

free education

Continued from p.14

AUTHORITY:

We are opposed to all coercive authority in education, however it is constituted, whoever wields it. The sole principle of discipline is that whoever attempts to impose himself or herself on another is open to criticism in the first instance, and direct action ultimately. That applies to the teacher who attempts to inflict punishment, and to the student who resorts to gratuitous acts which interfere with the free decisions of others. Within a free society a sense of communal responsibility can grow to take the place of coercive authority and punishment, and remove the urge to such acts; in this respect the community will by its nature educate its own members.

THE ANARCHIST SYNDICALIST ALLIANCE EDUCATION SECTION:

i. Membership is open to all who broadly agree with the aims and principles as stated above.

ii. Membership is achieved by simple declaration of support. There are no membership cards, no hierarchy and no enforced subscriptions. It is naturally expected that members will do everything within their means to further the aims and principles.

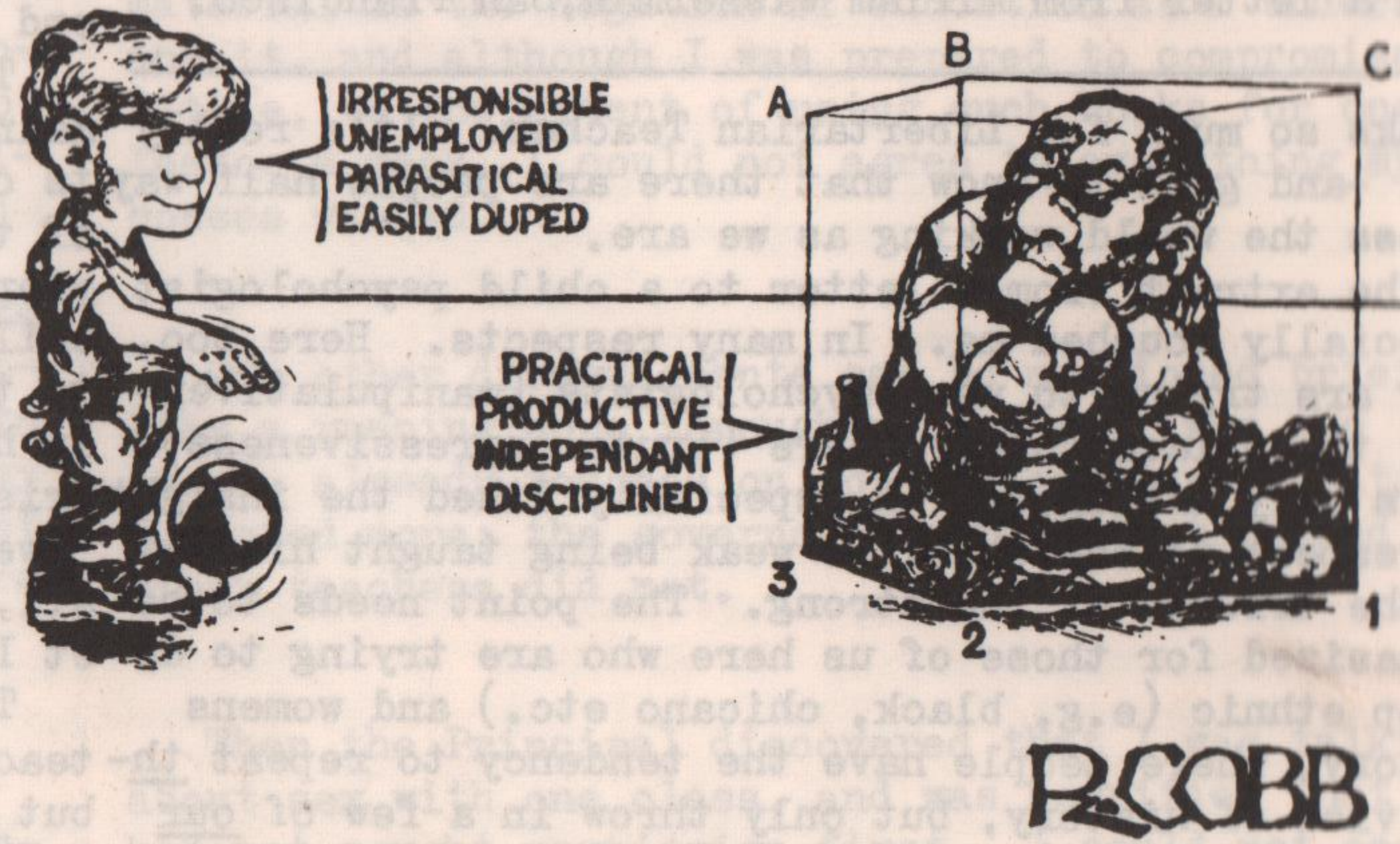
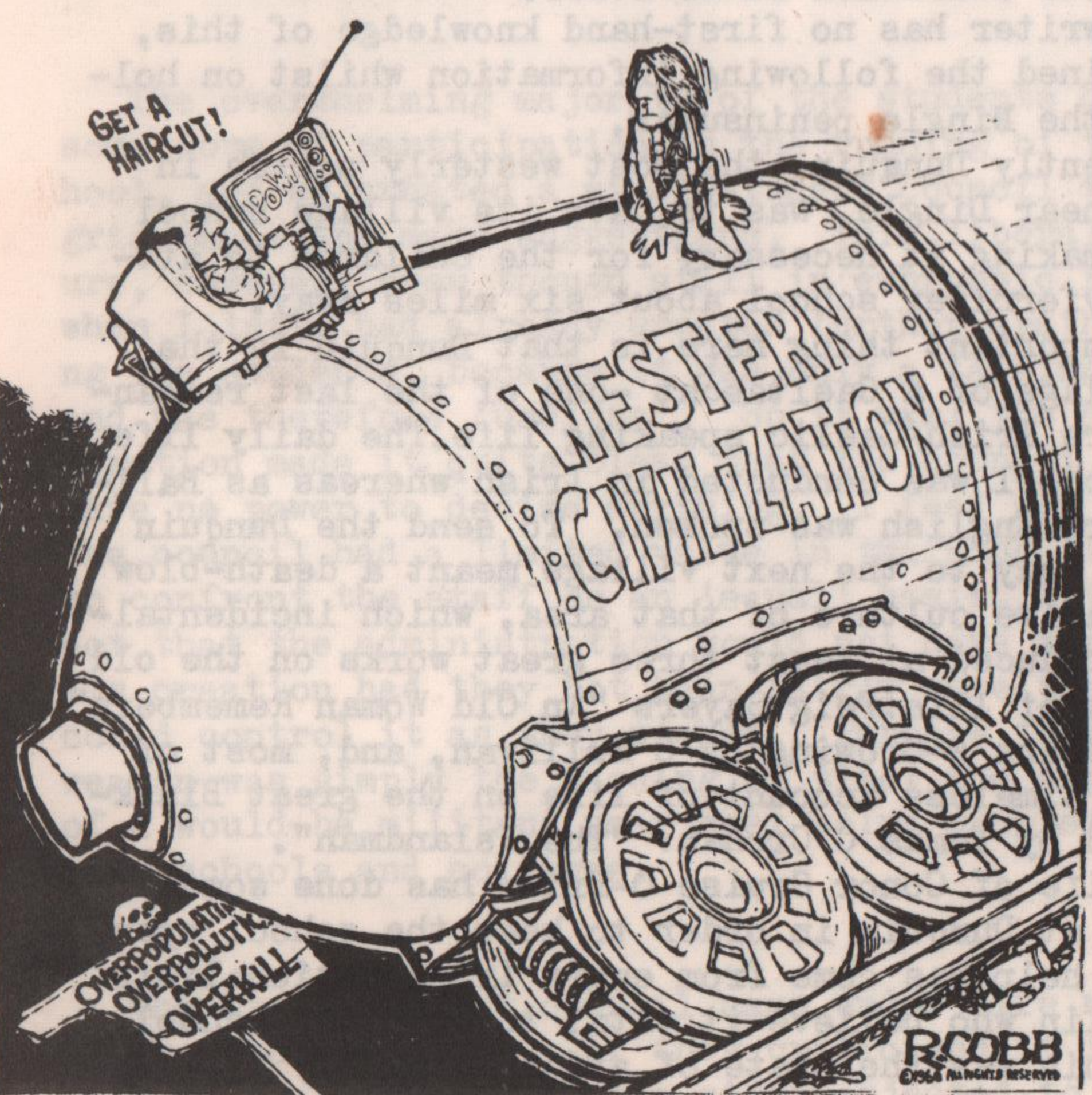
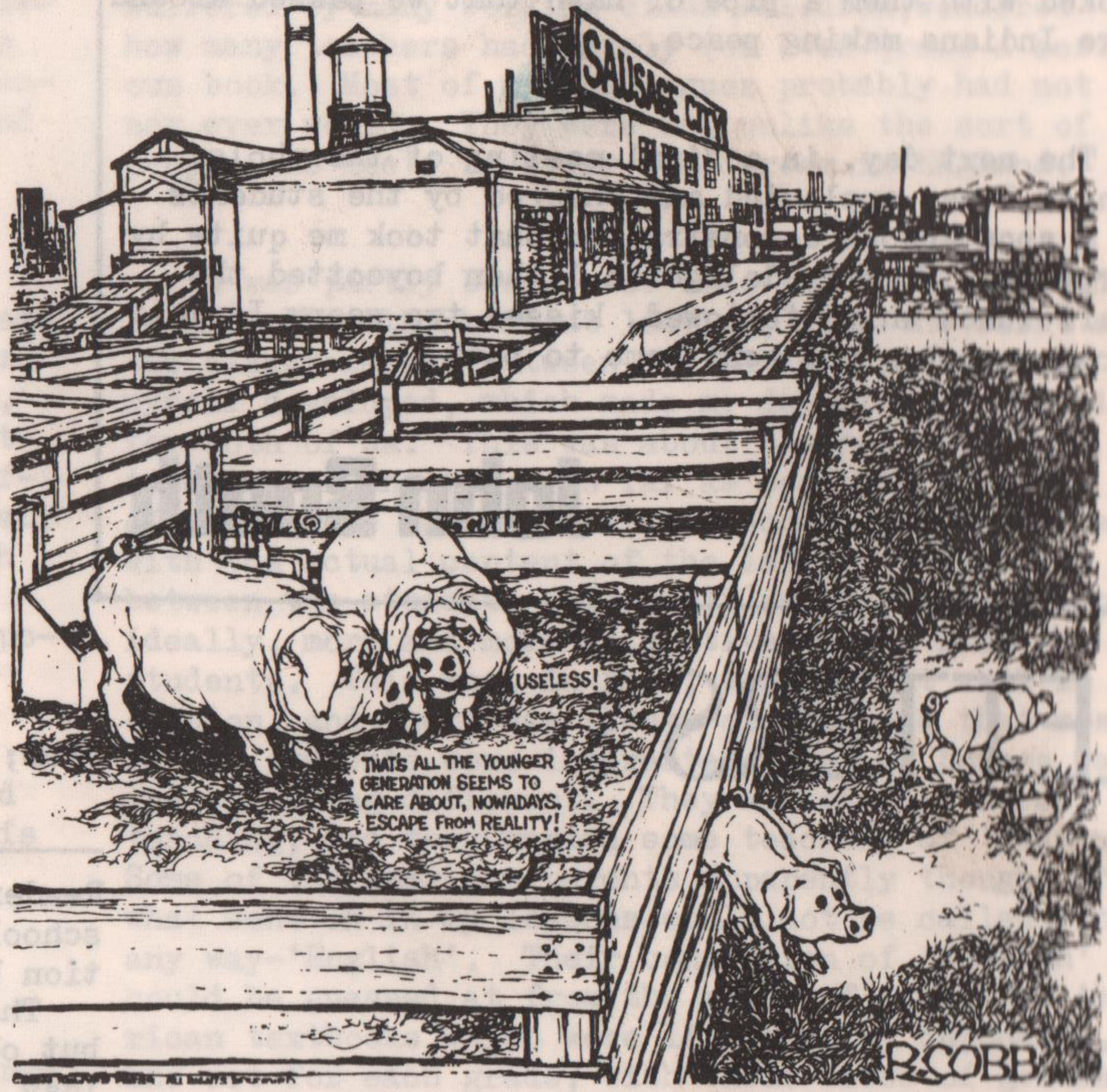
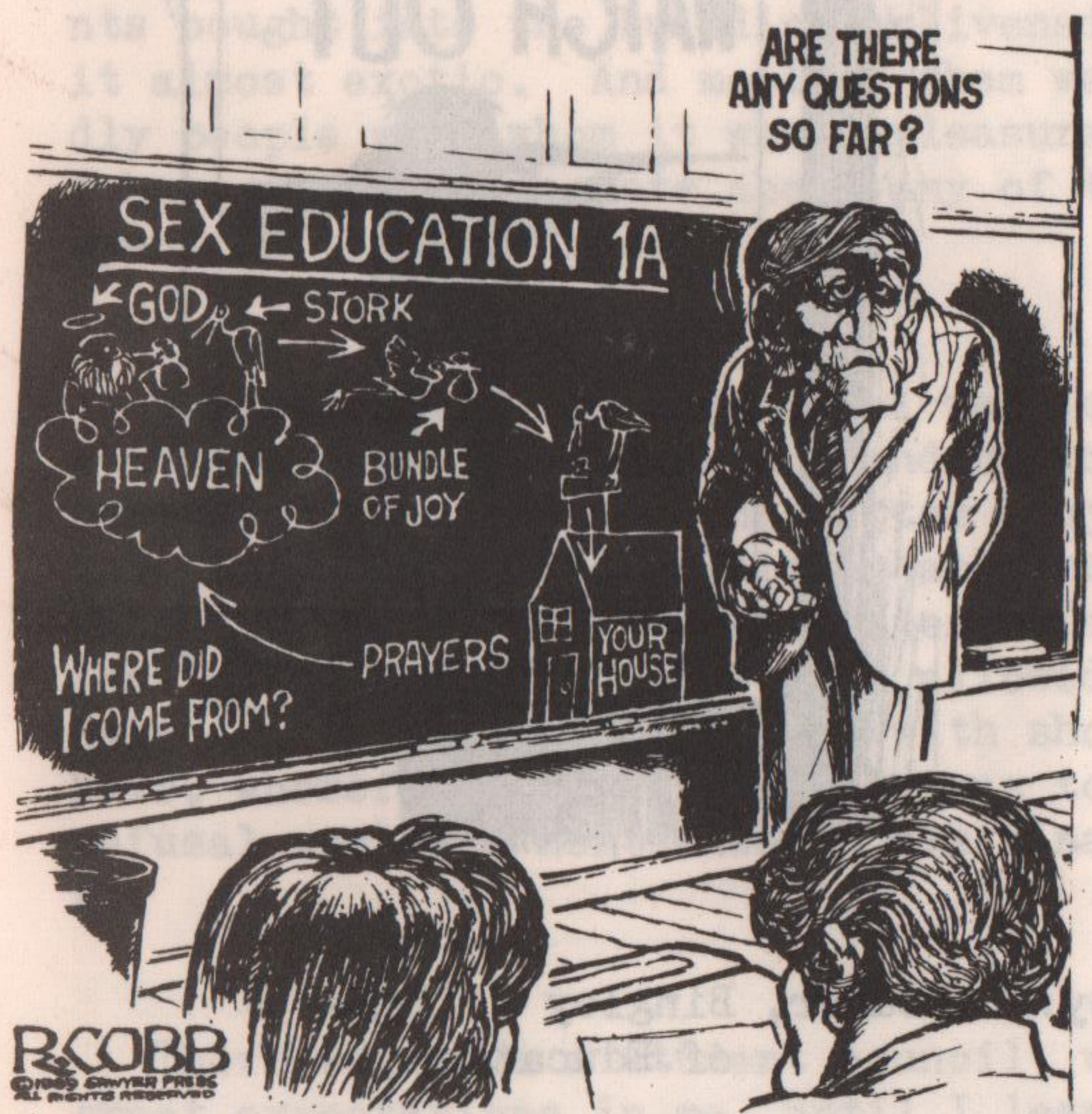
iii. Once a member, the individual has a communal responsibility to the other members, expressed in the practice of mutual aid and the acceptance of fraternal criticism.

