

LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION 16



12p

help!

If Libertarian Education magazine is to continue as a forum for Anarchist/Libertarian ideas and practice then it is essential that we encourage other people to get involved in the writing, production and distribution of it. At the moment a small group in Leicester puts the paper together and, quite frankly, there is a real risk of us running out of ideas and/or energy unless we do manage to get some help.

We have regularly offered other individuals and/or groups the opportunity of getting involved but we must admit that this is not a simple matter.

What we are suggesting now is that we publish definite dates (week-ends) on which we will work on the magazine - this should give anyone who can help (writing - suggestions - typing - laying out - lettrasetting - etc.) the chance to do so without feeling that they are lumbered with the formidable task of getting out an issue on their own.

It seems to us that, while we do not manage to do all we could, or as well as we could, there is a clear need for a regular publication to put the kind of ideas we have across. We are particularly concerned about the kind of authoritarian backlash that could so easily develop - look at what has happened to people like Bob Mackenzie and Manny Merino recently and at the high-powered political influence being brought to bear against Countesthorpe College. Look also at such alarmist publicity as the recent articles in the Guardian by one Janet Watts ('Sir - you Bastard') with its advocacy of more authoritarian discipline, national curricula, etc.

If you feel that you could help in any way - or if you just want to come to meet us and see what is involved - we will put the following week-ends

aside to produce Libertarian Education 17. No decision has been made as to what could be included in this issue - we have one or two submitted articles for consideration but that is all - so please come if you possibly can (no need for you to feel committed to coming both weeks or to stay for the whole week-end, but we have plenty of bed and/or floor space to offer).

LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION No. 17

Saturday 16th November & Sunday 17th November 1974
(Plan magazine - writing - some typing)

Saturday 30th November & Sunday 1st December 1974
(Typing - Lay-out - Pasting up)

If you can come you can contact us at:

180 MELBOURNE ROAD, LEICESTER

Tel. 0533 - 50272

can't come?

If you can't manage to come to any of the week-ends we still need plenty of support. We always need more original articles - if you are doing any research or know of any being done that could be usefully publicised let us know - write about your own experiences and ideas.

What about selling the paper - a bit of a drag but essential - can you take bulk orders on a sale-or-return basis? - could you contact local bookshops &/or newsagents and offer to let them have copies on similar terms (perhaps you could act as a local distribution centre for such sales as Alan Ross does in Cambridge).

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TOLSTOY'S Experiments With Education

It is not widely known that Tolstoy, amongst his many other activities, was also extremely interested in education and that his ideas in many ways anticipate those of many modern advocates of progressive, child centred education such as A.S. Neill. His ideas in this sphere are by no means comprehensive or systematic because he was essentially antitheoretical and preferred to develop them in practice and experimentation. He first opened a school at Yasnaya Polyana in 1848 but closed it shortly afterwards when he went to stay in the Caucasus. Later, in the 1860's he not only reopened the school at Yasnaya Polyana but also 14 others throughout the district.

Tolstoy had studied the educational system both in Russia and in other countries during his travels abroad. He discovered that the student, the most important factor in education, was always the forgotten factor. This came about because of preconceived theories and their arbitrary imposition on the people without examining the people's needs or the suitability of the theories to those needs. Tolstoy, on the other hand, saw education as having no ultimate aim such as being a means towards social adjustment, or adequate employment or leadership on society. He stated, in his essay 'On Popular Education', that the sole educational method must be experience freed from preconceived ideas, and that the only guide must be liberty because without it no experiment of any value can be accomplished.

The schools therefore were founded on total freedom - both of the teacher in relation to the pupils and of the pupils in relation to the teacher. Only those who wanted to learn came and nobody forced them to work if they didn't wish to. The pupils neither had to memorise at home nor prepare written work - all they brought to the lessons were themselves and their desire to learn. The teachers were also free to teach whatever they wished for however long they wanted to. Their moral authority and the interest they could inspire in the pupils (mainly the sons and daughters of the peasants) was the only acceptable basis for discipline.

In January 1864 he started a monthly review called Yasnaya Polyana to propagate his ideas. Its epigraph was Goethe's aphorism, "You think you're leading and it's you being led". The review was mildly received throughout Russia but caused a considerable stir in official circles. In October 1864 the Minister of the Interior asked the Minister of Education to look into the dangerous ideas being advocated. The Minister of Education despatched a minion to look into the school who returned a very detailed and favourable report "To establish a simple, easy and independent relationship between master and pupil, cultivate mutual affection and trust; free lessons from constraint and learning by rote; transform the school into a kind of family in which the teacher

acts as a parent: what could be better, more desirable and more profitable for all?" This report was sent to the Minister of the Interior with the following comment: "I am bound to say that Count Tolstoy's educational activities command our respect and that it is the duty of the Ministry of Education to help and encourage him, although it does not share all his ideas....." The Minister of the Interior was not impressed, however, and ordered the closure of the magazine after only twelve issues.

The following is an extract from "The School at Yasnaya Polyana" and is taken from 'Tolstoy on Education', translated by Leo Wiener (published by the University of Chicago Press, 1967). This book is well worth reading particularly the introduction by Reginald Archambault.

Dr. R.V. Sampson

The School at YASNAYA POLYANA

The school has evolved freely from the principles introduced into it by teacher and pupils. In spite of the preponderating influence of the teacher the pupil has always had the right not to come to school or, having come, not to listen to the teacher. The teacher has had the right not to admit a pupil, and has had the possibility of bringing to bear all the force of his influence on the majority of pupils, on the society, always composed of the school children.

The farther the pupils proceed, the more the instruction branches out and the more necessary does order become. For this reason, in the normal non-compulsory development of the school, the more the pupils become educated, the fitter they become for order, and the more strongly they themselves feel the need of order, and the greater is the teacher's influence in this respect. In the Yasnaya Polyana school this rule has always been observed, from the day of its foundation. At first, it was impossible to subdivide into classes, or subjects, or recess, or lessons; everything naturally blended into one and all attempt at separation remained futile. Now we have pupils in the first class who themselves demand that the programme be adhered to, who are dissatisfied when they are disturbed in their lessons and who constantly drive out the little children who run in to them.

In my opinion this external disorder is useful and not to be replaced by anything else, however strange and inconvenient it may seem for the teacher. I shall often have occasion to speak of the advantages of this system and now I will say only this much about the reputed inconveniences: First this disorder, or free order, is terrible to us only because we are accustomed to something quite different, in which we have been educated. Secondly - in this case, as in many similar cases, force is used only through haste and through insufficient respect for human nature. We think

that the disorder is growing greater and greater and that there are no limits to it - we think that there is no other means of stopping it but by the use of force - whereas we only need to wait a little and the disorder (or animation) calms down naturally by itself, growing into a much better and more permanent order than what we have created.

School children, small men though they be, have the same needs as we and they reason in the same manner; they all want to learn, coming to school for this only, and so they will naturally arrive at the conclusion that they must submit to certain conditions in order to acquire knowledge.

They are more than merely men, they are a company of men, united by one idea. And where three are gathered in My name, there will I be with them! When they submit to natural laws, such as arise from their natures, they do not feel provoked and do not murmur; but when they submit to your predetermined interference, they do not believe in the legality of your bells, programmes and regulations.

How often have I seen children fighting, when the teacher would rush up to take them apart, which would only make the separated enemies look awry at each other and would not keep them, even in the presence of a stern teacher, from rushing later against each other in order to inflict a more painful kick! How often do I see every day some Kiryushka, with set teeth, fly at Taraska, pull his hair, knock him down and, if it costs him his life, try to maim his enemy - and not a minute passes before Taraska laughs underneath Kiryushka - it is so much easier personally to square up accounts; in less than five minutes both become friends and sit down near each other.

The other day, between classes, two boys got into a hand-to-hand fight in the corner; one of them is a remarkable mathematician, about nine years of age, of the second class; the other, a close-cropped manorial servant's son, an intelligent but revengeful, tiny, black-eyed boy, nicknamed Pussy. Pussy had grabbed the mathematician by his hair and jammed his head against the wall; the mathematician in vain tried to get hold of Pussy's cropped bristles. Pussy's black little eyes were triumphant. The mathematician with difficulty restrained his tears and kept saying: "Well, well! What? What?". He was evidently badly off, though he tried to brace himself.

This lasted quite a while and I was in a quandary what to do. "They are fighting - they are fighting!", cried the boys, crowding in the corner. The little boys laughed, while the big ones, without taking them apart, exchanged serious looks which, together with the silence, did not escape Pussy. He saw that he was doing something bad, and began to smile criminally and to let go of the mathematician's hair by degrees.

The mathematician got away from Pussy, pushed him so that he fell with the back of his head against the wall and walked away satisfied. Pussy burst out weeping, made for his enemy and struck him with all his might, though not painfully, on his fur coat. The mathematician wanted to pay him back, but just then several disapproving voices were heard.

"Look at this - he is fighting a little fellow!" cried the spectators. "Run Pussy!"

This was the end of the matter and it was as though it had never happened except, I suppose, that the dim consciousness of both fighting is not a pleasant matter, because it causes both pain.

It seems to me I observed here the sentiment of justice, which guides a crowd. How often such

"Education is a compulsory forcible action of one person upon another for the purpose of forming a man such as will appear (to society) to be good ... Education is the tendency toward moral despotism raised to a principle ... I am convinced that the educator undertakes with such zeal the education of the child because at the base of this tendency lies his envy of the child's purity, and his desire to make him like himself, that is, to spoil him."

Leo Tolstoy,
from *Tolstoy on Education*, translated
Leo Weiner (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967)

matters are settled no one knows on the basis of what law, and yet satisfactorily to both sides. How arbitrary and unjust in comparison with it are all educational methods employed in such cases!

"You are both guilty, get down on your knees!" says the educator and the educator is wrong because only one of them is guilty, and that guilty one is now triumphant as he is kneeling and ruminating his unspent rage, while the innocent boy is doubly punished.

Or, "You are guilty of having done this or that and you will be punished," says the educator and the punished boy hates his enemy so much the more because the despotic power, the legality of which he does not acknowledge, is on his enemy's side.

Or, "Forgive him, as God orders you to and be better than he", says the educator. You tell him to be better than he and he only wants to be stronger. He does not, and cannot, understand anything better.

Or, "Both of you are wrong - ask each other's forgiveness and kiss each other, children!" That is worst of all on account of the lie and the flimsiness of that kiss and because the feeling which was being allayed only flames out anew.

Leave them alone, if you are not a father or mother and simply sorry for your child (and, therefore, always right when you pull away by the hair the one who has given your son a beating) - leave them alone and see how simply and naturally the whole matter will settle itself and, at the same time, in what a complicated and varied manner, like all unconscious vital relations.

It may be that teachers who have had no experience in such disorder, or free order, will think that without the teacher's interference such a disorder may have physically injurious results, and so forth. In the Yasnaya Polyana school there have been only two cases of injuries since last spring. One boy was pushed down the porch and he skinned his leg to the bone (the wound healed up in two weeks) and they scorched another boy's cheek with burned rubber, from which he had a mark left for about two weeks. It happens not oftener than once a week that somebody cries, and then not from pain but from anger or shame. With the exception of these two cases we cannot recall any bruises or bumps for the whole summer among thirty to forty pupils left entirely to themselves.

I am convinced that the school ought not to interfere in that part of the education which belongs to the family; that the school has no right and ought not to reward and punish; that the best police and administration of a school consist in giving full liberty to the pupils to study and settle their disputes as they know best.

Leo Tolstoy

DO IT — NOW

I work in a largish College of Education: large enough to be able to carry on subversive activities out of the full glare of the limelight, small enough to be aware of reactionary pressure quite acutely. What follows is an indication of the sort of thinking I've been doing, and of the sort of action I have found possible so far.

I take as my starting point Freire's definition of education as being the critical awareness of one's own reality, and attaining the power to act upon it. I needed, therefore, to reflect upon my own reality, before considering the wider situation of working with others. My reality is that I work in an academic, examination-centred and theoretically-oriented set-up, with the concomitant pyramidal, authoritarian, hierarchical organization that goes with this. The pressures on everyone to conform in such an institution are tremendous. Within all of us is a child who is in awe of authority, who wants to be loved by authority. Side by side with this, in me there exists an adult (20 years of teaching, 15 years a parent) who wants to be respected and to be loved. At a deep level, therefore, I find myself at the centre of a powerful press. On one side there is the life I have lived. On the other there are the expectations of the College, and of many of the students, that I shall be an, in, and under authority. I need to keep this picture in the forefront of my mind if I am to be able to resist the open and insidious pressures of the institution on me to conform, and if I am to be able to work with others to resist such pressures.

