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STOP PRESS... RACISM REWARDED... STOP PRESS... R

As we go to press Bradford Council have just announced that they have awarded Ray Honeyford £161,000 in return for his resignation. Throughout the campaign waged by the Drummond Parents Action Committee, Honeyford maintained that he had no case to answer. The Council obviously agree with him. We do not. The day after he announced his resignation Honeyford told BBC 2's Newsnight that in the end his views would be vindicated.

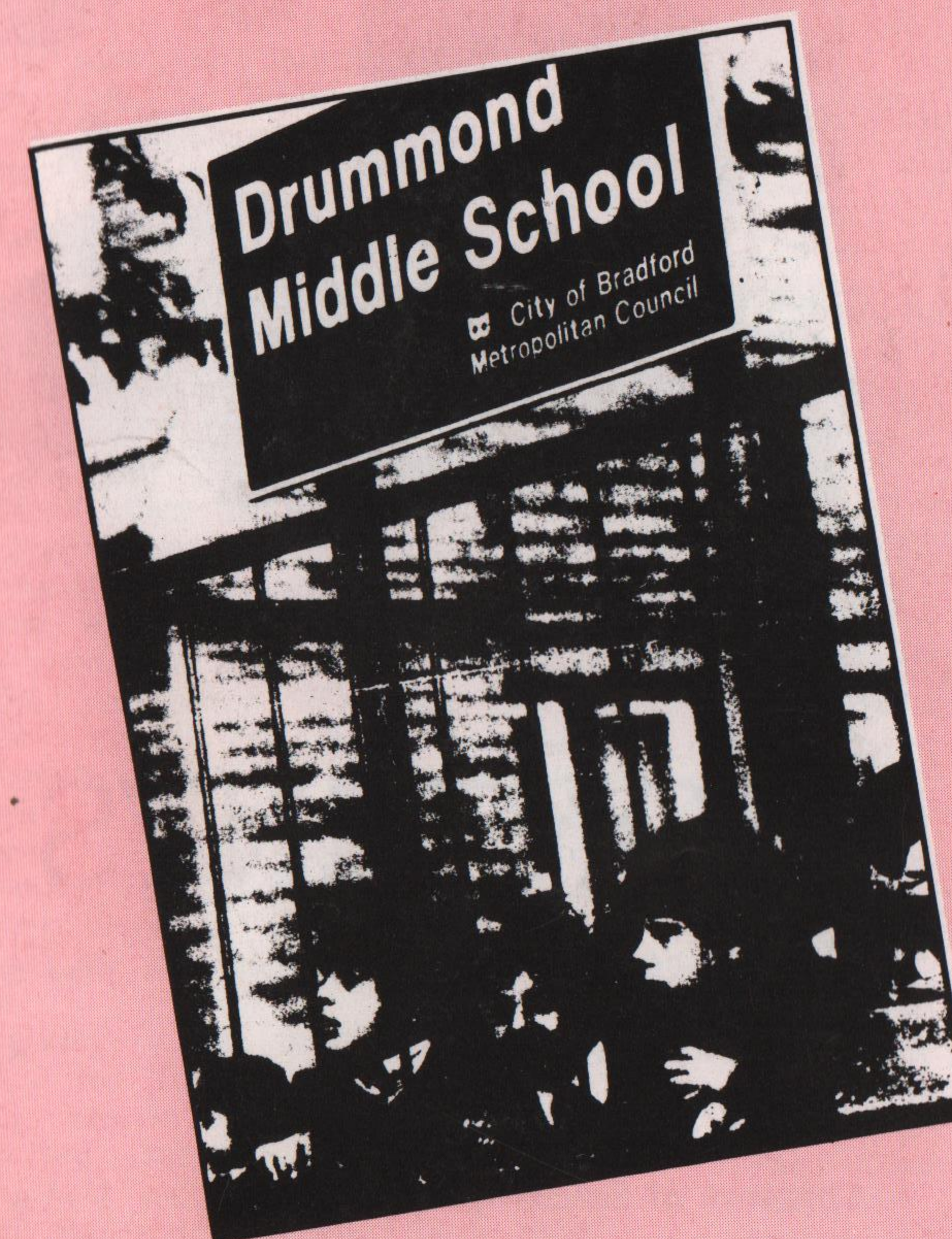
The leadership of the National Union of Teachers seem to agree with him as well. They have decided, far from supporting the Bradford teachers who went on strike to demand Honeyford's sacking, to suspend these teachers and will subject them all to a disciplinary tribunal.

What sort of education system is it that rewards racists and punishes anti-racists.

ACISM REWARDED... STOP PRESS... RACISM REWARDED

LIBERTARIAN LIB ED EDUCATION

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No 1 Spring 1986
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LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION

Spring 1986

Vol 2 No 1

SACK HONEYFORD!

For the past two years parents of the pupils at Drummond Middle School, Bradford, supported by a range of other organisations, have been fighting for the dismissal of the racist headmaster Ray Honeyford. They have demanded this of the Council, they have requested that their children should be moved to another school in the area, they have won elections for parent governors with massive votes, they have organised an alternative school and impressive boycotts and yet as we go to print, Honeyford, now merely condemned by the Council, is on the verge of a £100,000 golden handshake and massive publicity for a book.

In the light of what Honeyford has said and written this is a complete abdication of responsibility by Bradford Council and will do nothing else but fuel the fires of racism. It is worth remembering some of the things Honeyford wrote in the Salisbury Review in January 1984:

"The roots of black educational failure are in reality located in West Indian family structure and values."

And then of Pakistan:

"Pakistan is a country which cannot cope with democracy... it too is the heroin capital of the world. (A fact which is now reflected in the drug problems of English cities with Asian populations.)"

These ideas are those of the extreme right and are based on a belief in the superiority of white British middle class culture. Honeyford of course refers to this as 'high culture'. This distaste for other cultures is only surpassed by his contempt for working class people whether black or white. In a later edition of the Salisbury review he wrote:

"Working class culture is about bingo... the football pools... the tabloids... stories of broken marriages, unmarried mothers, hire purchase debts and evictions, big brother in prison and sister eloped with a black man."

He then argues that the medium for teaching people of such cultures must be "the appropriate language of the gutter".

If more reasons for Honeyford's dismissal are needed then it is worthwhile considering the effects of his 'stand'. Drummond Middle School has been thrown into total chaos but, more disturbing, the British fascists have returned on the streets. The British National Party have organised a presence on the picket line outside Drummond and they have leafleted the area. Further, the Salisbury Review editor, Roger Scruton, has now gathered around him a clique of so-called intellectuals and leading media figures including Peregrine Worstthorne, Tom Stoppard and Enoch Powell, and they have

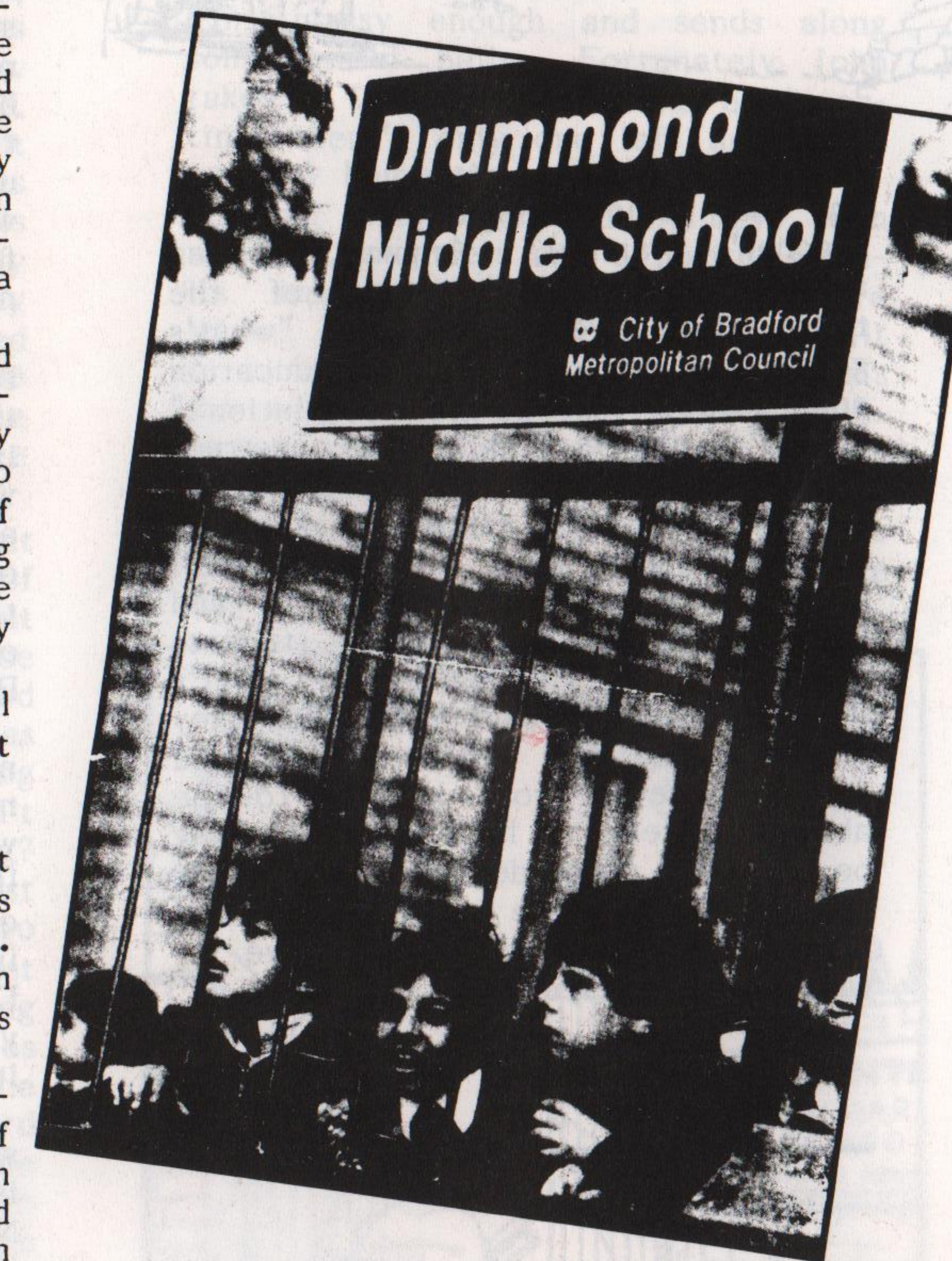
Margaret Thatcher's ear. According to the Times, Thatcher has attended meetings of the Conservative Philosophy Group also founded by Scruton where extensive support exists for the repatriation of British immigrants and in September Honeyford himself was invited to 10 Downing Street as a 'leading educationalist'.

racism rather than simply draw attention to it can we hope to make any dent in the racism which exists in British schools."

Secondly, we have the appalling role played by most trade unions. For example, the General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers instructed the Bradford and Keighley Association that they could not discuss Mr. Honeyford or call for his sacking. In fact when 22 members of Grange School in Bradford supported a strike call they were instructed not to strike and are now being disciplined. The action committee of the N.U.T. told the regional official to go to Drummond School to escort N.U.T. members across the picket line. This flies directly in the face of the N.U.T.'s supposed anti-racist policy. However, pride of place must go to the National Association of Head Teachers who have campaigned for Honeyford throughout and have given him legal and financial backing.

Thirdly, the media. Honeyford has been portrayed as 'misunderstood and the victim of a Trotskyist conspiracy. Bradford's local newspaper, the Telegraph and Argus, from the very beginning sought to mobilise public opinion in support of Honeyford. They did this by first publishing an edited version of the original Salisbury Review article, edited to such an extent that it excluded all the offensive racist sections. As the campaign against Honeyford intensified the Telegraph and Argus made a dramatic effort to drum up sympathy by publishing 'the life, times and turmoil of Ray Honeyford.' More recently the Daily Telegraph has carried a leader supporting Honeyford because he has made it legitimate to discuss the West Indian crime problem, and the Sun has accused Honeyford's enemies of being the real racists. Add to that the fact that the Times Higher Educational Supplement published a diary of a week at Drummond Middle School by Ray Honeyford which reads like a tract against Muslim Fundamentalism, and in this context perhaps the most serious charge that can be levelled against the media is that they have consistently failed to demonstrate that the Drummond Parents Action Group and its supporters are not dominated by Muslim Fundamentalists. On the contrary, they represent the whole of the black community in Bradford.

That Honeyford should have been sacked long ago is clear, that he should now, even at this late date, be sacked is even clearer. And yet whatever the outcome, everyone should be left in no doubt that Honeyford's continuation as headmaster at Drummond since the beginning of 1984 has allowed him to become the focus for the most pernicious racist elements in British society.



The issues raised by the stand of Drummond Parents Action Group are considerable. In the first place when it comes to fighting racism they have demonstrated the complete inadequacy of a race relations and multi-cultural policy developed within the confines of a Council chamber. The Council and Local Education Authority have consistently failed to treat the issue as a racist one and have prevaricated when an apparent commitment could and should have led to Honeyford being sacked. The parents and support groups who assisted in the opening of an alternative school for a week at the height of the crisis in March 1985 demonstrated what they felt about multi-culturalism when they developed a completely new set of resources for use in the school which were not merely multi-cultural but in their words 'anti-racist'. "There is a marked difference between a multi-cultural curriculum and an anti-racist one", stated one of the organisers. "Notions of multi-culturalism might appear anti-racist but in fact fail to address the most important question of the hierarchy of cultures... only by developing resources in schools which attack

STOP PRESS... RACISM REWARDED... SEE BACK PAGE



■ This magazine is against authority.

■ Schools and colleges use their authority to define, to grade and to discipline, in order to transform the learners into the sort of 'products' the state demands.

■ In contrast Libertarian Education sees education as liberation. The learner, young or old, is the best judge of what they should learn next. In our struggle to make sense out of life, the things we most need to learn are the things we most want to learn. The liberated learner controls the process - no longer the victim.

■ We don't pretend to have all the answers. Lib. Ed. magazine is a forum for everyone who is interested in the liberation of learning.

