

RADICAL EDUCATION is published termly (September, January, May) and priced 30p

Send me one copy of the next issue. I enclose 40p (30p + 10p p&p)

I would like to order . . . . . copies on sale or return starting this/next issue

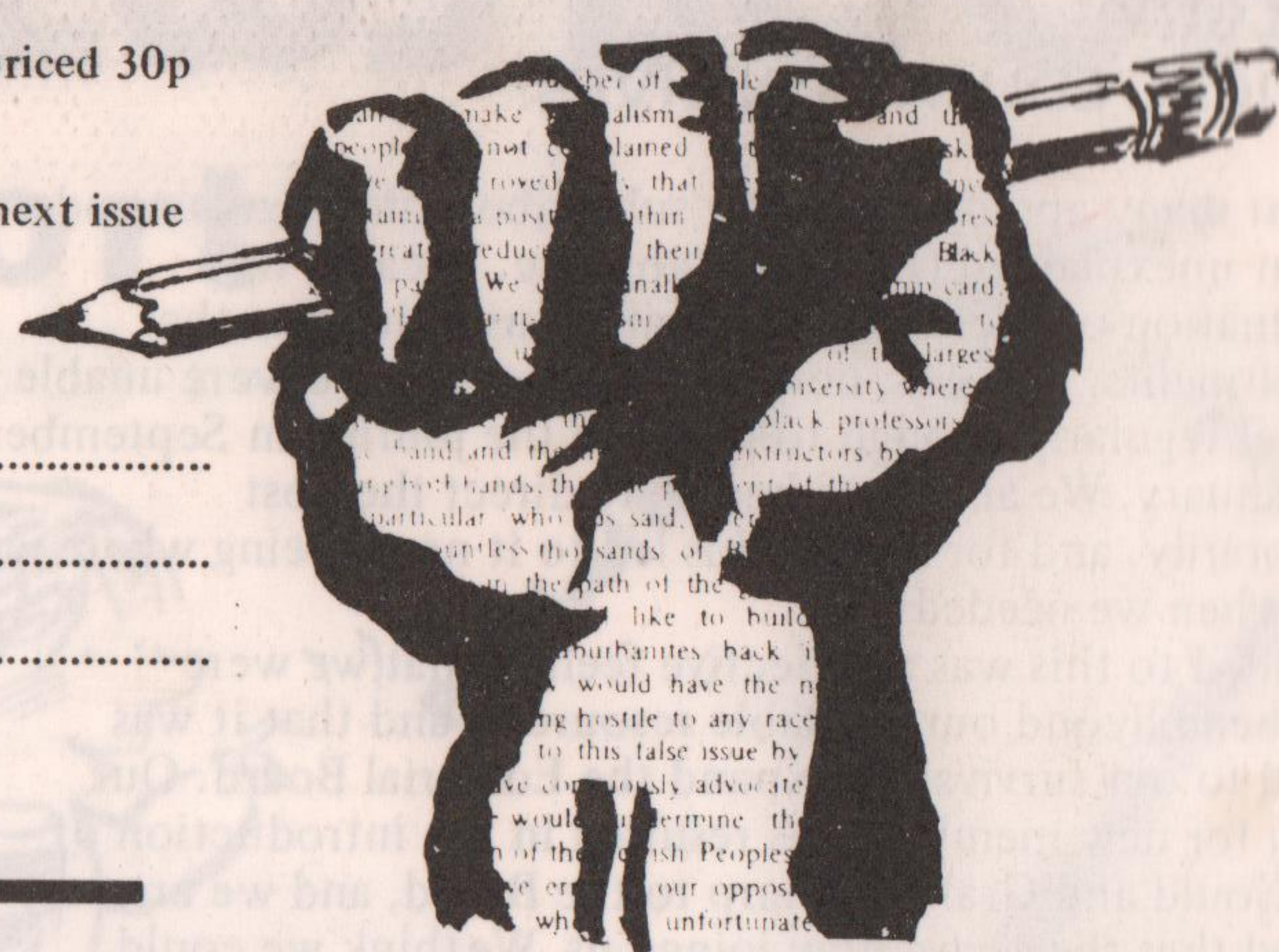
I enclose £1.15 (institutions £2.30) for a 3-issue subscription

Please make cheques and POs payable to 'Radical Education'

NAME..... ADDRESS.....

Send this coupon to:

Radical Education,  
86 Eleanor Road, London E8



# RADICAL EDUCATION

junior humanities  
chris searle on mozambique  
n.f. in schools

## RADICAL EDUCATION

is a journal about teachers, students of all ages and education. It was set up in Spring 1974 by a group of socialist teachers who saw the need for a revolutionary change in education. Most commentators see education as a social provision which can be improved without regard to the general social conditions which have caused its failure. We reject this 'piecemeal engineering' because we believe that our educational system cannot give equality of anything until the entire social system has been itself altered to create this possibility. We do not, however, believe that we are powerless. On the contrary, much of the future of socialism is in the hands of children, teachers and parents, who together can create an understanding of the conditions which will enable them to act upon and thus change the world, rather than remain passively within it.

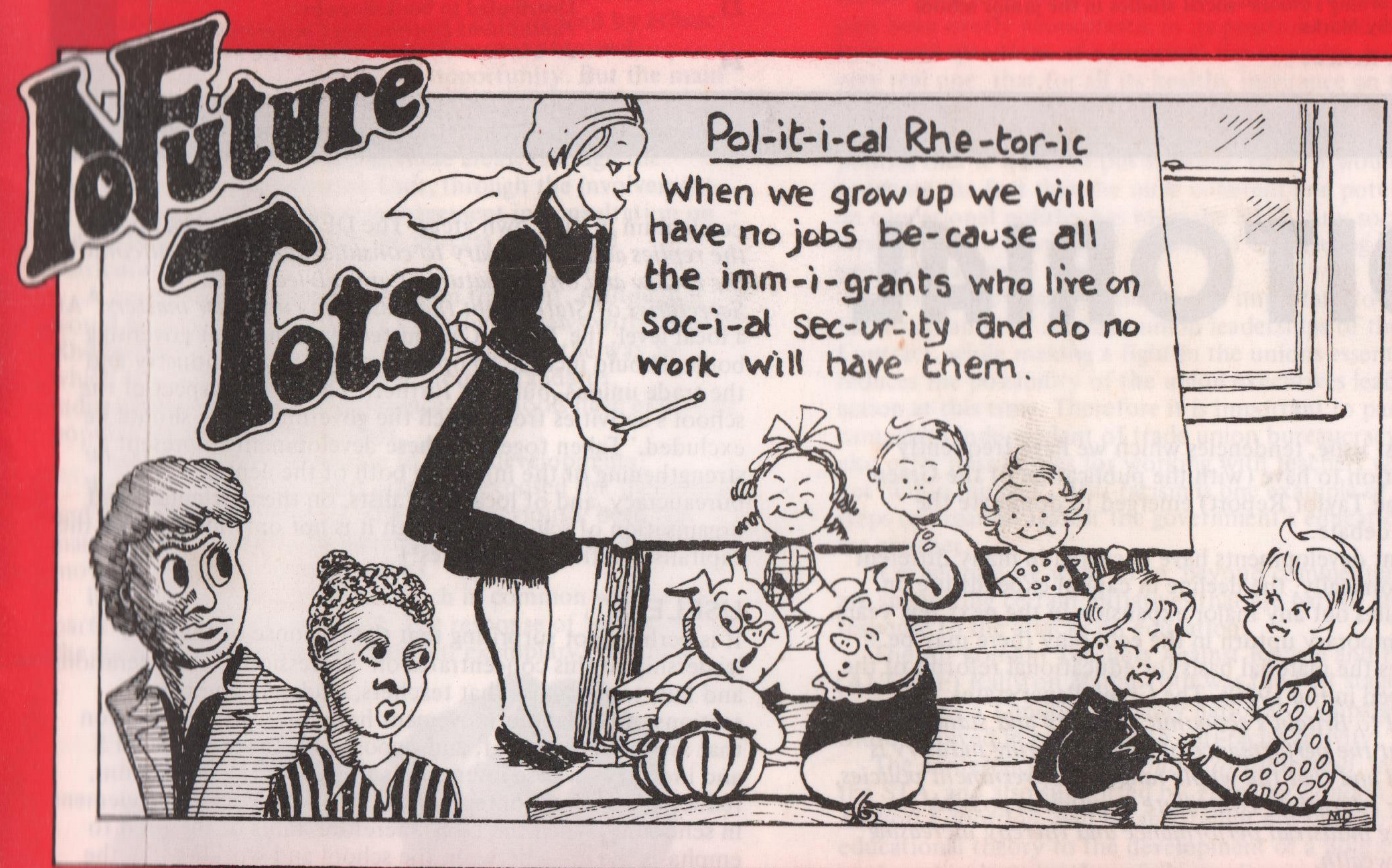
In *Radical Education*, we wish to develop a clearer understanding of the role that education plays within the wider society, and to pursue the consequences of this understanding within and without the classroom. We wish to look at the methods whereby knowledge is transmitted, the curriculum in which this is supposed to take place, and the economic restraints placed on both. We want also to look beyond these issues to those which touch our individual lives but are rarely mentioned: attitudes to race and to sex, and the bearing of the authoritarian structure of our society on these matters.

In providing a forum for those who are seeking to develop a revolutionary socialist critique of the present educational system, *Radical Education* is able to give expression to important educational demands and to suggest strategies, especially collective ones, for confronting problems within the classroom and within the school or college.

We aim also to service as a notice board for the numerous radical events and movements in Britain and abroad which have any connection with education.

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOMED—ARTICLES, LETTERS, REVIEWS & NOTICES

DONATIONS, HOWEVER LARGE, WILL ALSO BE WELCOMED; LEGACIES MOST GRATEFULLY RECEIVED



SUMMER 1978 10 30p



# CONTENTS

NUMBER 10

SUMMER 1978

Editorial	2
Chinese Education after Mao Ronald Bain	4
Mozambique Words Chris Searle	6
Haringey Parents and Teachers against the Cuts Carole Shaw	8
White Lion Free School	9
Gould Riposte Doug Holly	12
Forum—The Brent Initiative Ned Newitt	13
Letters	14
Coventry CPA on hidden costs of education	14
Notices	15
Face the Front Lin Layram	16
Fighting Racism the Hard Way Ken Jones	20
Concerning Juniors—social studies in the junior school Elly Marks	23
Book Reviews	24

Copy date: Issue No. 11 . . . . July 15th

Editorial Board: Jean Gould, Nigel Hewlett, Ken Jones, Lin Layram, Elizabeth McGovern, Gail Parfitt, Gail Sharman, Graham Sharp.

Advisory Group: Ron Best, Ted Benton, Martin Francis, Roger Harris, Jon Taylor, Douglas Holly, George Hudson, Liz Muir.

Published by:  
Radical Education  
86 Eleanor Road  
London E8

Typesetting by:  
Redesign (01-359 5324)

Printed by:  
Anglia County Press

Illustrations:  
Martin Davies, Ned Newitt

Help with layout:  
Special thanks to Nigel Wright, Agnes Dunlea, Roger Harris, Ned Newitt.

Distributed to bookshops by:  
Publications Distribution Co-operative  
27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1

# EDITORIAL

Since our last issue, tendencies which we have frequently drawn attention to have (with the publication of the Green Paper and the Taylor Report) emerged to dominate the educational debate.

Significant developments have occurred in many different fields. Economically, the decline in capital expenditure on education rules out any major expansion in the next few years, whatever temporary upturn in the economy there may be. This removes the material basis for educational reforms of the sort developed in the 1960s. The Green Paper states:

*'It is vital to Britain's economic recovery and standard of living that the performance of manufacturing industry is improved and that the whole range of Government policies, including education, contribute as much as possible to improving industrial performance and thereby increasing national wealth.'*

So, the constant aim of capital to increase profitability now entails a cutback in unproductive expenditure, as on education, but also a basic change in the form of welfare expenditure and organisation, which now more obviously militates against the interests of the working class.

In order to modify the role of education in this way, both a new form of political control, and a different ideological consensus on the curriculum are necessary.

Politically, what is entailed is again illustrated by the Green Paper: the DES should have a more central part in reviewing, and in altering, the curriculum. LEA's should review the

curriculum in their own areas. The DES 'would then analyse the replies as a preliminary to consultations on the outcome of the review and on the nature of any advice which the Secretaries of State might then issue on curricular matters.' At a local level, the Taylor Committee reaffirms that governing bodies should include co-opted members from industry and the trade unions, but goes further. 'There is no aspect of the school's activities from which the governing body should be excluded.' Taken together, these developments represent a strengthening of the influence both of the central bureaucracy, and of local capitalists, on the curriculum and organisation of schools. (Though it is not only locally that the capitalists' influence operates!)

## USELESS

It is perhaps not surprising that the response of the NUT leadership to this concentrates on 'professional' considerations and fails to recognise that teachers, students, and other sections of the labour movement have interests in education that are independent of, and opposed to, those of the DES and industry—whose intention is to narrow the curriculum, reduce the critical content, and step up the vocational element in schooling. When the DES, therefore, talks of the need to emphasise the links between the school and working life, the NUT will not fundamentally disagree: if that is to be the new social "consensus", then teachers should redefine their practice in its light. It will only draw the line when it considers that one interest group is trying to establish its views as dominant; thus it opposes the 'implication that the school programme should be geared specifically towards preparing pupils to enter manufacturing industry.' But it will not explicitly counterpose to the DES the idea that education should be critical of the organisation of 'industry'. Instead it takes refuge in an empty liberalism which avoids the central issues:

*'While an understanding of the workings of the economy is indeed important . . . the schools' curricular objectives need to be broader: the development of mature young adults prepared for the whole of their future lives which may well include periods of unemployment.'*

For this eventuality the union recommends education for leisure!

The Trade Union bureaucracy, similarly, has failed to develop any ideological position from which the assumptions of the Green Paper can be challenged.

The NUT while it accepts the underlying premise of the DES, finds itself in sharp disagreement with the political measures that flow from them. A resolution for the 1978 conference supported by sections of the Communist Party and others among the left states that:

*'The complex issue of curriculum development can only be undertaken by those with the necessary expertise and teaching experience.'*

This approach is inadequate in the present situation.

Professionalism, by its very nature—'give us the resources and we will do the job'—is not an ideology that can provide an alternative to the DES. Nor can it rally forces outside education, in the labour movement, to the support of radical policies. It thus renders education particularly vulnerable to political and ideological attack.

## NEW THEMES, OLD RESPONSES

The leadership of the Labour Government understands the importance of gaining a general consent for the new emphasis. Hence the whole apparatus of the Great Debate. Hence the care which is taken in the Green Paper to stress, alongside the new themes, the continuity of its proposals with the previous tradition of progressive state reform: it speaks, for instance, of education that will prepare women for a *working* life, of eliminating educational disadvantages experienced by ethnic minorities, of achieving full comprehensivisation and extending equality of educational opportunity. But the main stress is on the new themes: 'the school and working life'; the 'core curriculum', 'standards'. So far the only visible follow-up to the Green Paper has been in these areas: through the Assessment and Performance Unit, through the involvement, as in Coventry, of industrial management in consultation on the curriculum, and through the process of national curricular review.

A more radical attack comes from the right. Although it would be a mistake to identify Callaghan's views with those of Rhodes Boyson, it would be foolish to ignore the way in which the campaigns of the right around standards, indiscipline, and 'political influence' in schools have exploited popular mystification and fears.

What has been the response to these developments?

We argue that the present crisis has exposed the theoretical and political weaknesses of what have previously been the main progressive forces in education: the NUT, the Labour movement, radical educationalists.

In its caution, the NUT has much in common with other parts of the educational world. The response of 'educators' to the right wing has been anything but exemplary. Within a



fortnight of Julius Gould's attack on the Open University course 'Schooling and Capitalism', the OU announced it was reviewing the course . . . And when the NF announced its campaign against ILEA-TV, the response of educators was wary, to say the least:

*'Mr Lawrence Norcross, head of Highbury Grove Comprehensive, said that the school would not use the series, it was too controversial . . . Miss Margaret Maden, head of Islington Green Comprehensive, said it would be judged from a strictly professional point of view . . . There was a feeling that the series was cluttered (sic) with social issues.'* (TES 20 January 1978)

On this, as on other issues, concessions have been made which can only encourage further attack.

## The Left Organises

For *Radical Education* the developments described above are not unexpected. Nor is the character of the response. But that doesn't mean that for us, any more than for other sections of the left, it is easy to develop a strategy. Problems of strategy exist at several levels: classroom activity; the political control of schools; fighting the NUT's collaboration with the government's educational and political policies; uniting these various issues in the development of a socialist alternative in educational practice and programme.

To do this, it will be necessary to go beyond the purely 'commentarist' positions which we have had, in common with much of the left in education, over the last few years. The activities of Gould, of Boyson, of the NF show that they understand the importance of focusing their campaigns on particular, agitational issues, which crystallise their general social and educational programmes. We have to do likewise.

Therefore we have to understand the importance of campaigning on educational issues, among the widest possible layers. Although the left in the educational unions has in the past been overly economic in its positions, and has neglected to its cost questions of education, the opposite danger is a very real one: that, for all its healthy insistence on the politics of education, the rest of the educational left has not been able to produce any strategy of action to make concrete the politics that it wants to put forward. Here, it would be stupid to ignore the fact that the most coherent and potent influence on educational politics has been the NUT. Any socialist strategy has to show itself capable of challenging NUT professionalism.

At the same time, of course, it is important to realise that the acceptance by all trade union leaderships of the Social Contract, while making a fight in the unions essential also reduces the possibility of the union executives leading mass action at this time. Therefore it is important to participate in campaigns independent of trade union bureaucracy—which also offer possibilities for working with teachers who aren't as yet 'union-minded'. Anti-racism is one example of this; initial steps to organise against the government's educational strategy are another.

It is because we want to go 'beyond commentary', that we are sponsoring certain initiatives that are part of an organised response to the attacks on education.

The All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism (ALTARF) Rally on March 16th was the first stage in establishing a London—possibly national—campaign to win those involved in education to anti-racist activity.

The conference on the *Politics of Education*, initiated by the STA, and also supported by *Teaching London Kids* and *Radical Education*, will be an attempt not only to link educational theory to the development of a political response to the crisis, but also, hopefully, to discuss the precise issues around which such a response can be organised.

These events are signs that an organised 'non-professionalist' response to the crisis is underway. It is long delayed. *Radical Education* will be devoting much of its resources to a discussion of how the left's response can be made most effective.

## PUBLICATIONS REFERRED TO:

*Education in Schools* (1977 Green Paper)  
*Education in Schools: The Response of the NUT* (NUT 1977)  
See *Notices* for details of *Politics of Education* Conference



# CHINESE EDUCATION

In *Radical Education 5* Pat Denton wrote an article on education in China. Ronald Bain takes up some of the issues raised in this earlier article and suggests that the left may have been viewing China's education system too uncritically.

In the past year, since the dramatic arrest and denunciation of those highly visible protagonists of Mao's revolutionary line now widely referred to as "the gang of four", the Chinese press has carried daily calls to raise technical and scientific standards in education and research, for respect for teachers, for discipline to replace criticism and "rebellion", and for expertise to balance redness. Foreign "bourgeois experts" and "academic authorities" must be delighted to see China back in the fold with examinations to select the privileged few who attend tertiary schools (some 300,000 or at best 700,000 in a population of some 800 million), and admissions that the experiments of the past 10 years have failed to produce the necessary high standards to challenge the industrial achievements of capitalism.

Readers of *Radical Education*, on the other hand, must be confused by the sharp reversal of claims made both by Chinese periodicals like *Peking Review* and by foreign admirers of China. The manner in which the present reversal of policy is being conducted, reminiscent of reversals of educational policies in the USSR in the early thirties, is all too likely to produce cynicism rather than strengthen socialist understanding. One of the reasons for this is the low level of marxist analysis of education as a process and its relation to other structures in society. Another is the long-standing habit on the left of looking for examples of successful socialist practice and exaggerating the successes of first the USSR and more recently, China.

Many observers of Chinese education since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966-69, on a 12-25 day tour of three to four cities and their nearby rural communes, have been overwhelmed by the unfamiliar friendliness and enthusiasm of those they met. Lacking both a knowledge of Chinese cultural history and of more recent events in China, they have been impressed by the attempts to combine education with productive labour, with the claims to have combined theory and practice more closely in the school curricula, and with such new institutions as the 21 July worker colleges and May 7th cadre schools. Not surprisingly, radical students and teachers have responded positively to the slogans of the Cultural Revolution. The attacks on academic schools divorced from the realities of working class and particularly peasant life, on examinations and other forms of selection which gave preference to those from bookish homes and "middle class" families, found echoes in the struggles which the left has been conducting throughout the capitalist world over decades. The move to make a work break between school and college and thus allow young people to acquire that maturity and steadfastness of purpose to fully benefit from tertiary schooling also has many adherents in Britain, especially among tertiary teachers who have taught



"mature" students with work experience. What such sympathisers too often did not realise (and were not informed of) was the superficial nature of the changes which were actually made (though they were usually labelled as "experimental") and the resistance to them of wide sections of Chinese society. They were unaware that, because of the peculiar nature of the political system, opposition was combined with outward conformity and even expression of enthusiasm for them. Those foreigners who did write critically were often labelled and ignored. Yet the evidence was there in the Chinese press for those with patience and opportunity to ferret it out. (e.g. in the translations made available by the US Consulate General in Hong Kong.)

## TRANSITION PERIOD

Chinese experience has, nevertheless, been and will continue to be of value to radical educators. I can point up problems and reveal aspects of problems we might otherwise not encounter. Perhaps first it helps show us that the theory of socialist education is, unfortunately, not so simple as Pat Denton (*Radical Education* No. 5 page 24) suggests. He ignores the difference between short-term and long-term considerations and the transition period between capitalism and socialism/communism. The problem is to find an acceptable form of schooling (and other educational agencies) which will solve immediate problems (in China today the production of skilled personnel for industrialisation and the mechanisation of agriculture) while at the same time contributing to the closing of what the Chinese call the "three big differences" (between



city and country; industry and agriculture and between mental and manual labour). Introduced in a China which is highly class and status conscious and where schooling, as in capitalist countries, is seen in social mobility terms, such an education must yet be able to change attitudes. Movement towards communism would also require not simply that cadres take part in manual labour. That is relatively easy. It requires that ordinary workers take on the functions of managing society which is much more difficult. This would require widespread changes of attitude and the acquisition of skills and information which is currently withheld from people on various pretexts. Moreover, it is not a question of training people in American-style business schools which now apparently find favour in the USSR. These presuppose a hierarchical and authoritarian management structure which is incompatible with participatory democracy or workers'

# AFTER MAO . . .

control. Both the structure of management must be changed and workers must be trained in the process of management. Current attacks on 'disruption of factories' and 'the abandonment of rules' suggest that attempts may have been made to initiate this in some factories, though more probably struggles were over wages and typically trade union issues.

The present leaders, preoccupied with economic growth and the training of scientific and technical personnel, are reverting to the well-trodden path of selecting students for tertiary schools direct from secondary school by academic examinations. At the same time they seem to be encouraging such alternative forms of training as the 21st July workers' colleges and spare time schooling. Under the slogan of *jitiaotui zoulu* (walking on several legs) they are, albeit unwittingly, returning to the class-diversive "2-track" path so roundly condemned in the Cultural Revolution. It would require giving preference to the part-time and spare-time schools and gradual merging of them with the full-time system to bring about any fundamental changes in the skill and class differences and these measures would have to be supported by fundamental changes in the managerial-governmental system of society far beyond anything which has been discussed in the Chinese media so far.



## SELECTIVE LADDER

In the field of mass schooling and the long-proclaimed intention to reduce the period of schooling finally seems to have been accomplished. But instead of working out a basic citizen-training which would form a platform on which specialised work study could be built the present government seems content to return to the model of selective ladder to the university. The realities of the socio-economic situation will

ensure that city youth will still have the edge on those from the rural areas, and we again see specialised selective secondary schools for "the gifted" (condemned during the Cultural Revolution as "little treasure pagodas"). Unfortunately there is little evidence that such a system, combined with socialization in family- and party-piety leads many to demand the alternatives too lightly sketched during the Cultural Revolution. Reversion to minimum participation in cleaning the classrooms, mending furniture, harvesting, or occasional workshop practice, and to lessons given by Party functionaries and veteran workers on respect for the Party and its history of struggle on behalf of the masses will neither raise the vision of genuine workers' control nor encourage the critical thought required to achieve it. In some it will promote the ambition to be a cadre "serving the people" (cf. Dai Hsiao-ai in Bennett & Montaperto's *Red Guard*), but in the majority it will probably only promote passivity and acceptance akin to that inculcated by education elsewhere.

