

If Ever the Twain . . .

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Yugoslavian, the Rumanian, the Russian, and the Albanian, has produced numerous opportunities for the West to engage in fruitful economic trade and cultural exchange.

Of course, the war in Indochina continues to be the immediate major issue straining U.S.-Chinese relations. For Americans, the war is winding down, the troops are coming home. There is an almost universal acknowledgment that we committed a gross folly with our intervention in Vietnam and that it will be well when our troops are out even if the situation remains devoid of political settlement. The war is now so abhorrent we tend somehow or other to accept at face value President Nixon's statement that we can get out and that the divided governments of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia can be stabilized, like that of Korea.

The Chinese are of a completely opposite opinion. They acknowledge that American troops are being withdrawn, but they believe we are putting hired mercenaries in their place plus an incredible array of sophisticated armaments, particularly in the hands of the U.S. Air Force. This combination of hired mercenary and airborne fire power, especially when applied to the more recent battlefields of Cambodia, indicates to the Chinese that we have not abandoned our basic determination to create on their periphery a series of governments sympathetic to, if not clients of, the United States.

The Chinese pay far more attention to the issue of a divided Korea than we currently realize here in the United States. Premier Chou En-lai has visited the Democratic Republic of Korea, and the leaders of that government have returned the visits. Furthermore, while we were in Peking, the top Chinese officialdom engaged in a variety of ceremonies celebrating Korean National Day, including a banquet at the Great Hall of the People. However, China's commitment to the northern half of a divided Korea is as nothing compared to the commitment, which I became aware of in Peking, that has been made to the anti-Lon Nol "United Front" of Cambodia. The Chinese know that the United States has increased Lon Nol's troops from 30,000 to 180,000. American efforts to create a client government appear to the Chinese as the latest of our interventions and one that they are determined to defeat, no matter how many years it takes.

Let us examine the case of Cambodia, which the Chinese regard as quite different from Vietnam. In Vietnam, the North Vietnamese possess a highly organized military force that (when sup-

plied from China and the U.S.S.R.) has proved capable of holding off the Americans. The same could be said of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam with its guerrilla forces. Such was not the case in Cambodia, where, at the time of the coup, there existed almost no Cambodian military forces capable of resisting the American and South Vietnamese invasion.

The Chinese means of countering American intervention in Cambodia have been of a highly sophisticated nature. I did not come from China feeling that they will directly intervene with military forces. Quite the contrary. After three hours of talk with Prince Norodom Sihanouk and after conversations with Chinese officials, I concluded that China's main contribution to the Cambodian scene has been to assist in the creation of an ideological base that will ultimately defeat the Americans. This United Front includes Marxist-Leninists, centrists, and even monarchists. Nationalistic and anti-American, the United Front acknowledges Prince Sihanouk as the head of the Cambodian government.

From my talks with Foreign Ministry officials and others in China, I gained the impression that the Chinese have great confidence that the North Vietnamese and the NLF and the Pathet Lao can take care of themselves. They regard the American support of the Lon Nol government in Pnompenh as an intolerable imperialist intrusion, demonstrating that the Americans haven't learned a thing from Vietnam even though they now substitute air power and mercenary troops for U.S. ground forces. Problems of land tenure, agriculture, and the need to achieve industrial growth cannot be resolved by the arbitrary use of American fire power. The President's impending visit to China is an important and significant development. What is disturbing is the failure to take the required steps that would lead to the total withdrawal of American military forces in Indochina.

It should be self-evident that China's revolution comes from its history and its culture, and is nontransferable. But the United States can learn much from China. For instance, could we not learn from the Chinese about public morality and control of corruption? How the Chinese sense of public morality could be applied in our country is not clear, but at least we should avoid acting as though the Chinese have not accomplished something by eliminating corruption, which has been widespread in other Asian societies.

The Chinese are attempting an enormous experiment affecting one-quarter of the human family. We should wish them well and hope that they will provide an inspiration for the underdeveloped and developed nations alike.

More than Herbs . . .

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than some mild analgesia, adequate anesthesia for major surgery was achieved by use of manipulated or electrically stimulated acupuncture needles.

Does this practice work only because the Chinese are stoic? Is it effective only because of intense ideological expectations? Does it involve a degree of hypnosis? I doubt that these are sufficient explanations. Acupuncture anesthesia deserves thoughtful review with an open mind by Western medicine.

