



Rome

by Richard Moore

Stability at last: the Empire.  
Mechanics control the Government,  
sentimentalists the intelligentsia,  
those with imagination nothing.

### The Creation

When God first stuff  
shaped into form  
and made earth warm —  
just warm enough

to unfreeze ice  
and not to boil,  
but soak, make soil —  
wasn't that nice!

All went so well,  
all worked, all ran —  
but then all fell

into a gloom,  
and God made man —  
and man went BOOM.

### The Seventeenth Century

Men led in that unhealthy age  
short lives of feverish endeavor  
Poor old Molière dropped dead on stage.  
Now Johnny Carson talks forever.

EDUCATION



**In Loco Parentis**  
by Laura Rogers

**The Brave New Family  
in Missouri**

Many people are concerned about the problems that face our nation today, and the good folks at the Missouri Department of Education are no exception. In an attempt to reverse the decline in enrollment and the high dropout rate, and to win back parental favor for the public school system, Missouri launched an experimental parenting program in 1981. It was then called New Parents as First Teachers, but has since been simplified to Parents as Teachers, or PAT.

Dr. Burton White's Harvard Pre-school Project paved the way for the PAT program. "Sending a new parent home with a six-day-old baby as we now do in this country is insane," he asserted at a 1982 education conference. He predicted that future community involvement in his "very unusual project" would reach 80 percent.

In Missouri PAT began as a voluntary pilot project in four school districts at a cost of only \$30,000 each. State legislators believed it would help disadvantaged children by screening them for "developmental delays." In 1985

the Missouri Legislature mandated the Parents as Teachers program for all schools and all children. The cost rose to over 9 million dollars and involved 53,000 families.

This program now covers 100,000 children at a cost of fifteen million dollars in tax money, and the January 1990 issue of *Parents as Teachers News*, PAT's monthly bulletin, reports that PAT will be fully implemented "by 1995 or so." Since 1981 PAT has been introduced in 40 states and at least eight foreign countries, and in 1987, the Education Commission of the States announced eight spinoff programs with different names and similar goals. Edward Ziegler, director of the Yale University Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy, predicts the future price tag will be from seventy-five to one hundred billion dollars for the total child care package. All that money will go to pay for a program that is revolutionary in its approach to child development and parent involvement.

Much of the strategy behind PAT was laid out at a Governor's Conference on Education held in Kansas in 1989 called "Schools, Goals and the 1990's." At the Kansas Governor's Conference two years earlier Dr. Ziegler stated that "the child care system must become part of the very structure of our society. It must be tied to a known major societal institution." During the 1989 conference Lamar Alexander, president of the University of Tennessee, called for "a brand new American school." These schools are to be open year round for children from birth, and a team of teachers will be assigned to a child from the day that child arrives at the school all the way through college.

Dr. Shirley McCune added definition to what she called the "strategic direction" for American schools. "It seems to me that far too much of our efforts have been focused on the issue of let's find a short term fix and fix up these schools and taking care of them, rather than the issue of understanding that what we're into is a total restruc-

turing of the society. What is happening in America today and what is happening in Kansas and the Great Plains is not simply a chance situation and the usual winds of change. What it amounts to is a total transformation of our society. We have moved into a new era."

Dr. Frank Newman, who is with the Education Commission of the States (and on the national advisory board of PAT), agreed. "We cannot expect these systems to change unless we change the basic policies that surround them. That means for example that new teachers entering the profession must come in from higher education and teacher education programs as change agents."

To the Missouri taxpayer, the goals of PAT may be more obscure.

The process begins when a "parent educator," through home visits and school visits, bonds herself to a family. The January 1990 issue of *Parents as Teachers News* reports that the "purpose of these visits is to help the parents feel more comfortable about leaving their child at the center. Because the parent-teacher relationship begins in the home, parents see the teacher and the center as more responsive to their needs and to the needs of their baby."

Once that bond between parent educator and the biological parent is established, the children and parents are eased into school programs that deliver a battery of services. First, under the guise of education screening, parents and children are evaluated, the child is given a personal computer code number, and a computer record is initiated that will enable Missouri to track each child for the rest of his life. All of the twelve computer code definitions label the children "at risk." If children don't fit in the first eleven "at risk" categories, they automatically fall into the twelfth category PAT calls "Other—That Wonderful Catch All." There is no code for normal.

The next step of the PAT program is to change and usurp the relationships parents have with their children. The