

# POEM. BY KATRIN 9.

School rules

School rules, School rules,  
Don't bring footballs,

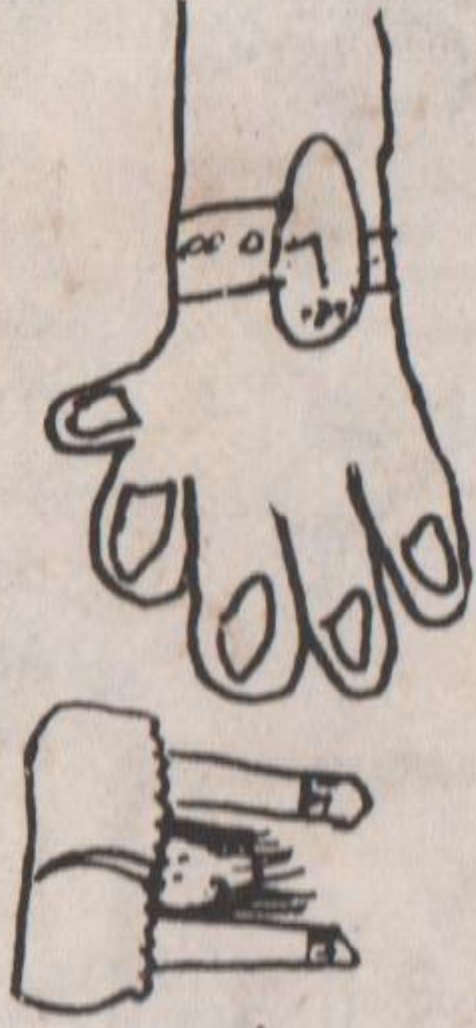
We always have to listen,  
We're not allowed to whistle,

Not even allowed to sing—

Have to concentrate on everything

You shouldn't cough—on the teacher will  
Tell you off

You're not allowed to bring sweets or gum  
or the teachers hand will come down  
on your bum!



like drawing thin lines around articles  
to make them stand out or to isolate  
them from other items. We also dis-  
covered Letraset (thank you to Brighton  
Voice collective for donating all your  
half-used sheets).

When the paste-up is completed, the  
kids go along to Black Wedge Press in  
Brighton where Richard and Keith let  
them help with plate-making and print-  
ing. We then collate and sell—though  
even Little Digger had to apply to the  
police for a street-sellers licence!

Little Digger just about covers its cost,  
and thanks to CLAP and a few in-  
dividuals we manage to keep going.  
(Last summer we had two Little Digger  
parties and a Little Digger picnic.)  
We've also printed a guide called  
Brighton for Kids and a book called  
Little Digger Book. If anyone would  
like a copy send 15p to Little Digger  
Book, 117 Hartington Road, Brighton.  
If ever we make any profit at all it  
will go to the A. S. Neill Trust which  
exists to promote alternative education  
projects providing children with the  
means to learn in freedom

VAL HENNESSY

personal type—magazines which con-  
tain only the corrected and stilted writ-  
ings of the "clever kids", certainly  
written to please adults (ie teachers)  
and not to satisfy themselves.

When the teachers at the school criti-  
cised our paper with remarks like "what  
about our standards? It will reflect on  
the school", I replied that if we, as  
teachers, want to understand how chil-  
dren think and feel we must let them  
be free to make honest and genuine  
responses to our questions and sugges-  
tions. When children are doing written  
work at school and know that they are  
likely to have a great red line drawn  
through a word and SP\* written next  
to it they are not going to eagerly  
attempt long, tricky words. And if they  
know that they might be reported for  
using "bad grammar" or words like  
"ain't", the result will be stilted, dull  
writing.

I wanted the children to feel free to  
write about the things relevant and  
important to them. We soon found that  
everyone could participate in producing  
the paper—you didn't have to be the  
cleverest or the neatest writer to make  
people laugh over your poems.

In that school I noticed that 9-year-old  
called Patrick was always standing about  
aimlessly in the draughty corridor do-  
ing nothing at all for hours. Basically  
Patrick didn't hit it off with his teacher  
and often I'd say "Come on Patrick.  
Come up to my room and help with the  
paper". Here is something that Patrick  
drew for us:

(Patrick's "teacher": "That boy is an  
utter pest, I can't stand him. I just  
send him outside the minute he opens  
his mouth..." and when he showed  
his teacher this drawing, I was criti-  
cised for "enticing" him to my room  
when he should have been receiving  
his punishment, ie wasting his time in  
the corridor).

So I moved the paper right away from  
school and from censorship from the  
hierarchy. (When a kid tried to sell a  
copy of Little Digger to Councillor  
Burton of the Education Committee he  
said: "Ha, that looks like a load of  
rubbish—no thanks".) The children  
continue to meet at my house where they  
write, draw and do the layout and  
paste-up. My chief role is to gently  
check that the 6-year-olds make their  
contribution and are not overwhelmed  
by the 12-year-olds. We made plenty  
of mistakes at first, like crooked writing  
and jumbled or badly spaced articles.  
By studying magazines together we dis-

My Ideal School

My Ideal School is that we could  
play and do what we want  
without being told off

by Andrew

Teachers shouldn't  
have any right  
to hit children  
that aren't their  
own.

Jacqueline

which didn't go down too well with the  
headmaster, although he didn't mind  
the inclusion of this one:

I wouldn't leave my  
School for a million  
quid it is so good there

Lee

For nearly two years I had been in-  
volved with a collective in producing  
the community paper Brighton Voice  
and realising that no mythical skill  
or expertise is required to produce a  
newspaper, it seemed a good idea to  
let the children have a go (they could  
all do graphics far superior to any of  
the pathetic illustrations we in the  
Voice collective managed to produce!).  
I wanted the children to see their own  
writings and illustrations reproduced  
in a form superior to those drearily  
duplicated "school magazines" with  
smudgy drawings and dull pages of im-

# LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION IS

"THERE IS NO  
BEAUTY IN RELATING  
TO OTHERS IN AN EX-  
CESSIVELY REPRESSIVE  
ENVIRONMENT,—WHAT  
MATTERS IS TO DO SO  
WITHIN ONE'S OWN  
HEAD."

THE MORENO SAGA, pg 3



## EDITORIAL COMMENT

We have devoted a large part of this issue to the trials of Manny Moreno. The whole saga has spread over about

one year, the origin- al suspen- sion and transfer to Sutton was for these reasons (on the right).

We feel that the charges and 'evidence' speak for themselves - but what really staggers us is the way the Head (in the charges against Manny) blithely details the rigidity of his curriculum (in a subject trendily, if obscurely, labelled Personal Relations) and his adherence to such reactionary attitudes as:-

1. learning = written work
2. obsession with neatness (kids apparently not even normally trusted to punch holes in work-sheets themselves!)
3. written work is seen as, only, something to be marked (i.e. destroyed) by teachers - not perhaps as something they might regard as their own.

Remember that Sutton Centre sees itself in the liberal vanguard of education, some of its staff (who were furious with us for having published Manny's letter in Lib Ed 16) and the Head even regard themselves as members of the A.S. Neill Trust!

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Also in this issue is material relating to John Warburton, who made much headline news in England recently, (no one in the straight press initially mentioned that he worked in a girls school. If they were playing on him as a threat to the kids in his charge, then having no male pupils rather destroys this).

While we are all for openness and honesty in our dealings with kids (and adults), we don't see them as mere aids to perpetuating the system's 'disciplines'. One hopes that the Gay Teachers Group's handout is so worded for political reasons, and that they share our commitment to open and honest discussion of all things sexual - in their own right -, and not merely for other ulterior motives

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We were recently asked about the paradox between our position as anarchists, and the various examples of Lib. Ed's. (qualified) support of numerous victims of the state education system, - headmasters even, when we obviously (presumably) had no respect for the nature of, and continued existence of, such positions and such a system. Whilst we hold no brief at all for the continuation of the current social 'order', we do feel that those teachers that are pilloried for attempting to make the current system show more humane aspects in its treatment of kids deserve some fair reporting, and have relevant things to say to others in similar positions.

Our work on Lib Ed does reflect the fact that the current collective involved in its production are all currently working within the state education system, and have scant contact with educational alternatives. However, if current plans mature, the next issues should reflect much closer our political positions.

LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION. EDITORIAL ADDRESS  
180 MELBOURNE ROAD, LEICESTER. ORDERS TO  
BLACK FLAG BOOKS, 1 WILNE ST, LEICESTER.

LIB. ED. 19 will be discussed/planned on 26/27 April (probably in London), and got ready for printing on 17/18 May (Leicester). For details, ring us on 0533 50272, or Jean Fitzpatrick on 01 741 0545. Dates for no 20 are 6/7 Sept. & 27/28 Sept.

Thanks to the GPO we can't peg our price any longer. From this issue the following will apply. COVER PRICE 15p.

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This is being typed before the new rates have been published, so bulk rates may be different by the time this issue is sent out. We hope not.

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Thanks,  
Luchia . Popgee , Bob .

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We, (Lib Ed Collective), take the opportunity to ask your support for the above appeal. Moss Side prints LIB ED, among countless other worthy papers, all of whom would face print bills DOUBLE their rate if forced to use commercial printers.

# The MANUEL MORENO SAGA

As we mentioned in Lib. Ed. 17 Manny Moreno has finally been chucked out of his teaching job at Sutton Centre (Nottinghamshire) - where he was sent as a result of disciplinary action taken against him at his previous school, Garibaldi. He is planning to take the Nottinghamshire Education Authority to court under the Industrial Relations Act in order to contest their decision of unsuitability. The following extracts are taken from a letter he recently sent us.

..... I'm probably a sore embarrassment to the authorities, not only because of the case but also because of the community project thing some friends and I are getting together. It's not free schooling, but community/home alternative to get people who want to use buildings, skills, etc to do so - control over their lives. Also, my lad, Marcel, who is 6 years old, has been off school since I was suspended in November. It's been his choice, the herding and repression in schools must stop, and I reckon it's not going to happen in any significant way by progressive teachers or education authorities - they only devise liberal disguises and games - schooling is a total fabricating machinery to keep kids and parents down and to condition them to accept. Only kids and parents will change and get rid of schooling as it is. But I'm not saying don't have schools. Some kids might be into it, provided they have a choice not to go. This means getting alternatives together - not a service to dump kids into like all schools, free and otherwise.

My kid is not into going to school but since it's there if he wants to use it he should be able to. He decided to go the other day - chose to do so. He was excited about it, but not about school - about other kids being nice to him. He said he wanted to stay all day (I wanted to be with him in there, but the Head wouldn't have it, even though he's into parent participation. You know what that means - helping schooling to do its job, not to decide what they want or to find out what the kids want - participation, not power or

## WHEN TYRANNY IS LAW



REVOLUTION IS ORDER

control). He knew he could go swimming with me and another kid and parents. He came home for lunch and decided then to come swimming. We did so in a pool with school classes being directed by dry teachers - "Now do ring-a-ring of roses - stop! now splash - stop!" - etc.

