

RANK & FILE

Rank and File '83 stands for:

- no cuts
- no redeployment or job loss
- no misuse of short term contracts
- parity of conditions for primary teachers in terms of cover and 1/5 marking and preparation time
- a single salary scale Restoration of pay to Houghton level in a flat rate increase
- no headteachers in the Union
- democratisation of the Union. Abolition of Rule 8
- opposition to racism in and outside school. Support for the struggle of black people fighting racism
- women's involvement in every aspect of the Union. No tokenism

Rank and File '83 is a campaigning group of teachers with the National Union of Teachers, who see the need to link up and organise all those teachers who are opposed to attacks on education, teachers' conditions and pay. This new group was launched in Autumn 1983 by a number of classroom teachers from all over the country, without the initiative of any political party. The group is socialist in view, but this does not mean expecting people to join with a 'socialist programme' in their heads. We want people who understand the need to fight but not to despair or follow the path of 'polite socialism'.

Join Rank and File '83 Now!

THE STRUCTURE OF RANK AND FILE

A message from the National Co-ordinators

Ideally we see ourselves as envelope shufflers! A means of keeping the machinery running. We hope that News-sheets will come out more regularly and be used as a means of communicating between committee meetings. Anything urgent or of interest can be sent to us for circulation. It is in a way changing the nature of the job. We are facilitators, our role is secretarial and not a point of reference inside the context of how Rank and File organises itself. Use us and the News-sheet please! We are not experts. (John & Collette)

Rank and File Groups meet locally and elect representatives to the National Committee which meets as necessary and reports back to the local group.

Rank and File is not dominated or controlled by any political organisation.

Local groups are autonomous

In its first year Rank and File '83 gained over 100 members. It was active in many areas of England and kept close links with Rank and File Scotland. We were effective at conference in Blackpool and again at Scarborough.

JOIN RANK AND FILE

Subscriptions cost £10 please send it to the following address:

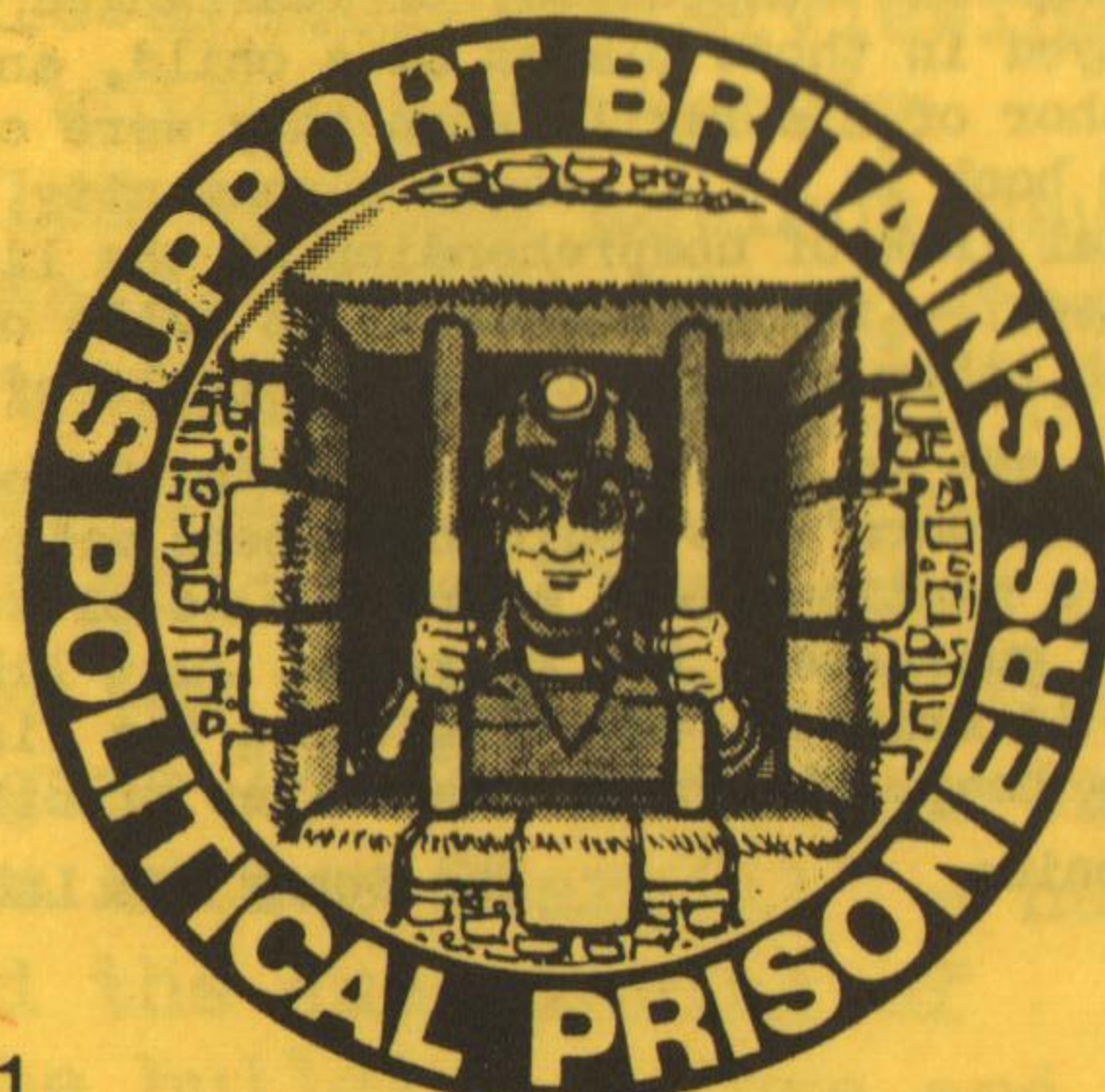
Martyn Coles
Treasurer, Rank and File
11 Hollar Road
London N16 7NT

AMNESTY



REINSTATE SACKED MINERS
SUPPORT THE PRISONERS STOP THE TRIALS

National Organisation
MINERS PRISONERS AND
SUPPORTERS, Secretary,
John Wilkin
26 Old Hall Gardens
Coddington,
Newark, Notts.



South Yorkshire Defence Campaign, 73 West Street, Sheffield S1.

RANK AND FILE TEACHER

* MAGAZINE OF RANK+FILE '83

A PAPER OF NUT CLASSROOM TEACHERS



50P

1985

Who's a good boy then ?

Keith Joseph wants us to assess each other or to submit to his assessment and to be rewarded accordingly. The idea is that if you show your colleagues up badly you will be rewarded. In Westminster, we can see that council employees are experiencing now what the future holds for us.

Westminster Council employees have been told that if they are involved in political activity on or off duty which is detrimental to the interest of the council this will be regarded as a disciplinary offence.

It is Westminster Council which has been spearheading the Court attack on the GLC and ILEA. Westminster finances at present are a quarter of ILEA's funds. That's why they want out! They want to keep their money here in Westminster.

An indicator of what is on the way for us: - a free colour TV and video was the prize offered to employees for filling in the most nasty evidence on their colleagues on what could be cut!

We are now organising joint meetings through a public sector sub-committee of the Trades Council with the aim of co-ordinating the response between the Town Hall and ILEA unions.

Martin Spafford
(Westminster R&F)

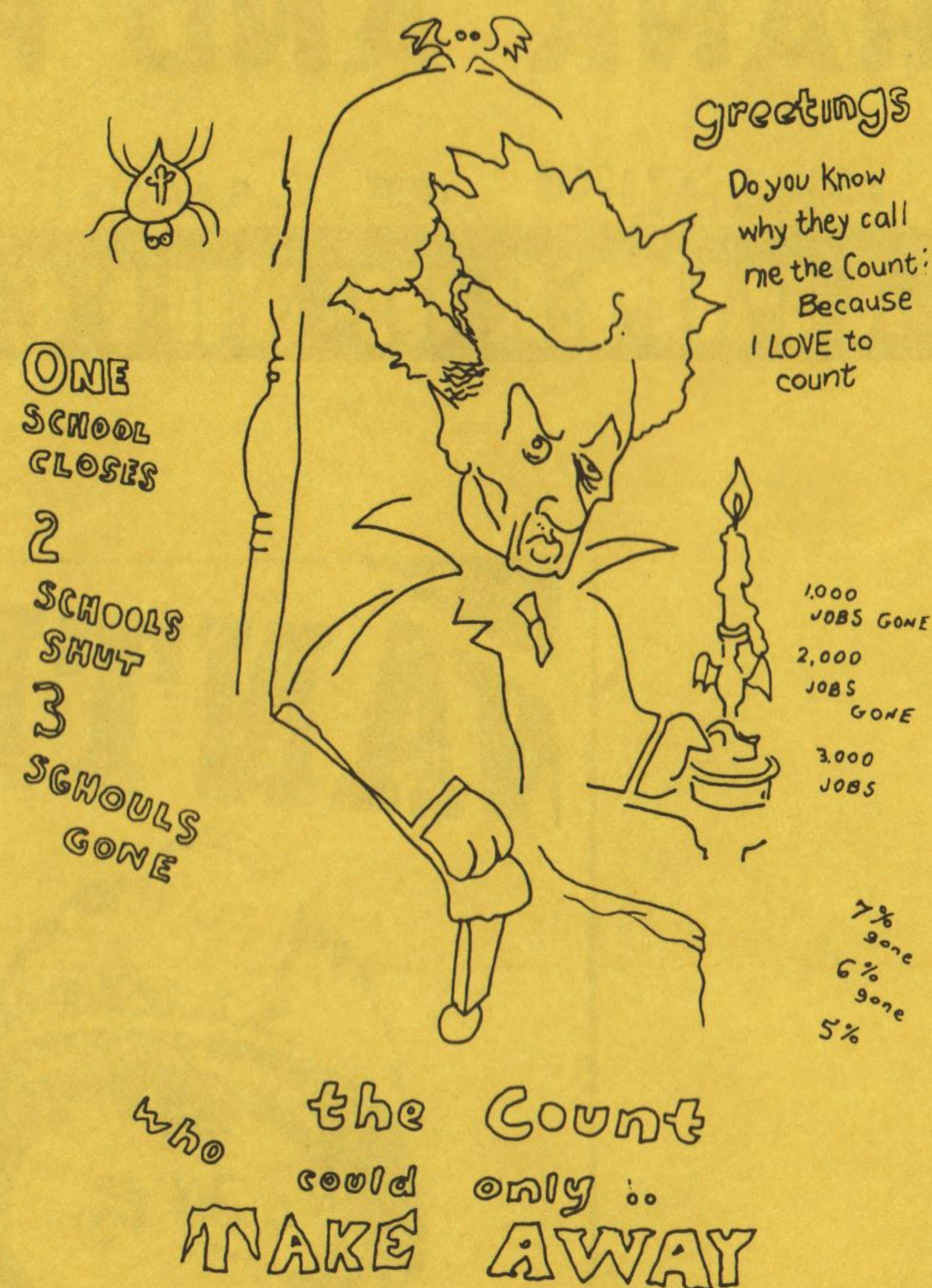
P.S. Did anyone spot a queue of people standing in the rain in Church street, Westminster during the NUT three-day strike? They were lining up to sign the NUT petition. Honest!

a good job of work

A Good Job of Work

If all we had to do was simply become more and more skillful then we could admire and applaud the craft and brilliance of the engineers and fence-builders the plumbers and welders the fitters and designers the draughtsmen and the architects the planners and the chemists who made Concentration Camps the clever places they were.

