

# Groups - special listing

## Education Otherwise

25 Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots,  
Cambs.  
*(For everyone who practices or supports the  
right of children to learn without schooling)*

## Growing without Schooling

729 Boylston Street, Boston MA02116,  
USA  
*(American equivalent of EO)*

## Human Scale Education Movement

Harton Manor Cottage, Hartland, N Devon  
EX39 6BL  
*(Draws on the Danish experience and has  
considerable info about the small schools.  
To obtain its manifesto and three  
newsletters, send £6 payable to the  
Schumacher Society)*

## Liberation Network of People with Disabilities

c/o Townsend House, Green Lanes,  
Marshfield, Chippenham, Wilts.

## Workers' Educational Association

National Office, 9 Upper Berkeley Street,  
London W1H 8BY.  
01-402 5608

## 101 Centre

101 Hinckley Road, Leicester

## Lesbian and Gay Youth Movement

BM GYM, London WC1N 3XX

## Gay Youth Help Service

37 Rosenthal House, 45 Rushey Green,  
London SE6 4AR  
01-698 2857

## Sussex University Anarchist Group

Falmer House, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9QF

## Animal Liberation Front

BCM 1160, London WC1N 3XX  
*(Determined to end all exploitation against  
animals. Uses direct action against  
individuals and institutions who abuse  
animals - join by taking part.)*

## Campaign against Military Research on Campus (CAMROC)

190 Burdett Road, London E3 4AA  
01-980 2455

# Resources

## Afro-Caribbean Education Resource Project

Wyvil Rd. School, Wyvil Rd., London SW8.  
01-627 2662

## Advisory Centre for Education

18 Victoria Park Sq., London E2.  
01-980 4596

## Children's Legal Centre

20 Compton Terrace, London N1.  
01-359 6251

## Greenpeace

36 Graham Street, London N1.  
01-251 3020

## Minority Rights Group

29 Craven St., London WC2N 5NG.  
01-930 6659

## Oxfam Youth Education Dept

274 Banbury Rd., Oxford OX2 7DZ.  
0865-56777

## Peace Education Project

Peace Pledge Union, 6 Endsleigh St.,  
London WC1.  
01-387 5501

## Play for Life

31b Ipswich Road, Norwich NR2 2LN  
*(Promotes and supplies life affirming toys  
and games. Write for catalogue enclosing  
£1)*

## Housmans Mail Order

5 Caledonian Road, London N1  
*(Suppliers of a wide range of libertarian  
literature by post; send for their catalogue of  
titles)*

## Third World Publications

151 Stratford Road, Birmingham B11 1RD.  
021-773 6572

## Letterbox Library

5 Bradbury Street, London N16 8JN.  
01-254 1640  
*(Specialise in non-sexist and multicultural  
books for children. For details of their free  
catalogue, write or phone.)*

## Commonweal Collection

c/o J.B. Priestley Library, University of  
Bradford, Bradford BD7 1DP.  
*(A small library designed for anyone  
interested in libertarian, anarchist and  
pacifist ideas.)*

## Feminist Library

Hungerford House, Victoria Embankment,  
London WC2N 6PA.  
01-930 0715

## Marx Memorial Library

37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R  
0DU.  
01-253 1485  
*(Comprehensive collection of materials  
concerning the Labour Movement.)*

# Groups - regular listing

## Lib Ed groups

Leicester 0455-209029  
Bristol 0272-41380

## National Union of Students

461 Holloway Rd, London N7  
01-272 8900

## National Union of Teachers

Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London  
WC1.  
01-388 6191

## Woodcraft Folk

13 Ritherton Road, London SW17  
01-672 6031  
*(kind of non-sexist, non-militarist scouts  
and brownies)*

## Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment

18 Victoria Park Square, London E2  
01-980 8523

## Anti-Apartheid Movement

13 Mandela Street, London NW1 0DW  
01-387 7966

## Teachers for Animal Rights

c/o Wanda Dejliko, Lynwood Rd, London  
SW 17

## All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism

Panther House, Room 216, 38 Mount  
Pleasant, London WC1.

## Gay Teachers Group

BM Gay Teacher, London WC1N 3XX.  
01-837 7234

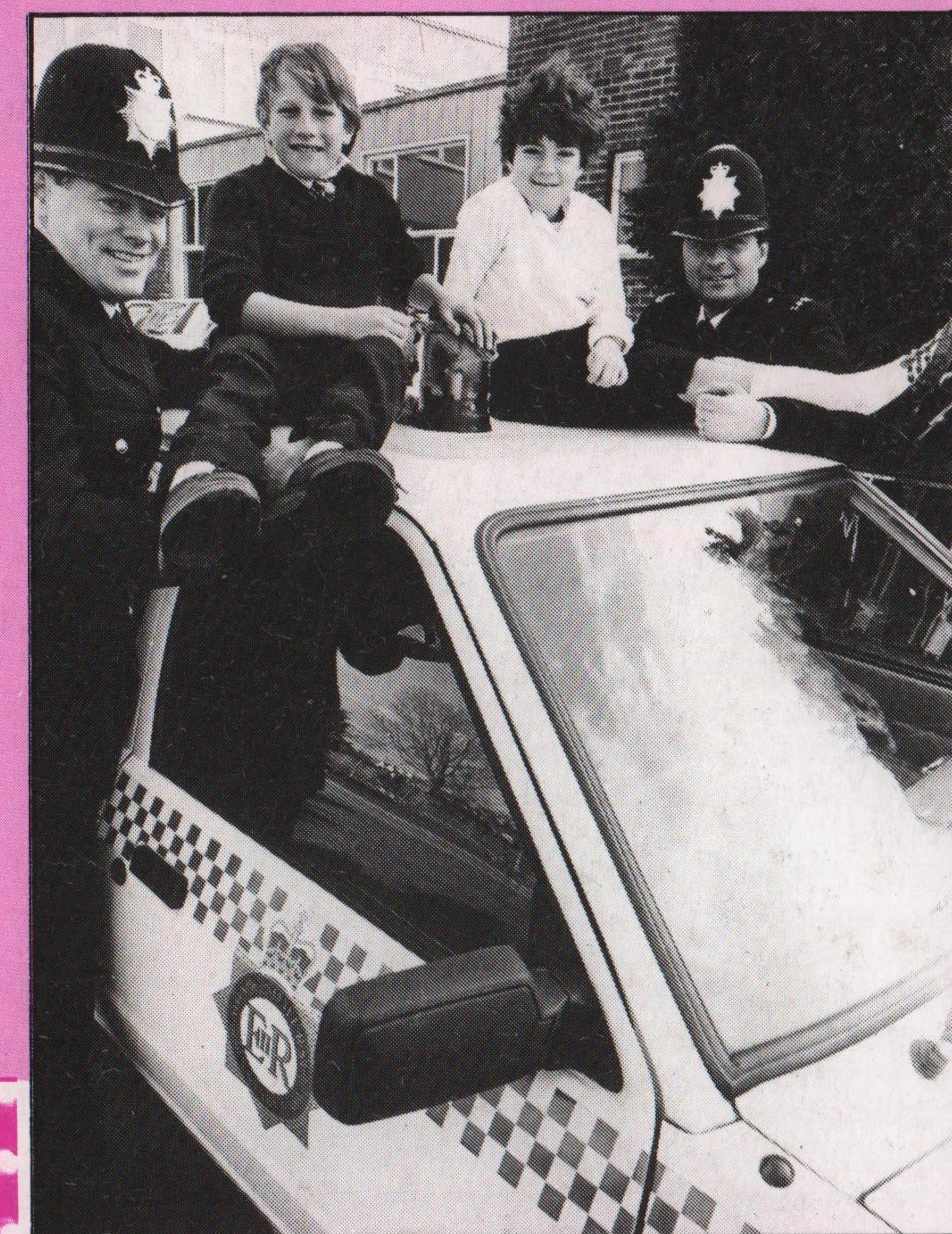
## National Secular Society

702 Holloway Road, London N19.  
01-272 1266

# Lib ED

Summer '87 50p

A magazine for the liberation of learning



**Classroom police**  
Who's ever heard of a fair cop?

**Learning about sex**  
Children must be put first

**Education Otherwise**

Home from school or school from home?



# Libertarian EDUCATION

A magazine for the liberation of learning

Vol 2 No 5 Summer 1987



Friendly police visits disguise the truth

1950s nostalgia isn't just "Peggy Sue Got Married" and 501 jeans; it seems to have reached education too. Those were the days, before all that 1960s trendy liberalism. There were grammar schools for the middle class and secondary mods for the working class, with the 11-plus to decide who went where; and teachers who didn't go on strike.

But the new Education Act is not only an attack on the trade union rights of teachers, it's also another victory for central state control over local authorities. The degree of flexibility which has been possible in state schools, especially primary schools, is threatened by teacher assessment, as well as by the proposed national curriculum.

We're not saying that what is currently being taught in schools is wonderful, but the introduction of standardised tests for children at ages 7, 11 and 14 is hardly likely to produce the sort of changes libertarians would welcome.

It's difficult to be optimistic about the future of state schooling, but this makes it more important than ever to build alternative models of learning, both in and out of school.

- This magazine is against authority.
- Schools and colleges use their authority to define, to grade and to discipline, in order to transform the learners into the sort of 'products' the state demands.
- In contrast *Libertarian Education* sees education as liberation. The learner, young or old, is the best judge of what they should learn next. In our struggle to make sense out of life, the things we most need to learn are the things we most want to learn. The liberated learner controls the process - no longer the victim.
- We don't pretend to have all the answers. *Lib Ed* magazine is a forum for everyone who is interested in the liberation of learning.

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## LEARNING ABOUT SEX

### A sense of sexual self

There can be no blueprint for sex education in school but neither the 'authorities' nor 'progressive' teachers seem to put children first. This is the first of a series of articles on learning about sex. In later issues we will be looking at the development of sexuality and sex education out of school.

SLOWLY BUT SURELY the last two years have seen the sexually moralistic come crawling out of the woodwork. This has had disastrous consequences for young people. For a period organisations like the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) and the Conservative Family Campaign (CFC) had been pushed to the sidelines.

However, Gillick, the Thatcher government and the Labour Party have all fuelled the reactionary climate with their respective pronouncements on the illegality of adolescent sexual relationships, the worrying trends against 'family values' and the furore over books like *Jenny lives with Eric and Martin*.

Is it really surprising that the Brook Advisory Centre reports a dramatic increase in pregnancy amongst teenage girls? Is it so very startling that, in a survey conducted by the London Gay Teenage Group, nineteen per cent of lesbian and gay young people interviewed had attempted suicide?

#### Progressives

Naturally there are some progressive lobbies who argue that the government's current attitude is pathetically inadequate, as is the response of most parents, governors, teachers and local councils. Such authorities are torn between a repressive sexual morality and an explicit and open discussion of sexual issues necessary to prevent unwanted pregnancies and check the spread of AIDS.

The Brook Advisory Centre advocates explicit education about sex and sexuality "in every area of the curriculum". Authors like Carol Lee and Jane Cousins are tireless campaigners for a more open approach in schools to sex and sexuality. "There should be specialist teachers trained to do the job", Lee writes, "failing which it should be an important part of all teacher training courses".

#### Libertarian approach

This all has a familiar ring to it. The general tendency of the sex education progressives is to argue for a more broad-minded process of guiding and informing. The implication is still that teachers should be active 'transmitters' and pupils 'passive receivers', empty vessels almost.