In conclusion, the above criticisms must be seen against the tremendous strides that education in China has made since Liberation in 1949. Literacy has been brought to many millions of adults. Peasant children have gradually been provided with schooling, mainly through the development of flexible, locally controlled forms which have adapted to the needs of peasant life where the labour of children is still needed by the family. Outside the school a network of study groups has grown up in the factories and offices where in addition to Party directives and policy statements in the *People's Daily* people have read such marxist classics as Engels' *Anti-Duhring* and Marx's writings on the Paris Commune. In the coming struggle to further raise standards there will be many lessons to be learnt, but only if we apply our minds critically to a more detailed study of Chinese education than most commentators have done so far.

## RONALD BAIN

### Further Study:

Articles in *Peking Review* and *China Reconstructs*, published in Peking; *Selections from the PRC press* and other publications of the US Consulate-General, Hong Kong; T H Chen, *The Maoist Educational Revolution* (with documents), Praeger, 1974; R F Price, *Marx and Education in Russia and China*, Croom Helm, 1977.





Over these last two weeks preceding the First of May known here in Mozambique as the International Day of the Worker—our school has really burst into life. At a meeting of Form Teachers, Form Representatives and the School Commission, we decided to mobilize the school fully for May Day. The entire school must be cleaned so it shone, painted and decorated, and all the pupils were to organise cultural activities—poetry, drama, songs and dances—on the theme of international solidarity with all workers, and the oppressed and struggling people of the world. The fifth class were given Zimbabwe as their subject, the sixth South Africa and Namibia, the seventh East Timor, the eighth Brazil and Chile and the ninth Europe and North America. On the last day before May Day, we would organise a giant 'espectaculo', and each form (there are over twenty of them) must perform for ten minutes on their particular theme.

Since that meeting, an infectious sense of purpose has carried through the school. At any time of day, one or two classrooms would be ringing with the new Mozambican version of The International, the yards and outbuildings of the school be busy with students and teachers with hoes, brooms and paintbrushes. New slogans and murals are appearing daily on the walls of the school and the classrooms: 'Workers of the World, Unite!', 'Viva the First of May' and 'Only by being organised can we defeat reaction!' As I go in to teach form 9B, two students with paintbrushes ask permission to finish a giant slogan they are painting right across the side wall of their classroom—'Viva a Disciplina Revolucionaria!'

We were exploited by the imperialists  
We were maltreated during the reign of the bosses,  
Today we struggle to achieve freedom  
Of our oppressed class  
Of our class of workers.

We will conquer Imperialism  
We will conquer oppression  
We will conquer Imperialism, our great enemy.

Our sole decision is to struggle until we win  
Our decision is to destroy exploitation,  
To consolidate total freedom  
Of our oppressed class,  
Of our class of workers.

### REVOLUTIONARY POEMS

We study The International in English, and despite its archaisms, the students understand the words and appreciate their force. I hear them singing phrases from it all over the school. Helena, born in Portugal, but a militant enthusiast of Frelimo's revolution, brings this short poem in Portuguese:

#### WORK

While there are  
men  
with chains of oppression,  
While there are  
workers  
who need liberty  
And are machines  
of Imperialism,  
We  
The free workers  
Do not have total liberty.

# MOZAMBIQUE

Chris Searle, who used to work in Stepney, is now teaching in Namula Province in the north of Mozambique. He sent us this report of the atmosphere in his school as preparations for May 1st were made, to give us some idea of the mobilization and organisation in the secondary schools there.

# WORDS

This message is clearly beginning to go to the hearts and heads of the students. My own form has been busy painting large portraits of Lenin, Mao, Che and Eduardo Mondlane, and changing the theme of the Form Newsboard from the emancipation of women to solidarity with the world's workers. And to give meaning to the role of the New School in Mozambique, a huge paper banner in English is painted and hung across the back wall, translating the words of order: 'Let us make the entire country a school where everybody learns and everybody teaches!'

The steel columns that support the central corridor of the school are being painted the colours of the Mozambican flag, and the same paint is being used to paint giant portraits of Marx, Lenin, Engels and Che and a massive emblem of a crossed hammer and spade, which is hung from the wall of the gymnasium. The students are beginning to organise themselves for the cultural activities. Poems of solidarity with workers of all the world are passed to the teachers or pinned directly to the Form Newsboards. I find my own class in a corner of the gymnasium practising Joe Hill songs they are going to sing at the 'espectaculo'. When I go to teach form 9C, they are practising a song with four harmonies, that their Form Representative has written for May Day. Could they practise it one more time, they ask? They sing it beautifully, the different pitches of their voices weaving in and out of each other.

The activity is not confined to the students and teachers. Comrade Beatriz, one of the secretaries and a student of the night class, brings in a poem she has written in English about Zimbabwe:

The struggle in Zimbabwe  
Led by ZIPA,  
Is to fight the enemy—  
Ian Smith and his friends.  
Supported by Imperialism  
And by colonialism,  
Enemies of liberation  
And of Revolution.

Smith, one day you'll die,  
You think you can finish people,  
You forget that the more you massacre and murder,  
The more you create the People's courage.

On the morning of 30th April, all the teachers, students, secretaries and other functionaries of the school are present in the giant gymnasium. A stage has been erected from fifty desks covered by a canvas sheet, and a loud speaker system borrowed from the FPIM (People's Forces for the Liberation of Mozambique). A 'jury' has been appointed from amongst the students, teachers and functionaries, to judge the cultural contributions from each form. Behind the stage are the huge portraits of Marx, Engels and Lenin, with the Mozambican national emblem towering over the top and Frelimo flags fluttering around the sides of the stage.

Each form presents its act, after an initial booming version of The International which nearly lifts off the roof. By the end of the 'espectaculo', which lasts four hours, almost all the students and teachers of the school have participated. Many of the songs are also simultaneously danced, the students march on and off the stage singing Frelimo songs, and the poems—especially written for the occasion, and forming solidarity with people in all corners of the earth—are declaimed with enormous force, passion and body movement. A seventh year form appear, singing songs and saying poems in solidarity with the struggle of the people of East Timor, like Mozambique an ex-colony of Portugal, with separate letters F-R-E-T-L-I-N tied around their necks and covering their bodies. Some forms present short theatrical sketches—the Coup in Chile, the Soweto resistance, the decadence of drug addiction among the American youth. Other students declaim speeches, explaining the significance of the First of May, and the historical struggle of the Chicago workers in May 1886.

### SPONTANEITY

My own form sings 'I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night', and after the third verse, hum the tune softly while Ines comes to the microphone and speaks her poem in ardent Portuguese over the tune. She has learnt it by heart:

#### I, THE WORKER

My work begins at dawn  
When there is neither moon nor sun.  
I leave my mat, my blanket and my hut,  
And on foot, I begin my work.

I take the hard iron to strike,  
I take my hoe and plough the earth  
Under the sun—  
All hear me, and they come.

After four hours of work on the machamba\*  
And the sun striking my back,  
The soft-coated exploiter calls me a thief—  
But I know that I am innocent.

I am spurned by him. To him  
I do not feel the cold in the winter  
Nor hot in the sun of the summer—  
I am only a work-hand.

PHOTO: LARRY HERMAN



There is neither man nor unseen creature  
Who can deter the advance of the worker!  
The organised worker is indestructible,  
There is no-one who can stop me.

\*Machamba—cultivated plot of land

After a stirring version of 'The Preacher and the Slave', with the rest of the school joining in on the chorus and accentuating the English rhymes 'PIE in the SKY when you DIE', Gloria comes forward from the group and says her poem, which she has again learned by heart:

#### FIRST OF MAY

Worker of Mozambique,  
You, who during centuries  
Lived through the Portuguese humiliation,  
Arise, for now is the time

Already, many centuries have passed  
When the worker lived as a poor man,  
And had his dignity  
Torn from him.

Worker of the world!  
You who raise up with force  
Your beloved country—  
It is on you she depends  
To make this colonial yoke fall.

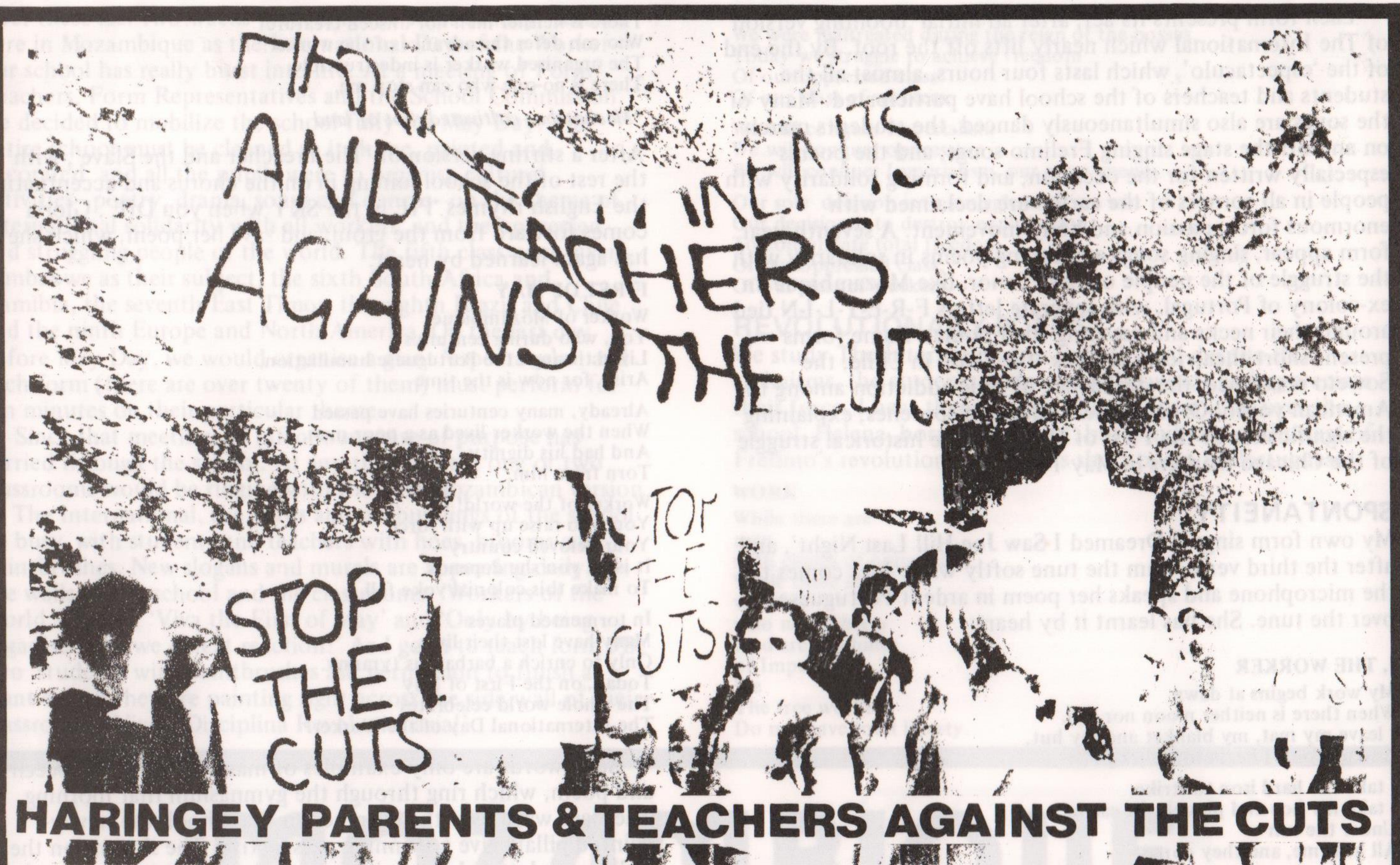
In tormented places  
Many have lost their lives,  
Only to enrich a barbarous tyranny.  
Today, on the First of May  
The whole world celebrates  
The International Day of the Worker!

Such words are only examples of many, in song, in speech and poem, which ring through the gymnasium that morning. The flags wave over the entrance to the school, the newly-painted pillars give a stunning perspective. The slogans on the walls, each letter drawn with geometrical precision using ruler, compass and set-square, gleam with red, green and black paint. I have scarcely participated in any school event of so much joy, mass organisation and spontaneity—and this is only a prelude to the next day, the First of May, when the whole of the city will ring with the slogan:

Viva a luta dos trabalhadores do Mundo!

CHRIS SEARLE





## HARINGEY PARENTS & TEACHERS AGAINST THE CUTS

*The story so far...*

During the spring term of 1977, parents, teachers and friends came together in Haringey to show their dissatisfaction with the Education department's proposed cuts. Committed to the improvement of education in general and the fight against teacher redundancy in particular, they formed the Action Group, Haringey Parents and Teachers Against the Education Cuts.

After Easter 1977 as information percolated through the various channels, (as always by the longest most devious routes) about "voluntary" transfers from primary schools; and rumours began about amalgamation and closure in the foreseeable future of primary and secondary schools, people began understandably, to get anxious. The number of job losses involved at a time of critical unemployment was enough in itself to activate the least militant trade unionist.

Action was stepped up when the threats anticipated by the rumours materialised. Also a document—a Green Paper entitled *School Provision in Haringey in the 1980's and Beyond* forecast a number of planned cuts in Education, and confirmed peoples' worst fears. The report indicated that as many as 15 (and possibly more) schools were likely to be axed! People rallied, and the campaign against the cuts strengthened.

Parents and teachers, not always from established PTA's, independently and jointly, organised public meetings in affected schools, (some with councillors and officers from the Education Department, including the Chief Education Officer Mr Groves) to gather the facts and opinions. The meetings spontaneously elected Action Committees to liaise with other groups and report back; they resolved to oppose all education cuts where the quality of teaching was effected, where parental choice took a back seat and where the children would be shuffled about merely to balance the books. (The overwhelming feeling at the meetings was that the main factor determining the cuts was an economic one.)

By July 1977 when the Education Department was busy picking the "voluntary" transfers, and the Chairman of the Council was refusing to comment on the Green Paper because she had no opinion of it yet—parents and teachers were angry enough to march to the Civic Centre (400 of them) to present the council with a petition of 1000 signatures protesting against the cuts.

Though some transfers were made, unhappily only days before the summer holiday, many schools were "given back" one or more of the possible transfers, and the campaign gathered impetus. Information Bulletins were produced, working parties set up to test the validity of the Chief Education Officer's figures on population, and an elaborate advertising campaign was launched, and supported throughout the summer.

Its worth detailing the types of advertising because it was so impressive. Posters, stickers, T-shirts and leaflets were distributed and a market stall was set up to keep people in touch with what was happening. A Rally and Council Deputation were organised and well supported during the following September and it became clear that many organisations and unions within the Borough also backed the campaign and were determined to see the Green Paper scrapped.

Next the Education Sub-Committee of Haringey Council invited each of the protest groups to submit reports stating why they wished to reject the Green Paper, submissions were in by the end of October 1977.

There then followed a discussion with the Sub-Committee. Again each group, if they knew they were allowed to speak, (not all groups were informed) applied. The hearings took place during two separate evenings. About twenty groups came forward. During the group interviews, individuals were asked certain controversial questions regarding their opinion of the single sexed schools under threat of closure in the Green Paper. (Groups had taken exception to this proposal precisely because of the Asian community's preference for single-sexed schools.)

In retrospect the sub-committee was seen as making a nod in the direction of consultation, but no real negotiation took place. Rather it seemed the council were bent on finding out who the groups represented.

Continued militancy and supportive local press coverage followed. By Christmas it was leaked out quietly that the Green Paper had been dropped. Officially an announcement came confirming this in January.

It's been mooted that Haringey heads nevertheless have been invited to a meeting about further proposed cuts and closures. The matter won't rest here; but Haringey Parents and Teachers Against the Cuts are already continuing the struggle.

# WHITE LION FREE SCHOOL

In this article an adult worker from White Lion Street Free School gives a challenging account of an alternative educational practice which refuses to prop up the present state system.

The White Lion Free School is a non fee-paying, all-age, community school situated in a depressed area of Islington. Its intake is limited to those children who live within half a mile of the school. Workers, children and parents are therefore able to keep in close touch with each other. At present there are 47 children on our register, including the 8 under-fives who attend our playgroup.

There are 8 full-time and 2 part-time adult workers who share, with the childrens help, all the tasks necessary to the running of the school. Our ratio of adult workers to children is no greater than that in the maintained system, whose servicing requires large numbers of administrative and ancillary workers, nor are we more expensive per child.

We are a registered independent school, though for over 5 years we have tried to change this invidious, but legally necessary, status by campaigning for ILEA support. At present we are funded mainly by trusts and foundations, though Islington Council give substantial support to our playgroup and community work (it is prevented by the London Government Act from supporting educational activities). Private donations, while fairly insignificant as a proportion of our income, testify by their number to the interest the Free School continues to arouse.

### APING THEIR "BETTERS"

While we support the comprehensive idea against attacks from proponents of any form of selective schooling, we believe that the Free School demonstrates a constructive way of solving

the problems that very obviously beset the maintained school system. These problems have two main causes: firstly, because the rate of government and local authority spending, though great, was and is not enough to transform or replace existing schools, striking inequalities persist within the state sector; secondly, and more importantly, the model this investment is meant to produce is already outmoded—thus the 'good' comprehensive is usually the one that holds most closely to grammar school 'standards', concerning itself with exam results although the resulting diversion of school resources to favour the academically 'able' to the detriment of the majority of its pupils. Such tendencies have been encouraged by the official attitudes expressed during the 'Great Debate' with their emphasis on raising standards and implied hostility to progressive ideas like mixed-ability teaching.

Just as a return to various forms of streaming within schools is being sanctioned, so also those children who do not fit in comfortably suffer another kind of streaming, being placed, when not actually truanting, in special truancy units, or 'sanctuaries', or 'sin bins', or made to undergo 'intermediate treatment' (their teachers here may well be on a higher scale of payment than their former classroom teachers).

Progressive educational ideas, often and maliciously attacked as the cause of our educational problems, and scarcely a reality except in parts of the primary school sector, can make little impression in a 'new' system where old authoritarian organisational ideas persist. There is a fundamental contradiction between progressive theory and the



structure of the institutions in which it is supposed to be practised.

### DE-PROFESSIONALISED EDUCATION

At the Free School we have tried to follow the logic of progressive thinking. We have, as far as possible, de-professionalised education, by presenting an alternative organisational model:

- the adults are not primarily teachers but work as cooks, cleaners, accountants, secretaries, maintenance people etc
- we have tried to draw on the skills of our neighbourhood and of other interested people. We have therefore been able to put those who want to learn in contact with competent (not 'qualified') people with a skill to teach
- we have involved parents in the school—two of our paid workers are parents of children at the school, others use our facilities
- we have broken down the divisions of the traditional school day and year by running evening and holiday activities
- we are a non-hierarchical, co-operative, society. Decisions affecting the school are taken at weekly meetings at which children have an equal voice, and at ad hoc meetings which anyone may call.

The sharing of jobs and of responsibility means that adults learn new skills too. A working alternative to traditional forms of organisation is created, teacher and pupil roles break down, and the belief that knowledge is an entity that the one passes to the other is thus challenged.

We believe that children want to learn and in the ways described above we provide an environment where children can make real choices and see their decisions having a real effect on their lives.

It is a natural consequence that we don't have compulsory learning, though by an allocation system whereby adults are responsible for a particular group of children, each child's progress is noted and s/he is encouraged to improve basic skills and pursue interests. Similarly, we don't believe in punishments. In general problems are resolved by discussion, often involving parents. The demands of an organisation like the Free School, which stresses inter-dependence, inevitably requires strenuous self-discipline.

Our small size does not prevent us from providing a wide range of activities. We are distrustful of subject specialisation, but do offer access to many different areas of knowledge. We have facilities for art, crafts (including pottery), music, computer studies, photography, plus the full range of facilities provided free by our surrounding borough and city.

We believe, with the supporters of the large school that certain expensive resources must be centralised, but we dispute the necessity of forming an enormous, structured, agglomeration of pupils around these resources, and the efficiency of so doing, since we are sure that our children have greater access individually than all but those who are regarded as academically able in the maintained school.

Despite a climate of opinion very unfavourable to radical innovation, many teachers struggle to implement such ideas as pupil participation, mixed-ability teaching, the need for a more relevant curriculum. But, although much has been done to change the content of schoolwork the context remains the same—the school hierarchy with the prestige attached to the job which involves least teaching, the graduated wage structure, specialisation around academic subjects, the restrictive emphasis on professionalism and qualifications, and the unregarded ancillary workers who keep everything running smoothly.

The radical teacher must work very hard to prevent the inculcation of the values that the structure s/he works in embodies, especially when his/her position in the hierarchy is so easily detected by the pupils.

### THE EDUCATION CUTS

Opposition to the education cuts, which have forced teachers to defend the standards of their schools, and their own living, has highlighted the quasi-industrial aspect of the teacher's position. However, the industrial analogy, though important at

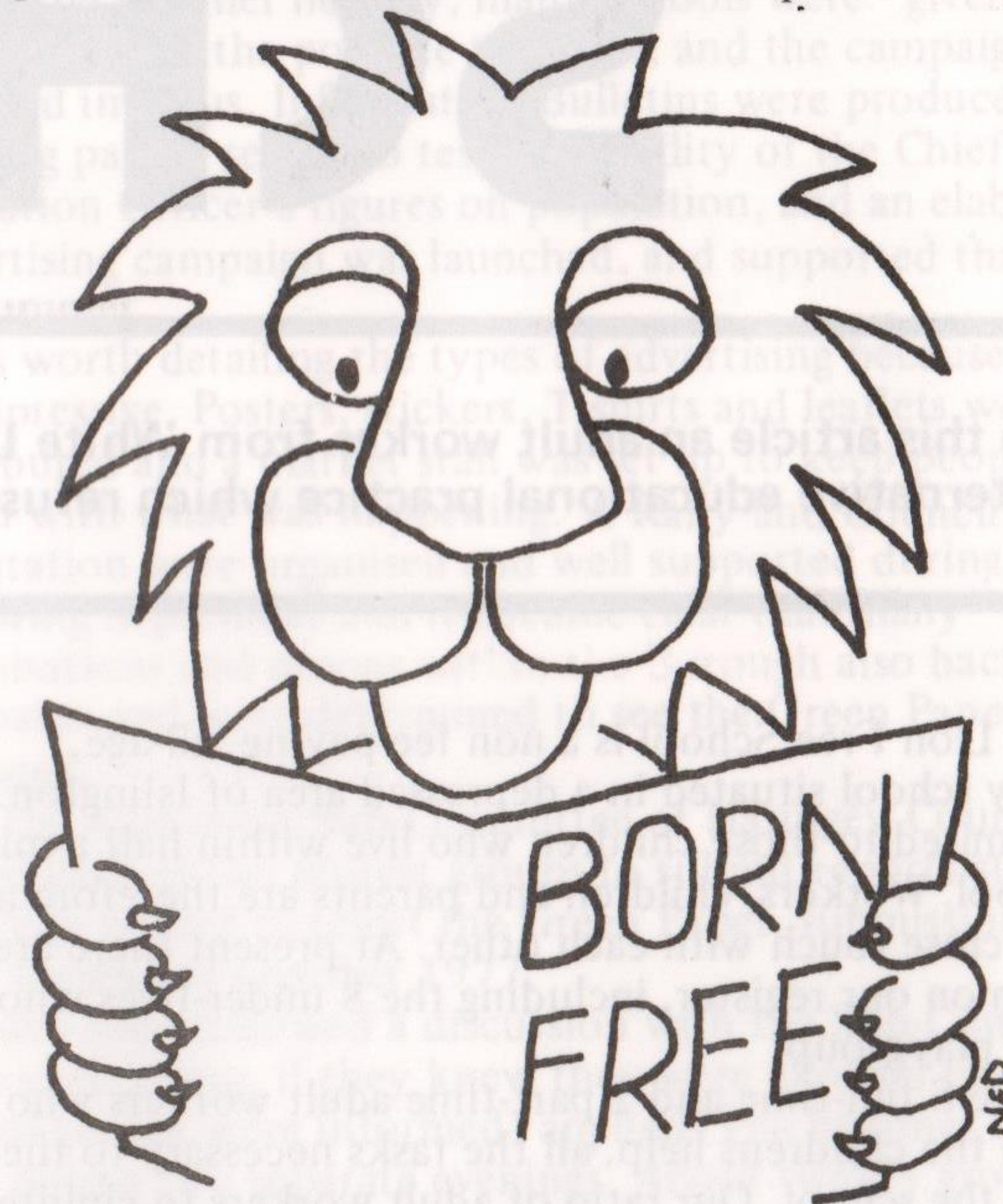
a time of financial crisis, can stifle creative thinking. Certainly, some of the bosses can be readily identified, but who are the workers in the schools, who or what is the raw material, and what is the product?

