

THE GREENING OF AMERICA: How the Youth Revolution Is Trying to Make America Livable

by Charles A. Reich

Random House, 399 pp., \$7.95

Reviewed by Robert Eisner

■ "Consciousness III," according to Yale law professor Charles A. Reich, "is deeply suspicious of logic, rationality, analysis, and of principles." If you have arrived at Consciousness III, you will like this book.

Reich constructs three categories of "consciousness," or "whole perception of reality," on which the progress and survival of society depend. Consciousness I is the free-enterprise "traditional outlook of the American farmer, small businessman, and worker who is trying to get ahead. . . . II represents the values of an organizational society. . . . III is the new generation." Our current "corporate state" (a phrase borrowed from John Kenneth Galbraith's much more finely etched *New Industrial State*) is somehow trapped between the anachronistic Consciousness I and the conformist Consciousness II. We thus have "depersonalization" and "repression," and are threatened with the destruction of "all meaning and all life."

It strikes me that Consciousness I, II, and III represent about the extent of Reich's use of numbers; *The Greening of America* is stronger on purple

prose than on quantitative analysis. One could immediately smell success in this opus (excerpted in *The New Yorker* and widely commented on prior to publication), not because it is intellectually rigorous but because it is just the opposite. Like *Easy Rider*, it is easy on the mind and carries a rich appeal to the senses. Consciousness II will gain masochistic pleasure from reading a rundown of its sins, and both Consciousness II and III will derive delight and titillation from Reich's description of the new life-style.

But the problems Reich takes as his departure points are terrifyingly real. We do have poverty in the midst of plenty. We do have a heritage of exploitation of our black minority. We do have violence in our schools, which both literally and spiritually destroys children, and violence in our cities. We do choke in our own smoke and destroy our own land, even while our youth are being forced to destroy another land in a dirty war we seem to lack the collective ability to stop. Above all, we are frustrated in our quest for individuality in a world of interdependence. We are challenged on the meaning and value of freedom of choice when the values that determine our choices are themselves determined by forces that seem to be out of our control. All these are serious, weighty issues, and failure to resolve them may lead to the destruction of our society—although that is a possibility to which a cautious social scientist might not wish to assign a

high probability. But Reich's discussion of these issues and what to do about them employs none of the professional tools of any social science.

Reich makes short shrift of Consciousness I. It "was appropriate to the nineteenth-century society of small towns, face-to-face relationships, and individual economic enterprise. . . its reality centered on the truth of individual effort." It cherishes a nostalgic belief that that government is best which governs least, and one may presume it still contributes much to the mass support of the Republican Party, if not to its power structure.

Despite our lingering faith in the virtue of individual effort, self-discipline, and even competition, most readers of this review—along with the reviewer—are likely to be found in the admittedly diverse general area of Reich's Consciousness II, which includes "businessmen (new type), liberal intellectuals, the educated professionals and technicians, middle-class suburbanites, labor union leaders, Gene McCarthy supporters, blue-collar workers with newly purchased homes, old-line leftists, and members of the Communist Party, U.S.A. Classic examples of Consciousness II are the Kennedys and the editorial page of *The New York Times*." The one characteristic we Consciousness II types all share, according to Reich, "is the insistence on being competent and knowledgeable."

We may be carried along by some of Reich's criticisms of life under the corporate state, of the pressure for conformity, the toadying, the cant, the materialism, the conscienceless tie-in with the military and war. His jibes at advertising may be welcome. Suggestions that much work is routine and repetitive and boring will be received with sympathy. But what does it mean to say that man now lives a "robot life"? How seriously can we treat assertions that "the state has undertaken to define, within rather strict limits, the life-style of its citizens with respect to sex life, culture, and consciousness, and political thought and activity. . . . Sex life shall consist of a monogamous marriage. . . . Cultural life shall include anything produced and prescribed by the machine. . . . Political life shall be limited to loyalty to the Corporate State. . . .?"

Perhaps we should excuse the rhetoric. There are certainly elements of truth, if not of novelty, in those statements. Reich is objecting, however, not to specific evils but to the whole system, and he claims that elimination of the evils calls for rebelling against the system's regimentation and rejecting its life-style at every turn.

