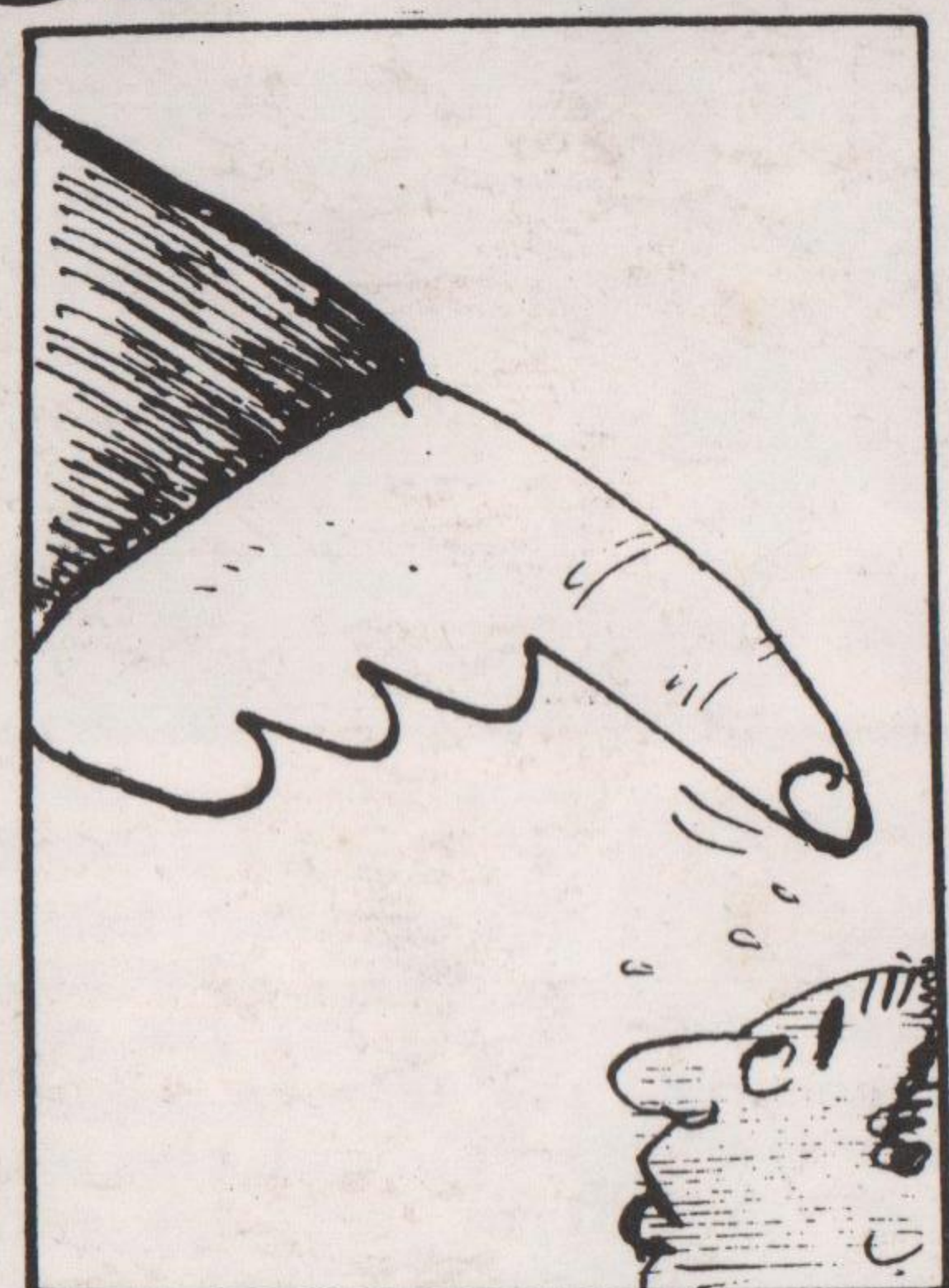
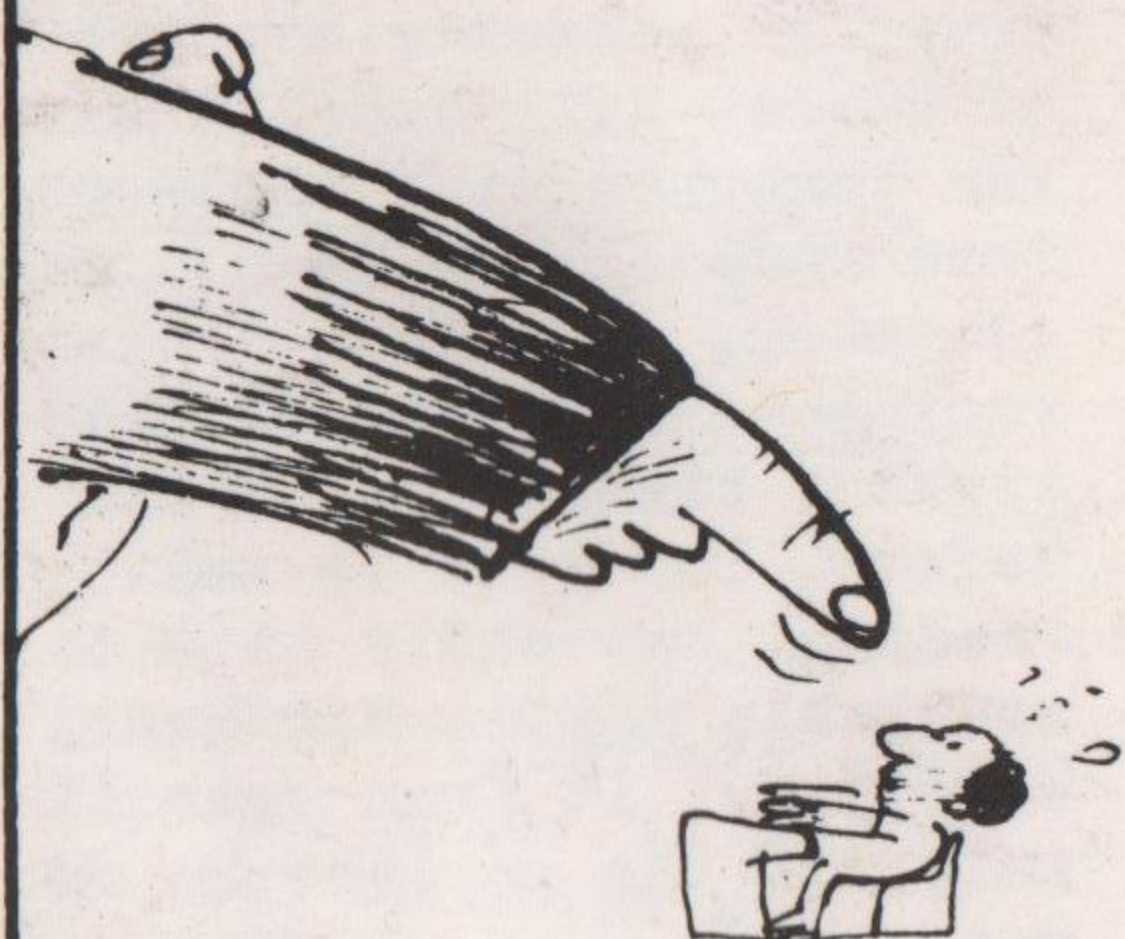
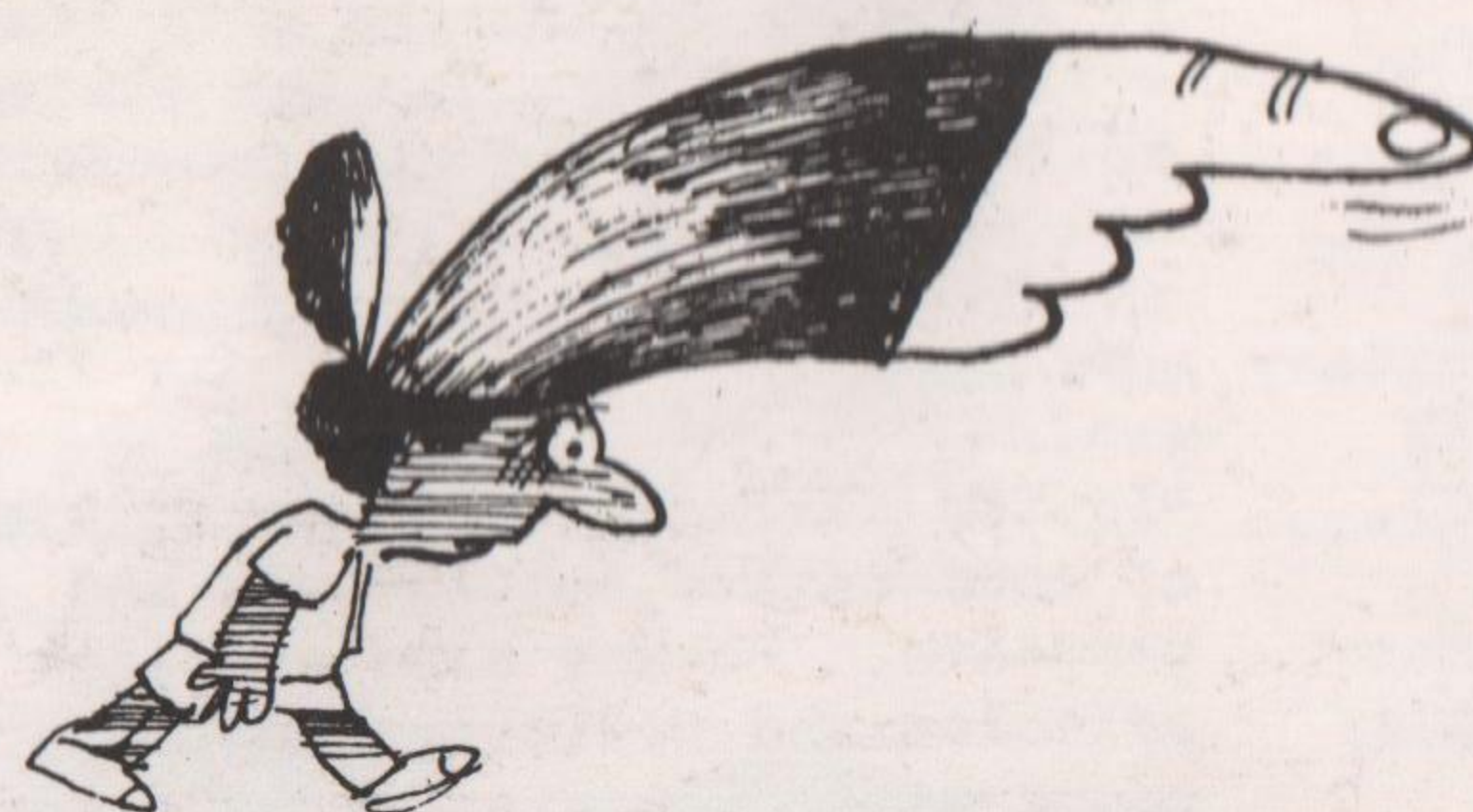


Lib Ed 29

THE IDEAS WERE
IMPOSED ON US FROM
AN EARLY AGE



THAT WAS THE COLONIZATION OF THE MINDS

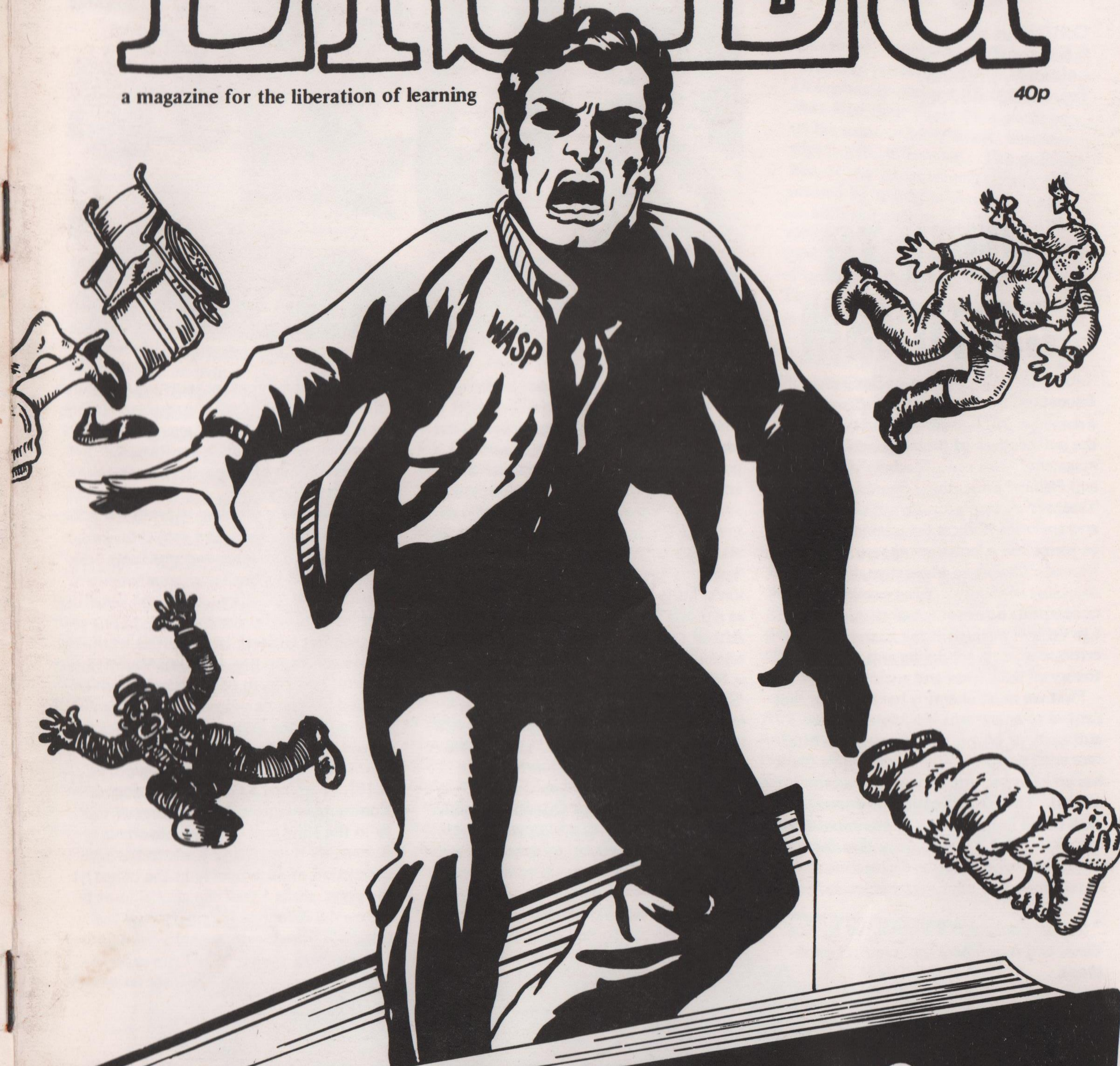


“ Propaganda, management, manipulation cannot be the instruments of humanization ... teachers and students co-intent on reality, are both subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality and thereby coming to know it critically but in the task of recreating that Knowledge” Freire

Lib Ed

a magazine for the liberation of learning

40p



reflections on
bias in books

Lib Ed

AUTUMN 1980

Contact us at:
6 Beaconsfield Road,
Leicester, England,
Tel. (0533) 552085

REPLY TO CRITICISM

'Liberation (sic), Action or Radical Education' by Maureen Clark (*Screen Education 30**) examines and contrasts the perspectives of three education magazines - this one, Teachers' Action and Radical Education. She criticises Teachers' Action's 'crude political analysis' and endorses Radical Education's attempts to formulate a 'coherent theory of education comparable to Marxist analyses of capitalist economy'. What particularly concerns us however is her dismissal of Lib Ed and through it the anarchist critique of state schooling and libertarian theory of education and society.

