

THE KIDS ARE SAYING: THE REVOLUTION IS INCLUSION

I had a dream. It was a long one. I was someplace away from home on my way to a play. I didn't want to go. I had not heard of the play and I didn't recognize any of the actors' names. I went in and was shown to my seat. The stage was huge and round. All the stagehands looked like middle school students, but they were weird. It seemed as if every one of them had a different type of hair. Different colored, different shape. What had I let myself in for? Here were all these young people. Most of them were waist high to me. There were no adults directing anything. It was like a scene from THE WIZARD OF OZ! My feeling got worse as the play started.

However, the play was about the past, present, and future of the world. The script was magnificent, in a category with Shakespeare! The actors were brilliant and unique. Their hair was in colors and shapes I had never



seen before. As the stage slowly revolved, the skin shade and hair color of the actors shifted. It was a truly outstanding performance.

Then there was a shift in the dream. I was at home but the same stage had been set up in a field and the same little actors and stagehands were all over the place. I wanted to acknowledge my appreciation and tell them I had seen this someplace else. But it soon became apparent to me that they were very much in the here and now. Most of the seats were filled. I had trouble finding a place to sit until one of the young people helped me. She/he had skin that was a lovely shade of brown, and a huge head of hair that was a golden red color, and a smile that was knowing, inviting, and loving. The play began and I was filled with a sense of anticipation and hope.

I woke up, but I knew the play was going on.



My dream seemed to be commanding me to have hope even though I woke up to a country that was in shock. Its leader had alienated the nations that had been our partners in keeping peace for 70 years and was cozying up to the person and country that was seen as the biggest threat to our well-being. 70 years — that doesn't seem like much, but I believe it was the longest period of peace in the modern history of the world.

Thoughtful journalists, like Fintan O'Toole, wrote dramatically in THE IRISH TIMES



about the fact that we are being psychologically prepared to accept savagery. Keeping brown skinned children in cages on our southern border or letting black children die from drowning in the Mediterranean, or other children die from bombing in Syria could be a necessary preparatory step toward fascism. I thought of the pictures I had seen as a child of all those basically good people in Germany and Austria

who had liberated the savagery which probably lies in some dark corner of all our souls and who appeared to be joyfully accepting Hitler. *And yet my dream says, Have Hope.*



Mitt Romney, a former Republican presidential nominee, called the recent actions of the present occupant of the White House, “disgraceful and detrimental to our democratic process...It undermines our national integrity and impairs our global credibility.” Others just simply use the term “treasonous.” *And yet my dream says, Have Hope.*

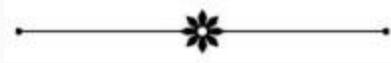
For the first time I have heard people talking and writing about the brutality that seems to be sweeping our country, not so much in terms of “white supremacy” as “white nationalism.” It has been so long since I've thought about this that I must confess I had difficulty in remembering the difference in the terms. According to a statement by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1992, “white nationalism” is equivalent to “ethnic cleansing,” i.e., the systematic forced removal of an ethnic or racial group from a given territory. This term was first used by the oppressors in the Yugoslavian wars. It's not enough that a person is superior to a person who doesn't look like them, pray like them, live like them, etc. A white nationalist wants others totally removed. It wasn't good enough to be better off than a Jew, they had to be completely removed. And they were. In the Nazi's “final solution,” 8 million Jews were murdered. Is it possible that some of the people making up the cult backing the present administration have thoughts along the same lines? *And yet my dream says, Have Hope.*



It appears that Russia influenced the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. It also appears certain that what the journalist Trevor Hughes and others have written about is correct. The cult that supports the winner of that questionable election “tapped into decades of pent-up racism to spark a movement.” A movement that is still very much active and probably growing. Where are we possibly going to find hope in these times?

Perhaps some of us are looking in the wrong place for hope. Maybe we should forget about looking around the stately buildings of Washington, D.C. or the Kremlin, if they

are still active in our elections. Maybe we have to look closer to home and think about the future.



I have not seen many young faces in the cult of white supremacy. Maybe there are some but at least the young people who come to Starcross seem to have entirely different attitudes about who makes up the human race. And, they are not alone.

For the past year in hundreds of high schools across the country students have embraced something they call “The Revolution Is Inclusion.” And thousands of them have taken a simple pledge. This is what it says,

**I PLEDGE. TO LOOK FOR THE LONELY. THE ISOLATED.
THE LEFT OUT. THE CHALLENGED. THE BULLIED.**

**I PLEDGE. TO OVERCOME THE FEAR OF DIFFERENCE.
AND REPLACE IT WITH THE POWER OF INCLUSION.**



I imagine most of the young people taking the pledge are not on the short side, as in my dream, and they definitely will be of every skin shade known to the human race. Most likely they do have outlandish and colorful hair — together with tattoos and piercings

Where those young people are is one place where hope abides. Let us encourage it and support it.

Brother Toby