In the schools we have a mindless

Your Literary I.Q.

Conducted by David M. Glixon

CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

Grace J. Breckling of Shaker Heights, Ohio, found a dozen unhappy children in the predicaments summarized below. Who suffered them, and in the writings of what authors? If you can't bear the suspense, you may turn for relief to page 40.

- | | | |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| 1. Threatened by townsfolk with separation from her mother () | A. Alice | a. anon. |
| 2. Stranded on an island with no adults () | B. Cosette | b. C. Brontë |
| 3. Made to wear a Sir Launcelot costume () | C. David | c. Browning |
| 4. Prepared for burning as a sacrifice () | D. Edward | d. Carroll |
| 5. Pinned to a mast by a dirk () | E. Eppie | e. Dickens |
| 6. Had to work 364 days a year in a silk mill () | F. Isaac | f. G. Eliot |
| 7. Smothered in bed with his brother () | G. Jane | g. Golding |
| 8. Unmercifully thrashed by his stepfather () | H. Jim | h. Hawthorne |
| 9. A queen threatened her with decapitation () | I. Pearl | i. Hugo |
| 10. Forced into heavy labor at an inn () | J. Penrod | j. Shakespeare |
| 11. Locked up in the room where her uncle had died () | K. Pippa | k. Stevenson |
| 12. Lay in the snow by her dying mother () | L. Samneric | l. Tarkington |

violence to the spirit, which must be ended. Youth must no longer be "prolonged by studying, so that young, energetic, and restless bodies are confined to chairs in lecture halls and libraries, memorizing facts, writing papers and cramming for exams. . . ." There must be no slavish devotion to a career, to a job where one does what the boss or the organization expects. One must be free to work or not as one pleases, to surf, or ski, or ride a motorcycle, or live in a commune, to enjoy sex when one wishes and with whom one wishes however one wishes. And one must be allowed mind-expanding, sense-accentuating drugs.

This is the life style of Consciousness III. Its freedom, its sensuousness, its power are all expressed, according to Reich, in the clothes and music of youth. The faded jeans, worn over and over until every body crease shows, bring out individuality, since different bodies have different shapes and creases. They also permit freedom: If one decides to stop work and go for a motorcycle ride one is prepared; the same blue jeans can serve all purposes. And the new music "expresses the whole range of the new generation's experiences and feelings." In its richness and variety and loudness, in its profanity and irreverence, and in its

shared enjoyment by performers and audiences who are jointly and mutually stoned by drugs, it somehow exemplifies all that is natural, free, sensuous and alive—as "when Janis Joplin, a white girl, sang 'Ball and Chain' to a pulsing communal audience of middle-class young white people."

It is striking how pot and psychedelic drugs recur as a vital element of Consciousness III, bracketed with other things one might think could stand by themselves. Thus Reich writes: "If a Consciousness II person, old or young, is asked whether he wants to see a far-out film, try a new drug, or spend a week living in a nature-food commune, he feels uncomfortable and refuses. . . ." Reactions to such varied propositions would probably be quite different. But perhaps the essential unity in Reich's schema is that somehow everything depends on the rejection of reason, the systematic thought-processes that man has slowly and painfully acquired in his rise from the apes. "It might take a Consciousness II person twenty years of reading radical literature to 'know' that law is a tool of oppression: the young drug user just plain 'knows' it." One might expect that the drug user knows because he is "oppressed," but

Reich insists that "All of the various efforts of the new generation to increase awareness [including the use of drugs] combine to produce a remarkable phenomenon: the Consciousness III person, no matter how young and inexperienced he may be, seems to possess an extraordinary 'new knowledge.'" The author ascribes this to "the repeal of pretense and absurdity." I wonder.

On the political level, Reich's attitude comprises a jumble of insights and suicidal impulses. He perceives the psychic injury suffered by blue-collar workers, which has made them prey to the George Wallaces of the land, but it is not clear that he comprehends the economic realities of their lives, both good and bad. He warns of the folly of guerrilla tactics that serve not to convert but to harden reaction and prejudice. But he finds that "Burning draft cards is an effective and pointed commentary on the war."

