

LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION 19

15p





LIB EDitorial

Nothing much to say this time - except to apologise for being a bit late - Summer-time blues 'n' all that.

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From: Nicolas Walter; 134 Northumberland Road,
Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 7RG.

David Hart (Lib Ed 18) has mistaken the motivation of my article on Ivan Illich (Lib Ed 16). I attacked Illich not because I wished to vent my "spleen", or because he had "got my goat", or because I think he is "our enemy",

or because I have my own "model ready for some grand unveiling", or because I want to play "a kind of one-upmanship game" with him, or because he is not an anarchist; it was because I think that among his good sense is a lot of nonsense (are schools always anti-education or hospitals always anti-health? try being illiterate or ill!), that he gets out of his depth when he tries to propose solutions to the problem he describes, that he is fundamentally inconsistent in his attitudes, and that he may in the end do more harm than good by making people believe that the situation is as simple as he suggests. Like David Hart, I first approached Illich as a friend, but the more I read (and heard) of him, the more I became convinced that he is a false prophet, an intellectual poseur, who doesn't really believe what he says; I don't think we should be either generous or sour about such people, just realistic and rational.

MODERN BEHAVIORISM & EDUCATION

Think about the kind of world you want to live in. What do you need to help you build that world? Demand that your teachers teach you that.

Bearing in mind the above ideals as expressed by Kropotkin, let us look at the possible part behaviour analysis may have to play in the attainment of such a society. Throughout the last few years and the recent resurrected interest in libertarian approaches to education we have seen a number of authors delve more deeply into the practicalities of libertarian methods. Many of the ideas are clearly derived from Tolstoy, and the little credited stimulus for the present upsurge is Paul Goodman. The striking feature of Goodman's work on education is his perceptive social criticism, so evident and of a consistently high standard throughout his life. In "Compulsory Miseducation" (1964) however are contained the beginnings of some misunderstandings surrounding operant conditioning. I do not quarrel with Goodman's

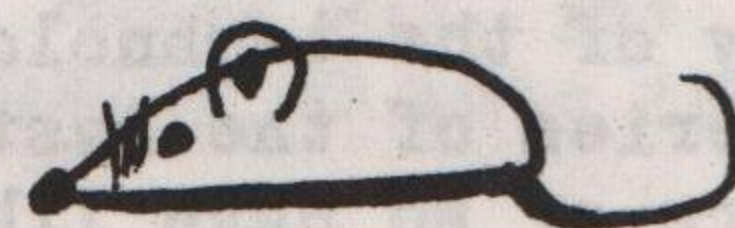
approach to education or society in general, with which I am in fact greatly in sympathy, nor with the development of his thought by writers such as John Holt whose critical examination of our educational processes is refreshing. I do however wish to take issue with the blanket dismissal of the techniques deriving from the research of B.F. Skinner since the 1930's.



Such developments are known under many different labels, e.g. behavior modification, behaviour influence, social learning theory, programmed instruction, behavior analysis etc. What they have in common is a scientific approach to human behaviour, with the accompanying demolition or redefinition of many of the terms that are used frequently in the libertarian literature. A similar, non-psychological analysis of many of the terms still in current usage is to be found in the writings of Gilbert Ryle and Ludwig Wittgenstein, Skinner being particularly indebted to the latter in facilitating the extension of behaviorist methodology to the study of covert behavior (mental phenomena) about 20 years ago, a fact not widely recognised in criticisms of Skinnerian theory.



I feel therefore that a brief explanation of my position as a behaviorist and, I believe, an anarchist, may prove useful for clarification. And perhaps it may be of some comfort to the assorted radicals (some recent examples in Undercurrents) to know that it is much easier to find a competent behaviorist strongly concerned with the political implications of scientific investigation of behavior than it is to find a political theorist with even an elementary understanding of modern behaviorism.



Goodman is justifiably concerned about the dangers of the use of programmed instruction when schooling is compulsory. In such a situation the state will set the curriculum and it is likely that much of the content will run counter to anarchist sentiments. This differs from the present educational system in one major way. It is effective. Presumably the state will not change the behaviors required from 'Well socialised' citizens, but it now has a more effective way of producing these behaviors. We have been complacent too long about what is taught in schools. Because schools are so inefficient we can rely on parental or peer influence to counter some of the unwanted effects. For example, despite the sexist nature of much of the educational system, it is evident that other more powerful forces are producing a more enlightened consciousness in sectors of the population. Such reliance would be shattered by the planned use of effective methods of value installation. An example of such a programmed text was published in a recent New Scientist.

It is foolish with the present abundance of evidence to state, as Goodman does, that operant conditioning is vastly overrated. Since the 1964 revision of his book the evidence indicates that it was, and perhaps is, vastly underrated. It is widely accepted as a very powerful model to explain human behaviour and its power to modify many human behaviors in predictable fashion is no longer questioned. Anyone who says that it doesn't explain everything (and no behaviorist ever maintained that it did)



is of course correct, but this does not diminish the importance of the areas in which it has been successfully applied. Those interested in the liberation of mankind must acquaint themselves with the technological applications of scientific research for two reasons:

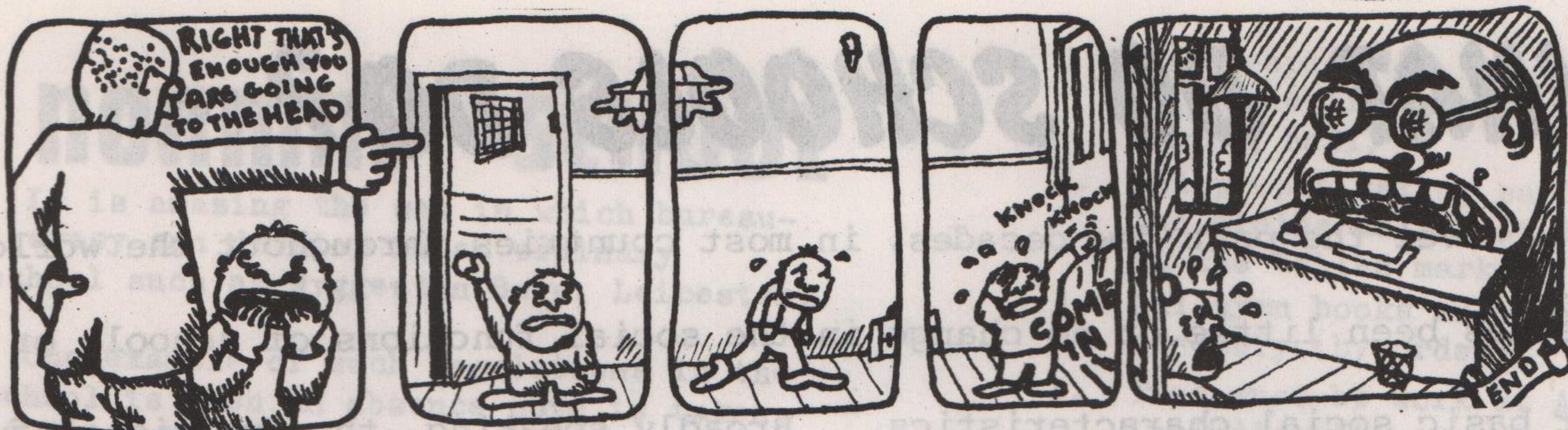
- (1) If it works we can rest assured that it will be used by centralised bodies against the interests that we stand for.
- (2) Many of the technological discoveries of the last hundred years or so have liberatory pot-

