

bob james (cont.)

responsible, would have chosen.

Hanging over the whole area of programmed learning is, of course, the spectre of 'success'. That's why programming. But what would a controlled environment look like, if 'success' was up to the learner to determine?

As Mr. Masterton understands it "a free citizen is free to the extent that he can function effectively in his environment." Perhaps when Mr. Masterton has read and thought more on anarchism and B-M theory and can define 'effectively' in words that emphasize autonomy and 'self-image' of the individual learns then he might have another, perhaps more successful, go at what is a potentially fascinating area. I don't think he can put B-M and anarchism together, but I'd be interested to see his attempts.

LOOKING...?

If you are looking for reading matter which arises out of the real world of kids and not the never-never land of Janet & John or the bourgeois utopia of Peter, Jane and the rest of the Ladybird world of friendly cops and vast lawns, then take a look at the material being published by Centreprise (66a Dalston Lane, London, E.8). Following are some notes about some of the material available.

FERNDALE FIRES

A story about the real world of black and white working class kids - a world of ever-rising rents for crappy housing - a grey world of flats which "looked the same, except every family had made their balcony look different" - a world of terrifying fires caused by overturned paraffin stoves - a world of violence - institutional and personal.

The story, adapted by Chris Searle from a play done with some children at Santley Junior School, Brixton, includes poems by some of the kids and is illustrated by Mel. Robinson, another of their teachers. Many of the children live in a block of flats called Ferndale Court and the book is in support of their parents, who were on rent strike and have been on a sit-in at the Lambeth Town Hall demanding central heating for their unheated council flats, following a series of serious paraffin fires. The book attempts to relate the parents' struggle to improve their living conditions to the children's education at school.

Interested in setting up a
LIBERTARIAN STUDENTS NETWORK
please contact A. Richards
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SCOTTISH LIBERTARIAN FEDERATION

lib. Edinburgh Anarchists are organising the next conference of the SLF. All who are interested in attending are invited to write for details to:

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FREEDOM PRESS

FREEDOM anarchist fortnightly, 10p, sub £ 4 per year from 84B Whitechapel High St., London E.1
Freedom Press & Bookshop same address for books etc. on anarchism.

Growing Up

It's factual, it is sane, it is well written. It is 'Growing Up Homosexual' published and printed by Birmingham Gay Education, c/o The Peace Centre, 18, Moor Street, Queensway, Birmingham, B4 7UH. It is good and sensitive: most schools might try to fire teachers who let school students see it.....

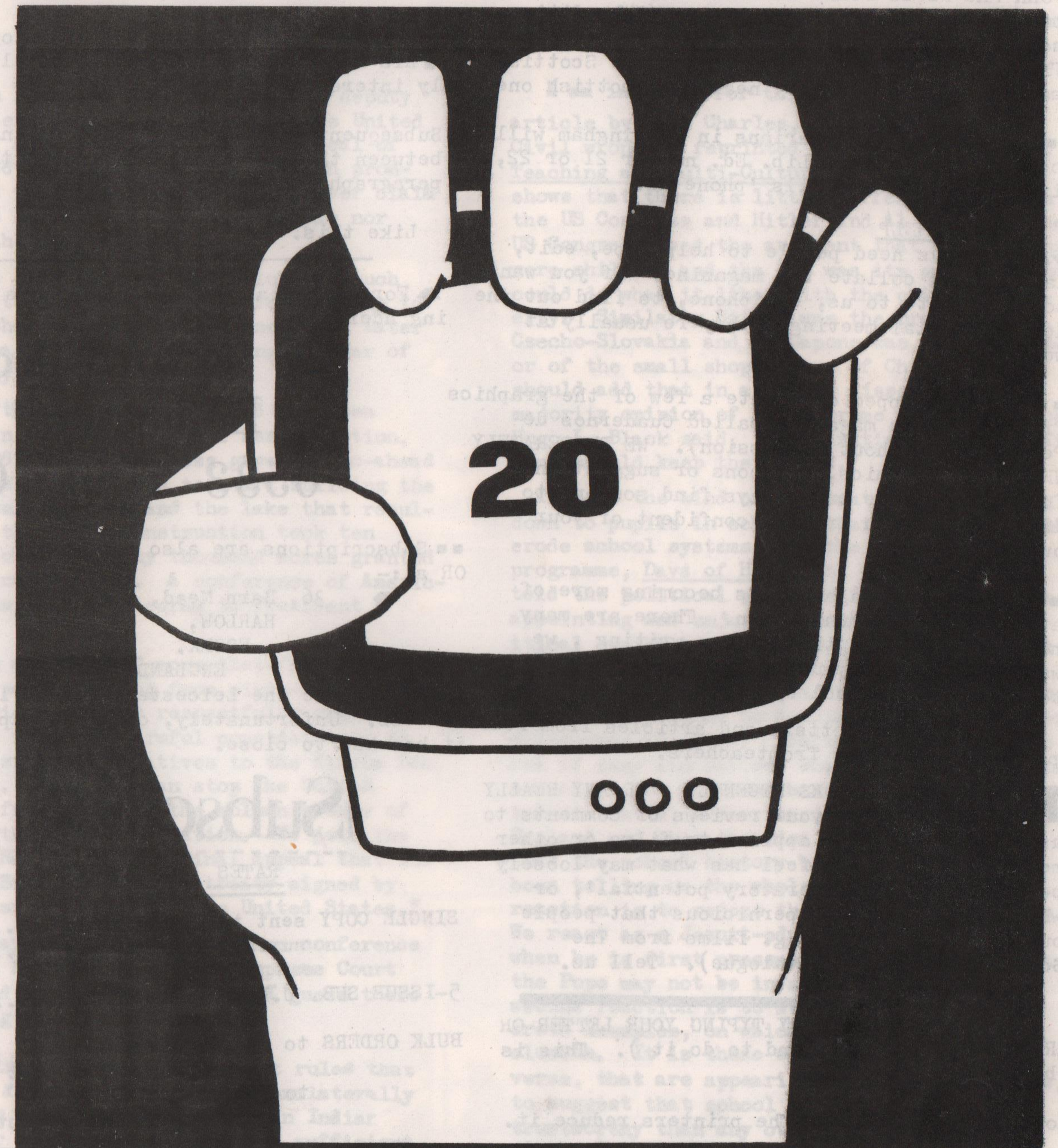
The Writers and Readers Publishing Co operative is an experimental publishing venture that aims, among other things, to provide an outlet for the kind of literature that is difficult to place in the commercial publishing network, and to involve writers in all stages of the production and distribution of their work. It's at 14, Talacre Rd., London N.W. 5.

The magazine 'CAMERAWORK' is published by Half Moon Photography Workshop, 27, Alie Street, London E1. cost 20p. It's v.interesting.

They're specialising in alternative photography techniques; overall strategy is seen in terms of contributing through photography towards social change. They also have an Education Workshop Project..

«Students Look Left!

libertarian education.



media study

pages 6/9

15p

LIB Editorial

THANKYOU - ADRIAN WRAGG for the splendid cover and cartoons in the last issue - we've used two in this issue as well. At present Adrian is undergoing 'education' at Westcotes Secondary School, Leicester... Good Luck and Many Thanks.

■ This was going to be the Dundee edition, but John and Nioll found it hard to get enough material for an exclusively Scottish edition, so they sent what they had to us in Leicester. This edition relies very much on the Scottish material: so it is very nearly a Scottish one.

■ A group of libertarians in Nottingham will be producing either Lib. Ed. number 21 or 22, if you want more details 'phone us.

HELP

■ We always need people to help type, edit, lay out and collate the magazine. If you want to help write to us, or 'phone, to find out the next editorial meeting - they're usually at week-ends.

■ We have ripped off quite a few of the graphics from a Spanish magazine called Cuadernos de Pedagogia (without permission). WE DESPERATELY NEED more graphics, cartoons or suggestions for cartoons: we can always find someone to draw them if you are not confident of your own artistry.

■ At last the magazine is becoming more of a vehicle of communication. There are many more letters this time - keep writing, we want news of how you are surviving in relation to education, school systems, hierarchies etc.

We want more letters and articles from real people, as well as frontteachers.

READ ANY GOOD BOOKS RECENTLY - OR ANY REALLY BAD ONES? Send your reviews or comments to us. Of course this applies to films or other media which you may feel has what may loosely be described as 'liberatory potential', or which you feel is so pernicious that people ought to be warned (e.g. films from The South Africa House catalogue). Tell us.

YOU CAN HELP US BY TYPING YOUR LETTER OR ARTICLE (or get a friend to do it): This is the lay-out we use:-

Column width 10.3 cm. The printers reduce it.

Mistakes at end of line may be crossed out ~~ix~~ - elsewhere use Tipp-Ex, or type line again.

Leave one space after commas, like this.

Leave two spaces after full stops. Like this.

First paragraph of article - leave out first letter and leave three spaces (two spaces only

for the letter I) at the beginning of the first two lines, like this:-

he school has evolved freely from the principles introduced into it by teachers and pupils. In spite of this

When we come to stick up/Letraset the magazine we will put in the initial letter like this:-

The school has evolved freely from the principles introduced into it by teachers and pupils. In spite of this

Example involving the letter I:-

It is not widely known that Tolstoy, amongst his many other activities, was also extremely interested in

Subsequent paragraphs - leave a line gap between the paragraphs and indent the new paragraph two spaces.

Like this.

* *
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■ Subscriptions are also now at the same address, OR at:-

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▲ DO NOT use the Leicester, Black Flag Bookshop address. Unfortunately, owing to capitalism, it has had to close.

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Fraternal greetings to Leicestershire branch of National Union of School Students Magazine, Where it's At: it has managed to upset a few trendies already. We would like to see more School Students Unions news/magazines - please send stuff in.

BOB MACKENZIE WRITES...



On 11th November 1794 the personal deputy of President George Washington of the United States of America placed the Great Seal of the United States on the treaty which promised that the United States would never claim the lands deeded to the Seneca people nor disturb the Seneca Nation.

At that time the new USA nation was much beholden to this Indian tribe for helping to protect them against foreign enemies. Later the Seneca helped the USA during the war of 1812; they were good allies.

Thirty thousand acres of land had been granted in perpetuity to the Seneca nation. But in 1961 the US Congress gave the go-ahead to a corps of engineers to start building the Kinzua Dam. The dam and the lake that resulted from the dam's construction took ten thousand of the thirty thousand acres granted to the Seneca nation. A conference of American Indians sent a telegram to President Kennedy.