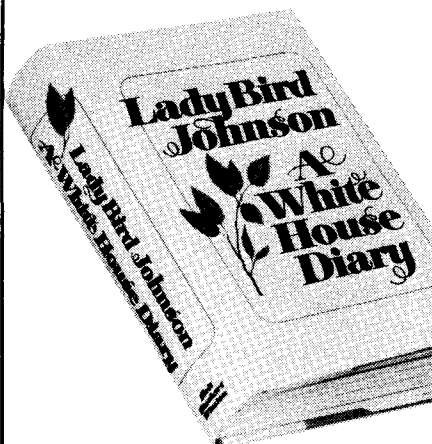
Yet Reich rejects "both the liberal and the SDS theories of how to bring about change in America." Even a successful liberal effort at mass organizing, politics and law "would end as the New Deal ended, with reforms that proved illusory," while radical "believers in class struggle would engage in a hopeless head-on fight against a



The Irish Art of Waterford.

Each piece of crystal is blown, cut and made wholly by hand, with love, in the same way that Waterford museum pieces were cut almost two centuries ago. Illustrated: Decanter, \$55. Vase, \$50. Centre Piece, \$55. For free brochure, write to Waterford, 225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10010.

NATIONAL BESTSELLERS



"She may have been the best First Lady of all... The diary is an extension of her person—a rare, refreshing, private face in the public maelstrom."—*Time* "The product of a keen mind and superior literacy... an intensely personal document."—*Marya Mannes, New York Times Book Review* "There has never been, and perhaps never will be, such an intimate glimpse of power in its private moments."—*James Brady, Book World*

A WHITE HOUSE DIARY by Lady Bird Johnson

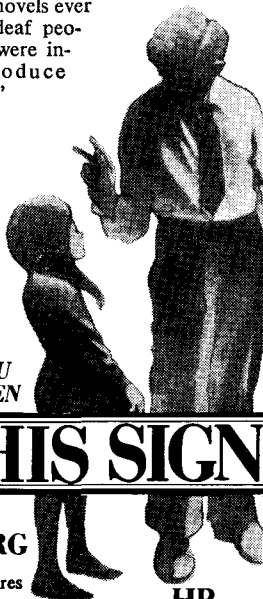
806 pages. 40 pages of illustrations. \$10.95 at all bookstores

"Writers were invented to produce books like this"*

"This is the closest thing to *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* which [she] wrote as Hannah Green." *Kirkus Reviews*. "A miracle of empathy, a tour de force of imaginative conjecture, and quite simply one of the best novels ever written about deaf people... Writers were invented to produce books like this."

*Christopher
Lehmann-
Haupt, *New
York Times*

by the
author of the
best-selling
*I NEVER
PROMISED YOU
A ROSE GARDEN*



IN THIS SIGN

JOANNE
GREENBERG

\$5.95 at all bookstores

Holt, Rinehart & Winston

machine that could work for them instead. . . ." The solution, according to Reich, is a "revolution by consciousness." The spontaneity, the lack of discipline, the anarchy of Consciousness III youth can and will be spread through the entire population. As we all refuse to buy what we are told to buy, to work when and at what we are told to work, the whole corporate state with its acquisitiveness and repression will just wither away. It is that simple.

In elementary economics courses we sometimes take as our text the fallacy of composition: the incorrect deduction that what is true for individual parts is also true for the whole. It is all very well for the young sons and daughters of affluence to cop out of the competitive race. If they do it briefly, they can return to their places in the establishment, as distrustful blacks and hostile white hard-hats are aware. And even if they do it longer they will have sacrificed only themselves. But what if Reich's Consciousness III were to sweep the nation? What if everyone worked as he pleased and when he pleased? Who would make the blue jeans and the motorcycles and the sleeping bags and the electric guitars and the pills?

Reich may think he has an easy answer. We are, he says, producing too much now anyway. Free from the tyranny of the corporate state and its advertising, we could produce only to satisfy "real need." We would all "put great effort into any work that is worthwhile." And so Reich slips over the central issues of our society, and of any society. What are real needs? What work is worthwhile? What should be the mechanism for deciding, for choosing? The thoughtful members of Reich's Consciousness I have an answer, that in its ideal form has a logical consistency and a record of achievement, which, with all its imperfections, cannot properly be dismissed out of hand. A world of individual freedom, subject to the rules of competitive markets, can in many situations give us most of what we want and what we as individuals think we "really need." A kind of social optimum with desirable efficiency can indeed result if how much we each get depends in large part on how hard we work, on how we choose to allocate our time and effort.