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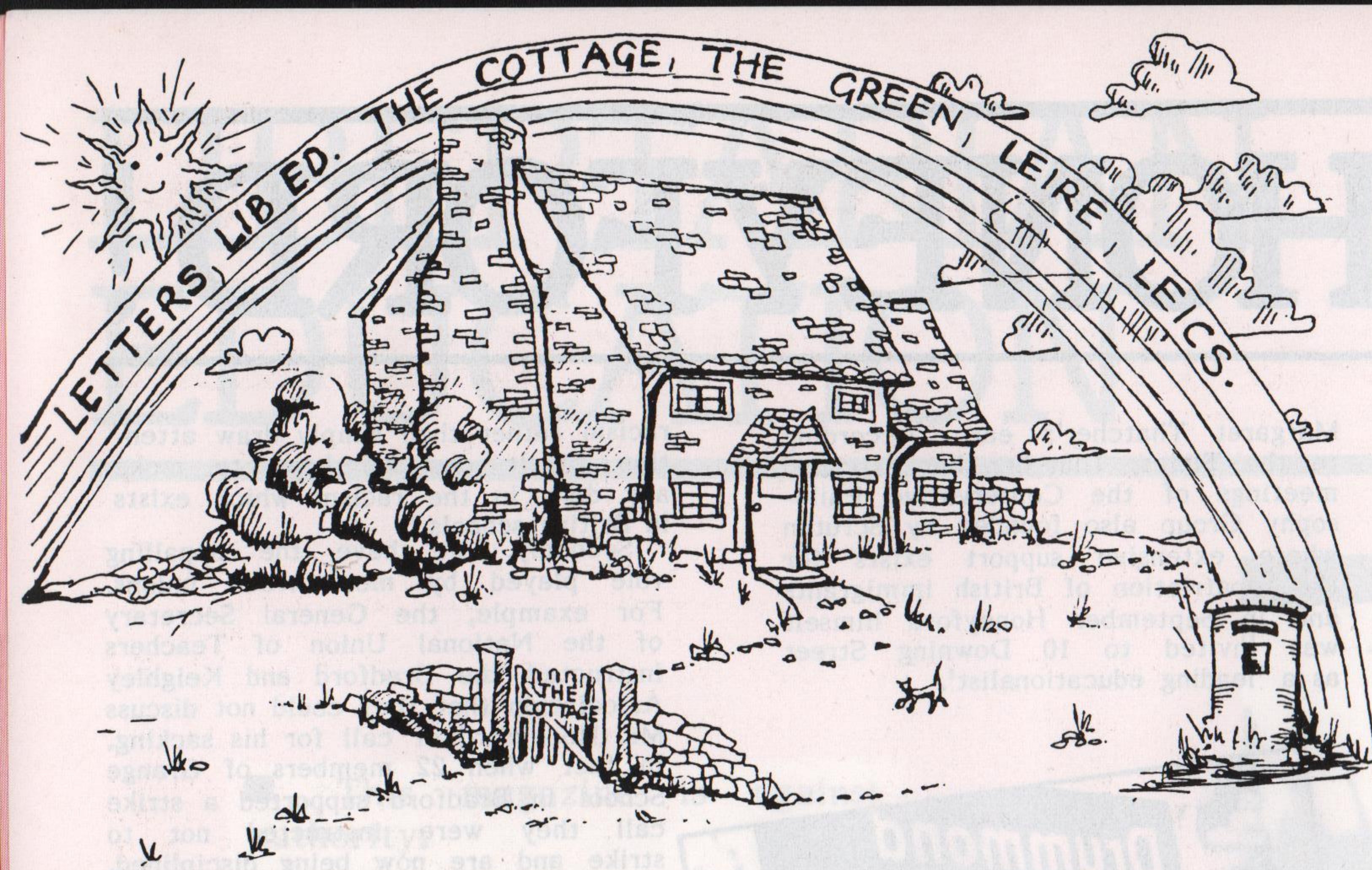
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Diary of a Probationary Teacher (aged 21³/₄)



How Ethnic Minorities disappear from the Agenda.

Dear Lib Ed,
You probably know about Mrs Thatcher's meeting with 'prominent educationalists' at 10 Downing St on 3rd October 1985. Among her guests was Ray Honeyford, the infamous Bradford head teacher. She also invited a Leicester head of a multi ethnic school, a Mr Green. The Association of Teachers of Ethnic Minorities (A.T.E.M.) of Leicester complained. They wanted to know what Honeyford had said, what Green had said, whether Green had repudiated Honeyford's ideas on ethnic minorities. Indeed they wanted to know what Mr Green's multicultural strategy was in his own school, since neither parents, staff or pupils had been aware of one. There was also the question of how Mr Green was using four extra teachers employed with government Section 11 money for "the specific needs of the ethnic minorities".


They took their published document to the County Council's Race Relations Sub-Committee. One would imagine that an affair of this sort would have had immediate attention, at least from the Labour members of the Committee. Because of the timing of the next meeting it could only be brought up under Any Other Business.

When it came to the end of the meeting both the Tory and Labour members agreed (connived) that there was nothing to discuss under A.O.B. It could not be that asking too many questions about what actually happens in a Labour-run, self-proclaimed Equal Opportunities Employer could yield embarrassing answers - could it?

How often do we find that in spite of platitudes ethnic minority issues never even make the agenda. No wonder the parents at Drummond exploded in anger - when will the rest?

Yours sincerely,

A Leicestershire Teacher.

 Indicates letter has been cut for reasons of space - sorry.

September

The first day wasn't as bad as I imagined it. Some of the children even thought I was a real teacher but they couldn't convince me. I didn't need my impressive plans for classroom activities. It took the children until break to write their names on their books and they either followed my instructions too literally or else I've really got seven kids called Fred Bloggs in the class. By the time I'd cleared the classroom and found the staffroom, morning break was over. Come lunchtime, Wayne wanted to know if it was home time. I wished it was too. Doing dinner duty was a mistake. John and Wayne had an argument about the size of their sausages and dislodging peas from nostrils is not restful. When I eventually got to the staffroom it was empty except for Miss Bates who cautioned me not to sit in her chair. The afternoon went fast and at home time Wayne asked if he could have his lunch now... so I felt much better.

First playground duty. A bit of a riot broke out when some of the girls organised a protest about the boys monopolising all the space to play football. The Head stopped by to remark what a shame it was that the girls seemed to be getting as noisy as the boys and why wasn't my class at assembly that morning? Having missed or been late for most of the assemblies in the last two weeks, I realise that while most of the class can remember cooking and games time, no one recognises assembly time despite all the practice I've given with the maths cupboard clock etc. Met the rest of the staff towards the end of the month when I discover they usually go to the pub at lunchtime. To join in the chat I think I've either got to start watching Dallas or reading Junior Ed.

October

I got fed up when my teacher tutor asked me to write out in triplicate my scheme of work for the year. When I asked for some guidance he said he'd nothing to show me as experienced teachers didn't need to write everything down but that if I wrote about fifty pages it would about cover it.

November

A word from the caretaker. The cleaner is distressed at the indecent amount of painting the children do in my class. Once a week and preferably on a Friday afternoon is the desirable timetable I'm told.

Another visit from the caretaker. John, as an extension of our construction project on bridges and dams, has put principles into practice and blocked the outside toilets with leaves and conkers. My first Parents' Evening. Surprisingly few turn up, not even John's parents to whom I'd written especially. William's parents are keen to know why William can't "do" his 9x table when his cousin Rodney at Prep School can "do" his 12x table and also has rugger and computer programming twice a week.

December

Josephine's parents want to know why we did Divali again this year. Miss Bates and Richard are busy preparing for their Nativity Play and Carol Concert and are continually on the alert for foil and cotton wool. Despite their efforts some parents get together a petition for more Christmas spirit in school. They obviously haven't seen Richard's stock cupboard. He knows how to get the right presents. I wonder why I get soap. Josephine's mother feels our classroom doesn't look Christmassy enough and sends along some tinsel balls. Fortunately John takes a fancy to them and by lunchtime there's only one left and that's gone by home time.

Going home for the holidays with a dozen soap sets and a plastic gremlin from John I'm still not sure where, or even if, I want to fit in to all the routine which overwhelms me with detail, so that wider implications concerning the values I may be consciously or unconsciously transmitting become lost in strategies for survival - like being on time for assembly.



January

Arrive back feeling energetic and optimistic. The Inspector visits. Who's that rude man nosing around says John. "I'm a friend of teachers" says rude man, I mean Inspector. Even John declines to comment on that. "Well, they're doing some very nice work for Top Infants" says Inspector. "We're not Top Infants, we're 2nd year Juniors" says Jane indignantly. I'd have kept quiet... I'm beginning to feel depressed.

February

Ran out of felt tips and find that I've used up my official allocation for the term. Discover that other classes don't have this problem. Apparently they've learnt from Miss Bates, whose experience of rationing during World War II has made her a firm believer in grabbing and hoarding when the stock cupboards are unlocked at the beginning of terms.

March

We had a fire drill. Wayne was so excited by the experience he threw up in the middle of the classroom. The caretaker had gone to the dentist so it had to stay in the classroom covered with sand 'til lunchtime when someone could find something to clear it up with. Meantime John tried to integrate the experience into our curriculum by jumping over it and exhorting others to do likewise. Perhaps I can cope after all!

April

New term. I'm feeling more relaxed, even confident in class. Danger sign? The children seem to be enjoying this term's topic and settling happily into group and individual projects. Some have been making plaster casts and remembering the sensibilities of our cleaner, suggest clearing up outside. I'm impressed by their initiative and thoughtfulness. The caretaker comes in. He's threatening to close all the toilets in the school, the plumbing's been blocked solid with plaster.

May

The Head pays us a visit and suggests we confine our art activity to junk modelling. She appears the next morning. Guess what I've got in my bag, she says brightly. 'Arrods says William helpfully reading the bag. Inside are a collection of boxes. William obligingly chants the labels, Chanel No 5, Hot Cooter Shoes £65.

June

Industrial action is beginning to take visible effect in the school as corridor displays decay and fall. John wants to know, and I have my suspicions, why the Head is always looking through our window. I arrive back from lunch one day to find the door swinging by one hinge. The Head is remonstrating with John who's threatening to chuck a chair. I'm informed that John needs an appointment with a child psychologist.

July

I opt out of a competitive sports day. 'Only been in the school five minutes and wants to destroy our traditions', Miss Bates confides to Richard in a loud voice as I enter the staffroom. I pretend not to hear and pick up my mail... you have satisfactorily demonstrated your practical proficiency as a qualified teacher... I know there's been a mistake but I don't feel like telling the DES yet.

Richard doesn't invite me to the end of term party at his house. I feel a bit crushed until I realise that only Miss Bates and the Head are going anyway. I go down to the pub with the rest of the staff. Some of them watch the Tube and the Young Ones and somebody talks about starting a rival mag to Junior Ed. John asked me if he could have back the plastic gremlin he accidentally left on my table before Christmas. By the way he adds "I've got this wicked idea for a topic on plumbing so I'll be in your class again next year if you like."

Dear Lib.Ed.,

Here are some random ideas raised by seeing your publicity leaflet for the new Libertarian Education. The leaflet is impressive, it looks professional and purposeful: well done. One of the best features of the first few Radical Education issues was the 'Notice' section. Could you do something like that. It's great advantage was that it wasn't sectarian. Please do book reviews - I used to find them very valuable in the old mags. Don't forget to do Michael Smith's "The Libertarians and Education."

I believe that the Campaign for State Supported Alternative Schools totters ineffectually along. Perhaps you could give it a fillip. Don't forget to put all the education correspondents on your mailing list. They'll write about anything.

That's all that comes to mind at present. Power to your elbows.

Nigel Wright

Dear Lib.Ed.,

It was with great interest that I read of your journal in Black Flag 145. I have been looking for some time for information about libertarian education; this is partly because I am a student (at the University of Kent) and partly because my family are so tied up with education that they've got schools and colleges

on the brain (basically a 'typical' teacher's family). Anyway, as an anarchist, I've lost count of the times that I've been asked "what's going to be done about education and schools 'after the revolution'." Also I'm always looking for constructive ways to criticise the privileged institution that I attend - it's easy to point out how crushingly dull it is, how authoritarian it is and how hopelessly powerless students are to do anything about it (that's if they could be persuaded that they wanted to). So please would you forward one of your leaflets to the above address - hopefully we may be able to persuade other anarchists that teachers are only 'soft-cops' because of the role they have to take in this society,

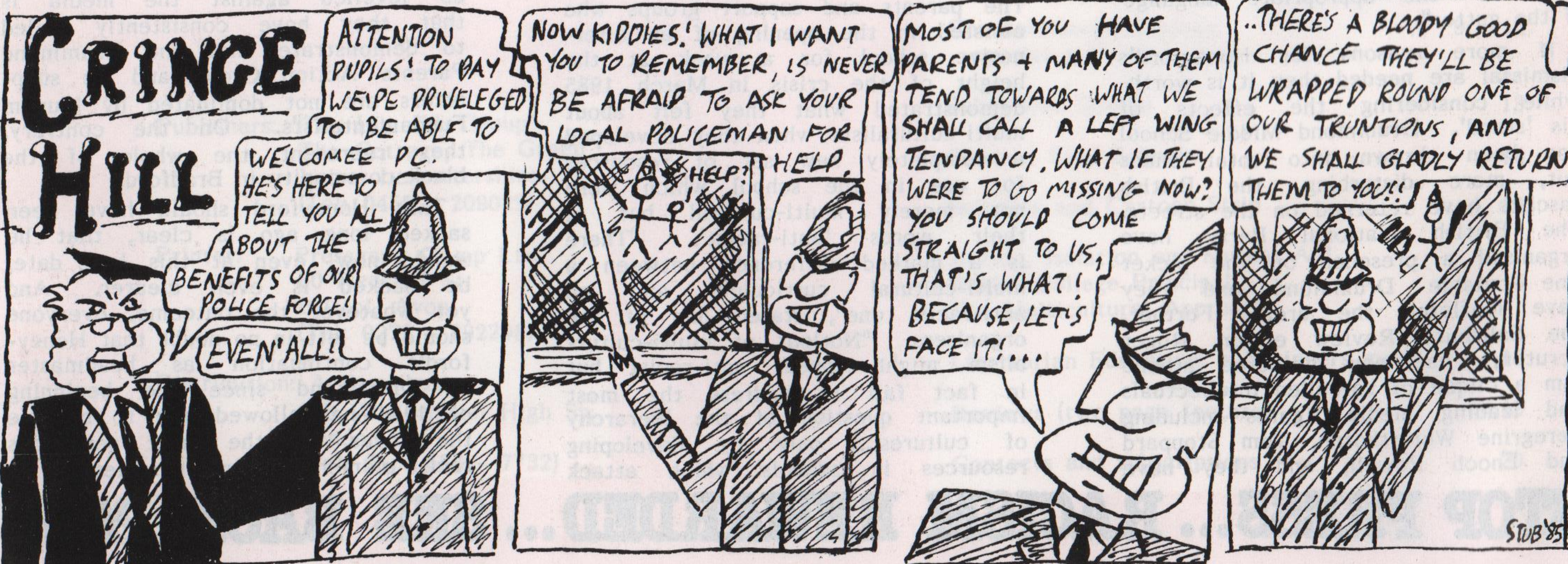
Matthew Lenton

Dear Lib Ed,

I have never before come across such an ill-considered, immature commentary on education as your "Libertarian Education" leaflet. If any of the persons responsible are employed in our school system I can only hope the Secretary of State for Education, who you so amateurishly lampoon, will be able to identify and dismiss them,

Yours in disgust,

Mr H Taylor



CHALLENGE of SPECIAL NEEDS

Since 1980, with the publication of the "Warnock" report, and following the dubious 1981 Education Act, "Special Needs" has at least been on the agenda of educational policy makers in Britain. This has been a mixed blessing. While the Tory Act laid a duty on L.E.A.s to do certain things, in particular "integration" of children into mainstream schools - it did not provide any extra money for the process.