One thing which I think really needs pushing is that kids don't have to go to school. The 1944 Education Act states firstly that local education authorities have to provide suitable education to all children's needs, according to their age, abilities and aptitudes and secondly, that all children must either attend state school regularly or otherwise. This could mean many alternatives for children - irregular attendance at school, free schooling, home/family/community tuition. It is not up to parents to prove to H.M.I.s or local authority truant officers (what they call welfare officers) or inspectors that your children are being provided with suitable education. All one need say is that they are being provided for. The authorities have no rights other than this. It is only if you are taken to court by them that you need to prove it. To my knowledge parents have only been taken to court where they have denied that their children are being provided for. Usually one is not hassled, even in traditional terms - kids learn so little at school that it takes nothing to show that your kids learn more at home or otherwise. In fact, schools retard as well as slowing kids down.

..... This. Pieces an anarchism and nd book and drama reviews sit alongside es on crime and prisons, religion and t events. Not all the articles have authors but the total of contributors is han thirty, probably a lot more. Some iters well known in the anarchist move- some are obscure. Altogether a book of richness and variety. It is beautifully ed, but with a number of printing errors. per back is well worth the £3.25 asking

My k and I say that having paid for the copy went tol for this review. But if you are becauseing to believe this, order the library being wn through your local library and see the sive. and read through it. This will only to othead you to buy it.

ive and people once read a review of Peter Sellers' "The an excuof Sellers" which said that however often think ilayed the L.P. it would always make the wants hner laugh again. I've had the record even 3015 years now and still smile at it. I and prcre to suggest that however often the beauty r comes back to this excellent volume he repressfind something to stimulate the interest so withet the mind pondering anew.



If kids want to go to school they have a right to and to use its resources. We've paid for it five times over. One day kids and parents and friends will take over schools and kick teachers out. Then police will be in the classrooms and corridors. I hope we stick together.

As far as I'm concerned with my case, it seems highly probable that by kicking me out of Garibaldi Comprehensive where I had wonderful support from kids and parents and placing me in another school, it gave them the chance to kick me out altogether. What is perhaps far more important is that I got the boot because I did not behave or appear in the image of a teacher. This increased bit by bit in the 3 years I taught in schools. You cannot be yourself as a teacher. It's role, in one's head and in the subtle pressures exerted by other teachers, gets you and there is no shaking it off. In terms of freedom, as a teacher I reckon one probably does more harm than good. They put me into Sutton Centre, a progressive community school. These are more dangerous than the traditional schools. They con kids and parents into schooling - into getting them not to question the basis of why they go to school and what they are about. They devise games and liberal words to motiv-ate kids to 'learn'. Its more confusing for them. At least in the traditional schools working class kids know where they are - 'them' and 'us'. And it is like that - 'them' and 'us' - and I was one of 'them', even though I suppose in ways I was different - a progressive teacher, but still a teacher. You can't change that - well, I didn't.

MANUEL

## HEAD'S REPORT to the Governors— Sutton Centre

The following extracts from the Head of Sutton Centre's report to the school Governors list the 'specific complaints against Mr. Moreno'.

### Lack of competence as a teacher.

- (i) Mr. Moreno was entrusted with the teaching of two first year tutor groups for Personal Relationships at the beginning of this term. He was supplied with the same written information to assist him in conducting the course as was given to the other staff engaged on the course.

Mr. Moreno was taken off the two groups on Monday 28th Oct. at the request of the Head of Dept. ....for the following reasons:-

- No pupils in one of the groups had had any work marked or corrected.
- There was only cursory marking of some of the work in the second group.
- Neither group had followed the basic course in the way that was planned and discussed. In consequence the majority of files are incomplete and they contain very little written work or illustration. Much work had been omitted and some worksheets had not been made available.
- By the quality of the answers it was clear that Mr. Moreno had offered little assistance in the class situation or explanation or constructive criticism. Pupils had been left to get on as best they could. The more able had not been tested - the less able had been disregarded.
- There was inadequate emphasis on English usage, spelling or simple punctuation.
- Despite instructions that the basic course must be given priority before either follow up or alternative work Mr. B\_\_\_\_\_'s group had been given the opportunity to follow any line of enquiry or interest. For example, sex education had been introduced much earlier than it should have been and before the Head of Dept. had had the opportunity of explaining the course to parents as is his practice each year. Mr. Moreno was aware of this.
- No help had been given with presentation. Files had often been misused, worksheets were pitted with attempts at punching holes and logical order was absent.

- h) Assessment sheets had not been completed.

- i) The Head of Dept. has now arranged for the two classes concerned to be taught by a student on teaching practice, under his direction. He has more faith in the ability of the student to teach to the required standard.

- (ii) Mr. Moreno was also given responsibility for the General Studies course in the 5th form. To assist him in this he was presented with a suggested scheme of work by the Head of the Dept, Mr. K\_\_\_\_\_.

Mr. Moreno's teaching of this group of senior pupils was so poor and the work so inadequately prepared that members of the group who were following examination courses quickly asked if they might be allowed to get on with private study during that particular session.

Mr. Moreno's influence on the non-exam. members of the group is also becoming more and more open to question. He seems to be unable to structure any worthwhile course for them although he was allowed by me to modify the scheme of work prepared by Mr. K\_\_\_\_\_.

### Unsuitability to be in charge of children.

- (i) Use of Obscene Language

- a) Mr. Moreno was taking the 5th form for General Studies on the afternoon of Thurs 17th Oct. Because of the lack of preparation of the lesson the boys and girls were becoming restless. He then said to the group, "Piss off - I'm tired of you lot shitting on me". When this was reported to me by the girls in the group I saw Mr. Moreno. He admitted using the phrase and was warned as to the possible consequences of using such language and that under no circumstances was he to use such language again in front of children in Sutton Centre.

- b) Two sisters of S\_\_\_\_\_ Y\_\_\_\_\_, a pupil at Sutton Centre, attended Mr. Moreno's evening session in the Centre on Wed 8th Oct. Mr. Moreno asked the sisters which school they attended and the name of their Headmaster. When they told him he referred to the Headmaster as a bastard.....

- c) There have been other occasions when it has been reported to me that Mr. Moreno has used obscene language in front of children and when he has condoned the writing of obscene language by children in the Centre. I have received complaints about this from parents and members of the teaching and cleaning staff.

- (ii) Displaying unsuitable reading matter in his classroom in such a way as to make it readily available for children to read.

While carrying out a routine inspection of the building during the evening of Wed 13th Nov I noticed the following literature on the display shelf in Mr. Moreno's classroom:

- Typed document in which Mr. Moreno describes certain episodes in his life as a young man. (..... Document A)
- Libertarian Education No.15 in which the articles "Perhaps a plea for Sex Education" and "Butch or Bitch" were printed. (..... Document B)

I consider the message contained in these documents and the language used to be totally unsuitable for children. It was, in my opinion, improper of Mr. Moreno to expose children to such material. It showed a complete lack of professional judgement. This was underlined by the fact that when I questioned Mr. Moreno about the documents he admitted that he had used and discussed document A as teaching material with a group of 5th form boys.

- (iii) General attitude to school discipline and normal moral standards.

It has become increasingly obvious that Mr. Moreno is unable to accept the professional discipline and normal standards of behaviour which are fundamental to a teacher. It is, for example, no use telling a 5th form boy who resents the raising of the school leaving age - as Mr. Moreno did - that the law says he doesn't have to come to school without also going on to explain that it allows this only if parents are able to provide a satisfactory alternative system of education. This boy's parents were in no position to provide an alternative system. Similarly it is no use telling me - as Mr. Moreno did - that the fact that one of our 4th form boys was sleeping with a 2nd year girl at the girl's home and with the full knowledge of the girl's mother is none of the school's business and that the school had no right to consult the Probation Service with a view to having the circumstances of the particular home investigated. When asked how he would have felt had it been his own daughter and she subsequently became pregnant he just shrugged his shoulders. Nor should he have been surprised - as he so obviously was - when a boy's mother complained to the school about his taking her fifteen year old son camping late one evening without any prior information about it being given to her or her husband. ....



I am fortified in my view of Mr. Moreno's unsuitability to be a teacher by his views as published in Libertarian Education No.16 in which he specifically states that he was disliked by most of the staff at Garibaldi School because what he was doing affected their authority in and out of the class. He then went on to say in the article that he regretted his inability to introduce anarchy into schools....

S.Wilson - Head



## MANNY'S 'DOCUMENT A'

I find it important to me to recollect what I was like as a boy and a young bloke. One of the reasons for this is that I can't remember much about it. I'm sure that it is partly because I've repressed many of the things that happened out of fear and insecurity and unpleasantness.

I also find it useful not only to talk about what's happened and what is happening to me as a boy and male, but also to write it down. It sorts some things out. I wrote this quite quickly as it came and felt to me.

I was brought up in a working class area, Paddington in London, in a Spanish family. As you can probably guess it was very male dominated. My Dad ruled and my Mum did her bit in the home and with the kids and later at work. I grew up in his image, even though, being the middle one of three boys, my Mum wanted me to be a girl. We did no housework, not even our own beds, no cooking, not even washing-up (my Dad's rota for us three to do it broke down within a week) or washing our own socks and pants. By the age of about 10, I had my first crush - on a girl. of course. I couldn't

fancy blokes - I wasn't supposed to; no other men around me did - how could I? In my head, not only was it not natural but it just didn't come into my mind then, as a question, problem issue, etc. I'm no queer, no homo, no poof - I had this ingrained in my head then. I was a male - arrogant, cocky, fanciable, a teaser with girls; I used to spend ages looking at myself in the mirror, combing my hair like Billy Fury's quiff style and a duck's arse behind. I remember my first shiny blue mohair made-to-measure suit from Burtons. I wore black winkle-pickers, bright (almost luminous) pink, green and red socks and padded jackets. I should have worn glasses around the age of 13 or 14, but I was so conceited and concerned with my image that my arrogance wouldn't let me wear them and so hide my beautiful dark brown sexy eyes. It was all me as I recollect a girl (she lived on posh Bayswater Road) saying when I was about 17 or 18 that when I looked at girls it was as if I was stripping them. That made my day, week, life then. I even wrote it down on a piece of paper.

I knew she fancied me, but I kept her at arms length when I wanted to, pulled her, pushed her around, tortured her head, made her cry and have sleepless nights. I knew I could have screwed her, but I didn't have to. The game was that I ruled; I was the conqueror; I was her guru. Man - did you fuck her up!? Was I not cruel? I thought. Don't think like that Manuel, I'm it - I'm god's gift to women (well that's what they said), stop getting soft - you're a bloke, a male, a man, manuel. I snogged her when I wanted to, titted her when I wanted to; she was always there to do it to. For the life of me I can't remember her name. Something like Marcia, not really though. It wasn't important anyway, her name, my 17-year-old memories say. She was only to be used, abused.

