

Groups and Resources

Lib ED contacts

Bristol 0272-778453
Nottingham 0949-60306 (distribution and subs)

Education Now

PO Box 186, Ticknall, Derbyshire

Buktu Resource Project

136 Grosvenor Road, Bristol BS2 8YA

Liberation Network of People with Disabilities

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

National Union of Students

461 Holloway Road, London N7
071-272 8900

Letterbox Library

8 Bradbury Street, London N16 8JN
071-254 1640

(Specialises in non-sexist and multi-cultural books for children. For details of their free catalogue, write or phone)

Forest School Camps

Lorna English (Secretary), 110 Burbage Road, London SE24 9HD

(An organisation that arranges camps for children -- it's very decentralised)

Woodcraft Folk

13 Ritherton Road, London SW17
081-672 6031

(A kind of non-sexist, non-militarist scouts and brownies)

Education Otherwise

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

The Children's Home-Based Education Association

14 Basil Avenue, Armthorpe, Doncaster, DN3 2AT
0302-833596

Campaign Against Military Research On Campus (CAMROC)

190 Burdett Road, London E3 4AA
081-980 2455

New Education Directory

15 Bellevue, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1DB
0272-735091

Shocking Pink

Young Women's Magazine Collective, 121 Railton Road, Brixton, London
(A 4 issue sub to this excellent magazine costs £2.40)

All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism

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

Bread'n'Roses/Tenants Corner

46a Oval Mansions, Vauxhall St., London SE11
071-582 7286

(housing & education resource centre run by tenants)

Scottish Civil Liberty Trust

146 Holland Street, Glasgow G2 4NG

(Provides legal information and has published a series of leaflets aimed at young people in Scotland)

Children's Legal Centre

20 Compton Terrace, London N1 2UN
071-359 6251

Hummingbird Multicultural Resources

24 Ashley Hill, Bristol BS6 4JG

0272-541946
(publish mail order catalogue of books and other resources)

Advisory Centre for Education

18 Victoria Park Square, London E2
081-980 4596

Minority Rights Group

29 Craven Street, London WC2N 5NG
071-930 6659

Third World Publications

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

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)

Z to A Project (New University)

24 South Road, Hockley, Birmingham B18
021-551 1679

(An alternative education project)

Black and In Care

20 Compton Terrace, London N1 2UN
071-226 7102

Teachers for Animal Rights

c/o Wanda Dejliko, 29 Lynwood Road, London SW17 8SB

End Physical Punishment of Children (EPOCH)

PO Box 962, London N22 4UX

(A national organisation which aims to end physical punishment of children by parents and other carers)

National Union of Teachers

Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1
071-388 6191

Lesbian and Gay Workers in Education

BM Gayteacher, London WC1N 3XX

A K Distribution

3 Balmoral Place, Stirling, FK8 2RD

(Suppliers of a wide range of libertarian literature by post: send for their catalogue of titles)

Global Futures Project

Institute of Education, University of London, 10 Woburn Square, London, WC1H 0NS

Kilquhanity House School

Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland

University of the Third Age

Wren Street, London WC1

071-833 4747

(Self-help learning groups for older people)

Blackcurrent Otherwise Project

24 St Michaels Avenue, Northampton, NN1 4JQ

Skool Bus Project

24 Clive Street, Hereford, HR1 2SB

Summerhill School

Leiston, Suffolk, IP16 4HY

Feminist Library

5/5a Westminster Bridge Rd, London SE1

We don't have room here for a comprehensive list of all schools, groups and resources available.

For that see our handbook, *Freedom in Education - A d-i-y guide*, advertised on page 18.

International

The Children's Village School

Tombol, Wangdong, Amphoe, Muang, Kanchanaburi, 71190, Thailand

National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools

58 Schoolhouse Rd, Summertown, TN38483, USA
tel:615 964-3670

City as School

16 Clarkson Street, New York, NY 10014, USA

Foundation of Education with Production

PO Box 20906, Gaborone, Botswana
(Education for social change)

ANKUR

J-21, Hauz Khas Enclave, New Dehli 110016, India
tel:661473

(Society for alternatives in education)

Maharaja Sawai Man Singh Vidyalaya

Sawai Ram Singh Road, Jaipur-302 004, India

Tamariki Free School

Woolston, Christchurch, New Zealand

New Zealand Lib ED group

c/o Richard Bolstad, 26 Southampton Street, Christchurch, New Zealand

SAC (Syndikalisterna)

Svenvagen 98, 113 50 Stockholm, Sweden
tel:08-34-35-59

KRUT (Kritisk UtbildningsTidskrift)

Torpedverkstaden, Skeppsholmen, S111 49 Stockholm, Sweden

("Critical Journal of Education")

Frankfurt Free School

Vogelweidstrasse 3, Frankfurt, W. Germany

Familial, Day Nursery Kindergarten School

PO Box 2009, Kathmandu, Nepal

Grupo Impulso Libertario

CC984, 2000 Rosario, Argentina

Le CERISE

77 rue des Haies, 75020 Paris, France

(Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur l'Innovation Sociale et Educative, which publishes the journal "Zero de Conduite")

Graine d'Ecole

La Paillerie, Avenue de Bardenac, 33600 PESSAC, France

Circule-Air

Agence Informations Enfance, 29 rue Davy, 75017 Paris, France

tel: (1) 42-28-71-64

(an alternative education organisation and magazine)

Assn. Nationale pour l'Education Nouvelle

1 rue des Nefliers, 31400 Toulouse, France
tel: 61-52-45-10

Connect

12 Brooke St., Northcote 3070, Victoria, Australia

Acrobatic Arts Community School

PO Box 1101, Wodonga 3690, Australia

Centro Studi Libertari

via Rovetta 27, 20127 Milano, Italy

(Libertarian study centre and archive which publishes the journal "Volonta")

CNT-AIT-Ensenyament

Calle Unio 16, 1-1, Barcelona, 08001, Spain
tel: 301-06-12

CNT-Federacio d'Ensenyament de Catalunya

c/Roger de Lluria, 123 pral, 08037 Barcelona, Spain

tel: 215-7625 (English spoken Tuesday mornings)

(They publish "Alternative Teacher" (in English), news for foreign language teachers.)

De Weide Free School

Sevekootstraat 67, Erpe-mere, Nr. Aalst, Belgium

Free Schools in Vienna

c/o Davidgasse 6/15, 1100 Vienna, Austria

SEX, LIES AND VIDEOTAPE

How accurate was Channel 4's portrayal of Summerhill

FEM FM

First in Women's radio

GRADES FOR GULLIBILITY

A consumer view of schooling

A magazine for the liberation of learning

Libertarian EDUCATION

A magazine for the liberation of learning

Vol 2 No 20 Winter 1992

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Cover photo taken at Summerhill, courtesy of Channel Four.

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EDITORIAL

AFTER everything else the Tories have inflicted on state education, they have now put a religious nutcase in charge.

The new Secretary of State, John Patten, is an upper class Catholic with very strong views on the role of Christian morality in society. Already he has made it clear that he intends to make the teaching of the difference between right and wrong a central concern of schools.

For the time being however, this intention has been subordinated to the larger task of completing the dismantling of the state education system based on Local Education Authorities (LEAs).

It seems clear that the white paper, amusingly titled *Choice and Diversity*, is substantially the work of John Major with Patten just being put in charge of presentation and implementation.

Major has made it quite clear that education is a personal concern and that he is absolutely at one with the market ideologists who have made the running on this issue inside the Tory Party.

What the Tories propose is to dismantle the LEA-based system we have at present and to replace it with a market system under central control. Having failed, despite open attempts at bribery, to persuade more than a handful of schools to opt for Grant Maintained Status, they now propose to make it virtually compulsory.

Schools will become completely autonomous institutions competing with each other for pupils, with the 'best' being able to pick their intake while the rest begin the slide into sink schools.

The more successful the school, the more resources it will receive while the less successful will be faced with cuts that will reinforce failure. The likelihood is not that unsuccessful schools will close but that their intake will become increasingly working class as the successful schools become more selective.

At the same time as the market is being put to work, the Department For Education is also proposing to take more power to intervene in the running of individual schools and with what goes on in the classroom than ever before, powers that are without precedent in the history of British Education.

This might seem a contradiction: both the "free market" and central control. In fact they are two sides of the same coin. The market is not an end in itself but is the means to achieve other ends and central control will both monitor and ensure this. The intention is that the market will create a hierarchy of schools which will enable a gradual reintroduction of selection

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EDITORIAL

A quick trip to Hell

without risking the political consequences of imposing it directly.

This is more than just an educational project, it is a social project, an attempt to legitimise and reinforce the widening divisions within society.

What is interesting is that even after four general election victories, the Tories still feel the need to camouflage their intentions with a rhetoric of "choice", "diversity" and "specialisation".

How successful is this latest assault on the education system likely to be? A number of factors need to be taken into account. First there is the sheer stupidity and downright incompetence of the Tories themselves.

This factor is often underestimated when considering these people, probably because of their ability to win general elections, but the two should not be confused. Tory education policy is in the hands of people whose ignorance is equalled only by their prejudice, people whose ideas were not too long ago considered crazed nonsense. These are the people with the Prime Minister's ear.

The result under both Thatcher and Major has been a succession of failed initiatives, policies that don't work and educational disasters, and there is every reason to believe that the situation is going to get considerably worse. The dismantling of the LEA system is guaranteed to produce serious problems that are going to damage schools and students, cause the Tories difficulties and perhaps even disturb Patten's immaculately permed coiffure.

On top of this, of course, there is the collapse of the economy. Patten will be introducing his educational revolution alongside massive education cuts. This combination will create the conditions

contribution to education policy: Christian morality. The key text here is his celebrated *Spectator* article, "There Is A Choice: Good or Evil".

Here he laments secularisation and longs for a return to the faith that sustained previous centuries, for a return to moral certainties reinforced by real tangible fear of eternal damnation and hellfire:

"Dwindling belief in redemption and damnation has led to loss of fear of the eternal consequences of goodness and badness. It has had a profound effect on personal morality - especially on criminality ... It is, to me, self-evident that we are born with a sense of good and evil. It is also self-evident that as we grow up each individual chooses whether to be good or bad. Fear of eternal damnation was a message reinforced through attendance at church every week. The loss of that fear has meant a critical motive has been lost to young people when they decide whether to try to be good citizens, or to be criminals."

He looks forward to parents feeling the "contemporary lash", if they don't persuade their children to behave, to schools becoming surrogate parents and reintroducing religious teaching and to the turning back of the secularist tide and the revival of the Church as a force in society.

There is no doubt that Patten intends to use his considerable powers as Secretary of State to try and achieve these objectives. Already the Tory press have welcomed, in the words of the *Daily Mail*, his "CRUSADE to put God and Christianity back into the

rest of the Cabinet damned for a start), his real concern is with the working class young.

He is addressing the problem of alienation and unrest among young people on the housing estates and in the inner cities. He is worried about rising levels of petty crime and the certainty, in conditions of mass unemployment, of a return to the riots of the early 1980s.

The only answer that modern Toryism can suggest is that the schools have got to inculcate the fear of God into potential troublemakers. Instead of being offered pie in the sky by and by, they are to be warned of Hell down below when you go.

This will not work. As one headteacher at a Newcastle primary school put it with great bitterness, her pupils ... "don't need to be told about Hell. Some of them are living in it".

What is particularly contemptible about Patten's quite cynical attempt to use his religion as an instrument for social control, an attempt that a great many Catholics will reject, is that his morality is without a social conscience.

What sort of morality considers it acceptable to deprive tens of thousands of unemployed, young people of social security, leaving many literally penniless, forced into begging on the streets or prostitution?

What sort of morality is it that presides over a dramatic rise in the number of homeless, many of them young people, something Patten, a former housing minister has direct responsibility for (as the *Observer* put it, "... he helped preside over one of the Thatcher Government's most brutal and humanly destructive policies ... when he left the DOE there were more human wrecks living in cardboard boxes in our cities than there had been when he joined it")?

What sort of morality is untroubled by, indeed is in favour of, the increasing gap between the rich and poor in society?

What sort of morality is it that regards the huge increase in the number of children living in poverty as of no account? Whereas in 1979 10% of all children were living in poverty, ten years later in 1989 the figure was 25%, and is certainly even higher today. What sort of morality is agnostic on these issues?

What we are confronted with in the person of John Patten is a pharisaical hypocrite and bigot, a stooge who is being used by John Major to remodel the education system so that it better fits a society with increasing inequality and deepening social divisions. He has to be opposed and exposed every step of the way.

"I believe in God. I worry about him. I think that He probably worries about me."

John Patten, Secretary of State, Department for Education.

for resistance and for a Tory defeat. The Government is in deepening trouble over the economy and education is an area where they can be made to pay the price.

Which brings us to the third factor: the apparent ability of the majority of teachers to put up with anything the Government chooses to do to them. Will this stoicism under fire prove inexhaustible or will the troops finally mutiny? As the Government's unpopularity increases, teacher confidence will recover. There are battles ahead.

And now to Patten's own distinctive

classroom".

What lies behind this sudden religious enthusiasm on the part of a Government previously considered to be wholeheartedly committed to the worship of the Mammon? To put it bluntly, Patten's Christian morality is nothing of the sort. What he is concerned with is not morality at all but social discipline and social control, with keeping the lower classes in line.

Patten's Christian concerns are very selective. While he mentions issues of personal morality such as marital breakdown, divorce, adultery, illegitimacy, abortion etc. (that's the

Fem Fm - Sound Choice!

Pat Thorne tells how the idea for a female frequency developed from one woman's inspiration to an organisation involving over two hundred volunteers ...

WOMEN IN BRISTOL made broadcasting history when they put Britain's very first women's radio station on air for eight days last March.