ential. Murray Bookchin (1971) presents criteria by which a technology may be assessed. By his criteria operant conditioning possesses considerable liberatory potential. It does not require large amounts of capital and so it is particularly suitable for use in a decentralised society. Of importance too is that the fundamental principles of behavior are relatively easy to learn and apply. They can readily be understood by non-professionals, thus minimising the role of experts (centralised knowledge). The technology is flexible, as demonstrated by its use with a wide range of behaviors, populations and settings. And, most importantly, the role of the skilled psychologist becomes that of a consultant who will advise individuals as to how to produce changes in their behavior that they themselves ask for.

It is possible then that there are many situations in which the use of such a technology would be beneficial to libertarians. There are certain core values common to most expressions of anarchism. Examples are that we value strongly egalitarian behavior, cooperation, and competent self-direction of our lives. It would therefore seem wise to examine research concerning conditions under which such behaviors are likely to exist stably. It is apparent that we do deliberately train such behaviors in our children and pupils, though because it is done in a spontaneous, unstructured way it is

the capability often not recognised as training. I greatly value a situation where an adult has to produce anarchist behavior in his children.

Many parents who have great hopes about how they will teach their children lower their ideals continually as they compromise when their child interacts with its more violent, competitive, aggressive etc. peers. Without a knowledge of the principles of behavior there is little such a parent can do except hope that his morality will become important in the child's life as he grows older. Such a parent is likely to punish undesired behavior in the child because teaching desired behavior requires much skill and patience. Punishment has immediately visible effects which are often fallen back on when good intentions without skill are failing. A more thorough study of the principles of behavior may enable them to teach more in accordance with their ideals.



In questioning the appropriateness of operant conditioning for educating free citizens Goodman treats the problem scantily. As I understand it a free citizen is free to the extent that he can function effectively in his environment, and to the extent that his behavior is not controlled by aversive means. A person is free to the extent that he can make meaningful choices between behaviors that it is possible for him to emit. This necessitates a degree of personal development that many of our citizens never attain. He cites Dewey's model for curriculum and method - i.e. "and study so pursued that it ends up with the student wanting to find out something further". He feels that this is contrary to the essence of programmed instruction since it entails controlling behavior "towards a predetermined goal". He misses the point that programmed texts may easily use Dewey's ideal as their predetermined goal. A student is equipped to "find out something further" to the extent that he has learned the basic techniques for doing so adequately.

This is closely tied to the objection that one cannot program creativity. Present educationalists, including many libertarians, seem to believe that by minimizing the transmission of the already known we can foster original behavior. The behavior involved can be partially specified however. What the student is doing is manipulating variables in a way that has not been performed before. In order to facilitate this behavior it is necessary to maximally transmit already known variables. Side by side with this, programs must be designed to generate manipulation of variables. The word original merely compares behavior with that previously emitted by either the same person or society at large. When emitted without explicit training this behavior is accounted for by recourse to a trait (e.g. curiosity). An important implication of the analysis of behavior in terms of environmental variables is the abolition of so-called explanations in terms of traits which are so prevalent in education today. Their main function is to exonerate teachers. A hard working student does not possess a special trait (e.g. perseverance). He has been exposed to an effective learning history. It is only by topographical examination of the behavior and its related contingencies that we can learn how to train students to persevere, should we so desire.

Having considered the possibility for behaviorist techniques to be applied to complex concepts such as creativity it would seem worthwhile to attempt to do the same with a concept such as personal responsibility. It is apparent that few people learn the component behaviors required for application of this label. A large body of research exists concerning the facilitation of a wide variety of human behaviors, many being components of effective human functioning. Bearing Kropotkin in mind, can we ignore a powerful method when our children demand that we equip them with the skills necessary to function effectively as adults.

No-one will deny that the early experiments concerning the use of behavior modification in education were authoritarian in nature. Their value lies in the clear demonstration of the modifiability of certain behaviors in children in a predictable manner. It is worth noting that the most comprehensive objection to such goal behaviors has come from behaviorists themselves (Winnett & Winkler, 1972) and Krasner (1971), one of experimental psychology's most capable theorists, has noted the beneficial effect of the open classroom experiments on the behaviors chosen for manipulation in behavior modification programmes. Within the discipline itself the change is in a desirable direction. But the technology is there for anyone who wishes to use it, and to whatever degree is found to be useful. While we would not want all our teaching done that way, there are certain areas in which it may prove worthwhile. This is a question that will be determined empirically. But the responsibility for the beneficial use of operant technology is in everyone's hands. To finish, a quotation from Erich Fromm sums up for me the importance of an understanding of the laws of behavior for the development of freedom in our society. He said:

"Only by being aware of the forces which act on me can I achieve optimal freedom as a human being. As long as I am not aware of the forces which drive me, I am irresponsible; I am shoved around by forces which act behind my back."

John Masterson

WHAT DO SCHOOLS DO?

Over the past few decades, in most countries throughout the world, there has been little or no change in the social functions of schools or their basic social characteristics.¹ Broadly speaking, the functions of schools (i. e. what schools do) could be defined in the following way:

(i) As a set of exogenous influences which are applied indirectly to schools (in a watch-dog role) by the economy, the government, and the police force in order to maintain and perpetuate the existing social order e.g. policing, training, holding, and sifting and sorting functions.

Schools and schoolmen as representatives of the status quo viewpoint support these functions by carrying them out directly in schools (e.g. teachers act as selectors of recruits for management and industry);

(ii) As a set of endogenous influences which are applied directly or indirectly by teachers, who in addition to their normal teaching duties, e.g., act as custodians of the young, enforcers of a hidden curriculum, age-grade classifiers, and developers of skills and knowledge.