In my earlier comment that we were the first American physicians in China in twenty-five years I was inaccurate. One American physician has been there all the time. George Hatem, born in Buffalo, New York, has lived in China since 1934. His field has been in public health, and especially venereal disease. We were able to have an informal, substantial talk with him at the East Hotel in Canton, where we both were guests. Dr. Hatem, or, in Chinese, Ma Hai-teh, a relaxed, highly intelligent man, told us with quiet confidence that venereal disease has been effectively eliminated in China. Hatem said it has been ten years since a case of gonorrhea was identified. Cholera, plague, and similar epidemic diseases have been controlled. Hatem acknowledged that there are still schistosomiasis, though much decreased, and leprosy. Careful documentation of the numbers of lepers confirmed far fewer cases than anticipated. (Additional information on the venereal disease program in China is available in Dr. Joshua S. Horn's book *Away with All Pests*, published by Monthly Review Press, New York City.)

Edgar Snow has written in *Red China Today*: "Red China is of course merely the current chapter, and an organic part, of a very ancient and rich history wherein one may find pre-Marxist beginnings even of some institutions built by Chinese Communists of today. . . . How . . . mandatory it is to see China today as a point in time and space reached by a great people who have traversed a long, long road from antiquity."

The Chinese people are undeniably proud of what they have done as a people in these last twenty-two years. In some ways, communism is but a part, not the whole, of the exuberant drive of a people. A thoughtful moment to reflect on the continuity of Chinese culture, under a variety of circumstances, suggests that China and communism are inseparable forces which must be considered as one in our time, but that China is more than communism.

Letters to the Education Editor

Financing Schools

In "Anatomy of a Revolution" [SR, Nov. 20], Harold Howe II mentions that Hawaii provides 100 per cent of school costs from the state level. But Howe does not hint what Hawaii's accomplishments are compared with the mainland's results. Will somebody give us a reliable comparison?

Karl Haartz,
Andover, Mass.

In "The California Doctrine" [SR, Nov. 20], Arthur Wise suggests that the *Serrano* decision forbids local choice of school spending levels. This hope of Dr. Wise is triggered by the court's brief and cryptic references to "territorial uniformity." I fear your readers may be led to expect more than *Serrano* will actually deliver.

To read the decision as forbidding local "add-ons" would render most of the long opinion by Justice Sullivan superfluous. Eighty per cent of it is consumed by his analysis of the nature and implications of the discrimination caused by widely varying district wealth (most of the balance of the opinion distinguishes threatening precedents). If uniformity of spending is mandated, all this painstaking analysis and argumentation is pointless, and the stunning result announced by Wise is supported only by a casual postscript. This would be a result, by the way, that was specifically forsworn not only by the parties and "amici," but by several of the majority justices in exchanges during the oral argument. In addition, the Minnesota case, which Dr. Wise correctly implies is indistinguishable from *Serrano*, specifically rejects his interpretation.

Perhaps the confusion flows from Wise's doubt "... whether the equal protection clause applies to children or to school districts." Of course the rights asserted in *Serrano* are the rights of the children, but this settles nothing. The question is whether the child's right is to a statewide uniformity in spending levels or merely to

the removal of the influence of district wealth differences upon spending. Properly read, *Serrano* is limited to the latter.

This is neither a counsel's quibble nor an effort to put down the excellent Dr. Wise. The dispute is of central substantive importance. If Wise were right, the case would be reversed on appeal, and perhaps properly so. What makes *Serrano* viable is its very refusal to bully the legislature into homogenizing spending.

John E. Coons,
Professor of Law,
University of California, Berkeley,
Berkeley, Calif.

The articles on Financing Schools prompt me to express a point that I feel needs emphasis.

In the controversy of local vs. central control of schools, we should not forget that the quality of citizenship is partly dependent on the quality of childhood schooling. I suspect that most people spend their adult lives outside their childhood school districts, a tendency that is growing with increasing mobility. Thus the community of a person's adult residence has more "right" to control his education than his local childhood community.

Nevertheless, the fairness-equalizing value of centralized control of schools must be balanced against the danger of homogenization and standardization. But the "rights" of the community of the adult vs. the parents of the child should also be considered.

Richard P. Neville,
Sunnyvale, Calif.

In response to your recent articles concerning the obsolescence of the property tax, I offer the Archonist plan for equitable taxation for support of schools.

In lieu of heavy taxation upon incomes, sales, or real estate, the Archonist scheme advocates a per-capita tax—or "head tax"

—reflecting relative utilization of the public schools. In this scheme, the head of every family would pay a prescribed "unit" per annum for each child enrolled in the public schools. Because education theoretically benefits the entire community, every adult would be separately assessed—in nominal measure—in accordance with income and within a limit of "one-fourth unit" per annum. The latter assessment would apply to parents and to nonparents; but the plan could exempt retired citizens, unemployed persons, and parents who enroll children in private schools.

