

situation that promotes the growth of children, the development of their security, their ability to relate to the world and people, and their sense of personal worth. But the intimacy of the family situation is also the perfect opportunity for adults to pass on to children their own insecurities, fears, and feelings of self-degradation. The value of the intimacy, especially in adult-child relationships, depends very much on the psyche of the adult—a matter that Dennison seems to treat all too lightly.

Reading this book can be an enormously frustrating experience precisely because the success of Dennison's teaching is so evident, and because the explanations of it are so unconvincing. The experiences of the people at First Street are so well described, and the environment for personal growth seems so excellent. Yet, to account for all of this, Dennison merely offers us the small size of the school as an explanation. That's not enough, and I suspect that Dennison knows it. In his own words, "What the student needs is . . . an ally in the world. . . . I am not suggesting that every teacher be a psychotherapist; I am insisting that every teacher put himself in relation with the person before him, and not with one portion of that person's conflicts." *The Lives of Children* leaves no doubt in my mind that the teachers at First Street are the kind of people that Dennison is insisting on for teachers. But how do people get to be that way? Most of us have enough trouble relating as whole, secure people to our wives or our own children, let alone our students. And while we might all agree that an atmosphere of intimacy

is necessary for developing such relationships, we strongly suspect that it's not sufficient. Help us to find the adults to staff mini-schools all over the country, Mr. Dennison; help teachers to overcome their own deep-rooted fears, insecurities, and self-degradation, and I'm with you all the way. In fact, I strongly suspect that *The Lives of Children*, read as a character study of George Dennison, may be a good step in that direction. The models are there; we all have much to learn from them.

In one of the few passages where he touches on the characteristics of teachers, Dennison claims:

The work of the teacher is like that of the artist; it is a shaping of something that is given, and no serious artist will say in advance that he knows what will be given. . . . The teacher's instrument is himself. Group therapy puts us in touch with ourselves. It clarifies emotions and reduces the blind spots in behavior. We cannot pass from the mechanical conceptions of method to the living reality of technique except by passing through ourselves.

*The Lives of Children* is a warm and honest account of teachers in touch with themselves creating an environment where children can get in touch with themselves. What remains to be written—and Dennison may well be the man who could write it—is *The Lives of Teachers*, an account of how teachers can get in touch with themselves.

**Peter H. Wagschal**

PETER H. WAGSCHAL is assistant to the dean, School of Education, University of Massachusetts.

## THE DEVIL HAS SLIPPERY SHOES

by Polly Greenberg

Macmillan, 704 pp., \$14.95

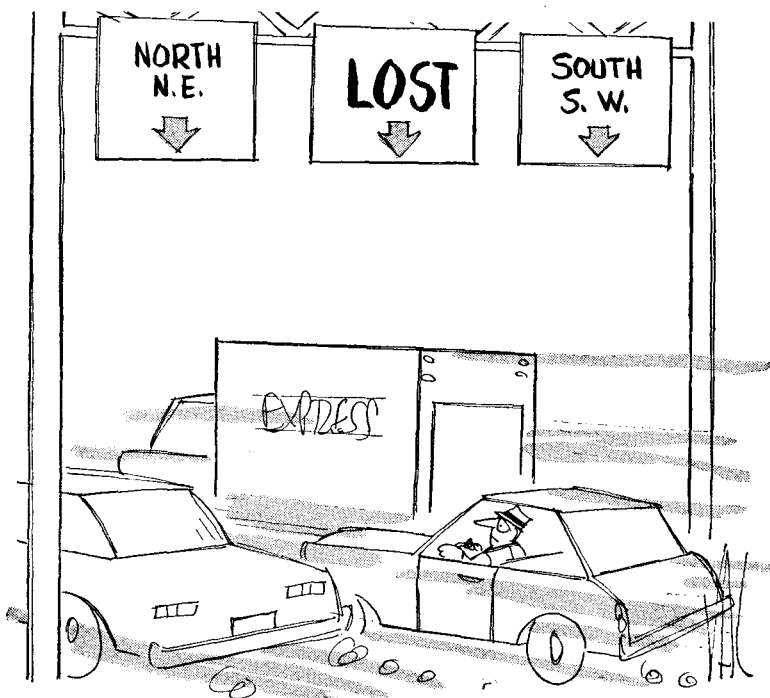
THERE ARE SOME realities that are difficult to discuss explicitly. One feels so uncertain of his perceptions, he is reluctant to attempt to describe them except through fiction, fantasy, or allegory, not because these forms give a credible context to what would otherwise be passed off as hyperbole, but because one wants to believe that those realities are not real. They are too devastating. Mississippi is one of those.