"This assembly of more than five hundred Indian people coming from sixty-seven tribes of American Indians respectfully urges you to give full and careful consideration to all possible alternatives to the Kinzua Dam Project. Only you can stop the United States from breaking the solemn treaty of 1794 with the Seneca nation. We join the Seneca Nation in this final appeal that the United States honor the treaty signed by the first president of the United States."

A few days later during a press conference President Kennedy said, "The Supreme Court has passed on the question, so I guess there is nothing more to be done."

It was true. The Supreme Court ruled that the US is free to arbitrarily and unilaterally do away with any treaty with an Indian nation for any reason it may deem sufficient. The ruling was based on an earlier Supreme Court opinion that the relation of American Indians to the United States Government is that of a child to a guardian and that the US Congress is not required to deal with any Indian tribe within the borders of the United States as a governmental entity.

I am indebted for this information to an article by Jack Charles, "The Indian and Civil Wrongs", reprinted in an American book, Teaching and multi-Cultural Populations. It shows that there is little difference between the US Congress and Hitler and Al Capone. The US Congress used the argument that the Indians were children and the USA was its guardian and could do what it liked with the child's property. Similarly Hitler was the protector of Czecho-Slovakia and Al Capone was the protector of the small shopkeepers of Chicago. I should add that in a strong dissent from the majority opinion of the Supreme Court, Justice Hugo L. Black said, "Great nations, like great men, should keep their word."

This is the kind of information percolating down to pupils in schools that is beginning to erode school systems. In the BBC television programme, Days of Hope, the prison chaplain told the political prisoner that, however disappointing and unjust he might think the political system to be, there is a core of truth and justice in it. The education system is based on this belief. It is this belief that for the first time in Scotland is coming under widespread scrutiny. Adults are beginning to ask if they can believe what they were told in schools. But Scotland has been a more deeply indoctrinated, authoritarian country than even England and when the idea first strikes us that the school history books may not have been telling us the whole truth, our first reaction is to reject the idea as unthinkable. We react as a Jesuit-educated student does when he is first presented with the idea that the Pope may not be infallible. The delayed second reaction is to start looking for concrete examples, on which to base a firm conclusion. It is these examples, chapter and verse, that are appearing more frequently now, to suggest that school education is no more trustworthy than any other advertising campaign. The worst that school education is selling is the present organisation of society. The schools, like the prison chaplain, would have us think that there is a certain core of truth and justice in it.

cont.

Similar selling techniques are used. Inconvenient details are not mentioned. The patter of the glib salesman doesn't give the customer time to ask searching questions. This is the purpose of the examination system. The pupil is so busy memorising information that he is left with little opportunity to ask questions. And he is kept at it with the threat that (now more than ever) he won't get a good job unless he gets more and more 'O' grades and higher. You used to get into a bank with three or four 'O' grades; now it's three higher and two 'O' grades. There's inflation here too and we all work harder to stay in the same place.

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," says the Bible. Well, Scottish pupils are a long way from the truth, and a long, long way from being free; but the first erosion of authoritarianism in Scottish schools since education was made compulsory is just beginning to appear. Questions, not articulated before, by pupils, are beginning to be put together. One question leads to another. If we can't trust the schools, what other agencies of indoctrination are there that we should be having a look at? Let's have a squint at the BBC, for example. Are all these so decorous foreign correspondents who speak so persuasively from our radios and screens, are they the dedicated servants of the truth that we had been brought up to believe?

I believe we are on the eve of very great changes. There is the movement towards freedom. In Scottish schools there are the authoritarians already moving to try and re-establish their controls. I think it's going to be a big, confusing battle, particularly since Labour in Scotland is allying itself with the forces of reaction.

I re-read Wordsworth's poem to Toussaint L'Ouverture. The editor's note says that Francois Dominique Toussaint, surnamed L'Ouverture, was governor of St. Domingo, and chief of the African slaves enfranchised by the decree of the French Convention (1794). He resisted Napoleon's edict re-establishing slavery in St. Domingo, was arrested and sent to Paris in June, 1802, and there died after ten months' imprisonment in April, 1805. Wordsworth could be somewhat heavy and pompous at times, but I find a strange comfort and hope in the concluding words of his salute to this freedom-fighter.

There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies.
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

The educational system makes its bow to this kind of poetry. Ode to Liberty, Scots wha Hae, and all that, trying to insulate poetry from the realities of ordinary life and force it into a kind of posh culture remote from pupils in the comprehensive prisonhouses of Scottish state schools in 1976. But what the pupils are beginning to realise is that Wordsworth was

speaking to them. The authoritarians work in different ways at different times; in one century they are responsible for the back-breaking of slaves in St. Domingo, in another century for the mind-bending of pupils in Scotland. But we have great allies.



Another Bad Job:

Beginners Luck?

After a few months, part-time, pretending to educate in a comprehensive, I realize that libertarian education principles are not just desirable, they may be unavoidable. But to be paradoxical the old problem of "how to be libertarian" does seem to be obstructed by the State System.

The Teachers Learn Most:
The first lesson I had was to see that no concessions are made by teachers. 'Concessions' merely recognize a changed situation. Is this your best hope?

You do very little teaching. Most of the time is spent attracting attention, cooling a dozen more important conversations, and writing notes for visits to toilets- or what have you. Is teaching 1% of the time?

Far too many kids prosper much better under a tight regime, they're so used to being manipulated that they loathe parting with their ideas or being participative.

The more one seeks to force class participation, the more resentment there is. You're still a bore.

A Strategy
That should be enough, but then what of the staff? I feel it is time libertarian teachers adopted a common appeal to identify with and agitate for. Some sort of coherent campaign.

- Firstly and directly:
- 1) lower the school leaving age to 14 immediately.
 - 2) concentrate on the 3 R.s to make the product capable of holding its own in capitalist society.
 - 3) make adult education a priority
 - 4) make re-entry to school instruction simpler and at no personal loss to the individual (i.e. full unemployment benefit, etc.)
 - 5) reduce comprehensive school size. (Hardly anarchism, just a reaction to an insane system.)

- Secondly and more subtly:
- 1) phase out lecturing/collective teaching
 - 2) encourage a reputation as a source of information- a question answerer.
 - 3) refuse to police thefts and squabbles between pupils.
 - 4) allow enthusiastic/more able kids to escape harassment.
 - 5) actively encourage working together, fight competition.
 - 6) remain authoritarian on matters of damage to school equipment.

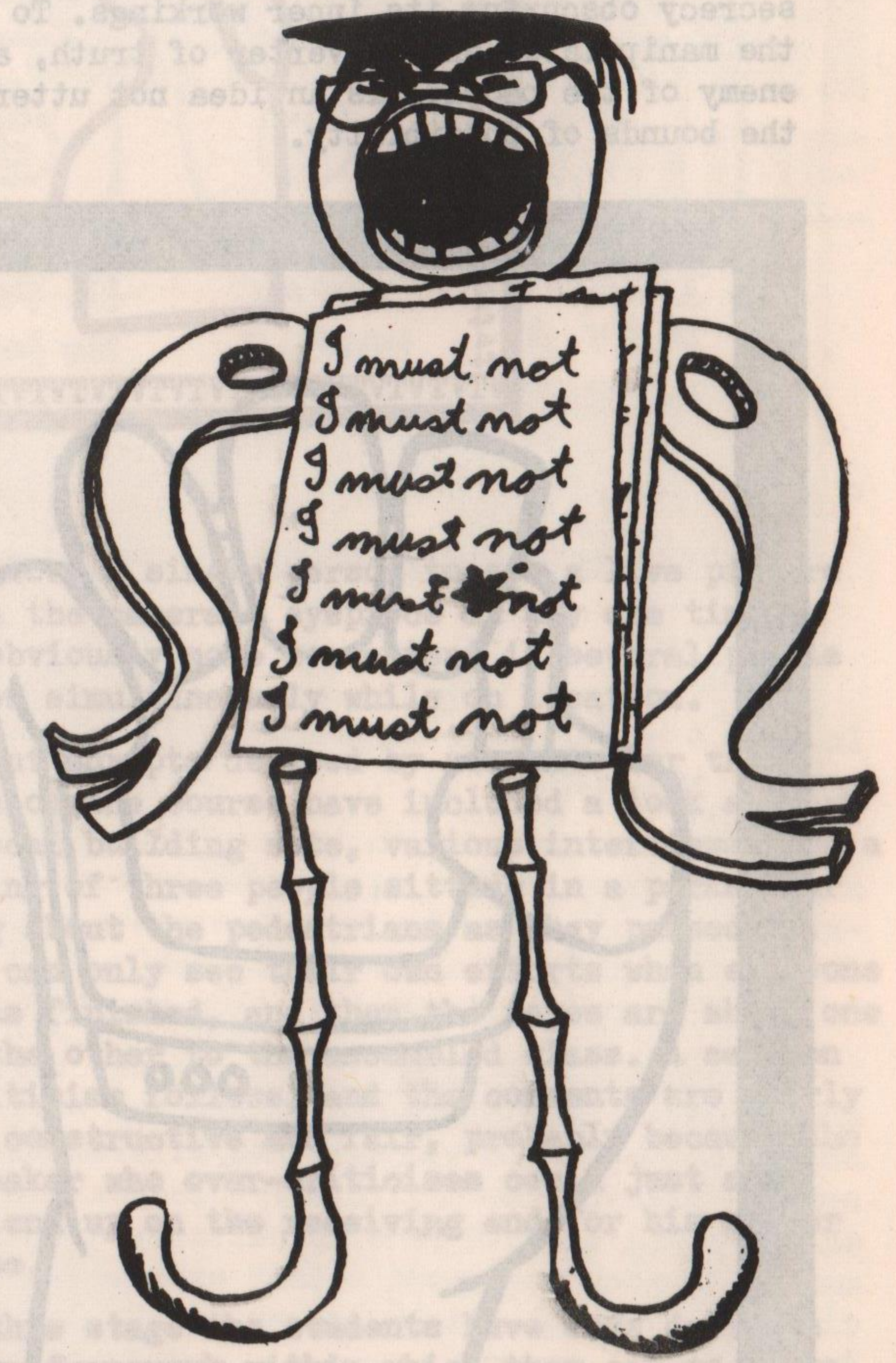
That's not very revolutionary

Perhaps not. Doing a job, rather than actively subverting it, is what most of us are doing. Let's admit it. Our work is as much with our colleagues as with kids, and we need to present a set of ideas. So far they've had far more to tell me.

Some areas I haven't considered (e.g. school councils/democracy generally. Unions I have no experience of - I really only want to break the ice.)