It is to the advantage of government departments and education authorities that teachers should have an uncomplicated view of their position in relation to their employer. A hierarchy develops which comes to have an interest in maintaining an antagonistic but well-regulated relationship with authority.

The press coverage of our efforts to gain the support of the ILEA, by preferring to see the story in the colourful terms of a David and Goliath struggle, ensured our survival until next April, but dealt scarcely at all with our innovative practices or with the role of the controlling Labour Group in the Authority who, throughout, viewed us as a threat to their system, and a reproach to its staff. Consequently, strong local pressure on our behalf from ILEA institutions, social service departments, and elected representatives, was ignored, and in effect, we were asked to cease being a school and become instead a truancy or intermediate treatment centre, with our children nominally (and dishonestly) on the register of local ILEA schools, so that by participating in the process of 'problem children' we would fit snugly into the scheme of things. However, the final vote on the issue was close, being only 19 to 17 against. We feel that opinions at County Hall are changing and that arguments for our case will finally prevail. The problem is to survive until 1979.

We feel that we have a common cause with radical teachers and other workers in schools, but partly through our own fault we have not made as many contacts as we should perhaps have done with them. For the sake of our own future, this is an omission that must be dealt with.

We still hold open evenings on Tuesdays from 7 to 9pm and have publications which can be sent on request.



### A FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

**Q1. What is the situation White Lion Free School finds itself in now as regards economic and political support?**

A1. Following the publicity last May and June, we raised enough money to fund us until April 1978. At the moment we are working very hard to get another £20,000 from trusts and charities—so far we've been promised £4000. This is on top of the money Islington Council contributes towards funding our playgroup and community work, (boroughs in the ILEA are not able to support educational activities).

**Q2. What is the attitude of Islington Council to the school?**

A2. It's very sympathetic and is extremely willing to help us to continue to function; so we hope there will be a possibility of getting part of the central government fund recently made available for regenerating decaying inner city areas. A large proportion of it is to be distributed by Islington and Hackney Councils in partnership. It's a sign of the ILEA's remoteness

that it can ignore the fact that a local council is one of the strongest supporters of a project like ours.

**Q3. What form does your annual application of funds to the ILEA take?**

A3. We operate at about the same cost as schools in the maintained system. Therefore, in applying for support for educational activities, we base our estimates on ILEA's own published figures of per capita expenditure—these figures are for the complete service and not merely the price of teachers (at the Free School we share all ancillary and administrative tasks).

**Q4. Why do you want to become a part of ILEA?**

A4. Firstly we feel that our influence will be greater if we are in the system. Although we co-operate very closely with the local ILEA institutions, ignorant GLC councillors will continue to stress our 'separateness' until some sort of formal link is established.

Secondly, our determination in this direction reflects our belief that our innovations are relevant to teachers and children coping with the problems in urban schools. We don't see a contradiction between central funding and local control, nor are we advocating an alternative network of schools, (rather the possibility of a network of alternative schools), responsible to their local community but funded by the LEA.

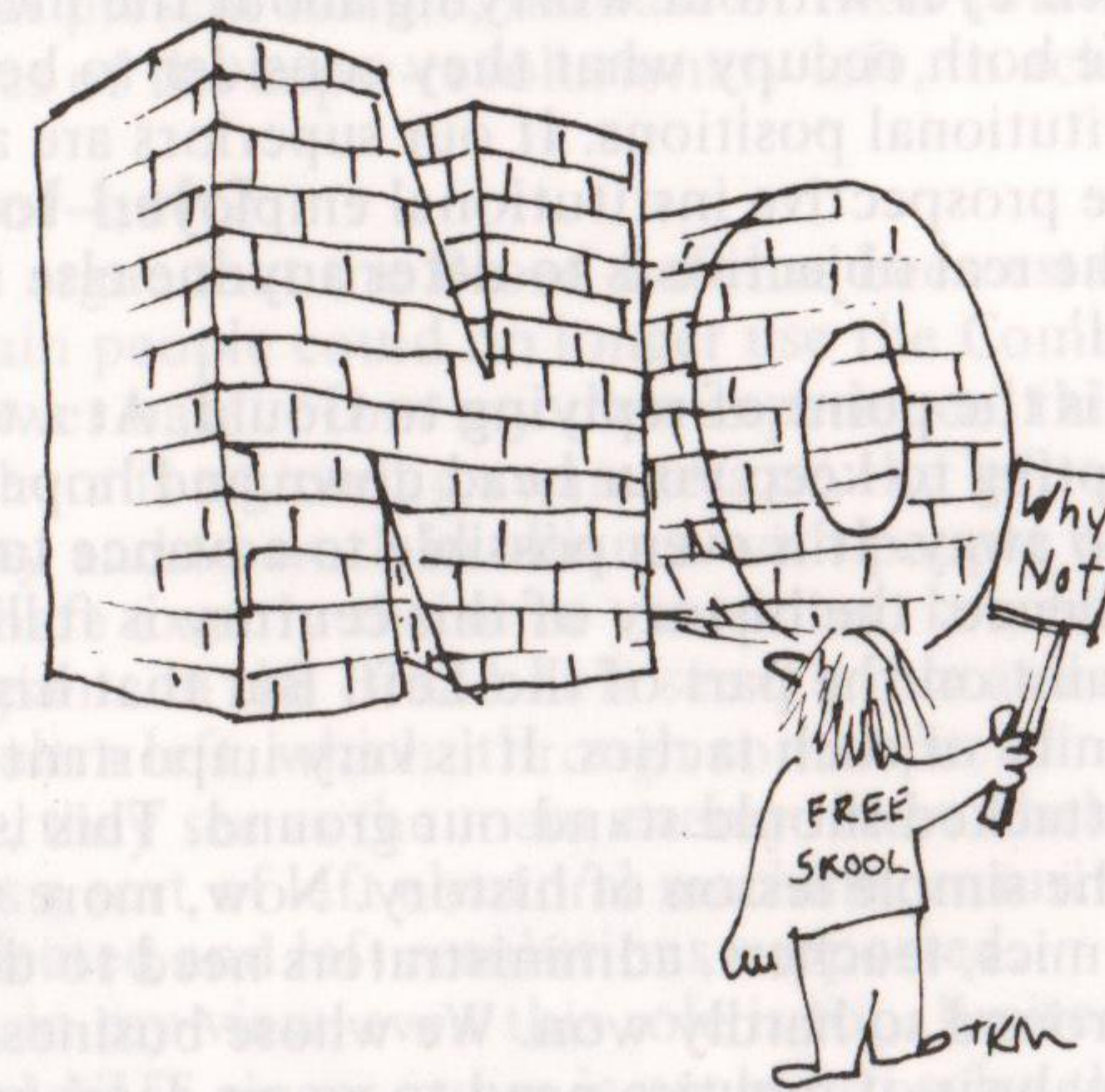
Thirdly, ILEA funding would help to establish in a formal way the fact that we have a common cause with radical teachers.

Fourthly, we think it vital for everyone concerned with the welfare of children that the principle of variety of provision be established. Even now, following the presentation of Peter Newsam's paper on 'Disruptive Children' to the Education Sub-Committee in January, the ILEA is planning to extend its practice of labelling and 'treating' inseparable units those who by their behaviour are not conforming to the demands of our present type of school.

Finally we can't survive indefinitely on charitable money. If there is no prospect of ILEA support our 'angels' will certainly stop backing us.

**Q5. What sort of excuses have the ILEA made for not supporting the school?**

A5. This is a difficult question to answer. Much depends on the prejudices and ignorance about the school and its functions, of the members of the Authority. (Very few have ever visited us!) For instance, the Education Officer in his report to the Committee made several constructive suggestions as to ways of supporting us. However his proposals were rejected because of excessive adherence to previously laid down but inappropriate policy. In particular it's ILEA policy not to support independent schools. Now it is by reference to this 'ruling' that our applications are rejected.



**Q6. Why do you consider this policy inappropriate?**

A6. Well, our status as an independent school is a legal necessity if we are to continue providing full-time education. But the crucial thing about us is that we are non-fee paying and therefore fundamentally different from conventional independent schools. We would have thus expected the ILEA to make exceptions of our type of school.

**Q7. Would your application have succeeded if you'd agreed to being called an intermediate treatment centre instead of a school?**

A7. It's very likely that it would have been accepted, yes. In fact this was proposed by the Authority. There was even some movement from the 'six principles' which govern grants to voluntary agencies such as intermediate treatment centres. Significantly though there was no compromise over the first of these principles which states that the aim should be 'to get children back to school as soon as possible'. We were not prepared to accept the terms. This is contrary to our aim of being an alternative within the system.

**Q8. Have relations between the ILEA and White Lion Free School improved over the years?**

A8. Formerly our applications with the ILEA have been dealt with secretly by the Education Sub-Committee. Last June the issue was brought to the full Education Committee and vote support is increasing. We will of course continue to press ILEA, but owing to local elections this year it's unlikely that any further application would be dealt with before April 1979.

**Q9. What about the attitude of the Tories if ILEA came under their control?**

A9. We got some unsolicited support from the Tory side. We had the feeling that those few who were interested felt that the Free School "worked", viewing it as a place which was successful with "difficult" children. If the Conservatives gain control of ILEA this May they will of course look at us from a rather different point of view, and, no doubt, take into account the political implications of our methods.

**Q10. Has the economic crisis in general affected the everyday running of the school?**

A10. Despite the ever continuing prospect of running out of money, we insist on maintaining our "service". There is no attempt to make funds last longer by cutting down on what we provide.

**Q11. It must be quite a hassle having to make application for funds each year.**

A11. Workers at the school have to spend a good deal of free time writing begging letters to charities, and keeping up the pressure on ILEA. Naturally we're frustrated at this waste of energy, and at the disruptive and demoralising effect that insecurity has on children, adults and parents.

**Q12. In your article you mention liaising with left teachers in the State system. How are you going about this?**

A12. Although we have extensive contacts with people involved in education, and although workers personally take up a radical position, there is little formal contact between the school and left teachers groups. There are two main reasons for this:

- The necessities of survival continue to absorb most of our surplus energy;
- Until recently the abnormal lowness of our pay made union involvement a low priority.

We are now paid more respectably and are on the point of joining a section of the TGWU. We can then discuss links with the local Trades Council and through it our NUT counterparts.

Members of the school have given support to many campaigns—eg. workers and children are going to support the ALTARF rally on March 16. It is important that, by greater contact, we should be able to dispel misconceptions that may cause left wing teachers in schools to dismiss us. As I've already said, our aims are not Utopian, nor will the official acceptance of some of our ideas lead to a spread of trendy little centres for children of middle class parents—they already do very nicely out of the existing system.





# ET TU JULIUS ?

The Institute for the Study of Conflict is an ultra right wing front organisation which has links with the National Association for Freedom, the police and the military. In their pamphlet on education which has come to be known as the Gould report, *Radical Education* was attacked.

Though the very thought of 'replying' to Julius Gould's reference to me in the so-called *Gould Report* ('The attack on higher education') is far from congenial—such effusions usually neither intend nor deserve serious response—the fact that the article he refers to appeared in *Radical Education* (No 5, Winter 1976), prompted me to set the record straight. There are certain principles at stake which ought not to go by default, certain—probably deliberate—confusions being perpetrated in Gould's commentary on the debate which took place between Gabriel Chanan and myself.

The first point to notice is that Gould is concerned, at the cost of no matter what violence to the evidence, to prove the existence of some monolithic dogmatism called by him 'radicalism' (or, sometimes, 'Marxism'). For this purpose Gabriel is put forward as the 'moderate' contestant while I am the hard-line dogmatist. No attempt is made to report the actual grounds of the argument, which was an attempt to discover the nature of intellectual liberation via curriculum, for Gould is not interested in critical analysis or even principled polemic but, quite simply, in witch-hunting. The critical difference between Gabriel Chanan and myself in *Radical Education* is not, as Gould implies, that one of us is prepared to be less 'radical' than the other. We are both committed to the idea that education in schools is in need of radical analysis and transformation. Gabriel argues strongly for 'prescription', in the sense of laying down a groundwork of socially powerful knowledge. He is *not* urging a mystic power in the 'forms of knowledge' described by bourgeois philosophers, to which young people are to defer. In appearing to champion Gabriel, Gould is actually treating his serious arguments with as much contempt as he treats mine in

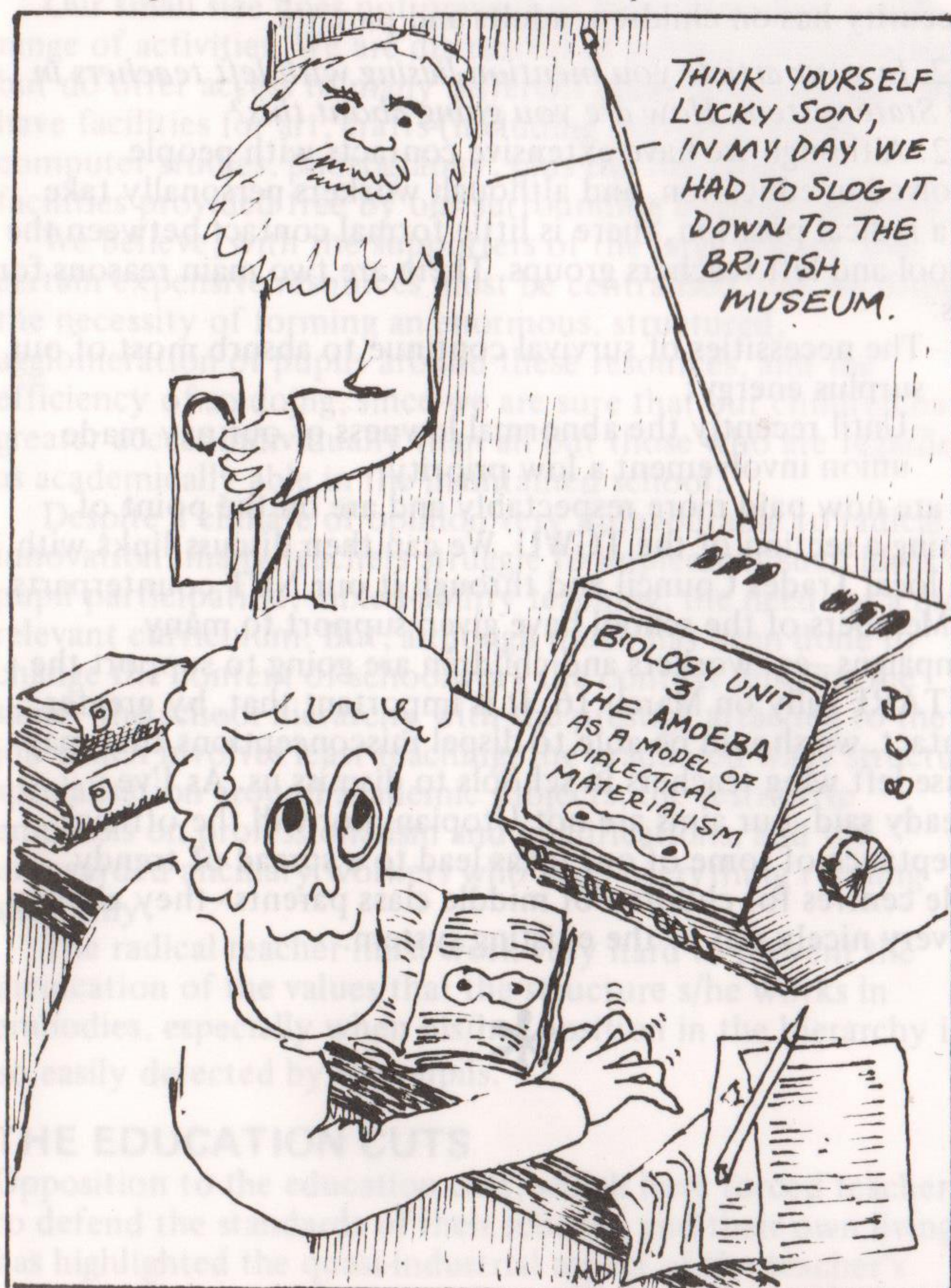
characterising them as 'relativising dogmatism'. In fact Gould has no interest in the arguments of either of us—he merely wants to find 'extremists' and the 'moderates' alongside which to measure them.

by Mr. Searle—even though he enjoys a platform in *New Education*—but not lack support in the wider world of education. I am witness Mr. Doug Holly (of the University of Leicester Institute of Education in *Radical Education* 5, Winter 1976). He "goes to town" in a paper by another educationist, Gabriel Chanan, on "The Anatomy of Learning". In that paper Chanan had said some kindly words about the "prescriptive" role of the teacher in shaping the curriculum. After the conventional references to "organised education" as an "instrument of domination" and praise of Paulo Freire's advocacy of "a dialogical approach" as distinct from "mystical 'disciplines'", Holly comments on the view held by Chanan, that "traditional knowledge must be subject to reevaluation and reinterpretation by teacher and pupil together".

The second, much more important thing to notice is that names are being named and targets pinpointed for even less scrupulous 'counter-attackers' of the overtly political right. It is not that compilers of this spurious 'report' and their financial backers are really concerned to take sides in arguments about science or social work or education. Intellectual discrimination was never a favourite pastime of reactionaries. The real point is to spotlight plausible heretics and subject them to a withering fire whose intensity can make up for its imprecision. It wouldn't matter for this purpose if anyone were to get Gabriel and I the wrong way round—confuse the extremist with the moderate. After all, we both contributed to something called *Radical Education*, damnation enough in their eyes without worrying about the niceties of argument. We both occupy what they consider to be strategic institutional positions. If our superiors are alerted—or perhaps some prospective institutional employer—so much the better, but the real objective is to deter anyone else from being 'radical'.

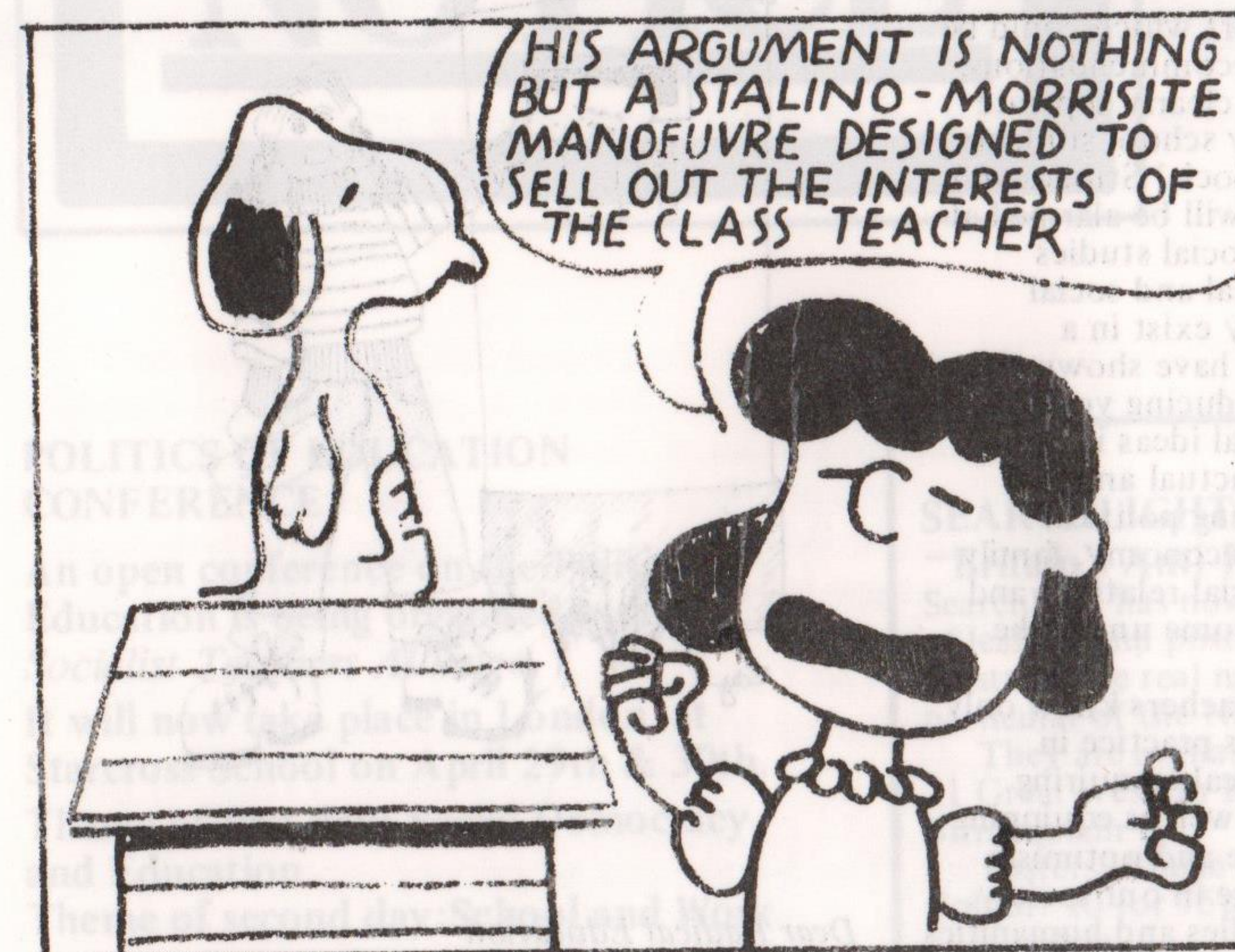
And here is the point of replying to Gould. At a time like this it is tempting to keep your head down and hope the nasties will go away. It is even possible to advance tactical reasons for silence: the history of this century is full of such tactical restraint on the part of the Left. But that history also shows the vanity of such tactics. It is very important that those of us attacked should stand our ground. This is not heroics but the simple lesson of history. Now, more than ever, radical academics, teachers, administrators need to defend stubbornly ground so hardly won. We whose business is the theoretical analysis of practice need to go on demonstrating whose interests are served by which educational or scientific or literary practice. Let those whose talk is of 'greater discipline', 'proper respect', 'natural leadership', 'racial superiority' defend themselves. The memory of the Nuremburg rallies and their inevitable outcome is not dead.

DOUG HOLLY



# FORUM

In *Radical Education* 9 we introduced a feature called 'Forum' which invited individuals and groups to use the journal to spark off debate. In this issue, Ned Newitt, a teacher at a Leicestershire Community College, makes a critical assessment of the Broad Left initiative in the NUT.



For almost a decade, radical teachers have been at one another's throats. This division on the left has been caused by differences over progressive education, allegiance to different left parties, in ways of working with sympathetic but non-socialist teachers and in the whole approach taken towards the National Union of Teachers. A few years ago the left was largely split between two groups. On one side Rank and File, dominated by the International Socialists (now SWP) and commanding support from many non-Trotskyists, committed to progressive education and support for socialism. On the other side was an alliance, commanding considerable influence within the NUT and epitomised by the anti-christ of the ultra-left: Max Morris, then a Communist headmaster.

## New Developments

However, times are changing, after successive defections from Rank and File, the Socialist Teachers Alliance, backed by the International Marxist Group, has emerged. Max Morris has handed in his party card, as Communist Party teachers become increasingly locked in argument on questions of policy and tactics in education. In September 1977, a meeting in Brent, attended by several executive members established a Broad Left. Though this Broad Left has only taken a few faltering steps, it is clear that it is likely to become a significant influence amongst teachers, in a way that the STA, and Rank and File are at present unable, because of their commitment to the politics of the super-revolutionary left, to achieve.

## What Sort of Left?

Some people argue that the Broad Left has been established because certain people could no longer use the Communist Party as a power base. From my own experience, this seems to be untrue. There is a growing awareness on the left of the need for unity and to work in alliance with people who don't necessarily share exactly the same viewpoint. It is true that some participants in the Broad Left see its role as a caucus to counter the ultra left, which, through some special demonology, they see as the main enemy. Nevertheless, others see its role as a sort of left electoral machine, ensuring left people are elected and left resolutions supported.