In a demonstration of the art of the possible, they showed how voluntary and co-operative effort can succeed in spite of financial uncertainty; and perhaps just as important - that energy, talent and enthusiasm are just as valuable as experience and cultural background in the making of good speech and music radio programmes.

But above all, they showed that women in broadcasting are worth far more than the limited amount of responsibility they enjoy at the moment. (Taking the media throughout Europe as a whole, women make up less than 4% of the total workforce and the majority of those are engaged in service occupations such as clerical and secretarial grades which unfortunately are perceived as subsidiary roles with low status.) So **Fem FM** wanted to show that women have the necessary ability to be producers, technicians, engineers, studio managers, presenters and yes, even disc jockeys.

In March 1991 **Fem FM** existed only as a bold idea in the minds of Caroline Mitchell, co-ordinator of media studies at South Bristol College, and Trish Caverly, a freelance broadcaster with a passion for community radio (Trish had helped to set up FTP Radio in Bristol a few years ago). It wasn't even called **Fem FM** as yet, but only "a women's radio station".

Under the provisions of the new broadcasting act, it's now possible to obtain a temporary licence to broadcast over a small area in association with a special event (the best known of which is Brighton's Festival Radio). Trish and Caroline thought - well, why not a women's radio station starting on International Women's Day?

And everybody they talked to responded with such enthusiasm, a desire to be linked with the project, to help to make it happen, and to share their talents so that the radio station would be a success. Right from the start, the project seemed blessed with goodwill and positive commitment.

Soon, regular monthly meetings were being held by what became known as the steering group, and the name **Fem FM** emerged as favourite partly because it would be easy to use in a design for an eye-catching logo, and also because people thought it would be easy to compose a good jingle for a such a short, snappy name.

From the outset, women connected with the organisation of **Fem FM** were determined to involve as many other women as possible as it was always envisaged that a large group of volunteers would be needed to cope with the volume of work, as well as give first time broadcasting experience to those normally denied access to the airwaves.

So a series of public meetings was held throughout Bristol which attracted hundreds of women. Far too many of them very much wanted to be disc jockeys, so it had to be explained that not everyone can have the sexy jobs. In the end, though, there were enough volunteers to help with promotions, training, premises, publicity, fundraising, administration, volunteer co-ordinating and production control.

But what we still didn't have was money. And although we had been promised small amounts of help from local authorities (Bristol and Avon) and South West Arts, we were kept going for the first five months on a loan of £500 from an early enthusiast. All we needed for peace of mind was a major commercial sponsor.

We were so excited by our project, and had such belief in our own ability to put a women's radio station on air that we thought our enthusiasm would be infectious; that no commercial firm could fail to see our potential, or realise the benefits to themselves.

What we didn't realise was that most commercial sponsorship is planned at least twelve, and often as much as eighteen, months in advance and that we were asking for an impossibly huge amount of money (we wanted at least £10,000). We never attracted that kind of support, although we were very glad to be helped by Aer Lingus and the Co-operative Retail Society with smaller amounts of money.

In the end, we just managed to raise the £20,000 it cost to put our radio station on air - half of it coming from our own fundraising efforts (raffles, benefit gigs, T-shirt sales, individual donations) whilst the bulk of our training budget was provided through a £5,000 grant from the Gulbenkian Foundation.

But it was nail-biting stuff right up to the very week we went on air, whether we would end up in debt, and we couldn't have managed without generous help from local organisations (all our printing costs were donated by Jiffyprint; and our studios in Brunswick Square were housed in a lovely Georgian building lent to us by

Knightstone Housing Association).

In the months leading up to our launch on International Women's Day, there was always a high level of debate within the steering group about the kind of station we wanted it to be; how to develop a radio station with a distinctly different sound and style; how to involve women of different generations, backgrounds and cultures; how to give women whose first languages were other than English access to broadcasting and yet keep our mainstream audience; and how to provide enough training opportunities to those volunteers who had such brilliant ideas for programmes but who had no previous studio experience.

Helping us to resolve many of these problems were the experienced people at Great Western Radio, BBC Radio Bristol, BBC South West Network and Bristol Polytechnic Media Department all of whom not only advised and encouraged us, but put producers, directors, technicians, engineers and studio time and equipment at our disposal. We still didn't have studio space or equipment of our own, and **Fem FM** would not have happened at all without the co-operation and generosity of so many other people in the broadcast media in the West Country.

From October 1991 onwards we embarked on an ambitious training programme to give first-time broadcasters the necessary experience and confidence to make and present their own programmes; or to play a vital part in the essential technical support and monitoring during our time on air.

Full-time women broadcasters gave unstintingly of their expertise and generously shared their skills with those women new to radio who were to be given their first chance during our time on air. In the period from October to February when most mixing and editing was finalised on pre-recorded programmes, we trained a total of fifty eight women in an across-the-range variety of broadcasting and engineering skills.

In the countdown to our debut on 8 March the pressures on all of us intensified, particularly on those members of the steering group who were normally self-employed freelancers and who now found their work for **Fem FM** taking up more and more of their time.

And inevitably frustrations arose simply out of the fact that we were so dependent on the use or loan of

equipment and studio time which was not under our direct control. Some programme makers found themselves recording in one studio, mixing and editing in another, with the deadline ever nearer, unable to get the use of yet another studio for putting the finishing touches to their work.

As with all first time projects, (especially one involving such large numbers of people) there were sometimes problems with communication, and logistic difficulties of getting all the jobs done at the right time and in the right order. It was only possible with a high degree of friendly co-operation between people who had a clear idea of their own areas of responsibility and control. What characterised the whole set-up of **Fem FM** in the weeks leading up to, and during our time on air was this wonderful spirit of working together in the shared partnership of enterprise.

Finally, we gathered in the studio at Brunswick Square in the early morning of Sunday 8 March to hear Roz Scordilis, Bristol's own "Queen B" announce that **Fem FM** was on air broadcasting on 101 FM and making broadcasting history in the process. Champagne corks popped in the general air of euphoria and excitement as the first programmes went out - "This is it!" we thought.

And then we settled down to the business of running a radio station nineteen hours a day for the next eight days, providing a lively mix of speech and music reflecting the broadest range of women's issues and concerns. By the time we said a sad farewell the following Sunday evening, we had attracted a growing following of listeners in and around metropolitan Bristol and learned that we could be heard as far away as Bath.

Our telephone lines were always busy with listeners phoning in with requests, dedications and (mostly) favourable comments, whilst the post brought goodluck messages and cards of good will. We even had a tape from the cast of "The Archers" sending us their support and received coverage in local and national press, television and radio. Community radio stations from around the world telephoned to arrange phone interviews which went out in Australia, United States, Canada, South Africa and many cities in Europe.

For many women involved with **Fem FM**, the business of working together in such a mutually supportive fashion, especially during our week on air, was an intense and fulfilling experience. Many of them described how the farewell broadcast was accompanied by a dreadful sense of loss - and in the days that followed, tuning in to 101 brought

only silence which served to reinforce that sadness. Others simply claimed that being part of **Fem FM** had been the best thing they'd done in their lives, and didn't know now, how they were going to carry on without it.

But most women felt that not even the real sorrow that it was over could eclipse our amazing achievements. To bring a project like this from inception to realisation within a year is in itself something of which we can always be proud. And to have worked together, without any commercial backing or resources other than our own energy, enthusiasm and determination is quite wonderful. Starting from scratch, we really showed what we could do.

We introduced many local women to the idea of a career in sound broadcasting and gave many volunteers their first opportunity to be trained. Inspired by **Fem FM**, local station GWR has hired its very first woman DJ and on our very last day on air we heard that Radio Manchester was planning the sincerest sort of flattery by putting on a copycat show. As a tribute to the success of **Fem FM**, women in Radio Manchester will have complete control of the air waves once a month.

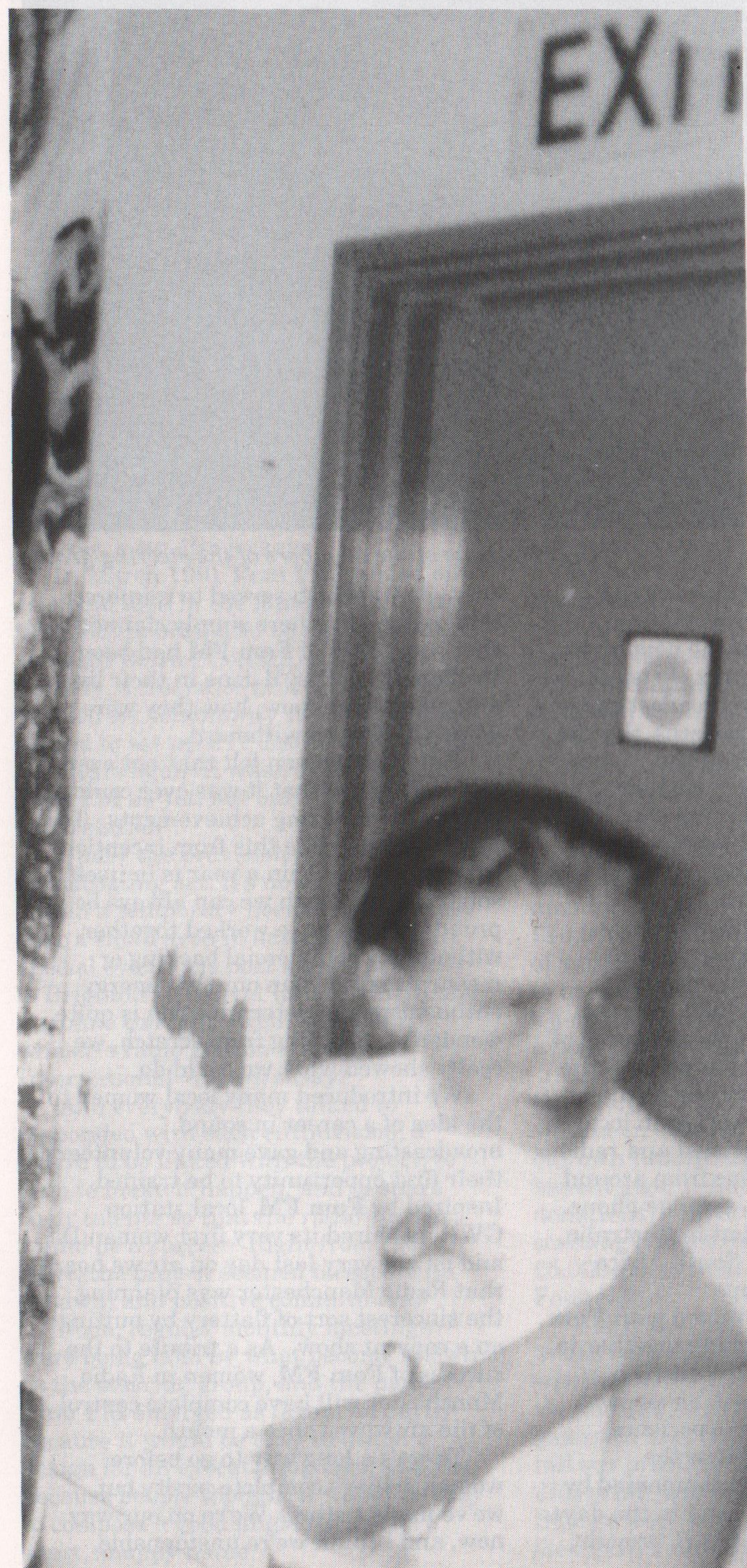
There's a long way to go before women achieve complete parity but we've made a start. We're on our way now, and I think we're unstoppable.



101FM: Some of the members of the steering group

A light extinguished

School Units are places that don't often get talked about. The last stopping place for young people that the Education System has decided are "unmanageable", they receive as little funding as publicity. Yet some maintain a very libertarian approach to schooling. Here *Lib ED* looks at Bath Place in Leamington Spa, which was a light at the end of a dark tunnel for many until it closed recently.



OFF-SITE school units are often dumping grounds for young people who for the best of reasons find school oppressive and boring. Bath Place School in Leamington Spa always tried to operate on libertarian lines. Sadly it closed this summer, a victim of savage cuts by Warwickshire Education Authority. We look here at how the school has operated and what the implications of its closure are.

Bath Place School Unit in Leamington Spa came into existence in 1977. It has taken pupils from most of the local secondary schools. The policy was to take young people for the whole of their fifth year of secondary education. These persons would generally need to be referred through the Education Office, towards the end of their fourth year at school. The individuals referred were normally long-term truants or excluded or suspended from their previous schools.

The school played an integral part in the community centre in which it was located. This organisation incorporates a coffee bar, playgroup, women's room and a welfare rights advice centre. The school aimed to create a structure and environment which enabled young people to learn and interact together in a cooperative way and to relate responsibility to each other as individuals and as members of the community. It sought to:

1. Prepare pupils in their final year of schooling for leaving school, establish support systems with their involvement and devise a curriculum suitable for their immediate and future needs.
2. Structure a class which keeps the balance between the sexes and deters individuals from dominating others.
3. In a small group setting develop a strong sense of responsibility towards all, both fellow pupils and teachers.

The curriculum included Maths and English which could be taken at City and Guilds level. School work was based on mutual help rather than competition. Those who were academically inclined are encouraged to go to college once they left Bath Place School.

Young people who have experienced severe problems at school need time and support to work through their difficulties and the programme allowed time for this work, both individually and in the group.

The School operated within the framework of a social education programme so that subjects and skills such as photography, art-work, social studies, cookery etc were not seen as an end in themselves but as having real relevance to the community around them.

Community work in the centre was seen as an important part of the timetable and provided a valuable opportunity to build constructive relationships. Work experience placements were arranged outside the centre for pupils who felt ready for this.