In the cases of persons who have been breeding with the assistance of public stipends from welfare, the prescribed amounts of the per-capita tax would be subtracted from welfare allotments. This plan would strongly encourage greater interest of parents in the uses of revenue by school boards and realistic curtailment in the unplanned growth of the population. In essence, the Archonist plan properly recognizes the frequently neglected correlation between pressures of population and demands for services.

William L. Knaus,
Mendota Heights, Minn.

School Board Politics

Jack Witkowsky's article "Education of a School Board Member" [SR, Nov. 20] contributed little to the education of the reader. It came as no surprise that he was squarely for desegregation, busing, and decentralization. What did come as a shock, though, was the blatant lack of a restraining editor's pencil on this slanted material. Once again the foes of liberal journalism have found a fertile field.

I have no idea who Mr. Witkowsky and Mr. Whiston are. But Witkowsky tells us he is a "real estate consultant," while his rival is a "seventy-year-old real estate broker." Furthermore, Mr. Witkowsky's picture shows him looking professorial, with pipe, glasses, etc. Mr. Whiston's picture is a cut from the *Sun-Times*, and the caption describes him as "livid."

Witkowsky gives us thumbnail descriptions of his fellow board members. One of them, Mrs. Wild, whom he apparently does not admire, comes across as snobbish, if not arrogant, thanks to the description of her "being easily identified by her mink coat and cigarette holder." It would be interesting to hear how his fellow board members described the author.

Furthermore, Witkowsky tells us the board's meeting room is "a large, somber, two-story chamber with a rail," etc. I'll bet he conducts his real estate consultations amid a sober, businesslike atmosphere, and behind a desk, at that.

What specific proposals Mr. Witkowsky put before the board during his two-year tenure we are not told. Nor do we know what support he was able to marshal or what the opposition put forth. Mr. Witkowsky describes these two years as frustrating and in the next breath exalting. Chicago's schools are apparently still functioning without Mr. Witkowsky.

John K. Butler, M.D.,
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"I've been feeding you for twenty-five years,
and where in the hell has it gotten me?"

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Antidote to Instant Reform

THE ENGLISH INFANT SCHOOL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

by Lillian Weber

Prentice-Hall, 276 pp., \$7.95

Reviewed by Marilyn Hapgood

■ Lillian Weber has written a history of the careful, gradual change in English infant schools over this century toward more open, humane, and meaningful education. This is not the book that readers of Charles Silberman's *Crisis in the Classroom* may have been anticipating. The crusader of the "open corridor" that he celebrates says almost nothing here about her own work in New York's inner-city schools. (This has been described by others, in the pamphlet *Open Door*, a publication of the Center for Urban Education.) Instead Professor Weber records her findings from a sixteen-month stay in England in 1965-66 during which she visited fifty-six schools. For better and for worse, the result is a scholar's book—cautious, thorough, sometimes obscure, often slow-going—yet as a history it is, I believe, definitive. With this book, plus the Plowden Report and the excellent array of BBC films, one can virtually experience the English approach without going there.

Weber devotes the first half of her study to the practice of informal education in English nursery and infant schools and the second half to its theory, especially the trailblazing ideas of Susan and Nathan Isaacs, English child psychologists and educators. Throughout, her approach is historical. Her greatest contribution, in fact, is to trace the evolution of informal education. American devotees who would achieve this kind of education need to be reminded that in England the achievement took decades to accomplish and is still under way. Weber documents the process authoritatively.

In this process a liberating body of experience has developed, a tested wisdom about how children learn that has been shared by school staffs, by the inspectorate, and by the thoughtful government committees that have reported to the public on best practices. For example, because long experience in the classroom tells otherwise, the English teacher refuses to believe that the ghetto child is deficient in experi-

ence and curiosity as well as language. On the contrary, Weber observes, she honors *his* experience and builds her curriculum upon it, following through on her "commitment to make better connections with a child's background, to use his 'natural' language in his first learning." Weber's prose comes to life when she describes a London school, for many of whose students English is a second language:

I saw a genuine relating to a child's background, and there I also saw enormous self-pride in the children and much sharing with others of their background. The Morning Service at this school was occasionally led by a representative from a child's own religious group. Children in this school asked me, "Where do you come from?" and, dragging me over to the globe, offered to point out to me their place of origin. All over the walls words from one language were matched with words from another. Children offered to learn a word in one child's language in exchange for a word in theirs. They praised the head's pronunciation of her greeting to them in their language and reciprocated proudly with an English reply.