First we must examine her assertion that central to anarchism is a 'distrust of all authority or power structures which interfere with personal "liberation"', (Ms Clark has an idiosyncratic way with quotation marks). This identification of anarchism with crude individualism is common among marxists. This is not to deny that there exist those who describe themselves as libertarians, and who might place individ-

* *Screen Education* is distributed by Full Time, and is available from radical bookshops.



ual liberation (whatever that might mean) above any concept of societal change, nor that anarchism has always contested the idea that socialism without freedom is a goal worth fighting for. However the achievement of a free society, a stateless socialism, is the aim of anarchism, rather than the production of liberated individuals. And far from ignoring humanity's 'social nature', anarchist theory - Kropotkin's 'Mutual Aid' for example - claims it as a prime force of human evolution. Arthur Lehning's introduction to the selected writings of Bakunin (Cape 1973, p.14) states that for Bakunin:

'Social solidarity is the first human law, freedom is the second ... Freedom is not the negation of solidarity; it represents on the contrary the development, the humanisation of the latter.'

Ms Clark's statement that the anarchist attitude to 'authority and power structures' is one of 'distrust' evidently reflects her view that anarchists reject theory. It is as if we are to be characterised as political neanderthals emerging from the jungle to be confronted by a dazzling skyscraper - Authority. Bewildered, we hurl rocks at this structure we fear but do

not understand, before scuttling back into the gloom. The truth is entirely different. It is not difficult to find examples of anarchist writing which confirm our understanding of authoritarian relationships in society.

'May the future preserve us from the benevolence of despotism, and may it also save us from the damaging and stultifying consequences of authoritarian, doctrinaire or institutional socialism. Let us be socialists, but let us never become sheep. Let us seek justice, but without any sacrifice of liberty. There can be no life, no humanity, without liberty, and a form of socialism which excluded liberty, or did not accept it as a basis and as the only creative principle, would lead us straight back to slavery and bestiality.' (Bakunin in Lehning op.cit. p.15). 'I am not a Communist because Communism unites all the forces of society in the state and becomes absorbed in it, because it inevitably leads to the concentration of all property in the hands of the state, while I seek the abolition of the state - the complete elimination of the principle of authority and governmental guardianship, which, under the pretence

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HISTORY ... a libertarian view

'So far, all that has given colour to existence still lacks a history. Where could you find a history of love, of envy, of conscience, of pious respect for tradition?'

The Contemporary Role of History:

History is a means of social control. It is part of ruling class culture, and works for ruling class aims. History has always been defined as 'society's memory' - but a ruling class suffers from selective amnesia.

The Great British Myth is one of a slow steady progression upwards in the standard of living. On its left wing the myth has a little class analysis to show how the condition of the working class has improved, and how 'socialism' will finally guarantee the land of milk and honey. On its right, a painful ambiguity: the new ruling class - the bureaucracy - is coming to power, and the right sinks into a nostalgia for the Good Old Days.⁽²⁾ But it, too, is captured by the Myth, and cannot sink back too far.

The mass media and other agents of cultural control force-feed us a junk version of our own history. Just as cultural stereotypes degrade women, and Irish jokes erase any real contact with Irish people, so ruling class history caricatures our past. 'Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.'⁽³⁾ Within the perspective of

ruling class culture radicals are 'deviants' - the past is *Upstairs, Downstairs* and the future is *Star Trek*. Such stereotypes are not simply insulting. They are an essential part of a social conditioning process that creates an image of the masses: the unwashed, unthinking, emotionless, irrational consumers.

Any movement which seeks to challenge the ruling class must fight a cultural battle to break free of these stereotypes. The Rastafarian mythology, herstory and Irish Nationalist history are examples of such battles.

How does the ruling class control the past? The obvious way is a simple manipulation of facts: on the basis of our present knowledge the Industrial Revolution reduced workers' wages if statistics are taken from 1800 and 1850, and increased them if statistics are taken from 1780 and 1830.⁽⁴⁾ A ruling class historian can easily manipulate such 'objective' facts to conform to political prejudice. In 1984 this manipulation is taken to its limit: the ruling class periodically re-write the whole of history.

But more important is the distortion of history through a myopic ruling class perspective. Imagine a newspaper office: the editor selects what he thinks is newsworthy from a variety of events. Inevitably he chooses the illness of a film star, the shooting of a president, the blunder of a monarch - events that make up a spectacular

theatre of immaculately dressed and infinitely enviable personalities. Occasionally some ordinary person is shot into their circle by a pool win, or by some other contact, however slight, with this world. The political bias of the paper is consciously expressed by a scrounger story, or by an editorial against a strike - yet the mind-deadening effects of the mass media do not come from its feeble efforts at political manipulation. They come from its distorted perspective of life.

The eyes behind the tits on page three can only see the glittering actions of great personalities in past, present and future.⁽⁵⁾ The Spectacle⁽⁶⁾ rules in the fake intimacy of the chat show and in self-importance of academic learning. So the Russian Revolution is explained in terms of the strengths of Lenin against the weaknesses of the Tsar. Eras are named after single great personalities: the Victorian age, the Napoleonic Wars. This is called political history - the history of the class that controls the political life of a society.

At a more sophisticated level political history develops from being the history of leaders to the history of governments. It is assumed that not only are governments accurate reflections of the whole of society but also the actual nerve centre that determines the shape of the rest of society. I'm reminded of a

IMPORTANT RULES...



1 DON'T SWALLOW IDEOLOGIES WHOLE! CHEW ALL THEORIES 100 TIMES BEFORE SWALLOWING.



2 BEWARE OF SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES IN ADVERTISING! DEFACE BILLBOARDS AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY.



3 GIVE YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS A BREAK! MAKE ROOM FOR A WELL-INTEGRATED SUBJECTIVITY IN YOUR SOCIAL STRUGGLES.



CALL IT SOCIALISM, COMMUNISM, ANARCHISM OR WHAT HAVE YOU... THE FUTURE IS FLEXIBLE. ALL I KNOW IS THAT THIS PRESENT SET-UP IS ABOUT TO COLLAPSE AND HISTORY CAN'T GO BACKWARDS !!

cartoon: a crowded street scene with schoolchildren, newspaper sellers, chauffeurs, rich ladies, executives and workers all wearing the same expression of deep concentration, their puzzlement growing into enlightenment. The caption read: 'The world slowly realised, through Einsteins's work, that time was a relative concept.' All political history that seeks to explain the entire life of a society through the political and cultural life of its ruling class suffers from the same absurdity.

Hegel formulated the theory behind political history, and Marx was the first to challenge it. For Hegel consciousness determined life, and government and ruling class culture were the highest expressions of consciousness; therefore they determined the whole of society. Marx believed that life determined consciousness, and devised the concept of historical materialism to counter political history. He claimed that the social dynamic lay in the relationship of the forces of production. Economics, not politics, was the driving force of history; only by understanding economics could the historian write a history that was something more than a diary of political events. Historical materialism was to be based on

'...men, not in any fantastic isolation and rigidity, but in their actual empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions. As soon as this life process is described, history ceases to be a collection of dead factors... or an imagined activity of imagined subjects.'

Yet the writings by Marxists have consistently failed to reach this ideal. Read Khrushchev's 'secret speech' of 1956 - no trace of a social or economic analysis of Stalinism in its 'actual, empirically, per-

ceptible process of development'. Read Trotsky's 'classic' *History of the Russian Revolution* - two chapters of economic history and then wham! Straight into the glorious rise of the obedient proletariat led by their heroic leaders, the holders of the magic quality of class consciousness. Read Lenin's 'prophetic' testament of 1922 - 'Stalin was rude to my wife yesterday ... he would not make a good leader of the Soviet Union'. Read Marx himself - in his vastly over estimated *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, written only six years after his conception of historical materialism, he makes no attempt to describe the 'definite conditions' of the French people - not even to the extent of sketching out wage-levels, housing conditions, population growth, etc. Men are not the 'theatre of history' in *Eighteenth Brumaire*; at best they are the backdrop in front of which the various spectacular great personalities (Lamartine, Louis Blanc, Louis Napoleon, etc.) act.

In practice, orthodox Marxists have simply created a counter mythology. Leaders of genius replace presidents, parties of the proletariat replace parties of the bourgeoisie, conferences of radicals replace conferences of diplomats.⁽⁸⁾ Historical materialism is reduced to an introductory chapter of stodgy economic history, and the rest of the work is the same old history of date-by-date, fact-by-fact accounting of the spectacular actions of great personalities. Possibly this counters the manipulation of facts by bourgeois historians. But the vast majority of society, in both bourgeois political history and Marxist-Leninist history, are reduced to a single inanimate lump (the people of the proletariat, the mob, the masses, the nation) that is wheeled off and onto the history books as and when required by the great figures.

Libertarian history:

Marxist-Leninists have reduced historical analysis to the level of economic determinism.⁽⁹⁾ Since Marx's analysis several thinkers have challenged the view that economics is the single most important force within society. Freud argued - and many feminists would agree - that sexuality and sexual relations were the decisive force within society. Reich and Fromm have tried to combine Marxist and Freudian analysis. The Situationists argued that ruling class culture was the most significant inhibition to freedom.

Two desires complement each other: firstly the need for an accurate analysis, on which radicals may base their actions and historians satisfy their aim for an 'objective' history, and, secondly the desire by political movements to impose their theories onto historical analysis. For Reich, in the 1930's these two desires fused. The crude economic determinism of the CP hacks no longer bore any resemblance to 'actual, empirically perceptible' reality. Reich wrote in an attempt to improve Marxist analysis, not to attack it. On the basis of an accurate analysis, socialists could fight German fascism. Reich re-introduced individual consciousness into socialist history.

'The trend of society is determined solely by the overwhelming majority of working men and women, whether they passively tolerate or actively support tyranny.'⁽¹⁰⁾

Reich talks of 'working men and women' - not a single inanimate bloc. Marx sees history as governed by economic forces; Reich looks at individual emotions. But, like Marx, Reich was unable to fulfill his own ideal. His greatest work, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, introduces

a psychological perspective but fails to consider other areas where individual consciousness and social life blend - such as schools, the media, in leisure.

Surprisingly, a quite politically orthodox group of French historians (the Annales school) have come closest to writing libertarian history. They attempt a 'total' history that uses economic, social, psychological and political sources to investigate all aspects of life. Some works - despite their explicit political neutrality - have revealed facts of interest to libertarians. Rude's *The Crowd in the French Revolution* actually analyses the individuals behind the labels 'the mob' (right wing) and 'the people' (left wing), and depicts the growth of a popular political consciousness and a system of self-management ignored by historians writing from a hierarchical ruling class perspective. (Bookchin's essay *The Forms of Freedom in Post-Scarcity Anarchism* is undoubtedly influenced by this school). E.P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class* is libertarian to the extent that it considers the working class as a living, creative unit consciously making their own culture as a response to social change - though this work neglects the family as a social force. Solidarity have produced a number of forceful pamphlets, both on aspects of libertarian history and on the theory behind it.⁽¹¹⁾

The hierarchy of sources of historical 'facts' is another reflection of our social hierarchy. The word of a Prime Minister is more important to most historians than the word of a blacksmith - yet the blacksmith may be far more representative of the society than the Prime Minister. The people do not write books; their history is only traced through folk songs, stories and, rarely, a newspaper or a pamphlet. Most orthodox historical sources only reveal popular life in exceptional circumstances: at birth, on strike, in revolt, being promoted, in favour, in disgrace and at death. The everyday life of ordinary people is rarely directly described: novels and paintings, despite their subjectivity can reveal far more than official reports.

Conclusion

Libertarian history does not mean the history of libertarian groups, nor even the history of the few moments aspects of self managed life have emerged.⁽¹²⁾ A history of big colourful libertarians arguing with Marx or merrily setting-up barricades

is no more liberatory than a history of the British monarchy.

Libertarian history is the history of the individual within a social context. Its focus is the relationship between individual consciousness and all social life: in schools, in factories, in fields, in love, in childhood, in leisure and in old age.

Libertarian history sees all utterances by leaders, bureaucrats, writers and representatives as being inaccurate reflections of society. Only a history drawn directly from popular sources, or a history that pierces the smoke screen of official addresses, can directly reveal our past.

The liberation of the past from hierarchical control exercised through the manipulation of facts and distorted spectacular perspectives is essential to the success of any libertarian movement; no such movement can succeed before there is a popular realization that the suppression of the past is part of oppression in the present.

John Cobbett

Footnotes:

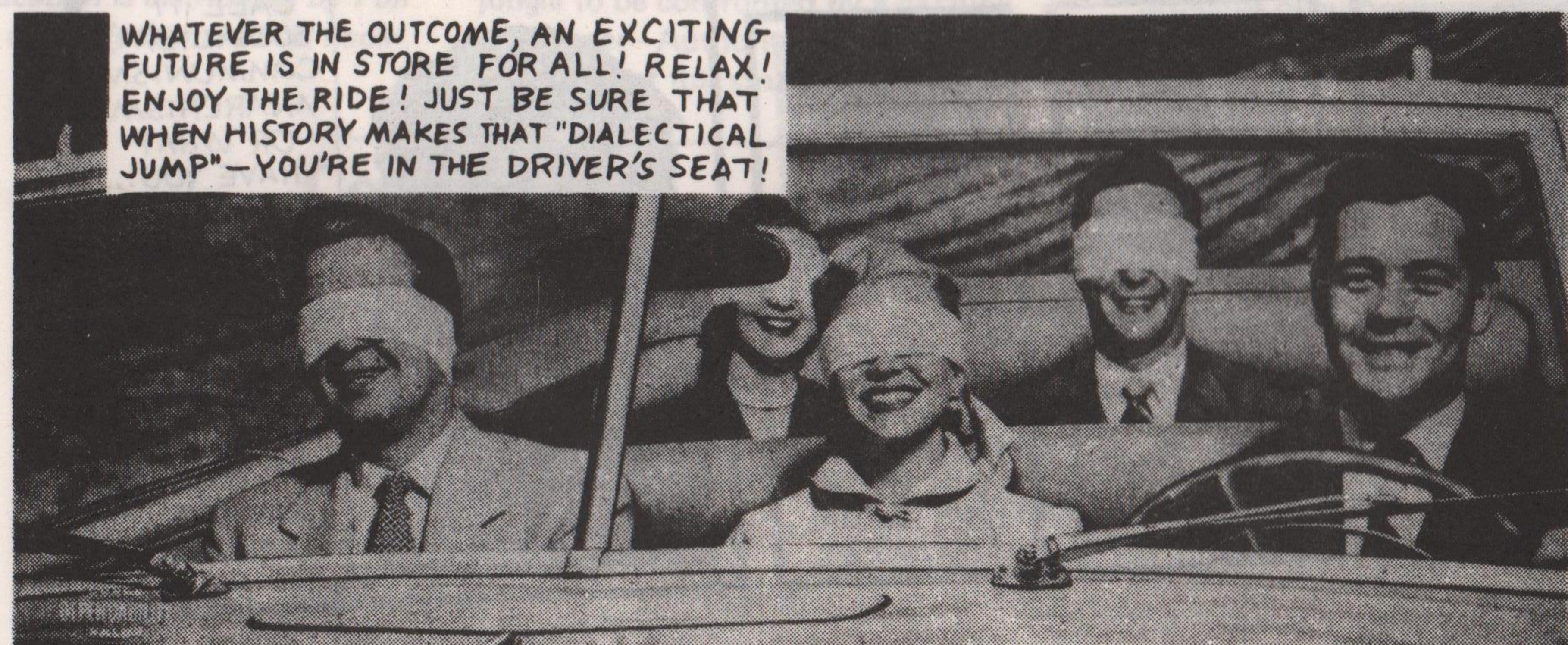
- 1) Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, paragraph 7.
- 2) see, for example, Boyson, *The Crisis in Education*, p.5. in which he argues that the people of 1880 were more literate than today's.
- 3) Orwell, 1984.
- 4) E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English Working Class*, p.216.
- 5) Marx, *The German Ideology*, p.59-60
- 6) If you don't understand that the Spectacle is, and can't guess from the context, read Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* or Vaneigem's *Revolution of Everyday Life*.
- 7) Marx, *The German Ideology*, p.47-48
- 8) Cardan makes this point in *From Bolshevism to Bureaucracy*.
- 9) I realise that this is a simplification to Marx's theory, and is a debatable point. However, Marxists-Leninists have simplified Marx.
- 10) Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, p.350
- 11) I am not claiming that libertarian history has already been written, British historiography remains

mostly traditional. All the books listed here are still written in universities for people at universities. Yet I still feel that the latest trends in historiography are moving towards a libertarian theory.