One problem is the huge variety embraced by the term "special need". If we ignore the chubby, well-scrubbed aspiring suburban elite who march through the school system as if they owned it, you could say that most children confronted with the authoritarian monster of education develop "special needs" in relation to it. The Warnock report suggested that the proportion was about 20%.

The Libertarian Assumption

There is an assumption, I feel, among libertarians that if you give children the right tools then they will be able to use them to your best advantage. In fact some liberal thinking schools act on this assumption - for instance young children are sometimes given a range of reading materials at the appropriate age to choose from instead of having a prescribed reader.

But there are some children with special needs for whom this innate learning approach is clearly inadequate. As part of my job - which is to do with children with impaired vision - I meet with a very wide range of children. At one extreme are the children found in what are known as "Special Care" or "Multiple Needs" units attached to the Severe Learning Difficulties (used to be called E.S.N.(s)) schools. I am thinking of a child like Sandra. She is aged 11, has no speech, no limb movement beyond the occasional arm jerk, and she seems to have no vision. Her eyes "work" - pupils react to light and she blinks when the light is switched on and off - but she is reckoned to be "cortically blind" which means that her brain does not perceive the signals that her eyes pick up.

The Object not the Subject

Most of Sandra's life is spent having things done to her. She has to be nappy changed, put in a wheel chair, put on the floor, have physiotherapy (when available), have music played to her, have textures introduced to her, be brought into the swimming pool etc. etc.

There is little that she or other children like her can do that relates to 'freedom'. However, she turns her head to sound. So it is possible to give her a little control over her environment by putting a micro-switch under her head so that she can turn what seems to be her favoured sounds on and off at will.

6 libertarian education

Most people will not come in contact with Sandra, or the thousand (guesstimated) others like her in Britain. With these children the aim can be refreshingly simple - trying to work out how to give the child some small measure of control over its own life.



What about "maladjusted" children? What does it mean? According to Gulliford's book on Special Educational Needs the symptoms are grouped under six headings which include:

- Nervous or emotional disorders e.g. fear and anxieties.
- Habit disorders - e.g. bed wetting, nail biting.
- Behaviour disorders - e.g. stealing, cruelty, aggression.
- Nervous disorders e.g. overactivity
- Psychotic behaviour
- Educational and Vocational difficulties.

The problem is, as many of the people who specialise in the area admit, that it is all rather vague.

I used to have a gut feeling that it was society's fault and that it was wrong to put these unjustly labelled children in schools by themselves. I now think that a more accurate picture is that there are children around whose behaviour is "impossible" in the ways outlined above: for all sorts of organic and environmental reasons. How to keep them in the slightly more real world of mainstream education (probably more real than "special schooling") is a problem. What would happen in a deschooled society - where it would not be fair for parents to bear the burden of what are often frightful difficulties - needs some deep thinking: let alone how to work out satisfyingly libertarian approaches for present use.

Thankfully the old schools for ESN(M), or "Moderately Educationally Subnormal" children are beginning to disappear. The new term is Moderate Learning Difficulty. At one time it was a catch-all term used to embrace a huge gamut of social environmental and intellectual problems. People pointed out the disproportionately high numbers of Afro-Caribbean school students who were dumped into the "M" schools for not conforming to our middle class WASP school system.

Having said all that, the fact seems to be that there are a number of children who learn things very slowly even with the most auspicious preconditions. Not just the school things of reading, writing and numbers, but things such as self-help, independence and the ability to get on with other children or relate to any adults. They sometimes seem to be unaware of whole areas of fairly basic experience, such as where other children live, people in the neighbourhood or the meaning of places they have been to visit.

Currently educational psychologists are working on behaviourist ways to make their target children learn. Each skill is broken down into sub-skills and into finely calculated achievable tasks. The fact that it is not remotely libertarian in that choices are all made for the pupil would not, perhaps, matter too much if it was clear cut that the students were led to gain more control over their lives through their greater command of Basic Skills.

What is to be Done?

The problem may not so much lie in the assessment of the child on a list of skills and then teaching the gaps in small steps - but in the danger that it could be used as the basis for a sterile and boring curriculum. Some people see these approaches as part of "deskilling society", so that people will get used to learning small bits of predigested information only. Such an approach is the reverse of the experience based curriculum where the aim is to give the kids as much experience of the real world outside school as possible.

So we are left with questions. What do we do with the children who are special? Where should they go, bearing in mind that some of them need expensive and bulky equipment? How can they be stimulated to learn things, bearing in mind that some of them will never have the capability to become autonomous, self-motivating adults? In short how can a libertarian education be set up that embraces all the children (and adults) and ends the still-adhering labels of maladjusted, learning difficulties etc. etc. while taking into account the uniqueness of each individual person: both now and in a reformed or revolutionised world?

Are you a libertarian teacher?

1. Your favourite school is...

- a) Eton
- b) Grange Hill
- c) Summerhill

2. You lend your expensive camera to the kids - it gets dropped on the floor - you...

- a) smile
- b) demand that they pay for it
- c) write to their parents

3. Your union...

- a) NUT
- b) Don't believe in unions
- c) "Professional Association of Teachers" (or anti-strike union)

4. You find a group of students spray painting the walls of the toilets. Do you...

- a) encourage them to devise a design for a mural
- b) cane them
- c) point out the heads car...

5. Do you think girl-only lessons are...

- a) sexist and divisive
- b) a good idea
- c) an inadequate substitute for single sex schools

6. Your ambition is to...

- a) become a head
- b) retire
- c) work in a free school

7. The students call you...

- a) sir/miss
- b) by your first name
- c) Hitler

8. Your favourite clothes for teaching are...

- a) simple but smart
- b) gown and mortar board
- c) casual or even scruffy

9. A boy in your class can't stop crying because his rabbit's died. Do you...

- a) say how sorry you are
- b) tell him not to be such a baby
- c) cuddle him

10. These sort of quizzes are...

- a) trivial and immature
- b) fun
- c) a bourgeois deviation from the real struggle

Your score

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. a) 0 b) 5 c) 10 | 6. a) 0 b) 5 c) 10 |
| 2. a) 10 b) 4 c) 0 | 7. a) 0 b) 10 c) -5 or 10 |
| 3. a) 10 b) 0 c) 0 | 8. a) 3 b) 0 c) 10 |
| 4. a) 8 b) -10 c) 10 | 9. a) 5 b) 0 c) 10 |
| 5. a) 0 b) 10 c) 10 | 10. a) 0 b) 10 c) 0 |

so are you....?

- 80 -100 Your career is doomed. Your sensitivity and integrity will not be appreciated by the education establishment. Why don't you join the Lib Ed collective instead, but be tolerant with the rest of us.
- 60-80 You are anti-authority but still try too hard to direct the learning of others. Relax, read Lib Ed and support the learners not the system. You know it makes sense.
- 40-60 You seem a bit of a liberal. You might do well at the Open University or as an equal opportunities adviser to the ILEA (£23,000 a year). You believe in progressive ideas but are sufficiently flexible to believe the opposite if your career demands it.
- 20-40 Your natural home is teaching classes at 'Lord Snots Academy' (even so Lord Snot would probably consider you a bit of a pinko).
- 0-20 You must be a real fascist - what are you doing reading this magazine.

In common with the majority of experienced teachers, I believe corporal punishment should be retained as a last resort.



WILDCAT - © DONALD ROOMM

It's the most enjoyable part of a teacher's job.



GCSE – a progressive examination development?

For over fifteen years teachers have campaigned for the fusion of G.C.E. O level with the Certificate of Secondary Education (C.S.E.). The idea was to create an exam which would not differentiate between students at the age of 13 or 14. Successive Tory and Labour governments have refused to introduce a single exam at 16 though support has escalated for it during the last ten years. Keith Joseph finally announced the intentions of the Department of Education and Science (D.E.S.) in the summer of 1984.

It emerged that what was originally conceived as a radical reform with distinct egalitarian overtures has been turned into something quite different with enormous implications for teachers, students and parents. Firstly, it is obvious that the new General Certificate of Secondary Education (G.C.S.E.) will not be a single exam at all. On the contrary it will be a system of examinations with differentiated papers and questions in every subject. Grading and differentiation between candidates will become even more severe. If teachers are anticipating the sudden disappearance of differentiation they are mistaken, it will all simply take a different and possibly more dangerous form.

Joseph's proposals

Secondly, it seems clear that Joseph's proposals are part of the Tory government's intention to establish a centralised control not only over the curriculum in general but over each of its differentiated levels. This is to be achieved by the definition of national criteria covering examinations on every subject. These criteria will shift control to the centre since the Secretary of State will have to approve them. World history, for one, looks as though it will be out.

But it is not only a question of general criteria governing overall examining objectives. In addition there are to be grade related criteria which will specify the knowledge, understanding and skills expected for the award of particular grades.

The undesirable aspects of the Secretary of State's conceptions of G.C.S.E. are becoming apparent. Already on pilot schemes target-groups based on ability are becoming commonplace, the threat to mixed-ability teaching is enormous.

But most important of all, many teachers after work on curriculum development and teacher-based assessment do not see how Mode 3 assessment fits in with the government's plans. Although Mode 3 is not ruled out under G.C.S.E. Joseph is known to oppose the sheer diversity of small-entry submissions which currently exist. Mode 3 has offered teachers and students the opportunity to exercise a real control over what they teach and what they learn respectively, it has legitimised project work for example. That radical aspect of the examination system is now clearly under threat.

How should teachers react to these developments? Where possible individual teachers can resist implementation by delaying any work necessary, members of the National Union of Teachers (N.U.T.) have in fact been advised during the recent pay campaign to do just that and cease all work on G.C.S.E. development. However, if there is to be a resistance then the teachers' organisations have to be central to that resistance. The government's intentions are clear, they seek a return to an education system modelled on the 1944 Education Act. Here lies the first reason for the teachers' organisations to seek a common front against the present government and begin a debate about the kind of examination system they want to see.



But there are other reasons to mobilise support for a campaign of resistance. Firstly, the Association of County Councils have decided to ask the Government to postpone the introduction of the G.C.S.E. by one year from 1986 to 1987. They are so alarmed at the cost of training teachers for the new exam that they are to tell Joseph his timetable cannot be implemented without three times the present allocation for in-service training. The teachers' organisations should boycott all work on examination development until the right kind of money is made available. Secondly, funding is apparently going to be offered to allow for one representative in each subject in each school to attend a preparatory briefing session for up to two and a half days. These sessions were to take place largely in the first half of 1986 before the introduction of the G.C.S.E. courses in the Autumn of that year, but this may well now be delayed. It is estimated that approximately 60,000 secondary school teachers will have to be released from school to attend these sessions and the D.E.S. will provide 70% of the £6 million that will be needed to provide supply cover for the days when they will be out of school.

All this will do will be to place examination development in the hands of the traditional authorities, namely the heads of department, in schools. Not only is it not enough to do that it is also pernicious. This is an issue which affects all teachers and should involve as many as possible. It seems to Lib. Ed. that the teachers' organisations have a good case to seek a complete revision of the plans for the implementation of G.C.S.E. which with the right campaign could lead to a revision of the very nature of the examination, surely justifiable as a long term aim.

VOCATIONALISM & EDUCATION How the MSC moved into schools

Recently the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (T.V.E.I.) has become known as the Technical and Vocational Initiative (T.V.I.). Where, where one might ask, has the education gone? Where indeed? The entry of the M.S.C. into the fields of youth, social and education policy has been dramatic and it has been rapid. In recent years we have seen students and teachers blamed for youth unemployment because of falling standards and witnessed firstly the arrival of YOP and YTS. Emphasis has been placed upon giving training to seventeen and eighteen year olds in jobs that will probably never be available to more than one in three. Education for them has long disappeared with the emphasis being upon training for a hard life probably with only at best, periods of employment. But now we have a similar approach developing in schools, education is out, training and vocationalism are in, but to what end? Training and vocationalism for the dole, that is the real long term prospect for many school leavers. Schools across the country are witnessing the development of YOP and YTS philosophies in the curriculum, this in many ways being symbolised by the change from TVEI to TVI. Fourteen and fifteen-year-old school students are being encouraged to think about how they might cope with part-time employment, what major adjustments they might need to make in their lives in order to gain some kind of employment. This is the reality of social and life skills. Education is a right, not a forgotten, irrelevant social policy. Education is about learning and not training, it is about exploration and experimentation not vocationalism. If the drift towards vocationalism in schools is to be checked then a simple monitoring of TVI is not enough, the sooner a move is made against the MSC and local authorities who support their suggestions the better for all schools and students, and certainly the better for education.

COUNTESTHORPE COLLEGE

Part of the solution or part of the problem?

