

WILHELM REICH

CHILDREN

OF THE

FUTURE

*On the Prevention of
Sexual Pathology*

WITH TRANSLATIONS BY DEREK AND INGE JORDAN
AND BEVERLY PLACZEK

EDITED BY MARY HIGGINS AND CHESTER M. RAPHAEL, M.D.

PREFACE BY WILLIAM STEIG

FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX
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*Love, work and knowledge are the wellsprings of
our life. They should also govern it.*

WILHELM REICH



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Preface by William Steig

How do babies, those beautiful, guileless creatures of joy, develop into us—insecure, self-involved people, incapable of living together in harmony, with ambitions to become unusually wealthy, or terribly clever, or enviably beautiful, or world-famous for some reason or other, eventually wanting to find God (who is presumably in hiding somewhere) and hoping our children will not turn out like us?

Angels at birth, we become lost souls. And so it has been for ever so long, as we learn from reading the ancients. How does this happen? Why do we humans, in many ways the most intelligent of all animals, fail to realize what every dog, or whale, or mouse spontaneously knows—that he is part of nature and must cooperate with it, obey its laws? Why are we estranged from life? What is wrong with us, with our way of rearing our children?

Reich asked such questions all the time. He was one of those extraordinary men who are able to step outside their culture and examine it with innocent eyes.

This book contains a part of Reich's enormous work on human pathology. It consists of studies, made between 1926 and 1952, of the damage we do to our children by thwarting their natural impulses, some of which are sexual.

These studies are of more than passing interest. In a world where nations are preparing to obliterate one another and the planet itself in order to assert, quite emphatically, their various ideological points of view, it is proper for us to ardently consider everything that helps us understand how we got into this terrifying position.

January 1983

I have throughout all of my lifetime loved infants and children and adolescents, and I also was always loved and understood by them. Infants used to smile at me because I had deep contact with them, and children of two or three very often used to become thoughtful and serious when they looked at me. This was one of the great happy privileges of my life, and I want to express in some manner my thanks for that love bestowed upon me by my little friends. May fate and the great ocean of living energy, from whence they came and into which they must return sooner or later, bless them with happiness and contentment and freedom during their lifetime. I hope to have contributed my good share to their future happiness.

WILHELM REICH,
from his will

*Children of the future age,
Reading this indignant page,
Know that in a former time,
Love, sweet love, was thought a crime.*

WILLIAM BLAKE

*CHILDREN
OF THE
FUTURE*

The Source of the Human “No”

When a child is born, it comes out of a warm uterus, 37 degrees centigrade, into about 18 or 20 degrees centigrade. That's bad enough. The shock of birth . . . bad enough. But it could survive that if the following didn't happen: As it comes out, it is picked up by the legs and slapped on the buttocks. The first greeting is a slap. The next greeting: Take it away from the mother. Right? Take it away from the mother. I want you to listen here. It will sound incredible in a hundred years. Take it away from the mother. The mother must not touch or see the baby. The baby has no body contact after having had nine months of body contact at a very high temperature—what we call the “orgo-notic body energy contact,” the field action between them, the warmth and the heat. Then, the Jews introduced something about six or seven thousand years ago. And that is circumcision. I don't know why they introduced it. It's still a riddle. Take that poor penis. Take a knife—right? And start cutting. And everybody says, “It doesn't hurt.” Everybody says, “No, it doesn't hurt.” Get it? That's an excuse, of course, a subterfuge. They say that the sheaths of the nerve are not yet developed. Therefore, the sensation in the nerves is not yet developed. Therefore, the child doesn't feel a thing. Now, that's murder! Circumcision is one of the worst treatments of children. And what happens to them? You just look at them. They can't talk to you. They just cry.

What they do is shrink. They contract, get away into the inside, away from that ugly world. I express it very crudely, but you understand what I mean. Now, that's the greeting: Taking it away from the mother. Mother mustn't see it. Twenty-four or forty-eight hours, eat nothing. Right? Penis cut. And then comes the worst: This poor child, poor infant, tries always to stretch out and to find some warmth, something to hold on to. It goes to the mother, puts its lips to the mother's nipple. And what happens? The nipple is cold, or doesn't erect, or the milk doesn't come, or the milk is bad. And that is quite general. That is not one case in a thousand. That is general. That's average. So what does that infant do? How does it respond to that? How does it have to respond to that bioenergetically? It can't come to you and tell you, "Oh, listen, I'm suffering so much, so much." It doesn't say "no" in words, you understand, but that is the emotional situation. And we organomists know it. We get it out of our patients. We get it out of their emotional structure, out of their behavior, not out of their words. Words can't express it. Here, in the very beginning, the spite develops. Here, the "no" develops, the big "NO" of humanity. And then you ask why the world is in a mess.