

# Groups - regular listing Resources

## Lib Ed groups

Leicester 0455-209029  
London 01-263 8801  
Bristol 0272-41380

## National Union of Students

461 Holloway Rd, London N7  
01-272 8900

## National Union of Teachers

Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1.  
01-388 6191

## Gay Youth Help Service

37 Rosenthal House, 45 Rushey Green,  
London SE6 4AR  
01-698 2857

## Woodcraft Folk

13 Ritherton Road, London SW17  
01-672 6031

*(kind of non-sexist, non-militarist scouts and brownies)*

## Liberation Network of People with Disabilities

c/o Townsend House, Green Lanes,  
Marshfield, Chippenham, Wilts.

# Groups - special listing

## Association of Teachers of Mathematics

Kings Chambers, Queen Street, Derby DE1 3DA.

*(Generally progressive, their magazine Mathematics Teaching has useful articles.)*

## Factor

SMILE Centre, Ladbrooke Grove  
Mathematics Centre, Middle Row School,  
Kensal Road, London NW10.

*(A stimulating magazine, might be useful for children being educated at home.)*

## Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign

23 Beviden Street, London N1 6BH  
01-608 0414

## Association of Teachers from Ethnic Minorities

c/o Highfields Youth and Community Centre, Melbourne Road, Leicester.

## All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism

Panther House, Room 216, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1.

## World Studies Journal

World Studies Teacher Training Centre,  
University of York, Heslington, York, YO1 5DD.

*(Published quarterly, has some ideas for maths topics)*

## Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment

18 Victoria Park Square, London E2  
01-980 8523

## Anti-Apartheid Movement

13 Mandela Street, London NW1 0DW  
01-387 7966

## Education Otherwise

25 Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots,  
Cams.

## Teachers for Animal Rights

c/o Wanda Dejlidko, Lynwood Rd, London SW 17

## National Association for the Support of Small Schools

91 King Street, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 1PH  
0603-613088

## Gay Teachers Group

BM Gay Teacher, London WC1N 3XX.  
01-837 7234

## National Secular Society

702 Holloway Road, London N19.  
01-272 1266

## The Bus Group

18 Laburnum Road, Bassett, Southampton SO2 3LF.  
0703-557187

## Steiner Schools Fellowship

Orlingbury House, Lewes Road, Forest Row, Sussex RH18 5AA  
0342 82 2115

## Rudolph Steiner Bookshop

38 Museum Street, London WC1  
01-242 4249

## Free the Airwaves Campaign

BCM Box 1502, London WC1N 3XX.  
*(Committed to small scale open-access revolutionary radio. They also publish the excellent Radio Crimes magazine, £2 for three issues.)*

## Community Radio Association

13 Midland Road, St Philips, Bristol BS2 0JT.  
0272-555438  
*(The respectable face of radical radio)*

## Radio Klara

c/o Garrigues, 1-40-M, 46001 Valencia, Spain.  
*(One of the most successful Libertarian radio stations: broadcasts in stereo eighteen hours a day, to three Spanish provinces)*

## Afro-Caribbean Education Resource Project

Wyvil Rd. School, Wyvil Rd., London SW8.  
01-627 2662

## Advisory Centre for Education

18 Victoria Park Sq., London E2.  
01-980 4596

## Children's Legal Centre

20 Compton Terrace, London N1.  
01-359 6251

## Greenpeace

36 Graham Street, London N1.  
01-251 3020

## Minority Rights Group

29 Craven St., London WC2N 5NG.  
01-930 6659

## Oxfam Youth Education Dept

274 Banbury Rd., Oxford OX2 7DZ.  
0865-56777

## Peace Education Project

Peace Pledge Union, 6 Endsleigh St., London WC1.  
01-387 5501

## Workers' Educational Association

9 Upper Berkeley Street, London W1H 8BY.  
01-402 5608

## Anarchist Book Service

BM Bookserv, London WC1N 3XX.  
*(They will supply a wide range of libertarian literature by post; send for their free catalogue of titles.)*

## Third World Publications

151 Stratford Road, Birmingham B11 1RD.  
021-773 6572

## Letterbox Library

5 Bradbury Street, London N16 8JN.  
01-254 1640  
*(Specialise in non-sexist and multicultural books for children. For details of their free catalogue, write or phone.)*

## Commonweal Collection

c/o J.B.Priestley Library, University of Bradford, Bradford BD7 1DP.  
*(A small library designed for anyone interested in libertarian, anarchist and pacifist ideas.)*

## Feminist Library

Hungerford House, Victoria Embankment, London WC2N 6PA.  
01-930 0715

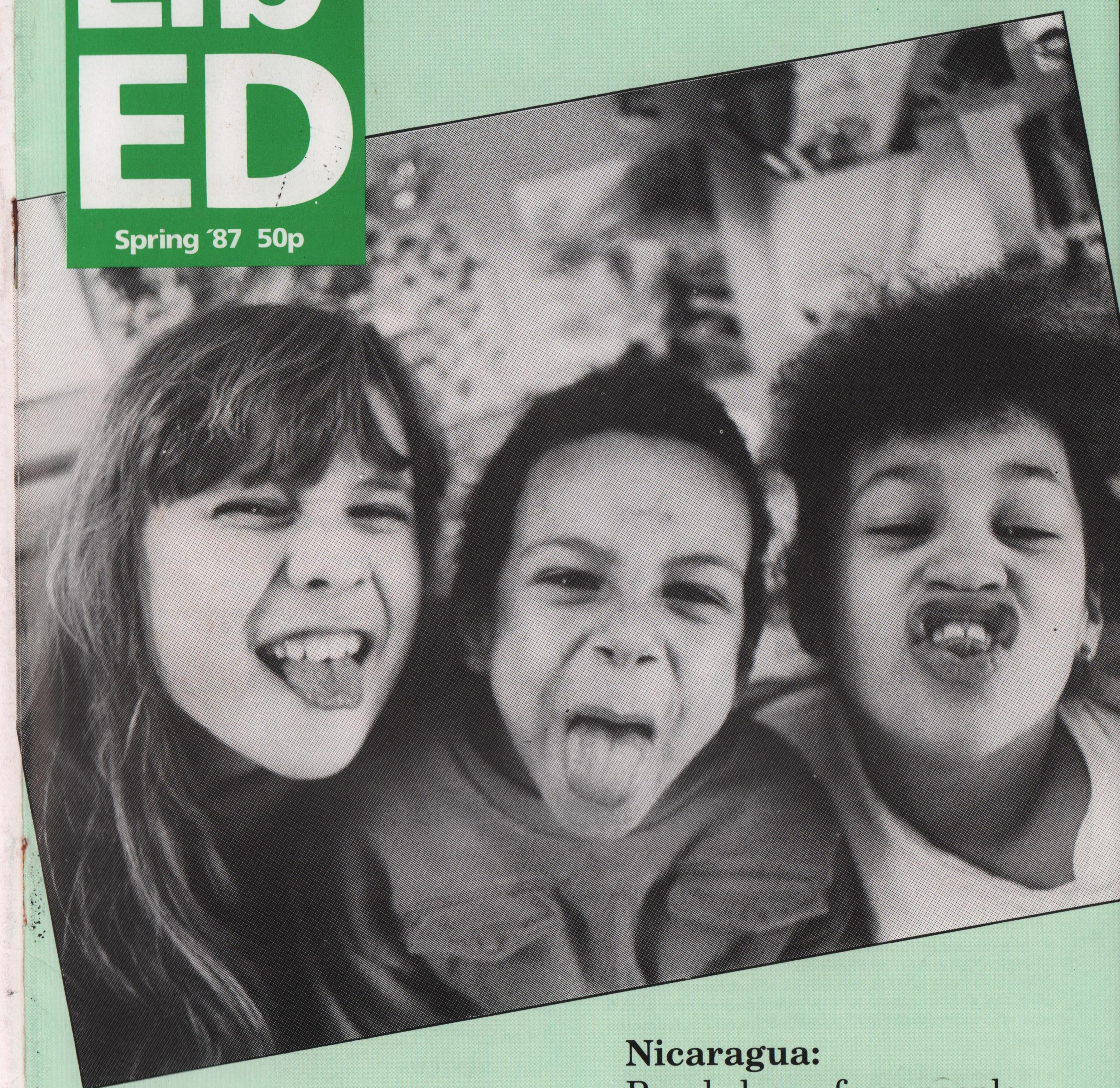
## Marx Memorial Library

37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU.  
01-253 1485  
*(Comprehensive collection of materials concerning the Labour Movement.)*

# Lib ED

Spring '87 50p

A magazine for the Liberation of Learning



**Woodcraft Folk:**  
The green costumed co-op kids.

**Waldorf Schools:**  
Are they better than the salad?

**Nicaragua:**  
People learn from people.

**Pirate radio:**  
Free the airwaves!

**The Third R:**  
The politics of Mathematics.



Lib Ed conference in October

Vol 2 No 4 Spring 1987

Although the state continues its attack on the apparently redundant progressivism of the 1970s (sex education receiving current attention), the attendance of 156 people at the Freedom and Education conference organised by Lib Ed in Leicester on October 4th, last year, was far greater than we originally anticipated and, we hope, reflects a revival of interest in alternative ideas in education. Not only was the attendance large, it was made up of a wide variety of interests. Debate took place on education at home, small schools, human-scale education and free schools, as well as state funding for alternative schools and what can be done in the state system. The conference will now be an annual event on the first Saturday in October. Preparations are underway for this year's on 3rd October, 1987. Make a note in your diary now.

A major initiative of the conference was the Libertarian Education Network. This will provide a library, national contact list, bibliographies, news, articles and an information exchange via a newsletter to subscribers. To join the Network costs £5 and includes a year's magazines. The first newsletter was circulated in November and the second is now available to anybody taking out a Network subscription.

- 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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## Doing it for themselves

STUDENTS

South African school students are making international news - other young people are finding that they too can fight for change.

ALL TOO OFTEN it is assumed that the liberation of learning, whether for young or old, depends on the initiative and insight of radical educators. To them is accorded the mission of providing the conditions in which autonomy, and consequently liberation, can thrive. Whilst this might be true, in that most would-be learners find themselves in institutions at some stage or another and are hence likely to be served better by more libertarian structures, in other ways it is not the case. Indeed such a perspective frequently detracts from the ways in which children organise and act themselves whatever the structure, libertarian or not. A mere glance at South Africa can provide evidence of this where virtually every township today has school-based action groups which coordinate the political activity of large groups of school students.

### "Racists frightened by our power"

Obviously the situation in South Africa is unique, but everyone, especially parents and teachers, should realise that children the world over are perfectly capable of organising things for themselves. 1985 and 1986 saw some particularly strong examples of this in Britain. A significant response to racism was made by school students in the Tower Hamlets area of East London, centred around Daneford Boys School. The school had been an exclusively white one but, as the local council implemented its policy of racial integration, the intake changed with Asian pupils, mostly from the Bengali community, entering the lower forms of the school. A series of horrific racist attacks occurred at the school, so the Bengali children began to organise themselves. They formed protection gangs, but developed a political programme too.

*"We made a list of demands of things that were important to Bengali boys. We wrote our own leaflets. We decided to form groups in the school to defend ourselves and fight the racists back. We had to demonstrate at the County Hall to fight the racists and get Bengali lessons for all boys. After all our struggling things started to get better. The racists were frightened by our power. All boys can now study their mother tongue. Bengali boys can have a better future in our school. Boys and girls from other schools will be joining our group. We want the police out of school. Teachers can have their policy. It will not be powerful until they stand by the students!"*

**Abdul Hoque - Bangladeshi United Youth Group, Daneford School**



### Striking against the YTS

In March 1985 20,000 school students went on strike for a day in protest against the Youth Training Scheme. The following month students from four comprehensive schools in Kirkby, Liverpool did the same. The media hardly covered either of these events, despite the fact that they were the biggest school student demonstrations for a decade. Neil Kinnock commented that the strikes were "not likely to serve the interests of young people in Britain." And yet the very fact that the strikes took place indicate the feeling and organisational ability of large numbers of youth.

### Picketing apartheid

These examples of children and students organising were generated by pernicious circumstances over the last twelve months. *Lib Ed* has learnt of a range of other activities occurring in schools in Leicestershire. School students have been responsible for the organisation of pickets of Barclays Bank and supermarkets stocking South African goods in Leicester, and some schools have their own Anti-Apartheid groups. Similarly there have been a range of activities organised in connection with Animal Rights, with large

groups of students and young people involved in pickets of local butchers and leafleting campaigns including one recently over the visit of a circus to Leicester. Currently a broad-based student group is trying to promote a tour by the band Chumba Wumba in support of a group of people currently serving prison sentences of up to five years for breaking into the Unilever animal experimentation laboratories.