The monstrosity and holiday camp allegations that accompanied the opening of Countesthorpe College in 1970 emanated from an educational philosophy and practice which wanted students and staff to be on first name terms, which encouraged students to develop their own individualised timetables, which structured a democratic forum where all the staff, students, and workers in the college had equal voting rights and where the College Principal could never expect to see the institution being simply run as he wanted. In the 1970's, along with William Tyndale School, the Sutton Centre, Summerhill Academy and Madeley Court, it was probably one of the most distinctive schools in the country.



The background

Countesthorpe College opened amidst a blaze of publicity in 1970. It was one of three new purpose-built colleges in Leicestershire, which constituted a third stage of development in what was in the 1960's and early 1970's a radical local authority. Stewart Mason, the Director of Education did not prescribe the kind of things which he expected to see in the new community colleges, rather he sought the appointment of staff who were seeking developments in education which went beyond the abolition of the eleven-plus examination and advocacy of equality of opportunity in education.

The form taken developed slowly and was complex but essentially

focused on the 'moot' and 'teams'. The moot became the decision making body in the College. It was a weekly meeting with no fixed chairperson or formal agenda. All staff, students and ancillary workers could attend, all had equal voting rights. Teams were essentially mini-schools and emerged after 1973 under the guidance of John Watts, the second principal. There were core subjects in teams in English, Social Studies, Art, Maths and eventually Science, but students could negotiate completely individual timetables and control how much time they spent on particular subjects and when. Students spent about one half of their time in team, other specialist subjects were undertaken

in specialist areas.

Tim McMullen, the first principal, was appointed in 1969 and given six months to plan the new school with twenty staff. When the College opened it did so with 850 pupils aged eleven to fourteen. This was totally unexpected and was to prove a problem as the staff would have to design a curriculum which they would have to succeed with and then quickly abandon in order to accommodate the 'real intake', aged fourteen to eighteen two years later. However, despite this problem a commitment to individualised learning and to a democratic decision making structure was made very quickly and thereafter put into practice.

You could get away with anything...

Lib. Ed.: Could you tell us when you began at Countesthorpe College and what your initial feelings were about going there?

Jean: I started there in 1974 I think. Anyway it was the time when all the trouble was going on. My Dad was always going on about it, what with all the stuff in the newspaper about it. I didn't want to go and my parents didn't want it either, they said it was nothing but a youth club and full of trouble. But all my friends were going there so I wasn't that bothered.

Lib. Ed.: That must have been a hard time then, going to a school that you and your parents were worried about. Did your feelings change at all.

Jean: A little bit after a while. It was a right laugh to begin with, you could get away with anything. No uniforms, no detentions, it was completely unlike my other school. The teachers were dead friendly, they called you by your first name and you could call them just about what you liked. I didn't used to do a lot of work just like my Dad said I wouldn't but I was happy enough there. You see, I hated Maths and they said I didn't have to do it.

Lib. Ed.: That seems a bit strange saying you didn't have to do Maths. Looking back on it do you think that was a good thing?

Jean: I regret it sometimes but I don't blame the teachers. I can do all the Maths I need, I could do it then. I just couldn't stand problems and all that. It all seemed so pointless. I suppose I regret I didn't get a qualification in Maths, a decent one anyway, I got a low CSE grade but anyone could do that. The point is that I could do loads of other things that I really wanted to.

Lib. Ed.: Like what? You haven't really said anything about what you enjoyed there.

Jean: Yes I have, I liked being called by my first name.

Lib. Ed.: But what else was there about the College that appealed?

Jean: I suppose it was team really. Everybody was in a team there, a big area with no classrooms and about five teachers in it. I can't remember some of their names now but they were alright. After a time I started to do a project about my family - where they lived, where they came from, what work they did. That eventually ended up being a project about the village I lived in. I got a grade 1 for that in the exam - my claim to fame. I've still got it now. God knows it took me about a year to finish it.

Lib. Ed.: You worked on one project for a year?

Jean: Yes. That, I suppose, was what team was all about. Everybody could do what they wanted. There was no history and geography and stuff. IG they called it or CW or something like that, I don't remember. I remember writing loads of stories about the village though. That got me an 'O' level in English. I've got them somewhere too.

Lib. Ed.: How many exams did you take?

Jean: Five and I got the lot. Mind you two or three were CSE's and one was a grade 4, I got a grade 1 in the other though and three 'O' levels.

Lib. Ed.: A lot of people would say that's not very many.

Jean: I suppose they would but it was enough for me. I got a job didn't I? And anyway I did loads of other things while I was there.

Lib. Ed.: Like what?

Jean: I learned how to use a camera - take photographs and all that. One of the teachers taught me how to develop my own photographs. They're all upstairs. I didn't take an exam in that but so what, I can still do it now. Well just about I think.

Lib. Ed.: So you began to like College then?

Jean: Yes it was a strange place for a school but I was used to strictness and all that. Team was dead good you see. There was always someone around in there to talk to. I got attached to it, I was quite sad to leave.

Lib. Ed.: What about your parents? Did their attitude to the school change?

Jean: Not really, every parents' evening they were up there complaining but I really liked it. They said I got too cheeky.

Lib. Ed.: Did you?

Jean: Maybe. I certainly started speaking my mind.

Lib. Ed.: What about when you left?

Jean: I got a job as a hairdresser.

Lib. Ed.: Do you still do it?

Jean: Off and on. I've got two kids now so I just do it evenings for some people.

Lib. Ed.: Did going to Countesthorpe help you in getting a job?

Jean: I don't think so. That's what I'd always wanted to do and I knew I'd get a job, my sister did it as well you see. But there again I think the school changed me a lot.

Lib. Ed.: In what way?

Jean: It made me more confident. My Mum and Dad had always told me what was best. I used to argue with them a lot.

Lib. Ed.: What about?

Jean: Everything. My tutor said it was a good thing.

Pay differentials - a radical alternative

The allowances policy at Countesthorpe was one of the corner stones of the democratic principles on which the college was founded, and was inextricably linked with its educational ideals. To realise the democracy which was seen as central to learning relationships, democracy had to operate at all levels within the college to provide an appropriate context. A hierarchical system of promotion would not only have been incompatible with the openness of the working relationships which existed, but would also have worked against the entire educational philosophy of the college.

An elected Allowances Committee of nine was charged with the administration of the Allowances policy. Eligibility for a scale point was based on length of service: in the early days two years for a Scale 2, 6 years for a Scale 3. In addition to length of service low pay was then the major factor which determined the priority given to eligible teachers. In the late 70's the moot decided that no more appointments (excluding Head and Deputies) above Scale 3 should be made, neither internal promotions nor posts filled externally. This policy remains unchanged to date, and in 1985 there remain only five Scale 4s or Senior Teachers with over two-thirds of the staff on Scales 2 and 3.

There were other anomalies. 'Buying in' experience was one. An attempt was usually made not to

bring in teachers from outside on a higher scale than they qualified for under the college's policy, but it was not always possible to avoid this. Some felt that our policy of not appointing Scale 4s disadvantaged those seeking promotion outside the college (but judging from the number of ex-Countesthorpe heads and deputies in Leicestershire, it doesn't seem to have been such a handicap). We sometimes had to make rather arbitrary decisions between people in similar positions.

It was, inevitably, as part of a very far from perfect national system of teacher remuneration, flawed. But it worked, well, for fifteen years. It reflected and fostered the essential shared commitment of the staff; it was a central structural element in the framework of the college, without which the educational aims of the college could not have been approached.

In the early '80s a scarcity of points began to create problems. Inadequate pay rises made it harder to compensate adequately for the shortcomings of Burnham. As circumstances changed there were sequences of long difficult moots to adjust the policy accordingly. Even after policy had been made the Committee often had to meet for weeks on end before being able to come to a final decision on where a Scale point should go. How do you choose between three teachers, all 33, all

with eleven years, all on the top of Scale 2? When someone with 6 years experience joins the staff on a Scale 1 do you give them a scale point immediately one becomes available, at the expense of someone less experienced who has been eligible within the school for a couple of years? How long is it reasonable to keep people waiting on the top of Scale 2 whilst giving priority to the ever-increasing queue of lower paid candidates? In the end, however, Allowances Committee decisions were virtually always unanimous. Constitutionally, decisions could be challenged by a moot, but, though there were obviously disappointments, the fairness of the system was recognised and appreciated by the vast majority and decisions were always accepted by the staff, the head and the governors. Discontent was minimal.

Although considerations of merit were never used for awarding points, they were sometimes used in withholding a point from an eligible candidate. The rare implementation of the so-called 'negative criterion' was never entirely satisfactory. It seemed a necessary safeguard, but ensuring the justice of its use was a problem. The idea was that a teacher who was 'not fulfilling the basic requirements of the job' should not receive a point.

The Moot

The moot was the body around which democratic organisation and mutuality in learning pivoted. It represented the progressive aims of the College. It was open to everyone, staff, cleaners, students and caretakers, although in practice it was usually dominated by staff. The development of teams, guidelines on the role of the tutor, the allowances policy, the use of first names - all decisions around these issues were taken in the moot.

Frequently the moot would delegate authority to sub-committees on staffing, space and the curriculum but all policy decisions were taken in the moot. Ideas on development could always be challenged in the moot whether those ideas were from the Principal or from a probationary teacher. Students sometimes challenged the staff and were by weight of numbers potentially very strong. In the mid 1970s a group of staff were interested in developing teams vertically i.e. having students of different ages in one team instead of the traditional year grouping structure. Despite this being a laudable aim and despite the fact that it had the support of the vast majority of staff it was voted out by the students who did not want to see the traditional structure done away with. This is an illustration of the way students were able to exercise their democratic rights in the College although the fact that moots usually



took place after school worked against real student involvement.

Interestingly, when the College faced a major crisis in 1983 due to the fact that it was told by the authority that it had to shed at least seven staff, the students formed an action group and called a series of moots in school time. As a result of this, independent of the staff, they organised a coach to take students to a lobby at County Hall on the day when the budget was set and a student addressed a rally of teachers calling on them to encourage students to set up action groups in schools across the country. Further, in the moots students passed radical proposals on class size and staffing. They demanded, for example, that the ratio of teachers to students in teams should be no more than 1:25. They threatened to work to rule if this did not become school policy and they sent letters to the Director of Education to this end. Sadly the proposals were never acted upon; they were considered by many staff 'pie in the sky'. The problem though in reality was that in 1983 and 1984 a major assault on the democratic organisation of the college was launched by the college executive with the support of the local authority so that democracy was about to go out of the window and the student proposals effectively became a dead duck.

Not surprisingly, Countesthorpe College was held up as an educational beacon and yet this was a factor that figured largely in its eventual demise. The College became an island of enlightenment. Little attempt was made to forge links with other community colleges in Leicestershire trying to adopt similar methods. Further there was no real national perspective. At the time of the Tyndale enquiry the College's union group sent a letter of support to the Tyndale teachers but the College had failed to build good links with Tyndale and other progressive schools which eventually saw their progressivism destroyed by enquiries without an acknowledgement from Countesthorpe. There were other problems too. In the teams the emphasis was always on negotiation and contract, students had to negotiate a curricular contract with their tutor and were monitored accordingly. The degree to which the monitoring was pursued varied enormously but in the contract system the tutor was frequently the stronger party. Students often had to go outside the contract to do what they wanted. Many tutors accepted this but for others it created a series of problems. This lack of complete faith by some teachers in student autonomy was to be crucial in later developments in the College.

Stresses

In 1973 however, the College did survive a major crisis. In the spring of that year a group of parents critical of the College formed a Parents Action Committee. They won the support of the local Tory M.P. John Farr. The demand was made for an independent enquiry into the so-called monstrosity. Margaret Thatcher the then Secretary of State for Education refused the demand but a general inspection did take place. The inspectors had their criticisms but were generally very supportive. Why was the College able to avoid a full enquiry unlike many of its contemporary initiatives? Why did the general inspection not lead to further demands for an enquiry? The answer to the second question is straightforward, the College worked. Parental complaints there might have been but 920 parents still signed a statement in May 1973 expressing strong support for the staff and the College. But there were other reasons. Watts, the second Principal was a great spokesperson for the College. The Director of Education was also supportive, so too was the governing body. But the staff were crucial too, they were united in their opposition to the 'threats'. Crucial in this was the College's appointing policy whereby all the appointments were effectively controlled by the staff as a whole and commitment to the College's philosophy was a pre-requisite for getting a job there. The question of course in 1973 was how the College would fare in a possible lurch away from progressivism nationally which in fact was to result from the Black

Papers and the Labour Party's great debate? What would be the implications of the arrival in the College of an executive with little understanding of or support for the practice of the College?

Transition

Countesthorpe College in 1986 is a far cry from the college which survived the stresses of 1973. The democratic organisation has gone, a hierarchical management structure is evolving. The appointing policy has changed drastically with the executive operating a veto. The allowances system has been abolished. Team organisation is under threat. Admittedly the Tory government's educational legislation has hit hard. Parents have found themselves able to opt away from the College which still suffers from the smears of the early years and the College has found it difficult to stop this 'drift'. An attempt has been made but a new Principal, Chris Evans, has seen the way forward in terms of pragmatism. He has been behind many of the changes which in his eyes have been long overdue. Normalisation will, he thinks, stop the drift. And yet one must not attach singular blame to Evans. He is, in many ways, the pawn of a now unsupportive local authority. But at the heart of the issue are the staff. Many of the changes have been instituted democratically, staff have spent twelve months effectively voting away their rights. Why? There are a lot of new staff at Countesthorpe now who know little or nothing of the past and the battle for progressivism, sympathy for the original ideals is not in abundance. But many of the longstanding staff have moved too and in this context it is interesting to return to the issue of the staff/student contract. For many staff that was pragmatism and yet insistence on contracts illustrates a sinister reservation for its advocates namely that some sort of control is always necessary, negotiation being the important facility. Staff who believe this have listened to and accepted the voices of pragmatism.

1986

The College has not lost all of its heritage. There has been opposition and it is interesting to note the comments of students currently in a team trying to resist the pragmatic/prescriptive drift.

Sam writes:
"I think that school doesn't teach students about what the real world is like, and how to get on. A lot of the subjects taught at school are of no use to the jobs students want. I think that most schools are awful because there is no freedom of speech or dress but Countesthorpe College is quite good because you are treated like adults and this gives more responsibility, also you are treated as a person in your own right without

someone telling you what to do, say, or think. School should be a place for meeting people and learning to get along with others.