iv. The aims and principles are not a dogma, but are open to change collectively and to individual interpretation. Differences will naturally be thrashed out in open discussion between members.

v. Membership is not conditional upon membership of the general body of the Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance. Activities are open to the participation of non-members.

vi. In line with the general policy of the Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance, it is expected that members will strive to encourage the creation of organisations alternative to the institutions of the existing education system (including professional organisations) to involve teachers, students, pupils and the community, in order to further the aims and principles as outlined above.

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libertarian teacher



LIBERTARIAN TEACHER 9

PRODUCED BY

LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION GROUP, 180 Melbourne Road, LEICESTER Tel. 50272

Editorial Comment

Since the publication of Libertarian Teacher No 8 there has been a feeling among those of us involved in its production that perhaps journals such as "Rank and File" and "Kids"(Childrens Rights) were doing what Libertarian Teacher was designed to do, but better. On further consideration though, we realised that this feeling was little more than an attempt to rationalise our own inaction. As anarchists or libertarians we have specific points of view which cannot be left to others to define and/or propagate.

The Libertarian Education Group in Leicester have therefore decided to move into action again and try to organise the production of a worthwhile magazine which comes out frequently and regularly enough to be of use to those of us who adopt a libertarian attitude towards society and who have a particular interest/involvement in education. Our immediate aim is to get the magazine out five times a year :- (September. November. January. March. May.)

If we are to have any chance of carrying out this proposal successfully the first requirement will be to organise ourselves locally. We need a good typewriter capable of producing a dark even image, and are hopeful of fulfilling this need shortly. We have weekly meetings to talk over ideas, look at possible material and share out work to be done. We are having the magazine printed commercially in order to guarantee quick good-looking results once the art work is ready. Members of the group have put up loans, (to the extent of about £50,) in order to get this issue out.

Our first need, from people interested in ensuring the success of the magazine, is for help with the writing of articles. If you have any ideas please contact us. If you have something to say we'd like to hear it - if you know anyone else ask them or tell us. We dont have a 'line' to push - we dont know the 'answers', or even all the 'questions'; we want to know what is happening and what ideas people have relating to the function of education in the liberation of people and society. If you can help in any way please write to ;
Arthur Humphrey
Libertarian Education Group
180 Melbourne Road, Leicester
(phone Leicester 50272)

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Single copies	-	10p + 3p postage (cash with order)
Bulk orders	-	10 copies for 70p + 10p postage
Subscription	-	5 issues for 50p (post free)

ORDERS TO - BLACK FLAG BOOKS, 1 Wilne Street, LEICESTER Tel. 0533-29912

Our other big need will be help in the distribution of Libertarian Teacher. We will sell it by subscription, through the Black Flag Bookshop and our other present contacts and by direct sales at Colleges, Schools, meetings of teachers, etc. This, however, will not be enough - what we need is many more people in Colleges, Schools, etc prepared to take bulk orders for themagazine and sell them for us. We can offer a small discount and are prepared to send them out on a 'sale or return' basis. What we would ask though is that, if you possibly can, you pay for the magazines when you order them. We have to meet the printing costs of L.T.10,11 and so on. See below for details of cost etc.

We hope that the magazine will in future consist mainly of original articles, although we will also continue our policy of reprinting good articles from elsewhere. In particular we would like to hear from teachers, children and others describing local conditions and experiences and to develop the 'schools of interest' section, which was once an important part of the magazine. One idea we are looking into is the possibility of giving particular issues of L.T. a thematic unity. Thus we might have an issue devoted to Free Schools, one devoted to 'Leicestershire Schooling' etc. If you or your group could plan/write/print any future issues of L.T., please contact us.

Concerning the Libertarian Teachers Association, Pete Ford has announced that, insofar as this organisation ever in fact existed it has now been wound up. The Leicester group can only hope that interested people in other areas will continue to organise regular meetings on a local basis (ideas: Discussion meetings: Public meetings: L.T. selling???: maintain contact with Colleges and Departments of Education). Meanwhile we have Libertarian Teacher as a national link for those who wish to use it.

Some of us dont like the title 'Libertarian Teacher' - (contradiction in terms/preentious/exclusive) but cant come up with any generally acceptable alternative. Any ideas?

SCHOOLS — not PRISONS

The surprising thing about the recent militancy that has swept through London's schools, and others elsewhere, is not that it has happened, but that it has taken so long to happen. The movement that started in 1968 to bring greater democracy into the running of our schools was in some ways very different from the uprising of a few months ago. The activity then was largely confined to older students who went mainly to selective Grammar schools. It was this narrow base, among other reasons, that led to the disintegration of this original effort. The strikes, sit-ins and sit-downs we have recently seen were much more spontaneous and appealed to a much wider section of school students. It has been the large London "comprehensives" which have been most affected. It is not only the cream that is in revolt, but the kid in the seventh stream who has just about had enough. And that is a very important difference.

THE ISSUES

As one leaflet said, "Schools are shitty places" and that's about all you've got to appreciate to understand why so many kids should act to show their disapproval. The whole thing began in one or two West London "comprehensive" schools over a petty school rule. Some boys from Rutherford school came out and marched to the local girls' school, Sarah Siddons, who in turn came out to support the boys. Steven Finch, a Rutherford student who was at the very centre of this first incident, was also a member of the Schools Action Union (S.A.U.), an organisation which would like to reorganise the schools along the lines of its Maoist philosophy. So it was from the beginning that the S.A.U. was involved. Rapidly, various other schools in the area became involved, and the original issue of 'no school uniform' widened out to include many others. The police were by now taking more than a passing interest in this growing protest movement. On Friday 5th May, a march involving about three hundred West London students was headed off by police cars and turned back.

PROTEST

After this first week of activity Finch called on fifteen schools in the neighbourhood to come out on strike for the following Tuesday, 9th May. Not waiting for the Tuesday S.A.U. strike, many students came out on Monday, 8th May. They gathered at Paddington Green and then attempted to march off to another school, and it was at this point that the police moved in to break up a group of school students for the second time. Finch was quickly arrested and charged with Obstruction and Insulting Behaviour: the usual remedy the state applies to those who dare to question its ways.

CONTROL

Although the S.A.U. were issuing formal appeals for strikes at various times, it was clear that they had little real control over the thousands of school students who were now taking part. In fact the mass of student demonstrators were acting in advance and independently of the S.A.U. The walk-out on Tuesday 9th May was a great success with some fifteen hundred marching from Speakers' Corner to County Hall, the headquarters of the Inner London Education Authority. In a letter to the I.L.E.A. the marchers

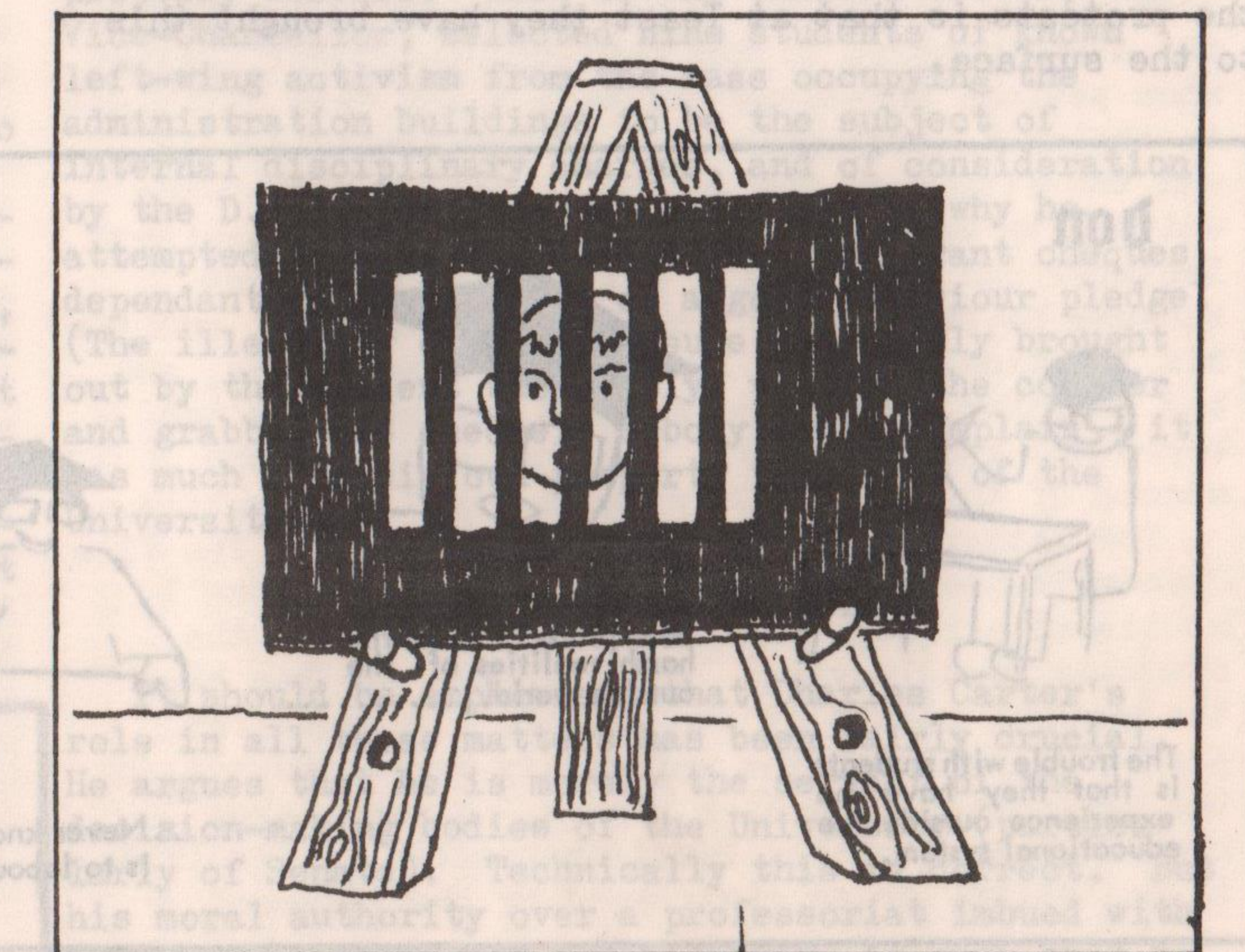
demand: no uniform; no caning; no detention; rules to be decided and enforced by the whole school; and no victimisation. They also said they would no longer "passively accept being pushed around, beaten and locked up on the sole authority of the Head".

REACTION

With the various forms of protest becoming more and more popular in the schools the authorities were getting increasingly scared. Police harassment was stepped up with Special Branch pigs observing meetings to plan further action. Two teenage girls who had a disagreement with their stepfather over the strike activities left home and were subsequently reported "missing". The police took an amazingly short time to find them, and when they did the girls objected to going with them, and tried to run away. The police restrained them and they were both charged with assaulting police officers. When they appeared in court they were remanded in custody for "social reports". The school authorities with the cooperation of the gutter press launched a campaign to turn parents against their children. The parents were sympathetically asked in a letter from the I.L.E.A. to help end "mass or individual truancy, which is absolutely wrong". What a way of putting it! If kids stick up for themselves they become truants which, as every right thinking person knows, is ABSOLUTELY wrong. An individual headmaster actually incited parents to use violence against their children by saying that he would leave them to deal with any striker and that he expected to see a few sore bottoms in school the next day. Unfortunately this divide and rule tactic had some success and many parents did threaten their children to deter them from taking part in any activity.