However, in my view, even this role is too limited. A conspiratorial NUT ginger group is unable to solve the major problem that the left faces in teaching: how to win a basically conservative group of workers to a socialist viewpoint. Having a left trade union leadership is no guarantee of left development unless there is support from the membership. This means grassroots activity, both in the local associations and in the staffroom. It means discussions, debates and forums on issues beyond pay and conditions. To establish a leading role for the left amongst all teachers we have to

develop links between the immediate trade union issues and the politics of educational practice (mixed ability, integrated studies etc) and with the labour and-trade union movement, taking up such broad issues of human rights as Apartheid, Chile or Grunwick.

## The Right Fights Back

The last year has seen the culmination of an ideological offensive by the right wing against progressive ideas in education. Initiated by the Black Paperites, it has won the support of the Tories and gained favour with the Labour government. The calls for a nationally agreed curriculum, the greater use of school inspections by local authorities, for publicly identified standards, the attack on teacher influence on the Schools Council added to the Green Paper's proposals for individual teacher assessment are an attempt to bring teachers back into line.

Under the influence of Tory controlled County Councils, LEA's in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire have been doing their best to make changes in schools with progressive reputations by the use of inspections and control of appointments. There can be no doubt that the new level of ideological conflict in education is a result of the fear, by the establishment, of the potentialities of a truly comprehensive education.

The Gould report, on Marxists in higher education, the Tyndale affair and the exploitation of Neville Bennett's minor research on teaching styles has all been used to create a new climate in education in which the clock can be turned back to



a system weighted against the working class kid. Theory cannot be underestimated. The failure to develop a coherent pedagogy for the mixed ability classroom has been a major weakness and the right has not been slow to exploit the difficulties faced by ordinary teachers having to construct a new approach to teaching, hand to mouth.

## Wanted: A New Strategy

As it stands at present, the Broad Left, or the 'Brent Initiative' as it has become known, cannot claim to match up to the requirements of the present situation. It has, as yet, no democratic structure and it is heavily weighted in favour of those with prominent union positions. If it can manage to reach out into the provinces and become a political movement among those teachers who are making the break with capitalism, then there is hope. But what is still required is a new strategy for the left which is capable of creating unity and mass action on specific issues and capable of defeating capitalist ideas.

NED NEWITT



# LETTERS

Dear Radical Education

The recent H.M.I. report on political education in schools (printed in the T.E.S. 25/11/77) persuasively argues for the place of such a subject in the school curriculum which on the surface one would expect socialist and progressive teachers to welcome. However, caution from all political sides is apparent and clearly demonstrates fears and anxiety concerning stakes in an issue which could soon become a reality.

All the more reason then for socialist teachers to be clear what kind of political education within the school curriculum is going to best serve the interests of the working class movement and the struggle for socialism.

To begin with the notion of Political Education implies to many a condescending narrowness of what constitutes politics; a view which for centuries has ably supported and legitimized a system of society where only a minority can and are able to participate in decision making and power disposition. It also implies rigid boundaries as to what constitutes political matters. For instance the Tory Norman St. John Stevas has stated that he is not opposed to political education being introduced into schools provided the teachers made central to their aims and objectives loyalty to the Crown. Again where political education courses are already in existence they usually take the narrow form of Civics and matters of the Constitution and the legal apparatus that goes with it.

Also a recent report issued by the Hansard Society in collaboration with the Politics Association argues that political education should be included in a common curriculum for all secondary schools. Their report is backed up by research undertaken by the Political Research Unit at York University. In their findings they recommend:

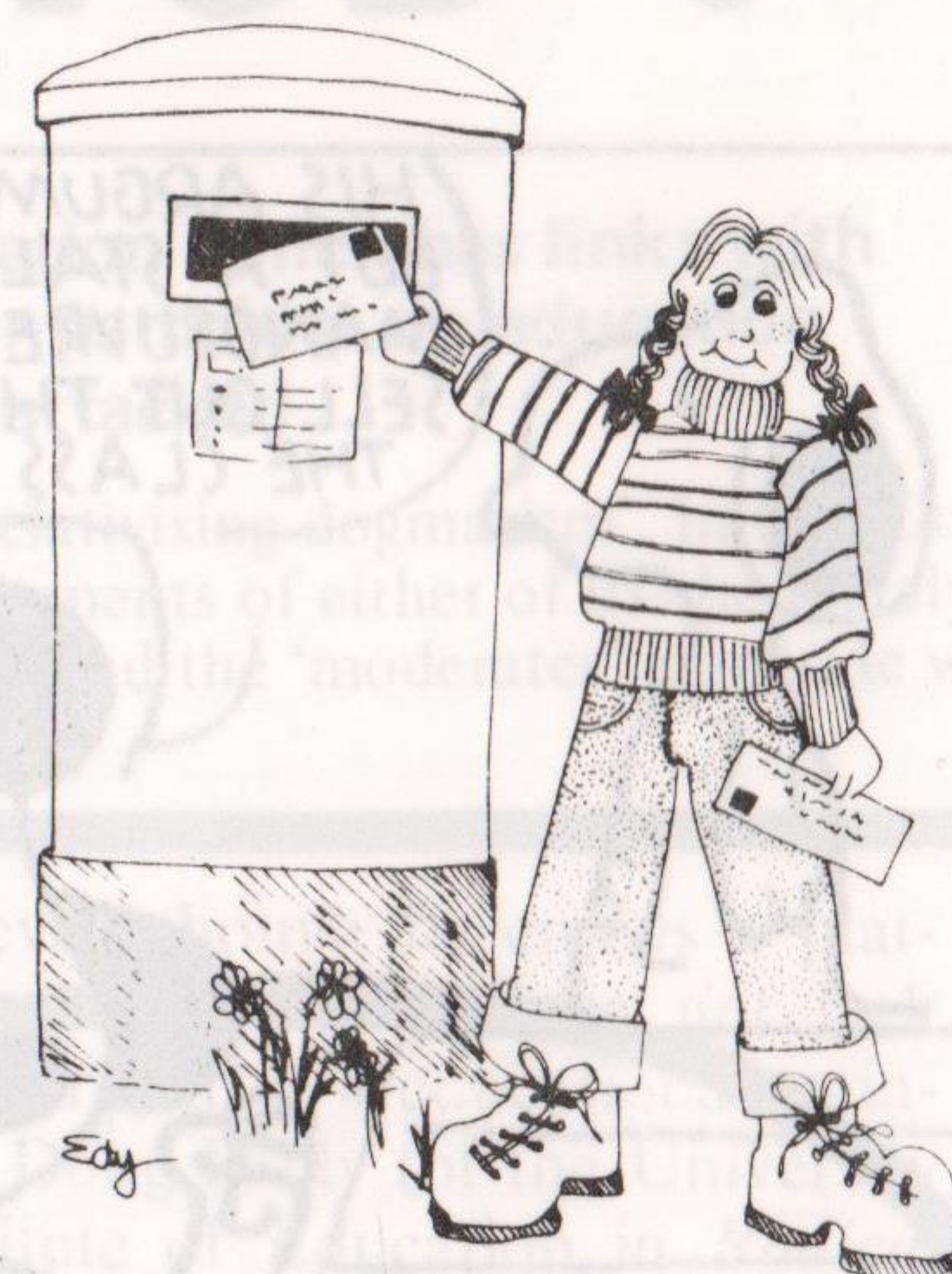
"... that political education should be in a common core curriculum. It could be part of a social studies programme but should have a clear identity of its own and not be merged into other subjects." (T.E.S. 2/12/77)

So here we have it, a report which could be highly influential in policy recommendations, arguing for politics to have a clearly separate identity within the secondary school students' time-table. Many practising Social Studies and Humanities teachers I know will be alarmed at these suggestions for whilst social studies programmes of a lively, critical and social science based nature still only exist in a minority of our schools they have shown that one of the best ways of introducing young people to politics and political ideas is by conceptualising it within its actual and real societal setting. That is, relating political phenomena to areas like the economy, family school, race relations, industrial relations and all other topics that usually come under the study of social sciences. As socialist and progressive teachers know only too well the difficulty in ones practice in school is in developing a critical, enquiring frame of mind in students as well as equipping them with skills of confidence and optimism about the possibility of change in our society. Many of the better social studies and humanities courses are beginning to come to grips with such problems and should be critically supported by the progressive and labour movement. This is particularly so in the case of the unions where the T.U.C. is apparently concerned at the lack of any inclusion of political education in the Government's Green Paper proposals (see T.E.S. editorial, 2/12/77). Clearly the issues need to be discussed and argued out more fully between the labour movement and its objective interests and the views and present practices of those engaged in education and teaching.

If we stand by and do not voice our criticisms and intervene in such debates then we could soon find much of the contents of the Green Paper a reality in our schools with the abolition of progressive social studies courses substituted with narrow and rigid, socially conforming political education programmes which only serve the interests of those who have a stake in maintaining the status-quo.

Yours in Unity,

GRAHAM SHARP



Dear Radical Education

Please note that in the typing of my article in RE9 some words have been left out, muddling up the meaning. On p8, in the middle column, near the top, the passage beginning "The crucial question is not at all..." down to "broken or ignored" should read: "The crucial question is not at all whether there is control or management. *It is whether the authority of that control is based on the bourgeois state or whether it is based on a break with the bourgeois state, where the legal and material authority of the bosses is broken or ignored.*" Thanks. (The words in italics were missed out in the last issue.)

In solidarity

RICHARD HATCHER

Dear Radical Education

The fact that Rad Ed is coming out again is the best news I've heard this week!

Solidarity

MARTIN FRANCIS

Despite the surveys admitted limitations, it does seem that hidden education costs are a significant burden to some families. The survey did show that no one, including schools and parents, is aware of the full extent of such costs and that sensitivity to the problems they can cause is low or non-existent in the education establishment. There is obviously a need for a fully resourced, more intensive, research project.

For further information, contact:

John Matthews  
Community Work Centre  
Cox Street  
Coventry (Tel. 56149)



## Hidden Costs of Education: Survey in Coventry

Between January and June 1977, a survey was carried out in Coventry on behalf of the local branch of the Child Poverty Action Group. The survey was particularly concerned with the effects on low income families of 'hidden' education costs, such as domestic science equipment/materials charges; educational trips; woodwork materials; photographs etc.

The survey concentrated on secondary schools as they incurred higher costs for parents than primary schools. An attempt was made to monitor expenditure by a number of parents by means of a weekly account sheet kept for each child. This was concentrated on parents who could afford the costs as only in these families was the full extent of the schools' demands likely to be experienced. Headmasters were sent a questionnaire to fill in to assess how their schools dealt with the problem of children of low income parents and several teachers and pupils were interviewed.

The limited resources available meant that the survey could only be very restricted in its extent and the weekly monitoring in particular proved very time consuming. However, several significant factors emerged. Hidden costs did prove to form an unexpectedly large part of some parents' school budget.

The reason why hidden costs have not received much attention from parents seems to be that the bulk of concern is still directed towards school uniform costs. It was interesting to note however that in some cases, special clothing, eg for domestic science, added considerably to basic uniform costs.

The survey found that schools themselves had no idea of the scale of the financial demands (except for basic uniform) which they were laying on parents and pupils. Moreover, there was considerable evidence that the 'pastoral care' system in some schools operated in isolation from any understanding of the money problems of low income families. There were indications, naturally difficult to substantiate, that some pupils stayed away from school when they were unable to afford items demanded. This could, of course, be the beginning of more serious problems between pupil and school.

# NOTICE

## POLITICS OF EDUCATION CONFERENCE

An open conference on the Politics of Education is being organised by the Socialist Teachers Alliance.

It will now take place in London, at Starcross School on April 29th & 30th.

Theme of first day: Social Democracy and Education

Theme of second day: School and Work

Speakers include: April 29—G Esland (Open University); Dan Finn & Neil Grant (Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies); Raymond Williams (The Long Revolution etc); April 30—Simon Frith (CP); John Holloway (Conference of Socialist Economics); Michael Young & Ian Hextall (Institute of Education and Goldsmiths College).

Workshops, led by various organisations will be held after the morning speakers.

The aim is to provide a forum where those concerned with theory and practice of education can meet to debate, and forge links between their areas of action and research.

Further details from:  
25 Highgate West Hill, London N6

## TEACHING PACKS

The Cobden Trust, the research charity which works with the NCCL, is working on an 18-month project to produce teaching packs and teachers' source books on civil liberties and the law.

The packs will be suitable for mixed ability groups in the 13-16 age range. They will be accessible to slow readers but include material for the CSE Social Studies syllabus.

The packs will be obtainable in units to suit different schools' requirements and will include the following:

factual/statistical easy-reference units; case study notes; out-and-about projects; photographs, comics, games and slides; role playing dialogues; work-sheets and teachers' notes.

"Our approach is to build upon the demand for immediate and practical information on, for example, the police or young peoples' rights. By developing an understanding of conflicting interests within society, and the relationship of the law to rights (or their absence), we hope the individual student will better understand how and why the laws affect them, and what they can do about it."

Further details of the project can be obtained from Ms Prior at the Cobden Trust, 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1X 9DE.

## SEARCHLIGHT

—Britain's Anti-Fascist Journal

Searchlight has now produced a remarkable series of leaflets and posters. They are designed to illustrate the real nature of fascism and in particular of the NF.

They are available from AF & R Publications, 21 Great Western Buildings, 6 Livery Street, Birmingham 3.

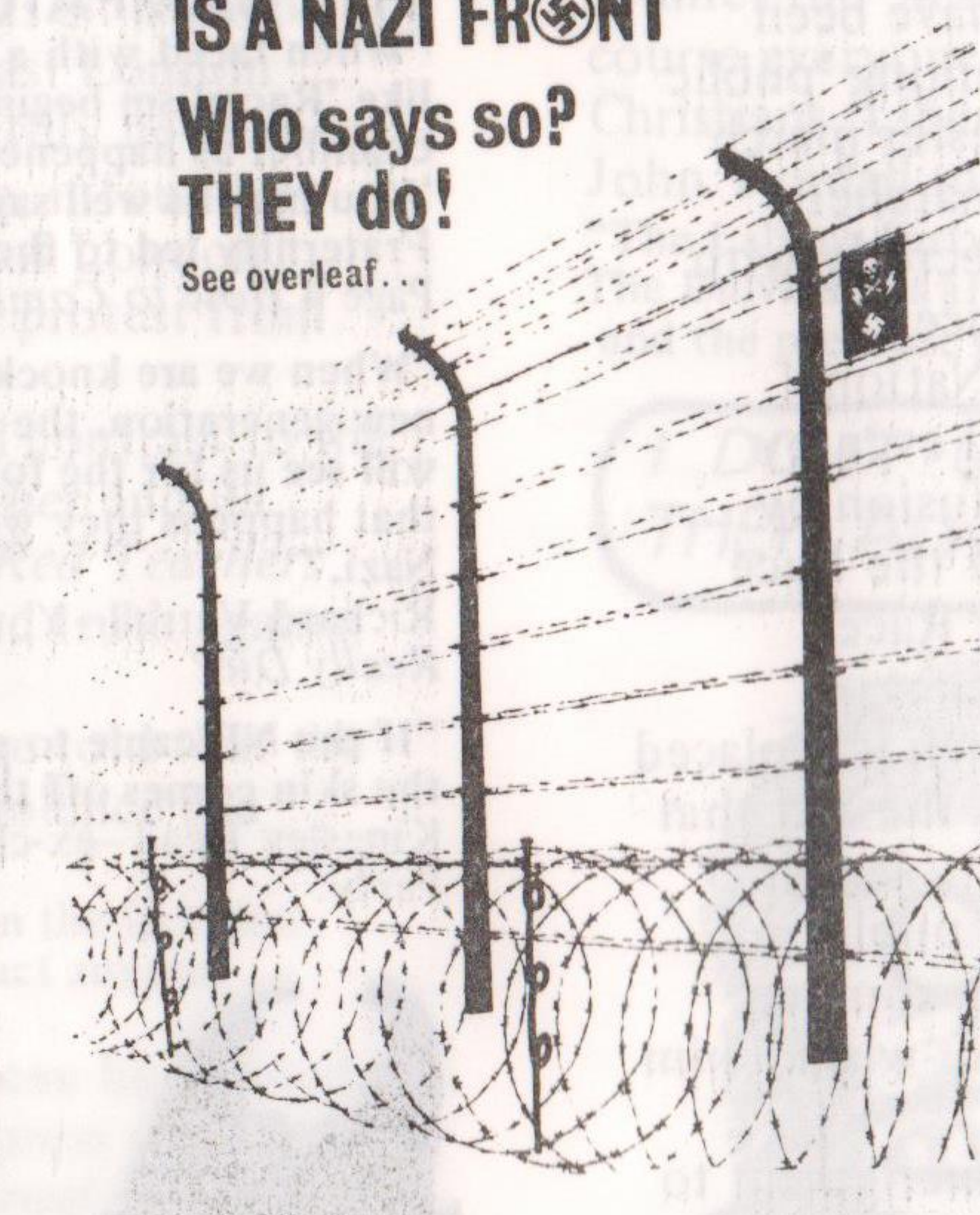
Posters—Single Colour: 10 for 50p; Two Colour: 10 for 75p; both plus p & p. Discount for bulk orders.

Leaflets—Two Colour: 100 for 75p; 500 for £3.25; 1,000 for £6.00

## THE NATIONAL FRONT IS A NAZI FRONT

Who says so?  
THEY do!

See overleaf...



The Westminster Group for Multi-Racial Education consists of teachers, parents, community workers and school students concerned with the role education can play in the building of a just, multi-racial society. Such a group obviously encounters difficulties which are still being worked through: how to get more parents involved, how to cater for both primary and secondary teachers, how to run meetings so that school students are not bored or talked down to, how to stop the group degenerating into a mere talking shop. However we have had useful discussion on the problems of progressive education, black youth—police relations, suspension, the options system and careers guidance.

The group has recently taken a stand in the local press against National Front activities in schools and organised a successful joint meeting with the local Paddington Campaign against Racism. New members from the locality are welcome. Further information from Martin Francis (794 2758).

We invite all groups to let us have details of events, conferences, meetings, campaigns, publications etc. they are planning—or just a description of the group. While we are sympathetic to everyone represented here, the Editorial Group is not necessarily in complete agreement with them.

Copy date for the next issue is 15 June. The issue will cover September, October, November and December.

## COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY OF LONDON 1978:

July 15th - July 23rd.

Covers a wide range of subjects. A new education course, tackling in depth the major aspects of class struggle in education; including: progressive theory and teaching methods; industry or education - relevant to whose class? and democracy in education. For free prospectus and further details, write to: Geoff Roberts, C.U.L. 16 King Street, WC1 8HY.

## FROM FRENCH TEACHERS IN THE FREINET MOVEMENT AND IN THE UNIONS

A change in the way of teaching is part of the struggle for a socialist society

Teachers all levels  
all subjects (primary, secondary, university)  
interested in international correspondence for a socialist education, please write to:

Jacques Joubert  
600 Rue de Bouillargues  
Nimes, Gard, France

This announcement is not limited to teachers. Anybody interested please send enquiries and suggestions (pupils, young workers, students, parents, etc...)

## CONFERENCE OF SOCIALIST ECONOMICS

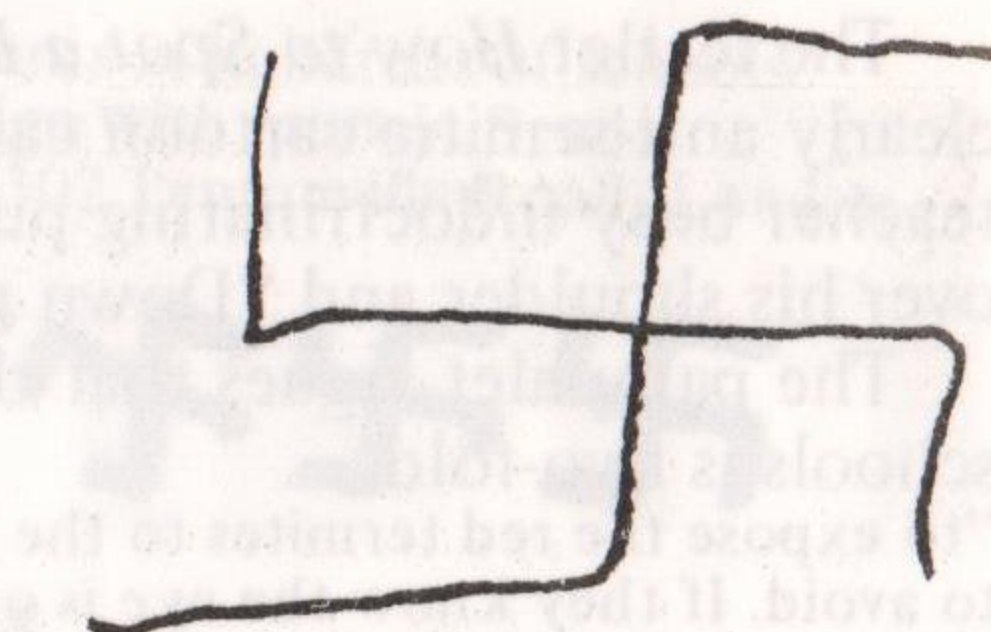
The Conference of Socialist Economics will soon have an office where necessary administrative work can be done. It is also hoped to use it as a library, information centre and for small meetings. They urgently need offers of office equipment (chairs, desks, filing cabinets, typewriters etc) and volunteers to give a few hours occasionally to help do the work.

Please write to:  
CSE Office Committee, c/o 83 Amhurst Park, London N16 or ring Tim Putman on 01-889 3830.

CSE Subscriptions: Full £2.50; Low Income: £2.00.

All subscriptions and queries to:  
CSE Membership, c/o Dept. of Economics, Birkbeck College, 7-15 Gresse Street, London W1P 1PA.

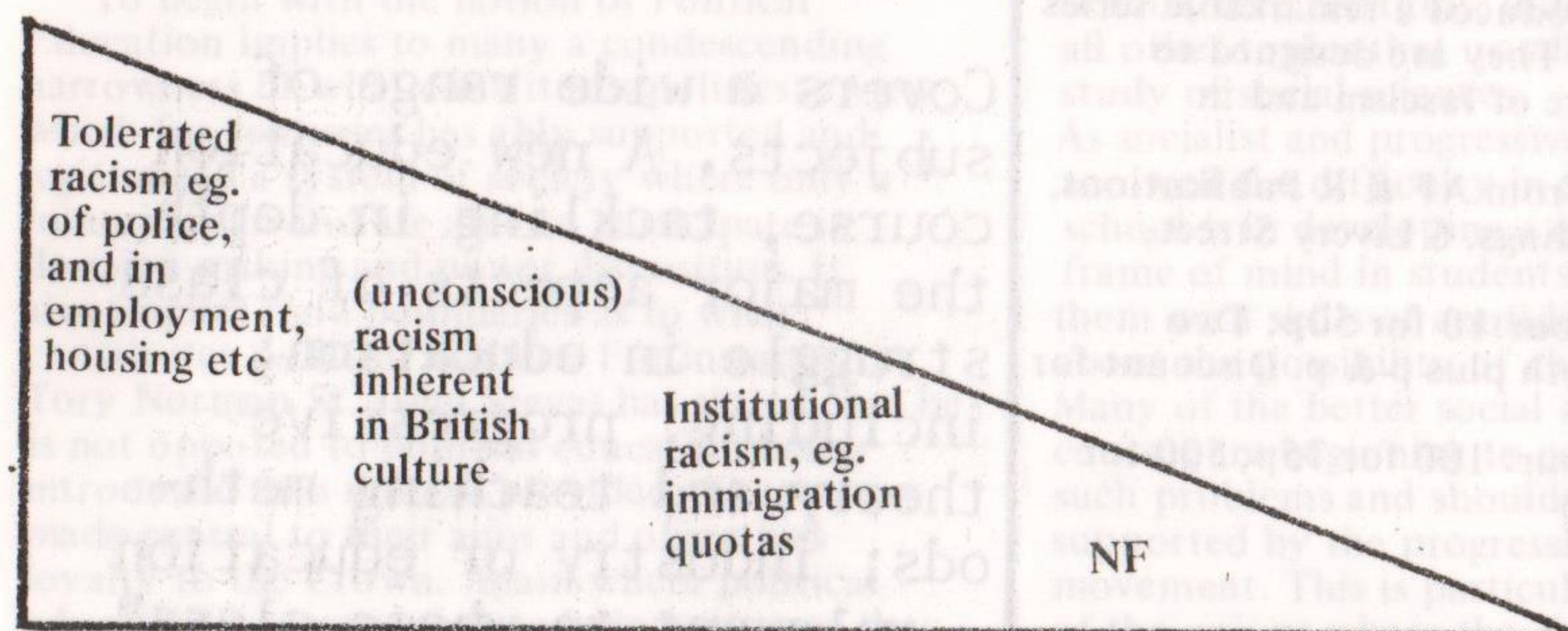




How serious is the NF campaign in schools? Lin Layram explores the nature of fascist propaganda and its tangible effects.