If sex education is to have any meaning whatsoever it is the learner who should control the process. This

necessitates a revolution in the attitude of adults towards young people, a transformation in the relationships between them and a dramatic alteration in teaching methods.

A study made by the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) of 200 families plus interviews with another 400, threw up most of the usual statistics indicating that the vast majority of children and parents want sex education in schools. However, when pressed on the nature of the education required by children, the PSI

should see themselves as resources rather than experts. Literature is crucial and teachers could do a lot worse than ensure that there is a variety of explicit literature available which is accessible to all young people.

Further, teachers should make themselves available to supply information. To do this successfully it is necessary for teachers to take a non-authoritarian stance and not to make judgements about individuals who might ask for particular kinds of information, be it how to make an appointment at the family planning clinic or what to do about sexual abuse by parents.

There are other considerations too. We live in a society where a double standard of morality exists for boys and girls. For example, sexual experience is usually frowned upon for the latter. Daily verbal and physical sexual harassment is all part of the routine for adolescent girls at school, sometimes by male staff. This should be countered by teachers, rather than ignored. Similarly, all teachers need to be aware of the intimidation and fear suffered by lesbian and gay young people at school and prepared to act accordingly.

It may be impossible to leave young people to develop their own sexual education entirely. It is therefore central to the teachers role, whether through literature, resources or support, to deal with the problems in sexuality and sexual relationships raised by the power relationship between men and women in our society.

#### Support

There is a strong argument, for example, that male teachers ought to tackle issues of dominance, violence and the powerful myths about rape with adolescent boys. It should also be possible for lesbian and gay adolescents to come out in school without fear of prejudice and victimisation. In many instances teacher support could be very important.

In the end there can be no blueprint for sex education in schools. It is important to avoid falling into the trap of slotting it into traditionally organised classes, where expertise, in the form of teachers, rules the roost. Further, for teachers to be involved in a process of real sex education it is necessary for them to transform their own attitudes towards young people and, more than likely, what they themselves actually think about sex and sexuality.



discovered that ninety per cent want the facility for discussions about adolescence, sexual relationships, contraception and abortion to take place *without* a teacher. Such a demand implies that the curriculum in school ought to be deconstructed rather than restructured, to allow young people to pursue their own education in an informal context.

#### Resources

That is not to say, however, that teachers have no role to play whatsoever. They



## Frank distaste

Dear Lib Ed,

I have now read about three issues of your magazine. In that time my attitude to your viewpoint has changed from bemusement to frank distaste. I wish to raise some points with you about the whole educational attitude of your publication. You name yourself "Libertarian Education". I find that surprising. In the front of your magazine you have a clear statement of your views, including "This magazine is against authority", "...in contrast Libertarian Education sees education as liberation. The learner, young or old, is the best judge of what they should learn next. In our struggle to make sense out of life, the things we most need to learn are the things we most want to learn. The liberated learner controls the process, no longer the victim". The first statement I could agree with if it were more clearly defined what kind of authority you are against. The second statement I readily agree with. So what am I complaining about? It is simply that all through your magazine you constantly side with teachers, mostly in the matter of the low pay that they receive. Now why do you? These teachers are people who go directly against the fine maxim that "the pupil is the judge of what they learn". In your support of teachers like this you simply strengthen the school system. That system controls what children learn desecrates their individuality. For a child to learn properly he must have a free choice, including the choice of leaving school and teachers. But I do not see much about children making these free choices in your pages. You propose new ways of teaching subjects, you envisage new school systems, and you demand higher wages for teachers, the ones who enforce the educational system which is so against children's liberty.

I have another question which I would be interested in an answer to. Your publication has a certain theory about how schools should be run: more ethnic culture, mathematics being politicised, as well as a strong political viewpoint. My question is, what is your theory about how to behave if a child says "I reject your system, I wish to learn in another way"? Suppose he wants to use books which you regard as sexist, racist, militaristic and capitalist? Would you allow the child to make a choice of his own? (I would). Or would you say "we are right", and force him to behave according to your educational criteria?

Before I finish, I have one point to make which is outside the field of education. In your most recent issue you have a letter from a member of the Animal Liberation Front. In his letter he tells us how good etching fluid is at destroying windows. This information could indeed be very useful for those who wish to destroy



property. But that isn't my point. The Animal Liberation Front practices violence of a very repulsive nature. Here is a quotation from a front cover of the "ALF Bulletin": "Factories don't burn down by themselves. They need help from you. Learn to burn." Do you feel shame furthering the credibility of such an organisation by publishing a letter from one of its members? Attacking property and people to further a cause is a totalitarian form of practice. That concept is the very opposite of libertarianism. You call yourself "libertarian", but I don't see why.

Yours sincerely,  
Ben Brown

*We felt that the points raised in Ben Brown's final paragraph were so important that we invited the ALF to reply immediately, rather than wait for the next issue of Lib Ed.*

## Gay Youth Help Service replies

Dear Lib Ed,

I read with interest the letter from the Lesbian and Gay Movement and I must admit that I may well be called ageist, even though I am still a qualified and active Football Referee. However, I would dispute this, as our three other helpers combined age is just over 55 years of age.

The advantage that we have over the L&GYM is: i) we are a 24 hour service reached by phone, people often need advice NOW and not in a few days time, ii) we do not ask for a subscription and give little or no return. This is very true since we have sent monies to the L&GYM for various reasons, never obtaining even an acknowledgement, iii) from those who have tried to contact L&GYM we have learnt that replies take months rather than weeks. GAY YOUTH HELP SERVICE reply within 48 hours of receiving a letter. We long for a SAE but never delay a reply, if we have not received it (and why do

## Vicious violence

Dear Lib Ed,

In response to Ben Brown's views on the ALF we would like to point out the following:

The ALF is fighting against the "totalitarian practice" of human domination over other animals. In all the tens of thousands of ALF actions, no human has ever been injured.

Compare that with the vicious violence that the hunt saboteurs have suffered in recent years. For example in 1984 Eddie Coulsden was attacked by hunt supporters, he spent six months in hospital with brain damage and has been told he will never be able to work or drive again.

Does Ben Brown think that had he lived in Nazi Germany he would have opposed people burning down empty concentration camps? If, like most, he would have supported such direct action, then why does he castigate the ALF for trying to destroy the latter-day equivalent in our society?

The ALF does not attack people. It does however attack empty property in its policy of non-violent economic sabotage, which has proved far more effective than writing to MP's waste paper bins.

Burning down a vivisection laboratory, after the animals have been rescued, does not constitute "violence of a repulsive nature". It is an act of compassion.

P.S. What does he think of peace protesters who cut the fence at Greenham? Animal Rights/Human Rights = One Struggle, One Fight  
ALF

L&GYM hide under a BM address instead of giving a proper postal address where they can be visited, as we do).

Regrettably, like most Youth-run organisations, they only see THEIR urgency and rarely the urgency of those who need their service. I believe the needs of others are more important than those of one's own, even though we often disagree.

You might like to know that the GAY YOUTH HELP SERVICE has a seat at many organisations like the Police and Community Consultative Committee, the local Council, various federations dealing with communities, and that I, as head of this service, am also the Chairman of the local Legal Council. The GAY YOUTH HELP SERVICE has the services of very many solicitors on call 24 hours. Something many other organisations have a need of.

Yours sincerely,  
Gay Youth Help Service

## Becoming aware

Keith and Sarah talk about disability awareness. Keith works for the London Strategic Policy Unit, Sarah is a London teacher. Both have personal experience of disability.

HOW MANY PEOPLE are positively aware of disability? It is, of course, difficult to say, but a number of factors have militated against any general awareness. One of the most important has been segregated education. Children with disabilities have been put into medical categories such as physically, mentally, hearing or vision impaired; or "delicate" or "maladjusted".

Then, out of sight and mind of the rest of the world, they have received schooling either in residential schools in inaccessible rural settings, or in day schools at the end of well disguised driveways in the leafy suburbs. Often the teachers in the special schools have tended to take on the role of sympathetic child minders rather than having any awareness of disability of each child's specific needs.

### Poor knowledge

Keith went to the Ormerod School in Oxford. The school was meant to cater for children with a range of disabilities, aged from 6 to 16, and consisted of only two classrooms. He felt that many of the staff had a poor knowledge of people with disabilities. Another school he rejected because they would not let him walk, except when he went to physiotherapy sessions.

There is some on-the-ground evidence of a slight improvement. Since about 1980 the question of disability has actually reached the educational agenda. There are more professionals involved, courses being run on "special needs" and a trickle of money allowed for micro-

technology. The watchword is "integration".

However, as with multi-racial education, the increasing professionalisation of disability does not necessarily mean solutions to basic issues. Handicapped attitudes persist - on the "we know what is good for you" line. Funding for integration falls well short of what is needed to correct one hundred years of state education that has ignored disability.

### No funds

The Fish Report, by the Inner London Education Authority, called for integration; but the necessary funds have not been forthcoming for schools and colleges to adapt structures and this debars most children and students with a physical disability.

Keith and Sarah rightly feel that there needs to be a revolution in thinking about disability and creating disability awareness. For a start all schools should be adapted so that they are accessible to all students and teachers with disabilities. This means basic, but expensive, adaptations such as putting in lifts and widening doorways.

There should be disability awareness training for all teachers and students. For instance all children could be taught to finger spell. British Sign Language, Makaton and some Braille should be a compulsory part of teacher training and could be offered as curricular options to children. They could have the same status as languages in the curriculum.

No child should be debarred from a

subject choice because of disability. An example of what can be achieved, for instance, is that blind students have passed O level Astronomy - amazing what can be done if the resources are made available. Text books need to be examined to remove handicappist references.

### Positive discrimination

There needs to be a positive drive to recruit teachers with disabilities into schools. There have been token examples that have hit the media (for instance of a teacher who is registered blind teaches in an ordinary school in Warwickshire); but these are exceptions. The fact is that teacher training colleges are unwilling to accept people with disabilities, and are generally impossible for access.

The Department of Special Education at Birmingham University itself is one of the worst examples. Local authorities have told prospective teachers with a hearing disability that they need not apply. Keith feels that school staff should reflect the number of people with disabilities in the population. At least then there would then be positive role models for children and teachers - and for children with disabilities.

An article of this length can only raise some of the issues. The fact is that much fighting needs to be done to eradicate handicappist attitudes and build non-discriminatory education. People with disabilities must have structures built in to schools and society that enable them to have at least the same control over their lives as anyone else.





# Preparing the class

The Workers' Educational Association came into existence at the beginning of the twentieth century. Its aim was to educate the working class for the exercise of political power, in effect for participation in the processes of local and central government.

THE WEA IS a national movement, independent and voluntary, non-party and, as far as it is concerned, non-sectarian. Its aims, in general, are to further the advancement of education for all, and in particular to stimulate and satisfy the demands of adults to enhance their own education. However, whilst being a national movement, it is not necessarily a united movement.

It does not speak with one voice, for the basis of its organisation is the autonomous local branch. What this means, amongst other things, is that the responsibility for the organisation and development of courses in WEA branches varies enormously, with some branches failing to break out of highly prescriptive teacher-led, teacher-organised classes, but with other branches being run by the sum total of its volunteers and members. This latter model will be of interest to those seeking examples of libertarian education in action.



## Academic past

The WEA was founded in 1903 by Albert Mansbridge, a clerical worker in the Co-operative Movement and a former university extension student. The Association was supported financially by the Co-operative Movement and various trade unions and universities.