In the discussion which follows, my intention is to develop each of these functions schools perform in slightly greater detail, bearing in mind while in the process, the exogenous and endogenous influences which impinge upon them.

a) Schools perform a policing function.² Michael Katz has suggested that schools have historically operated to answer or solve pressing social problems or crises, e.g. to arrest poverty, to stem the diffusion of crime and public immorality, and to check political unrest, that were thought to accompany the rise of the New Industrial State.³ Under the guise of accomplishing a programme of moral rescue for the young, salvation became secularised in the schools and this mystical belief in the school's magical healing powers still largely permeates our educational thinking. As most of us are aware, the school's dream of creating a new social order has failed dismally,⁴ and the standard

response to whatever social crisis is currently fashionable has been to demand a course in it (e.g. Black Studies, The Role of Women in Society)⁵, or institute an administrative change. Just as whenever, on the one hand, we discover our youth indulging in sexually promiscuous practices we implement a sex education programme in our schools, whenever, on the other, we see rebelliousness emerging in our societies, we institute the open classroom. In this manner we can completely overlook the social conditions which originally caused the problem, or the circumstances which gave rise to it.⁶

- b) Schools perform a training function in order to fulfill or anticipate the learner's future occupational requirements.⁷ In Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery,⁸ Ivar Berg has expressed some doubt regarding the school's success in preparing individuals for society through the monopoly it holds on jobs and the professions. The conclusion he draws is that it is not necessary to spend fifteen years training someone for a wide range of human activities (e.g. social work, architecture, etc.) which are only remotely related to the academic, and that dropouts can and may do as well as high school graduates on certain levels of jobs.⁹ This finding should be viewed in relation to that provided by Donald Hoyt for American College Testing in 1965, which disclosed that college grades have no correlation with life achievement in any profession.¹⁰ Despite the existence of such strong evidence to the contrary, there is still a growing insistence on the part of parents, educators, and managers of industry that extensive schooling is the only answer to competently preparing an individual for the world of work. If it remains impossible to undermine the belief that a person attends school to get his union card, and if, as a result, the number of 'educated unemployed' continues to expand at the rate it is in most countries of the world, we may soon have to pay our children to go to school.

- c) Closely related to the training function that schools perform is a holding function: the increased holding power of schools assures every youth the chance to successfully complete a school programme deemed

of value to himself and to the rest of society, and hence keep otherwise employable young people off the labour market. The effect of enforcing attendance at schools is to remove "masses of young people, at a critical period of their lives and for a considerable time, from the productive process and, more generally, from institutional ties to the rest of society."¹¹ Such programmes, e.g. as Canada's Opportunities for Youth, recently implemented to provide summer work projects for university students, supports the holding function of schools by enabling these individuals to earn sufficient money to continue their schooling in the upcoming year, and thus keep pressure off an otherwise overburdened economy. On the other hand, programmes such as vocational training in schools are geared toward producing and retaining a vast pool for manpower which can be tapped when or if the occasion demands or when unemployment is at a low ebb.

- d) Schools perform certain latent functions using such sifting and sorting mechanisms as selection, certification, and status-reinforcement. As Edgar Friedenberg,¹² and more recently, Miriam Wasserman¹³ have brilliantly demonstrated: schools and their teachers are eminently successful at doing what they purportedly do best, i.e. socially stratifying a youthful population in accordance with the principle of merit. In many respects, we are already well on the road to instituting a beehive society because the school system creates a self-fulfilling prophecy such that the final sorting of students through the grading process becomes approximately equivalent to the original expectations. Therefore, the importance of limited success, much failure, and the maintenance of an air of vulnerability in schools is now vital to the functioning of any school system.¹⁴ However, in the case of Griggs vs. Duke Power Company of 1971, the United States Supreme Court dealt a blow to the school's monopoly on certification - especially the infirmity of using diplomas and degrees as fixed measures of capability. Already, it appears, the walls of diplomaism are beginning to crumble.¹⁵

- e) Schools perform a custodial or baby-sitting function. Particularly

under the banner of progressive education they have willingly seized a major share of the child's time and thereby relieved many tortured parents of the tasks of bringing up and educating their children. In addition, progressive education alleviated custodial problems created by the emergence of an extremely varied student body in the 60's.¹⁶ During its decipherment by discerning school mandarins, progressive education sought through its custodial operations to maintain the student's interest, instil in him the wish to stay in school, initiate extra-curricular activities, and redefine academic standards. However, what it failed to achieve by its custodial functions, even though it did, of course, have a marked effect on school efficiency, school routine and the content of the school curriculum, was to inspire a child-centred sentiment or educate the 'whole child'.¹⁷ Despite this fact, the progressive school still tended to nullify and dissipate the former oppressive image of its predecessors.

- f) Schools put forward a hidden curriculum in addition to their normal one.¹⁸

Various norms and values (such as industry, punctuality, efficiency, achievement, and competition) are inextricably intertwined within the instructional process and they certainly impede as much as facilitate learning and teaching in schools. These norms and values become, in turn, overtly or covertly institutionalized by the schools and internalised by the students. With the internalisation of these values by the student as norms comes the destruction of deviant values and patterns of behavior. The ritual of schooling, then, besides imposing a set of norms and values, defines its participants according to roles (i.e. teacher-student). Clients of schools are rewarded (by extrinsic motivation such as praise or rewards) for exhibiting personality characteristics of good workers in bureaucratic work roles (e.g. subordination to authority)¹⁹ and identifying with external commands (e.g. eliciting desirable cognitive responses). Therefore, it is no coincidence that these requirements neatly tie in with those of business and industry within the corporate economic structure by

offering a thorough psychological and technical preparation using schools as their vehicle.²⁰ Given this situation, it is difficult to disagree with Illich's observation that the "hidden curriculum serves as a ritual of initiation into a growth-oriented consumer society."²¹

- g) Schools promote age-grade classifications. The classroom within the student's particular grade, with its age-homogeneous membership and clearly delineated boundaries, provides a basis for categorizing that the family cannot match:

First, by assigning all pupils in a classroom the same or similar tasks to perform, teachers in effect make them confront the same set of demands. Even if there are variations in task content, class members still confront the same teacher and the obligations he imposes. Second, parity of age creates a condition of homogeneity according to developmental stage, a rough equalisation of pupil capacities making it possible for teachers to assign similar tasks. Third, through the process of yearly promotion from grade to grade, pupils cross the boundaries separating one age category from another.²²

After continual exposure to boundary crossings, learners are comforted in the knowledge that each age-grade category is connected to a particular set of circumstances (e.g. new and demanding teachers, more difficult tasks, different subject matter).²³ They are further aware that they can only move upward in grade by promotion through testing or grading (where others define them).