Our mere advantage of knowledge puts us in authority, but I never expected riots nor even to love the kids, but it's happened. It shouldn't be necessary even in this system.

julian turner

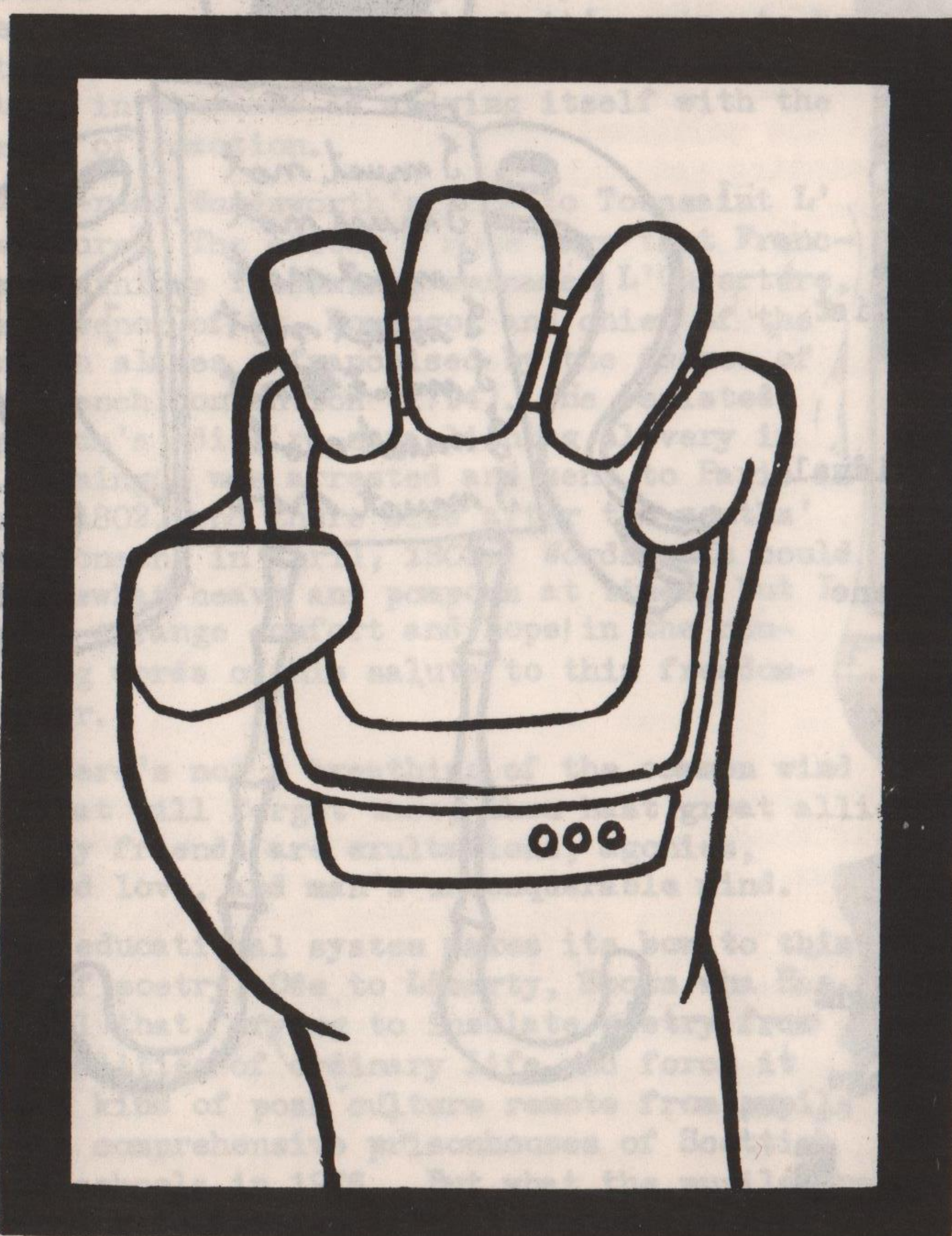


TV RULES OK?

Over the past few years I have tried to devise courses in TV studies designed for students who would not normally have the opportunity of examining the subject at either a theoretical or, more importantly, practical level.

By now the reasons for introducing such areas of media study employing video are well established and accepted in the minds of a significant, if still minority group of educationists. The growing sense of visual literacy among the young, paralleled by a distinct animosity towards the written and printed word, has been clearly observed. Cinema and TV screens enjoy the attentive gaze of more young people than the pages in books do. TV has that contemporary relevance which creates a high degree of motivation in students, so often lacking when dealing with print media.

Equally important is the sheer ignorance most people display when it comes to considering what lies behind this incessant flow of images. The most powerful mass medium ever known not only claims the devotions of so many, but it is questioned by so few. The inside world of TV has remained largely hidden; a veil of almost religious secrecy obscuring its inner workings. To see TV as the manipulator and perverter of truth, as the enemy of the people, is an idea not utterly beyond the bounds of possibility.



The passivity of the uncritical viewer can be undermined by putting him or her in a practical relationship with the means of TV production. Learning through doing is a highly efficient educator.

These thoughts formed the context in which I began to construct suitable courses. The students involved were mainly on day-release at a Tech.; they included motor vehicle mechanics, computer programmers, carpenters and civil engineers, mostly aged between sixteen and twenty-one.

What follows is a summary of the kind of course I came up with. To start off the process the students are encouraged to discuss the TV output they already watch. Through these sessions various pieces of information of which they may be unaware are introduced; for instance the regional structure of ITV companies and the departmental divisions within each organisation.

The merits of World in Action might be compared to the style and attitudes of Panorama, which is, incidentally, a programme frequently cited for its regular assaults on the heights of serious boredom. Many other points arise. What is meant by the politicians' appeal to the 'national interest'? How balanced is the 'balanced view' which TV is always supposed to adopt? Who are the 'moderates, the militants and the silent majority'? Why was Till Death Us Do Part such a successful and controversial series? Are police stories put on as a PR exercise to help cover up their real functions? And so on. In this open-ended fashion the students are able to exchange views and opinions, while at the same time they are soaking up new knowledge which inevitably flows into the conversation.

Having started with the familiar and scratched the surface of the subject, the group then moves on to consider how a TV programme is made. Rather than give a lecture the picture is gradually built up through question and answer. What is the difference between a film and electronic (TV) camera? How is a production gallery organised? What is an autocue? Why does the newsreader's hair often sparkle where it meets the surrounding caption? What is a director's job? The questions develop naturally, deriving from an intense curiosity, which itself grows as more and more aspects are explained. A video tape of a broadcast TV programme is shown and a short section is taken and analysed shot by shot. This is also illustrated in script form so the students gain an understanding of the shorthand relating to TV work. ➤

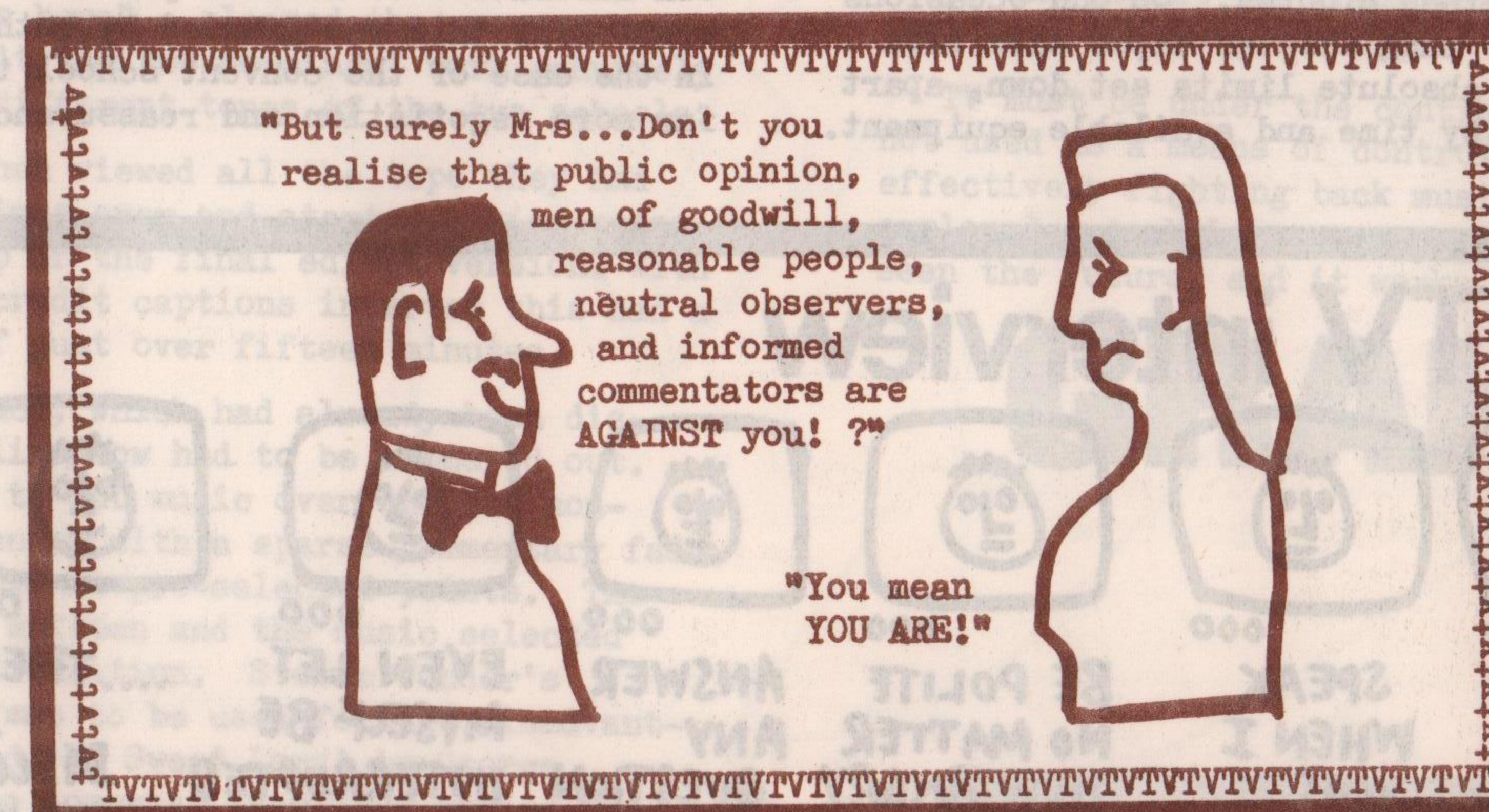


Following on closely comes the first practical demonstration of some video gear. A simple studio interview situation is usually the format chosen, using a portable video tape recorder (VTR) and camera linked to a large monitor. (These portable units cost about £1,000, which may sound a lot, but over a life of four years with regular use is not such a bad deal.)