However, it had not just simply appeared. On the contrary it grew out of the Association to Promote the Higher Education of Working Men, an initiative backed by the Labour Representation Committee, but organised completely by the universities. It was, in effect, the universities' attempt to embrace working class men and they did so in their customary philanthropic, patronising, but hardly libertarian, way.

The tutorial class became the hallmark of the WEA, carried out under the academic direction of Oxford University initially, but the movement was quickly seized by other universities and for a whole generation it became the major feature of university extra-mural work. Most WEA branches became inextricably tied to their nearest university. Ruskin College stood at the hub and in many ways academia ruled the day.

## Rivals

Thus the work of the WEA was rooted in the liberal, humane philosophy of the universities, where all the emphasis was put on giving working class men access to the same sort of education that their peers enjoyed. There was little attempt to consider content or, more importantly, who controlled the learning process and there was a sense in which the WEA functioned as the political wing of the Labour Party.

There was, however, a rival organisation founded in 1909 under the title of the Labour College and known later as the National Council of Labour Colleges, which based its teaching on the Marxist analysis of the class struggle and offered an education "designed to equip the workers for their struggle against capitalism and capitalist ideology". Relying entirely on voluntary subscriptions and voluntary teachers, the college strove, like the WEA, to cover the country with a network of branches and classes.

It poured scorn on the universities as the lackeys of capitalism, and denounced the WEA for its subservience to authority and its willingness to accept subsidies from the enemies of the working class. A contest

between rival ideologies, the so-called apolitical and Marxist, persisted until the dissolution of the NCLC in 1965 and had the unfortunate effect of splitting the trade union movement.

## Central control

Some of the criticisms of the WEA by the NCLC seem well founded until the similarities between the two organisations become obvious, namely their central control and generally structured approach to learning. The question remains, is there anything of interest to libertarians?

The actual struggle for, and development of, an education for the adult working class, despite the fact that women were apparently of little or no relevance, is interesting in itself but it is the size and federalised structure of the WEA that remains of genuine interest.

As the Association grew, with more and more branches opening and funding became available from Local Education Authorities, there could be no total, central control. Branches became autonomous, and whilst there was a 'ruling orthodoxy', illustrated by the current Renfrew Retirement Branch programme, today more and more branches like the 101 in Leicester are in operation.

WEA

## Volunteers

Classes are available every day drawn up and planned in advance in a variety of different ways. There are two full-time field officers and any number of volunteers, the centre seems to feel that anyone who attends a class is a volunteer! Classes plan and organise other classes, and the field officers try to respond to any suggestions for classes made to them, usually in pubs or at parties, as well as going out into the community to try to establish what people not attending the centre might want.

Increasingly a variety of groups also use the building on a regular basis. These include the National Childbirth Trust, the Birth Information Group, CND, a Parent and Toddlers Group, Elderly Asian Men, Asian Womens Group, Mens Group, East-West Community Project and the Leicester World Development Centre.

## Programmes

Most 101 programmes are so varied and diverse that they reflect a real involvement by students in the operation of the centre. Recently an over-50s discussion group calling itself "New Horizons" organised 12 classes on "Victorian Life and Times". The fee of 60p per session included coffee.

A group of Asian parents became involved in the centre and helped to organise a class on Gujarati and Asian Culture, it was of particular interest to

Asian parents with children. A series of free and popular courses on Adult Literacy and Numeracy, in the eyes of the field officers, reflects a "consumer demand".

Similarly two other free courses entitled "Experiences of War" and "Memories of the West End" reflect local peoples desires to come together and share different memories and experiences from the past. Add to these, courses on Vegetarian Indian Cooking, the Nuclear Question, Red Herrings in Feminism, Rocks and Fossils in Leicestershire, Welfare Rights and a whole series of particular courses for Asian Women and the incredible varied nature of the 101 begins to emerge.

There have also been a series of Saturday Schools, "Back to the Classroom" for people intending to return to study, "Coping with Adolescents" for parents with teenage children, "Helping your Dyslexic Child", the history and background of Tarot, and a series of Puppet Workshops and Sexism Awareness Courses.

These courses are merely part of an extensive programme. No field officer or tutor organiser could sit down and plan such a programme. The centre is run by local people for local people. One feels immediately comfortable in the building, which has no sterile gloss-painted walls and thin-piles carpets, the hallmarks of most educational institutions. The 101 is an example of a libertarian tendency within the WEA.



# Opening the door

101 Hinckley Road, Leicester is an Inner City Project run by the WEA and funded by the Local Education Authority and the WEA. It is a converted house providing education for adults of many different interests and backgrounds. Every student is encouraged to be involved in planning courses and activities in 101 but the centre which has a real base in the community and a communal atmosphere tends to make this inevitable. It is not an educational institution, more a lively community centre which is run by and for the local community also being used as a meeting place by a number of other local community groups.

## Links

Vaughan College is the University's outpost in the City of Leicester. It was founded as a provincial working men's college in 1862 and since 1929 it has been the main centre for part-time courses provide by the university. Similar to many colleges housing university extra-mural departments, it has full-time WEA tutor organiser and a thriving WEA branch.

The 101 took off as a result of the work of the full-time WEA tutor organiser who recognised the weaknesses of the WEA programme in that whilst making every effort to incorporate student wishes it did not reflect community wishes or expectations for "continuing education" because it was not housed in a local community. The 101 took the WEA into a multi-ethnic working class area.



*Dancin' the night away with the WEA!*

*(photos by Mark Salmon)*



# Designs on Art

Can Art Education help children to look critically at the images they see around them?

MOST CHILDREN have to undergo the pressures of formal learning, and increasingly lose the chance to play, and to pursue and explore their own ideas and investigations in their own way and time. Children's confidence in their ability to communicate, clarify for themselves or enjoy the process of manipulating materials is frequently undermined or directed by an academic hierarchy of skills.

Although art is frequently cushioned with cosy platitudes concerning individual creativity and self-expression and appears to offer the most opportunity for freedom of choice and the development of a personal statement within the curriculum, in reality it tends to be marginalised.

At extremes, art becomes a time-filler for the 'non-literate', or lost within the vast range of integrated skills that it can offer in the search for a methodology to assess and record "artistic consciousness and achievement".

## Neutral

Art education has traditionally played a somewhat "neutral" role in the education of equality. Many would argue this neutrality to maintain a respectable (intellectual) and legitimate (academic) disposition to art education, or to avoid conflict. However, to be neutral is to support the dominance of the eurocentric patriarchal educational system.

In the past GCE exams have been the only clue for teachers as to curriculum content and course design. They have invited students to make responses to such themes as "the bathroom...", a topic hardly likely to be very questioning. Controversial areas of class, race and gender have never been considered as



appropriate content for exam questions.

Although developments within GCSE art and design have not stated overtly that such topics must now be dealt with, there is much more opportunity for teachers to take the initiative to include work of that nature in their syllabus. Whilst still working under the constraints of the exam system, emphasis can now be directed towards the understanding of certain relationships and processes within the subject, rather than the explication of a specific, mundane topic.

Within a school, however, how can one approach the concept of equality or any of its constituent parts through art teaching? It is important for the school to have an equal opportunities policy, and to be actually implementing it. If a department decided to go it alone it is possible for that department to end up isolated and alienated from the very students that it is trying to inform.

## Tokenism

Initiatives are also frequently too tokenistic to effectively penetrate and reconstruct attitudes and beliefs. One common approach to multi-cultural art education is through the study of the artefacts and customs of a particular culture. This approach, which on the whole attempts to generate sympathy and understanding through the concept of cultural diversity, paradoxically has the potential to alienate children.

It has a tendency to focus on the positive aspects of cultural relationships, but ignores the lived reality of racism in this country. It continues to present a stereotyped white view of what multi-cultural education should be. It obscures the conflict that exists between ideologies and does not resolve them.

## A graphic solution?

What is it possible to do, then, in a school which ignores its responsibility for the promotion of equality? Graphic design, a subject within art education which is often associated with the greedier aspects of vocational advertising, has a potential in schools which has so far been untapped.

If we recognise that its essential concepts, the manipulation of words and images, are the foundation for the analysis of prejudice, we can begin to construct a course in visual analysis which can directly inform children about how beliefs and attitudes are arrived at.

Picture analysis from a sociological perspective, perhaps with reference to

sympathetic support from English and Geography departments, could enable children to find alternative interpretations of received images. Media analysis, particularly of newspapers, is an ideal means of recognising prejudice in both written and visual form.

## Vocational interest

In the past, graphic design education has centred on two aspects of its vocational interest. The first, an emphasis on skills and techniques which amounts to little more than the teaching of fundamental processes such as lino and silkscreen. The orientation of this approach is purely technical, and therefore safely 'neutral'.

The second area is advertising, where teaching is a vocational preparation for the advertising profession. There is no room for conflict in this approach since the jobbing graphic artist must earn a living in what is essentially a corrupt advertising world.

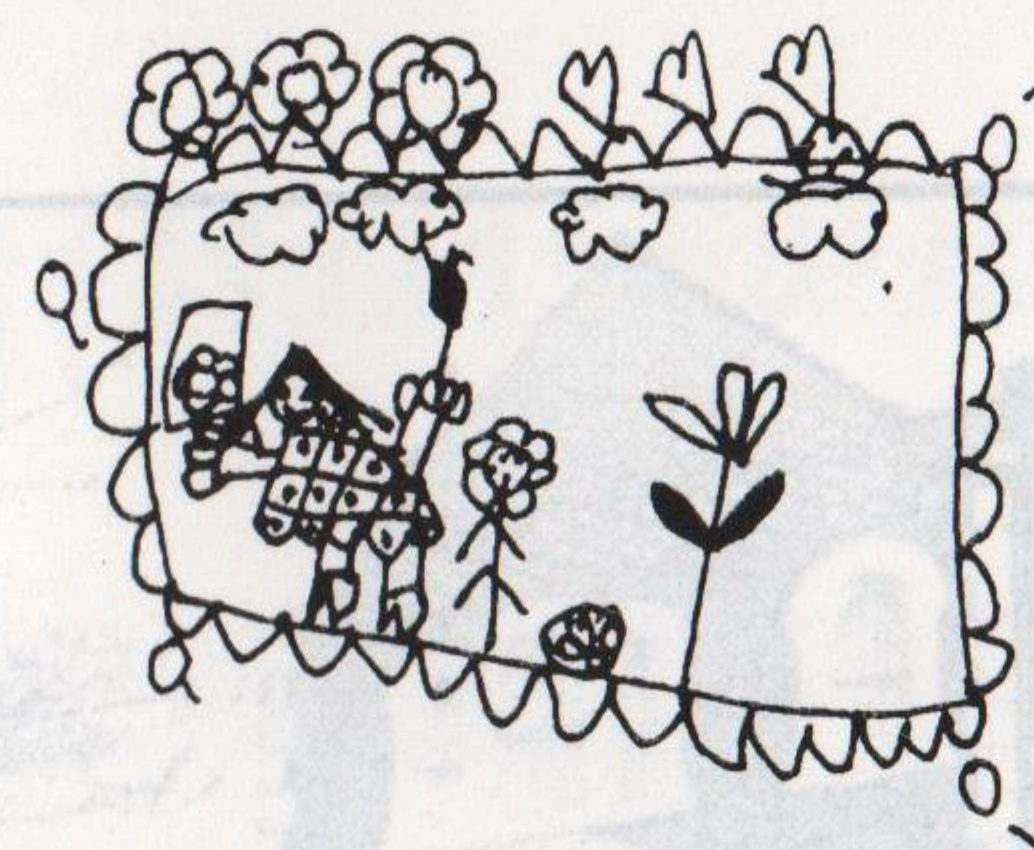
There is an alternative method which can ultimately be useful as a "benchmark" for future designers. Information graphics focuses on the message. Communication - what is communicated and how - becomes the central issue. Concept comes before skill in this approach. Children are encouraged to develop a responsible, critical awareness of the multiplicity of messages that exist in the noise of advertising which pervades our world.