Andy writes:

"When I first left Leysland school (I'd been there since I was eleven) I thought to myself 'great, no more being pushed about!' Well to start with at the College me and my mates did what we liked and when we liked. We used to skive off school nearly all the time, it was like a Youth Club. After a while we got bored with dossing about and started to give work a bit of a go. At Leysland we got our thrills by dossing about at break and dinner times and were bored with work and fed up with teachers always telling you to do their useless work. Now it's the other way around. At the College at times its really free and easy but if you want to work and somehow I have decided that maybe it's not such a bad thing after all, then you really can get into things."

This should remind us what a lot of young people think about schools and what they want from them.

Staff

It is important that the staff at Countesthorpe do not lose sight of the earlier aims and intentions of the College whatever the possible stresses and whatever the limitations. There will always be some oppositional space within schools and possibilities of experimentation. For example, at the College today there is a group of teachers who are interested in trying to build a team within the present structure which will recognise the constraints and take note of external requirements but which will endeavour to muster support from both inside and outside the College for a type of education that is open and recognises the very individual needs of students. Herein there is maybe a message for other teachers labouring in highly authoritarian schools, namely that some experimentation, even if it is in one's own classroom is possible.

There is of course a much wider issue. Islands of enlightenment will eventually be consumed leaving only some kind of heritage, such is the history of many radical educational initiatives in Britain, such is certainly the history of Countesthorpe College. One needs to consider, however, the strength that some form of local and/or national organisation involving students, parents, trade unionists, teachers, local authority officials, politicians, academics et al might have offered to Countesthorpe College between 1979 and 1986 and certainly could offer to any future initiatives as well as remembering that a commitment to non-authoritarian education must be a commitment to democracy and mutuality in learning and not just to more humane methods of teaching and administration whatever more positive features of the latter.

You probably are not in a position to do anything very much "libertarian", "socialist" or ideologically sound if you work in a school. The whole structure of the places is against you. Head teachers will often query material about CND or nuclear weapons as being "political" while leading the whole school in "For those in Peril on the Sea" in memory of our boys who fell in the Falklands.

An area which is worth exploring is Educational Drama. In previous issues of the old Libertarian Education there was one short article about its value, and one which touched on drama therapy.

There are a large number of activities which have been called "drama".
1. Warm ups and exercises - the sort of thing where you do some stretching or relaxing exercises, and then go on to "Let's all walk round like old men/cripples/rabbits etc." and eventually get to saying "Right, get in pairs, you are a brother and sister watching TV and you want different channels - act out what happens."

This, if you've got enough activities, is great for class control - but it's totally directed and is hardly any more heartfelt drama than party charades. It also tends to be dangerously stereotypic.

2. Drama Therapy:- sounds great - get the kids to act out their aggressions - act out intimate secrets - find their innermost souls... BUT what happens after the lesson? The kids have given away their phobias, early childhood experiences, inmost secrets in the heat of the lesson. News spreads and what may have seemed a liberating experience at the time can result in a child being pilloried by her peers.

3. Playlets: these sound good. Give the kids some titles and send them off in groups "Come back in ten minutes and show us your play."

The trouble is this tends to lead to stereotyped cops and robbers things - who can blame kids for wanting to have a ball? The situation is false and unrealistic (it's inside school and they've been given a time limit) so it's hardly surprising that they try to ape the drama they are exposed to most - Starsky / A-Team etc.

4. Whole class drama living through experiences together. This is based on the work of a very imposing woman named Dorothy Heathcote. It's not particularly "Libertarian" in style, but it gives you a chance to explore issues with children in a way no other means can.

You can start by asking the children what they want their drama to be about. The group I am thinking of wanted "War". So while I was thinking about what I hoped they could learn, I told them a little about two countries "A" and "B" that happened to resemble Iraq and Iran.

Then I told them they were soldiers and I was the sergeant and we were waiting for the order to attack into the mouth of the enemy guns. We chanted slogans and built our spirits up by saying derogatory things about the enemy. Another lesson had them hard at work making posters and TV commercials in a recruiting drive as the war became unpopular.

I should mention here the importance of building belief by using the kids' knowledge. The right sort of questions are vital here. The ones that imply that you know the answers already (What does the general in charge of artillery look after?) being useless. More important being such as "What do we want the room where the cabinet meets to be like? The point being that you use the children's knowledge to build a collective play, so that their sense of investment in the drama is as deep as yours. Of course, you run the risk of entirely inappropriate contributions: usually the rest of the group will modify them, or you can rejig your plans to accommodate the ideas.

A meeting of the war cabinet was called - of course, we had to discuss who would be in it and what they would be responsible for. As "Supreme President", (a controlling role, I freely admit) I suggested that I knew that one of the cabinet had been betraying "us". I would return to the office in one minute to ask for more information.

This gamble paid off. What had been a group of ministers and generals preoccupied with getting more money for their own department became an ugly scene thick with accusations of lying and treachery. We cut back and they became the waiting soldiers again. One of the children took the sergeant role - but in the light of "knowing" what their superiors had been up to the military chants that the sergeant tried became surly. I took the risk of presenting myself in a low status helpless role - I gambled that they were far enough into the drama not to worry that it was "Mr G", crawling in with a piece of red cloth held to his side to symbolise blood and gasping something in a foreign language.

The effect was pleasing to me, and I hope good for the group. They had just heard in the "days orders", read out by the sergeant, that all the prisoners were to be shot (they had decided this as the "cabinet". I am sure that as teacher/pupils some of them would really have loved to shoot me. However, they rushed around finding water and first aid things and discussed how to hide me from the war authorities, in whom they had now lost faith.

At the end of the session you come out of the drama and get your feedback.

questions of the group can help you to find out what they have experienced and help them to rationalise what they have been through. "How did you feel when you were the war cabinet?" "What do you think of 'the cause' now?" "What did you feel about the wounded soldier?" And perhaps most importantly for the group: "What is going to happen to the soldier next time..."



It is not necessarily "libertarian" - but educational drama has its attractions. The students are all encouraged to join in - even students opting out can be made part of the drama (situations in schools where you can allow genuine opting out and get away with it are very rare). "Acting" is not involved - men can be women and vice versa. I was aware that in the example quoted above it was centred on men's activities - later when we explored the life history of the prisoner an attempt was made to redress the balance.

It is possible to make strong political points: in this case the students seemed to grow in awareness as they realised that ministers and generals can and will manipulate whole armies for their own selfish ends. It is possible to structure a lesson so that the participants get their "dramatic moment" from it - and have fun.

There are, of course, a lot of worrying questions with this sort of drama. How far is it an exercise in manipulation by the teacher, for instance? But the students do not need literacy for it and it's definitely not book, or even 'skill' oriented: though they can develop skills through the medium of "educational drama". Two books to start you off:-

Davies, G. (1983) Practical Primary Drama (Heinemann Educational)
Neelands, J. (1984) Making Sense of Drama (Heinemann Educational)
A book about the exercise, playlet, "acting" type of drama:-
Scher, A. and Verrall, C. (1975), 100+ Ideas for Drama (Heinemann Educational)

Free Schools in Germany



The 1970's in West Germany saw the development of a number of progressive educational initiatives both inside and outside the state system. Inside the system there were moves to establish comprehensive schools and eradicate selection, outside the system alternative schools for young children emerged and were followed by the creation of a number of free schools in inner-city areas of Frankfurt, Bochum and Berlin. Today the movement towards comprehensive education has disintegrated but interestingly the free school movement has gone from strength to strength with the Green Party now giving its unequivocal support to the movement although 'Green strength' is more obvious in Hessen than in the republic as a whole.

History

The developments in the 70's were the direct result of the radical democratic students' movement of the 1960's. In those years in cities across the republic politically active parents and kindergarten teachers set up what became known as 'Kinderladen', small schools in which young children aged from three to seven could be educated in a non-authoritarian way. Many people involved in the students' movement saw both the readiness of the middle class in Germany in the 1930's to go to war in the name of fascism and the weakness of the working class to prevent or resist this as partly the result of an authoritarian education system which encourages subservience and tabooed dissent. Similarly, the lack of a readiness for a really democratic renewal in Post-war Germany has been explained in the same terms. Consequently the Kinderladen were set up on non-authoritarian lines with children being encouraged to play and explore. Neill's Summerhill, the educational experiments of revolutionary Russia, and the various analyses of education made by psychoanalysts like Homer Lane served as an inspiration but much of the actual energy for creating

the Kinderladen came from women. In many ways this was a manifestation of the growing self-confidence of women that was evident in the students' movement. Women took themselves out of the kitchen and out of the home where children were looked after and into all different sorts of buildings from town halls to Nissen huts where the Kinderladen were created and where they fast became self-help groups as well with the aim of creating time and opportunity for political action. In the Kinderladen, women were brought together in a totally new and invigorating way.

As the Kinderladen children grew older and their parents came under pressure to send them to traditional schools attention was diverted to the state system. Many parents who had been involved in the creation of Kinderladen began campaigning for open and democratic schools without selection and indeed some experiments were set up but many of these soon collapsed in the aftermath of government pressure to conform and the possibility of a genuine comprehensive education of the German education system disappeared.

Frankfurt Free School

As a consequence of this retreat a group of Kinderladen parents and teachers in Frankfurt did what appeared to be the only thing possible; in 1974 they applied to the authorities for permission to set up a free school for children up to the age of thirteen. The Basic Law, the West German constitution, allows schools to be set up privately as long as the state recognises them. The parents and teachers knew that there would be a battle for recognition but that it would take a long time and would not actually affect the establishment of the free school. The intention was that children of different ages would live, play and work together according to their own defined needs and interests. There was to be no rigid curriculum and no subject

divisions, marks or reports. The school began with nine children in 1974 but without state approval. That approval was eventually granted in 1983 but in the interim period the school grew and grew with a certain amount of toleration from the authorities who anticipated a law-suit with a favourable outcome for them. Though precarious, this state of affairs had its advantages too because the fact that a free school could exist with teachers being paid a nominal amount by the state encouraged others to follow and from 1974 onwards other schools were established in major German cities including Berlin, Bochum and Bremen. The 'illegal status' was acceptable to all sides but the schools benefited enormously because of the chances for experimentation. However, on the other hand the fact that all the schools had to fight for legal status at the same time as experimenting had its adverse effects as the ground rules were laid by the German government, this led to an abdication of principles in certain situations, initially for tactical reasons but eventually in the name of pragmatism. The most important feature at the free schools however was that the two major previous progressive educational trends, namely the political criticism of education and actual school reform were continued; the Frankfurt free school was both an alternative to school and an alternative school.

Green Party

After the very sudden growth of the Green Party in the early 1980's the free schools suddenly found themselves with a political party as an ally. In 1984, after the incredible electoral success, the Green Party demanded in their party programme that free schools should be established as general education schools. The fact that the party began to campaign for free schools is rooted in its origin. Besides having an ecological programme the party has taken up many of the radical demands of the democratic movement of the 1960's and has renounced a Marxist analysis of the state. In Hessen, the party's stronghold, the Greens have committed themselves to the establishment of six more free schools in addition to the Frankfurt free school. With this legitimisation the increase in alternative and free schooling has grown but there are real problems. The schools being established are understood not so much as part of the struggle for social change and emancipation but rather as remedial centres where the adverse effects of daily life can be considered. In consequence political critiques of education have been thrust into the background and with alternative schools having become almost respectable few people actually think of alternatives to school.



How Sir Keith may crack

SNIPPETS

Daily Mail, Friday, November 1, 1985

With regrets

RAY HONEYFORD, the Bradford headmaster who was branded a 'racist' by the race relations lobby for daring to express his views in print about the difficulties of white children in schools where they are an ethnic minority, has had enough.

After enduring months of insult, harassment and intimidation by Leftists determined to get him out, he has finally decided to quit and take the money.

It is to be offered as their price of principle and £100,000 has been mentioned. It will not blot out the injustice and indignity. It cannot make up for a broken career. But it will soften the blow.

Daily Mail COMMENT

FOSTER-PARENTS OF THE UNWANTED BABY CHOSEN

ROY and Sheila Winkle, the young Timperley (Cheshire) couple who do not want their unborn baby, have chosen the child's foster-parents.

At their Broomwood estate home today, Mrs. Winkle said: "Many more letters have arrived this morning, and we have come to a decision. I will be going out later today to phone the couple we have chosen and arrange to meet them."

She said the couple were childless and lived in Cheshire, adding, "I will not say anything further."

When the postman arrived today, he had a bundle of unstamped letters.

"I would not accept them," said Mrs. Winkle. "Why should I pay. I paid 2s. 4d. yesterday, and the letters were abusive."

Daily Telegraph

Joseph 'close to tears' while meeting teachers

By JOHN IZBICKI Education Correspondent

SIR KEITH JOSEPH, Education Secretary, came close to tears yesterday during a confrontation with a group of teachers at Newbury, Berks.

repeated this three times during the 25-minute meeting. On the third occasion, he came close to tears. There was a break in his voice and he looked down at the floor," Mr Wheaton said. He said "other m

Lecturers who need a lesson

SKIVING on a fantastic scale has been uncovered by the Audit Commission further education - organisations forever raving about their need for more resources. The Commission reveals that they are wasting up to £150 million a year.

Not surprising, really, when you consider that some lecturers are teaching for fewer than 10 hours a week in a "working" year of 30 weeks. This leaves them plenty of time to sit and think, or do a spot of moonlighting.

Incredibly, the lecturers' union has tabled a claim for a 20 per cent pay increase. At their workrate, the lecturers should be taking a pay cut, not demanding a huge rise.

QUESTION: If it takes three lecturers to do the job of one, how much should each of the three be paid?