There is a book by Jerry Farbin called 'DO IT' and this is a good sort of slogan to have. I need to have the spontaneity that a child exhibits in an adventure playground when I'm in a position to act. Once an action has been made, it is there for ever. It can never be entirely undone. It will be a never replaceable chip out of the foundations of the repressive institution, an act gratuit, unforeseeable and unrepeatable, something from the outside the system, for ever a piece of grit in the well-oiled machine.

And what of my academic colleagues - what is their present reality? Tight, defensive, and upholders (innovators - tolerators) of the system. With some exceptions, there is little camaraderie, no sense of sharing, little real friendliness. A new member of staff, seeing my hair and roll-necked shirt (student?), hearing my friendly 'Hi' (equal?), suffers a severe case of cognitive dissonance and shuffles

past, eyes averted. Fair enough. What distresses me about almost all of them is the fact that they pay very convincing lip service (that's their job after-all) to learner-centred education, and in the next breath, treat their (the implications of the word 'their' bear examination) students as skyving, malingering, completely untrustworthy, shiftless inferiors. Except, that is, those students who most nearly approach themselves and their own ideals, ideas and way of thinking - these they fiercely mould into frightened facsimiles, scarcely able to express an honest, original opinion. I've seen lively, openminded eighteen year olds transformed in the space of three years into passive sponges, able only to regurgitate to order. These are future teachers. I listen to (and have certainly delivered) block lectures that are so far removed from the present reality of any of the listeners as to be meaningless and completely counter-productive to their presumed aim. (Perhaps that is a point in their favour: if all were like that, perhaps the students would begin to act on their reality in other ways than falling asleep, writing letters, or just sitting glassy-eyed.)

The lecturers, in short, are just ordinary folk, drifting unthinkingly - but with such power - along well-worn and comfortable tramlines towards retirement, or Prime Minister Kitson, or 1984 or (who knows) an English 1968.

What is the reality of my colleague-students (Freire's students-teachers)? Present reality is a product of the past, of future hopes and fears and of present circumstances. Their past has much that is common to all: tight, tense, pressure-cooker intensive family; hierarchical, head-teacher-centered schools: all culminating in society's idea of success, and the aim of the State - enough O and A levels to seduce them into slotting into positions that will ensure their continuing the life-denying, potential-killing, consumer-orientated, competition-based, inequality-maintaining system.

That is in all probability their future. Some kick the system, some are kicked by the system, but the majority end up as part of the system. The socialisation pressures are too great and too pervasive to avoid, unless, that is, something occurs to increase their awareness of present reality in the context of past and future to a great enough extent for action to be seen to be both desirable and possible as a means for taking control of that reality. Few, if any, have been educated: instead they have been schooled like circus horses. This is their reality: for them there is no other way of living or of learning. The system demands, and has always demanded, a tight control of the learning process.



This can be seen even in the Infant school, where even the most 'accepting' of teachers can be heard to be subtly channelling children's responses through their own intonations until they are acceptable. The process, even at that tender age, is one of search by children for the answer teacher wants.

Their responses are tentative rather than expressive of themselves. They soon become expressive of the teacher's own beliefs. This subtle, largely unrecognised process gives way much more as children grow older, to an explicit control of children's and student's responses as these become more and more oriented to the demands of the State as mediated through examination requirements and their dependent curricula. Our 'education' system is far from learner-centred (except at the most superficial level of classroom organisation).

It can never be, in a situation in which the teachers are, for all intents and purposes, a priestly caste, and in which they are led to see themselves as channels for revealed truth from the apex of the pyramid, rather than as sharers in discovered truth in a horizontally-organised community in which learners of any age are as worthy of respect as anyone.

The dilemma is plain for those few of us in Colleges of Education. Should we opt out of the system, form free schools, for example, and hope to convert by example? Or should we remain in the system (and thereby help to confirm it) in order to subvert it, believing that the potential for subversion is perhaps greater in the College of Education (Training Colleges - a rose by a more appropriate name) because it is future teachers who are being exposed to change? If the latter, what to do?

FIRST, LAST AND AT ALL POINTS BETWEEN, THERE MUST BE an avoidance of verbalism. To talk about alternatives is merely to carry on in the old ways with moderately new ideas. There must be a change in life-style. The alternative must be a lived, an experienced one: the words, the concepts that help us to think about the alternative and its implications must emerge - can only emerge - from our concrete experience. Almost all that is needed is to do it! Anything that breaks with the existing system. But anything.

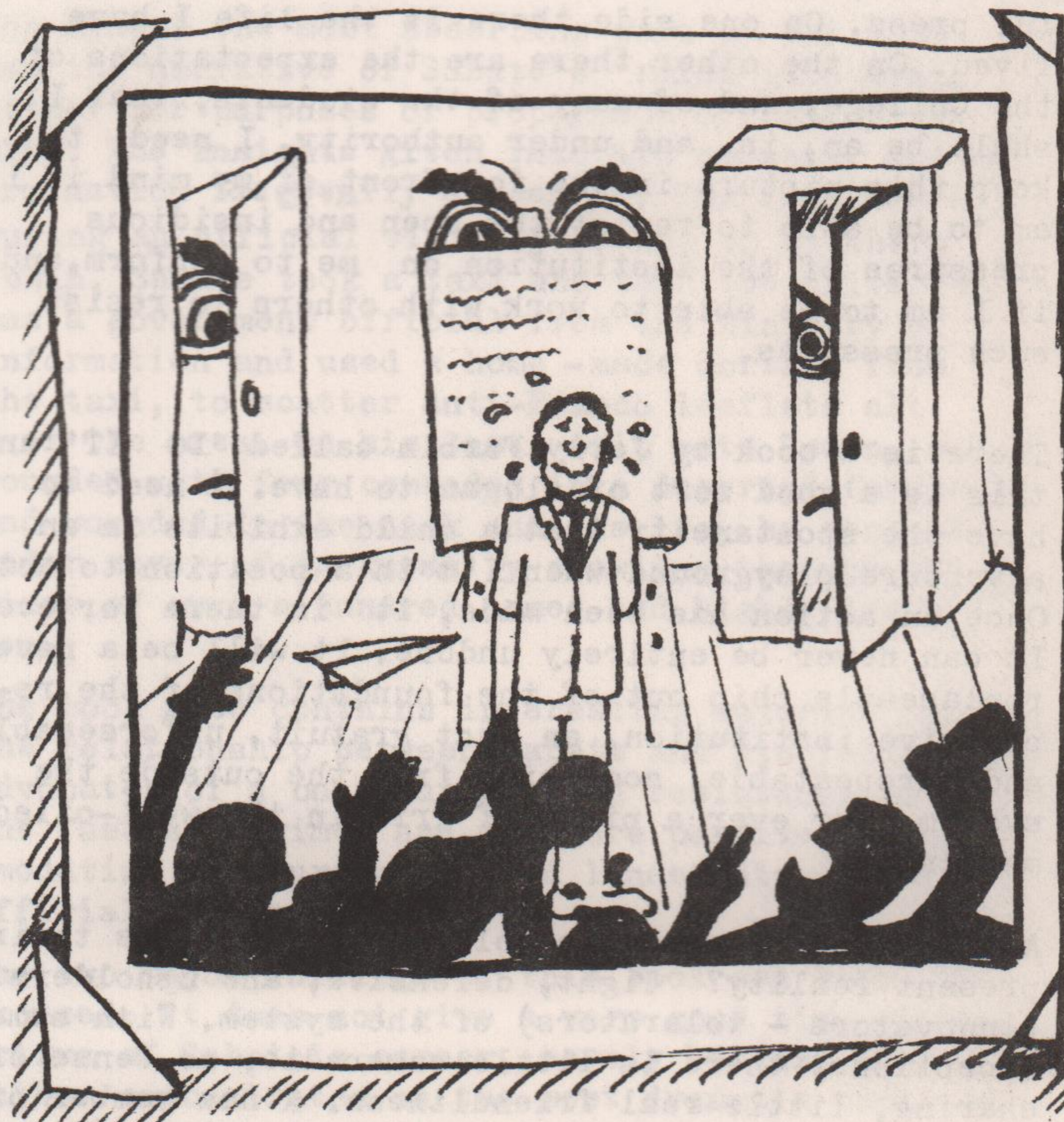
We don't have to take over the Academic Board, wave banners, scrawl slogans on the walls. Besides being the quickest way of alerting the Establishment to the woodworm in the panelling. It's also in my opinion where most movements towards liberation go wrong: there's the intense desire to seize power, from which all things good as well as bad are presumed to flow. But power per se is bad: it's WHAT I AM FIGHTING. Not all my friends agree, but my view is that what we should be doing is setting up a viable alternative to power and all its works. (Paulo Freire is especially good on this aspect of revolutionary failure.) What is to be done is to start, as we have, to live the alternative. No one can see into the future - the present is all we have - and if that is right, the future can be left to take care of itself. So, I refuse to be an authority, refuse to be in authority, refuse to have authority ascribed to me. (By anyone, not least my at first bewildered student-colleagues.) I give up grading essays, gave up setting essays, refused to grade exams. The value of essays and exams is already in serious question across a wide spectrum

of opinion: they are instruments of control, and not of education or even of effective learning except in the most limited sense of the word.

We cannot expect to change the world overnight (though change of all kinds will come quicker than expected). I have to take my learner colleague-teachers where they see themselves, as they are beginning to take me. For example, if they feel the need (personal or tactical) to write essays, I use them for what they should be: avenues of communication, not a means of apple-sorting. If they want to sit their finals, I use the internal exams as a means of improving their techniques. If they, in other words, at this time, need the system, I try to help them to beat it. Perhaps, then they will see the need for getting out from under - and the possibility of doing so. This is our present reality: we help each other to become aware of it, and help ourselves towards acquiring the power of altering it. This cannot be done by mouthing slogans, nor even by the most exquisite reasoning: it may only be done through living the alternative together, experiencing it together, and learning about it together. Within a term it was possible to set up a limited Information Switchboard, to be sharing (yes, sharing) past essays, to be talking about instituting essay-writing syndicates for externally-imposed essays, to be covering the course requirements (as far as they were seen to be relevant) cooperatively rather than competitively, and, above all, spreading the word quietly throughout the wider college community (if community is the right word).

The crunch will come. The woodworm will not for ever be confined to the panelling. But that is to talk of the future: it is enough for us for the present to have begun together to do things right.

michael PAGE



my teaching practice
(or why I'm writing to you)

CLASS WAR

This article, which first appeared in MOLE EXPRESS, takes up the the story of the 1911 Schools strikes as they manifested themselves in parts of Manchester. We would be interested to hear from anybody else who has researched these incidents in their locality.



The 1911 Schools strikes involved thousands, from Aberdeen to Portsmouth and from Hull to Bray, Co. Wicklow (now in Eire). It affected every industrial town (so far as can be judged) in Britain and as a demonstration of militant action among working-class school pupils has never since been equalled.

Official history ignored it, forgot it; Dave Marson who wrote the History Workshop pamphlet only came across newspaper references to the "Schoolboys' Strike" by accident while researching into something else.

1911 was a hard year if you were a worker. The average wage was 35/- a week. 30% of the population of York for example were living below the physical subsistence poverty line. It had been a long, hot summer, one of the hottest on record, and there had been long, bitter strikes - Seamen, dockers, in August the railwaymen, and many other industries.

Only weeks before the school strike started in Llanelli on September 5th, two workers had been shot dead by strike-breaking troops there.

In the same week as the school strikes, tin-plate workers struck in Llanelli, there were strikes among shipbuilders in Glasgow, French-polishers in Liverpool, miners in St. Helens; even a strike by a troop of Boy Scouts in Altrincham against victimisation of their assistant Scoutmaster. The "Evening News" condemned the action of the Army in "pouring" troops into Manchester because of rumours of rail strikes without waiting for the City Fathers to ask for military assistance! That was their editorial on the day they first reported school strikes.