## Hidden messages

One point of entry is through the common experience of comics. Here we can find not only the technical aspects of story-telling in words and images, but also the hidden messages within the story. It becomes clear how our culture regards another, or how one class sees another.

Encouraging children to look critically at comics and to create their own enables them to focus on aspects of their received world which might otherwise be taken for granted. This area of research can be developed into a study of advertising as a whole, looking at it from the points of view of persuasion and exploitation, and combining study with practical skills such as the design of posters, badges and T shirts.

If we look at inequality in its broadest context, then, through the medium of the message in the early years, we can focus on the particular context of messages later in school. Cross-curriculum work can help reinforce this.



## SPECIAL FEATURE

ASTOUNDING OUT OF SCHOOL TALES

# EDUCATION OTHERWISE

10 YEARS & GOING STRONG

DECEMBER no. 50 1986

There ARE MANY WAYS OF LEARNING ... THROUGH THE MACHINE ... OR BY THE MOST AMAZING USE OF YOUR OWN MIND!! DON'T MISS "The FANTASTIC IDEAS!" IN THIS GREAT ISSUE!

HAH! ANOTHER GROUP PROCESSED! BRING ON THE NEXT BATCH!

MODERN industrial societies are obsessed with schooling. Children are processed en masse into standardised products of the education-machine. Yet resistant forms emerge. Critics of these factory methods spring up and refuse to submit their offspring for processing... Over the last ten years these 'deviants' have become increasingly well organised and advertising themselves as "Education Otherwise" now claim a membership of almost two thousand.

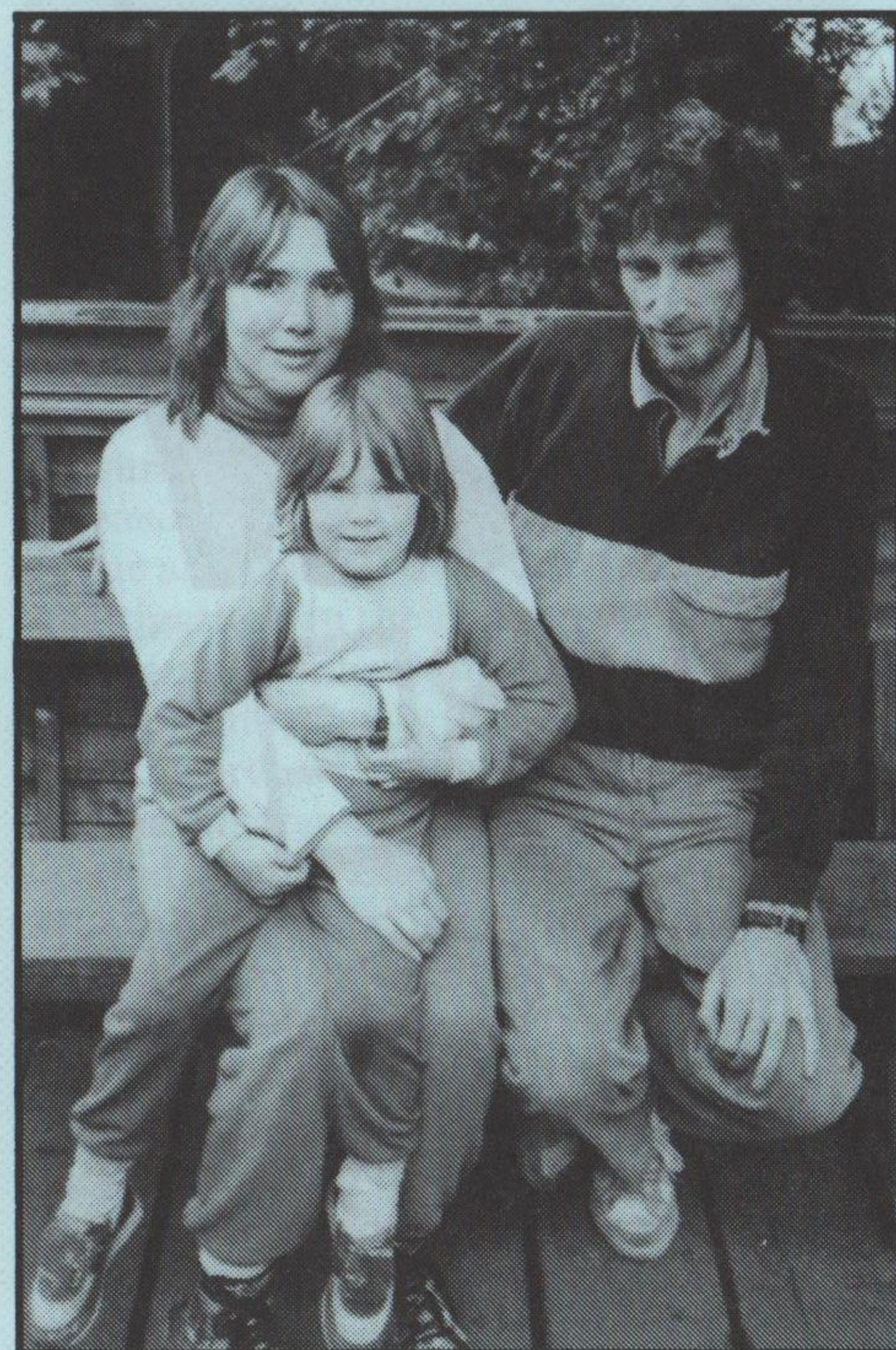
Demonstrating their belief that the state doesn't always know best, these

parents encourage their children to learn without schooling. Every year hundreds more join them. Through mutual aid EO members are able to offer emotional, social and technical support to parents and children opting for organised education.

Despite their obviously libertarian aims and impressive dynamism, EO has not escaped criticism from supporters of free education. The following pages detail the philosophy, organisation and approach of Education Otherwise, and assesses its distinctive contribution to the liberation of learning...



## Individual attention



**Jill O'Connor is training as a National Childbirth Trust teacher. Joseph teaches the guitar. Their only child Lara (5) is learning at home. They live in New Malden, Surrey.**

We decided some time ago that we would not be sending Lara to school. We feel that education in schools is structured in such a way as to discourage the natural learning process and the curiosity of children. Schools encourage dependence on received information and authority. There is little or no focus on making independent

decisions or choosing when and what to learn.

We think that schools provide an artificial, intensely competitive and restricted social life. All children are different and have individual and unique personalities. The way school organise children into large groups means they are unable to give each child the individual attention they deserve and require.

Learning and education are part of real life; real life cannot be structured and packaged into an institution. Schools do not educate children for the rapidly changing real world. Home education is much more flexible. Lara likes set learning times but we're not concerned that she learns a certain thing at a certain age. When she was four she began to notice the people coming to the house to learn guitar and she asked to learn too.

She worked so hard at it because she wanted to learn. We've taken her swimming since she was six months old, she always enjoyed it but didn't make much progress. Then recently she jumped in and swam four widths. With home education the child's individuality is recognised and they're given space to choose the pace and content of their own learning.

We get a lot of support from EO It's enabled us to meet lots of interesting people, to make social contacts and to learn... I (Joseph) would like to see EO make more of an impact on the public. Everyday there are horror stories in the paper, about violence in schools, the poor state of buildings and uncaring local authorities, but still lots of people don't realise it's legal to educate their own kids at home.

## Aims and objectives of Education Otherwise

- 1 To re-affirm that parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school.
- 2 To establish the primary right of children that full consideration, with due allowance for their age and understanding, shall be given to their wishes and feelings regarding their education.
- 3 To support families in which for any good reason a child is being educated out of school, particularly in the following respects:
  - a By disseminating information through the medium of a newsletter, booklets and in other ways about:
    - i people's experiences;
    - ii available resources; and
    - iii exchange of skills and resources.
  - b By providing advice and, where needed, specific help in:
    - i presenting their case to the authorities; and
    - ii the legal aspects of education out of school
  - c By providing advice about:
    - i educational methods and materials; and
    - ii devising programmes of activities.
  - d By arranging meetings and by supporting the formation of local groups.
- 4 To support families where a child is suffering educationally, socially or emotionally from compulsory school attendance, particularly in the following cases:
  - a where the family is being inadequately served by the statutory services; and
  - b where the family is in need of legal assistance.
- 5 It is not the intention of the group to act in conflict with the schools or education authorities, and we endorse the legal responsibilities of the authorities in the following respects:
  - a as a safe-guard for children who might otherwise be deprived of their right to education; and
  - b as providers of educational resources and services.

We envisage a situation in which schools and other educational services provide a resource which is freely available to all members of the community, whatever their age.

## Alternative lifestyle



**Jennie White, her husband Nick and daughter Rachel (16) live in a small cottage in Wensleydale, North Yorkshire. Jennie and Nick make their living by selling candles which they produce in a windmill near their village.**

JENNIE: We became interested in alternative education as a part of our lifestyle which we tried to develop so that we ran as much of our own lives as possible. I'd taught in schools for two years and was appalled at what they do to children in terms of repression and control,

so we decided not to send Rachel. We wrote off to things like the *AS Neill Trust* and eventually contacted others who felt the same. We got together and set up EO.

Personally I'd like to see more alternatives; free schools, EO, part-time schooling. When Rachel was junior age we'd have liked her to have gone to school for playtimes... It's fascinated me to see how Rachel and other EO kids have developed; they're different, they've been allowed to become real people, and it's exciting...

RACHEL: When I was fourteen I wanted to try school because I didn't believe the other kids saying it's awful. I went for five months, and they were right... Kids have no say in school, the teachers give you work that's boring and degrading, and if you ask for help they say you're stupid and should have listened in the first place.

I'm not sure why teachers are like that, maybe they're insecure and don't want kids answering back, they want to be in power all the time, they're worse than other adults. At home I decided what to learn. Everyone wants to learn things, even little kids want to know what this does and how it works and why. I really liked learning to drive, first on a motorbike, then a van. I'd like to maybe take up driving as a living. Quite a lot of my friends didn't go to school - illegally - they spent a lot of time working, lambing, building, fixing things, lots of parents don't mind 'cause they truanted themselves.

Home-education's not for everyone, though. Some kids in EO would be better off at school, their parents are recluses, not many but some, but I think I benefitted a lot from EO.

## School phobia



**Patricia Knox was drawn into home education through her children's school phobia. Two of her three daughters developed a fear and hatred of school... They live in Anglesey, North Wales.**

My eldest child, Richenda, went to the local state schools until she was thirteen. During that time she gradually became more and more unhappy. Eventually this produced psychosomatic illnesses and complete school phobia; she even threatened suicide if forced to attend. We turned to the local education authority's "Schools Psychological Service" for help.