One wishes for many more such passages describing the individual schools that Weber visited, for some of the most memorable sections of her book give a vivid picture of the gentle, firm way the English teacher has with a child. Nothing in the school day is hurried. Time is found for the head to chat with mothers, for a mother to stay a while with her child at school, for the teacher to make the surroundings beautiful with plants, books, things to think about and handle, and children's work. Above all, the learning process follows the natural pace of a child. "Piaget's research indicated," Weber remarks in her habitual past tense, "that a child needed time for all his very gradual adaptation to reality, a prolonged time of active engagement with the many concrete situations in the environment. The school's obligation was to allow *more* time than had previously been thought necessary, to allow whatever time was needed by an individual child." With life lived to the full in such an environment, the serenity of the English children—even when seen—can hardly be believed.

Yet "to live fully as a child," which the Plowden Report recommends as the best way to prepare for ultimate maturity, includes experiencing the in-

fluence of adults who know a great deal about a great many things. And it is the indispensable adult perspective of the informed teacher that Weber slights. She is child-centered to a fault!

Children can only bring what they know to their play. Piaget has helped teachers know that children can assimilate ideas from an adult if they are presented in a concrete form, if they have some connection with the child's life, and if the child is then asked to transform the new information in some way unique to him. Hence, not only the child but the educated teacher must be an active agent in the learning process. For instance, I remember watching the headmistress of an Oxfordshire infant school working with a child who was making a clay fish, pointing out the texture of the fish scales and gills and then helping him use a pencil to get a textured pattern in the clay. American nursery school and kindergarten teachers who even now can say about informal education, "We've been doing it for years," might think again. For they may have been ingloriously settling for activity instead of engagement. This is all the more likely when the key element of discerning adult appreciation is lacking. Pinning a child's story on a wall "already 12 deep in stories" (as related in the *Open Door* booklet) does not value his work in the same way as placing it in a carefully arranged display.

When Weber looks toward America, she sees little hope for real change. Educators here still seem to her inclined to fit the child to the system rather than vice versa: the current challenge to the old system "may only replace the old bureaucracy with a new one." Compensatory education has been misguided; Weber concurs with the Plowden Report that, instead of special programs, "What these deprived areas need most are perfectly normal, good primary schools alive with experience from which children of all kinds can benefit." About American teachers, she recognizes that "In the present climate some teachers, despite administrative discouragement, are no longer passive and are experimenting." But she adds that it is not enough to change classrooms; we must change whole schools. Her most hopeful words come in her last paragraph, where she avers that "Out of the ruins of our ghettos a new education can be built . . . using the ghetto homes, the ghetto street life, the ghetto neighborhood—using all the things the children know, and expanding from there." This, one hopes, will be the subject of Lillian Weber's next book.

Marilyn Hapgood is a New England consultant in early childhood education.

The Magnitude of the American Educational Establishment (1971-1972)



More than sixty-three million Americans are engaged full-time as students, teachers, or administrators in the nation's educational enterprise. Another 137,000 make education a time-consuming avocation as trustees of local school systems, state boards of education, or institutions of higher learning. The breakdown is given here:

Institutions

Elementary

Public	64,539
Nonpublic (private and parochial)	15,340

Secondary

Public	23,972
Nonpublic	4,606

Combined elementary and secondary	2,310
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Universities, colleges, and junior colleges

Public	1,089
Nonpublic	1,467

Total 113,323

School Districts	17,995
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Students

Elementary (kindergarten through eighth grade)

Public	32,470,000
Nonpublic	4,230,000

Total 36,700,000

Secondary

Public	13,710,000
Nonpublic	1,440,000
Total	15,150,000

College and university full-time and part-time students enrolled for credit toward degrees

Public	6,230,000
Nonpublic	2,160,000
Total	8,390,000

Total students enrolled 60,240,000

Teachers

Elementary

Public	1,136,000
Nonpublic	172,000

Secondary

Public	960,000
Nonpublic	91,000

College and university

Public	407,000
Nonpublic	210,000

Total 2,976,000

Administrators and Supervisors

School superintendents	13,584
Principals and supervisors	119,530
College and university presidents	2,556
Other college administrative and service staff	89,000

Total 224,670

Board Members

Local board members	112,064
State board members	523
College and university trustees	25,000
Total	137,587

Cost (in billions)

Current expenditures and interest, elementary and secondary

Public	\$43.3
Nonpublic	4.7

Higher Education

Public	16.7
Nonpublic	9.6

Capital outlay, elementary and secondary

Public	5.5
Nonpublic	0.6

Higher Education

Public	3.4
Nonpublic	1.3

Total \$85.1

Figures based on available estimates from the U.S. Office of Education and the National Education Association