FURTHER STRIKE CALL

The S.A.U. then decided to call for an all-London strike for Wednesday 17th May, and they distributed a huge number of leaflets to nearly every school in inner London. An anarchist leaflet calling for support of the strike was also distributed to a few schools in South London. This really set the pot boiling. In most schools students discussed the ideas of student rights and asked their teachers to talk about it in class. Headmasters issued threats of expulsion, caning and so on to anyone who dared to do anything. The embryonic National Union of School Students refused to give support to the strike, which would confirm that this Young Communist League led organisation is likely to be as useless as its parent organisation the National Union of Students.



PRESS RESPONSE

On the actual day of the big strike long articles on the subject appeared in the Daily Mail and the Daily Express. These journalistic efforts really need to be read in full to appreciate the incredible depths to which the gutter press is prepared to descend. The Express presented its articles under the feature heading "This Violent Age", including a quote from the president of the National Association of Head Teachers which ran, "We could soon need policemen to bring peace to our schools". This was then followed by the headline, "The Class-room Castros Bent on Revolution". In the text the writer managed to link the schools movement with the Irish struggle, C.N.D., the Angry Brigade and Agitprop, which they described as a group who produced banners for demonstrations. No link with Cuba was substantiated. The full-page spread in the Mail was possibly even more insidious as the paper had employed a young reporter named Wheball to make out he was a school student and then lie his way into meetings. His article was largely concerned with clenched fist salutes, people calling each other 'comrade', Communism and Ho Chi Minh. The two pieces together added up to a real 'Reds under the bed' spectacular.

THE STRIKE

With the media in full swing the day of the strike arrived. Police had called at many schools trying to ascertain how many kids would actually be coming out. They were also to be seen outside school gates on the Wednesday morning to discourage any breakouts. During the morning break at many schools senior members of staff were conspicuously absent from their coffee tables as they similarly employed themselves patrolling the perimeter wire. Of course our schools aren't like prisons! Despite all of these counter measures some four thousand students made their way to central London where they found a vast number of fuzz to welcome them. The police tactic was to prevent any gathering in Trafalgar Square, and to split the kids into as small groups as possible. This harassment and provocative behaviour continued as the march attempted to make its way to County Hall. Twenty four arrests were made apparently on the basis of how much of a leader any individual seemed to be. The police activity was an education in itself for the kids - most of whom had never before seen the pigs in action on a demo. Leaflets were given out by four main groups - S.A.U., N.U.S.S., Rebel (International Socialists) and S.M.A.C.K. (Schools Mass Action Collective for Kids - a South London anarchist group. The numbers on this demo must make it clear that there is a great amount of discontent in our schools today, and the greatest achievement of the protests is that at least they have brought this to the surface.

LOOKING AHEAD

The big question is where to go from here? The S.A.U. having gone from small strikes, to big strikes and then to even bigger strikes obviously had little real appreciation of the situation as they rather foolishly decided to call yet another all-London strike for the Friday of the following week, 26th May. The leaflet, which they issued for this second strike included rather more Maoist rhetoric than the first, with a demand for "working class studies" in schools, presumably on the Chinese model, and the slogan "Victory to S.A.U.". This strike turned out to be a miserable failure with fewer than a hundred turning up at the rallying point.

REAL ADVANCES

Real advances in the democratisation of our schools are a clear possibility in the near future, and it is at the level of the individual school that the work must be done. 'Large' organisations like the S.A.U. with strong leadership, few members, and the ability to produce thousands of leaflets have their advantages, but these are outweighed by the deficiencies implicit in their authoritarianism and centralism. Sympathetic teachers have an important role to play in helping students who want to change and improve the schools to discover ways of getting this done. It is quite legitimate for outsiders to also join in this process, but on the condition that they are only there to assist in the students' struggle, and not to pervert it to their own political credo.

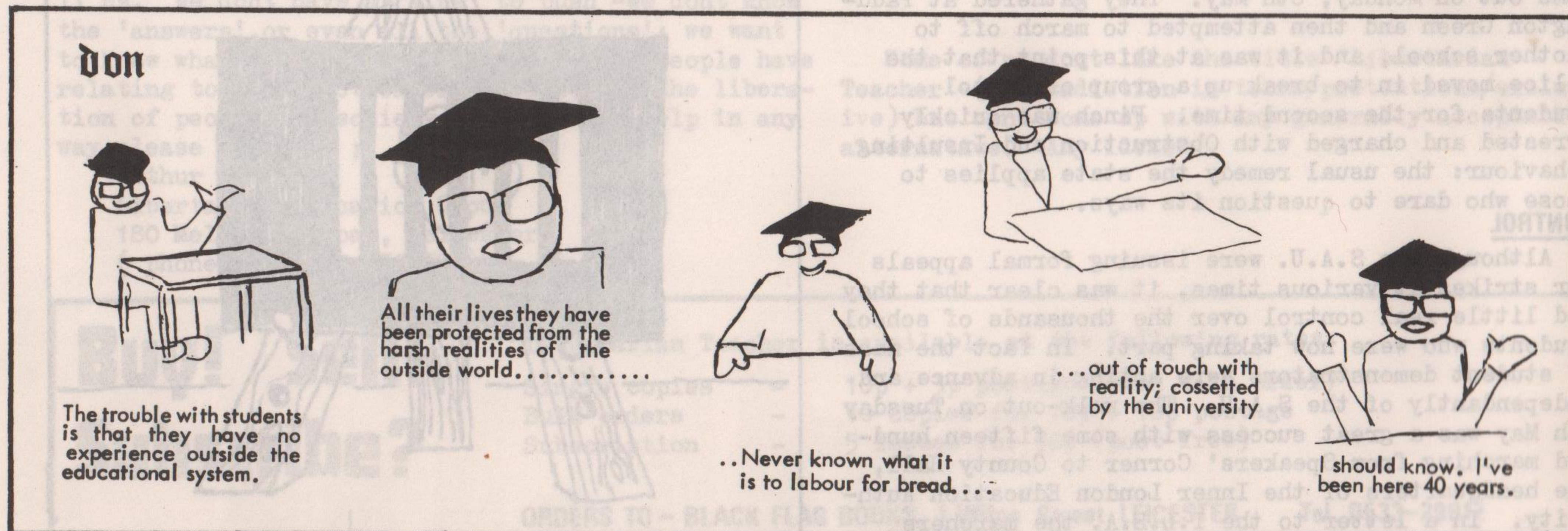
NEARER TO ANARCHY

The time is ripe. Those of us who want to improve the educational system have an opportunity for doing just that. The authorities are already worried as they have shown by the use of the press, the police, the courts and the rest of their paraphernalia. It is time to make them really scared. As Major-General Buckland (British Army) recently said:

"The more discerning of us are extremely depressed about the way things are going. We seem to be nearer and nearer to anarchy all the time. Now with schoolchildren on the streets of London, we have reached an all-time low."

(The Times 23 May 1972)

G.W.



ACADEMIC FURNITURE at LANCASTER UNIVERSITY —

The CRAIG Affair

David Craig was a member of the English Department here at Lancaster University from the early days. Every student I have spoken to (with one exception) says he is a brilliant teacher. I do not know him well, but my impression is that he is a man of passionate convictions and a deep humanity, though he may not always be easy to get along with. He is a libertarian communist intellectual.

'BIAS' AND 'OBJECTIVITY'

Is he a biased teacher? The question has often been asked, but I think it is a meaningless one. There is no such thing (nor should there be) as an 'unbiased' approach to the social sciences. I very much doubt whether there is one to the physical sciences either. We all, necessarily, select material according to what our system of values and priorities tells us is important. The danger is not that teachers should do this, but that they should do so while masquerading under the banner of objectivity. The apologist for contemporary liberal-bourgeois values who presents his studies as 'value-free' is a much more dangerous beast than the Nazi propagandist. The latest work of Eysenck is a particularly glaring example.

IDEOLOGICAL TEACHING

Yes, the orientation of David Craig's teaching is definitely determined by his ideology, as he himself will fearlessly admit in private. He believes that 'human nature' is not some kind of unvarying absolute, but rather that it is intimately bound up with changing socio-economic relations. Hence literature can not be studied in isolation from the social context which gave rise to it. Thus somebody who reads the novels of Koestler or Kipling in search of human 'absolutes' is misguided, and David would criticize his work. Furthermore, he holds very strong views on the location of good and evil in recent history, and in the literature to which it has given rise. He is sufficiently honest not to hide his convictions.

BUCKING AUTHORITY

However, to see the 'Craig Affair' as concerning essentially 'political bias' in teaching would be to mislocate the source of the trouble - as much of the national press, even the sympathetic Grauniad correspondent, has done. David was appointed, by a committee including Bill Murray, the English professor, precisely to teach the Marxist approach to literature. Murray is reputed to be strongly anti-communist but he has imbibed sufficient of the liberal ideology to accept at least one Marxist in his department, (there are probably others). It was not David Craig's communism, or even his biased teaching, that set off the witch-hunt. It was the fact that David had

for years been bucking Murrays professorial authority, trying to democratize decision-making in the English department. For years this didn't matter, because he was a voice crying in the wilderness. Then a year or two ago a group of young staff were appointed to the department, who were prepared to support David's vocal opposition to professorial power. That was when Murray felt his authority really threatened and set out to get him.

To nail David he used the issue of biased teaching. The external examiner was asked to prepare a report on David's marking of finals papers, a report which, in very guarded language, accused him of favouring answers which were the reflections of a certain ideology. Murray then took his senior lecturer off the convenorship of the course concerned, and also changed other of his teaching duties.

OTHER ISSUES

From there on the issue escalated and became inextricably linked to a whole series of other issues. There is no space to write about these in detail. Sanctions were taken against at least four others of the English staff who had supported David. A new Sociology professor was appointed over the heads of, and without consultation with, the existing Sociology department - an issue exacerbated by the fact that she is reputedly fairly reactionary, and the Sociology department is notoriously left-wing. There have been many other "mini-affairs". I think that the common factor between them all is that the present occupiers of the seats of power within the University - basically Vice-Chancellor and professors - feel their authority to be threatened.

STUDENT ACTION

The biggest threat to it comes not from the staff which has proved (with a few exceptions) craven in the face of intimidation and overwhelmingly in favour of the existing power structures within the university. The real threat to these structures comes from the students. It is they who took the action - boycotts and occupation - which got the authorities properly worried. That is why Charles Carter, the Vice-Chancellor, selected nine students of known left-wing activism from the mass occupying the administration buildings to be the subject of internal disciplinary charges, and of consideration by the D.P.P. for prosecution. That is why he attempted to make the handing over of grant cheques dependant on the signing of a good behaviour pledge. (The illegality of this measure was nicely brought out by the student who simply vaulted the counter and grabbed his cheque. Nobody could complain - it was much more his own property than that of the University.)

VICE CHANCELLOR'S ROLE

It should be emphasised that Charles Carter's role in all these matters has been fairly crucial. He argues that he is merely the servant of the decision-making bodies of the University (particularly of Senate). Technically this is correct. But his moral authority over a professoriat imbued with patterns of deference and hierarchy is such that he can more or less dictate decisions to Senate. An

RALPH GIBSON is a lecturer in History at Lancaster University. He is "increasingly drawn to anarchist ideas in education and social organisation", but lacks the "revolutionary temperament". He says his article "may be rather more dispassionate than the subject deserves".

example: Senate, which has by and large been very hostile to students, recently voted overwhelmingly to drop the internal charges against the nine students. I am sure that the Vice-Chancellor had prepared the way - a big new appeal for funds is being launched and he wants to bury the whole business as soon as possible - even at the cost of retreat - in order to save what he can of our tarnished reputation with industry. That is where the extra money comes from. Furthermore, the V-C is devoted to our business school, which he sees as being that which marks Lancaster out from the common run of universities.

Charles Carter, in the early 60's, had the reputation of being the most liberal Vice-Chancellor in England. When the university structures were established, what was then held to be a considerable consultative (and even decision-making) role was allotted to students. Since about a year ago he has become very much more repressive. He believes that the mass of the students are led by the nose by a few agitators, who are out to destroy the basis of a liberal university, by making ever-expanding demands for a share in running the place. I do not think, however, that he has changed much. The mistake was ever to regard him as a true liberal. Concessions were made to students, not because Carter felt that they had a right to determine their own lives, but in order to forestall student unrest, so evident elsewhere. Events have made this fairly plain. Charles Carter was never a sincere liberal; he was merely the best repressive tolerance man in the business.

He it was, in any case, who moved the motion for David Craig's dismissal before Council (the governing body of the university for non-academic matters). He said he was obliged to do this because David, in publicly supporting the proposal to set up a parallel "free university", had proposed the disruption of the existing one. I feel obliged to say that this was transparent nonsense on his part. Carter wanted David out, because he saw in him one of those 'disruptors' who are filling the minds of the multitude with dangerous illusions. His dismissal (even on trumped-up charges) would serve "pour encourager les autres".

SETTLEMENT or SELL OUT ?

David and Council, through their lawyers, reached a settlement before the charges were heard. David would remain in the university, as a "free-floating" senior lecturer, attached to no department, directly responsible to Senate. The morning after, many of us saw this as a victory. The students were quick to point out that the nine victimised students had been wholly forgotten in the bargaining, and that the other members of the English Department against whom serious sanctions had been taken were still out in the cold. The principle of freedom of speech, and the attack on the authority structures of the university were no further advanced, for a senior lecturer had been kicked out of his department because he bucked his professor's authority, and for his political views. It was for these issues, and not only for David's case, that the students had boycotted and occupied. They had provided the muscle of the fight; they had a right to complain.