On Thursday, September 7th the strike started at St. Mark's School, Holland Street, Ancoats, over the punishment of a boy for some alleged 'minor offence'. Immediately mass pickets, some wearing cards marked 'picket' went to other local schools to bring them out; Holland Street Municipal School and Corpus Christi, Varley Street are both mentioned.

It seems, although the local press of the day was unclear on the point, that they had some success. Pupils attempting to break the picket

were denounced as 'scabs' and 'blacklegs', stones and bricks were thrown at school windows. The caretaker at one school was frightened enough to disperse the picket by turning a fire-hose on it.

Although these particular schools, according to the local papers, were back at work by Monday (the 11th) the word must have got about like greased lightning over Saturday and Sunday. For on that day unrest - varying from school to school but in some cases all out strikes - touched Armitage St. school (Ardwick), St. Michaels, St. Pauls, St. Peters, St. Anns (all Ancoats), St. Margarets, Queen Street (Bradford), St. Marys (Beswick), St. Anns Catholic school, Every Street, St. Judes, St. Albans (Oldham Road), St. Patricks, St. Thomas, St. Katherines (all Cheetham), Derby Street Jews school, Cheetham. There may indeed have been others which went unreported by the unsympathetic local papers.

The papers describe columns of boys (only in Scotland were girls active in the school strikes), usually led by 'official pickets' with identifying cards in cap or jacket, going from school, sometimes armed with sticks, stones or bricks, prepared on occasion to physically stop 'blackleg' pupils from entering, as happened at St. Chads, Cheetham. At several schools police were called out to stop bricks being thrown through school windows.

Next day the strike spread out even further; St. Josephs R.C. School, Houldsworth School (Reddish), Gransmoor Road (Fairfield), Manchester Road Commercial School (Droylsden), "more than one" school in Salford including St. Josephs, West Craven Street, St. Clements, West Park Street and St Lukes, Eccles New Road, The Chapel Street, Alma Park and St. Andrews schools (Levenshulme), "six or seven" schools in Ashton-under-Lyne, "several schools" in Stockport and at least four schools in Oldham.

The Reddish schools were brought out by "flying pickets" from Ancoats who at one point came across a van in charge of a "half-timer"; when this lad refused to join the strike the van was overturned before the strikers were "driven off" by tradesmen. In Ashton the pickets were reported as "carrying heavy sticks" and police, including plain-clothes police, were put on duty at some schools.

By the Wednesday (Sept. 13th) however, the strikes in Manchester were more or less over although the wave of school strikes continued elsewhere almost to the end of the month. Few had lasted more than a day and with one possible exception none had achieved their stated demands.

The demands varied from school to school but were usually similar to those reported in the Manchester Evening Chronicle for Sept. 11th. They were presented by a "boy of twelve" at the Queen Street School, Bradford and were:

1. Half a day extra holiday a week
2. One penny a week for monitors pay
3. No cane



Salford pupils differed mainly on the amount of payment for monitors' duties; they suggested 2d a week; Levenshulme added "No French, no Algebra" - the only time in the Manchester strikes (as far as we know) that course content was criticised. Wednesday was universally suggested for the half-day. In Ashton the pupils own suggested school hours were: 9 - 11 a.m.; 1.30 - 3.30 p.m.

Sixty-three years on and most of these demands are still to be met.

An exception was the "Derby Street Jews School", Cheetham (this school still exists in new premises) There the demands were specifically religious; the school should close at noon on Friday instead of 2 p.m. in order that the boys could have more time to wash and change before the start of the Jewish Sabbath at 3 p.m.; also to end the practice of school on Sunday mornings. The strike lasted longer than any other in Manchester, was well organised and had some backing from parents.

The papers agreed that there was "some reasonableness" in these demands and the matters might be "discussed with advantage" by the authorities.

Everywhere else the Press treated the strikes as a huge joke, and split its collective sides poking fun at the "revolutionists" - or as one paper put it, "youthful disciples of Tom Mann and Ben Tillett" - while gloating over the punishments likely to be dished out by parents and teachers.

The Press in fact took exactly the same line as it did 60 years later towards the SAU strikes and demonstrations in London. True to form, 'Miscellany' in the Guardian (Sept. 14th) dismissed the local strikes as "a monkey trick" while praising as "serious" a strike which had taken place 2,000 miles away and five years previously!

One interesting point in the press coverage of the strikes was the papers' readiness to proclaim headlines saying the strikes were at an end, while references to the schools where strikes were starting were left insignificantly down at the end of the reports.

Most of the strikers in Manchester were boys aged between 10 and 14 although much younger activists were mentioned in other places, including 6-8 year olds in London; one striker at Risinghill School was reportedly only three! Nearly all came from what Manchester papers carefully called the "industrial" areas of the city. That is to say, the depressed working-class districts. None of the toffee-nosed schools were affected.

It would be probable, therefore, that the fathers or older brothers of many of the strikers or their friends would have been on strike during the summer; Salford during June and July had been a centre of street battles between strikers and police with the army in readiness; as reported in Mole Express 36, strikers out in sympathy with the seamen had included 3,000 dockers, 1,200 Pendleton miners, railwaymen, casters and other trades.

"This bridge will be blown up at one o'clock today".... chalked on the parapet of Windsor Bridge, Salford by school strikers.

The papers were in no doubt that the strike collapsed because the "strikers" received no support from their parents who were "unanimously on the side of authority". There would have been good reasons for this; many families were still dangerously near starvation level after the bitter actions of the summer, and could not afford to be penalised for "truancy"; the government school grant was based on average attendance and any reduction from a strike would mean an increase in

rates; and as Dave Marson said in his pamphlet, many families still coveted the medals awarded for perfect school attendance over a period of years.

Even so, there are many instances of mothers supporting the strikers - in Salford (Evening Chronicle, Sept. 12th) where they sympathised, probably for practical reasons, with a demand to "leave school at 13", and in Ashton teachers complained that "some women were encouraging the boys" and threatening violence against any teacher who caned a striker (Guardian, Sept. 13th).

The strikers everywhere including Manchester used "flying pickets" and "rolling columns" to spread the word from the schools where strikes started to other schools. One headmaster in Salford actually used that expression: claiming that his school had not been 'out' he said that "any unrest was caused by the flying visits of the pickets from elsewhere" (Manchester Evening Chronicle, Sept. 13th).

Mass pickets where possible were used - as mentioned above, at least one school was closed down by their action. In some places "it was noticeable that the strikers were careful not to make one lad more conspicuous than another" (Evening News, Sept. 11th). A precaution against victimisation.

MR. JUSTICE SCHOOLBOY.



CARTOON FROM THE 'MANCHESTER EVENING NEWS'.

The strikers weren't too popular with the press...

And Today...

School strikes have occurred more recently. On March 26th, 1968, for example, 200 'S' stream students at Miles Platting Secondary School struck in protest against conditions in the school such as the use of the 'tawse', the removal of toilet doors because of alleged vandalism, the sacking of a popular teacher, and the suspicion that some pupils were being paid to inform on others.

The students sent deputations to the Education Authority and the Press, while a majority remained in the school yard singing 'We shall overcome' until a worried headmaster agreed to the reinstatement of the shithouse doors, the immediate cause of the revolt. Violence against the pupils, both 'authorised' strappings and 'unauthorised' clouts round the head, decreased for a while afterwards, although vengeance was taken against two teachers believed by the head to have stirred up the strike and who were rapidly given the sack.

The same school had another 'strike' the following year, again in response to a decision by the headmaster; again the students immediately contacted Press and LEA.

One interesting point about this school is the fact that older local people still sometimes call it the 'Holland Street School', maybe it is indeed the very same place where in 1911 the strike started, where the students are still being oppressed by a system not that different from the regime of 63 years ago.

Out of the 1968 strike came the first Schools' Union in Manchester, the awkwardly named "Manchester Union of Secondary School Students" (M.U.S.S.S.) which never really took off except in the middle-class grammar and direct-grant schools unaffected by the actions of 1911, places where maybe the students in 1968 felt more closely identified with the University actions of that year.

The MUSSS was never strong enough to take action in a school dispute and was eventually replaced by the equally ill-fated Schools Action Union and in 1972 by the NUS-sponsored "National Union of School Students". Strikes continued to happen, usually brief and isolated such as the one at Levenshulme High in 1971 involving about 100 senior pupils over, of all things, staff censorship of a joke in a Christmas Revue presented by the pupils!

And action by individual students over the years shows how popular is the Education System. In 1911 strikers attacked schools with bricks; in 1971 several schools in the Ashton-Droylsden area burned down in suspicious circumstances; recently a report in the Manchester Evening News expressed concern at the number of outbreaks of arson in schools.....

The N.U.S.S. succeeded in Manchester - to the limited extent it has so far - because of the 1972 Parrs Wood incident where the headmaster, Mr. Iball, attempted to disperse a peaceful N.U.S.S. meeting - thus provoking a militant demonstration - and subsequently suspended three members of a deputation who had attempted to negotiate with him. The actions and statements of Iball, a right-winger whose outbursts against the N.U.S.S. as a "communist-backed anarchist conspiracy" surprised nobody who had heard him in action at NUT conferences, probably did more than anything else to gain recruits for the N.U.S.S. at the school.

But although opposition to 'school' is as strong as ever, it is strange that, while in 1911 working-class kids struck and were incredibly militant and the middle-class schools (like the universities) remained - presumably - quiet, loyal, and obedient, today's school-Unionism is largely popular among middle-class school students (again following the example of the universities where it is fashionable to be mildly 'left-wing') while in working-class areas school unions are weak, but strikes are sharp and very unofficial, and vandalism and arson, the education system's equivalent of factory sabotage, are worrying the media and authorities.

The 1968/69 strikes at Miles Platting school did indeed lead to the formation of a 'schools' union'; but a union which had no base in Miles Platting school! Clearly there is a contradiction, which Mole (and Lib.Ed.) will hopefully investigate in future issues.

N.B. - If any of our readers took part themselves, or know somebody who did, could they get in touch with us or Mole Express (100 Oxford Road, Manchester 13)

Steve Cohen and Mike Don

Friend or Boss?

In a January copy of the Teacher (weekly magazine of the National Union of Teachers) we were presented with a boring bit of journalese written by a headmaster calling himself 'Psyche', telling us what a radical guy he was because he'd decided to shift some of his decision-making onto the staff. He'd called a meeting, selecting various teachers to be responsible for various decisions and organised a sub-committee or two - the result was that his teachers became all panicky and rushed around wringing their hands and begging him to go back to making the decisions alone. "SO MUCH FOR GIVING MY TEACHERS SOME LIBERATION", concludes Psyche. Patronising old bugger. Somewhere along the line he's heard it might be a good idea to involve teachers a bit in decision making so he condescends to divide them all into sub-groups and committees, completely fragmenting the team.

It seems very obvious to me that the only way to run any school is COLLECTIVELY. All teachers in state schools know that 'headmaster' is another word for BOSS (And his big boss is the Director of Education). All teachers know that whatever their opinion, it will be ignored if the headmaster doesn't share it. Psyche nowhere suggests that his staff are capable of sitting around discussing things for themselves, nowhere does he allow them

the dignity of making their own decisions. It is evident from his article that he intends to impose his ideas all the time.

Not that I am very optimistic about Collective discussions in staffrooms! In most of the staffrooms I've had the misfortune to sit down in for my cup of tea there have been so many private feuds going on, in-fighting, bitching and people ignoring each other that any kind of dialogue would be impossible. Most staffroom chat tends to revolve around what's for school dinner, did you watch the Onedin Line and the Royal Wedding. I have taught in a great number of schools in the last 10 years. My impression of most teachers is that they went straight from the repressive authoritarian schools of their childhood into training colleges (even more repressive and authoritarian), straight back into schools where they accept without question that they'll be working for some authoritarian head (like Psyche) who will make all the final decisions. These teachers have never had any opportunity to speak out against authority and so in their classrooms they clamp down on the wise child who starts to get bored and asks awkward questions like, "Why the hell SHOULD I".

I see no hope for the teaching profession unless we adopt an attitude of mutual aid amongst teachers in schools, which should extend to the classroom. Then maybe we will become a 'friend' to the children we teach rather than a 'BOSS', and we can participate with them in developing collective consciousness.

Val Hennessy

Tool of Conviviality

Ivan Illich has become the focus of many strands of 'non-political' revolutionary thinking. Nicolas Walter shows that Illich is primarily repeating ideas previously promulgated by many theorists such as Paul Goodman. When it comes to remedies for the 'general crisis' Illich is left irresponsibly wanting, doing the very things he castigates in others.