She invited me once to a party on a Saturday somewhere near White City - posh mate of hers who lived near Sid James's house. (She even took me to the London Palladium once to see Frank Ifield and Susan Maughan - ugh!) Their parents were out - going away. I didn't know whether to go or not. What for? There's nothing there for me, I'd think. She only invited me because she fancied me. Silly cow. I don't really fancy her. But I might as well go - nothing else to do. I'll go with my mate Joe. We got smoothed up to go - went by tube and bus. There weren't very many people there - big house, big garden, posh, what can we pinch? Can't pinch jackets - they'll know it's us. What can we get from this place? There was no thought about what we can give. We are the givers! - that's the assumption from which we start or do anything. What can we take from it? - money, tits, silver ash trays, kisses with open mouths and waggling tongues, records, one or two right-hand fingers up her fish-smelling cunt/prat/fanny/pussy/etc. - snub fags on their posh carpet and leave them to burn or stain furniture, drink all their booze, walk over their flowers, break glasses and bottles - I couldn't care a

fuck; it was fun, a laugh! We were takers! That's how I was then.

Marcia, or whatever her name was, wanted me to dance with her, snog her, she would have let me too - you know - touch her up and get in any of those big 'magical' bedrooms, on bouncy beds, getting on top of her, running my right hand over her cotton blouse, feeling those things that come out of her chest; under her blouse, unclip bra with right hand using two fingers (don't tell anybody but it didn't always work - well, hardly ever. So what? No other blokes knew that and that is what mattered - your mates, your hard, cool image). Fondle her tits - not too hard. Done that. Tell her she's nice - pepp her up; almost like that she's lucky to be with me. Next get either leg between hers - got to get them apart - it's important. She'd lie there on her back, passive, just kissing and perhaps putting her arms around me - on my back; that's it. That's all she can do anyway, as a girl. It's up to the bloke to do it - action comes from me. She'd just respond to my moves, tease a bit over titting her. "You're a quick starter", she'd say pushing my hands off her blouse, but I'd get them soon. I'd take them with me in my mind to brag and tell my mates, perhaps on Sunday at the youth club how I did it all. It was a game I was quite good at. Wasn't I. I was. Yes, of course I was Manuel. Don't think you weren't Manuel. You bloody well know that once you think you may not know, you've lost the game. Come on, I was good, cool, a bragger, sexy, quick - course I was.

Get her legs apart with one leg; to do it with both is difficult - not necessary anyway. You've done the main thing. Run my right hand over her skirt, up her nyloned leg, perhaps unzip her skirt - no it's too complicated. I get quite hot and so does she. Oh!

I forgot - while all this is happening, I got the hard on really fast, even before we got on the bed - lump of hard thing down there. So that it doesn't show (I hope - got to look cool - can't look aroused) I move it with my hand in one of my pockets, up. It's more comfortable like that. I don't feel any association with it - prick, tool, etc. It is like some weapon apart from me. I remember mates at Beethoven secondary modern school (dump) slapping theirs on desks before a woman teacher came in. Mick, of course, got spotted once - supposed to have been reading 'King Solomon's Mines', ~~like extended~~ she had not seen; programme of educational work and activities divided, and arrangements for physical exercise to games.

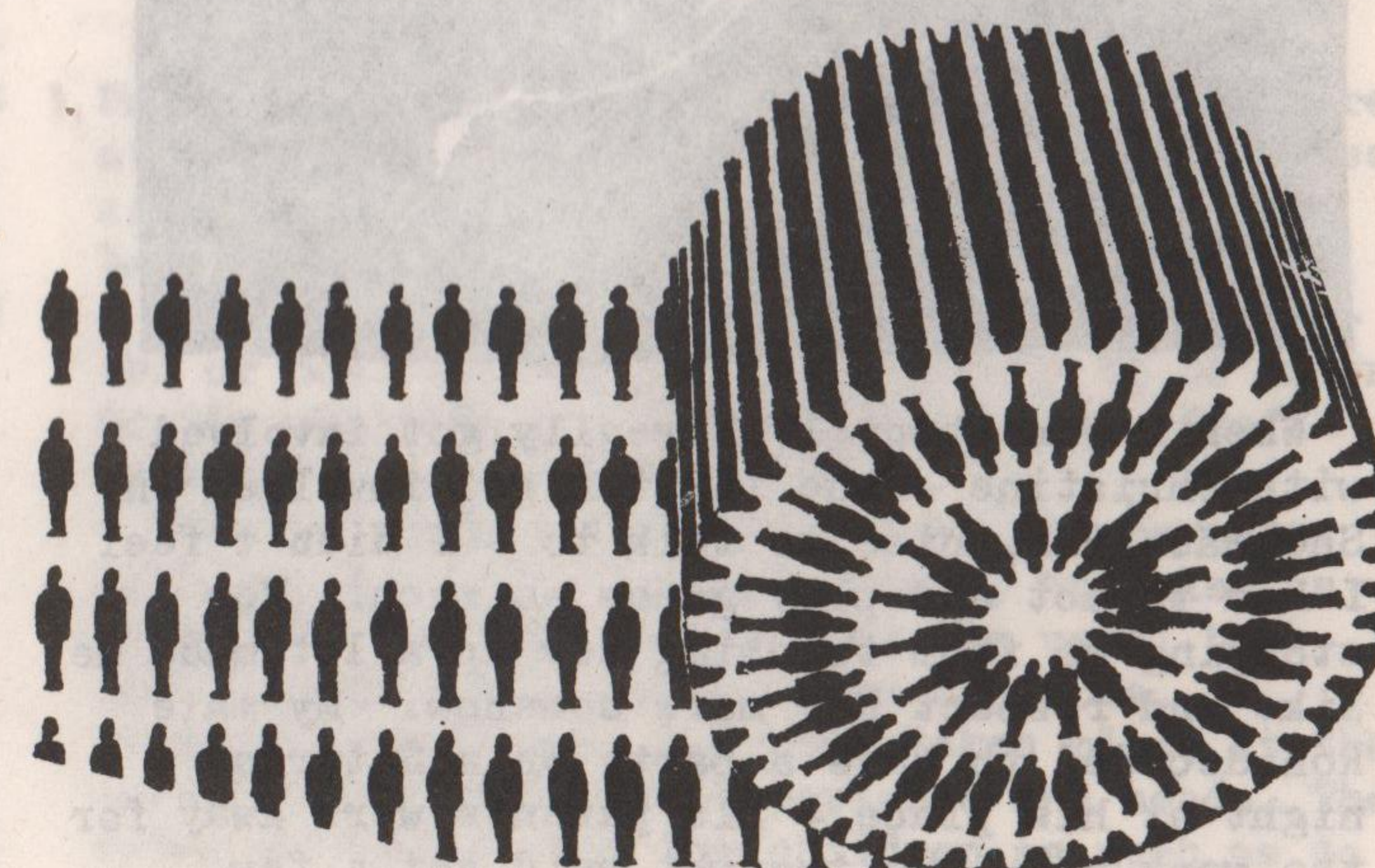
The tutor scheme is, of necessity, completely irrelevant to kids. We existed on donations to cover, heating, outings, and essential supplies, paint, wood, books, furniture etc. They only develop from here. There are many of us wandering the streets who have asked us included - and to this end we have applied litigious a disused goods yard with buildings on York Way. The ultimate success of this project had

simply something to piss out of, to rub up and down sometimes, to play pocket-billiards with, and sometimes if you were lucky, and one of the lads, to insert it into a hole - vagina. That's all I thought about organs. It was all about conquering - not about loving and caring. It was all about bragging - saying that you'd had it when you really had not. But then, it was as if we had had it. The question of not having had it did not arise. You were one of the lads remember.

It pains me now to think of the deceitful, cunning, repressed person I was and how I'd treated girls. It pains me now to think that lads still go on doing it.

Back to the girl and it's right hand ~~clim~~ ily under her knickers - feel around, hairs, hole, finger her, etc. It makes me want to puke. More often than not it didn't go on to an actual screw (what a horrible word). There is very little satisfaction on either part.

During the party she was after ~~me~~, trying to catch her man; I played it cool and distant. My mate Joe started on her and she simply reluctantly accepted it. This sort of thing with girls happened time and time again, in the bomb sites behind Stowe boys club, near the Cut with the easy ones; on the grass in Hyde Park; beneath their porches after taking them home if not before (It was always tactically better to try to do it before you got near to her place); up against the walls; etc. And was I shit scared? Of course I was. I didn't know what love meant in action; what caring was, what kindness was to girls. I feel perhaps that there must have been some goodness in me - it's pointless smashing that.



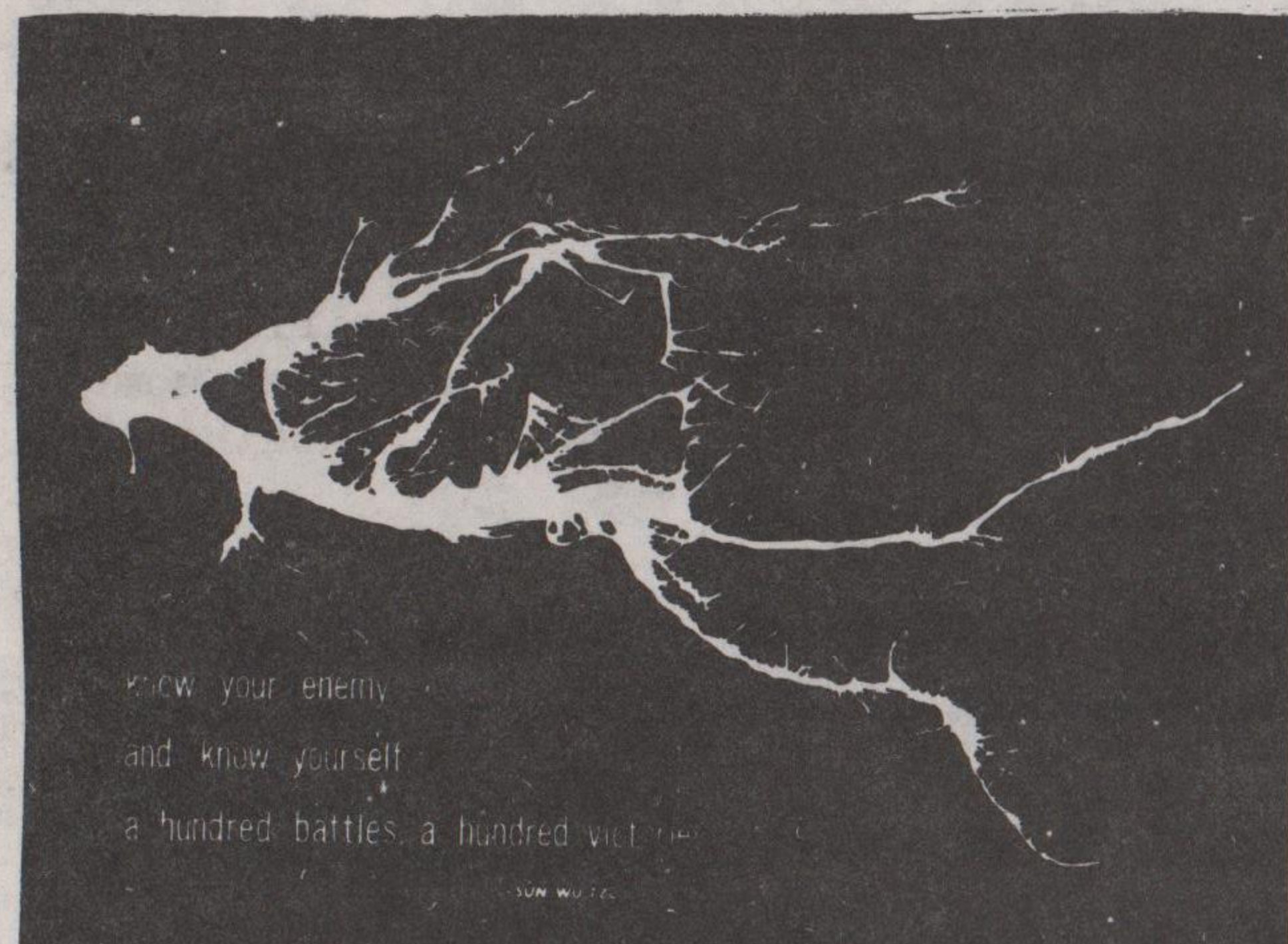
I must have really feared sex, intimacy and openness. It was always, "Block that and so this", to them. Play the swarthy, cool, arrogant bloke. They must have really hated me. I don't blame them, even though they must have been playing their side of the game.