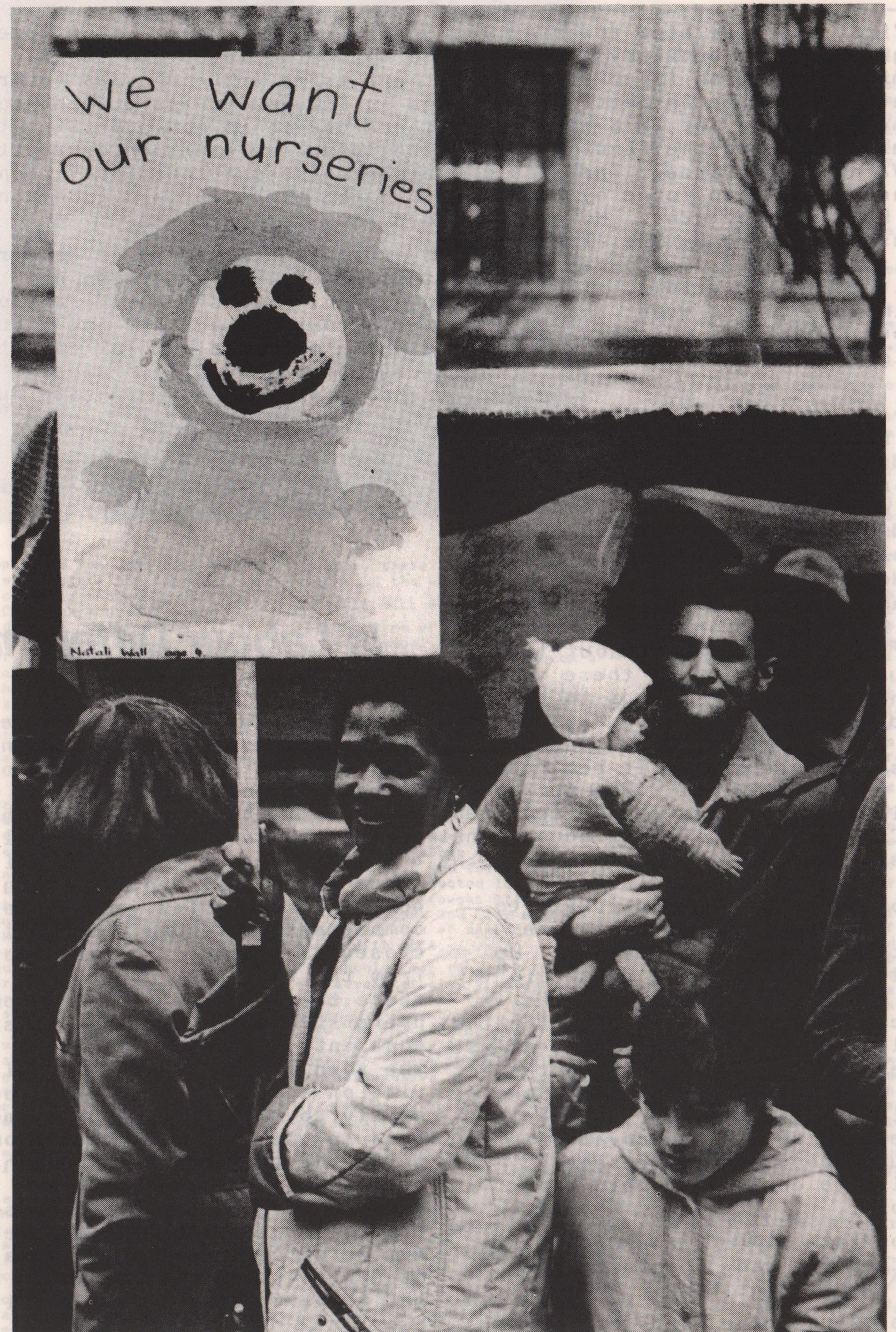
Mike Rosen



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CUTS BY LAW



Lobbying Hackney Council before a Council meeting which voted not to set a rate (7.3.85)

SPECIAL EDUCATION- TORY THINKING AND THE 1981 ACT

The first positive step towards integration into ordinary schools of children needing 'special' education was made in Section 10 of the Education Act 1976 which actually preceded the findings of the Warnock Committee. The Section was never put into force by the then Labour Government. However, it was influenced by the already published reports of the Warnock Committee's deliberations. Thus its non-implementation meant that the Warnock Report was effectively consigned to the dustbin at that time.

However, educational psychologists were beginning to refuse to refer children who would normally have been referred, to special schools arguing instead that such kids could be educated in an ordinary school. One can sympathise with the determination of such psychologists to achieve a back-door implementation of the Warnock recommendations but without the adequate resourcing in these ordinary schools. It has to be asked whether these enthusiasts were taking into account the best needs of these kids. It remained like this until 1981. The term handicapped was removed and replaced by 'Children with special educational needs'. Under the description S.E.N. some 20% of children already in schools were considered likely to have some special needs at some point in their school career. Up until then 2% had been deemed in need of special education. The key clause was Clause 2 of which the final demands are "the efficient use of resources". Clause 14 of the Act says that Maintained Special Schools should be brought under similar procedures for the approval of closure proposals as presently applied to county and coluntary schools.

If you take Clause 2 and Clause 14 together you can begin to see Tory thinking at work.

Clause 2 uses the word 'efficient' twice. Clause 14 provides for the closure of special schools.

Special schools cost a lot more money to maintain, equip and staff. In their terms efficiency as referred to in Clause 2 means cutting costs therefore it is not surprising that the Tory Government enforced its plans for educational provision when the previous Labour Government had not.

As far as the Tories are concerned their priority is cutting, not children. Consequently, authorities across the country are struggling to meet the special educational needs of children in ordinary schools without any adequate funding from the Government.

Chris Ambrose
Oldham Rank and File

Is Labour Different ?

In Oldham the Labour controlled authority have recently announced plans to shut one special school altogether, close another one down and move it half way across the town into a school which is already a special school for older children, those older children will then move down the road a few yards into a comprehensive school which will be closed as a comprehensive! Apart from the fact that nobody yet knows where the children from the comprehensive will be going, this apparently senseless juggling around the town of its special school population appears to have been posed mainly to save the authority money because the special school from which the children will move half way across the town is to be adapted for use as a primary school due to a large increase in the number of children in the area otherwise the authority would have had to have built a new school.

CUTS BY LAW - RATECAPPING AND BEYOND:



Rate-capping is now upon us. At the time of writing all the top-tier, precepting councils including Labour, ILEA, GLC, South Yorkshire and Merseyside have complied and set a legal rate, despite Labour Party policy of non-compliance. The eight London Boroughs, Liverpool, Sheffield and Manchester along with seven others did not set a rate on 7th March, but then they were not legally required to as were the precepting authorities.

Individual Labour Councillors have been put under enormous personal pressure by threat of disqualification, sure-charging and now injunctions as in the case of Hackney and Islington who are not to borrow or use rent income after 1st April.

The Hackney Borough Workers have decided to continue working without pay if the injunctions go ahead, and some argued to give the Councils IOU's rather than going on strike. This action makes it very difficult for other council workers affiliated to London Bridge to take supportive strike action. It is claimed that by keeping services going rather than striking the support of local people will be maintained. The only way to win the support of local people is by involving them and combating their prejudices and mis-information about local services and also agreeing that much is wrong but rate-capping is no answer. Strikes with occupations and the maintenance of emergency essential services form a far better basis to build solidarity action from. Of course many councillors would prefer their employees not to strike, but then their jobs are not on the line. Lack of militant defence of jobs will also be used by councillors as an excuse for complying.

The Councils that are continuing to oppose rate-capping want to negotiate the restoration of rate support grant - the millions of pounds the Government have withheld from them: In ILEA's case this is now over £400m. Their only protection is if they all stick together as then the Government will not be able to put commissioners in to run services.

However, there are already many cracks in the unity needed.

ILEA/GLC SELL OUT

The decision of the GLC and ILEA to set a legal rate was a particular blow, but should not have been a surprise either to those who heard Ken Livingstone's 'Bent Shield' speech a few weeks ago, or to those of us who have experienced ILEA as a cost cutting, school closing, job cutting, anti-trade union employer.

The cynicism created by these council's two-faced-ness is difficult to estimate, but there is no doubt that large numbers of parents, teachers, and many others had illusions in the Labour leadership at County Hall. Not least Mike Loosley the recently elected ILTA General Secretary who fought Richard Rieser and other Rank and File members on the main plank of making common cause with ILEA.

The problem for those in the union who advocated unity with our Labour employers is that they ignored history. Remember the Labour opposition to the 1972 Housing Finance Act and how the Clay Cross Councils were left alone in their fight against massive rent increases. Here too the mass of Labour Councils were pledged to break the law just as the hit-list Labour Councils are now 'pledged' to defy the 1984 Rates Act but in the end it was tenants on rent strikes that continued opposition.

Or take the Scottish experience where rate-capping has been a reality for the last four years. Despite all the fine words of opposition every council has complied and reduced expenditure to permissible levels and with it the number of jobs and level of resources. In Scotland too, the Councils used creative accountability, reserves and other means to stave off cuts in jobs and services, but as they lost their unity and the confidence of their work-forces natural wastage - the creeping cancer of job loss - has taken its toll.

LINK WITH OTHER UNIONS

Consequently our strategy for dealing with massive grant penalties and rate-capping must link up with all council and LEA employees in opposing all job loss. The Councils, if they support us in this fight, should get our support but it is far more likely that they will attempt to discipline us or use the courts to stop those who fight job loss.

NUT POLICY

For the NUT this must mean a change of policy.

No longer can we just oppose Compulsory Redundancy.

We must oppose all means that are used to reduce teacher numbers.

Any re-deployment scheme without replacement must be opposed.

Non-filling of vacancies or the non-re-engagement of teachers on fixed term contracts or early retirement without replacement must all be opposed.

This will require much more active union involvement for all members at school. A policy of total non-co-operation/non-identification with teaching and non-teaching staff job loss.

Where staff are not replaced they should not be covered.

Where new rotas or timetables are drawn up which entail job loss we should work shadow timetables leaving uncovered those classes or duties that would have been carried out by the non-replaced staff.

This policy to be successful will HAVE TO ACTIVELY INVOLVE PARENTAL SUPPORT. This can be built if we are honest and open about the effects of cuts on children's education. Parents have a lot of influence and power especially if their anger is directed.

Occupations or organised keeping of children away from school on certain days can be very effective.

The NUT will have to adapt its rigid structure especially the Action Committee and Rule 8 and allow Divisions to authorise such defensive action. If this doesn't occur far more widespread unofficial action seems likely. The Executive may well hide behind the 1984 Trade Union Act as Solihull has already shown they are willing to do.

We now have to realise we are going into prolonged, and much more severe attacks on educational provision than any of us have previously experienced. We can succeed in halting the attack, but only if we adapt our Union and work with other public sector unions much more closely on the ground.

Richard Rieser (Hackney R&F)



1985-SALARIES • 1985

Annual Conference

1985

Scarborough

assess



The Salary policy adopted at Scarborough was a gain for policies which could involve the mass of ordinary classroom teachers, but the tactics necessary to win the fight were left to the Executive and National Officers. This 'mistake' could in the end have disastrous consequences for all teachers far beyond this year's salary claim. The stakes are very high.

SINGEE SCALE

The combining of Scale 1 - 4 in a single scale is a move to get rid of the divisive hierarchical scale system and is a recognition, not only that many experienced teachers had become stuck at the top of their scale, largely due to falling rolls; but also particularly in smaller schools, that many teachers wish to work collectively as equals. Recently it has become clear that the employers and Sir Keith Joseph still see any progress towards the top of this scale as being linked to some form of merit assessment.