DURING the past four years Ivan Illich has produced four books and has acquired an international reputation. His background is international enough—half Croatian Catholic and half Sephardic Jew, educated in Austria and Italy, a Catholic priest in New York and then the vicerector of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico, a founder of the Center for Inter-cultural Documentation at Cuernavaca in Mexico and the initiator of seminars on 'Institutional Alternatives in a Technological Society', a champion of poor people in a rich country and of poor countries in a rich world, dismissed from his university post and forced to renounce his priesthood. His reputation does not depend entirely on his books—he is also an energetic writer of articles, giver of interviews, and maker of speeches—but it is his books which made him a guru when he ceased to be a priest.

Religious imperialism

Illich's first book, *Celebration of Awareness* (1970), is a collection of essays dating from 1956 onwards and subtitled 'A Call for Institutional Revolution'. From his New York experience he writes in defence of the Puerto Rican immigrants—'What they need is not more help but less categorization . . . and more understanding'—and in favour of learning not just the words but the atmosphere of a foreign language. From his position on the Catholic left he writes of the necessity to destroy the bureaucracy of the Church—'Clerical technocracy is even further from the gospel than priestly aristocracy'—and to encourage a movement of 'priests who leave the Church in order to pioneer the church of the future': a movement he soon joined himself. From his position in the ecumenical movement he writes of the necessity for the Church to withdraw from its traditional exercise of power and to accept change—which will in any case be carried out not so much by Christians as by 'groups committed to radically humanist ideals': ideals he himself seems to share.

From his Latin American experience he writes against the attempt to increase United States missionary activity in the continent as part of the defence against Castroism, identifying religious aid as imperialism very much as Teresa Hayter has identified economic aid as imperialism: indeed his work at Cuernavaca was largely intended to subvert this operation. He writes both against the Church's refusal to accept contraception and against the United States campaign for contraception as a technique of capitalist development. He writes against the educational programmes in Latin America because they only serve the ruling class and simply force the peasantry into the proletariat, and because the double bind of stimulating and then frustrating expectations will cause more problems than it cures. He suggests 'that the emerging nations cannot be schooled, and that schooling is not a viable answer to their need for universal education'; indeed, that 'the maintenance of the present school system may turn

out to be an important step on the way to Latin American fascism'. He goes on to write against the 'sacred cow' of school as 'the established church of secular times' and 'the central myth-making ritual' of modern society: since this was in a graduation speech at the university of Puerto Rico, it is easy to see why he got into trouble there.

Above all he writes against the attempt by the United States to make the rest of the world in its image—capitalized, industrialized, technologized, consumerized: what is generally called 'development', but what he insists should be called 'underdevelopment'. He applies the argument particularly to Latin America, but events applied it particularly to Vietnam, and Illich was involved in the movement against the war there. However, he says repeatedly that non-violent imperialism is just as harmful in the end as violent imperialism, whether directed at poor countries outside or at poor communities inside the United States, and he tries desperately to resist the growth of violence which even non-violent imperialism provokes.

But it is easier to expose problems than to expound solutions. The book begins with 'A Call to Celebration' and ends with 'A Constitution for Cultural Revolution' which consist of mere phrase-making: 'Let us join together joyfully to celebrate our awareness that we can make our life today the shape of tomorrow's future'; 'We need an alternative programme, an alternative both to development and to merely political revolution. Let me call this alternative programme either institutional or cultural revolution'. The themes raised in the book are scarcely drawn together by such evasion.

Striking paradoxes

Deschooling Society (1971), a collection of essays written in 1970, concentrates on one of these themes. Illich insists that 'deschooling is . . . at the root of any movement for human liberation' and investigates the various defects of schooling. It is misleading, suggesting that learning is the result of teaching. It is expensive, taking up increasing amounts of scarce wealth, especially in poor countries. It is inefficient, both for the instruction of basic skills and for the inculcation of 'liberal education', so that acquiring the former and absorbing the latter are generally achieved in spite of rather than because of school. It is bad for pupils, prolonging childhood further and further into adult life: it is bad for teachers, placing them in the false position of 'pastor, prophet and priest'. It is disastrous for higher education, indoctrinating students so thoroughly that universities are corrupted into schools as well. It is dangerous even for revolutionaries, themselves victims of schooling, and convinced that only schooling can transform society.

He widens the argument by contrasting 'manipulative' and 'convivial' institutions—following a dualist tradition running from Kropotkin to Goodman—according to whether they treat people as groups or as individuals. He

suggests that just as schooling is the main obstacle to education, production is the main obstacle to wealth, technology the main obstacle to techniques, medicine the main obstacle to health, welfare the main obstacle to happiness, military defence the main obstacle to security, law-enforcement the main obstacle to order, aid the main obstacle to equality—and so on, in a series of striking paradoxes which are central to his thought.

Replacing consumption

So the call is not just for deschooling but for what has been called deinstitutionalization—the institutional revolution Illich began with. He ends with the suggestion that the time has come for the Prometheans, the makers and scientists and technologists, to be replaced by Epimetheans—‘those who value hope above expectation . . . who love people more than products . . . who love the earth on which each can meet the other’. But this still leaves us with the problems he has raised.

Tools for Conviviality (1973), written in 1972 when Illich had become famous, is ‘a progress report’ on the solutions to these problems. The main recommendation is a deliberate limitation to industrial growth. Technology for consumption must be replaced by ‘tools for conviviality’—defining conviviality as ‘autonomous and creative intercourse among persons . . . individual freedom realized in personal interdependence’. He discusses various tools— aids to or applications of human skill—in this context, and he certainly makes some good points. About medicine: before the twentieth century medicine seldom cured disease; then for a few decades it developed so fast that it could cure most diseases; but now it has developed so far that it causes more disease than it cures. About books: this remarkable medium of communication, based on the brilliant inventions of the alphabet and the printing-press (he forgets the importance of the codex, or paginated volume), is a perfect convivial tool; but now it has developed so far that it is more difficult to read, more expensive to buy in shops and more inaccessible to consult in libraries than ever before.

Clear thinking minority

As long as he is describing problems on this level Illich is clear and concrete. But as soon as he attempts to suggest practical remedies he becomes obscure and abstract. Thus he calls for deprofessionalization to accompany deinstitutionalization, but fails to describe the difficult process in any detail. He calls for the simplification of technology, but for all the neat ideas there is no reason to believe that anything will happen. This weakness also pervades *Energy and Equity* (1974), a summary of discussions at Cuernavaca during 1973. This is really a series of footnotes on one of the themes of *Tools for Conviviality*—the use of energy for transport, seen as a symbol of the crisis, taking speed of travel as an indicator of status. Illich’s approach is summed up in such slogans as ‘Mechanical power corrupts’ and ‘More energy means less equity’, and the moral is that ‘participatory democracy demands low energy technology, and free people must travel the road to productive social relations at the speed of a bicycle’. There is much on what is wrong with cars and aeroplanes and what is right with feet and bicycles (but not much about buses and trains). He argues that accelerating vehicles intended to save time actually waste it, because faster travel leads to slower traffic—yet another in his series of paradoxes. The trouble is that this method of argument is soon reduced to absurdity—truths glibly repeated become mere truisms.

But Illich fails more significantly when in *Tools for Conviviality* he turns to political remedies for the problems he has described. For example, he argues for ‘the recovery of legal procedure’ for convivial purposes, fully realizing

the obstacles in the way of using the legal system against itself, but refusing to show how these can be overcome. More seriously, he argues for the choice of ‘political process’ rather than either ‘bureaucratic dictatorship’ or revolutionary action, but seems to have no notion what this involves. Despite references to a ‘transition to socialism’ and to ‘revolutionary liberation’, he is not really interested in politics. He even says at one point that ‘it would distract from the core of my argument if I were to deal with political strategies or tactics’.

For the future, however, he expects a ‘coming crisis’, a ‘multiple catastrophe’, in which growth will grind to a halt, and during which a conscious minority, ‘an emerging group of clear-thinking and feeling people’, must prepare to act—but still through ‘the formal structure of politics and law’. Indeed, ‘the preparation of such groups is the key task of new politics at the present moment’; ‘political debate must now be focused on the various ways in which unlimited production threatens human life’, and at the right time ‘the framework of due procedure can be used as the most dramatic, symbolic, and convivial tool in the political area’: ‘A general crisis opens the way to social reconstruction’. What a mountain of problems! What a mouse of a solution! A convivial utopia may come in the end, but not through a Wellsian—or rather, anti-Wellsian—Open Conspiracy of intellectuals working within the very system which is bringing about its own (and our) destruction.

Prudence the answer

Illich is not putting forward an ideology, but just throwing out some ideas, without knowing how they go together or where they lead. He is uneasy not only with political implications, but with historical, sociological, psychological and economic considerations in general. He is not really at home with that convivial tool, the book. He can keep up an argument for a couple of pages, but hardly for a chapter, and certainly not for a whole volume. All his four books add up to barely 500 small pages, and could well be printed as a single work; indeed they are a single work, saying the same few things over and over again more clumsily each year—and more humourlessly: a discussion of contraception contains solemn references to the ‘limitation of tools’, a ‘miracle tool’, and ‘a new relationship between people and their tools’, without the trace of a smile.

Above all, there is a basic inconsistency in Illich’s entire enterprise. He attacks ‘destructive consumers’, including the ‘ecologist who takes a jet plane to a conference on protecting the environment from further pollution’; but he is himself always taking jet planes from one conference to another. He attacks mass production, mass communications and mass consumption; but he does so in book after book, printed on precious paper, sold in millions of copies around the world, full of sound and fury—signifying what? His message is a sort of secular sermon, prophesying doom and preaching conversion. He is a sort of Jansenist Malthus (another clergyman!), recommending prudence to prevent misery and avoid vice. Such a message is a luxury which can be afforded only by someone with education and without commitments, who has never been seriously hungry or seriously ill, who speaks for the people and not from the people, who uses rhetoric rather than reason, and prefers paradoxical dialogue to political dialectic. The question is whether Illich actually does more harm to those who maintain the present system or to those who are trying to change it.

Tools for Conviviality by Ivan D. Illich (Calder & Boyars £2.25)

Energy and Equity by Ivan D. Illich (Calder & Boyars £1.95, paper 60p)

Thanks to — NEW HUMANIST magazine —
88 Islington High St., London N1 8FL.

DRAMA THERAPY

Following my attendance at the first National Remedial Drama Conference (1) and at their 1974 Summer School (2) both organized by the Drama Therapy Centre, London, I need to frame this account into some sort of political and social context, since I am not qualified, in present society's terms, in Drama Therapy, both in the occurrence of practice established and practice likely to be established.

My claim to some sort of authority on the subject, however, rests with my eight years experience as teacher in Leicestershire secondary schools, and throughout this time I have constantly made use of elementary techniques in drama teaching, even though mostly employed as a science or remedial teacher. In my analysis of the traditional (and not so traditional) class teaching situation, and with careful and continuous observation of children's behaviour, I have elaborated the elementary ideas in drama teaching to the point where I feel able to use them to effect greater social and political awareness in myself and in others. But as may well be guessed, I have come under considerable personal strain and stress, and also feel very strongly committed to the idea that such techniques should not become part and parcel of a normal curriculum in present day schools. Not because I devalue them in their effectiveness to liberate the self and assist in the liberation of others, but once established in the context of our present political systems then they would merely be used to perpetuate it.

As a recent tv programme showed us, the management of some Japanese factories encourage their workers to release their aggression on effigies of the bosses, indicating the insidious and perverse ways in which authority today is used for precisely such perpetuation.

Let me begin with a question I put to the speakers at the first National Remedial Drama Conference. I asked whether or not they were aware that the anti authoritarian basis for all good Remedial Drama teaching was really a recipe for anarchy, and therefore had profound implications for society as a whole. They answered in the affirmative, noting that techniques developed for physically or mentally handicapped people could be equally useful for ordinary kids in school, for instance. It seems that to work with adolescents in youthclubs, as an example of one of the areas of concern for remedial drama, and since such adolescents can so easily be labelled anti-social, unmotivated, unclubbables, drop-outs, delinquent, disturbed or even maladjusted, means either to get them to conform to expected modes of behaviour or to capitalise on

their 'disturbances' and create new experiences for all of them.