The matter has nevertheless blown over. The Vice Chancellor decided to bury it, for the reasons I mentioned earlier. Exams were upon us, and the students were leaving. What can one say has been the general result of the Affair? In the first place, the life of the university was disrupted, by the aggression from high places. A very large number of my students found themselves so involved in agitation, or so distressed by the poisoned



atmosphere of the university, that they were unable to work properly. Very many of them are embittered against the university as a whole. Instead of seeing it as a community of learning, they now see it as an enemy that has done them down. All this will not quickly pass.

Furthermore, as I have already suggested, a number of issues of principle have been swept under the mat. Perhaps the most crucial of these has been not freedom of speech, but the power structures of the university. These remain wholly unchanged. Bill Murray, discredited as he is, has just been reaffirmed as head of the English Department. Before me at the moment is a paper drawn up by the senior politics professor, for discussion by Senate. One of the principles enunciated is that "the head of Department cannot be required by members of staff or students in the Department or by departmental meetings to act in ways which he judges are not in accord with or will not best serve the purpose of the University". That is to say, the head of Department (nearly always a professor) is neither elected by nor responsible to those over whom he has very considerable power. Many of these professors are very able and highly honorable men, but they are inevitably corrupted by power without responsibility. It is not so much the men who are at fault, as the structures of the University. Or, as a friend remarked, the trouble with Lancaster is not the 'reds under the beds', or even the 'fascists in the chassis' - it's the furniture that's wrong.

MIRROR TO SOCIETY

My final reflection is that all this may be only the internal bickerings of an elite community. Yes, our structures may be at fault, but there is much less injustice within the university than without, because we have all of us the common bond of a university education which destines us for the ruling class. I think that may well be true. But I also think that the hierarchical structure of this university may reflect, in microcosm, the hierarchical structure of our society. From our cradles, we are socialised into acceptance of authority at home, at school and finally (for the lucky ones) at university. The other day, I was so exasperated by the deferential attitude of a first-year student, that I asked her if she knew what 'patterns of deference' were. "No, sir", she replied. I think there is a far greater tragedy in her reply than in the destruction of Lancaster University as a place of learning by the Craig Affair. Her words are merely the tip of an iceberg, the end result of a process which teaches us that authority is always right - first the parents, then the teacher, then the law, sometimes the university teacher. Very few of our children will ever come to doubt such seemingly self-evident verities. That is why their human worth and creative power is being systematically strangled.

Ralph Gibson



anarchism and education:
the dissenting tradition

by Joel H. Spring

The implications of the rise of state supported public schools is often obscured by the lack of a critical tradition. There have certainly existed enough internal criticisms centering around the form, methods, and goals of public schooling which have been treated with great detail by historians. What has been lacking in historical literature is the exploration of a critical tradition which questions the very existence of state supported schools and offers an alternative direction for education. Anarchism as a social and political philosophy concerned with the role and nature of authority in a society has since the eighteenth century raised serious and important questions about the very existence of state systems of schooling and the possibility of non-authoritarian forms of education. From William Godwin in the eighteenth century to Paul Goodman in the twentieth century, anarchist literature abounds with educational discussions and represents what one might call the dissenting tradition in education.

The central concern of traditional anarchists has been the development of social and economic systems which enhance individual autonomy. Simply defined, autonomy means assuming the responsibility for determining one's own actions. At first glance this goal would not appear radical, but when one begins to work out its

Joel H. Spring is assistant professor of Education at Case Western Reserve University. Beacon Press will publish his *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State* in the fall of 1972.

This article was first published by the Center for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC), Cuernavaca, Mexico, March, 1971. It has been shortened slightly.

implications, it brings into question many of the established and accepted institutions in the modern world. In the first place, anarchists oppose the existence of the state in any form because it destroys individual autonomy by legislating laws which determine individual action. Anarchists in the nineteenth and twentieth century have argued that the state and its laws exist for the protection of the political and economic elite. This rejection of the state includes democratic societies where the individual is required to sacrifice his autonomy either to the majority or a representative. The state has also been viewed as a mechanism which protects economic systems which allow for the exploitation of one man by another man. Working from this perspective, anarchists have found themselves in the interesting position in the twentieth century of being equally opposed to the political and economic system of both the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Secondly, anarchists have believed that individual autonomy means an individual who is able to make a choice free from all imposed dogma. This means that to freely determine one's actions one has to establish his own values and goals. This has meant the rejection of all institutions which attempt to make the individual into something. Of particular importance in this respect has been the objection to the school and the church as institutions which limit autonomy by molding character.

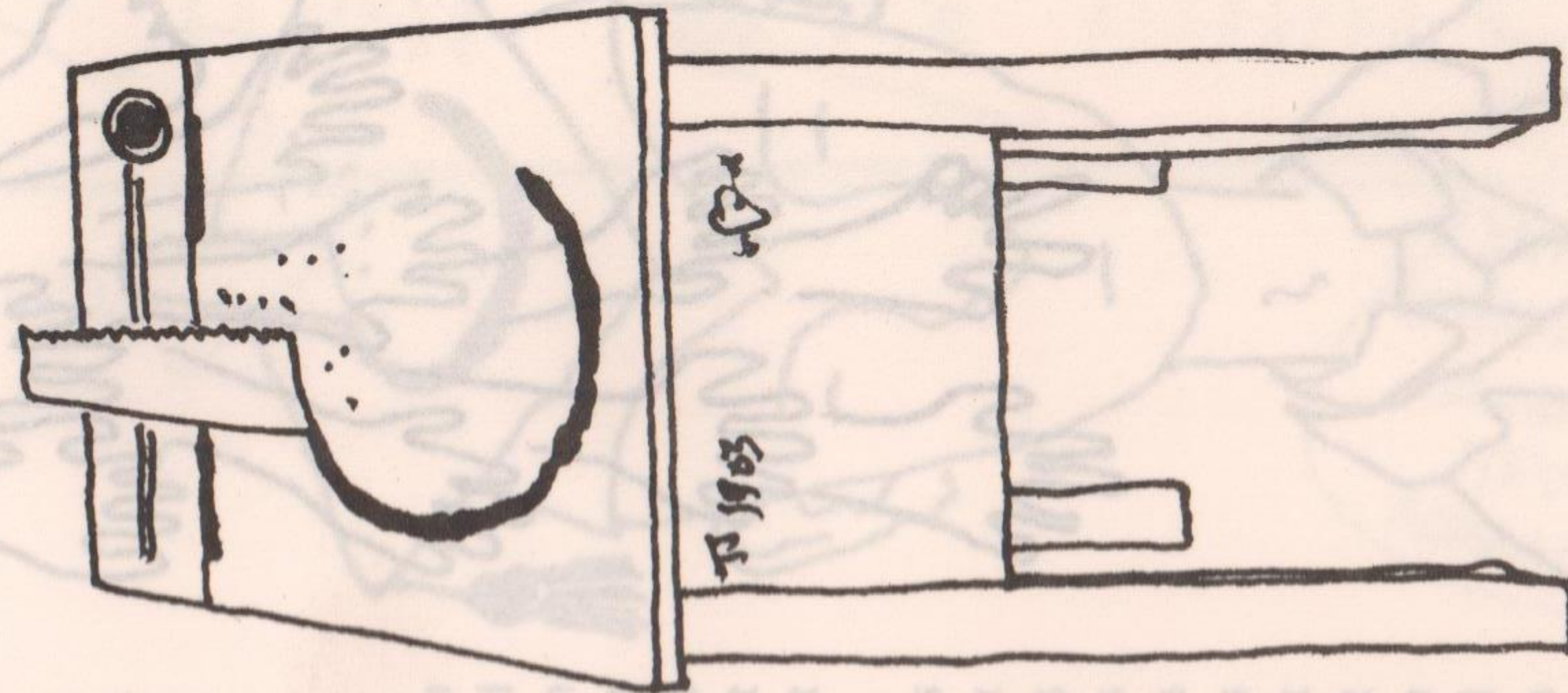
Godwin: state education and fear of subservience

One of the most important objections made by anarchists to the existence of national systems of schooling was that education in the hands of the state would become subservient to the political interests of those in control. Within this context schooling was viewed as a formidable weapon used by the state to mold and direct the will and character of its citizens so that they would support and maintain existing institutions. Education linked to the national state was viewed as the ultimate form of authority because it limited individual autonomy by directly controlling desires, aspirations, and goals.

William Godwin was one of the first writers in the anarchist tradition to voice these criticisms of national education. Godwin's most important work was *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness* published in England in 1793 in which he warned that before government is allowed to assume the role of educator "it behooves us to consider well what it is that we do." [1]

Godwin argued that education in the hands of government agents would be used to strengthen their positions of power. He stated, "Their views as instructors of a system of education will not fail to be

1. William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness*, Photographic Facsimile of the Third Edition (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1946), Vol. II, p. 302.



analogous to their views in their political capacity: the data upon which their conduct as statesmen is vindicated, will be the data upon which their instructions are founded." [2] Godwin rejected the assumption made by many in the eighteenth and nineteenth century that public schooling would result in individual freedom. That national schooling could be used for totalitarian purposes was not made clear to the Western world until the twentieth century. "Had the scheme of a national education," Godwin warned in the eighteenth century, "been adopted when despotism was most triumphant, it is not to be believed that it could have forever stifled the voice of truth. But it would have been the most formidable and profound contrivance for that purpose that imagination can suggest." Even in countries where liberty prevailed, Godwin argued, one could assume the existence of serious social errors which a national education would tend to perpetuate. [3]

Ferrer: oppressive institutions & social inertia

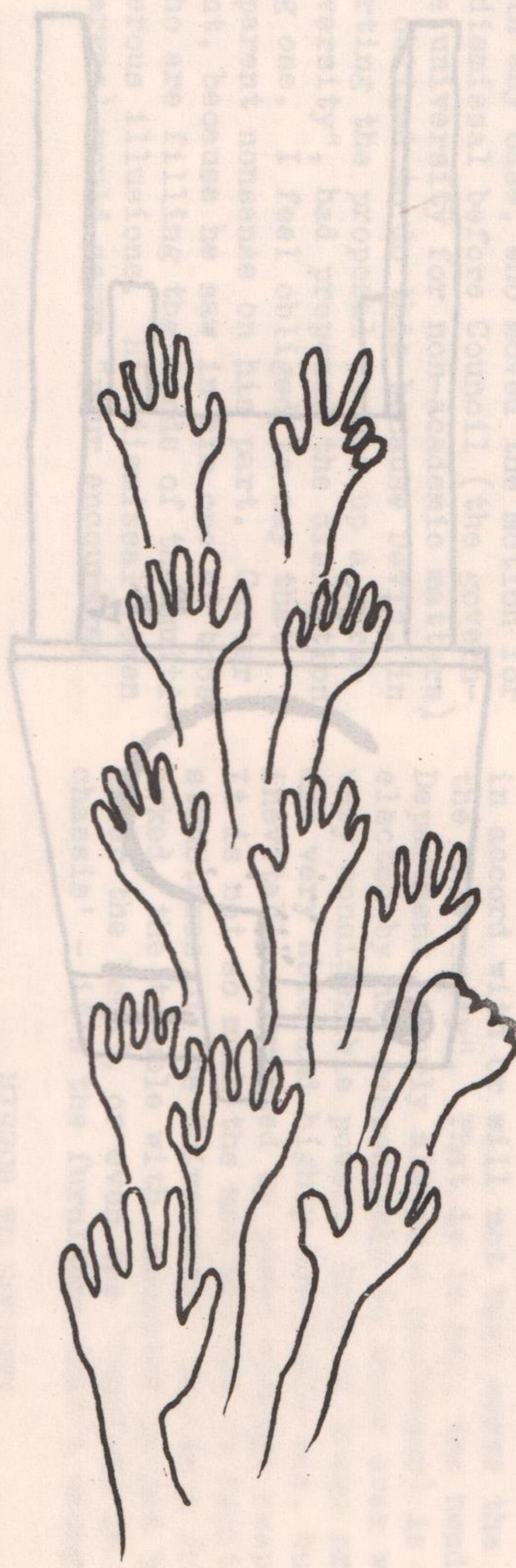
Godwin's criticisms came at a time when public schools were still in their infancy. His concerns were with what might happen with national education rather than being a critique of actual results. By the end of the nineteenth century some form of national education had triumphed in most industrialized Western countries and anarchists could turn to these institutions for more direct evaluation of the relationship between schooling and the national state. One of the foremost anarchist critics was Spanish educator Francisco Ferrer who founded the Modern School in 1901 in Barcelona. Ferrer's work gained international recognition when in 1909 he was accused by the Spanish government of leading an insurrection in Barcelona and was executed. His execution elicited a cry of injustice from many groups in Europe and the United States and sparked interest in his career and educational ideas. In the United States a Ferrer Society was organized and a Modern School established in Stelton, New Jersey. In Europe the International League for the Rational Education of Children, which had been founded by Ferrer, was re-organized after his death and claimed as its Honorary President, Anatole France.

During Ferrer's career as educator he argued that governments had come to monopolize education. "They know, better than anyone else, that their power is based almost entirely on the school." [4] In the past, Ferrer maintained, governments had kept the masses in a state of

2. *Ibid.*, p. 302.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 303-304.