- h) Finally, after all these other functions have been fulfilled, schools play a role in the development of cognitive knowledge and practical skills. Some educators have recently questioned the school's effectiveness in carrying out this task. Holt has reminded us that few children learn to read or write easily and well in schools,²⁴ although all children learn to speak fluently and well, a skill learned outside of school. Goodman has also proposed that a normal child can learn the first 8 years of the curriculum in 4 months at age 12.²⁵ In stressing that we do not need 15 or 20 years of formal preparation to train someone for an office or factory, for example,

John Gardener has suggested that everything a high school graduate is taught could be learned in 2 years, and with a little extra effort in one year.²⁶ If these criticisms regarding the school's role in the teaching of knowledge and skills are correct, it would be true to say that there is little or no correlation between a person's intellectual competency and years of prior schooling, or his employment suitability and level of schooling. On the other hand, it is only logical that a person who remains in school for any length of time must acquire some knowledge and skills simply because most people do not learn on account of the school's learning arrangements, but in spite of them.

Concluding Remark

The present system of schooling as has been constantly reiterated is not viable even though one could perhaps argue that it is simply because it is thoroughly entrenched and largely successful in achieving the purposes of a technocratic society.

Given the monopoly schools have traditionally held on educating, interestingly enough we have never really tried education throughout our history, but it may be our last as well as our only hope.²⁷ Silberman, re quoting a remark uttered by Horace Mann in 1848, has chastised us: "Education has never been brought to bear with one-hundredth part of its potential force, upon the natures of children, and through them, upon the character of men, and of the race."²⁸

If we accept this view as tenable, it is imperative that we attempt to give education back the exalted position in our societies that schools have traditionally held. For this to occur, however, we would be required, on the one hand, not only to own up to the problems we are experiencing with the schools of today, but also, on the other, to finally take our rhetoric about education seriously, "instead of continuing to look to legends to explain why, in our time, the promise of our society is unfulfilled - and seems destined to remain so."²⁹

We should perhaps also attempt to do two things of a more practical nature. Firstly, it is evident that we need to reinvest man with the

opportunity to direct his own educational future. With such thoughts in mind, Harold Cardinal has suggested: "(No) educational programme can be successful, and it follows no society can be successful, where the people most directly concerned and affected have no voice whatever in their own education."³⁰ Secondly, we must ultimately confront a problem for which each of us is equally responsible. We must face "the problem of maintaining a respect for the uses and intrinsic value of knowledge in a culture which regrettably seems to have lost (all) respect for it."³¹

Realistically speaking, the change from schooling to education, when or if it occurs, will not or could never be practical or orderly. The group or groups in power will attempt to stop change or, failing all else, limit the degree of change to the least significant area. In especially bothersome situations these individuals may also react by employing a variety of extremely subtle means of control, and by promoting a few more plastic or tokenistic types of reforms. Colin Greer, in addressing himself to the problem of the unresponsiveness of schools and schoolmen to progressive programmes of reform, has argued:

(Schools as institutions) protect their functions and functionaries. To violent attacks upon them, they respond with confusion, hesitation, and ad hoc improvisation. They may even adopt the rhetoric of their attackers and identify with them....Systematic and pervasive reform awaits changes in the success routes of an epoch and a change in the dominant groups of the society....As long as this continues to be the case, schools may use the rhetoric of the counter-culture or the rhetoric of the industrial corporation...., but they will be used as protective coloration.³²

Admittedly, administrators in particular, many of whom are loyalists who maintain a vested interest in the school system will unquestionably object to any measures which would serve to curb their power as representatives of bureaucratic institutions: they do not intend to go out of business. Further, so much effort is consumed in keeping the schools functioning in their monopolistic settings that little time can or could be devoted by school officials to promoting the necessary change from schooling to education.

Teachers would also find any proposal geared toward undermining

their professional status and position to be anathema because it would devalue their professional perquisites and at the same time flood society with the unanointed, i.e. unlicensed educators.

Finally, whereas affluent, middle class parents especially would tend to regard unrigidly structured educational activities as a boon, poor parents may regard them as downgrading. On the whole, however, the general public is "so uninformed (and perhaps even unimpressed) about innovations and lacking in objective ways of judging (educational) achievement that little, if any, pressure (would be) exerted by them to make improvements, or is likely to be exerted until they are more knowledgeable in this area."³³

NOTES

- ¹See M. Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform, Boston: Beacon Press, 1968; and, L. Cremin, The Genius of American Education, New York: Vintage Books, 1965, pp. 8-9.
- ²Bishop, J., "An Essay on the Ideology of Schooling", Listening, Vol. 6, No. 2, Spring 1971, pp. 94-103.
- ³Katz, M., From Voluntarism to Bureaucracy in American Education, 53 pp, (mimeo), in J. Bishop and J. Spring (eds.), Formative Undercurrents of Compulsory Knowledge, Cuaderno-Mexico: CIDOC, No. 1011, 1970.
- ⁴See, e.g., C. Bowers', The Progressive Educator and the Depression: The Radical Years, N.Y.: Random House, 1969, particularly Ch. 1, "Dare the School Build a New Social Order?" pp. 3-47.
- ⁵Cass, J., "Pressures for Change", Saturday Review, Vol. 54, No. 47, November 20, 1971, p. 77.
- ⁶Etzioni, A., "Human Beings are not Easy to Change After All", Saturday Review, Vol. 55, No. 23, June 3, 1972, pp. 45-47.
- ⁷Spring, J., Education and the Rise of the Corporate State, Boston: Beacon Press, 1972, Ch. 3, "The Classroom as Factory and Community", pp. 44-61.
- ⁸New York: Praeger Pub. Co., 1970.
- ⁹It is not surprising that the book's thesis was challenged by congeries of pupils, employers and taxpayers.
- ¹⁰Goodman, P., "The Present Moment in Education", Notre Dame Journal of Education, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1970, p. 19.
- ¹¹Lasch, C., The Agony of the American Left, N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969, p. 177.
- ¹²See Friedenbergs contribution to W. F. O'Neill's Selected Educational Heresies, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1969, pp. 176-186.
- ¹³Wasserman, M., The School Fix, New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1970, p. 520.