Perhaps I may quote some of the many criticisms I have had levelled at me. For instance, I allowed a severely psychologically disturbed boy to take charge of my class because I could not control

them myself (Beaumont Leys School, Leicester). I encouraged youthclub members to destroy LEA property by filming the process (Forest Lodge Youthclub, New Parks Estate, Leicester). I organized 4th year boys to dramatize a criminal court scene, and a visiting HMI thought this was dangerous as some of the boys were already delinquent, and I was mocking the English judicial process. (Lancaster Boys School, Leicester).

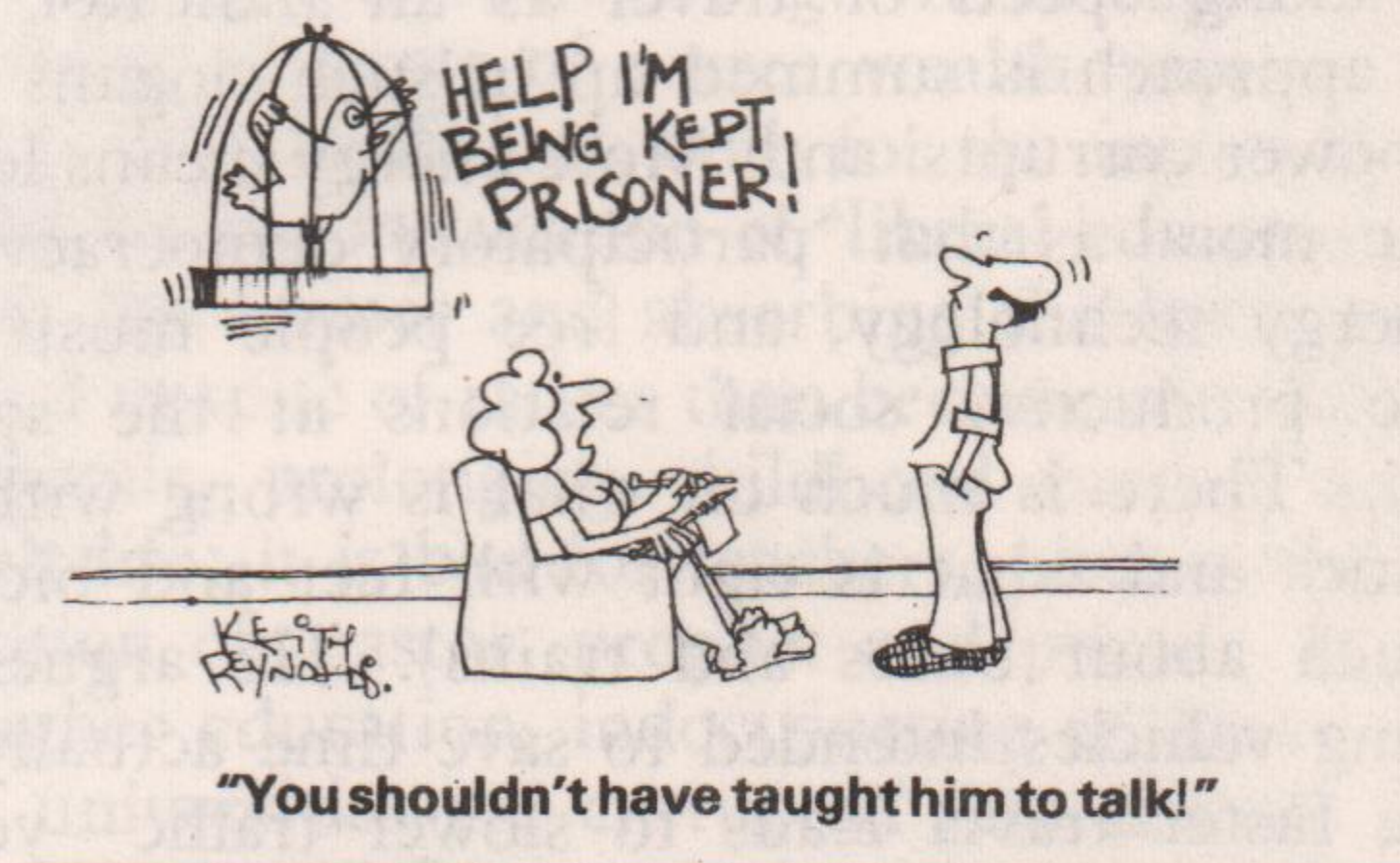
In every instance, and there are many more, no serious complications arose from such activities always they seemed beneficial to the youngsters taking part and I developed satisfying relationships with them; and we always enjoyed ourselves.

At what stage, then, does Remedial Drama become Drama Therapy? To answer this, I think, there needs to be some definition of 'therapy' and/or 'therapist'. And even before such definition is given, I attack the notion of anyone calling themselves a therapist since the opportunity, for the person seeking therapeutic assistance, is always present to assume, in short or long intervals of time, the role of therapist. I see therapy as a form of help, or a form of attention I can experience with another person or group of people, thereby helping them to resolve their problems, yet being equally attentive to the possibility that others can help me to resolve some of my own.

Why, then, this paper, for there appears to be stated here a simple philosophy of life, based on cooperation and mutual respect, and on the building of non-authoritarian relationships. Unfortunately, life is not at present cooperative and non-authoritarian. It is competitive and extremely coercive, and we are all party to it.

The following examples should serve to illustrate the point where I feel Remedial Drama becomes Drama Therapy, and how the conflicts of working in non-authoritarians with very authoritarian people, including myself, manifest themselves.

As a demonstration lesson in violence I staged an incident involving the throwing of a glass bottle against a classroom wall. The audience (4th year students, Countesthorpe College, Leicestershire), were initially frightened and confused, yet they were unwilling to participate in the normal lessons on violence (mostly discussions, worksheets and



films). Before the end of the lesson, some of them had attempted the demonstration themselves (one bottle did not break but bounced back into the room, to the great amusement of the audience) and all left having experienced something strange yet exciting. Follow-up work in discussions was, of course, substantial and enthusiastic. Mind you, many of the students were convinced I was crackers.

As part of standard drama, we practiced fencing with broom handles in a science laboratory (Lancaster Boys' School, Leicester) staging the duck of a head to avoid a horizontal swing, the handle then hitting a glass bottle. Unfortunately, again the glass bottle did not break but sailed through the laboratory window. In the same laboratory I encouraged a boy to lose his temper with me, and he, quite deliberately in a fit of rage, caused considerable damage around the benches.

I would support both of these latter occurrences in an anarchist society if people like myself were so screwed up that such violence was necessary to establish their personal relationships. In present society I continue to support the first of these two but not the second, even though, for me, a sound relationship has been established with this particular boy. In the drama workshop (Countesthorpe College, Leicestershire) hyperactive adolescent boys were throwing chairs around. I deliberately did not stop them (no damage was being caused) until they switched off the lights. A pot of paint hurled across the room in the dark (Forest Lodge Youthclub New Parks Estate, Leicester) caused no harm to any person, but some damage to the room. I felt no urge to recriminate or report the matter to the 'authorities'. At a more trivial level, I did not report students at Countesthorpe College for illegal smoking (actually using the activity in the drama workshop) nor did I feel any need to control my own, and their own, bad language. Interestingly the Principal thought I was unsuited for teaching.

I discussed these events, and others, at the Summer School for Remedial Drama and received considerable support especially from colleagues on the course. It seemed they were interested in these techniques whereby their difficult pupils and their difficult classes could be managed. But I repeat again I would be fundamentally opposed to the idea that any one of them should learn these techniques merely to enhance their own status in their school without being also fundamentally opposed to the institutions in which they work.

I finish by describing one activity in which some of us engaged during our attendance at the Summer School. I also use this example to raise questions concerning working with adults, and working with children. "Age of Consent" is in the news at the present time, if we extend the discussion to aspects of sexual behaviour, which I see as a particular case to be included when describing all dramatic behaviour and experience.

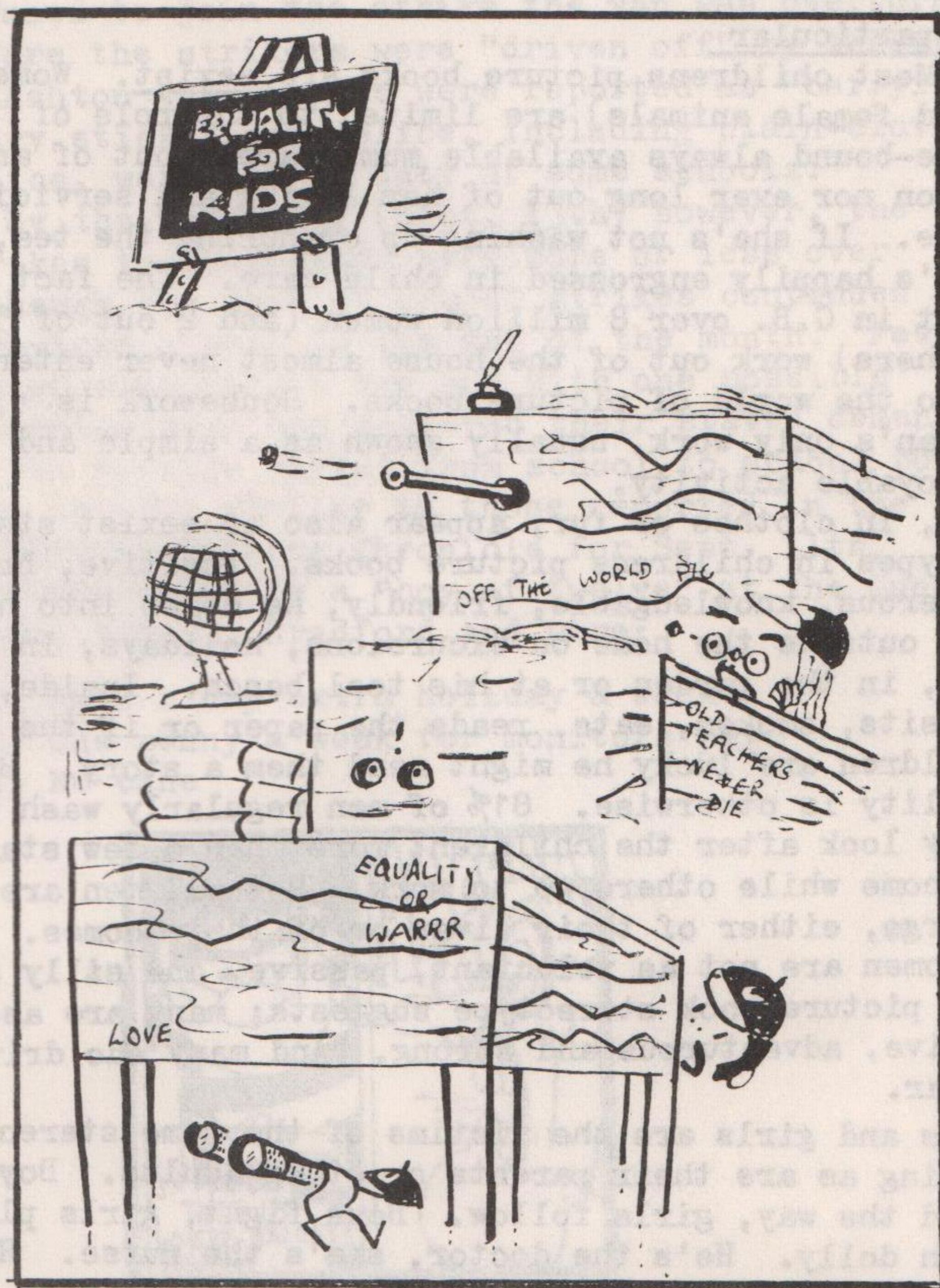
During the week we engaged in role play, mime and fantasy. There was a suggestion that the situation I describe was contrived by the tutor, and I also indicated perhaps that it had a flavour of witchcraft about it. Perhaps these were aspects of my own fantasy make-up, and perhaps a "clinical drama therapist" would make much of it (like I did, and am now doing, by putting myself into precisely such a role). The work for me

centred on the construction of a rag doll, and in an encounter type discussion with a peer the situation was such that to him the doll represented a real person whom he hated, and to me a real person whom I loved. Contrived or not, the encounter had the potential for conflict. Both my partner and myself were more 'mature' than others on the course, and in this instance I felt I was the therapist. He demonstrably destroyed the doll.