A set is arranged with flats, table and chairs, a table microphone and three or four portable lights. The camera with a zoom lens is mounted on a tripod, and the live picture appears on the monitor so that everyone can see clearly. The equipment is basically explained and then the group discusses the details relating to how the interview can best be shot. The participants out front are chosen and they concentrate on finding a suitable subject to talk on. The rest of the group deal with such matters as camera position, seating

The use of portable units in natural locations tends to bring the better results, and this is what the students are then asked to work on. Small sub-groups of four to six members are formed and each goes on to prepare a rough script outline for a short sequence to be shot outside near to the college. For the first time the students are working largely on their own and it is crucial that they are allowed to discover and explore an idea by themselves, and are not merely the objects of a constant flow of directives emanating from the teacher. This exercise, which leaves the students complete freedom of choice, takes a couple of hours planning followed by another hour for producing the tape.

For this learning purpose it is far better to have a portable unit (or portapak) which has a small monitor attached to the VTR - like the Akai VT110. Unfortunately the more popular equipment



arrangements and lighting. Hopefully after half-an-hour of debate and preparation the interviewer has his questions sketched out and everyone else has some idea of their rôle in the operation.

A four to six minute interview is taped and immediately replayed for comment, and then the whole procedure is repeated with people doing different jobs. Although students are often initially a shade wary of appearing on screen, soon after the obligatory jokes and laughter have subsided most settle down and accept it for what it is. In a few isolated instances individuals have been unable to overcome their fears, and in such cases it is of fundamental importance that no one should be forced to appear against their wishes.

The next step is to show the class how a two camera set-up operates with vision and sound mixers, explaining some of the special effects that are possible. Personally I find studio work too inflexible and unrewarding at this level, except as an illustrative exercise. All too often the technical element can come to dominate everything else and lead to confusion.

only allows a single person to see a live picture through the camera's eyepiece at any one time. It is obviously more convenient if several people can view simultaneously while on location.

Recent scripts devised by students for this section of the course have included a look at work on a local building site, various interviews, and a recording of three people sitting in a parked car talking about the pedestrians as they passed by. Groups can only see their own efforts when everyone else has finished, and then the tapes are shown one after the other to the assembled class. A session for criticism follows, and the comments are nearly always constructive and fair, probably because the speaker who over-criticises could just as easily end up on the receiving end for his or her own tape.

By this stage the students have some definite and firm framework within which they can go on to attempt a more ambitious project. But before this they see the finished work of former participants on the course, and as always closely argued group discussion follows. Points which may have been

TV

glossed over or inadequately understood can now be properly examined. Some students might want to follow up a particular interest in sound dubbing and the use of music, others with simple graphics or perhaps interviewing techniques.

Up to this point the students have undergone a process which is a mixture of practical exercises, straightforward instruction, and above all repeated sessions of group discussion and criticism. It is this last ingredient which gels the whole programme together: intense communication brings about critical standards which in themselves are an excellent basis for understanding.

The students now elect for programme groups which go on to plan and produce a tape that will last from ten to fifteen minutes. On odd occasions much longer and also much shorter tapes have been made - there are no absolute limits set down, apart from those dictated by time and available equipment.

further it emerged that the group felt a presentation which offered a view of two very different types of school, one with all the advantages and the other with precious few, would highlight most effectively the contrasts they were trying to capture.

Soon the idea was developed to the point where two likely schools had been chosen as suitable. The first one was a state primary situated in the middle of an area that had been long designated for slum clearance. The school buildings were late Victorian and the intake was about half black. The choice for the privileged counter-part was an all girls, direct grant, convent school set in a leafy, middle class suburb near the university. Its intake, with one or two exceptions, was overwhelmingly white.

The students approached the schools on their own initiative to ask for permission to film, and eventually this was granted by both headteachers. In the case of the convent school this required far more negotiation and reassurance. The precise

The actual filming followed this plan very closely. The first interview was extremely informal with the interviewer talking to a large group of children, several of whom wandered in, out and across the conversation. For the second only one subject appeared - an eight year old West Indian boy. The final sequence was of the school coming out for playtime and of the children milling around the front iron gate as the camera pulled back to a wide-angle shot.

A similar procedure was followed at the convent school, but here the students were not free to choose who they wanted to interview - this choice was made for them by the authorities. The tennis courts and gardens with all of the pupils in precise uniform provided excellent material. An interview with a senior master - "We have definite moral standards here" - pleased the group very much. They felt the two mornings' work genuinely reflected the different tones of the two schools.

The group then viewed all the tape they had shot several times over and started making notes for the make-up of the final edited version. With the title and credit captions inserted this had a running-time of just over fifteen minutes.

The soundtrack, which had already been discussed in outline, now had to be hammered out. It was decided to dub music over all the non-interview sequences with a sparse commentary fading in over this at pre-selected points. The commentary was written and the music selected after great deliberation. Stevie Wonder's 'Ghetto Child' was to be used for the disadvantaged school and 'My Sweet Lord' by George Harrison was the somewhat facetious choice for the convent school. At the very end of the programme John Lennon's 'Imagine' was used over intercut shots of both schools with the flatly spoken comment: "Two schools. One society. Is it fair?"

The sound dubbing was simply executed using a record player with the commentator holding his script and microphone in front of it. Someone else gave him his cues as the video tape ran through. And so, at last, the project was finished.

Most groups produce their programmes in the same way - or at least following this general pattern. The sense of pride and loyalty which nearly all of the groups display towards their production at the final screening for the whole class is quite remarkable. Over many hours and through many weeks of work the group has managed to create a piece of TV which is their very own. Not only has something tangible been produced - although in many senses the substance of the final tape in itself is largely irrelevant - but a collection of people have had to discuss, plan and put into effect a relatively sophisticated operation. On the way there they have learned a great deal about TV and perhaps this will help

them become more discerning and aware in their future TV viewing. Naturally at the final screening there is ample opportunity for comment and criticism on the presentations. And with this the course is completed.

I shall end where I began: TV is an immensely powerful mass medium. It can be used for the greater good or something very much less laudable, which is the case for the most part now. The more people who have some understanding of how it works, the less likely it will be misused. Maybe the type of video courses I have mentioned will become a standard part of every youngsters' school timetable in the not too distant future. They certainly need a deeper knowledge and understanding of the visual media in order to be able to recognise and combat its commercial excesses and insidious elitist ideology.

TV must be under the control of the people, and not used as a means of controlling them. Ways of effectively fighting back must be thoroughly explored. As McLuhan once said of video: "I have seen the future, and it works."

GRAHAM WADE

the TV interview



In fact I have only a single portapak to use for most of the time.

A programme made as their main project piece by a group of Post Office telecommunications technicians is a reasonably representative example of the kind of work which is undertaken. What follows is a brief record of how that tape was produced.

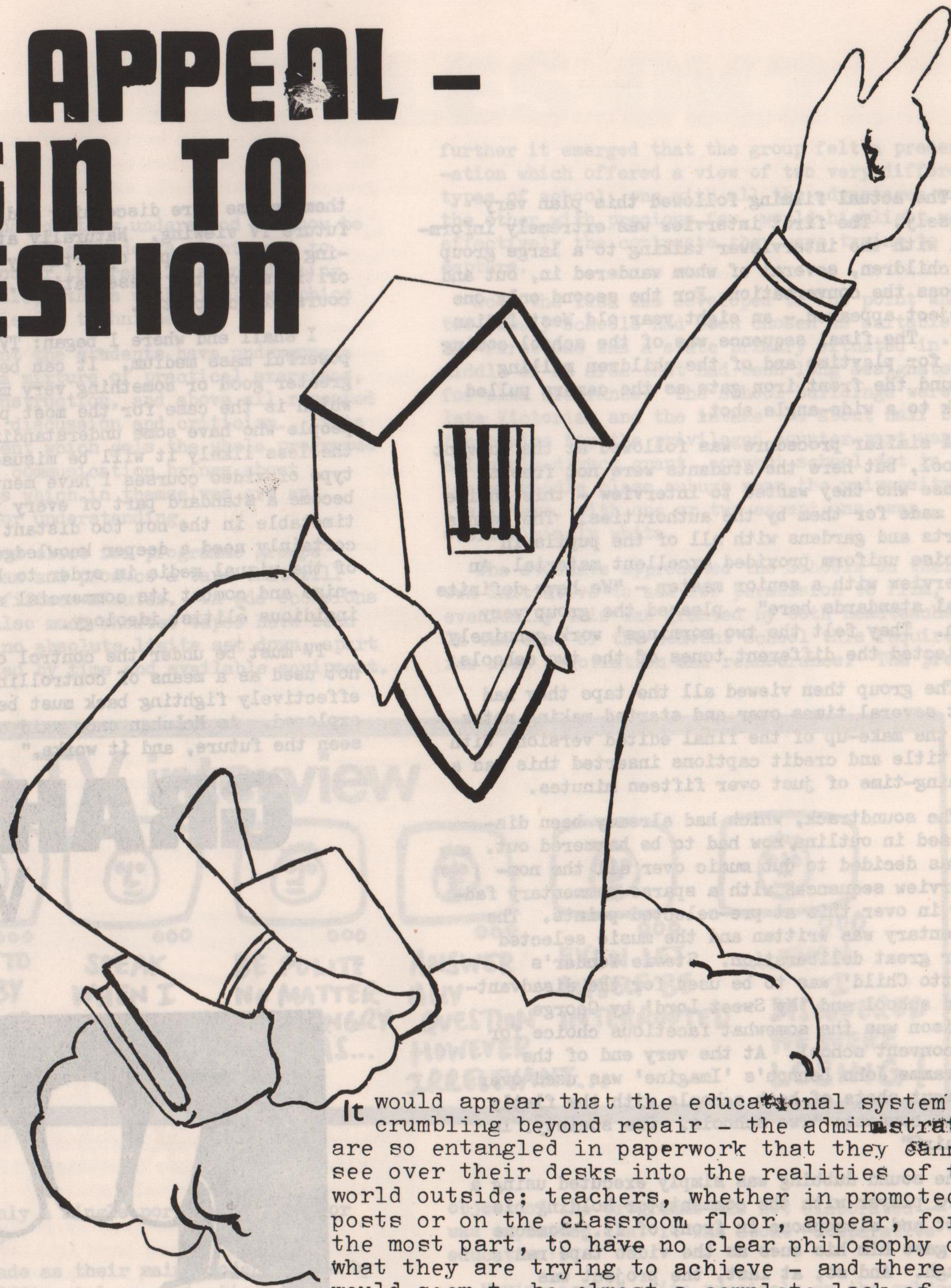
The original idea this group had was to make a documentary piece which would show the basic social and economic inequalities existing in our country today. The preliminary discussions were mainly taken up with finding suitably striking material which portrayed either extreme wealth or dire poverty: the cliché images of the Rolls-Royce and the tramp.