4. Francisco Ferrer, "L'Ecole Renovee," *Mother Earth* (November, 1909), Vol. IV, No. 9, p. 267.



ignorance as a means of controlling them. With the rise of industrialism in the nineteenth century, governments found themselves involved in an international economic competition which required a trained industrial worker. Schools triumphed in the nineteenth century not because of a general desire to reform society but because of economic need. Ferrer wrote that governments wanted schools "not because they hope for the renovation of society through education, but because they need individuals, workmen, perfected instruments of labor to make their industrial enterprises and the capital employed in them profitable." [5] At first there was a great hope in the nineteenth century, Ferrer felt, that schooling would become a means of liberating humanity. That hope had been crushed when it became clear that a national system of schooling by its very organization could only serve the interests of those with political power. School teachers became

the conscious or unconscious instruments of these powers, modeled moreover according to their principles; they have from their youth up . . . been subjected to the discipline of their authority; few indeed are those who have escaped the influence of this domination . . . because the school organization constrains them so strongly that they cannot but obey. [6]

In Ferrer's mind the schools had accomplished exactly the things Godwin had warned of in the previous century. The schools in becoming the focal points for maintaining existing institutions depended on a system which conditioned the student for obedience and docility. This, of course, was a charge leveled at the schools by a variety of critics. From Ferrer's point of view it was an inevitable result of a school controlled by the state. "Children must be accustomed," Ferrer wrote, "to obey, to believe, to think, according to the social dogmas which govern us. Hence, education cannot be other than such as it is to-day." [7] For Ferrer one of the central problems for reform was breaking government's power over education. Reform that tried to work within the system could accomplish nothing towards the goal of human emancipation. Those who organized the national schools, Ferrer claimed, "have never wanted the uplift of the individual, but his enslavement; and it is perfectly useless to hope for anything from the school of to-day." [8]

5. *Ibid.*, p. 268.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 271.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 272.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 272.

For Ferrer it was inconceivable for a government to create a system of education which would lead to any radical changes in the society which supported that government. It was therefore unrealistic to believe that national schooling would be a means of significantly changing the conditions of the lower classes. Since it was the existing social structure which produced the poor, education could only eliminate poverty by freeing men to radically change the social structure. An education of this nature would not result from a national education because the government would not teach something which threatened its own stability. Writing in a bulletin of the Modern School about the mixing of rich and poor in the schools of Belgium, Ferrer stressed that "the instruction that is given in them is based on the supposed eternal necessity for a division of rich and poor, and on the principle that social harmony consists in the fulfilment of the laws." [9] What the poor were taught, according to Ferrer, was the acceptance of the existing social structure and the belief that economic improvement depended on individual effort within the existing structure. Developing this attitude in the poor reduced the threat to the controlling economic powers of any major social changes.

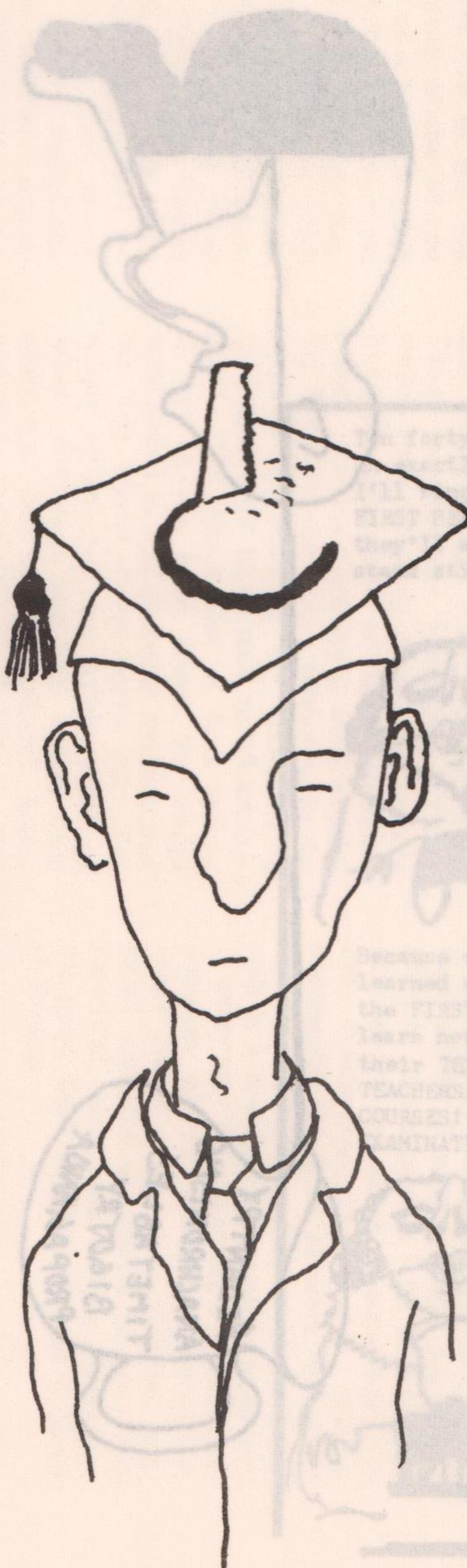
Stirner: freeman or learner

The critical factor that anarchists were to perceive in a state controlled educational system was that the political dogmas expounded and the attempt to shape the individual into a useful citizen undermined the autonomy of the individual by fixing the boundaries and limits of the will. While state and religious schools were recognized as the greatest threat to individual freedom this did not mean that freedom from these strictures was the sole condition for an anarchist school.

The central issue for anarchists was the meaning of freedom and its relationship to education. Most anarchists have agreed with Max Stirner's statement in the 1840's that the major problem with the stress upon freedom in the nineteenth century was that it "appeared . . . as independence from authorities, however, it lacked self-determination and still produced none of the acts of a man who is free-in-himself . . ." [10] From an anarchist standpoint this meant that a state might free the individual from direct authority structures but still enslave the individual by determining how he would act through a system of schooling. To be "free-in-himself" required that an individual choose his own goals, ideals, and character rather than having them imposed through a planned system of schooling.

9. Francisco Ferrer, *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School*, Trans. by Joseph McCage (New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1913), p. 48.

10. Max Stirner, *The False Principle of Our Education*, Trans. by Robert H. Beebe (Colorado Springs: Ralph Myles, Publisher, 1967), p. 16.



What this meant was that knowledge could be both freeing and enslaving. Whether it was one or the other depended on how one gained knowledge. Probably the most cogent statement of this position was made by Stirner in *The False Principle of Our Education*. Max Stirner, whose real name was Johann Casper Schmidt, was a poor German school teacher who in the 1840's attended meetings of the Young Hegelians in Berlin with Marx and Engels. Stirner's one and only major book, *The Ego and his Own*, was written during this period and so upset Marx that he devoted a large section of the *German Ideology* to an attack upon Stirner's ideas. Stirner's articles on education were written before the book and published by Karl Marx in 1842 in the *Rheinische Zeitung*.

Stirner believed that one had to make a distinction between the freeman and the educated man. For the educated man knowledge was used to shape his character. For the freeman knowledge was used to facilitate choice. "If one awakens in men the idea of freedom," Stirner wrote, "then the free men will incessantly go on to free themselves; if, on the contrary, one only educates them, then they will at all times accommodate themselves to circumstances in the most highly educated and elegant manner and degenerate into subservient cringing souls." [11] It was Stirner's belief that knowledge should not be taught because this turned the individual into a learner rather than a creative person. The learner was a subservient person because he was taught to depend on authoritarian sources for his beliefs and goals rather than on himself. A learning person was without free will because he depended on learning how to act rather than determining how to act. ". . . where will a creative person be educated instead of a learning one," Stirner asked, "where does the teacher turn into a fellow worker, where does he recognize knowledge as turning into will, where does the free man count as a goal and not the merely educated?" [12]

To avoid the mere learner the goal of pedagogy, according to Stirner, should be self-development in the sense that an individual gain self-awareness and ability to act. For him the existing schools worked against the freedom of the will. In discussing the development of education up to his time, he argued, that following the reformation education in the humanistic tradition was a means to power. Referring to the humanistic tradition, he wrote, ". . . education, as a power, raised him who possessed it over the weak, who lacked it, and the educated man counted in his circle, however large or small it was, as the mighty, the powerful, the imposing one: for he was an authority." [13]

11. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

The rise of the idea of universal schooling undermined the authority of the humanist scholar with a system designed to produce useful citizens trained for a practical life. Authority under the system of popular education was not that of one man over another but rather dogmas of what was practical and useful over the minds of men. Stirner wrote, "... only scholars come out of the menageries of the humanists, only 'useful citizens' out of those of the realists, both of whom are indeed nothing but subservient people." [14] Education for practical life, Stirner believed, produced people of principles who acted according to maxims. "Most college students," he stated, "are living examples of this sad turn of events. Trained in the most excellent manner, they go on training; drilled, they continue drilling." [15]

For Stirner and future anarchists the heart of education should be the development of a mind which is able to choose free of dogma and prejudice and whose goals and purposes are self-determined. Knowledge pursued in this fashion would become a result of self-direction designed to strengthen the will. The individual would not be taught but would teach himself. This did not mean that the individual might not seek a teacher. The acquisition of knowledge would be the result of an individual desire and, consequently, directly related to the will of an individual. Stirner, in a statement which would reflect the attitude of later anarchist educators, put the matter in these terms,

If man puts his honor first in relying upon himself and applying himself, thus in self-reliance, self-assertion, and freedom, he then strives to rid himself of the ignorance which makes out of the strange impenetrable object a barrier and hindrance to his self-knowledge. [16]

Tolstoy: culture or education

This approach to education required a careful distinction between what was normally defined as schooling and what anarchists hoped to accomplish. Leo Tolstoy, the Russian novelist and Christian anarchist, who established his own school in Russia in the 1860's, carefully defined these distinctions in an article titled "Education and Culture" published in 1862. Tolstoy argued that culture, education, instruction and teaching had distinct and important meanings. He defined culture as the total of all the social forces which shaped the character of the individual. Education was the conscious attempt to give men a particular type of character and habits. As Tolstoy stated, "Education is the tendency of one man to make another just like himself." [17]

14. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

17. Leo Tolstoy, "Education and Culture," in *Tolstoy on Education*, Trans. by Leo Wiener (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 111.



The difference between education and culture was on the issue of compulsion. "Education is culture under restraint. Culture is free." He argued that instruction and teaching were related to both education and culture. Instruction was the transmission of one man's information to another and teaching, which overlapped into the area of instruction, taught physical skills. Teaching and instruction were a means of culture, Tolstoy claimed, when they were free, and a means of education, "when the teaching is forced upon the pupil, and when the instruction is exclusive, that is when only those subjects are taught which the educator regards as necessary." [18]

For anarchists, using Tolstoy's definitions, schooling was to be a process of culture and not education. This meant a school of non-interference and compulsion, where the student learned what he wanted to learn. Tolstoy defined a school as "the conscious activity of him who gives culture upon those who receive it..." Non-interference in the school meant "granting the person under culture the full freedom to avail himself of the teaching which answers his need, which he wants... and to avoid teaching which he does not need and which he does not want." [19] Museums and public lectures were examples of schools of non-interference. They were consciously planned by the institution or lecturer to achieve a certain goal, but the user was free to attend or not to attend. Established schools and universities on the other hand used a system of rewards and punishments and limited the area of studies to achieve their particular ends. Tolstoy's example of his noncompulsory school was one without a planned program where teachers could teach what they wanted and their offerings would be regulated by the demands of the students. The school would not be interested in how its teaching was used or what the effect would be on the students. The school would be a place of culture and not education.

In varying degrees Stirner and Tolstoy reflected general anarchist thought about learning. In the United States, Elisabeth Burns Ferm, writing in the anarchist journal *Mother Earth* in 1907 emphasized the distinction between making the child into something and allowing the child to become something. Using different terms than Tolstoy had, Ferm defined the pedagogue as one who endeavors "to make and leave an impression on the child." Rejecting the pedagogue, Ferm believed the teacher should aid the individual in gaining an awareness of self and, consequently, autonomy. The role of the teacher would be to act as a mirror for students' actions, so that the "individual may see how his act reflects his thought and his thought reflects his act. That thought and action are indivisibly, inseparably one—helping the individual to realize this, consciously, by holding him responsible for every word and

18. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

act." [20] A teacher serving in this capacity would help the individual, in Stirner's sense, become free-in-himself. Acquisition of knowledge would then become a function of the free choice of the individual.

Beyond education

Most anarchists believed that any form of education would have little meaning unless the family were changed. Emma Goldman, the leading spokesperson for anarchist thought in the United States in the early twentieth century, declared in 1906,

The terrible struggle of the thinking man and woman against political, social and moral conventions owes its origin to the family, where the child is ever compelled to battle against the internal and external use of force. [21]

From Emma Goldman's point of view the central problem in overcoming the modern authoritarian family structure was the end of the subservient role of the woman in modern society. Goldman's career was characterized by a life-long fight for women's liberation.

Francisco Ferrer also recognized the importance of the social role of the woman as a factor in anarchist education. Since women had the major responsibility in the care of the child, free humans could never develop until women were free. Ferrer wrote,

It is a conspicuous fact in our modern Christian society that, as a result and culmination of our patriarchal development, the woman does not belong to herself; she is neither more nor less than an adjunct of man, subject constantly to his absolute dominion, bound to him—it may be—by chains of gold. Man has made her a perpetual minor. [22]

Co-education at Ferrer's Modern School in Barcelona was unique not only because it was not generally practiced in Spain, but also because it emphasized the teaching of girls as a means of freeing humanity. He argued this was crucial because so many of one's ideas were wrapped in the emotions of childhood association with the mother. Ferrer did label the male and female with terms that would later be rejected by ardent feminists. For Ferrer the male was the individual and woman the conservator. While this identification was not to be accepted by later groups of women liberationists, his recognition of the necessity of changing the status of women as a precondition for any important social change was to become an important argument in that movement.