- 12) Unlike the disastrous article in January 1980's *Black Flag*, which recommends a study of "famous figures good or bad" - and no doubt weekly services at Bakunin's grave. This whole article deserves a reply from people concerned to establish a libertarian form of education.

Bibliography of works on the theory of libertarian history, and of history books of interest to libertarians. * indicates of particular interest.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
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| * Rowbotham/Segal/Wainwright | - Beyond the Fragments (Merlin) |
| Rude | - The Crowd in the French Revolution (Clarendon Press) |
| Thomas | - Religion and the Decline of Magic (Paladin) |
| Thompson | - The Making of the English Working Class. |
- If anyone wishes to send criticism etc., please write to
 Box 32, Freewheel Community Bookshop, 56 St Benedicts, Norwich, Norfolk.



WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, AN EXCITING FUTURE IS IN STORE FOR ALL! RELAX! ENJOY THE RIDE! JUST BE SURE THAT WHEN HISTORY MAKES THAT "DIALECTICAL JUMP"—YOU'RE IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT!

Women on Women

The Workers' Educational Association aims to provide people with educational experiences that they demand: courses in industrial health and safety and trade unionism for example. But generally the WEA has failed to attract back into the education system the working men and women who opted out of it. In the spring of 1979 Leicester WEA advertised for a development officer to initiate and coordinate educational activities in the racially mixed, working class area in which I live. The officer was to plan and supervise the opening of a community education centre at 101 Hinckley Road. Perhaps this project might succeed where traditional WEA courses had failed.

101, as the centre is now called, is a three-storey, newly renovated terraced house on a main road near the middle of a fairly distinctive geographical area of Leicester. It is specifically for the people of that area and has no association with any local school or college. The courses can be run free of charge and a creche staffed for any day or evening class.

WHERE WE LIVE AND ORGANISE

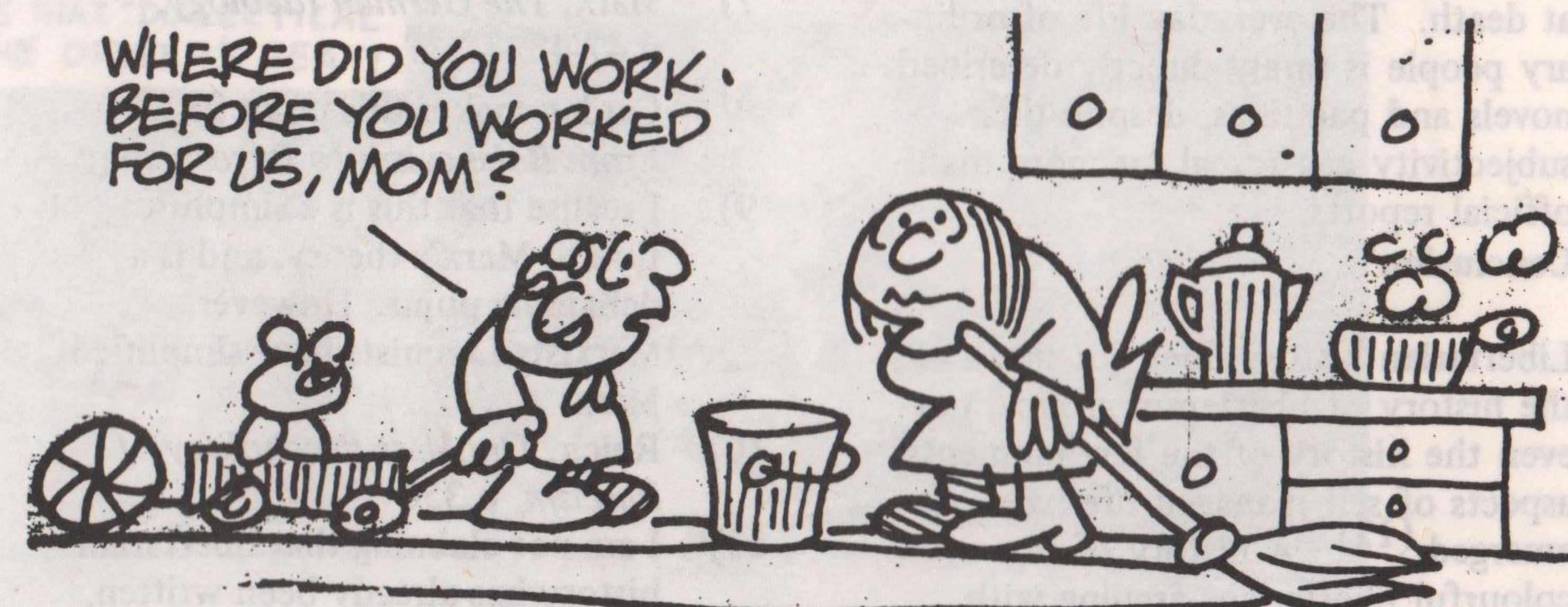
The WEA wanted to put on classes organised and run by local people; I had several friends within the area so why not approach 101 with some of our ideas? Our interest was in setting up some kind of women's studies course. Most of us had previously been involved with a Women's Liberation Group, but had increasingly felt frustrated with it. The topics we discussed, the conferences we went to all seemed to have nothing to do with women who brought up kids and lived in nuclear families. As the group as a whole became more interested in radical feminist ideas so women who felt unsure of them dropped out. Other women's organisations in Leicester such as National Abortion Campaign and Women's Aid continued their work but rarely did we all get together to put our common ideas on women's place in society to other women. A woman's studies course seemed a good opportunity to do that.

So some of us from the Women's Liberation Group arranged to meet the Development Officer and discuss the feasibility of our plan. We realised

that the aims and objectives of the WEA did not allow craft courses, so we could not run a simple plumbing/carpentry course. We also came to the conclusion that we wanted to have full control over the course.

The first meeting took place in September and the centre was due to open early in December, later postponed to the New Year. We were offered a room in which to put on an exhibition linked to the course during 101's opening week, and so we had a lot of work to do in the next three months. Five people turned up to the next meeting from the original twelve. It was an exciting meeting and we drew up a rough programme of twelve sessions covering possible areas within our range of expertise. We wanted the course to be practical and useful, ideas and information we could use in our everyday lives. Other areas to explore were new ways of working together through co-counselling or assertion training techniques. We were prepared to do the factual sessions between us, but decided to ask Frankie Armstrong, the feminist folksinger, to do a workshop on 'speaking up for yourself'.

The next meeting was arranged to take place in someone's house. We wanted to invite members of other women's organisations on the left to participate, and we felt a neutral meeting place was essential, due to the bad feelings still felt towards the Women's Liberation Group. We drew up a list of women we knew were involved in groups such as NAC, Women's Aid, Trades Council Women's Subcommittee, Labour Party Women's Group and Women's Voice, and sent out about thirty letters explaining our ideas. We were conscious of having drawn up the programme before asking



for other people's contributions, but we felt we needed something concrete to offer. We were quite prepared for our whole programme to be thrown out. Twenty women turned up and our plan was agreed upon in principle. The format of each class was to be an introduction to the topic by a speaker, followed by a discussion. We then started looking for people to lead each class. We were pleased to find that between us we knew a feminist solicitor, midwife, family planning worker, welfare rights worker, and NALGO shop steward.

SPEAKERS & TOPICS

Things had begun to develop in a very positive way and we now only needed to get together the women we hoped would lead each class and our course was arranged. All the suggested speakers agreed to their topic and a title for each was chosen. Each of us had an idea of the purpose of the course and the points each class would bring up. We wanted to show how women are treated unfairly and unequally in this society, to discuss the reasons and the possible things we as a group could do about it. Throughout our future meetings, this common basis was understood rather than articulated, and although some of our speakers had differing political views, we felt this was unimportant. For instance some women were in favour of collective child care and others felt mothers should be given financial encouragement to stay at home to look after their own children. Some women saw lesbianism as a political strategy and others thought an alliance between men and women workers was the only way women would be liberated. But on the funda-

mental issues concerning women's exploitation we were all agreed.

PUBLICITY

It was now November and we were ready to plan our publicity. We arranged a day-long session to draw up a leaflet and poster and begin the exhibition. Four of us turned up and we were very disappointed. The success of the course would depend on a considerable publicity and that needed women to work on it.

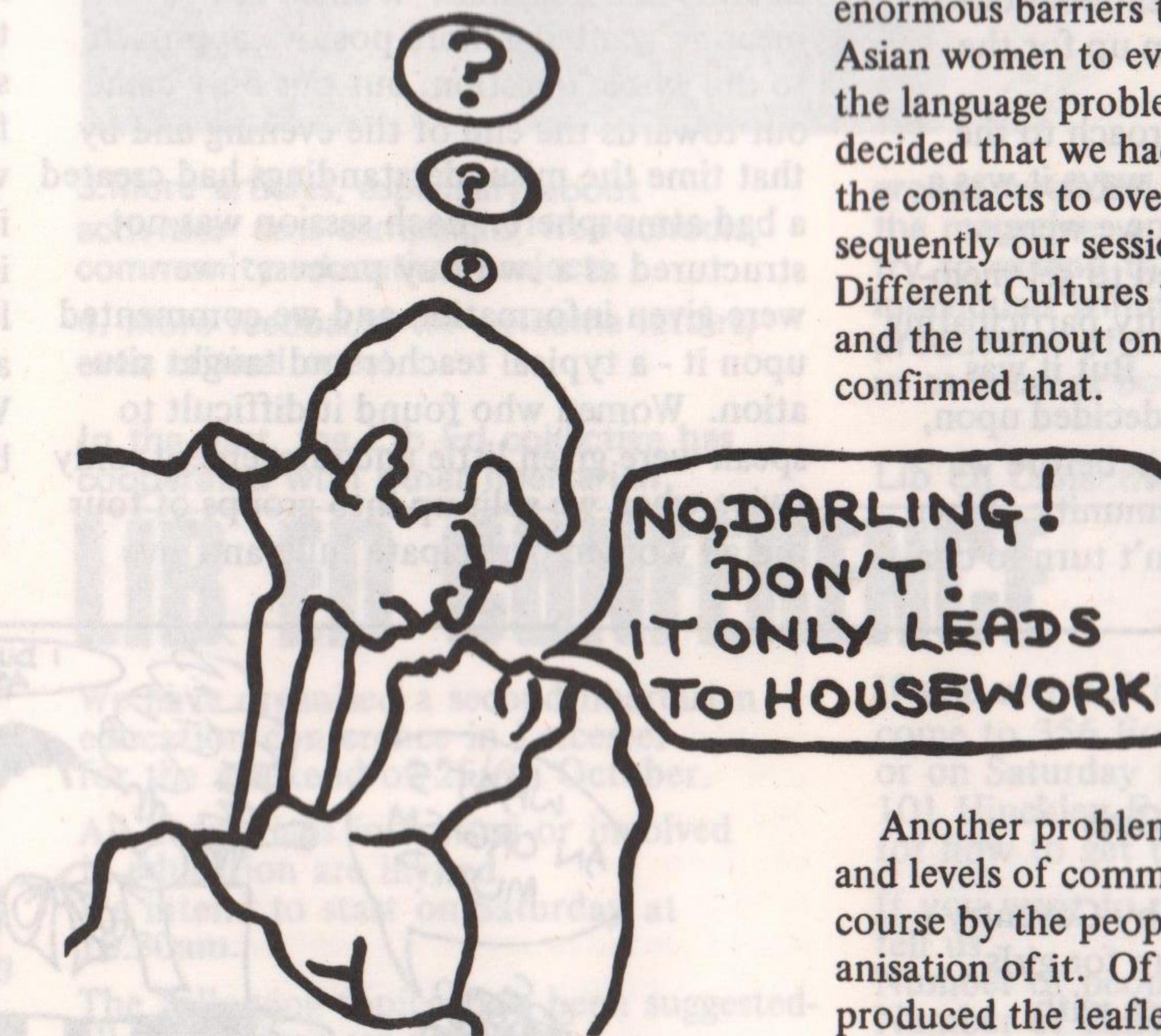


Nevertheless we had an amazingly productive day. We did all we had intended and learned a lot about our skills or lack of them and about ways of working and learning together. The exhibition was put up in a top floor room at 101 on the first Saturday in January. The four of us had each designed and produced posters on work, marriage, children and women's liberation which we supplemented with posters from the See Red collective, photographs and magazine cuttings. We also arranged to be included in the WEA interviews with the local press and radio publicising the opening of the house. The press gave us scant attention, and the radio broadcast succeeded in attracting one woman to the course. The exhibition was not well attended; the opening week of the centre was noticed in the area, but not with any great enthusiasm or excitement. A similar enterprise in Liverpool had used a pop group and street theatre performance to publicise their centre, the Leicester WEA was not so imaginative.

We decided on two thousand leaflets, some of which were to be distributed around the area as part of a package of WEA literature on 101. We kept 750 ourselves and had 150 posters printed. Our plan was to distribute leaflets in the street and through letterboxes on the local council estates, and to put up posters in shop windows, doctors' surgeries, working men's (!) clubs etc. By this time our numbers were too low for an effective campaign, so we sent a strong letter to all the initial group. This raised twenty people for the

leafleting, and twelve for the follow-up, which was canvassing door-to-door. From the response we received we realised that we should have organised a baby-sitting service, as well as a creche.

Two weeks before the course was due to start we had finished our publicity. The success of the course would depend on the number of women who turned up to the meetings, but we felt we had achieved something worthwhile already. We had of course many fears ... Perhaps nobody would come, or, on the other hand, the meetings would be dominated by committed feminists. If men turned up we could not, strictly speaking, ban them, although we were very clear that the meetings were for women only. Maybe the speakers would forget to come or people feel too inhibited to participate in a discussion. We also had our own



thoughts about what we wanted to get out of the course. I wanted to meet women from the area, women who were not involved in the existing political groupings in Leicester. I wanted to learn and discuss ideas with women I didn't know well and who had new perspectives to offer. I hoped we could all make friends, reach a better understanding of our position as women in a male dominated society, give each other support and possibly continue our association in the future. I would have liked to have seen a women's group set up in the West End of Leicester where women could continue to learn together and fight for a better deal for women in that area.

LOOKING BACK AND TO THE FUTURE

The course is now over. The speakers all turned up and so did an audience of women. The first few sessions had an average attendance of twenty rising to around thirty for the ones on Law and Childbirth. Support fell towards the end with an all time low of nine for Women of Different Cultures, but rising again to forty for Frankie Armstrong's Assertion Training session. The women who came were not all of the same age, class or political involvement. The atmosphere was friendly and some discussion was generated. The creche was staffed by the W.E.A. and the kids enjoyed themselves there.