This line of approach seemed to be leading to a dead end, when during a discussion on the structure of society it was suggested that the most central factor in determining where you ended up in the social pile was education. Exploring this avenue

object of the programme was not elaborated - it was explained that it was about 'comparative education'!

Having agreed quite precisely on the subject matter, the title was then chosen, with the weight of opinion falling behind 'The Unacceptable Face of Capitalism'. (This was 1973-4.) Someone was delegated to design this title caption as well as prepare the end credits, which finished up being done in white Letraset on a plain black backing. The outline shooting script for the first section of the programme was conceived and this comprised various general impression shots of the area surrounding the working-class school: the derelict sites, the roaming dogs and the gas-works. These would lead up to an exterior view of the school itself. The following interior shots were to cover the children at work in the classrooms and two set interviews.

AN APPEAL - BEGIN TO QUESTION



It would appear that the educational system is crumbling beyond repair - the administrators are so entangled in paperwork that they cannot see over their desks into the realities of the world outside; teachers, whether in promoted posts or on the classroom floor, appear, for the most part, to have no clear philosophy of what they are trying to achieve - and there would seem to be almost a complete lack of questioning of the conformities and restrictions imposed by the bureaucrats for their own financial and organisational convenience.

Teachers in general are a very conformist breed within what is perhaps one of society's most conforming institutions. It is of vital importance that this state of affairs changes and that teachers begin to question not only what they are doing to the people in their charge, (too many teachers appear to have no respect or regard for children as individuals, rather they see children as a mysterious and often slightly inferior breed to be kept apart from the rest of humanity) but teachers must also question the very function of their profession.

by
galileo

It seems to me to be incredible that so many 'eminent' and 'respected' individuals never see past the blackboards, the textbooks, and the paperwork, in order to question the overall aim they themselves wish to achieve within the bureaucratic and mis-managed cogwheels of the educational system. Nevertheless this is the frightening reality with which we must come to terms and try to reform.

Even more horrifying is the complacency which most of the teaching profession appear to have with regard to the general functions of education within our society. Throughout time, most, if not all, educational systems have been developed in order to channel individuals into the conformities of the society as it existed in a particular era. We are all acquainted with the experiences of Galileo, who was suppressed when he did not conform to the ideas which the educated in his society acknowledged as being 'true' - "There was never any doubt that Galileo would be silenced, because the division between him and those in authority was absolute. They believed that faith should dominate; and Galileo believed that truth should persuade", as Bronowski explains to us. However, we often cannot see far enough past this anecdote in order to appreciate that we are often trying very hard to stunt divergent thinking on the part of the children in our care. Faith in 'the authorities' is not enough - we must question them

constantly. Things have not changed much since the time of Galileo in-as-much as 'difficult' or nonconforming children are regarded as being in the wrong - too rarely do we see further than this and too infrequently do we consider why those children are 'difficult' or 'discontented'

Not only is this a most incredible waste of potential, it is tragic in an even wider sense, as I have already hinted - we are refusing to recognise even our most obvious mistakes, and we are alienating millions of children from education and learning, as a result of our narrow, naive, and often unthinking definition of the word 'Education'.

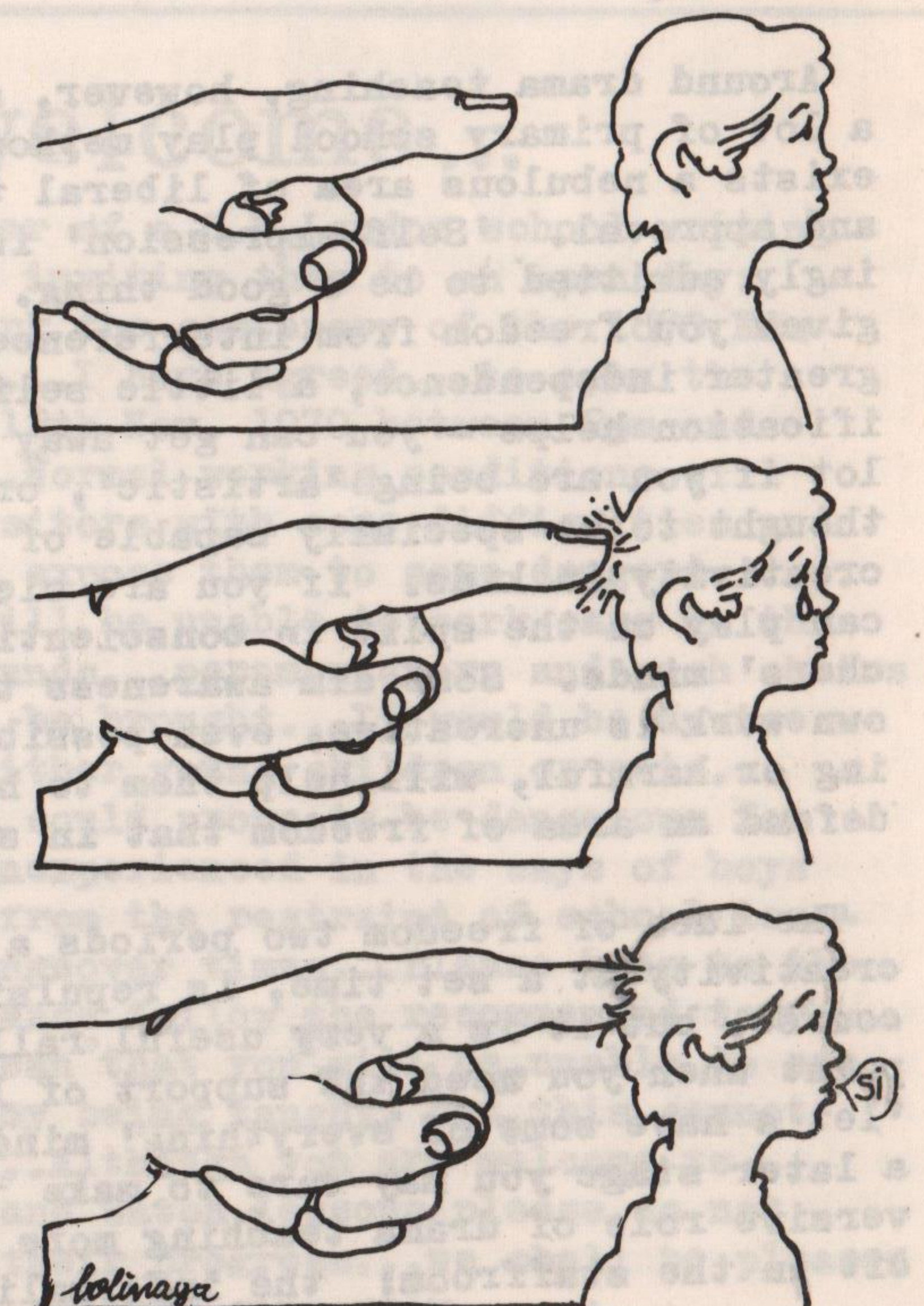
This is the basis of my plea to parents, teachers, administrators, and all others who consider themselves in any way responsible towards the society in which we live. Start to question what you are doing to your children, your pupils, or to the society in which you live by your unquestioning obedience to and acceptance of the institutions of Education - whether they be the Home, the School, the Church, or any of the institutions which are inexorably intertwined with those often 'respectable' but subversive 'mainstays' of our society. This question affects YOU in whatever position you hold within society. It is YOUR responsibility to think about this question and to take action for your own sake, and for the benefit of the society in which you live.

School got you down?



Then bring it down!

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BUT MEANWHILE.



SUBVERSIVE DRAMA

Our generation's just about had it. Old at twenty - just a few of us left, living as best we can, signing our own death warrants by beginning to believe 'it's up to the next generation', and beginning to sacrifice ourselves for them, especially in the schools. Resignation and self-sacrifice in favour of the kids is actually self-defeating. How can we stay living and pass on our real learning, our enjoyment, if we live inside the shell of 'teacher' with all the assumptions it embodies, particularly about our relationship to the children? Will they notice our good intentions? Do we believe that the choices we make in order to be able to be radical tomorrow, at the cost of being radical today, will ever radicalize anyone?

The organization of the school and its ideology divide the kids and set them against one another. There is virtually no contact between pupils in different years, and there are vast protective networks of censorship and screening. The kids' own culture is quite different. Pop music and underground culture are the main influences which turn kids on, away from the rat race and the profit motive, to a freer kind of life. 'OZ' was read widely in schools - no wonder they busted it for the 'School Kids' issue, which was said to corrupt the young. Yet many critical and intelligent children are untouched by this. They rest on the system's carefully induced sense of cultural arrogance - a superb ideological prop to maintain fear of the physical and communal.

Around drama teaching, however, as around a lot of primary school play methods there exists a nebulous area of liberal tolerance and approval. 'Self-expression' is grudgingly admitted to be a good thing. This gives you freedom from interference. For greater independence, a little self-mystification helps - you can get away with a lot if you are being 'artistic', or are thought to be specially capable of inducing creativity in kids. If you are clever, you can play on the split in conscientious teachers' minds. Some dim awareness that their own work is uncreative, even possibly boring or harmful, will help them to help you defend an area of freedom that in spite of

The idea of freedom two periods a week, creativity at a set time, is repulsive of course, but it is a very useful rallying point when you need the support of liberal 'let's have some of everything' minds. At a later stage you may care to make the subversive role of drama teaching more explicit in the staffroom; the informality ero-

ding the 'teacher-pupil relationship', the permission to make noise (we're rehearsing the crowd scene, headmaster...), the erosion of the idea that lessons are what you have to do, whereas you do what you want to do 'out of school' (the firm's) time'. Further, improvisation provides possibilities for satirical and critical thinking, the losing of inhibitions (teachers who take a class the next period after drama may have noticed this already), and the sense of being able to get on without the teacher. Beyond the imposed limits of his own lessons, the drama teacher can encourage, say, history teachers to stage re-enactments of trials and battles, or French teachers to deal with the real interests of the kids during their conversation periods instead of side-tracking them into the world of vacances, cahiers et M. Dupont. The way to extend this influence is not to declare yourself 'radical', but simply to spread good ideas. Instead of being explicitly ideological, use the prevailing concepts like 'project-work', which, if properly interpreted, embody some of the essential ideas. This is all part of the smokescreen you will probably need. Perhaps only when you have moved some staff to teach more creatively can an open confrontation be useful.