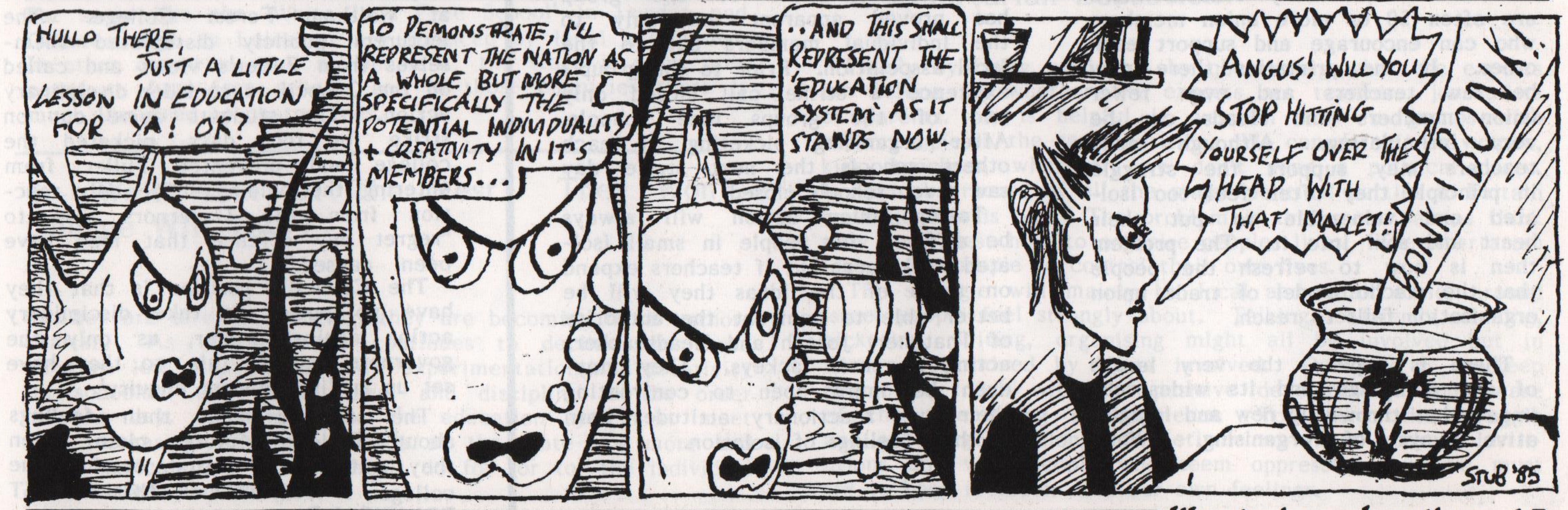
ANSWER: One-third of what he is getting.

That is the kind of basic arithmetic our spoiled practitioners in "higher education" need to learn.

de Chaos

How Sir Keith may crack the teachers today

BRISTOL EVENING POST, THURSDAY, MARCH 20 1968



What's wrong with Multi-cultural Education ?

Black pressure and white guilt are forcing schools to try and overcome the cultural bias of their curricula. Schools are including celebrations of Chinese New Year in assemblies and putting up pictures of black faces in classroom displays as never before. Yet many of these initiatives are serving to promote stereotypes rather than challenging them.

The celebrations of the Chinese New Year for example are usually confined to the Dragon Dance and displays of noodles and chopsticks. I haven't noticed many schools covering any aspect of Chinese communism in their displays. The Chinese are therefore represented as curious people with strange customs.

Images of Africa are even worse. When I ordered resources for my own school "The Struggle for Namibia" poster-pack was deleted from my order by a colleague who considered it "inappropriate". Pictures of Black Africans living in dire poverty are acceptable but pictures of Black Africans fighting back against poverty and oppression are not... That's why the "Live Aid" project is so popular in schools... Blacks are shown as



passive victims, victims of their own incompetence.

The multicultural perspective concentrates on particular features of other cultures and peoples, crudely tearing them from their social and political setting. So customs often seem absurd and naive and poverty self-induced. This approach is popular though because it leaves "our" society and politics unscathed.

In fact "our" social and political system is enhanced because it seems so much more rational and efficient in comparison. Multicultural education is not good enough. Anti-racism is what is required but this is threatening - it threatens us (whites) personally but even more it threatens the smug liberal hierarchy that controls the education industry.

There is a temptation to dodge the challenge by hiding behind a nice liberal multicultural smokescreen but we mustn't hesitate to face the challenge squarely and fight for a powerful anti-racist approach. Teachers and learners together exploring the unequal power relationships between and within cultures and peoples, not only overseas but at home too; even within the very institutions in which the learning is taking place and ultimately within the personalities of each of us.

Anti-racism is more challenging than the "Christmas Around the Commonwealth" approach of multiculturalism but it is necessary if we are to oppose racism rather than reinforce it.

Fuller Shit

Many education authorities have published policy statements on anti-racism and multi-ethnic education. Most liberals in schools and colleges have made a token nod in this direction, but increasingly reactionaries are crawling out the woodwork, encouraged by the political climate.

One recent example of this is in a letter, published in the Times in October, written by Jack Fuller, the principal of Waltham Forest College, a college in north-east London which has a very high proportion of black students. A quote gives the flavour of the letter: "True, Britain has experienced an invasion more subtle than was likely in 1940, but many ordinary Britons are becoming aware of being ethnic minorities in parts of their own land."

Fuller had visited Jamaica where he found that "the sort of loud aggressive conduct seen in Brixton was there in Jamaica" and could therefore not be blamed on racism.

The letter provoked an immediate response from staff and students at Waltham Forest College. The lecturers publicly dissociated themselves from Fuller's views and called on the Council to consider disciplinary action. The students came out on strike for four days, picketed the college and prevented Fuller from entering the building. The only reaction from the Governors was to "regret any offence that may have been caused."

The Council's position is that they have no power to take disciplinary action against Fuller, as only the governors can do this, so they have set up an 'independent enquiry'.

The students made their feelings about Fuller's future plain when they put up a notice outside the college: "VACANCY - NON-RACIST PRINCIPAL."

LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION

A beginner's guide

A sort of pretend interview where you ask really naive questions and we provide interesting, informative answers.

1. What's Wrong With Ordinary Education Anyway?

It is anti-life, it is a systematic attempt to repress the natural instincts of the developing person. Play, fun, spontaneity and love are crushed and replaced by conformity and the fear of freedom.

2. But Some People Like It.

Of course... a lot of ordinary, authoritarian education is simply building on the foundations laid by traditional authoritarian child-rearing. Even before entering school the child has been 'broken'. The child's personality develops as a projection of the parents' ambition - the rest is repressed - the child is polite, quiet, guilt-ridden and awaiting further instructions. It's not surprising that many want to be told what, when and how to learn.

3. Well, What's The Alternative?

Freedom - freedom for people of all ages to learn what they want with teachers supporting the learning not directing it, no matter how subtly.

4. Isn't That A Bit Pie In The Sky?

Not at all. It's not only practical but it exists. There are lots of schools and colleges around the world where there is freedom in education. In England Summerhill is probably the best known example.

5. Are They All Fee Paying Places?

Not entirely. In this country most progressive schools are outside the state system and exist by charging fees, but some like the 'White Lion Free School' in London and Countesthorpe in Leicester are financed by local authorities. In other countries such as Denmark the state is more prepared to fund free schools and in those countries there is much less need to charge fees.

6. Well What Of The Rest? They Won't Change Will They?

They are already changing, they are becoming more authoritarian. As the economy continues to decline the state is even less disposed to allow experimentation and creativity in schools. Cost-effectiveness and discipline is the order of the day. The need for the education system to meet the increasingly stringent needs of the state are more and more articulated. What schools do for (or to) the individual is even less considered.

7. Is There No Hope For Most State Education?

Some - there are positive developments, the emergence of Black and Womens Studies, the provision of girl-only spaces, the widespread abolition of the cane, all demonstrate real gains for libertarians.

8. Is This Libertarian Idea Of Education New, Then? Has It Developed As A Critique Of Modern Society?

Yes and no - No it's not new in that schools have been criticised since they were first invented but the developed libertarian philosophy of education goes back about 200 years to William Godwin who wrote of the child as "an individual being with powers of reasoning, with sensations of pleasure and pain and with principles of morality... By the system of nature he is placed by himself; he has a claim upon his little sphere of empire and discretion; and he is entitled to his appropriate portion of independence." Since then many people including Tolstoy, Ferrer, A.S. Neill and Paul Goodman have developed the idea.

But it is also new in the sense that it continues to develop. We see Lib. Ed. in that tradition, updating the critique of authoritarian education as we also describe and encourage the libertarian alternative.

9. But If Libertarian Ideas Are So Good Why Hasn't The Education System Adopted Them?

Mainly because it is in the interests of some people to make sure that institutions don't develop along libertarian lines. People who profit from the willingness of others to be exploited and enjoy it. Most importantly the owners of capital who want workers who will not only work for less than their work gives the owner in profit but who will be grateful for the opportunity. Ultimately, though, so many of us gain a vested interest in the prevailing system that the majority are reluctant, at least initially, to see changes...

10. How Can We Support The Struggle For Libertarian Education?

Firstly by being critical - by questioning what the experts are telling us, whether the experts are teachers, journalists or parents. It is helpful if we can work in groups with other people in the same position. We can do this as women, kids, teachers, whatever, we don't need a political party. In fact the record of all the major political parties in Britain on Education is bad. The problem is that most parties think they know best how to organise peoples lives. The libertarian idea is for people to control their own lives.

The struggle will mainly be local and small scale, around issues people feel strongly about. Talking to friends, reading, picketing, writing, organising might all be involved but in a way determined by those involved. Our role is to keep people in touch with the positive developments and aware of the threatening developments. To inform the struggle and encourage it along. Sometimes we must work in institutions and with people who seem oppressive, but we must try to keep in touch with our own feelings.

ACTION, ISOLATION & MUTUAL AID

The teachers pay campaign has seen teachers more militant than ever before. It's good to see teachers refusing to be ground down but there have been problems with the details of the campaign. Take the refusal to attend staff meetings, this seems to give Heads carte blanche to be even more authoritarian. The ordinary union member is applying the sanctions recommended by the leadership but is becoming more and more alienated from their work, and sometimes from the union as well. The campaign is maintained but the experience is not always liberating for the membership.

The members are treated as foot soldiers in a rather ill-prepared army. The union's national executives draw up the campaign plans and the activists at local level try and dragoon individual members into action.

The weakness of this strategy is most keenly felt in the primary schools. In secondary schools there are often 50 or more union members who can encourage and support each other. In the primaries there may be few teachers and even fewer union members and Heads can be very intimidating. Although many teachers may support the struggle in principle they often feel too isolated and vulnerable to put their heart and soul into it. The problem then is how to refresh the people that the macho model of trade union organisation fails to reach.

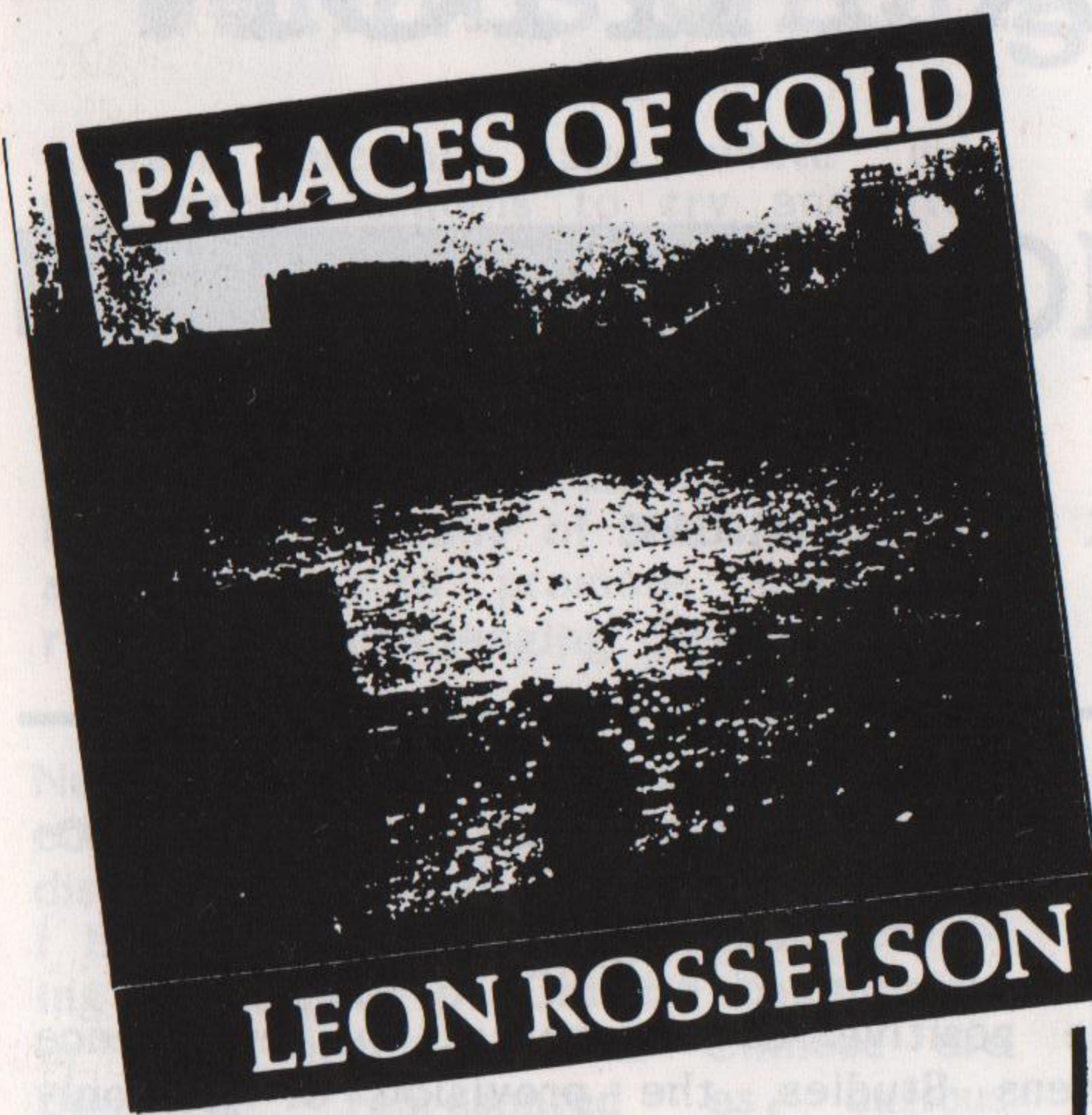
There is hope - the very length of the campaign and its widespread impact has thrown up new and imaginative ways of organising. While

many secondary schools have had their best attended and most lively ever school branch meetings some primaries have begun to get to grips with their problems of isolation. In London one local association has devolved some of its organising to four smaller groupings of schools. As an alternative to attending large secondary dominated association meetings, primary members can now take part in small, more local, informal primary group meetings. These groupings of about ten primaries have several advantages that encourage participation and solidarity:

- More local, less far to travel
- Can get to know people better
- Easier to discuss in an informal meeting (no standing orders)
- Have started a newsletter to keep people who miss a meeting in touch
- Concentrate on primary school issues

The effectiveness of one group has proved apparent not only to the individual members but to the local association. Prior to the group's existence a strike call closed only two of the groups nine schools. After organising picketing of each others schools the next strike day saw seven schools closed.

