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## **“The Next 25 Years of The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust”**

**Remarks at a Fundraiser for  
The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust Endowment Fund**

**The Williams Club  
New York City  
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In a 1950 audio-recording of Wilhelm Reich’s lecture entitled “*Man’s Roots in Nature*” Reich forcefully declares that:

“I am, to begin with, a natural scientist. Not a psychologist, and not a psychoanalyst, of course. I went into the whole field of psychiatry as a natural scientist. This interest was dictated primarily by the problem of energy.”

And yet today, 51 years after his death, the narrative of Wilhelm Reich as a *natural scientist* is completely unknown or unacknowledged in the scientific, medical, and academic communities.

Over two decades of Reich’s scientific and medical research—from 1935, when he begins his bio-electrical experiments in Oslo, until late 1956 or early 1957, shortly before his incarceration—over two decades of this work continue to be disparaged, distorted, and dismissed.

To the scientific, medical, and academic communities, Reich’s discovery and applications of a specific biological and atmospheric energy that he called “orgone” are, quite simply, fantasy and fraud. And his principal scientific and medical tool, the orgone energy accumulator, continues to be misunderstood and ridiculed as either a salacious sexual device, or as a worthless medical device that Reich was promoting as a cancer cure. *Neither* of which is true.

By contrast, the widespread commonplace narrative about Reich’s earlier work exhibits, at times, considerable admiration and intellectual honesty, including rational differences of opinion.

And so, for the most part, we don’t see the same scorn and ridicule heaped upon Reich for his early accomplishments as a gifted psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, and clinician. There is, by and large, a more reasoned tone to discussions and criticisms, to agreements and disagreements regarding such issues as:

- Reich’s repudiation of Freud’s “Death Instinct”
- his elucidation of therapeutic techniques in *Character Analysis*

- his identification of character armor and muscular armor
- his political activism as a physician in Socialist and Communist organizations to counter the authoritarian institutions and governments in Vienna and Berlin
- his theories on the nature of fascism as the expression of irrational character structure
- his integration of Malinowski's findings in his discussions on matriarchal and patriarchal societies

But these are *not* the issues that concerned the Food and Drug Administration here in America. There's *nothing* about these issues in either the original 1954 Complaint or in the Decree of Injunction against Reich. These are *not* the reasons why Reich's books were banned and burned in the United States in the 1950s. And these are *not* the reasons why Reich's scientific and medical research was, and continues to be, maligned and marginalized to this day.

The Food and Drug Administration's official narrative about Reich in the 1940s and '50s was fueled by the active cooperation and resources of the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychoanalytic Association, as well as numerous state chapters and affiliations of these three powerful professional organizations.

It was a distorted narrative of Reich and his work that was, and continues to be, replicated and disseminated in hundreds of articles in magazines, newspapers, and professional journals. Boiled down to its essence the official, legal narrative—as stated in the 1954 Complaint for Injunction against Reich—was *this*:

“...the alleged orgone energy, as claimed to have been discovered and its existence proved by the said defendant Reich as stated for the labeling for said devices, is not a powerful form of energy, is non-existent...”

—leading to the logical assertion later in the Complaint that the orgone energy accumulator:

“...is not a preventive of and beneficial for use in all diseases and disease conditions, is not effective in the cure, mitigation treatment, and prevention of the diseases, conditions, and symptoms hereafter enumerated...”

We can only assume that Reich's hope for some future vindication of his legacy was what inspired him as he drew up his Last Will and Testament and signed it on March 8, 1957, three days before being taken into his final custody and imprisonment.

In this document, Reich created The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust Fund—now known as simply The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust—for *this* specific reason:

“I made the consideration of secure transmission to future generations of a vast empire of scientific accomplishments the guide in my last disposition. To my mind, the foremost task to be fulfilled was *to safeguard the truth about my life and work against distortion and slander after my death.*”

And under the stewardship of Mary Higgins, The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust has flourished. Next year, specifically in March of 2009, will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mary becoming the Executor of the Trust.

This was a time when—after Reich’s Last Will & Testament was finally probated and all personal bequests were fulfilled—the Trust’s total assets were \$823, which would translate into approximately \$5700 today.

I doubt that even Reich, with his fertile imagination, could have conceived of all that the Trust would have to contend with after his death: that his Archives would be illegally removed from the Orgone Energy Observatory at Orgonon; recovered after protracted legal actions spanning five decades; and would find a home at the Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard University, one of the world’s premier medical libraries.