Nearly
^ FLAT RATE

The minimum increase of £1200 for all teachers from 1st April; while not the flat-rate increase we have fought so hard to get for the last 3 years, it is more than a nodding concession from our leadership to the pressure from the mass of teachers for a fairer distribution of any settlement. Whatever is eventually won we must insist it is distributed on a flat-rate.

NO ARBITRATION

The recognition by the majority of the NUT at Scarborough that we could not gain by arbitration has meant that the union leadership has had to call action much earlier than usual. However the involvement of ACAS or an independent pay review such as the EIS leadership in Scotland are fighting for remains on the cards. The Executive's lack of any clear strategy for winning our

claim makes it all the more likely particularly so if various Court decisions go against us, that a bolt-hole will be found; arbitration under another name.

It was clear in September that in order for us to win our claim we would need to develop a strategy that won the support of the mass of teachers, the public and united with other public sector trade unions in real joint action.

PREVARICATION - THE LOST TERM

This was not forthcoming rather the autumn was a lost term. The media was dominated by attempts in the structure talks by the employers, to bargain with conditions and assessment. Instead of withdrawing as soon as we had policy in September the Executive continued to meet with the employers up until 29th November. This was justified in terms of the NAS/UWT, but in the event they still stayed in the talks after the NUT withdrew and are still prepared to bargain on conditions if the price is right. In the event a vacuum was left by the NUT for two months from December to February. The tactics eventually adopted - the withdrawal of goodwill, no cover and rolling selected 3 day strikes appeared to have been chosen with no regard to the wider political situation.

The employers circular CLEA/23 in November had made it clear that they were going to take a firm stand on Cover and voluntary duties. To put the main emphasis of our salaries campaign on these very areas was a bit like the teacher being led into the valley of Death in the Charge of the Light Brigade. The Executive appeared to ignore the 1984 Trade Union Act, claiming it was our policy not to comply and then capitulated to a National Ballot on voluntary duties in the wake of the Solihull decision.

Certainly the decision to ballot even though a huge majority voted for the sanctions, has given ground to the employers and the courts; by voting to withdraw these duties showed they might be considered contractual. It has also clearly shown that the NUT will comply with any court ruling under the 1984 Trade Union Act.



- ~ GREENHAM NEWS! ~ New by-laws come into force from 1st April - specially for Greenham + Madsworth - they haven't had to go through Parliament thanks to Heseltine's powers under the Military Lands Act: - £100 fine for going into the base or decorating the fence! More Q needed to stay at the camp for short or long spells, + to do night watches. (Ring Cathy: 01-985-5434).
- ~ WOMEN FOR PEACE + JUSTICE GATHERING - SEPT 14 - 15. CONTACT Women's Peace Alliance, Box 240, 8 Elm Ave., Nottingham.
- ~ GREENHAM Q SUPPORT THE MINERS and are continuing to raise funds and keep links with women in mining communities. Ring Liz: 01-367-0021.



DEFEND CONDITIONS

What is absolutely clear is that if the courts, employers and Government seek to impose on teachers contractual duties to cover or duties out of school or at midday we must escalate our withdrawal to all management initiated voluntary activities. This may well necessitate taking up the fight with our own union Executive if they seek to enforce such decisions by use of Rule 8. If members are victimised for carrying out the above policy we will have to take strike action to defend them. This policy must be prepared for now.

If cover is not contractual then we should not be covering at all - wherever school NUT groups vote to carry out this policy they should be supported.

THE WAY FORWARD

The limitations placed on our union to take extended strike action must be removed. A levy should have been implemented on a sliding scale of net income last September, now it must be introduced. A national day's strike with mass meetings for all members should be held to argue for the levy and further action. Sustentation for action must be paid at a reduced flat rate to all on strike. Whole areas must be called out on extended strike action. These areas should include those threatened with major cut backs in resources and jobs so that the link between our fight for salaries and the fight for education can be made to parents and links made with other unions effected by Government cut backs.

The publicity material issued by the NUT to date concentrates on the justice of our case for a restoration of Houghton levels of salary.

Yet the most effective arguments in winning parental support have proved to be demonstrating the cut back on our salaries of 35% is part of a general squeeze on education - Government spending having dropped from 13% to less than 9% in 5 years. The stand that we are taking is for an improvement in the spending on education not just for our salaries.

It is also important to explain that the so called problem of ineffective or bad teachers can be dealt with by in-service training and support. Assessment is not really about this small problem, it is about taking control of the curriculum, taking control of what happens in classrooms, centralising it. One only has to look at GCSE to see this and the increasing emphasis on profiling and other methods of assessment show that at the heart of the debate on assessment is the wish by the Government for ideological control. We must convince parentd and public that our battle is really about the continual existence of the state education system.

We must also build strong links with other public sector union in the localities particularly NATFHE where we should have a common policy of boycotting all exam invigilation and marking. We should also link with other Council workers threatened with cuts by rate-capping and grant penalty. The Civil Service have a substantial pay claim in and we must link up with the E15 in Scotland, although there are dangers that our Executive will use this as an excuse to go for a pay review.

It is now clear in the wake of the miners' defeat that without linking with other unions and maintaining a high level of publicity to parents, strike action will not be enough even if extended. A total withdrawal of goodwill could be very effective but only if the ground work has been done. All school NUT groups should hold NUT meetings with parents to explain our case and win support. Finally, we should be quite clear that our National Officers and Executive will be looking for a compromise. Only by maintaining the pressure to escalate the action can we stop a sell-out. Any such deal now will lead to demoralisation and a weakening of the unions and leave the state education system open to massive changes against the interests of the majority of working class children.

Richard Rieser
Hackney Rank and File

HE SHOULD NOT PASS!

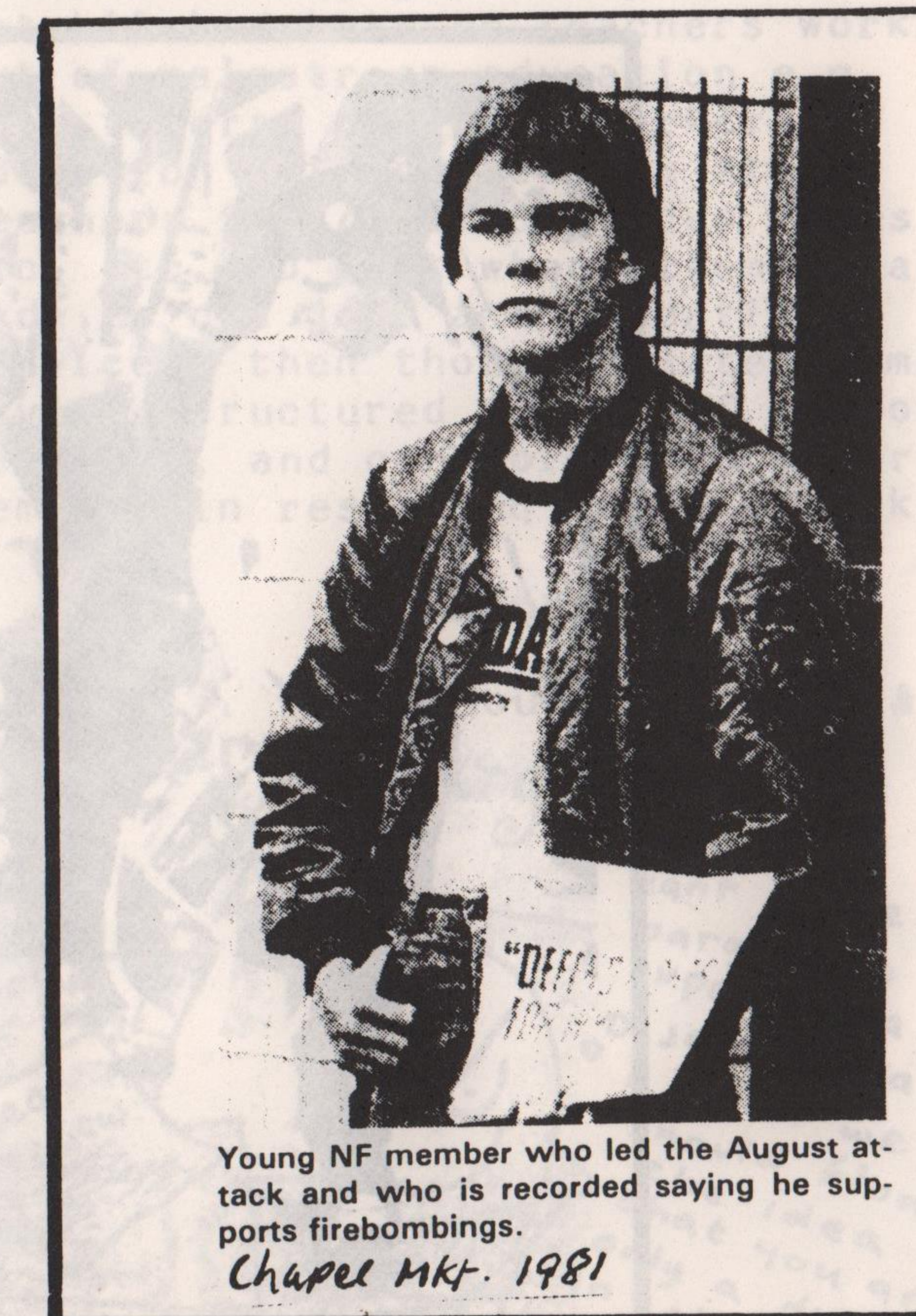


During the long recess of summer no one could be blamed if they thought that the conflict over Patrick Harrington at the North London Poly had well and truly ended, whereas in the two months running up to summer we were inundated with press articles and coverage every night on T.V. about the situation. When college closed there was hardly a whisper.

Patrick Harrington enrolled at the N.L.P. on the Humanities course in 1982. He is a fascist from South London who joined the N.F. when he was thirteen. He was a pupil then at Pimlico School and was asked to leave because of his behavioural problems. These problems involved him in all kinds of overtly racist activity backed up by the local N.F. Since then he has scrambled his way into the infamous N.F. hierarchy and is now on the National Directorate. He is not a confused and disaffected young kid who has been attracted to fascist ideology through unemployment or social disadvantage. He is articulate, self confident and an evil piece of work. He was involved in the publication of South London News a fascist paper that printed Hit Lists of socialists and black people in the community who opposed the N.F. In Islington where he was very active in the fascist paper sales he was tape recorded by the Islington A.N.L. where he glorified the philosophies of the Brown Shirts and said he agreed with arson attacks against his opponents and would do them himself if he could get away with it. On that same day in 1981 he led a vicious attack on the anti-fascists with bricks, batons, knives and bottles. He is in fact a pedigree nazi.

During 1983 it was brought to the attention of a student at the N.L.P. that Harrington was at the college. Fuse, the student magazine had run an article on Islington fascists in 1981 and Harrington was in one of the photographs. This student quite rightly tried to bring this to the attention of the student executive and she produced a leaflet exposing Harrington. The Socialist Worker Student Organisation said that the woman was paranoid and that they should not listen to her or the local A.N.L. This was much more to do with

the S.W.P. line, that you do not oppose fascists than the fact that Harrington was supposedly harmless. However when Harrington switched his course to Philosophy things started to change. Students began to boycott Lectures where Harrington appeared. He got upset by this opposition and went running to the High Court for assistance. The Judge did what he asked and served an injunction on the students thereby making the picketing illegal. The students organised mass pickets and Harrington was often escorted in by hundreds of police many of them in riot gear.



Young NF member who led the August attack and who is recorded saying he supports firebombings.