*Some women in the neighborhood had made dinner for us that night, spontaneously and without any show or pretense of doing something for the white kids from the North. They just cooked up a batch of chicken, greens, and rice, and brought it all over to Mrs. H.'s house. After dinner, everyone else drifted off, and I found myself alone in the kitchen. I decided to do the dishes, figuring it was the least I could do. Just as I was finishing up, Mr. H. came in and asked why I was washing dishes. I told him and he said, "That's women's work!" and left, glowering. Later, Mrs. H. and I got talking; I mentioned the incident and apologized. She was silent for about thirty seconds, staring intently at the battered kitchen table. Then she looked up into my eyes, and said, "Don't apologize. Just try and understand. Pappy's been beaten down so long that there's just not many ways he can be a man."*

After that summer in 1964 of freedom schools, voter registration, the Freedom Democratic Party, Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman, the War on Poverty came to Mississippi, principally in the form of the Child Development Group of Mississippi, a state-wide Head Start project that included, at various times over the first two years, 6,000 to 12,000 preschool children and 2,200 adults in a genuinely creative experience.

CDGM was not what nearly every other Head Start project was: nursery school with breakfast and a dental check-up. CDGM, in the words of one official of the Office of Economic Opportunity, "doesn't seem to be an agency or an organization as it's some kind of damn concept. It's supposed to be a school for small children; yet it seems to be a community project involving much more than that. That may be great, but we are only funding Head Start here."

The quotation is taken from *The Devil Has Slippery Shoes* by Polly Greenberg. The book is a self-proclaimed but gently "biased biography" of CDGM, and in its own unique, wordy, sometimes confusing way, it is one of the



best accounts of the social turmoil that has been going on in America for the past decade. It is more than just a story of missionary WASPs, foggy-minded and spineless bureaucrats, red-neck sheriffs, racist politicians, and poor, uneducated blacks who could do no wrong. It is, quite simply, a story of the ambiguities of making change and of despair—not over what's wrong but over the apparent impossibility of doing right.

The OEO official was right; CDGM was "some kind of damn concept." It was based on the simple premise that no changes that could be made in the classroom could make any difference to the children unless there were also substantial changes in the communities in which they grew up.

CDGM was originally conceived in early 1965 by Dr. Tom Levin, a New York psychoanalyst who had been active in the civil rights movement in Mississippi the previous summer. Levin knew all the jargon about "ability to control one's destiny" long before the Coleman report described it as a characteristic attitude felt by black children attending integrated schools and not felt by those in segregated schools. He conceived CDGM to do more than just provide nursery schools for children and menial jobs for parents. CDGM was set up and run deliberately to reduce the hopelessness people feel about their fate.

By coincidence, the rhetoric behind the War on Poverty proclaimed the same beliefs, but there the coincidence ended. Levin believed that, if the feelings of resignation and hopelessness were to be dealt with effectively, the poor must plan and operate their own programs. They must not just participate; they must have power. They would learn how to run classrooms, how to organize centers, how to administer programs, how to operate budgets, and how to deal with bureaucrats by using power.

It worked, often painfully, slowly, exasperatingly, but it worked. Mrs. Greenberg, a former OEO official who became CDGM's director of teacher development and curriculum, didn't write this book so much as she wove together hundreds of accounts, stories, narratives, observations, reflections, and analysis about the first two years of CDGM. The book wanders through the back roads of the thirty counties in which CDGM projects operated and records what happened.

"Some people keep saying we should have unity. They think the hassling we have now in these communities is awful. . . . I thought we'd have a shooting-do over who will be chairman, where it used to be you couldn't get no one. But it was quiet then, and

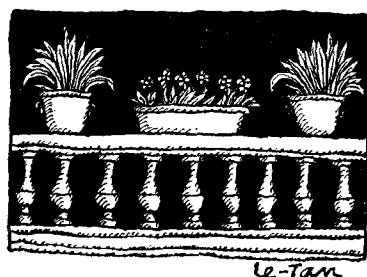
"peaceful," and we sure did have unity. That's good? Hah! You tell me that lively fighting is bad? Hell, it's fantastic. . . . Now, they quit the committees and they say, "If things don't be like I like, I just won't mess with this mess no more." We've still got a mess as long as we've got all this wrassling and tassling, but they're *beginning*: asking questions, being inquisitive, fussing, misunderstanding, getting it all wrong, making a big rignarole: but it's started, you hear me?"

Eventually, of course, this "damn concept" was killed. Mrs. Greenberg devotes much of the book to a fascinating description of the project's relations and difficulties with Washington. OEO had to kill CDGM, because it was there that the rhetoric was reality. Most other Head Start and Community Action Programs made a feint toward "maximum feasible participation" of the poor and then ran in the opposite direction, stacking boards and staff positions with safe, certified members of the middle class.