Young people do not lack the ability to speak up and organise for themselves. What they have to contend with, however, is a society which, with its teachers and its authoritarians, will do all in its power to prevent this from happening.

*Lib Ed is anxious to facilitate the creation of a contact list for children and school students, and would welcome any information and suggestions. Letters should be sent to:*

Anthony George  
Countesthorpe College Student  
Action Group  
Countesthorpe College  
Winchester Road  
Countesthorpe  
Leicester

# Oops

Dear *Lib Ed*,

I read your winter's issue of liberal, oops, libertarian education - the first of its kind I'd seen. On reading the first article "Kissing Babies" I was very impressed - at last young people's liberation in print! However, I know it was too good to last. The second article "Writing on the Wall" proved me right. Write on the walls, as long as you do it properly. I was in hysterics over one section: "Now you're tooled up, which is it to be: arty, slogan, or graphic-plus-slogan?" and "sketch out your design first, and if possible get hold of a copy of Subway Art (Thames and Hudson, £7.95)." What is this, Blue Peter for middle class would-be-Anarchists?

From bad to worse, free schools at £1,800 a year (just what we need - freedom for the rich), letters from 'libertarians' congratulating each other, *nothing* by young people apparently and listings of ageist, patronising groups i.e. Gay Youth Help Service (suggested alternative: Lesbian and Gay Youth Movement, BM GYM, London, WC1N 3XX, run by young people for young people).

Keep up the good work.

Jo Smith



## Etchings

Dear *Lib Ed*,

Great mag, especially No 3. I was reading your article entitled "Writing on the Wall". Great article. But I thought I'd like to write letting you know that the animal rights movement have discovered a new type of direct action that is linked with graffiti, it's called etching fluid. You can get it from most art shops, I'm not sure of the price. What you do with it is get one of

your stencils (how to make them in issue 3), put it on the shop window and paint the fluid on, being careful not to get it on your clothes or hands. What it does is acts like an acid, rotting the glass. The only way that they can remove it is by replacing the glass. This has big advantages that are obvious over smashing the window. Hope this is useful.

Strength in struggle,

*Animal Liberation Front*

## Pass it on

Dear *Lib Ed*,

I found the conference very useful: especially good to be with a group with some shared perspective so you don't have to be super-careful not to upset/alienate/shock others! Disability workshop was especially good - I'm no longer actively involved in these issues, but know people who are and I'll pass on what happened to them.

In peace,

*Ruth  
Centre for Peace Studies  
St Martins College  
Lancaster*

## An uncharitable little article?

Dear *Lib Ed*,

I cannot imagine what provoked your uncharitable little article "Free but at a price" (Lib Ed, winter '86). Summerhill has jogged along for the last 65 years, minding its own business, hurting nobody and producing hundreds of happy, healthy individuals with no axes to grind against anybody.

I feel that *Lib Ed* is fundamentally against the idea that Summerhill is a private school with Directors and no staff co-operative and that is why you stated that our "Self-government is severely circumscribed and our freedom problematic". A.S.Neill coined the words "Self-government" as far as Summerhill is concerned and he made it quite clear that the community governed itself in "everything connected with social, or group life, ..." Which we still do here today.

I must take you to task for getting your information about Eton completely wrong. Yes, I went to Eton, with a friend (we were invited to talk about Summerhill). SHE wrote an article for the *Friends of Summerhill* Newsletter about our trip. SHE said that she thought Eton, like Summerhill, a happy school. I said in the opening page of the Newsletter that she

and I had seen Eton like the proverbial Optimist and Pessimist. She saw the doughnut whilst I only saw the hole!

You do my father a great injustice when you suggest that I am trying to find a more 'acceptable' public image for his school. Summerhill is as radical today as it was 50 years ago. Granted, I have no wish to slip into the trap which many 'Free' schools have fallen into - that of rebelliousness for the sake of it. Summerhill is too old and too wise for that. We are not searching for the answers any more. We have found a Free School that works. Don't ANYBODY try and tell me that it doesn't, for I have the proof here.

Your statements about the fees being doubled are absolutely untrue. The termly fees are now £800 and £850 for under and over 13 year olds respectively. Neither have we sacked any staff. Two members of staff left at the end of last term. One had been here for ten years and left for financial reasons, the other I asked to leave (not sacked) as she was not doing her job properly. Also it is an exaggeration to state that women are employed in traditional female roles at Summerhill. Of our four house-parent staff employed to care for the children's welfare, wash clothes etc., two

are men. As for the daily staff, in a provincial town like Leiston it is unlikely that a man would apply for a domestic post.

Concerning how poorly treated the staff are at Summerhill. I contest that strongly! Granted the pay is lousy (and that is one of the priorities on our shopping list), but saying how little time they get off is nonsense. 17 weeks paid holiday a year, a half day each week plus two weekends a term (11 week terms) is not totally unreasonable. It is quite unrealistic to consider more time off if you remember that our community relies on having a full quota of people here in order to function properly.

To sum up, I accept that not everybody agrees with Summerhill or its methods. If it pleases you to imply that it is crumbling at its very foundations then of course it is your privilege to do so. However, I think it wise to ensure that you have your facts right first ...

*Zoe Readhead  
Principal  
Summerhill School  
Leiston  
Suffolk*

We're always delighted to get your letters. Please send them to:  
Lib Ed, The Green, Leire, Lutterworth, LE17 5HL

Mural, Association of Nicaraguan Women's HQ, Managua (photo BLINC)



## People learn from people

The literacy campaign in Nicaragua proved that everyone can be a teacher.

MANY PEOPLE have heard of the famous literacy campaign in Nicaragua: how after the revolution that threw the dictator Somoza from power, those who could read formed into brigades and, armed with a reading scheme that was relevant to people's lives, set out to reduce illiteracy. They succeeded, and in three years illiteracy dropped from over 50% to 12%.

In 1983 the Nicaraguan minister of education, Carlos Tunnermann Bernheim, wrote about the political ideas behind the literacy crusade, and its aftermath. Education, he said, has a fundamental role in transforming the people from belonging to a society dominated by a privileged minority, to one where power is held by the majority - but he said they should be led by a political vanguard.

### Education and People's Culture

In capitalist society education and culture are the privileges for the few: 'Culture' is the culture of the minority, it is used as the justification for their interests and is not the right of all. The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua is trying to make culture everybody's right. Since education is a systematised transmission of culture an education revolution was felt to be fundamental to creating a new people's culture. Tunnermann claimed that education in Nicaragua had to convert itself into one that was popular and libertarian so that it would be part of the culture of revolution.

The "liberating" education should allow people to be creative and self-educating,

not as individualists, but within a collective liberation movement. One of the most important steps in the education programme was seen to be to organise around people's experiences.

### The People's teachers

In order to undertake the "post-alfabetizacion" (post literacy campaign) the Nicaraguans had a number of problems. The first was "where to get the teachers?" - most of the original "brigandistas" had gone back to their own homes: also there were no spare qualified teachers. Sheer necessity gave rise to the idea that in each community there should be instructors - who would be learners at the same time. These were to be the "maestre popular" or people's teachers.

They were recruited from farmers, workers, housewives and young people. For many their only contact with 'education' was the literacy campaign. But the main point was that they came from the same place and class as the students and could help to pool knowledge. In the face of the facts of lack of human and material resources there seemed no other way to follow on from the literacy campaign.

The risks were seen as, on one hand, the relatively poorly educated "maestros populares", without materials or much support would be discouraged and desert: on the other the people, not able to displace in their minds the historical idea of 'teacher', would reject them as poor substitutes.

However, the success of the scheme has

exceeded all expectations. Recruitment of teachers has spiralled and the people have welcomed the system: for between teacher and taught there are no barriers. Pupils and teachers learn together at the same time.

In this, Nicaragua has broken with the patronial image assigned to "school master" in role, appearance and status. It is the very insecurity, inexperience and "lack of professionalism" of the people's own Coordinator Teachers that enshrines the negation of traditional education which legitimates and reproduces authority on the basis of a monopoly of knowledge that distances and alienates the learners. Basically the revolutionary government in Nicaragua has decided to give people the power to educate themselves. "Our revolution thus registers its confidence that it is the people who are subjects and agents of their own education."

The Revolutionary Struggle is seen as the great school for the people. The Adult Education Programme was the starting point for a cultural education such that the people are in a permanent "state of education". As a result there has been a programme of building educational centres and nursery schools, but integrated with cooperatives and workshops.

The Sandinista may be criticised for their centralist outlook on a number of issues but one can hardly disagree that it is a unique development that a state should try to place education genuinely in the hands of the people as in Nicaragua.

# Free the airwaves

**"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers"**

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, 1948

RECEIVING and imparting ideas and information through any media may be essential to education, it may be guaranteed by the UN but in Britain it is illegal if the medium chosen is radio. The British Government claims to own the airwaves. Nobody is legally permitted to broadcast a word without the permission of the government or its front organisations the BBC and the IBA. For anyone who tries it out over the airwaves the government has its own heavy mob who will pay you a visit - the men from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). As well as seizing broadcasting equipment you can then be fined £2,000 and spend six months in prison.

## Government rules K.O.

The roots of state control go back to the first world war, but the formation of the BBC in 1922 was the coup de grace. With lots of money and the support of some useful legislation the official government station soon saw off Marconi and the other independent pioneer broadcasters. With its monopoly established the BBC began its regular output of government propaganda and highbrow music and it has continued to toe the establishment line ever since. Over the years the main programming concessions to popular tastes have only occurred through the challenge of pirate stations. First in the thirties when the masses tuned into Radios Normandie and Luxembourg (beamed in from across the Channel) and forced the BBC to reluctantly include popular dance music in its output (or lose most of its audience). Again in the sixties when young people in their droves tuned into the sea-based pirates (Veronica, Caroline, Atlanta) and away from the BBC's feeble "Light Programme". The government looked after its own and smashed the pirates with a coordinated strategy of raids and legislation. They also created Radio One as a sop to the punters and set up the IBA as the commercial twin of the BBC. A twin who's kept up the family tradition of loyalty to the establishment.

## Rebel radio

Official radio is bound to be boring, and so, predictably, pirate stations soon sprung up again, but this time more vital, varied and

numerous than ever before. This new wave of rebel radio falls into three main categories:

- a Political Stations
- b Cultural Stations
- c Ethnic Stations

The first is most likely to be hit by the DTI squad, so their broadcasts are often restricted to guerilla action. Like Radio Arthur which used to break into Radio Trent's news transmissions and surprise



listeners with calls for Nottingham miners to support the pit-strike. More recently Radio Wapping has used the same technique to urge support for sacked print workers. The second group of stations serve communities with a particular cultural interest ranging from the rock music station "Alice's Restaurant" to the now defunct "Gay Waves" Radio. The ethnic stations began with London Greek Radio in October 1983, but now include Asian, Turkish and Arabic pirates. They each broadcast a mix of news features and music, and often include specifically educational programming on, for instance, the language and history of the respective ethnic group.

Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Holland, Italy, the USA and Sweden all permit community-owned and run stations. America's first, KPFA, was set up nearly forty years ago by pacifists and anarchists, and financed by listener subscriptions. It's still going strong, and has been joined by many other community stations. In Australia, although community radio only began in 1974, there are already over thirty stations. Even Spain, fascist until 1976, has begun to develop decentralised free local broadcasting, like the libertarian station Radio Klara. Meanwhile in Britain the government rules all and even listening to rebel radio is a criminal offence!

## Go for it

Official radio is unexciting and biased. You have to be reliable and respectable to be allowed onto it. Even the pop channels are unadventurous - have you ever seen a bigger bunch of wallies than the Radio One DJs? Rebel radio takes risks, it doesn't pretend to be all things to all people. It serves the specific community of which it is a part. Communities who feel misrepresented or ignored by official radio shouldn't waste stamps writing to the BBC's Director General to complain. Far better to save up for their own transmitter.

## DIY

Basic broadcasting requires a cassette recorder, a medium wave transmitter, a long aerial wire, and a car battery as the power source. Two hundred pounds should cover it. Ideally you want an elevated wooded site to broadcast from, with a good view of access routes. The elevation will help to get a good signal out, the trees provide cover and height for stringing the aerial wire (a catapult is useful) and the view will enable you to spot the approach of the DTI. You pre-record your programmes onto C120s, stick them in the cassette player, switch on, and hide. If you do spot the DTI it's best to sacrifice the equipment and leg it ... Don't forget to ask friends in the local area to tune in and monitor your broadcasts to ensure that you can be heard loud and clear. If you are really ambitious you can broadcast live on VHF using infra-red and microwave links between studio and transmitter, but this requires higher expertise and more money (nearer £2000 plus).