Chapel Mt. 1981

He then tried to force the lecturers to give names and addresses of pickets photographed on the picket line, to his solicitor, Tessa Sempick, who had been married to a leading fascist. The lecturers rightly claimed that this would put at physical risk those students named. The High Court once again supported him in this demand but the lecturers, fourteen of them, declined to do so and faced imprisonment for contempt of court. That's when we slumped into summer. After many Affidavits to the Court from anti-fascists who had personal knowledge of Harrington's violent activities the Judge decided not to force the lecturers to give the names but on the proviso that the students in the future behaved themselves. But they didn't!

During the Autumn term, until Christmas, the mass picketing continued and Harrington was shifted from one building to another but the pickets followed wherever he went. They occupied the buildings, padlocked them and stopped his entry many times. By this time of course the S.W.P. had changed direction, had become part of the Union Executive and were very involved in the campaign (what a chance for recruitment). Just before Christmas two students were jailed for contempt of course, because of

'illegal picketing'. Harrington had made a statement on T.V. saying that he did not think that black people were entitled to civil rights and that the Black students at the Poly should be repatriated. I.L.E.A. who had done nothing so far in spite of its Anti Racist Policy finally said that Harrington should be disciplined. He came up before the Governing body and, wait for it, he got a reprimand! After Christmas the student Union Executive went to the acting Director, the old one had resigned, and made what they call a 'peace deal'. This means that all picketing has been called off. A house in Islington that belongs to the Poly has been renovated and Harrington has his lectures there in private. He has his own library and all conveniences laid on for him. After such a long and courageous battle by the students it is tragic that it should end this way, if indeed it is the end. Harrington is not too happy with the deal and many students are not. The role of I.L.E.A. throughout has been shameful. It is interesting to note that Steve Bundred who is so zealously in agreement with the disciplining of teachers over 'No Cover Action' is also on the Poly governing body. You can never trust your Employer or Executive. Teachers and Students please note.

Anna Sullivan

Islington
RF



The John Collett Barge Story

From a Union perspective, those of us who work out of mainstream education, for example, in an 'off-site' unit, find ourselves having to define what is acceptable in our conditions of work, and what is effective in terms of industrial action. This is because the NUT has no official record of who we are, and no category in which to place us as a sector of membership. Things are changing slowly. We have set up an off-site teachers' group in my Association, and an ILTA group has been active for some time.

This, perhaps, coupled with the management structure of the particular project where I work, explains the vulnerability of teachers like us when there are moves to cut back or even close the project.

The 'John Collett Barge' was set up some six years ago when the Charity which owns the vessel approached the ILEA with the concept of a floating school for secondary non-attenders. The Authority accepted - after all, it was a very cheap resource. The Charity meets all the running costs, and employs a part-time social worker. While the two teachers are employed by the Charity, their salaries are paid via a grant from ILEA. All cleaning and secretarial duties are undertaken by the staff and pupils.

We have worked successfully since then with young people who have difficulties - for many reasons - attending school regularly, and who may well have dropped out of school totally by the third year. Our record on re-integration into the parent school is much higher than the ILEA average, and we have close links with the pupils' families. This is, in fact, an important part of our work.

In October, we were told by our employers, the Charity, that because their finances were in a poor state, they were recommending the closure of the project by Christmas 1984. The recommendations would be 'nodded through' by their Council three days later. We were told that since the ILEA was reviewing all it's off-site provision the

project 'might have no future in any case'. The Charity hoped that the ILEA would take on responsibility for the project. At the same time the ILEA would give no reassurances to counter the view that there was a move to centralise off-site units, and close down the smaller, more cosy units which had been described as not 'cost effective'.

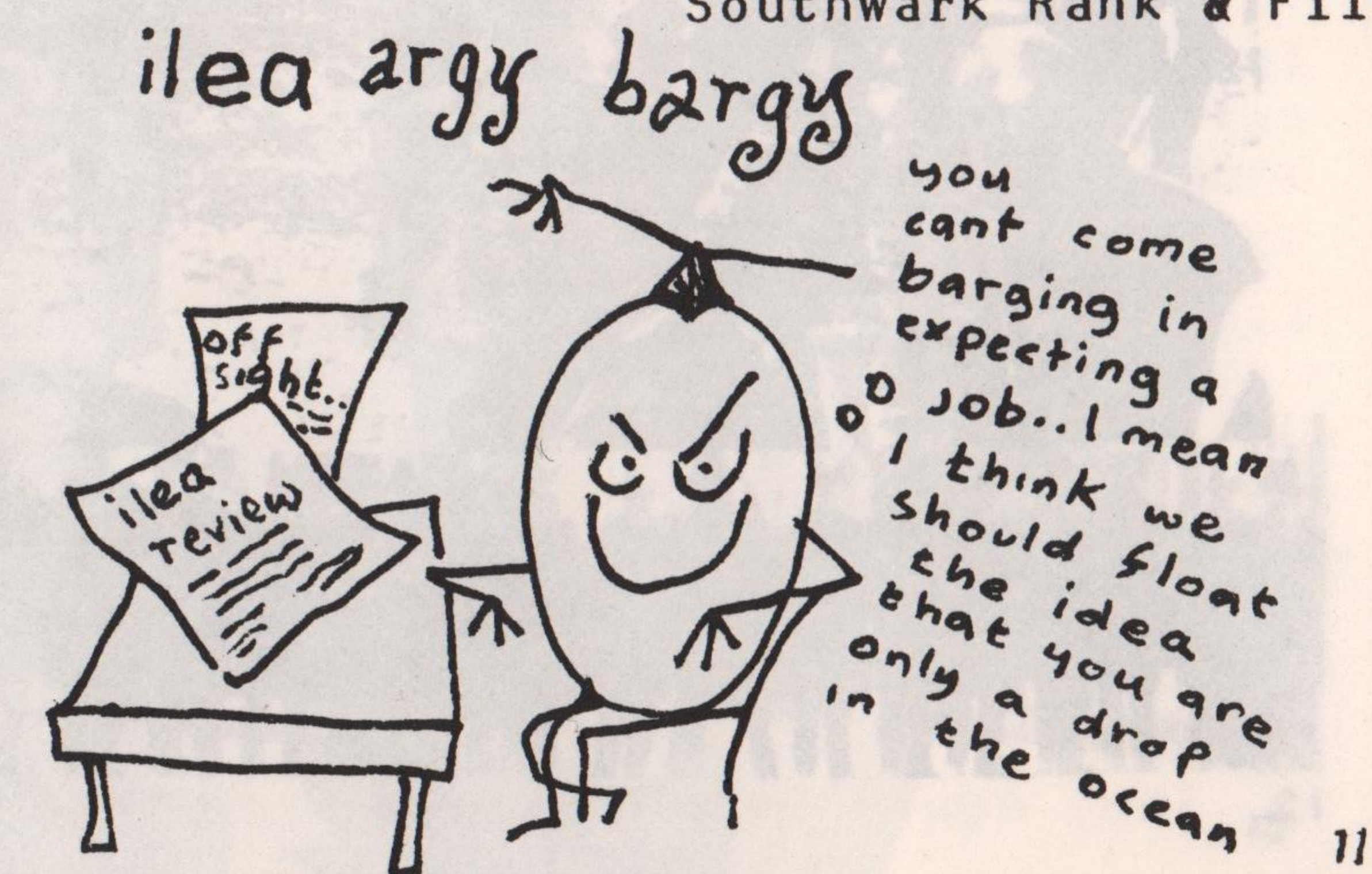
Following a series of frantic telephone calls, we managed to persuade the Charity to delay the closure decision. However, the future of the project along with the continued employment of the teaching staff, remains uncertain. Although the value of the Barge's work has never been questioned, no clear commitment to maintaining this type of provision for children who cannot cope in a large urban secondary school has been forthcoming from either the employing Charity or the ILEA.

The ILTA off-site working party is asking the Authority to take responsibility for small units run by charitable organisations on the grounds that manoeuvres like the one I have described here do not recur.

It is absolutely vital in all Divisions that generally links are established between teachers working out of mainstream education e.g. home tutors, off-site workers, Education Guidance Centre staff, Teachers in Social Services Homes, etc. etc. so that when attempts are made to cut jobs and educational services, then those isolated members have a structured system of support to refer to, and can join with other members in resisting these attacks.

Meryl Davies

Southwark Rank & File



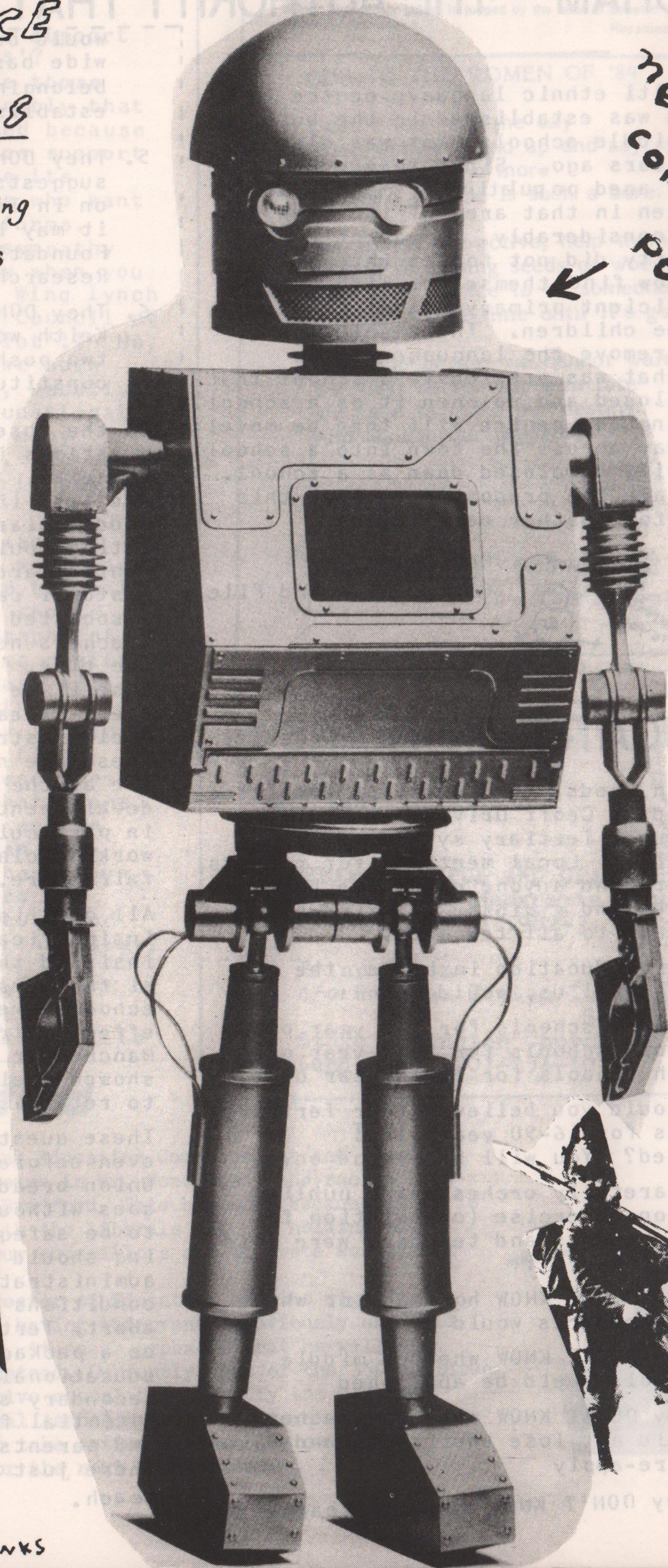


Rank + File says:

**POLICE
OUT OF
SCHOOLS**

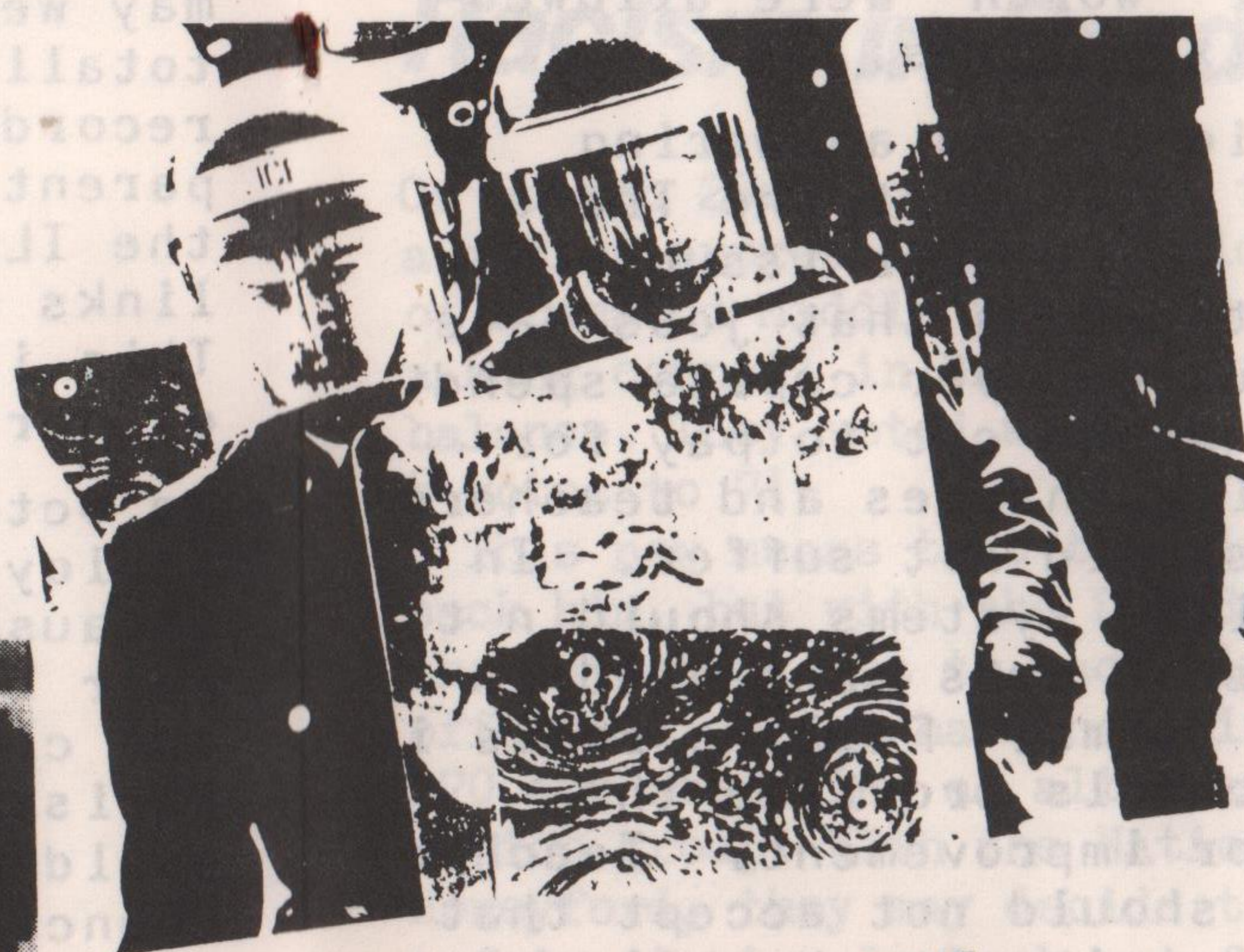
No
Collaborating
with
Thatcher's
Army

the
new
community
police



Rank + File says..

No access to
pupil + teachers
records!



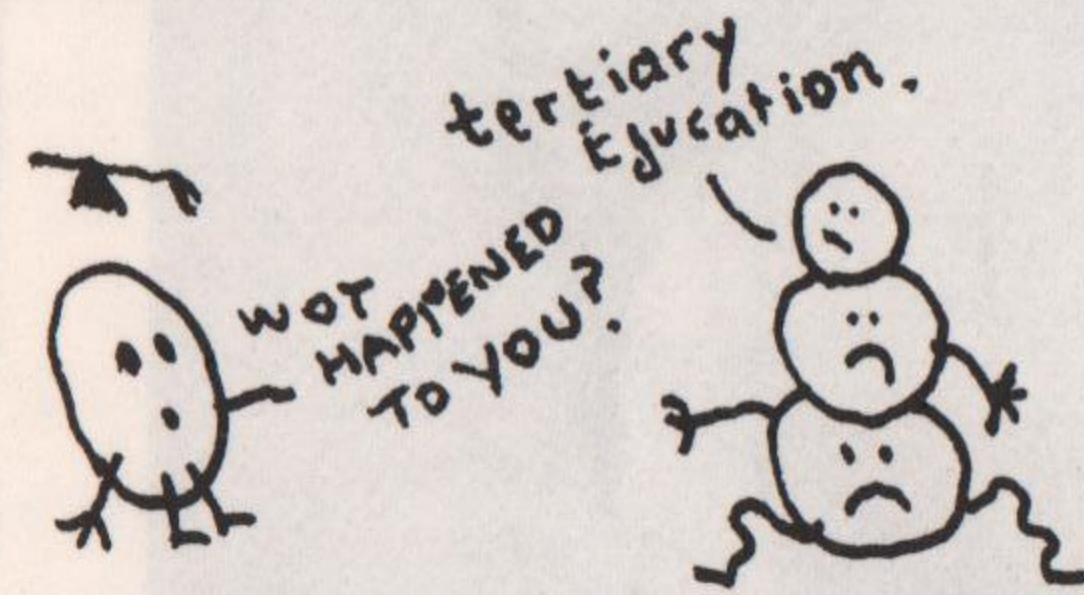
Rank and File says

BREAK LINKS

OLDHAM - THE AUTHORITY THAT PLANS AHEAD!

The multi ethnic language centre in Oldham was established in the building of a middle schools that was closed some years ago. Since then, the school aged population of mainly Asian children in that area of the town has grown considerably. A parently the Authority did not forsee this as they now find themselves with insufficient primary school places for the children. Their solution is to remove the language centre from what was previously a school that they closed and re-open it as a school. The language centre will then be moved part way across the town into a school that will be closed down as a school. These are the proposals - watch this space for further details.

Chris Ambrose
Oldham Rank and File



EDUCATION IN TEARS?

Here in Leeds, the Education Committee chaired by Geoff Driver are proposing a new Tertiary system of education. Local meetings for parents, teachers and anyone else have been arranged and a glossy magazine has been sent to all teachers.

Tertiary education in Leeds, the Council tell us, would mean:

1. Primary schools for 5-9 year olds
2. Middle schools for 9-13 year olds
3. High schools for 13-16 year olds

and, would you believe, four Tertiary Centres for 16-90 year olds! Confused? You will be! Read on.

In a carefully orchestrated public relations exercise (consulation for short) parents and teachers were told by the Council:

1. They DON'T KNOW how many or where such centres would be
2. They DON'T KNOW whether middle schools would be abolished
3. They DON'T KNOW whether teachers would all lose their jobs and have to re-apply
4. They DON'T KNOW whether teachers

would be employed on a city-wide basis as opposed to belonging to a particular establishment.

5. They DON'T KNOW which research suggests that more pupils stay on in Tertiary Centres - but it may be the N.F.E.R. (National Foundation for Educational Research)
6. They DON'T KNOW whether Sir Keith would intervene to save two posh sixth forms in his constituency of North East Leeds.

In the absence of answers to these questions it impossible to assess the plan. Working class children are less likely to travel out to middle class areas and so the siting would be crucial. If the Centres are to provide the pastoral care traditionally associated with schools (!) even teachers need to be on hand all the time. This would not be the case if we were employed on a "rent-a-teach" basis, receiving field instructions for the week. These are not petty details, they lie at the heart of how we see the development of young people and, in particular, how we encourage working class pupils to get their fair share.

All of this would fade into insignificance if Sir Keith insisted that 'good' schools retain sixth forms. We would have grammar schools overnight. This has, in effect, already happened in Manchester where schools which showed their 'worth' were allowed to retain sixth forms.

These questions need answering even before we look at the Trade Union bread and butter issues. It goes without saying that jobs have to be safeguarded, per capita spending should not be cut to pay for administrative changes and teachers' conditions should not suffer. In short, Tertiary systems should not be a package of cuts presented in educational terms. Falling rolls in secondary schools provides the potential for improvement. Teachers and parents should not accept that there just aren't enough children to teach.

The question is not 'Do we support or oppose Tertiary systems'? Already in Leeds there are those who say, perhaps understandably that the scheme is to be opposed because it amounts to cuts. Others support the scheme and caricature its opponents as raging Tories who want selective academic sixth forms. Again, you can have some sympathy with this view, especially when you hear of meetings of Right Wing lynch mobs who have accused the Council of developing a 'communist plot'!! No, the real argument is how we move from strictly trade union, usually defensive activity, to educational arguments which challenge many assumptions of capitalism. We won't support a Council because it calls itself socialist.

If a 'socialist' Council wants a Tertiary system then they will have to outline how they intend to deal with our questions. They should spend less time drawing graphs of falling rolls and more time dealing with the unfairness of class society. If they want our support in a fight with Sir Keith, they should show their willingness to fight the Government for more resources. Of course they can't do that alone. They will need industrial action from their employees. Sham consultation which at times has shown contempt for teachers makes the fight against Government cuts and rate-capping that much further away.

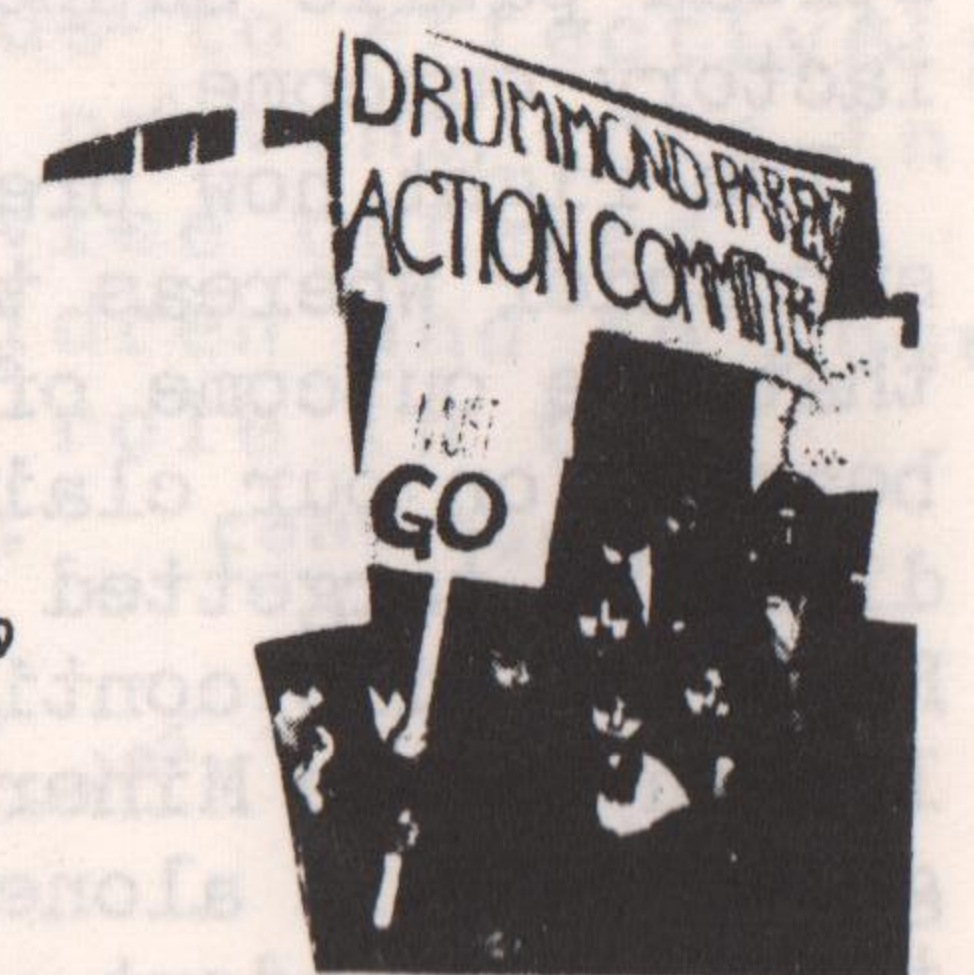


Howard Stones
Sue Buckle
Leeds Rank and File

Racism in Bradford

On March 23rd in Bradford, the Education Committee met and passed a motion expressing no confidence in Mr. Honeyford, the racist head of Drummond Middle School in Bradford. This happened because there is a hung council in Bradford with the Liberals and SDP holding the balance. They voted with Labour councillors and the vote was passed 8 votes to 7!