## THE CONTEXT OF THE NF OFFENSIVE

The National Front is important not just in its own right but in its relationship to racism in our society as a whole. The open racialism of the few prepared to march in the streets for fascist principles is the thin edge of a wedge.



In practice the law has failed to halt the continuous flow of racist literature and speeches directed against the black community. Marches through multi-racial areas have been made at astronomical cost to the public in maintaining 'public order'. It cost £1/2 million for the Greater Manchester march alone, and there were 7 policemen to every NF marcher. Webster's march through Manchester (arranged secretly with the Chief Constable) was protected by 3,000 police.

Legislation that could be used to control the National Front is extremely confusing and is ill-understood even by politicians and the press who compound the confusion by demanding that the NF marches be banned under the Race Relations Act. In fact this is impossible. The new Race Relations Act (1976) cannot be used to ban marches or meetings. The old Race Relations Act (1968) which it replaced did deal with 'incitement to racial hatred'. This is the Act that was used to unsuccessfully prosecute National Party leader Kingsley Read for his 'one down, a million to go' public epitaph on the racial murder of Gurdeep Chaggar in summer 1976. (He was acquitted by Judge McKinnon who 'wished him well'.)

However, since 1976 a shift has taken place. 'Incitement to racial hatred' is now dealt with under an amendment to Section 5 of the Public Order Act, and *not* under the Race Relations Act. This amendment covers only inflammatory speeches, leaflets etc. It does not deal with marches and demonstrations.

The banning of the NF's proposed march through Ilford North was made by the police under the *old* Public Order Act (1936) (brought in after the Mosely Blackshirt marches through the East End culminating in the Cable Street riots). It does not deal with racism and is as likely to be used against anti-fascist activity as for the protection of the immigrant community. The NF march is only one of a series of marches and demonstrations that will not be allowed to take place in the Metropolitan Police District over the next two months. No political demonstrations at all are to be allowed during this period. The appropriation of the authoritarian centre by the unstable Labour administration headed by Callaghan has pushed Thatcher into a desperate attempt to win the racist vote, in the ever increasing possibility of a general election this year.

If there is a general election it will be a golden opportunity for the NF. They have announced their intention to field 300 candidates which will give them the same TV election

broadcast time as the Liberal Party and free distribution of propaganda material by the GPO in those constituencies where they have candidates. The local council elections in May will give the NF access to schools for meetings, under the Representation of the People Act. "Affecting neutrality in such conditions will be seen by minority group parents as betrayal; by parents of the indigenous it will be seen as granting approval to racism" (NCCL). In Sefton Park Junior School in Bristol an angry picket of 500 protesters outfaced 40 NF supporters who had hired the school for a meeting (against the wishes of the head) and parents kept their children away from school as a protest. The NF are out to achieve respectability by creating a climate in which racial violence is acceptable.

Recently they have made a conscious effort to reach children in schools. "At school they're still forming and that's where we've been very successful" said Tyndall, Chairman of the NF. (*Inside Story* BBC2, February 1978). It's essential that teachers are aware of this offensive, and that they have information made available to them about the nature of the NF.

## THE CAMPAIGN IN SCHOOLS

"When faced with a teacher who makes 'an inane but emotive statement like 'Racism begins with arguments like yours and leads to the gas chamber as happened in Germany'. . . Be quick with a sharp reply like 'You may as well say that arguments for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity led to the guillotine!'"

Page 4 *How to Combat a Red Teacher*

"When we are knocking at the gates of power in Britain there will be a new generation, the 14 and 15 year olds who are joining us now. They will see us for the force we are, a new force, a virile force. And when that happens they won't give a damn who was a fascist and who was a Nazi."

Richard Verrall—Youth Organiser of the NF. Author of *Did 6 Million Really Die?*

"If the NF came to power we would whip juvenile delinquents until the skin comes off their back."

Kingsley Read—ex-chairman of the NF, now chairman of the National Party.



Clifton Rise. Arrest.

Peter Marlow

The extension of the racist and fascist campaign into schools is nothing new. In 1974 the NF produced leaflets aimed at school students which, in the words of Blaise Wyndham, chairman of Camden and Brent NF, were calculated to "appeal to those young people who are fed up with the massive influx of coloured immigrants".

The tone of the leaflet took a cynically pseudo-radical stance . . .

"British school students are probably the most oppressed section of British society. Schoolkids don't have much choice about whether or not they want to go to a school overrun by young thugs, or a school where the teachers try to indoctrinate you with Communist claptrap. At least adults have some choice about where they go to work".

It was an attempt to exploit the alienation felt by many kids in urban schools by blaming vandalism, over-large classes, bullying etc. on blacks . . .

"Are you tired of lessons where the teacher has to go at a snail's pace to allow immigrant kids who don't speak English a chance to catch up? . . . If so then the NF students' association is the organisation for you".

The campaign was not a great success but in Autumn 1977 in a blaze of publicity from the media the NF set up youth corp organisations throughout the country. The first duplicated news sheet of the YNF—*Bulldog*—was an attempt to distribute 2,000 copies of the "organ (sic) of East London YNF" into schools in South East Essex. A monthly news sheet produced by sixteen year old student Joe Pearce, it found its way into the Barking area and into many areas of London, especially the East End, and caused widespread protest from the NUT, TUC, LEAS etc.

The extreme crudity of *Bulldog* is in marked contrast to the more recent pamphlet *How to Spot a Red Teacher* and its more intellectual counterpart *How to Combat Red Teachers*. Both present the NF as a bastion of decency and truth against communist propaganda.

In *How to Combat Red Teachers* students are told that the claim that the NF is preaching and practicing violence is a "filthy slur" . . .

"That the NF does not practice violence can be seen in the fact that marches and meetings of extreme left groups and in fact anyone opposed to the NF take place unmolested. . ." (P8).

Apart from the fact that this outrageous lie can be refuted not only by left groups, but by some 'neutral' press observers (see for example the report in the *Hornsey Journal* after the Wood Green demonstration by the NF in April 1977) young fascist Pearce himself is hardly reticent about the character of YNF activity. Some quotes from *Bulldog* No 2 follow to show teachers who have not seen these leaflets what race poison the YNF are actually trying to propagate and their open viciousness and brutality . . .

—"One of the filthy perverts was thrown headfirst into a concrete post and another was followed on to a bus by two YNF members . . ."

—"An anti NF march was held in Manchester . . . all along the route of this march Manchester NF activists threw flour, soot and smoke bombs. . . However the most enjoyable moment of the day came when a cartload of reeking dung was tipped over the march as it passed under a flyover. Most people agreed that the Reds smelt much better than they did before. . . about forty NF activists were arrested at Lewisham and seven at Manchester, but it was worth it for the enjoyment of it all."

—A mock news report on a 'mugging' ends with the 'joke' . . . 'Reports that the assailant had been sighted at Whipsnade and near Chessington were found to be cases of mistaken identity'.

This issue of *Bulldog* is now in the hands of the Attorney General for consideration for prosecution under the discredited Race Relations Act but its exhortation to young NF members to "give the Communist teachers nightmares. . . spread the racist word" has been taken up in the 'Spot the Red Teacher' campaign which started in January 1978.

## HOW TO SPOT A RED TEACHER

The YNF called a press conference to launch the leaflet campaign and for maximum publicity also picketed the TV studios of the ILEA in Battersea in January to protest against a film for schools which portrayed the relationship of a white girl and her West Indian boyfriend. Both the leaflet campaign and the picket went off like a 'damp squib' according to trade union, immigrant and teachers' organisations in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, one of the Front's main target areas. Few of the 350,000 leaflets allegedly printed have appeared in schools. However, copies of the leaflets do exist and so also does the extended pamphlet version for more 'intellectual' NF supporters, *How to Combat Red Teachers*. After the YNF AGM in Birmingham they may be released into schools.

Both are worth examining because they illustrate NF mentality and it is necessary for anti-fascists to understand and counter this propaganda as it arises, and not to be taken by surprise. Both leaflet and pamphlet are intended as handbooks for NF activity in schools, and provide so-called evidence to counter the 'lies' taught by left wing or liberal teachers. (of course everyone opposed to fascism is 'Red' to the NF—Christians, Liberals, Feminists, Gays) . . . as NF chairman John Tyndall told the 1976 Front AGM . . .

"The Labour Party's Communist. The Liberals are nearly communist. The Universities are practically communist. The broadcasting services and the press are riddled with Reds."(!)

I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT . . . WHY DO THEY ALWAYS SPOT YOU AND NEVER ME





The leaflet *How to Spot a Red Teacher* is headed by a clearly anti-semitic cartoon caricaturing a leering Jewish teacher busy indoctrinating pupils, with Karl Marx looking over his shoulder and "Down with Britain" on the blackboard.

The pamphlet argues that the way to fight communism in schools is two-fold. . .

"to expose the red termites to the kind of daylight they normally like to avoid. If they know the eye is on them some of them will take fright and drop their classroom politics".

"The other way to fight communism in the classroom is to equip yourself to demolish its arguments—to fight falsehood with truth!"

Stirring stuff. . . and young fascists are advised to observe teachers' authority, speak politely, address the teacher as 'Sir', 'Mrs' or 'Miss'. So, let's go on to look at the 'truths', with which keen young NF supporters will fearlessly counter communist lies. ]

### SOME NF 'TRUTHS'

"Social studies" of course comes in for a predictable bashing. Crime is (according to the NF) unrelated to poverty since youths today. . .

"Have a bountiful social security service which provides them not only with the necessities of life but many of its luxuries as well. When many a car salesman can testify that his customers pay him with social security cheques, being out of work can hardly be cited as the mugger's excuse". (P2 pamphlet)

"Commie teachers will tell you that all races are equal. Tell the Red teacher that top scientists like Jensen and Eysenck say this is rubbish. . ." (leaflet)

In the pamphlet this point is expanded and the student is advised to consult "the most useful summary of the findings of the scientific experts" in the article by Richard Verrall in *Spearhead* April 1976. Verrall's article could have come straight from the pages of *Der Sturmer*, (Julius Streicher's racist journal) complete as it is with skull diagrams depicting the Orang-Utan, the Negro and the European each one complete with measurements in order to 'prove' that the European is superior.

According to the pamphlet (p5), "The huge resources of Black Africa remained untapped until the White Man arrived and started to exploit them for the benefit of Black and White alike. The African blacks had no idea what to do with their continent's minerals. . . nor had they even heard of agriculture; for food they lived on fruit, fish, animal meat and *each other*." (My italics)

The Russian revolution 'fathered' by the 'layabout' Karl Marx was financed by international bankers of which the most prominent was Kuhn Loeb and Co. of New York (p7). This amazing 'truth' with which to confound your Marxist teacher is a classic example of the way in which the NF have taken over a number of pre-war anti-semitic forgeries. (See David Edgar's pamphlet *Racism, Fascism and the Politics of the National Front*.) It testifies clearly to the Nazi roots of the movement which the NF wish to deny.

### HOW HAS THE NF CAMPAIGN BEEN AFFECTING SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS?

Racism in schools has not begun with the recent upsurge in NF activity, but judging by the experiences of many teachers it has become more blatant and overt. Since the Mackinnon judgement with its subsequent publicity some kids are more confident in expressing racist sentiments. The expression of racist bias has become more 'respectable' in recent months. Swastikas and 'NF' are appearing scribbled on books like the names of pop groups, or football clubs. How serious is the involvement of kids who behave like this? Swastikas became for the Hell's Angels a symbol of anti-authoritarianism and machismo. Can we see the wearing of NF badges as a similar phenomenon—a passing cult which the kids don't fully understand? It would be a mistake to dismiss such displays as bravado in a situation where forces outside the school are operating in an open, public and deliberate way to create and heighten racial hostility and tension. Racism must continually be confronted however and wherever it arises.

Alienated and angry kids can be used by fascism in attempts to scape-goat immigrants. An obvious contradiction exists in the NF's campaign to recruit young members. Together with the attraction of the anti-authoritarianism of 'getting up the nose of your red teachers' is the demand for young NF supporters to be disciplined and polite in baiting the teacher with fascist 'facts'. It is, of course, a contradiction inherent in fascism itself to push 'law and order', while using, and encouraging, thuggery in its supporters.

Luckily the irrationality of NF propaganda has not been lost on most of the school population. NF leafleteers have been largely ignored or treated with open hostility. However the situation does not call for complacency. The existence of the NF as an electoral party in the current economic recession gives a political platform to racism which will exploit confusion and disillusion and seems to give some coherent explanation of symptoms of the economic slump, inner city decay, bad housing and, most of all, unemployment.

### SOME TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN LONDON

Frances is head of a Social Studies department in a big multi-racial comprehensive in North London. She and her team were the recipients of the messages with which this article is illustrated. The culprits were 15 year old boys who said the notes were a 'joke'. Confronted by the anger of their teachers one became ashamed, and denied being a member of the National Front. The other has not appeared at school since the incident.

REDS  
4  
GAS-CHAMBER

Mary, who works in a school in Hackney, East London, finds that race differences are being used as a scapegoat for the problems caused by the chaotic and difficult amalgamation of a girls' grammar school, and a creamed 'comprehensive'. Some parents are in the NF and have focussed a debate about standards around the black/white issue. Race has become the focal point of resentment, and may be dragged into any kind of confrontation.

On 26 January 1978 a London schoolteacher was shoved, kicked, shouted at and chased down the street by a gang of six 15 year old boys. An ILEA spokesman said that the teacher was born in Nairobi of Asian origin and the incident was clearly racial. Police were called in and later two boys from Pimlico School, Westminster, were suspended.

Jan, who teaches in Waltham Forest, East London, feels the situation has definitely deteriorated. An Asian child was beaten up recently but the head refuses to regard it as a racial incident. Jan complains that the head and teachers in her school refuse to take a stand. They argue that it is best to ignore such incidents, and not to give them publicity.

Chris runs the social studies department in a multi-racial comprehensive in North London. He recently tried to introduce into the syllabus an examination of the growth of the NF. This would have strengthened a section of the course dealing with multi-cultural society which already looked at prejudice, discrimination and the reasons for immigration. Chris was opposed by a vocal minority of teachers and a staff meeting was called. It was argued that his proposal was overtly political. . . that a teacher must retain neutrality in the face of controversy. "We must keep politics out of school and give both sides of the argument" said a teacher who refused to teach the new course. Ironically enough this particular school is in an area where the local newspaper itself gave the answer to that classic liberal cop-out. Writing about a nationally advertised fascist march through the local shopping centre it demanded "Why do the authorities fail to implement the law on the incitement of racial hatred? There are some liberal-minded people who would argue that to act more forcefully would be to curb people's freedom. What freedom? Freedom to discriminate? Freedom to insult and injure innocent bystanders? We don't permit people the freedom to rape, steal or murder." (*Hornsey Journal* 1977)

Neutrality in the face of the NF offensive is facile. Teachers who wish to promote 'freedom of speech' for fascists should perhaps be referred to some quotes from the works of John Tyndall, present chairman of the NF, during his long fascist career.

"In place of the modern Jew-inspired illusion of 'freedom' we substitute the honest reality of freedom, ie. Freedom for those fit to use it and a curb on those who are not. Such a principle forms the basis of the authoritarian state, which we seek to build in Britain." (Quoted in Martin Walker *The National Front*).

"For the protection of British blood, racial laws will be enacted forbidding marriage between Britons and Non-Aryans, Medical measures will be taken to prevent procreation on the part of all those who have hereditary defects, either racial, mental or physical. A pure strong and healthy British race will be regarded as the principle guarantee of Britain's future." (During Tyndall's 'Greater Britain Movement' period. . . from GBM's political programme)

"The democratic idea has no great moral superiority. . . Dictatorships are often the best thing." (Interview in *Observer* 4 July 1976)

These statements are blatantly at odds with the NF's cynical presentation of themselves as upholders of free speech

and traditional freedoms. There is, in addition, the sinister precedent of political activities of fascist parties in many other countries. Both in the twenties and thirties, and more recently, democratic freedoms have been openly exploited by fascists to pursue the physical intimidation of their opponents. There are ominous signs of this tactic operating today in Britain. Since the beginning of 1977 there have been systematic attacks on black, community and left bookshops. A joint picket was held outside the Home Office on January 17th by 'Bookshop Joint action' to protest against inaction by police and the Home Secretary's indifference. A leaflet has been produced cataloguing the attacks and incidents. It states that the black community bookshops are not giving in to threats—"We won't be terrorised out of existence".

### FIGHTING BACK—COUNTER OFFENSIVE

It is not enough for us as teachers to *respond* to the racist attack. We must also *initiate* anti-fascist activities.

#### 1. IN THE SCHOOL

—(Some strategies suggested by John Wright of the NCCL in the discussion document *Race Politics in Schools*).

##### a) The school responding:

- to the circulation of racist propaganda inside the school—by trying to find the source; by protesting to the Local Education Authority, and by reporting the incident to the local union associations; by writing to the local press, clearly stating why such ideas are so totally at odds with the aims of education.
- to the letting of the school hall to a racist organisation at the time of general or local elections—if the letting cannot be prevented, by protesting loud and long; by writing to parents to disassociate the school and staff from such a use of the premises—explaining fully the ways in which the aims of a racist organisation are totally incompatible with those of the education system. Use the DES and NUT statements. (Letters of this kind have been written by parents to Heads of some London schools).

Produce an exhibition of children's work—written work, paintings, photographs. Have as the theme: "Our multi-racial school/neighbourhood". Mount an exhibition in the hall, corridors, entrance to the school. Make the display emphasise co-operation and love. Should any of the work be defaced, the school will have further grounds for opposing a subsequent letting.

##### b) The school initiating:

- Parents' Meetings, Open Days—Take the opportunity of presenting the school as totally opposed to racism, in individuals and in organisations. Display positive materials. Explain to parents, if necessary, the ways in which the aims of the school must inevitably be opposed to. . . etc.
- Offer school premises to local minority group organisations as well as to mainstream community groups: (for example an Asian, Greek or West Indian evening where food and music is available as a parent-teacher social).
- Work out a 'code' for the school based on positive virtues—fair play, justice, democracy etc. Stress the importance of this code for all children and parents when facing attack from NF supporters amongst the parents.
- Apply the code—Democratise as much of the decision making as possible in school, seek to involve ancillary staff, parents and children as much as possible. Demonstrate concern by becoming involved in local community issues (it may be that those families showing most hostility are in fact those most need of support and understanding).

Learning materials and curriculum

These must recognise the cultural heritage and the skills which all children bring into the school. Derogatory images can only undermine the positive situation which it has been argued it is a teacher's professional duty to create in schools. (NCCL)

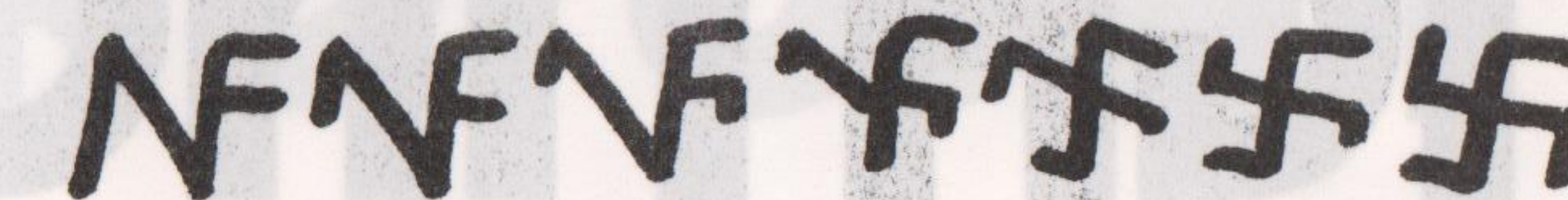
#### Examples of Material:

- The ILEA reading centre is producing a pack of non-racist reading materials;
- The London Borough of Haringey is funding the distribution of non-racist reading materials in schools separate from the schools budgets;
- The Broadside Mobile Workers Theatre have a play against racism *Divide and Rule Britannia* which is available to schools and colleges. (Contact them at 01-450 6992 or 01-730 5396). The play is followed by discussion.

Socialist teachers should support the struggles of the NUSS against the NF. Teachers and students working in schools where there are no student union members should notify the NUSS so that union membership forms can be distributed along with any relevant literature and anti-NF leaflets.

The NUSS have been on the offensive since the first NF leaflets appeared in schools. They produced and distributed 20,000 leaflets against *Bulldog* entitled *Keep the YNF out of our schools*. They are now preparing two leaflets to counter the 'How to Spot a Red Teacher'

campaign. They have 12,000 school students in hundreds of schools. It is essential that we support this campaign with money. Send a donation to the NUSS Fighting Fund at 302 Pentonville Road, London N1.



### 2. WORKING WITH OTHER TEACHERS

Ken Jones' article has criticized the stand of the NUT but teachers themselves can support and set up associations of teachers against fascism on a local basis. In London, for example, the All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism have been set up and held a rally on 16 March in Central Hall, Westminster with capacity for 2,700 people to attend (ALTARF c/o 2 Balfour Road, London SE25).

They also propose that all schools in ILEA and Outer London Boroughs be circulated with a resolution along the lines (precise wording to be agreed):

"This staffroom association/NUT school branch resolves:  
1 To oppose the spread of racism (particularly as promoted by the National Front and other groups) both within the school as a whole and through out classroom practice; and also to support initiatives in the community in general which seek to oppose racism and fascism.

2 To discuss ways in which we as a school staff can play an active role in developing a genuinely multi-racial school and a curriculum that reflects this perspective.

3 To support the formation of a movement which seeks to unite all teachers in a campaign against racism and fascism.

NUT delegates to Trades Councils should be giving NUT local association meetings information of Trades Council community struggles against racism.

A victory was recently won in Hillingdon where Dave Potter, an NUT secretary was suspended before Christmas for using an anti-nazi leaflet in a fourth year government and politics lesson. Despite attempts by the local press to smear him, more than 200 teachers turned up at a general meeting to back Dave and condemn the authority for suspending him. He has now been reinstated.

### 3. IN THE COMMUNITY

We must ally ourselves with anti-racist, anti-fascist initiatives being taken on a local and national level. Many groups are forming all over the country and coordinating activity.

The television coverage of the NF over the next few months will try to give them credibility and respectability. For example, the programme *Inside Story* (BBC2 15 February) persistently described the anti-fascist demonstration against the NF in Manchester only as 'SWP supporters'. It is essential that we counter this by making broad based alliances to attack the NF's mask of patriotism and decency. In Haringey the whole local council came out with a banner against the NF march through Wood Green including the Mayor complete in chain and regalia. This made it difficult for the police and press to wade in and bash the left 'extremists' in the same way that they did at Lewisham.

In Leicester the Unity campaign against racialism has promoted an intensive anti-fascist onslaught of material, leaflets and advertisements against the Front. Thousands of organisations and individuals ranging from the church to the Communist Party have been persuaded to take a public stand *together* against racism. Such activity has had considerable impact in making the individual expressing racist sentiments feel out of step with the rest of the community. The NF vote in Leicester has *fallen* from 30% in the 1976 council elections to 12.7% in the bye-election in February 2, *after* the Thatcher immigration speech with the candidate standing on a straight anti-immigrant ticket (*Sunday Times* February 12).

It has to be said that on the left the term 'fascist' has been hurled as an insult at political opponents pretty much as the NF 'abused' the term 'Red'. Now we are faced with a genuinely fascist party openly proclaiming race hatred, apartheid and violence led by men like Tyndall and Webster who argued in *Why I am a Nazi*. . .

"My belief that only Nazi tactics have a chance of winning back Britain for the Britons has not grown weaker. . . not a day goes past without some act of stupidity by the Jews and their allies coming to light—acts of foolishness brought on by the chill north wind flaunting the swastika banner in the sky".