As you've probably guessed it's illegal to sell transmitters over the counter in Britain, so if you'd like one under the counter write to LR-TS, BCM Box 225, London, WC1 3XX. If you want more info check out the contacts on the back cover ...

# Kids, campfires and co-operation

**If only organisations for adults were as friendly, enjoyable and co-operative as the Woodcraft Folk are for children.**

THE SCOUTING MOVEMENT is militarist, sexist, nationalistic and very popular. Less well known but much more attractive are the Woodcraft Folk. Where Scouting is based on the British Army, Woodcraft was modelled on the life of the American Indians. Hierarchy and obedience to God and the Queen are replaced by cooperation and respect for all living things. Since their formation in 1925 the Folk have also maintained close links with the wider Cooperative Movement, who also provide some financial support. In the early days the Folk were affiliated to the Labour Party, but soon opted out in favour of political autonomy. Although some Woodcraft parents and helpers may individually be members the Folk are certainly not the infant section of the Labour Party.



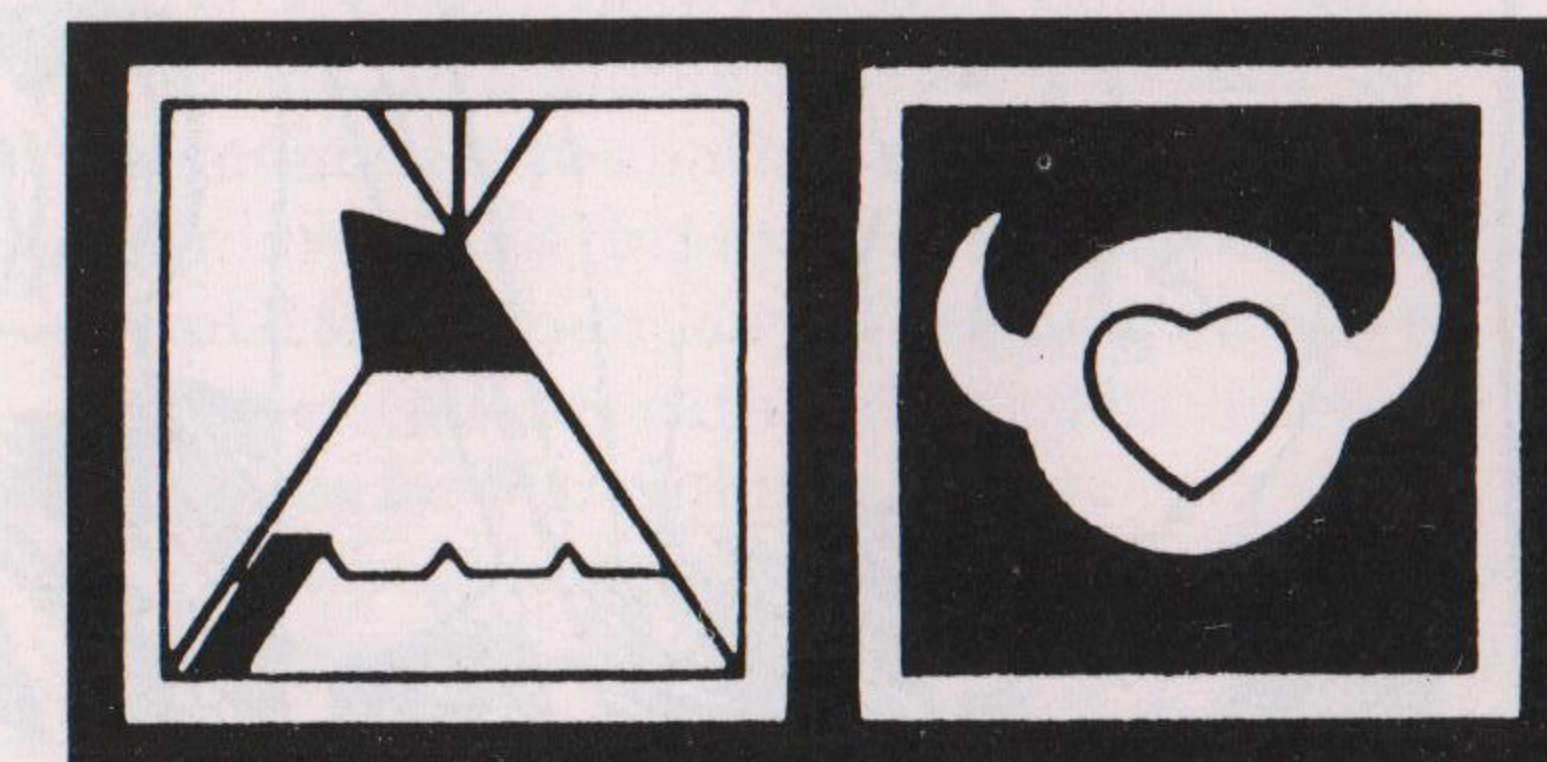
paying weekly subs of about 20p, extra monies are raised through jumble sales and so on. There's a real determination not to exclude any child on grounds of cost, if a kid can't afford the three or four pounds for a weekend camp they still go and pay what they can afford. The national organisation is run by the National Council and its secretary, Doug Bourn, with overall policy determined by the Annual Delegate Conference. Policy issues are also raised and discussed through the journal *Woodcraft Focus*. The Folk also publish several booklets on the ideas, activities and history of Woodcraft.

## Across frontiers

Internationalism has always been a strong element in the Woodcraft philosophy. Drawing on the folk traditions of many countries it emphasises the common humanity that unites people and promotes links between them. It hosts international youth camps in Britain every four years and sends groups to take part in similar camps abroad. Last year alone groups took part in exchange visits with youth organisations from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Italy, France, Portugal, Austria, East and West Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria and Malta.

## Folk story or fiction?

Most 'progressive' organisations don't bother much with kids and in ignoring them demonstrate the limits of their progressivism. The Woodcraft is different. It was begun by young people for young people. Though it has held to its ideals throughout its long history we shouldn't be dazzled by its comparative success. There are aspects of the Woodcraft Folk which



shouldn't be ignored, which effectively exclude some children and limit the possible contribution of others. There is concern about the Folk's inability to attract black kids, for example. Even inner-city groups are sometimes entirely white. This problem is recognised within the organisation and is adding urgency to the continuing debate around the Woodcraft traditions. How much of the old should be respected and continued, and how much jettisoned and replaced by the language, ideas and activities attractive to today's more 'street-wise' kids?

The Folk's green shirts raise another issue. They insist that they are "costumes", but most people see them as a uniform, and uniforms and freedom don't go well together. The Folk will point out that there are no badges of rank on the "costumes", but it's difficult to see why kids shouldn't just choose for themselves what to wear to Woodcraft evenings. This leads onto the key question of just how much control children have over the organisation. At the highest levels (National Council) all positions are filled by adults, at the District level the picture's the same ... There's obviously real difficulties with kids playing a full part in any national organisation as travelling long distances to meetings, handling finance, dealing with correspondence and so on, require skills



young children may not possess. However, there doesn't seem any real commitment within the organisation to empower children; to support them in acquiring the skills necessary to overcome the subordination. The approach is generally to allow children to participate in the existing organisation rather than to use the organisation to encourage children's autonomous self-activity. Yet at local group level kids do enjoy a degree of involvement and control that's often unique in their relations with adults. For many kids Woodcraft Folk is an evening of comparative freedom where grown-ups actually listen and don't boss you around. There's new experiences, adventure, fun and pleasure in being with and helping others. If only the progressive organisations for adults were as friendly, enjoyable and cooperative ...

# Crumbs from the table

Satish Kapur of the Association of Teachers from Ethnic Minorities describes some of the difficulties black teachers face in Britain's schools.

EVEN GOVERNMENT reports have made a case for the introduction of minority languages into the school curriculum. "The transition from home to school can be traumatic in the extreme ... if school is a place where no-one can understand what the young child says ... let alone learn required behaviour and skills from people whose speech seems incomprehensible" (National Union of Teachers reporting to the Swann Commission). Work done on studying languages and learning patterns of young children in school who do not speak English as a first language shows that they are severely disadvantaged in school if their mother tongue is not accepted and catered for.

The demand from the minority communities is there - government reports make the case for mother tongue teaching, but the response from local education authorities has been totally inadequate and token. There has been some meagre financial support for the supplementary schools (set up as 'extras' by the minority groups themselves outside school hours in a variety of settings) to the appointment of a few 'bilingual teachers' within the local authorities.

## History

In the 1950s and 1960s, Local Education Authorities had an 'assimilationist perspective' - that the need was for black children to acquire English to become 'black British'. The 1970s and 1980s saw 'Cultural Pluralism', the theoretical recognition of cultural diversity, but in practice there is little evidence of any real effort being made - the result is both underachievement and alienation from home and family.

The authorities, however, claim they cannot provide any more minority community teachers because there "are not

enough qualified language teachers to go round". Thus the victim is said to be at fault.

## The Teachers

The obvious solution would seem to be to recruit some teachers from Africa or Asia. However the Department of Education and Science applies archaic and racist criteria which prevent their employment in Britain. The criteria for the recognition of black teachers qualifications has changed in line with restrictions on black immigration. In the 1950s and 60s overseas graduate qualifications were considered on a par with British.

From early 1970 only graduates with masters degrees in certain subjects, excluding Asian languages, from certain universities are eligible for qualified teacher status. If two graduates qualified from the same university in the same year, yet one came to Britain in the 1960s and the other in the 1970s, then the qualifications of the latter immigrant is not recognised. These restrictions hit teachers from East Africa hardest.

Even recognition of qualifications does not guarantee teaching positions - many have been forced to seek employment elsewhere. The "shortage" argument is nonsense. If these teachers can teach O and A levels in East Africa or the Indian sub-continent, they can be good teachers here too.

The respect that education authorities have for minority community languages is shown by the fact that they are often put on at lunch times or after school hours. The languages, and indeed the cultures, are seen as second rate. These are modern languages and need to be offered to all school students, black and white.

As it is diplomats, immigration officers, intelligence gatherers, MI6 officers and a

few academic anthropologists have access to minority languages. If the state really had any respect for minority cultures then heads in multi-racial schools would have to know the languages. There are all sorts of mechanisms of teacher exchange or in-service training by which the education authorities could get the people they really need.

## Leicestershire - an example

Twenty seven per cent of Leicester City children are from black ethnic minorities: in 1982 five teachers were appointed to introduce 'mother tongue nursery and infant teaching'. It is not followed up at the junior or secondary stage, presumably on the assumption that the children are culturally deficient and their languages should only be used for adjustment purposes.

In practice these five teachers are not attached to the staff of any particular schools. Heads have either made them unwelcome, with their contempt for black culture, or tried to use them as extra staff rather than as bilingual teachers. They have found themselves marginalised within the profession: four out of five of the original teachers, and seven altogether, have left the scheme.

Government money was for years given to Leicestershire ostensibly to cater for bilingual teaching ("Section 11 money") but there was no accountability as to where it went: so it was handed out to compliant head teachers on a patronage basis - just another way in which ethnic minorities are abused by bureaucrats and authority.

I realise that I don't offer any neat answers to the questions raised here. But I feel the first task is to alert people as to what is really *not* being done for the minority groups and let more than just crumbs fall from the white establishment loaf.

# Salad days at the Waldorf

Lib Ed has chosen to study Steiner Education in this issue for a particular reason. Our special interest in this case is in systems of education which present themselves as a substitute for, as well as to, the state system. In our opinion it is necessary to find such an alternative, as it represents a potential solution for everybody, and not just an escape valve for the elite few who can send 'their' children to private schools, of whatever character, or educate their children at home.

There are also lessons to be drawn. In another article in this issue some of the reasons for the near demise of the free school movement of the 1960s and 70s are discussed. The relative success of the Steiner movement, the fastest growing group of 'alternative schools' in Britain today, in coming to terms with the problems of both finance and structure is relevant to any movement which wishes to put forward a viable alternative to the present educational system. Lib Ed investigates the reasons for this success, and the educational practice and theory that lies behind it.

## A typical lesson

THE DAY in Class 9 (fourteen-year-olds) starts with the Main Lesson, which lasts for about an hour and a half. The Main Lesson, at this age, represents the part of the Steiner curriculum which is meant to develop the child as a person, as opposed to the more subject-orientated work which comes later in the day. The class assembles with a great deal of noise and bustle, and after about ten minutes settling down into their rows, begins with the lighting of a candle and the chanting of a verse (this ritual is continued, with slight modification from year to year, throughout the time a child spends at school, and is meant to represent security at the beginning of the day).