- ¹⁴ Henry, J., Jules Henry on Education, New York: Random House, 1971, pp. 9-24.
- ¹⁵ Illich, I., The Alternative to Schooling, Extended Version, Cuaderno, Mexico: CIDOC, No. 1017, October 4, 1971, p. 18.
- ¹⁶ Spring, J., Youth and the Custodial Role of the Schools, 41 pp. (mimeo), Cuaderno-Mexico: CIDOC, No. 1011, 1970.
- ¹⁷ Greer, C., The Great School Legend, New York: Basic Books, 1972, p. 73.
- ¹⁸ See B. R. Snyder, The Hidden Curriculum, N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971; R. Dreeben, "Schooling and Authority: Comments on the Unstudied Curriculum", in W. O. Overly (ed.), The Unstudied Curriculum, Washington, D.C.: Assoc. for Supervision and Curriculum Development, N.E.A., 1970; and M. Apple, "The Hidden Curriculum and the Nature of Conflict", Interchange, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1972, pp. 27-40.
- ¹⁹ Dreeben and Merton have shown there is little doubt that school clientele are affected by the environment in which they work. See, e.g., Merton's "Bureaucratic Structure and Personality" in R. K. Merton, et al (eds.), Reader in Bureaucracy, Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1952, pp. 361-371.
- ²⁰ Goodman, P., The New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative, N.Y.: Random House, 1970, p. 74.
- ²¹ Illich, Deschooling Society, New York: Harper and Row, 1971, p. 33.
- ²² Dreeben, R., On What is Learned in School, Toronto: Addison-Wesley Co., 1968, pp. 76-77.
- ²³ Reimer, E., Proposal for educational alternatives, Cuernavaca, Mexico: CIDOC, 1968, 25 pp.
- ²⁴ Holt, J., Freedom and Beyond, New York: E.P. Dutton Co., 1972, pp. 217-223.
- ²⁵ Cited in Bishop, "An Essay on the Ideology of Schooling", op cit., p. 98.
- ²⁶ Gardner, J., Excellence, can we be equal and excellent too?, N.Y.: Harper Books, 1961.
- ²⁷ A. Pearl makes this point in The Atrocity of Education, St. Louis, Missouri: New Critics Press, 1972.
- ²⁸ Silberman, C., Crisis in the Classroom, New York: Random House, 1970, p. 523.
- ²⁹ Greer, op. cit., p. 157.
- ³⁰ Cardinal, H., The Unjust Society, Edmonton: Mel Hurtig Ltd., 1969, p. 57.
- ³¹ Burton, T., The Horn and the Beanstalk, Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972, p. 74.
- ³² Greer, op. cit., pp. 37-38.
- ³³ Gallup, G., How the Nation Views the Public Schools: A Study of the Public Schools of the United States, Princeton, New Jersey: Gallup International, 1972, p. 25.

NORMAL SCHOOL

It is amazing the way in which bureaucracy can develop in an ordinary school such as Wyggeston Boys, Leicester.

One example of such regulations in the school is when an absence note is taken. It first has to be shown to your form master, then to your 'year' master (whose function will be explained later), he will then show it to the headmaster. Surely it would be more convenient to give it direct to the 'year' master who should then be allowed to believe that the note exists without having to confirm the fact with the headmaster.

The reason for the note to go the long way round is so the pupils are harassed as much as possible in order to make them believe that there is nothing wrong with the realms of officials, departments and bureaucrats etc. in government offices, and thus prepare them for bourgeois life.

Another instance where the terrible trio of the form master, 'year' master and headmaster come into action is when someone makes a complaint. First, you must go to your form master (this is because theoretically he deals with all of your problems). He will tell you that it is nothing to do with him and that you must go to the 'year' master.

He will ask whether you have consulted your form master, and, if not, he will tell you to do so. If on the other hand you have, he will tell you that your complaint will be harder felt if it is put into writing. So you go away and write a letter to the headmaster, and the next day you return to the 'year' master and give it to him. He then opens the headmaster's letter and reads it. Then, perhaps that day, or perhaps the next, he takes the letter to the headmaster. He informs the Head that he has received a complaint, but he would rather not mention the person's name in case of repercussions. He gives the letter, with your name at the bottom to the Head, who immediately, right that very minute, does nothing about it.

Thus you have seen one of the uses of the 'year' master. Another example of going the long way round, is for a simple letter, such as one giving notice that you don't want school dinners (and who does) when a fourth person comes into play. As before the letter is taken to the form master, then on to the 'year' master, then on to the deputy head. He takes it off you, shows it to the headmaster and files it.

In addition to these unwritten procedures there are also many written rules that are equally ludicrous, but in different ways. A few examples of these rules are:

1. All people that eat sandwiches at dinnertime must do so in the dining hall.
2. All people eating sandwiches in the dining hall must do so only at the tables marked 'sandwiches'
3. All hymn books must be taken to assembly (by order).
4. Ties must be worn at ALL times, including time spent in travelling to and from school.

Such are the rules and regulations, written and unwritten. These are bad enough but there are also the attitudes of the masters to take into consideration. Each master needs to be handled differently, and you preferably should know each individually. But, if this is impossible (as it nearly always is), the golden rule is 'handle with care'.

As a rough guide there are four groups:

- a. Those that have been at the school for years and are due for retirement. These are excessively strict, are ancient in the teaching methods (writing on cave walls etc.), and tell bad jokes that have to be laughed at.
- b. Those that have been at the school for a few years and are quite young. These are strict but on the whole are very good at their job. They tell occasionally, once a year jokes (usually around Christmas).
- c. Those that have just joined the school but have perhaps been to another school before. These aren't strict, don't teach at all, and never stop joking.
- d. Those that are brand new and unspoilt. These are excessively strict, don't teach, and never joke (the cads).

In this account I have hoped to give everyone an idea of how a 'modern' state grammar school runs. I have tried to give examples and facts rather than opinions (although this is not always the case) so that the reader can draw his own conclusions.

Simon Crane



VANDALS ?

One of the perennial discussions of adults is: "What's wrong with our youngsters, and what can be done about it?"

After an investigation lasting two years, the teachers advisory committee of Liverpool education authority recently produced their report. Their main conclusion was that society was too permissive. By this, they meant that the media have low moral tone, and that parents are nowadays inadequate in various ways. There were the usual assumptions about deprivation and unfavourable environments. Presumably a gypsy child with half-time schooling is deprived, whilst a middle-class child with school all day, and hours of homework in the evening, is having the time of his life. The question of why the media and parents now have the characteristics claimed seems to have been completely beyond the committee's brief. Yet they made the following recommendations:

- better discipline;
- training courses on 'the modification of undesirable pupil behaviour';
- screening of problem children;
- special rehabilitation centres;
- schools with residential centres attached;
- the pressuring of parents by LEAs;
- full and exhaustive enquiry into causes and cures of disruptive behaviour;
- a better educational welfare service for catching truants.

The report was appropriately entitled: "The Suspended Child".

Dr. Alexander Gunn, physician in charge of Reading University health service, suggested, at the Royal Society of Health's conference on stress, that we are failing to provide for the needs of adolescence. A promising starting point. But then come the usual recommendations:

- use of more counsellors;
- training doctors in adolescent psychology;
- better vocational guidance;
- more and better provision for social, psychological and sexual care of the young;
- and, inevitably, more research into adolescent needs.