So in lots of ways we can congratulate ourselves. However, there were problems. One of these was our failure to involve any of the Asian women, a substantial minority within the area, in the course. We had realised earlier that there were enormous barriers to cross in getting Asian women to evening classes and that the language problem was great. We decided that we had neither the skill nor the contacts to overcome this. Consequently our session on Women of Different Cultures was mere tokenism and the turnout on that evening only confirmed that.

Another problem concerned the amount and levels of commitment given to the course by the people involved in the organisation of it. Of the four of us who produced the leaflet and exhibition only one was left with the overall responsibility for the course. She had to contact the speakers, remind them of meetings, write and send out letters, arrange chairs, lock up and so on. She felt that the success of the course depended on her efficiency and that other people's commitment and enthusiasm was not sufficient. As most of us involved in the project were libertarians we should have given more time and thought to this. We did not want to set up sub-committees to take on responsibilities for areas of work; we hoped to work co-operatively and sort out problems as they arose. This worked well in the beginning, but later there were not enough people prepared to give a consistent amount of time and effort to the course. Women committed themselves for a few weeks

Women

continued

and then dropped out. Perhaps next time the amount and length of time people need to give to the project should be discussed and some sort of contract or obligation given before the decision is taken to go ahead.

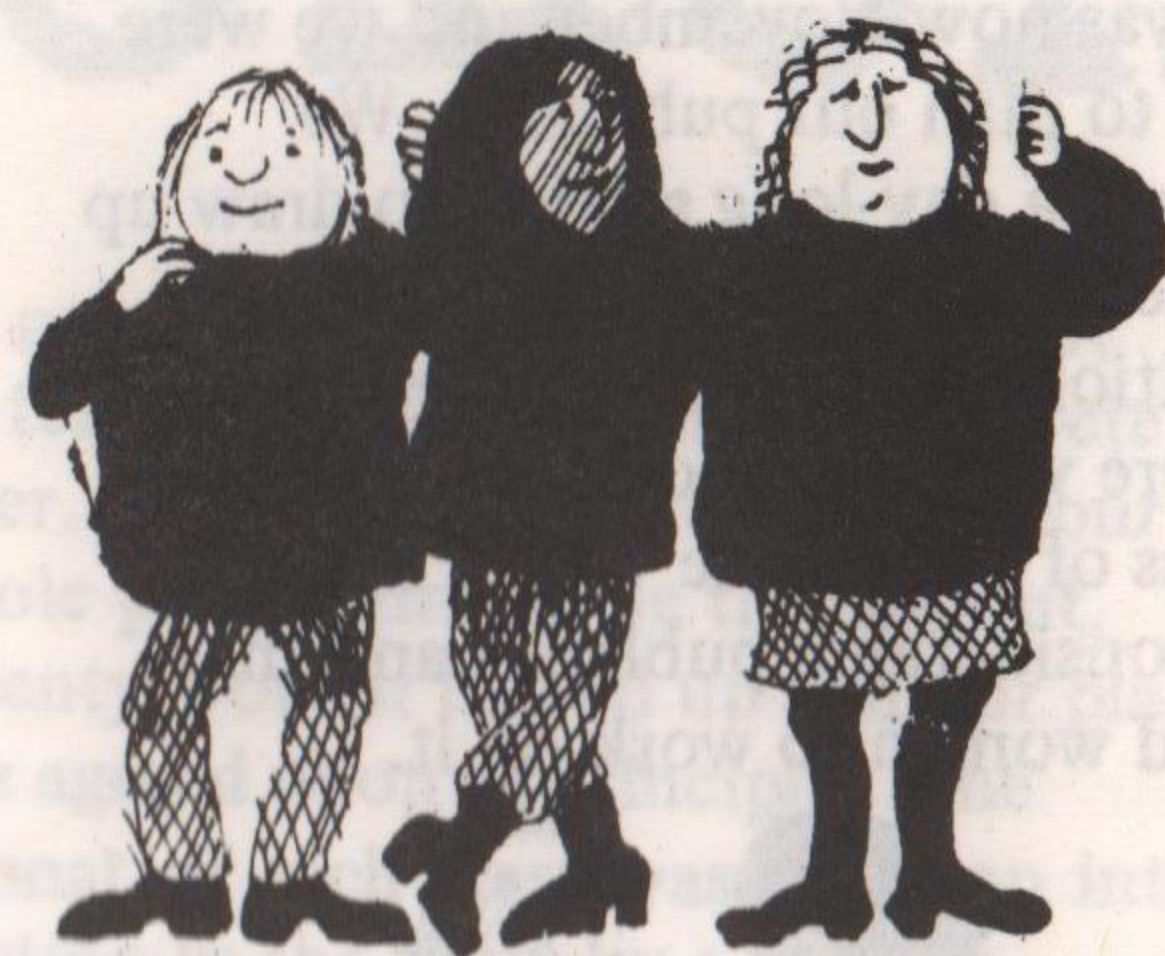
Nor were there enough women to give active support throughout the months preceding the start of the course. We had hoped that the Women's liberation group would rally round and take some of the pressure off the few of us left and yet women only turned up after they had been nagged and cajoled into it. This seems to be a problem familiar to many women's groups. Women's Aid and N.A.C. are forever appealing for women to get involved in the day to day administrative and organisational tasks, but most people only turn up for the demos.

Perhaps our whole approach to the idea was wrong. In many ways it was a form of community work we were involved in. We had hoped to get members of the local community participating in an educational project. But it was already organised, topics decided upon, outside speakers brought in before we approached the local community. When desperate for help we didn't turn to con-

tacts we had already made within the area; we still went to women who had shown an initial interest. In fact we had set up our own power structure. Although this power was mostly invisible it still existed and it became impossible for anyone else to break down those barriers. Therefore when one woman suggested a night out in a pub or day trip to the seaside nobody was willing to organise it.

The third problem that arose concerned the format of the meetings. Some of them were stimulating, particularly the sessions where the speaker had specialised knowledge and suggested controversial areas for discussion. Some of them were rather boring and the discussion over-generalised and cliched. The liaison between the speaker and audience was minimal. There was no discussion before each meeting as to what women wanted to know about each topic. For instance the talk on childbirth consisted of a description of the worst hassles women might get from doctors and hospitals. Women at the meeting wanted a more positive approach to the whole question, but this only came out towards the end of the evening and by that time the misunderstandings had created a bad atmosphere. Each session was not structured as a two way process: we were given information and we commented upon it - a typical teacher and taught situation. Women who found it difficult to speak were given little encouragement; only twice when we split up into groups of four did all women participate fully and give

their opinions. It is, therefore, difficult to know how much the women at each session were stimulated by it.



The most productive part of the whole project for me has been the planning and working out of an idea with sympathetic people. I have made some new acquaintances, but not yet friends. The course has not produced any burning enthusiasm for changing the lives of women in the West End of Leicester. It was naive to think that it might. Transferring community education into community action is a long slow process. What we have for the future is a desire on the part of a dozen women to carry on meeting and organise a new course. What we must do is find new ways of sharing the workload and responsibilities. At least we are now more aware of the pitfalls. We have made one step and we have to build on it.

J.W.

Review

Please Yourself - Sex for Girls

This booklet is produced by Coventry Women's Education Group for girls 13 years and over, 30 pages with cartoons and diagrams, cost 40p.

The group describes itself in the introduction as Socialist Feminists. They say that the book is about "sexual pleasure for girls", which immediately marks it out from the other books available. For example, in the book, masturbation is described in detail and explicitly encouraged, p.10: "It is important to learn to masturbate and explore your sexuality yourself."

The booklet encourages girls to examine and learn about their own bodies, and not be frightened to do so, - there are useful diagrams to help. It also encourages girls to use tampons during periods and gives advice in case of problems.



There is information on contraceptive methods, details of pregnancy testing and methods of abortion.

Earlier the writers point out that full intercourse is not necessary for sexual satisfaction, and that masturbation, mutual or otherwise, can be just as enjoyable and does not carry the risk of pregnancy.

There is also some easily-understood details about sexually transmitted diseases plus advice on what to do in

case. Finally there is a glossary of slang terms, and a useful list of addresses, e.g. The British Pregnancy Advisory Service, Brook Advisory Centre etc.

All in all this is a very useful little book which brings together a lot of information not usually available for girls. It is easy to read - not patronising, and being cheap it would be possible to have multiple copies available.

C M

CRISIS!

Lib Ed is in a crisis.

The causes are several but interlinked; they can be listed like this:

1. Money. Like most of the left press, Lib Ed has been badly hit by the rises in production costs and postal charges. If we were not printed and typeset by a non-profitmaking community press we would not have survived this long. As it is, the last issues have all lost money, and the present issue, despite the price rise, is also not likely to cover its costs.

In the past we have appealed to our subscribers for donations, and we have been answered generously; this issue will be subsidised by the editorial/production collective, who are not of course paid for our labour.

We are reluctant to keep appealing for financial assistance, both because we know there are many other calls on the earnings of our readers, and also because we realise that this can only provide a temporary solution to the magazine's problems.

What we really need is more sales and more subscriptions. Both have remained static, despite what we at least believe to be improvements in both the style and content of the paper.

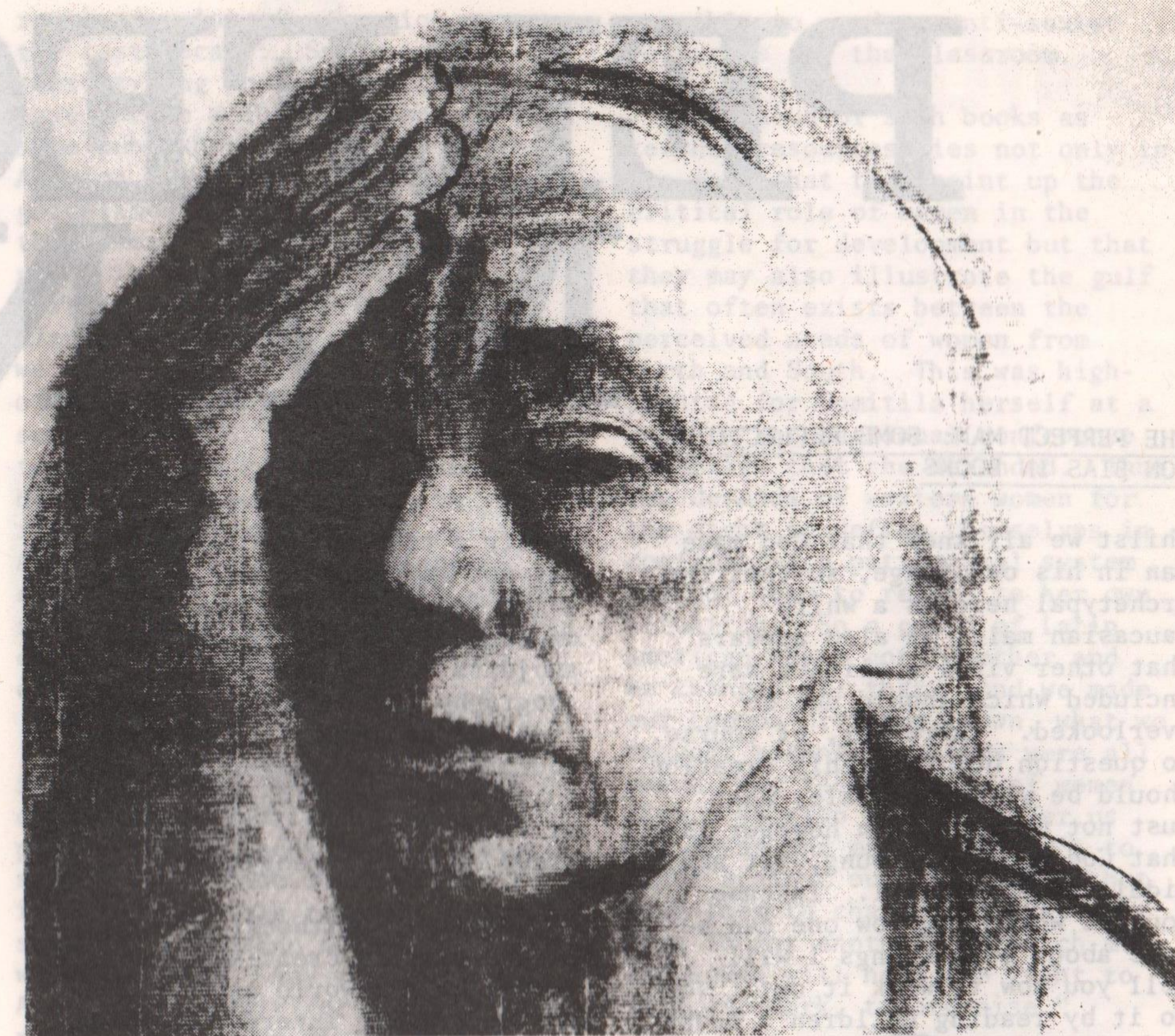
If we sold every copy we produced, we could easily cover our costs. If you can take some copies - on sale or return - to sell at your school, college or wherever, please contact us.

2. Lack of material and feedback. We need a lot more contact with our readers, both in the form of articles and letters, if Lib Ed is to remain a relevant, interesting and inspiring publication. We prefer articles to be clearly written and free of jargon, and we don't promise to print everything that's sent, but we do want to know what you have to say, and to hear what you think of Lib Ed.

3. Group crisis. As a result of the two above, the Lib Ed collective has been thinking seriously of closing down the magazine. The lack of sales and feedback has made us wonder whether there is any longer a place for a magazine of this kind. We were most heartened by the response we received at the recent Oxford Anarchist conference, and hope that the good feeling generated there can be translated into practical help for the magazine.

To sum up, if Lib Ed is to continue, we need:

1. More sales - can you take a bundle, or persuade your local radical bookshop to increase its standing order?
2. More subscriptions - an easy way to help Lib Ed, and to make sure you get every copy.



3. More articles, especially about activities - cuts campaigns, free schools, community education projects.
4. More feedback - we welcome letters, even critical ones!

In the past, the Lib Ed collective has cooperated with other libertarian

groups outside Leicester in compiling the magazine, and we would like to try to extend this. Any groups or individuals willing to participate in the production of Lib Ed should contact us as soon as possible.

Lib Ed Collective.

LIB ED CONFERENCE

We have organised a second libertarian education conference in Leicester for the weekend of 25/6th October.

All libertarians interested or involved in education are invited. We intend to start on Saturday at 10.30am.

The following topics have been suggested - all other ideas are welcome.....

1. Is there a libertarian theory of education? How does it differ from the Marxist view?
2. The role of alternative schools, and the Campaign for State-aided Alternative Education.
3. Libertarian child-rearing.
4. The cuts and the Education Fightback Campaign.
5. Libertarian teachers and trade unions.
6. Adventure Playgrounds.
7. Self-directed learning.

There will also be showings of a film on the work of Paulo Freire and a controversial videotape on sex-roles.