From the time a young person was referred to Bath Place, contact was made and maintained frequently with parents and guardians. The roles of the teachers in the school were to take on not only the function of pastoral care but to supplement the functions of educational social workers and social worker when necessary.

The school's location in a community centre enabled parents to drop in for coffee, a chat, or to use the facilities of the building. In many cases where the parent's relationships with previous schools had deteriorated, they were able to develop more positively in Bath Place. Family support was always an essential ingredient and effort was spent on maintaining links consistently rather than just at times of crisis.

WHAT'S SO DIFFERENT ABOUT BATH PLACE SCHOOL

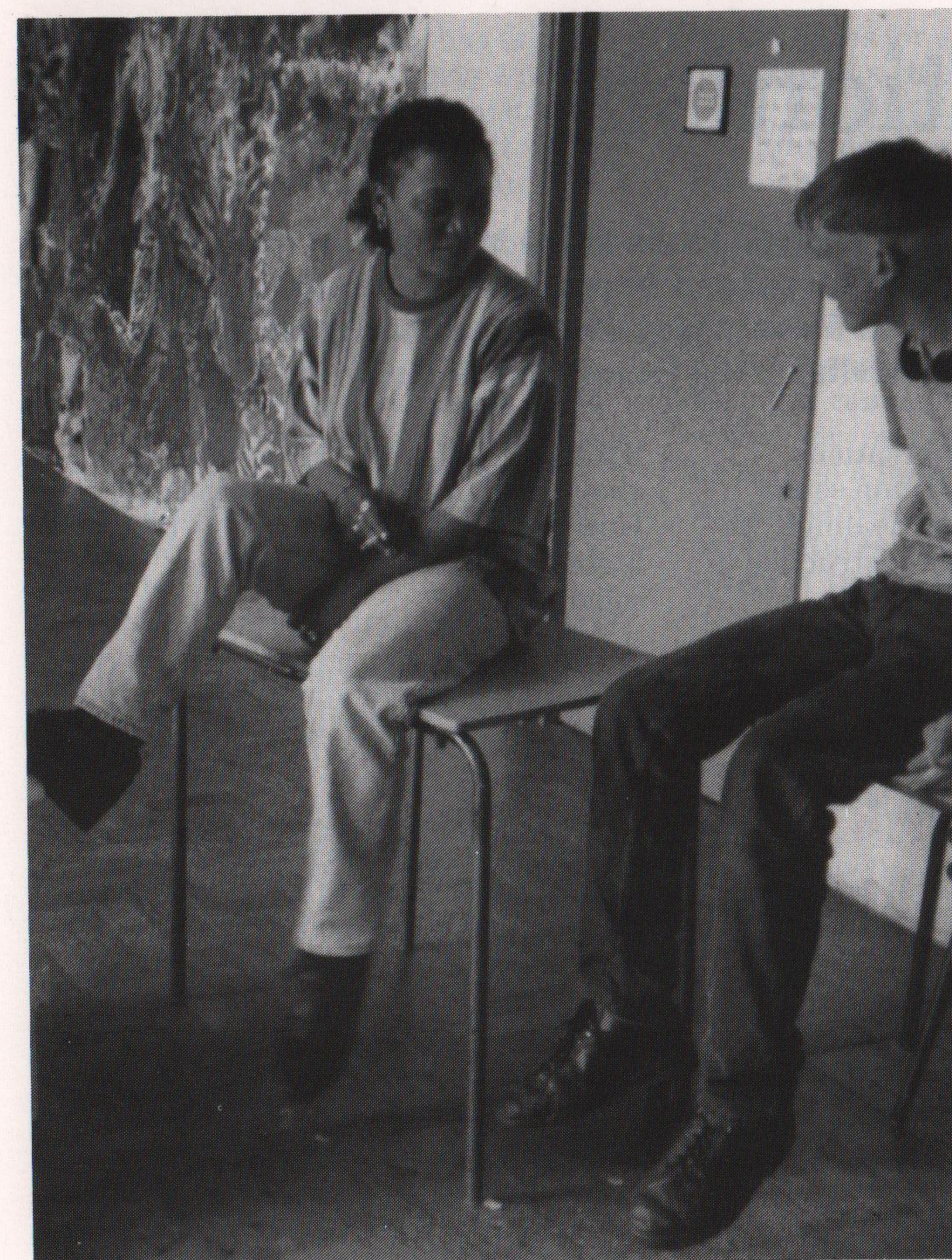
I AM 15 years of age and I attend Bath Place school with 11 other 15-16 year olds.

There is one difference at Bath Place and that is freedom. There are two teachers called Pat and John and we all start at 9.30am, and are there till about 4.00pm. We have 5 lessons a week and they are Maths on Monday, English on Tuesday, Art on Wednesday, Social Studies on Thursday and Cooking on Friday. We have these lessons after our cup of tea and discussions usually at 10.00am. The lesson then finishes at 11.00am. We then have some lunch. We either make it at the school or have some chips from the nearest chippie. Then it's into the minibus and we go to several places; e.g. ice skating, bowling. We have a half day on Wednesday.

Bath Place is not really like a school, it is more like home really. You can eat whenever you want to. You can smoke whenever you want to and you are treated with respect not just like some failure who dropped out of school. Your opinions are actually listened to and you can wear your own clothes, and when I wear my jeans and jacket I feel much better and far more individual than anyone else. If I was wearing a uniform, I would feel very uncomfortable and boring.

As for Pat and John, they are like one of us. They listen to you, they respect you and they are good teachers. They know how to treat kids who find normal school life hard. Also John is interested in mountain bikes so he's got to have some sense.

Bath Place is not a school for rejects, it is a school for kids who hate normal school life. Bath Place to me is like the light at the end of a dark tunnel.



CUTS, CUTS AND MORE CUTS

WARWICKSHIRE County Council, Tory-controlled for as long as anyone can remember never believed that it would be charge-capped. When Michael Heseltine announced that capping was imminent immediately before the general election, the panic buttons sounded at County Hall and the Education and Social Services Departments prepared to take the brunt of inevitable budget cuts.

What no one anticipated was the savagery with which the Education Department set about local services. Youth and community work were reduced to a shell. The Special Education needs programme was decimated. Funding for voluntary projects was abolished.

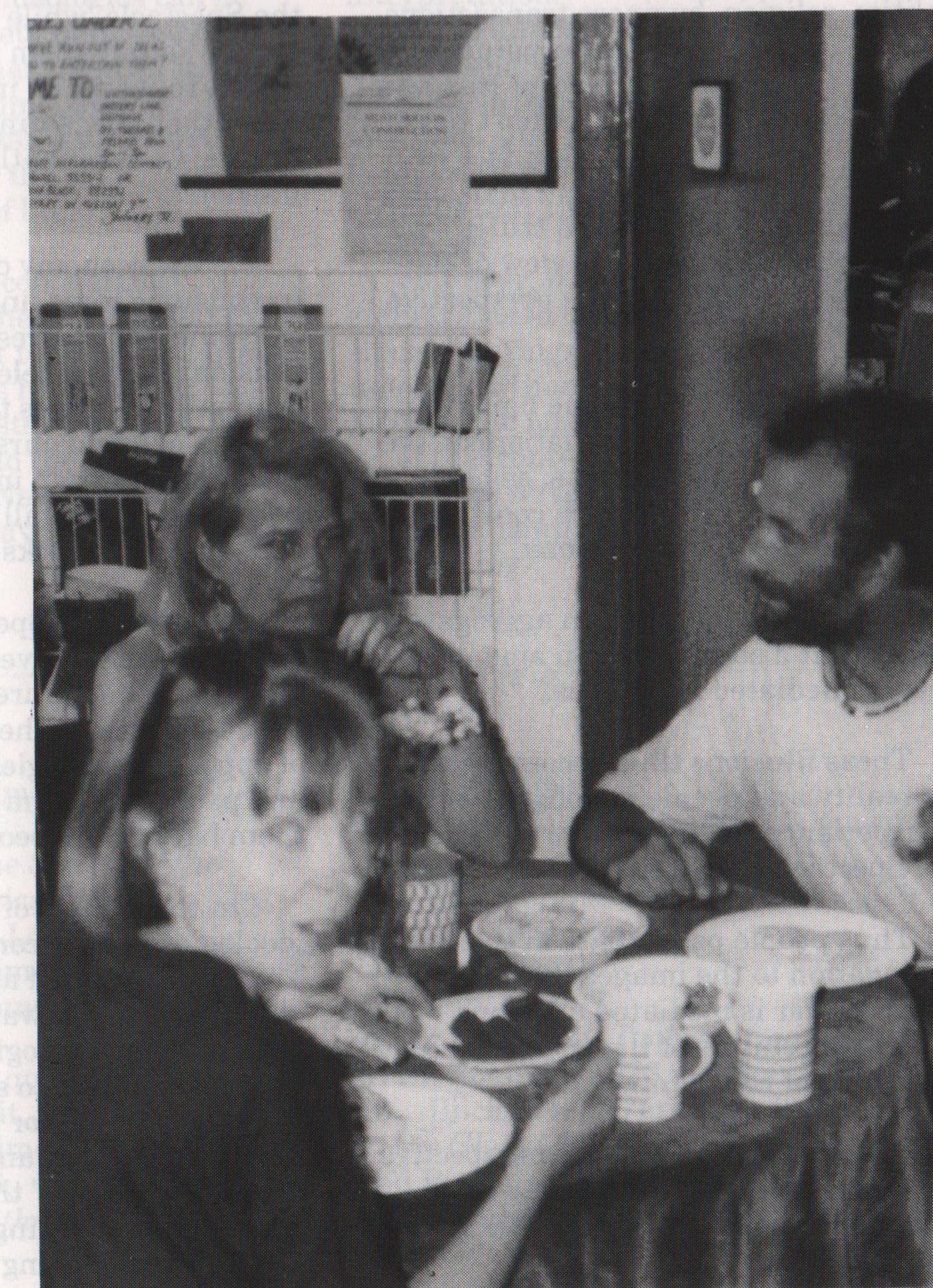
Bath Place School Unit cost the Local Authority just under £50,000 a year to run. It was an easy target and the decision to end funding in August was taken without any consultation with the project itself.

It is a familiar story but the implications for young people who find nothing for them in mainstream schooling are enormous.

The Local Authority suggests that the onus is now on schools to accommodate the traditional 'school-refuser'. The reality is that there will be little or no provision for young people who for whatever reason find school unbearable.

Off-site units often have as oppressive regimes as mainstream schools. At Bath Place the situation has been very different and the school's attendance record since 1977 has always been between 80 and 90%. Furthermore the school has had great success in giving its students access to good training programmes and employment after they leave.

As another state-funded libertarian project bites the dust, as a result of the Tory government's financial attack on local government, how sad but how predictable it is that the young are the ones who suffer.



Illich and The Situationists

In this final part of our series on the thoughts of Ivan Illich, Clive Baldwin looks at the influence of the Situationists. A small group of radicals who mixed Marxism, Surrealism and Anarchism into a potent cocktail of action and words, their influence, especially in the Evenements in Paris in May 1968, far outweighed their numbers. For both Illich and the Situationists, the solution is inevitably the Revolution of Everyday Life.

IN 1957 the Situationist International was formed and through its publications a new strand of anarchist thought was developed. This analysis of society found expression in the term "The Society of the Spectacle" after the publication of that name by Guy Debord in 1967.

For the Situationists the analysis of society stemmed from the traditional anarchist concern with the nature of power. Power is carefully disguised and manipulated through the construction of illusions which prevent people from perceiving its reality. Through these illusions we come to see life from the perspective of power:

"In the Society of the Spectacle we live in a world of carefully constructed illusions - about ourselves, each other, about power, authority, justice and daily life. These illusions are both constructed and reflected by education, advertising, propaganda, television, newspapers, speeches, elections, politics, religion, business transactions and the courts. They are perpetuated by us from the moment we accept this as a valid view of the world. We don't have to agree with every detail - in fact we are encouraged to argue and take sides over a host of prefabricated trifles - we simply have to accept this view of the world; to view life from the perspective of Power."¹

Yet, far from being some naive conspiracy theory, the Situationists see these illusions, these myths, as being part of a lived reality which constructs and maintains these illusions.

"The spectacle is not an aggregate of images but a social relation among people, mediated by images."²

These illusions thus become taken for reality and people no longer perceive or experience reality but participate in the Spectacle as passive recipients, as audience.

Thus people participate in their own subjugation to the images through which Power is mediated and thus become spectators of the spectacle. In the words of Larry Law:

"Once we accept power's perspective we can be safely let loose in a world filled with people who accept the same perspective.

That way, by our conversations, relationships, advice, 'common sense', and our simplest everyday dealings, we engage in the democratic construction of social illusions."³

In the sphere of social life the main form these illusions take is the commodity relationship. Whatever is experienced is, and must be, experienced as a commodity:

"Capitalism has made all social relationships commodity relationships. The very structure of our daily lives is based on commodity relationships. Society is consumed as a whole - the ensemble of social relationships and structures is the central product of the commodity economy."⁴

And the Spectacle, in order to preserve itself, creates new demands (or needs) which it then attempts to satisfy. However, this reveals a significant contradiction within the Spectacle. For the Spectacle, while creating demands cannot satisfy them and to a certain extent relies on its inability to satisfy so that other needs can be created from its failure. Consequently, it reveals itself as illusion:

"... the economy cannot stop making us consume more and more, and to consume without respite is to change illusions at an accelerating pace which gradually dissolves the illusion of change. We find ourselves alone, unchanged, frozen in the empty space behind the waterfall of gadgets, family cars and paperbacks."⁵

However, the Spectacle is incredibly flexible in that its very creation of needs, and its failure to satisfy, can be used to create further commodities out of opposing ideologies by recuperating and packaging them and then selling them back to the people:

"In the Society of the Spectacle ideologies have become commodities. They are packaged and offered to us for consumption. We wander along the shelves of an ideological supermarket inviting someone to sell us their product. We look for pre-packaged ideas that we can adopt and live by - convenience 'foods' that cut out the necessity for deciding what we really want and developing a theory to get it.