I would use such an idea with children, and the thought of all my classes constructing effigies of the headmaster and throwing them onto a bonfire excites me. But, oh dear, what would the headmaster think? That the children participate because they are willing is not, in present society's terms, justifiable. But I would continue to engage children's attention by such means, being forever aware of its dangers to the children and myself. I think children have the capacity to see when an activity is dangerous to themselves and will not participate but unfortunately in their unfree states as we find them, this capacity is underdeveloped. If I choose to work with adults, especially young teachers, can I really delegate the responsibility to them, since they are willing and consenting?

I think so, equally as with children. "Age of Consent" has no meaning except to the individual person alone. And in applying such principles to myself, it is only I who will decide whether I work in this way, with adults or children as long as I continue to "get away with it".

Barry Cope



Under the heading TOKEN DISSIDENTS the Times Educational Supplement back somewhere in September had this to say about the Exeter Childrens Books Conference and only last week that most respectable

bastion of juvenility, the Exeter Childrens Books Conference, opened its gates to some highly critical outsiders.

Rosemary and Andrew Mann, Selima Hall and Helen Petit, came down from the Children's Rights Workshop in London to tell the conference "how most picture books tell lies". They were plagued by gremlins who turned off the microphones and removed the automatic slide projector but the biggest spanner in the works was Frederick Smith, conference organizer, who before he let them talk reassured the audience that he had "made discreet inquiries about them and found out they were all right"

What the Children's Righters were on about was the racism, sexism and class bias of most children's books, which annoyed some of the writers there. Ann Thwaite, who was enjoying a good laugh at the pictures of be-aproned mums decorating the Children's Rights book-stall, found it a good deal less amusing when she found her own book, *Poor Pigeon*, had been included. Asked to come to the session and hear why Ms Thwaite said she "couldn't possibly".

Some members thought the group were "just Marxists" but an inebriated John Rowe Townsend was overheard reassuring liberated Helen Petit "you and I are among the few people here who really care about children!"

That was one of the shorter snipings that they got from the established ed journals. This is the statement that got the ball rolling.

HOW MOST PICTURE BOOKS TELL LIES

1 Most childrens picture books present a partial and distorted view of reality. Consciously or unconsciously, they tell lies about the way people live, work and play, about the way they think and feel.

Even when picture books take the road of fantasy or that of the farmyard or jungle, behind the adventures and excitement we find the same mystification and lies.

BOOKS AND

In particular

2 Most childrens picture books are sexist. Women (and female animals) are limited to the role of home-bound always available mum, rarely out of an apron nor ever long out of her loving and servicing role. If she's not washing up or pouring the tea, she's happily engrossed in child care. The fact that in G.B. over 8 million women (and 2 out of 5 mothers) work out of the house almost never enters into the world of picture books. Housework is woman's only work, usually shown as a simple and enjoyable activity.

Men, in clothes or fur, appear also as sexist stereotypes in childrens picture books. Positive, brave generous, knowledgable, friendly, he comes into his own outside the home on excursions, holidays, in a car, in the garden or at his tool bench. Inside, he sits, smokes, eats, reads the paper or if the children are lucky he might read them a story. But reality is otherwise. 81% of men regularly wash up. Many look after the children; more than a few stay at home while others go to work. Not all men are in charge, either of their lives or of their homes.

Women are not as reluctant, passive, and silly as the picture book stereotype suggests; many are assertive, adventurous and strong. And many do drive a car.

Boys and girls are the victims of the same stereotyping as are their parents or other adults. Boys lead the way, girls follow. Boys fight, girls play with dolly. He's the doctor, she's the nurse. He climbs trees, she sulks. Boys and girls playing together doing the same thing don't often get shown.

3 Most childrens picture books are racist. Like most of the world, we live in a multi-racial society. Little of the reality of this society appears in childrens picture books, or when it does, assumes racist forms. In books about the countries of origin of Black immigrants, Black people are stereotyped as primitive, naive and underdeveloped. They are unable to understand their situation or resolve their problems. Their human dignity and autonomy are not represented. In picture books about our Western society, Black people are stereotypically represented either as token participants in an all white context and moved by WASP values and problems; Black existence in Western society is glossed over or ignored. But it is by implication that most children's picture books are racist; they simply don't have any Blacks in them.

4 Most children's picture books misrepresent home life. They portray ad nauseam the nuclear father and mother with 2 children, home and garden and car family. Unlike real life, one-parent families and larger and looser domestic groupings are a rarity in picture books. Middle class suburbia predominates, smooth and uncomplicated. Nowhere are babysitters, daily helps, dustmen, the workers who make this dream world possible. For many children, this decorative and privileged picture book nuclearity is non-existent and incomprehensible.

5 Picture books falsify the reality of work. If it is shown at all, it is unrelated to the action of the story or the people in it. It is mere backgr-

ound; never the central role it plays in real life. People are rarely seen at work, on the line, in the office, cleaning, doing the night shift. Or if working people do sometimes do appear, they are reduced to the jolly and contented stereotype.

6 In the few welcome attempts to get away from the middle class assumptions of most childrens picture book writing and to write and illustrate picture books that convey more of the social reality of the modern age, this reality nevertheless remains partial and distorted. This is most marked in the attempts to write books about and for working class children, in which, good intentions notwithstanding, the working class remain caught in the stereotypes of old, i.e. the inevitable unrelaxed, overcrowded, quarrelsome relationships, in undignified vulnerability to forces apparently beyond their control; the born losers. Don't working people ever agree? Can't they talk without shouting at each other? Are they always slovenly, chip-eating, fag-end smoking, roller and braces wearing, always living in a state of disorder and conflict. Reality, in the old houses and the new flats, is of course very different.

7 Most childrens picture books abuse fantasy. Instead of exploring the mystery and limits of the known world or suggesting the many alternatives of other worlds, most fantasies take us on floating and shapeless escapades, with no conscious or subconscious logic. And we are always returned to the inescapable status quo.

8 Childrens books cannot be neutral, 'art' without content. Writers and illustrators are responsible for what they create and the values they transmit. Publishers, librarians and teachers are responsible for the books they select.

Our children are important. They deserve a better deal; a bit of truth.*

* * * * *

* "There have to be elements of anxiety and mystery in truthful children's books, or at least there have to be in mine. What I dont like are formless, floating fantasies. Fantasy makes sense only if its rooted ten feet deep in reality." (Maurice Sendak)

This statement has been prepared for discussion at the 6th Exeter Children's Fiction Conference, August 1974, by an ad-hoc group of people from Childrens Rights Workshop, CISSY (Campaign to Impede Sex Stereotyping in the Young), London Womens Education Collective. 26.8.74

Copies of the above, along with the pamphlet CHILDRENS BOOKS - A Statement and Lists from the Childrens Rights Workshop; are available from 73 Balfour Street, London, SE17. (price unknown) Also available soon is the INDEX OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION, price 15p. Available now is a 4-page leaflet for parents, EDUCATION OTHERWISE THAN AT SCHOOL.

(an expanded 2nd edition of Alison Truefitt's pamphlet HOW TO SET UP A FREE SCHOOL,- Alternative Education And The Law, is due about now.)

THINGS

FREEWAY TO LEARNING - Educational Alternatives In Action. David Head, White Lion Free School, Alison Truefitt et al. Penguin 50p

First it must be said that this is an excellent readable book. David Head, the editor, is a radical chaplain. His radicalism seems genuine and deep: he is deeply committed to freedom for all children, including his own, and professes to hate the way in which most schools seem to have the same message of the 'hidden curriculum' of schooling, grading, competition, being measured, being taught by a teacher etc. His own personal solution with his family, to keeping out of schools has been to found 'Operation Otherwise' in which he, along with other families have withdrawn their kids from school and encouraged them to take what they want in the form of learning. However, he is aware that the 'middle-classness' of the families involved in 'Operation Otherwise' gives them tremendous advantages which many other kids could not share.

Apart from his chapter on Operation Otherwise, David has written a general introductory chapter on educational alternatives under the title "Letter to an Educational Quisling" which is the name some caste-preserving official in the NUT has given to those who are working in alternatives to the state system. In this first chapter he briefly outlines the useless obsessions of state schools with compulsion, discipline, authority and excellence, dealing with each in short, pithy sections as well as examining ideas on Child-centred education, relevance, freedom and free schools.

Each of these short sections conclude with a question for his quisling, such as "As you explore new ways of linking education with community experience, what kind of learning do you regard as relevant?"

The rest of the book which is the part that has to be read (dont read this, read the book) gives some idea of the progress some quislings have made.

An article from Islington's White Lion Free School shows that by being careful of the law and working with the LEA, a 'free' school can at least survive in an area where the community wants it. The question that is not answered here, is, what demands are made on the school in recognition of its existence. (If the reviewer is LEA

(If the reviewer is hinting at possible arm-twisting by LEA's, then this, and other, topics are currently being discussed by various educational 'alternative' schemes. We will try and report these results, and the nature of the groups concerned, when the groups themselves are ready to share their findings. -Lib Ed typist.)

Lucia Backett outlines the rise and fall of a street school in Manchester. This section is very moving as she charts the conflict with the regulations and the internal lack of direction which finally closed the school; as well as the bumbling two-faced aspect of the LEA. The school has finished, but it has been a learning experience and they plan to start again.

The other alternatives reported on are "The Ark", a project in Oxford, and "Fun With Learning"- A Supplementary Programme in Notting Hill.

The Ark is fee-paying, concerned to promote the wholeness of life' and, by implication, attempts to be 'non-political'. The people who run it believe that people educate themselves through their experiences, and attempt to provide the right background to give happy experiences to the children involved, thus producing sane, balanced adults in the end.

Ajoy Ghose in Notting Hill has a different angle on learning through experience; he follows Malcolm X in believing that slum-dwellers must learn through their own discoveries and initiatives to improve themselves and their conditions through a 'stand-up' philosophy and self-help. Reading the two chapters Ghose's attempt seems somehow more relevant than the bread-making rituals of the Ark.

There is plenty of useful info in the book. The chapter by Alison Truefitt on "Educational Alternatives within the Law" outlines how a 'Free School' can escape without being hounded by the men from the DES/LEA.

What do Free Schools do? Are they centres for change, or merely oiling the cogwheels of constipated society and, in fact, reinforcing the school system by soothing its dropouts. David Head does not go into the debate too deeply: he has tried to chart what is happening now. "To do nothing only makes sense if you believe that the path of history is laid down, and that the political millenium will come without reference to intention or consciousness".

Michael Gerard

Sabate: Guerrilla Extraordinary by Antonio Tellez. Cienfuegos Press, 83, A, Haverstock Hill, London NW3 £2.35

The past ten years have seen a particularly interesting development on the political-social scene: the various forms of urban guerrilla groups have introduced an entirely new element into the struggle against oppression, or rather have done so on an international scale for the first time. From Ulster to South America, from the Middle East

Books and Things

One of the ways in which the big 'educational' publishers try to sell their wares is by collaborating with the LEA's or the Colleges of Education in holding exhibitions of materials for teachers to order for their schools.

A typical exhibition of this type was held in Leicester recently: it was concerned with language development - specifically for teachers of immigrant children.

At first sight it appeared to be a joyful splash of colour and sound. A cassette recorder was playing something that sounded a bit like pop music and the books seemed to gleam in bright reds, blues and greens.

However the recorder was not playing pop, but an imitation which, when the songs were read, would give the reader an insight into "phrasal verbs": an expensive, ersatz, pointless package of the sort beloved by experts who love to sell answers.

Some of the books were extreme cases of elaborate mumbo-jumbo for foreigners. For instance an "Intermediate Phonetic Reader": on one page some feeble stories written in English, while on the opposite page the same stories written in the phonetic alphabet.

One of the books that was attracting a great deal of attention from earnest looking white teachers was the gaily coloured "Scope" language development course published by an ominously named firm of 'Books For Schools Ltd', a commercial offshoot of the state-run "Schools Council". These Scope books have been around for 2 years disseminating some interesting messages.

At first sight the book seems O.K.: a few photos, drawings and predigested easy English. However, the book is as sexist as the notorious Ladybird books. Sex roles are absolutely stereotyped with boys pillow-fighting, playing street football, collecting, building and chasing, while girls are washing-up, cleaning floors or standing around being demure with books under their arms. Men are seeing to the car, being postmen, working while smoking pipes or lounging while women are still washing up and have progressed to shopping and child-minding.