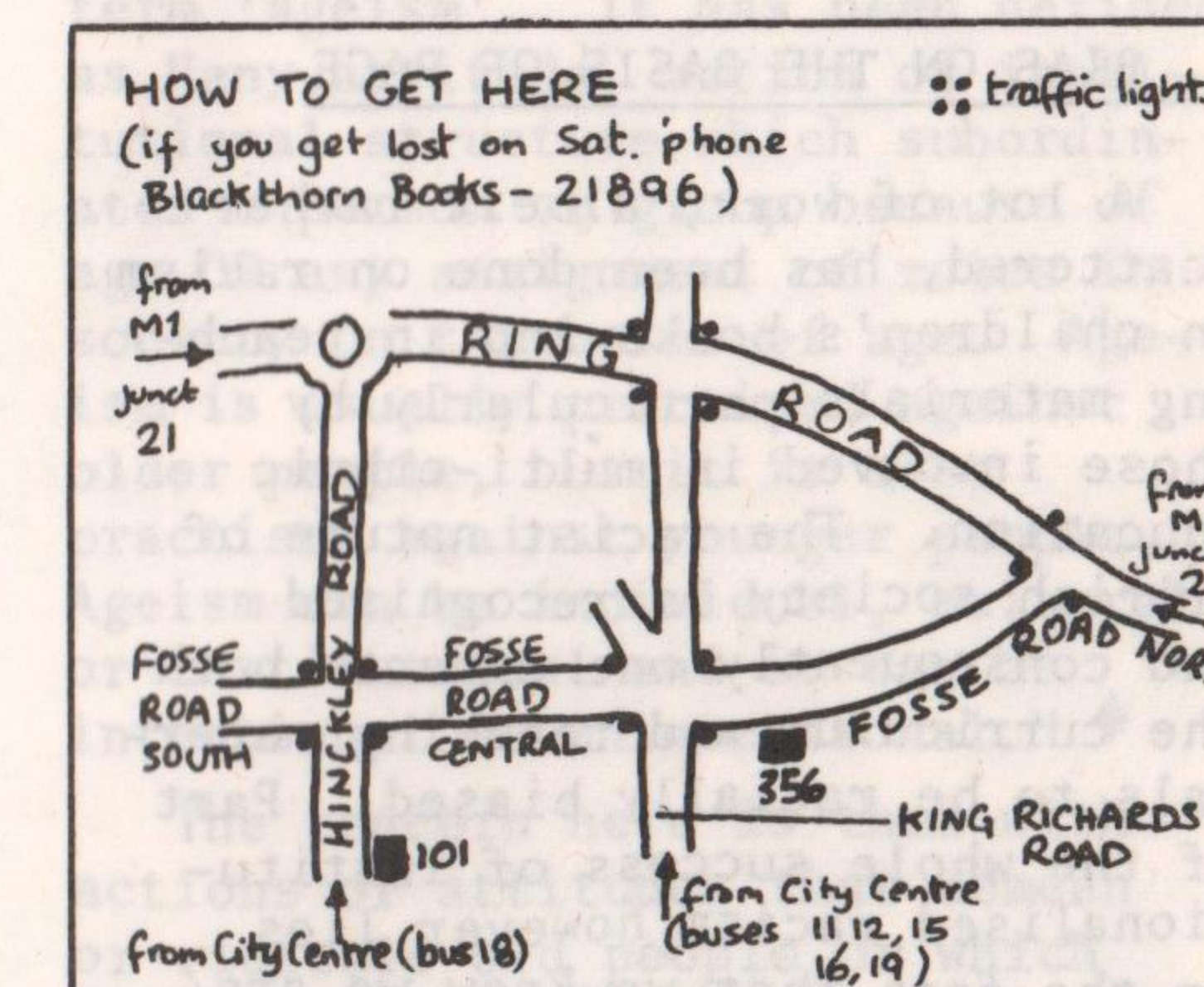
We are organising some entertainment for Saturday evening, and food, accommodation and a creche will be provided.

If you arrive Friday evening, come to 356 Fosse Rd North (58093) or on Saturday to the WEA centre at 101 Hincley Rd (556614). See the map for how to get there.

If you want to come, please write to tell us:-

Number of people coming
Number of children for the creche
If you require accommodation
Suggestions for discussion.

Replies before October 10th please, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope so we can send further details, papers etc.



PERFECT MAN

THE PERFECT MAN: SOME REFLECTIONS ON BIAS IN BOOKS

Whilst we all know that God made man in his own image, so that the archetypal hero is a white Caucasian male, it also appears that other vital qualities were included which should not be overlooked. There was, of course, no question but that this creation should be white and male, what must not be forgotten however is that God made him young, fit and middle-class as well. In case you are wondering how one can be sure about such things I will tell you how to work it out. You do it by reading children's books and school books and then it's a process of elimination. In other words you make of note of which people do *not* appear, or are portrayed unfavourably, and then see what is left: up until recently that has always been the "perfect man".

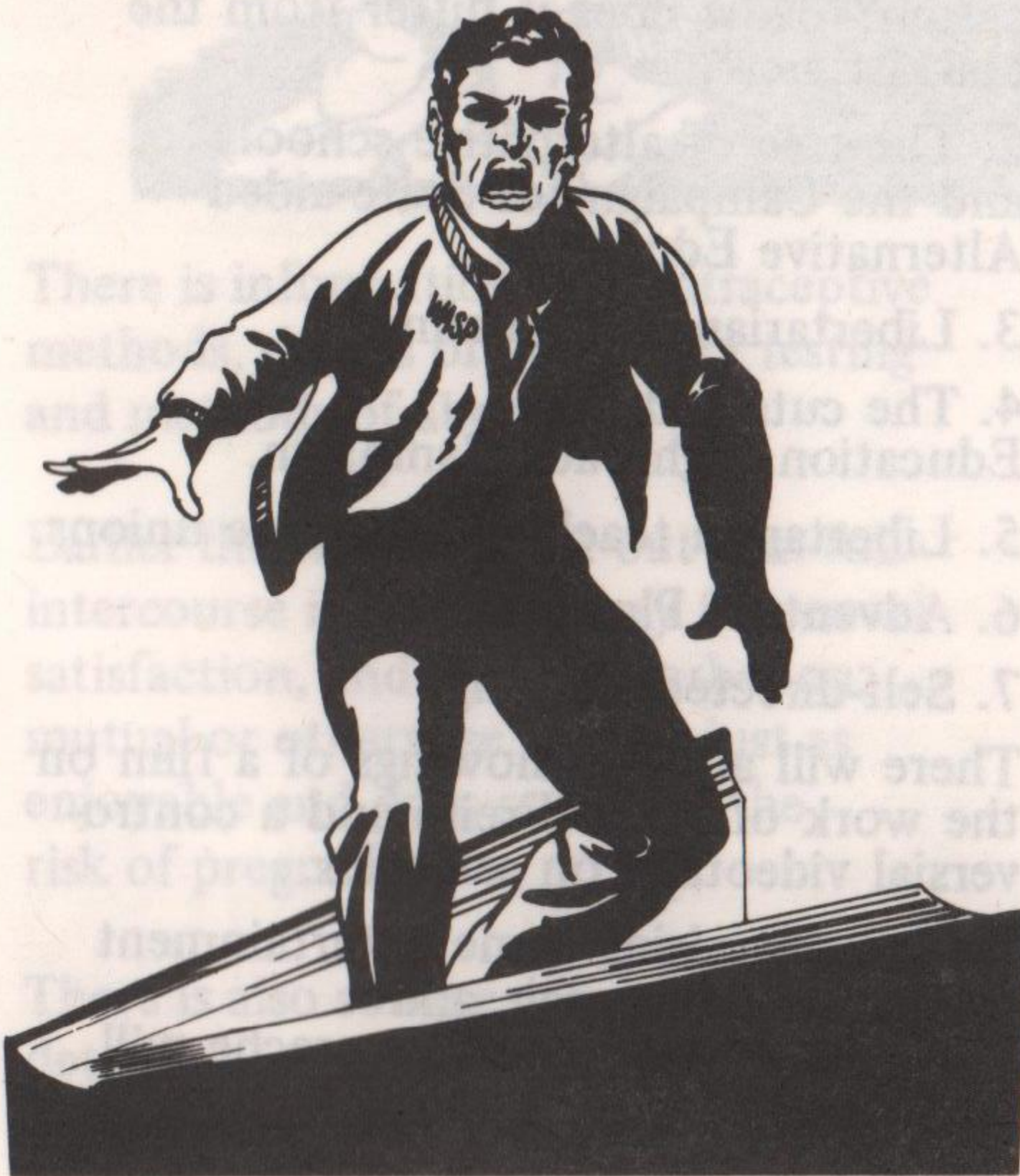
There are, of course, a whole range of social groups that suffer from discriminatory practices in western society. They suffer, if you like, at the hands of the institutionalised 'perfect man' by being either the wrong "race" or sex, the wrong age or class, or simply disabled. My particular interest is bias in teaching materials, primarily racism and sexism, but exploring these issues has led on to several others: namely bias based on age, on class and on disability. Each of these five sorts of bias - and they are not the only ones - are worth examining to see what patterns emerge.

1. BIAS ON THE BASIS OF RACE

A lot of work, albeit rather scattered, has been done on racism in children's books and in teaching materials particularly by those involved in multi-ethnic education. The racist nature of British society is recognised and consequently one expects both the curriculum and teaching materials to be racially biased. Part of the whole success of institutionalised racism however lies in the fact that we know we are

really a tolerant society. What has not happened so far in education is any in-depth analysis of racism as found in particular subjects in the curriculum. Take geography for example. Although 'radical geography' in higher education acknowledges that no subject can be objective, neutral or value-free, this has yet to be faced by school geography.

Geography textbooks obviously play a part in creating student's images of the world and, in view of the growing interest in teaching about world problems, it is interesting to look at how these issues are treated. Some examples can be used as illustrations. *Problems Around Us* by Maxwell Davies (Holmes McDougall, revised 1972) not only sets out most of the world's problems in its seventy pages, but shows how to solve them as well. These extracts will give something of the flavour: "We see that hungry people are a great problem in the world today. It is a problem which must be solved if the peoples of the world are to live together in peace ... The two most important things to be done are: Increase food production. Control the growth of world population." A description then follows of how poorer countries of the world could produce more food "if they are helped to ..." Later, when



discussing world poverty we find that "poorer nations must be helped to develop by aid from the more advanced countries... Money is being loaned to the backward nations ..." One of the tasks at the end of the section is "Discuss why the poorer nations have not developed at the same rate as the rich nations. What has held them back?"

One could list the hidden messages to students as follows:

- People create a problem by being hungry.
- Increased food production and population control in the "third world" are the solutions.
- The problem is in the "third world" and not here.
- Poor countries can only solve their problems with our help.
- These countries are behind us in their development.
- This retardation is due to inherent weakness in poorer countries.

A good illustration of the "colonial brain-damage" that imperial powers suffer from. In fairness one must say that new books coming on the market can be found which take an anti-racist stance. One good example would be Janet Stuart's *The Unequal Third* (Arnold's Network Social Studies, 1977).

It is often useful to devise checklists on particular themes to help in the evaluation of teaching materials. The following are two examples taken from a project on bias in geography textbooks¹:

UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

1. *Causes* - Is it assumed or suggested that there is only one cause of poverty? If so, is this diagnosed as overpopulation or environmental restraints rather than economic factors?
2. *Conditions* - Is underdevelopment described as a state or

a set of conditions which people just happen to find themselves in, and need to get out of?

3. *Process* - Is underdevelopment also shown as an historical process which arises out of unequal relationships between colonised and coloniser?
4. *Solutions* - Is it assumed that there is only one right model of development, without showing that there are a range of options that have been in favour at different times and in different places?
5. *Catching up* - Is there an assumption that "third world" countries need to catch up with richer countries, and that development is to be equated with economic growth alone?
6. *Models* - Are models of development discussed which look at the satisfaction of basic needs in a "third world" context?

WORLD FOOD

1. *Scarcity* - Is it suggested that people are hungry because of scarcity, both of food and land, although world food production is keeping up with population growth?
2. *A contest* - Is hunger described as a contest between the rich and poor worlds? Is it implied that everyone in a country is hungry or only the poor?
3. *More* - Is it suggested that the answer is simply to concentrate on producing more food rather than looking at who produces it and who can afford it?
4. *Cash crops* - Is there an over-emphasis on cash crops for export rather than the subsistence economies in which most of the population are likely to be engaged?
5. *Peasants* - Is it presumed that peasant farmers are ignorant and unable to understand the nature of their own problems?
6. *Green Revolution* - Are the disadvantages of the "green revolution" described, as well as the fact that the poor did not really benefit from it?
7. *Land* - Is the importance of land reform discussed i.e. the ability of people to grow their own food? N.B. About 0.23% of all land-owners control over 50% of all the world's cultivated land.

2. BIAS ON THE BASIS OF SEX

Sexism in children's books has

received a lot of attention over the last decade. Sex-role stereotyping and sexist language have become a focus of concern and some publishers, albeit in North America, have produced their own guidelines for equal treatment of the sexes². Again one of the needs in the U.K. is for the portrayal of women within particular subjects to be analysed. If we take, once more, the example of geography several questions spring to mind. How many geography textbooks are written by women? How often do women appear in illustrations and in what roles? Are women ever given a separate existence in the text? Is the role of women in "third world" development strategies ever discussed?

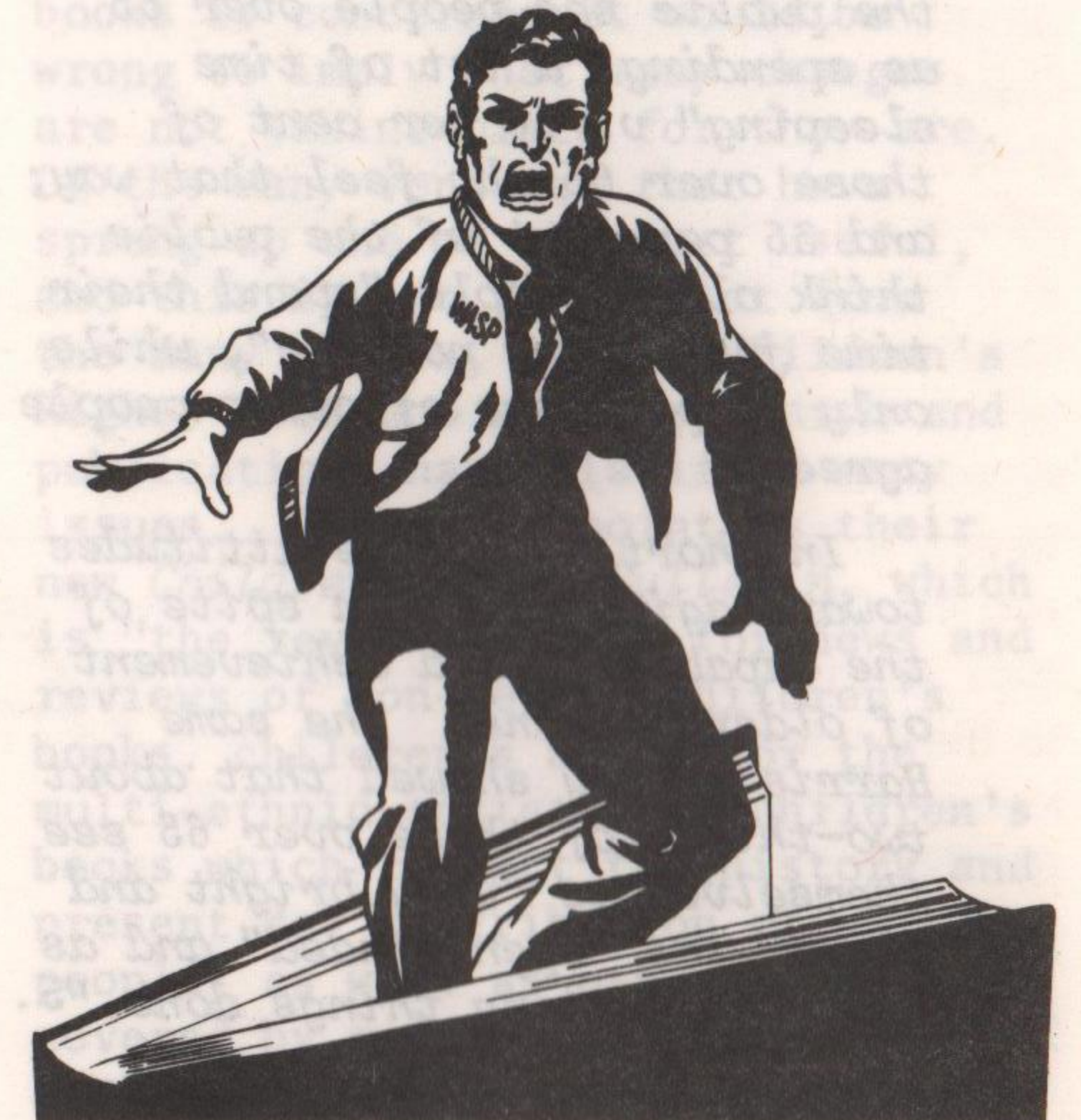
The answers to these questions in a particular subject will not change until tackled by the practitioners themselves. Whilst school books have changed little, if at all in this respect, other sources do provide material from which to work. Any work on Latin America generally, or Bolivia in particular, or on mining and mineral resources, can be totally reshaped by reference to *Let Me Speak! Testimony of Domitila, A Woman of the Bolivian Mines*.³ The back cover summary catches the spirit of the book well!