The subject of the main lesson today is Oedipus Rex. As well as the usual examination of memory and capacity of digesting the text, three noticeable features are added. Firstly the acting out of the play, by dramatic chanting. Secondly the discussion of topics raised by the text. On this day it included the children talking about Destiny and Freedom in fairly abstract terms. The previous week they had covered incest in some depth.

The final point of interest was the incorporation of a session of jokes (the real title of the lesson is Comedy and Tragedy) and is meant to take account of the need for adolescent children to encounter life in black and white terms with violent swings of emotion (the texts covered at this age are all classical Greek/Roman plays which, like Oedipus, contain quite a bit of this). The jokes included an alliterated rhyme which meant you said "fucking" quite a lot if you got it wrong. Quite a few did, including the teacher.

Overall the impression is one of relaxed attitudes (everybody on first name terms), no strict discipline (despite the ranks of desks which betray a traditional view of the relationship between teacher and taught), and a warm constructive atmosphere in the classroom.



Steiner schoolchildren are naturally inquisitive

(photos by John Lowings)

## A history of expansion

BRISTOL WALDORF SCHOOL was started, with five pupils, in 1973 by a group of Steiner teachers who wanted to teach in a city, rather than the more usual rural retreat. In a couple of years they had expanded into another site, to cater for 68 children, and this expansion has continued until the present day. They now occupy a former catholic cathedral and have ten classes for 300 children.

The popularity of the school, and its rate of expansion, has been such that they have now reached a point where they are forced

to put a limit on the number of children admitted to the school. In fact 300 children would appear to be a natural limit for a Waldorf school. They have no intention of having more than one class per year, as that would have to be duplicated throughout the school and a school of 600 children is thought to be too impersonal. They would prefer to expand to accommodate 17 and 18 year olds, but that would require too high an injection of resources, in terms of staff and materials, for the current financial situation.



# Education and psychology

STEINER educational theory is based on a particular view of the psychological development of children. This is fundamentally divided into three stages of development, each of about seven years. Each stage is thought to manifest itself both physically and mentally, and, educationally, requires different curricula.

In the first stage, to an age of about six or seven years (the boundary is characterised by the development of permanent teeth), children are thought to be incapable of formal learning and therefore develop by imitation. The alphabet may be introduced to children towards the end of this period, but they are not expected to start reading until the second stage.

Up to the age of fourteen, the most important factor is considered to be imagination and feeling. Steiner thought that during this period children needed to see adults as a source of wisdom and goodness. One teacher will therefore be assigned to a class and stay with them throughout this period.

In the final stage, from age 14 upwards, the child is now thought to be ready for abstract thought. Main lessons are taken by different teachers, and the curriculum is divided along more traditional lines.

In each year the content of the curriculum is highly structured, incorporating aspects of the traditional academic subjects, myths and legends, and more practical subjects like gardening. The content of lessons is varied according to the age of the child. For instance, when children are at their noisiest they are taught Norse myths. During the second stage, when they are learning of nature and beauty, they do the classical civilisations. In adolescence, the focus changes to the black and white and they do revolutions.

The general attitude to education is holistic. 'Nourishment' of the body is thought to be of equal, if not more, value than academic learning. It is also characteristic of Steiner that learning is encouraged through activity. Thus maths may be taught to young children through the use of counting games, French would be taught by play-acting roles in a shop, rather than by the study of grammar. It is noticeable, when comparing Steiner children to those educated in the state system, that they are not as well educated in academic terms, but are ahead in their ability to express themselves or socialise.



Girls beat the boys at tug-of-war

## The problems of expansion.

DUE TO the current increase in interest in Steiner schools, with 8 schools (making 23 in all) having opened in the last 3 years, it is only natural that the British organisation have had to respond to the structural problems of expansion, with its associated capital investment. They are now looking for ways of funding schools from outside the parental support network, and are approaching this in two ways.

Firstly, by developing political links, with their natural allies the Greens and, more importantly, the Liberals, both of who now have a policy of providing state finance to non-state schools. The systems that they are seeking to emulate are those found elsewhere in Europe, in particular in Germany, Denmark and Holland, where practically all major towns have their Waldorf schools (indeed Denmark has a large network of free schools, established on a similar basis).

At a more contentious level it would also be interesting to know the attitude of the Steiner Fellowship (and indeed the free school movement) to the proposed Tory

voucher system, which might also be a source of state finance for alternative schools.

Secondly, the Steiner fellowship has launched a fund to attract outside finance, primarily from industry. Glossy publications to further these ends have been published, full of intriguing ideas such as the ability of Steiner schools to turn out capable workers. But perhaps it is a bit much to complain about this because, in truth, the Steiner principle doesn't exist to challenge the structure of society, but represents itself as an alternative for the state system.

## Life of Steiner

**RUDOLF STEINER** was born in Austria in 1861, the son of freethinkers. He, therefore, avoided a career as a priest, the usual fate of a bright village boy, and studied for a degree in science. At university he was drawn into literary circles and the study of Philosophy, in particular Goethe. After working in the Goethe Institute, and collaborating in the editing of several magazines, in Weimar, he then moved to Berlin, where he worked for a number of years writing and teaching. At that time it was a hotbed of radicalism, and, although he never became attached to any particular radical theory, he became involved in the Berlin Workers School, run by Karl Leibknecht.

In 1899 he became acquainted with adherents to Theosophy ("wisdom about God") and in the following years he incorporated much of their beliefs into the theory of Anthroposophy ("wisdom about man"). The spiritual nature of Anthroposophy repelled his radical colleagues, and he eventually left the Workers School, but Steiner continued with his investigations, or 'spiritual research', into the relationships between spirituality, the soul, intuition and consciousness, and humanity and the natural world.

## School for life

STEINER education is truly comprehensive, and none of the classes are streamed, though they have found it necessary to bring in remedial classes for some slow learners. Indeed, until recently, no exams were offered and Steiner teachers would still say that it is not the aim of education to enable children to pass exams. However if they wish to take them at the end of the year then they may be entered.

The problem up to now has been the curriculum set by the examination boards, which bears no relationship to the Steiner curriculum. It is interesting, though, that the new GCSE system, with its more flexible approach to syllabus and course work, may give them the opportunity to gain acceptance by the authorities, as they have done in, for instance, Denmark, where the universities accept a Steiner 'school-leaving certificate'.

# The teachers view

FROM a libertarian point of view one of the nicest things about Steiner schools is the way that they are organised. No heads here, the schools are run by a college of teachers (chaired by each teacher in rotation) who collectively perform the role of the headmaster. In addition there are separate groups which cover, for instance, administration, upper and lower schools or fund-raising. These various bodies then liaise with each other. A federal paradise!

One of the characteristics of the Steiner method is the fact that, during the eight years of lower school, a class will be taught by a single teacher throughout. This puts a considerable premium on the relationship between teacher and students, which has its positive and negative sides. On the plus side there is no possibility of a child disappearing into an anonymous class, and if any problems arise then there is no hiding from them, they have to be sorted out, even if it means endless discussion within the teaching college, with the students, with the parents. Indeed the overwhelming impression is of a very strong relationship between teachers and their class.

On the other hand, it is true that some people just do not get on, and no matter how much you can try to sort things out this can often just make things worse. Being condemned to be taught by a teacher that you don't like for eight years is like a life sentence. There are also potential problems when a teacher leaves, to be replaced by somebody who may be resented.

And so to the subject of pay, one very dear to the heart of most of us. Teachers' pay in Steiner schools has traditionally been on the basis of needs, tempered by any limitation on available funds. Pay, therefore, varies widely between the staff and, because of the shortage of funds, tends to be very low, with nobody getting a wage equivalent to that of a state school teacher. While this has a corresponding effect on the amount of commitment that is shown by staff (you have to be keen to work at wages this low) it also represents a curious form of elitism that is characteristic of some radical projects. It can be a form of alternative virility that says that to do a project you have to suffer.



Bristol Waldorf School - the bus to afternoon swimming

This research was very wide-ranging, much of which is published, even covering more everyday subjects such as agriculture, architecture and health, and he toured extensively delivering lectures. An extension to this work was the establishment of complete 'christian communities', whose everyday lives were (and are) lived in accordance with the principles of anthroposophy.

Educationally, his work culminated in the establishment of the first Steiner school in Stuttgart, when he was asked by the owners of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette company to start a school for the factory workers. Part of his work had included the development of an educational theory that nourished the spiritual, as well as the mental and physical, side of the child. This formed the basis of the curriculum of the school, which remains substantially unchanged today.

## Natural Sex

IN THESE trendy times it seems difficult to leave a school without asking questions about the current in-subject. So what about Steiner and sex education? In fact, apart from a set lesson on the biological functions, there is no formal time set aside for this issue.

Instead sex is very much approached on what might be described as a 'needs' basis. When the subject comes up it is covered in as much depth as seems appropriate at the time. This obviously puts a lot of responsibility on the teacher to be sensitive enough to the requirements of the children but, as we have seen with the discussion about incest, there is scope within the class framework for this to happen. As the continentals seem to be saying to us constipated Brits. "What's the fuss about?"

## The imperatives of finance

IN THE ABSENCE of state funding, Steiner schools are of necessity fee-paying schools, though the actual form that this takes varies with each school. To date, in this country, each school has been opened,

by and large, on the initiative of local people, without substantial help from any central organisation. They have therefore been left to raise whatever sums they could from their own resources.

Initial capital, and finance for expansion, has therefore tended to be raised on appeal, largely taking the form of gifts of buildings or substantial sums of cash from individuals, but also through a number of covenants of relatively small amounts. The running costs are largely met by fees, set in one of two ways.

The most usual form of payment is that of any private school, the flat rate per term. Alternatively some schools, Bristol for instance, operate a system of payment by contribution, whereby parents offer to pay what they can afford. In addition to fees, a vast amount of fund-raising is done, through the usual jumble sales and fairs, and Bristol even gets money from a shop and cafe in part of the premises. The end product of all this effort can amount to tens of thousands of pounds per year. Further, parents can also 'contribute' by the donation of services to the school, such as help with building work or maintenance.

A problem, of course, can then occur when the sums offered do not meet the budget for the year. This would then be solved by a meeting of parents and teachers, by an increase in the 'commitment' of either or both sides. In other words either the parents offer more, or the teachers are paid less, or both, until the matter is settled.



Steiner encourages expression through art

# Progressive, but not libertarian

IN CONSIDERING Steiner education there are a few objections that we will put to one side very quickly, as they are criticisms that apply to other forms of alternative education. These are questions of whether fee-paying is right, or whether it is right to remove children from their neighbourhood and send them to a school which is by definition special, as it is separate from the normality as experienced by most people.

Possibly we should also put to one side some of the more lunatic sides to Steiner. It seems almost unbelievable that an educational theory should condemn football because the use of head-foot coordination is thought to be unhealthy.

So if we ignore these points, there is no doubt that, in general terms, the approach that is taken by Steiner schools to education has a lot of very positive attributes. The education process is very child-centred (though not child-directed). The methods used, with considerable use of teaching through practice and expression, are very progressive. The commitment made by both teachers and parents is considerable. Each child is never lost in the midst of an anonymous class, and considerable sensitivity towards their individual needs is possible.

In addition, considerable emphasis is put on having a broad education, streaming is non-existent and exams are considered to be of secondary importance. Much stress is put on non-academic activities, such as pottery and art, as away of ensuring that children can find their own niche of success and are not relegated to the perpetual role of failure. However, much of this broad area of agreement could be true of any school of nice middle class kids with nice middle class parents. We ought to look behind this and examine those aspects of Steiner which are incompatible with a libertarian approach to education.

## Dogmatic curriculum

The foundations of the Steiner system lie in a very prescriptive curriculum, albeit cloaked in the attractive terms of caring and nurturing. This even extends to the strictly defined use of certain drawing materials at different ages. This is something they would not seek to hide. They do not believe in free schools, but in a highly structured curriculum. It is a fact that according to Steiner children should not learn to read before the age of eight. When pressed as to whether it is right to actively discourage a child of three or four who is teaching itself to read, the Steiner response is not "yes". However it is suggested that the child should be distracted into more 'constructive' activities so that no 'damage' is done to its spiritual development. In other words "yes".

Further, it was described as necessary to remove the 'burden' of decision making from children such that the 'guiding hand' of adults could steer the child towards freedom... when they are 21. I hear an outcry. "Isn't it possible that a more flexible approach might take place in individual schools, or by individual teachers." But the same can be said for state schools. Individuals will always buck the system, but that doesn't remove the system or its effects. In fact the Steiner rhetoric resounds with phrases like



A normal school?

"freedom in a vacuum is a bad thing", "individuality within a framework", "teacher as an artist" (painting on the child!).