If Reich better understood the meaning of a market economy he might better reconcile the contradictions and confusions in his mind between the "depersonalization" he identifies with the corporate state and the striving for freedom and equality. For, whatever the existing inequality before the law, the impersonality of markets can be equalizing and liberating. Business is

business and a dollar is a dollar, as blacks have learned from successful bus boycotts and from their ability to buy what they wanted when they had the money, and as some victims of McCarthyism learned in the Fifties when they found that government blacklists did not prevent them from selling their talents to less political and more profit-minded employers.

Reich is apparently anxious to appear Marxist, but he has stood Marx on his head. Marx never called for "a community bound together by moral-esthetic standards such as prevailed before the Industrial Revolution." Rather, he paid eloquent tribute to capitalism's development of the "colossal productive forces" that had slumbered in the lap of social labor." The utopia of plenty for all would follow upon the



highest achievement of social labor and a scientifically based and guided technology, not upon the destruction of social labor and the abandonment of social rules and reason. And it would come by tackling not the superstructure of life-style but the organization and control of the means of production.

The author does reveal a certain inner logic to the "youth rebellion" which may have escaped those of us who are not part of it. And it would be easy to acquiesce in many of Reich's strictures against contemporary society. In the pleasant glow of communal joints—or in the light of old-fashioned drinks around the fireplace—we might excuse or pass over much of his rhetoric. Most of us, like Reich, loved Holden Caulfield, and take heart and sustenance from the vigor and freedom and searching of his successors almost a generation later. There is much in the world to question, much to change, much to construct. But there is illusion and an invitation to tragedy, hard to excuse in a mature adult, in Reich's counsel, that the answer is to be found by imitating Holden—or Janis Joplin.

Robert Eisner is professor of economics at Northwestern University and a member of the research staff of the National Bureau of Economic Research. He has written widely in areas of econometrics and economic theory and policy and has, most recently, contributed "The War and the Economy" to the volume "Why Are We Still in Vietnam?"

MAXIMUM SECURITY WARD

by Ramon Guthrie

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 160 pp., \$7.50..

Reviewed by Louis Untermeyer

■ Although, in spite of the once influential New Critics, few readers believe that a poem should be considered purely as an esthetic object complete in itself, it is still a matter of debate whether a creative work should be, or even can be, divorced from its creator. Ramon Guthrie's *Maximum Security Ward* makes such a debate implausible if not impossible, for rarely have poetry and autobiography been so tightly intertwined.

Maximum Security Ward, a book-length poem composed of a series of interrelated sections or movements, is the evocation of one man's stubborn struggle against extinction. It is also a fusion of ancient myths and modern banalities, random recollections mixed with accounts of hospital routines, a blend of pain, fantasy, and free association that has the sweeping suggestiveness of *The Waste Land*, to which it will inevitably be compared.

As the title indicates, most of the poem was written while Guthrie was, as he thought, dying. Cancer of the bladder had been arrested by cobalt radiation, but the radiation treatment had been excessive, and Guthrie was slowly hemorrhaging to death. Fifty-seven blood transfusions were given until the blood flow became less frequent. The doctors gave him a few

FRASER YOUNG LITERARY CRYPT NO. 1427

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1427 will be found in the next issue.

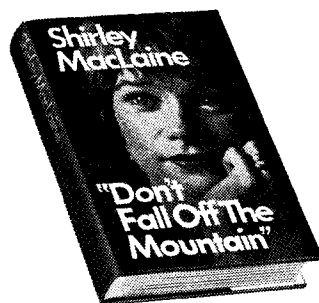
BOZW MCLTOTJT LCJ OL PCB-
FOLE ECCF MNDFT AIJ OL
KBNXOLE JPCTW XCI FC PCBF
GWBB.