Dr. Gunn does refer to the inadequacies of the system, but the recommendations suggest that adolescents, not the system, are inadequate.

Why is it that, even when we recognise that the roots of many of our difficulties are social, we continue to use only psychological measures to deal with them? Why are we apparently content to carry on producing the same set of problems, then use all the ingenuity we can muster in trying to contain them? We try to cope with vandalism in schools by such superficial measures as bugging the schools. Why?

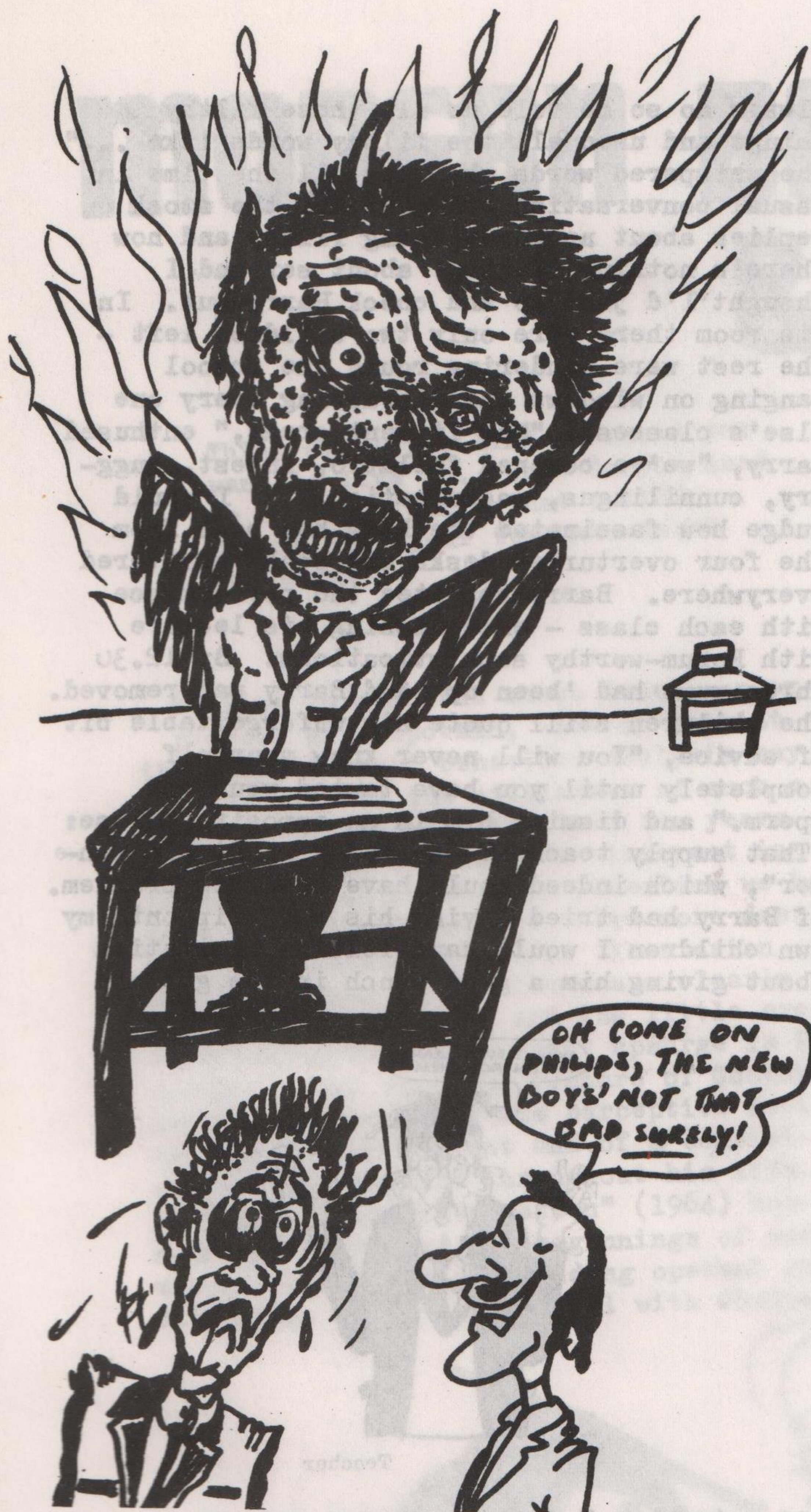
Answers to these perplexing problems can best be found, perhaps, by taking a concrete problem, such as vandalism, which is what adults often have in mind when asking themselves what is wrong with the youngsters. Yet vandalism committed by the young is only a tiny fraction of the vandalism that takes place. It is adults themselves who are the real offenders.

Originally, vandalism meant the destruction of works of art. There is no evidence that the young are particularly to blame here. When teen-age soccer supporters are labelled as vandals, of what are they

accused? Usually it is damage to property; often it extends to injury to people. The young, it is continually stressed, are guilty of these crimes. Take, firstly, damage to man-made property. When the young damage public telephones, slash or break windows, they are playing a very minor role. All over Britain perfectly sound buildings, many of historic and social importance, have been and are being destroyed. Four hundred listed buildings will be demolished this year.

If they are replaced, it is usually by something inferior in important ways. Whether one takes the example of buildings, planes, coaches, ships, trains or other machines, it is the same story: they are destroyed before they are worn out, and the replacements are usually more expensive to maintain, and have a shorter life than the models they supersede. Further, when buildings are destroyed, whole communities are also destroyed. We have 2 million people living in high-rise flats - now considered a mistake by planners and architects. If research into vandalism were done along these lines, we would find youngsters responsible for very little.

Enormous destruction of man-made property occurs because things are made so as to wear out in a short time. Almost all the machines which adults produce could, at little extra cost, be made to last several times longer than they do now. Obsolescence guarantees institutionalised and legalised destruction is so widespread as to make the damage done by the young pale into insignificance. Most adults seem incapable of understanding this. Instead, they find specious excuses for their vandalistic behaviour: it creates employment; it raises Gross National Production. Exactly the same could be said of damaged telephones, broken lifts and



smashed windows; this illustrates that expanding GNP and employment are rather stupid ways of measuring welfare.

The word vandalism is now used to cover damage done to the countryside by the young. If youngsters damage a tree, adults label it vandalism. Yet adults fell trees by the thousand. They also pollute the air, streams, rivers and the sea. They root up hedges, and make animals suffer in millions. They dump rubbish, and scatter poison, everywhere. Adults are obliterating nature-birthright of both young and old. At this very moment adults seem hardly perturbed about the possible damage they are doing to the ozone layer - which protects us all from radiation!