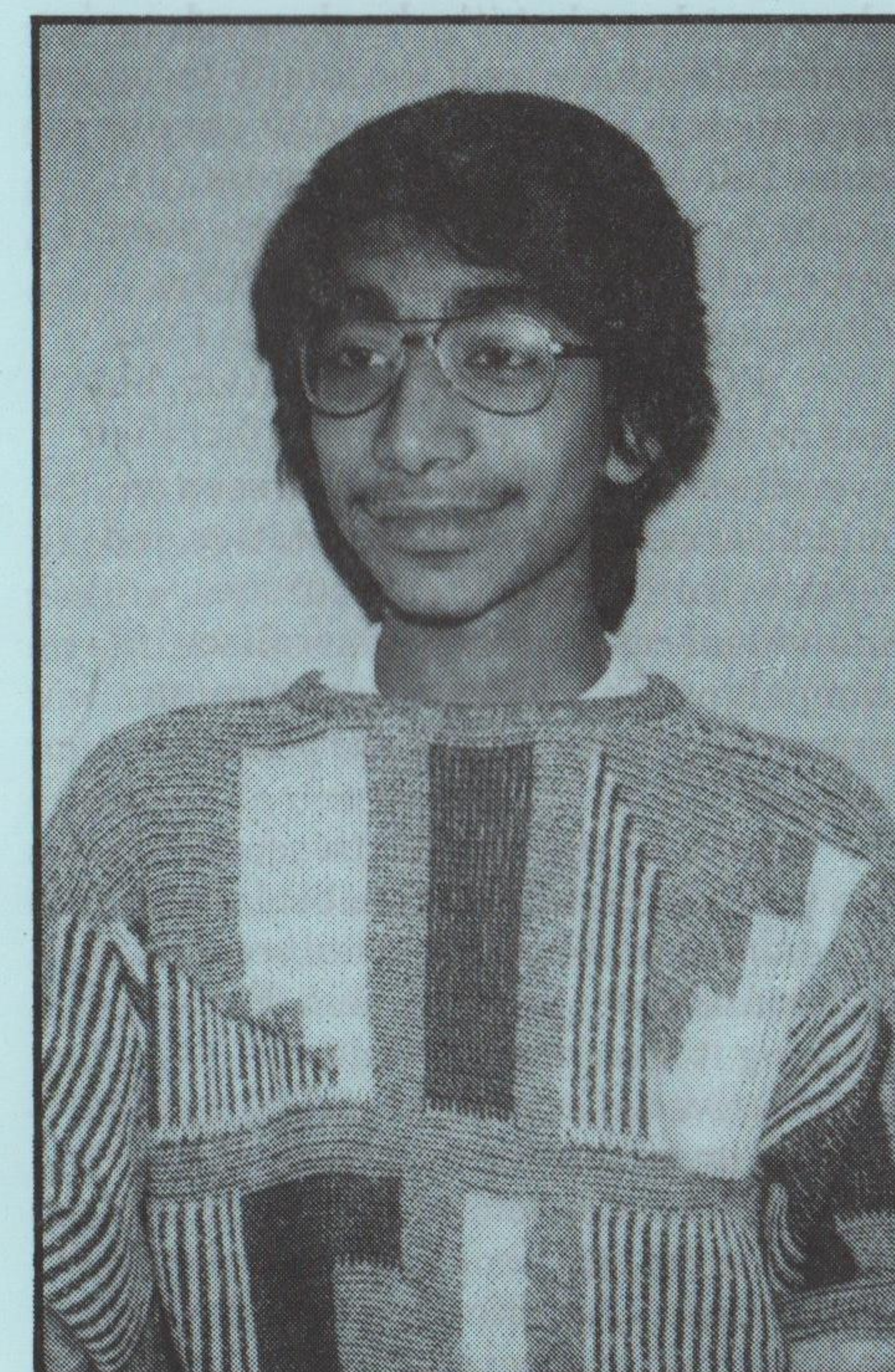
Their advice was to ignore the suicide threat and to get the school's welfare officer to help us drag her to school. When I suggested home-education the psychologist said that would destroy any prospect of her studying again, and that she would become so anti-social that she would never be able to get married!

Then I phoned the Samaritans. They said that to ignore a suicide threat is the

worst thing you can do. When the local vicar put me in contact with Education Otherwise I decided that teaching Richenda at home was the answer. We began by spending a week with other parents and children at an EO "get-together". It was marvellous to meet and get support from other people...

Alexandra, my youngest daughter, has had a similar, but much less severe, experience of state education. She too went to a local primary school, but after three years there she had lost most of her self-confidence, so we taught her at home with Richenda. Recently we managed to find a school not too far away that gives priority to children's happiness. Ally seems to be enjoying her schooling now.

Through Education Otherwise I've become aware just how widespread school phobia is. I'm appalled by the way schools use punishment to control children, not just the obvious physical beatings and ear twistings, but the more subtle psychological techniques. My daughters' experiences are all too common...



## Teaching himself

**Rakesh Dharmecha 'resigned' from school a year ago, when he was fourteen, and now organises his own learning. He lives with his family in Harrow, Middlesex.**

When I was at school the teachers wanted me to do GCSE courses which would have taken me two years to complete. I preferred to do GCE O levels because I reckoned I could pass them in only one year, and they're just as valuable. The school refused so I decided to move into Education Otherwise. I found out about EO from an education pack in my local library. I noticed a section on "Education Out of School" and thought "that looks interesting".

I wrote to EO and they were very helpful. They outlined my legal position and explained that I would need to get the support of my parents. My dad was against

me leaving at first but when I explained exactly what I wanted to do both my mum and dad agreed. I wrote a letter resigning from school and my father added his signature. Then I began to organise my own learning... I registered for three O levels, Gujarati, Commerce and English Language, which I did last November and I'm doing another five O levels this summer.

I expect to pass all these and then I should be able to persuade a school to let me start my A level courses in September. I only really plan to do this Education Otherwise temporarily, to help me get what I want out of the education system. Really I think schools should cater for the individual, not just play around with statistics. Everybody's an individual. I wouldn't recommend EO for everyone, but it's suited me.



# Small is not always beautiful

**Small schools thrive in Denmark where the State meets up to 85% of costs for 'alternative schools' set up by parents. But are they any more than just small versions of ordinary schools?**

IN DENMARK today nearly ten per cent of the country's children attend private schools formed as a result of the collective initiatives of groups of parents and teachers. In these schools the State meets between seventy five and eighty five per cent of the costs with the result that to send a child to such a school costs a parent around £30 per month.

Usually the second child sent from a family can be guaranteed a significant discount, and often younger children from large families go free of any charge. Recent research has shown that the independent small schools of Denmark cost more per pupil to run overall but cost the state rather less than the parallel state schools. In practice it would seem that most parents meet nearer twenty five per cent of the costs rather than the fifteen possible in theory.

## Model

An Independent School Bill in Britain, modelled on the legislation that encourages the development of alternative schools in Denmark, could go a long way towards providing a rallying ground for communities to come together and launch themselves into running educational ventures where discipline and discussion can flourish together.

These ideas have been taken up by the rapidly expanding movement for Human Scale Education supported by the Schumacher Society. One of the proposals from this movement concerns the establishment of a schools grants commission.

## In action

What then are the Danish small schools like in practice? As one would expect, the picture is varied. In some there is clearly an elitist ethos, with a strong orientation towards academic excellence and university entrance. In others there is an emphasis on practical education. What is clear, though, is that there are very few schools which have chosen to develop alternative methods of organisation, and even fewer that have sought to build new and libertarian pedagogies.

All the schools have a head teacher, and he or she is not bound to accept decisions reached by staff or parents. There have been cases where this has produced controversy. Recently 30 parents removed their children from one school in

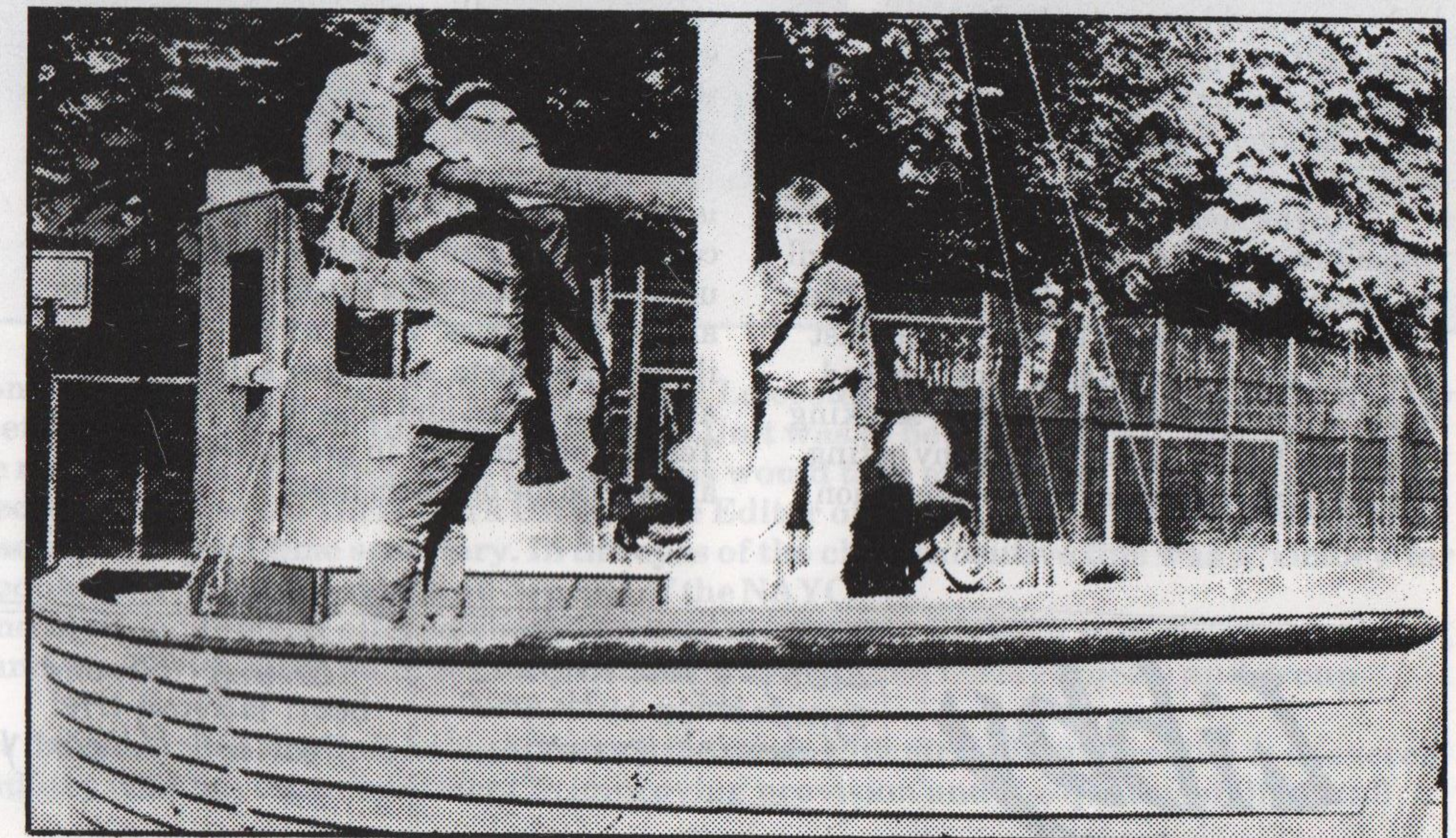
Copenhagen because the head refused to timetable more so-called non-academic subjects, such as pottery and dance.