20. Elisabeth Burns Ferm, "Activity and Passivity of the Educator," *Mother Earth* (March, 1970) Vol. II, No. 1, p. 26.

21. Emma Goldman, "The Child and Its Enemies," *Mother Earth* (April, 1906), Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 10-11.

22. Ferrer, *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School*, pp. 36-37.

to teach anarchism or facts for use

Freeing the child in the family and the school of all authoritarian dogma created an important dilemma in anarchist educational thought. If the teaching of children was to be free of dogma, what exactly would be taught? For instance, Ferrer searched in vain before the opening of his school for books that would meet this criterion. Interestingly, the Modern School was opened without one book in its library because Ferrer could not find one that would meet his approval. [23] There was also a concern about an anarchist education forcing the child to become an anarchist since this would be a product of dogmatic imposition. Emma Goldman warned radical parents who imposed beliefs on their children that they would find that

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-87.



became a method by which the individual was indoctrinated into those systems. On the other hand, arithmetic presented as a tool for creating a more just organization of the economy was a body of knowledge the individual could use to free himself. It was from this standpoint that Emma Goldman criticized traditional methods for teaching history in the schools. With reference to the teaching of history, she wrote, "See how the events of the world become like a cheap puppet show, where a few wirepullers are supposed to have directed the course of development of the entire race." History which emphasized the actions of rulers, governments, and great men conditioned the individual to accept a society where things were done to men rather than men acting. From Emma Goldman's perspective history had to emphasize the ability of all men to act and shape the direction of history. History presented in the traditional manner enslaved man to authoritarian institutions. History presented as all men acting convinced the individual of his own power to shape history. [27]





27. Goldman, p. 9.

In the second of his two articles on "Anarchism and Education," Dr. Spring will evaluate the ideological and psychological positions of radical education proposals in the twentieth century. Particular emphasis will be given to labor education; the development of the Modern School and Wilhelm Reich.

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**BOARD OF EDUCATION
CITY OF NEW YORK**

Public School No. _____ Borough of _____

NAME	CLASS	DATE ISSUED	WHEN RECEIVED	CONDITION
All education is despotism.....				
Go there; do that; read; write;				
rise; lie down; will perhaps for-				
ever be the language addressed to youth by age.				
<i>The Enquirer: Reflections on Education, Manners, and Literature</i>				—William Godwin

boy or girl, over-fed on Thomas Paine, will land in the arms of the Church, or they will vote for imperialism only to escape the drag of economic determinism and scientific socialism, or that they... clinging to their right of accumulating property, only to find relief from the old-fashioned communism of their father. [24]

Anarchist discussions of this dilemma were often resolved in conviction rather than logic. For instance, the statement of purposes of the International League for the Rational Education of Children founded by Ferrer admitted that there was no neutral instruction and argued, "We should not, in the school, hide the fact that we would awaken in the children the desire for a society of men... equal economically... without violence, without hierarchies, and without privilege of any sort." In the next paragraph the League warned, "... we have no right to impose this ideal on the child." [25] The League claimed that if the child's conscience, sense of justice and reason were aroused, this would lead him to work for human emancipation. The conviction underlying this feeling and other anarchist statements regarding education was that reason, which was cultivated free of dogma, would create naturally within the individual a desire for the preservation of his own autonomy and that of others.

It was from this standpoint that Ferrer emphasized the presentation of facts from which the child would draw his own conclusions. Ferrer exhibited a great faith in the ability of the natural and social sciences to yield objective data with which the human mind could reason. It was, of course, open to judgment what constituted objective data. For example, Ferrer argued that arithmetic should be presented without reference to wages, economy, and profit. The substance of arithmetic would be problems dealing with the just distribution of production, communication, transportation, the benefits of machinery, and public works. "In a word," Ferrer wrote, "the Modern School wants a number of problems showing what arithmetic really ought to be—the science of the social economy (taking the word 'economy' in its etymological sense of 'good distribution')." [26]

Objective fact and knowledge therefore had a special meaning in anarchist groups. It was objective in the sense that the individual could use it for maintaining his own individual freedom. For Ferrer, arithmetic placed in the framework of existing production systems

24. Goldman, pp. 12-13.

25. "The International League for the Rational Education of Children." *Mother Earth* (July, 1910), p. 156.

26. Ferrer, *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School*, pp. 89-90.

Class Struggle and the Classroom

MANY ANARCHISTS are familiar with Ruskin College Oxford's fine series of history paperbacks written by worker-students about the organisation and experience of work and leisure in their own industry. This is history written from the guts as no academic can write it—self-conscious independent working-class history. Every year Ruskin holds an open two-day history workshop, designed to present work in progress by teachers and researchers. It's informal and enjoyable and costs only 50p.

WHOSE CONFERENCE?

This year's workshop was ambitiously called 'Children in history: children's liberation'. The second half of the title was what attracted many of the 80-odd radical teachers—out of a total of 1,000 or so attenders—to come. But so tight was the schedule that we were kept busy attending lectures in no particular order from morning till night with scarcely a break. Group discussion of present problems was left to the end almost as an afterthought. The researchers largely monopolised question time with their recherché points. Many people were inhibited by the vast lecture room atmosphere. (There were happy exceptions. A Maoist ex-Scout got up after a dry-as-dust lecture on the Boy Scouts to announce that he felt there were strong affinities between Scouting and Trotskyism. He illustrated this mindbending comparison by his own ideological odyssey and as follows: when he was on the LSE students revolt committee four years ago, he was struck by the last-ditch stand of three committee members, who nobly offered to give back their Queen's Scout badges. . . .) Some of the worker-students felt that the nature of the conference was spoiled by 'too many North Kensington trendies', and the workers were conspicuously absent from the group discussions at the end.

MAKE THE LINKS

That was a shame. Interchange of work experience can be fertile. Teachers have a lot to learn from their history, and historians of childhood whether working class or not ignore present-day classroom struggles at their peril. The links between past and present, between childhood and adulthood, between experience and liberation, were not always evident. One lecturer who is travelling the country recording old people's memories of childhood gave an entertaining account of children's truancy, pranks and gangs. He declared that these testified to the eternal war of kids against adults, and that children are an oppressed class. No anarchist could separate the world of school so sharply

from the world of work. What about our nationwide industrial absenteeism, informal work organisation and sabotage? (The Ruskin books are informative on these neglected aspects of working life.) To stress the uniqueness of kids in this respect, is to universalise and romanticise just as the Opies did in their collections of children's rhymes.

CHILDREN'S STRIKES IN 1911

The triviality of this approach was shown up by a Ruskin docker-student who described the children's strikes in nearly 60 port towns in 1911. These strikes were always in the poorest, roughest parts of town, and often truant and 'bad elements' took a leading role. Their demands are fascinating. These varied from place to place, but usually included: abolition of the attendance officer, one day's holiday a week excluding Saturday, one hour's schooling in the morning and one in the afternoon, a shilling a week to be paid to all school-goers. 1911 was a year of dock strikes. It was in the town where the troops were called in and shot two strikers, that the first school strike broke out. The school strikes had no visible effect on school discipline, but who knows what effect they had on the strikers? Someone commented that in Dublin in 1913 when the T&GWU blacked Eason's, the local W. H. Smith's, the kids brought schools to a standstill by refusing to work on blacked books!

Raphael Samuel, organiser of the workshop, tried to stir thoughts of present-day action by asking why 1911 was the only instance of widespread school strikes, and asked why teachers do not organise kids' strikes now. A rank-and-file teacher answered too swiftly that it is up to the kids to organise their own strikes. If there were any schoolkids there, any SAU militants, they were neither seen nor heard. Schoolkids were what the workshop really lacked. But nor was there any account of kids now, in Belfast for example, where a teacher is reported as saying, '14-year-olds are coming out with things I'd expect from a 16-year-old. . . .'

TWO CULTURES

Dave Douglass, a 24-year-old CP miner who edits *The Mineworker* and is leaving Ruskin soon to go back down the mines, gave a wonderfully vivid talk about his childhood. As soon as it was over, he slipped into the international jargon of Marxism-Leninism to describe the 'real' problems of the working class. The next day we were treated to a brilliant demolition of the sociology of Bernstein, revered on both Right and Left. But although 'restricted and

elaborated codes' are a load of bollox, we had just heard two different languages spring naturally and fluently from one person—the fresh expressive language of experience, and the cliché-ridden ideology of Communist orthodoxy. Not the sort of problem to raise in that heady smoky pall of dedicated left-wing militancy.

RUSKIN COLLEGE FOR AND AGAINST

In his Ruskin book *Pit Life in Co. Durham: rank and file movements and workers' control*, Dave Douglass attacks the Ruskin College idea of selecting self-improving workers, indoctrinating them with a middle-class education, then setting them adrift. Ruskin students are known often to find it hard to fulfil an academic reading list and essay as competently as raw middle-class 18-year-olds. But to accomplish the kind of work we see in the Ruskin books and heard at the weekend, is a thousand times more important in every way than carrying out the dreary demands of the bourgeois curriculum. What use is a degree or diploma compared with the expression of your own historical experience? This underlines the good work Raphael Samuel is doing at Ruskin.

POPULAR EDUCATION AS MORAL POLICE

Samuel himself read a paper on the introduction of compulsory schooling 1860-80, which put Forster's Education Act of 1870 in the background for a change. As the clergyman said, 'The proletariat may strangle us unless we teach it the virtues which have elevated other sections of society.' Some of us didn't realise how recent compulsory schooling is. It involves the extinction of a whole class of street arabs outside the industrial and moral disciplines of the age. This was the time when restrictions on factory and workshop employment of children began to bite, when trust schools were set up, when orphanage societies began to snatch the child and stir the conscience. Kids were seized by Dr. Barnardo's, by police, by truant officers, and dumped forcibly in schools and homes. (One of the familiar weapons in such schools was **silence**.) There were even raids on Punch and Judy shows! When they had been broken in, thousands were sent to Canada, as domestic servants, etc. In the 1870s and 80s, Canada becomes for children what Van Diemen's Land was earlier in the century for convicts. Goodbye to the streets, to parents and families. When the kids' incomes vanished, their families were often pauperised. What Samuel did not say was whether all this regimentation had

any positive effects at all—for example, whether it contributed to the control and elimination of childhood diseases like rickets.

NO VOICES FOR LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION

The debate over free schools versus radicals working within the state school system never really got off the ground. Nobody from Liverpool free school was around, and the few libertarian teachers were swamped by socialists. The libertarians obligingly revealed some of their difficulties: where is the money for free schools to come from? From factory money, capitalist money. There's nowhere else for it to come from. Kirkdale School finds cash hard to come by. The contradictions between free schools and a factory future were not resolved, nor the differences between liberty for a kid at school and the demands of his authoritarian family. (But these problems are universal, and state school teachers didn't have much to say about them either.)

Nobody was actually against free

schools—but deschooling was simply dismissed from the start as untimely utopianism. If a paper had been read by a worker explicitly on say, Learning From Experience, people would have been forced to discuss deschooling in practical terms. All too clearly, none of the researchers or Samuel had absorbed Illich or Goodman, though some of their experiences cried out for a deschooling emphasis.

WORKING WITHIN THE SYSTEM?

The mass of teachers stood with Chris Searle. He was for working within the state school system—and putting fire in his belly now and then with the sheer existence of free schools. There were several dismal accounts of teachers being repeatedly sacked by state school after state school for the tiniest signs of radicalism. Stories of long-sought 'successes' like longer hairstyles were depressing. More encouraging were examples of work projects. One teacher sent kids out with one of them in a wheelchair to

make phone calls, go shopping, go on a bus, go to the cinema, public lavatory, etc. Finding out at the town hall about provision and regulations for cripples was also part of the aim to arouse kids' awareness of how society does and doesn't provide for the disabled, and how society is run. The kids had to be insured for every day spent out of school! This tale raised shouts of 'liberal crap' from the ideologists. But it is arguable that any school free or unfree could do with countless experiments of this kind. And it's not just the kids who need to learn how our society is run.

Julius

(Next year's Ruskin history workshop will be on Women in History: Women's Liberation.)

(A draft statement of aims and principles of the Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance in respect to education, prepared for the teachers' network).

AIM

The prime concern of anarchist syndicalists is life, which can only flourish at its best in a free society. Our concern in regard to education is to see it in the context of the struggle to create a free society and as part of our general vision of what constitutes a free society.

Our aim is to foster the creation of an education free from the pernicious influences of commerce, hatred, mystification and coercion by whatever means are consistent with this end.

FREE EDUCATION.

Free education is not simply the removal of cash payments or authority. A truly free education can only exist when ends the separation between education and life, school and community.

Unfree education is what we get now. In our present education system, the initiative of teachers, students and community alike are sapped by authority and parsimonious finance. The teaching function is made the property of a self-perpetuating bureaucratic elite, cut off from pupils and community alike and making of their job a mystic art. The system is riddled with competition for meaningless goals, standardisation of subjects for study, artificial compartmentalisation of subjects one from another, professional snobbery, tyrannical

authority and the priorities of the book-keeper.

A free education can only be founded on the destruction of these influences once and for all. Only then can education serve the needs of the members of a free society, instead of the interests of State Technology and the Stock Exchange.

FREE SCHOOLS

One of the historical foundations of free education will be the experimental work of free schools which at one and the same time provide an alternative to the existing system and a laboratory in which pupils and teachers alike will seek the practical basis of free education by, within the free society.

By free school we do not mean fee-paying establishments, even those which conduct Utopian experiments divorced from real contact with the wider community, though we recognise the part such schools have played in bringing to our attention the need for and practicality of free education, and salute their pioneer work.