'I'll buy that!' - says the convinced shopper in the ideological supermarket. How revealing that phrase is - the highest compliment of the true consumer."⁶

Thus the Spectacle becomes total in its embrace, taking in not only its own products but those of its opponents.

"The spectacle is the moment when the commodity has achieved the total occupation of social life. Not only is the relation to the commodity visible but it is all one sees: the world one sees is its world."⁷

However, the spectacle is maintained, not only by the commodity relationship but also by a number of other illusions. One of these is the illusion of scarcity. Commodities become important to the extent they are scarce. The spectacle survives not only by creating needs but also by failing to completely satisfy those needs so that others can be created out of that failure:

"In the image of the society happily unified by consumption, real division is only suspended until the next non-accomplishment in the consumable. Every specific product which must represent the hope for a dazzling short cut to the promised land of total consumption is, in its turn, ceremoniously presented as the decisive factor ... Any product gets its prestigious character only because it has been placed for a moment in the centre of social life, as the revealed mystery of production's final goal ... Too late it reveals its essential poverty, which it naturally gets from the misery of its production. But by that time another object already carries the justification of the system and the demand to be acknowledged."⁸

Because of the all-embracing nature of the spectacle, and its ability to recuperate dissent, any revolution needs to be rooted in the everyday experience of the individual rather than an adherence to any specific commodified ideology. Neither is it sufficient to simply develop a critique of society, no matter how radical in appearance, waiting for such theory to provide a blueprint to the future for this too can be recuperated by the spectacle. This, according to the Situationist, is

where revolutionary theory has failed.

The revolution, then, starts with the great refusal. For the Situationists it starts with individuals living out their dreams and desires in interaction with others:

"It is not enough to analyse the misery of daily life and its causes, we must speak of our dreams and desires and provide examples of life as it could be. We must start to build the world we want now - in our relationships, our interactions and interventions and in the way we conduct ourselves in our daily lives.

Revolutionary theory is developed on the basis of lived experience. A revolutionary movement based on the development of a revolutionary theory is participatory."⁹

A similar form of analysis and prescription can be found in Illich. The analysis of society in terms of the commodity relationship forms much of the focus for Illich. For him, human activities have gradually been turned into needs to be satisfied by the consumption of professionally determined packages. This commodity relationship, mediated through institutionally prescribed packages, is increasing and threatens to engulf the whole of society - a trend encapsulated in the title "Imprisoned in the Global Classroom".

For Illich, too, this society is maintained through the creation and promotion of certain myths. The four myths which schooling creates and relies upon are:

- that the products of institutions are the socially valuable ones and that these products are available only through the client relationship with the institution. For example, learning is the product of attending school.
- that these institutional values are quantifiable ones and thus non-quantifiable experience is not as valid as that which is quantifiable. Thus education becomes grades, rankings and scores.
- that these values, being measurable, can thus be packaged for consumption. Thus education becomes curriculum.
- that consumption of these commodities breeds the desire (or need) for further consumption i.e. there is always more to be learnt in the form of packaged knowledge from further educational institutions.¹⁰

As with the Situationists, Illich sees that a necessary part of this commodification is the promise of satisfaction and the guarantee that satisfaction is permanently delayed. This failure on the part of institutions to provide the packages they promise is then used as the reason to extend their influence and prepare further

commodities for consumption. This is illustrated in the following passage:

"Educators can justify more expensive curricula on the basis of their observation that learning difficulties rise proportionately with the cost of the curriculum. This is an application of Parkinson's Law that work expands with the resources available to do it. This law can be verified on all levels of school: for instance, reading difficulties have been a major issue in French schools only since their per capita expenditures have approached US levels of 1950 - when reading difficulties became a major issue in US schools."¹¹

Within a schooled society there are what Illich terms "irrational inconsistencies" whereby the very production of any particular commodity frustrates the satisfaction of desire (or need) after the institution passes through the second watershed.¹²

Thus education becomes less and less likely with the ever increasing reliance on schools, health care increasingly impossible with increasing reliance on the medical establishment etc. This is a very similar to the Situationist notion that the accelerating rate of change in commodities destroys the illusion of change ie that society has within it contradictions which reveal its true nature.

Illich also shares the notion that supposedly opposing ideologies can be recuperated into society and used as support for, rather than opposition to, the status quo. For him, opposing ideologies share the same blindspots which thus maintain the institutionalisation of life:

"As it is, it has become almost senseless to oppose the political left to the right. You cannot tell a liberal from a conservative unless he wears a button. The economists of socialist and capitalist countries do the same with different rhetoric ... New politics has come to mean new ways of getting more of the same."¹³

and an institutionalised society would be perfectly capable of absorbing dissent:

"... the present crisis in the schools could provide educators with an excuse to use all the networks of contemporary society to funnel their messages to us - for our own good. Deschooling, which we cannot stop, could mean the advent of a 'brave new world' dominated by well-intentioned administrators of programmed instruction."¹⁴

Finally, the revolution starts in everyday life. In Illich's words:

"The emerging counter-culture reaffirms the values of semantic content above the efficiency of increased and more rigid syntax ... This reorientation towards personal surprise rather than institutionally engineered values will be disruptive of the social order ..."¹⁵

For him, the revolution starts with a return to vernacular values and the commons; in self-determined projects; spontaneous and creative intercourse between people unmediated by institutions and the embrace of voluntary austerity.

The above comparison is not meant to imply that Illich is a closet Situationist. There are substantial difference between their approaches which do not allow for this interpretation.

For instance, the Situationists deal with an analysis of the production process, an aspect Illich hardly ever mentions, and their starting point is an analysis of the nature of Power, an element that Illich never adequately addresses.

However, it is important to note the similarities in order to indicate that Illich's writings have connections with, indeed are thoroughly infused with, the ideas of the anarchist tradition.

If this contention is accepted then I believe we have a foundation on which to build a more sophisticated theory of deschooling.

NOTES

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- Spectacular Times, op. cit., p3.
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- ibid., p74.

Grades for gullibility

Just what are schools like today? Schoolchildren rarely get asked. Sarah Loutfi reflects on school life, exams, the divisiveness, the frustration, and what it should really be for.

GOING TO SCHOOL is not a way of becoming educated. It is merely a form of capitalism which helps to split people (from an early age) into classes. The main way in which schools do this is in the form of tests. Those who do well in them and get high grades will be put in the groups only for geniuses. The rest whose marks don't help sell the school are shoved into lower groups or "thickie" groups as I have often heard my peers refer to them.

SATs, GCSEs, 'A' Levels, the lot. All these prove nothing. A good memory is all you need to have in order to "do well". Just agree with everything they say, don't argue, take the lies in, wear the uniform and shut up. These obedient children will get an A in every subject. Those of us who offer an alternative way of learning, as opposed to being dictated to by the teacher, are "just going to have to learn to respect the rules".

In actual lesson time, when we are not revising for exams, we are fed the lies, hypocrisy and useless verbiage that the National Curriculum says we must. In Maths we learn how to use statistics, ie the amount of people who use unleaded petrol. Art lessons are merely preparing us for being advertising agents and in 'music' lessons we invent our own advertising jingles. The languages we are supposed to learn teach us catchy businessmen's phrases such as "ich möchte ein Coca Cola Bitte".

Our history lessons are constructed carefully so that we grow up thinking, amongst other rubbish, that American Indians are savages, that all inventors are European and that to be apathetic is the best way to be. Geography lessons teach us how to plan underground networks and I'm sure RE lessons don't have to be looked at in great detail.

So what are we doing when we are at school? We are being shaped and moulded so that we are ready to become bosses and workers. Then at the age of 16, the "thickies" are sent to work and the "geniuses" are left to study in Further Education.

Anyone who poses a threat to the content of lessons is frowned upon. A fellow pupil of mine was thrown out of school for an offence she did not commit. Why? Because those at the top, the senior management team, did not want her at school. She spoke out and was silenced very quickly.

The National Curriculum is very carefully planned out for us. It is constructed so well that the majority of people think they have done well to get



PLUS ÇA CHANGE: graphic from Lib ED 1979

an A. These marks are not for intelligence, whatever intelligence might mean, these grades are for gullibility.

It is important to realise what these people are doing to us. I can't speak even a little in a foreign language, I can't use any mathematical skills, I can't draw, I don't know where any places in the world are. I can't sew, cook or work manually, my spelling

leaves a lot to be desired and the RE and History I have learnt will never be of any use to me.

The right to an education is an important one. But the right to a free education where we learn what we want to learn and we become more aware about the things that can help us, is all the more important and necessary in order to allow us to grow up free minded and free spirited.

Sex, lies and videotape

Many of you have seen the Channel Four film *Summerhill at 70* on the Cutting Edge programme and many others of you have read about the film in the papers. Summerhill has never before been subjected to this kind of concerted barrage of criticism by the British media. The film, with its bleak picture of life at the school, has been seen by millions of people who now think they know what goes on at Summerhill. Unfortunately for most people seeing is believing. The *Lib ED* letter box has been straining under the weight of protest. Here we print contributions from teachers and pupils at Summerhill, as well as reactions from other viewers.

A film that failed to live up to its title

Albert Lamb is an ex Summerhill student who now works there.

CONTRARY to the impression you may have received Summerhill is not today an unhappy, frightening and angry school, where children are uncared for by the adults in the community. We have a strong and mature staff at the school who are doing a professional job. The educational side of Summerhill life is given a high priority and our recent graduates have gone on to do well in other schools. The self government of the community is working very well and is particularly strong at the moment. There is a great deal of creativity at the school, music, dance, art, theatre and woodwork.

We at the school have been working hard to make Summerhill all that it can be and to bring it to a new level of self-understanding and we hoped that this film would reflect some of this. We had no editorial control over the documentary but the filmmakers were radical American anthropologists with children of their own and a history of interest in, and admiration for, the school. We felt in relatively safe hands.

Our hope was that their film would reflect the reality of life at Summerhill today. They chose instead mostly to focus on a few troubled 11 to 13 year-old new kids (among the 16 new kids who started in September) and their difficulty in adjusting to the freedom at Summerhill during a difficult term.

The headlines in the papers focused on the scene where a rabbit with myxomatosis is dispatched with a

machete by a pupil at the school. If this scene with the rabbit had been titled so that it was clear that this was a sick and dying rabbit we might have avoided a lot of bad feeling. That rabbit had nothing to do with Summerhill. It is not even something that we can adequately defend as the boy did not have the community's permission for his mercy killing and probably would not have received it if he had asked for it.

Zoe and I saw the film before it was shown on television and both of us asked the filmmakers to cut out the scene with the rabbit. Now we are asking Channel Four to remove the scene before this film is distributed to other countries around the world.

Many things were taken out of context. The scene of the pretend wedding bothers many people but within the autumn term that wedding was an important life-affirming ceremony.

Only a few weeks before this event the school had gathered for a memorial service to celebrate the life of Akira, a young Summerhillian who had died after an asthma attack in Japan. I felt at the time that the community chose to dress up and celebrate this mock wedding as a way of showing that life goes on.

Yet watching the film a lot of people have got the impression that this one-off entertainment, dreamed up by a couple of kids, is our regular and adult sponsored method of sanctifying illicit relationships.

The thing I most dislike about the film, personally, is the name, *Summerhill at 70*. The film does not live up to its title and present a symbolic representation of life at our school today, as many in the press have taken it to do. We have asked that for future broadcasts the title be changed, perhaps to 'New Kids at Summerhill'.

This film has not been an unmitigated disaster. After all, any film about Summerhill would be controversial. Some people have liked what they see in the film and have appreciated seeing conflicts brought out in the open at school meetings. We have been receiving many requests for information about the school from prospective parents.

One other impression that the film has made must be refuted. Zoe, as the Headmistress of Summerhill, is seen only cursing kids in the meeting and cooing to a horse in the stables. This has created a very unfair perception of her role within the school. Zoe has made an enormous effort to care for our community of individual children, for their parents and for the school's staff. She also carries the weight of looking after the old home of a widely scattered community of ex-Summerhillians.

If this film had worked out and had shown the world, the power and the goodness that is within the school, we would all be basking in the reflected media glory. As it is all of us around Great Britain, and soon all of us around the world, will have to be standing up to defend our old school.

They showed all the bad things

Jesse, Jessica, Kate, Rebecca, Jack, George, Earl, Jason and Jody, ages 12, 13 and 14, watched 'Summerhill at 70' on Channel Four and later talked about it.

- I think that when they leave school they're in shit.
- They've all got rich parents anyway or else they wouldn't be able to go.
- The school looks like a tip.
- The general idea is good but they all dossed about all the time, they didn't have any respect for the school or each other.
- I didn't like the school, it was too violent.
- The video was probably not accurate.
- It probably was.
- It doesn't show them much in lessons.
- They were horrible to each other.
- The bit where the boys went into the girls room was horrible.
- I'd like to try it out for a month or two, but I wouldn't like to go there permanently.
- It might be a good school but you wouldn't do very well unless you had great will power.
- Was very biased towards boys.
- I wouldn't work if I didn't have to so I wouldn't turn out very well
- I wouldn't really want to go there 'cos I want a good education.
- Good place to go on Monday mornings.
- The video gave Summerhill a bad name, they showed all the bad things but none of the good things.
- Good the way they showed different attitudes towards school and children.
- Most of the kids were real bastards, they were horrible to each other and I wouldn't like to go there because I'd get treated like shit. Only the teachers were treated OK. Why pay so much to go somewhere to be treated like cack all the time.