I doubt that even Reich could have envisioned all that Orgonon would become: not only a Museum dedicated to his life and work, but a 175-acre property that hosts outdoor nature programs, community\_events—including lectures, music and children’s activities—and an Adoptive & Foster Care Program in Reich’s former living quarters.

And I doubt that Reich—with all of his visionary instincts—could have ever imagined that his banned and burned books would be reprinted, along with new manuscripts, by one of the world’s most reputable publishers: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

And yet today the existence of Reich’s Archives has generated absolutely no interest outside of the small, informal community of those already interested in Reich. No one from any medical or scientific organization, no one from any research laboratory or hospital has contacted us with any interest in the Archives.

Today, a year after Reich’s Archives first became accessible to scholars and researchers, perhaps a dozen people, including members of Reich’s family, have visited the Archives.

At The Wilhelm Reich Museum at Orgonon, anywhere from 800 to close to 1000 people visit us each year, depending on the overall tourist trends of a given year. Which unfortunately hasn’t translated into any appreciable increase of serious interest in orgonomic medicine and science.

And the overall readership and sales of Reich’s literature—21 books, reprints of *all* of his research journals and bulletins, comprising well over 7000 pages of publicly-available primary resources—overall readership and book sales are *down*.

Much of this, no doubt, can be attributable to the Internet becoming the major source of information for people today. Whereas a previous generation, including those interested in Reich, eagerly sought books as their first choice of reading materials.

But it's more than just the Internet. A half-century after Reich's death, we still experience the chilling effect of the most powerful government on earth—with the full cooperation of three powerful professional organizations—banning books, burning books, imprisoning a physician and natural scientist, all in an effort to destroy his pioneering medical and scientific legacy.

During Reich's life—and up until today—the voices against him personally and against his work have always spoken from platforms larger and more powerful than Reich's, and much more influential than *ours*: voices from psychiatric, medical, scientific, academic, and government institutions; voices on radio and television; voices in popular books and magazines.

Decades of *these* voices speaking from *these* formidable and far-reaching platforms have created a factually and intellectually dishonest narrative of Reich. But it is a narrative of Reich told for so long and so insistently and so loudly that it has become ingrained and accepted as fact in official and public consciousness.

And it is precisely this cumulative and corrosive narrative of Reich that dominates and constricts every good and honest effort that all of us make on behalf of Reich's legacy.

And so for the next 25 years, the task of the Trust—and of *anyone* with an honest interest in Reich's legacy—is quite clear in terms of intention, but complex in terms of its implementation.

And the task is simply this: *To correct an injustice.*

And not the literal injustice of Reich's imprisonment and death, which is beyond our power, but the injustice of a medical and scientific legacy almost being destroyed.

Which means we need to think boldly, pragmatically and historically for the ages.

I'd like to now share with you six specific strategies that the Trust will be focusing on—some of them long-term, some of them short-term—strategies that we believe need to be pursued to move pragmatically forward into the next five years, ten years, 15, 20, and 25 years to vigorously preserve and promote and promulgate Reich's legacy.

Each of these strategies seeks to answer a central question with the future hope of creating major breakthroughs and dissipating the commonplace distorted narratives about Wilhelm Reich.

We hope that introducing these questions and strategies will encourage intellectually honest feedback, discussion and participation in the steps that need to be taken.

## Number One:

- **A COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSION ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE ORGONE ENERGY ACCUMULATOR**

—that addresses the following question:

*“What specifically might happen today to a physician or psychiatrist in the United States who would like to freely use or prescribe the use of an orgone accumulator for patients in his or her care?”*

And we pose this question bearing these points in mind:

- The 1954 Decree of Injunction against the interstate shipment of orgone accumulators and the dissemination of materials promoting the accumulator was an injunction specifically against Wilhelm Reich, Ilse Ollendorff, and The Wilhelm Reich Foundation—none of whom are engaged in these activities any longer—as well as “all persons in active concert or participation” with the defendants.
- This injunction does not prohibit anyone but the defendants and those in concert with them from engaging in actions pertaining to the orgone accumulator.
- That being said, it’s quite reasonable to assume that any use of an accumulator today by a physician or psychiatrist might conceivably elicit a response from a government agency, or, more likely, from a professional medical or psychiatric organization.

To explore this question then, with all of its intrinsic issues and complexities, there needs to be a discussion—and sooner rather than later: an informal discussion around a table—to use Reich’s words, “a friendly exchange of opinion”—with participants that include physicians, psychiatrists, and lawyers with either an intellectual or professional interest in Reich’s work.