A free school is one that asks no fees, in which there is no coercion, in which there is no artificial status distinction between teachers and pupils, in which the community is active, and which in turn is active in the community, and makes no conditions for entrance and participation.

DIRECT ACTION

The basis of free schools and free education is the replacement of the initiative of State

and finance by individual and communal initiative. Therefore the principal means by which the existing education system can be destroyed and the 'non-system' of free education created, that is, direct action. That term is to be understood in its widest sense, to include de-schooling of the existing system, rebellion, sabotage of the State's indoctrination processes, and the creation of alternative free schools, among many other possible methods.

ASSESSMENT

A free education does not recognize the validity of bureaucratic assessment, competitive examination and separation by status (e.g. streaming, different standards of school establishment, etc). We are therefore opposed to examinations, assessment, competition for status, certifying, syllabuses, and the division of education into primary, secondary, grammar, further education, higher education, etc. We are opposed to the separation between sexes and age groups both administratively and in terms of subjects of study. The division between teacher, pupil and community must end.

The individual alone can decide what to learn how much, when, who from, and to what level of attainment; he alone can decide when he is satisfied with his achievements.

CONTINUED p. 20

SCHOOLS OF INTEREST

KIRKDALE

Kirkdale school got going in May 1965 by taking a large old Victorian house, due for demolition for a redevelopment scheme, on a 3 year lease. The lease was later renewed and now finishes in March 1973, so Kirkdale may come to an end, though there are various vague plans in the air.

The school is a day school and started with two children and younger siblings, being run by their teacher-mothers. The numbers gradually rose to around forty-five, ages 3½ to 12. When classroom space was needed a large pre-fab hut was built in the garden, and there are plans for a further extension to be built by some building students. The maximum number for the present premises would be fifty, partly due to the need for outdoor space. The garden, once a large green jungle, is now two-thirds beaten earth. However there are trees, crates, ropes, etc.; hideouts are constructed; holes dug; and fires lit. There is a sandpit and paddling pool for the younger ones.

The school is divided into three groups, though children can move freely between them, if they are not being a nuisance. There are the Bees (ages 3 to 5), Wasps (5 to 8) and Hornets (8 to 12). Each group has one qualified teacher and an assistant, and a number of parents or other contacts come in to run clubs or courses which may last half a term or go on for years. In this way the children have had further opportunities, e.g. for cooking, dressmaking, dancing, advanced science and learning various musical instruments.

The permanent teachers try to cope with the three R's, start off various projects, and do a great deal of varied creative work. Lessons are not compulsory although there may be some pressurising according to the temperament of various teachers. The five children who went on to Comprehensive school in September found they were generally more advanced in lessons than other children. Of these five, two have managed to cope successfully with the other aspects of state Secondary schooling. The two who were not very happy, and the one who refused to go back to it have now dropped out, and a system of tutorials (often outside school hours) is being arranged for them.

The school is run as a limited company and all parents are share-holders. There is a board of directors appointed at an A.G.M., who can appoint the Head. Actually, as John and Susie Powlesland started the whole thing off and have worked tremendously hard to keep it going, they are automatically joint Heads. They take various decisions, but things are generally thrashed out at staff or parent meetings.

Apart from recurring financial and staffing crises, there have been various times when bad feelings arose between one group of adults and another - A accusing B of being too authoritarian, or C being accused of being irresponsible - but the fact that these things can be talked over at meetings seems to ease these sorts of situations. Actually things seem to work in a pretty anarchistic way and if Susie makes a decision with which the other staff generally disagree, then it is simply not carried out.

And course there is the weekly meeting for children and any adults who are there; where the things closest to the children are discussed - the size of the dinner helpings, who is allowed to have a knife at school, complaints about bullying or stealing, and so forth. As the children are so young there is oft-

en a poor attendance, but it has been one of the main features of Kirkdale, and the decisions taken by the children have generally been well kept to.

Various other councils and committees of adults and children have come and gone - dealing with repairs and maintenance (done mostly by parents), trying to raise money, or organising a social event. The 3 groups also have meetings of their own.

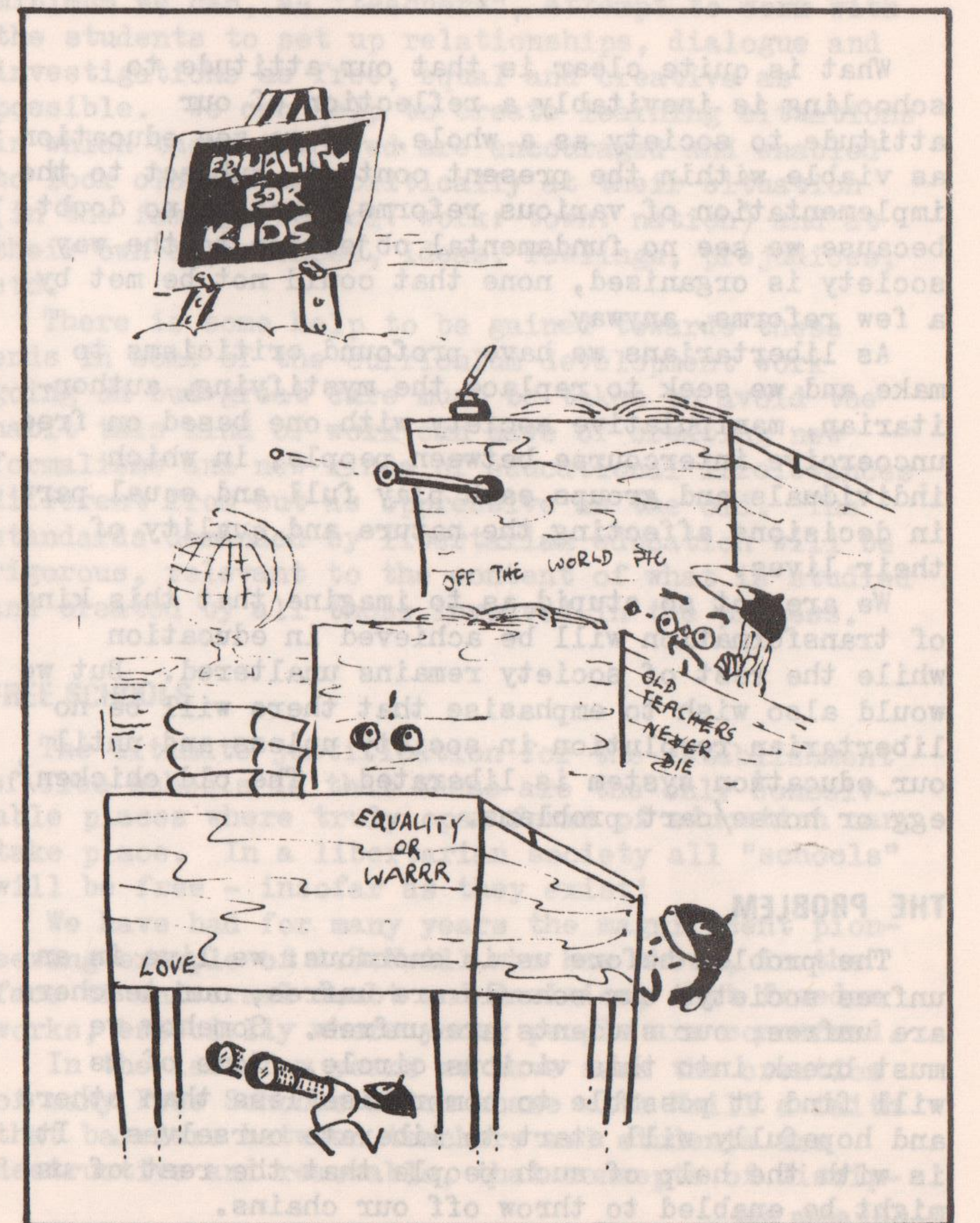
Being a 'progressive' school, Kirkdale sometimes seems to attract more than its fair share of 'mixed-up' kids, although those from very unstable homes often only stay a term or two. For the others, the fact that they are able to express their confusions in ways not normally tolerated, and are given a great deal of love and attention, does truly seem to help them to come to terms with their difficulties, though it is a slow process. Kirkdale has also often played a supportive role to staff or parents who are going through some crises in their lives.

It is so hard to describe 'what its like' at a place like Kirkdale, or to tell people what to expect. Activities vary from day to day or week to week. Sometimes it seems as if nothing but roller-skating is going on - or drama - or tie-dyeing. Sometimes there is a peaceful situation of little groups contentedly 'doing their own thing', sometimes there is a gang of little boys storming through classrooms, throwing mud, being yelled at.... Sometimes you will be ignored, sometimes you will immediately be asked for help, sometimes a gang of little kids will climb all over you and try to pull your trousers off; life at Kirkdale is rarely dull anyway, and one thing that I've never seen there is the sort of apathetic child that the state produces.

JACQUETTA BENJAMIN.

If you want to visit - or teach your favourite subject for no pay - phone Susie Powlesland, 778 0149

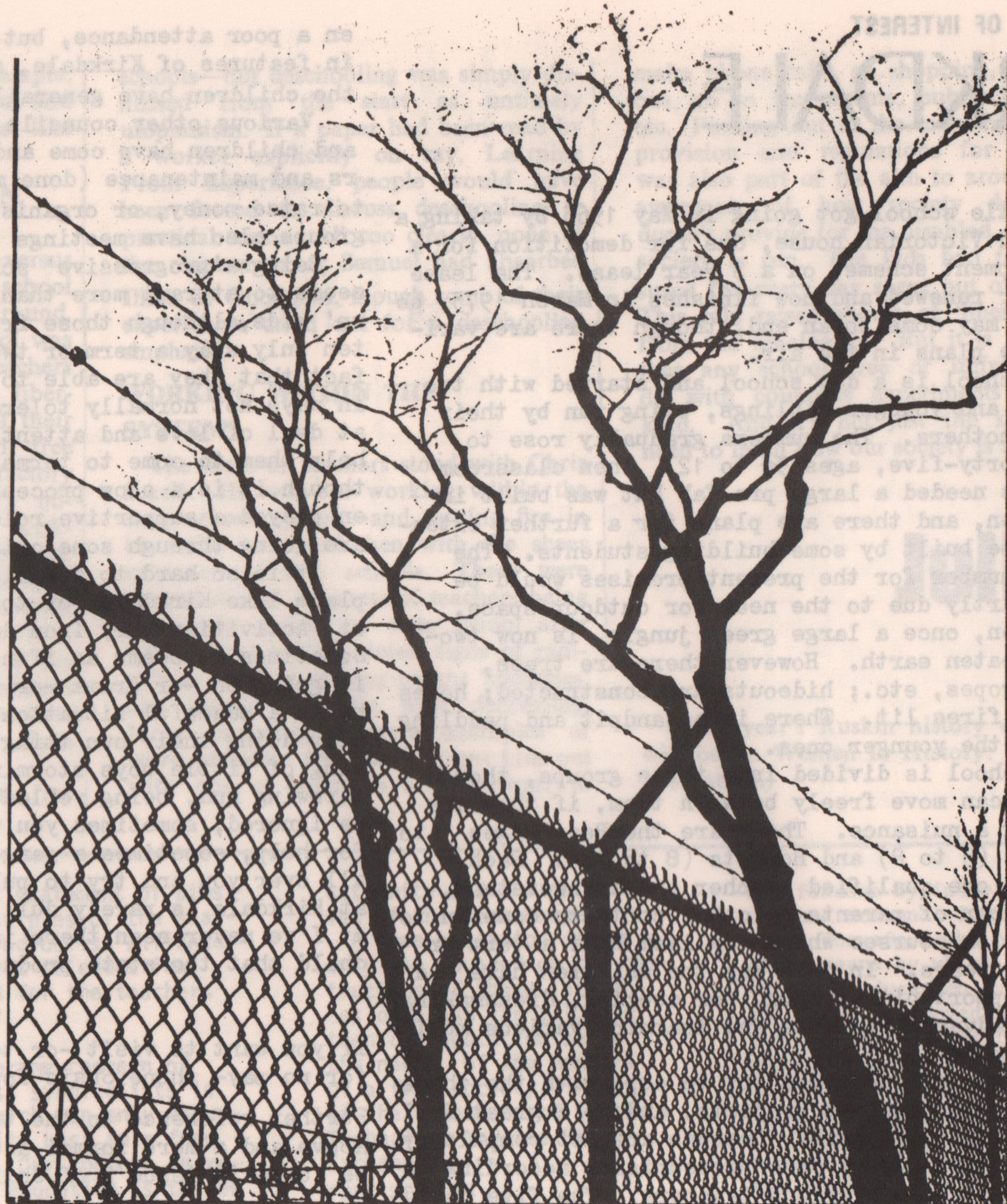
Further reference to the tutorial system mentioned above, and a more formal account of the school, can be found in issue 2 of Childrens Rights magazine.



Free Education



WHAT DO WE WANT?



What is quite clear is that our attitude to schooling is inevitably a reflection of our attitude to society as a whole. If we see education as viable within the present context, subject to the implementation of various reforms, that is no doubt because we see no fundamental objection to the way society is organised, none that could not be met by a few reforms, anyway.

As libertarians we have profound criticisms to make and we seek to replace the mystifying, authoritarian, manipulative society with one based on free uncoercive intercourse between people, in which individuals and groups each play full and equal part in decisions affecting the nature and quality of their lives.

We are not so stupid as to imagine that this kind of transformation will be achieved in education while the rest of society remains unaltered. But we would also wish to emphasise that there will be no libertarian revolution in society unless and until our education system is liberated. The old chicken/egg or horse/cart problems.