The book is also anglo ethno-centric to the point of racism. Two pages on Animals and their Homes followed by a couple of pages on 'Homes in different areas of the world' which perpetuate the usual myths and stereotypes. The Indian lives in a tent and wears feathers, just as the Eskimo lives in an igloo and all Africans are supposed to sit outside their mud huts eternally pounding something nasty in a bowl; apparently in the Middle East they all live in poverty in round stone houses with two small windows.

The book is also capitalist. There are photos of Victorian terraced houses and modern blocks of flats which people could relate to. However the emphasis is on stately homes, and the incomplete history of housing given shows a Tudor mansion, Georgian mansion, a Victorian villa, 1928 Stockbroker Tudor ending with the beautiful mass-produced Wimpey type town house and block of flats.

Capitalist, sexist and racist: perhaps these books really do show the Scope of society to the immigrant with language problems.

Michael Gerrard

Sabaté cont

to Los Angeles, from Japan to Germany, different types of urban guerrilla groups have organized and operated for a variety of purposes.

But I believe it to be appropriate that the first modern example of urban guerrilla warfare was directed at what is now the oldest continuing fascist regime in the world, Franco's Spain, and that it was carried out by anarchists.

The recently published book Sabate: Guerrilla Extraordinary by Antonio Tellez is the only book so far written on the subject of the life and career of El Quico, Francisco Sabate Llopart, the most outstandingly successful of the many anarchists who carried on the armed struggle against the Franco regime after the formal conclusion of the Spanish Civil War.

When he was eventually killed by the Spanish police in January 1960 he had been active as an anarchist militant for just under thirty years, and carried on an almost continuous armed struggle against fascism for 25 years of this period, the only significant gap being the duration of the second world war when he worked with the French Resistance. Sabate's activity was twofold. He carried out a number of highly daring armed robberies in Catalonia, especially in Barcelona, with the express purpose of raising funds to finance the resistance movement which was carrying on the struggle against Franco, and to give financial support to those of its activists who were imprisoned by the regime in its intermittent outbursts of bloody repression against opponents. He also undertook the distribution in the Spanish interior of anti-Franco propaganda, a project which is about as dangerous in Spain as an armed robbery is in this country.

For myself the most absorbing part of the book was the narrative of Sabate's raids into Spain either for purposes of propaganda or expropriation. The insights given into his audacity and determination ~~freely~~ amazed me. Two examples:- During an official visit by Franco to Northern Spain, Sabate took a taxi and told the driver he was a government official from the Ministry of Information and used a home-made mortar, from the taxi, to scatter anti-Franco leaflets all over the area. On his last trip onto Spain, surrounded with four comrades in a deserted farmhouse and wounded in the neck and the leg, he escaped under cover of darkness by crawling through the lines of over a hundred armed and highly trained men.

The book also contains interesting material on the relationship between Sabate and his fellow advocates of a continuing armed resistance to the fascist regime, and the more passive, accommodating and bureaucratized leadership of the official CNT in exile.

The two major failings of this book can both be excused. It does not give a very good time-perspective of Sabate's career, partly because the author concentrates on the most dramatic parts of his, Sabate's, activity and does not relate the events sequentially to what is happening in the world beyond the area of the Spanish-French border, and partly no doubt because Sabate was killed

Sabaté cont.

less than a decade and a half ago and the events of his life remain too close for such an assessment to be expected.

Also some of the individuals who worked and fought with Sabaté have not been named, clearly because they are still alive and many of them live in Spain and to name them would be to expose them to needless danger.

The book is exquisitely produced and the translation, done by Stuart Christie while on remand in

Brixton awaiting trial, is a good one, clear and simple. A highly recommended book, though it neither is nor claims to be the definitive work on its subject. We may have to wait for the re-establishment of libertarian communism in Spain and its spreading throughout the Iberian Peninsula before that is possible. In the meantime this book is indispensable.

Pete Miller

"YOU CAN SACK ME, but the problem remains." - R.F. Mackenzie

The experience of Bob Mackenzie, sacked by the Labour-controlled Educational Committee in Aberdeen from his job as headmaster of the ironically named Summerhill Academy because of his refusal to beat and otherwise brutalise the kids in the school, provides more confirmation of the dilemmas facing anybody who tries to introduce radically different attitudes and practices into state schools even (or perhaps especially?) when that person is in a 'responsible' position. Of course the establishment would not accept the brutal language I have just used - he was in fact 'suspended' (which means, apparently, that "an appeal is just not on because Mr. Mackenzie has not been sacked") - and the cause given is "allegations of indiscipline, disruption and division among the staff". Incidentally, it seems unlikely that we will be able to get away with using this kind of precedent to get rid of the reactionary bastards among his fellow-heads - the only heads who get sacked (sorry - suspended) because the staff don't all agree with him are those tainted with what they call 'progressive' ideas.

We published Mackenzie's own views of the matter in our last issue. The following comments (contained in a letter published in the Scotsman) are from a teacher at the school who has since left.

May 24, 1974

"Sir, - Does anyone want to know what is happening at Summerhill Academy, Aberdeen? When the headmaster, R.F. Mackenzie was suspended, there was much comment about the implications of the future of comprehensive and progressive schooling. Since then there has been an almost indecent silence.

Presumably the Education Committee and others involved in the solution to the 'crisis' school are congratulating themselves on the success of their moves. The place is not in the headlines and all appears quiet. As the acting headmaster has told us, "We are becoming a good school and making progress towards civilised behaviour."

Unfortunately the "barbaric behaviour" implied in this statement about Summerhill under Mackenzie is still continuing. The difference is that those who before worked to publicise it, now want to conceal it. There is still vandalism, stealing, swearing, extortion, gambling, truancy, etc., and some teachers are still unable to cope with their classes.

Yet strangely we hear no complaints from those who were most vociferous in their condemnation of the school under R.F. Mackenzie. Perhaps they are

scared to voice their criticisms since the acting headmaster is also the senior deputy director of education, and one of those involved in the promotion of teachers in Aberdeen.

Or is it possible that, having blamed the problems of Summerhill on Mackenzie, they are now in no position to complain when the problems remain? Still, whatever the reasons, Summerhill goes on much the same as before. However, as critics of Mackenzie would be quick to point out, there have indeed been some changes in the school.

Already several dedicated teachers are leaving and more resignations seem imminent. These teachers are not leaving for promotion but simply because what they want to do is contrary to the new spirit of the place, which seems to discourage new attitudes.

Guidance teachers, appointed specifically to deal with children's problems, feel they are increasingly being ignored when problems arise. It seems that less value is placed on the need for understanding and more on the disciplinary procedure.

The police appear to be more often brought into internal school situations. In at least one case, the only result of this was to prevent the guidance teachers from discovering what had really happened.

Under Mackenzie, certain disruptive pupils were excluded from normal classes and given individual attention. Now they have been accepted back into normal classes. This does not appear to have improved the situation, since these children are simply truanting those classes, and the teachers are turning a blind eye. A classic case of appearances deliberately being made to conceal reality.

Relationships between teachers and children are deteriorating as teachers are forced to become more authoritarian.

Some teachers who feel themselves to have been vindicated by the dismissal of Mackenzie are active outwith their areas of responsibility and, in some instances, are harassing probationer teachers whose views they disagree with.

Mackenzie was suspended partly because he refused to implement the staff's document which was accepted by the Education Committee. One item in this document was that a detailed record of corporal punishment had to be kept and the machinery for doing this was set up. Despite the fact that children have been belted in the past few weeks, there is no record of this. What is the Education Committee's attitude to those teachers who are not implementing this part of the document?

The staff document was concerned basically with disciplinary procedures; however the convener of the Education Committee made it clear that he saw this only as a part of the Summerhill solution, and that as a matter of urgency, staff discussions would take place to discuss other such vital areas as curriculum and timetabling. To date no discussions have taken place.

Soon the appointments of a new deputy head and headmaster will be made. Will they be men of vision who support Mackenzie's principles, as the Education Committee have so often asserted they themselves do? Or will they be "yes" men to whom it will be safe to entrust responsibility; who can be relied upon not to rock the boat?

The convener of the Education Committee claims that Aberdeen has not rejected Mr. Mackenzie's educational methods; he said, "Mr. Mackenzie was just not successful in implementing his own philosophy". In these two new appointments we shall see how much he meant it, and whether Aberdeen really is in the forefront of educational innovation.

W. H. Sutherland,
(Teacher at
Summerhill Academy)."

Michael Duane (to whom the catalogue of events must have a familiar ring) has been in close contact with Bob Mackenzie and points out in a letter to us that Mackenzie's E.I.S. legal rep. (Educational Institute of Scotland = N.U.T.) advised him that he had three courses of action open:

1. To do nothing and just enjoy his suspension on full pay until he retires anyway in June, 1975.
2. To send in his resignation now - to take effect in June 1975. This might cause the authority to set conditions on his return to the school.
3. To accept the terms offered by the authority and return.

The 'terms' offered by the authority means, in effect, using the tawse and agreeing to the conditions proposed by a majority of the staff. No suggestion, of course, that the decision should be resisted - that it was anything but reasonable - that the union had any power (wish?) to support their member in any way. The uselessness of such loudly-proclaimed 'legal representation' which all unions make such a fuss about when soliciting new members is shown up in this case and in the case of Manny Merino (reported elsewhere in this magazine). They are not in the slightest interested in supporting anyone who upsets the liberal/reactionary education establishment - of which they themselves form such a central part.

Another interesting issue raised by Michael Duane arises from the document drawn up by the "majority of the staff". Apart from the fact that "the Authority had, by accepting the document, publicly gone back on its policy, adopted in 1968, when, with other signatories such as the E.I.S., the S.S.T.A. (Secondary Schools Teaching Assn.) etc. they approved a document setting out the desirability of and the stages and techniques for eliminating corporal punishment in schools." Duane also points out, "that while the specific issue - the tawse - was unhappily the content of Aberdeen's acceptance of the staff document, the authority had established an important new precedent by accepting it. In effect this established the right of the whole staff - and not just the head - to formulate school policy for presentation to the authority! Perhaps other staffs might now use this precedent to create more democratic staff participation." Again, such precedents are of course more easily used to attack 'progressive' ideas - but its there.

Arthur Humphrey

Blind Trust

David Wolsk

This article, written by a member of the Danish Institute for Educational Research, is taken from Vol. 5 of the Bulletin of Peace Proposals ('Peace Education: Theory and Praxis'). The bulletin contains a wide range of 'Peace Proposal Abstracts' from a variety of sources, together with longer original articles, and is available free of charge from Robin Richardson, World Studies Project, 37 Parliament Street, London, SW1.

PROCEDURE: The class divides into pairs; one is 'blind', with eyes closed or well covered, the other is his/her leader. The pairs are instructed to walk around for about 10 minutes; depending on circumstances, this can be inside and/or outside. Doing both is better because of the greater variety of experiences possible. The instructions must include: (1) no one is to talk during the whole exercise; (2) the leader should not turn the walk into an obstacle course for the blind pupil. Sometimes there is a tendency to 'tease'. Rather, most of the walking should be fairly easy and the leader should try, instead, to be creative in finding a variety of experiences for the blind pupil such as trying to identify objects by touch,

being left alone for a few minutes, running (on smooth ground) and being exposed to a variety of sounds. The teacher can mention these possibilities specifically but it is better to just let the pupils use their own imagination for creating a variety of experiences.

After about 10 minutes the pairs switch roles and continue their walk for another 10 minutes. The teacher can ask for this switch to take place in the classroom or let the pairs decide.

DISCUSSION; Concepts:

- a. We are all born with total trust.... and then, what happens?
- b. relationships between trust - mistrust and dependency - independence
- c. communication of emotions through bodily posture, movement and tension
- d. unfamiliarity and mistrust.... increasing mistrust of those more unlike oneself, e.g. opposite sex, social class, racial and cultural differences
- e. role of past experiences in trust - mistrust
- f. earn trust, earn power

The trust walk is generally a strong experience for pupils. They come back wanting to talk and it is quite useful for the teacher to stay completely out of the discussion at first. The pupils begin talking about the events that took place. But the experience has emotional effects, i.e. feelings of fear, helplessness, trust or mistrust in one's

cont. back page

from MANUEL MORENO.....