CDGM was killed because it was run by a "mob of Nigras." OEO had to kill CDGM to appease Senator John C. Stennis, who threatened to cut all anti-poverty funds unless OEO eliminated what Stennis quite rightly considered to be a potential danger to his political security.

The Washington bureaucrats were the villains; the wishy-washy liberals chickened out again. Once more the bankruptcy of the Establishment is proved and the righteousness of the romantics is vindicated. Right? Not quite. After CDGM beat back the first OEO attempt to kill the project, Mrs. Greenberg wrote in her diary:

It's easy to blame others, as others can always be found somewhat to blame. It's easy to feel pure, and that others are despicably sinful. But the root of this ruination of CDGM is within *us* as much as within *them*. Whatever *they* did or didn't do to our project, we would have done it ourselves sooner or later. It's in our nature to break up as much as we make: to foul up and fail at everything good we set out to do. We would have slaughtered the project anyway, with our overreaching of ability, overspending of passion, and overrating of selves. With egotistical striving and conniving and competitive possessive-



ness, we would have stabbed it to death and snarled it up past untangling. With energies warped into petty personal antagonisms and hateful bitterness, we would have strangled the good there was in it. It's comfortable to see ourselves as the virtuous ones, motivated only by the beautiful, but we are so dishonest. On both sides, OEO and CDGM, we're self-indulgent, self-important, very small people, with a long way to go to be wise.

CDGM still exists, but by all reports it is a pale shadow of the radiance it was from 1965 to 1967. Repeated battles with OEO over funding left it emasculated; Head Start funds have been cut back and control of the programs has passed into the dungeons of the Office of Education. But CDGM's death should not be mourned long, for it could not have been otherwise. For one brief moment, the radicals and the poor forged a new species of life in a land known only for death. The species could not survive in that climate, but it has not really died if survival lies in creating, not existing.

CDGM would probably have been just as dead, in a way, if, instead of hacking it to death, OEO had adopted all of its principles and required every Head Start and Community Action Program in the country to adopt them. Too often the institutionalization of ideas changes them into their very antitheses. On a compulsory, large-scale application, CDGM probably would have become as rigidified and as destructive as the system it was meant to supplement and supplant. Mrs. Greenberg deals with these issues through the Reverend Jimmy Jones, a white Methodist chaplain at Ol' Miss, born and raised in the desolate Delta town of Leland, and later the board chairman of CDGM:

History doesn't just make itself. Somebody gets an idea from the mesh he's in, and he moves out alone with his idea, and he educates himself and others and forms a model that's back down in the mesh; but it's new. The perpetual revolution is what I see as the essence of life. The job will never be done by people who do something and then sit back down and never do anything else—or people who never do anything at all. I call them the living dead. An idea is like any living thing: the minute it's birthed, it's on its way to death. We have to keep on with the birthing process—creating, creating, learning, experimenting. . . .

"They say that freedom is a constant struggle," goes the old song. It is. It is also more than that. Freedom is *the* struggle. It is never achieved except in the effort to reach it.

—WALLACE ROBERTS.

# New Books

**Research for Tomorrow's Schools: Disciplined Inquiry for Education**, edited by Lee J. Cronbach and Patrick Suppes (Macmillan, 281 pp., \$3.95), provides a joint statement from the Committee on Educational Research of the National Academy of Education. Written by outstanding American masters of such diverse crafts as history, anthropology, and economics, the report posits certain key concepts that clearly distinguish disciplined research from less painstaking investigation. After defining conclusion-oriented inquiry (planned exclusive of possible useful results) and decision-oriented study (intended to furnish decision-makers with information), this lucid book goes on to trace the evolution of American educational scholarship and to map out significant research in testing, epistemology, and learning theory. A final section on problems in want of scholarly consideration is bound to generate further useful work.

**Teachers Talk: Views from Inside City Schools**, by Estelle Fuchs (Doubleday, 224 pp., \$1.45), is a fine little summary of beginning teachers' first impressions at deprived area schools. Based on taped interviews, it reveals many of the fears that haunt classroom novices. General pessimism, nervousness under administrative observation, and confusion at local politics all loom large on the roster of felt threats. In contrast to admissions of raw fright and occasional emotional reward, Dr. Fuchs's objective discussions cast the interviews in anthropological mold, with special emphasis on culture shock, social behavior, and rites of passage. *Teachers Talk* is a simply conceived book that succeeds in revealing aspects of education little known to the general public. It also makes sensible recommendations about the sorts of perceptual frameworks teacher education should employ in order to enhance teacher survival.