## Small classes

The usual learning arena is a class. Considerable emphasis is placed on small classes, often with only eighteen or nineteen pupils. Desks are rarely seen in rows, but the teacher is always a focus of attention. Parents involved in running schools are anxious to attract well-qualified and experienced teachers.

communities to come together and produce the energy necessary for an alternative venture. The problem is that their challenge to orthodox education is minimal. The experience of the German free schools, and more recently the White Lion Free School in London, has shown that state support often still means state control.

Do Danish small schools thrive because they do not really challenge the educational status quo? In addition, the assumption that small is always beautiful seems to be unfounded, as in most Danish



*At play in a Danish small school*

Most of the schools, whether inclined towards academic excellence or not, attach importance to breadth in the curriculum. It is unusual for Danish small schools not to have flourishing community initiatives in operation. An example is the educational commune in Nyborg, a one-year residential school for young people in their last year of compulsory education.

Here the whole community has been involved in building living blocks and working out the educational programmes. Similarly, exchanges take place between many schools, and there is a strong emphasis on diversity in terms of cultural experience.

## How alternative?

The Danish small school movement is an interesting phenomenon. The schools are a testament to the ability of diverse

small schools the only essential difference between state and private schools is their size.

## Parental drive

Whilst parental drive, enthusiasm and initiative are worthy attributes when it comes to building alternative ventures, little is heard, in the small schools, of children being actively involved in such issues as the organisation and development of the curriculum, the appointment of staff and the allocation of money.

The Danish government has a massive investment in small schools. The fact that no Danish government has yet tried to close a school it disapproves of may well be because there is not an awful lot that any Western government would oppose.



## New Age Travellers

THE STATE has tried to smash the New Age Travellers. Their "hippy convoy" was vilified both by the media and the government.

In fact, urban decay, unemployment and outrageous rents and property costs have left many people with little option but to take to the road.

At the moment there is no provision for the travellers. There are precious few facilities on sites for traditional gypsies. Although some people have shown sympathy, the New Age Travellers face discrimination and prejudice.

## Grub up

ON 1ST APRIL, an ironic date, the Health Education Council, an independent body, was abolished by the Health Minister, Norman Fowler, and replaced with the Health Education Authority, a statutory body responsible only to the Minister himself. The vice-chair of the new Authority is to be Ann Burdus, a director of a City ad agency with major alcohol and tobacco clients.

In the short time since the announcement the Joint Advisory Council on Nutrition Education (JACNE) has been disbanded, along with 13 other specialist advisory groups, including those on food hygiene, children's safety and no-smoking policies. The new guide to healthy eating has also had its central recommendation,

The Travellers' School Bus Project is an attempt to provide a mobile education service for the travellers and their children. The project needs help to purchase, equip and fuel a coach for use as a mobile educational resource.

To support the project make cheques/POs payable to "SKOOL BUS" a/c Lloyds 0222778 and send with any request for further information, progress reports, badges, and posters to Richie Cotterill, "Skool Coordinator", Waterleat, Ashburton, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ13 7HU□

the reduction of the consumption of refined sugar, dropped.

To add insult to injury the final report of the Council, on the links between poverty and sickness, was swept under the carpet by cancelling the launch press conference at short notice. It's predecessor, the 1980 Black report was suppressed by the then Minister, Patrick Jenkin.

It would seem that the Government is seeking to move towards a more centralised control of health education, under the influence of the food, tobacco and alcohol industries. While poor nutrition, ill-balanced diets, additives, salt, sugar and over-refined and false foods keep Tescos and Unilever in profits we are being allowed to die of ignorance□

## Doing nothing together

THE National Union of Teachers (NUT) is acting together with the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NAS/UWT) against the Baker Education Act. But will they now do anything? This Tory law puts more power in the hands of the state and will probably be used as a precedent to try to smash all the public sector unions in the country.

So far the teachers' unions have acted too slowly and too feebly. The NUT has even expelled three leaders and suspended 48 others from its local association in London for taking prompt strike action. The situation looks like a Pyrrhic victory for the



union executive over its local branches and members, and the triumph of a pin-striped authoritarian government over the trade union movement□



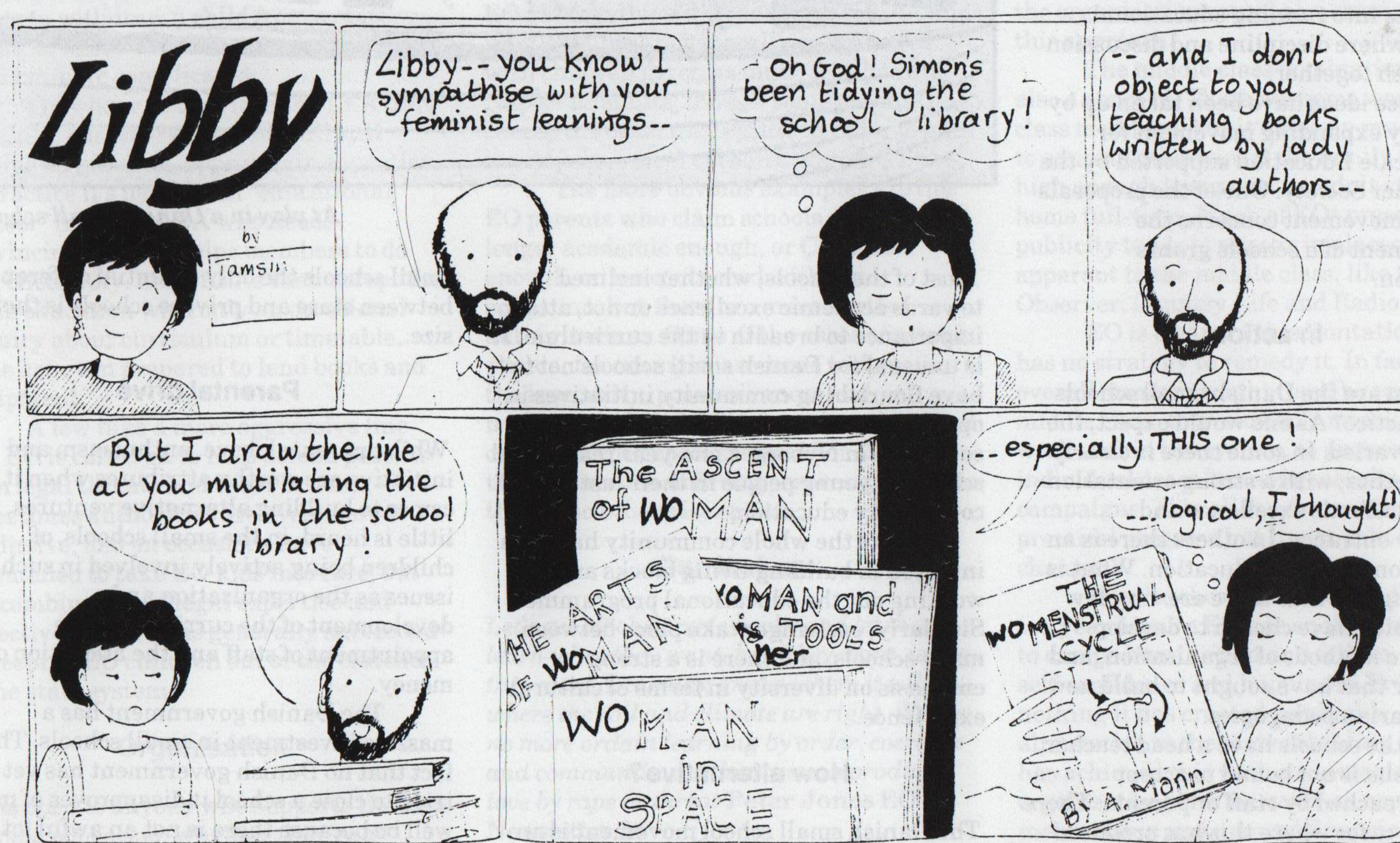
(photo by Mark Salmon)

THE GIRLS WORK officers at the National Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC) in Leicester were summoned, on 3rd February 1987, to a meeting with Jan Holt, the chief executive, and told that the Girls Work Unit was to be closed down. All five employees who worked in the Unit were made redundant. They were told that this would take effect from noon the next day.

The five women who were made redundant were the Girls Work Officer, the Editor of the magazine *Working with Girls*, the Information Worker and one full-time and one part-time secretary. In the eyes of the chief executive this was a 'victory' for Girls Work because now all Girls Work could be incorporated into all aspects of the NAYC.

The Unit was the only one of its kind in the country. It offered youth workers involved in working with girls comprehensive resources, training around work with girls, facilities for publishing low funded Girls Projects and group materials.

Contrary to Jan Holt's optimism at the closure of the Unit being a victory for work with girls, the sad reality is a severed lifeline for youth workers around the country who have a commitment to improving provision and the quality of life for all young women□



## Death research

STAR WARS and nuclear weapons research have gained a lot of press recently. Yet, in the background, another arms race is also going on, that involving chemical and biological warfare. These weapons were first used in the 1st World War, in the form of chlorine, phosgene and mustard gases. They were not used in the 2nd World War, out of fear of reprisal, though in the name of progress Porton Down, the main research establishment, polluted an island of the NW coast of Scotland - Gruinard Island - with Anthrax. The island remains uninhabitable today.

These weapons are banned under the terms of the 1972 Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention, yet recently the Campaign against Military Research on Campus (CAMROC) has established that

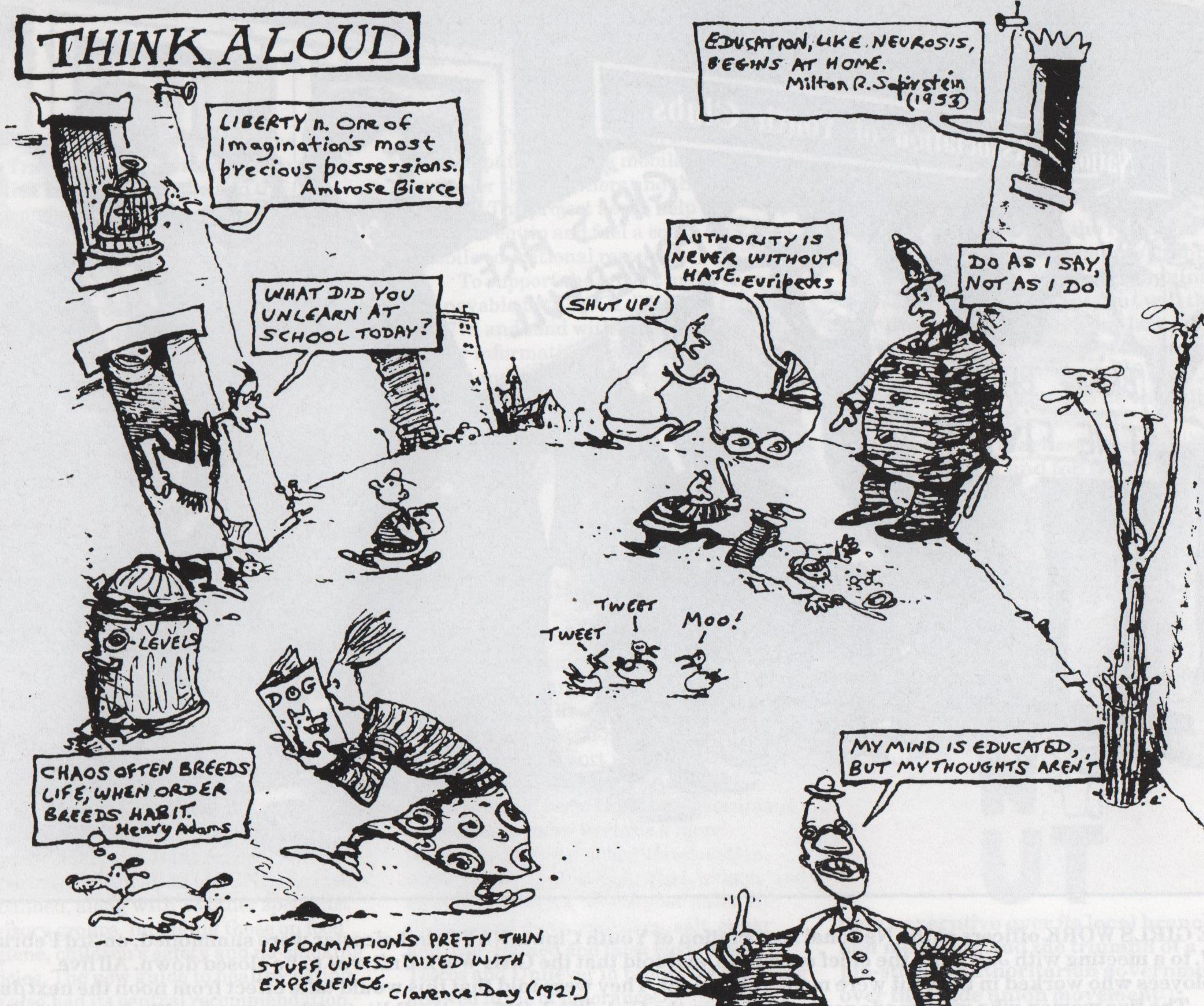
research is continuing. Amongst the work being done is research into the skin absorption of specific agents, their distribution in body tissues and the action of nerve gases on the nervous system. Further research is also taking place into genetically-altered bacteria, their spread in large populations, and potential delivery systems.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has at least 750 research contracts with several universities, notably those at Bath, Surrey and Cardiff. The total expenditure amounts to some £2 million. The hazard at present is that research on 'defensive' systems are not prohibited by the Convention, and NATO and the Pentagon, egged on by the chemical and bio-tech industries, are talking speculatively of a "technology gap" with the USSR. In this atmosphere the pressure is on to develop new systems that may come outside the scope of the Convention□