Walk cool, talk cool, dance flash, charm, chat, hair, looks, clothes, competitive sports and with girls (like table tennis - I was good at that), knock about with the lads, youth clubs, look hard - Edgware Road and Harrow Road mobs, Portebello Road, shouting, breaking fag and milk machines, throwing bottles, bunking in the pictures, 'beating up the spades' (image) or trying to in reality; ugly spotty tough Bony, the feared over a large area having a really good looking girl; Holl-and Park school, in the grounds at lunch time.

I remember another girl. Can't remember her name either. Somebody told me she fancied me. I was 16 then. Arranged to meet her outside Lancaster Gate tube station. I went to a church youth club, playing table tennis and didn't expect her to be there. She was. I didn't know what to do, what to say - I was caught unawares. I lost the mold for a moment. Got it back quick and went into Hyde Park. On the grass, nothing to say to each other - embarrassing silences. On the grass in summer takes that all away.

After I had a piss against a tree. I was amazed by my penis. It was really hard and it wouldn't go down. I was sort of worried and even shy about it, but at the same time there was a he-man thrill - a feat achieved.



When I was about 17 I really got involved with Christine - the first I got involved in. She was kind, nice to talk to - I didn't feel I had to act and play games as much. Her stopping me from touching her up a lot made me like and respect her more somehow. My mate Ron decided to have a party on a Saturday night at his place - his parents were away for the week-end. We thought we'd get a few couples in - about eight of us in all. I suppose it sounds like a terrible pre-marriage situation. But I enjoyed it then. Chris could stay the night and I had calculatedly bought some johnnies. After the dancing, laughing and talking couples went home or sorted themselves out some place to sleep. Chris and I were to sleep in the kitchen. We got the 'bed' ready on the floor. I was feeling tense and excited. But everything was happening differently. There seemed to be some conscious thought about it all, some

joint thought, less of a game, as it usually was with a girl; the first girl who had stayed out all night with me, etc. With butterflies in my guts we took some of our clothes off - leaving my pants and her knickers, bra and full petticoat on. I didn't have to wade through clothes and zipps. We lay down and kissed and cuddled and took more clothes off (I'm slightly excited now as I recall it all those 12 years ago). Then somehow, so quickly, without struggles and teasing and arrogance, which was all it used to be like, we reached the possibility of actually making love. It had not been like this before.

I asked and she hesitantly said yes, but that I should use a duxex. I'd never used one before. They looked so clumsy. That she'd said yes, however, completely threw me. This was so unlike anything I'd experienced before. Where was the competition, the conquering, the struggle? It was not there - or very little anyway. Somehow I could not cope with all this unpredictability and spontaneity. For some reason I went to the bog in the next room, partly I think to have a piss but mainly to put the johnny on. My penis wasn't so hard now and it was a bit difficult to put the bloody thing on. I didn't like all this somehow. I began to be worried. Why wasn't the bloody thing hard?

I went back into the kitchen. Chris had taken the rest of her clothes off - I think. We started loving again. But I just couldn't get the hard on again. Everything in me fell in - collapsed. Where was the masculinity now! Where was the active lover now! I felt a part of my insides had been ripped out, I willed it with all my mind to rise, but no chance. I felt awkward, uncomfortable, upset, ashamed, useless, a failure. I just couldn't make it,

She was such a nice girl - I was so fond of her, like no one before, but I couldn't give. I was such a mixed up, repressed, distorted and broken-in-pieces bloke, that I couldn't get myself together enough to GIVE! I so much wanted to give to her, even, I suppose in a twisted way, through a fuck, but I couldn't. My image was exposed, and I felt the cracks in it. We rubbed and continued, but I was never the same again.

### MANUEL MORENO



The following statement was sent to Manny to be used as evidence at his hearing if he felt that it would help in any way.

I refer to the material (Documents A and B) which Mr. Moreno is charged with having displayed in his classroom and with having used as the basis of discussions with various teaching groups.

It seems to me that it is the very frankness of the material (to which objection is presumably taken) that makes it suitable to be used with secondary-age students. As we are reminded by a recent report on the reading habits of young people, young adolescents are increasingly exposed to exploitive writings (like 'Skinhead') designed to 'appeal' to their growing fears and worries, especially as these relate to their developing sexuality. Unfortunately most of the 'sex education' material published (while it does a more or less reasonable job of informing students of the biological facts and of the danger of unwanted pregnancies) fails utterly to tackle, let alone answer, their deeply felt (and largely unarticulated) questions and anxieties. Although our society 'permits' the blatant use of sexuality to sell soap, cigars and scent and openly offers for sale (in corner newspaper shops) 'novels' and 'soft' porn girlie-mags whose message is specifically and graphically that male success/happiness is girls with parted thighs and big breasts yearning to be conquered, we find it almost impossible to present them with equally candid material that does not exploit them but that relates to their developing feelings honestly and realistically.

What, it seems to me, the material in question displays is a remarkable openness and a real attempt to expose the barrenness and oppressive/unfeeling nature of the crude 'masculinity' (and the equally oppressive passivity and weakly 'feminine' characteristics attributed to the ideal/desirable female) that is held up as normal and healthy by those who have a commercial interest in the young and are only too eager to use whatever psychological know-how they can to sell their shoddy wares. We cannot, as parents and teachers, counter such skilful manipulation with moralising or half-truths. Unless we understand and acknowledge the real problems, the real fears, the real anxieties of the young, as Mr. Moreno's material honestly tries to do, we cannot pretend to be able to offer our children any help in understanding and surmounting their problems/fears.

ARTHUR HUMPHREY

## JOHN WARBURTON

This leaflet was issued by the GAY TEACHERS GROUP on 19th Feb 1975. Their contact address is :- Paul Patrick, 14 Holden House, Deptford Church St London S.E.8 Tel 01.690.1684 (office hours)

### VICTIMISATION OF A LONDON SCHOOL TEACHER

A young London teacher has been banned from working in any of Inner London schools because he refuses to sign an agreement stating that he would not mention homosexuality in the classroom.

John Warburton, 25, has been blacklisted by the ILEA after he told his girl pupils about homosexuality in response to their questions.

His troubles began a week after a demonstration in Trafalgar Square on Nov. 2nd last year, in support of equal rights for homosexuals. He was noticed by a pupil from Marylebone Girls School, who told the other girls in the school. When he went to work he was greeted with taunts of 'poof' and 'queer'. So Mr Warburton stopped teaching geography and explained why he was on the rally and what his homosexuality meant. In a statement referring to the situation he said, "I had to answer their questions and stop the taunts, because I would not have been able to maintain discipline in the classroom."

But word of the discussion reached the Headmistress who contacted the ILEA. Mr Warburton was summoned to County Hall for an interview and asked to sign the agreement. He refused to sign because he felt he could only maintain order and discipline if he was free to respond to the cat-calls and jibes.

At this point Mr Warburton contacted the Gay Teachers Group, a group of homosexual teachers from all over the country, who agreed to take up the case. The group wrote to Mr Ashley Bramall, leader of the ILEA, asking that he receive a deputation to discuss this case in particular and the position of homosexual teachers working for the ILEA in general. Mr Bramall refused an interview, stating that there "was nothing further to discuss".

The Gay Teachers Group were disheartened by this negative response, but set about attempting to prove to the ILEA that there were several important issues raised which needed clarification. A statement was drawn up which teachers and student teachers, both heterosexual and homosexual were asked to sign. The statement read: "We, the undersigned teachers and student teachers, claim the right to discuss homosexuality with pupils where and as the need arises on the same grounds as we would discuss any other controversial subject. Therefore we would be unable to give a written assurance such as the one the ILEA have requested from one teacher, requiring him not to discuss homosexuality with pupils except in the course of a completely structured programme of sex education of which the Headmaster/mistress had full knowledge and with which he/she was in full agreement."



The statement so far has been signed by over one thousand teachers. A second letter was sent to Mr Bramall by the group. It stated:

We recieved your letter and cannot agree that there is nothing further to discuss; on the contrary you have raised several controversial issues. Mr Warburton did not bring his private life into the classroom, his pupils did, calling upon him as a teacher and as a person to explain aspects of human behaviour about which they were ignorant and uncertain. The 'sensitive areas' you mention are sensitive precisely because they are central to many peoples thoughts and anxieties; who better than a confident sensitive and articulate teacher to answer their questions and put into a human perspective the distorted information with which they have been fed? Mr Warburton answered a need, he did not proselytise.

With regard to the 'purely professional assurance' sought from Mr Warburton, we had hitherto understood that a teachers contract was the only purely professional agreement entered into according to the law of the land.

We also wish to draw your attention to the fact that homosexuality is not discussed in school even as part of a 'completely structured programme of sex education' which may account for the way in which Mr Warburton was recieved by his classes when they discovered that he was homosexual.

We feel as a group that the policy that you have indicated falls far short of the realities of the situation. It means in fact that a gay teacher in Mr Warburton's position must endure indiscipline and humiliation, a state surely not conducive to the education of the children in his care, whatever subject he is employed to teach. Since we as individuals within the ILEA employ could not tolerate such a circumstance, we must reassert our request that you and the appropriate committee recieve a formal deputation from the Gay Teachers Group to discuss these points which are far from resolved.

The letter was dated 4th Feb. We have not yet recieved a reply.

During the last few weeks, letters of protest have been sent to Mr Bramall from teachers and homosexual groups all over the country. Motions of protest and calls for action to resolve the situation have been put to several branches of N.U.T. and A.T.T.I. Annoyed at the lack of response from County Hall over this issue, members of the Gay Teachers Group phoned County Hall on Feb 18th to express their dismay and call for an immediate removal of John Warburton from any 'blacklist'. Assurances were also requested over the position of other homosexual teachers employed by the ILEA.

# THE RIGHT TO BE GAY

Above is the text of a petition which a group of teachers have prepared and sent out in defence of John Warburton, the London teacher who was recently suspended by ILEA, allegedly for refusing to sign a statement to the effect that he would not discuss homosexuality in the classroom.

I expect most people reading this will have seen brief mention of this case in a couple of newspapers, saying that the trouble arose when John Warburton was seen by pupils from his school taking part in a demo for equal rights for homosexuals. Perhaps you also got the same reaction I did when the case was discussed in your staffroom (ha ha) and elsewhere. Comments seemed to range from "he must be a raving queer and of course should not be allowed to talk about it" to, I s'pose a more liberal attitude, "there must be more to this than meets the eye... I expect this chap dragged the subject into his lessons wherever he could..."