This is the story of a woman of the Bolivian Andes, wife of a tin miner, mother of seven children, militant women's leader from Catavi. Domitila de Chungara was the daughter of an activist in the Movimiento Nacionalista evolucionario who lost his job because of his political activities. Her mother died when she was nine, and she became responsible for raising her four sisters in extreme poverty; when she married, she went to live with her husband, also a miner. She gradually became involved in the struggles of the Bolivian tin miners and organised the women into an active force in this struggle. This book is the record of her development into a popular leader, and a first-hand account of the continuing confrontations between the miners and the government over the last fifteen years. There are few such testimonies of the lives of women or men in the mines, factories, shantytowns, and countryside, and few narrators who understand so well the causes of their poverty or who are so deeply committed to the struggle for change.

Using and adapting extracts from a book such as this makes it

possible to produce anti-sexist resources for the classroom.

The value of such books as teacher resources lies not only in the fact that they point up the critical role of women in the struggle for development but that they may also illustrate the guilt that often exists between the perceived needs of women from North and South. This was highlighted for Domitila herself at a women's international conference in Mexico that she attended. Thus the demands of western women for the right to define themselves in confronting a patriarchal system did not seem to relate to her own situation: "So a group of Latin American women got together and we changed all that. And we made our common problems known, what we thought women's problems were all about, how the majority of women live. We also said that for us the first and main task isn't to fight against our companeros, but with them to change the system we live in for another, in which men and women will have the right to live, to work, to organise."



3. BIAS ON THE BASIS OF AGE

Several American studies on bias in books have pointed out that older people as a group are consistently stereotyped and maligned in children's books. Stereotyping of human behaviour based on age has been termed 'ageism'. It has been defined as "any attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because of age OR any assignment of roles in society on the basis of age. Ageism is usually practised against older people, but it is also practised against younger people. Ageism can be individual, cultural or institutional and it can be intentional or unintentional."⁴

The concern here is thus with actions or attitudes that demean or ridicule old people or which limit the fulfilment of their full

continued

human potential. Ageism is thus part of our culture and an institutionalised part of society. It includes forced retirement, low pensions, old people's homes and attitudes towards the old as being useless, nuisances and unproductive to the system. Thus in children's books old people are often shown as bent, slow, badly dressed and sexless. They are also often shown as infirm, stubborn and unable to communicate clearly. Opinion polls have shown the gulf between the public's perception of old people and old people's perception of themselves:

67 per cent of the public think older people "spend a lot of time watching television," while only 36 per cent of older people think they do; 62 per cent of the public think older people "spend a lot of time sitting and thinking" v. 31 per cent of older persons who think so; 39 per cent of the public see people over 65 as spending "a lot of time sleeping" v. 16 per cent of those over 65 who feel that way; and 35 per cent of the public think older people "spend their time just doing nothing", while only 15 per cent of older people agree.

In short, negative attitudes toward aging exist in spite of the capability and achievement of older persons. The same Harris survey showed that about two-thirds of those over 65 see themselves as "very bright and alert", as "open-minded" and as "good at getting things done." 5.

Although this survey was American one wonders how different the findings would be in the U.K. ?

There are of course difficulties over terminology when dealing with bias by age. Should one use "old", "elderly", "aged", "senior citizen", or what? Opinions seem to differ and although some older people prefer "senior citizen" others have argued that this is patronizing. Even "the old" has perjorative connotations. Perhaps "older people" is the best expression for the time being.

As with racism and sexism, ageism tends not to occur in overt forms in books now. That of course makes it all the more insidious. Many books will simply omit older characters thereby implying that old age has no interest or dynamic of its own. Where older characters do occur



they are often not developed thus confirming a common childhood image of old age as boring. Since current demographic trends are resulting in a higher proportion of older people in the population ageism may increasingly become a focus of concern.

Although ageism has been defined here as oppression of old people, oppression because of age can also apply to the young. The whole area of children's rights is a response to the demeaning of the young who are so often considered unable to be responsible for themselves. Tradition has sanctified the maternalistic treatment of the young.

4. BIAS ON THE BASIS OF CLASS

Since educational planning, writing and publishing are still largely the prerogative of the middle class it is not surprising that bias on the basis of class is widespread. Its ramifications are at least as far reaching as any of the other types of bias referred to so far. At the risk of quoting what is already well known I can only say that Bertolt Brecht identified the crux of the problem when he wrote:

A WORKER QUESTIONS HISTORY

Who built Thebes, with its seven gates?
In books we find the names of kings.
Did the kings drag along the lumps of rock?
And Babylon, many times destroyed -
Who rebuilt it so many times?
Where did the builders of glittering Lima live?
On the evening, when the Chinese wall was finished.
Where did the masons go?
Great Rome is full of triumphal arches -

Who erected them?
Who did the Caesars conquer?
Did the inhabitants of famed Byzantium
All live in palaces? Even in legendary Atlantis,
When the sea swallowed it up,
the drowning
Howled in the night for their slaves.

Young Alexander conquered India.
On his own?
Caesar beat the Gauls
Didn't he at least have a cook with him?
Philip of Spain wept when his fleet
Was destroyed. Did no one else weep?
Frederick the Second won the Seven Years War.
Who else won it?

Every page a victory.
Who cooked the victory feast?
Every ten years a great man.
Who paid the cost?

So many statements.
So many questions.

As Brecht so vividly portrays those who actually did the work have all too often been rendered invisible. Bias by omission. In many, but not all, children's books the message is clear: some people are better than others because their jobs, homes, clothing, manners or speech are the "correct" ones. Manual labour is often viewed as inferior to professional work, working class life is stereotyped and often only seen from the outside. Robert Leeson points out that: "Working class life viewed from the inside in which the characters are given the dignity of a full existence, is much more a rarity in children's books. Those writers who have most succeeded in creating a genuine working-class background and characters are those who come from that background themselves, not 'less fortunate' people, but simply people for whom the whole way of life of the working class is a natural resource for their creativity." 6. The reference is, of course, to children's books as against textbooks and it would be useful to examine how the latter vary in their treatment of class differences. The simulation game by Fielding and Anderson to illustrate the pervasiveness of social class inequalities could provide a useful lead in to this. 7.

Offensive

handicap, handicapped person
deaf & dumb, deaf-mute, the deaf
mongoloid
cripple, crippled

the blind

retardate, idiot, imbecile, feeble-minded

crazy, maniac, insane, mentally ill

Preferred

disability, disabled person
deaf, hearing disability, hearing impairment
Down's syndrome
orthopaedic disability, mobility impaired
disabled person
blind person, sight disability, visually impaired

retarded, mental impairment, mentally disabled

emotional disability, emotional impairment, developmentally disabled

5. BIAS ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY

Very little work has been done on the way in which discrimination against disabled people is reinforced by children's books and the media. Most of the research comes from America where the term 'handicapism' has been coined to refer to attitudes and practices that lead to unequal and unjust treatment of people with disabilities. 8. Awareness of social bias against people with disabilities has grown in the States as a result of activism from the disability rights movement. Handicapped people are still kept on the margins of society and their position reinforced by negative language such as "cripple", "spastic", and "idiot". One object of the disability rights movement is to eliminate such language with its dehumanising overtones. In the light of this new awareness preferred terminology is being identified. 9.

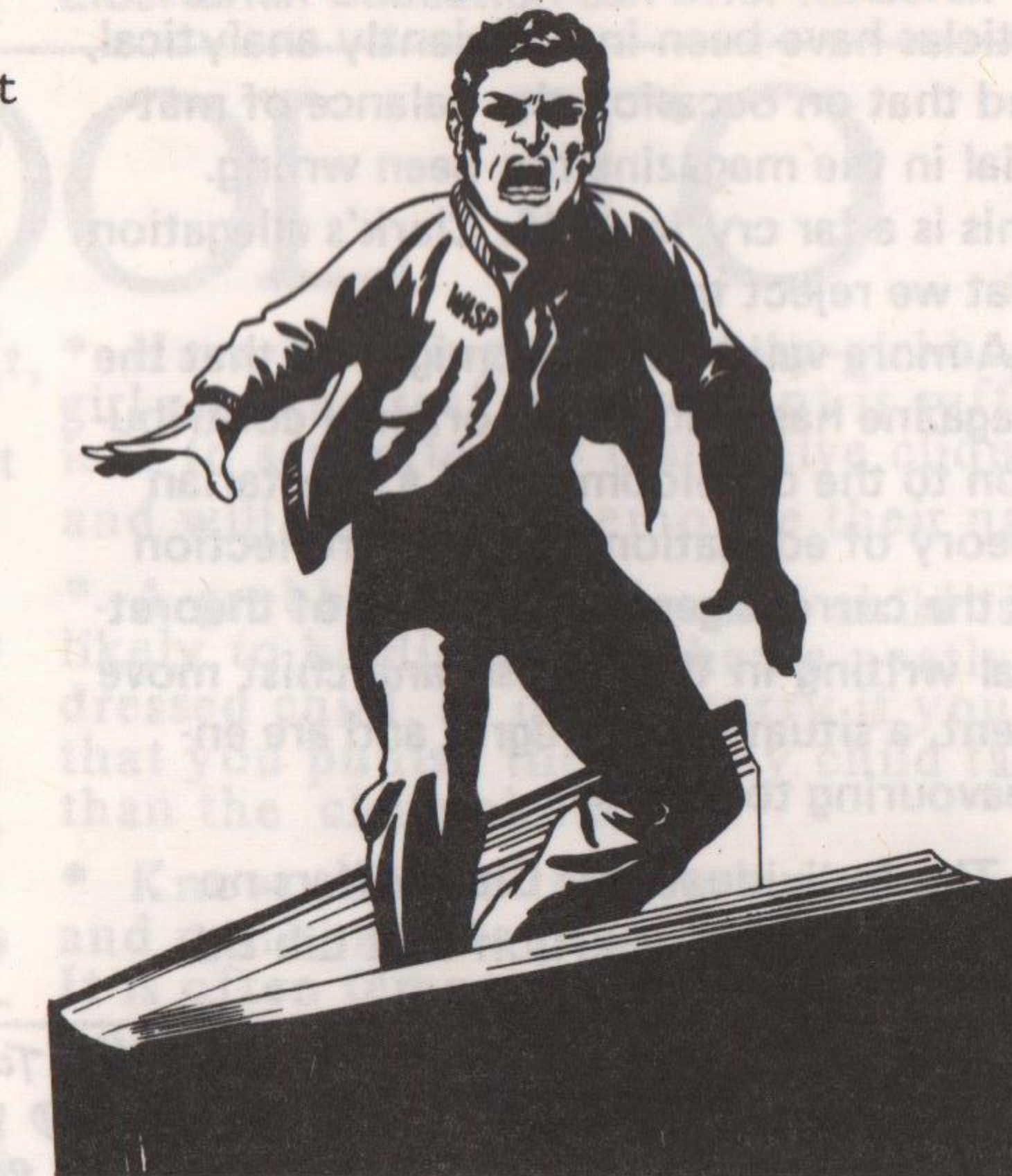
Clearly disabled people do experience a range of real limitations relating, for example, to hearing, seeing or walking. Most of the limitation however derive from society's response to disability. A range of stereotypes have been identified as follows:

1. The disabled person as pitiable and pathetic.
2. The disabled person as an object of violence.
3. The disabled person as sinister and/or evil.
4. The disabled person as providing "atmosphere"
5. The disabled person as "Super Cripple" e.g. Ironside.
6. The disabled person as laughable.
7. The disabled person as his/her own worst - and only - enemy,
8. The disabled person as a burden.
9. The disabled person as non-sexual.
10. The disabled person as incapable of fully participating in everyday life.

Very little analysis has been done of this whole field, whether in children's books or in textbooks.

Bias by omission, turning away and hiding from disability, is the most likely. What is required now is the ability to face disability without evasion.

In trying to draw some of the threads together I must return to my image of the 'perfect man'. This creation can be identified, as was suggested earlier, by a process of elimination. The 'perfect man' is thus not only white, but also young, middle class and physically and mentally fit. Perhaps this would not matter so much if the opposites were not continually held up as inferior, unwanted, objectionable and often to be exploited i.e. woman, black, child or old, working class, disabled.



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Dave Hicks, Education Officer for the Minority Rights Group

editorial continued

of making men (sic) moral and civilising them, has up to now always enslaved, oppressed, exploited and ruined them.' (Bakunin in Woodcock: Anarchy or Chaos, Freedom Press 1944, p.41).

Anarchy and Education

'Anarchism has persistently regarded itself as having distinctive and revolutionary implications for education. Indeed, no other movement has assigned to educational principles, concepts, experiments and practices a more significant place in its writings and activities.' (Krimmerman & Perry, Patterns of Anarchy, 1966).

As Colin Ward points out: 'One significant role of the state in the education systems of the world is to perpetuate social and economic injustice.' (Anarchy in Action, Allen & Unwin, 1973, p.84). Two hundred years ago William Godwin recognised this, and opposed state control of education. 'Government will not fail to employ it to strengthen its hand and perpetuate its institutions.' (Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, 1797). And long before Freire's 'dialogue' model of education, Bakunin described education in a free society as requiring 'schools no longer; they will be popular academies in which neither pupils nor masters will be known, where the people will come freely to get, if they need it, free instruction, and in which, rich in their own expertise, they will teach in their turn many things to the professors who shall bring them knowledge which they lack.' (God & the State).

Lib Ed

Ms Clark's criticisms of Lib Ed are that we reject politics and theory, 'rarely rising above the level of the anecdotal', stress the liberation of the individual instead of examining social relationships, offer no potential strategies for over-

coming core inequalities, and have 'little to offer teachers with an active critical commitment to politics.' Let us examine these assertions one by one.

1. Theory. Lib Ed is, as Maureen Clark rightly points out, less academic in tone than Radical Education; we do our best to avoid the brain-deadening mystification which has passed for theoretical writing in for instance Screen Education's sister journal Screen. But we have examined Freire (Lib Ed 27/28) children's sexuality (26) Goodman (26) Ferrer (25) curriculum reform (24) deschooling (22/27) social function of schools (19) Reich (15) examinations (14) anarchism and education (9/13) teachers and unionism (9/10/17/22). We have also always included personal accounts, by teachers and students, of their work situations. Since the demise of the Libertarian Teachers Association, the Libertarian Education Network and the Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance Teachers Section there has been no specifically libertarian organisation for teachers and such accounts can help combat the isolation of radicals in education, and contribute to our understanding of the role of the teacher in the state school. Our theory, after all, must be tested constantly against everyday life. We must admit that some articles have been insufficiently analytical, and that on occasion the balance of material in the magazine has been wrong. This is a far cry from Ms Clark's allegation that we reject theory.