This now means that the Director of Education has the right to sack him, but with the D.E.S. having intervened previously and told the authority not to sack him, it seems probable that he will be offered a golden handshake instead. Currently, out of the 350 children, 270 are attending an alternative school organised by the parents' action group. With the National Association of Headteachers backing Honeyford, they may decide to take action against the council for unfair dismissal. Look out for the next development.



'Cultural enrichment is an approved term for the West Indian's right to create an ear-splitting cacophony for most of the night to the detriment of his neighbour's sanity, or for the Notting Hill Festival whose success or failure is judged by the level of street crime which accompanies it.'

Ray Honeyford

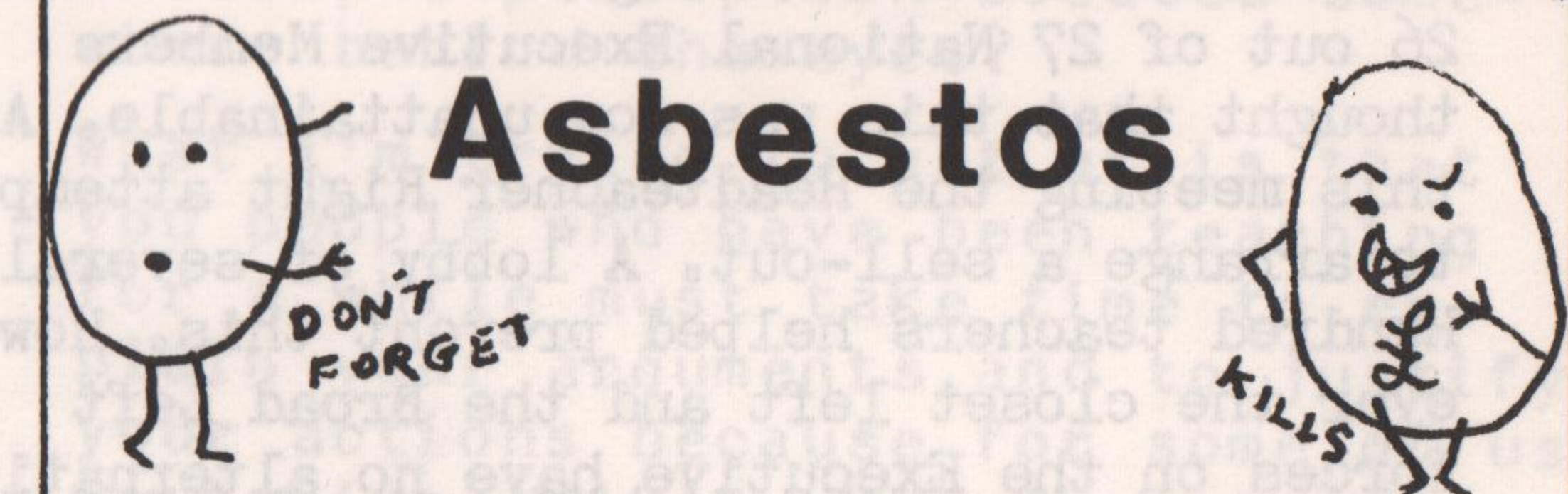
ODE TO THE WOMEN OF '84

I can't wait for the day
When women stand up and say
No! We want no more
Housework alone is such a bore.

Our minds are active, help them grow
Instead of sowing seeds of woe
Give us a chance to be someone
And not waste time until it's gone.

Our time is now we cannot wait
We must decide our own fate
We have to make our destiny
And abolish our drudgery.

from *By Up mi Duck*
~ images and poetry from Derbyshire
miners wives.



Asbestos

'CHEAP, CHEERFUL AND DEADLY' is a video about Hackney's successful campaign in 1982-3.

Brian Simons
c/o William Patten Infants
School
Stoke Newington Church St.,
London N 16/01-254-4014

Scottish Teachers SALARIES- The "Tartan Special"

Scottish teachers have been involved in industrial action over pay and conditions since last August. The action began with a complete boycott of all new curricula developments. This was supplemented in October by a general work to rule and from January by a boycott of examination procedures. Since December all the Education Institute of Scotland (EIS) members have been involved in a total of 3-day strike action, while there have been weekly 3 day strikes in Tory Ministers and M.P.'s constituencies. Schools in Ayr have been on strike for 10 weeks.

Our National Executive has tried to present us as a special case, separate not only from other workers, but also from English and Welsh teachers. Hence the campaign for a "Tartan Special"- an independent pay review. However an emergency National Council meeting has revealed that 26 out of 27 National Executive Members thought that this was now unattainable. At this meeting the Headteacher Right attempted to arrange a sell-out. A lobby of several Hundred teachers helped prevent this. However the closet left and the Broad Left forces on the Executive have no alternative strategy. The present confidence rests on the members continued determination. But the closet left would sell out given the chance.

Management is counter-attacking on several fronts. George Younger, Secretary of State, is trying to open schools over Easter. Disciplinary proceedings are to be started against teachers in breach of contract. Many EIS headteachers are collaborating in this.

At present each management provocation only hardens the attitude of class teachers. Action has spilled over onto other fronts such as no-cover. However the defeat of the Miners Strike has lessened teachers' confidence that the justice of our case and widespread public support can achieve a satisfactory outcome.

The right now preaches doom, gloom, and surrender whereas the closet left pretend that the outcome of the Miner's Strike has no bearing on our claim and continues with the divisive targetted strike action. Scottish Rank and File continues to argue that the lesson of the Miner's Strike is that no group can win alone. We need to link up with the NUT and adopt a £1200 and single salary claim. We also need to link with Civil

Service unions and NUR and, at present, are pushing for a joint day of action with the CPSA.

Alan Armstrong
Edinburgh Rank and File

After watching the NEWS

If
Murderers
must go
to Prison
Why
isn't
Maggie
Thatcher
in Prison.
She sank
a Ship
with lots
of people
in.

Hannah Enfield NURS RF

How did you learn to read?

I remember how I learned to read. I had a Woolworth's note book. I scribbled while I said this story out loud. I don't know what it was. I scribbled away and wrote all through the book telling the story. Then I went back to the beginning to read it through and I couldn't work out what it said. So then I realised you had to learn a code. I picked up the code from having a nursery rhyme book (it's now falling to pieces and stuck up with sellotape) read to me over and over again, again and again. So I knew the rhymes off by heart and then I cracked the code. This time I knew what was being said so I could crack it. I knew those words then.

I remember then reading 'Janet and John' and it said "see Kitty see" and I thought that doesn't make any sense and that's what gave me misgivings about the fact that I could read. So that set me back a bit and then I read more text that did make sense and gave me confidence and then I went back and saw that "see Kitty see" was just idiocy. Then I went home and read the newspaper to me mum and dad. I knew I could read.

How did you learn to read?

Brenda Gibson
Hackney Rank and File

Phone: Pauline - 969 7938
or Brian - 254 4014



Is schooling good for you?

The Rabbit

An Infant class are teaching me at the moment - 20 children - more will be coming after the holiday. The 20 have had between five and seven years to show people what is important and ten weeks to show me.

I don't like lots of things about our classroom but we get on OK for most of the time at the moment.

I'm lucky enough to be in a school where at least superficially there is quite an informal relaxed atmosphere, an integrated approach and double mounting! When I started at this school I was going to have groups of children doing different activities with lots of structure and I'd know what everybody was going to do next. I was soon taught that that wasn't the way to do things, so the "groupings" were gone by lunchtime on the first day.

In our classroom I want people to learn through and about their interests. I want people to acquire interests and to develop and share them. I want people to work together sometimes and to work on their own sometimes. I want people to realise the importance and value of themselves and of others and of their relationships with others. I want people to begin to realise how our society is run - and to be disgusted with it. I want to be liked by the people in our class. It would also be good if we could all read and write better.

These are some of the things I want. I probably want lots of other things but I don't know what they are at the moment.

So, why do we have number books and PE only at 10.55 on Tuesdays? Why do we all sit on the carpet at 9.30 for the register and "chat"? Why does everyone have to stop whatever they are doing at 10.40, 12.25, 2.40 and 3.30 every day? Why do we put everything away at the end of the afternoon?

We spend a lot of time doing things none of us wants to do, why? Some of the things - number books and "chat" are for and from me. They help keep the day under control, I need them at the moment, hopefully I will grow out of them. Other things aren't from me, but factories have them as well.

And, oh yes, I worry a lot about finding time to read with children, what our classroom looks like, what parents and teachers think of me and who is going to look after the rabbit through the holidays.

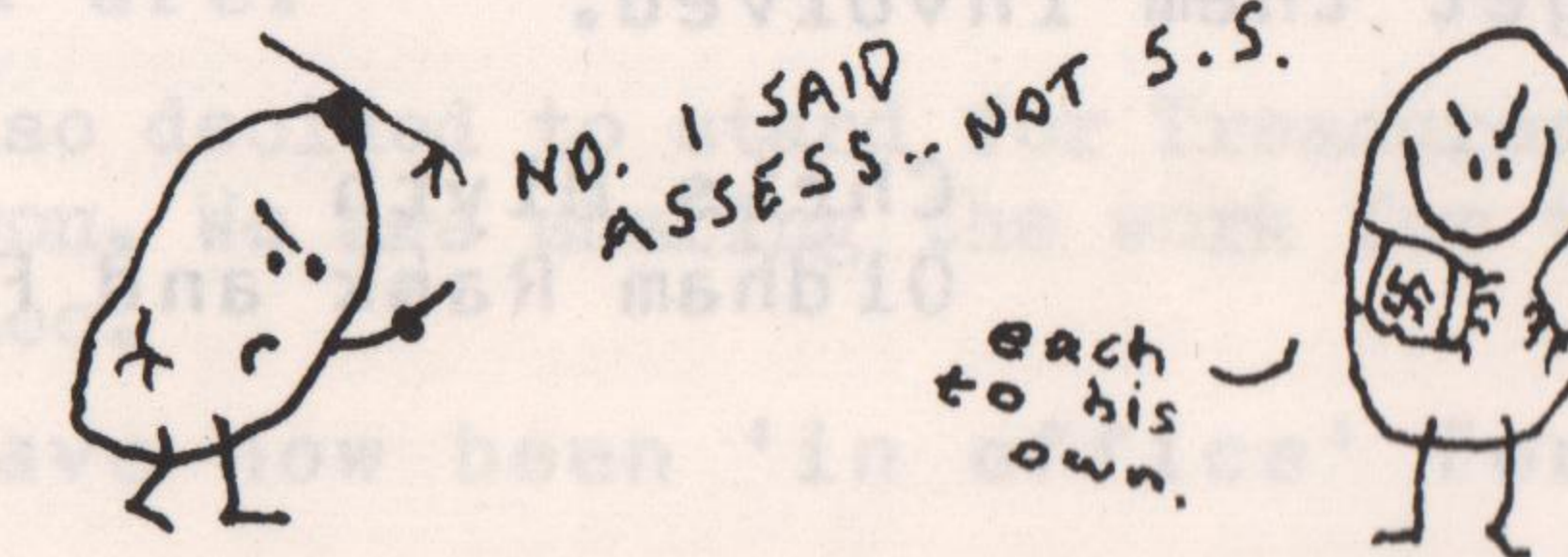
As a new teacher I'm pretty lost and uncertain about how I can get things in our classroom going more along the lines of how I'd like them to go. I guess there are some people who feel the same way as I do. I know there are many people who are more sure of what they are doing in the classroom and of where they are going. Other people's teaching may differ to mine at the moment, but that is a result of what they have been through and experienced.