"I'm not subversive"

LUXURY

The other side of the coin to drama teaching is that it is still seen as something of a luxury optional extra ('the cultural life of the school'). This means that can be dropped just like that. Not, of course, that when sacked you meekly obey their definitions and go away, banished from seeing any of those kids again. Rather, all the extra-curricular activity you have built up during the run you had will now be tested. If it was good, no kid will let you go from the area. You should by this time have made a firm ally of the art teacher, who is slightly more difficult to shift as he has examinations in his subject. Now you begin work on that play about a school which is taken over by its pupils, if you haven't

done it already - that is, if they have done it already*.

Teaching inside the schools is not the only way to use drama subversively. Here are two more.

Working as a schools touring company

Several repertory theatres employ eight to ten actors to do this work, sometimes with grants from the Arts Council. If the core of a college theatre group stayed together after graduating, it could feasibly sell itself as a package deal of people who have experience in working together. A group at Sheffield, for example (Theatre Vanguard) take new plays produced by students round to school audiences. There are several independent groups who make a living this way, but they largely serve to relieve the tedium of chasing fish imagery through the footnotes in 'O' level Shakespeare periods, and their basic function is to make the boredom more palatable. Their minds are as rotten with 'the topic' approach as most teachers'. The value of visiting schools, then, might not be the good you can actually do in an hour or two there and then, but that you might make sufficient contact to interest the kids in coming along to your theatre workshop on Saturday mornings, where you will have much more scope.

guerilla theatre

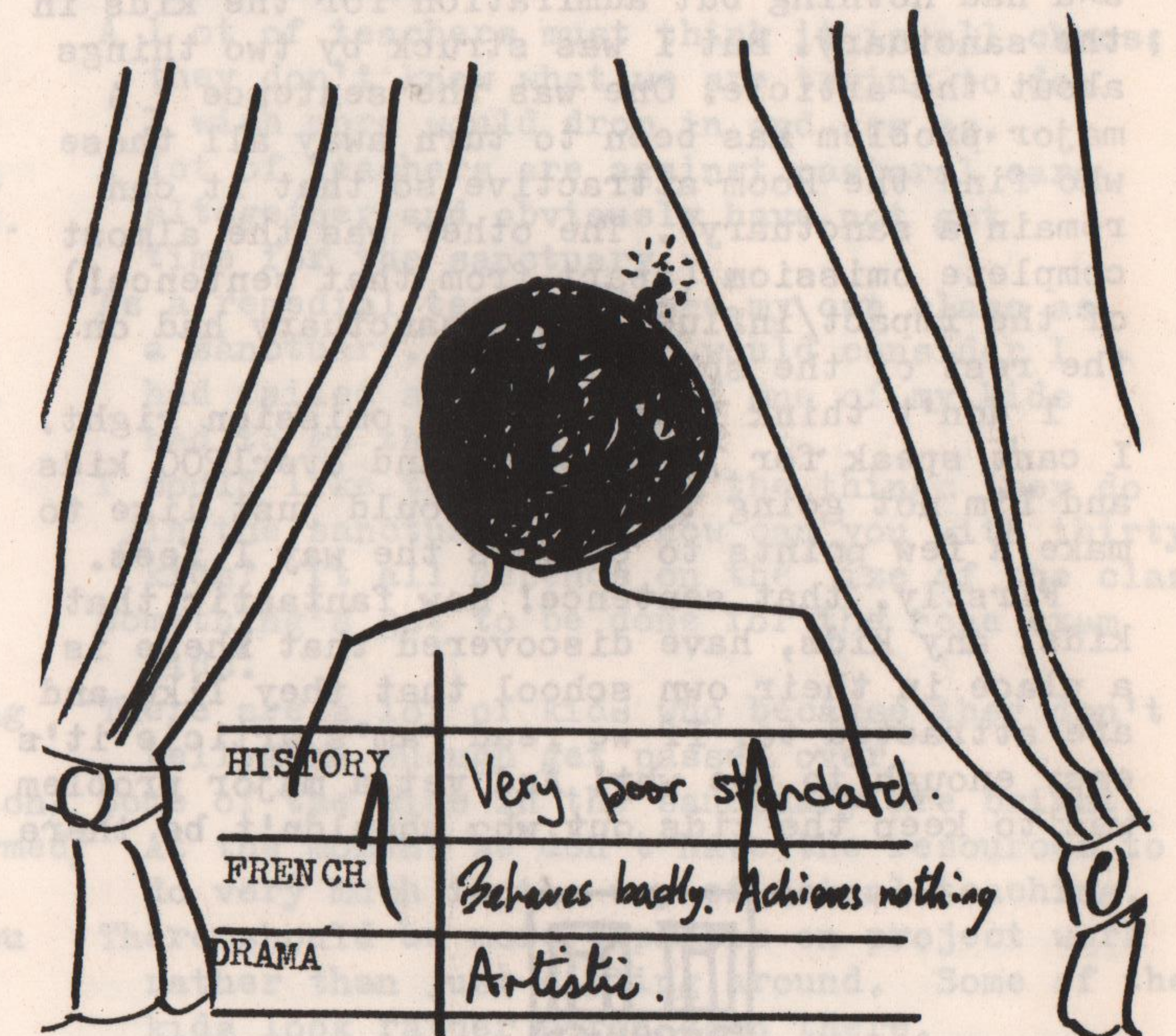
The other method is guerilla theatre in school playgrounds. Student groups and senior Schools Action Union groups have tried this - see Radical Arts and OZ (School Kids issue) for scripts and report of their reception. Often the fuzz are called in, as, like the Pope, headmasters are peculiarly prone to the idea that kids are being indoctrinated with harmful ideas.

One script developed the metaphor of The Academic Stakes: the setting is Braintree racecourse, the action takes place over ten years and three principal fences; actors mime horses while a bookie banter with the audience. Obviously these work best in secluded areas in large playgrounds. These occasions, again, open up lines of contact to be developed under other circumstances, which is a matter of discussing in a friendly, non-educational manner most of the time. One of the best tactics is to incorporate any staff member who starts ordering you off the premises into the play: an actor playing an authoritarian teacher telling the actual teacher to keep quiet and sit down or he'll be punished has quite delightful effects.

The immense value of drama as a means of criticising the system is that it confronts the entire life style of the institution. Political work which limits itself to a critique of the prefect system and a call

for students to run the system reflects the organisational obsessions of the existing system. Alternatively, merely to promote healthy, enjoyable 'leisure' activities/hobbies/sports as some kind of antidote, is to help maintain the repressive idea that 'work' and 'leisure' are and should be separate areas. What we ought to be working for, and what can be done through drama, is to help develop a different sense of time that relates to the internal momentum of what you're doing and not to external pressures.

jock phistle



welcome...

Headmaster of a S.W. London school writing to parents inviting them to an open day: 'To mark the centenary of the 1870 Education Act...I have agreed...to open the school on 12th Nov. 1970 between 2pm and 4pm only...Normal working conditions will provide visitors with some difficulties and could also expose them to some danger..... Visitors will be unable to park cars in the school grounds...perambulators and push chairs should not be brought...It would be unwise to bring either young children or pets... Staircases could prove to be dangerous for visitors inexperienced in the ways of boys unleashed from the restraint of school lessons at changeover times...Please keep to the right...Please follow the recommended tours... This may mean that you will be unable to see your own boy being taught, but this cannot be helped...Although you are welcome to listen to and watch lessons please do not interrupt their progress...we shall be pleased to see you...Yours sincerely.....'

RETURN OF THE SANCTUARY

jean fitzpatrick

I work at the same school as Pam Partington the teacher in charge of the sanctuary unit (see Lib. Ed. no. 17). I agreed with her views and had nothing but admiration for the kids in the sanctuary. But I was struck by two things about the article. One was the sentence "A major problem has been to turn away all those who find the Room attractive so that it can remain a sanctuary". The other was the almost complete omission (apart from that sentence!) of the impact/influence the sanctuary had on the rest of the school.

I don't think I can put the omission right. I can't speak for 70 teachers and over 1200 kids and I'm not going to try. I would just like to make a few points to express the way I feel.

Firstly, that sentence! How fantastic that kids, any kids, have discovered that there is a place in their own school that they like and are attracted to. If we read Pam's article it's easy enough to see why! And yet a major problem was to keep the kids out who shouldn't be there



Who should be there enjoying that kind of environment, those kind of activities? If we look around at the 'alternatives' that have been set up by L.E.A.s (in their infinite wisdom as enlightened despots - or as a last ditch stand before the floods) the kids who attend them all have more or less the same odious labels attached to them: they are kids 'at risk', 'in care', 'deprived', 'maladjusted', 'e.s.n.', 'disruptive', - the jargon is all too familiar. But how lucky these kids are in many ways. The powers that be saw they were in trouble, needed help and in many cases provided the right help. I know Pam would have agreed that the sanctuary at our school is still an embryo - the plans she had for the future (if personal reasons had not carried her off to Australia) included outings, projects not necessarily based at school, real education through experience; real learning through finding out what's in you, what you are.

K. Back to the kids who hang around the sanctuary, wanting entry, but like in a Kafka novel being told that although this is the right door, it is not for them and is shut in their faces. So where do they go? A lot of them go back to their natural sanctuary, the school loos. Or perhaps, they'll find an out-of-the-way corner to linger in before they are discovered. Or maybe they'll wander the corridors, just putting off the evil hour they know must come when they are yanked back into class or return there sheepishly themselves, mumbling some excuse for being late. Still there is only 15 minutes left of the lesson to go now and then the ritual-like wanderings can begin again - and then it's dinner time anyway.

What impact has the sanctuary had then? on curriculum development in general I would say hardly any. Yet we do have meetings, both formal and informal to discuss what changes might be desirable. Again and again some of us say that those who will never even scrape a pass at CSE are getting a rough deal. Some say the options the kids are given don't really catch their interests. And anyway it's quite likely that some of the more interesting options for the "less academic" kids, like craft or woodwork, might not have teachers to take them: so I'm afraid it'll have to be history or physics. Not so bad, eh? What's that you say? Your teachers say you're hopeless at reading and arithmetic? Well, er, um, see me about it tomorrow, will you, I, er.... I have never heard it mentioned that we might like to consider what the sanctuary is doing in trying to find a way out of the dilemma.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Continued.....