## Tools for industry

The interest in funding from industry is remarkable in the way that it clarifies the complete lack of political context in the ideas of Steiner. They have no problems in declaring that industry should acknowledge that it is their interest to fund schools because Steiner schools turn out capable and intelligent (and normalised?) workers. But again, this is not unexpected because Steiner sees itself as a straight alternative for the system, without seeking, necessarily, to change it.

## Discipline or punish

While Steiner schools reject corporal punishment they do, like most schools, have their gamut of rules and the usual sanctions if they are broken. Children, of course, have their own ideas about what they want to do. The management of conflict is always an interesting subject to discuss with teachers or parents.

Although it is nice to think that everybody in the world ought to be pleasant to each other, there is no doubt that in the real world conflict exists. We are all different after all, and liable to have different interests on occasions. Relationships between children/students and parents/teachers are like any other relationships. In the natural course of events a certain difference of opinion is going to arise eventually. The question is how we are going to resolve such conflicts.

If you are a naked authoritarian then the solution is very simple. You belt the said child around the head. If you have liberal pretensions you do it in a different way. The situation is manipulated to remove the violence, but leave the authority. Western society, of course, is very skilled at this, and through time has become more devious in its means of domination.

The Steiner teaching method relies on the building of a strong relationship between teacher and child over a number

of years, to the extent that "when there is a caring loving relationship between a student and their teachers/parents then conflict does not arise". There is no doubt that the building of such a relationship can be very effective in providing a secure base from which to learn.

However, the teacher is also in a powerful position from which to control. A person who is trained to defer naturally is not free, but normalised to accept authority. While it is also true that the successful resolution of conflict can be an agonisingly difficult process, there remains a suspicion that the Steiner method can be profoundly authoritarian, if only through its all-embracingness.

## That sixties feeling

It is worthwhile asking ourselves "why Waldorf?" Why should Steiner schools be the fastest growing group of alternative schooling in Britain? From our conversations with parents it seems that the main source of growth in the movement is the massive disaffection with state schooling as it exists at present, rather than any positive desire for the Steiner method, but that doesn't entirely explain the Waldorf factor. There are, after all, some other alternatives.

It would seem to be more something to do with the perspective of the parents who are sending their children to these schools. They are overwhelmingly white and middle class. They do not tend to be very rich themselves, except by inheritance. They were also brought up in the sixties and seventies. Anthroposophy is one of those esoteric, "christian community" type of organisations that are hard to pin down.

Its basis, on the accumulation of 'wisdom', is typically Eastern in nature and it is this mixture of the Eastern and Western philosophies which may be the source of its popularity. The 'caring and nurturing' philosophy, the overwhelming 'niceness', of the movement is obviously attractive. Are these parents the near drop-outs of a bygone era still trying to live out a dream? This is more than a little ironic considering that the roots of Steiner are in workers education.



# Tragic death of a boy swapped for some horses



TRAGIC toddler Anthony Penney was given away by his mother in exchange for four horses, a shocked court heard yesterday.

He was passed from one home to another, ill-treated and starved and would sit with his hand curled like a claw waiting to grab desperately at food.

The covering youngster finally found love in the arms of a foster mother and he began to smile for the first time.

But Anthony's joy was short-lived. He accidentally

hanged himself on a clothes-line while playing at Tarzan.

The story of the five-year-old boy unwanted from birth

was revealed at an inquest at Mudgee, near Sydney, New South Wales.

He was two when his mother handed him to her estranged husband for four horses. Later she claimed him back because two of the animals were in poor condition.

## 'Wogland' sacking ruled fair

By a Correspondent

A WOODWORK technician was fairly sacked by the London borough of Brent from his job at a school after writing "wogland" on an Asian pupil's map of India, an industrial tribunal ruled yesterday.

The tribunal chairman, Mr Eric Wintmore said: "We have no hesitation in saying this was a very offensive and foolish thing to write."

The technician, Mr Leslie Ostergaard, who had claimed the unfair dismissal at the tribunal in Chelsea, south London, had said he wrote the word as a joke.

# THE INDEPENDENT

## Youth shot

ISRAELI troops yesterday shot and wounded a 17-year-old Palestinian in the occupied West Bank after he made an obscene gesture at them and tried to run away, an army spokesman said. — Reuter.

## One-parent families 'evil' says Boyson

By Our Churches Correspondent

"The intentional one-parent family is probably the most evil product of our times," Dr Rhodes Boyson, newly appointed Minister of State in the Department of the Environment, told a Church Society fringe meeting at the conference.

He referred to "the nightmare society" in which the family "is particularly under attack from the feminists, the youth cult, the homosexual lobbies, and the increased power of the State."

Dr Boyson argued that children should be given the right to be born to a normal family with the presence of father and mother; to attend schools where they are taught discipline and respect for religion and authority; and to attend churches where religion is "not a preparation for an all-solving protest march."

# 'Devil's music' ban by parents fails



## Mouse 'drunk'

A WOMAN who says her four-year-old son was attacked by Mickey Mouse is suing the Disney organisation for \$3 million. She claims that a person dressed as Mickey Mouse hurled her son against an iron railing after he pulled the mouse's tail at Disneyland. The writ alleges that the person in the mouse costume was drunk.—AP.

## Baby to keep 140 names

A baby girl is finally to get a birth certificate following a 10-month battle over her 140 Christian names. Her parents John and Margaret Nelson, of Barrow Hill, Chesterfield, were told only 20 would fit.

A concert by controversial British rock star Ozzy Osbourne will go ahead despite angry protests by parents.

Parents in Tyler, Texas, claim the 36-year-old Birmingham-born singer is a disciple of the devil and 500 of them signed a petition to halt his concert.

Mr Mike Dugan, who organised the protest which was rejected by Tyler Council, said: "Osbourne is evil, demonic and Satanism. We oppose what a salesman of witchcraft and Satan is able to do to Ozzy Osbourne."



'SINNER' Osbourne

# Maths for a change

**The structure of traditional Maths teaching reinforces authoritarianism. What can be done about it?**

IN JUNE '86 school students sitting a London Regional Board CSE Maths examination were asked to carry out the following calculation:

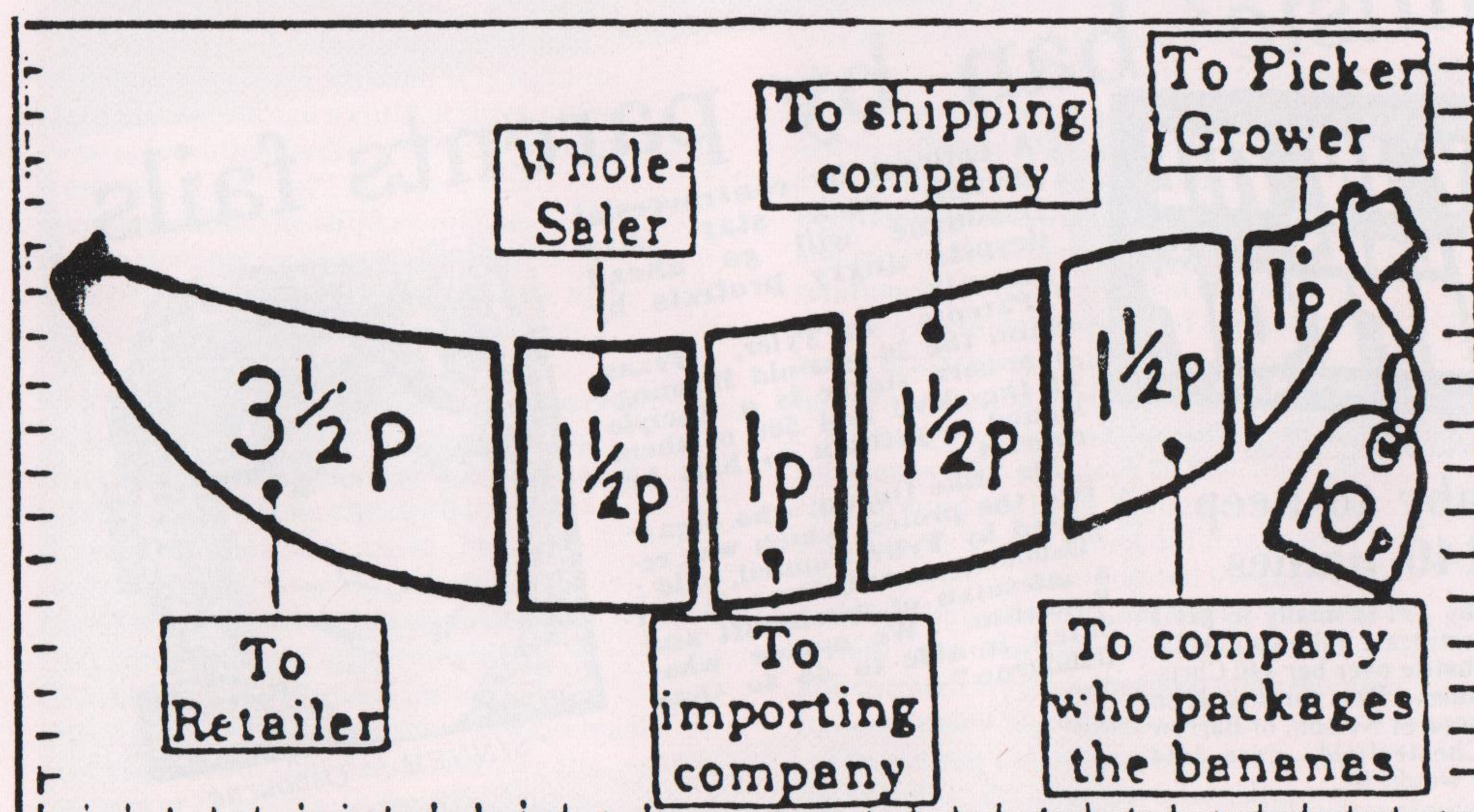
*"The money required to provide adequate food, water, education, health and housing for everyone in the world has been estimated at £17 billion a year".*  
(New Internationalist, 1980)

*How many weeks of NATO and Warsaw Pact military spending would be enough to pay for this?*

*(Show all your working)*

This was the final part of a long question which looked at the military expenditure of NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, through graphs, tables and pictograms. Exam entrants were expected to calculate the average percentage rise in spending on arms between 1980 and 1984 for the USA and USSR - answer USA 39%, USSR 7.5%. What is more, they were then asked to comment on this result. Another section called for the student to work out the military spending per head in the UK in 1980.

Not surprisingly, the question caused a stir among certain right-wing educationalists. A spokesperson for the examination board said that they always vetted social science subjects for political bias, but that it had never occurred to them to look at maths. It probably wouldn't occur to many people. Mathematics has a high status as a politically neutral subject, objective and value-free. Does this view of maths stand up to scrutiny?



The examples below are all taken from text-books widely used in schools and colleges today.