I don't think it is right for teachers to flaunt their particular hang-ups all the time in class. But I do think it is my job to help try to unuddle the confusion and hang-ups the kids go through. In one lesson we were talking about school and the discussion got round to universities, exams etc and questions like "do you have to wear uniform at college", "what's O-level", "what sort of things do you have to write in an exam?" were asked one after the other in rapid succession. It really was as if the kids had so much bottled up inside them that they just wanted to

get off their chests. Now to me the whole subject of exam-taking was dull but to the kids on that day it seemed almost as if their lives depended on talking about it. And I as a teacher of that class felt obliged to help them do so: to give them factual information, to put both sides of the argument for and against exams and to relate some of my personal experiences, like "were you scared, Miss, before an exam?"

From reading the reports in the press it was difficult to know what really happened. All I know is that I was shocked and angry that a teacher had been suspended for refusing not to discuss the subject. What was my position then? When I thought back only over the past week I realised that the kids themselves had alluded to homosexuality more than once. On one occasion, not untypical, I came into the classroom where a group of 4th year boys were telling one of the filthiest jokes I have heard. It was about 2 "queers": the boys showed themselves to be naive, infantile, pathetic, and at the same time coy and highly embarrassed; their language was nothing but crude and obscene. So what was I to do? Pretend I hadn't heard what they had been saying, hardly possible when their laughter and jeers were loud enough for the whole of East Acton to hear! Did I join in the joke then, or tell them one on the same subject I had heard at a teachers' centre disco? Presumably, if I had been teaching in a ILEA school I would have been liable for suspension if I had taken any action other than to ignore the joke itself, ignore the boys' attitude, ignore the battery of questions and remarks

that were fired at me when they realised I was disturbed at the whole situation. Ignore? Surely a teacher just can't ignore something like this; aren't we as teachers supposed to concern ourselves with the way the minds of the kids are working. And these boys were clearly so preoccupied with the subject. If I ignored this, then by the same token I must feel it was outside my brief (as they say) as a teacher to discuss racial prejudice, baby/wife battering, drugs, abortion, gambling, the environment, inflation, advertising? Is it? And where do you draw the line between what's an OK subject and what's not?

Isn't it up to us to show Houghton that we are earning the massive pay increases he so graciously awarded us? He naively and touchingly believes that teachers come second only to parents in the power they have to influence the young! How often has the cry gone up in the staffroom that "the kids just don't care, they don't want to know". I think they do. Perhaps it's the teachers who don't.

I saw the NCCL had taken up the issue so I decided to get in touch with them. I got a rather fuller story from them than from the newspaper articles.

John was teaching in a girls' school - so much for the notion expressed by some that the boys in the school were probably "at risk" (although listening to comments made by young and not so young male colleagues I sometimes wonder just how much "safer" the nubile young girls are at my school. I assume a homosexual has as much self control, or as little, as a heterosexual).

## Note to overseas readers

NUT - National Union of Teachers

ATTI - Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions

NCCL - National Council for Civil Liberties (a voluntary body)

LEA - Local Education Authority

ILEA - Inner London Education Authority

Although John had refused to sign the statement forbidding him to discuss the subject, he himself agreed he would not raise the issue himself (so much for the idea that he was dragging the subject into every lesson).

He had been seen by the kids on the demo and had spoken about it when the kids confronted him with it at school. But there were no complaints from the kids or parents - in fact the headmistress decided to take the matter up when one of the other teachers on the staff brought the matter to her attention....

So John went to County Hall. He had been a supply teacher but applied for and got a full time job at Holland Park Comprehensive ... until the head there was instructed by ILEA not to give him the job.

The irony is that the NCCL apparently had been in the process of carrying out a survey of the LEA's to find out just where the discrimination against homosexual teachers was most prevalent. They had got a mixed reply: but Ashley Bramell had said most definitely that his LEA would not discriminate. And what LEA does he represent - of course, ILEA. NCCL was at first refused a meeting to discuss the matter at County Hall. The latest at time of writing is that ILEA is considering receiving a delegation. So the matter is far from dead and forgotten. If you think you can help, get a petition going, talk about the issue at school (makes a change from talking about pay, uniform, the caretaker), send money to the fighting fund (Paul Patrick, 14 Holden House, Deptford, Church St. SE8).

Solidarity! They can't suspend us all - although with the cuts in education it makes you think they are looking for excuses. Watch out - they may start putting a ban on all German irregular verbs soon.

**JEAN FITZPATRICK**

## EXTRA AGIT-PROP

### A.S. NEILL TRUST.

In March we had a meeting of the Association at White Lion Free School (London). The Trust distributed our rapidly growing funds like this:-

LEEDS FREE SCHOOL: £130.

BERMONDSEY LAMPOST: £160.

KIRKBY HOUSE: £130.

NORTH KEN. FREE SCHOOL: £100

DELTA (Southampton) .. £140.

LITTLE DIGGER: £20.

any project which exists to promote Freedom for children may apply. Contact Ray, 7 Manor Rd Extn, OADB. Lincs.

IDIOT NEWS (14p + post) is a new (irregular?) mag, from the 'Psychosoc' at Lancaster University. Libertarian and essentially non-academic, 'tis a welcome addition to the likes of RED RAT and HUMPTY DUMPTY. Current issue includes 'PADADIGM LOST' (on pupil applied re-enforcement schedules for teachers) 'WHY HOMO SAPIENS BECAME EXTINCT' (on race IQ and education) and 'THE POLITICS OF TESTING' (on intelligence testing and invalidation of "disruptive" kids). from Jon Matthews, 2 Primrose St, Lancaster.

COMMUNUS is removing the SCA and eco-action element to a duplicated internal bulletin. The magazine will go roughly Bi-monthly and will re-orientate around the issues of 'alternatives and critiques in post-school education', hopefully with a wider appeal. Lib Ed sends crossed fingers for this, and hopes that the paper doesn't become less libertarian for the change. Communications to 3 Endsleigh St, London. WC1. (013871277.)



# FAN MAIL

From: DAVID PRINCE, BIDSTON, BIRKENHEAD.

The following notes (re 1911 School Strikes) were sent in to us following the article we printed in Lib. Ed. 16 - if you come across anything about your local area please send us details.

Schools Strikes, Birkenhead (Merseyside)

Extracts from 'The Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser', September 16th, 1911.

'STRIKE MANIA' (Editorial comment)

"Strike mania has evidently developed to the academic stage. 'Like father like son' runs the old adage, and apparently during the past week or so there has been a series of strikes among boys attending elementary schools in different parts of the country. They want shorter hours for 'labour', more time for 'recreation', and less drastic methods of correction for merely boyish offences against discipline. In other words, they have 'come out' for less learning, no cane, and more play. They have adopted measures for 'peaceful persuasion' by hooting and abusing their masters, supplemented by volleys of stones. Well and truly may it be said that the lessons of the late labour troubles (the notorious rail and other strikes of August, 1911) have been imparted to the younger generation."

'SCHOOLBOY STRIKE' (News report)

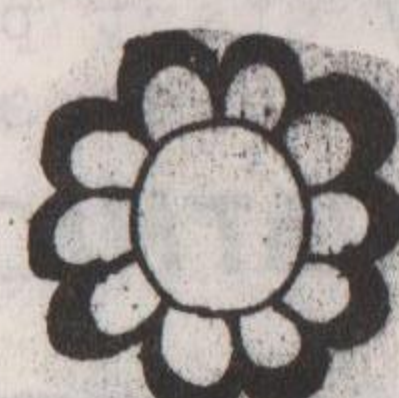
"Little did local people imagine that such a thing would happen here. But it did.

"The schools involved: St. Peter's; St. Mary's; St. Werburgh's; Holy Trinity; and St. Luke's, Lower Tranmere. The strike had evidently been well organised because before the school bell rang, bodies of boys left the yards, and shouting as they marched along the streets, all converged at one point (location not given) where they were addressed by their 'leader' (Two dozen boys from St. Luke's, Lower Tranmere, held a separate meeting in Mersey Park): 'They (their fathers) starved to obtain their rights, didn't they?' 'Yes', came back the reply. 'Stick to your guns, and show what stuff you're made of.' This remark was received with loud cheers. A gentleman standing by us was convulsed with laughter at the scene, and the youngsters, not appreciating his merriment at their expense, crowded round and jeered at him."

"A teacher drove away 'pickets' from St. Anne's School, and was molested by a hooligan"

"'Black-legs' were tormented at dinner time."

The strike apparently 'fizzled out' during the afternoon of the same day. The report ends with this perceptive observation: "agitators are chiefly dunces, always looking for an opportunity for a holiday".



From: David Hart, 80 Church Road, Moseley, Birmingham 13.

Dear People,

I could feel Nicholas Walter's spleen getting into its stride, so to speak, in the final paragraph of his article on Ivan Illich, and I wondered why he was doing it; there seemed to be some background information missing, why Illich had got Walter's goat.

In the first place, Illich is hardly our enemy; or if Walter thinks he is, he should deal with that possibility head-on, and not out of the corner of his mouth. I've reviewed Illich's books myself and pointed out that he doesn't have the whole future of the world sewn up, packaged, like a huge plasticine model in his living room, but that doesn't stop me seeing what he has done.

Secondly, maybe Nicholas Walter has his model ready for some grand unveiling, and if he has I won't refuse to look (I've found his vision stimulating in the past), but a kind of one-upmanship game with Illich just doesn't seem useful.

Had Illich given us straight down the line anarchism, Nicholas Walter would have been pleased, but you-know-who etc would not. Illich couldn't win that one, and anyway maybe he simply can't see the global solution. Do we want him to tell us lies?

If we need people who see (for example, that schools are anti-learning) and say what they see with delight in the very seeing of it, which is a kind of root-confidence (the ability to imagine our society without schools) then it's more than nice to have Illich around. I haven't noticed people falling over each other because of their amazing eye-sight and radical imagination, we're in the main a pedestrian lot, I mean derivative.

It's crucial that we trust our friends enough to attack them when we think it necessary, and to demand more of them every bloody day, but generously, eh, and not sourly?

So thanks for making me write this letter, I'll probably have to do some hard thinking now. you bastards!

## EDUCATION OTHERWISE.....

ONE SUCCESSFUL WAY OF STARTING AN ALTERNATIVE

EDUCATION

PROJECT

In the last issue we preceed the Childrens Rights Workshop leaflet 'EDUCATION OTHERWISE THAN AT SCHOOL'. The following piece is extracted from the Workshop's first Newsletter. (see Agitprop section).

We started at the beginning of the Spring term at the request of some local kids who hadn't been to school for some time. There were eight kids aged 7 to 15. They were considered by ILEA to be hard core truants, none of them having attended school regularly in the last two years. One of the children had already spent a year 'in care' for truancy; another was in danger of being sent to the educational psychologists for non-attendance at school. The kids asked us to start a school so that they could 'learn something' -- none of them reckoned that they could learn anything in school.