## World Studies conference

WORLD STUDIES 8-13 is a project aimed at developing a multicultural curriculum which reflects our interdependent world. Their 1987 conference, entitled "Images and Journeys", is being held at King Alfreds College, Winchester on 25-27 September. Workshops include, for example, Perceptions of Other People and Places, The Role of the Media in Creating Images, Teaching about Alternative Futures and Beginning World Studies in Schools. More details from World Studies 8-13, St Martins College, Lancaster LA1 3JD□





## The secrets they wanted to hide

FORTY-EIGHT students from Sussex University are currently facing disciplinary action which could lead to their expulsion, after an occupation of the administrative building.

The occupation, involving over six hundred students, was not initiated through the bureaucracy of the students union, the usual channel for annual 'wacky' student stunts. After a green paper was published by the University authorities giving notice of the loss of ninety jobs and a 10% cut in library funding, various interest groups and societies called a public meeting. It took the meeting only two hours to decide to occupy the administrative building and thus began a ten day occupation, condemned originally by the students union, which was to reveal 'classified information' concerning the monitoring of students by the university authorities.

Documents seized during the occupation show the contempt of the university authorities towards students for whom the university was built to serve. A particular paranoia towards politically

involved students is revealed in a confidential memorandum dated March 1984, "It would be most helpful if information about students who appear to be regularly involved in demos, disruptions etc. could be informally communicated to the Dean". Further, it is clear that the authorities have compiled secret files on students political activities and have employed a private detective agency to spy on them. Similarly, a system of "positive vetting" of potential applicants to the university has been in operation for seven years. This has taken away responsibility for admissions from individual academics, ensuring that interviewees expressing left-wing views are disadvantaged.

Once such information was revealed, the students union had to support the occupation. It now faces a £74,000 fine, for alleged theft of equipment, telexes sent and the photocopying of every student file. The vice-chancellor has announced plans to impose changes on the union constitution, an idea close to the heart of Kenneth Baker.

## South Africa turns the screws

THE SCHOOL STUDENT boycotts are ending, following calls made before the emergency by the National Education Crisis Committee, comprising representatives of a cross section of black organisations. With this, parents, teachers and students are trying to devise new syllabuses and control their own education through the community rather than the state.

The South African government is imposing impossible conditions on the return, such as student application forms signed by parents accepting liability for any school damage, banning any non-approved syllabuses, banning non-approved teachers or students, slogans, badges or books. Most of the NECC leadership is now in detention, along with thousands of students. Resistance and refusal to sign or register are running high...□

## And the beat goes in

Teachers must recognise that both crime and education are political issues and in no way can school be "neutral ground".

ON 11 SEPTEMBER 1986, 600 police swooped on the predominantly black community of St Paul's, Bristol. Operation Delivery was launched, declared the police, to clear up drug dealing, and the local press was full of stories of hard drugs openly on sale on the streets.

In fact, only 20 charges for drug offences were made, involving altogether a small amount of cannabis. However, in the ensuing two nights of disturbances, the riot police made a further 111 arrests resulting in 43 charges for public order type offences. 'Crimes' created by the heavy handed police operation in which "they were marching up and down these streets like legionnaires with their shields. There were ten on every street corner and some of them were chanting 'come on monkeys, come on gorillas' deliberately winding people up."

What little credibility the police had amongst the people of St Paul's was now completely destroyed. Policing such as this has caused many schools in Inner London to operate a "Police Out of School" policy, a policy which is, at the moment, under attack from the government, the tabloid press and the National Union of Teachers.

However, only one school in the St Paul's area has 'banned' the police from its premises, and apparently this ban is not widely known outside the staffroom. The others continue to allow police on their premises. Some headteachers see the school as neutral territory where the 'two sides' can meet, but at least one head is realistic: "Teachers are in alliance with power and authority. We cannot opt out in school," he admits.

### Links

The State demands police involvement in schools. The Education Act of 1986

requires a headteacher to have regard "to any such representations which are made to him by the chief officer of police" and the annual school governors' report should describe "what steps have been taken to develop the school's links with the community (including links with the police)." Perhaps this is a reflection of the right wing establishment's mistrust of the willingness of teachers to indoctrinate children to submit to the state's authority.

The police are enthusiastic to develop their work in schools. Not just the traditional road safety aspects, they claim to want to inform young people of their rights, help them to become 'good' citizens and encourage crime prevention (don't talk to strangers). All in all they try to foster a community image within schools.

### Intelligence

Two other reasons for police activity in schools, however, are rarely mentioned. Schools are ideal places for intelligence gathering, information is gleaned from teachers about young people and their parents and from children themselves: "A lot of youngsters began talking to us, giving us descriptions and nicknames of burglars," PC Currant told the Metropolitan Police newspaper, *The Job*, of his successful contacts built up in schools and community organisations. Also, getting to know the local youth is seen as important for they are the ones who, if not already, will soon be committing the crimes.

Unfortunately for the police much of their work is counter productive. They find it very difficult to relate to children and young people even in a 'social' setting. Describing a seaside holiday with police helpers Jill Bright, in a letter to the *Guardian*, wrote: "They made little effort

to help constructively, showed racist attitudes... and seemed to imagine they were controlling a riot in their desire to shepherd the children into closed spaces!"

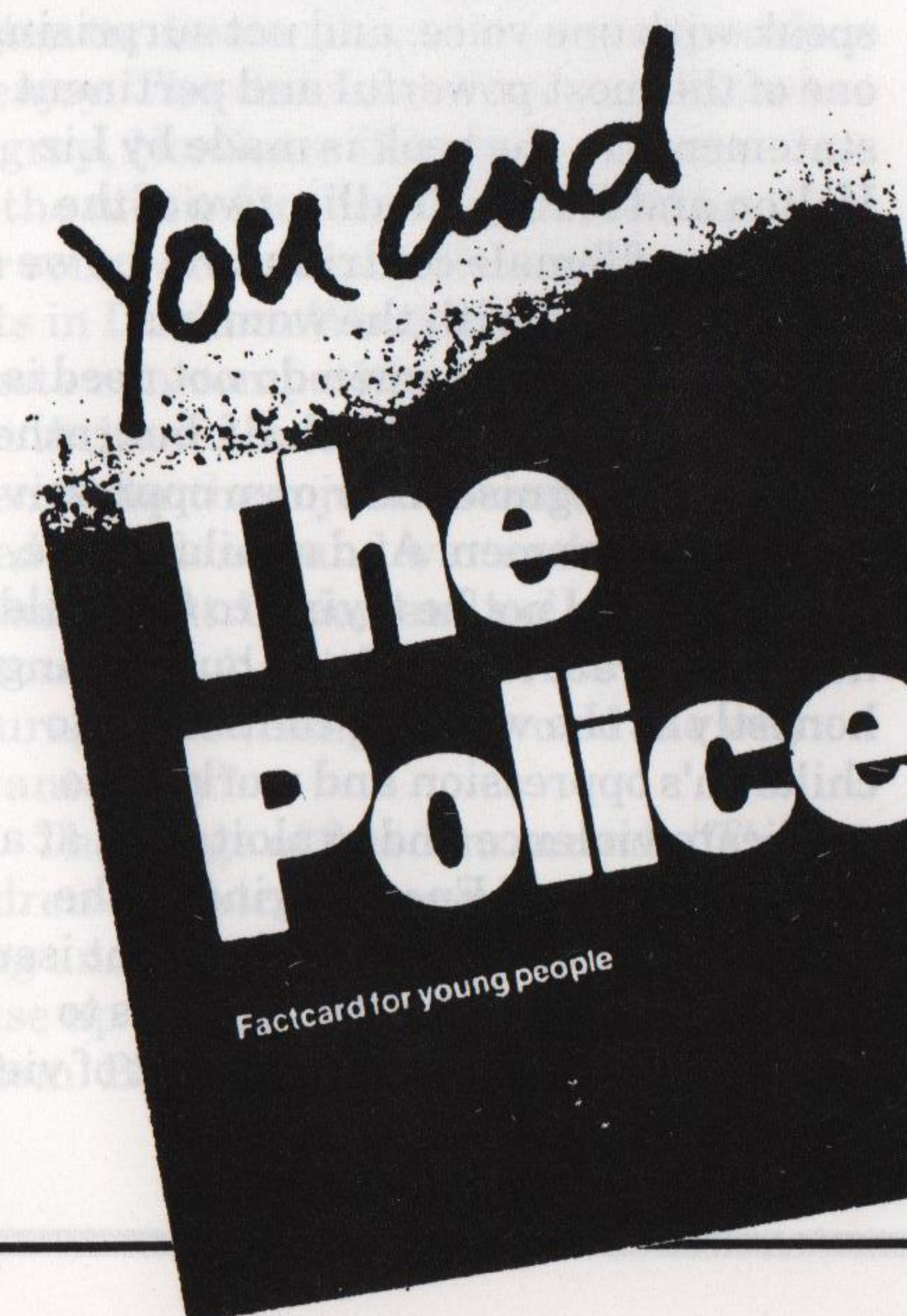
### Tell them

Like many teachers, police suffer from the delusion that children's attitudes are formed by what they are told in the classroom, rather than what they see on the streets. In school their techniques are extremely crude. The Metropolitan Police's Notes for Guidance: A Programme for Secondary Schools describes a lesson pattern as:

- Tell them what you are going to tell them
- Tell them
- Tell them what you have told them.