*A shopgirl works a 46 hour week for which she is paid £58.88. She works four hours overtime which is paid for at time and a quarter. How much did she earn that week?*

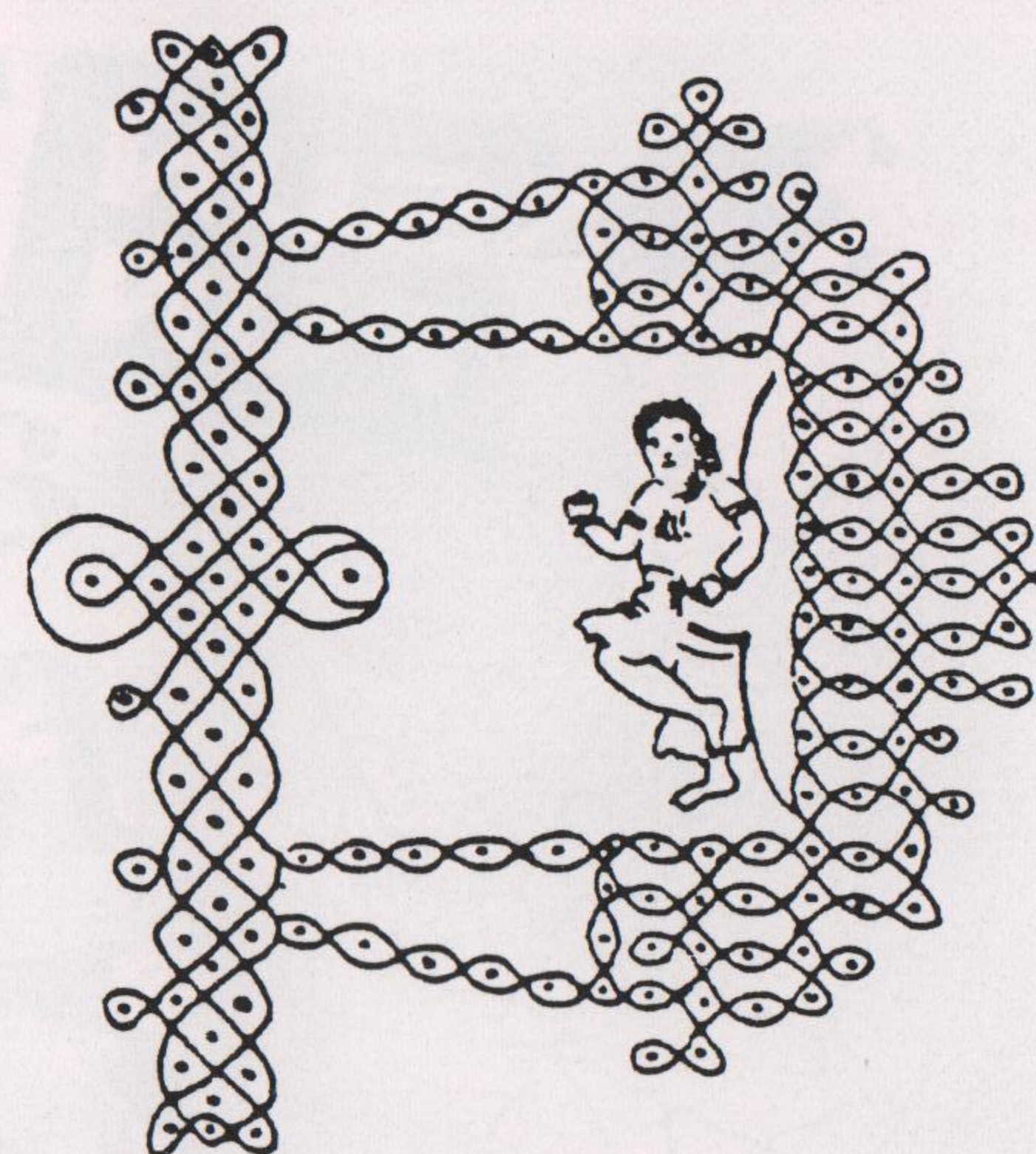
*A supermarket has 1800 cm<sup>2</sup> of shelf space for washing powder. A box of Sure-Clean requires 25 cm<sup>2</sup> of shelf space and a box of Quick-Wash 15 cm<sup>2</sup>. The profit per box is 16p for Sure-Clean and 24p for Quick-Wash. How many boxes of each should be stocked for the greatest profit to be made?*

*A man borrowed £2400 for 2 years at 11% compound interest. How much will he have to repay?*

*When an aircraft is flying horizontally at a speed of 420 km/h, it releases a bomb, which on release has the same velocity as the aircraft. The bomb is released when the aircraft is 2 km horizontally and h km vertically from the target. Given that the bomb hits the target, find the value of h.*

### What's the problem?

So what lessons are children learning under the guise of mathematics? Hierarchies are legitimised - some people are paid a fixed monthly salary, while others have to work long hours of overtime to get enough money to live on. The only criterion for decision-making in business is the maximisation of profit, and profit



doesn't arise from exploiting people's labour, but is the difference between cost price and selling price. War is an exercise in calculating the trajectories of bombs and bullets, or the number of soldiers needed to storm the radio station during a coup. Most people who do anything of note are men, and all of them are white.

The structure of traditional mathematics teaching, even more than most subjects, reinforces authoritarianism generally. There is only one correct answer to every question, known by the teacher, arrived at not by investigation and discussion, but by applying a formula. In other areas of the curriculum, such as social studies, students may be expected to question and debate the structure of society, but these subjects do not have the high status enjoyed by maths.

### What's the solution?

So what can a teacher of mathematics do to change the emphasis of the maths classroom away from the legitimisation of capitalism, racism, militarism and sexism? A start has been made - the CSE question about military spending was the product of SMILE (Secondary Mathematics Individualised Learning Experiment). This is a work-card based scheme, originated by London teachers, but now also used in schools outside of London. They also produce a magazine for young people called *Factor*. SMILE questions refer to Krishna, Soulla, Delroy, Ms Sharma and Mr Dabrowski, instead of Tom, Dick and Harry. Girls are not only prominent, but shown to be dynamic and decisive. Other individual teachers and groups are now producing materials which portray black people and women.

### Multicultural maths

For some years progressive teachers have tried to bring a multicultural dimension to maths teaching. Islamic patterns or Hindu rangoli designs can be used to investigate symmetry or tessellations in geometry. Bilingual children can teach others in the class to count in the language they speak at home. If the history of maths is touched on, this can be used to challenge the

Eurocentric bias of 'Pascal's Triangle', or 'Pythagoras' Theorem'. We can talk about the great mathematical achievements of the Indians and the Chinese. Pascal's Triangle was used by Chinese mathematicians 300 years before Pascal's birth. The number system that we use today came from India via the Arabs, replacing the inefficient Roman numerals that were the best that Europe had come up with. Children can play mathematical games from around the world, or look at different calendars. There's nothing wrong with this multicultural approach, as far as it goes. It just doesn't go far enough. Mathematics, and especially statistics, can be used to present, in a graphic way, issues related to the global division of wealth, the position of women, apartheid.

### Inequalities

A standard text book example of a pie-chart shows how the world's land area is divided between the continents, a pretty meaningless exercise. Why not draw two pie-charts to compare the distribution of population with the amount of energy consumed, and then discuss the 'fairness' of this division.

Other ideas for graphs and charts related to world development are infant mortality rates, life expectancy, food imports and exports. 'Aid' can be shown up for the fraud that it is, and the colonialist background to the present economic structure of the world explained. There's the exercise in ratio and percentage: "If there were 100 ...". For example:

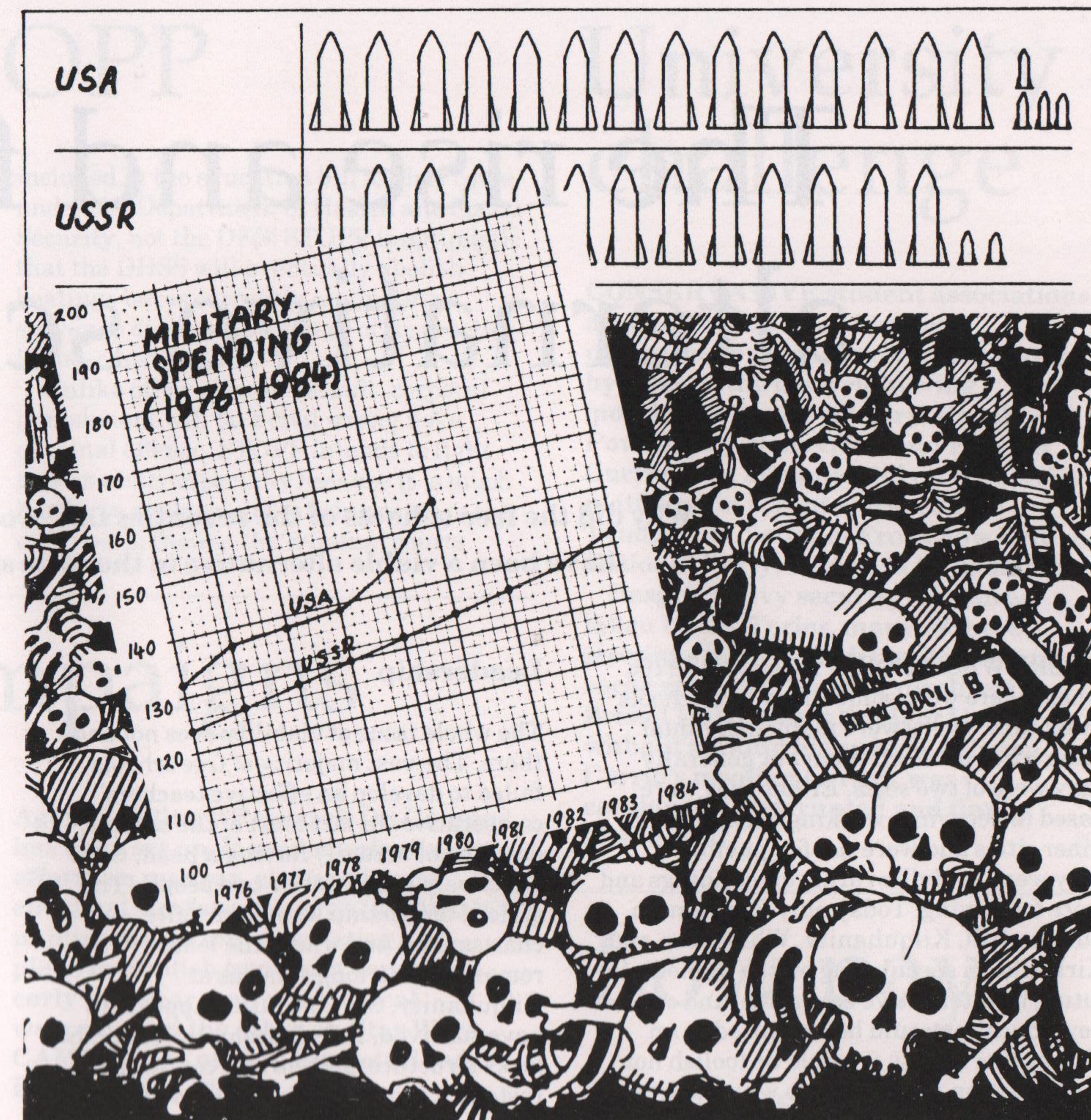
*If there were 100 people in the world, this is where they would be*

Africa	9
East Europe and U.S.S.R.	9
East Asia	34
Latin America	8
North America	6
Oceania	1
South Asia	20
West Asia	3
Western Europe	10

*If there were 100 banknotes in the world, this is where they would be*

Africa	3
East Europe and U.S.S.R.	18
East Asia	14
Latin America	5
North America	28
Oceania	1
South Asia	2
West Asia	2
Western Europe	27

Another area is the position of women globally. It has been estimated that women perform two thirds of the world's work hours, receive 10% of the world's income, and own 1% of the world's property. Would the figures for Britain agree with this?



Then there's the vegetarian alternative. 10 acres of land will support:

- 61 people growing soya
- 24 people growing wheat
- 10 people growing maize
- 2 people growing cattle.

Charities like Oxfam, Christian Aid and War on Want, and the magazine *New Internationalist*, are good sources of information.

### Toys for the boys

We have seen how SMILE used statistics on arms spending. There is a wealth of figures to look at here. For example, compare the money spent on health with military spending for different countries or areas of the world. How much does a Cruise Missile cost? What else could you buy for the same money? How many times over would everybody in the world be killed by the nuclear weapons in existence now?

### Black and white

South Africa's apartheid system provides a huge amount of statistical information for use in a maths lesson to bring home the realities of institutionalised racism. Compare the infant mortality rate for white babies (18.6 per ,000) with that for black babies (112.2 per ,000). Or what about a bar chart to show the per capita

spending on education in 1982/3 for the different racial groups (the whites get more than 7 times as much as the blacks). Then there's a pie chart to illustrate the exports from South Africa to various parts of the world in 1982 (13.7% came to Britain).

Under apartheid 15% of the population (the whites) have taken for themselves 87% of the land. In a group of 20 children, this would mean that 3 children had almost all the classroom for their own use and crowded the other 17 into a corner. Racism in Britain can be tackled too - for instance comparing the figures for black people picked up on Sus with the number actually charged. Other possible areas to look at are housing and unemployment.

### Making it all add up

This isn't only an excuse for introducing information about apartheid, or world trade, or arms spending, into a maths class. The thinking and talking that will go on about these issues should also change the way in which children relate to maths. Instead of an oppressive, meaningless set of operations about nothing at all, mathematics can become a powerful tool for interpreting the world. Mathematical thinking can be used to look at real problems, demystifying the economic and social structures that surround us. If this starts to happen, then students may begin to see some point in learning maths for a change.



# The rise and fall of alternative schools

Why did the free schools of the seventies fail? Could they ever have been a viable alternative to the state system?

THERE WAS A POINT in the mid 1970s where there were some thirty free schools in Britain. There were many individual differences between them but generally they were of two sorts. Either they were based in decaying, working class areas of inner cities and were not fee-paying, or they were in idyllic rural surroundings and were fee-paying. Today only four remain, Summerhill, Kilquhanity, White Lion and Kirkdale. In speculating on the immediate future of 'alternative education' and on how education could be organised in an alternative society it would be foolish not to attempt an analysis as to why the free school movement failed to maintain the momentum created in the 1970s.