Brighter Kids and the SANCTUARY

The brighter kids may get on all right, in the conventional meaning of "getting on" at school. There seems to be a large grey area in the middle - nice enough kids and not particularly bright, not disruptive, yes, rather noisy, who plod along, occasionally enjoying the odd bit of English, maths or geography. When they go, even the teacher near to despair can feel elated. Imagine how kids must feel when they are inspired by or interested in something. Perhaps they do get like this and are engrossed in something when the bell goes and it is time for musical chairs once again. What's next? Ugh! I hate that.

I'm not quite naive enough to think that a set up like the sanctuary has all the answers. But in a system of compulsory education it must have a lot more to offer the school in general than many people will give it credit for. What's the answer? more money for education to improve the pupil/teacher ratio - I mean really improve it. At our school it's something like 18:1. That does not help the teachers who find they have classes of up to 35. But then we all know how the ratios are worked out. But it's not just a question of money. Many teachers could not stand teaching an integrated day. They want to teach their subjects. What? You say the French revolution/matrices/land use in Action/how coal is formed/the use of the apostrophe (delete where applicable does not interest you! What do you mean your dad didn't like school either? I expect he is earning more than you and me, that's very true. But money isn't everything. Is he happy? Yes, I remember I said yesterday that I was not very happy.... Open your books at page forty five. Phew!

Other Teachers

So what do other people think at my school? I steeled myself and started asking a few people that question (well conversations on this plane aren't all that usual, and it's difficult to know where to break the ice and jump in.) This is what different people said about the sanctuary. I must add that hardly any of the staff knew that one was to set up last year - although the head made a big faux pas at a parents' association meeting by assuming teachers did know. It was very embarrassing when I from the sea of blank looks from the staff present he twigged that none of us had a clue what he was talking about.

What They All Say

The sanctuary is a place to skive. I don't know what they do down there: I've never been to see.

I went down there once and felt very awkward. I sometimes go down there: but the kids see me as an authority figure. If I behave in a different way they know it's false. The sanctuary should be bigger. A lot more kids need to have that kind of thing. The sanctuary is just a safety valve, let's face it. It stops an explosive situation. I've had a couple of kids who have settled down much better after they'd been going down there.

I've never met any kid it's made much difference to. When they come back into the classroom situation they're exactly the same as before they went.

Things seen very chaotic down there - I don't think kids really want a record player on all the time.

A lot of teachers must think it is all chaos; they don't know what we are trying to do. I wish more would drop in and see us.

A lot of teachers are against pastoral care altogether and obviously have not got time for the sanctuary.

As a remedial teacher I see my own class as a sanctuary. I think I would consider I had failed as a person if one of my kids had to go there.

I would like to do some of the things they do in the sanctuary, but how can you with thirty kids? It all depends on the size of the class. Something's got to be done for the rone exam kids.

There are a lot of kids who because they don't bellyache enough get passed over.

Some of the kids in the sanctuary are bright. At the moment we don't have the resources to do very much in the way of actual teaching.

There should be more emphasis on project work rather than just sitting around. Some of the kids look rather bored down there.

It's good that there are special units for the kids with problems. But there should also be more more for the bright kids who can't get on because classes are always being disrupted.

The three of us down there who run it haven't really discussed ideas very much together. I feel rather cut off from the school down there. I'd like to be able to sit in on some of the ordinary classes, to get more of the fell of the place.

SO?

Here is a selection of comments, as representative as possible. One thing stands out: the sanctuary still needs to be discussed properly at our school. To many of us a lot of alternative projects are just covering the cracks in a system we don't particularly want to see survive anyway. But at the moment I think that to look at the ideas behind the sanctuary is a way ahead. We shouldn't forget in the morass of polemics that it is the kids who are getting a raw deal. For their sake, even if it is only (only?) to make their lives at school a little more tolerable we should be looking where we can find a way out.



10, Milner Rd.
Sherwood,
Nottingham.

LETTERS! MANNY REPLIES TO VAL

Dear Val,

Although many of the assumptions you make about the way I taught, how I used 'Document A', how I went camping with one lad, etc are mistaken, I consider the questions you raise as being very important, especially those about licence and freedom and children wanting teachers a certain 'distance' from them.

Just a few things before all that. I wrote the 'Document A' thing originally for myself. I was then into exploring my own male-sexist attitudes and behaviour and found it a worthwhile experience to write about how I treated girls and myself when I was 16 - 17 years of age. I learnt a lot from it. But I was not interested to bull-shit with flash, armoured and defensive language; I wanted to feel it as it was; in its own reality - its pain, humility, degradation and selfishness. I'm not into rose-coloured spectacles. I feel its horrific honesty. The motives were not cheap frills/thrills. This all sounds like a discussion against censorship. Val?

Having taught mainly 14 - 16 year olds I learnt that basically the relationship between lads and girls had changed very little. Lads were still playing the chauvinist part - women were, and girls were still taking

it. I thought my article might help change this.

When I was moved from Garibaldi Comp. Schl. and put into Sutton Centre I was determined more than ever not to put things ('what is best for them') on them. There were many books, papers, poetry, etc. in my room at this school but I didn't tell them to look or read them. My article was around. One lad picked it up, then another, then some girls, etc... The lads couldn't finish it - too much for them. The girls read it intensely. None of them were shocked or horrified and nobody complained. They agreed, especially the girls, that it still went on. The message seemed to have got through. No other kids read it to my knowledge. It, together with stuff on the army, socialism, alternative living, libertarianism, etc. was

well displayed for 3 months, till the head, S. Wilson, inspected, having been convinced that 'I couldn't fit into the school'. They were just getting an opportunity to see/read things they probably wouldn't come across.

Ian (the lad I went camping with) asked me to do so, and told his mother before we left while I was getting fish and chips. Why do you assume Val the report to be the truth? It was quite a complicated story with Ian, mother and school/authority. He exerted himself too much as far as the authority was concerned. He was great - from the heart. They tried to put him inside, S. Wilson and another teacher manipulated the mother to say she did not know. It was just for one night after school. Wilson saw his task as 'concern' for kids at all times

Continued

-doing a progressive school kick- extending schooling outside school. I think I know what freedom, self-responsibility and care are. His game had nothing to do with them. Little benevolent dictators are like big benevolent dictators. Its so easy for inquiring teachers to get inched into progressivism. I found it very difficult to be free in school as well as to create spaces where kids could feel and act freely and responsibly. You can't force people to be free; you can't be free within repressive institutions.

I found it difficult to be distant with kids. Distance to me is the opposite of honesty and caring for others as well as oneself.

Its different for different people. Some will say I failed. I hope they succeed. I learnt a lot from teaching. The kids I think did too - those I went around with. One of the things was that openness and trust is precious and can be found both with caution and awareness in this society.

I thought it a pity Val you assumed too much about me. I enjoyed reading what you wrote, especially about freaky Barry and the Miss. Brown saga.

I hope you carry on convinced. Take care!

from
MANUEL MORENO

and

Read this one -

FROM

ACROSS THE WORLD

688, Gloucester St.,
Christchurch,
New Zealand.

The Editors, Libertarian Education,

I had to write in answer to the amazing article by Val Hennessy (amazing because found in a magazine called 'Libertarian Education').

I was interested to read, in a journal of libertarian education, a statement remarkably similar to statements made to me by masters and headmasters trying to show me the right way to teach when I was a state high school teacher in Australia. This is that children want us to be in control of situations (presumably the classroom situation). True, I'm

airaid, in many cases. But what surprised me was that the statement was left at this - no questioning of the desirability of the attitude. It seems to me that one aim of the education system is to create this need in children - the need to have a leader, to have someone to unquestioningly follow. This of course makes a pleasantly pliable adult population who, as trained, follow blindly our Wilsons, Fords, Hitlers, Stalins....

I saw clearly the absolute faith my students had in me as a teacher - my opinions accepted as fact and the great need they had of my approval. It frightened me indeed, and my reaction as a libertarian, was quite different from Val Hennessy's. I didn't control the situation, which means imposing on the class meaningless and useless exercises dreamed up by some academic educationalist. Instead I got to know them as people, related to them in a natural way according to my own personality. I kept no greater distance between us than I do between any friend or acquaintance.

They called me by my first name. If they didn't want to relate to me they could get on with their own affairs. Many did want to, not just in class, but at other times I was surrounded by students when on playground duty or walking from one room to the other. I was told I mustn't let them lose their 'respect' for me, presumably letting them treat me as an equal meant this would happen.

It didn't. I explained my lack of discipline was due to my belief in their basic right to be free, to make their own decisions on how to run their lives. They responded enthusiastically. Their respect for me only lessened when they saw me half-heartedly bow to intense pressure from the administration to go against my convictions and attempt to impose discipline and restraints upon them.

The Rebels?

I am not saying all the people I taught felt this way. Some no doubt felt insecure in a classroom where they were not directed minute by minute to act in unison with 38 others. I found it was the well known troublemakers who responded to me most wholeheartedly. The instinctive rebels who found that their (to me extremely intelligent) unwillingness to be moulded by some alien adults had support from someone who held a position of power. Of course the fact that I gave this support meant that I did not hold that position for very long.

Val Hennessy may argue: 'But your classes sound chaotic, what did they learn?' I reply - they didn't learn to obey authority because it is authority. They didn't learn

they have to be exactly like everyone else, they didn't learn to accept boredom in preparation for accepting their role as a cog in the wheel of a sick destructive dehumanising society. Maybe - maybe - they began to learn to think for themselves.

Because....

I'm a libertarian because I have faith in the ability of men women and children to be able to act according to their own real desires, and still behave in a socially responsible way. I dislike imposing my will on others, or having others impose their will on me. My (enforcedly short) teaching experience confirmed this belief. The classes I gave freedom to didn't erupt (in the words of one Diploma of Education lecturer) into 'murder and mayhem', no desks destroyed, no windows broken.

They were noisy, chaotic - a result of the natural energy of young people being released after long periods of enforced restraint - but a situation did exist where a group of people could honestly discuss matters meaningful to them.

Yours sincerely,

CATHERINE WILSON



Character, the Journal of Bioenergetic Research (obtainable from David Boadells M.ED., Abbotsbury, Weymouth, Dorset)? but ultimately these insights and discoveries need to be augmented by a higher synthesis as described, for example, in Sri Aurobindo's 'The Synthesis of Yoga' and in his 'Life Divine'.