A more valid criticism might be that the magazine has made little original contribution to the development of a libertarian theory of education. This is a reflection of the current general shortage of theoretical writing in the British anarchist movement, a situation we regret and are endeavouring to improve.

2. The Individual. Ms Clark offers no evidence for her assertion that Lib Ed

assumes that the individual 'represents a static, perfected whole.' The quotation she produces turns out to come from a reader's letter; to criticise a magazine on such a basis is a dishonest trick. Similarly, her liberal use of inverted commas around concepts which she wishes the reader to assume are the common currency of Lib Ed's philosophy - personal 'liberation', 'selfish' intentions, the 'possibility of transcending the experienced realities of everyday life' are no substitute for evidence.

The Anarchist view is that education must be a co-operative, voluntarist process. Our critique of state schooling rests upon our perception of it as authoritarian, divisive and therefore profoundly anti-educational, serving excellently the needs of statist society. It pursues its own narrowly defined concept of excellence, thus condemning most students to failure; it reproduces the class divisions of an unequal society; it views itself as the means whereby the commodity 'knowledge' is transferred from those possessing it to those lacking it; the price it exacts from the students for this transaction being their solidarity and autonomy.

Now none of this, of course, differs too much from the Marxist view of state schooling. The main difference lies in the anarchist concept of authority as a prime contradiction in the role of the teacher - the fact that however radical the teacher's ideas and attempted practice might be s/he is obliged to take part in a process which, because of its reliance on compulsion and its authoritarian structure, negates most of its consciousness-raising potential.

Maureen Clark appears to endorse the statement from 'Radical Education' that the socialist teacher must 'try to educate pupils into recognising the source of oppression and not merely its surface features.' Apart from its acceptance of the traditional teacher-student relation-

ship - teachers teach, students learn, and its patronising assumption that without the instruction of teachers students will be unable to see the source of their own oppression, this view entirely ignores the irony and contradiction of the role of the (even socialist) teacher as agent, however reluctant and counteractive, of a patriarchal capitalist state.

This is not to say that the socialist teacher cannot contribute to the critical awareness of his/her students about the social realities in which we live. But this cannot be done without recognising the limitations inherent in this role. 'Too often the students themselves are made into the object of education and the educator sets out to change them in some way - to make them more diligent, or more tolerant, or more obedient, or more loving, to make them Christian or Communist ... whatever creed the educator embraces or thinks important.' (Lib Ed 28, p.12)

3. Overcoming Core Inequalities. To be sure, we do not offer a strategy for transforming the school by activity within the school - our analysis precludes such a strategy. We are working for a society which does not rely on one institution, the school, for the process of education, and the prospect of our society deschooling (deinstitutionalising) itself piecemeal is as likely as the state withering away.

This is we realise vague, but not more so than Ms Clark's 'Radical change within

the education system will only be feasible when practical experience and theoretical analysis combine to produce an active critique of the capitalist system and its institutions.' Fine-sounding words, and nothing that we could disagree with, but we are given no indication of what is meant by 'active critique' - a term which could refer to anything from insurrection to the election of a Labour government (Pledged to Socialist Principles, of course).

Maureen Clark evidently approves Radical Education's view that socialist teachers should 'make explicit the "weak links" in the school and the curriculum between the requirements of society and the pupil; this would create "space" in which to develop individual consciousness in opposition to the expectation of the school.'

We would agree, and would hope that she would agree with our proviso that the teacher 'cannot ... set out to instil in the students revolutionary conviction without risking an increase in their dependence in him/her which would reduce their capacity for authentic revolutionary action ... The crucial stress here is on the apprehension of reality as the object of educational effort.' (Lib Ed 28 p.12)

4. Teachers and politics. Ms Clark poses two problems: 'How to develop oppositional ways of teaching, and how to build a political alliance among radical teachers. Libertarian Education can offer no coher-

ent reply to such questions ...' As we hope to have shown, Lib Ed sees the development of revolutionary ways of learning, rather than 'oppositional ways of teaching as our main function.' This comes, not from a lack of political perspective, but from a distinctive libertarian view of education and society.

Similarly, although we recognise the value of alliance between radical teachers, and have analysed the failure of recent attempts to forge such an alliance (Lib Ed 22) a failure due largely to the sectarian party-building activities of Marxists, We reject Ms Clark's emphasis on teachers as the sole motive force of educational change.

Nonetheless it is true that most of the Lib Ed collective, and, we might assume, many of our readership are teachers in state schools. Though we have discussed in the magazine ways in which teachers can oppose the racism, sexism, and class nature of the dominant ideology, we could, and should do more in this area.

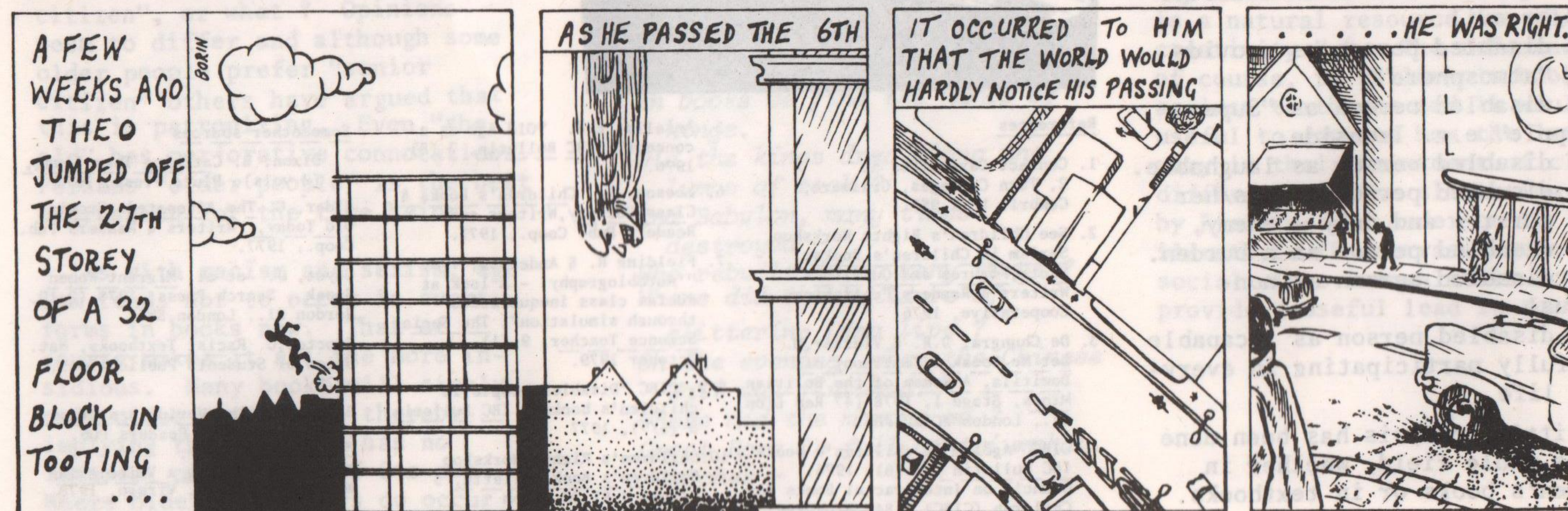
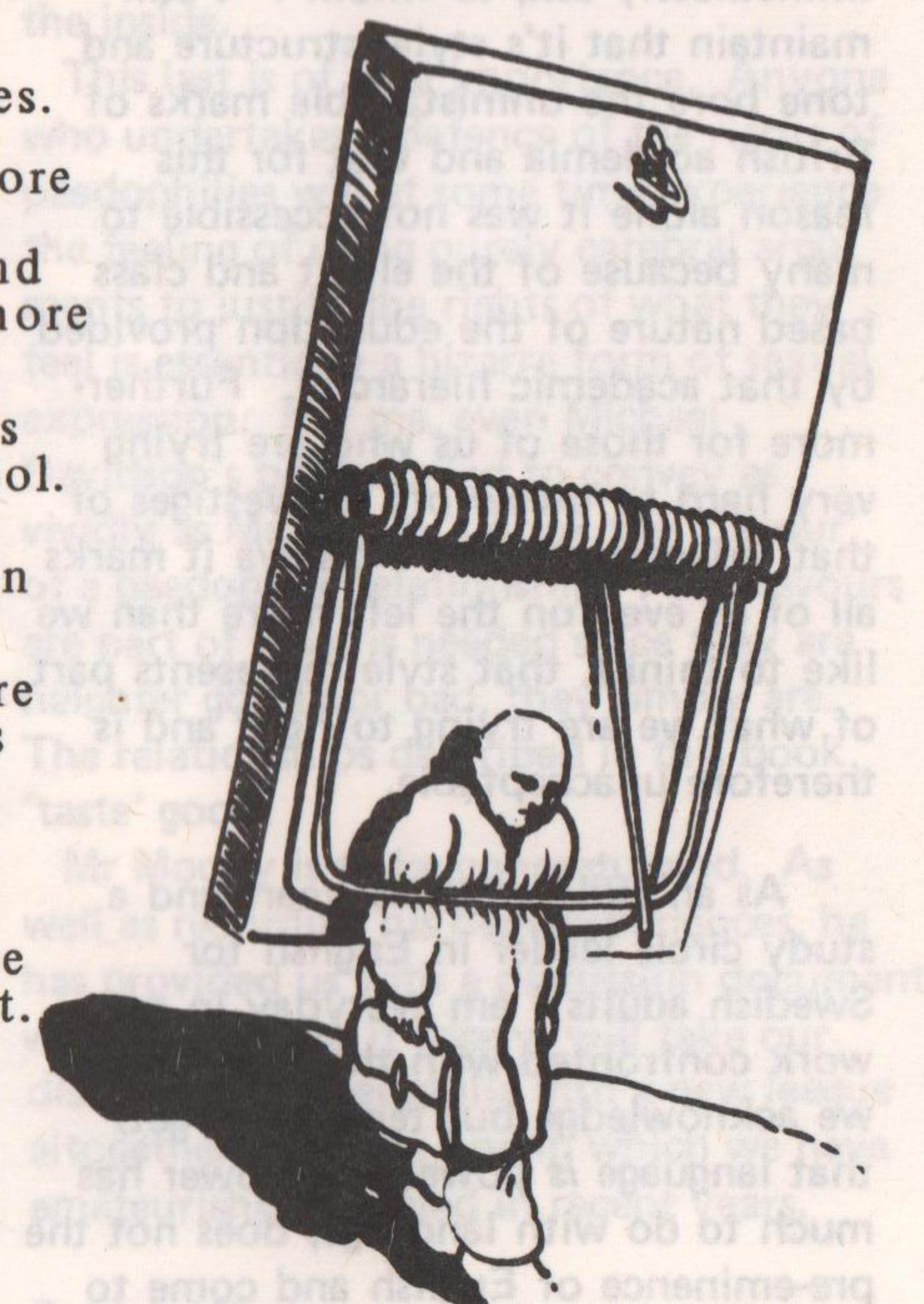
Maureen Clark has prompted us to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the magazine, and for this we are grateful to her, though we hope to have shown that her criticisms are misdirected. We have been criticised elsewhere for seldom making our ideology explicit. Having done so, we welcome readers' comments.

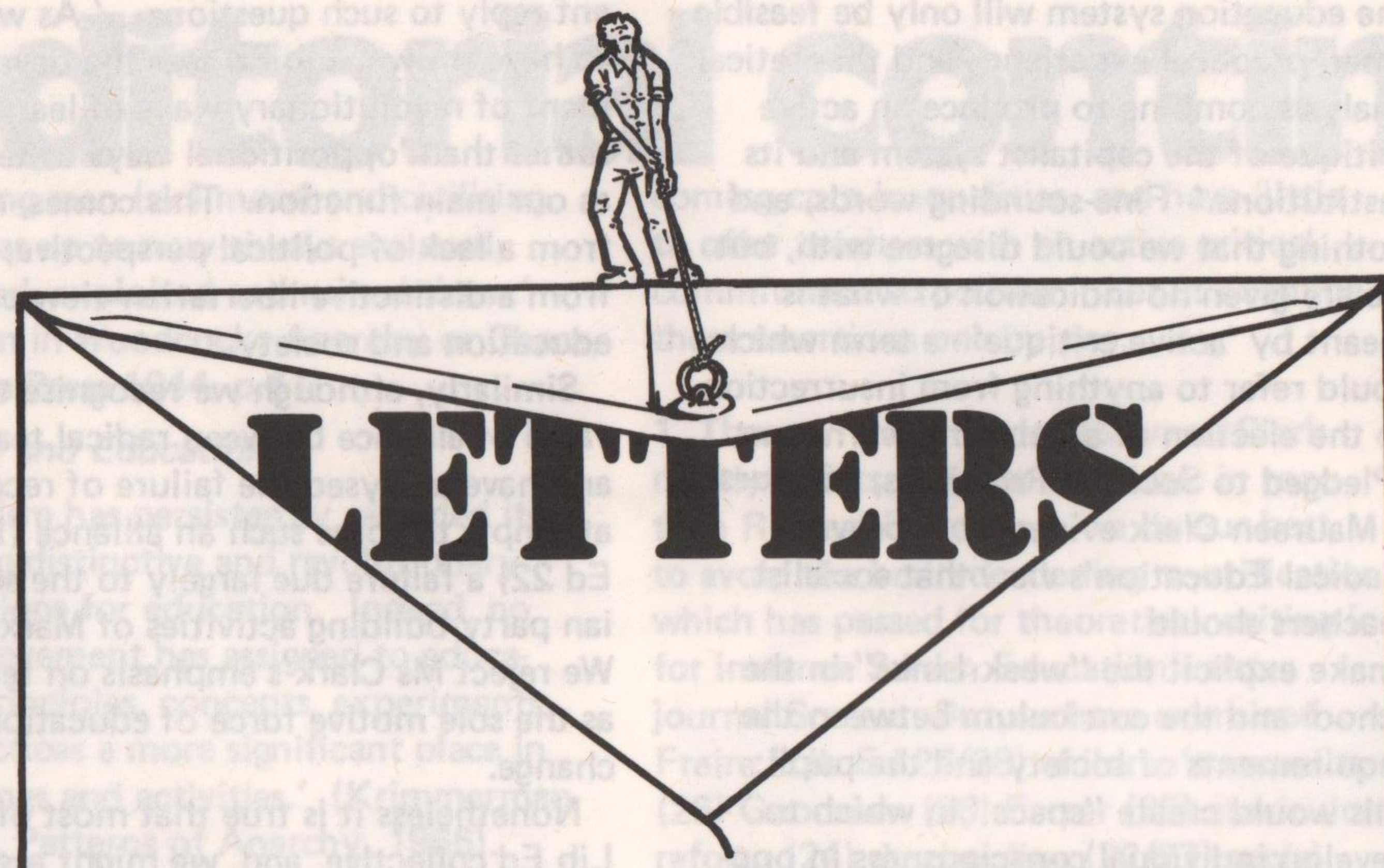
SCHOOL TO AVOID

TEACHERS! Do you get that 'Oh shit, not another morning feeling'? Does the prospect of standing in front of a sullen malevolent class make you want to retch? What you need is new, improved **CLASSROOM CONTROL** and it's free! Yes free! With every teaching job at Woodway Park School, Coventry comes a free copy of **CLASSROOM CONTROL**, two pages of handy hints to keep your pupils placid, your students stupified, your kids catatonic. Sadly we only have room here for a brief selection of this truly wonderful advice.

- * Tell children when they may enter. Show that you are in charge from the moment they enter the room.
- * They must have something to do - a worksheet, something on the board to read, a book to read from the moment they come in.
- * See that pupils do not talk to you without first raising their hand - a convention which pupils readily accept. If this is not kept to, one or two pupils can monopolise the teacher's attention.