The swastika has been replaced by the Union Jack. Martin Webster, who wrote those words, is now national activities organiser of the National Front. Interviewed 'objectively' for example on the TV programme *Tonight* by Ludovic Kennedy, he is given credibility, and an opportunity to promote the NF as a political party like any other. The coming local and general elections provide possibilities for the Front to express their 'patriotic' views 'nationwide'. It is essential that we are organised and prepared. Analysis is needed of the ideology of racism and fascism and its development in Britain now, but it is not enough to analyse. We must also act.

The NF can be driven into retreat by a concerted effort. The battle against fascism is on. We must win it.

### LIN LAYRAM

Take out a subscription to *Searchlight* (see Notices on page 9 for details of anti-fascist posters and leaflets).

Thanks especially to John Wright of the NCCL, to the Institute of Race Relations and to the NUSS.



# FIGHTING RACISM

Ken Jones analyses the effects of NUT policies of 'professionalism' and 'political neutrality' in response to the racist offensive. He suggests alternative strategies for teachers.

The National Union of Teachers, like the rest of the 'profession', has always prided itself on its political neutrality. 'The NUT', replied *The Teacher*, recently, to an irate correspondent, 'is strongly opposed to any attempt by teachers to impose their own political views on their pupils'. At the time, the NUT is committed, as it says in its response to the Green Paper, to 'the highest possible standards in social values, attitudes and behaviour'—standards which derive from a consensus thought to be so profound as to be beyond question and beyond politics. This basic consensus is supplemented by beliefs derived from the union's commitment to equality of educational opportunity, which implies a removal of all the social and educational disadvantages that prevent equality of access to education.

The growth of fascist parties, the importance they attach to agitation in education, and the militant response they have met, poses some questions to these positions. If the union remained silent about the NF, it would clearly be failing in its professional duty, since the NF exists outside the consensus which forms the framework of the NUT's positions. Furthermore, the growth of racist activity, and the scale of opposition to it from black youth, reveal the inadequacy of attempts to equalise educational and social opportunity.

It is in this context that the NUT's response to racialism should be seen, rather than as a break from previous 'non-political' positions. The course of the anti-racist debate in the union shows how carefully the NUT has sought to keep its opposition within 'professionalist' bounds.

## RESPONSE

Racialism is now established as a major issue for the NUT. It was debated at the 1977 Conference, and will be debated this year as well. It has also been discussed at several executive meetings in the meantime. The anti-fascist mobilisations of Lewisham and Hyde, coupled with the NF's *Bulldog* activity in schools, have pushed the issue into the mind of even the most professional of teachers.

But the impact of the anti-fascist struggles has been processed through the professionalist ideology of the NUT executive and its many supporters. This has three aspects. Firstly, the NUT wishes to separate the issue of racialism in education from its general social manifestations. Secondly, the union leadership considers that overt racism within the schools can best be fought in alliance with head teachers, the local authorities, and other national state bodies—and without the active involvement of the mass of teachers and school students. Thirdly, the ideology of educational deprivation gives the NUT a starting point for its discussion on racism and the curriculum.

At the 1977 conference, many of the large urban associations, supported by the STA and Rank and File, backed a resolution that called for an end to the NF use of schools for meetings, for a ban on fascists in the union, for an end to immigration controls and for defence of black communities harassed by racists. In this context, proposals were made for a campaign against racism in the curriculum. In addition, the left proposed support for a TUC resolution on racism, which called for a national trade union campaign, including meetings and demonstrations. This intervention, centering on directly political questions and proposing joint activity with extra-educational bodies, was anathema to the conference.

Instead, it approved an amendment, expressing concern at racist activity, and calling on the executive to take steps to develop a multi-racial curriculum.

This latter proposal was intended as an extension of 'equality of educational opportunity'. The recent union publication *All Our Children* sees black children as a 'disadvantaged group' whose 'educational performance needs to be improved'. The booklet goes on to talk about the need to establish a 'pluralistic and tolerant society', without anywhere recognising that black people are an oppressed minority: it is 'attitudes'—the multicultural and multiracial awareness of pupils—which need to be changed, nothing structural to our society. Education itself—a few old textbooks apart—is 'non-discriminatory in intention and fact'. Bernard Coard's pamphlet *How the West Indian Child is made Educationally Sub-normal in the British School System* might never have been written, for all the effect its conclusions have had on the NUT.



## AGAINST ALL RACISM?

There is, in fact, no great divergence between the union's position and that of the DES. The Green Paper, *Education in Schools*, states: 'The government's wish is to alleviate inequalities of opportunity (for ethnic minorities KJ) as fully as possible within the education system'. The recommendations of the Green Paper are for 'positive policies towards equalising opportunities and on encouraging young people from the ethnic minority groups to enter teaching'.

What is the purpose of this strategy, which the union has lent its support to? It is part of a general attempt to remove, through the intervention of state bodies, some of the obstacles to the integration of ethnic minorities in Britain, on a par with the Race Relations Act. But this effort to solve aspects of the social crisis is contradicted by another dynamic. The same government that attempts to resolve social tensions by means of the Race Relations Act etc. exacerbates them through its general policies of wage restraint and cuts. Indeed, some economic measures—such as the raising of college fees, for overseas students (necessitating an amendment to the Race Relations Act)—have a directly racist aspect. At the same time, the state's institutionalised racism of work permits, quota systems, separated families and 'patrialism' leads to a systematic harassment of black people. This is intensified by police and other racist thuggery.

# THE HARD WAY

But the NUT refuses to recognise that many ethnic minorities are oppressed in this way. By talking instead of 'disadvantage', it can firmly locate the measures to be taken, within the educational—or at least the generally environmental—sphere. At conference, this position was accompanied by manic warnings from Max Morris 'not to get involved in the minefield of sectarian politics'. Thus the union's famed 'non-politicality' is pressed into service to reinforce the idea that the development of equality of opportunity is the path of social advance for teachers and students.

Even so, the resolution that was finally approved could, despite its over-emphasis on the curriculum, have been made use of. The Executive could, for instance, have used it to campaign against existing racist practices in education, and to investigate and challenge the content of the curriculum. But if it had done this, it would have run up against another of the pillars of its professionalism: its collaboration with the Schools Council, the DES, LEA's and Exam Boards in the supervision of the curriculum. This relationship would be jeopardised if teaching union started *independently* to question the content of education. The executive thus decided to hand over to the schools council its brief to develop multi-racial curricula—and thus confirmed the virtual exclusion of the membership from direct participation in debates and action that touch on the issue of racism in education.

## THE LATEST PHASE

The activities of the Young National Front have been dealt with in a similar fashion. But the response by school students and teachers to the YNF has in many cases been excellent. For instance:

- the fascist youth who demonstrated against the ILEA-TV programme *Somebody's Daughter*, were by far outnumbered by black and white school students on the counter picket.
- at one school in East London, pickets of black youth prevented the fascists from reaching the gates to distribute their material.
- in Westminster, mass intimidation from his classmates discouraged one YNF member from any further activity.
- the All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism Rally in March—too late to be reported on here—has already involved hundreds of teachers in support for anti-racist campaigns.

The response in education to fascism, then, has on occasion reached mass proportions. This is no thanks to the NUT Executive. It opposes the right of school students to organise—

on any issue. To anti-racist teachers it says that they should fight racism purely with the aid of headteacherly diktat and police intervention: 'The responsibility of the Headteacher for the organisation and discipline of his (sic) school should be emphasised'... 'It is recommended that contact with the police should be made by the Headteacher or at local authority level'. (*NUT Guidelines on Racist Activity, 1978*) The anti-racist campaign, then, finds itself hemmed in on all sides by restrictions derived from 'professionalism'. In practice, the NUT Executive involves the mass of its membership neither on the curriculum, nor in direct anti-fascist activity.

But in London, at any rate, the activity of associations and of school NUT groups has gone beyond these limits. Encouraged by their associations, many school groups have made clear to students and parents their opposition to racism, and announced their intention to confront racist leafletters. Most London Associations have supported ALTARF, which is considering how to develop a mass campaign against the fascists, including a petition calling for a ban on their use of school premises for electoral purposes. (At the moment, they have this right under the Representation of the People Act) This is a far cry from the statements of Morris, who, when asked at his Divisional Council whether he would support pickets organised against the fascist use of schools, complained that this was a trick question, and refused to answer it.

Considering the burden of the NUT's 'professional' tradition and feebleness of the Executive, the response of many NUT members to racism has been heartening. There now exists the opportunity for work at many levels against racism: —in the curriculum—some ILEA teachers have already started to develop an anti-racist pack of materials; —in mass anti-fascist activity, in co-ordination with other sections of the community; —against institutionalised racism—immigration laws that split families, police harassment of black youth.

If they do this, teachers will find themselves: questioning the existing system of the control of the curriculum; involved in political activity with school students inside and outside the curriculum; linked with local parents and the labour movement in anti-fascist campaigns; raising the political issues of the oppression of black people. Each of these examples entails a break with 'professional' ideas and practice. The precise strategy for such a many-sided campaign cannot be worked out here, but it is certain that the issues raised by anti-racist activity pose very searching questions to the past practice of most teachers.

KEN JONES







### My future

Why are you crying, Mother?  
My future stretches before me like a sea,  
Your past is dead and gone like a grave,  
And yet I am the lucky one  
Aren't I, Mother?

Why are you crying, Mother?  
A mechanical brain and a plastic heart  
will make sure I do not die,  
P.V.C. steaks and Vitamin A  
will make sure I do not starve,  
Coronation Street and football pools  
will make sure I do not think,  
Won't they, Mother?

So why should you cry, Mother?  
There is carbon monoxide for me to breathe,  
And D.D.T. for me to eat,  
There are concrete blocks for me to—occupy,  
So why?

FIONA MORGAN, 15  
Gerrards Cross

### You

You are to me a Sunday morning  
smelling of fried bacon and promises of more.  
You are to me the honking of city cars  
that spell gypsies and tambourines.  
You are to me a majestic sultan  
being fanned by ostrich feathers.  
You are to me a white sports car at 95 mph  
that nobody else has.  
You are to me life, my friend.  
But what am I to you  
a child?

Gillian P.

# CONCERNING JUNIORS

## Getting children thinking about social issues in the Junior School

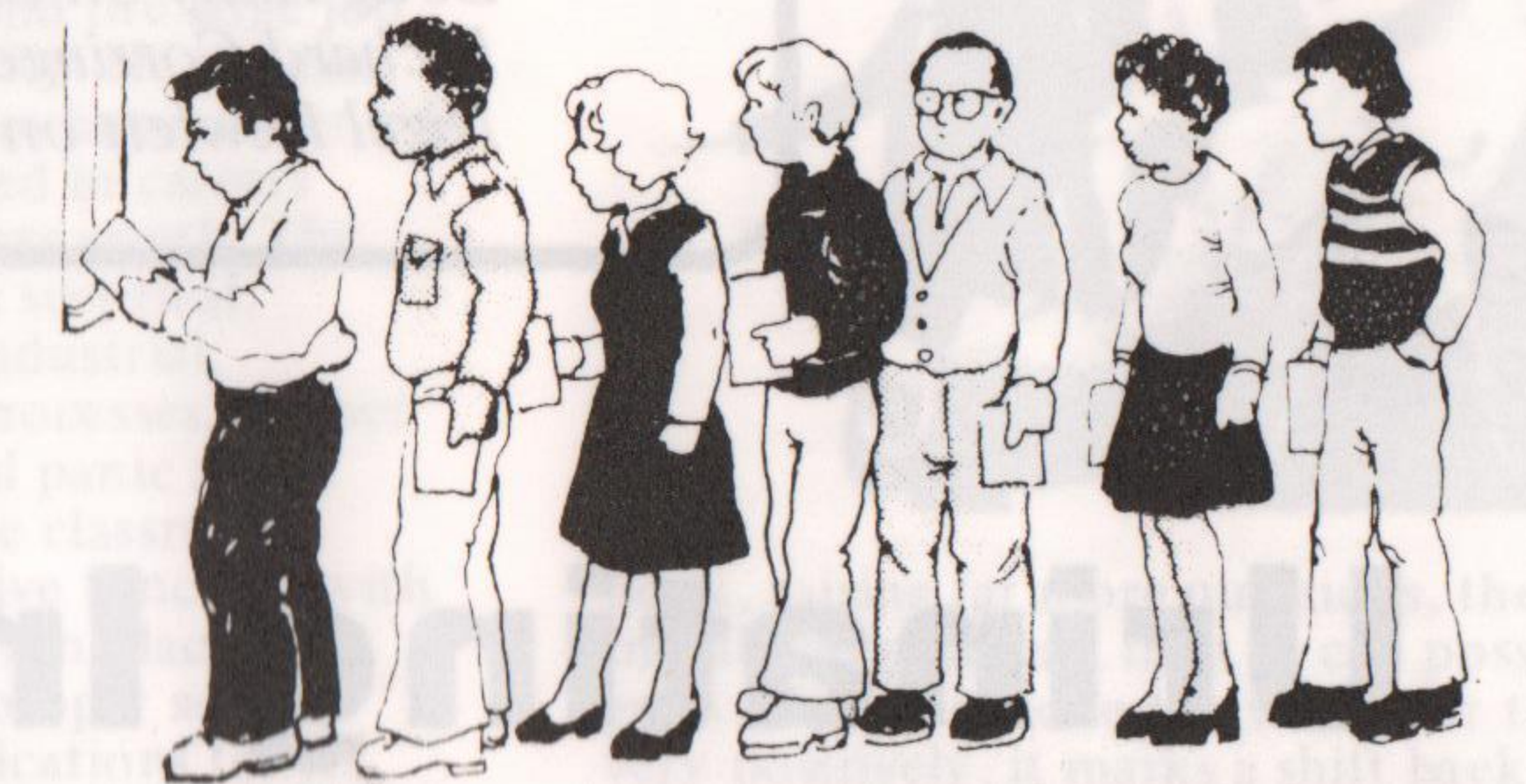
There is a singular lack of Social Studies material in Junior Schools. A number of practices masquerade as Social Studies. Quite prevalent is the mistaken view that adding history and geography together = Social Studies, not to mention the resurrection of Religious Education as the guiding light which makes the amalgam morally visible. (sic)

Quite the worst elements are often combined so you get David Livingstone famous white individual doing a great PR job for British Imperialism under the guise of "good" religious missionary.

What a relief then to be able to give news of a new humanities pack, designed for specific use in the junior school. Although undergoing a year of experiment and modification this course should be available for use in schools from next September 1978.

Produced as an ILEA Social Studies Development project, the course is called "People Around Us" and differs from many other environmentally based studies in the primary school in that it is concerned with people, and the children's concepts of how people interact within the community.

"People Around Us" is made up of three units in all to date: "Families", "Friends and Neighbours" and a third unit which looks at the wider economic relationships in the community. Attention will be restricted here to the first unit.



Mr. Webb used to work for a factory which made boxes. The factory had to close down, so Mr. Webb is out of a job. He gets money from the Social Security, but the Webbs find it hard to pay their bills.

The Thomas family is made up of Mrs. Thomas and her daughter, Pat, who is 5 years old. They live in a house with lots of other people. They all pay rent to the landlord. He lives a long way away. Mrs. Thomas and Pat live in one room. They have to share the bathroom and the toilet with the rest of the people in the house.



Mrs. Thomas works as a cashier in a supermarket. She earns just enough money to pay the rent and pay for food and clothes. She cannot take Pat out as much as she would like to.

As in all units, the "Families" unit is prefaced by a number of key concepts. These are to be taken as central ideas around which teachers can organise their work and the selection of relevant materials. In the "Families" pack these are as follows: i) distribution of Power and Authority; ii) Conflict; iii) Social Control; iv) Division of Labour; v) Interdependence; vi) Cooperation; vii) Values (Tradition); ix) Social Change.

The material content of the unit, by means of which these concepts are to emerge moves from an analysis of eight different 'families' ranging from Asian to one parent. A commune also figures. These are later compared to Victorian families, and family life in New Guinea.

Analysis takes place as a result of group discussion of photographs of the different families (sites of labour power production). Activity Sheets, Cassette Tapes and Drama Improvisation Schemes are provided so that issues can be taken up in a variety of ways.

With drama in particular it becomes possible for children to experience different 'lived ideologies' of family life. In this way children are able to stand outside moving in and out of different situations and life styles, even beginning to compare and criticise inadequate systems of belief. It is crucial that critical tools for grasping a knowledge of the society in which we live are developed, together with the means of changing it.

Compared to existing teaching aids, this pack is a breakthrough for Junior School Social Studies. However, there are obvious limitations. In line with the emphasis on culture that pervades sociology teaching generally, there is a clear absence of politics. The concept of class is not listed. The varying role of the family in the social production of labour power in pre-capitalist and capitalist societies is not considered. Increasing State control of family life is not put up for discussion, nor is there any information concerning the precise nature of that control. The position of various political parties, and action groups are also excluded, and so on.

Nevertheless there is no reason why socialist teachers can't feed this kind of information into the course. Judging by the reaction of children here in London who participated on the first trial run, the course is worth trying. Mind you, its quite expensive so you may prefer to work with others in your area on an alternative socialist teachers kit, if so, we'd certainly like to hear about it.

ELLY MARKS



Ken Jones on education and social democracy  
 Hilda Kean on catching them young  
 Tony Green on learning to labour  
 Doug Holly on education in Russia and China  
 Richard Gorrige on Herbert Kohl  
 Nigel Hewlett on progress in education

## Urinating In The Teapot

**LEARNING TO LABOUR: HOW WORKING CLASS KIDS GET WORKING CLASS JOBS** by Paul Willis. Saxon House 1977. Price £7.50 Hardcover, Paperback £3.95

Why do working class kids put up with it? They get sod all out of schooling, and they're going to get very little out of work. With this as his central theme, Paul Willis has produced a strong though, as he describes it, tentative book written in a mostly readably but challenging style.

There are several major themes organised around the chief concern of identifying the ways in which the culture of disaffected male teenage kids poses problems and possibilities for understanding and challenging certain features of capitalist organisation of production. The specific context is the transition from school to work. This book has made a timely arrival if we consider the recent popularization of concern for the relationship between schooling and production, the 'Great Debate' and its promotion of 'accountability' in education. It attempts to illustrate and explain the irony whereby disruptive male schoolkids and the specific culture of rebellion they generate within the school serves in the relatively short run to prepare them for boring routine and often arduous work. Their challenge makes for the possibility of their own survival and, for the most part, Paul Willis appears to be arguing, though this is not fully clear, that the culture of the school and work for these working class people has a *potential* for political integrity in socialist terms.

### Theory and Methodology

It is not always an easy read. Though the style is usually clear, the concerns of the author and the ambitious nature of the overall project have forced him occasionally to write in a tangled and complex dialectical form where he is trying carefully to point up as much what he is *not* saying as what he *is* saying while attempting to articulate different 'levels' of social reality in their structural processing. He combines accounts and illustrations drawn from ethnographic fieldwork amongst the kids at school and interviews with them at work—plus general assessments of theory and methodology for his work—with a final section of recommendations for action on the part of the practitioners in teaching and the careers advisory service.

### Ethnographic

On my reading, his major points are these. The culture of disaffected working class kids is

construed as an *active* response to their structural location. He draws certain distinctions between schoolkids. That between 'working class' and 'middle class' on the one hand and within the working class between 'conformist' ('ear-oles' or 'lobes') and non-conformist ('lads') on the other. The distinctions are broadly cultural and drawn at the level of their response to schooling but within a Marxist theoretical framework which attempts to articulate culture, ideology and economic production. Paul Willis makes a strong case here for ethnographic work and detailed cultural analysis within the Marxist project of critiquing the political economy of contemporary capitalism. His work sits within the present debates among Marxists concerning the correct formulation of human agency and ideology which attempts to avoid the imprisoning theoretical consequences of a rigid structuralism and economism. For Paul Willis structure and process are not alternative but different sides of the same thing—thus praxis is saved as a theoretical and material possibility but within 'opportunity structures'.

These ambitions are not always achieved, however, and the reader must avoid a temptation occasionally written into the text to see reality purely from the 'lads' point of view. At certain points Paul Willis, though making the correct formal provisos that he is only concerned with a specific facet of a complex multifaceted cultural reality of male working class culture, narrows the focus a little too much. Thus while the strength of the text is its concentration upon the counter culture and its critical articulation with the liberal democratic myth in education (the 'lads' recognise that school is a waste of their *living* time), by the same token, the weakness is that the 'lobes', conformists, are dealt with both less sensitively and, I suspect, with rather less political interest.

### Mucking About

The 'lads' do not conform to the formal system and they construct their cultural responses via sexist and racist masculinity at one level, with a fatalistic resignation at the other. Paul Willis sees these responses as both closures and potential openings. The non-conformity articulates a moment of critical awareness, or 'penetration' as he puts it. This moment recognises the abstract and barren nature of labour power under capitalism; the routine grind of industrial production, such that the worker's only commitment can beto his mates; the ethic of masculine survival in difficult physical conditions and the cash nexus. But the 'penetration' goes only so far—to making space by 'mucking about' and thus continuing the culture of 'lads' and 'kids' from school to work.

The moment in which the worker denies the authority and the structure which dominates him is also that moment of pathetic anti-authoritarianism of the lark and petty practical joke—whether it be (amongst the many possibilities) unscrewing the chair of the person in front at school, or urinating in the teapot while making tea at work. The creativity and ingenuity of these cultural forms are pointed up and at the same time shown their articulation with the major structures of domination.

Perhaps the major weakness in the account at this level is the shallow appreciation of the conformists who constitute probably the majority of working class kids and who may well pose, as Paul Willis points out occasionally, a possibly greater potential challenge to the dominant structures of capitalist production. What is not brought out very fully is the potential for a greater possible dissatisfaction on the part of the 'lobes'. They have certain expectations of the possibilities of social mobility and respectable survival in the system. What happens to the disillusionment they inevitably will experience? Are they equipped for resignation because they are already ground into conformity or do they have, as Paul Willis gives the 'lads', an *active* response? At this point the danger of being 'lad centred' as a consequence of his ethnography becomes a problem and a limitation in the work. The banality of the conformist, if this is indeed what it is, may be, in the 'end', more crucial than the 'partial penetration' of the non-conformist.

### Critical Moments

Paul Willis attempts to chart what is distinctive about specifically working class cultural responses to capitalism and in so doing enters a major blind alley. In his concern to draw cultural distinctions along class lines he reproduces the major error that somehow it is only the working class whose culture can accomplish the intellectual penetrations necessary for the radical critique; middle class culture, it is assumed, is determined to be apologist in form. Firstly this is too crude as a formulation of the class nature of culture—working class and middle class culture cannot be polarized in this simple way. Secondly, even in Paul Willis' own terms, the text he has generated with *its* critical moments could not have been produced without the intellectual foundations having been achieved largely in and through 'middle class' culture. The danger of romanticising the 'working class' is massive at this point.

The book ends with several things to say about 'what to do on Monday morning'—ie. its implications for vocational guidance and the education of disaffected working class youth. These appear to amount to two general principles. One—recognise the potential for critical activity within this working class culture and attempt to build on and amplify it where possible. Two—recognise the structural



limits of activity at the cultural level and that political organisation is essential to operate against the structures of domination. In offering these suggestions, Paul Willis appears mindful of their slenderness and the large job of translating them into practice. He appears to feel that teachers themselves have rather less of a chance than those involved in careers guidance amongst working class youth. The teacher can, however, "play a sceptical, unglamorous real eye over industrial, economic and class cultural processes. Rather than being scared into a moral panic about 'disruption and violence in the classroom' (which has its own reproductive function with respect to ideology) teachers can place the counter-school culture in its proper social context and consider its implications for its members own long-term future—never mind the problems it poses for their own survival in front of the class". (p 190). Bravely written some may think at this point. Nonetheless, Paul Willis has produced a useful and stimulating



book, raising far more questions, theoretical, moral and political, than it can possibly get to grips with. It is none the worse for that, and, very positively, it marks a shift back (perhaps) towards a necessary *cultural* sensitivity which is crucial to any educational and political activity at this or any time.

ANTHONY GREEN

## Education under Labour or education under labour ?

**SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, EDUCATION AND THE CRISIS** by Dan Finn, Neil Grant, Richard Johnson. In *Working Papers in Cultural Studies 10'*

This article of fifty pages is essential reading. It would not be immodest to say that it takes up several of the themes sketched out in recent issues of *Radical Education*. But it deals with them in greater depth, and more rigour. There are many sections of it which would stand up in their own right as detailed and illuminating critiques of key educational documents: Tawney's *Secondary Education for All*, the Newson and Bullock reports, and Crosland's speeches of the 1960's. But besides these, the article develops an analysis of the road that Social Democracy has travelled to arrive at the present educational crisis.