THE PROBLEM

The problem before us is enormous: we live in an unfree society; our schools are unfree; our teachers are unfree; our students are unfree. Somehow we must break into this vicious circle. Some of us will find it possible to compromise less than others and hopefully will start to liberate ourselves. It is with the help of such people that the rest of us might be enabled to throw off our chains.

It is important to stress that as anarchists we reject authoritarian concepts of education, however

they might be used. The educator who sees himself as the possessor of superior knowledge or skills which he "passes on" to more or less willing disciples, whether this is in the name of a liberal/democratic outlook or a socialist/revolutionary analysis, is part of an authoritarian, or at best paternalistic, culture. The libertarian will see education as a sharing of knowledge, skills and experiences and will emphasise the importance of study aimed at understanding the participants' place in society and the nature of the forces acting upon them. With the object of helping to equip the participants to counter oppressive aspects of that society.

LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION

The relationship between the libertarian "educator and "student" will be a free, cooperative and increasingly ambiguous relationship based on the mutual investigation of problems (which does not mean the student finding answers to the teachers' questions) The essential element in this relationship is the open, wholehearted, respect which must exist between those involved and especial care must be taken where young children are concerned that their natural trust is not abused, however well-meaningly, by those in the position of teacher. However clever the latter might be the fact remains that he can only help his students to liberate themselves if he finds it possible to enter into a genuine dialogue with them, accepting their ideas and feelings as real and meaningful, however "mistaken", examining and discussing such ideas and feelings rather than "correcting" them.

The anarchist will tend to place considerable

importance on the nature and organisation of education because we cannot leave it to other people to liberate us. We have no faith in the ability of a Vanguard group or party taking over power on our behalf in order then to "educate" us in such a way that we learn to exercise power "responsibly" ourselves. Until we understand and act to liberate ourselves we will remain unfree.

SCHOOLING

A fundamental distortion of the relationships involved in our schools is made by the teacher being put into a position of exercising responsibility over (expressed as responsibility for) his students.

The general effect of schooling is that students are treated as completely stupid and irresponsible beings, to such an extent that they soon learn to act out this role. Thus they are not to be allowed to board or leave busses unsupervised or go into town during 'dinner time' (actions which they are quite capable of performing outside of school hours)

This attitude - regarding students as irresponsible - leads to stringent requirements being made as to the extent of control to be exercised by teachers over their classes and to all manner of restrictions being placed on work done in, and especially outside of, the classroom. All this anxiety tends to be explained away by dark, awesome, references to the vagaries of a mysterious, unknowable, force called shhh.... insurance - you can't be too careful old boy.

Humiliating punishment like lines, detention, canes, and sarcasm/insults are used to help secure conformity, obedience and fear. Uniforms, the prefect system, house points and games are all used in an attempt to get the students to identify with the school and to accept its divisive and destructive values as their own.

The examination system has its own pernicious part to play on the curriculum and values of our schools. It seems quite extraordinary how schools have been prepared to distort "education" to the extent that the highest value is placed on that which is examinable simply in order that our industrial/commercial/business bosses can more easily categorise us and decide, without any more effort, who to reject. This seems even more lunatic when we reflect upon the fact (which most upholders of the system seem to accept) that the examinations taken have little or no relevance to the subsequent work to be undertaken - possession of a million O and A levels is no predictor of success in any job. But - these people are not so stupid - they know that anyone who has sufficient stamina and resistance to tedium, irrelevance and humbug to be able to take in the acres of nonsense required for subsequent regurgitation in the examination room is likely to make a "good" worker/manager/executive, who knows his place and what's good for him.

Attempts to "democratize" our schools suffer from tremendous obstacles, even when the attempts are genuine and determined. One simple factor is that most of our schools are very large for effective direct democracy to be practiced and people are reluctant to allow such concepts the importance they demand so that insufficient time is available for the discussion of ideas. But much more important is the fact that such attempts are almost always phoney as power remains firmly in the hands of the L.E.A./Board of Governors/Head/Staff while the "School Council is allowed to talk about (but not actually decide upon) cloakroom facilities, lunch-time activities, use of notice boards and slight modifications in uniform.

WHAT DO WE DO?

There is a problem to be faced as to just how each of us as individuals, or/and as part of a group or organisation, utilise our energy/enthusiasm/dynamism. It would be senseless not to keep clearly before us at all times our ultimate objectives and to work relentlessly for them, but this realisation does not get us far - we have still to face the vast problem of how to work for such ends - what action will be the most effective. Also we wish to develop an attitude towards reforms of the system - do we reject them because they help to prop-up the system? - do we work for them because it might be possible to improve things, which will be "better than nothing"? - or do we accept reforms at their face value while bearing in mind that they are never enough?

There is also a choice to be made between working within the system as we find it or attempting to set up alternative, libertarian, structures. This latter choice might be made with the intention either of showing examples of what is possible, or of replacing the existing system or simply because it seems a good idea.

WORKING FROM WITHIN

The fundamental argument for working within the State system is that that is where the kids are (the vast majority of them, anyway) and where the most oppressed of them are likely to remain. As libertarians any decision to work from within must be one hell of a compromise: for many of us it is an unthinkable one. Apart from our attitude towards the state (fascist; democratic; socialist; totalitarian; or whatever) we are also opposed to the idea of compulsory schooling. Ideally we seek voluntary and unrestricted access to education, however it might be constituted, throughout life.

What can be done within the system? At the very minimum we can, as "teachers", attempt to work with the students to set up relationships, dialogue and investigations as free, equal and creative as possible. We can help to create learning situations in which those involved are encouraged and enabled to look closely and critically at their situation (in the family: school: work: town: nation) and at their own experiences, ideas, feelings, prejudices, etc.

There is some help to be gained towards these ends in some of the curriculum development work going on but great care must be taken to avoid the habit this kind of work can have of creating new formalisms and new kinds of educational irrelevances, different from but as oppressive as the old. The standards demanded by libertarian education will be rigorous, relevant to the content of what is studied and created by all those involved in the process.

FREE SCHOOLS

The ultimate justification for the establishment of free schools is that these are the only conceivable places where truly open forms of education can take place. In a libertarian society all "schools" will be free - insofar as they exist!

We have had for many years the magnificent pioneering example of A.S.Neill who has shown, in the face of universal doubt and derision, that freedom works, especially where young people are concerned.

In the last few years we have seen the creation of many Free Schools which share with Neill a faith that barriers between teachers and students are destructive and removable, that concepts of discip-

An INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

I taught last year at an international school in Sweden. My contract was for two years, but half-way through the first I was sacked -or to be more exact, it was politely indicated to me that my presence was not desirable, and since, by that time, I had decided to leave anyway, the necessity for actually sacking me was avoided.

The students were of many nationalities, but those I taught, in the 11 to 16 range, were mainly American. Their parents were generally in Sweden on business, or were working in embassies. The staff were a mixed bunch too, although the largest group was British. The school was run by a board of governors composed mainly of businessmen and diplomats; several had children at the school.

In some ways the school was quite an interesting place. The cosmopolitan atmosphere which the students brought into the building enlivened it and made it almost exotic. And most of them were very friendly people with whom it was a pleasure to work, and I have very few regrets about any of the time I spent in the classroom.

Superficially too the school was quite "progressive": no corporal punishment and no school uniform. During a discussion on the latter subject one day, the Americans expressed dismay and amused contempt when they heard what their contemporaries had to suffer in England. The boys were allowed to wear their hair fairly long, but one boy with shoulder-length hair, who refused to get it cut, was told that his refusal would be mentioned in his final school report.

There was even a student council, which aroused great expectations in me, until I learned that this American institution existed in order to arrange dances, and had no other powers at all. This was referred to as 'student self-government'!

The overwhelming majority of the students desired some form of participation in the running of the school, and we created a staff-student council to hear grievances and make suggestions. This liberal gesture, however, even though still in embryonic form when I left, had already created further apathy among the students, because it was only a talking-shop and was therefore 'useless'. So it was: the administration made it quite clear that the council would have no power to decide anything. I feel now that the council had a limited value in training students to confront the staff on an 'equal' basis, but suspect that the administration would not have agreed to its creation had they not been fairly sure that they could control it as they wished. Perhaps their best weapon was simply the passing of time: the departure of a would-be militant year must solve problems in many schools and colleges.

The staff-student council came under fire not only from the students. If they criticised it for its lack of powers, many of the staff objected to its very existence. The subject was argued over during a

staff meeting at which some tempers ran pretty high. The objection was quite a straightforward one: students had no right to discuss rules which their elders had made for them. Some of these teachers even appeared to resent the idea that students might dislike certain rules, and to suggest that they ought to be allowed to voice their dislike in an open meeting was enough to bring them to the verge of apoplexy.

My colleagues were not a very stimulating bunch, although most of them were pleasant enough. But, with few exceptions, they were intellectually shallow, socially conventional, and professionally conservative. Many were timid and deferential towards their employers, and no doubt expected deference from their students; many were simply not interested in education. A writer in a recent 'Rank and File', talking about the so-called 'cultural deprivation' suffered by many working-class children, wondered how many teachers had lately (or ever?) read a serious book. Most of my colleagues probably had not - nor ever would. They were not unlike the sort of people one meets in every staff-room in England.

It was partly because of this that I was already beginning to think about leaving, when the first of the disagreements between the administration and myself developed, which made my departure imperative for both of us. This was about the nature of my teaching of English. As far as possible I prefer my classes to be informal, with frequent discussion, and with the actual content of the lessons worked out between the students and myself as we proceed, with, ideally, more and more initiative coming from the students. This was, in fact, working out well in my opinion, and there was plenty of evidence that most of the students were interested. But my bosses wanted something different. They wanted more formal teaching, and they wanted some teaching of 'grammar! Some of the American parents apparently thought that what went on in my lessons could not be called -in any way-'English'. Their conception of 'English' could be guessed at from the piles of expensive American textbooks which were littering my cupboards, one set for each grade, with their doses of grammar alternating with "creative" work, and with enough "exercises" to keep every class quiet and busy for the whole of every lesson during the year. Such material is the negation of education as I understand it, and although I was prepared to compromise a little, to the extent of using such books for one lesson a week, I could not agree to everything my bosses wanted.

Our other disagreements can be mentioned briefly. Like a running sore throughout the year was the issue, already touched on, of student participation. I wanted more; the governors, administrators and other teachers did not.

Then the Principal discovered that I was talking about sex with one class, and was horrified that I had not sought permission first. I could not see why permission was necessary: if students raised issues or asked questions, then naturally they would be discussed.

What do we want? (from page 17)

line and punishment are pernicious and that education can be creative and life-enhancing, despite all the evidence to the contrary.

Where the new Free Schools differ is that they are also financially free (to those attending) and tend to be firmly rooted in a neighbourhood so that poor, working class, children have access to their liberating influence.

Arthur Humphrey

And then there was the case of the student newspaper, a fortnightly affair which originated at my suggestion, and for which I regularly wrote an article in order to help the editors fill their columns. It seemed that my comments were too critical, and I was to stop writing them or the paper would be forbidden. I stopped, reluctantly, believing the paper to be more important than my own feelings.

Obviously this school was not entirely devoid of interest. But beneath the facade of progressive liberalism ran the rigid girders of authority and discipline. This set-up was acquiesced in or actually supported by the majority of teachers and parents, because, basically, their conceptions of "school" and "education" went no further: what had always been in the past would prevail in the future.

Two special memories of the place that I treasure, however, suggest that they may be wrong. On the penultimate day of the school year the senior students and some of the staff went for a picnic. I met a group of my own students, as we had previously arranged, and in a quiet place, in the warm sunshine, smoked with them a pipe of hash that we passed around like Indians making peace.

The next day, in a final meeting of the whole school, I was applauded and cheered by the students in a spontaneous demonstration that took me quite by surprise. Frankly delighted, I then boycotted the staff lunch which followed, kissed two weepy Israeli girls good-bye and went home to pack.

John Booth

LETTERS :

from a letter from Miriam Wasserman, San Francisco.

Thanks so much for Libertarian Teacher. It's really good -and good to know that there are people half way across the world working as we are.

The extract from a letter to a child psychologist especially touched me. In many respects. Here, too, they are trying to use psychologists (manipulativeness) to replace cop-teachers (brute oppressiveness). It is very insidious. I especially liked the insight in respect to the child as weak being taught history as the triumph of the strong. The point needs to be emphasized for those of us here who are trying to develop ethnic (e.g, black, chicano etc.) and womens history, where people have the tendency to repeat their view of history, but only throw in a few of our (black, womens, etc) names. Instead of conveying the point that it is the oppressed who, surviving their oppression, have been truly the strong.

From; Graham Carey: Lecturer, Bingley College of Education.

Readers of L.T.8 might like to know of another Irish school which is trying to survive local re-organisation by the education authorities.

This writer has no first-hand knowledge of this, but obtained the following information whilst on holiday in the Dingle peninsula.

Apparently Dunquin -the most westerly parish in Europe -near Dingle, was to have its village school closed, making it necessary for the children to attend Ballyferriter school about six miles away.

The important thing here is that Dunquin is the main village of a Gaeltacht -one of the last remnants of pure Irish/Gaelic speaking life. The daily life of the school was conducted in Irish whereas as Ballyferriter, English was spoken. To send the Dunquin children away to the next village meant a death-blow to the native culture of that area, which incidentally had produced at least three great works on the old Irish way of life: Peig Sayers "An Old Woman Remembers" "Twenty Years A-Growing" by O'Sullivan, and, most of all, the timeless account of life on the great Blasket Island by Tomas O Crohan: "The Islandman".

The wife of Conor Cruise O'Brien has done some teaching at Dunquin in order to keep the school open, but most help has come from eager Irish nationalists from Dublin who believe it vital to keep the school open. This was the state of affairs in July 1972, what has happened since then I don't know.