It was crap

Lani, age 10, one of *Lib ED's* resident reviewers watched the programme and found some pertinent criticisms.

THE PROGRAMME just focussed on some of the bad bits about Summerhill. Surely free schools are going to have their bad bits but they would have their good bits too.

I can only think of about 2 good bits in the video where people were friendly, the rest was about their problems. I think Summerhill must be good because it's a free school but if that was your first impression you wouldn't like it.

My friend and her dad thought it was good from what I had said to her from the other video that I'd seen before, but now she doesn't want to go there with people throwing knives around and being horrible to each other.

They shouldn't have shown it like that, they were there for a term and

half. Surely they could have focussed on the good things. I suppose they wanted the drama - like killing the rabbit and that but they should have showed the good things.

Basically I thought the video was crap - the only really nice bit was the girls playing on the swing.

The bit where the boys searched the girls' room was terrible and I'm glad that the girls protested and then she had to drop the case and that was not fair at all.

They showed loads more about the boys than the girls and what they did show about the boys was them being violent and horrible. I'm sure there were peaceful boys there but you didn't see them and mostly the girls were just sitting around being quiet which I'm sure that wasn't true either.

Beware visitors bearing video cameras

Hussein Lucas was a visitor at Summerhill during the filming of the documentary. His initial suspicions were justified.

I WAS a guest at Summerhill for a week shortly after the arrival of Peter and Harriet Getzels the (so-called) directors. My immediate instinctive feeling, which was to deepen throughout the week, was that this couple was not to be trusted. If they were to approach me with an offer to point a camera at an organisation I was involved with, and cared deeply about, I would turn and run in the opposite direction. Indeed, since they had pointed the camera my way once or twice, I subsequently refused to sign the form allowing them to include footage of me, had they wanted to. My suspicions of them were amply justified. They are not directors but voyeurs.

Cutting Edge on March 30th was not a documentary but a badly-made, sensationalised home movie. You could take a camera into any 'decent' family home for 15 weeks and come out with enough footage of quarrels, idiosyncratic, bizarre and unpleasant behaviour to fill an hour, but it would not be representative of the life of that

family, any more than this mess was representative of Summerhill.

This was a classic example of lying by omission. Notably absent from the video mess were the mature 16 year-olds, the delightful younger children and the experienced teachers. (With the exception of the very new science teacher the other adults focused on were not teachers). Instead we followed almost exclusively the generally tedious, often unpleasant but developmentally necessary wranglings of a small number of 11-14 year-olds going through the gangster stage. They don't stay that way. That is the point! There was no balance in this mess; no footage of the well-conducted and very fair general meetings which I attended; no mention of the self-disciplined work, the exam successes, the fact that most pupils go on to further, and many to higher, education, that Summerhill has produced a large number of high-achievers as well as many 'ordinary' well-balanced people leading useful and successful lives. And no, it

didn't all end with the death of Neill. There are former pupils at colleges and universities now. They should have been interviewed. (There may be some former pupils meeting underneath the arches at Waterloo, along with some old-Etonians and former grammar school pupils, but precious few). This was a disgracefully irresponsible piece of work by this award-winning couple. As the *Times* reviewer put it "Like the children they pointed their cameras at, directors ... were guilty of enjoying the freedom of the moment." Yes, but unlike the children they enjoyed freedom without responsibility. In fact, licence. The difference between freedom and licence was something Neill was continually having to point out. Someone should have pointed it out to the directors.

If the adults at Summerhill are guilty of any irresponsibility it lies in dangerous naivete regarding strangers. I advise them to adopt a motto of the Yoruba Tribe, "love all, trust few", especially those bearing video cameras.



PHOTOS: courtesy Channel Four

It's easy to pick something shocking

Naomi has been at Summerhill School for eight years, is sixteen years old and Japanese. She will be leaving Summerhill at this end of term to go to a college to do further education.

THE DOCUMENTARY on the Channel Four *Summerhill at 70* only showed the bad side of Summerhill. The film crew stayed with us for 15 weeks.

Surely it is easy for them to pick out an hour of the shocking and uncaring side of Summerhill.

Even if you pick a normal family and filmed them for the same amount of time, it would be easy to make a disturbing documentary.

Because of the documentary it made me very nervous to go to the local town.

When I went to the local cinema with Henry and two other friends, two adults in a car stopped and threatened to chop Henry's head off.

The rabbit scene didn't make it clear that the rabbit had myxomatosis. The documentary might be sold to Japan and most people wouldn't know what myxomatosis is because it's an uncommon disease.

I'm very upset by the documentary because I care about Summerhill very much and I would hate to see the school being damaged by the documentary.

The happiest school in the world

Lauren Clark, 15, and Lucille Barnett, 14, are both students at Summerhill.

SUMMERHILL was founded in the 1920s by A. S. Neill. He set up Summerhill to make a school where children can be free from the laws and rules in our society, and live a happy childhood so they can grow into happy adults.

With a school like Summerhill, kids learn to be individuals and learn things about life that you would never learn in a normal school. In normal schools children are in a structured environment, learning maths and history etc and not learning about life.

Summerhill is a good place because kids learn to look after themselves and learn what life is all about. When children first come to Summerhill from a normal school they kind of "freak out" and say "WOW, I don't have to go to any maths or history lessons. No one is telling me what to learn or what to do." This means that the child wasn't truly interested in what they are learning. Children at Summerhill usually find what they are interested in learning and go to those lessons. It might even be only one lesson but that one lesson would be what they were

really interested in. So they learn and probably end up making a career out of it when they are older.

Children when they are forced to study don't really learn and being forced to learn makes a child confused about what they really want to do as an adult.

People who hear about Summerhill usually think straight away that it is a horrible place. They think that kids just do as they like, play all day and never do any responsible work. This is not at all true. Summerhill's community teaches kids to work together so they can make the school an environment that fits everyone. The community teaches kids to help run the school because they make Summerhill what it is. They need to work to help keep the school running.

You learn that adults don't have to do everything for you and if you want something done to do it yourself. Summerhill is probably the most happiest school in the world and to see people putting down such a place that they really know nothing more about than what they read, SUCKS!

An all-girls school would be better

Bonnie Hill writes from the perspective of a 12 year old home educated girl, although she has been to both an 'alternative' school and a normal school.

THE PROGRAMME did not give a very good impression of the school and it looked as if it was meant to make the school look bad and it wasn't filmed very well. It seemed to me that the people who were making the film picked out the bits which showed the school in a bad light.

For instance there is a boy chopping off a rabbit's head and to most people that would come across as very cruel and it is not made clear that the rabbit had myxomatosis and he is relieving it from its misery.

The aspect of the school which I did like was having more choice of what you wanted to do and learn. This is important because if you don't like doing something and you are forced to do it then you don't learn anything so it is a waste of time.

I didn't like the school because a lot of bullying went on and there were lots of boys going around in gangs with real guns and bows and arrows and being cruel to animals.

If you were a shy person then Summerhill would not be a very good place to go to because you might get bullied.

I think the school seems much better for boys than for girls because the boys seem to just take over, because they're much more aggressive. I think an all-girls school based on the same ideas would be much better.

The excessive swearing added to the overall image of anarchy and aggression.

I don't think that the big meetings are a very good idea; they bring people up and humiliate them in front of the whole school.

The bedtime issue was very interesting; I think that not to have bedtime is unfair on people who want to go to bed early. It also appears that there is not much time for privacy and your own space, which I would not like.

God moves in mysterious ways

9.00pm Just finishing off the quiz in the latest issue of that disgusting anarchist rag, *Classroom War*. What do you get if you cross a deputy head with a rat? Hmmm! I know that one. Overpaid vermin. NO, wrong. Shit! The answer is a rodent without any self respect. I should have got that. There are enough of them around.

Anyway enough of this. I must get ready for my 11 o'clock meeting with Boss Patten.

Things have been really hectic since the Party's triumphant victory in the 3F's* election campaign. Thinking up a whole new education policy is not as easy as it seems.

I must confess the election result was a bit of a surprise. We all expected Labour to get in and had the WELCOME BACK COMRADES banner ready and waiting. Still there's no making sense of what goes on inside the heads of the British people. Probably something to do with the education system!

Then, of course, Boss Clarke was transferred to the Home Office to put the boot in on the pigs and we get His Holiness, John the Baptist Patten.

I can still remember my first audience. After kissing his ring (the one on his finger I hasten to add, I'm not just a teacher after promotion), he told me how he had got the job.

Apparently God had appeared to the Major demanding that whoever became Education Secretary must sacrifice his children as a demonstration of his faith. The Boss was the only one prepared to send his kids to state schools and so he got the job.

The most amusing thing after the election was all the educationalists who had backed Labour, ringing up to say they were sorry and hadn't meant it.

Even that arch turd Tim Shithouse rang up to tell us he no longer supported comprehensive schools and was in favour of privatisation.

I told him to piss off. There's nothing more contemptible than a time-server who can't tell the time.

11.00am Meeting with the Boss. After prayers he tells us that he is going into seclusion for forty days and forty nights. During this time he will get together with God and they will draw up a brand new education policy.

Despite some raised eyebrows, he assures us that God has all the right qualifications for the job. He has never taught in a school, is hopelessly out of date and has an Old Testament view of discipline ever since his own son came to a bad end.

This is all very different from the



STOP PRESS: Turin Shroud mystery solved. Image is of Patten.

days when that old Satanist Boss Baker was in charge of the Department. Still I don't suppose it will affect policy too much.

After the meeting a colleague asks me what on earth God and Tory education policy have got in common. Easy, I answer, they both move in a mysterious way.

1.00pm Visit the Norman Lamont City Technology College on Canary Wharf. This institution was set up by a grateful industrialist to commemorate the end of the recession. Unfortunately most of them went bankrupt while it was being built so the Government had to pick up the bills. Still the thought was there.

We have to make the more experienced staff redundant as part of our steadfast commitment to raise standards. It is really hard trying to keep a straight face while giving a succession of teacher creeps who have devoted their lives to education, the bums rush.

The real problem, however, is with the deputy heads. These saps thought they were safe. They thought redundancy only happened to people who taught kids in a classroom!

Well, they were wrong. Not only are they extremely expensive and highly dispensable, but, strange as it seems,

making a deputy head redundant seems to cheer the rest of the staff up. Weird!

Still we are not completely heartless. We are at this very moment trying to arrange a career shift for deputy heads. We are trying to persuade the medical establishment to use them for research.

There are two reasons for this. First of all medical researchers sometimes become too attached to their rats, and secondly there are some things that not even a rat will do.

NEXT ISSUE:

The curriculum cop visits his old alma mater Leicester Polytechnic for its change of name to the Reinhard Heydrich University. The Director replies to criticism of the new name on the grounds that Heydrich was a great constructive statesman who helped build the autobahns and that his supposed involvement in an alleged massacre of the Jews happened a long time ago and is best forgotten. As part of the celebrations David Irving was appointed to the *Sunday Times* chair of Holocaust Studies.

* **Editors note:** This refers to the Tories' successful election slogan, FUCK THE NHS, FUCK EDUCATION AND FUCK THE POOR!

Populism, or the stolen agenda: reflections of a born-again libertarian

Doug Holly has been a Marxist all of his adult life. Here he describes his frustrations, and conversion to the True Path of Libertarianism.

STRANGE how long it takes to learn simple but basic things. It has taken me forty-odd years of adult life to grasp that a just and decent world can never result from the socialism I have up until now thought capable of providing one.

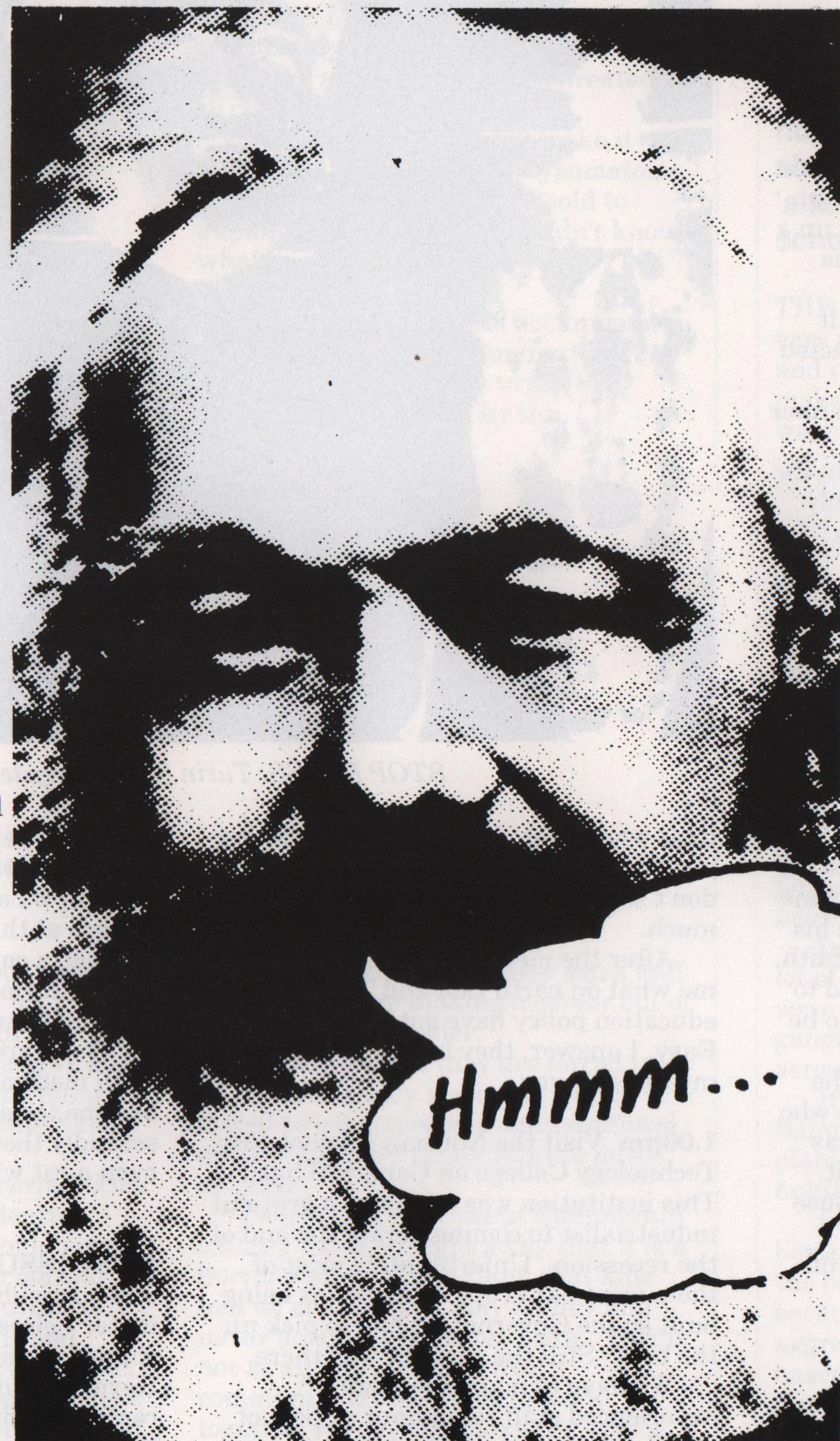
Stranger still, during all these years I have been busy promoting the idea that genuine education is active and participatory, a function of the individual learner rather than of that which may be learned, yet my politics has implicitly accepted the reverse - that political change will arrive from a system of ideas, an analysis of reality, the application of some form of "socialist consciousness".