Taking union action will always be difficult for people in small isolated workplaces but if teachers expand on some of the ideas they will be better able to confront the authority of Thatcher, Joseph and Headteachers acting as their lackeys. They may even be more open to confronting their own reactionary attitudes born of their feelings of isolation.



Palaces of Gold

A record by Leon Rosselson

Acorn Records Ltd.

CF249

PALACES OF GOLD

- If the sons of company directors
- And judges' private daughters
- Had to go to school in a slum school,
- Dumped by some joker in a damp back alley,
- Had to herd into classrooms cramped with worry,
- With a view into slagheaps and stagnant pools,
- Had to file through corridors grey with age
- And play in a crackpot concrete cage
- Buttons would be pressed
- Rules would be broken
- Strings would be pulled
- And magic words spoken
- Invisible fingers would mould
- Palaces of Gold

Singer-songwriter, Leon Rosselson is still recording and touring clubs, pubs and colleges. His songs are no less powerful and, unfortunately, not much better known despite very popular appearances with Roy Bailey and Frankie Armstrong at the Glastonbury Festivals. So make an effort to support Leon by buying his records and going to his gigs. You'll enjoy them and be ideologically correct both at the same time. A rare event.

The School with No Rules

The Tamarisk Tree - My School and the Years of War

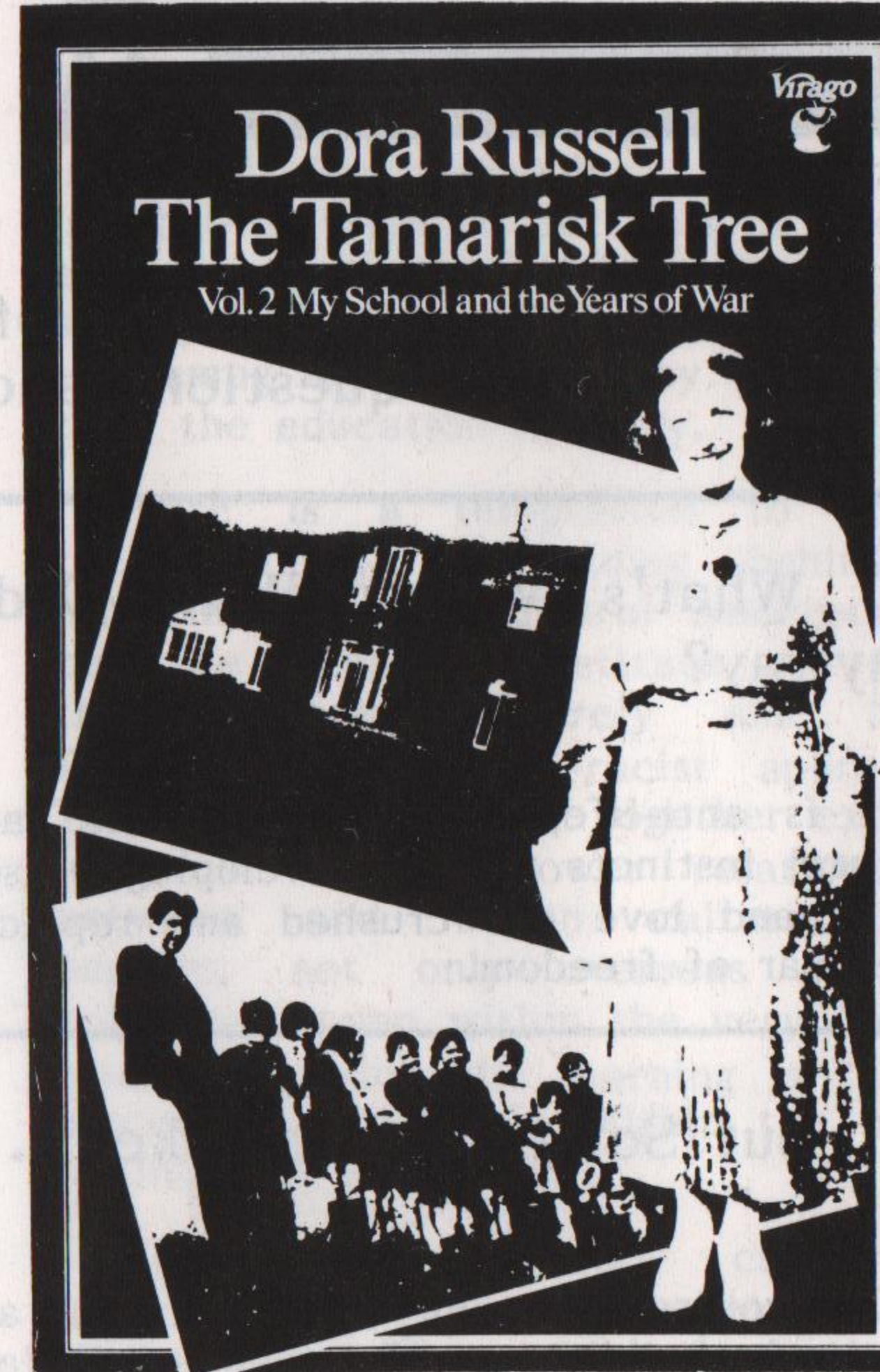
A book by Dora Russell

Virago 218pp £3.95

"The School With No Rules" That's what the newspapers called Beacon Hill, the school started by Dora and Bertrand Russell in the twenties. Dora has devoted the second volume of her autobiography to telling the story of the school. The idea first came to them when they were considering how best to educate their own children. They didn't fancy the existing schools with their emphasis on obedience, conformity and nationalism and they guessed that some other parents must feel the same way. They were offered a big, old house near Petersfield, Sussex and opened there as "Beacon Hill School" in September 1927.

The libertarian philosophy of the school is described at length in the book and a sketch is also built up of the world of progressive education in the twenties and thirties. "The Tamarisk Tree" not only details the content of the curriculum but reproduces scripts of plays written by the children, their poems and some photographs of their various activities (including the then notorious nude movement lessons on the lawn).

Dora bravely also details the personal stresses and strains, the break-up with "Bertie", the bad feelings and the effects of the war which



eventually forced the closure of the school.

Inevitably the success of Beacon Hill was limited, it depended too much on the financial patronage of its founders and supporters. Yet a moving testimony to that success is provided by an ex-pupil writing 40 years after leaving...

"If there was one thing we learned it was the meaning of freedom. I learnt what freedom is by first hand experience...."

"The Tamarisk Tree" is a good read and a very important book.

Libertarians and Education

The Libertarians and Education

Unwin Education

A book by Michael Smith

161pp £5.50

This is an 'education' book not a libertarian book and as such has obvious failings. Though Michael Smith gives a sympathetic account of the ideas and practice of libertarian education from the writings of William Godwin in the late 18th century to the Free School movement and the Deschoolers in the 1960's, the emphasis is definitely historical.

After reading this book you might have a fair idea of the structure and curriculum of the 'The Beehive' - a school set up in France in 1904 by Sebastien Faure. You would, however, have learned nothing of the way a free school in the 1960's might have worked.

In the introductory chapter Michael Smith makes the following point:

'There are then, major differences between libertarian education and the 'progressive' education with which it is sometimes confused. Libertarian education is not just progressive education writ extreme. It has a consistent social and political reference which progressive education typically lacks.'

Throughout the book he makes a distinction between the libertarian movement and the libertarian position. The movement has always been rooted in a political background, with a strong tradition of trying to provide a politically as well as personally liberating education for working class children. So what is learned is as important as how it is learnt.

A.S.Neill would clearly be a libertarian of the position, since at Summerhill no attempt was made to construct a curriculum with clear social and political values. Self-government by the children and non-compulsory lessons though are enough to separate Neill from the progressives.

The book gives a clear idea of the variety of approaches to learning which come under the heading 'libertarian', but also of the common strands which run through all of them.

Despite some of the criticisms of it, I would recommend this book to anyone who asks 'What is libertarian education?'

Girls do less well academically at mixed schools than at single-sex schools but it's socially desirable for them to experience the single 'normal' environment that being with boys at school provides - or so the argument runs.

In her book, 'Schools for the Boys' Pat Mahony doesn't dispute the fact that mixed-sex schools provide a normal environment in that domination, verbal abuse and sexual harassment by boys constitute the normal experience of girls. She does, however, question its desirability.

Her observations of and interviews with pupils in three London comprehensives present a horrific catalogue of boys' attempts to push girls into the margins of school life. Boys take up a disproportionate amount of space - both physical space and verbal space - in the classroom and the playground. To answer questions or put forward ideas in class they are met with exaggerated sighs, groans and remarks like 'Turn it off', 'pull it's plug out'. When they walk in the corridor or the playground they run a gauntlet of degrading remarks and sexual attacks. Some schools recognise this, but rather than confronting the problem, let girls out of classes before the boys, to allow them to escape.

Especially illuminating are the comments made by girls who have switched from co-educational to girl's schools and realise in retrospect how badly they had been affected by the boys' attitudes and actions. 'You don't notice if it's happening all the time'.

School for the Boys

School for the Boys? Co-education Reassessed

A book by Pat Mahony

Hutchinson in association with Exploration in Feminism Collective

118pp £3.95



Girls who have made the change in the other direction were horrified to discover the realities of life with boys in the school. 'One (boy) passed unnecessarily close and growled to his mate "Cor I'd like to squeeze her tits". Amazed, we turned to the boy and told him how disgusting his attitude was. How dare we speak to him like that -

.....'Obviously slags, slags, slags, slags'. He continued to shout loudly at us as we continued out of the school.' The few boys who try to question the other boys' behaviour receive similar treatment and soon learn to keep quiet.

After a short section dealing with the reasons for the social control of girls by boys, the book turns to the implications for schooling. Presumably Pat Mahony's conclusion is that mixed-sex-schools are out? Well yes and no. She cites the arguments against girls' schools and proceeds to demolish them, saying that both girls and boys are more likely to pick gender-stereotyped subjects at mixed schools, that girls have stronger role models and become more assertive at girls' schools. However, boys at boys' schools may become even more aggressive and violent. So there is no easy answer, 'Because the basic problem which I have argued is the social construction of maleness is yet to be tackled'.

In the last part of the book she presents ideas from schools which are attempting to tackle sexism with programmes of single-sex groups for maths and science, rigorous screening of materials for racism and sexism and lessons in which girls can discuss these issues.

There is a long tradition of regarding co-education as progressive but perhaps in the light of research such as Pat Mahony's it is time to question this assumption. Strategies of girls' discussion groups, girl-only lessons and girl-only space within schools may be taken to their logical conclusions in girl-only schools.

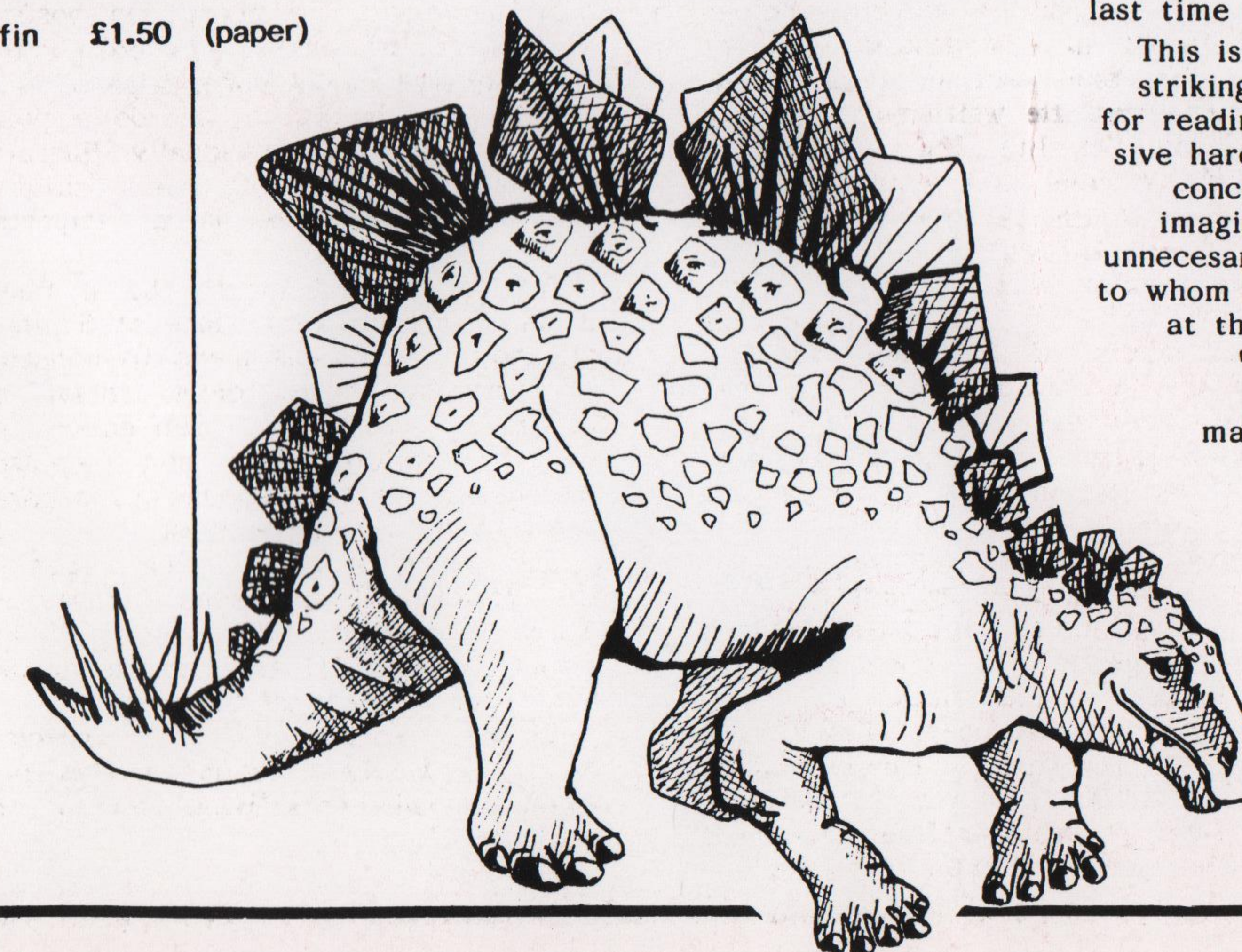
DINOSAURS

Dinosaurs and all that rubbish

A book by Michael Foreman

Hamish Hamilton £4.50 (hard)

Puffin £1.50 (paper)



"This time the earth belongs to everyone, not parts of it to certain people, but all of it to everyone, to be enjoyed and cared for." the dinosaurs warn the man who has destroyed the earth in pursuit of his dream, to fly to the stars. Using his money and his men, trees are cut down, coal is mined and factories fill the earth with smoke and fumes and rubbish, and his rocket is built and finally launched. Dinosaurs lying dormant beneath the surface of the earth are disturbed by the heat of the smouldering waste. Disgusted by the mess, they clear up the rubbish, making it possible for plants and animals and beauty to thrive again, making it unrecognisable to the man when he returns to earth. When he asks to own just a part of this paradise the dinosaurs and all the other living things are adamant, ruled by his head instead of his heart last time ruined the earth, now it belongs to "EVERYONE".