As if all this were not enough, adults condemn the young for injury to people, and use words like "mugging". What fantastic hypocrisy! Who was responsible for the 44,000 miners known to have been given pneumoconiosis? The death toll runs into thousands. Who caused the suffering and deaths from asbestosis? - affecting people who never worked in the asbestos industry.

What about the PVC disease, and the statement by the TUC's medical adviser that "there is no point in us stopping PVC production unless others do so." What about byssinosis? And is it the young that are responsible for the latest menace: myelomatosis and leukaemia among workers in nuclear fuel plants? There were two deaths in one week recently. And who is responsible for the systematic slaughter on our roads where, in Britain alone, getting on for 8,000 people are killed every year, and fifty times that number injured? This regular carnage is rendered inevitable by adults, who manufacture cars with high maximum speeds - and who make the laws to legalise the whole process. This, incidentally, makes the roads too dangerous for many of the young to use at all. As far as injury to people is concerned, the young are beaten to a frazzle.

Legalised destruction, injury and killing are integral and accepted features of adult society. Adults conveniently sweep them under the carpet. Instead of carrying out endless research, the nature and assumptions of which presuppose the answers they will get, adults would be better employed trying to work out such problems as:

How many slashed seats equal the destruction inherent in making just one car which wears out in five years instead of twenty-five?

How many damaged telephone booths add up to the destruction of one tree?

How does one compare the number of muggings per year with the thousands of road casualties?

How many broken windows might add up to a broken ozone layer?

Two things seem clear. Firstly, adults are overwhelmingly concerned with symptoms, the psychological problems which result from their own social arrangements.

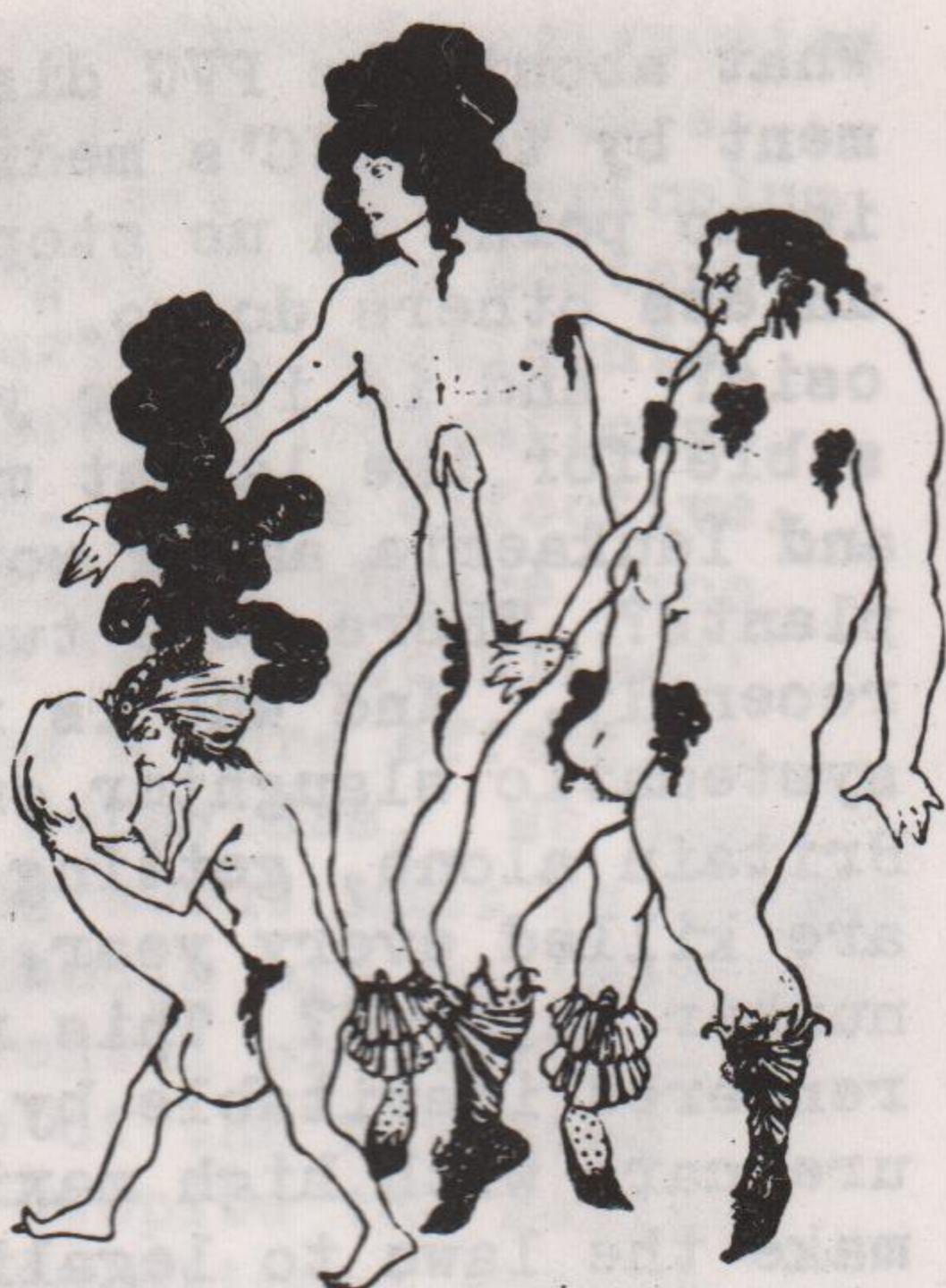
Secondly, adults fail to see that there are far greater and more urgent problems than those for which the young seem to be responsible.

How can adults be stupid enough to commit these errors? Perhaps it is because, if we did not, the question: "What's wrong with our youth, and what can be done about it?" would become "What's wrong with us, and are we prepared to do anything about it?" For some reason, adults are not capable of asking such a question.

The much-publicised teen-age vandalism is a red herring. The youngsters are really the victims. Who, after all, put the huge quantities of strontium 90 into their bones?

KEN REGELOUS

REPLIES TO MANNY



All praise to Lib. Ed for giving Manuel Moreno's case fair publicity and for giving him opportunity to speak for himself without the inevitable manipulation he'd be treated to by the bourgeois press but I still think that 'Manny' comes over as a heavy, humourless self-obsessed drag. I don't want to attack him because I don't know him and because I haven't seen for myself how he relates to children and I certainly don't want to write an article which old S. Wilson (head of Sutton Centre) could seize upon to support his grievances because judging from the dry dismissive superiority of his reports on Manny he sounds a right reactionary, unoriginal old fart. However I do want to comment on Manny's 'Document A' and say that if my daughter's teacher felt compelled to expiate his feelings of sexual guilt by presenting her with such an outrageously male-chauvenist account of adolescent fumbings which included such Maileresque phrases as 'push one or two fingers up her fish-smelling cunt' I would seriously question his motives, his maturity and above all his sense of responsibility and respect for children's freedom. I think Manny - like many so-called libertarians - is confused about the distinction between licence and freedom.