The recognition of this massive existential contradiction has taken until now to emerge. It was finally confirmed when I attended a day conference of socialists recently. There it all was: dogmatism, deafness, egotism and above all, academicism. The planet is now seriously threatened with terminal decline.

This much is dimly grasped by the average supermarket shopper, yet here were these highly 'educated' people earnestly contending over whether we needed another Left Party and whether it should or should not be Marxist! Not only the global situation but even events in Europe appeared to have passed them by.

The unreality of the situation was further underlined by the fact that the majority of the participants were male, white and white collar. It was like having entered some new episode of Alice in Wonderland: the degree of madness could not have been higher.

I have come to believe that this pathological self-absorption among intellectuals can be explained by two linked factors: the nature of the intellectual industry itself and the all



pervading influence of oligarchy.

Ideas are monopolised by power structures - the major global ones and the ancillary ones represented by the higher-status institutions of 'education'. Whatever its origin, the result of this process is to separate any 'progressive' policies - or philosophy or discussion - from the daily experience of lived reality.

This gives a tremendous advantage to the lackeys of power and privilege. Because the populace finds the ideas and behaviour of 'socialists' distasteful,

populist politics, which should logically be about a fuller understanding by ordinary people of the processes affecting their daily lives and greater participation in the control of those processes, is appropriated instead by monopoly-owned media which systematically trivialise and distort all discussion of events.

What we need, to regain the ground of popular discussion for ideas of fundamental change and a return to sanity on a global as well as a personal day-to-day level, is a politics which encourages people to "name their reality", to use Paolo Freire's expression.

From there we need then to reappropriate the agenda of people - in Britain as much as in the favelas of Brazil where this is beginning to happen already.

What we do not need is more "schools of socialism", more "leaders of thought", more finely honed "prefigurative policies".

Forget all that comrades. One final word to libertarians. It would be nice to believe that the anarchist tradition has been free from academicism, doctrinal dogfights and male egos.

One glance at any contemporary anarchist publication would immediately dispel any such illusion. Authoritarian thought structures are

powerful and long established; they have even affected attempts to introduce libertarian ideas.

But perhaps - *Libertarian Education* always excepted - the best place to find free, active and modest thinking is not in print but in practice.

So go along to your local Friends of the Earth or development education group. There I think you will find the beginnings of a truly libertarian politics which is free from the "master - pupil" heritage.

Don't miss the next issue...

The next issue of *Lib ED* will be published in November. The main focus will be on testing, but they'll be lots more. Why not subscribe to ensure that you don't miss this or any of the following issues. Our ordinary year's sub costs £4 (inland), £8 (overseas in sterling), or US\$16 (otherwise). But see below for other attractive packages. Fill in the subscription form, write a cheque and post it to us TODAY!

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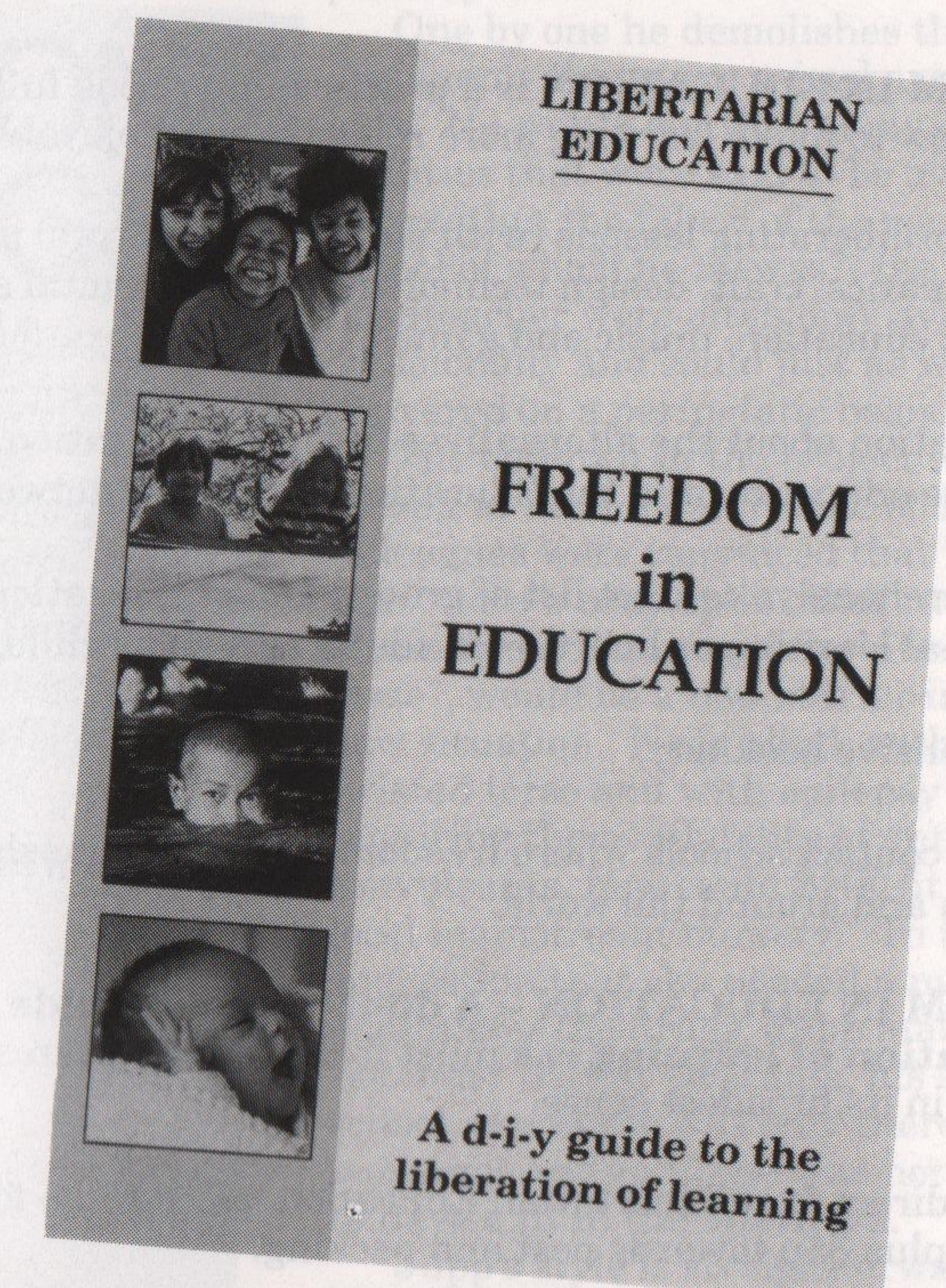
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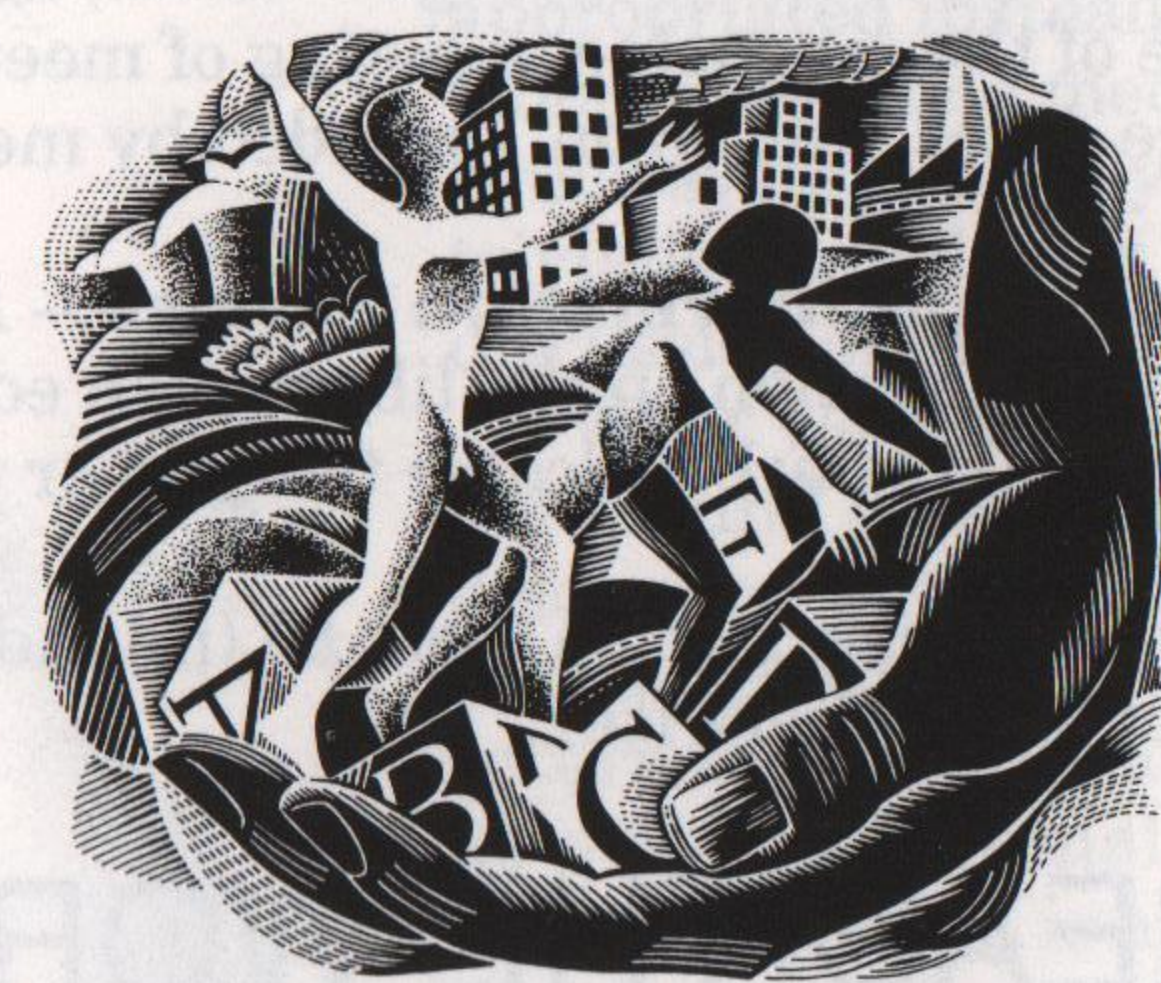
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LIBERTARIAN
EDUCATION
AND
SCHOOLING
1890-1990

JOHN
SHOTTON

NO MASTER HIGH OR LOW



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Everyone belongs

Everyone Belongs - Mainstream Education for Children with Severe Learning Difficulties

A book by Ken Jupp, 1992.
Human Horizons Series, Souvenir Press, London, pp203, Illus.

Disability Equality in the Classroom: A Human Rights Issue
A book by Richard Rieser and Micheline Mason, Republished 1992,
Disability Equality in Education, London (78 Mildmay Grove, London, N1 4PJ), pp240, Illus., 25 resource cards.

IT MAKES YOU want to cry, it makes you want to cheer as well. Here are two superb books that have the same message; that young people with disabilities need to be included in mainstream situations, that it can be and has been done, but there is much prejudice against them.

The reality of the Tories' messy education policy means that just when it began to seem that the arguments for inclusion of special children had been won, the introduction of "selective schools", the implications of SATs scores being published, and the fear of extra expense arising from the inclusion of children with special needs on roll, mean that many more will be excluded.