Readers will recall that in the last issue we had a letter from a comrade in Nottinghamshire who was suspended on full pay pending an enquiry into his 'suitability to be a teacher'. The enquiry supported the headmaster who instigated the charges but didn't find Manny unsuitable to teach, just not suitable to teach in that particular school. He has now, as expected, been transferred to another school.

His suspension resulted in some encouraging support. A defence committee of pupils, parents and teachers was formed; a support march on Cup Final afternoon realised 150 people; 3 petitions were sent to County Hall in Manny's support:-

- a 100 signature petition from teachers, lecturers etc. in the Nottingham area
- a 400 plus signature parents petition
- an 800 plus pupils petition, which also disassociated Manny from any responsibility for instigating a pupils strike at the school.

As Manny is possibly preparing a pamphlet on the whole episode, based on a diary kept during the duration, we won't now go into the affair at great length. We have recently received the following letter from him.

"The NUT were terrible - no local support from teachers, or on a county level. The regional officer Swallow, who 'represented' me, only wanted to get a compromise - i.e. for me to be considered suitable to teach. In this sense he won and was pleased. They (him and the sub-committee) didn't care at all about the kids and parents at Garibaldi (the school in question). During the hearing the chairman, Cains, said that the 800 petitions from the kids and the 400 from the parents should not be considered as evidence. Wow! Stone, the Director of Education, ruthlessly questioned my two mates from Garibaldi (teachers) - Swallow did nothing - it was all part of a political game.

I challenged their decision - Swallow reluctantly went back in and got nowhere. I wanted to go back to Garibaldi. They had to uphold the authority of the Head, Mr McIntosh. He, apparently, is in dodgy waters with the county - they already know of his incompetence and stupidity - no doubt they'll place him in an admin job soon. Promotion.

Rank and File in Nottingham were very bad - a threat to their own positions to help. Only a couple of people helped individually. The teachers at the school either stayed on the fence or backed the head. In fact most of them disliked me because what I was doing really affected their authority in and out of class.

The media surprisingly has been very good. Only one silly editorial in the Nottingham Evening Post saying I wanted to bring anarchy into schools. Unfortunately you can't even do that.

I've been transferred to Sutton Centre, a school in Sutton-In-Ashfield. It only opened last year, is supposed to be a community school - no uniform, no corporal punishment, etc.; Head - Stewart Wilson - okay bloke but treading too carefully. I've got it very cushy there - mainly, I think, because of what has happened. I've already been seen by the Head.

I felt sore about the Garibaldi thing, especially for the kids. I see them now and then. I think they learnt a lot, parents too - working class kids getting it together to protest by themselves - no adult encouragement or manipulation. Parents following their children in it - they began to be concerned about schooling, when most of the time they find it meaningless. Their protest was a way of getting at schooling and teachers.

In many ways I was pleased the whole thing happened. I've learnt about the systems limitations and how narrow they are. Some progressive teachers say to me that it wouldn't have happened at their school - its only because they don't challenge it enough. It depends to what extent you are prepared to go. I was increasingly pissed off with my role as teacher - the pressures I found enormous. Nobody had to verbalise them - but you felt the oppressive atmosphere all round. As much as possible I tried to get away from it by going outside school, but it followed me, through adults around, kids expectations

and my own head. It all blew up and I know for certain now that institutionalised schooling is not for me. I'm leaving soon even though I've got a good number at Sutton. I'm not disillusioned, but rather because my head and body has developed so much in the past year, I find I cannot find it meaningful to go on. I used to see it before as a struggle, a fight with authority. I often had to close my mind to other teachers (or try to) and pursue my thing with the kids. It used to exhaust me physically and emotionally - the amount of giving was great. Talking, coping, reassuring, touching kids, etc.

Now because I care less about the job (its money I work for first and so do other teachers - many don't seem to realise that. There's lots of kids on the street if they want to relate to kids). I was trapped in the job, like most people are, especially as I had a wife and 3 kids to be the breadwinner for - male role.

I don't find the pressure now of getting a straight job. Searching out my sexist male role and getting together alternative work has enabled me to see through the job.

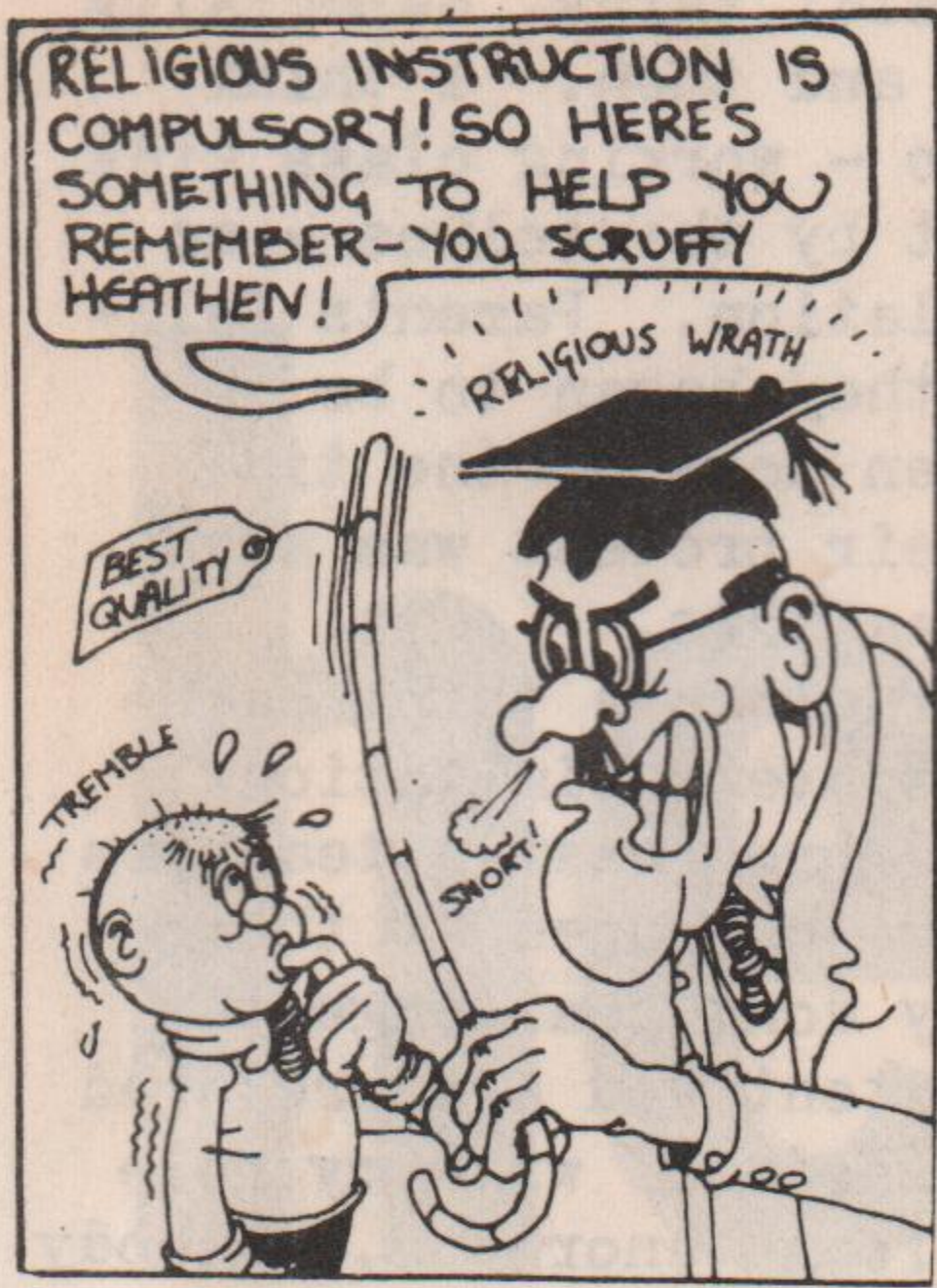
I want to do things with kids still - The old dispensary is becoming the place soon for doing these sorts of things. We didn't like the term 'free school' so we're sticking to the old buildings name here in Nottingham. It was squatted in by mums whose kids were in danger of being knocked down by cars in their street. There wasn't anywhere for them to play. Now they've turned it into a playhouse for their kids and others under 10 years old".

Manuel Moreno

The main points that led to Manuel's suspension and subsequent appearance before the County Education sub-committee were:-

- sabotage and instigating a 5th-year strike
- inadequate control in teaching situations
- encouraging kids to use staff-members christain names
- having a vasectomy during school time
- bad supervision of a school coach outing
- holding an assembly that encouraged children to revolt. Manny was 'second in command' of the social studies and careers dept. The assembly merely pointed out a few of the more obvious aspects of an undesirable class-based society, and what this meant to schoolkids.

Our readers will be interested to know that the staff at Garibaldi have recently voted by 28 to 3 in favour of caning for girls.



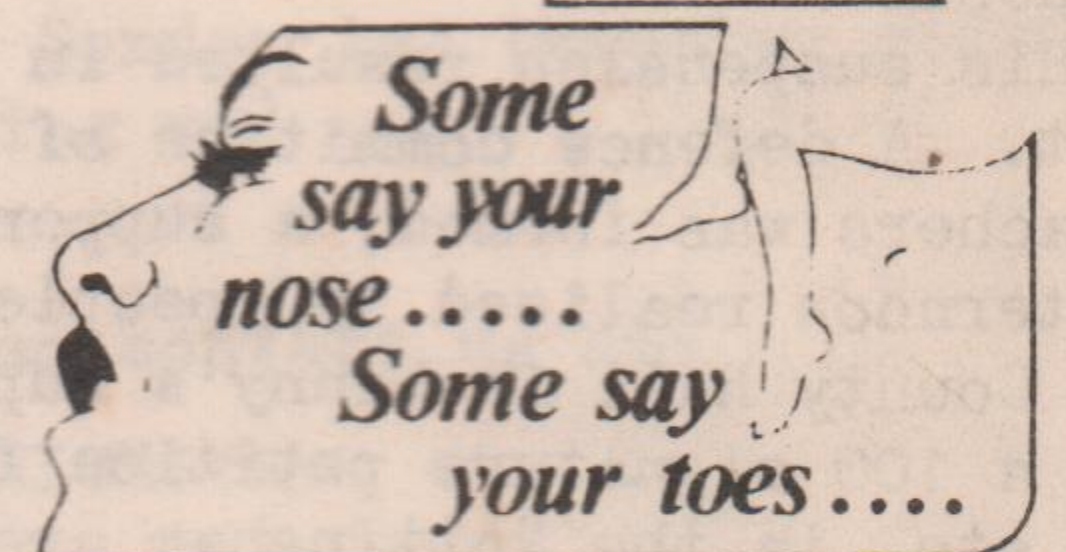
A 25-YEAR-OLD teacher has been suspended following charges that he over-emphasised sex, horror, and death in his history and English classes at Kirrae High School, Sydney. One charge said he read his class a story titled "Sing this at your old school reunion" — then asked them to write an essay on it in which they were to imagine themselves taking the part of a striptease artist sexually assaulted by drunken young men.

According to other charges he twice gave pupils sex lessons without permission and allowed them to perform absurd activities, including rolling peanuts along the footpath with their noses. Denying the charges, he said: "My idea of teaching is to stimulate students, to catch their interest and give them variety."

WHAT'S THE UGLIEST PART OF YOUR BODY?



What's the ugliest part of your body



But I think it's



Blind Trust - contd. from p.18

leader, responsibility for another's safety and guilt if there was an accident; and, for those few who relax completely while blind, a marvellous feeling of freedom and release from decisions. If the pupils spontaneously discuss these emotional aspects, the teacher can help them explore the meaning and significance of their feelings. However, if their discussion remains only with the events, their own avoidance of the emotional components can be pointed out to them.... as a starting point.

In going beyond the concrete experience, some of the concepts from the list can be brought into the discussion. These are easily related to the pupils' experiences with their friends and in their families, in school and community. But the discussion should also get to the workings of the social system and the concrete ways different social institutions handle trust and responsibility. For example, factory workers punch time cards... How are rules related to mistrust?.... family and school rules, safety regulations for food, medicines, traffic, etc. How are immigration laws related to mistrust? Can we imagine what a society would be like if there was complete trust amongst all persons? Is there such a society or group? Are there radical, cultural, social class and national differences in the level of trust amongst the people? Why?....