I can't help wondering whether Manny is like the supply teacher who was sent to the Sec. Mod. where I teach. Barry (PHD) grooved into our staffroom one morning; thirty-five-ish, bare-footed, long pony tail, reeking of dope and his first words were, "Who's gonna roll up a joint then?". His next remark was, "Look man, I've never taught kids before, I'm here to spread the Revolution - gimme some hints.." We explained that 75% of our pupils were 'emotionally disturbed', 'disruptive' or 'school phobics', that the younger pupils feel very insecure when their regular teacher is absent and maybe Barry could try to reassure them and prevent them from freaking out in panic which event might result in broken furniture. "Wow - far out", muttered Barry. He lasted for precisely one morning. An anxious thirteen-year-old girl came into my lesson crying. She explained, "It's that divvy new geezer - he keeps talking about filthy things all the time - He said he don't believe in lessons and asked what we are interested in so we all shouts 'SEX' like we

always do so he told us all these filthy things and used all the filthy words like ...". She whispered words she uses all the time in casual conversation. I gave her the stock replies about no words being filthy and how there's nothing 'filthy' about sex and I thought I'd just go and check Barry out. In his room there were only two children left - the rest were wandering round the school banging on windows and disrupting every one else's classes. "Wow it went great," enthused Barry, "we've covered fellatio, incest, buggery, cunnilingus, masturbation..." I could judge how fascinated the kids had been from the four overturned desks and books scattered everywhere. Barry repeated the performance with each class - embellishing his lecture with Forum-worthy sophistications. By 12.30 three mums had 'been up' and Barry was removed. The children still quote his unforgettable bit of advice, "You will never know yourself completely until you have tasted your own sperm." and dismiss him in an apposite phrase: "That supply teacher? He was a right old wan-ker", which indeed could have been his problem. If Barry had tried laying his sad trip onto my own children I would have felt no hesitation about giving him a good punch in the gob and



as a teacher I felt no regret when the Headmaster kicked him out. That kind of liberal freak teacher can totally disrupt a school and this kind of negative destruction is not what I mean when I talk about anarchy. I want children to control their own lives and not be subjected to neurotic loonies of the Barry-type or the extreme authoritarian.

As teachers we must remember that we have an enormous responsibility towards the children we teach. They expect teachers, and indeed want us, to be in control of situations because for many of the children in our schools the teacher is the one and only stable secure factor and they depend on us not to let them down. It sounds terrible and it is certainly very frightening to be invested with so much responsibility but they do depend on us often with great intensity. Secondly I believe that children want us to keep a certain 'distance' between ourselves (as teachers) and them - after all they have no CHOICE about spending possibly six hours a day in the company of one adult whom they may possibly loathe. Therefore we should not

assume that we can be intimate and chatty with them. Did you really want to confide in your teacher? The idea that I might have been expected to call my teachers by their first names because they wanted to establish some kind of trendy informality makes me shudder - I couldn't STAND most of them and if any of the old cows had presented me with a document as 'frank' as Manny's 'Document A' I think I would have thrown up all over my ink-stained desk and been turned off sex for life.

Of course teachers must be honest in our dealings with pupils. We must respect each child's individuality - remain consistent and not rush about socking them on the head and treating them like robots but we must also maintain our own identity and be together enough in ourselves to cope with situations which might quickly get out of control (As Manny's lessons appear to have done - I was amazed that his pupils reported him for swearing - he must have angered them or let them down badly) I would like to know how Manny would have coped in the situation I found myself in when I became 'Craft Mistress' (!) when I took over from a Miss Brown who left in mid-term. I was extremely nervous first lesson to be confronted by fifteen 'disruptive' sixteen-year-old boys.. When I walked in they stopped playing cards, dragged on their fags and one shouted, "Cor - Miss Brown had much bigger tits than yourn." - "YERS", they all riposted, "Miss Brown's wobbled when she walked." Try to stay cool under that kind of onslaught (indeed I've always been very hung up about my small tits and felt like bursting into tears.) I asked them to tell me what they used to do in Miss Brown's lessons. "Well, Miss Brown used to get up on the desk and pose for us in the nude and we painted her Bristols with finger paints" - chortle, chortle.... It was all totally predictable (and really ever so funny) but I simply made a bored face and said, "O.K. boys very funny - let's start the lesson." and gradually over the weeks the references to Miss Brown's superior physique ceased to feature in the conversation. After a term Martin said, "Remember when we used to go on about Miss Brown? We were trying it on you - trying to wind you up - but you never batted a beedin eyelid. We reckoned you was alright - wasn't 'alf a laugh tho' - wasn't it?" I said, "Yes - it was." and we all had a good laugh together. I'd kept my distance and I believe this is what pupils want. What would our anarchist Manny have done in my shoes? I suspect that with a shriek of, "Libertarianism...." he would have bared his tits and launched into a lecture on the relative merits of small ones maybe distributing copies of Document A at the same time and possibly he'd have climbed onto the table and let the kids get stuck into the finger painting? Maybe I'm doing him a really great injustice to get a cheap laugh.

Finally I thoroughly approve of the mother of the fifteen-year-old boy who complained that Manny had taken her son camping without letting her know. That kind of 'spontaneous activity' is thoughtless and selfish if it leaves a kid's mother worried sick about her missing son. How would Manny feel if his kid didn't come home from school one night? And if Manny can sincerely say he wouldn't have worried then I believe he is confused about the difference between freedom and licence for kids.



**Val
Hennessy
and
from
Bill...**

I do not know Mr. Moreno personally, but I have just been informed that one of the 'counts' against him is that he used an article of mine ('Perhaps a plea for Sex Education' in Libertarian Education No. 15) in a lesson with a group of Fifth Formers.

That he chose this article seems to me an example of good teaching, not because I wrote it, but for the following reasons:

1. It is a piece of up-to-date human documentation.
2. With hang-ups so common, it may have helped these young people to avoid at least some hang-ups.
3. It may have helped these young men to be better parents in the future.

It may be levelled against Mr. Moreno that the language wasn't suitable. To that I would reply that it is unlikely there is any word in my article not known or regularly used by the majority of young men of this age (I say this with nearly 20 years teaching experience behind me). If by chance there were any who did not know what 'cunt' or 'shagging' meant, then it is our duty to make them aware of the meaning at that age.

Bill

(N.B. - this is a copy of a letter sent to Manny to use as he thought fit.- Editors.)

THE REBEL

A STORY IN WORDS AND PICTURES

