

however radical, a limited goal, one which even beneath revolutionary rhetoric is really conservative.

But the person is not a revolution, nor a call to one. He seeks a justification, a place, inside himself as well as in the outside world. We kill the Eichmanns because of their crimes, but we know, as we do it, that it is both necessary and pointless.

Justice is a feeble flame. It is nowhere Strong enough to wage war, even a good war. It is more than possible that the source of much evil is the belief that one knows all the answers, the total solution. It is this harsh, despairing, violent truth, stripped now of people and living only for itself, that is offered us, possibly in spite of himself, by Laing. And mixed up with it are bits and pieces of other ways out - 'death and re-birth', the communal family, God, Christ. All these might, or might not, have offered a way out had the writer not gone so far into nothingness.

One can build a house to a plan. It will look like the plan envisaged, but the plan cannot ensure that we live in it in the way intended. We have built cells, but those inside them are not always prisoners. We order the world, we think, but *it* orders *us*.

REFERENCES

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ENCOUNTERS

Peggy Thornborough

I came all glowing with anticipation, with eagerness to participate in the encounter of person to person. But I brought with me that other self who is afraid, and there was a consciousness of the other roles I knew: the analysed social worker, the woman with a life's experience, the leader to those who need help, and the self that finds it hard to be the helped, and so shows a tough exterior.

My companions were all young except one. He had just come from a week's encounter experience and was bubbling over with it, and even he was years younger than me. We were invited to make statements to one

another. He and two of the young ones spoke of liking and feeling close, and immediately I felt outside the group. For how could one feel close in so short a time? It seemed phoney. And so my irritation grew and I found myself saying things which came over to them as negative. I felt angry then that they saw only this defensive self and took it for the real one inside; and angry, later, with myself also for perpetuating a repeated pattern.

But as involvement grew in the group I found my defences cracking, for they were very near the surface. And as we came to the imagining of a childhood fantasy I felt very near to tears, and all I could feel was a sort of sadness and aloneness and nothing more. So that when we shared these fantasies all I could tell them was what I felt.

They were silent, and I felt the warmth of their concern. Then one, a young girl who had expressed her own apprehension of this group experience and whom I felt was full of gentleness, just said: 'I feel I want to hug you.' It was so real and spontaneous that I stretched out my arms and she came to me and we hugged one another in a joyous naturalness of caring.

We were told then to choose the one we felt most needed to relax, and all turned instinctively to me. By now I was past caring about my facade and I knew they were right. They made a circle and put me in the centre. I stood with my eyes shut and swayed from side to side, being caught and protected from falling and thus ensuring my trust of the group. Then I lay on the ground and they lifted me up high. My eyes were still closed, my arms limply falling, and all my body was relaxed and free - something very rare for me. As they brought me gently down I slowly opened my eyes and smiled at them. One said, with amazement: 'What a lovely smile!' And another, the older man, said: 'You look entirely different.' And out of the naturalness that enveloped me, I said: 'This is me. I knew I was there all the time.' Not the sort of thing you usually say in ordinary conversation, but it was the simple truth and accepted by them all as natural to say.

Then the gentle girl was relaxed as I had been and lifted high. As she came down she opened her eyes and just looked round and touched each one of us. The release that had come to me had also released the tears, and now they were flowing quietly down my cheeks in a kind of peace. She reached out and touched the tears as if in wonder. And there was in me no sense of shame at showing my tears. It was the natural outpouring of my feeling self, and in this experience of awareness and personal encounter there was no shame of being myself.

Afterwards, alone, there was a feeling of sadness that I had repeated an old defensive pattern that I had thought used up; but no guilty recriminations at myself as once there would have been. Just a sadness, and yet also, too, a gladness at the experience of swift liberation pointing the way to a more natural living with others where we need no longer be afraid to pull down the facades and be ourselves.