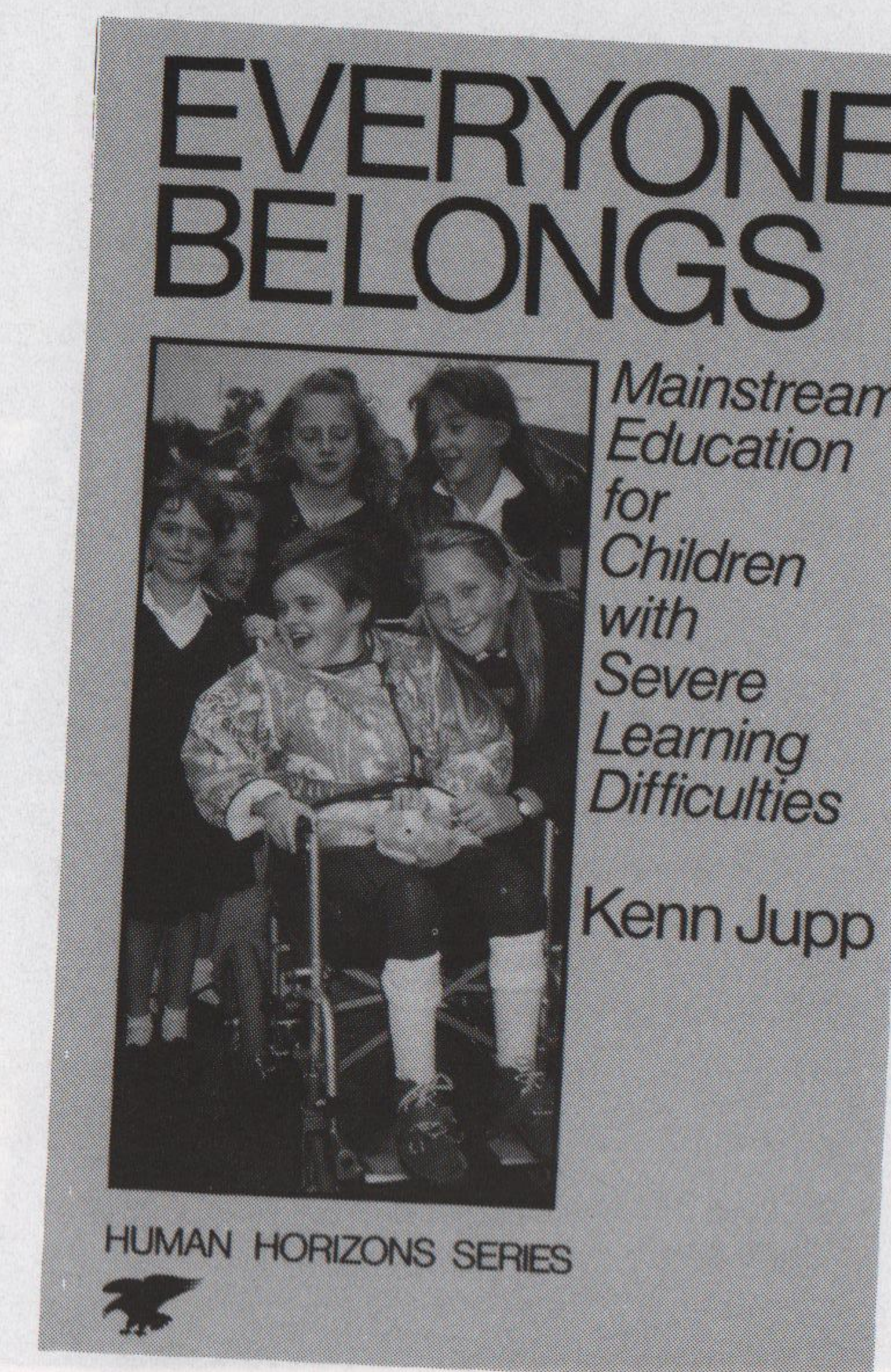
We are already seeing the populations of schools for children with EBD (Emotional and Behavioural Disturbance, this used to be called maladjusted) rising as mainstream schools try to give the bums rush to the kids they see as being the most difficult in the current climate.

Disability Now, the monthly paper of the Spastics Society pointed out (June 1992) that the number of 5 to 11 year olds in special schools actually rose by 2% between 1988 and 1991.

We know that in some special residential schools there have been some mighty strange goings on taking place; and if you did not Micheline Mason tells us.

Disability Equality in the Classroom started life as a resource pack of the ILEA two years before publication in its present form. In some ways it still resembles one, being composed as it is of many different short chapters each with appropriate illustrative material presented to catch the eye. This presentation is somewhat obtrusive as you turn to yet another photograph presented on the slant for effect.

It is difficult without endless quotations to put over the personal nature of the contributions of the many authors whose experiences and ideas Mason and Rieser have gathered into the book. Judy Watson, a blind person



who teaches in mainstream schools tells of her sadness at being educated away from home, Jenny Morris, a College lecturer, recounts her struggles to be treated decently by an LEA which proclaimed a policy of humanity and Equal Opportunities, but which tried to declare her contract void when, owing to her disability, she was not able to turn up on the first day for work. Pamela Roberts tells of her problems, as a black wheelchair-using woman, with trying to gain acceptance on to video making courses.

These people are not whingeing, they are telling it like it is from their own experiences.

The focus is firmly on human rights and looks at the politics of and attitudes to disability, "things you need to know", Good Practice and finally "work that can be done in class".

Maybe it does not seem very libertarian to want to go to mainstream schools - but while they remain the norm many people with disabilities want to enjoy that norm on their own terms and the articulate are saying it through this book which contains plenty of thought provoking material for children and adults alike.

According to Ken Jupp, in *Everyone Belongs* the inarticulate also appreciate the benefits of mainstream schooling. This is a remarkable book about a project in which five children with severe or profound learning difficulties were placed in their local mainstream

primary schools.

One by one he demolishes the arguments that were raised against the idea. He points out that many of the facilities that were said to be available only within the fabric of the special school of which he is (was?) the headteacher were often only available occasionally and could just as well be delivered on a peripatetic basis.

The children in the project were chosen at random and some of Jupp's colleagues were convinced that "Lizzie", who "wore a body splint that rather resembled a Roman soldier's breast plate", would be a non-starter in the new situation. Near blind, with a twisted torso and with epilepsy requiring the availability of anti-convulsants, how could SHE fit into a local mainstream nursery? To the suggestion that she needed a nurse to administer the drugs, Jupp makes the rejoinder that at Overdale, his special school, the nurse was only there in the mornings and so Lizzie was not allowed to have a fit in the afternoon.

Jupp's style is straightforward, even abrasive. It is not in the mould of many education books that read like barely retouched academic theses. You have the impression that he talks and writes in a similar manner. He describes the many objections that were put to him about his plan, and for each he prints, and presumably made at the time, a flattening rejoinder. The Hester Adrian research centre in Manchester gave the project a positive evaluation, but he also stamps quite hard on their assumptions about schools.

It is not giving away the happy ending to say that the project was a success. As a result Stockport is doing away with its special schools. The children are to be integrated but, sadly not into their local schools but into selected mainstream schools in the LEA.

Paradoxically it may be that for children with special needs, the first step on the road to liberation is to be seen as normal, and be included in ordinary schools. "Whatever normality is, it is rarely to be found in special places," says Jupp.

Jupp could have given us a longer reading list and some contact addresses (he is not the only person working in the field of integration, though from the book one might think so), however Souvenir Press are to be congratulated on publishing such a strong polemic for the rights of children with learning difficulties.

These are two books which everyone with an interest in children, especially those with special needs, should purchase.

3 into 2

Hillsden Riots/Getting It Wrong
Adlib Paperbacks £5.99

Them and Us
Adlib Paperbacks £4.99

Three novels in two volumes by Rhodri Jones

THE FIRST of these books consists of two of Rhodri Jones' novels published together in one volume. Not only is this good value for the reader but the decision can be justified on thematic grounds; both are concerned with young blacks and policing in contemporary Britain.

In *Getting it Wrong*, two very different black kids, Donovan and Clive, are stopped in the street and wrongly accused of stealing Auntie Elsie's electric organ. They panic and make a run for it, are eventually cornered by the police and beaten up. The description of their arrest is graphic and uncompromising. One Policeman:

"... seized a handful of Clive's hair ... He screwed the hair tighter and crashed Clive's head against the metal of the van. 'You black bastard', he snarled."

The two boys are charged and duly appear in Court. The police evidence is a pack of lies and they are duly found guilty of resisting arrest and given a year's conditional discharge. Donovan is outraged:

"They call themselves the law and justice. That was a laugh. They'd broken more laws and done more wrong in a few hours than he had in his whole life."

The story is given all the more force by being based on an actual incident. Of course, it would have been easy for such a story to become just a lesson in anti-racism, but Rhodri Jones is much too good a writer for that.

The story is all the more effective because he has created two convincing characters in Donovan and Clive, and explores the impact that the injustice has on their lives; Clive's parents throw him out while Donovan's relationship with his girlfriend goes through a serious crisis.

At the end of the story, they both respond very differently. After his initial outrage, Donovan resolves to put the incident behind him, while Clive is determined to pay the system back.

The other story, *Hillsden Riots* is even more impressive. A celebratory fictional account of the 1981 Brixton Riots, it is wholly and commendably



ambiguous in its support of the young people, black and white, who fought back against the police.

Once again the story concerns very real characters: two brothers - Colin who is determined to do well at school, his more rebellious younger brother Wayne, and the streetwise youth, Herald who introduces the two of them to the reality of inner city living.

Wayne is swept up in the rioting:

"It had been a real battle all right with the enraged mob facing the line of police. Each time, the pattern had been the same. The crowd slowly moved forward. One or two of the braver spirits - or more incensed - advanced a step or two in front, yelling their defiance and hurling a missile. The crowd pushed forward to back them up and join them.

Then the police charged, striking out viciously with their batons, seizing a straggler here and there to pull behind their lines, driving the crowd back. They could see their comrades, now prisoners, being set upon, booted and clubbed and dragged along the road ...

Sometimes, one of the policemen got too eager and found himself stranded in the hostile mob, away from the protection of his colleagues. The crowd was on him like wild animals, his helmet was knocked off, his shield kicked away, his baton wrested from him, and all weapons were used against him - fists, nails, knees, feet.

Wayne had never seen faces so

distorted with hatred and the desire for revenge. In the few blows the crowd were able to land before the policeman, bloody and staggering, was rescued, were packed the bitterness and resentment of years."

Colin searches for his brother through the riot-torn streets and himself confronts the black experience that he had hoped an education would rescue him from. He is reluctantly forced to acknowledge that at least the troublesome Wayne had

"... stood up and been counted."

The story ends with Colin resolved to come off the sidelines:

"... for him the battle was just beginning".

This is very powerful stuff and is highly recommended. Rhodri Jones has written an important novel that deserves the widest possible readership.

The other volume, *Them and Us*, is a collection of short stories, first hand accounts of school life that explore prejudice, oppression and resistance from the student's point of view.

They are all excellent, some of them outstanding. Cleverly crafted and beautifully written with absolutely convincing narrators, they all nevertheless have a point to make. Once again essential reading.

John Newsinger

Never Again!

Children with a Star

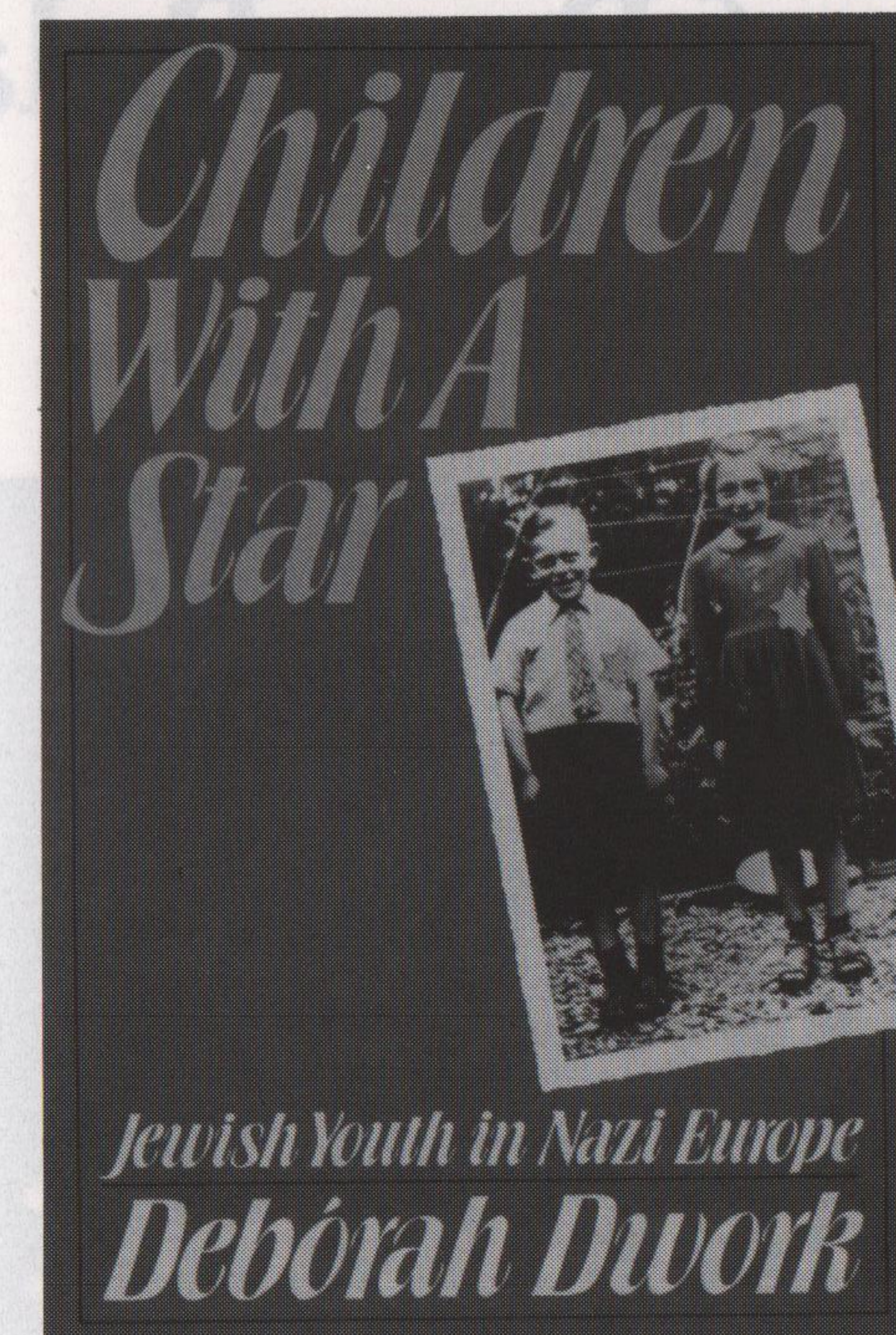
A book by Deborah Dwork
Yale University Press £19.95

SOME one and a half million Jewish children were murdered by the Nazis and their accomplices between 1939 and 1945. This impressive, often moving study attempts to recover their experience of Hitler's Europe and of the Holocaust from the testimony of the survivors. It is a social history of Jewish children's lives at the darkest hour of the century.