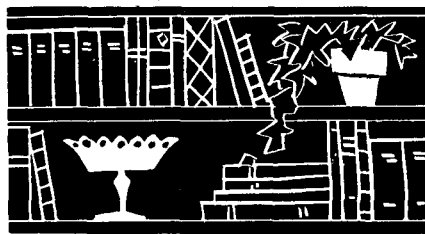
**Up the Ivy Ladder**, by Norman Runnion (Doubleday, 178 pp., \$4.95), will raise a few chuckles in between more serious reading on America's troubled campuses. Most of today's university problems come under Runnion's ironic pen. Student revolutionaries, "shagies," and "jocks" stretch professors to the limits of patience. Would-be deans receive advice on sex, pot, and campus warfare. Though farcical, sections on public relations, development, and admissions hew close enough to reality to lay bare actual shortcomings. In some places, this book merely dupli-

cates some of the cornier passages of student journalism circa 1940. In others, it stimulates a few nerves too long untwined. Well worth a couple of hours.

**The Brass Factories: A Frank Appraisal of West Point, Annapolis, and the Air Force Academy**, by J. Arthur Heise (Public Affairs Press, 190 pp., \$6), "examines the credentials" of America's three renowned officer training schools in order to establish some connection between outmoded education and cheating. Heise concludes that the connection is direct. He characterizes the Air Force Academy as a malfunctioning assembly line geared to letter-grade distribution rather than character-building. Annapolis fares little better. It is said to vacillate between technical and academic emphases without any overall plan. West Point gets top marks for running smoothly but continues insensitive, Heise says, to the need for radical curriculum change. At times, Heise appears unusually surprised at guarded officialdom. Conversely, his argument that America's top military leaders should get an appropriate preparation comes as yet another appeal for the relevance of higher studies.

**Employment and Educational Services in the Mobilization for Youth Experience**, edited by Harold H. Weisman (Association Press, 224 pp., \$4.95), presents a striking definition of a slum as a "disorderly mechanism for human destruction," followed by careful accounts of the orientation, training, counseling, and placement of MFY youth. For an official report, this book reads surprisingly well. Henry Heifetz's brief introduction traces Lower East Side settlement patterns since the Irish immigration of the 1840s. Subsequent chapters describe problems encountered in government-sponsored programs and furnish short, objective assessments of their effectiveness. Anyone concerned with educating those for whom traditional institutions have somehow failed will find this concise volume most enlightening.

**Approaches to Education for Character: Strategies for Change in Higher**



**Education**, edited by Clarence H. Faust and Jessica Feingold (Columbia University Press, 451 pp., \$10), consists of some two dozen thoughtful papers initially prepared for the seventeenth meeting of the Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion in Their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life. With power, protest, relevance, and similar constructs so much at the center of university discussion these days, a full, formal exchange on character comes as an intellectual jolt. Character as employed in this work, however, turns out to be no mere avenue to pious moralizing, but rather a focus of attention illuminating some striking ideas. Albert Hofstadter's opening statement on the structure of responsibility sets a stiff pace for essays of exceptional quality by Richard McKeon, Robert J. Havighurst, Robert W. Lynn, John C. Lilly, and other confreres. For its fine, even analysis of an often neglected topic, this edition stands out among scores of good tries.

**Student Power: Problems, Diagnosis, Action**, edited by Alexander Cockburn and Robin Blackburn (Penguin Books in association with "New Left Review," 378 pp., \$1.25), is a collection of forceful papers on student activism in Britain. Averaging twenty-four years of age, contributors with experience in higher studies, teaching, and writing analyze the basis of university protest. Cockburn's introduction sketches certain broad issues including the nature of bourgeois society, of student power, and of revolutionary culture. Essays by G. S. Jones, David Adelstein, Perry Anderson, and others further discuss the origin, form, and meaning of student dissatisfaction. In thematic organization and tidy style, here is an excellent offering. Vigorous and thoroughly provocative, it shuns that easy polemic approach marking less discriminating works on the same topic.

**The Campus in the Modern World**, edited by John D. Margolis (Macmillan, 381 pp., \$3.95), organizes twenty-five essays under such headings as goals, criticisms, and alternatives. Whitehead is there with his university preserving "the connection between knowledge and the zest for life." T. S. Eliot's censure of superficial liberalism and Hutchins's abhorrence of mediocrity counterpoise Richard Lichtman's attack on universities as services "adjunct to prevailing social powers" and Theodore Roszak's castigation of academic complacency. Additional pieces by Mark Van Doren, Paul Goodman, Jacques Barzun, John W. Gardner, and others make up an admirable source book on a vital topic.

—John Calam.