals."

The times they are indeed a-changing if the East German government found it necessary to justify its actions on national television. (The television waves in both countries are strong enough to be received on either side of the border.) But the continued shootings at the Berlin Wall; the barbed wire and brick walls; the watchtowers and concrete dugouts with armed guards, dogs, and military vehicles; the field mines and miles of no man's land between East and

West Germany; these are hardly monuments to peace, cooperation, and freedom of travel and thought between East and West.

I lived in Berlin for many years, and I was there on that fateful August 13, 1961, when the Berlin Wall was first erected. It is a travesty of politics that the lives of individual persons are so often overshadowed by the general course of history. But on that night of August 13 the erection of the Berlin Wall became a very real and personal experience for me when a young woman arrived at our doorstep with the proverbial child in arms.

Like so many other people living in the city of West Berlin (one-fourth of the city's 2.2 million population came as refugees from the Soviet occupied terri-