## Finance

Thatcher, Monetarism and the new orthodoxy are convenient scapegoats and whilst it would be true to say that the last seven years have witnessed a stifling of both alternative debate and development it is too easy to just blame the Tories for the problems that have afflicted the free school movement, especially as the last three years have witnessed the emergence of some new alternatives, namely the Steiner schools and the small school movement. Finance stands at the heart of the issue. Summerhill, Kilquhanity and White Lion all have a relatively strong financial base. Kirkdale does not, and interestingly is on the brink of closure itself. This was exactly the situation that many of the urban schools faced earlier, as they had been forced to rely on grant support and occasionally community support, both of which often evaporate quickly. Experience seems to suggest that if free schools are to be a viable alternative they will either have to be fee-paying or they must gain state funding in advance. However, there are other possibilities. One is already being developed in Steiner schools, where parents pay what they can in cash, goods or labour. Further, it is worth remembering that many libertarian schools abroad, and in London before the first world war, have been financed by trade unions, a source never really explored by the free schools.

## Leadership

The whole issue of viability does not end there. The vast majority of free schools failed to develop an effective teachers' co-operative. In fact most of the schools, despite not actually having a head, were effectively led by one or two people. The style of leadership was essentially charismatic, and where the leader remained for a long time, as at Kilquhanity, the institution appears to have survived. But charismatic leadership lacks structure, system and continuity. Instead it tends to be influenced by intuition and the mood of the moment, thus being unpredictable and unreliable. In these circumstances when the leader goes what is there left to sustain the initiative? If free schools are to be viable as alternatives they have to develop a strong co-operative with skills, strength and organisation.

## Intake

It is important to realise that the attenders at most of the urban free schools were truants. Only rarely did the schools make real inroads into the local community. This is in no way to underestimate the positive experiences that many children went through in the schools. However, the free schools did not set out to be libertarian truancy centres, and the fact that they developed on such lines made them marginal in the same way that the fee-paying rural retreats were as a result of their essentially middle class intake.

## Philosophy

And so to philosophy. Generally the free schools were characterised by a belief in the individuality of the child and by a desire to challenge the traditional authoritarian nature of structure and relationships in schools. However, any consensus really ended there, not that that in itself is necessarily counter productive but it did prevent the emergence of an actual movement with some sort of national federation or network. This would

have been important if only as a support system. However many of the schools experienced significant internal conflicts. Some conflicts were over finance and intake, although the most significant were about pedagogy. Schools like Frensham Heights 'straightened up' in the face of adversity, abandoning school meetings and other libertarian practices. Similarly, in the urban free schools, after the early carefree days, many teachers and parents found themselves arguing for a more prescriptive curriculum. In general, many of the free schools lacked a cohesive philosophy.

## Parents

Every free school has tried to encourage and develop parental involvement. A laudable aim but not without its problems. Free schools developed in the first instance for children, in many cases they were eventually taken over by parents, and much more importance was attached to parents being involved in decision-making than was attached to children doing the same. If free schools are to be genuine alternatives then they have to enfranchise their children at every level.

## Conclusion

Free schools have much to offer. Their size, their community base, their belief in the autonomy of the individual child, their search for an alternative pedagogy which places learning in the hands of the learner, all give us some sort of idea about the kind of schools that could exist in an alternative society. However, what of the here and now? If free schools are to exist then they should be as an alternative to, and an alternative for, the state system. They should be small, strong and well-planned, with a coherent philosophy. Many of the 'free schoolers' of the 1970s believed that they were beginning a school revolution, and whilst it is impossible for libertarians to deny anyone the right to set up a school, a small number of practical working examples are of infinite value to a larger number of essentially symbolic failures.

# The next STOPP

THE GOVERNMENT BAN on caning in Britain's state run schools does not come into effect until August 1987. So the campaigning group, STOPP, Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment, intends to continue its work in the Local Authorities who have not already outlawed these barbaric acts. Private schools, which will not be covered by the ban, will be another area of concern for the group. Two extreme cases of school beatings have reached national headlines recently, perhaps the tip of an iceberg.

Residential children's homes are also not

included in the education bill as they come under the Department of Health and Social Security, not the DES! STOPP is optimistic that the DHSS will eventually abolish beatings but is currently conducting a survey to discover the extent of its practice in these institutions.

Unlike other cases of assault, corporal punishment will be a civil wrong not a criminal offence. STOPP intends to fight this anomaly especially because it is much harder to get legal aid to bring cases to the civil courts than to the criminal courts. □

# Campus campaigns

A GROWING number of British scientists believe that Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative is technically flawed and a serious threat to nuclear disarmament. Over 500 university scientists have signed a pledge that they won't take money for star-wars research.

In order to combat all forms of war research in universities and polytechnics CAMROC, Campaign

Against Military Research On Campus, has been set up. It is concentrating its efforts on nuclear, electronic and chemical warfare research. CAMROC publishes a termly newsletter and plans to publish two short reports early this year, one on chemical weapons and the other on Star Wars. CAMROC are at 190b Burdett Road, Bow, London E3. □

# Free degrees

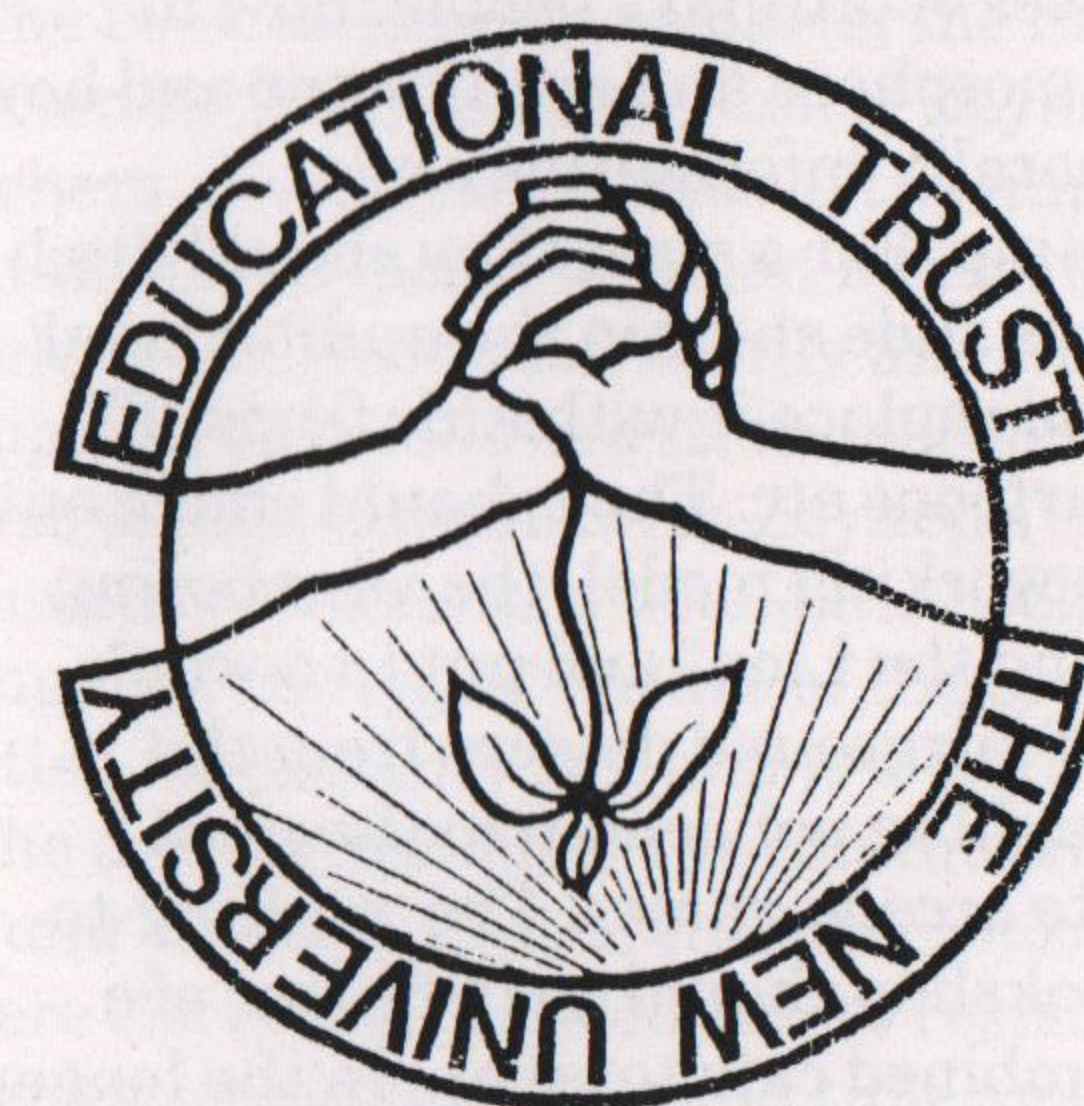
A RADICAL further education project is being set up in the Hockley area of Birmingham. The New University Project has just purchased a large property to form a close radical education community as a first step in the project's long term aim to set up a series of residential centres for adults.

People will be free to design their own courses, but they will be encouraged to avoid specialisation by drawing on several

experimentation with the emphasis on dialogue rather than the traditional structure of one-way instruction, and social responsibility rather than individualism.

The project aims to avoid the elitism of many educational institutions by not basing entry on the ability to pay fees or on the crudity of academic qualifications. There will also be special efforts to attract women, black people, working class people and other groups who have always been under represented in higher education.

The New University Project can be contacted at 24 South Road, Hockley, Birmingham 11. (tel: 021-551 1679) □



subjects and perspectives in their studies, which could include alternative economics and politics, humanistic psychology, non-violence, intermediate technology as well as arts and crafts. Learning will be open to

# University challenge

CONSERVATIVE student associations around Britain have been co-ordinating provocative speaking tours by some of the most right wing 'politicians' in the country. Enoch Powell, Ray Honeyford and Edwina Currie have all appeared on university platforms in recent weeks. John Tyndall, ex National Front now British National Party, is soon to be included.

Despite heavy security measures taken by the Tories, many of these meetings have been disrupted by anti-racist students. Enoch Powell left Bristol University's Student Union without making his speech. Edwina Currie's meeting at York was continually interrupted and finally abandoned. □

# Low pay

APPALLING wages in British universities have been revealed in a recent survey. Manual and clerical workers were found to have an average take home pay of about £80 per week. Many of these workers are only a few pounds better off than they would be on social security. □

# School tied up in knots

TWELVE year old Toby Lyons was excluded from Royston Comprehensive School, Barnsley, soon after starting there for not wearing school uniform. He simply does not wish to wear a uniform, and his mother backs him in his right to determine his dress for himself.

However, there appears to be no school in Barnsley which does not have a uniform, and so, over a year later, Toby is still being educated at home. Barnsley Local Education Authority has recently offered Toby a place at another school claiming that he need not wear a uniform there, despite four pages of uniform restrictions in its prospectus. Needless to say, he does not wish to go to a school whose headteacher will only accept him on sufferance. □

# New School

WOULD you like to see a small, friendly alternative school in your area? That's what people in the London Borough of Lewisham are being offered by the South London Free School Campaign. The campaign is supported by North London's White Lion Street Free School who would love to see a similar venture south of the river. The group have earmarked a suitable building and are currently mobilising local support through leafletting and meetings. They can be contacted at: 120 Algernon Road, Lewisham, London, SE13 7AW. □

# Human Rights and Wrongs

## Teaching and Learning about Human Rights

A Project Pack published by Amnesty International, 5 Roberts Place, Bowling Green Lane, London, EC1 0EJ £9.35 inc. p. and p.

ALL STATES are organised to serve the interests of the rich and powerful. In democratic states the oppressed have limited control over their own destiny, in others not at all. This pack focuses on the worst excesses of state power but also encourages us to look at our own attitudes and collaboration with authority. In unit nine for example, we read of an American sociologist who found that 65% of the ordinary citizens taking part in a "Learning Experiment" were prepared to administer very dangerous electric shocks to their fellow citizens. They did this even though the subject was apparently screaming with pain because they were told to do so by an authority figure.