We were in no position to open a school. We were not qualified teachers, we had no premises, no equipment, nothing to satisfy the elementary requirements of the DES. However it was necessary for us to be recognised as a legal alternative to school in order to protect the kids from the courts.

To satisfy the legal requirements (both of the ILEA & DES) we decided to operate as a tutor scheme and started immediately in the groundfloor of one of the kids homes. The tutors were local residents: home-bound mothers, part-time or self-employed workers, university students and student teachers, any local person with a free morning, afternoon or evening to spare. Sometimes the tutors came to the house, sometimes some of the kids went to them; sometimes activities were held in a local centre. A teacher training college allowed us to use their craft workshops and we were offered the use of other local premises.

The parents registered the children as receiving tuition in groups of four. This involved parents in filling out a form DO/35 from ILEA, giving details of the name and qualifications of the person or group by whom the child is now being instructed, place and hours of instruction, the programme of educational work and activities provided, and arrangements for physical exercises and games.

The tutor scheme is, of necessity, completely free to kids. We existed on donations to cover food, heating, outings, and essential supplies - paper, paint, wood, books, furniture etc. Things can only develop from here. There are many other kids wandering the streets who have asked us to be included and to this end we have applied for a disused a disused goods yard with buildings on York Way. The ultimate success of this pro-

ject depends on everybody's support, especially from those with knowledge or particular skills....

\* \* \*

The above notes are based on accounts of how the Freightliners Free School first started, early in 1972. In those days it used to be called the South Villas Comprehensive.

1. LEA officers and inspectors normally expect alternative education projects to be run by qualified teachers, although there is nothing in the Law (Education Act 1944) that says that education must be provided by qualified people. Certainly projects can benefit from the participation of qualified tutors.
2. Section 114 of the 1944 Act defines 'independent school' as "any school at which full time education is provided for five or more pupils of compulsory school age..." Many LEA education officers and inspectors have interpreted this as meaning that any tuition scheme with more than four children must be an 'independent school'. They often warn alternative education projects that they are not legally allowed to have more than four children involved unless they set up a school. This is not true. Tuition schemes do not have to become schools when they have more than four children involved. Lib.Ed. note (for foreign readers). ILEA = Inner London Education Authority. DES = Department of Education and Science. LEA = Local Education Authority

### SOME ADVANTAGES OF A TUITION OR TUTOR SCHEME

- 1 Unlike a school, tuition can take place anywhere at any time. Central and comprehensive premises are not required, although any project needs a base.
- 2 A tuition scheme involves local people, qualified or not, who are thus more likely to be known to the children and the neighbourhood. Professional distance is avoided.
- 3 A tuition scheme necessarily involves parents, both as organisers and supporters, but also as tutors. This helps break down the usual barriers separating education from the home.
- 4 In a tuition scheme, learning takes place at the level of the childrens experience and needs. The education comes from the children as much as to them, certainly not from on high as in most schools.
- 5 A tuition scheme is a legal alternative to school, both as a temporary measure and as a long term project.
- 6 A tuition scheme is flexible and can serve as many children as need tuition at any time, and can involve as many tutors as are available.
- 7 A tuition scheme, by involving local children and local adults, helps to bring together families who have been trying to cope in isolation at home.



- 8 A tuition scheme can concentrate on particular difficulties, needs or interests of the children involved; it doesn't have to follow a pre-set programme of work.
- 9 A tuition scheme allows children to participate for as long as they want to, for some longer than others. It can accommodate those children who would normally be (and want to be) in school, but who have either not been offered a place that they like, or are going through particular difficulties. But a tuition scheme can also serve long term needs and in particular can encourage children to specialise in those fields of interest not encouraged in normal schools.
- 10 The kids like a tuition scheme, particularly its flexible nature and the way it can respond to their interests. If they don't like a part of it, then they can be involved in changing it to suit their particular needs.
- 11 A tuition scheme can be a natural first step in the development of a more permanent educational provision such as a Free School or a similar voluntary scheme.
- 12 A tuition scheme is flexible. It reflects people's needs and their ability and willingness to fulfill them. It also satisfies the legal requirements and the expectations of the authorities.

For further information see the pamphlet "How to Set Up A Free School - Alternative Education And The Law, or contact the Workshop. (both addresses in Agitprop section)

# EDUCATED AT HOME

JOHN STEELE

The letter I had from the education officer said: "It will be helpful to know whether Melanie's education will terminate in July, when she will cease to be of compulsory school age."

Perhaps it was that commonly-held attitude — that education terminates on a certain date at a predetermined age — that made us decide, when we moved to the Cotswolds from London twelve years ago, to try educating our daughter at home.

Setting out on this relatively uncharted field, we first read the Education Act. Contrary to popular belief, it is not compulsory to send a child to an organised state (or even private) school. Section 35 of the act says: "It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability, and aptitude, either by attendance at school or otherwise." Section 76 of the act also states: "Education authorities shall have regard to the general principle, that so far as is compatible with efficient instruction . . . pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents." (My emphasis)

We have never, in fact, needed to quote these sections of the act to any education officer. Once it was seen that we did indeed intend to educate our children, in the broad sense of that word, we were left pretty well to get on with it. From time to time we were asked to submit samples of timetable and work to the local education officer. Children who organise their own school, as ours have done, are only too delighted to comply with these requests.

Judging from sensational stories occasionally appearing in the national press, it seems that some education authorities have taken upon themselves, either knowingly or not, attitudes and powers expressly withheld from them by those who formed the 1944 act. It seems unlikely that the present government will change these provisions.

When we set up informal home schooling twelve years ago for two of our daughters, Stephanie was seven, and Melanie was four. We expressly requested the qualified, but unpaid teacher who lived with us at the time to offer lessons to the children, but not to force them. More lessons were rejected than accepted, and in the course of time the teacher left us for a paying job. Despite this, the children continued to learn. The elder

was, and still is, an omnivorous reader, and when she wanted instruction in some particular subject, my wife and I (whichever was better qualified) would then give her some coaching.

A popular general encyclopaedia, which was published weekly, was the background for all her studies for nearly three years. Her almost obsessive interest in astronomy and science fiction caused her to read a large number of books over a period of years. Her general knowledge and wisdom, at the age of 18, appear to be at least as wide as, and perhaps of more practical use, than that of her contemporaries — even if she could not, perhaps, sit down and write examinations for her A levels in specific subjects.

Throughout this time we have encouraged interest in the live theatre, ballet, concerts. There is no television in our home. Both girls asked for, and were given, ballet lessons, piano lessons and drama/speech lessons. Both soon discovered that most of the pupils in all these specialised activities were not interested in, or actively disliked their studies.

And, of course, they soon began to discover the inevitable reaction of other children when it was found out they did not attend school. At ballet, one girl said to Stephanie: "You don't know how lucky you are not to have to go to school."

Both children also enjoyed our home theatrical productions and Stephanie was becoming increasingly drawn to the idea of a professional acting career. Meanwhile, every friend and visitor to our home was crying havoc and doom: "How will they ever get on in the world not having to mix socially at school . . . what

will happen if they want to go on for further education in some speciality?" We persisted.

Shortly before her sixteenth birthday, Stephanie auditioned for, and was accepted by, a nationally approved drama school. The director of one drama school, on hearing she had no formal schooling, said: "Splendid, that gives us less to undo." She decided she would require a skill for making a living between



acting jobs and so applied to the local technical college for admission to its secretarial and business course. An admission test replaced her missing O levels, and she soon settled in the environment of an organised school. She was startled to discover, during her first few days in school, that every girl she spoke to in her class hated every subject and had very little respect for the teachers.

Stephanie, on the contrary, liked all her teachers, without exception, and was fascinated by all subjects offered. Yet we had been warned that: "She would not be able to mix with people . . . she would not have the qualifications to enter for what she wanted to do," and, "she would be a practical and social misfit." In her year at the Stroud mid-Gloucestershire technical college, where she took her secretarial course, she came out with high marks.

Melanie, the second one, has also produced some surprises for the criers of woe. Unlike Stephanie, who had a first year in a formal classroom where she learned to read, Melanie has only ever had a few days in a schoolroom. On that occasion, when aged eleven, she was talked into attending classes by an anxious relative at a so-called progressive school, she was startled to discover that most of the children in her class knew less than she did about things which she took to be common know-

ledge. All showed supreme distaste for learning in general, and their teachers in particular. Reporting this at home to her mother, she burst into tears as she said: "I can't go back. It's the first time I've ever been bored." Not wishing to see that attitude develop, we allowed her to withdraw from formal lessons.

After her experience of attending classes, for a time Melanie refused her lessons. We watched with interest and permitted her to do what attracted her — mainly arts and crafts activities, and playing outdoors. Then, at twelve, Melanie decided to start a school of her own, with her younger sister Felicity as pupil. To add interest, there were quite a number of other imaginary pupils, who turned the classroom into something resembling an old-fashioned small village school. Felicity, then aged seven, responded with enthusiasm, and learned to read. This was something she firmly declined to do under the tuition of an enthusiastic mother, and other temporary residents.

Melanie, when 14, had worked out a full timetable for herself. School started, sharp at nine o'clock for her younger sister and their imaginary friends. In her youthful wisdom, the teacher only kept up and pleasure in learning continued. Melanie herself continued lessons all day. She asked me to teach her arithmetic, history and geography. Her mother took her in French (they used the BBC records), English grammar and composition. She went to an outside teacher for lessons on the guitar and has taught herself to play the recorder from a book. Now 16, Melanie has enrolled in a new free school in Montreal.

Of course, there are problems in all this. It is not perfect, and we would certainly not suggest that it is a suitable course for everyone. But in our particular circumstances with our freedom to devote plenty of time to helping the children when asked, and living away from towns and neighbours as we have for the past twelve years, it seems to have worked, and to have worked well. We have always been open with the local education authority, and though there must have been times when there was head-shaking in the quiet of their offices, we have never had anything but courteous and helpful relations with them.

This article has been ripped-off from an old copy of New Society — thanks.



# REVIEWS

## days in the lives of two schoolphobics

THE GATES by Leslie Mildiner and Bill House. 65p. publ. by CENTERPRISE on behalf of Stephney Basement Writers Group.

THE GATES is an extraordinary book, written by two boys in Stephney in an attempt to explain why they couldn't face going to school. Written as a novel, it is in fact wholly autobiographical. It is a funny, bitter deeply perceptive look at schools teachers, educational psychologists, and at how, at present, the education system almost completely fails to respond to the needs and abilities of the inner-city children it is supposed to cater for.

For teenagers this is a true book about themselves. For adults this is a book to teach them something. There is nothing lurid or sensational about this book, written by two kids who couldn't stand school. It is a very good piece of work, written right from the inside, honestly, utterly unacademically, and for any adult with imagination, disturbingly.