And evidence is that the lesson content is no more sophisticated. A vandalism lesson included: "How many of you have carved your name on the school desk? Or snapped a twig off a tree in the park?" asked detective constable Courtney. Almost all put their hands up. "That makes you vandals. Vandalism is criminal damage. Under the 1971 Criminal Damage Act you can get 10 years for it. That shows you how seriously the government takes it..."

The increasing involvement of police in schools can only be detrimental to the liberties of young people and must be seen as a reflection of Britain's slide towards becoming a Police State. The "Police Out of Schools" policy needs to be spread throughout the country and not merely confined to areas where police activities are their most extreme. Police must not be allowed to gain a foothold in schools.



### 1. In the street

#### Stopping

The police can talk to you in the street and ask you questions. You do not have to stop unless the police are searching you (see below) or you are arrested.

#### Right to silence

You do not have to answer police questions.

#### Questioning

It is usually sensible to answer simple questions like 'What is your name?', 'Where do you live?', 'Where are you going?', 'Where have you come from?'

If the police keep asking you questions say 'I'm not saying any more until I have had legal advice'.

#### Resisting

If you struggle, swear or shout at the police or threaten them you may be committing an offence for which they could arrest you.

#### Searching

The police can search you (or your bag) or any vehicle if they

have reasonable grounds to suspect you have stolen goods, an offensive weapon, or things which might be used for burglary or other crime.

Before searching you the police must have some real grounds for suspicion - they cannot search you just because you are young, black or because of the way you are dressed.

Before searching you the police must tell you the reason for the search.

The police can hold you to search you in the street - they can ask you to take off your jacket, overcoat and gloves; they can only make you take off other clothing if they take you out of public view and if the police officer conducting the search is of the same sex as you.

Wherever possible the police must make a written record of the search saying why it has been carried out; they must give you a copy of this record if you ask for it.

\* up to 24 hours  
\*ing you while they  
urries. If you are  
d for an extra 12

be held after 24  
a serious  
a warrant from a  
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stances but will usually  
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ue to hold you (and you  
nder 17) they must  
ler you to a local authority  
ren's home.

### 4. Legal advice

If you are held in a police station or are interviewed by the police you are entitled to legal advice.

As soon as you are taken to a police station or are told you are to be interviewed by the police you should ask for a solicitor.

Duty solicitor scheme  
If you have a solicitor or know one you should ask the police to find a number and let you have contact with a solicitor under the Duty Solicitor Scheme. This free service will provide you with a solicitor at any time of the day or night.

Produced by the Children's Legal Centre  
and funded by the GLC



# Free as a bird

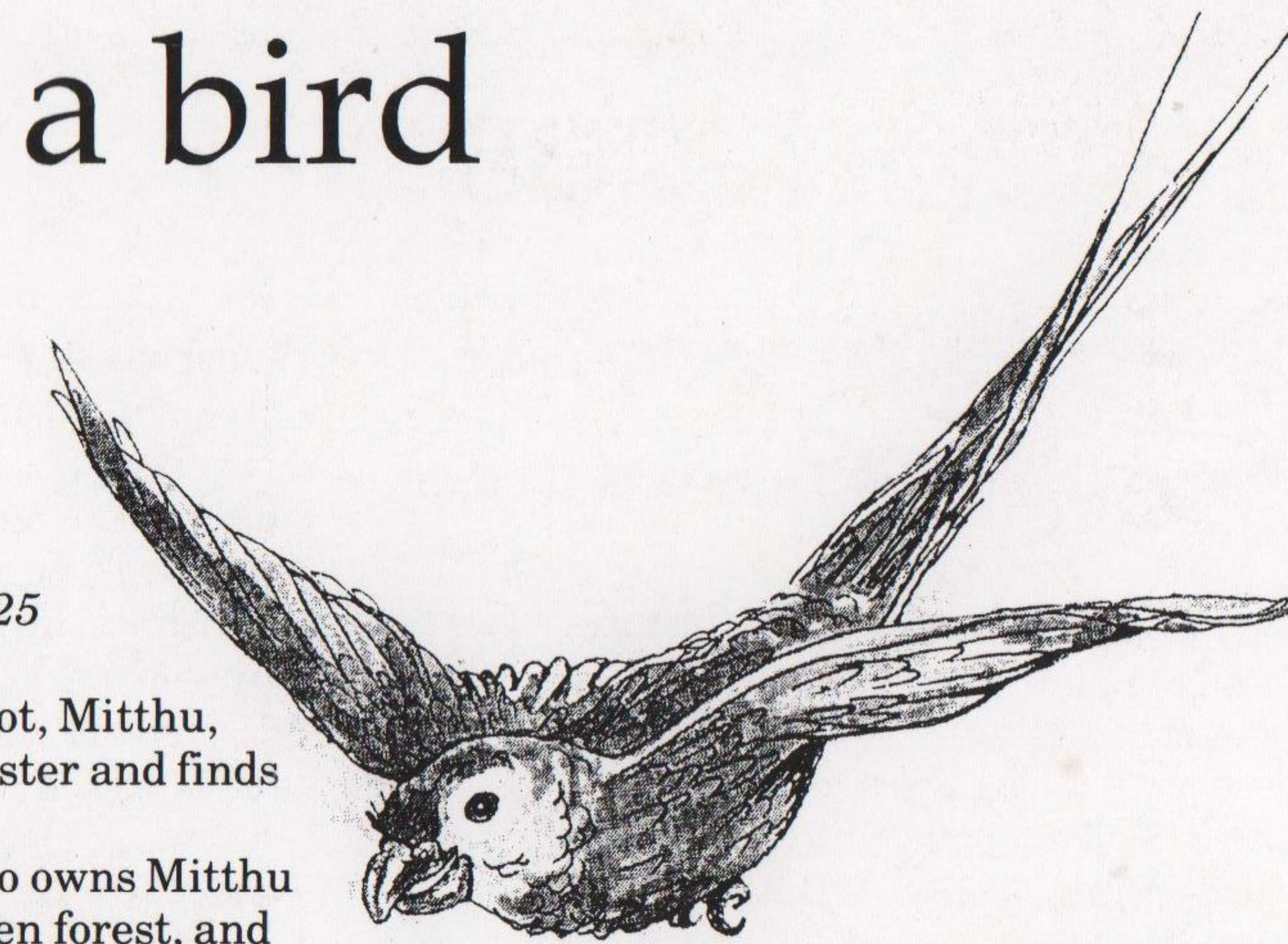
## Mitthu the Parrot

A book by Susheila Stone  
*Luzac Storytellers*, pp24, £2.25

THE STORY of a caged parrot, Mitthu, who cleverly outwits his master and finds his freedom.

The rich merchant who owns Mitthu travels through the lush green forest, and while doing so promises to take a message from Mitthu to his family; "Tell them that while they are free to fly about the forest, I am cooped up in a cage".

On hearing this the eldest parrot appears to drop dead. When Mitthu receives this sad news he falls motionless from his perch. Fearing the worst his master opens the cage; Mitthu flies out and tells him the true meaning of the news from his family, that the parrot had only played dead and this was the clue for Mitthu's escape. "The message you brought was one you did not understand. It said, pretend that you are dead and you will be free". Mitthu was now free to return to his forest home and have a good laugh about the merchant who was tricked out of his caged possession.



The story is told both in English and in Turkish. It is part of a series of dual language books produced by Luzac Storytellers in the Tall Tales Series. The story is carefully structured and well told, sustaining interest throughout. It is also beautifully illustrated. We sympathise with the caged bird and share his surprise and delight when he regains his freedom. The parrots are all intelligent and determined (not the usual storybook image) and admirable in their quest for freedom. This is an excellent book, a very good read.

*Finola Harrington and Martin Garfield*

# Sala'am

## Plenty of Stuff Around

A cassette and song book (illustrated by the children of the Woodcraft Folk)  
*Durham ILP Press, 2 Diamond street, Durham, £3.50 inc. p. & p.*

A LIVELY collection of songs for children to listen to, dance, play or sing along with and enjoy. The children of Abi Adi School in Tigray, Northern Ethiopia, sing and play the music for "Sala'am", all of the other songs are sung by the children and adults in Durham Woodcraft Folk "to promote non-competitive, non-sexist, non-racist attitudes to life". The songs express a contempt for the injustice and oppression, a hatred of violence and war and the continued destruction and pollution of the environment. A united response is encouraged "to change the world the way we want today".

The songs of freedom include "The Children of Africa". It reveals the spirit of a strong and determined people committed "to rise up united" in their fight for freedom. Both "Freedom Train" and

"Vientos del Pueblo me Llevan" are short optimistic songs sung as rounds. "Listen to the Voices" is hauntingly evocative. The voices of the old women, of the young children, of the Indian nation remain: "Telling us what we need to know, In order to be free".

The theme of injustice continues to be explored in the spirited non-sentimental "King of the Castle" where the exploited workers rebel: "As long as some eat all while others go hungry". "Rat-a-tat-tat" and "Harry" are anti the glorification of warfare, condemning the toys, the media and the adults who encourage and perpetuate this violence.

We are encouraged to become more aware of what is happening to the earth and to become more involved in stopping this destruction in "People who care" and "Crabs against pollution". Aunty Meg hates waste and assures us that: "There's plenty of stuff around ..." and warns us that we must "Use and re-use what we've got".

The songs are varied, cheerful and rousing, serious and moving. They are all involving, sung with pleasure, with an optimism and a clear message: "The only way to grow, Is to share each others skills and we'll go far".

*Finola Harrington*

## Conductive Education: a system for overcoming motor disorder

A book edited by Phillipa J Cottam and Andrew Sutton  
*Croom Helm*, pp232, £9.95

MIRACLE CURE for children with motor disabilities ... parents spending thousands on taking their children to Budapest for treatment ... lots of TV programmes.

But what is conductive education? It is difficult to be precise because there is little written theory. In short it is what they do in Hungary at the Peto (pronounced Payter) Institute. It is quite authoritarian, but it uses few artificial aids with children with movement disabilities who it tries to make orthofunctional (physically independent).

It also seems to have a high rate of success. This is the only book in English on the topic: it is comprehensive, readable and thought provoking.

## Challenging the MSC - On jobs, education and training

A book edited by Caroline Benn and John Fairley  
*Pluto Press*, pp281, £5.95,

THIS COLLECTION of essays traces the growth of the MSC (Ministry of Social Control?) from a government backwater to a pivotal position in training and education in this country, a typically English tale of fudge, incompetence and expediency layered onto a base of implicit racism, sexism and wage-reduction. With training standards like these the Japanese and Germans are laughing all the way to the bank.

## Half Left - The Challenges of Growing Up Not Quite Normal

A book by Peter and Roger Moody  
*Dreyers Forlag (U.K. George Philip Services)*, pp159, £9.50

THIS IS surely one of the best accounts of living with Down's Syndrome, or any other disability, written yet. Roger Moody lives with his brother Peter, who has Down's syndrome. You must read this poetic and libertarian work: written and photographed jointly by the two brothers.

## Two Dogs and Freedom: Children of the Townships Speak Out

A book by Ravan Press/The Open School, available from Third World Publications  
*pp55, £3.50*

IN THEIR OWN handwriting and drawings, children of the South African townships describe their evryday lives and their hopes for the future: "On Tuesday the police came to our school and they shot two times and they throw tear gas in the school yard." "Our students are stoning cars and burning buses." "But even if all this is happening we will find our freedom."