George de Warr, a great pioneer in radionics described the P.Q. - the psychic quotient, which indicates the creative movement towards self-knowledge and transcendence. Perhaps, in the future, teachers will be examined on this basis rather than on the ability to maintain an obedient class and academic qualifications (which even Barry managed.)

Early morning meditation with adults, the presence of good pictures, (also a Rudolph Steiner idea beyond Neill's superficial observation on this point), can be good means to inner harmony and growth in co-operative responsibility. It is important (even if Trobriand Islanders showed happiness) that there should be a background where the power manifest in sexuality is approached with some realization of its potential for human evolution i.e. including what Viktor & Frankl point out as a sound and meaningful eroticism which avoids the frustration of the inappropriate drive for sexual relations; and also at least the acquaintance with the knowledge of the possibility of a further great transforming development in which the time-based sexual urge is lost in the creative power of self-realization.

In the 1910s and 20s the League of Parents and Teachers of Adyar and Gwalior with a Theosophist background, produced some little pamphlets advising better understanding of children, against corporal punishment, critical of punishment in general, and suggesting a beginning to self-government. Perhaps some easy-to-read pamphlets on more modern lines should be more readily available, these could point out the real causes of potential bullying by parents in the name of discipline, learning, etc..

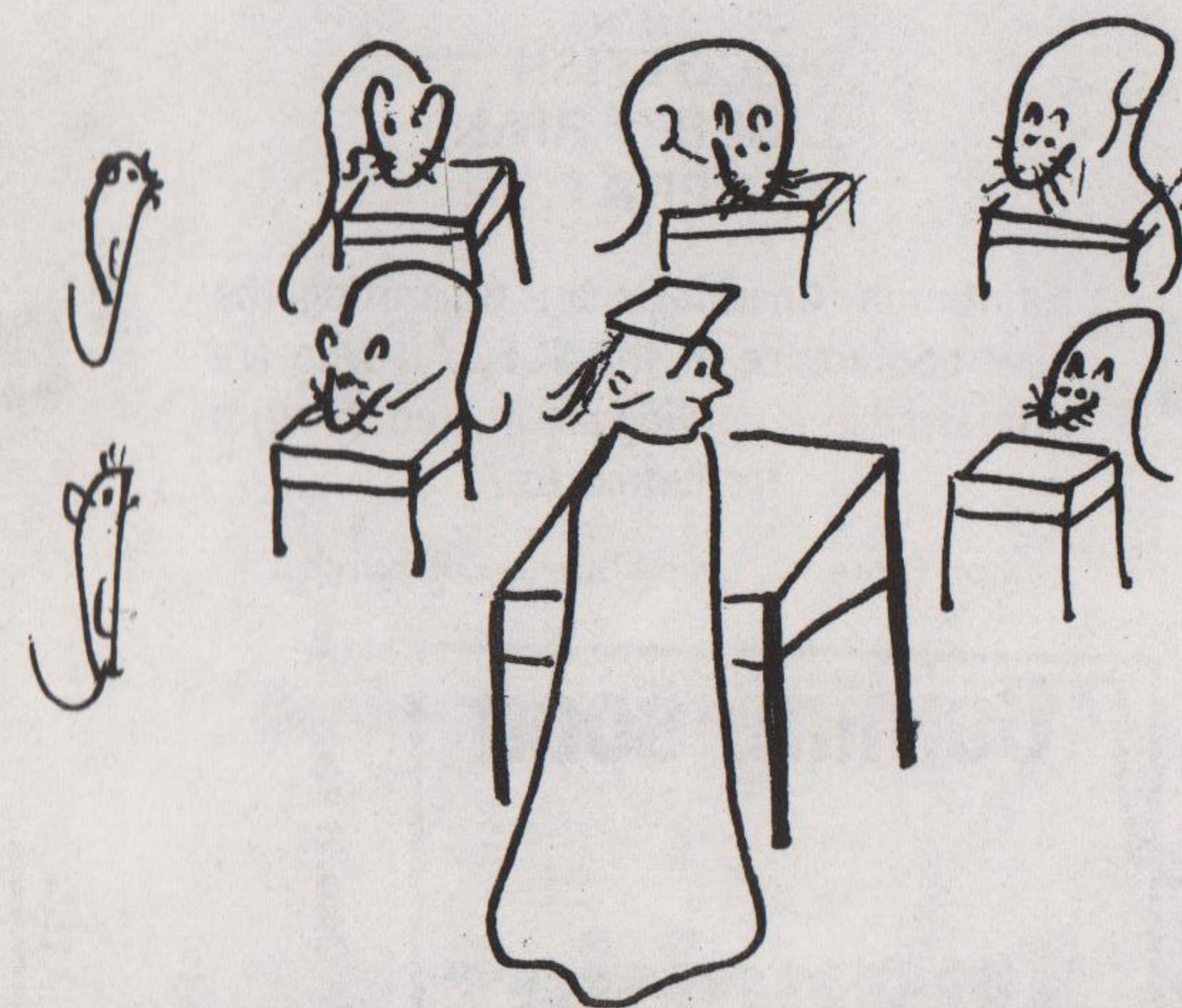
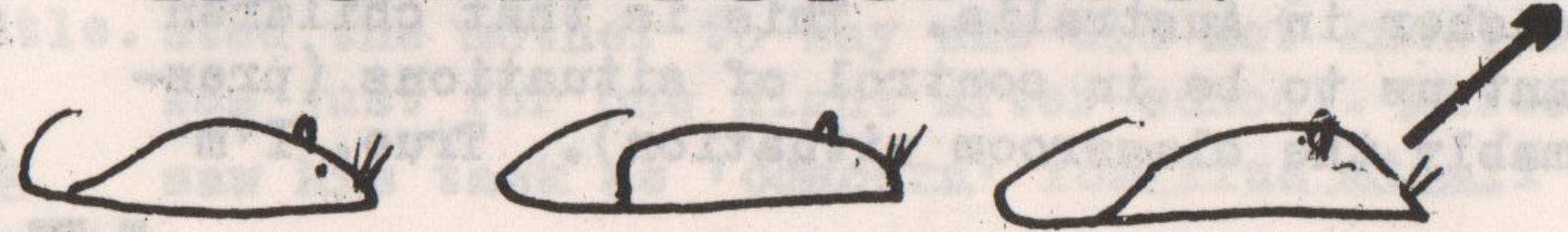
*(Here one might refer to the flowering of what Dr. Arthur Guirdham calls the Cosmic Age as distinguishable from the Herd Personality Impulse, which he describes in his relevant book on Psychology and Education 'Man Divine or Social' (1960)

Jeffrey R.J. Bond Writes!

Barry's interpretation (Val Hennessey's article, issue 19) of 'Know Thyself' is hardly likely to insist that aspiration for an evolutionary fulfilment of consciousness which alone can sustain a satisfactory anarchical society. An environment which encourages such a development is not necessarily modelled on all the features of a Summerhill.

Teachers should know something more of the cosmic forces operative in the human being. There are many fascinating articles on these (including articles in Lib. Ed.) in Energy and

More Letters ~ ABOUT BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION



FROM NIGEL WRIGHT --

I couldn't believe my eyes as I read John Masterton's article on 'Modern Behaviourism and Education' (Lib. Ed. 19). I had to keep re-reading sentences to see if I'd misunderstood them. But I hadn't. John Masterton seems to be saying that since there are certain qualities that libertarians like to see in the human personality (e.g. 'egalitarian behaviour, co-operation, and competent self-direction of our lives') we would be justified in conditioning our kids like rats, into conforming to these characteristics. What a Grotesque proposition!

I'm caricaturing him, John Masterton will reply. He is only advocating operant conditioning where the subject asks for it (remember Clockwork Orange). To this, I'd say two things. First, if anyone invites others to systematically manipulate him, there's something wrong; the answer isn't to accede to his request, but to help him, by time-honoured ordinary human methods, to sort out why he wants to be changed, whether he really does, and if so what factors are stopping him from effecting this change in himself, and what we could do together - ordinary humans, natural things - to overcome these restrictive factors.

Second, if this somebody is a child, I would take it to be my responsibility as an adult to warn him against getting deliberately involved in any process which seeks, even for a moment, to take the initiative away from his conscious will's control over his self-development.

If we want our children to grow up with a stable, libertarian, co-operative outlook, the way to do it is to provide a natural, free, gentle, human environment in which to grow up. If such an environment is lacking because of the society we live in, then what's needed is an effort to change that society for the better, not to manipulate people so as to counteract the environment's impact on them.

"Many of the technological discoveries of the last hundred years or so have liberatory potential" says John Masterton. Quite so. And

many others destructive and manipulative qualities, and the most deadly of all are the growing battery of schemes and systems designed to 'scientifically' change people's minds. All such schemes and systems, however benign their advocates, need to be utterly condemned.

- FROM TONY AUGARDE

If you go on printing articles as full of pretentious jargon as the first two in Lib. Ed. 19, I'll ask for my money back. John Masterton, for example, tells us that Skinner was indebted to Wittenstein in facilitating the extension of behaviourist Methodology to the study of covert behaviour (mental phenomena) and 'in order to facilitate -again?- this behaviour it is necessary to maximally transmit already known variables. Of course.

Meanwhile James G. Lergesson's article reads like a college thesis (which is probably what it is), sprinkled with words such as exogenous, endogenous, status-reinforcement, diplomatism, and age-homogeneous.

The only advantage of such crappy verbiage is that it makes clear to the reader, long the article ends, that the writer has nothing to say.

- AND FROM BOB JAMES

I would agree with John Masterton (L.E.19) that too little is known about 'behaviourist' modification theory' particularly by those who count themselves political theorists. But after reading his piece on 'Modern Behaviourism and Education' I wonder what he knows about either B-M or anarchism.

I don't claim to be an 'expert' in either field and I feel that Skinner and supporters are much maligned people.

BUT, the point about learning programs (be they for pigeons, humans or whatever) devised to produce certain behaviour is that they are programmed. The information thought necessary for the achievement of an already predicted result is broken down into units and arranged in stages thought to be in a particular relation one to another. No matter how Mr. Masterton uses terms or juggles those terms, B-M theory in application, still requires a controlled environment, a disciplined 'student' and a program which insists that behaviour is measurable, and that the measurements (if such be gained) from one student can be meaningfully compared with another. Further, since there are, in what anarchists mean by a free learning environment as many students as there are people, and such multiplicity of probabilities, no program devised beforehand can possibly be what an entirely unfettered 'student' however