Physicians and psychiatrists could provide insights into possible concerns and sanctions from their professional organizations and regulatory agencies, while attorneys could offer their opinions and advice about the ramifications today of the 1950’s legal case against Reich.

For decades there has been endless speculation in private conversations, at various gatherings, and at conferences about this very question. It is time, at long last, to get some answers, and from people whose opinions might actually matter. Without the participation of lawyers, physicians and psychiatrists, any such discussion would be meaningless.

**Number Two** (which takes our first strategy a step further):

- **A COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSION ABOUT A LEGAL TEST CASE**

—to address this question:

*“A half-century after Wilhelm Reich’s death, isn’t it time at long last to put together a legal test case whereby a physician or psychiatrist—with a legal team already in place—openly uses or prescribes the use of an orgone energy accumulator, with the commitment to challenge any response from any government agency, or any medical or psychiatric organization?”*

We are not unmindful of the courage and resources that a possible legal challenge would take, nor of the potential consequences to whatever physician or psychiatrist might want to participate in such an effort. On the other hand, how long can we continue to simply *sidestep* the issue of practical applications of the orgone accumulator in medicine and psychiatry?

The orgone energy accumulator was the focal point of the FDA’s case against Reich, the focal point of the opposition to Reich by the American Medical, Psychiatric and Psychoanalytic Associations. How can we ever expect a significant breakthrough to counter today’s distorted narrative about Reich and the orgone accumulator without some sort of bold, but carefully-calculated initiative?

And so again, there needs to be a discussion—sooner rather than later—that includes physicians, psychiatrists and attorneys to comprehensively discuss what such an effort might entail.

For example, what would be a possible model for a legal challenge such as this? Might the model be something along the lines of the *Griswold v. Connecticut* case from the 1960s, which led to a landmark Supreme Court decision in 1965?

In this case, the Executive Director of the Planned Parenthood Center of New Haven—along with a physician and professor from Yale Medical School—knowingly violated a Connecticut statute forbidding the use or dispensation of contraceptive devices, fully expecting to be arrested, tried, found guilty, and fined. Which, in fact, they were. *But* with a legal team already in place, ultimately taking the case all the way to the United States Supreme Court which reversed two lower-court decisions and found in their favor.

Or perhaps—and more likely—there are other legal models and case law more germane to the medical or psychiatric professions. At any rate, there needs to be a rational discussion about this issue, sooner rather than later.

### Number Three:

- **PRIORITIZING PROJECTS ABOUT REICH'S LIFE & WORK**

—which attempts to answer the following question:

*“What kinds of projects—in terms of scholarship, publishing, or medical and scientific research—might bring about the major breakthroughs that are needed to redress today’s commonplace, distorted narratives about Reich’s medical and scientific legacy?”*

While the Trust always encourages and celebrates any kind of intellectually-honest projects about Reich’s life and work—from others, as well as our own—not all projects *can* or even aspire to contribute to the much-needed effort to correct the distortions and misunderstandings about Reich’s orgone energy research.

Going back to when Reich was alive, and up until today, we’ve seen how even those favorably disposed to Reich’s earlier achievements in psychiatry, psychoanalysis and social activism exhibit either indifference or disdain for his scientific and medical research which begins, in earnest in 1935 in his laboratory in Oslo.

Consequently—and unfortunately—published scholarship about Reich’s earlier achievements, prior to 1935, seldom provides the necessary impetus to propel readers and researchers forward into studying Reich’s publications which document over two decades of orgonomic medicine and science.

Therefore, in terms of how the Trust allocates its time, its resources, its energies, and its spirit of cooperation regarding various kinds of potential projects, we will always be asking this: *“How—if at all--does a particular project contribute to an intellectually-honest narrative about orgonomic medicine and science, and in ways that might reach wider audiences?”*

Here, for example, are a few projects that we *are* excited about, projects that we feel have the potential to bring knowledge about orgonomic medicine and science into the traditional medical and scientific communities:

- A proposal for clinical trials to test the effects of orgone energy blankets on burns, put together by an American psychiatrist and orgone therapist together with an American physician who works and teaches in the field of Emergency Medicine.

Here is a worthwhile project for which these physicians are seeking funding, an appropriate venue for these clinical trials, and qualified personnel and volunteers to assist in the complex logistics of this endeavor.

Another promising project is:

- A book-in-progress by a science historian & tenured college professor with two books already published by two major academic presses.