The central, politically-determined, weaknesses of Labour's educational programme are seen, on the one hand, as its historic 'inability to connect . . . with a revived tradition of working class self-education which was a marked feature of the period 1880-1926' and, on the other, the supplanting of that tradition by an ideology which asserted 'a quite unproblematic harmony between the equalisation of educational opportunity and the necessities of (economic) growth'. According to the authors this has led to a failure to give expression to an independent working-class position on education, of the sort which existed in embryonic form in the 1920's, and a complete inability to deal with the

ideological content of schooling. Instead, Labour relied on a 'form of educational policies' which was 'constructed within the state' with unforseen results, for 'this state is not the neutral machinery which social democracy takes it to be: it systematically transforms the political demands that are made on it by the subordinate classes . . . In a general sense, pressure for the extension of social rights and for greater 'equality' has fuelled the long term growth of the state system. But in practice this process has been inflected . . . by specific features of the state in the educational region. The key features have been the structural separation of the schools from other kinds of learning . . . the professionalisation of the teachers and their pursuit of sectional interest within the apparatus; and, above all, the structural necessity for educational policy makers . . . to take account of capital's interests.'

The 'essentially passive relationship' of Labour to its class which this reveals, is now having serious political consequences, as school students and parents see social democracy as one of the main culprits in the educational crisis. 'Labour . . . has opened up massive opportunities for a demagogic, anti-bureaucratic, anti-statist, Toryism.'

Within this general framework, is noted the coalition between social democracy and educational interests: sociologists of education, teachers and progressive educationalists. The authors point out that these groups had their own specific interests in the post-war expansion and restructuring of education. But they also show that these interests in the post-war expansion and restructuring of education. But

they also show that these interests were not conceived from the point of view of the working class (or the 'popular classes') as a whole: 'Whereas Labour's educational policy was part of a broader social and political strategy . . . the unions' policy was essentially an educational one with its own discrete rationale.' Within the coalition that developed, the role of progressive education was to provide 'the missing centre of social democratic policies' by dealing with the questions of the content and method of education, which Labour left untouched. The progressives and the professionals, therefore, also stand implicated in Labour's failed educational policies—and still have before them the task of evolving socialist positions on education. They can only do this by establishing political links with the working class movement, on the basis of educational policies that express the interests of the entire movement, and not of one single professional sector.

### Read This Article

It is very important that radical and socialist teachers read this article. It establishes beyond any doubt that the roots of the educational crisis do not lie in the classroom—nor can the crisis be solved there. The questions of control of education, its relevance and content, its relation to production, its relations of authority and discipline can't be solved by teachers in isolation. They can only be dealt with by an alliance, based on common interests, of teachers with the working class. The task is one of forming that alliance, and breaking with



Labour's traditional view of the State as the machinery through which the aspirations of the class can be defended and fulfilled.

It is from this point that criticisms of the article have to start. The sixth section of the article is entitled 'The Crisis'. The main features of the crisis are well described. After that, though, the article finishes. Why is there no seventh section, headed, perhaps, 'A Strategy'? Is it just a mindless activism that demands such a conclusion? I don't think so. The failure to suggest any way out of the crisis stems from the absence, in the article, of any treatment of the struggles on education that have *not* been wholly under the control of State-fixed social democrats. This has an effect on the concepts developed in the article. 'Social democratic ideologies', 'professionalism', 'ideologies of progressive education' become concepts which are wholly self-generating. They are *not* treated as ideologies which change their form, if not their fundamental content, in relation to the practice of classes in a class struggle. For instance—the article correctly rejects the notion that the Labour Party's commitment to educational expansion can be explained as a simple expression of working-class demands. It shows how Labour's educational policy was elaborated and accomplished in alliance with Fabian sociologists, educational administrators, professional leaders, rather than at the head of a working class movement. But to leave things here, is to suggest that social democracy has been able to express, and recuperate, all working class struggles on education—that since the 20's the working class has been completely under the thumb of its Tawneys and Croslands. In the long term sense, this has probably been true. But the article tends to ignore those moments when the possibility existed for the working class movement to go considerably further than its social democratic leaders—temporary, perhaps—on social democratic ideology of these struggles. The

campaign leading to the 1944 Education Act cannot simply be explained as a social democratic pressure group. The Council for Educational Advance, founded during the war, represented an alliance between the NUT and many sections of the working class movement. In his book, 'The New School Tie', GCT Giles describes the lively debates among parents and trade unionists that underlay this alliance. The upsurge then was not marked, of course, by the more spectacular kinds of working class struggle—but it had real, material effects: the fight in the Labour Party against the tripartitism of the Education Minister, Ellen Wilkinson; the election of CP members to the NUT executive. A certain impetus to struggle did exist, though it was largely confined to demanding the enforcement of Butler's provisions, rather than aiming at a radical restructuring of education. We can see similar developments—though this time on the narrower front of wages militancy—occurring among teachers in the late 60's and early 70's. These developments have been crucial in the formation of a sizeable layer of NUT members, whose practice can by no means be contained wholly within the concept of 'professionalism'. More strikingly still, what happened in Tameside last year provided clear evidence that the relationship of the working class to Labour's comprehensive reforms is by no means one of listless acceptance. Until a combination of legalist ideologies and the sell-outs of the union leadership's forced acceptance of the Tories' selection plans, many sections of workers had showed their willingness to go on strike in defence of comprehensivisation.

### Classroom Practice

The point here isn't the outcome of these struggles, so much as the way they demonstrate that the limits of social democratic ideology

are sometimes, in practice, exceeded by the actions both of teachers and sections of the working class. It is these developments which provide the basis on which to challenge the hold of social democratic ideas.

Similarly, on the question of educational practice. It is wrong to suggest that for all progressive teachers, their classroom activity is fundamentally a 'method of control', that rests on the establishment of an illusory 'community of interests' between teachers, the curriculum and the students. This is to neglect the contradiction between progressivism as an ideological system (which can be said to rest on such illusions) and the transformations that progressive practice has undergone, in the hands of radical teachers and their students, who develop a 'common interest'—but one based on an identification of themselves as members of the same class, an active historical force. In this situation, the effective role of progressive ideology, is to obscure the necessity of locating such a *classroom* practice in the context of a more general struggle of the working class to transform education. There is thus a *contradictory* relationship between the systems of ideas generated by social democracy, and the practice of sections of teachers, and, sometimes, of the working class.

The dangerous tendency of this article is to neglect this contradiction, and to develop an argument which can only suggest that no alternative exists for a frustrated working class to the panaceas of social democratic educational policy, but the beguiling populist demagoguery of the Black Papers.

Copies of 'Cultural Studies 10' (270 pages) can be obtained from:  
Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies,  
University of Birmingham, Birmingham 15,  
price £1.75.

KEN JONES

## Modest Price

MARX AND EDUCATION IN RUSSIA AND CHINA. Ronald Price. Croom Helm 1977. £9.95

Ronald Price's title is too modest. This book is more than just another text on comparative education: it is really about marxism, the basic analysis itself, as applied to the historical practice of the two socialist giants of the contemporary world. Price shows himself to be penetratingly knowledgeable and deeply concerned about Marx. He does not aspire, as so many self-styled Marxists do, to improve upon the original; merely to explicate, simply and tellingly, the main principles of the dialectic theory of historical materialism for those concerned about education, by reference to the corpus of Marx's and Engels' writing itself. That neither found time to consider 'education' systematically is shown to be inconsequential: the main thrust of their work was about consciousness, the scientific, *self-consciousness* open to mankind through the historical development of society. Education is one means by which social individuals attain a specific form of consciousness. Stripped of the ideological guises which it attains in definite historical circumstances—not least those of contemporary Russia and China—it is *the* means of promoting self-consciousness, of 'educating the educators'.

This is a point which Price brings home again and again in his careful, measured, unemotional exploration of Soviet and Chinese rhetoric and actual practice. I have never seen the contradictions of those societies laid bare more clearly and with less axe-grinding (save the grinding of the axe of marxism itself). Price is not concerned to espouse or attack: simply to observe and draw attention to the implications of practice. Nor is he concerned to moralise about contradictions, still less to bask in smug theoretical rectitude. At one level the book is a straight descriptive exercise, using the terms of current Soviet and People's Republic of China accounts, amplified by the comments of ex-patriates and visitors where official sources are incomplete. In the case of the People's Republic, Price can also refer to personal observation, but this he does sparingly, having covered the ground already in his earlier book, *Education in Communist China*.

As a marxist analysis the book naturally deals fully with the historical development of

present structures, scrutinising the present closely for clues to the future, but wisely refraining from naive speculation. The arterial sclerosis of the sixty-year-old Russian revolution nowhere appears more obvious than in the education system, but though not optimistic about the Soviet future, Price is perceptive about signs of similar tendencies in China, even during Mao's lifetime, and consequently avoids a simplistic 'maoist' enthusiasm about Russia's most strident critics.

While this may seem to add up to a rather sombre picture of the future for revolutionary mankind, the book is positive in its clear

enunciation of the way forward is the principles of Marx, Engels, Mao and Lenin are *really* applied. There is no mystery about the sort of educational practice demanded by marxism. The fact that it nowhere yet seems to be applied is, as Marx would say, simply a *historical* fact. It can be superseded by other historical facts, and an educational practice congruent with self-consciousness and self-direction is available to us *now*, even in bourgeois society—perhaps *especially* in bourgeois society.

DOUG HOLLY

## Radical Science Journal

No. 6/7 now available £1.75 176 pages

Contents: EDITORIAL—Science and the Labour Process; LES LEVIDOW—A Marxist Critique of the IQ Debate; MICHAEL BARNETT—Technology and the Labour Process; BOB YOUNG—Getting Started on Lysenkoism; RSJ SUBGROUP—Marxism, Psychoanalysis and Feminism; LES LEVIDOW—Grunwick as Technology and Class Struggle; MICHAEL YOUNG—Althusser's Marxism and English Social Science; GREG MCLENNAN—Will the Real Louis Althusser Stand Up. Short Reviews: Technology of Political Control; Sabotage/Industrial Conflict; Television/Technology&Cultural Form; Sociology of Knowledge. Notes: Energies, Priorities & Activities; Marxist Readings on Science, Technology, Ideology, Labour Process, Psychoanalysis.

No.5 still available £1.00 136 pages

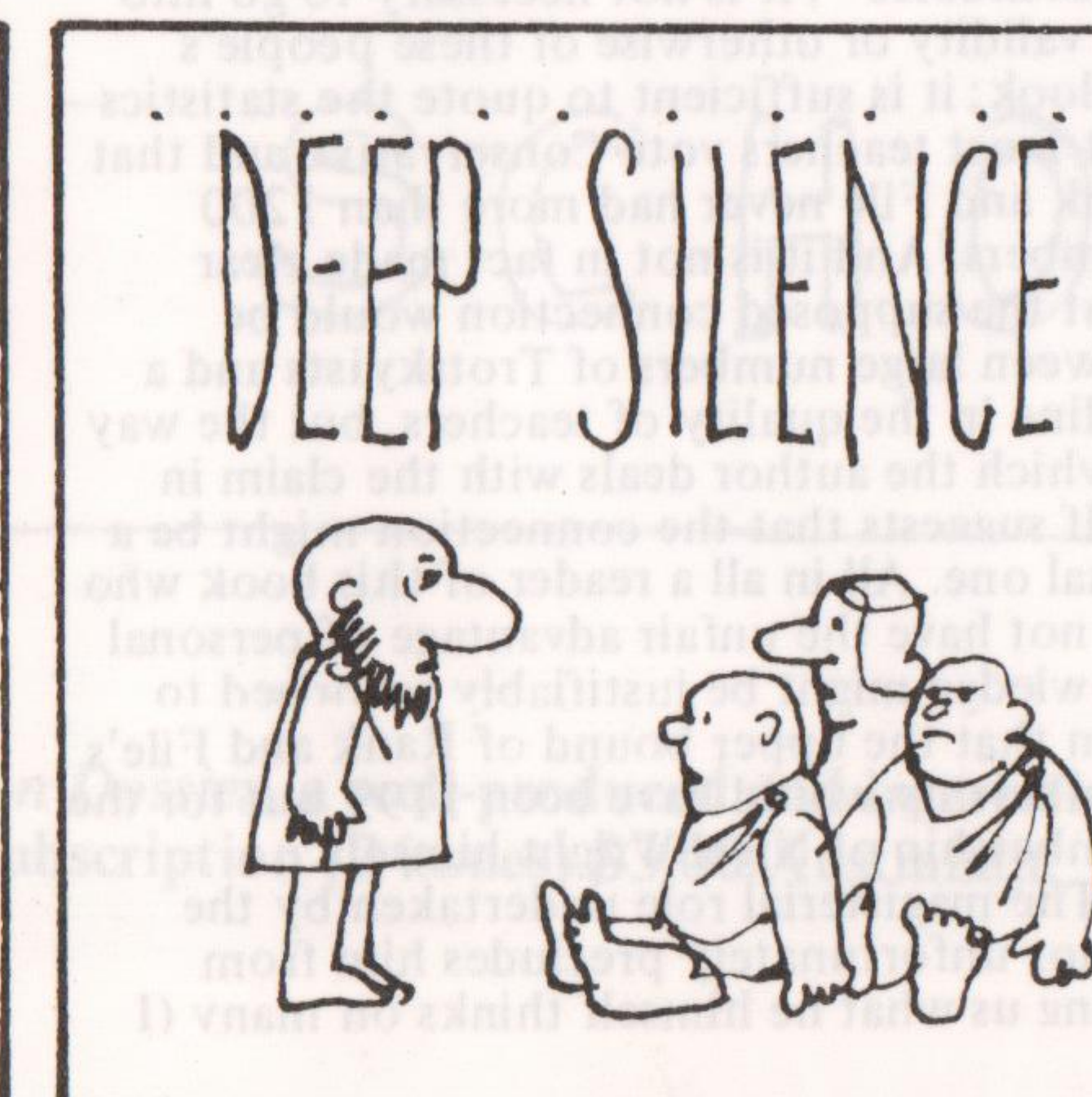
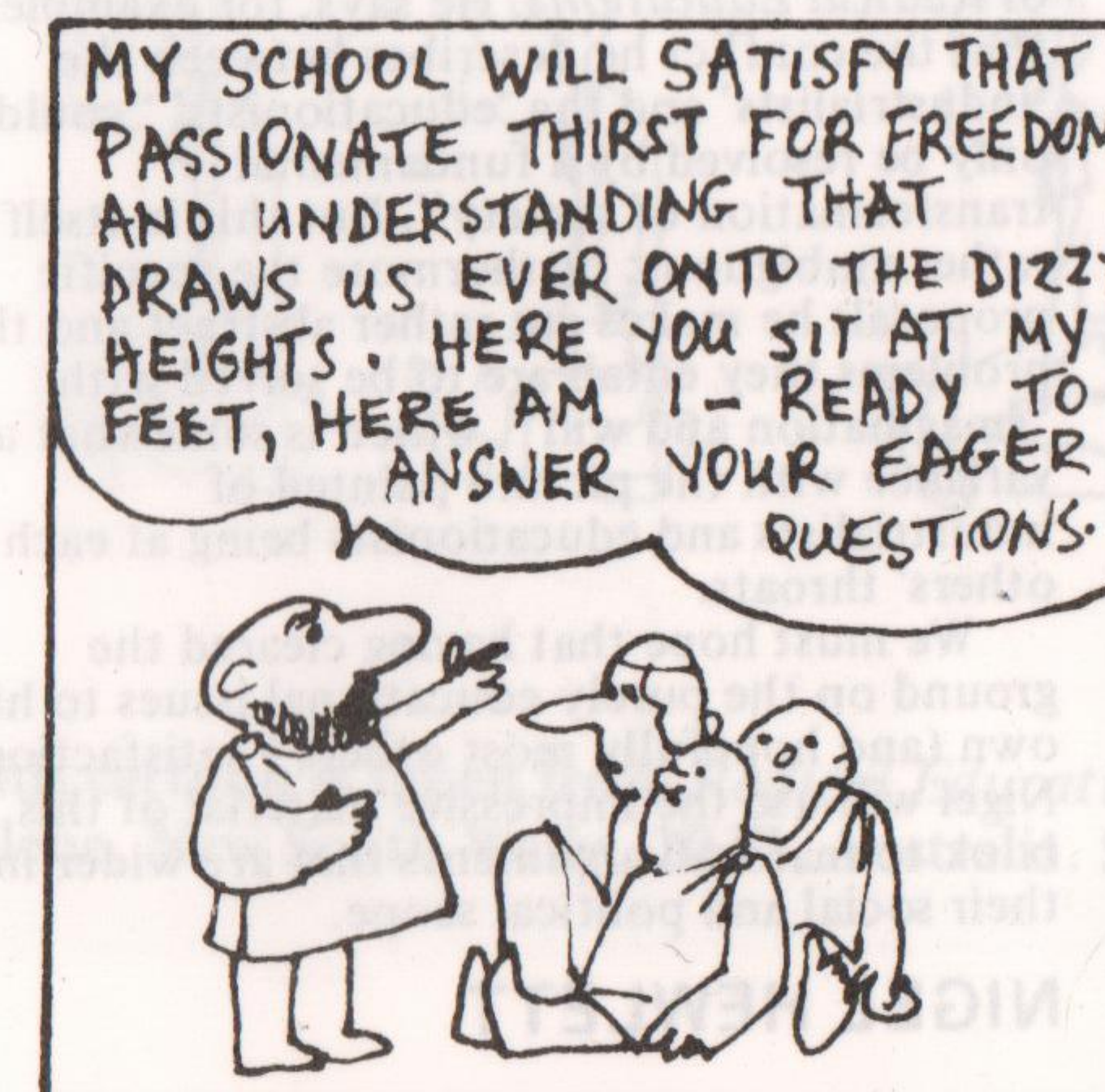
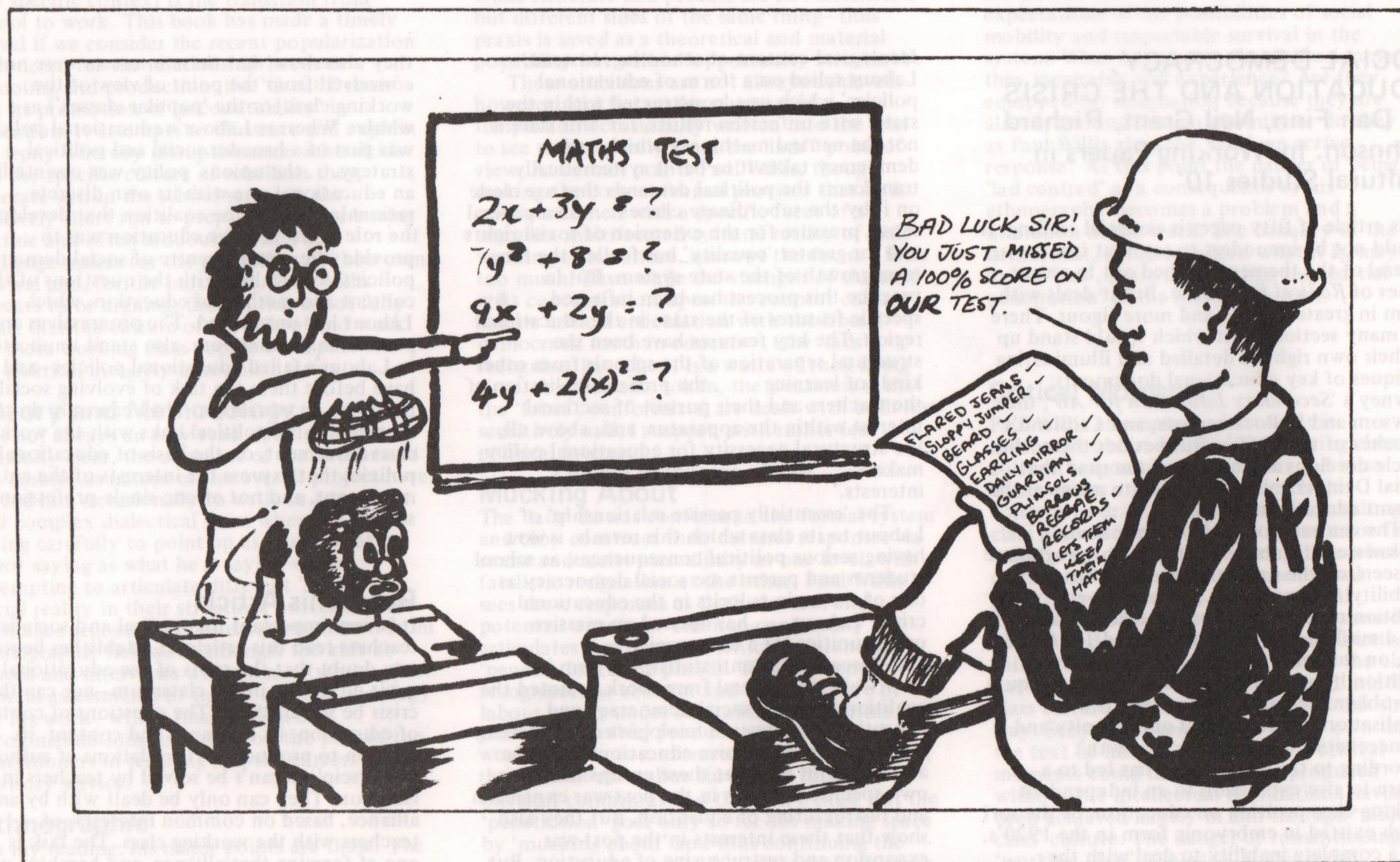
Contents: PATRICK PARRINDER—The Black Wave: science and social consciousness in modern science fiction; DAVID TRIESMAN—The Institute of Psychiatry Sackings; BOB YOUNG—Science is Social Relations. Letter: LOUP VERLET—La Course cu la Vie.

Subscription: £3.00 (individual), £9 (institutional) for 3 issues post paid.

Individual copies: please add 15p each for postage, etc.

Bulk orders: one-third reduction on 10 or more copies.

Radical Science Journal, 9 Poland St., London W1





# Here comes the judge

PROGRESS IN EDUCATION by Nigel Wright. Croom Helm £2.95

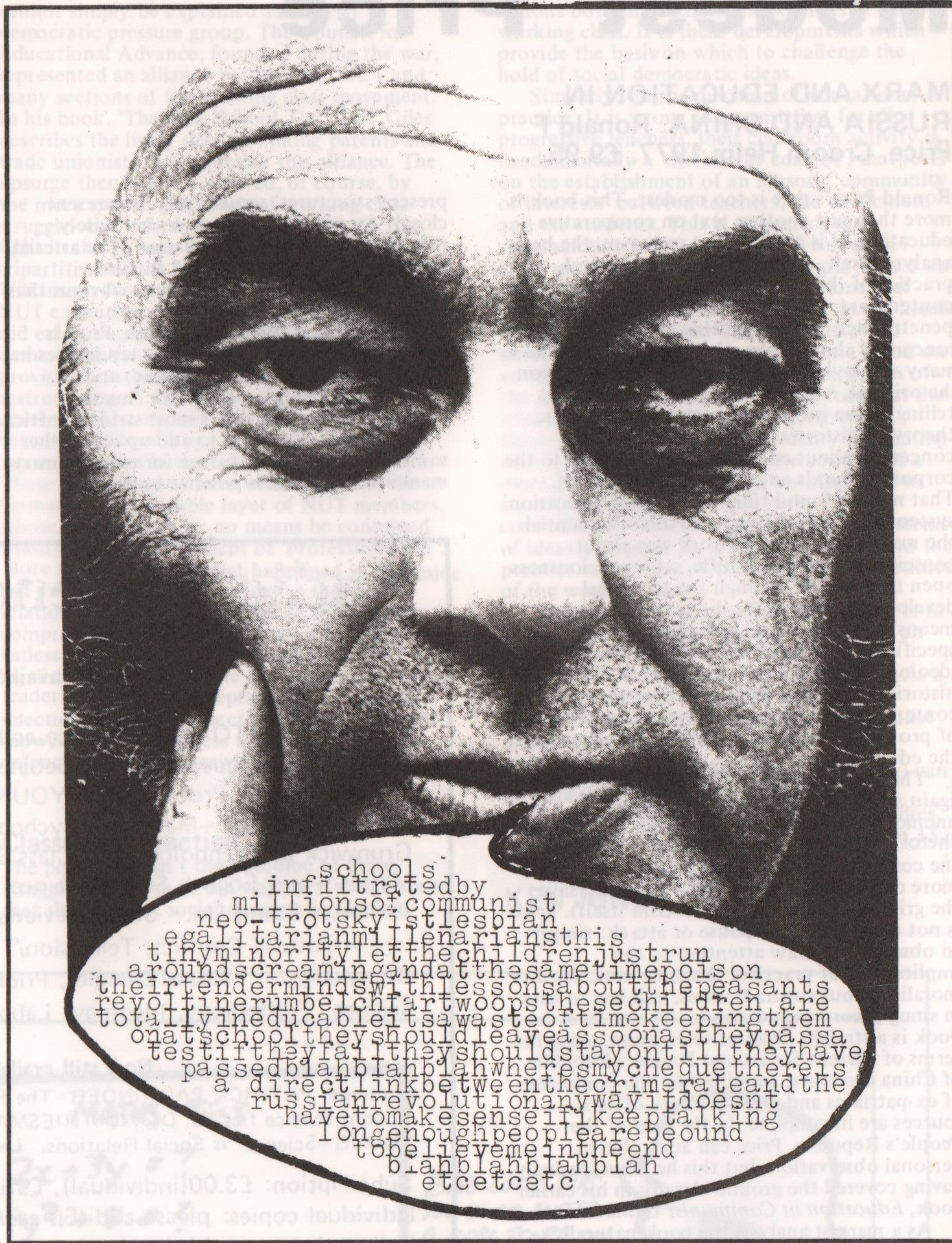
*Progress in Education* seeks an objective answer to the question: have standards fallen over the last few years, in particular as a result of certain recent innovations such as comprehensive schools and 'progressive' teaching methods? Objective, in so far as the author seeks the answer to the question in published research findings and government statistics. His conclusion is that there is, on balance, no evidence of such a decline; and he attacks (cuts to ribbons in fact) the Black Paper writers for their distortions of evidence and contradictory arguments.