Deborah Dwork takes us into a universe of unimaginable horror. It is Monday 7 September 1942 in Warsaw. Adult Jews are being herded off to the slave labour camps while their dependents, the old, young children and their mothers are separated off for extermination. They are of no value. Alexander Donat watched as a father tried to smuggle his baby through, hidden in a knapsack:

"In the tense silence the wails of a baby suddenly rose. The SS officer froze and a thousand men and women held their breaths. A Ukrainian guard ran out, plunged his bayonet several times into the knapsack from which the criminal sounds had come. In seconds the knapsack was a blood-soaked rag. 'Du Dreckiger Schweinehund!' the SS officer shouted indignantly, bringing his riding crop down on the ashen face of the father who had dared to try smuggling his child past. Mercifully the Ukrainian's bullet put an end to the father's ordeal then and there. Thereafter it became routine for guards to probe every bundle and knapsack with their bayonets."

How was this horror experienced by the children themselves? The book takes us through a number of kinds of experience, through the outer regions of Hell. It examines how life at home changed as Nazi persecution began to get underway, first in Germany and then later in the occupied countries. As the situation worsened, some families went into hiding to try and avoid deportation, surviving in secret with the help of courageous well-wishers, whether Christian or Communist. The book recounts childhood in the transit camps and in the ghettos and then lastly the culminating horror of the slave labour camps and the death camps. Inevitably the book is unbalanced because more evidence has survived from those who succeeded on going into hiding than from those who went to the almost certain death of the Nazi concentration camps. To be a child



was a sentence of death. Nevertheless it is invaluable for revealing an unknown dimension of the Nazi war against the Jews, that is the Holocaust as seen through the eyes of children.

Sara Grossman-Weil recalls life as a child in the Lodz ghetto. In September 1942 the Nazis rounded up all the children under ten and adults over sixty-five, all the non-productive inhabitants:

"All the children were taken away ... And when the mother objected, either she was taken with them or shot. Or they tore the child away from her and let her go. And all the children, little ones, five, six, four, seven years old ones were thrown, literally thrown into this wagon. The cries were reaching the sky, but there was no help ..."

Foo Foo

Little Rabbit Foo Foo

By Michael Rosen and Arthur Robins
Walker Books, £2.99

IMAGINE a little woodland scene. Dancing mice, a badger looks on, goblin musicians.

Into all this we put an anarchic bunny who causes trouble and they all get bopped on the head. It's wicked and funny and it works. It has all you look for in a picture book.

Little Rabbit Foo Foo is Rosen's recycling of an old poem. Whether children are familiar or new to this story, Rosen has shown that, like in *Inky Pinky Plonky* and *We're Going on*

Esther Geizhals-Zuckers describes how she and her parents were taken from the Lodz ghetto to Auschwitz in August 1944. As they got off the train, they were divided into two groups, those who could work went to the right and children, women with children and the old, to the left. Her twelve year old brother, her aunt and her cousin were all sent to the left for immediate gassing. Her mother was comforting a neighbour's little boy and rather than leave him on his own, she too went to the left:

"This was the last time I saw my mother. She went with that neighbour's child. So when we talk about heroes, mind you, this was a hero: a woman who would not let a four year old child go by himself."

A handful of children survived in the slave labour and the death camps, working with the rest of the slave labourers or even being kept as pets or mascots by the SS guards. But for the vast majority there was only death. For most children, being young was itself a sentence of death. Too young to work, they were murdered on arrival in the camps.

Books like this serve two purposes. First of all they memorialise what happened in Europe under Nazi rule, making it impossible to forget the terrible crime that was committed against the Jewish population. Second, at a time of Neo-Nazi revival across Europe, they serve as a warning that these people must be fought and that such a crime must never be allowed to take place again. Deborah Dwork has performed an invaluable service on both counts.

a Bear Hunt, these traditional rhymes make good reading. They put children on the position of reading a known text. This builds enjoyment and confidence.

But this isn't just a straight re-telling. Rosen and Robins have put Foo Foo in dungarees and on a motorbike. He has an evil grin. He has a large mallet. The illustrations draw children back to the book again and again.

I read it to a hundred kids in assembly. They all enthused and joined in and we ended up all reading it together - loudly!

Like I said - this book works!

RACE AND CLASS

The Institute of Race Relations Story

OVER THE LAST twenty years, the London-based Institute of Race Relations (IRR) has led the way in challenging racism in Britain and increasingly in Europe, and in supporting Third World struggles. This is an unlikely achievement for an organisation that was originally established in 1952 as a department of the Royal Institute of International Affairs with the remit of monitoring issues of race on behalf of the British Establishment. For the first decades of its life, the IRR was in effect a ruling class think tank with, for example, its African Private Enterprise Group including representatives from such progressive organisations as the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa, Rio Tinto Zinc, Barclays, Unilever and of course, the Bank of England. Even more astonishing, in 1959 and 1962 the IRR hosted joint conferences with the Institute of Strategic Studies on the strategic importance of Africa. Among the progressives present were representatives from the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, British American Tobacco, British Petroleum, Shell International, the Standard Bank of South Africa, the Foreign Office as well as the US and Israeli Military Attaches in London and the Daily Telegraph's defence correspondent. All this was to change.

Between January 1971 and April 1972, the Institute's staff staged a rebellion and overthrew the alliance of businessmen and financiers, academics, politicians and race relations professionals that had so far controlled the organisation's destiny. What emerged was the IRR as we know it today: a radical anti-racist organisation, unequivocally committed to black and Third World liberation and that proclaimed the connection between issues of race and class. Predictably it was an IRR shorn of its grants and

endowments. Over the years since the rebellion, the IRR has produced considerable material that is of vital interest to teachers and schools, most

Tarzan Stories (Vol 28 No 2), Nancy Murray's *Anti-racists and Other Demons: The Press and Ideology in Thatcher's Britain* (Vol 27 No 3), Lee Bridges', *Policing the Urban Wasteland* (Vol 25 No 2), George Joseph's *Foundations of Eurocentrism in Mathematics*, (Vol 28 No 3), Graham Usher's *Children of Palestine* (Vol 33 No 4) and a special issue on *The Curse of Columbus* (Vol 33 No 3). The journal regularly carries articles by Chris Searle, a name many teachers will be familiar with: *Your Daily Dose: Racism and the Sun* (Vol 29 No 1), *From Forster to Baker The New Victorianism and the Struggle for Education* (Vol 30 No 4) and most recently *The Gulf Between: a School and a War* (Vol 33 No 4). Also worth mentioning are the regular contributions from the Institute's director, A Sivanandan, *From Resistance to rebellion: Asian and Afro-Caribbean Struggles in Britain* (Vol 23 No 2), the devastating *RAT and the Degradation of Black Struggles* (Vol 26 No 4) and most recently *All that Melts into Air is Solid the Hokum of New Times* (Vol 31 No 3). All told the journal is absolutely indispensable.

The nineties are already seeing the rise of a new tide of racism sweeping across Europe.

At such a time the work of the IRR becomes increasingly important, and of course this is the very time that it finds itself financially at risk. The London Borough Grants Scheme has just withdrawn an £80,000 grant that leaves the IRR vulnerable. It is vital that the IRR survives and that it is able to maintain its independence so as to shine a light on the grim times that lie ahead of us.

Subscriptions to *Race and Class*, £12 p.a. to the Institute of Race Relations, 2-6 Leeke Street, Kings Cross Road, London WC1X 9HS.

notably four illustrated books for classroom use, *Roots of Racism*, *Patterns of Racism*, *How Racism came to Britain*, and *The Fight Against Racism*.

As well as these books, the IRR also publishes an invaluable quarterly journal *Race and Class* that is essential reading for anyone concerned with the fight against racism. Over recent years the journal has carried many articles of direct relevance to teachers: Imogen Forster's *Nature's Outcast Child: Black People in Children's Books* (Vol 31 No 1), John Newsinger's *The Politics of the*

the gulf
between:
a school
and a war

UK commentary • US: mining Indian lands

Challenging the whole system

Dear Editor,

Clive Baldwin (*Lib ED*, Summer 92), writes of Ivan Illich that "He has moved from analysing institutions to analysing the mindsets that allowed those institutions to become acceptable." Valuable work, no doubt. But we should be in no doubt that the move is also a retreat. Finding out the ideas behind structures such as the modern schooling system is necessary. But not as necessary as challenging the whole system which gives rise to them.

Yours fraternally,
Keith Flett, Tottenham, London.

The limits of radical action?

Dear Lib ED,

Would it be possible to have a future article (or two) on the limits of radical action by mainstream classroom teachers and student teachers? I have been thrown off a PGCE teacher training (secondary schools) course on the grounds that I didn't fit into the school system and wasn't controlling my classes properly, and the school students weren't "doing enough maths".

As part of such article(s), it might be instructive for potential student teachers if you listed any PGCE departments (particularly secondary school ones) where the atmosphere is not hostile towards anti-hierarchical practice. I found next to no support for democracy or real freedom of choice in schools from university tutors, fellow students, established school staff or even it seemed at the time, from school students, so deeply entrenched is the system.

Libertarians in the system seem to have been restricted to successfully directing their energies at expanding the curriculum possibilities within the exam and school system. The price paid for acting within the system is that teachers do not seem to question the fact that they generally have to use punishments, threats, intimidating voices and body language, collusion with dominant students (as shown by Pat Jenkins in *Lib Ed*, No. 19), and can be pressurised by colleagues to ignore or gloss over bullying and fighting, even sometimes in the classroom. To what extent can the trade-off between making the curriculum more progressive and creating a genuinely better environment be overcome?

What are the view of the collective on the way forward regarding explicit industrial action in the light of their cautious response to David Ball's letter printed in the last issue.

Adrian Parr

New alternative school

Dear Lib ED,

Having read your article on Dame Catherine's school in your Winter 1991/92 issue, I would like to draw your attention to the Children's Learning Centre in Poole.

CLC was set up in November 1991 by a parent and a teacher feeling the need to create a viable alternative to the current developments in mainstream education following the closure of the local "alternative" school, High Lea. I will be taking over the role of key teacher at CLC in September.

At CLC we believe that it is the job of education to nurture the creative, intellectual, spiritual, physical and emotional qualities of each individual just as much as it needs to provide them with job oriented skills.

We have created an environment conducive with the development of the "whole person". Our small pupil/teacher ratio helps to promote the trust and understanding necessary to create the correct environment for learning. We believe that learning should take the form of a partnership between facilitator (teacher) and learner based on mutual trust and understanding. The children are democratically involved in decision making concerning their learning and the running of the school.

At present we have eight children, most are full time but we also have two flexi-schoolers. Interest is growing all the time and there are plans to develop CLC in order that it can take children from nursery age right up to GCSE level (at present we have children aged between 8 and 12). However despite this planned expansion, we are committed to the notion that "small is beautiful" and we are determined to keep our small pupil/teacher ratios. We believe that the size of CLC plays a major part in promoting the senses of community and belonging that are so evident.

At CLC parents pay what they can comfortably afford in order that it is open to the maximum number of children. We will not refuse a child on financial grounds alone. We have just introduced a scheme that enables parents to do practical work and fund raising in lieu of fees. Our aim is to run CLC on donations, fund raising and grants rather than fees.

We welcome visit, and further details can be given by contacting:

11 Netley Close
Poole
Dorset
BH15 3NW.

Yours,
Nick Banwell, Saddleworth, Lancs.

Kate Sharpley Library

Comrades and Friends,

No doubt some of you will be aware of the existence and work of the Kate Sharpley Library and Documentation Centre which has been in existence for the last eight years.

During the course of 1991 the Library moved from a storage location in London to Northamptonshire, where we are in the process of creating a complete computerised database of the entire collection. At the same time a working group has been created to oversee the running of the Library.

The Library is made up of private donations from deceased and living comrades, and comprises of several thousand pamphlets, books, newspapers, journals, posters, flyers and unpublished manuscripts, monographs, essays etc, in over 20 languages, covering the history of our movement over the last century. It contains detailed reports from the IWA (AIT/IAA), the Anarchist Federation of Britain (1945-50), the Syndicalist Workers Federation (1950-79), records from the anarchist publishing house, Cienfuegos Press, among others. Newspapers include near complete sets

of *Freedom*, *Spain and the World*, *Direct Action* (from 1945 onwards), *Black Flag*, along with many others.

The Library also has a sizable collection of libertarian socialist and council communist material which we are also keen to extend.

To enhance the collection, we appeal to all anarchist groups and publications worldwide to add our name to their mailing lists.

We also appeal to all comrades and friends to donate any suitable material to the collection and we hope to be open for consultation in 1992.

The KSL was named in honour of Kate Sharpley, a First World War anarchist and anti war activist. One of the countless "unknown" members of our movement so ignored by the "official historians" of anarchism.

All mail for the present to:

KSL
BM HURRICANE
LONDON
WC1N 3XX
ENGLAND

To receive our new Bulletin, write with an SAE to the above address.