Apart from the authors sheer pertinacity and the burning self-respecting drive to tell the world what they had discovered (neither of which they had developed in the ordinary state school), what comes over most is the bull-headed insanity of the compulsory school system. LEILA BERG

THE GATES is a novel about boys who refuse to go to school and the consequences for them. It has a real critical-documentary flavour, but it's not dry at all. There's a strong enjoyment of those things which are still to be enjoyed in the bleaker stretches of our cities, a marked lack of bitterness and a cheeky sense of humour. It left me with a feeling of hope. ADRIAN MITCHELL

The above 3 paragraphs are the puff from the book's cover. I've used them straight as they just about say it all. It's not quite what the first paragraph claims (i.e. the bitter deeply perceptive look at the system and its workers) but does not suffer, rather is the stronger for it. I had two expectations of the book:-

- 1) a sudden burst into anger and crime, at some stage
- 2) too much reference to the material aspects of the cultural lives of kids, e.g. records, films, T.V. etc.etc.

Both of these things were wholly absent. The result is electrifying. The writing is thus concerned solely with events, activities, relationships and feelings. Buy it. Today. p.a.c.

We never did get around to a full run down on the publications from CENTREPRISE, which is a Bookshop/Coffee Bar/Community Project in the East End of London. Their work in publishing local, working class people and material on the area itself is excellent and virtually unique. The closest (tenuously) equivalent, I suppose, would be History Workshop. Whilst expanding, the projects work is threatened, for financial reasons. They are a voluntary project existing on grants from various sources, most of whom see their pump-priming stage as over. The least we can do is to urge you to

send for their lists. If you are part of some educational institution, put the pressure on to buy some of their material. 136 KINGSLAND HIGH STREET, LONDON E8

RIGHTS. A HANDBOOK FOR PEOPLE UNDER AGE. 60p (Penguin Education, 160pp).

One of Penguin Education's dying kicks, this book seems aimed at both the classroom and the street. Author (collator) is Nan Berger: she of the great liberal family Berger, of Children's Rights (magazine), Schoolkids OZ and Thames TV fame. Sections are Guide (index), Rights, Home, School, Work (the right to ~~earn~~ money means the right to eat instead of the right to starve), On The Street, Help; put together as part factual information/ part discussion/ part case history, - liberally illustrated with cartoons, photos and clippings.

Basically, the book is a guide to the legal and theoretical boundaries that go with the different institutions and relationships likely to be encountered by folks at various stages up to age 18, (in society as currently constituted that is, -- one in which, we know, rights are virtually impossible to define concretely).

How about 'the right to be convicted of a criminal offence', or, 'the right to enter, or live in, a brothel'. Interesting that. The right to live in an illegal place.

For the most part the book makes nauseating reading. It reeks of liberal objectivity creaking at the seams. Each page seems like those paragraphs at the end of each chapter of a school textbook, when the questions on what you have learnt so far get asked.

The book she should have written peers through in places though, i.e. - "don't let anyone con you into believing that boys ought to have more 'rights' so far as sex is concerned than girls should", but basically the thing is hampered by its lack of commitment and the absence of a solid political stance. Thus, education 'otherwise' is seen as one of 3 full-time compulsory-educational variations to full time state schooling. The right of kids not to undergo 10 years of 'schooling' (and the right of parents not to have to make them) is not stated clearly enough: doubly so when one thinks of the exercising of these rights in terms of refusing the values that the system stands for.

By page 128 reality catches up, and under 'Taking On The Law' there are a few quite subjective paragraphs on the nature of power, who has it, and how they keep it etc. This nicely complements the phrase on pg. 29 which says (in referral to the U.N. Human Rights Declaration),

"The British government, for example, has not found it possible to carry out the provision 'No one shall be subjected to arbitrary detention or arrest', in their handling of the N. Ireland situation.

The book was prepared in early summer 1973. This accounts for a few omissions, and the fact that the list of help/advice agencies is erratic, not without error, and has some entries whose use to anybody must be in doubt. However, such is the nature of publications in this field, and the availability of them to kids anyway, that this book fills a gap — despite itself. p.a.c.

In the same series (Penguin Education/Extensions) is A TOUCH ON THE TIMES - Songs of Social Change 1770 - 1914. ed Roy Palmer. 352pp 80p.

A collection of words and music to 90 songs with 114 contemporary illustrations and photos - many previously unpublished. As chronicle of the ordinary persons reactions to the industrial revolution (political, social, romantic), the book is a delight. Good value to boot.

# MAN

MAN! An Anthology of Anarchist Ideas, Essays, Poetry and Commentaries, edited by Marcus Graham. Published by Cienfuegos Press. £3.25 paper back; £7 Library edition.



MAN! was an anarchist journal published in America during the 1930s and this book is a selection from the articles it published during its life made by the man who edited the journal. Principally the book consists of articles, but there are also poems and drawings. And the articles vary from the highly theoretical to the candidly polemical. Whatever the reader's taste there is much that will delight the palate. And in my view the most impressive section is the longest one, concerned with the ideas of anarchism. This contains as extensive a range of anarchist views of society as I have ever come across in a single volume. And unlike much contemporary material in the anarchist press, the writing sparkles with a variety of exquisite styles. I frankly approached the book with great interest but rather fearful that it would prove barely readable, a pessimism born of a familiarity with the poor standards of much contemporary anarchist writing. My surprise and delight were enormous when I found the selected pieces consistently well written and occasionally of great stylistic merit. Some pieces positively sparkle.

It is true that some will no doubt find the polemical material rather tedious, but polemic is much to my taste and I enjoyed them greatly. These articles are more carefully written than other similar material of more recent date. We tend to leap into the middle of an issue when we polemicise, but here the criticisms of of Stalin's government of the Soviet Union and of Hitler's Nazi Germany always set out the situation fully and go on to criticise fully. This is much more thorough and intellectually rewarding than a hotch potch of aspects of a regime followed by a miscellany of condemnations of it which is the more usual fare in our present anarchist press.

At times it does give the feel of America in the 1930s. The view of the Russian Revolution is clearly a much closer one in time,

though the judgements on it seem to me sound. The Spanish Civil War is contemporary with the writing, as are Stalin's show trials and Hitler's Nazi regime in Germany. Of these I think a present day writer on Nazi Germany would not use the term "mad" to describe its rulers, while the word is in repeated use in these articles. I don't say there's anything wrong with it; just that present day usage might avoid it.

There are but a few articles on the Spanish Civil war. Not enough for an opinion to be formed as to what the general feeling in the movement was at the time. But the articles present a distinctly transatlantic view of the conflict, calling Roosevelt to account for his effectively pro fascist diplomacy while leading European "Liberal" statesmen had a longer-standing culpability.

# BOURGEOIS

# VOUS

# N'AVEZ

# RIEN COMPRIS

"BOURGEOISE, YOU HAVE UNDERSTOOD NOTHING."  
french rebellion poster, 1968



But the range and scope of subject matter is wider than this. Pieces on anarchism and art, and book and drama reviews sit alongside articles on crime and prisons, religion and current events. Not all the articles have named authors but the total of contributors is more than thirty, probably a lot more. Some are writers well known in the anarchist movement, some are obscure. Altogether a book of great richness and variety. It is beautifully produced, but with a number of printing errors. The paper back is well worth the £3.25 asking price, and I say that having paid for the copy I read for this review. But if you are unwilling to believe this, order the library edition through your local library and see the book and read through it. This will only persuade you to buy it.

I once read a review of Peter Sellers' "The Best of Sellers" which said that however often one played the L.P. it would always make the listener laugh again. I've had the record over 15 years now and still smile at it. I venture to suggest that however often the reader comes back to this excellent volume he will find something to stimulate the interest and set the mind pondering anew.

Peter Miller 17



## reviews cont.....

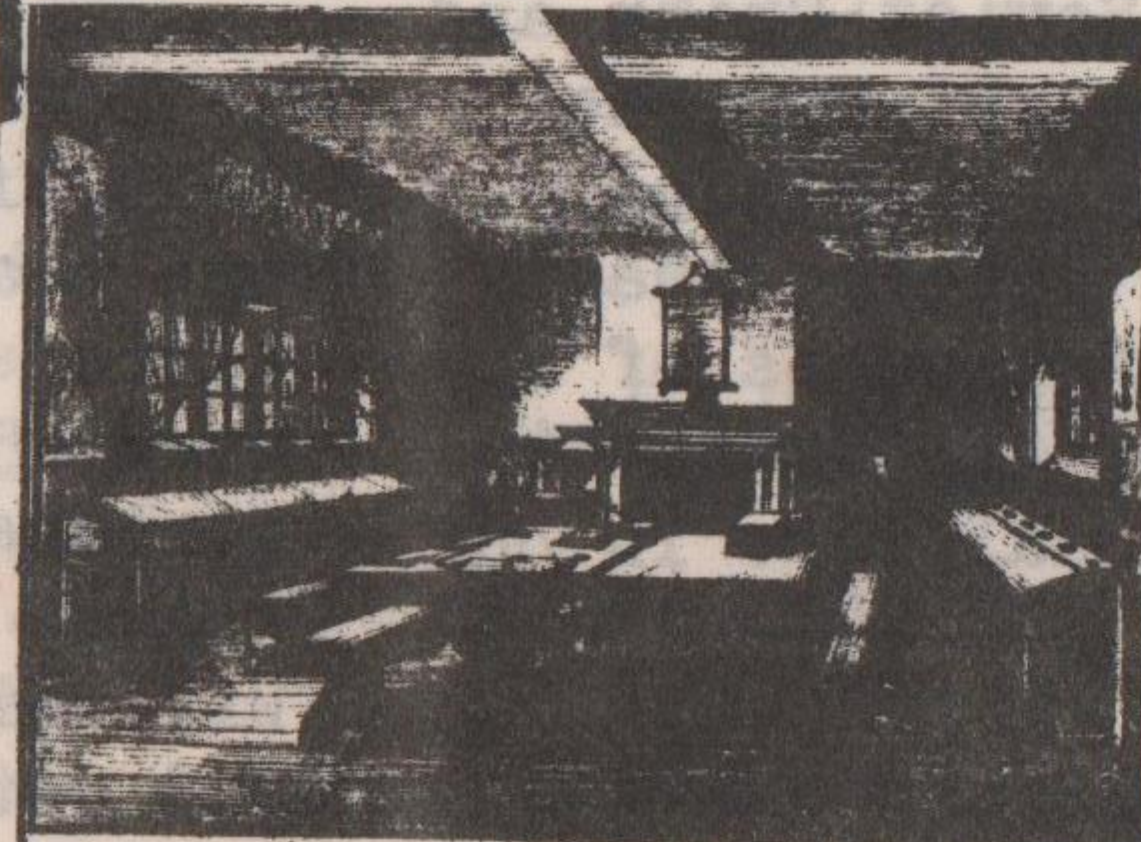
**EDUCATION AND SOCIETY.** Rank & File pamphlet. 10p. part 1. Education Under Capitalism, is an adequate analysis of the current education system, - factual and ideological. Predictable misunderstandings of the theses of Deschooling and Free-schooling. Your good democratic central-IS-t stuff creeps in here with the argument that schools, as institutions of some sort, must always be with us. After the (leninist) revolution the position of Free Schools will be as experimental hothouses for the revamped 'democratised' state system; - a position it is felt that they should occupy, with state aid, at the present time.