It is easy to perceive a situation (be it a type of classroom organisation, and aspect of education or whatever) in the light of your own experience, but it is not so easy to perceive it as others, or I, might perceive it. A different perception of the situation effectively alters the situation. After all isn't reality a perception located somewhere behind the eyes?

What I'm trying to get at is that you people who have been teaching for a while must take time to explain your arguments and to justify your actions because for some of us it is impossible, knowing what we know, to always understand or take part in all discussions - as we may not perceive the situation as you do.

We must be careful that a hierarchy does not become established in Rank and File '83 - a hierarchy based on an unequal access to information and on a lack of continuous discussion. With discussion and proper dissemination of information, decisions, the right decisions can be made and everyone can take a more equal part in the organisation and operations of Rank and File '83.

This will enable us to effectively fight together to prevent cuts in the education service offered to working class children and to come to terms with our role in that education service. continued...



Like I said earlier I'm not sure how to get our classroom running as I want it - and I'm not sure how I want it but if, at the moment, it is an alienating environment for the children - I'm sorry, and I hope that the children's experience with me will become more relevant to them as I gain experience with them.

I also hope that I can find more time to read with the children and that someone can look after the rabbit through the holidays.

Guy Hooper

Hackney Rank and File



Does anyone turn up at your union meetings?

Does anyone turn up at your Union meetings? Do they know what's going on or do they only know if they have a Committee member in their school? We've agreed at Oldham Association Committee will each be allocated a number of schools so that we will hopefully become more accountable. It's an attempt to break down the hierarchy of it all and let the membership know what's going on and get them involved.

Chris Blyth
Oldham Rank and File

The Teacher reveals ... the life of a policeman turned ...

Personally, he feels duty bound to go into school even when he is not feeling well. "We are all aware of the pressure you would put on your colleagues if you don't come in," he says.

Unfortunately, he says very few teachers are prepared to admit they are under strain. "To say one is under stress is a sign of weakness and might reflect on one's chances of promotion," he said bitterly.

What Mr Martin describes as a "continual sapping of energy - a covert but continual battle" was unheard of in the police. "In the police you can get tired. But the exhaustion is not there.

"In the police there is a face-to-face confrontation. In teaching you are on the rack and you are gradually being screwed down."

This feeling, he said, was like "wrestling with a ghost."



Lesbian and Gay Pride '85

We urgently need more lesbians to join the committee, helping to organise our annual June celebrations. We meet every Monday at 7.30 at The Fallen Angel, Graham Street, London N1, or write c/o 63 Holme Road, East Ham, London E6

NO TURNING BACK VHS Video 20 mins Colour



'What we're seeing is a whole new movement of women - women who've never been involved before - and there'll be no turning back.'

Women from Sheffield Women Against Pit Closures talk about their involvement in the miners' strike, how they have changed, and their view of the future.

Hire charge £12.50 (p&p incl) or £2.50 for WAPC groups.

Women's Own Pictures, 96 Broomspring Lane, Sheffield S10 2FB Tel: (0742) 730183/738424.

I.T.A. WOMENS COLLECTIVE WOMEN

WHAT DOES YOUR UNION MEAN TO YOU?

Do you find it easy to be active in your union? If not, why not?

Do you feel alienated by your union meetings? Are they dominated by men who've got the 'knowledge'? Are union meetings at the wrong time? Do you need childcare at meetings? Would you like women's issues to be discussed more? Would you like to discuss educational issues?



A group of women teachers in Islington who are concerned about this, have called a MEETING.

COME AND DISCUSS IT ... LET'S MAKE OUR UNION OUR OWN

Islington Teachers' Association secretary is now ten women. The idea grew out of a woman's group which began last year.

After the mass meeting in May, the attendance at I.T.A. Meetings had shot up. There was a lot of interest when a women only meeting was suggested and several of us organised a mailing of all schools, addressed to women contacts where possible - We were worried that some male reps wouldn't take it seriously and that the notice might not be put up on the board; in fact in one school a satirical version of the notice was circulated anonymously e.g. 'Do you find it easy to be active in your union?' became 'Do you find it easy to be sexually active in your union?' 'Are meetings dominated by women who've got the babies?' etc.

This ridicule was a foretaste of the suspicion and hostility we were to face.

Thirty women came to the first meeting. We were excited and relieved to have got together at last. It was great to have a good moan about how soul-less and intimidating Association meetings could be; how men always seemed to speak four times as much as women and often stood up as much to prop up their egos as to make points in the discussion and that when a woman did pluck up enough courage to speak she would be put down with an 'out of order' or some other mystifying rule. We were FED UP. It was not surprising that many strong feminists found meetings alienating and preferred to put their energies elsewhere.

We felt there were several ways we could improve things: by supporting each other, by learning the roles, perhaps through workshops, so that we could no longer be bamboozled by lack of the 'Knowledge',

by making meetings more open and friendly and by encouraging more women to be actively involved. We organised a questionnaire on childcare and Association meetings.

The women's group has put women into contact with each other who can work together preparing motions and mobilising support. The Greenham Women's Strike linked us with a strong network of women which already existed in Islington and more women joined us. We all feel much less isolated at meetings now.

There was a feeling that women should stand for positions in the union both to begin to crack the current male hegemony and so that more of us could gain the experience and confidence. The opportunity came sooner than expected when the secretary resigned in October. An acting Secretary was needed until the annual elections. We were determined to stand as a women only collective, though for purposes of mailings one woman had to be the 'named secretary'.

This met with surprisingly strong opposition. We were called divisive and some of the left felt that men who'd worked hard for the union and had a 'good record' on women's issues were being rejected. But it wasn't about excluding men, it was about including women. We wanted to say 'Here we are: Listen to us for a change'. We felt it wasn't simply a matter of Policies - our politics were similar - it was about the more subjective side of politics. It was about solidarity and people making the union more accessible and less hierarchial.

The idea of a women's collective caused quite a stir and it became a talking point in circles well beyond the ITA (I even heard about it from an NUR member on a picket line in Kent). People were excited, suspicious, hostile, patronising, or uncomprehending, but no-one was unmoved.

Well, we won the vote and became the Women's Collective acting secretariat. No one stood against us when it came to the annual elections so here we still are.

We also decided to stand for Treasurer and won. We are sharing the work for that job too.

We have now been 'in office' for

four months and can't understand how any one person ever did the work. There's a phenomenal amount to do: mailings almost weekly; leaflets, agendas, motions to type out and reproduce; school reps to phone (we each took a list of schools to contact); case work; all this as well as trying to initiate things such as a newsletter.

We still face some suspicion, hostility and the brick wall of 'Out of order' and it has been hard insistence that we are treated as a collective. Hamilton House were non-plussed by us; they said we were the first collective they'd heard of in the union. However, we have also had a lot of support from men who also feel alienated by the union and are relieved at the attempt to open it up.

Within the collective we have been so busy that we've not been able to discuss adequately what we are doing. We feel it is a priority to keep talking about the group dynamics and keep looking at how we share out the tasks and the information so that we can all participate equally.

Also, as we feared might happen, the women's group has lost its momentum for the moment because of so much energy going into the collective. We don't want just to service the union - and so fall into a traditional women's role - but we want to be active as well. We are encouraging women not on the collective to take a more active part in the women's group.

We felt that mentioning the problems as well would be helpful to women in other associations who wish to be involved in women's groups.

There is still a long way to go but we are still full of hope and we're trying not to let the hard grind get us down.

Maggie Scott,

for the Islington Women's Collective.

P.S. Some of us are in Rank and File, some are not, but that doesn't stop us getting on well together.

P.P.S. Collectives are not constitutional - yet, which is why we have a named Secretary and Assistant Secretary. We will have to legitimise the practice by putting in for a rule change at our next A.G.M..

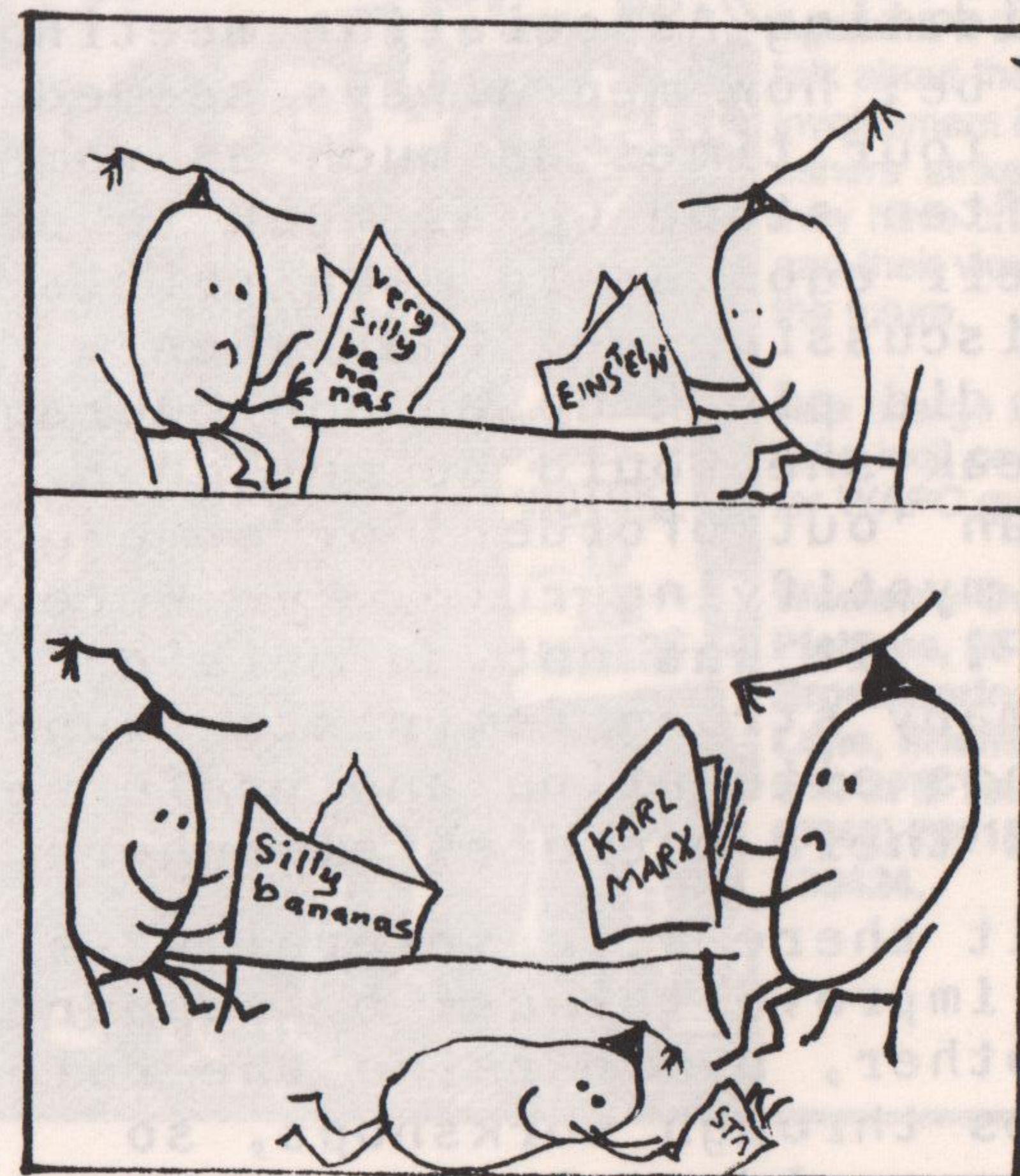
What do you read?