This book-in-progress focuses on Reich's bion experiments and how these experiments fit into the broader context of the history of science and medicine. This broader context includes:

- An historical overview of the oftentimes contentious debates about the origins of life
- The historic tension between “mechanism” and “vitalism,” and attempts by life scientists to resolve this tension during the 1920s and '30s
- *And* the influence of the Rockefeller Foundation at this time, from whom Reich sought financial support...a powerful foundation that was strongly steering the life sciences toward “physical-chemical reductionism” in ways that undercut the “*energeticist*” approaches such as Gurwitsch's mitogenetic radiation, Weiss's field theory in embryology, and Reich's bion experiments, to name just a few.

A book of this nature, published by a major academic press and dealing with one of the major pillars of orgone energy research, could go a long way into correcting the distorted narratives of organomic science and medicine.

Across the ocean in Vienna:

- A physician & orgone therapist is putting together a clinical study to document the results of physical orgone therapy—including the use of orgone accumulators and blankets—on patients with cervical dysplasia—also known as PAP Smear III-d—which is an abnormal pre-cancerous cervical growth and is often associated with infections with the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

This study is inspired by the physician's positive results regarding the efficacy of physical orgone therapy on both the physical *and* emotional well-being of patients with these conditions. This physician is currently working with a statistician to craft a study plan involving a statistically significant number of patients—somewhere between 30 and 65. And preliminary contact has already been made with gynecologists to find patients for this clinical study *and* to establish a necessary control group.

Here again is a project that specifically and boldly addresses organomic medicine and science.

We are also encouraged by the efforts of:

- A professional microscopist in America who has conducted substantial laboratory work on bions and Reich Blood Tests, has studied Reich's time-lapse bion and cancer films from the 1930s and 40s, and will soon be studying additional materials in the Archives.

Equally exciting is the prospect of:

- A long-awaited English translation of a book authored by a German physician, documenting his results of over 25 years of using the orgone accumulator *and* the Medical-DORbuster in his practice.

Having these medical case histories available in English in a single volume here in America will add to this broader effort to bring today's living legacy of orgonomic medicine to the attention of the medical, scientific, academic, and public communities. Also in Germany is:

- A physician conducting microscopic studies of the substance that Reich called "melanor" which began to appear on the inner and outer rock walls of the Orgone Energy Observatory during the Oranur Experiment in the 1950s.

To our knowledge these are the first studies since Reich's death into the area of his work known as "oranur chemistry."

So these are the kinds of projects in orgonomic medicine and science that we will continue to encourage as a means of bringing about possible major breakthroughs in the next five years, ten years, and so on.

#### **Number Four:**

- **PLANNING A MAJOR CONFERENCE FOCUSED SPECIFICALLY ON ORGONOMIC MEDICINE & SCIENCE**

---which addresses this question:

*"How can we expect to correct the distorted narratives about Reich and the orgone accumulator without creating clear narratives of our own...narratives that are accessible and directed to the medical, scientific, academic and public communities?"*

We need to consistently move beyond the confines of this small, loose, informal community of people interested in Reich to attract wider audiences, and *always* with an eye especially toward those in the medical and scientific professions.

And so there needs to be a carefully-planned, *major* International Conference on Orgonomic Medicine & Science in a *major* American city at a *credible* venue at which Reich's legacy of orgone research is articulated by qualified speakers with the appropriate medical, psychiatric, scientific and academic credentials whose individual presentations *taken together* will create a clear, compelling, unified, and accessible narrative about 22 years of Reich's scientific and medical research:

- the bio-electrical experiments
- the bion experiments
- cancer cell research
- the discovery of the T-bacilli
- the development of the Reich Blood Tests
- the discovery of orgone energy in bion cultures
- and later the discovery of orgone energy in the atmosphere
- the invention and development of the orgone accumulator as an experimental scientific and medical tool
- Reich's experimental use of orgone accumulators on terminal cancer patients
- case histories from Reich and doctors working with him on patients with a wide variety of illnesses
- the Oranur Experiment and its aftermath
- the use of reversed orgonomic potential in the invention and use of the cloudbuster
- and, similarly, the use of reversed orgonomic potential in the invention and use of the Medical-DORbuster

Following this, *additional* presentations by qualified speakers with appropriate credentials will offer a clear and compelling narrative about today's *living legacy* of orgonomic medicine and science:

- bion experiments and Reich Blood Tests over the past few decades in various countries
- medical case histories from physicians in various countries, involving the use of the orgone accumulator *and* the medical DORbuster over the past few decades
- *and* the use of cloudbusting for weather engineering in recent decades

—a *living legacy* that needs to come to the attention of wider audiences, especially those in the medical and scientific communities.