2 facts you may not be aware of -  
a) the blighting and obliteration of the noblest ideals, educational and otherwise, in Russia after the 1917 revolution were due to the "totally hostile physical conditions". One way of describing a jail or grave, I suppose.  
b) the rebelling schoolkids in France in 1968 had 'remarkably similar educational policies and organisational structures to those of Rank & File! or rather, their leadership did.' Might explain a lot, that. Which brings us on to:-  
part 2. The Great Uprising In French Schools, May/June 1968. The bulk of this is translation from a french teacher involved. It highlights what was essentially a self-managed struggle for self-directed education, (R&F dont quite use those words). However little questioning of the schools existence as an institution 'per se' appears. Judicious selection of excerpts (and translator) might account for that. The revolt collapsed because "the general social and political situation was not mature enough to lead to major social change". Or maybe the Trots/Leninists/Stalinists who put the boot in weren't ready for their particular revolution(s). Incidentally the 'retranslation' of the movement slogan INTERDIT D'INTERDIRE to 'No bans allowed' seems a snide move. Semantic though the point may be, the translation in use for the last 7 years namely 'It Is Forbidden To Forbid' was a truer reflection of the ethos of 1968. Read also (or instead) Anarchism In The May Movement, France 1968 - 6p from Rising Free, and Paris May 68 - Solidarity, 30p.

The above pamphlet - Education & Society - is by Chanie Rosenberg. She's also responsible for EDUCATION AND REVOLUTION - A Great Experiment In Socialist Education. (i.e. 1917 till the demise) 10p - same publisher. P.A.C.

**WRITERS AND READERS PUBLISHING COLLECTIVE** (see ILLICH review, last issue) is at 14 TALACRE RD LONDON NW5 3PE. Future publications include work from CHRIS SEARLE, CISSY, CHILDRENS RIGHTS WORKSHOP, practical pamphlets from INTER-ACTION, 3 works on FEMINISM, & 2 of Poetry. Handout available.

**KIDS REVIEW.** 20-page pamphlet from 'Kids AID' free help and info for under 17's project. Free to under 17 kids, 20p if over. From 44 EARLS COURT RD. LONDON W8.



illustrations in this issue are from the following: CASE CON - pg 7 & pg 8 (right); CHILDRENS RIGHTS mag - pg4; PEACE NEWS (top) & LITTLE DIGGER (bottom) - pg 12; MAN - pg 17 (left); pgs. 3, 6, 8 (left), 15 & 17 (right) are from the poster catalogue from TREE TOAD GRAPHICS? P.O. BOX 3259, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA, 94703 U.S.A.

**JUST A QUICK REMINDER**  
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YORKS.

## AGIT PROP

By the time you read this **RADICAL EDUCATION** will be on its 3rd issue (20p). The third issue of **HARD CHEESE** (25p) has appeared after a year.

This, and Radical Education 2 are both varied, interesting, and recommended - apart from the ubiquitous Farrukh Dhondy who appears in both. Wages for schoolkids is hardly the solution to anything. RE from 68 Goldhurst Terrace, London NW6. HC from 95a Shooters Hill Road, Blackheath London SE3.

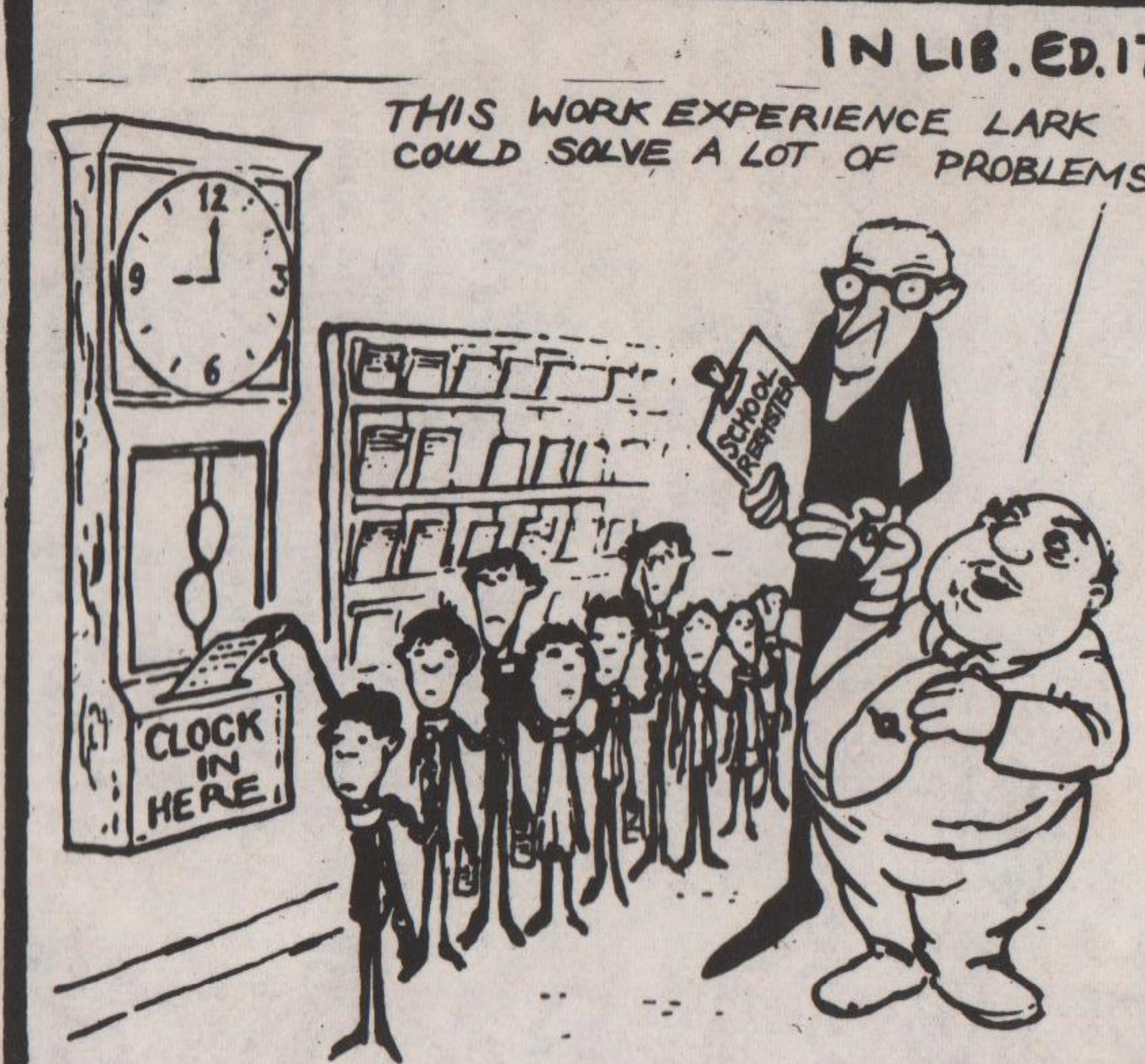
For masochists, **TEACHERS ACTION PAPER** is on no 3 issue. **2. TURQUAND ST. LONDON S.E.17** CHILDRENS RIGHTS WORKSHOP Newsletter No 1, 15p. Contains: List of Free Schools; General Notes On Alternative Education; Statement Of Aims; Reports of various constituent projects of the Workshop; plus full versions of the various pieces of theirs that we have mentioned/printed over the last few issues. From 73 Balfour St, London SE17. Any spare money you might have could be well used by the workshop.

**HOW TO SET UP A FREE SCHOOL** - A Handbook Of Alternative Education, is on to a second edition. 40p from White Lion Street Free School 57 White Lion St, London N1 (plus 5p postage)

**LANGUAGE AND CLASS WORKSHOP** no 2 25p from 41A Muswell Avenue, London N10 2EH

**STREET RESEARCH BULLETIN** is now quarterly (25p). Issue 5 includes Life At The Top - The Making Of An Oligarchy. This is a guide to researching the power structure of educational institutions, by Frank Campbell, based on his experience in writing HIGH COMMAND, the recent book on North London Polytechnic. The research methods described are relevant to studying almost any kind of institution. Also researching military involvement in higher education, plus much more. From 365 Kennington Road London SE11  
**HIGH COMMAND** is 30p for students, 50p for others from the author at 21 Bryantwood Road Islington London N7, or alternative and academic bookshops.

**STOP SCHOOL**  
from ruining your day and FIGHT BACK! with help from the Fifth Revision of Schoolstoppers Text-book. 24 pages 25c each, 10 for a \$1., 100 for \$7., 500 for \$25., to ST, Box 1246, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106  
more on this in LIB.ED. 19.



from the same sort of publishing enterprise as Centreprise:-

**POVERTY - Hardship But Happiness, Those Were The Days 1903-1917.** By Albert Paul. 25p. Queenspark Books (Brighton).

A beautifully written and illustrated autobiography from a retired Brighton carpenter, published by a local community newspaper.

### SITUATIONIST STUFF

1. **DIALECTICAL ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN.** 25p. (U.K. - Spontaneous combustion).
2. **LEAVING THE 20th CENTURY - The Incomplete Work Of The Situationist International.** Free Fall Publications. 168pp 80p + 8p post. First english language translation, by an ex-member.

I from box LBD; 2 from box no 13, at 197 Kings Cross Rd London WCI

3. **THE VERITABLE SPLIT IN THE INTERNATIONAL.** £1.50 + 8p from Rising Free (address above)
4. **THE RIGHT TO BE GREEDY** 40p. Theses on the practical necessity of demanding everything. (from california - try Rising Free)

SIMIAN REPRINTS from Black Flag, 83a Haverstock Hill London NW3  
15p  
TOLSTOY Power And Liberty  
BAKUNIN Criticism of State Socialism.  
PEIRATS What Is The CNT 10p  
GARCIA Spanish Political Prisoners & Looking Back After 20 Years. 10p each.



This cartoon turned out to be quite prophetic. Before moving to Leicester, and a career with Lib.Ed. (ho hum), I lived in Burgess Hill, near Brighton. Work experience there, about 8 years ago, involved a cushy 1-day-per-week in a local small factory or such. Now it involves a full-time commitment, i.e. schoolkids go for work experience for 40 hours a week for some weeks instead of being at school. One boy ended up doing his stint in the same branch of a giant supermarket chain that he worked in on Saturdays. He was lucky. The store manager diverted a reasonable number of quids from the petty cash into the kids pocket, rather than be party to some kind of slave labour agreement. However, AMERICAN EXPRESS, a right bunch of sharks quite at home with exploitation, who process credit cards at various branches in Sussex, are welcoming deskfulls of 15 year old girls to do 40 hours a week of boring office routine for absolutely fuck-all. The local school - OAKMEEDS - goes along with this quite merrily. No doubt it solves some of their chronic overcrowding. Job prospects in the area being what they are, not a few of the girls end up working for AMERICAN EXPRESS when they leave school. So training them in the schools time at no cost, and having them as productive workers the minute they start work, means that the firm is quids in three times over. As far as I know, none of the people who actually built AMERICAN EXPRESS'S new office block did so whilst on work experience.

Matt Groves.

**INTERROGATIONS** - International Revue Of Anarchist Research. 80p each, sub £3.20 p.a.. 1st issue of new international quarterly, put together in France, is now out (no 2 probably is too, by will be Italian particularies in Issue 1 SPANISH ISATION WORKERS INDUSTRY POLITICAL AVIRCH) an ess LIBER

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