There is still too strong a sense of censoriousness amongst socialists, with regard to what (other) people should and shouldn't read.

It is salutary to be reminded of Charles Kingsley, who was shocked when he visited a Chartist bookshop in London in the 1840's to find that most of the stock consisted of 'Flash Songsters', 'Swell's Guides', 'Tales of Horror' and 'dirty milksop French novels'. Yet Chartism was the greatest popular radical political movement of the 19th century. It met people's concerns and interests, on their own terms, and was not corrupted by 'vanguardist' notions of moral and intellectual superiority. Cultural values will only be achieved by mutual respect and common activity; they cannot be given, but have to be made. Literary values cannot be abducted by the academy alone - but will be developed through the common activity of writing and reading, and popular discussion. Culture is not only what we inherit, but also what we make in our lifetimes.

Ken Worpole

(An extract from Reading by Numbers - an excellent book on contemporary publishing/popular fiction)



JEDD -

View from a Pub in Stoke Newington



The working class was conditioned over the centuries to pay bills. I was brought up in the war years. I didn't realise we were 'poor'. Everyone was the same. 'We 'ant got a deal but I don't owe anyone a penny'. The strike broke the barrier. You don't pay bills - it makes life easier. Look around at the other classes of people. The more well off make money by owing it. That's one of many lessons I've learnt after being on strike for almost a year.

There was a terrific amount of worry. You felt different emotional feelings at different times. It was always changing. You would try to pay your bills with savings but you didn't know when it would end. No-one has ever been on strike for so long - no one has ever done that before. That's important.

Notts is an entirely different battle in some ways. You can't borrow money from Banks - you can in Yorkshire and South Wales. While you're employed you're encouraged to borrow personal loans but the Bank had issued instructions that a Miner on strike could only have a £200 overdraft. Miners had their electricity cut off. It didn't happen in the same way in Yorkshire or South Wales. When we approached the Electricians in Notts they said Notts was different because you can go to work. I had some money from an accident I used that at first. But when you get to rock bottom you can't do it. Miners have found the secret a standard letter 'to whom it may concern - my position is still the same I am sending you £1 - when I can I'll send you another'. That's keeps the courts off your back. BUT £11.74 is not eating money. Some have sold houses and moved in with relations. It strengthens your resolve though.

We must understand what it's like in the mining villages and I'm learning what it's like down here. It's culturally completely different. I've had a few rollockings from women over the sexism thing - but that's what its like - but now the womens' thing is changing in the village. Before perhaps only 1 women was politicised but now 40 women have joined the Labour Party. They are frightening the shit out of the Labour councillors - being called Trotskyists etc. etc. I've always been a giver. The most difficult thing to do is to receive. One of the nice things what happened while I was in Hackney I was invited to the William Patten Infants School and experienced something I've probably not ever seen before. A marvellous relationship between pupils and teachers. One of the highlights was being invited to their Christmas play the Wizard of Oz and having the opportunity to thank the parents and the children for all the support they had given us up to that time. The school invited women and children from Notts for a day out which they thoroughly enjoyed and I think the Notts women and children from Notts will have everlasting ties with the NUT and the children of Hackney.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN NOTTS

I don't think there's one man who hasn't been downgraded. We were looking for a quick expulsion of Notts from the NUM and the activists are feeling frustrated. For example, Notts won't have anything to do with the 50p levy. As far as we are concerned we want something to fight. In Blidworth we've all gone back to different jobs. Some have been downgraded. The atmosphere is very tense. I still feel if Notts were expelled we could organise the National Union of Mineworkers within Notts.

JEDD HOLMES

NOTTS
NUM

Children, Schools and the Miners Strike

The first school I read about in connection with the strike was a school in North Derbyshire which was empty! The 'disused' school was used to store clothing and has since been transformed into a Community Centre run by women. They are thinking of organising meals for the unemployed and the elderly.

Many more children took an active part in the miners' strike than has generally been realised. The first report of a children's strike in support of N.U.M. (in Scotland) involved a hundred and fifty pupils who walked out of school to join a picket line and we are only just beginning to piece together a picture of the scale of children's rebellion against schools and in the cause of the striking miners.

For example school children organised strikes in Northcliffe and Mexborough schools in South Yorks.

A hundred children from Northcliffe refused to go back to school after break. Five were suspended. At Mexborough children were on strike for three days!

The day of the 'return to work' emptied schools all over the North. The strike highlighted the split between the frozen culture of school and the real creative and educative power of an honest social movement. It also struck many parents as an indictment of the Education system - a theme which Tony Benn and others have used in their speeches recently. In terms of cultural production, it is difficult to estimate how many children expressed their thoughts and feelings about the strike in poems, songs, prints, cards, jokes, rhymes, accounts, drawings and letters etc. in a way that perhaps wasn't possible in school. But then schools aren't supposed to be about freedom.

THE NOTTS HOLIDAY SCHOOL

The first time I went to Notts as part of an NUT delegation I was beaten up by the police in a car park. The second time I was in Notts a kid I spoke to who was looking a bit bored in a soup kitchen didn't believe that teachers went on strike at all or that they supported striking miners. She thought I was kidding.

Whilst some people were busy trying to get information or sell papers some of us had a chat. We started talking about school. After the visit we decided to start our own holiday school for the children of striking miners.

We will be looking for funding from the Trade Union movement (not the GLC). The idea is not to bring 'metropolitan Socialist culture' to the Masses(!) but to respond as comrades to a community whose schools it seems treated them with contempt. Some kids were given detention for talking about the strike. Others were suspended.

"ROBERT sings 'Arthur Scargill, Arthur Scargill, we'll report you ever more'. He says, 'when Daddy gets back to work, we'll be rich, won't we?'"


My little boy woke me up at 6.30 in the morning with a tooth out. "Shall I put it under my pillow?" he said, "Or is the tooth fairy out on strike?" I told him to put it under his pillow, and the 'tooth fairy' managed to scrape together 30p. Was that little boy happy!

*It's taken time to build our lives
Our strong community
But strength and love will see us through
To keep our unity
For many months we've fought like dogs
And now the pit's a part
Of our lives and history
The centre of my heart
As time goes on and things get hard
I know we will pull through
And years from now our sons will mine
It's all the thanks to you.*

Ellie Bence. — Kent

Kim — Featherstone

Anne Marie — Middleton



Schools that claimed to be 'not political' discriminated against those who didn't agree with their politics whilst hiding behind a cowardly respectability.

State schools have always been afraid to be too effective and are afraid in case anyone finds out how ineffective they are. In this predicament political cowardice helps. Schools cheerfully demanded cash for children's outings in the middle of some of the worst hardship.

Women at the women's support kitchen talked about the right wing bias of their children's education. Some of the children - from Ollerton - knew an extraordinary amount about the profitability and productivity of the pits; they didn't learn it from school.

Ironically my own school has just been inspected by ILEA for 'left wing bias'.

A fairly reasonable article interviewing our headteacher - which inaccurately claimed that she led various actions caused the Express, the Mail, the Standard, the Gazette and T.V. to launch a campaign of harrassment against her and against us. Sir Keith was asked to hold a full enquiry and we were accused on the front page of the Times Ed of 'bringing little children out on the streets for Arthur Scargill' - hence the Inspection and the questioning of parents outside the building before and after school by the Tory press.

Whilst some of us wait to see if threatened disciplinary warnings - for taking too much unofficial action on support of NUM - amount to anything awkward (the victimizations are beginning), we must continue to support the dispute but also try to find and save the truth of what this year has meant.

Perhaps our holiday school can unambiguously serve our class for once, as some of our state schools did during the miners' strike.

Brian Simons
(Hackney Rank and File)

* Susan Hemmings and Martin Hoyles are compiling a book of some of the things written and drawn by children who suffered the hardships and supported the strike,

SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO: The Labour Centre,
8 Camden Rd, London N.W.1.

NOTTS HOLIDAY SCHOOL
For information please write to:
* Brian Simons 40 William Patten Infants Sch,
Stoke Newington Church Street, London N.16.
or * Jackie Naylor, 26 Big Barn Lane,
Mansfield, NOTTS.



My mum said to me, "it was the summer that Bernard was born, 1962..They had massive investment in Pithouse - coal gradin and washing plant, underground investment, jobs guaranteed for 25 years".
My brother Bernard will be 23 in May this year.
In the autumn of 1967 the NUM and the NCB held a meeting for all miners over the age of 55 to appeal for 200 voluntary redundancies, and got far more volunteers than they needed. The older men wanted the younger men to have a chance. It didn't matter. The pit was closed in February 1968 anyway..Bernard was nearly six.
The Bonny Pit Laddie was published in 1960, when the pit cottages and streets were still standing, and Pithouse, at least, was still working. No longer.. Brandon (Branton in the book) is now no more than a dormitory suburb of the City of Durham. It has even lost its one claim to fame, the title 'Brandon and Byshottles Urban District Council'.
Nowhere else ever had a 'Byshottles'.
And so to the book. It's all true, it all happened.. I've heard the stories from my grandads. Things are compressed, or rearranged in time or even in space, but they all happened. I played in those places as a child, and my parents played in the same places with the author or his family when they were children.
The book is about a community, a coal --mining community. It describes the total lack of comprehension of the lives of working people --coal miners-- on the part of the bosses -- the coal owners. It tells of the incredible solidarity that working people show each other in hard times. It tells of the strikes, and the lock-outs, and the black list s..
It's set in the years before the Second World War, before nationalisation, before the pits became 'ours'. It could have been written last year (except for the fact that the police hardly get a mention). And there are no pits left in Brandon now, and Bernard isn't 23 yet.
Jobs guaranteed for 25 years. Just like Cortonwood.
And in Brandon, they flattened the fiery heap, and got a civic award for landscaping the slag heap. The young executives practise their golf shots on it now.
Veronica The Bonny Pit Laddie Frederick Grice Penguin 0 14 03 11 90

MY name is Christie Young, and I am 10 years old. My Dad is a miner at Wheldale pit. For the last 10 months he has been on strike. My Mum has gone to the kitchens and worked all the hours God has sent. Before the strike I was quite babyish, but now I have grown up.

A little girl in our village was sent home from school because she didn't have grown shoes, which are the regulation uniform. Kids' shoes are expensive, and all her mum could afford to buy her was a pair of those plastic 'jelly-bean' shoes for £1.99. She asked about a clothing grant for uniform, but the headmaster wasn't at all sympathetic -- he just said, "It's your husband's fault if he chooses to be on strike." The girl wasn't allowed to go to school until she got the right shoes. Margaret — Kellington

Christie — Castleford