Earlier this year, in our January 2008 e-mail Update—which goes out to a regular list of close to a thousand people—we announced that we would not be having our usual Summer Conference in 2008 because we had so many things to catch up on after our inordinately busy schedule in 2007. We also announced that:

“...After the success of our *International Conference on Orgonomy* in Rangeley, Maine—with a total attendance of 120 people—we want to explore the possibility of organizing an even more ambitious International Conference in a major American city.”

And the tentative date we naïvely gave was June 2009 which, in retrospect, was premature and unrealistic. Consequently, we never ever mentioned the conference or date again. But the need is still there and the ambition is still there, and with the scope that I’ve just described.

This conference on organomic medicine and science will take an even greater international spirit of cooperation than we enjoyed during the preparation of our 2007 Conference. The goals here are more specific, the preparations are more complex, and the stakes are much higher. And while it’s not an event that can be rushed, it’s an event that needs to be achievable within the next few years.

#### **Number Five:**

- **IDENTIFYING NEW PUBLISHING OPPORTUNITIES**

—in which we pose the question:

*“In what medical, scientific, and academic journals—as well as magazines and other publications—might there be possibilities to publish articles and research papers that would reach wider audiences?”*

It’s understandable and desirable that various organizations devoted to Reich’s legacy—including the Trust—have published their own journals. But the total readership of *all* of these journals is painfully small and comprises a huge amount of overlap among a total of perhaps several hundred people.

In essence, we end up writing for *ourselves* and for each other, communicating among the same few hundred readers without any strategy for reaching a broader and newer audience.

Doesn’t it make sense for scholars, researchers, physicians, and psychiatrists to at least *aspire* to being published in more widely-circulated mainstream print media?

For example, a scholarly study completed in 2002 identified a core-number of approximately 120 clinical journals, including the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the *Lancet*, and the Center for Disease Control's *MMWR* [the Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report]. Furthermore, according to this study, approximately 40,000 new medical case reports are published every year in these clinical journals, and 13.5% of the footnoted references in these journals are devoted to medical case reports.

So while being mindful of the formidable obstacles involved here, doesn't it make sense to at least *aspire* to having case histories involving orgonomic medicine appear in these publications in the future? Similarly, with *any* article or research paper about *any* aspect of Reich's life and work, shouldn't we at least *try* to target more mainstream print media, rather than what are obscure publications with limited readership?

In terms of the Trust's specific publishing plans: with the availability of flexible and cost-effective digital technologies, it's inevitable that with some archival materials we will move into the area of self-publishing. The challenge, as always, is choosing which materials might best help correct the distorted narratives of Reich and his work, and more important, how to disseminate these publications to larger audiences beyond the same small readership of materials pertaining to Reich.

With well over 7000 pages of Reich's work currently available and so little read, our publishing challenges are daunting.

#### **Number Six:**

- **A COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSION ABOUT BRINGING REICH INTO THE COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES**

—which addresses the obvious question:

*“How can we make in-roads into institutions of higher learning, so that we can attract young educated people to the life and work of Wilhelm Reich in the hopes of sowing the seeds for future generations to continue—in a practical way—Reich's legacy in psychiatry, medicine and science?”*

We know of literally a handful of higher education courses in the United States where Reich is seriously discussed: courses in psychology, sociology, German History, to name a few. But here again, the focus is on Reich's early psychiatric, clinical, and political work, while over two decades of his orgone energy research are either completely ignored, dismissed, or mentioned in passing.

So here again there needs to a major discussion—and sooner rather than later—comprising college professors and administrators in friendly exchange of opinion who recognize the value of Reich's legacy and the value of its inclusion in college and university curricula.

And finally, on a personal note, I first came to Reich's work and to Orgonon 36 years ago in 1972. And in the past few years especially, I've gone back to re-visit and re-read many of Reich's books, articles, and bulletins—as many of us have—to refresh myself as we look ahead to what needs to be done within the next quarter-century.

And doing this has become a valuable exercise in the *re-discovery* of Reich after all these years which I find valuable in terms of deepening my understanding of his legacy *and* in strategizing for the next 25 years to bring about greater public awareness of this legacy.

The words of T.S. Eliot come to mind, in four wonderful lines toward the end of his "*Four Quartets*" where he writes:

“We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.”

So let us all continue to bring greater public awareness to Reich's legacy so that others, too, may know this place for the first time. Thank you.

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