The range of Human Rights issues covered by the pack is wide and it could be used in a variety of subject areas with secondary and further education students. The materials encourage active learner participation through discussion, role play,

simulation exercises and research. They are well illustrated with drawings, photographs and cartoons, and comprise ten A4 size booklets packed into a strong card project holder. The first three booklets introduce the subject of Human Rights, others focus on "Prisoners of Conscience", "Censorship", "Disappearances" and "Torture". Unit ten explores these themes through "Acting Games", while units four and six explain exactly how students can intervene on behalf of specific individuals suffering violations of their human rights. It is this intervention strategy that makes this project's approach distinctive. Action is anathema to British education where learning is supposed to be pursued for its own sake

Heads and LEAs will not take kindly to school students involvement in campaigning. Amnesty's reputation as a respectable, reliable, politically neutral organisation will allay the fears of some but no doubt put off others who would prefer a more political approach. They see Amnesty as too wet and liberal. This radical critique is best brought out through considering unit six on "Letter Writing": students are urged to write to governments on behalf of specific victims, not to criticise

state brutality, but to plead for clemency. The booklet advises; "Write politely ... take special care not to express yourself in a way which could seem aggressive or offensive". It also lists approved forms of address for heads of state etc. For example, when writing to generals or colonels (such as Chile's General Pinochet) you begin, "Your Excellency" and end with "Yours respectfully and sincerely ..." Such deference to tyrants is repugnant, it flatters their vanity and seems to legitimise their right to make decisions of life and death. It may be justified in these exceptional cases, but if this Amnesty approach leads students to consider human rights as a depoliticised issue then it will not help the struggle for freedom. Freedom for individuals may sometimes be granted but freedom for oppressed classes can only be gained through confrontation and struggle.

Despite limitations, used imaginatively this material could gain valuable footholds in schools for raising issues of vital importance. Learners once roused to act against injustice are apt to develop their own dynamic. After all writing polite letters needn't stop you getting involved in more impolite forms of direct action ...

# Childhood Exhibited

## Museum of Childhood

A National Museum administered as part of the V and A. Bethnal Green, London (01-980-2415) Admission free

SINCE IT BEGAN in 1974 the Museum of Childhood has established not only a national but to some extent an international reputation. Housed in an architecturally interesting greenhouse in East London the exhibits are spread out over three floors. The main galleries are organised around the themes of dolls, dolls-houses, games, toy soldiers, childrens costumes and puppets. The whole collection is vast yet the individual exhibits are attractively displayed and simply labelled. The staff have certainly succeeded in producing an extensive, clearly organised exhibition of the various artefacts usually associated with children, but does this make it a "Museum of Childhood"?

Despite its attractions, for me the museum is a failure, a real lost opportunity. It no more represents childhood than a gown, mortar-board and dunces cap represent education. The selection of artefacts, the categorisation of galleries and the overall planning of the museum betray an attitude towards children that is elitist and academic. The objects chosen largely represent middle/

upper class children, not the experiences of the lower orders. Many of the toys have come from the playrooms of the well-heeled and any one of the period dolls houses would probably have cost more than most families could afford to rent a real house for a year!

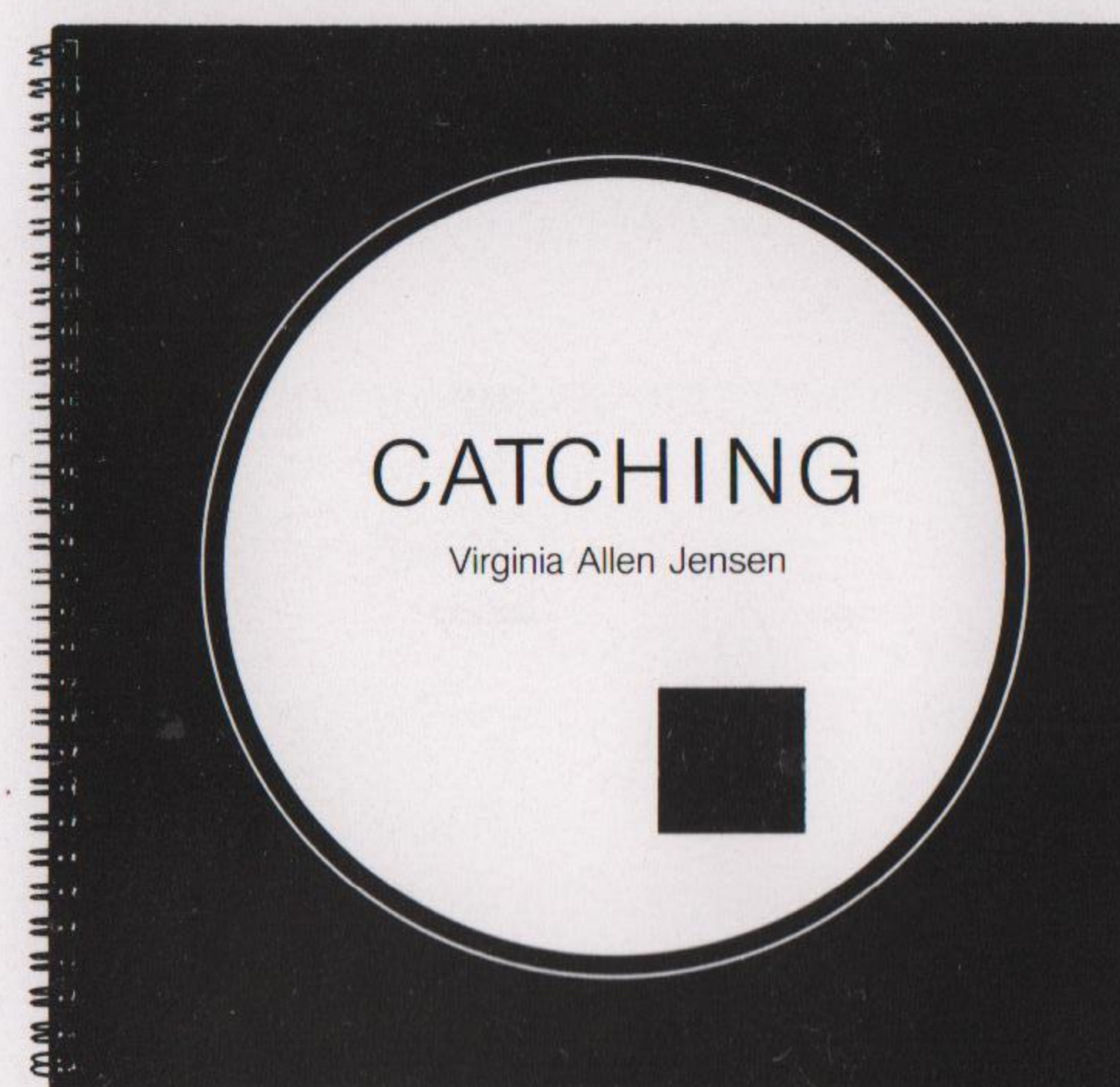


The particular grouping of exhibits does nothing at all to help understand their social role. Sticking all the mechanical toys together doesn't help explain why smoking monkeys and dancing negro slaves were considered as source of legitimate amusement for children. In fact such naive presentation merely encourages them to laugh at these disgusting spectacles. This

whole decontextualised, cataloguing-type display serves only the academic who might wish to produce a paper on "Bisque Dolls Heads, 1897 to 1903" or "Rare Timbers in Germans Dolls House Construction", it does little to inform, entertain or challenge the ordinary adult visitor and does even less for children.

Overall I find the place very boring, admittedly they do have a basement that is open for limited hours, for children to do some colouring but that is very tokenistic. The whole place could learn from the folk museum approach: how to present the experiences of ordinary people, how to create atmosphere and excitement and how to be generally informative and entertaining. For a start they should ditch the tedious slide show in the audio-visual corner and replace it with kids films, TV shows, cartoons etc. They should chuck out their one working model, the very boring "Albert and the Lion" and put in a whole battery of fairground devices from the oldest laughing policeman to the most up-to-date arcade games. The 'nothing-to-touch' bookshop should go in favour of a larger combined cafe/toyshop. In the longer term though it needs completely reorganising. Why on earth should a museum be so dull and lifeless? As it says on the wall on the way in ... "This museum is primarily a place for looking rather than doing". Shame!

# A touching tale



## Catching

A book by Virginia Allen Jensen Collins, pp22, £4.95

A FASCINATING book which has terrific appeal for blind or partially sighted, as well as sighted, children. The characters are all geometric shapes formed by raising the page surfaces into a variety of textures. There's Stripes, Squares, Roughts,

Hexagons and more. They chase each other along a zig-zag, straight and jagged paths, playing together and enjoying a game of catch. The story itself is rather trivial but children get real pleasure from tracing out the characters' progress with their fingertips. Sighted children enjoy "feeling the story" as much as the visually impaired. Enjoyment and visual perception are further enhanced through the books carefully selected and lively use of colour. The text is designed to be read aloud to children, but most sighted children would be able to manage the clear print and simple vocabulary for themselves. The use of shapes as story characters is inventive and makes a nice change from bunny rabbits and postmen. It also encourages children's appreciation of geometric form and reinforces the value of the book as an aesthetic and sensual experience rather than the more usual intellectual appeal.

At four pounds ninety-five it's not cheap, but it's unusual for a kids book to recognise disability. To incorporate this recognition into the whole design and create a book that can be shared by both sighted and visually impaired children makes "Catching" a rare and valuable resource.

# Zeynep's story

## Zeynep. That really happened to me ...

A book by Zeynep Hasbudak and Brian Simons All London Teachers against Racism and Fascism (ALTARF), pp100, £2.50

BORN IN HACKNEY in 1976 and 1978 respectively Zeynep Hasbudak and Fatih Hasbudak were deported to Turkey on April 4th 1984. This was done on the grounds that although both children were British citizens their parents were not and were hence illegal immigrants. The whole family had to go.

The book falls into two parts, the first written by Brian Simons, one of Zeynep's teachers, giving an account of the impact that the deportation decision had on the whole of the Hasbudak family and the campaign that followed it, the second a series of photographs with Zeynep's comments. Taken as a whole the book brings out the racist nature of the present British Nationality Act and is a testament to the determination of the community around William Patten Infants School, where the children attended, to resist the deportation order. Time and time again bureaucracy, typified by Mr Waddington at the Home Office, is seen to stand in the way of what was a significant movement. Brian Simons at one point quotes from a letter sent by Zeynep after the deportation,

"Mr Waddington is dumb. You know what? If we was home office and Waddington was us we wouldn't send him back to leave his kids and he go back to his country."

More specifically the book comes alive because of the clear involvement that Zeynep herself has had in its creation. This makes the book very special and almost unique. Time and time again the reader is made aware of the child's perspective.

"You can see the photos of what happened to us," Zeynep says. "I'll tell you about them, OK?"

And then commenting on one of the excellent photographs, Zeynep says,

"Deportation means you have to go away from this country and you can't come back. But why did they do it to us and we never did anything wrong? My Mum and Dad worked here for ten years and they never did anything wrong. So why did they have to go? And that's not fair."

Not only is this book excellent value for money, but it highlights that attitude of children, especially to authoritarian structures and people in positions of authority.

## How to Choose a School - Selecting the Best Secondary School for your Child - A Parent's Guide

A book by Catherine Itzin Methuen, pp232, £3.95

WHAT a surprise. Catherine Itzin doesn't suggest we opt for uniforms, exams and discipline but explains what progressive practices aim to achieve and suggests that we ... "Find out what each school is doing about adultism, sexism, heterosexism, racism, able-bodiedism, anti-semitism and classism ... Ask how students can register complaints ..." Good stuff, pity about her promise (page 111) to mention free schools on page 233 - the book ends on page 232! Thoroughly recommended for progressive parents (libertarian parents would, of course, let children choose their own school).

## It's MY body - a book to teach young children how to resist the uncomfortable touch.

A book by Lory Freeman, illustrations Carol Deach Parenting Press, pp24, £2.25

MANY well meaning attempts to help children avoid sexual abuse also heighten their feelings of powerlessness and insecurity. This short, amusingly illustrated, book supports kids autonomy. The child decides what's pleasurable and what's unwelcome. "You will probably feel warm inside when you share your body because you want to. But, if you feel uncomfortable inside, don't share your body! Say loud and clear. Don't touch me! I don't like it!"

## The Lady who loved Animals

A book by Pam Adams Child's Play (International) Ltd., £2.50 (hardback)

THIS is a surprising book which uses a traditional format with cute colourful pictures to challenge the hypocrisy in our attitude towards, and treatment of, animals. The lady who says she loves animals - "the hoppity rabbit" and "the little baa lambs" - only greedily thinks of eating them. She is herself loved in return and eaten by a hungry lion! An unusually truthful and sympathetic book advocating that "meat is murder".

## The Educational Implication of Disability

A book by J. Male and C. Thompson RADAR, pp174, £2.50

IT IS WRONG to segregate children with disabilities into special schools. This book supports their integration by providing information for teachers on how to meet their particular needs in ordinary schools. The detail is comprehensive, practical and fascinating. It prompted me to consider what little effort we able bodied generally make to appreciate the problems caused to the disabled by our ignorance. Essential reading, and not just for teachers.