This is an attractive book, beautifully illustrated, with a striking cover and original title. It is an excellent book for reading aloud (especially in the larger but more expensive hard back edition) as the story is told in a clear and concise style with a series of complementary bold and imaginative illustrations. The story unfolds without any unnecessary detail or long-winded description. The children to whom I read this story thoroughly enjoyed it and looked at the pictures in more detail later, remarking on how "alive" the dinosaurs appeared. Individual children chose to re-read the book quietly to themselves, making sense of the story through the pictures when unable to read particular words. It is a worthwhile book with a strong message. It is useful fantasy as it has its root firmly in reality, accurately reflecting the world in which we live, but in a way which is more accessible and comprehensible to younger children. It helps to initiate spontaneous and important discussion about issues which would otherwise be difficult to raise and to talk about.

THE LIBERATION OF LEARNING

Education is a process whereby we strive to understand the world and acquire the confidence to explore its workings. It is a process of becoming critically aware of ones reality in a manner which leads to effective action upon it. Education, then is not school as we know it. Schools which are tied to curricula, exams, grades and certificates; schools that rely on compulsory attendance and expend more energy on a custodial role than an educative one; schools that are licensed by the state to wield a monopoly of certifiable knowledge - these institutions prevent people from knowing enough about the workings of society to enable them to understand and change it. Such schooling is merely a process of blatant social engineering. We want to assert that education is alternatively a life-long process and should be in the hands of and under the control of only the learner.

Nevertheless we are forced to accept that for most people schools are likely for the foreseeable future to be seen as their main means of education; we cannot, therefore, simply turn our backs on formal schooling. Much more importantly we should aim to develop a libertarian critique of schooling and current educational trends. This should entail, amongst other things, exposing the injustice of teacher authority over young people in schools and the way in which that seems to create a passivity which only prepares the young for future roles as consumers or other, more specific, often oppressive, pre-arranged slots. Further, it means exposing the narrow-mindedness of current government notions of 'core curriculum' especially as that core, as Keith Joseph has made abundantly clear, should contain no departures from the status-quo such as modern world history or the dangers of nuclear power. In the end it means arguing for and examining the alternatives both inside and outside the state system for greater cooperation and for mutuality in learning.

Education, though, whether in schools or not, cannot be discussed in a vacuum; it cannot be divorced from society. The goal of enabling the development of human beings to their fullest potential necessarily implies, and cannot be achieved without, fundamental social change. In our efforts to propagandise for this we wish to maintain as broad a perspective as possible. For example we shall not hesitate to attack the present hierarchical structures and values of the teaching profession, but neither shall we forget that teachers as workers remain oppressed and manipulated by the same state which dictates what we shall be taught and what cannot be said.

Beginning in January 1986 we want Lib. Ed. to be a forum for genuinely libertarian discussion. We want to know what you feel and think about the present educational system; we want to publicise initiatives in education which contribute to the development of a system more conducive to genuine education. We also want to develop a network of teachers, parents and students supportive of such initiatives.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

please start my subscription to LIB ED

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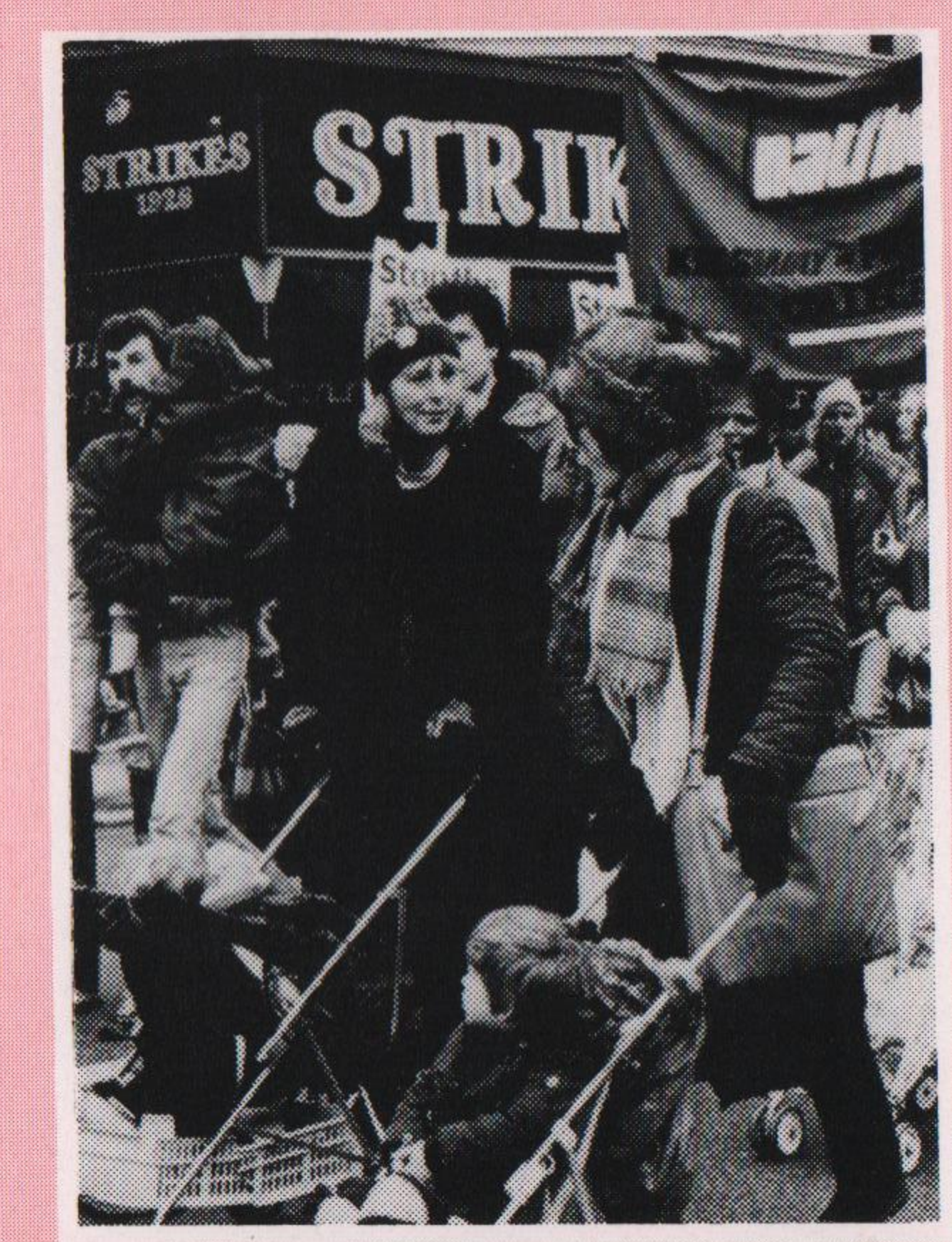
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LIBERTARIAN LIB ED EDUCATION

A Magazine for the Liberation of Learning



COMING SOON

A new educational magazine to focus discussion on practical alternatives to the authoritarian school system

in the first issue...

TEACHERS' STRIKE

The teachers pay campaign has seen teachers more militant and more united than ever before. It's good to see teachers refusing to be ground down by Thatchers policies but what about the details of the campaign itself?

Take the refusal to help organise or attend staff meetings. This gives Heads carte blanche to be even more authoritarian in running schools. Is it possible to develop forms of industrial action that bite against employers but don't hurt workers or clients? What would this mean in schools? We explore the issues in the campaign and outline some ideas for alternatives to the tactics of traditional male dominated trade unionism.

GIRLS IN SCHOOL

Girls should go to girl-only schools and boys to mixed-sex schools. You might be forgiven for reaching this conclusion after reading some reports on girls education. Girls are more confident and do better academically at single-sex schools but boys are nicer to know if they are at mixed schools. So should girls go to girls schools where they are not constantly reminded that certain subjects are really for boys? Do Or in co-educational schools can we ensure that girls get a fair share of teacher time and are positively encouraged to take up 'boys subjects'? We'll suggest some answers in coming issues.

NEW EXAMS

For over fifteen years teachers have campaigned for the fusion of G.C.E. O level (originally designed for the grammar schools) with the Certificate of Secondary Education (C.S.E.) brought in for the secondary modern school pupils. Should teachers then greet the arrival of the 16+ examination and its eventual development into the General Certificate of Secondary Education (G.C.S.E.) with great hope? There are important reasons for suspicion, namely that the G.C.S.E. will not be a single exam at all. There will be differentiated papers and questions in every subject and the new system will exacerbate differentiation and tighten grading. An originally radical reform has been turned into something quite different and needs to be recognised as such.

editorial

We want to develop a libertarian critique of the state's educational system and, more specifically, to address ourselves to current Tory party educational philosophy as displayed in their approach to the curriculum. What will be the implications for classroom teachers of the government's clearly stated intentions to seek the legislative powers over the curriculum and the powers to control the examination system? How can primary and secondary school teachers, alike, react if they see the little independence and autonomy they have being threatened?

RACISM?

Black pressure and white guilt are forcing schools to try and overcome the cultural bias of their curricula. Schools are including celebrations of the Chinese New Year in assemblies and putting up pictures of black faces in classroom displays as never before. Many of these well intentioned initiatives are serving to promote stereotypes rather than challenge them. We explain how in issue one

practical help

Some of us have found progressive, non-oppressive activities and projects in schools - and out of them. The magazine will present ideas based on people's experiences - and look to the readership for more.

SPECIAL NEEDS

At the moment the Tory government, having inadvertently opened the Pandoras Box of Special Needs, is hastily trying to close it again (e.g. 'too expensive' to educate 16+ handicapped students). In the short term it would seem that our position should be to defend special provision - but we need to decide where we stand on current issues such as the concept of integration into 'normal' schools. In the long term how can we educate profoundly handicapped children in a 'Libertarian' way? What about the special methods, special materials and checklists? When are they essential and when are they instruments of oppression? Who is maladjusted? What are the implications of 'moderate learning difficulties' as a category? The issues will be explored in future editions of the magazine.

CRINGE HILL

KEITH JOSEPH IS VISITING THE SCHOOL! (HELP!)



"If it be so ... that selection between schools is largely out then I emphasise that there must be differentiation within schools."

keith joseph

review

Does it ring a bell? Like me you probably hadn't heard of the radical school started by Dora and Bertrand Russell in 1927. That is until I started to read Dora's autobiography "The Tamarisk Tree". The book outlines the curriculum followed as well as explaining the struggles necessary to keep the school going. There's photos too, of Dora, the school, nude-movement lessons on the lawn and much more. A former pupil wrote of the school. "If there was one thing we learned it was the mercy of freedom. I learnt what freedom is by first hand experience. We had freedom in everything from self government to self expression ...". What happened to Beacon Hill? Was it all sweetness and light? - full review issue 1.

"There has to be selection because we are beginning to create aspirations which society cannot match."

"We are in a period of considerable social change. There may be social unrest, but we can cope with the Toxteths. But if we have a highly educated and idle population we may possibly anticipate more serious social conflict. People must be educated once more to know their place."

des official

M S C

Lib. Ed. recognises the part being played by the Manpower Services Commission (M.S.C.) in education. The M.S.C. are important, amongst other things, in implementing the Tory Government's plans to centralise and differentiate the curriculum in schools through the Technical and Vocational Initiative (T.V.I.). Although this initiative is only being 'piloted' at the moment the dangers are already very clear. In pilot schools four times as much money is available for traditional 'technical' subjects like Physics, Control Technology and Computer Science. Further, T.V.I. students are selected and in some schools such students form a separate identifiable stream. Even more worrying is the fact that from figures supplied by the Leicestershire Education Authority, for example, it appears that of 14 year old students who were identified as T.V.I. students, and hence benefiting from extra expenditure, 95% were white and 65% were male.

"Our focus must be on the strategic questions of the content, shape and purpose of the whole educational system and absolutely central to that is the curriculum. We would like legislative powers over the curriculum and the powers to control the exam system by ending all those independent charters of the examination bodies."

des official

PAY SCALES

As it stands the Burnham salary scale divides teachers producing bitterness and hostility. The search for an improvement has been taken over by Keith Josephs plan for a new single scale. The result would be an even more authoritarian hierarchy in schools. There are alternatives - we will outline a radically different approach that has been successfully operating in one large comprehensive for 10 years.

ALTERNATIVE

Fifteen years ago it was possible to debate the issue of alternatives to state schooling at a practical level because of the existence of a number of alternatives, albeit a small number. Times have changed and the only alternatives that exist are mainly in the private sector which hardly warrant consideration. However, this does not mean that a debate cannot take place. Lib. Ed. will look at alternatives to State Schooling that have existed and encourage debate about the practicality and desirability of such alternatives. Further, it will look at the few alternatives that do exist both in Britain and abroad.

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