—AOBBOLET

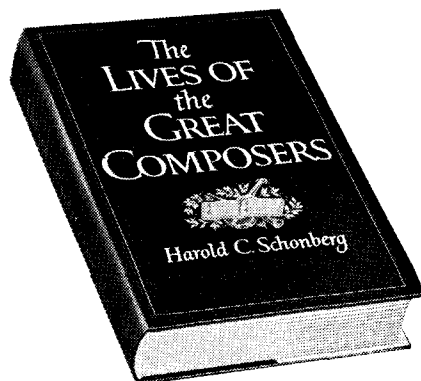
Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1426

Liberty means responsibility.
That is why most men dread it.
—SHAW.

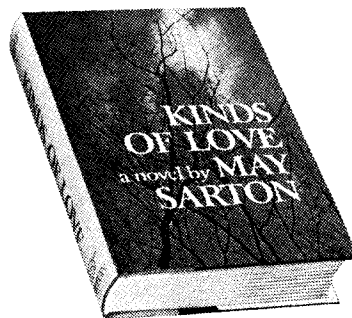
 **Norton**



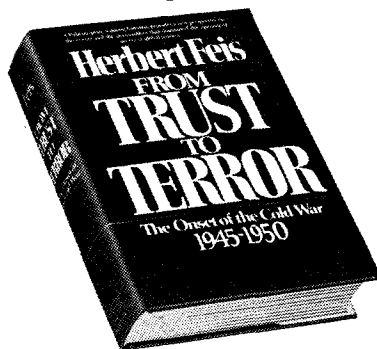
"A brave and charming book. She has not employed, and does not need, a ghost. Her opinions are sharp and pertinent." — *N.Y. Times*. \$5.95



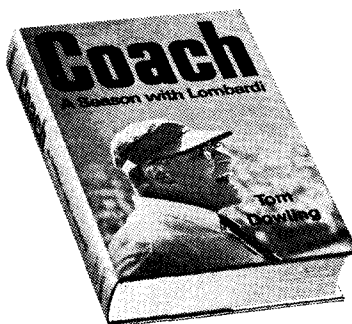
The Senior Music Critic of *The New York Times* traces the consecutive line of great composers, from Bach to Arnold Schoenberg. Illustrated. \$10.00



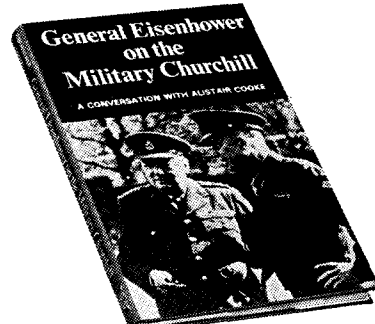
Life in a small New Hampshire town is understandingly re-created in "a major novel about mature people anywhere." — HAL BORLAND. \$6.95



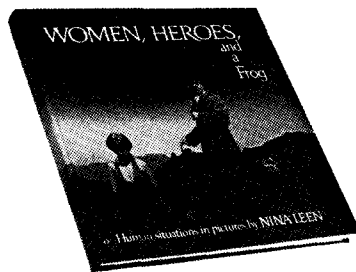
A Pulitzer Prize-winning historian casts fascinating new light on the personalities and events of a crucial half-decade. Illustrated. \$10.00



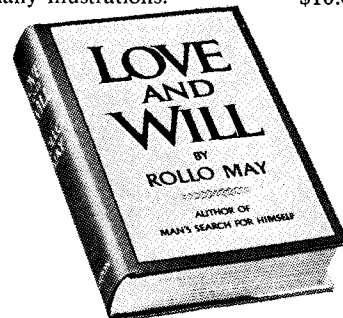
"A beaut," says *The Washington Post* about this book on Vince Lombardi. "Remarkably fair, well-balanced." — *Newsday*. Illustrated. \$6.95



"Vintage Ike, vintage Churchill and vintage Alistair Cooke—a superb combination." — EUGENE V. ROSTOW. With many illustrations. \$10.00



Human situations in "a rare, moving and witty combination of photographs and quotations." — CLEVELAND AMORY. Cloth, \$4.95. Paper, \$1.95



Over 131,000 copies of this "extraordinary book on sex and civilization . . . an important contribution" (*Newsweek*) are now in print. \$7.95



Norton

AT ALL BOOKSTORES

W. W. NORTON & COMPANY, INC., 55 Fifth Ave., New York 10003