The book is divided into two parts, Part one (entitled 'Evidence') describes the findings of recent major research projects on the issues of 'Basic Skills', 'The Modern Primary School', 'Streaming', 'Comprehensive Schools', (the quality of) 'Teachers', and 'Violence', 'Indiscipline and Truancy'. The author points out how, in many cases, the media (and the Black Papers) have distorted and misrepresented the research findings. Part two (entitled 'Argument') contains a straightforward account of modern ideas about the problems of interpretation of data, a detailed attack on the claims and arguments of the Black Papers, a chapter on 'Casualty' (did the progressives produce the 'decline', or did the 'decline' produce the progressives?) and ends with a short series of 'Conclusions'.

The net result of the evidence and argument is that: 1) there is no evidence that educational standards have fallen; but there is evidence, on the other hand, that *expectations* have risen—and therein lies the explanation for present-day dissatisfaction with educational standards, and 2) the reason that research has revealed little significant difference in the (measurable) results obtained from traditional and progressive approaches is that there really is little significant difference between the two approaches.

This book is impressive in many ways. I found much of it useful and interesting and in particular it provides some wonderful ammunition for use in everyday discussions and arguments about decline in educational standards—in the staffroom, with parents, your local newspaper etc. It is also apparent that all the material in the book has been exhaustively and painstakingly researched.

There is however a curious self-imposed limitation on the argument of the book. The argument throughout (except fleetingly, right at the end) is constrained by what I can only describe as a quasi-legal model. The author says that he has tried to use only the kind of evidence which might be admitted in a court of law; he concludes that there is 'reasonable doubt' about the charge that progressive education has produced a decline in standards; the verdict given, therefore, is (it must be a court in Scotland) 'not proven'. It is as though the author has set out to convince the maximum number of people possible on the sole question to which the book is addressed; and in doing so he has created an imaginary jury who are not easy to convince. There may be some value in this exercise but it does have its drawbacks. Since the only question asked is whether a claim is valid or not it is sufficient to refute or uphold it with the *minimum* evidence or argument. A stronger argument is never used where a weaker one will do. And any questions (such as streaming, as described in the book) which cannot be decided upon by the available research evidence and which involve obvious political and social issues are stated and then consigned to the individual reader's own conscience.



And thus in dealing with the claim 'that teaching attracts a disproportionate number of 'subversives', 'neo-Trotskyites' or other 'undesirables', it is not necessary to go into the validity or otherwise of these people's outlook; it is sufficient to quote the statistics—that most teachers vote Conservative and that Rank and File never had more than 1200 members. And it is not in fact made clear what the supposed connection would be between large numbers of Trotskyists and a decline in the quality of teachers, but the way in which the author deals with the claim in itself suggests that the connection might be a causal one. All in all a reader of this book who did not have the unfair advantage of personal knowledge might be justifiably surprised to learn that the upper bound of Rank and File's membership would have been 1199 but for the membership of Nigel Wright himself.

The magisterial role undertaken by the author unfortunately precludes him from telling us what he himself thinks on many (I

think important) issues. There are however one or two hints that he has not entirely abandoned his socialist roots (he was also a founder-editor of *Radical Education*). He says, for example, that the conflict he describes between the 'industrialists' and the 'educationists' "could only be resolved by a fundamental transformation of society". But this in itself is rather ambiguous; furthermore the specific proposals he makes are rather abstract and the problems they entail are to be solved with "imagination and will", which is somewhat at variance with the picture painted of industrialists and educationists being at each others' throats.

We must hope that having cleared the ground on the purely educational issues to his own (and hopefully most others') satisfaction, Nigel will use the impressive material of this book to marshal arguments that are wider in their social and political scope.

**NIGEL HEWLETT**

# Islands of freedom

ON TEACHING by Herbert Kohl. Methuen, London 1977.

Herbert Kohl's *On Teaching* is the product of a man who has kept his faith when it has become either fashionable or unavoidable for many to lose theirs. It is a book imbued with deeply humane feelings and generous judgements without a trace of cynicism. These qualities are at once its strength and its weakness; the latter because in teaching we have to accept that the faith which abounded in the late 60's was no substitute for rigorous analysis and political struggle in places far removed from the 'open' classroom, the free-school, or whatever.

Kohl includes a section on 'The Politics of Teaching' but no mention is made of struggles in the workplace, or of any historical development affecting class or race outside education. The book therefore has a timeless quality—it is like a cry from the more fecund world of eight or nine years ago. Kohl's panaceas are exactly those of 'alternative' educators like Holt, Herndon and Dennison, as if such alternatives are good for all time, regardless of developments in the society in which they are located. While the reader is, therefore, constantly aware of Kohl's naiveté, it must be said that there is also the pleasure of his great energy and conviction, occasionally issuing in unintended humour. A good example is when, obviously overcome by his own enthusiasm for collecting junk material from the local School Board warehouse he adds: "Bring a truck or van with you" (!)

*On Teaching* is not a theoretical work, but it is plainly informed by the kind of theory that radical teachers both in Britain and America have understood and modified over nearly a decade. One wonders, for instance, why he bothers to restate the case for considering students' cultural strengths rather

than their deficiencies (p141). More worrying however, is his apparent belief that for teachers to so consider is all that is necessary to alter the oppression to which working-class and black children are subject.

Likewise, Kohl's suggestions for action, provocative and ingenious as they often are, are very little updated from what he was saying in his earlier book, *The Open Classroom*. Now, as then, what informs his writing is the laudable desire to give teachers something they can grasp and actually use for change. He offers many useful ideas particularly in the area of personal relations. What inevitably happens, however, is that this degenerates into a kind of naive prescriptivism, which vastly oversimplifies the business of change in education. For example, he strikes this note when he says:

"Many teachers fear that students will be lazy when allowed freedom. Actually, given the time and atmosphere of trust, young people often want to learn more than educational theorists claim they are capable of learning." (p135)

Humane and liberal as this is, it amounts to the weary jargon of an earlier age when 'pupil resistance' was taken simply as an educational problem. Again, when he describes how he deals with fights (p77), the uncritical liberalism is hackneyed, and one has the feeling that Dennison said it all better anyway six years ago.

It must be said that Kohl does not advocate 'free' or alternative schools *outside* the existing system. His notion is of minischools located inside existing schools, rather like islands of openness and freedom in a sea of reaction and oppression. He never seriously confronts the relation between such 'minischools' and the wider society; the major part of the book is concerned with techniques and strategies within them. His message is always that schools can be changed if only teachers are strong/wise/

creative enough to do so. Such idealism is often very stimulating, but misses so much that radical teachers have learned since free-schools were 'news'.

Ultimately, Kohl's problem is that he wants to be practical in an area of such complexity that any uncontexted prescriptions *must* be naive. Ironically, his own comment that:

"There is no single way to go about changing a school." (p132)

makes nonsense of much of the rest of the book. A good example is his "Four Principles of Being a Bad Student/Teacher" designed to aid change. Remarks like:

"Don't do things that seem foolish to you ..."

"Look upon your school as a small barbaric society."

"If your school is ugly, make it beautiful,"

are little more than verbiage. Perhaps more dangerous are simplistic notions like:

"If school is interesting, students will stay.

If not, they ought not be confined." (p138)

or injunctions like:

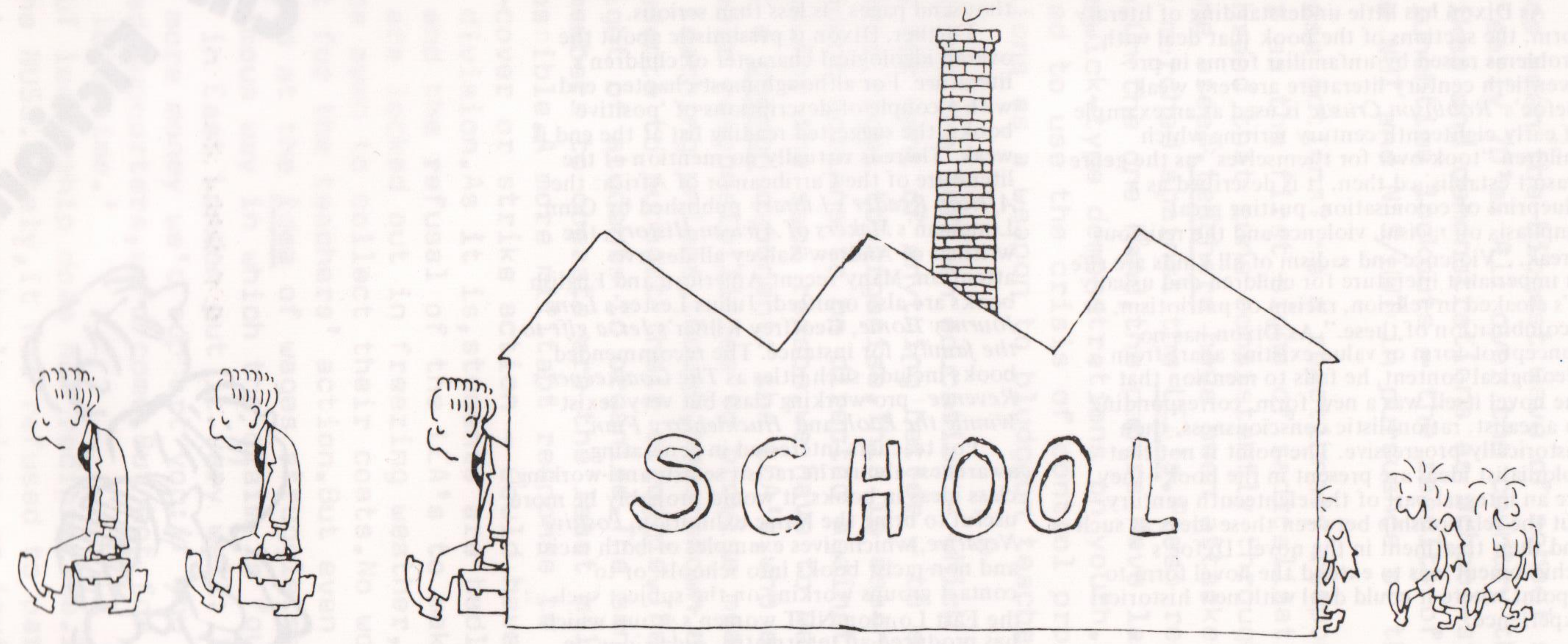
"You, the teacher, can give up the power to punish or grade students. . . ." (p138)

The point is that giving up grading is not something teachers can do alone, and to explore the reasons for this involves a form of critical social theory never glimpsed in this book.

Of course, some of Kohl's advice, especially as regards making allies amongst parents, is useful.

In the last analysis, Kohl's book remains an intensely personal document, full of the kind of anecdotal detail that makes interesting reading, but marred by its insistence that educational reform can be achieved in isolation. Finally, Kohl's optimism provides very little ammunition for any socialist strategy.

**RICHARD GORRINGE**



This cartoon is taken from *Radical Education Dossier*, a well-produced and interesting journal, available from 10, Reuss Street, Glebe, New South Wales, 2037, Australia. Subscription (3 issues) \$3.00 Australian.



# BOOK REVIEWS BOOK

## Caught Short

### CATCHING THEM YOUNG:

1. *Sex, Race and Class in Children's Fiction*; 2. *Political Ideas in Children's Fiction* by Bob Dixon. Published by Pluto Press, £1.80 each.

These books are disappointing for they go little beyond what has already been written on the subject, both in terms of description and analysis. The sections on racism and sexism in particular, draw heavily on existing works—the usual attack on Enid Blyton, on Hugh Lofting's *Dr Dolittle*, regurgitation of Coard's book on West Indian children, of the Clarks' research in USA on racial identification, the standard swipe at Freud for his views on women.

Although some interesting points are introduced they are not developed. We are often told that the 1870 Education Act, which gave educational opportunity to the working class, was important, but no analysis is developed of its effect on subsequent literature. We are told that *Little Women*, one of the first examples of books for girls, published in 1868, is sexist, but no attempt is made to place it in historical context nor show why such a genre was established then.

However, the main weakness is Dixon's method, which in its vulgar approach to literature strongly resembles an earlier oeuvre the Pluto stable, Paul O'Linn's *Them & Us in Literature*. Dixon's crude marxism has three main aspects: ahistorically, failure to pay attention to literary form, denial of any literary value existing apart from ideological content.

Ahistorically he treats all books as if they were written in 1978 and judges all ideas by contemporary progressive standards. Hence Shakespeare, writing in a pre-capitalist period, is seen as racist: "Shylock and Fagin (sic) Othello and Caliban all deserve a second look, for there's no need for anyone to accept racism in literature, not even if expressed in deathless blank verse (sic)". Shakespeare is thus placed on the same level as writers of contemporary racist fiction such as *Souther and The Cay*.

As Dixon has little understanding of literary form, the sections of the book that deal with problems raised by unfamiliar forms in pre-twentieth century literature are very weak. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is used as an example of early eighteenth century writing which children "took over for themselves" as the genre wasn't established then. It is described as a blueprint of colonisation, putting great emphasis on racism, violence and the religious streak. "Violence and sadism of all kinds are rife in imperialist literature for children and usually it's cloaked in religion, racism or patriotism, or a combination of these." As Dixon has no concept of form or value existing apart from ideological content, he fails to mention that the novel itself was a new form, corresponding to a realist, rationalistic consciousness, then historically progressive. The point is not that colonialist ideas are present in the book—they are an integral part of the eighteenth century—but the relationship between these ideas as such and their treatment in the novel. Defoe's achievement was to extend the novel form to a point where it could deal with new historical experience.

### Real World

As Dixon concentrates so avidly on ideas he fails to understand the attraction or interest of modern books such as those by Alan Garner, Ursula le Guin and Tolkien. "Lord of the Rings" is dismissed as having no reference to the "real world" and therefore it "persuades (people) that it's not possible to do anything about the problems of the world! He cannot adequately explain the difference between Tolkien's

writing and say, William Mayne's. Tolkien does not reduce his writing to an identification with the central characters and therefore an acceptance of their viewpoints but attempts an epic and quasi-allegorical form of writing. This at first appears different but is a nostalgic re-working of redundant forms, the Other World literature of, for instance, Middle English. What is needed is an explanation of why this form should be revived in the twentieth century and how this revival of a self-enclosed other world is ideologically determined. To criticise it as a religious book, and comment scathingly on the use of black and white imagery for good and evil, which is to be found "often several times per page . . . and there are more than a thousand pages" is less than serious.

Further, Dixon is pessimistic about the overall ideological character of children's literature. For although most chapters end with a couple of descriptions of "positive" books, the suggested reading list at the end is weak. There is virtually no mention of the literature of the Caribbean or of Africa: the *African Reader's Library* published by Ginn, Longman's *Makers of African History*, the writings of Andrew Salkey all deserve attention. Many recent American and English books are also omitted: Julius Lester's *Long Journey Home*, Geoffrey Kilner's *Jet, a gift to the family*, for instance. The recommended books include such titles as *The Goalkeeper's Revenge*—pro-working class but very sexist—*Winnie the Pooh* and *Huckleberry Finn*.

For teachers interested in generating awareness about the racist, sexist, anti-working class ideas in books, it would probably be more useful to bring the Name exhibition, *Positive Negative*, which gives examples of both racist and non-racist books into schools; or to contact groups working on the subject such as the East London NUT women's group which has produced an informative slide show on sexism in primary/infant school material.

However we must be aware that children's literature, or any literature, is not just a case of *ideas*, nor is there a conspiracy theory of literature, *catching* them young. We must create a critical, marxist, historical understanding of literature and not rely on the crude analysis offered by Dixon.

HILDA KEAN



Political Ideas in Children's Fiction  
Political Ideas in Children's Fiction  
Political Ideas in Children's Fiction  
Political Ideas in Children's Fiction

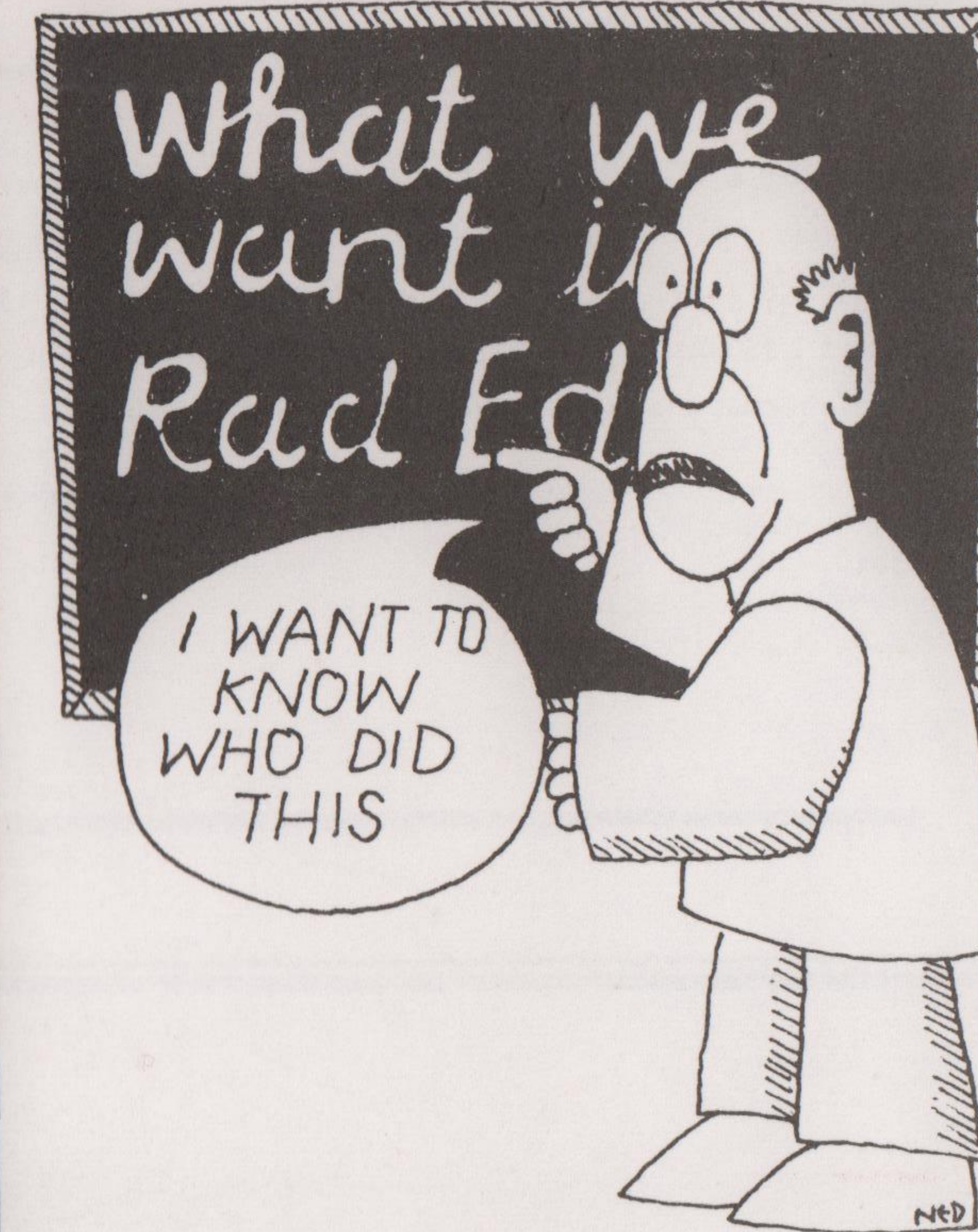


### EDITORIAL NOTE APOLOGY RADICAL EDUCATION LIVES!

A great many apologies to our subscribers and regular readers for our unexplained (till now!) absence. Because of a combination of events involving all of us either in other commitments, illnesses, new jobs, or moving, we were unable to meet regularly enough to produce the journal in September and January. We also have had to re-direct the post temporarily, and for awhile this led to it never being where we were when we needed it!

Added to this was a collective feeling that we were stretched beyond our available resources and that it was crucial to our survival to expand the Editorial Board. Our search for new members has resulted in the introduction of Jean Gould and Graham Sharp to the Board, and we are very pleased that they have now joined us. We think we could usefully expand a little more, and would be very interested to hear from any of our readers who would like to discuss joining the Editorial or Advisory Board. Thanks, and again. . . our apologies.

Subscribers will of course receive the number of copies for which they have paid regardless of our unavoidable price increase.



STUP PRESS: SCHOOL STUDENTS ORGANISE

March 18th: This week has seen the biggest wave of school student militancy since the early 70's. All over the country there have been protests, strikes and demonstrations as school-students have responded to lunchtime lockouts — the results of sanctions applied by the NUT and NAS/UUR in pursuance of their pay claim.

How should we see these actions? Is a reactionary response to teacher militancy? Or as the first signs of radicalisation? There is no political thread that runs consistently through the students' actions. In some areas, teachers have been attacked. In others, students have marched against the LEA's. Press response has been fairly uniform. On the one hand, the papers have lamented the influence of Grunwick-type demonstrations on youth. On the other, they have tried to use the crisis of control provoked by the students' actions as a weapon to bludgeon teachers back to normal work.

It is very important for the left in education — which has supported the sanctions for want of anything better — to support the students and their right to organise. This is essential if the tendency for student actions to be directed against teachers is to be halted. For the same reason, we have to wage a common struggle against a common opponent: the LEA's, who should be forced to fulfill their responsibilities to provide meals. The leaderships of the teaching unions, though, have shown no interest in winning students to support their struggle. They adamantly oppose the right of students to organise. The sanctions they have asked members to operate are the least militant forms of action possible. A more militant response to the employers — such as no-cover or strike action — would have prevented teacher/student division. As it is, students are badly hit by the sanctions — and the refusal of the LEA's to make alternative plans. They are locked out in freezing weather, sometimes without the chance even to collect their coats. No wonder they feel some contempt for the teachers' action. But even this hostility is not directed at the idea of wages struggle, so much as towards the pusillanimous way in which the claim is fought for. One 15 year old boy in East London put it very well: 'If you went on strike for more money we'd support you; if you went on a demo and you needed supporters, we'd come. But not for these poxy little strikes at lunchtime.'

Unfortunately, the NUT leadership does not reciprocate. It refuses to recognise the NUSS. Lately, it has refused to participate in CRE enquiry into racism in schools, unless an invitation to the NUSS is withdrawn.