- * Have a seating plan - a boy-girl-boy-girl alphabetical arrangement is sufficient to separate any disruptive cliques and will help you memorise their names.
- * A grubby, poorly-dressed child is more likely to be disruptive than a neatly-dressed child, so don't worry if you find that you punish the grubby child far more than the clean child.
- * Know and use the system of rewards and punishments provided by the school. It is often tempting to 'let pupils off' punishment. Don't, and don't be taken in by excuses, however convincing. Poor diligence marks, detentions etc are not only a deterrent, they also serve as an early warning system.
- * Some classes work best with a fair amount of talking. But if the noise level continually rises, complete silence is less of a strain on teacher and taught.
- * Insist on all outdoor clothing being removed. Do not allow children to slouch in their desks.
- * See that your own dress is tidy and that you yourself do not slouch.
- * Always put the question before naming the pupil - otherwise no-one else will think.





Keith Roe wrote to criticise two articles in Lib Ed (Maggie Humm on Goodman and Martin Hoyles on Childhood) as too academic in style. We wrote back, defending their inclusion. This is Keith's reply. We think it raises important questions about the style and content of radical journalism.

Dear Lib Ed,

Thank you for your letter of 23 March. I accept that within their own terms your comments have a certain validity and I shall try to clarify my objections.

Firstly I should say that my objections were not concerned with content but more a question of structure and style. You state that you believe Martin Hoyles article to have been 'accessible' and I would, of course immediately ask, to whom? I still maintain that it's style, structure and tone bore the unmistakable marks of British academia and that for this reason alone it was not accessible to many because of the elitist and class based nature of the education provided by that academic hierarchy. Furthermore for those of us who are trying very hard to throw off the vestiges of that 'education' (and I believe it marks all of us even on the left more than we like to think), that style represents part of what we are trying to right and is therefore unacceptable.

As an exile of three years and a study circle leader in English for Swedish adults I am everyday in my work confronted with the fact (which we acknowledge but tend to forget) that language *is* power and power has much to do with language, does not the pre-eminence of English and come to that my job result from British and later American economic and military

imperialism? Have not so many theoretical and research papers been written on the vital role of language in education and the way it has been employed in IQ testing, selection, examinations etc to favour certain groups and classes and ensure their 'superior' certification? Has not the Feminist movement come to realize how vitally language is employed in the superstructure of the male dominated state? I have no doubt that we agree in substance on all this, of course, so back to the article in question.

I have been in the habit of using extracts from your magazine for use with advanced groups, most are admirable both politically and linguistically but it is precisely articles of the type that I have mentioned that I cannot use, the structures are too elaborate, the vocabulary too wide and the style too rigid. Now you of course do not write for Swedish students but is this not symptomatic perhaps? My students represent a fair cross section of Swedish society, more women than men, more middle aged than young maybe, politically probably more informed and sophisticated than their British counterparts and extremely competent in English. They do not take to this type of material, even if they *understand most of it*, it is altogether *too learned*, in a negative, elite sense of 'learned' implying cultural superiority. Now perhaps I can ask you again, to whom was the article accessible? linguistically in England to most, perhaps, but to immigrants many of whose language use in English is worse than my students and many of whom come from a culture further removed from ours than the Swedish which is in many ways remarkably similar? And even if language isn't the problem what of style and ethos?

Finally I should say that I'm not implying any elitism here myself in the sense oh. they dont understand we must make it simpler - I am not implying any value judgement - but society does, it says this is 'good english' this is how the educated man should write, speak, behave. It says that those who cannot employ this style are 'failures' and it devalues whole cultures in these terms, terms which are nothing more than the arbitrary cultural imposition of one group(s) - class(es) upon others, and it is to this cultural imposition that I believe Martin Hoyles strays too far by couching his writing in terms owing too much to the traditions of that imposition.

I have been far more harsh on the article in question than I would wish in order to express a position, its content I thought was excellent. What I have been saying is that we must pay a lot of attention to language and cultural facts in our work. It may be that in the very difficult matter of editorial balance this presents a huge problem in any event I do hope that you continue your valuable work.

Best Wishes.

Keith Roe

Foreningsgatan 73A
21214 Malmo
Sweden

Dear Comrades,
I was very pleased to find a copy of Lib Ed 28. I had seen some copies before several years ago but at that time did not have sufficient inclination to buy one. However since I have been involved with helping to bring up children, and as a libertarian, I have had to seriously consider the whole problem of compulsory schooling. This has involved removing one child from the state system and fortunately finding a relatively free school where attendance and study are non compulsory for those children whose parents believe in freedom. Children appear to seize the idea of freedom as the most wonderful liberation. If only more adults had the same attitude. I have also been engaged in trying to form a local campaign against compulsory education.

A.M. Anderson
Edinburgh Campaign against
Compulsory Education
c/o 66 Henderson Row
Edinburgh.

Other Libertarian Papers

- Freedom 25p/£7.00 sub. (84B Whitechapel High St. London E.1.)
- Peace News 20p/£7.80 (8 Elm Ave., Nottingham).
- Anarchy 40p (37a Grosvenor Ave., London N.5.).
- Black Flag 25p/£5.00 (Over The Water, Sanday, Orkney).
- Xtra! 30p/£4.00 (182, Upper St., London, N.1.).
- Bread & Roses 15p (Box 2, 136 Kingsland High St., London, E.8.).

Please note: Single copy prices DO NOT include postage.

C. Tift and D. Sullivan's 'The Struggle to be Human' is an anarchist view of crime and criminology. (Cienfuegos Press 5.35).

STOPP (Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment) are making a drive to increase their membership. Contact STOPP, 10 Lennox Gardens, Croydon, Surrey CR0 4HR.

Belfast Anarchist Collective run Just Books, 7 Winetavern St., Belfast, produce 'Outta Control', a consistently excellent paper (5p) and if that was not enough, are strong advocates of the use of video as a practical tool. They have made their own tapes, largely on the subject of the Irish war, and are trying to encourage other groups to start video projects. Contact them for advice and info.



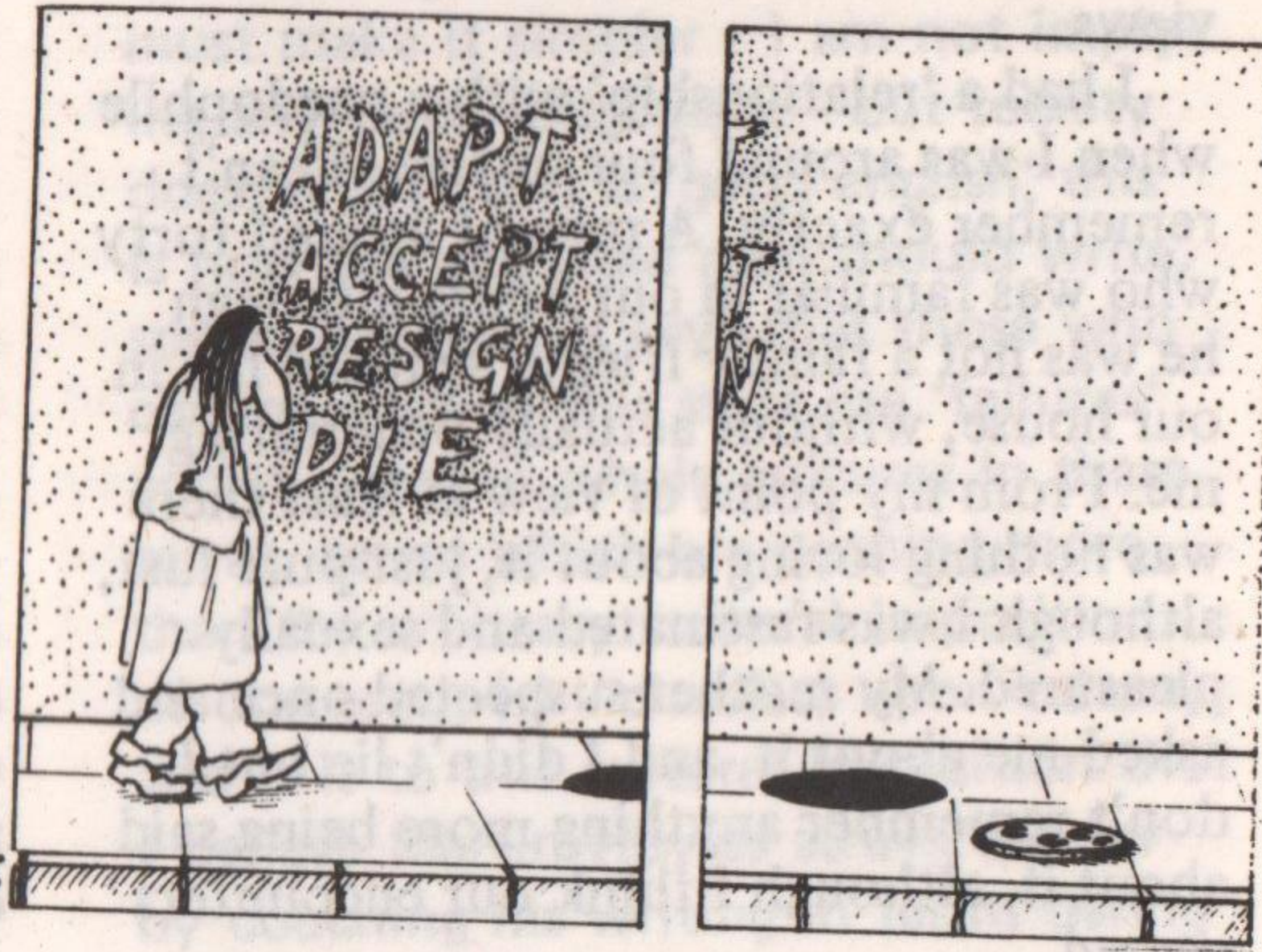
'Community Media' by Graham Wade and Heinz Migg (Regenbogen Verlag 3.95) is the first book to examine the development and practice of community communication in the U.K. It contains accounts of six projects using a combination of video, local TV, film and photography in a wide variety of ways. Review next issue.

John Rety (a Freedom editor 1964 - '68) is planning a new anarchist journal in which anarchist ideas and accomplishments can be discussed at some length. The first issue will have as its theme 'War is the Health of the State'.

Contributions to John c/o Freedom by September 15.

If you have any difficulty finding anarchist papers (even in alternative bookshops), do not despair. A new distribution service is being plotted, whereby publication dates will be coordinated so that bundles containing several papers can be dispatched via Rail Express. Papers involved are Freedom, Xtra!, Anarchy, Black Flag, IT, Bread & Roses, Outta Control (Belfast), Break Out (prisoners' paper), and a number of fanzines.

'Here is the Other News' and 'Where is the Other News' (1.25 each) are the first two of a series of booklets from the Minority Press Group. The first examines community and radical newspapers the second looks at the 'straight' and alternative networks (e.g. Smiths and PDC) for magazines and periodicals or why you can't buy the Leveller (or LIB ED) in the big chain news-agents.



Back Issues

16. Tolstoy on Education
1911 School Strikes
Critique of Illich
17. Racism in School
Syndicalism & Teaching
Guerrilla Teachers' Manual
18. Victimized Teachers
The Sacking of Manny Moreno
The John Warburton Case
19. Behaviourism & Education
Vandalism
What Do Schools Do?
20. Media Study
Subversive Drama
Questioning the System
21. Paedophilia
A Gay Teacher Comes Out
Interview with Neill
22. How to read Donald Duck
Leeds School Leaflet
Rank & File
23. Multi-racial Education
Community Schools in Spain
Punk
24. On the Retreat
Conisborough Rosla Experiment
Black Studies
25. Francisco Ferrer
Ocean Beach Free School
Children's Cinema
26. Asian Women's Hostel
Paul Goodman Assessed
Alternative Sexuality
27. Deschooling
Paulo Freire
N.U.S.S.
28. Disasters
Community Information
Freire part 2.

issues 16-22 cost 20p each + post
issues 23-28 cost 30p each + post
SPECIAL OFFER! All available back issues for £3 post free!

the illustrious Borin Van Loon (he of our front cover and assort ed other art works in this issue) who would like more of their hero's work should write forthwith to Suburban Books, 85 Copleston Road, London SE 15, for copies of Intellectual Bull Comix (35p) and Urban Paranoia (30p) and postage.

The plans for an anarchist centre in London are developing. The annual subscription cost is £15 (London) £10 (elsewhere). Write to Anarchist Centre, c/o Freedom.

'Cooperative and Community Group Dynamics....or Your Meetings Needn't be so Appalling' by Rosemary Randall, John Southgate and Frances Tomlinson (Barefoot Books £1.50) is a cartoon guide, explaining the forces that sometimes push a group in an uncreative and destructive direction, and sometimes in a creative and productive one. Review in next issue.

Peoples News Service is a left wing, non sectarian news service which aims to provide information not normally available in the conventional press. It carries British and international news, reviews, a diary and photographs. Essential reading. Published fortnightly, 35p, distributed by Fulltime. Ordinary sub. £10.80 from PNS, Oxford House, Derbyshire St., London, E2 6HG.

If the 'Women on Women' article interested you, and you want to find out more about Womens' Studies Groups, you should get the WEA Womens' Studies Newsletter. Cover price 40p, sub.£2, from Caroline Brown, 176 Hagley Rd., Stourbridge DY8 2JN.

'The Wobblies' is a major documentary film telling the story of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World). It features interviews with IWW members, men and women now in their 80s and 90s, but still holding the radical vision of their youth. These are supplemented by newsreel, photographs, songs generated in the struggle (by, amongst others, Joe Hill), watercolours, press cartoons and anti - union cartoon films from Walt Disney and the Ford Motor Co., to build up an inspiring introduction to the most radical movement in American labour history. 'The Wobblies' is available in a 16mm print from the Other Cinema, 12/13 Little Newport St., London WC2H 7JJ.



Lotta Continua was a revolutionary socialist organisation in Italy, producing a daily paper. The group has dissolved itself, but the paper continues, and its letters pages reflect the upheavals and bewilderment of the Italian left, the effect of feminism, arguments over terrorism and violence. Edited by Margaret Kunzle, 'Dear Comrades' is published by Pluto Press at 1.95.

'In and Against the State' by the London Edinburgh Return Group (1.25) examines the dilemma of socialists who work for, or are dependant (as claimants for instance) on the State. It includes interviews with State workers and shows how the State, while providing us with benefits and services we may need, inevitably involves us in relationships we do not want.

'In the Making' is an annual listing of cooperative enterprises and projects. It now also contains articles and reviews about aspects of cooperative organising- well worth £1

In Lib Ed 28, Nigel Wright put the case for state-aided alternative schools; since then a conference has taken place and the campaign has started. There is now a newsletter, available from CSAS Newsletter, c/o ACE, 18 Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green, London E2 9PB. The first issue lists existing free schools and some alternative projects, and gives names and addresses of interested people and groups.

AGITPROP

Kirkdale, an established free school in South East London needs energetic, committed teachers for small nursery and infant groups. Low wages - start Sept. 'Phone: 01 778 0149.

Dora Russell's second volume of autobiography, 'The Tamarisk Tree II' contains her account of Beacon Hill School, which she ran together with Bertrand Russell. Dora Russell has been a progressive educator, pacifist, socialist, feminist, champion of children's rights, birth control and sexual reform. The book is well worth reading, but sadly it's only available now in hardback, (Virago 8.95.) Get it from your library or wait for the paperback- due next year.



All books etc. mentioned in Lib Ed should be obtainable from your local radical bookshop, or can be ordered from Blackthorn Books, 74 Highcross St. Leicester. Please add 15% for postage and packing.



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